



Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan

Review Report

April 2018



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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Torfaen Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 3rd December 2013. The LDP sets out the Council's objectives and priorities for the development and use of land within the County Borough (excluding the area administered by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority who have their own LDP) and its policies and proposals for implementing them. It provides the land use framework which guides the future use and development of land in the County Borough up to 2021. Following adoption of the LDP the Council has monitored the delivery and implementation of the LDP through the production of three Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) produced in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report in order to assess if the plan is being implemented effectively. The conclusions and recommendations of these reports are the basis on which to inform review of the LDP.

Need for review of the LDP

- 1.2 Regular review will mean that plans remain up to date and support the objectives of the planned system of providing certainty, rational and consistent decisions and a reduction in misconceived planning applications and appeals¹. Following the adoption of the LDP, the Council has a statutory obligation, under Section 61 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to keep all matters under review that are expected to affect the development of its area. Section 69 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to undertake a review of the LDP. This is prescribed through the LDP Regulations² at intervals no longer than 4 years from the date of adoption, and such a review may comprise a selective review. Consequently Torfaen was formally required to commence a review of the Torfaen LDP on 3rd December 2017.
- 1.3 Therefore, Council (on 17th October 2017) resolved to “note the intention to commence a review of the LDP in accordance with Regulation 41 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005”; and Members were also informed that Officers will prepare the Review Report for presentation to Council in the new year following consultation with relevant parties”.

¹ Local Development Plan Manual, Edition 2 (2015)

² The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2005 As Amended

Purpose of this Report

- 1.4 A plan review should be based upon the findings of the published AMR's, significant contextual changes and updates to the evidence base. The review of the plan culminates in the preparation of this Review Report. The Review Report should be prepared in accordance with the guidance in the LDP Manual (2015). The Review Report should set out clearly what has been considered, which key stakeholders have been engaged and the changes likely to be required to the LDP based on evidence. This includes consideration of the LDP if any changes are required and why, based on evidence. The Review Report must make a conclusion on the revision procedure to be followed, i.e. full or short form LDP review.

Annual Monitoring Reports

- 1.5 The Review Report is informed by the preceding Annual Monitoring Reports prepared for the LDP in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The AMR has two key roles, firstly to consider whether the Strategy and Policies are being implemented successfully and secondly to consider all the information gathered from the various monitoring indicators to determine whether a full or partial review of the plan is required. The 2016 and 2017 AMR's noted that *whilst the basic strategy remains sound, it is taking too long to deliver and there is evidence to indicate there is a need for a full or partial review of the plan*. The 2016 and 2017 AMR's suggested that certain aspects of the LDP were not being delivered (housing numbers and employment allocations) and thus an early review was needed. The AMR findings pertinent to the review of the LDP are set out in Section 3 of this report.

Draft Review Report Consultation

- 1.6 The Draft Review Report was approved by Council on 30th January 2018, and then was subject to 6 weeks stakeholder consultation from 31st January to 14th March 2018, with over 100 specific / general consultation bodies and major landowners (full list attached at Appendix A) and was also available for comment on the Council's website. Following requests to do so, officers met with representatives of Cwmbran Community Council and Torfaen Friends of the Earth / Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales to brief them on the consultation. 21 representations were received on the Draft Review Report; and a high level summary is provided below, with more detail provided in the 'Report of Consultation' available on the Council's website:-

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/PlanningAndDevelopment/Planningpolicy/Local-Development-Plan-Review/Local-Development-Plan-Review.aspx>

- 1.7 The Draft Review Report set out:-

- the key contextual changes to be taken into account in the review of the LDP;
- the key findings of the three previous AMRs (mainly the lack of a five year housing land supply and delivery of housing and employment sites, including some strategic sites);
- the assessment of the current LDP vision / objectives, strategy, policies and proposals;
- the future LDP evidence base requirements;
- the review options; and
- the next steps, consultation process and consultation questions.

1.8 As part of the consultation, stakeholders were asked the following 8 questions covering the above detailed plan review matters:-

1. **Does the Review Report identify all the key contextual issues to be considered in the review of the LDP?** (see Section 2)
2. **Does the existing LDP Vision and Objectives remain appropriate for a revised plan?** (see Section 4.1)
3. **Do you agree that the existing LDP Spatial Strategy needs to be reviewed?** (see Section 4.2)
4. **Do you agree that the main issues that should be considered in the review of the LDP have been identified?** (see Sections 4.3 & 4.4)
5. **Do you agree with the assessment of the Policy Effectiveness Review?** (see Section 4.3)
6. **Do you agree that the LDP needs to be revised? If so do you consider the Full procedure or short form should be followed?** (see Section 6)
7. **If you consider a Full Review should be undertaken do you think that the Council should undertake a Full Review of the Torfaen LDP as well as collaborating on the production of the Cardiff City Region Strategic Development Plan?** (see Section 6)
8. **If you consider a Full Review should be undertaken should this be for an individual LDP for Torfaen or a Joint LDP? Please give reasoning.** (see Section 6)

1.9 The four options on the form of the review in the Draft Review Report were:-

1. Await Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and Torfaen LDP 'Lite' (LDPL) or Joint LDPL with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs);
2. Short Form Torfaen LDP Revision;
3. Full Torfaen LDP Revision; and
4. Full Joint LDP Review with neighbouring LPAs.

1.10 The comments received on the Draft Review Report (Questions 1-3 & 5) show that the majority of stakeholders who expressed an opinion considered that:-

- the Draft Review Report had identified all the key contextual issues to be considered in the review of the LDP (see Section 2 of this Review Report);
- the existing LDP Vision and Objectives remain appropriate for a revised plan (see Section 4.1 of this Review Report);
- the existing LDP Strategy (see Section 4.2 of this Review Report) needs to be reviewed; and
- they agreed with the assessment in the policy effectiveness review (see Section 4.3 of this Review Report).

Comments to the contrary were generally on specific policy issues which will be considered in the LDP Review or have resulted in a change to the draft Review Report.

1.11 As regards Question 4: 'if all of the main issues that should be considered in the review of the LDP have been identified' (see Sections 4.3 & 4.4 of this Review Report), the majority of stakeholders who expressed an opinion disagreed; the main reasons being comments / objections to the existing plan allocations and policies which do not provide the outcome they desire, such as longstanding housing allocations (including Mamhilad), renewable energy and solar farms, housing numbers, the Tir Penwys Preferred Area of Search for Aggregates, school closures, the loss of green spaces, Special Landscape Areas, Green Wedges, deliverability, limited references to improving road networks, public transport links and general accessibility to support developments, etc. These matters have generally been identified in the Review Report and will be considered in the LDP Review process or resulted in a change to the draft Review Report.

1.12 Comments on the options for the form of the LDP review (Questions 6-8 and see Section 6 of this Review Report) were largely been overtaken by the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 29th March 2018 (copy attached at Appendix B) who expects the Council to undertake an individual Full Review of the Torfaen LDP. Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet Secretary's letter is generally in line with the views of those stakeholders who commented; noting that a key stakeholder view was to review the LDP as quickly as possible to ensure the minimum period without plan coverage.

1.13 Council considered the Draft Review Report representations and other officer recommendations, on 17th April 2018, and as a result the following main changes were incorporated into the final Review Report:-

- a) updating the Review Report from a consultation document to a final document, whilst detailing the results of the consultation;
- b) correcting errors and other updating, such as referring to the current consultation on PPW or the WG Green Paper on local government reform;

- c) the need to plan for an ageing population, such as planning for dementia, the need for adapted living properties, etc.;
- d) include reference to the requirements of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and the Active Travel Plan for Torfaen;
- e) explain that whilst the 24.1% (1,132 dwellings) LDP affordable housing target is likely to be delivered by the end of the plan period, it has been met by additional dwellings provided by housing associations rather than via S106 obligations as originally forecast; and that the overall affordable housing need identified in the plan of 58% will not be met; and
- f) provide a better explanation of the under delivery of housing number, other than the capacity of the development industry to bring sites forward, such as long lead in times for strategic sites, landowners not bringing sites forward quick enough, sites needing more evidence of delivery before allocation, etc.; and
- g) in the 'Review of Policies' Section 4.3 and 'Review of Sites' Section 4.4, changing the text and colour coding of Policy S2 on 'Sustainable Development' and Policy SAA5 on 'The British' from green to amber; as the former will need changing to reflect the requirement of the Health & Wellbeing Act, and the latter because emerging proposals, which are limited by resources, will currently not result in the 'major land reclamation scheme' as envisaged by the policy.

Conclusion on the Form of the Review

- 1.14 The current Torfaen LDP will cease to be a local development plan after 31st March 2021, therefore, the need to ensure a replacement development plan as soon as possible to reduce the impact of the policy vacuum after that time is critical to ensure a plan led development management system and stakeholder certainty, especially for local communities and developers. This Review Report concludes (in Section 6) that in addition to preparing a Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan (SDP), a Full Review of the Torfaen LDP is required rather a 'short form review' or Joint Full LDP review with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). This takes into consideration the key issues raised as part of the Annual Monitoring Reports (Section 3); liaison with regional LPAs and the Welsh Government (WG); the results of the stakeholder engagements on the Draft Review Report; and the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 29th March 2018 (copy attached at Appendix B) which expects the Council to undertake an individual Full Review of the Torfaen LDP. In conclusion, a Full LDP Review for Torfaen is the most expedient way to ensure development plan coverage in Torfaen after the plan expiry date, and is wholly within the control of the Council.

Structure of the Report

- 1.7 The Review Report is structured as follows:
- 1.8 **Section 2** details the key legislative, national and local policy changes that have occurred since the adoption of the LDP in 2013, which are important considerations to inform the review of the LDP.
- 1.9 **Section 3** provides a summary of the main findings of the 2017 Annual Monitoring Report, taking into account the previous 2 AMR's and associated implications for the review of the LDP.
- 1.10 **Section 4** provides an assessment of the current LDP and details potential changes required in terms of the Vision and Objectives, Development Strategy, effectiveness of the current policy framework and the position on current allocations to inform the review process.
- 1.11 **Section 5** provides an analysis of the areas of evidence base that would need to be reviewed / updated in preparing a revised LDP.
- 1.12 **Section 6** considers the potential options and conclusions for the review of the LDP and highlights opportunities for joint working / collaboration.

2. Contextual Changes

- 2.1 As reported in the previous Annual Monitoring Reports there have been a number of new Acts in Wales, revisions to Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Notes and the publication of new or updated Welsh Government practise guidance that are relevant to the review of the LDP. The most significant of these to inform the review are set out below:

National Legislation and Policy

- 2.2 **Planning (Wales) Act, 2015** - The Act gained Royal assent and became law on 6th July 2015. It sets out a series of legislative changes to deliver reform of the planning system in Wales, to ensure that it is fair, resilient and enables development. The Act addresses 5 key objectives including strengthening the plan led approach to planning with act introducing a legal basis for the preparation of a National Development Framework and Strategic Development Plan, discussed in further detail below.
- 2.3 **Welsh Government National Development Framework (NDF)** - The NDF will be the national development plan for Wales and replace the current 20 year period 'Wales Spatial Plan - People, Places Futures' 2004 / Updated 2008. The NDF will reflect the seven well-being goals and associated five governance principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and draw on national policies covering areas such as natural resources and transport and will help to maximise the potential benefits from funding streams and support the delivery of infrastructure plans. It is expected to cover: the key areas of change for housing; economic development and sector growth and implications for places; renewable energy opportunities; areas of significant natural resources; electrification of rail lines, Cardiff Airport, road schemes and connectivity; infrastructure development of national significance; and the Welsh Language. The NDF will be a 20 year land use framework for Wales, which will:-
- set out where nationally important growth and infrastructure is needed and how the planning system nationally, regionally and locally can deliver it; and
 - provide direction for SDPs and LDPs and support the determination of Developments of National Significance.
- 2.4 WGs National Development Framework: Statement of Public Participation (June 2017) has set the following timetable for the production of the NDF:-
- publish & consult on the main issues, options and preferred option, supported by environmental reports and assessments (12 weeks: April - June 2018);

- Conduct a 12-week public consultation on the Draft NDF (July - Sept 2019);
- Present a draft NDF to the Assembly for 60 days;
- Have regard to Assembly resolutions / recommendations; and then
- Publish the NDF (September 2020).

2.5 The review of the LDP will have to be in conformity with the NDF (as well as the Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan).

2.6 **Welsh Government - Future of Local Government Proposals** - The Welsh Government are currently (20th March to 12th June 2018) consulting on a Green Paper (which is a consultation document inviting views on a proposed way forward) 'Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People'. The key proposal is for a reduction from 22 to 10 local authorities in Wales; and that Torfaen would merge with Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire. There are three options for discussion as to how the reform of local government should be delivered:

- 1) A series of voluntary mergers; or
- 2) A phased programme between 2022 and 2026, starting with early adopters, or
- 3) A big bang approach with all new councils starting in 2022.

2.7 These matters are beyond the remit of this Review Report, and the statutory duty to replace the LDP is still pressing. However, the key point to note is that, whatever happens with local government reform, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs considers (March 2018 - see letter at Appendix B) that if an LDP Review has not reached 'the Deposit Stage' by the time of any reform, the Council may have to recommence the process. However, the Council in the Torfaen LDP Review Draft Delivery Agreement (April 2018) considers that the Deposit Stage should be in September to October 2020, therefore, negating this potential risk.

2.8 **Well-being of Future Generations Act, 2015** - The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - gained Royal Assent and became law on 29th April 2015. The Act strengthens existing governance arrangements for improving the well-being of Wales to ensure "that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", which is known as the "sustainable development principle".

2.9 It identifies Seven goals (i.e. a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal and globally responsible Wales; and a Wales of cohesive communities, vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language) to improve the well-being of Wales and introduces national indicators (which have

not yet been produced), which will measure the difference being made to the well-being of Wales. It defines “sustainable development” as the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the ‘sustainable development principle’, aimed at achieving the above well-being goals. Five governance principles are also provided (i.e. long term; integration; collaboration; prevention; and involvement) to aid in the consideration of this work. The LDP was prepared iteratively with a Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA) which accords with sustainable development principles. Therefore, the LDP review and emerging Local Well Being Plans under the Act will need to be informed by sustainable development principles and there will be clear linkages between the aims and objectives of respective plans. The potential impact of the Act and Local Well Being Plans for any revised LDP are considered in Section 4 of this report. Indeed, it is also considered that the LDP evidence base, associated SEA/SA and AMR will help inform both the Council's and Torfaen PSB's assessments of local well-being and respective Local Well-being Statement and Plan.

- 2.10 **Environment (Wales) Act, 2016** - The Environment (Wales) Act received Royal Assent and became law on 21st March 2016. It puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way; and requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to report on the principality's natural resources and detail their ability to respond to pressures and adapt to climate change. Therefore, NRW published the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) in September 2016.
- 2.11 Similarly, the Welsh Government published the Natural Resources Policy (NRP) in August 2017; the focus of which is the sustainable management of Wales's natural resources, to maximise their contribution to achieving goals within the Well Being of Future Generations Act. The NRP sets out three National Priorities of delivering nature based solutions; increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; and taking a place based approach. It will set the context for NRW to produce "Area Statements" to ensure that the national priorities for sustainable management of natural resources inform the approach to local delivery. The SoNaRR, NRP and the South East Wales Area Statement (covering Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport & Torfaen; and expected to be published by the end of 2019) will be considered in the review of the LDP.
- 2.12 **Historic Environment (Wales) Act, 2016** - The Act received Royal Assent and became law on 21st March 2016 (with some provisions requiring secondary legislation) and makes important improvements to the existing systems for the protection and sustainable management of the Welsh historic environment. In broad terms, the Act aims to give more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments; enhance existing

mechanisms for the sustainable management of the historic environment; and introduces greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment. It also: provides for a statutory register of Wales' Historic Parks and Gardens; secures a more stable future for Wales' Historic Environment Records (HER); establishes an independent 'Advisory Panel for the Historic Environment in Wales' to advise on historic environment policy and strategy at a national level in Wales; and contains provisions relating to a statutory list of historic place names. The implications of the Act will be considered through the LDP Review process.

- 2.13 **Housing (Wales) Act, 2014** - The Act received Royal Assent in September 2014 and aims to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales. One of the key provisions of the Act provides a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsy and Travellers where a need has been identified. The Council submitted a 2016 Torfaen Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to the Welsh Government which was agreed by the Cabinet Secretary in November 2017. It concluded that the LDP Gypsy & Traveller site allocations will be sufficient to meet need between 2016 -2021. It is also noted that the Welsh Government have also consulted upon a draft circular for 'Planning of Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Sites' (February 2017) to update several existing Circulars and a draft replacement national strategy 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (September 2017). Therefore, Gypsy and Traveller provision will be given further consideration through the LDP review process.
- 2.14 **Welsh Government 'Prosperity for All: the national strategy'** (September 2017) - takes the commitments of their 5 year programme for government, 'Taking Wales Forward: 2016 - 2021', and places them in a long-term context, and sets out how they will be delivered by bringing together the efforts of the whole Welsh public sector. The four Key Themes of the strategy are the same as those in Taking Wales Forward, which are: 'Prosperous & Secure'; 'Healthy & Active'; 'Ambitious & Learning'; and 'United & Connected'. There are five Priority Areas which have the greatest potential contribution to long-term prosperity and well-being and include: 'Early Years'; 'Housing'; 'Social Care'; 'Mental Health'; and 'Skills & Employability'. It is considered that the Prosperity for All: the national strategy will influence the Cardiff Capital Region SDP and Torfaen LDP Review; although much will depend on if it changes WG investment / grant aid priorities.
- 2.15 **Welsh Government Valleys Task Force Our Valleys, Our Future** (July 2017) - This Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys has published a high-level action plan which outlines its priorities for the future. The key priorities in the Plan are: good quality jobs and the skills to do them; better public services; and my local community. The Taskforce

want to discuss how these priorities can be further developed into more tangible actions and further refine the plan; and public events were also planned. It sets out a range of aims and actions in each of the three priority areas, including: closing the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales by getting an additional 7,000 people into work by 2021 and creating thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs; and exploring the development of a Valleys Landscape Park, which has the potential to help local communities use their natural and environmental resources for tourism, energy generation and health and wellbeing purposes. The Taskforce aims to “Explore all options to target investment and create new strategic hubs in specific areas across the Valleys. These will be areas where public money is focused to provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs. The focus of each hub will reflect the opportunities and demand in a particular area and their aspirations for the future.” The seven hub locations include Cwmbran in Torfaen - focusing on office, industrial and residential development. It is considered that emerging Valleys Task Force proposals in Our Valleys, Our Future will influence the Cardiff Capital Region SDP and Torfaen LDP Review; although much will depend on if it changes WG investment / grant aid priorities.

Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes

- 2.16 Since adoption of the LDP in 2013 the three AMR's have reported on amendments to national planning policy in respect of Planning Policy Wales and associated Technical Advice Notes which have implications for and need to be considered as part of the LDP Review. The key changes since 2013 are set out below:

PPW Amendments:-

- Chapter 1: Introduction (November 2016)
- Chapter 2: Local Development Plans (January 2016 & November 2016)
- Chapter 3: Development Management (November 2016)
- Chapter 4: Planning for Sustainability (July 2014, January 2016 & November 2016)
- Chapter 6: Historic Environment (November 2016)
- Chapter 10: Retail and Commercial Development (November 2016)
- Chapter 14: Minerals (January 2016)

New / Amended Technical Advice Notes:-

- TAN 1: Joint Housing land Availability Studies (January 2015)
- TAN 4: Retail and Commercial Development (November 2016)
- TAN12: Design (July 2014 & March 2016)
- TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language (October 2017)
- TAN 21: Waste (February 2014)
- TAN 22: Planning and Sustainable Buildings - Deleted by WG in July 2014

- New TAN 23:Economic Development (February 2014)
- New TAN 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017)

2.17 The Welsh Government is currently consulting (12th February to 18th May 2018) on a Draft Planning Policy Wales 10th Edition, which has been restructured so that the seven well-being goals and five ways of working of the Well Being and Future Generations Act is fully integrated into policy; and has also been updated to reflect new Welsh Government strategies and policies. Welsh Government officers anticipate that PPW 10th Edition will be published by the end of summer 2018. PPW and any future additions will inform the LDP review process.

Welsh Language

2.18 Chapter 4 of PPW 9th Edition has been updated to reflect the requirements of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 relating to the consideration of the Welsh language in the appraisal of development plans. PPW states that LPAs must consider the likely effects of their development plans on the use of the Welsh language in the Sustainability Appraisal of their plans, and should keep their evidence up to date. All local planning authorities should include in the reasoned justifications to their development plans a statement on how they have taken the needs and interests of the Welsh language into account in plan preparation, and how any policies relating to the Welsh language interact with other plan policies. TAN 20 'Planning and the Welsh Language' (October 2017) provides more detailed advice; Part B of which contains 'Practice Guidance' to assist LPAs with the consideration of Welsh language issues during the preparation, monitoring and review of LDPs. This will be undertaken as part of the LDP review.

Regional Context

2.19 **Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan (SDP)** - The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduces powers for the Welsh Ministers to designate 'strategic planning areas' and for 'Strategic Planning Panels' (SPP) to be established for these areas. An SPP, if established for an area, will then be responsible for preparing a 15-20 year Strategic Development Plan (SDP) that will form part of the formal 'development plan' for that area. These new sub-regional development plans will only apply to cohesive regions of greater than local significance (such as the Cardiff capital region). An SDP is expected to cover cross boundary matters of more than local community importance; and could include the strategic elements of LDPs; such as larger housing / employment sites, major transport schemes, etc. Preparation of an SDP is expected to take at least 4 years from

commencement and will generally mirror the current LDP process. SDP's will address cross-boundary issues at a regional level and must be in conformity with the NDF. Before the SDP can be prepared the lead 'responsible authority' for the SDP has to submit a 'Proposal' (a map showing the boundaries of the proposed area and a statement of the reasons for proposing that area; with a consultation report) for a 'strategic planning area' to the Welsh Ministers who can then designate the strategic planning area and establish the Panel.

- 2.20 The Cardiff Capital Region is committed to regional working across the ten South East Wales authorities; and as part of the City Deal Document (March 2017), gave a commitment to prepare an SDP for the region. In response to the Cabinet Secretary's letter (December 2017) inviting the relevant Councils to prepare proposals for an SDP, the Leaders of the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet replied (February 2018) stating that *"there was consensus amongst all 10 Leaders in the Cardiff Capital Region in support of the principle of an SDP for the region."* Therefore, each of the 10 Council's, if they have not already done so, is making a formal resolution to prepare a Cardiff Capital Region SDP; with Torfaen taking that decision on 17th April 2018. Finally, it is envisaged that work towards an SDP will now commence in 2018, with the SDP being adopted in at the end of 2022 at the earliest; some 4 year later and all going well.
- 2.21 The review of the LDP will have to be in conformity with the Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan (and the Welsh Government National Development Framework). However, the LDP is expected to be adopted before the SDP, so it is likely that the LDP can only be considered if it is conformity with the SDP 'Preferred Strategy' once published. Once the SDP is adopted the Council will have to assess if the LDP is conformity with it; and if not, the Council will have to produce a (Joint / Torfaen) LDP 'Lite'.
- 2.22 **Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)** - The CCRCD was signed by the 10 constituent Local Authority Leaders (from Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan), the Secretary of State for Wales, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the First Minister on 1st March 2017. The CCRCD is a 20 year / £1.28 billion investment programme which aims to achieve a 5% uplift in the Region's GVA (*'Gross Value Added' - a measure of the value of the goods produced and services delivered in the area*) by delivering a range of programmes which will increase connectivity, improve physical and digital infrastructure, as well as regional business governance. Over its lifetime, local partners expect the CCRCD to deliver up to 25,000 new jobs and leverage an additional £4 billion of private sector investment by 2036. The CCRCD has 6 Objectives:-
1. Connecting the Cardiff Capital Region;

2. Investing in innovation and the digital network;
3. Developing a skilled workforce and tackling unemployment;
4. Supporting enterprise and business growth;
5. Housing development and regeneration; and
6. Developing greater city-region governance across the Cardiff Capital Region.

- 2.23 The Cardiff Capital Region Transition Plan details key activity to be undertaken, including establishing a Regional Office to drive the delivery of the Regional Cabinet's work programme in anticipation of receiving proposals. This includes the creation of a bespoke impact assessment model for those proposals. The investment proposals as part of this key strategic program represents significant opportunity for Torfaen and the wider South East region. Capitalising on the opportunities presented by City Deal will be a key focus of the LDP Review.
- 2.24 **South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (LTP)** (January 2015) - The South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan, which has been jointly produced by Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen County Borough Councils, sets out the local authorities' priorities for transport schemes in the five year period 2015 to 2020, and their medium and longer term aspirations up to 2030. The document also sets out the Councils' policies for safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities and services to, from and within their area. The LTP can be seen as a bidding document for Welsh Government, Cardiff Metro, Cardiff City Deal and other future funding sources; as well as local government funding from capital, S106 or CIL sources. Local Transport Plans across Wales have replaced Regional Transport Plans, which expired on 31st March 2015.
- 2.25 Torfaen's 'Short Term Programme' (2015-2020) includes several schemes from the North Torfaen Highway Study (LDP Policy T1/1), Pontypool Park & Ride (Policy T1/2), several walking & cycling route (active travel) schemes (including ones listed under Policy T3), improvements to the B4248 from Blaenavon to Brynmawr and the Pontypridd-Blackwood-Pontypool Bus Rapid Transport Scheme.
- 2.26 Torfaen's 'Medium and Longer Term Aspirations' (2020-2030) includes Cwmbran Town Centre Improvements (Policy T1/3), Llanfrechfa Link Road (Policy T1/4), other North Torfaen Highway Study schemes Policy (T1/1), Pontypool Bus Station and several active travel schemes (including ones listed under Policy T3). These schemes will be taken account of in the review of the LDP.

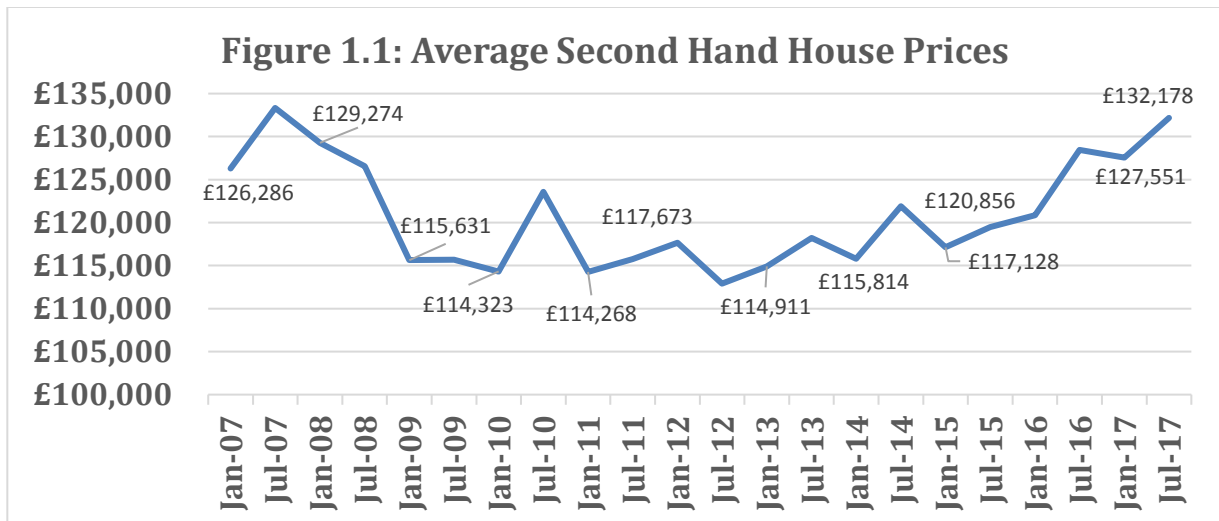
- 2.27 **Neighbouring LDPs** - The whole of 'Gwent' is covered by adopted LDPs whose plan periods, like Torfaen, generally are extant up to 2021; with only Newport's LDP expiring in 2026. However the end date of the Torfaen LDP is unlike the other plans 9 months earlier at 31st March 2021. Based on the statutory review dates of neighbouring plans, there is some opportunity for joint working, especially with Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire CBCs.

Local Context

- 2.28 A number of local policy documents, strategies have been prepared or revised since adoption of the LDP; of particular importance are the Torfaen Health and Well Being Plan and the Torfaen Active Travel Plan.
- 2.29 **Torfaen Draft Well Being Plan 2017** - A requirement of the Well Being and Future Generations Act, is that every public service board in Wales must publish a Local Well-being plan by May 2018. A Local Wellbeing Assessment was published by the Torfaen Public Service Board in May 2017. The findings of that Assessment have informed the priorities of the Draft Well Being Plan (October 2017) and its 7 well-being objectives, areas that the Board would want to work at to improve well-being across the County Borough. Consultation on the Draft Wellbeing Plan closed on 7th January 2018 and the final published plan (expected May 2018) and associated background evidence will be used to inform the review of the LDP. Further detail on the implications for the LDP is set out in later in this report.
- 2.30 **Torfaen Active Travel Plan (ATP)** - In September 2014, the Welsh Government introduced the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which makes it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel within settlements with a population of over 2,000 people. Active travel means walking and cycling for everyday short-distance journeys, such as journeys to school, work, or for access to shops or services, but does not include journeys purely made for recreation or social reasons. Therefore, the Council submitted the 'Existing Route Map Consultation 2015 - Response & Submission: Summary Report' to WG in January 2016; which shows the results of the active travel survey and identifies existing routes that the Council consider suitable for active travel. Similarly, following a public consultation exercise held in May - August 2017, the Council submitted the 'Integrated Network Map' (INM) to the Welsh Government in November 2017, which has identified new active travel routes and facilities as well as improvements to existing routes and facilities, that are needed to develop or enhance an integrated active travel network. The Council is now required to review the INM every 3 years, which is expected to be undertaken as part of the LDP review process, especially with the aim of integrating new development site allocations into the network.

- 2.31 **House Prices - Latest Torfaen Housing Market Overview** - Information below (from the Land Registry UK House Price Index (HPI) information - which excludes first time sales) shows that over the last 10 years, average second hand house prices in Torfaen have just about returned to their 'pre-credit crunch' high point of July 2007 (£133,332). Indeed, the over the period July 2015 to July 2017, average second hand house prices rose from £119,464 to £132,178 or 10.6%.

Figure 1 - Average Second Hand House Prices in Torfaen



Source: Torfaen CIL Viability Update Report (December 2017)

- 2.32 New house prices have generally increased within Torfaen over the plan period, especially within Cwmbran. As to the future, given the favourable housing market picture, it can be assumed that house prices and number of sales will continue to rise in Torfaen. However, a continued economic recovery; as well as a national housing shortage; and continuing low mortgage rates; with the Government's 'Help to Buy' (NewBuy Cymru) equity loan mortgage scheme are also helping to drive this market growth and house price growth.

Figure 2 - August 2017 Torfaen Average New Dwelling Sales Values (m²)

- North Torfaen - £1,650m²
- Pontypool West - £2,000m²
- Pontypool East - £2,300m²
- Cwmbran North and West - £2,200m²
- Cwmbran South and East - £2,300m²

- 2.33 In addition, development proposals, such as the new 6th Form Education Facility redevelopment and the new regional Grange University Hospital in Cwmbran should also drive economic and housing growth; as well as Torfaen's strategic location just north of the M4 Motorway (with the proposed £1.3bn M4 Newport Relief Road expected to be completed by 2023 subject to the findings of the current Public Local Inquiry (Spring 2018) and other

existing strategic road (A4042T (Newport to Shrewsbury) and A472 (Mid-Valleys Link)) and rail (Marches Railway line (Newport to Shrewsbury) and electrification of the South Wales Mainline by 2018) transport networks and proposed 'South East Wales Metro' proposals (such as the Pontypool Park & Ride facility and improved rail service frequencies on this line) under the estimated £1billion of benefits from the proposed 'City Deal' for the Cardiff Capital Region.

- 2.34 The future plans for the South Wales Metro alongside removal of Severn Bridge tolls by January 2019 could further impact on house prices and the implications will be considered through the LDP review process.
- 2.35 **Welsh Government 2014 Based Population Projections** (October 2016) - forecast that, by 2021, the population of Torfaen will increase to 92,273. The previous 2011 based projections had forecast that by 2021, the population of Torfaen would increase to 92,769. (The assumptions are based on past trends; and projections done in this way do not make allowances for the effects of local or central government policies on future population levels or distribution - they indicate what is expected to happen if these trends continue). The latest June 2016 mid-year population estimate for Torfaen was 92,052; compared to 91,836 in June 2015. This shows that the LDP strategy for an increase in population in Torfaen appears to be happening.

3. Findings of the Annual Monitoring Reports

- 3.1 In line with National Guidance set out in the Local Development Plan Manual the plan review should draw on, amongst other things, the findings of published AMR's. The most recent AMR (third AMR) was published in October 2017 and covers the period from 1st April 2016-31st March 2017. The 2017 report concludes with the following recommendation:

“There is evidence to indicate the need for a review of the plan at this time because progress in delivery of the strategy is slower than expected primarily due to the global recession and its impact on the housing and employment markets.”

- 3.2 It is considered that the evidence collected from this third AMR following adoption of the LDP in 2013 indicates that the basic strategy whilst sound is taking too long to deliver both in relation to housing and employment development. The regeneration aims of the strategy are being realised, however, delivery continues to be slower than anticipated. For example, in North Torfaen delivery of housing is in line with forecasts, but despite some progress on some large strategic sites is behind schedule in Pontypool and Cwmbran. The main indication of this is the Joint Housing Land Supply figure continuing to fall below the 5 year figure at 3.6 years. This can be attributed to the impacts of the global recession and the delays in bringing forward key strategic sites. Whilst a number of these sites are now starting to deliver housing numbers and this has been supplemented by some acceptable windfall sites the number being delivered is still below the projected plan trajectory. It is considered the plan is moving in the right direction in terms of the achievement of its objectives, but the strategy is taking longer to deliver than anticipated. The downturn in the economy has had a marked effect on house building rates and therefore, on the delivery of affordable housing. Whilst there is now progress on a number of key sites the previous low house building rates means delivery is still behind schedule. Viability continues to be an issue in overall house building and this has an adverse impact on the levels of affordable housing that can be delivered through the planning system.
- 3.3 The 2017 AMR sets out a number of actions intended to improve the 5 year land supply situation, on an 'allocated' site by site basis, encouraging appropriate 'windfall' housing sites; and reviewing the LDP itself.
- 3.4 From a regional perspective, the LDP is meeting its mineral and waste responsibilities in line with regional technical statements/regional plans through site allocations and policy implementation. Also the LDP is assisting in the planning of future health services for the

region through facilitating the delivery of the new Grange University Hospital at Llanfrechfa Grange which will serve 'Gwent' and South Powys.

3.5 The development strategy remains fundamentally sound however due to slow progress there is considered a need for intervention at this stage in the form of a review of the Plan. The continued shortfall of the Housing Land Supply figure needs to be addressed in order to ensure the continuation of a plan led approach.

3.6 The AMR identified key policy indicator targets that are not currently being achieved with following areas identified:-

- **Housing Delivery against LDP Target** - Housing Delivery is behind LDP target. To date only 2,114 units (44.9% of the total housing requirement) have been delivered, equating to an average of 192 dwellings per annum, which is significantly below the LDP target of 313 per annum.
- **Housing Land Supply** - The Torfaen Joint Housing Land Availability Study 2017 for the period 1/4/16-31/3/17 demonstrates the County Borough has a 3.6 years housing land supply (against the Welsh Government prescribed Residual method in Technical Advice Note 1). Since adoption of the plan this is the third consecutive year the 5 year supply has fallen below the 5 year target.
- **Delivery of Employment Land and land availability** - Delivery of employment land is significantly behind target with only 3.0ha or 7.5% of LDP allocations being delivered. There is an identified lack of readily available sites for new development to meet demand particularly with goal of raising GDP in City Deal. Delivery of allocated employment land is below target and small sites in Cwmbran have all been sold. Enquiries have shown there is a qualitative lack of larger sites. The Council has seen however, a significant upturn in queries and demand for employment land and consider that land will start to be come forward for development in the near future. The need for available and deliverable strategic employment sites to meet demand will be a key issue for the LDP Review.
- **Delivery of Strategic Housing Sites** - There has been a lack of delivery with regard to a number of Strategic sites which are crucial to delivery of the overall housing target. Work has commenced on strategic sites SAA1, SAA3, SAA6 and H1/2. However significant delays ,despite an outline Planning Application being submitted for Mamhilad (SAA4), on strategic sites SAA2 (Canalside), SAA4 (Mamhilad), SAA7 (Llanfrechfa Grange) and H1/1 (County Hall) has continued to produce a shortfall in delivery of completions to meet the housing target and has consequently produced a shortfall in the Housing Land supply figure of 3.6 years.

- 3.7 The findings of the AMR indicate it is clear that parts of the plan namely housing delivery and employment delivery is slower than anticipated. In terms of housing delivery, the plan is on target for delivery in the North of the County Borough effectively delivering the regeneration aims of the development strategy for this area. Delays to the bringing forward of the strategic sites and the downturn of the economy is resulting in slower delivery of housing in the Cwmbran and Pontypool sub market areas. Even with some strategic sites coming forward there is expected to be a continued shortfall in housing delivery rates against targets which will mean the overall housing target will not be met. This has implications for delivery of other aspects of the plan such as affordable housing delivery and the ability to demonstrate a 5 year land supply.

4. Assessment of changes required to current LDP

4.1 Vision and Objectives

- 4.1.1 In order to tackle key issues and guide and manage future development the LDP identified a clear vision of what the County Borough should look like in 2021. Therefore, as part of the review of the LDP this needs to be revisited to ensure it remains relevant to local needs and aspirations beyond the plan period. The LDP Vision was developed through stakeholder engagement and informed by a range of key strategies including the Torfaen Community Strategy. The identification of the Vision Statement paid due regard to the strategy of the Wales Spatial Plan for South East Wales. The LDP Vision Statement was:-

At the eastern edge of the South Wales valleys, Torfaen will be part of a Networked City Region supporting thriving communities and a diverse economy in an outstanding historical, cultural and natural environment.

To achieve this:

By 2021, through collaborative working, the development strategy for the Torfaen Local Development Plan will deliver planned, sustainable growth reflecting the specific role and function of settlements. It will provide a distinctive, vibrant and prosperous area where people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life in safe, healthy and thriving communities with accessible local facilities. It will promote the sustainable regeneration of our town centres ensuring they are a focus for social, commercial and community life, whilst also protecting and enhancing Torfaen's unique natural heritage and cultural and historic identity.

- 4.1.2 In 2013 the Community Strategy was replaced by the Single Integrated Plan: Torfaen Together. The SIP had a vision to make Torfaen the place people want to be and provide opportunities that will make sure that *'Torfaen has a healthy population with a good quality of life, people in Torfaen are safe, educated for life, enjoy a prosperous economy, live in quality affordable homes, live in clean green sustainable communities and frail people in Torfaen are happily independent.* The SIP is being replaced by a Local Well Being Plan (which is expected to be published in May 2018) which a requirement of the Well Being of Future Generations Act (2015).
- 4.1.3 The Well Being and Future Generations Act established Public Service Board for each local authority area in Wales who must improve the economic, social environmental and cultural well-being of its area by working to achieve the well-being goals. The Torfaen PSB

(established in April 2016) are responsible for preparing and publishing a Local Well Being Plan (LWBP) which sets out its objectives and the steps it will take to meet them. An assessment of well-being was published in May 2017. Torfaen Public Service Board expect to publish the Torfaen Well Being Plan in May 2018 and this will inform the Vision and Objectives for the LDP.

4.1.4 The Act places a duty on public bodies including local authorities to carry out sustainable development and to set objectives which maximise its contribution to achieving each of the seven wellbeing goals namely 'a globally responsible Wales', a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales; a Wales of cohesive communities, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

4.1.5 Planning Policy Wales states that the Local Well Being Plan should provide the overarching strategic framework for all other plans and strategies for the local authority including the LDP. The LDP will need to complement the LWBP and ensure that it expresses in land use terms, those elements of the LWBP that relate to the development and use of land. The Draft Objectives in the Well Being Plan are set out below and compatibility against the LDP Objectives:-

- Develop a functional, connected network of natural areas that support the current and future well-being needs of future populations;
- Deliver adaption and mitigation responses to the impacts of climate change;
- Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life;
- Prevent or limit the impact of chronic health conditions through supporting healthy lifestyles and enabling people to age well;
- Tackle the intergenerational patterns of poverty and develop economic resilience;
- Improve local skills through workforce planning, training, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities; and
- Create safe confident communities and promote community cohesion.

4.1.6 A review of the Draft objectives against the LDP Objectives indicate that the Well Being Objectives could better reflect Tourism, Cultural and historic resources, the opportunities of natural resources (minerals, agriculture, forestry and energy generation). Similarly, the need to promote accessibility and connectivity, the promotion of sustainable communities and the importance of economic development and provision of housing as a key aspect of Well Being. The two processes will be fully engaged as respective plans are prepared.

Assessment of the existing LDP Objectives against the Well Being Goals

- 4.1.7 The assessment of compatibility between the 18 LDP Objectives and the 7 Well Being Goals indicates that the current LDP Objectives contribute to achieving a range of Well Being goals and individual objectives delivering multiple goals. There is no obvious conflict between the Objectives and the Well Being Goals. However, ensuring the LDP and LWBP Objectives are compatible may necessitate wording amendments to respective objectives going forward.

Figure 2 - Assessment of LDP Objectives against Well Being Goals

LDP Objectives	Well Being Goals						
	Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More Equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
1. To ensure the provision of an appropriate quantity and range of employment sites and retail opportunities to support high and stable levels of employment in Torfaen and deliver a competitive, modern and sustainable economy and thriving town centres.							
2. To promote health and well-being through the provision of development including community facilities, leisure and outdoor recreational opportunities, accessible to all.							
3. To ensure that the location of development does not result in unacceptable risk from flooding, subsidence or health hazards							
4. To ensure the highest quality of design in all developments and delivering safe, healthy and attractive environments.							
5. To provide opportunities for the establishment of a network of quality educational facilities which serve local communities and are accessible for all sections of the current and future population.							
6. To protect, manage and enhance sustainable tourist attractions and facilities in Torfaen for the benefit of tourists and the community.							
7. To conserve and enhance the distinctive cultural and historic resources of the County Borough							
8. To ensure that all new development reflects best practise in sustainable design and location, construction and operation.							
9. To allocate mineral sites if required and safeguard appropriate mineral resources from sterilisation.							

10. To protect, manage and enhance biodiversity and ecological networks across Torfaen.						
11. To minimise climate change impacts through reduced emissions of greenhouse gases in both new and existing development, and to adapt to climate change through considerations of its effects in the design and location of new development.						
12. To protect and enhance the valued landscape character of Torfaen, including important open space and sense of rurality between settlements.						
13. To protect Greenfield land by enabling and promoting the most efficient use of appropriate brownfield sites for redevelopment across Torfaen.						
14. To ensure all development contributes to improving water quality, protecting water supply and maximising the efficiency of water consumption.						
15. To identify and conserve important soil and geological resources including Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and maintain their quality.						
16. To ensure the allocation of an appropriate quantity and variety of housing sites to deliver high quality choice in sustainable locations, well served by essential facilities and accessible by a range of transport modes.						
17. To develop integrated and efficient transport infrastructure, public transport and communication networks which are accessible and attractive to all, and encourage a reduction in private car use.						
18. To ensure people and organisations reduce, reuse and recycle waste and to foster this through the provision of regional and local waste management facilities.						

4.2 Development Strategy Assessment

Spatial Strategy - Network of Integrated Communities Strategy

- 4.2.1 The LDP Development Strategy was focussed on achieving a network of integrated communities, focussing particularly on the two key settlements of Cwmbran and Pontypool to ensure that they are successful and function as service hubs for the surrounding settlements. Growth has been focussed in locations where wider benefits are likely to occur, realising the regeneration potential of several key sites. Key to the strategy is the establishment of effective transport links being forged for example the realisation of the regeneration potential of the British, Cwmbran Town Centres and other Strategic Action

Areas. Development is emphasised along the key transport routes and will reflect the role, scale and function of individual settlements, with each settlement building upon its particular opportunities for the benefit of the County Borough as a whole.

- 4.2.2 The potential of the growth hubs of Cwmbran and Pontypool will be realised, alongside the tourism potential of Blaenavon. The strategy seeks to ensure that key services and facilities are accessible within the County Borough as a whole and as such the location of strategic service provision will be focussed in the key centres. Improvements to existing facilities will be sought to reduce disparities between settlements and improvements in accessibility to key services will be sought to ensure access for all. This will assist in reducing social inequality and make communities more self-sufficient.

The key elements of the Spatial Strategy

- 4.2.3 The LDP Strategy aims to realise the importance of Cwmbran as the economic driver of Torfaen. Spatial opportunities contributing to the Network of Integrated Communities Strategy will be promoted including:
- a) Delivering the large scale regeneration schemes in Cwmbran Town Centre and adjacent Strategic Action Areas (Eastern Strip Central and Canalside Strategic Action Areas) as identified on the LDP Proposals Map;
 - b) Delivering the mixed use health, employment and residential development at Llanfrechfa Grange Strategic Action Area with the Grange University Hospital being an essential component;
 - c) Delivering the major employment and residential development at Llantarnam Strategic Action Area;
 - d) Delivering the major residential development at the Former Police College and Adjacent Land site;
 - e) Delivering the major residential led development at South Sebastopol Strategic Action Area;
 - f) Providing strategic regional employment opportunities at Craig Y Felin and Ty Coch; and
 - g) Contributing to the reopening of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal to navigation and protecting the line of the Canal as it runs through Cwmbran.
- 4.2.4 The LDP Strategy aims to increase the potential of Pontypool acting as a service / growth hub for surrounding settlements in Mid Torfaen and deliver sustainable communities. Spatial opportunities contributing to the Network of Integrated Communities Strategy will be promoted including: -

- a) Delivering the new urban village at Mamhilad Strategic Action Area providing a major mixed use scheme;
- b) Realising the importance of Pontypool Town Centre as an area of economic and social growth which allows the settlement to perform its role and function as a service hub for the surrounding smaller settlements;
- c) Supporting new retail development (which meets the needs of the community without compromising the future viability of Pontypool Town Centre) through the reuse of vacant and underused floorspace, rather than new build retail development;
- d) Delivering the sustainable regeneration of Clarence Corner (i.e. Clarence Road and Clarence Street);
- e) Improving the accessibility between Pontypool and the surrounding settlements through the implementation of the schemes in the North Torfaen Highway Study;
- f) Protecting and enhancing important heritage assets particularly Pontypool Park and Glyn Pits and recognising their contribution to the wider regeneration of Pontypool;
- g) Delivering the major mixed use scheme at the British Strategic Action Area in the long term;
- h) Delivering the residential development schemes at the Tranch, Trevethin and Pontypool College; and
- i) Delivering sustainable transport choices to the people of Torfaen including implementing the Pontypool and New Inn Park and Ride / Share Modal Interchange Facility.

4.2.5 In the North Torfaen area the emphasis will be on creating sustainable settlements, through delivering regeneration opportunities and promoting the tourism potential of Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS). Spatial opportunities contributing to the Network of Integrated Communities Strategy will be promoted, including: -

- a) Delivering the strategic regeneration opportunity of the British Strategic Action Area, Talywain to provide a sustainable mixed-use development for North Torfaen in the long term;
- b) Ensuring the continued protection and enhancement of the character of the BILWHS by achieving high standards of design, appropriate to its setting and location;
- c) Implementation of online improvement schemes as part of the North Torfaen Highway Study;
- d) Delivery of the Blaenavon Community Campus, providing improved health, education and leisure facilities;
- e) Delivery of major employment development at the Kays and Kears site, Blaenavon;
- f) Delivery of the residential allocations in Blaenavon; and
- g) Continued protection of the important Special Landscape Areas around Blaenavon.

4.2.6 The development strategy remains fundamentally sound, however, there are challenges in delivering further successful housing led regeneration in the north of the County Borough due to land availability in this area alongside viability issues associated with delivering market housing. Cwmbran continues to act as a strategic driver for Torfaen and the development strategy should seek to take advantage of the opportunities presented by City Deal, Valleys Task Force and the potential opportunities provided by the abolition of the Severn Bridge tolls in January 2019 which may place additional demand for development within Torfaen.

Spatial Delivery of Growth

Figure 3 - Overview of Spatial Delivery by Housing Sub-Market Area (HSMA) - April 2017

HSMA	Distribution of growth of 4,700 target	Delivery against HSMA Target (74% by 01/04/17)	Distribution of Growth achieved and permitted against HSMA Target
Cwmbran	2,275 (48.4%)	820 (36%)	2,251 (99%)
Pontypool	1,875 (39.8%)	898 (48%)	1,361 (72%)
North Torfaen	550 (11.7%)	396 (72%)	527 (96%)

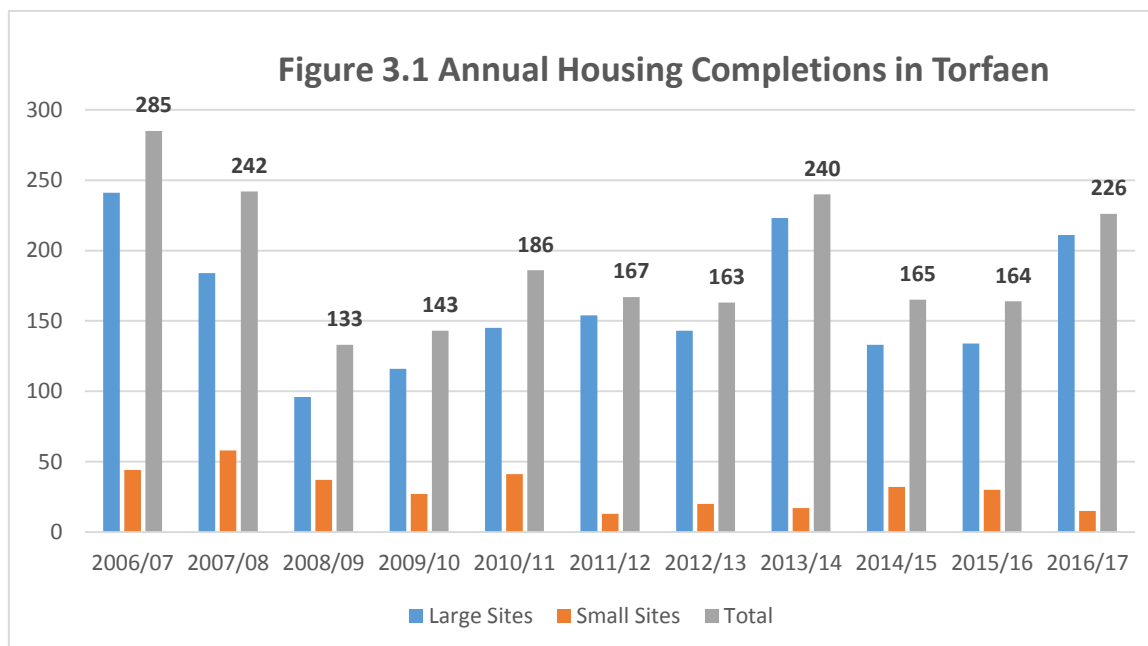
4.2.7 From the housing delivery figures above in the first 11 years of the plan period to 2017 it shows the regeneration aims of the strategy in terms housing led regeneration in North Torfaen has been successful. However, within Pontypool both housing delivery and planning permissions are behind target, mainly due to the delay in bringing the Mamhilad SAA forward. To date delivery in Cwmbran has fallen behind target, mainly due to the delay in the bringing forward of a number of key strategic sites. However, enough sites have now been permitted in Cwmbran to achieve the housing target.

Housing Delivery

4.2.8 The Torfaen LDP strategy seeks to achieve delivery of 4,700 dwellings by 2021 in order to deliver an increase in population and housing led regeneration. This growth strategy equates to a build rate on average of 313 dwellings per annum. As is outlined in the table below actual housing delivery has been below the average annual requirement (313) every year over the plan period to date, with 2006/7 being the closest year in terms of delivery. As of April 1st 2017 **2,114** dwellings have been completed leaving a remaining requirement for the 4 years of the plan period of **2,658** dwellings (including 72 demolitions accrued since 2006). This represents 44.9% of the overall plan requirement delivered over the 11 year period leaving the remaining 55.1% to be delivered in the remaining 4 years or last phase of the

plan period. This would equate to a build rate of 664 a year which, based on previous and current build rates, will not be met, as shown by Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 - Torfaen Annual Housing Completions 2006-2017



Housing Permissions

4.2.9 Housing permissions are likely to fall short of the 2,658 dwellings left to be delivered by 2021 by only 195 dwellings. However, in terms of delivery some 2,094 housing completions are likely to be delivered by 2021, some 564 dwellings short of the 2,658 dwellings residual target, if forecast further permissions and windfall sites are included.

4.2.10 In summary, taking the findings of the AMR 2017 into account:

- North Torfaen - in line with current forecasts, permissions will exceed the LDP Housing North Torfaen Sub Market Area target by 71 dwellings by 2021;
- Pontypool - in the Pontypool HSMA, in line with current forecasts, remaining permissions are likely to be short of the LDP Housing sub target by 420 dwellings, however there will be additional windfalls out of the forecasted 237 windfall figure to 2021; and
- Cwmbran - in the Cwmbran HSMA, remaining permissions are likely to exceed the target by 151 dwellings.

4.2.11 Therefore, the shortfall is not due to the overall supply of planning permissions, but rather it is an issue of timely housing delivery. Delays to bringing forward key strategic sites following adoption has led to build rates much lower than anticipated, therefore, longer lead in times need to be allowed for through a Housing Trajectory Paper being produced as part of the LDP Review. Similarly, some sites have not been brought forward by landowners and even

developers with an option, or progress has been slow; especially where landowners rather than a developer are bringing sites forward. Other sites have proved not to be developable due to delivery or viability issues. Therefore, going forward more evidence and detailed scrutiny of delivery and viability will be required at the 'Candidate Sites Assessment Stage' before a site is allocated in the plan. Also of help is the Welsh Government research study entitled the 'Longitudinal Viability Study of the Planning Process' (Arcadis UK Ltd, February 2017) has identify reasons why housing allocations or commitments that were assessed as deliverable during the LDP process became stalled due to viability issues at later planning stages, and made recommendations to address this issue.

4.2.12 The inability to deliver the level of housing growth in the LDP is also linked to the impact of the recession after the 2007/8 financial crisis, with rates only returning to 2007/8 levels in 2013/14, before falling away again. However, it can now be seen from the 2016/17 data, that completion rates are now shifting upwards; with a number of strategic sites recently gaining planning permission and construction commencing. Further, a delay in the delivery of a number of Strategic Action Areas (Llantarnam, South Sebastopol), non-delivery of others (Mamhilad, Llanfrechfa Grange, Canalside), other Strategic Sites coupled with the significant delay to the Grange University Hospital which was anticipated to be a driver for growth has led to the low build rates. The strategic sites account for a significant amount of the overall housing target and are crucial in delivery of the plan. Based on average delivery since the start of the plan period around 192 dwellings per annum have been completed and this will be considered in light of a revised housing strategy for the LDP.

4.2.13 Site viability is a problem north of Pontypool and a common problem amongst the valleys areas of South East Wales and provides a significant challenge in attracting market housing to this area. Given the strong performance in delivery of housing in the North, primarily through RSL schemes it is questionable whether this can be maintained in the next plan.

4.2.14 Going forward the commencement of the Grange University Hospital, and the implementation of the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City deal and associated South Wales Metro should provide a boost to the local housing market.

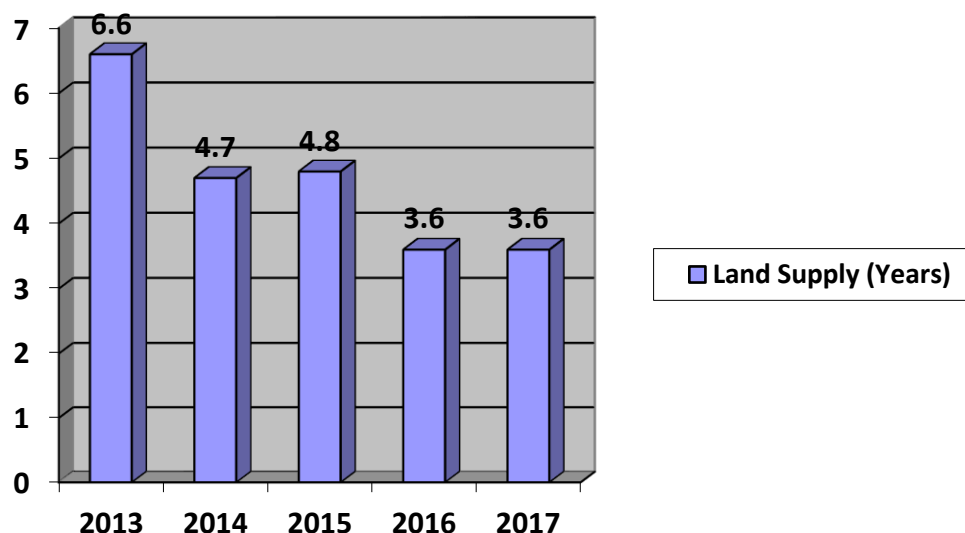
Housing Land Availability

4.2.15 Planning Policy Wales (9th Ed. para 9.2.3) states that local planning authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5 year supply for housing. Torfaen has not achieved a 5 year land supply since before adoption of the plan in 2013, with a **3.6 years land supply at April 2017**. Since adoption of the LDP the land

supply has been under 5 years in line with the Welsh Government's preferred Residual Method of calculation.

Supply of Housing Land

Figure 5 - Torfaen Housing Land Supply 2013-2017



4.2.16 Total land available in the current 5 year supply is 2,167 units, however, data from the 2017 JHLAS indicates if you consider total land allocations and the planning permissions, Torfaen has facilitated then total land available equates to 4,167 units (2,000 units outside the 5 year supply). Therefore, the delays in bringing forward key strategic sites following adoption has led to a shortfall in the current land supply; with build rates much lower than anticipated. However, with recent planning permissions delivery of a number of strategic sites are now underway specifically South Sebastopol (1,200 dwellings), Llantarnam SAA3 (450 dwellings), Former Police College (350 dwellings) and therefore, a significant increase in housing delivery should be seen over the next few years.

4.2.17 A contributing factor in the inability to evidence a 5 year supply is that whilst there is sufficient land allocated/permitted TAN1 requires LPA's to base housing land supply solely on the residual method. Under previous TAN1 the Past Build Rate Method was able to be used which provides a picture as to what is actually being delivered on the ground. The residual method focuses on the remaining number of houses to be delivered against an overall housing target (593 per annum), whereas past completions reflect what actually the development industry is delivering (on average 192 dwellings per annum). Based on a past build rate method the 2017 JHLAS for Torfaen would stand at 11.7 years.

4.2.18 Therefore, importantly housing land supply is not a simple case of the LDP not delivering, rather it reflects also the capacity of the development industry to bring sites forward in a timely

manner, the calculation method in which land supply is measured and external factors affecting the housing market.

- 4.2.19 Where a local authority cannot evidence a 5 year supply TAN1 states that considerable weight should be given to this when dealing with planning applications for housing sites that are not allocated in a plan but would otherwise comply with both local and national planning policies. The Council continue to facilitate permissions on acceptable windfall developments to contribute to improving the land supply shortfall and noting since adoption of the plan in 2013 permission has been given to 13 sites equating to permission for 527 units as outlined below.

Figure 6 - Windfall Schemes permitted December 2013

Housing Market Area	Number of Sites	Number of Units
North Torfaen	2 - King Street (10), Ty Rosser Gwyn (12)	22
Ponypool	7 - The Walk New Inn (10), Crownbridge Special School (22), Pontymoile School (39), Penywaun Lane West (20), Foundry Cottages (31), Commercial Street (10), Kemys Fawr (31)	133
Cwmbran	4 - Cold Stores (48), Commodore Hotel (20), Llantarnam Comprehensive (226), Llantarnam Primary (78)	372
TOTAL		527

- 4.2.20 The inability to deliver the LDP Housing Requirement of 4,700 dwellings by 2021 (an average of 313 dwellings per year) and the need to maintain a 5 year land supply, means that the level of housing growth as part of the replacement LDP will need to be reviewed. Existing unimplemented allocations will be reassessed to ensure they remain viable and deliverable.

Welsh Government Population / Household Projections

- 4.2.21 As regards the future, the Welsh Government 2014 Based Population & Household Projections for Torfaen are detailed in the table below. If we use the ratio of households to dwellings from the 2011 Census (95.8%) we can establish a corresponding dwellings figure.

Figure 7 - Welsh Government 2014 Based Principal Projections for Torfaen

Projection	2018	2021	2026	2031	2033
2014 Based Population	91,991	92,273	92,538	92,318	92,109
2014 Based Households	39,583	39,963	40,489	40,726	40,752
2014 Based Dwellings (Census Based)	41,318	41,715	42,264	42,511	42,539

- 4.2.22 This table shows that if a 2018 - 2033 LDP Review 15-year plan period is used, only 1,221 (42,539 - 41,318) new dwellings would be required over this period if the WG projections

were followed. However, as with the current LDP, the WG projection was seen a low against the policy aspirations and development potential of Torfaen. Indeed the 2017 Torfaen JHLAS shows that with no new allocations or windfall sites, between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2021, 2,167 dwellings are forecast to be built in Torfaen with a further 2,254 dwellings (on large sites) and 23 dwellings p.a. on small sites beyond that period. These matters will need to be debated in the review of the LDP, noting that housing strategy / numbers of the expected Cardiff Capital Region SDP will also be of relevance. Furthermore, in the consideration of the future strategy and levels of growth, the need to maintain a 5 year land supply will be an important focus, and to set a housing target that can be delivered to ensure a plan led system. Indeed, lack of a 5 year land supply has been one of the key issues of current LDP's. Issues around planning for a changing population age profile, such as an ageing population will also need to be considered including planning for dementia, the need for adapted living properties, etc.

Affordable Housing Delivery

4.2.23 The Torfaen LDP (Policy H4) seeks to achieve approximately **1,132** affordable homes out of the 4,700 new dwellings expected to be built over the plan period to 2021. This equates to a **24.1%** provision of affordable housing or the delivery of 75 affordable homes per year. As of April 2017, **701** affordable units have been delivered and a further **549** have already been permitted until 2021. In the 2016-2017 monitoring period 118 affordable dwellings were delivered. However, whilst the 24.1% LDP affordable housing LDP target is likely to be delivered by the end of the plan period, it has been met by additional dwellings being provided by Registered Social Landlords using social housing grant rather than wholly through S106 obligations as originally forecast due to viability issues being taken into account; noting that that the overall affordable housing need identified in the plan was 58%. Going forward, sites in the LDP Review will need to undergo greater viability scrutiny to ensure that the forecast affordable housing target can be met, and if not, more viable sites which can should, if practicable, be allocated in preference to meet the overall housing target. As a result, the LDP affordable housing target to be delivered through S106 should be more realistic.

Affordable Housing Policy

4.2.24 Policy H4 of the LDP sets differential affordable housing percentage rates which are sought across four housing sub-market areas within Torfaen. The affordable housing viability reviews in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 AMRs have shown that the % sought in North Torfaen should be reduced from 10% to 5%, mainly due to a lack of house price growth to make up for increases in build costs. Similarly, viability work on the Draft Torfaen Community

Infrastructure Levy (CIL), in October 2017, has shown that with the latest benchmark land values, house prices and construction costs these HSMA's and percentages need to be reviewed, for example the CIL viability work has showed that the Pontypool HSMA needs to be split into Pontypool East and West.

4.2.25 Site Size Threshold Review - Policy H4 of the LDP also sets the site size threshold at which affordable housing, public open space and recreation is sought at 3 dwellings (0.1ha). The affordable housing viability reviews in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 AMRs have shown that this threshold is too low, and as a result it was raised to 10 dwellings (0.33ha) in all the HSMA's except for Cwmbran S&E, where viability is more positive for small sites (9 or less dwellings) / builders.

4.2.26 Given the above results, it is considered that LDP Policy H4 and the associated S106 SPG need to be reviewed in terms of viability / site size threshold. Furthermore, the affordable housing strategy, housing sub-market areas and percentages sought will be reviewed as part of the overall strategy and aspirations of the LDP.

Employment Growth

4.2.27 The development strategy sought to provide for the employment and economic development needs of Torfaen by the identification of 40.3ha of land for employment and business purposes and 35ha for strategic regional employment opportunities during the Plan Period 2006-2021. These latter sites are allocated as regional employment opportunity sites which have been identified to provide opportunities to accommodate larger scale uses which serve a wider national, regional or sub-regional need. A number of such developments have been proposed since the start of preparing the LDP. The strategy sought to protect and enhance the employment role of important industrial and business areas and to deliver a range and choice of accessible employment sites throughout Torfaen to enable opportunities for business and local employment needs to be met. This included provision to enhance town centre based employment and economic uses and to increase the tourism, leisure and retail offer in Torfaen.

4.2.28 As identified in the previous LDP AMR 2017 it was expected that by the end of 2017 10ha of allocated employment land would be developed. As of April 2017 of the total 40.3 ha of allocated land for employment and business only 3.0ha or 7.5% of employment land has been developed and therefore, not sufficient to meet the requirements of the strategy. However, there has been delivery of 3400sqm of floorspace on existing estates in the form of new build and extensions to existing premises. Furthermore, in terms of allocated sites a

6.7ha employment site at Usk Vale has been acquired (EET2/6) and planning permission has been granted which will be coming forward in the next few years. Also a number of employment allocations totalling 2.5ha at Llantarnam Business Park (EET/2, EET/3 & EET/4) are under offer with an identified developers and will be likely to be brought forward in the next few years. This equates to 9.7ha of allocated employment land anticipated being brought forward in the next few years.

4.2.29 In addition to the allocated sites, the Council monitors annually the existing employment areas across the County Borough. As well as aiming to facilitate delivery of new allocated employment sites, protection and enhancement of existing employment estates to facilitate economic development is supported. Since adoption of the LDP in 2013 employment development on existing estates has been monitored comprising new build and redevelopment and we have seen delivery equating to 8.18ha which outlines the importance of the protection of existing industrial land and buildings.

4.2.30 Delivery of allocated employment land is below target and a number of small allocated employment sites in Cwmbran have all been sold. Enquiries have shown there is a qualitative lack of larger sites and provision of larger units of circa 100,000sqft (9290sqm). The Council has seen however a significant upturn in queries and demand for employment land and consider that land will start to be come forward for development in the near future. The need for available and deliverable strategic employment sites to meet demand will be a key issue for the LDP Review. This will be important in order for Torfaen to capitalise on some key contextual changes in respect of the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal investment program, South Wales Metro and Valleys Taskforce Programs (the Taskforce identified Cwmbran as a strategic hub for industrial/office development) that have the potential to deliver significant benefits to the County Borough and should stimulate economic development within the County Borough, facilitating the delivery of allocated employment sites. Furthermore, the bringing forward of the regionally important Grange University Hospital at Llanfrechfa Grange is likely to bring significant opportunities and demand in both the employment and housing markets which has implications for the development strategy going forward.

Retail

4.2.31 The Retail Strategy for the LDP sought to locate major retail and main town centre leisure and culture developments within the identified Town Centre Boundary of the Sub-Regional Centre of Cwmbran. The District Shopping Centres of Pontypool and Blaenavon will be protected and enhanced to improve vitality & viability and to ensure that they meet the needs

of local residents and provide a range of facilities. Local Shopping Centres will be protected and enhanced to provide services and facilities for the local community.

4.2.32 The Adopted LDP was informed by a number of retail studies (in 2007, 2010, 2012), which identified that the retail capacity would be focused on Cwmbran Town Centre. It also set out the future needs and strategy for Pontypool and Blaenavon. Overall, the Studies found that there was only retail capacity for comparison goods in Cwmbran which could be accommodated within the existing Town Centre Boundary (the convenience retail capacity identified was taken up the Morrisons proposal allocated as part of SSA1 Eastern Strip Central). However, the comparison allocation has not yet been delivered. The Studies did not identify a capacity for comparison goods floorspace and therefore, there was no need to allocate sites for retail provision in Pontypool or Blaenavon. However, the Studies did identify a small requirement for convenience retailing in Pontypool but no site was allocated to meet the demand given the strategy for Pontypool, which was to improve the performance of the Town Centre. To date this convenience requirement has not been taken up.

4.2.33 Town Centre Vacancy Rates - The table below shows vacancy rates in the town centres since the beginning of the Plan Period (noting that care must be taken in their analysis, as the 2006 and 2010 surveys were carried out by GVA and the 2015 - 2017 surveys by the Council and different town centre areas were used, especially in Cwmbran). Cwmbran town centre continues to perform exceptionally well as a sub-regional shopping centre with vacancy rates well below the national average. Vacancy rates in Pontypool town centre have increased over the last year, but decreased over the plan period; but remain slightly above the national average. For Blaenavon town centre have reduced since last year and over the plan period as a whole, but is still above the national average. Whilst a mix bag of results, they generally reflect national trends; and the overall reduction in vacancy rates in Blaenavon is welcome.

Town Centre Vacancy Rates in Torfaen

Figure 8 - Town Centre Vacancy Rates 2006-2017

Town Centre	2006	2010	2015	2016	2017
Cwmbran	2.0%	4.3%	5.4%	7.4%	7%
Pontypool	16.2%	24.0%	13.8%	11%	13%
Blaenavon	26.0%	12.0%	18.0%	25%	19%
UK	8.0%	11.1%	10.4%	12.4%	11.1%
Wales	-	-	-	-	15.2%

4.2.34 The review of LDP retail policies found that in general the policies are functioning effectively in enabling appropriate retail development in the County. However, in terms of Policy S9 the identified comparison retail capacity for Cwmbran has not been delivered. As part of the

review process the Retail Study will take account of the need for any retail allocations in terms of sites to be allocated, any changes in town, local and neighbourhood centres and/or updated retail requirements over the revised plan period. Similarly, consideration will also be given to the appropriateness of the existing boundaries of the centres' primary shopping frontages based on consideration of any changes to their role/function.

4.2.35 A number of contextual changes to national planning policy have occurred since the preparation and Adoption of the LDP. Welsh Government have published a revised version of Chapter 10 of PPW and TAN4 (Retail and Commercial Development) in November 2016. These documents have been updated to reflect the Welsh Government's revised national planning policy for retailing and commercial development. The main areas of change include revised objectives for retail planning policy, stronger emphasis on the need for retail policies to be framed by a retail strategy in LDPs (complemented by masterplans and place plans to assist in the delivery of the strategy), a requirement for LDPs to set out a locally derived hierarchy of centres and revised policies for dealing with new uses/centres undergoing change and a consistent approach to terminology. However, the policy requirement to consider retail and commercial centres first for retail and complementary uses remains, as do the requirements for retail need, sequential tests and impact assessments, where appropriate. The amendments to national policy do not result in a requirement to make modifications to current LDP policies; however, the revised guidance will be taken into account in the LDP revision process.

4.2.36 A new Retail Study will be undertaken in order to inform the LDP revision. This study will provide an update of the retail expenditure forecasts for comparison and convenience retail for Cwmbran, Pontypool and Blaenavon. The purpose of a new retail study will be to provide comprehensive information on the current performance of Cwmbran, Pontypool and Blaenavon town centres, and to provide an up-to-date assessment of retail expenditure capacity within the County and identify capacity for comparison and convenience goods. This updated study will inform the Plan revision in terms of retail strategy, retail policies and allocations.

4.3 Review of Policies

4.3.1 The following section details the initial findings of the review of the LDP Policies in order to identify if they are functioning effectively, whether any changes are likely to be required and if relevant should be considered for removal as part of the plan review process. The assessment is outlined in the table below. An overview of the appraisal table is below:

Policy functioning effectively	
Minor Changes required	
Revision Required to inform review of LDP or Policy not working - Amendment or removal	

Figure 9 - LDP Policy Review

LDP Policy Review		
Strategic Policies		Assessment
S1	Urban Boundaries	Review of the Urban Boundary necessary in respect of the British SAA5. The Regeneration area is included within the Urban Boundary and there is concern that the inclusion of the wider site in the urban area is encouraging potential sporadic, piecemeal development in this area, not part of a comprehensive regeneration scheme. Urban boundaries are a crucial mechanism for achieving resource efficient settlements and indicating where growth will be permitted. It's a plan mechanism as opposed to a plan policy and review of the need for the Urban Boundary to be defined as a policy when there is clear national planning policy in the issue.
S2	Sustainable Development	Functioning effectively - Minor amendments may be required to reflect national policy changes including the need to reflect the cultural element of Sustainable Development and the need for changes to align with the WBFGA that will need to be incorporated into policy wording.
S3	Climate Change	Functioning, however amendments to supporting text required to reflect changes in national renewable energy policy and to review requirement within policy for assessments for strategic sites to exceed national standards. Also potential changes to status of SUDS within national policy may require changes. Revised amendments to national planning policy on the need to identify sites/areas for Renewable Energy allocations to be considered in policy as part of LDP Review
S4	Place Making / Good Design	Functioning effectively
S5	Housing	Will be revised to reflect revised overall housing requirement and spatial distribution of dwellings over the extended plan period. Review of small sites, windfall and demolition allowance to be done as part of LDP Review.
S6	Employment and Economy	Will be revised to reflect findings of Employment Land Review and overall development strategy. Amendments may be required to reflect changes in national policy. The plan will need to clearly define employment areas
S7	Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment	Functioning effectively
S8	Planning Obligations	Functioning effectively but will need to be reviewed following potential future adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Torfaen

S9	Retailing/Town Centres	Functioning effectively. Amendments to supporting text will be needed to reflect revised retail strategy and capacity figures for the town centres
BW1	Borough Wide Policy	Functioning effectively. Amendments required to reflect updates in planning policy, and Environmental Policy particularly in respect of criterion B. Amendments required to provide greater clarity, particularly in respect of A vi) where this should impact on occupiers of the building as well as those of adjoining or neighbouring properties.
H4	Affordable Housing	Will be reviewed as part of Affordable Housing Viability Study and also in consideration of the future strategy of the plan and associated levels of planning obligations.
H5	Provision for Recreation, Open Space, Leisure Facilities and Allotments	Appropriateness of current standards to be reviewed as part of Open Space and Recreation Study to inform the review of the LDP.
H6	Conversion, subdivision or reuse of buildings for residential purposes within the Urban Boundary	Functioning effectively. Minor amendments required to improve clarity and interpretation of policy.
H8	New Gypsy and Traveller Site Proposals	Functioning effectively although limited use relating to one planning application only.
H9	Affordable Housing Exception Sites	Policy has not yet been used, need for policy and associated wording to be reviewed as part of the review process.
EET5	Protection of Employment Land and Premises	Functioning effectively but may require some amendments to supporting text to reflect updates to national planning policy. Interpretation of policy can be improved by definition of existing employment areas.
EET6	Leisure / Tourism Proposals	Functioning effectively but requires minor updating to amend references to certain tourism facilities no longer operating
RLT1	Town Centre Boundaries	Functioning effectively but will need reviewing in light of amended retail strategy for the LDP and review of town centre boundaries likely to result in amendments to those in Blaenavon and Pontypool
RLT2	Town Centre Development in Cwmbran Town Centre	Functioning effectively, minor updating required to RJ in respect of retail capacity figures in light of updated retail strategy and review of allocation RLT2/1 as part of the revised retail strategy.
RLT3	Retail Proposals outside Established Centres	Functioning effectively, but minor updates required in light of amendments to planning policy references
RLT4	Provision of Small Scale Retail Uses	Limited use but functioning effectively
RLT5	Primary Frontages	Functioning effectively but composition of Primary Frontages will be reviewed as part of Retail Background Paper to inform LDP Review
RLT6	Pontypool Town Centre 100% A1 Retail Frontages	Functioning effectively, composition of frontages to be reviewed as part of Retail Background paper to inform the LDP.
RLT7	Secondary Frontages	Functioning effectively
RLT8	Local and Neighbourhood Shopping Centres	Functioning effectively but clarity can be improved by additional clarification of assessment of proliferation of uses within criterion

RLT9	Food and Drink Establishments	Functioning effectively but clarity can be improved by additional clarification of definition of proximity within criterion
M1	Minerals Safeguarding	Functioning effectively, policy still a PPW requirement; so likely to remain unchanged
M2	Coal Working Exclusion Areas	Functioning effectively, policy still a PPW / MTAN2 requirement so likely to remain unchanged. Review of Proposals Map for any new designations or urban boundary changes which would cause the CWEA to change
M4	Mineral Sites Buffer Zones	Functioning effectively, policy still a PPW requirement, but buffer zone to be reviewed as part of LDP Review in light of future position of Policy M3 Tirpentwys if the current appeal for part of the site is allowed or if site allocation is deleted or reduced in the Plan Review. Also Blaentillery Drift No.2 coal mine permitted until mid-2020's so should remain under the policy
W1	Waste Management / Resource Recovery Proposals	Policy not been used, appropriateness of policy to be reviewed as part of LDP given potential overlap with national planning policy on waste.
CF3	Community Facilities	Main aim of policy functioning effectively but amendments required to policy wording to improve clarity and implementation of the policy.
CF4	Protection of Important Urban Open Space	Functioning effectively, however policy will be reviewed as part of overall study on Important Urban Open Spaces.
CF5	Protection of Allotments and Recreation and Amenity Open Space	Main thrust of policy functioning effectively but minor amendments to policy required to improve clarity and application of the policy.
C1	Green Wedges	Functioning effectively, although Green Wedge designations to be reviewed as part of LDP Review
C2	Special Landscape Areas (SLA's)	Functioning effectively, although SLA's designations to be reviewed as part of LDP Review. Minor amendments required to policy to improve application of the policy in terms of LANDMAP assessment if taken forward
C3	Rural Development and Diversification	Functioning effectively although has had limited use.
C4	Conversion / Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Countryside	Functioning effectively minor amendments to policy to improve clarity and interpretation
C5	Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	Functioning effectively
BG1	Locally Designated Sites for Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Functioning effectively
HE1	Buildings And Structures of Local Importance	Policy not effectively being used; as the Heritage SPG / 'Local List' and associated Article 4 Direction (to remove demolition Permitted Development rights) has not yet been prepared / made. Council to develop programme of Conservation work including Heritage SPG, 'Local List' and associated Article 4 Direction and unlikely resources can be delivered to implement the necessary work to implement this policy.
HE2	Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS)	Functioning effectively some minor amendments required to improve policy particularly in respect of

Other Policy Considerations

Renewable Energy

- 4.3.2 In 2015 the Welsh Government published an updated version of the 2010 toolkit to assist local planning authorities produce renewable energy assessments and develop policies in their local development plans. The toolkit offers a methodology for local planning authorities to develop a robust evidence base to assess the potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation in their area. The information can underpin renewable energy and low carbon energy policies in local development plans. The toolkit includes a section on how to assess the potential for solar farm developments. The toolkit also provides advice on how to translate renewable energy assessments into policies. Active template spreadsheets are also provided which enable local planning authorities to enter information and calculate specific energy data referenced in the toolkits. Local authorities are expected to undertake a proactive approach to all forms of renewable and low carbon energy generation.
- 4.3.3 In December 2015 Welsh Government Chief Planning Officer letter in respect of Energy policies in LDP's provided emphasis that Local Planning authorities should use their Renewable Energy Assessments to inform policies, areas of search and allocations for local authority scale renewable energy schemes or other low carbon technologies. It was indicated that through LDP consultation this would give communities a say as to where renewable energy developments should be located and by designating these areas it would ensure that developments can be guided to the most appropriate locations.
- 4.3.4 In 2013, Torfaen produced a Joint Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study with Newport which provided an evidence base for the potential development of renewable and low carbon energy within the two local authorities, to examine the low carbon potential for strategic development sites and explore strategic leadership opportunities. This study will need to be updated to inform the LDP Review.

Minerals

- 4.3.5 Minerals is a policy area where a regional approach is taken to the identification of requirements in LDP's and changes have occurred since preparation of the LDP. The Regional Technical Statement (RTS) on Aggregates for South Wales was produced in October 2008, and based on the identified need requirement for Torfaen of 400,000 tonnes

per annum. The LDP subsequently through Policy M3 made a 7.2Mt allocation in the Tir Pentwys Preferred Area for Aggregates; which covers the period 2013-2031. LDP Minerals policies were prepared in the context of the Regional Technical Statement.

- 4.3.6 The South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party Regional Technical Statement on Aggregates 1st review (2014) was endorsed by the Council at the Joint South and North Wales RAWPs Member Forum on 1st April 2014 and subsequently by the Welsh Minister on 1st August 2014 along with an associated Policy Clarification Letter **CL-05-14** setting out support for the approach taken in the 1st Review regarding the calculation of landbank for the purposes of the RTS apportionment process. The RTS 1st Review has revised the previous RTS requirement and states that there is generally no justification, on sustainability grounds, for requiring a change in the current geographical pattern of supply as, in most areas the existing pattern is sensibly balanced in terms of proximity and environmental capacity. Therefore, as there are no current aggregates sites in Torfaen, the RTS 1st Review makes a 'zero aggregate apportionment' (allocation) for Torfaen.
- 4.3.7 Therefore, in respect of Policy M3 the RTS as endorsed by the Welsh Minister, now makes a 'zero' primary aggregate apportionment for Torfaen, but encourages the use of secondary materials. This compared to an annual requirement of 400,000 tonnes per annum in the previous 2008 RTS, upon which the LDP (Policy M3) made a 7.2Mt aggregate allocation in the Tir Pentwys Preferred Area for Aggregates. This site which has been subject to a planning application was recently refused and is now subject to an appeal. This appeal and the subsequent RTS 2nd Review will be considered as part of the plan review.

Waste

- 4.3.8 Waste is another policy area where a regional approach is taken to the identification of requirements for LDP's. The LDP Waste Policies were prepared in the context of the South East Regional Waste Plan - First Review 2008. The South East Wales Regional Waste Plan 1st Review (RWP): Technology Strategy estimates that, depending on the technologies used, between 4.4ha & 7.3ha of land is required for new in-building strategic waste management facilities in Torfaen. 8.6ha of in-building facilities have now been provided in Torfaen. Planning permission was granted for a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant at the 3.1ha former Shanks site (which expired in 2014) and retrospectively for a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at the 1.1ha Refac Ltd site (which has since closed), both in New Inn, Pontypool. In addition, a further MRF has been provided at the 4.4ha Recresco site in Springvale Industrial Estate in Cwmbran on a previous B2 use employment site.

- 4.3.9 The RWP also requires the Torfaen LDP to make provision for 2.7ha of open-air waste facilities; i.e. 0.4ha for a Civic Amenity (CA) Site and 2.3ha for a Construction and Demolition (C&D) Recycling facility; the latter has now been provided at the 2.0ha former Little Mill Brickworks site. Therefore, only a further 0.4ha of land for a CA site was required in the County Borough and that was delivered in 2014.
- 4.3.10 The Regional Waste Plan 1st Review recognises that there was sufficient landfill capacity in South East Wales to meet the region's requirements during the Plan Period. Therefore, no new landfill sites were required to be identified in the LDP.
- 4.3.11 Planning Policy on Waste has subsequently been amended since adoption of the LDP with a revised PPW and a revised TAN21 issued in February 2014. The preparation of Regional Waste Plans is no longer required. PPW have been revised to reflect changes to the waste policy set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive and Welsh Government Policy 'Towards Zero Waste' and the 'Collection, Infrastructure and Markets Sector' (CIMS) Plan. The general approach of the CIMS Plan has been to move away from land-take based calculations to an approach where the need for waste management facilities is expressed by future capacity in tonnes. The CIMS plan describes the waste management framework considered to provide the best solutions to meet environmental, social and economic needs in Wales to 2050. Waste assessments contained within the CIMS plan do not need to be repeated by local planning authorities at a regional or local level. However, monitoring needs to be carried out through cooperation at a regional level to inform decision making for future LDP's. The first Wales Planning Monitoring Report for South East Wales was published in April 2016. This concluded that the regional position was that *there is no further need for landfill capacity within the South East region and any proposals for further residual waste treatment should be carefully assessed to ensure that the facility would not result in over provision.*
- 4.3.12 Therefore, there is no current need for additional residual waste facilities in Torfaen. Notwithstanding this PPW (para 12.6.2) requires that the identification of suitable locations for waste management facilities should be considered as part of LDP preparation. PPW (para 12.6.1) also requires that development plans should demonstrate how national policy and in particular the CIMS plan, along with an updated position adopted in the waste planning monitoring reports and any other form of waste management priorities relevant to its local area have been taken into account.
- 4.3.13 The LDP does not contain any site based allocations for waste and therefore based on the findings of the 2016 Monitoring Report there is no need for further site allocations for residual

waste facilities at this time. The current policy W1 will need to be revised to take account of the changes to national policy on waste within PPW and TAN21.

Open Space

- 4.3.14 The existing recreation/open space policies contained in the LDP were informed by the Torfaen County Borough Council Outdoor Recreation Assessment Draft Report July 2009 and the Open Space & Recreation Assessment Draft Report October 2009. The Outdoor Recreation Report assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of outdoor sports provision within the County Borough. The Outdoor Recreation Report identified deficiencies in the quantity and quality of existing provision in relation to the Fields in Trust Six Acre Standard adopted in the LDP. The Open Space & Recreation Assessment Report assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of children's play space and allotments. In addition the Report also contained a set of criteria for assessing the value of open space and which spaces should be protected against the criteria and defined as Important Urban Open Spaces (IUOS).
- 4.3.15 It is considered that in general the Plan's recreation and open space policies are functioning effectively (but do require minor amending) in safeguarding existing recreation facilities and public open space and in securing provision of new facilities in connection with new residential development in accordance with the adopted standards. However, there has been considerable development pressure been placed on open space and recreation sites across the County Borough for their redevelopment for higher value land uses.
- 4.3.16 The LDP revision process will need to give further consideration to the spaces currently designated as IUOS under Policy CF4, consideration of a revised assessment methodology for the consideration of a sites value, a review of the S106 requirements for on-site recreation and children's play space provision. Therefore, a full survey of all open space within the County Borough will be undertaken as part of the revision process based on a revised green infrastructure methodology.
- 4.3.17 Whilst there have been no contextual changes to national planning policy or TAN16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009) since adoption of the plan, Fields in Trust produced new guidance in 2017, 'Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard'. This guidance, while retaining the same headline rates of provision as the original "Six Acre Standard", draws out new recommendations for accessibility, for flexible application of standards and the minimum dimensions of formal outdoor space. The revision of the guidelines also introduces benchmarking for informal open space not involving organised

sport and play and includes parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural habitats. The amendments to the guidance do not result in a requirement to make modifications to current LDP standards as the TAN promotes evidence based locally generated standards. However, the revised recommended benchmark guidelines for both formal and informal outdoor space will be taken into account in the LDP revision process. The Council is also moving away from an approach to recreation and open space provision based on strict compliance with predetermined standards. This is in accordance with LDP Green Infrastructure policies that encourage the multifunctional use of open space.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 4.3.18 On adoption of the plan in December 2013, a number of existing SPG were readopted as SPG to the new LDP. A review of the existing SPG including ones recently amended and adopted will be undertaken as part of the LDP Revision process with amendments to a number of these likely to be required.

Proposals Map and Constraints Map

- 4.3.19 The form and content of the LDP Proposals Map will require changes as part of the LDP Review to reflect any changes to the plan which may include for example changes to settlement boundaries, housing allocations, retail boundaries, employment sites, important urban open spaces, green wedges and Special Landscape Areas.
- 4.3.20 The LDP Constraints Map contains designations that are not directly proposals of the LDP but are constraints to development created by legislation or other mechanisms outside of the LDP process such as Flood Risk Areas, Conservation Areas, SSSI's, etc. The printed Constraints Map for the LDP represents a point in time and includes a number of designations particularly flood risk areas that have been updated since adoption of the LDP and therefore it is out of date. Going forward it is likely that the Constraints Map will be produced in an electronic form with public access that will allow for it be updated as necessary.

4.4 Sites Review

Strategic Action Areas

- 4.4.1 The following table provides an assessment of each of the 7 Strategic Action Areas in respect of their implementation to be considered as part of a review of the LDP. An overview of the appraisal table is below:-

Figure 10 - Strategic Action Areas Review

Site being delivered	
Site behind schedule	
Limited progress and allocation to be reviewed	

Strategic Action Area Monitoring – Summary		
Site		Assessment
SAA1	Eastern Strip Central, Cwmbran	This brownfield strategic mixed use site has already received planning permission in 2014; the Morrisons store is now built; the 5.6ha B2 Meritor factory has been reduced in size and retained; and the residual 2.7ha B1 / Hotel site is now likely to be used for Torfaen's 6 th Form Further Education Campus. In this respect awaiting the outcome of the 6 th Form campus the indicators / targets for B1 / Hotel elements may need to be amended Continue ongoing discussions with landowners to bring forward the remaining elements of this regeneration scheme
SAA2	Canalside, Cwmbran	This brownfield strategic mixed use site is allocated in the LDP for 150 dwellings. No planning application has been submitted to date and therefore, delivery is behind schedule Work on going to look at opportunities by the Council's Planning Policy and Regeneration teams to bring this site forward for redevelopment in whole or in part
SAA3	Llantarnam, Cwmbran	This greenfield site has obtained outline planning permission (July 2015) for up to 450 dwellings, B1 employment uses, a neighbourhood centre Planning application approved and work has commenced on Phase 1 of development (102 dwellings). Further phases currently being discussed
SAA4	Mamhilad, Pontypool	This strategic brownfield / greenfield site, within the Pontypool Housing Sub-Market Area, has not yet obtained planning permission and delivery of this site is significantly behind forecasts. The lack of delivery is a cause for concern, as this is a key strategic site forecast to deliver 690 dwellings in the plan period to serve the Pontypool Housing Market Area and thus is a key contributor to meeting the LDP housing target Outline Planning Application submitted on approx. 2/3 of site for a mixed use development, of 941 dwellings, primary school and reuse of the Grade 11* Listed Building. Application currently being considered
SAA5	The British, Talywain, Pontypool	This brownfield land reclamation site, within the Pontypool Housing Sub-Market Area, is not likely to involve new built development within the Plan Period. The British SAA5 Action Area, the largest remaining area of industrial dereliction in SE Wales has been bought by the Council and a Cleaning and Greening scheme for the reclamation and subsequent regeneration and redevelopment of this key site in North Torfaen is being progressed by the Council. However, emerging proposals, which are limited by resources, will currently not result in the 'major land reclamation scheme' as envisaged by the policy.
SAA6	South Sebastopol, Cwmbran	This large greenfield strategic site obtained outline planning permission in January 2014 and again in October 2014; and reserved matters application for the 1st Phase for 210 dwellings has now been approved and work has commenced on site Continue to facilitate delivery of this scheme through the Development Management process
SAA7	Llanfrechfa Grange, Cwmbran	Whilst planning permission was granted in 2014 for the Grange University Hospital (GUH), WG did not announce that it will invest around £350 million in the new hospital until October 2016. Construction started in July 2017, and is expected to open in spring 2021. Health Board not progressing housing site and potential new link road as concentrating on the GUH.

		WG not progressing employment site and concerns that access and levelling costs may make the employment element uneconomic Study commenced in relation to future development of the remaining employment and residential allocations
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4.4.2 The following table provides an assessment of each of the individual site allocations in respect of their implementation to be considered as part of a review of the LDP.

Figure 11 - LDP Allocations Review

LDP Site Allocations Monitoring – Summary		
	Site	Assessment
H1/1	County Hall & Police HQ, Llanyravon - 220 dwellings	Preferred bidder approved and pre application discussions continuing Encourage & support submission of planning application from successful bidder
H1/2	Former Police College & Adj. Land, St. Dials - 350 dwellings	Planning application approved and work has commenced on Phase 1 of development. Phase 2 application submitted and currently under consideration Continue to assess Phase 2 application. Encourage landowners to bring forward Phase 3
H1/3	Former Belle Vue Nursery, St. Dials - 16 dwellings	Site under construction No action necessary
H1/4	Ty'r-ywen Farm, Fairwater - 25 dwellings	Site sold by Council Encourage & support planning application from land owner
H2/1	Former Trevethin School, Penygarn - 115 dwellings	Site permitted and under construction. No action necessary
H2/2	Animal Pound & Adjacent Land, Wainfelin - 135 dwellings	Site stalled. Not being progressed Site stalled. Encourage & support site planning application from landowners
H2/3	Pontypool College, Cwmynyscoy - 140 dwellings	Nature and extent of any development of the site is unknown at this time. Coleg Gwent reviewing plans for the site Coleg Gwent reviewing the future of site and unlikely to be brought forward in the plan period
H2/4	Coal Yard, Station Road, Panteg - 15 dwellings	Remainder of site acquired by landowner from Council in 2017. Delivery forecast 2018/2019 Encourage & support site landowner to bring permitted site forward and submit planning application on remainder
H3/1	Garn-yr-Erw Terrace, Blaenavon - 26 dwellings	Site stalled and landowner unlikely to bring forward Consideration of disposal of current planning application
H3/2	Blaenavon Health Centre, Blaenavon - 17 dwellings	The site is now in use for employment purposes Site now occupied for employment uses, following Change of Use permission in 2015. Site not being brought forward for housing
H3/3	St Peters School, Blaenavon - 18 dwellings	Site unlikely to be brought forward in the plan period Encourage and support landowner to bring site forward
H3/4	Hillside School, Blaenavon - 64 dwellings	Site under construction, for 54 dwellings; completed in 2017 No Action required
H3/5	Land off Giles Road, Blaenavon - 25 dwellings	Delivery forecast in 2011/2016 - Pre App discussions held in 2014, Landowner requested help to resolve 'ransom-strip' issue and bring site forward Ransom strip issue resolved. Encourage and support landowners to bring site forward

H3/6	Old Co-op, 39-43 High Street, Abersychan - 24 dwellings	Delivery forecast by 2015/16 - Landowner currently considering options to bring site forward Encourage landowner to either sell the site or submit application and bring site forward
H7/1	Rose Cottage, Pontypool - 10 pitches	Currently staled invalid planning application for site Encourage & support progressing planning application and site delivery
H7/2	Former Race AFC Football Pitch, Pontypool - 32 pitches	Granted full planning permission in January 2015 for 31 pitches First 10 pitches completed.
EET1/1	Ty Coch Way, Two Locks	Site now built out - 1.4ha delivered No Action required
EET1/2	Llantarnam Park A	No Planning permission - Site acquired by Gwent Police for new headquarters Encourage and promote site development
EET1/3	Llantarnam Park B	No Planning permission - Site acquired by Gwent Police Encourage and promote site development
EET1/4	Llantarnam Park C	No planning application - Discussions ongoing with potential developer for the site Encourage and promote site development
EET2/1	Former Gas Works Site, New Inn	0.9ha granted permission as part of household waste recycling centre (now built) - 1.2ha remaining Encourage and promote site development
EET2/2	Lower Mill Field (North), Pontymoile	No Planning permission - Undeveloped Encourage and promote site development
EET2/3	Lower Mill Field (South), Pontymoile	No Planning permission - Undeveloped Encourage and promote site development
EET2/4	Land South of Travel Lodge, Pontymoile	No Planning permission - Undeveloped Encourage and promote site development
EET2/5	Mamhilad Business Park	Land recently sold. No Planning permission - Undeveloped Encourage and promote site development
EET2/6	Usk Vale, Mamhilad	Land recently acquired. Planning application approved Encourage and promote site development
EET3/1	Varteg Road, Garndiffaith, Pontypool	Land owner on northern part of site exploring options to acquire remaining for car parking purposes Encourage and promote site development
EET3/2	Gilchrist Thomas Ind. Est., Blaenavon	Site has been part developed (car park extension, storage and factory extension) - 0.7 delivered 0.5ha remaining Encourage and promote site development
EET3/3	Kays and Kears, Blaenavon	Land recently sold. No Planning application submitted Encourage and promote site development
EET4/1	Craig Y Felin, Cwmbran	No planning permission and landowner not progressing site Encourage and promote site development of this key strategic site
EET4/2	Former Ty Coch Tip, Cwmbran	No Planning Permission - Landowner considering site options Encourage and promote site development
RLT2/1	Cwmbran Town Centre (Eastern Side)	No Planning permission - Investigations ongoing by the Town Centre Owners on redevelopment options for this site Encourage and promote site development

T1/1	North Torfaen Highway Improvements	Part completed with Online improvements on A4043 through to Albion Road roundabout completed. Ongoing investigations as part of Regional Local Transport Plan for delivery of remainder. £15,500 Welsh Government funding received to contribute to Abersychan junction scheme Continue to seek public funds and work with transport colleagues to seek grant funding to complete improvements
T1/2	Pontypool & New Inn Park and Ride	No Planning Application - Undeveloped. Ongoing investigations. WG have funded design work Continue to seek public funds and work with transport colleagues to seek grant funding to complete improvements
T1/3	Cwmbran Town Centre Improvements	Part completed through Morrison's / Arvin Meritor schemes under SAA1 (with S106 monies remaining and further work planned as part of remaining development area). Still requires public funding to complete - currently a 'City Deal' proposal Continue seeking public funds (and relevant S106/S278 schemes) to complete improvements
T1/4	Llanfrechfa Grange Link Road	Scheme subject to TIA to prove need as part of SAA7 housing element; which is behind schedule in terms of receiving planning permission Linked to SAA7; encourage Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to bring the housing site forward
T3	Walking and Cycling Routes	Torfaen County Borough Council is required by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 to produce an Integrated Network Map (INM) setting out a 15 year programme of improvements to active travel routes. The maps will show proposed future networks of key walking routes and key cycling routes and facilities. Following consultation the final INM was submitted to the Welsh Government for inspection in November 2017. These routes within the INM and any new or amended proposals for active travel may be considered for safeguarding through the LDP where they are within a programme, supported by funding and likely to be delivered in the Plan period.
T3/1	NCN492 Varteg Road Bridge to Blaenavon Town Centre	Scheme implemented None required
T3/2	NCN492 to Abersychan Town Centre	Awaiting Outline investigation Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
T3/3	Abersychan Town Centre to NCN492 at Merchant's Hill, Pontypool	Scheme implemented None required
T3/4	Pontypool & New Inn Train Station to Pontypool Town Centre	Awaiting Outline investigation Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
T3/5	Pontypool & New Inn Train Station to Mamhilad	Awaiting Outline investigation Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
T3/6	Usk (Monmouthshire) to Coed-y-Gric Road, Griffithstown	Awaiting Outline investigation Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary

M3	Tir Pentwys Preferred Area for Aggregates	Policy will need review taking account the current appeal for part of the site and the latest South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party 'Regional Technical Statement on Aggregates 1st Review' - which will undergo a 2nd Review during the plan preparation process
CF1	Blaenavon Primary Care Resource Centre	Scheme Completed None required
CF2	Panteg Primary School	School opened February 2017 None required
CF6	Playing Field - Eastern Fields, Cwmynyscoy	Uneconomic to develop new playing field due to excessively high remediation costs (£753,600 + land costs). However, Council is now looking to identify another playing field site in the locality Council to continue pursuing other playing field sites in the locality

5. Future LDP Evidence Base Requirements

- 5.1 To inform the review of the LDP there will be a need to update various elements of the evidence base that informed the current Local Development Plan which expires in 2021 as well as taking into account any contextual or policy changes that have occurred since adoption of the plan.

Topic Based Studies / Background Evidence

- 5.2 The LDP plan period will need to be extended to ensure that the revised LDP has an operational life of at least 10 years after adoption. Considering a commencement date of 2018 and the likely timescale of preparing a plan (i.e. up to 4 years based on a full revision procedure) and a 15 year lifespan of the plan then the plan period would run to 2033. Based on this existing topic based evidence studies which are now time expired will need to be reviewed and updated. This is anticipated to include:-

- Retail Study
- Employment Study
- Population Forecasts, Local Housing Market Assessment, Housing Trajectory
- Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- Renewable Energy Assessment
- Viability Assessment
- Infrastructure Assessment
- Green Infrastructure Assessment (incorporating Open Space and Recreation Study, SINC Review, etc.)
- Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environment Assessment
- Habitats Regulation Assessment
- Candidate Sites Assessment
- Minerals and Waste Background Papers
- Broad Level Flood Risk Assessment
- Settlement Boundary Review

- 5.3 This is not a definitive list and additional evidence base update requirements may emerge as plan revision progresses.

Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environment Assessment

- 5.4 A requirement of the LDP process is that Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) informs preparation of the LDP. The SA/SEA process is integral to the development of the LDP to ensure the policies in the LDP promote Sustainable Development through integration of the key economic, environmental, social and cultural objectives in the development of the LDP policies and proposals and take account of any significant effects on the Environment. The SA/SEA has been an iterative process throughout preparation of the LDP and policies and proposals in the LDP reflect this.
- 5.5 SA monitoring of the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives is undertaken on an annual basis and reported through the LDP Annual Monitoring Report. This enables the Council to assess the extent to which the LDP is contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and to identify any concerns. Through this monitoring process we have found there is an opportunity to improve the SA Monitoring to ensure that appropriate data is collected as a number of indicators are no longer relevant or data is not available or not sufficiently detailed to enable monitoring. The indicators will continue to be refined over the subsequent monitoring periods to improve the effectiveness of the SA process.
- 5.6 To inform the review of the LDP it will be necessary to revisit and update the environmental, social and economic baseline information, along with the review of relevant plans policies and programmes. The SA Monitoring Framework (Appendix 8 of the LDP) including the SA Objectives will need to be reviewed to ensure this remains up to date.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 5.7 The LDP was informed by Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), the purpose of which is to assess the impacts of a land use plan, in combination with the effects of other plans and projects, against the conservation objectives of internationally important European sites of nature conservation importance such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (designated for their ecological status) and to ascertain following screening what needs Appropriate Assessment (AA). As part of the LDP following screening of a number of European sites the LDP considered the impact of the LDP on two SAC sites outside of the County Borough. In summary, the HRA report concluded that with the mitigation and monitoring measures in the LDP, the LDP would not result in a likely significant effect on any European site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. As part of the review of the LDP the HRA will need to be reviewed.

Opportunities for Collaboration

- 5.8 As part of the review process, consideration will be given to opportunities to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on updating key areas of the evidence base. The regional South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) is already facilitating joint work to develop a regional evidence base in the form of Task and Finish Groups. This includes to date Retail, Housing and population, Sustainable settlement appraisals, Employment and Candidate Sites Assessment being the focus of the current work. This work in which Torfaen is part of will inform the LDP preparation process.

6. The LDP Review Options and Conclusions

- 6.1 The Draft Review Report explained that there are **four options for an LDP review**, which are considered in turn below:-
1. Await Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and Torfaen LDP 'Lite' (LDPL) or Joint LDPL with neighbouring LPAs; or
 2. Short Form Torfaen LDP Revision;
 3. Full Torfaen LDP Revision; and
 4. Full Joint LDP Review with neighbouring LPAs.
- 6.2 **Cardiff Capital Region SDP and Torfaen LDPL** - The Cardiff Capital Region is committed to regional working across the ten South East Wales authorities; and as part of the City Deal Document, gave a commitment to prepare an SDP for the region. However, in response to the Cabinet Secretary's letter (dated 13th December 2017) inviting the relevant Councils to prepare proposals for an SDP, the Leaders of the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet wrote to the Cabinet Secretary on 6th February 2018, stating:-
- "... there was consensus amongst all 10 Leaders in the Cardiff Capital Region in support of the principle of an SDP for the region. Whilst the decision to work towards an SDP is a matter for each of the 10 Councils, we are confident that this is a decision which can be taken quickly."*
- 6.3 Therefore, on 17th April 2018, Torfaen County Borough Council resolved *"... to be part of the production of the Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan"*.
- 6.4 It is envisaged that work towards an SDP will now commence in 2018, with the SDP being adopted in at the end of 2022 at the earliest (some 4 year later and all going well), almost 2 years post the March 2021 Torfaen LDP 'drop dead date'. It would then take a further estimated 2 years to produce a Torfaen LDPL (or Joint LDPL); therefore, not achieving full development plan coverage until the end of 2024 at the earliest, significantly beyond the Torfaen LDP expiry date in 2021. Therefore, Torfaen will be at risk from no or partial plan led development during this estimated 3½ year period.
- 6.5 However, consideration of the three remaining review options were overtaken by the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 29th March 2018 (copy attached at Appendix B) who expects the Council to undertake an individual Full Review of the Torfaen LDP. Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet Secretary's letter is generally in line with the views of those stakeholders who commented; noting that a key stakeholder view was to review the LDP as quickly as possible to ensure the minimum period without plan coverage. However, it is noted that the Draft Review Report,

as supported by the majority of stakeholders who expressed an opinion, had rejected a 'Short Form' Review in any event; and 'Joint LDPs' had unanimously been rejected by the regional Local Planning Authorities for a variety of reasons, but they all clearly expressed a willingness to undertake collaboration and joint working (see below).

- 6.6 **Full Torfaen LDP Revision** - Therefore, a full Torfaen LDP Review would result in a brand new LDP cover all plan issues. In accordance with Welsh Government requirements, the Council has resolved that this new LDP should cover a 15 year period starting from a base-date of 1st April 2018 and running to 31st March 2033; this would also satisfy the requirement for the LDP to have a minimum 10 year lifespan from adoption in 2022. It will also tie in with the plan period of the proposed neighbouring Monmouthshire LDP Review for the purposes of any joint evidence, studies, etc. If a full review of the Torfaen LDP was commenced in July 2018 it is considered a new plan could potentially be adopted by April 2022 at the latest; 12 months after the current LDP drop dead date of 31st March 2021. Albeit this timescale will be the subject of consultation on the Torfaen LDP Review Draft Delivery Agreement (April/May 2018), confirmation by Council (June 2018) and agreement of the Cabinet Secretary (July 2018) who in her letter (of 29th March 2018) has suggested a shorter 3½ year LDP Review production period.

Joint Working / Collaboration

- 6.7 Further to regional discussions to progress a Strategic Development Plan for South East Wales consideration has been given to joint working on LDP's and meetings have been held with Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent officers to explore such opportunities.
- 6.8 There are opportunities for joint working on areas of evidence base and shared workloads on policy development. The regional South East Wales Strategic Planning Group SEWSPG has already agreed the data collection and analysis methodologies for the employment and retail topic areas (see table below for other 9 topic areas) with the three 'Development Plan Strategy', 'Population & Housing' and 'Built/Natural Environment & Candidate Site Assessment' topic areas being the focus of the current work:-

Figure 12 - SEWSPG Regional Working

Policy Topic / Theme	Lead Authority
Development Plan Strategy	Vale of Glamorgan
Community Engagement, Consultation & Maps	Blaenau Gwent
Population & Housing	Torfaen
Development Viability	Cardiff
Transport	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Other Infrastructure Planning	Monmouthshire
Built/Natural Environment & Candidate Site Assessment	Newport
Employment & Retail	Caerphilly
Minerals & Waste	Bridgend
Plan Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation	Merthyr

- 6.9 It is clear that such working should save both time / money, reduce the need to employ consultants and help develop policy officer capacity / and address skill shortages issues, given the reduction in staff numbers in the region since the first round of LDPs.

Conclusions

- 6.10 The current Torfaen LDP will cease to be a local development plan after 31st March 2021, therefore, the need to ensure a replacement development plan as soon as possible to reduce the impact of the policy vacuum after that time is critical to ensure a plan led development management system and stakeholder certainty, especially for local communities and developers. Torfaen County Borough Council has resolved (17th April 2018) that in addition to preparing a Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Development Plan (SDP), a Full Review of the Torfaen LDP is required rather a 'short form review' or Joint Full LDP review with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). This takes into consideration the key issues raised as part of the Annual Monitoring Reports (Section 3); liaison with regional LPAs and the Welsh Government (WG); the results of the stakeholder engagements on the Draft Review Report; and the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 29th March 2018 (copy attached at Appendix B) which expects the Council to undertake an individual Full Review of the Torfaen LDP. In conclusion, a Full LDP Review for Torfaen is the most expedient way to ensure development plan coverage in Torfaen after the plan expiry date, and is wholly within the control of the County Borough.

Appendix A - List of Stakeholders Consulted on the Draft Review Report

Specific Consultation Bodies (B2)	
Welsh Government	Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Cadw	Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales	Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited
Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd	Virgin Media
Wales & West Utilities	EE
Western Power Distribution	Openreach
National Grid	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities	
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Monmouthshire County Council
Newport City Council	
Town & Community Councils	
Blaenavon Town Council	Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon Community Council
Cwmbran Community Council	Henllys Community Council
Ponther Community Council	Pontypool Community Council

UK Government Departments (B3)	
Home Office	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

General Consultation Bodies (B4) / Other Consultees (B5)	
Fields In Trust	Johnsey Estates (UK) Ltd
M&G Real Estate	One Voice Wales
Planning Aid Wales	Melin Homes
Pontypool Park Estate	United Welsh Housing Association
Design Commission for Wales	Pobl Group
Torfaen Leisure Trust	Bron Afon
Royal Voluntary Service	Linc Cymru
Royal Town Planning Institute (Wales)	Viridor Waste
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors	Sports Wales
Chartered Institute of Housing (Wales)	Welsh Local Government Association
Institution of Civil Engineers (Wales)	Welsh Environmental Services Association
Disability Wales	National Farmers Union
Friends, Families and Travellers	Farmers' Union of Wales
South Wales Chamber of Commerce	Ramblers Association
Stagecoach Wales	Pantygasseg Residents Association
Sustrans	Theatres Trust
Canals and Rivers Trust	The Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (Wales)	Comisiynydd y Gymraeg / Welsh Language Commissioner
Lynne Neagle AM	Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
David Davies MP	Equality & Human Rights Commission for Wales
Nick Thomas-Symonds MP	Children's Commissioner for Wales
Workers' Educational Association Cymru	Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party
Age Connects Torfaen	British Geological Society Survey
Wales Council for Voluntary Action	British Aggregates Association
Coleg Gwent	Mineral Products Association
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales	Torfaen Friends of the Earth
Friends of Llanfrechfa Action Group	Keep Wales Tidy
Gwent Wildlife Trust	Woodland Trust
Country Landowners Association (Wales)	Age Cymru Gwent
Wales Environment Link	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
The National Library of Wales	The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust
Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd	Federation of Small Businesses (Wales)
The South East Wales Energy Agency	The Open Spaces Society
RenewableUK	Rail Freight Group
Energy Saving Trust	Institute of Directors (Wales)
Wales Council for Deaf People	Arriva Trains Wales
Scope	Mind
Down's Syndrome Association (Wales)	British Liaison Group
Equality and Human Rights Commission	South East Wales Racial Equality Council
Ethnic Minority Foundation	Gwent Association for the Blind
Torfaen Voluntary Alliance	Wales Council for the Blind
Community Land Advisory Service Cymru	Community Housing Cymru
Confederation of British Industry (Wales)	Defence Estates
Home Builders Federation	Welsh Health Estates
Public Health Wales	Gwent Police
The Coal Authority	South Wales Fire Service

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ynni, Cynllunio a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: qa1317543

Cllr Anthony Hunt
Leader of Torfaen County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Pontypool
NP4 6YB

29 March 2018

Dear Cllr Hunt,

Re: Local Development Plan (LDP) Review

In December 2017, I wrote to you inviting proposals for Joint LDPs to come forward, highlighting opportunities to maximise efficiencies around plan preparation, as well the effectiveness of policy based outcomes for local communities and business.

The invitation was made in response to numerous comments expressed in the Annual Performance Report (APR) where Local Authorities (LAs) have cited reductions in budgets, skills, capacities and experience to planning departments. Collectively, reductions in LAs future planning resources, both financially and capacity, are having an adverse effect on reviewing adopted LDPs. Consequently, taking the extra step beyond current joint working to the preparation of a Joint LDP would provide a greater ability to optimise the plan preparation process, as well as delivering better outcomes across broader geographical and functionally linked areas.

Following the deadline of 28 February, it is extremely disappointing my invitation has not received a positive response. However, it is reassuring all responses received have indicated LAs consider they have sufficient resources and capacity to review their respective LDP individually.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Candlfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The reassurances received from LAs sufficient resources are available to commit to plan review and adhere to timetables throughout the whole process, instils sufficient confidence for me to enable LAs to progress this round of LDP reviews on an individual LA basis. However, having been reassured this is the case, I will be expecting receipt of Delivery Agreements (DAs) within 3 months from the date of this letter, to ensure plan coverage is maintained. I will also expect DAs to demonstrate that plan preparation can be achieved within 3.5 years from formal commencement of the process, with a single additional slippage period of 3 months. This will be monitored through the Annual Performance Reporting (APR) process. I should state quite clearly due to the reassurances received I will not be minded to agree any further extensions to the DA beyond the initial agreement itself.

I remain convinced better planning outcomes can be achieved by working together, however, LAs assert this can be achieved by improved collaborative working stopping short of formal joint LDPs. I have asked the Planning Inspectorate to give special consideration to collaborative working and planning outcomes when LDPs are examined.

Finally, Local Government reform could have an impact on the preparation of your LDP. Should the National Assembly agree to reform Local Government in the future and your LDP has not reached the Deposit Stage (Regulation 17, Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 as amended) your LA may have to re-commence the process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lesley Griffiths'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Lesley' and the last name 'Griffiths' clearly distinguishable.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ynni, Cynllunio a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs