



Foreword by Executive Member – Sustainable Communities

It is my great pleasure to present the Adopted Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan.

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the development and use of land up until 2011, in line with legislative requirements and provides a framework for the regeneration of the area. The Plan will replace the existing Blaenau Gwent Local Plan and form the basis for decisions on individual planning applications.

The UDP aims to seek to enhance the quality of life for the people of Blaenau Gwent as the Plan strongly reflects the principle of sustainable development ensuring that economic development, community development and regeneration take place in ways and locations that do not compromise the future needs of others.

The Plan has been subject to extensive community involvement and consultation through local exhibitions and meetings throughout the County Borough. The Public Inquiry into the Plan witnessed a considerable number of representations. Substantive changes have been made to the 2000 deposit version in light of the Inquiry Inspector's report and the suggested recommendations. In addition, careful consideration has been given to all representations made at the various stages of consultation and the Plan has been modified to reflect those issues raised, where appropriate.

Councillor Royston Welsh
Executive Member – Sustainable Communities
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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**UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
PART 1**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Part 1 of the Unitary Development Plan is a statement of the strategic land use planning policies for Blaenau Gwent. These policies have been prepared in the context of national government policies, the National Assembly guidance, the Council's vision statement and the provisions of the following Council Strategy documents:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Ebbw Fach Regeneration Strategy
- Tredegar Town Centre Action Programme
- Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy
- Housing Strategy and Operational Plan
- Rural Strategy
- Waste Disposal Strategy
- Community Plan
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy
- Objective 1 Local Action Plan
- Local Transport Plan

THE POLICY CONTEXT OF THE UDP

National Context

1.2 The Government's objectives for land use and the planning system are:

- to improve the quality of life in our towns and cities
- to ensure that the planning system works to provide for homes, jobs and transport requirements, at the same time as conserving our heritage and our environment
- the integration of environmental policy

1.3 The Government's vision of sustainable development is based on the following broad objectives:

- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment; and prudent use of resources

1.4 The Government's objectives for the sustainable use of resources are also relevant. They are:

- to increase the efficiency with which we use energy, at work in our homes, in our cars and use of public transport
- to reduce the amount of waste produced and seek to recycle 25% of domestic waste stream by weight, by the year 2000
- to ensure better use of resources in the government estate and the rest of the public sector
- to reduce emissions of gases causing global warming, ozone depletion and acid rain
- to enhance the environment and to meet targets for biodiversity obligations

1.5 Following the Earth Summit at Rio in 1992, adoption of Local Agenda 21 has made sustainable development an important issue for local government, enhancing its role as custodian of the environment. Sustainable development is commonly defined as

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ('Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development' the Brundtland Report 1987).

- 1.6 National planning policy guidance (This Common Inheritance 1990) states that the government intends to work towards sustainability and that it will continue to develop policies consistent with the concept of sustainable development. The planning system and the preparation of development plans in particular can contribute to this. Government land use planning policies in Wales are contained in Planning Policy Wales this is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes and Circulars. Advice on the preparation of unitary development plans is contained in Unitary Development Plans Wales. The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric of Wales but within communities in Blaenau Gwent it is less a part of the social fabric and land use policies do not therefore affect the linguistic balance. Approximately 9 out of 10 people in Blaenau Gwent are unable to speak Welsh and there are no Welsh speaking communities. However, the Welsh language is becoming a part of the County's character being seen and heard in placenames and signage.

Regional Context

- 1.7 Blaenau Gwent is situated in the north east of Industrial South Wales and adjoins the Brecon Beacons National Park. The plan area has a population of 73,200 (Registrar General Mid Year Estimate 1996). The main settlements are Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina and Abertillery.
- 1.8 Planning Policy Guidance (Wales) identifies Blaenau Gwent as part of an area for economic growth and regeneration and suggests that it is likely to be one of the main locations in Wales for economic development. Blaenau Gwent lies within the West Wales and the Valleys area eligible for European Fund Objective One status. In addition Blaenau Gwent is a Designated Area under the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978. This gives additional powers to local authorities with serious inner area problems so that they may participate more effectively in the economic development of their areas.
- 1.9 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is a member of the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group which has published Strategic Planning Guidance for South East Wales. The purpose of this document is to provide a regional context for the preparation of Unitary Development Plans and, in its later stages of preparation, informed this plan.
- 1.10 The main thrust of the regional initiative has been to attract employment and enhance the environment of the valleys areas, and developing the strategic nature of the Heads of the Valleys road.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

- 1.11 The Council's vision statement is:
- **To seek to enhance the quality of life of the people of the Blaenau Gwent Area**
- 1.12 This aim will be pursued through the promotion of sustainable development ensuring that economic development, community development and regeneration take place, and in ways and locations that do not compromise any future ability to meet needs. This will ensure that

a substantial valley community is retained in Blaenau Gwent to support an adequate range of community services and facilities.

Economic Development

- 1.13 The decline of the traditional employment base of coal and steel has left a legacy of high unemployment, low activity rates, low earnings and a lower skilled workforce.
- 1.14 The key to achieving a thriving economy is through regeneration. The Council's Economic Development Strategy aims to:
- reduce unemployment
 - provide a range of quality jobs and improved access to jobs
 - create a broader, more robust and dynamic local economy
 - increase in labour market participation
- 1.15 In this context it is essential that Blaenau Gwent benefits from the attraction of inward investment projects within the region and, it is essential that a continuous supply of serviced industrial land and buildings is available in Blaenau Gwent to accommodate future inward investment projects. In addition, there is a need to support and develop indigenous businesses.

Community Development

- 1.16 One of the greatest threats facing communities in the plan area is the loss of the youngest and most dynamic households. Between 1981 and 1991 the population declined by 5.84%, principally because of the decline of the employment base, with a consequent loss of social and economic activity which is vital to the prosperity of the local community. Furthermore there was a decline of 4.0% in the 5-24 year old age group.
- 1.17 Blaenau Gwent is one of the most deprived areas in Wales, and has the following characteristics:
- High levels of unemployment, above the Welsh average
 - Overall the population has fewer than average higher education qualifications
 - Low incomes are reflected in the relative absence of various household amenities and access to a car
 - The area displays characteristics of social stress such as ill health, high levels of crime and vandalism
 - Low grade environment for business and recreational purposes
- 1.18 These issues can only be addressed by involving the residents of Blaenau Gwent in community regeneration. The established Development Trusts play a vital role in facilitating community development. Action is required to tackle poverty and deprivation, by facilitating and enabling improvements, particularly in the most deprived areas, and to meet the needs of individual communities.
- 1.19 One of the main issues which the Council wishes to address, is the provision of modern school facilities, intended to contribute towards the objective of raising educational standards. Half of the Council's Primary Schools were constructed around or before the turn

of the century. There will, therefore, be recognition of the need to identify suitable sites for the eventual construction of replacement Primary Schools.

Urban Regeneration

- 1.20 Regeneration is the focus for the Unitary Development Plan. The character and appearance of Blaenau Gwent is a result of the industrial revolution in the South Wales coalfields to exploit coal and iron in the 19th century. Over dependence on these industries which progressively declined has resulted in severe unemployment and out migration.
- 1.21 The Council is pursuing measures to revitalise the local economy, improve the physical environment and strengthen community action. Achieving regeneration involves the co-ordination of the programmes and plans of public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure that resources are used effectively to bring about new job opportunities and better living conditions by improving facilities such as town centres, housing, education, community and leisure facilities. The current focus for regeneration is on Tredegar, the Ebbw Fach Valley and Ebbw Vale. The Corus site at Ebbw Vale will be the subject of major regeneration activity following the closure of the works in 2002.
- 1.22 Strategies for regeneration will be affected by the availability of resources which will depend on the availability of government funding programmes. The plan's provisions acknowledge these programmes of action, and aim to provide the appropriate framework for land use and development decisions which will assist the process of regeneration.

Sustainability and the Environment

- 1.23 The plan has been prepared in accord with the principles of sustainable development, this means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (the Brundtland Report 1987). The Draft Blaenau Gwent Local Agenda 21 Strategy lists elements and principles of sustainability and has informed UDP preparation.
- 1.24 In Blaenau Gwent the challenge is to provide homes, investment and jobs and services in a sustainable way. The locations of development are aimed to maximise the use of previously developed land. The key aims are as follows:
- To enhance and protect the distinctive features of the urban and rural environment including the maintenance of biodiversity. This means conserving natural resources like land, minerals, water and potential sustainable energy resources and ensuring that when they are needed they are used efficiently. This also means seeking to minimise the amount of waste produced. This should help to make Blaenau Gwent an increasingly healthy place to live and make it attractive for inward investment.
 - Similarly reducing pollution will reduce damage to the local environment and increase the attractiveness of Blaenau Gwent. The Council will act on the basis of the precautionary principle to refuse developments where the balance of knowledge is inconclusive. The land allocations and policies controlling the location of development take account of the desirability of minimising the need to travel especially the need for the use of the private car.

- Reducing inequality by reducing poverty and disadvantage by facilitating access to housing, employment and leisure.
- Sustaining viable communities by ensuring that residents have access to local facilities such as schools and public transport. Securing sustainable communities also requires that sufficient employment opportunities are provided for the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.25 Sustainability appraisal is an integral part of the plan preparation process. It clarifies and provides justification for the planning authority's choice of options.
- 1.26 Since 1991 there has been a statutory requirement that local planning authorities must have regard to environmental considerations when preparing their development plans (Regulation 9(1) (b) of the Town and Country Planning Regulations). A systematic appraisal is an effective way to demonstrate how this authority has met this requirement in its development plan.
- 1.27 A separate appraisal document has been produced which accompanies this plan. This document essentially follows the techniques and procedures provided in Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans - A Good Practice Guide DOE 1993. The key tasks and the basic approach provided in this guidance have been followed but the environmental appraisal has been broadened to become a "Sustainability Appraisal" which incorporates socio-economic issues.
- 1.28 The appraisal has been applied at all stages of plan making in order to ensure it is part of the whole plan. This also allows sustainable development to be an underlying theme of the plan. The appraisal work has been carried out by the authority's planning officers but supplemented by discussions with other local authorities, interest groups and the local community.

1.29 LAND USE PLANNING STRATEGY

The main objectives of the strategy are:

- To ensure that development and land use change reflects the principle of sustainable development
- To improve, encourage and safeguard the provision of education, health and social welfare and leisure facilities
- To improve the main north and south routes within the three valleys in the County Borough and the strategic Heads of the Valleys route (A465)
- To safeguard and to enable the introduction of a passenger rail service on the existing railway line from Newport to Ebbw Vale
- To move towards an integrated land use and transport strategy, encouraging alternative means of travel and transport which have less environmental impact

- To encourage high standards of design in urban and rural environments
- To consolidate and enhance the vitality and viability and attractiveness of existing retail centres
- To protect and manage landscape and implement biodiversity measures
- To enhance and protect the urban and rural environment
- To provide a framework for securing, funding and implementation of projects
- To control mineral development in order to meet the industry's needs whilst minimising harm to the environment and local communities
- To encourage the re-use and recycling of materials and achieve waste minimisation

These objectives will be achieved by the following:

- Industrial and commercial development will be within the defined urban area in appropriate locations along the three North/South Valley routes identified in the Local Transport Plan and particularly along the Heads of the Valleys Corridor and within or adjacent to existing industrial estates
- Office developments will be encouraged and will normally be located in or adjacent to town centres
- Existing locations for employment will be protected and a change to non-industrial use will normally not be permitted nor will the development of adjacent uses which could restrict industrial activity
- Enhancement of existing industrial areas
- Housing development will be facilitated as a means of securing urban regeneration. Unfitness and obsolescence will be treated thereby improving the condition of the housing stock by the provision of grants and by other available means
- Provision has been made to accommodate the housing demand over the plan period. Sub-area deficiencies exist in Abertillery and the southern section of the County Borough. The provision of further housing sites will be encouraged in these locations
- Land for housing will cater for a range of market requirements and should be located close to local facilities
- Housing development will be permitted within the built up area, particularly on reclaimed sites, by sensitive infilling and conversion and the utilisation of underused floor space above shops. Provision will be made for open space
- Public Rights of Way will be protected

- Development proposals will be required to demonstrate design quality and detailing
 - The redevelopment of the former Corus site Ebbw Vale
- 1.30 The regeneration of the Corus site in Ebbw Vale is of such significance that it's redevelopment is a strategic issue. Upon the closure of the Corus works, the site will represent an extensive area of derelict land within the defined urban area of Ebbw Vale. National and regional policy advocates that the land should be restored and brought back into beneficial use following the principles of sustainable development and the conservation of the historic environment. The Council is seeking the regeneration of the site and surrounding area through a mixed use development of the site integrated with the existing town.
- 1.31 The town centre will continue to be the focus for retail activity with the development of the adjoining Corus site promoting an integrated community by creating a mixed use development including:
- (a) Residential;
 - (b) Employment;
 - (c) Education and Community Services;
 - (d) Leisure and Recreation.
- 1.32 The mixed use development of the Corus site will secure the beneficial restoration of a major derelict site and the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the area.

POLICIES

- 1.33 Part 1 policies are arranged in two groups. Policies G1-G6 give expression to the general concerns of the Government and the Council and are relevant to the full range of issues covered in the Plan. The remaining policies, starting with policy H1, are topic based and provide the context for the Part 2 policies and proposals.

G1 REGENERATION WILL BE SECURED BY FAVOURING DEVELOPMENTS WHICH:

- (A) **STRENGTHEN AND BROADEN THE ECONOMIC BASE AND INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, AND/OR**
- (B) **IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SECURE THE RE-USE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS, AND/OR**
- (C) **BENEFIT THE MOST ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED PARTS OF BLAENAU GWENT, AND/OR**
- (D) **IMPROVE LEISURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF RESIDENTS, AND/OR**
- (E) **CONSERVE OR ENHANCE BLAENAU GWENT'S CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE, AND/OR**

- (F) **STRENGTHEN AND BROADEN THE HOUSING SUPPLY AND PROVIDE INCREASED FLEXIBILITY AND CHOICE OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION.**
- G2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA: -**
- (A) **PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND SHOULD BE USED IN PREFERENCE TO GREENFIELD SITES, AND**
- (B) **THE CONSERVATION OF ENERGY, WASTE MINIMISATION AND RECYCLING, AND**
- (C) **THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES OR LANDSCAPE QUALITY AND THE MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED, AND**
- (D) **THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON AIR QUALITY AND WATER RESOURCES, AND**
- (E) **NOISE LEVELS, AND**
- (F) **BIODIVERSITY.**
- G3 NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED WHERE THE NEED TO TRAVEL, PARTICULARLY BY PRIVATE CAR, WILL BE MINIMISED. PROPOSALS THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING, CYCLING OR THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT WILL BE FAVOURED.**
- G4 NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ACHIEVE A SUSTAINABLE DESIGN.**
- G5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL HAVE REGARD TO EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN TERMS OF ACCESS AND WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE.**
- G6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE CONSIDERED HAVING REGARD TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE CONTAMINATION OR INSTABILITY OF THE LAND CONCERNED.**
- H1 HOUSING**
- THE HOUSING NEEDS OF BLAENAU GWENT WILL BE MET BY:**
- (A) **ALLOCATING LAND TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL 726 DWELLINGS DURING THE PLAN PERIOD.**

- (B) IMPROVING EXISTING HOUSING PARTICULARLY THROUGH THE DESIGNATION OF RENEWAL AREAS AND AREAS FOR HOUSING IMPROVEMENT;**
- (C) PROVIDING LAND TO MEET THE REQUIREMENT FOR A RANGE OF DWELLINGS BY ALLOCATING SITES OF VARIOUS SIZES AND IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF LOCATIONS;**
- (D) ENCOURAGING THE PROVISION OF DWELLINGS AFFORDABLE TO THOSE LEAST ABLE TO COMPETE IN THE HOUSING MARKET.**

E1 EMPLOYMENT

THE STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF BLAENAU GWENT WILL BE MET BY:

- (A) PROVIDING 180 HECTARES OF LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE REQUIREMENTS OF EXISTING BUSINESSES AND A RANGE OF SITES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW BUSINESSES; AND**
- (B) MAINTAINING THE STOCK OF BUSINESS PREMISES AND SITES, SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY REGARD BEING PAID TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND, WITHIN ESTABLISHED BUSINESS AREAS, SECURING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS BENEFICIAL TO ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES; AND**
- (C) PERMITTING THE EXTENSION OF BUSINESS PREMISES EXCEPT WHERE THERE WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT; AND**
- (D) PERMITTING B1 OFFICE USES IN TOWN CENTRES AND WITHIN DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AREAS; AND**
- (E) FAVOURING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- (F) PERMITTING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE RURAL ECONOMY.**

T1 TRANSPORT

TO DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO:

- (A) SATISFYING THE TRAVEL NEEDS OF ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH AN EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM, GIVING PRIORITY TO IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS; AND**

- (B) PROMOTING A TRANSPORT NETWORK WHICH HAS REGARD TO THE SAFETY OF ALL ROAD USERS, REDUCES CONGESTION AND WHICH CAUSES MINIMAL DISTURBANCE TO AMENITY THROUGH DANGER, NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION; AND**
- (C) CO-ORDINATING LAND USE CHANGE WITH TRANSPORT PROVISION SO AS TO MINIMISE THE NEED TO TRAVEL AND TO LOCATE NEW DEVELOPMENT WHERE IT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED BY THE HIGHWAY NETWORK AND BE SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTES; AND**
- (D) PROTECTING THE LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS FROM UNACCEPTABLE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT.**

T2 TRANSPORT PROPOSALS

LAND WILL BE SAFEGUARDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE FOLLOWING TRANSPORT PROPOSALS:

- (A) DUALLING OF THE A465 HEADS OF THE VALLEYS ROAD**
- (B) PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES IN RELATION TO THE RE-OPENING OF THE EBBW VALE – NEWPORT/CARDIFF PASSENGER RAILWAY LINE**

S1 TOWN CENTRES

TOWN CENTRES AND LOCAL CENTRES WILL BE THE FOCUS OF SHOPPING, COMMERCIAL, CULTURE, SOCIAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITY AND BE THE PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

EN1 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD SAFEGUARD THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND AMENITY OF LAND. FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE WHICH ARE OF IMPORTANCE FOR WILD FLORA AND FAUNA OR HABITATS AND SPECIES WILL BE PROTECTED AND MANAGED.

EN2 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

THE DESIGN OF ALL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING CONVERSIONS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, SHOULD BE OF GOOD QUALITY IN TERMS OF SCALE, DENSITY, LAYOUT, HEIGHT, MASSING, ACCESS, MATERIALS, APPEARANCE AND LANDSCAPING. DESIGNS SHOULD RESPECT THE TOPOGRAPHY, NATURAL SETTING AND IMPORTANT EXISTING BUILT FORM IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSAL.

DL1 DERELICT AND NEGLECTED LAND

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH BRING DERELICT AND NEGLECTED LAND INTO BENEFICIAL USE AND ASSIST IN THE REGENERATION OF THE AREA WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THIS WILL NOT DAMAGE NATURE CONSERVATION, ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR BUILT HERITAGE INTERESTS.

C1 COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED IN ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS. THIS WILL NORMALLY BE TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES.

R1 RECREATION LEISURE AND TOURISM

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF:

- (A) THE NEED TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY; AND**
- (B) THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE NETWORK OF RECLAIMED LAND THAT HAS BENEFITED FROM PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT.**

M1 MINERALS

PROPOSALS FOR MINERAL EXTRACTION, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES FOR RESTORATION AND AFTER-USE OF THE SITE, WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THAT THEY HAVE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON:

- (A) THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING LANDSCAPE, WATER RESOURCES AND NATURE CONSERVATION;**
- (B) RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND HIGHWAY SAFETY;**
- (C) THE LOCAL ECONOMY;**
- (D) THE PROPORTIONAL LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NEED FOR AGGREGATE MINERAL SUPPLY;**
- (E) DESIGNATED SITES OF LANDSCAPE OR NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE ;OR**

- (F) SPECIES RECOGNISED AS HAVING NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE**

WD1 WASTE MANAGEMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR WASTE DISPOSAL, STORAGE, TRANSFER, TREATMENT AND RECYCLING WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY HAVE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON :-

- (A) THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT IN TERMS OF NOISE, DUST, SMELL AND OTHER AIRBORNE POLLUTION, TRAFFIC GENERATION, VISUAL AMENITY, ADJOINING TOPOGRAPHY; AND**
- (B) CONSERVATION INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE; AND**
- (C) WATER RESOURCES, AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND.**

AND THAT:

- (A) A SUSTAINABLE MODE OF TRANSPORT IS PROPOSED TO SERVE THE SITE; AND**
- (B) PROPOSALS INCLUDE SUSTAINABLE PROVISION FOR VEHICLE ROUTING AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS; AND**
- (C) ADJOINING LAND IS PROTECTED FROM LANDFILL GAS AND LEACHATE MIGRATION; AND**
- (D) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF A BENEFICIAL AFTERUSE OF THE SITE FOLLOWING THE CESSATION OF WASTE DEPOSITION, INCLUDING A PERIOD OF AFTERCARE MANAGEMENT; AND**
- (E) A LANDSCAPING SCHEME IS SUBMITTED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROPOSAL.**

EG1 ENERGY

THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT PROPOSALS WHICH DEMONSTRATE GREATER ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN; THE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND USES, MODES OF TRAVEL, THE LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT, THE MATERIALS USED, AND THE USE OF NON-FOSSIL FUEL AND RECOVERED SOURCES OF ENERGY, UNLESS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD CAUSE DEMONSTRABLE HARM TO INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE. PROPOSALS WILL COMPLY WITH RELEVANT PLAN POLICIES.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

2. HOUSING POLICIES

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 One of the main aims of the Unitary Development Plan is to maintain a substantial valley community in Blaenau Gwent. It is therefore essential that a sufficient quality and variety of land is allocated to provide a range and choice of sites for new residential development. Within this section, an assessment is made of future demographic changes and its implications on the amount of land required for new housing up until 2011, together with appropriate allocations of land for housing to meet this requirement.
- 2.2 The success of the iron and coal industries in the 19th and early 20th centuries resulted in a huge influx of population into Blaenau Gwent, leading to a peak population level of 127,611 in 1921. An example of the rapid growth in population that took place is illustrated by the growth of Abertillery, in 1880 the population of the town was only 6,000, by 1920 it had increased to 38,000. However, the decline of the iron and coal industries resulted in a population decline in Blaenau Gwent; between 1951 and 1991, the reduction was over 20%, and between 1981 and 1991 the population decline was around 6%, due to movement of people out of the area to find employment elsewhere.
- 2.3 However, since the early 1990's this population decline has stabilised, a more diverse economy is being pursued and jobs are being provided at a number of industrial parks. The landscape has also changed; almost all the spoil tips have been removed and landscaped. Furthermore a high proportion of substandard 19th century housing has been renovated to meet present day standards.
- 2.4 In order to maintain a viable valley community in Blaenau Gwent, it is essential that a net migration balance is achieved. This is because those most likely to migrate are the younger and more economically active members of the community. It is therefore important to attract public and private finance for housebuilding schemes, environmental improvement, land reclamation and infrastructure development. The continued implementation of a range of urban regeneration projects will ensure that Blaenau Gwent's image is radically improved and will have positive effects on migration levels.
- 2.5 The accuracy of calculating future housing requirements depends on how precise the demographic changes can be forecast. Population levels are governed by three variables namely: - births (or fertility rates), deaths (or mortality rates) and migration rates. Population projections in Blaenau Gwent are based on the assumption that net outward migration will be halted, and by 2006 reversed, and that the area experiences a small amount of inward migration which results in a population estimate of 73,725 in 2011 compared to a population figure of 73,250 in 1991.
- 2.6 The accuracy of population projections has implications on the anticipated future need for housing, jobs and other services. For the population estimate in Blaenau Gwent to be related to housing needs, it is necessary to make projections on household formation. Changes in marriage and divorce patterns, an ageing population, decline in mortality rate, trends in economic prosperity, will all affect the future numbers, type and location of dwellings required. Taking these factors into account it is estimated that 1,750 new dwellings will be required in Blaenau Gwent up until 2011 in order to maintain viable valley communities and allow for any significant unpredicted change in any of the variables described above.

- 2.7 An adequate choice in the range of housing available in the area is an important determinant of population change, so much so that if suitable dwellings are not provided, higher social groups and the young adult population will seek accommodation outside Blaenau Gwent. As a consequence, this could lead to social polarization within the area. In 2001, Census data showed that 55% of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock, comprised of terraced properties, most of which were built prior to 1919. This does not provide an adequate choice of dwelling type. Past trends suggest that this has influenced out-migration of people seeking more appropriate accommodation.
- 2.8 The scale and complexity of the housing problems facing Blaenau Gwent requires a comprehensive approach by the Council, and in this respect an annual Housing Strategy and Operational Plan (HSOP) is prepared and submitted to the National Assembly. This is accompanied by a bid for finance in order to implement a programme of capital spending on housing. The HSOP draws upon the content of the UDP to provide an integrated approach to housing issues in Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.9 The direction of the Council's Housing Strategy has been guided by the following factors:-
- (a) The 1996 Housing Act - which has fundamentally changed the Local Authority's housing role from that of provider towards that of enabler of housing provision.
 - (b) The condition of the existing housing stock - the continued survival and usefulness of the existing dwelling stock is an issue of great concern. The most recent statistics suggest that around 8% of private properties in Blaenau Gwent are estimated at being unfit (approximately 1,740 properties) and a further 12% estimated as requiring substantial repair (around 2,610 properties). Such a proportion is clearly unacceptable.
 - (c) Demographic changes and migration patterns which determine the number and type of dwellings required.
 - (d) The capacity for additional housing is severely restricted, due to topographical constraints.

RESIDENTIAL LAND AVAILABILITY

- 2.10 The Plan has been modified to provide for a "Need for Allocations" figure of 726 dwellings, and to take account of the conclusions of the inspector and National Assembly policy as set out in Planning Policy Wales.

The Council's Approach

- 2.11 The Council's housing requirement for the 1996-2011 plan period has been derived from a computer model based on 1991 census data updated by the Registrar General's 1996 mid-year estimate. The projection deviates from the, regionally based, National Assembly household projections. Blaenau Gwent is within the South East Wales Region, the population of which is projected to increase by 8% between 1998 and 2011 – which would amount to 2,400 households in the County Borough Council's area. However, the Council has taken the view that, bearing in mind the area's economically disadvantaged position when compared with more southerly authorities that are strung along the M4 corridor, such a projection was unrealistic. It has therefore worked on the basis that

economic initiatives taking place in the area would arrest outward migration and reverse it by 2006. As a consequence a small net inward migration is expected by 2011.

- 2.12 The Council's calculations to assess the Housing Requirement for 1996-2011 are detailed in the Housing Background Paper (CD26). The resultant Requirement is 1,779 dwellings.
- 2.13 After deducting completions and commitments, and making allowances for windfalls, demolitions and conversions there remains a need for land to be allocated for 544 dwellings (Table 1 below).

TABLE 1	
Housing Requirement 1996-2011	1779
<i>Add demolitions 1996-2011</i>	250
<i>Deduct completions to 2001</i>	483
<i>Deduct commitments 2001-2011</i>	728
<i>Deduct conversions 1996-2011</i>	50
<i>Deduct windfalls 2001-2011</i>	224
Need for Allocations	544

- 2.14 Based on local historical evidence it would be correct to make an allowance for the non take-up of commitments due to development constraints; and it is considered that an allowance of 25% would in this case be appropriate. The "Need for Allocations" figure in Table 1 above is therefore increased by 182, to 726.
- 2.15 The apportionment of the allocation between the respective settlements and the sequential selection of sites has been informed by a settlement strategy (Supplementary Document SS1). The methodology is briefly explained in the justification. A fully researched strategy will be devised to feed in to the first Review of the Plan.

POLICIES

H1 STRATEGIC HOUSING POLICY

THE HOUSING NEEDS OF BLAENAU GWENT WILL BE MET BY:

- (A) ALLOCATING LAND TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL 726 DWELLINGS DURING THE PLAN PERIOD;**
- (B) IMPROVING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK PARTICULARLY THROUGH THE DESIGNATION OF RENEWAL AREAS AND AREAS FOR HOUSING IMPROVEMENT;**
- (C) PROVIDING LAND TO MEET THE REQUIREMENT FOR A RANGE OF DWELLINGS BY ALLOCATING SITES OF VARIOUS SIZES AND IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF LOCATIONS;**
- (D) ENCOURAGING THE PROVISION OF DWELLINGS AFFORDABLE TO THOSE LEAST ABLE TO COMPETE IN THE HOUSING MARKET;**

H2 ALLOCATION OF SITES FOR HOUSING

THE FOLLOWING SITES ARE ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ARE DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP: -

PROPOSALS**Tredegar**

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(1)	Adj. Chartist Way	3.7h	80
H2(2)	Gas Works	0.5h	15
H2(3)	Hill's Bus Depot	0.7h	15
H2(4)	Peacehaven	4.0h	100
TOTAL			210

Nantyglo & Blaina

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(5)	North of Winches Row	3.7h	50
H2(6)	North of Forgeside, Blaina	4.4h	40
TOTAL			90

Abertillery

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(7)	Six Bells Colliery	2.0h	50
H2(8)	Roseheyworth Comp.	1.0h	25
H2(9)	Warm Turn	0.6h	15
H2(10)	Greenmeadow Farm	13.7h	100
H2(11)	Rear of Farm Road, Sofryd	10.7h	100
TOTAL			290

Ebbw Vale

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(12)	Nant-y-Croft, Rassau	1.7h	30
H2(13)	Adjacent Gwaun Helyg	1.4h	25
H2(14)	Pant-y-Fforest	1.7h	35
H2(15)	Glanyrafon School	1.5h	20
H2(16)	Froes-y-Barcl, Llangynidr Road	0.5h	10
H2(17)	Garden City	0.6h	16
H2(18)	Highlands Road	2.0h	50
TOTAL			186

COMMITMENTS i.e. land with planning permission**Tredegar**

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(19)	Park Hill	13.0h	150
H2(20)	Upper Ty Gwyn Farm	1.4h	35
H2(21)	Harford Street	2.5h	43
H2(22)	Merthyr Road	2.3h	47
H2(23)	Hamilton's, Crown Avenue	1.6h	34
H2(24)	St. Lukes Road	1.5h	20
TOTAL			329

Brynmawr

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(25)	Aneurin Place	0.4h	12
H2(26)	Clydach Street	0.8h	10
H2(27)	Noble Square	0.7h	20
TOTAL			42

Nantyglo & Blaina

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(28)	N. of Rising Sun	1.25h	18
H2(29)	North of Pond Road	6.5h	180
H2(30)	Cwm Farm	11h	246
H2(31)	Land North of Porters Road	0.65h	12
TOTAL			456

Abertillery

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units
H2(32)	Ty Bryn Bakery	0.25h	17
H2(33)	Welsh Brewers	1.1h	28
H2(34)	Cwm Farm	1.0h	20
H2(35)	Ty Pwdr/Greenmeadow Farm	4.0h	73
H2(36)	Oxford Place N.	0.3h	12
TOTAL			150

Ebbw Vale

Proposal No.	Site	Area	Units	
H2(37)	Plantation Road	0.9h	32	
H2(38)	Former Beaufort Junior School	1.0h	46	
H2(39)	Rock House, Rassau	0.8h	35	
H2(40)	Briery Hill School	0.7h	15	
H2(41)	Garden Festival Area	A	1.7h	50
		B	2.4h	81
		C	1.4h	30
		D	1.0h	14
		E	2.0h	30
		F	2.4h	20
H2(42)	Tredeggar Road	0.1h	21	
H2(43)	Big Lane, Beaufort	0.5h	10	
H2 (44)	45 Yard	3.5h	100	
TOTAL			484	

- 2.16 The Corus site in Ebbw Vale is proposed to be redeveloped as a mixed use development incorporating a significant amount of new residential land. The amount and form of new residential development has not been determined but it is anticipated to exceed 10 hectares (250 units).
- 2.17 A range of housing sites has been indicated throughout the Borough. The council will encourage proposals for development of these sites that promote efficient and sustainable design.

H3 RESIDENTIAL DENSITY ON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

PROPOSALS ON ALLOCATED SITES SHOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE PROJECTED DENSITY LEVEL.

- 2.18 Housing sites have been identified which indicate a scale of provision. This is to ensure sufficient land becomes available to meet the housing need. Development proposals should not unnecessarily restrict or prejudice the further development of the site.

H4 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN AREA

PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON UNALLOCATED SITES WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREAS AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- (A) **THAT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF LAND OF RECREATION OR AMENITY OR TOWNSCAPE VALUE; AND**
- (B) **WHERE SUBSTANTIAL NEW HOUSING IS PERMITTED AMENITY AND PLAYSPACE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- (C) **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN, IN KEEPING WITH THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA; AND**
- (D) **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HARM AN AREA OR BUILDING OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST OR A SITE OF NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OR SPECIES PROTECTED BY STATUTE; AND**
- (E) **THE DEVELOPMENT CAN BE SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATED ON THE SITE WITHOUT LEADING TO OVERDEVELOPMENT AND/OR INADEQUATE PARKING FACILITIES; AND**
- (F) **THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT IMPAIR THE FREE FLOW OF TRAFFIC OR HIGHWAY SAFETY, WHILST BEING**

WELL RELATED TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORT; AND

(G) THAT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT HAS ADOPTED MEASURES THROUGH ITS LAYOUT AND DESIGN TO REDUCE CRIME; AND

(H) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK.

- 2.19 Within the defined urban area, there is considerable potential for residential development especially where linked to urban regeneration activity. The Council wishes to encourage the rehabilitation, conversion and re-use of derelict and underused buildings and Brownfield land. However, to ensure that development adds to, and increases the quality of life within Blaenau Gwent, careful consideration needs to be given to proposals as outlined in the criteria contained in this policy, particularly the relationship between proposed and existing development and where brownfield land has become of nature conservation value. The Council will through its development control procedure, ensure that attractive residential areas are not spoiled by insensitive infilling. Where the proposed development would be in conflict with considerations of amenity, design or highway matters prevail, planning permission will normally be refused. The layout of residential developments can play a part in reducing the risk of criminal activity to both property and people.

H5 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT IS NECESSARY IN THE INTERESTS OF AGRICULTURE OR FORESTRY.

- 2.20 Strict development controls must apply in the countryside (defined as land outside the defined urban area as indicated on the Proposals Map) to prevent unnecessary sporadic developments which, in aggregate, would seriously detract from the character and appearance of the countryside. In this context, the Council will seek detailed information regarding business viability, labour requirements and existing accommodation before any decision is reached. Where a dwelling is approved in the countryside, it must be of an appropriate scale and design. Occupancy conditions may be attached accordingly.
- 2.21 Where planning permission is granted for a new agricultural dwelling, occupancy conditions will be imposed on the dwelling itself, and possibly on other dwellings in the farm unit controlled by the applicant, to ensure that the dwelling is kept available to meet the needs of other farm or forestry businesses in the locality if it is no longer needed by the original business, thus avoiding a proliferation of dwellings in the open countryside.

H6 DISCHARGE OF AGRICULTURAL/ FORESTRY OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

AN AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITION WILL ONLY BE DISCHARGED WHERE IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE DWELLING IS NO

LONGER NEEDED TO HOUSE AN AGRICULTURAL WORKER FROM THE ORIGINAL HOLDING OR FROM WITHIN THE LOCALITY

H7 REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

THE REPLACEMENT OF AN EXISTING DWELLING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (A) THE PROPOSED DWELLING WILL BE WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF THE EXISTING DWELLING; AND**
- (B) THE PROPERTY HAS NO ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC MERIT AND IS NOT WORTHY OF CONSERVATION; AND**
- (C) THE PROPERTY HAS NO VISUAL MERIT IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS SURROUNDINGS; AND**
- (D) RESIDENTIAL USE HAS NOT BEEN ABANDONED; AND**
- (E) THE PROPOSED DWELLING WOULD NOT BE MORE INTRUSIVE IN SITING OR SCALE THAN THE ORIGINAL; AND**
- (F) THE PROPOSED DWELLING HAS NO UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION VALUE OF SEMI IMPROVED VEGETATION.**

- 2.22 Subject to the policy criteria the replacement of an existing dwelling in the countryside is acceptable. The Policy is, however designed to prevent the reinstatement to domestic use of dwellings that have been abandoned for so long that the property has fallen into a serious state of disrepair and would need to be virtually rebuilt. Permission for such development will not be granted. Applicants should not commence demolition work pending the determination of the planning application, as this could result in the Council having to consider the proposal as a new dwelling under the provisions of Policy H5.

H8 CONVERSION TO RESIDENTIAL USE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

THE CONVERSION OR REHABILITATION OF BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE TO PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL USE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- (A) THE APPLICANT CAN DEMONSTRATE HIS ATTEMPTS TO SECURE SUITABLE BUSINESS RE-USE AND THE APPLICATION IS SUPPORTED BY A STATEMENT OF THE EFFORTS MADE; OR**
- (B) RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION IS A NECESSARY AND SUBORDINATE PART OF A SCHEME FOR BUSINESS RE-USE AND:**
- (C) THE EXISTING BUILDING IS OF A PERMANENT CONSTRUCTION AND IS STRUCTURALLY SOUND OR CAPABLE OF BEING MADE**

SO WITHOUT EXTERNAL ALTERATION, RECONSTRUCTION OR EXTENSION, AND

- (D) THE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING AND ITS SURROUNDINGS ARE ENHANCED, AND**
- (E) THE CREATION OF A RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGE WOULD NOT HAVE ANY HARMFUL EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

2.23 The Countryside is defined as all areas within Blaenau Gwent not included within the defined urban area boundary on the Proposals Map. The creation of local employment is a priority and the re-use of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of the area for business, tourism, sport and recreation. However, there are existing buildings in the countryside which may be suitable for conversion to dwellings, indeed this may be the only practicable way to conserve them. This is subject to the proposal not having an unacceptable effect on the countryside. The policy does not permit the rebuilding of a ruin or the conversion of a recently completed structure.

H9 GYPSY SITES

WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREA PROPOSALS FOR SETTLED OCCUPATION, TEMPORARY STOPPING AND TRANSIT GYPSY SITES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- (A) THE LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OR VISUAL QUALITY OF THE SURROUNDINGS; AND**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE AMENITIES OF OCCUPIERS OF ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; AND**
- (C) THE PROPOSED LAYOUT, SITE ACCESS, INTERNAL VEHICULAR CIRCULATION, LANDSCAPING AND THE PROVISION OF SERVICES IS SATISFACTORY.**

2.24 The Caravans Sites Act, 1968 as amended no longer places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide accommodation on caravan sites for Gypsies residing or resorting in their area. This Policy provides a criteria based approach for considering the suitability of any sites proposed.

2.25 Settled occupation sites are for long-term use. Temporary stopping is for seasonal or periodical occupation and transit sites are designed for limited stays. Conditions will be attached to approvals in respect of temporary stopping and transit sites.

H10 NURSING HOMES AND SHELTERED HOUSING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NURSING HOMES AND SHELTERED HOUSING FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT HAS A HIGH LEVEL OF PEDESTRIAN ACCESS BOTH WITHIN THE SITE AND FROM THE STREET.**
- (B) GARDEN SPACE WITH A SITTING OUT AREA IS PROVIDED, WHICH ENJOYS SUNLIGHT.**
- (C) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS WITHIN CLOSE WALKING DISTANCE OF LOCAL FACILITIES SUCH AS SHOPS, CHURCHES AND PARKS.**
- (D) SAFE ACCESS AND ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR PARKING AND THE MANOEUVRING OF CARS, AMBULANCES AND VANS OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY CAN BE PROVIDED, WHILE MAINTAINING AN ESSENTIALLY RESIDENTIAL APPEARANCE.**
- (E) NO NUISANCE IS CAUSED TO THE RESIDENTS OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES FROM AN INCREASE IN THE MOVEMENT OF TRADE AND VISITOR TRAFFIC, AND THERE IS NO LOSS OF PRIVACY.**
- (F) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SIZE AND LAYOUT TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT PROPERTIES, THUS MAINTAINING THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF AN AREA.**

2.26 There is a continuing need in Blaenau Gwent for residential care homes and nursing homes, where care is provided on the premises for people who because of their age, require assistance for their daily living needs. There is also a need for sheltered accommodation, where people can be allowed some independence but with varying degrees of care provision.

2.27 Such premises are an appropriate use within residential areas, provided that the building and its surroundings are suitable for the provision of long term residential care. Locations close to and convenient for facilities such as local shops, post offices and chemists may be particularly suitable. Large detached premises with a reasonable amount of garden space are the most appropriate types of property for such a use. Whilst the provision of private open space is a requirement of such homes, this should not be prejudicial to the privacy of adjoining residents. Screening will be required where this is considered necessary to protect the amenity of adjacent residents, or to prevent the overlooking of adjoining private land.

2.28 Vehicular access and the circulation of vehicles within the grounds of the premises have also to be taken into consideration. Although this particular use generates low levels of traffic and requires only limited parking facilities, nevertheless the ability of the property and the highway network to accommodate anticipated traffic movements will be taken into

account.

- 2.29 Development proposals for homes for the elderly will be assessed purely on land use considerations, which includes the impact of the proposals on local amenity and the environment. All other issues regarding the quality of care is governed by Central Government Acts and Regulations enforced by the Council's Social Services Department and Gwent Health Authority. It should not be assumed by developers that if planning permission is granted, registration of the home would follow automatically.

H11 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON LARGE ALLOCATED HOUSING SITES, THOSE OF 30 UNITS OR MORE, AS DEFINED IN HOUSING POLICY H2 WILL BE SUBJECT TO A NEGOTIATED ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING BASED ON NEEDS EVIDENCE.

- 2.30 With the role of the local authority in the housing field changed from that of provider to enabler, the Council will encourage alternative means of ensuring that local residents have access to affordable housing for sale or rent. Affordable housing, for the purposes of this Plan is defined as starter homes for purchase, low cost homes for rent, special needs housing or houses for shared ownership schemes or flexible tenure.
- 2.31 The range of housing currently available in Blaenau Gwent is dominated by older terraced housing. The current average price levels of the existing stock (lowest in Wales) and the number of vacant properties and properties for sale together with recent Housing Association developments suggest that the affordability issue should not be a problem in the area.
- 2.32 Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (Wales) 2 (1996) on Planning and Affordable Housing recognises the need for affordable housing, but consider that specified targets should be based on demonstrable need. The Council intend to develop detailed information on housing need in order to assist developers in identifying the type of affordable housing required in any one area. Until such information is available no targets will be set. Where provision will be expected the amount of provision will be a matter for negotiation between the Council and the owners/developers of large sites. Large sites are defined as those which accommodate 30 or more residential units.
- 2.33 The Council will expect affordable housing for sale or rent to be retained in perpetuity to benefit people requiring such properties, thus providing affordable housing in the future. Such arrangements may include:-
- (a) a restrictive covenant as a condition of sale of land owned by the Council.
 - (b) planning agreements to control the subsequent sale of affordable housing.
 - (c) planning briefs prepared for larger sites will indicate the affordable housing to be provided.
 - (d) schemes which offer an initial discount purchase price, only where priority nomination to existing Council tenants is agreed. This will allow the re-let of the Council property.

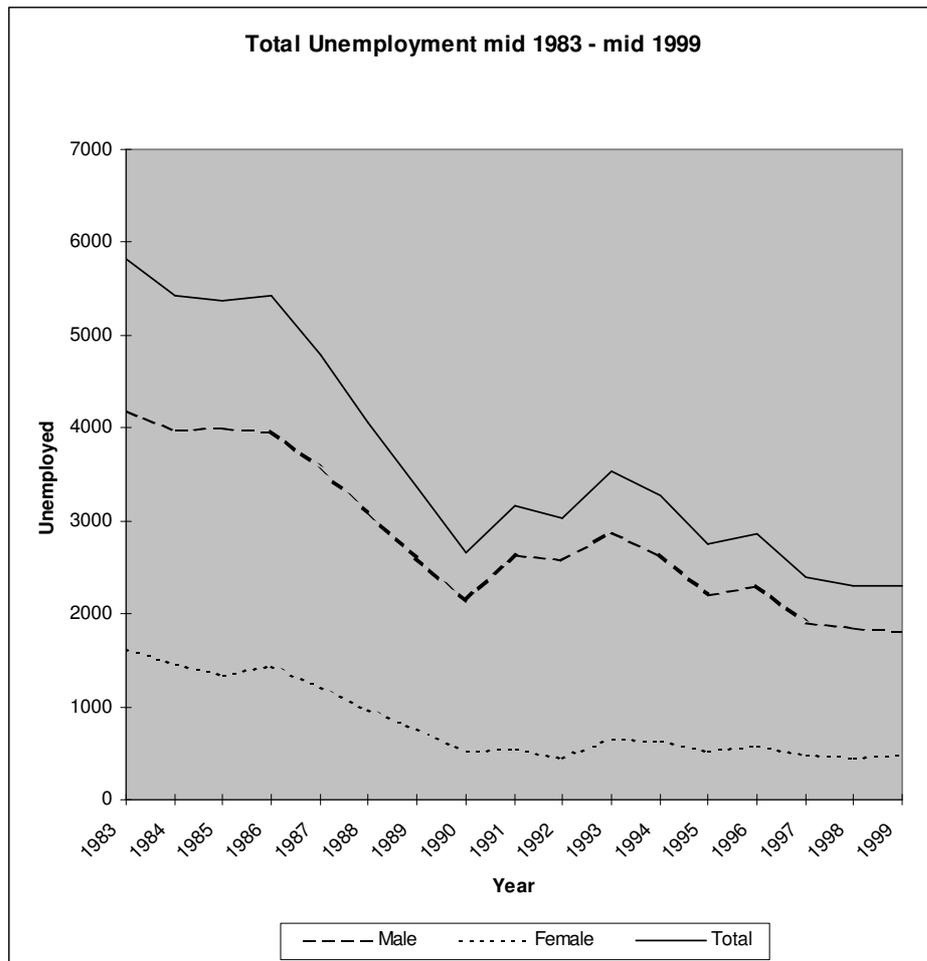
UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

3. EMPLOYMENT

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The last twenty years have seen a dramatic change in the national economy. The 1970's and early 1980's was a period of economic recession with high levels of unemployment and inflation. During this period the economy of the South Wales Valleys deteriorated significantly due to the decline of the coal and steel industries. However, the Council, supported by Central Government agencies, made a determined effort, through a variety of means, to attract inward investment to the area and stimulate the expansion of indigenous businesses. As a result Blaenau Gwent has a record of achievement in economic readjustment. New manufacturing plants attracted to the area currently employ 5,250 people and account for 70% of total manufacturing employment. However, unemployment remains at an unacceptable level with 2,130 people unemployed (9.6%) [January 2000].

3.2 The Figure below indicates that since 1983 there has been a gradual decline in the level of unemployment. However, this reduction can be partly attributed to the changing methodology used to calculate unemployment, it is estimated that "hidden unemployment" significantly increases the official unemployment statistics.



- 3.3 Blaenau Gwent's economy is dominated by manufacturing (7,600 employees) and "other services" (5,300 employees). Other sectors such as distribution and banking are weak, resulting in a limited range of local job opportunities.
- 3.4 In 1991 18,398 men and 21,452 women were economically active in Blaenau Gwent. This gives an activity rate of 77.1% for men, compared to 84.8% in 1981. The female activity rate in 1991 was 58.1% compared to 53.8% in 1981. These rates are significantly lower than the national average of 86.6% for men and 67.6% for women.
- 3.5 The activity rate is a calculation of those considered available for work, in terms of the proportions of those in employment (full and part time) to those unemployed. Those (16-59/64 year old). The implications of low rates of economic activity are a disproportionate number of people becoming dependent on the working population for support. This reduces the amount of money circulating in the local economy, and consequently results in a decline in the quality and quantity of services and facilities available. The low activity rates for Blaenau Gwent reflects in part, the high proportion of residents of pensionable age and residents with a limiting long-term illness.
- 3.6 In addition to suffering high unemployment, Blaenau Gwent has very low household incomes which is attributed to low wages. Employees in Blaenau Gwent were recorded as having the lowest average earnings in Great Britain in 1996, 72.4% of the national average. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent also has low car ownership (43.1% of households having no car, in 1991) and a limited public transport network in a geographically diverse area which has implications for travel to work.
- 3.7 Under the Local Employment Act 1972, Blaenau Gwent has been designated as a Development Area where special measures are available to encourage the growth and attraction of industry. As a result Blaenau Gwent benefits from Regional Selective Assistance. This aims to encourage commercially viable projects, which will create or safeguard employment, whilst contributing to the regional or national economy.
- 3.8 Blaenau Gwent is one of the most deprived areas of Wales. Under Section 1 of the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978, Blaenau Gwent has Designated District Status. This enables the Council to declare Commercial and Industrial Improvement Areas. Grants can then be made available for works which would benefit that area. Works eligible for grants or loans include the conversion, extension, improvement or modification of industrial or commercial buildings and the conversion of other buildings into industrial or commercial use. The scheme also supports environmental improvements. In an attempt to combat deprivation the Council will maximise its efforts to take advantage of all initiatives which assist to relieve economic, social and environmental deprivation including Urban Investment Grants (UIG) - which encourage new capital investment by the private sector in development projects which provide jobs and housing.
- 3.9 The Council prepares an Economic Development Strategy which is reviewed on an annual basis. The primary aims of the strategy are to protect existing levels of employment, to diversify the economic base by attracting new investment, to create new job opportunities and increase skill levels. The Economic Development Strategy (2000/2001) identifies the land required within Blaenau Gwent to provide the employment needed is between 90 and 180 hectares based on 50 to 25 jobs/hectare.

3.10 The Unitary Development Plan is essentially a land use planning document and therefore attempts to influence employment levels through the successful implementation of land use and other policies promoting job creation. The policies listed below indicate the Council's objectives to:-

- a) secure the maximum employment on available land allocated for employment/industrial development bearing in mind the need for development to be sensitive to the quality of the environment.
- b) actively encourage the growth of industrial and service sector employment to protect existing levels of employment and provide new and improved job opportunities.

POLICIES

E1 STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT POLICY

THE STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF BLAENAU GWENT WILL BE MET BY: -

- (A) PROVIDING 180 HECTARES OF LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE REQUIREMENTS OF EXISTING BUSINESSES AND A RANGE OF SITES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW BUSINESSES; AND**
- (B) MAINTAINING THE STOCK OF BUSINESS PREMISES AND SITES, SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY REGARD BEING PAID TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND, WITHIN ESTABLISHED BUSINESS AREAS, SECURING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS BENEFICIAL TO ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES; AND**
- (C) PERMITTING THE EXTENSION OF BUSINESS PREMISES EXCEPT WHERE THERE WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT; AND**
- (D) PERMITTING B1 OFFICE USES IN TOWN CENTRES AND WITHIN DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AREAS; AND**
- (E) FAVOURING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- (F) PERMITTING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE RURAL ECONOMY.**

3.11 The Council's objectives are to increase and diversify employment opportunities by strengthening and broadening the economic base. This involves providing for the needs of established firms and attracting new investment to the area. A major concern is to ensure that the existing stock of business premises and sites is maintained so that opportunities for business expansion and for the establishment of new businesses are not inhibited. This involves encouraging measures to improve the local environment and assist the efficient operation of firms, as well as providing for the extension of business premises, unless there is no environmentally acceptable means by which this can be achieved.

E2 EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATIONS

THE FOLLOWING SITES, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ARE ALLOCATED FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES.

PROPOSALS

Policy No	Location	Ward	Area (Ha)	Class		
				B1	B2	B8
E2(1)	Rassau Extension (West)	Rassau & Sirhowy	33.02	✓	✓	✓
E2(2)	Crown Business Park (Platform G)	Sirhowy	2.21	✓	✓	✓
E2(3)	Crown Avenue (East)	Sirhowy	1.13	✓		
E2(4)	Rassau Extension (East)	Rassau	8.13	✓	✓	✓
E2(5)	Rhyd-y-Blew	Badminton	26.60	✓	✓	✓
E2(6)	Bryn Serth Road	Badminton	12.55	✓	✓	✓
E2(7)	North of Waun y Pound	Badminton	7.95	✓	✓	✓
E2(8)	Waun y Pound	Ebbw Vale North	6.94	✓	✓	✓
E2(9)	Letchworth Road	Ebbw Vale North	0.49	✓	✓	✓
E2(10)	Marine Colliery	Cwm	6.00	✓	✓	✓
E2(11)	Cwmcraehen Lower	Nantyglo	2.35	✓	✓	✓
E2(12)	Extension to Cwmcraehen Estate	Nantyglo	1.38	✓	✓	✓
E2(13)	North Rising Sun	Nantyglo	6.83	✓	✓	✓
E2(14)	Rising Sun Upper	Nantyglo & Blaina	4.61	✓	✓	✓
E2(15)	Cwmtillery Valley	Cwmtillery	1.02	✓	✓	✓
E2(16)	Adj. Blaen-y-Cwm School	Brynmawr	1.50	✓		
		Total	122.71			
<i>*Note</i>	<i>Former Corus site Ebbw Vale.</i>	<i>Ebbw Vale South</i>	<i>Anticipated that approximately 15 ha will be available</i>			

THE FOLLOWING SITES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED, UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR FIRMLY COMMITTED (BETWEEN 1 JANUARY 1996 AND 1 JANUARY 2000):-

Policy No.	Location	Ward	Area (Ha)	Class		
				B1	B2	B8
E2(17)	Tafarnaubach (West)	Sirhowy	1.05	✓	✓	✓
E2(18)	Tafarnaubach (Central)	Sirhowy	0.68	✓	✓	✓
E2(19)	Tafarnaubach (North)	Sirhowy	1.08	✓	✓	✓
E2(20)	Tafarnaubach (East)	Sirhowy	1.22	✓	✓	✓
E2(21)	Tafarnaubach (South)	Sirhowy	1.75	✓	✓	✓
E2(22)	Crown Business Park (B,D)	Sirhowy	2.58	✓	✓	✓
E2(23)	Tredegar Business Park	Tredegar C & W	8.44	✓		
E2(24)	Rassau	Rassau	11.55	✓	✓	✓
E2(25)	Rassau (Platform H)	Rassau	6.08	✓	✓	✓
E2(26)	Waun y Pound (North & Central)	Ebbw Vale North	1.15	✓	✓	✓
E2(27)	Garden Festival Wales (A & C)	Ebbw Vale South	5.05	✓	✓	✓
E2(28)	Roseheyworth (North)	Cwmtillery	2.70	✓	✓	✓
E2(29)	Roseheyworth Business Park	Cwmtillery	1.82	✓		
E2(30)	Glandwr	Llanhilleth	0.70	✓	✓	✓
DEVELOPED						
E2(31)	Cwmdraw South	Ebbw Vale	1.00	✓	✓	✓
E2(32)	Rising Sun Lower	Blaina	1.09	✓	✓	✓
E2(33)	Crown Business Park (A)	Sirhowy	1.50	✓	✓	✓
E2(34)	Crown Business Park (C)	Sirhowy	3.90	✓	✓	✓
E2(35)	Steelworks Road (North)	Ebbw Vale	0.50	✓	✓	✓
E2(36)	Garden Festival Wales (B)	Ebbw Vale	3.01	✓	✓	✓
E2(37)	Roseheyworth Business Park	Abertillery	0.81	✓		
		Total	57.66			

- 3.12 All development proposals on employment land should be checked with SWALEC records for overhead lines etc. Development proposals on employment land should also demonstrate the efficiency of water use during the construction phase and incorporate measures to conserve water by the use of appropriate design and technologies for the operational phase. The Environment Agency and other bodies provide assistance on water efficiency practices.
- 3.13 Certain sites and pipelines are designated as notifiable installations by virtue of the quantities of hazardous substance present. The siting of such installations will be subject to planning controls, for example under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992, aimed at keeping these separated from employment and other land uses with which such installations might be incompatible from the safety viewpoint. In accordance with Welsh Office circular 20/92 the Local Authority will consult the Health and Safety Executive, as appropriate, about the siting of any proposed notifiable installations.
- 3.14 The area covered by this Plan already contains a number of installations handling notifiable substances, including high pressure gas pipelines. Whilst they are subject to stringent controls under existing health and safety legislation, it is considered prudent to control the kinds of development permitted in the vicinity of these installations. For this reason the Planning Authority has been advised by the Health and Safety Executive of consultation distances for each of these installations. In determining whether or not to grant planning permission for a proposed development within these consultation distances the Planning Authority will consult the Health and Safety Executive about risks to the proposed development from the notifiable installation in accordance with Welsh Office circular 20/92.
- 3.15 A key aim of Government policy is to encourage economic development. Local authorities need to ensure that there is sufficient land available which is readily capable of development and well served by infrastructure. It is estimated that Blaenau Gwent needs to identify between 90 and 180 hectares of employment land, in order to create 4,500 jobs by 2011. The aim of the employment land allocation in Blaenau Gwent is to provide a range of sites to cater for economic development opportunities. The selection of sites for allocation for employment use has taken into account the following considerations:-
- (a) the scale and distribution of land which has the benefit of planning permission for employment purposes which are expected to come forward for development within the plan period.
 - (b) the need to take account of topographical constraints and of existing and proposed infrastructure.
 - (c) the need to ensure that land is genuinely available for development i.e. free of exceptional construction requirements.
 - (d) the need to have full regard for environmental concerns, amenity, particularly the visual impact of development and its possible effects on nature conservation.
 - (e) the need to encourage shorter journeys to work and the use of public transport for such journeys.

- 3.16 The scale and distribution of employment land allocations are also based on the following general requirements:-
- (a) to provide opportunities for development in locations with ready access to the Heads of the Valleys Road (A465) which has good links to the national motorway network. This aims to meet the requirement for attracting inward investment projects and to avoid increasing heavy goods vehicle movements through built-up areas.
 - (b) to provide development opportunities throughout the remainder of Blaenau Gwent located as near as possible to established business areas.
 - (c) to improve the quality of the sites available in Blaenau Gwent for employment use and to provide the opportunity for the creation of business parks, incorporating low density development, restricted to B1 uses only in a high quality environment; this is to encourage the establishment of types of business currently poorly represented in Blaenau Gwent and hence diversifying employment opportunities
 - (d) to ensure that allocations are of sufficient size to enable a range of site requirements to be accommodated, including those of large single users requiring capacity for later expansion.

E3 BUFFER ZONES

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN BUFFER ZONES. BUFFER ZONES WHICH WILL PROVIDE FOR TREE PLANTING OR OTHER MEANS OF SCREENING, DRAINAGE WORKS AND CAR PARKING WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE AMENITY OF OCCUPIERS OF NEIGHBOURING LAND WILL NOT BE PREJUDICED. ALL PROPOSALS AFFECTING BUFFER ZONES SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO VISUAL AMENITY AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

- 3.17 Buffer zones are defined as land within areas allocated for employment use adjoining residential development. In order to protect the amenity of occupiers of land adjoining sites allocated for business and industry and to reduce the impact of industrial development on visual amenity, landscape and wildlife, parts of some allocated sites are designated as buffer zones. Buffer zones are not identified for any sites where planning permission has been granted nor small sites where normal design and environmental protection measures will be sought when planning applications are made. The intention of the buffer zone designation is to keep areas adjoining residential development and other sensitive land uses free of industrial buildings so that disturbance and visual impact are minimised. The LANDMAP study will help define appropriate management guidelines. Progress is currently being made on the LANDMAP project.
- 3.18 Some buffer zones will require no special treatment when development takes place on the allocation, but within others it will be appropriate to create screening through measures such as earth mounding and tree planting. Such measures will be secured by planning conditions or legal agreements. The treatment of buffer zones will provide opportunities to enhance visual amenity, wildlife value and possible local recreation opportunities.

- 3.19 It is the intention to prepare development briefs for sites allocated for employment use. Briefs will provide the necessary guidance to ensure satisfactory development in accordance with the UDP policies.

E4 LOCATION OF INDUSTRY

NEW INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND WAREHOUSING DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE: -

- (A) **SUCH PROPOSALS COMPRISE EXPANSION REDEVELOPMENT, CONVERSION OR SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FALLING WITHIN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES E6, E7, E8, AND, E9; OR**
 - (B) **THERE ARE SPECIAL SITE OR BUSINESS NEEDS WHICH CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED ON ALLOCATED LAND; AND**
 - (C) **THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT BE UNDULY HARMFUL; AND**
 - (D) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE OR WILDLIFE INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE.**
- 3.20 In order to safeguard the amenity of existing residential areas, all new large scale industrial, commercial and warehousing development will be channelled to existing or proposed allocations for that purpose. In a limited number of cases it may prove impossible to accommodate new development on the allocated sites, in which case an exception to the policy may be made provided that criterion C has been met.

E5 ESTABLISHED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING OR ALLOCATED EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PREMISES TO OTHER THAN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL USES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:-

- (A) **IT IS PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH FACILITIES FOR THOSE EMPLOYED IN THE AREA SUCH AS DAY NURSERIES, TRAINING CENTRES AND CAR PARKING; OR**
 - (B) **CHANGE FROM BUSINESS OR INDUSTRIAL USE CAN BE SHOWN TO REMOVE A SEVERE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM.**
- 3.21 In order to protect existing employment levels it is important to maintain the stock of business premises. The incursion of other uses into business areas is not generally desirable. However, if the wider needs of the workforce employed in these areas are to be met and if employment opportunities arising there are to be accessible to as wide a range of people seeking work as possible, the introduction of facilities such as day nurseries, training centres and car parking is appropriate.

- 3.22 Other exceptions to the general objectives of retaining business premises for business and industrial uses may arise, for example, where the businesses or industrial use of the premises gives rise to severe environmental problems, then a change of use may enable these problems to be removed.

E6 EXPANSION OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL PREMISES

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL PREMISES ON ADJACENT LAND WILL BE PERMITTED, PROVIDING THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (A) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE AMENITY OF NEARBY RESIDENTS; AND**
 - (B) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING, AND LANDSCAPING IS PROVIDED; AND**
 - (C) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE OF A SCALE AND DESIGN APPROPRIATE TO ITS SURROUNDINGS; AND**
 - (D) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE OR WILDLIFE INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE**
- 3.23 Most expanding firms tend to prefer to stay in the area (avoidance of upheaval, training staff, client and customer awareness). If they move out of Blaenau Gwent they may be replaced by new companies but the benefit of their potential employment growth is likely to be lost to local residents. Although the UDP has not allocated land specifically to accommodate the expansion of existing firms, the Council will look favourably on proposals for existing and indigenous business to be developed. Modest expansion within the existing boundaries or on adjoining land will be permitted providing there are no substantial objections to the development, for example, on the grounds of access or amenity. In certain circumstances, however, the continued expansion of a firm could result in a development which is out of scale with its surroundings resulting in damage to local amenity. In such cases expansion will not be permitted.

E7 REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING UNDER UTILISED OR DERELICT INDUSTRIAL LAND.

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING UNDER USED OR DERELICT INDUSTRIAL LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES WITHIN CLASSES B1 AND B8 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (USE CLASSES) ORDER 1987, WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (A) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE AMENITY OF NEARBY RESIDENTS; AND**
- (B) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING IS PROVIDED; AND**

- (C) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE OF A SCALE AND DESIGN APPROPRIATE WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS, INCORPORATE SATISFACTORY LANDSCAPING, AND WOULD NOT RESULT IN VISUAL INTRUSION; AND**
- (D) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE OR WILDLIFE INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE.**

3.24 Development of existing under utilised or obsolete industrial land has the advantage of contributing to general environmental improvement by the removal of unsightly buildings. It is necessary for the best use to be made of such land, as development on such sites can make use of existing on-site infrastructure investment, assist in overcoming shortage of industrial land and assist in the economic regeneration of the area.

E8 CONVERSION OF PROPERTY TO INDUSTRIAL USE

PROPOSALS FOR THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS FOR SMALL SCALE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (A) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN SO AS NOT TO DETRACT FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA AND INCORPORATES APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPING; AND**
- (B) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE UNACCEPTABLY DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL OR OTHER AMENITIES IN TERMS OF NOISE, SMELL, SAFETY, AIR EMISSIONS OR EXCESSIVE TRAFFIC GENERATION; AND**
- (C) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING IS PROVIDED.**

3.25 Where small scale industrial activity is proposed, particularly in existing buildings, permission will be granted unless there are specific and convincing objections. In rural areas such schemes will be encouraged if it can be established that they help towards creating a balance between housing and employment needs and thereby minimise the need to travel.

E9 SMALL BUSINESS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF PROPERTY IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS TO B1 (BUSINESS/LIGHT INDUSTRIAL) OFFICE USE WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE: -

- (A) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING PROVISION IS PROVIDED; AND**

- (B) THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED USE WILL HAVE NO UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE IMPACT IN TERMS OF THE AMENITY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS; AND**
- (C) THE IMPACT ON THE VISUAL AMENITY RESULTING FROM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS WOULD NOT BE INCONGRUOUS WITH THE RESIDENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA.**

3.26 The establishment of small businesses close to or within residential areas encourages local employment. Large homes especially those with large gardens and other redundant buildings may be suitable for conversion into office use. However, while B1 uses are by definition acceptable within residential areas, consideration will be given to parking and access arrangements, impact on the visual and residential amenity of local residents and the established residential character of the surrounding area.

E10 EXTENSIONS TO BUSINESS PREMISES IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

PROPOSALS TO EXTEND BUILDINGS WHICH ARE WITHIN USE CLASS B1 THAT ARE LOCATED WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN SO AS NOT TO DETRACT FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.**
- (B) THERE WILL BE NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF OCCUPIERS OF NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.**

3.27 Where B1 light industrial/office development is permitted in residential areas there may be subsequent proposals to extend the property to accommodate increased activity. It will be important that any such extensions are in harmony with the host building in terms of scale and proportion and are without detriment to the amenity of neighbouring residential property.

E11 WORKING FROM HOME

PROPOSALS TO USE PART OF A DWELLING, OR A BUILDING ANCILLARY TO A DWELLING, FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT: -

- (A) THERE WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE LOSS TO THE AMENITY OF ADJACENT DWELLINGS OR TO HIGHWAY SAFETY FROM THE PARKING OF VEHICLES OR THE COLLECTION OR DELIVERY OF MATERIALS; AND**
- (B) THERE WILL BE NO OPERATION OF NOISY MACHINERY AND/OR OUTSIDE WORKING OR STORAGE; AND**

(C) THE RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE PROPERTY IS RETAINED.

- 3.28 Many small scale businesses and some types of jobs are based in the home which is used as the "office", business address and base for any vehicle used for the business or job. Home based businesses provide valuable employment opportunities. However, it is important that any proposals to establish home based businesses will not introduce activity which will exceed that which can be tolerated in a residential area. Planning permission is required where the proposal to work from home amounts to a material change of use. Many home based offices with limited business use will not require planning permission.
- 3.29 Unless there is some certainty about how a home based business will operate it will be appropriate initially to grant planning permission for a temporary period, so that the nature of the use can be assessed for a period of time (namely one year) unless the Council can be satisfied that a longer period, or a full time permission can be justified. Where a proposal is to enable an individual to pursue a business based on a particular profession or skill, it may be inappropriate to allow a subsequent occupier to continue the business and a personal planning permission may then be justified.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

4. TRANSPORT

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The transport network determines the ease with which people can move about and gain access to the range of facilities they wish to use, it therefore has a vital role to play in the quality of life of the community. Good access and personal mobility are also essential for the economic and social well being of Blaenau Gwent. The dominant feature of the highway network in Blaenau Gwent. is the Heads of the Valleys Trunk Road (A465) located at the northern end of the County Borough. There are proposals to upgrade the A465 between Hirwaun and Abergavenny to dual carriageway standards, thus completing the entire A465/A40 route across Wales between Neath and Monmouth to a standard commensurate with its strategic nature.
- 4.2 The main north/south links in Blaenau Gwent are the A4048, A4046 and the A467 which connect the Heads of the Valley Trunk Road (A465) with the M4 Corridor to the south.
- 4.3 Currently there is no passenger rail service in Blaenau Gwent. A feasibility study has been carried out into the possibility of restoring a passenger service on the Newport to Ebbw Vale railway line previously used only for freight. The feasibility study indicates that from an engineering and railway operations point of view the restoration of a passenger service is perfectly realistic. The service that is envisaged is a mixture of fast and slow trains serving Abertillery to Cardiff and Ebbw Vale to Newport respectively. Interchange would be possible at major stations Newbridge and/or Risca. The railway operation will stimulate retail and commercial development at and around stations and should lead to substantial regeneration of Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Abertillery and possibly Llanhilleth. Ebbw Vale in particular would be regenerated from a bus/taxi/rail transport node with associated retail and commercial developments in the area of the existing multi-storey car park.
- 4.4 Nationally increasing demands for road space have led to a major public debate on the problems of traffic congestion, the need for controls on the use of the private car and improvements to public transport and the effects of pollution from exhaust gases and its contribution to global warming.
- 4.5 According to Department of Transport national statistics, private transport use increased by 47% over the decade 1982 to 1992, whilst the number of bus journeys declined by 18% and train journeys increased by 18%. The number of cars rose from just over 2 million in 1951 to 21.1 million in 1996. By the year 2025 use of private cars is predicted to increase by between 51% and 76% and the number of cars increasing by between 40% and 51%. (*Source - Transport Statistics Great Britain 1997 - Department of Transport). It is generally agreed that a major problem facing the country is the pollution, congestion and unsociable impact of the private car on the environment.
- 4.6 In Blaenau Gwent car ownership is low compared to the national average. In 1991 57% of households within Blaenau Gwent owned a car, compared to the Great Britain average of 67%. This represented a significant increase in car ownership from 1981, when only 49.4% of households in Blaenau Gwent owned a car. The relatively low level of existing car ownership means that there is a greater potential for an increase in car ownership, and hence overall traffic in Blaenau Gwent. Although traffic congestion is not currently a serious problem in Blaenau Gwent, this increase would require major improvements to the highway network in addition to those recently completed, particularly the A4048 Tredegar By Pass and the A467 Brynmawr to Abertillery Improvement.

- 4.7 Many residential areas in valley towns have little or no provision for residents parking and serious problems are already experienced as a result. Further growth in car ownership will obviously exacerbate this problem. The resolution of traffic problems is essential not only to support the continued economic regeneration of the area, but to also improve the environment by removing traffic from residential areas and hence the quality of life of the residents.
- 4.8 The basic transport priorities of the plan involve:-
- a) the development of an integrated approach to transport which takes account of the needs of all sections of the community including disabled people and other vulnerable groups using the network such as pedestrians and cyclists.
 - b) improving road safety and personal security, and reducing the effects of traffic on the environment from noise and air pollution.
 - c) co-ordinating land use change with transport provision, to ensure that development proposals are located so that workplaces, homes and community facilities are conveniently located to one another, to minimise the need for long journeys and where they can be served by existing transport infrastructure, particularly public transport.
- 4.9 The policies within the plan embrace strategic and non strategic road investment, whilst the promotion of public transport is reflected with appropriate policies for the development of rail facilities and improved bus facilities. The transport strategy of the development plan and the transport implementation programme and long term strategy of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) are integrated with one another. The policies in the LTP are based on the UDP. The documents will be reviewed in parallel as the second LTP will cover the period 2006-2011.

POLICIES

T1 STRATEGIC TRANSPORT POLICY – INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TO DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO: -

- (A) SATISFYING THE TRAVEL NEEDS OF ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH AN EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM, GIVING PRIORITY TO IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS; AND**
- (B) PROMOTING A TRANSPORT NETWORK WHICH HAS REGARD TO THE SAFETY OF ALL ROAD USERS, REDUCES CONGESTION AND WHICH CAUSES MINIMAL DISTURBANCE TO AMENITY THROUGH DANGER, NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION; AND**
- (C) CO-ORDINATING LAND USE CHANGE WITH TRANSPORT PROVISION SO AS TO MINIMISE THE NEED TO TRAVEL AND TO LOCATE NEW DEVELOPMENT WHERE IT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED BY THE HIGHWAY NETWORK AND BE SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTES**

- 4.10 The co-ordination of land use change with transport is a major consideration in the plan. All proposals for new development have, as far as possible, been located so that workplaces, homes and community facilities are conveniently related to each other, and where they can be accessed by public transport. The impact of development on the transport network has also been assessed to ensure that the network, either in its present form or with adaptation capable of being funded through the development, can accommodate the anticipated additional traffic generated.
- 4.11 Due to the relatively low level of car ownership in Blaenau Gwent, a high level of accessibility by public and other sustainable modes of transport is essential if the travel needs of the whole community are to be satisfied.

T2 TRANSPORT PROPOSALS

LAND WILL BE SAFEGUARDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE FOLLOWING TRANSPORT PROPOSALS:

- (A) DUALLING OF THE A465 HEADS OF THE VALLEYS ROAD**
- (B) PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES IN RELATION TO THE RE-OPENING OF THE EBBW VALE – NEWPORT/CARDIFF PASSENGER RAILWAY LINE.**

- 4.12 The safeguarding of Park and ride facilities is also linked to policy T6 which makes provision for the safeguarding of land adjacent to the railway line to enable track line and rail halts to be provided.

T3 MAJOR HIGHWAY SCHEMES

MAJOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:-

- (A) A4046 – CWM-BY-PASS**
- (B) A4046 EBBW VALE TOWN CENTRE – A PACKAGE SCHEME MAINLY TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

- 4.13 The measures proposed to improve the highway network will assist the economy of the area. The emphasis towards improved accessibility will ease travel between local businesses and provide better travelling conditions for employees. Additionally, the improvement of the A465 will ensure the upkeep of a high quality network designed for the movement of goods and give reliable links to the national trunk road system including the main motorways. Proposals for major highway schemes will include an assessment of their impact on landscape and nature conservation. Environmental improvements will be developed to improve areas that have benefited from reduced traffic levels, for example as part of the package of the Cwm By-pass, a range of environmental improvements will be developed for the village.

- 4.14 The A467 has been improved throughout its length, though problems have arisen at Warm Turn. There is a need for improvements to traffic flow, reduction in congestion, and the provision of safe and adequate access to any new development on the A467.

T4 HIGHWAY CONSIDERATIONS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT IT CAN BE ADEQUATELY SERVED FROM THE EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK. IF IT CANNOT, THE SCHEME SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT:

- (A) HIGHWAY SAFETY WILL NOT BE PREJUDICED; AND**
- (B) ENVIRONMENTAL HARM IS AVOIDED.**

- 4.15 New development will not be acceptable if it will create or add significantly to safety or environmental problems on the existing highway network, or, if it does not make provision for appropriately designed new highways and transportation facilities within the development. Development proposals in the plan have been examined to ensure that they do not have unacceptable effects on the highway network, but in some instances off site works may be needed to increase highway capacity or to overcome road safety or environmental problems. Where developments require off-site highway works, the Council will seek safeguards through planning and highway agreements to ensure that such improvements are funded by the developer, and implemented before the development is brought into use. Innovation will be possible in design, provided that the basic principles required by the Council are met, and that the needs of service vehicles, public transport and emergency vehicles are also catered for. Highways designed and constructed appropriately will be adopted for future maintenance by the Council under the provision of the Highways Act.

T5 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE PROMOTION OF GREATER USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE BETTER INTEGRATION OF RAIL, BUS AND CAR TRAVEL BY: -

- (A) FAVOURING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH RAIL TRAVEL.**
- (B) SEEKING TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS AND OPERATION IS MADE AT THE PLANNING STAGE OF NEW DEVELOPMENT.**
- (C) SEEKING TO ENSURE THE INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES INTO NEW DEVELOPMENT AT AN EARLY STAGE BEFORE TRAVEL PATTERNS BECOME ESTABLISHED.**
- (D) PERMITTING APPROPRIATE FACILITIES RELATED TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT.**

- 4.16 A strategic network of public transport covering all areas of Blaenau Gwent is necessary to ensure that non-car owners and people without direct access to alternative means of transport are offered a reasonable level of mobility. The quality and provision of public transport will be improved where possible taking into account changes in accessibility need. This will be in the interests both of energy efficiency and of generally safeguarding and promoting the economic viability of public transport services.

T6 PASSENGER TRANSPORT BY RAIL

LAND WILL BE SAFEGUARDED ADJACENT TO THE EBBW VALE – NEWPORT/CARDIFF RAILWAY LINE TO ENABLE TRACK LINE AND RAIL HALTS TO BE PROVIDED, SITES ALLOCATED ARE: -

- (A) LLANHILLETH
- (B) CWM
- (C) VICTORIA
- (D) EBBW VALE
- (E) ABERTILLERY

THIS WILL FACILITATE THE INTRODUCTION OF AN EBBW VALE – NEWPORT/CARDIFF RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE.

- 4.17 The existing railtrack from Ebbw Vale to Newport is a valuable resource which could provide an important and attractive means of public transport between Blaenau Gwent and the coastal belt. The Council consider that this development is vital and Railtrack have stated that the introducing of passenger rail transport will be subject to the proposals being financially viable and operationally acceptable to both Railtrack and the appropriate train operating companies.
- 4.18 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has been instrumental in forming a Steering Committee made up of members of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Newport County Boroughs to attempt to raise the profile of the railway and to promote the reintroduction of a passenger transport service.

T7 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

THE SAFETY, CONVENIENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF PEDESTRIAN ROUTES WILL BE IMPROVED AND NEW ROUTES CREATED. PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO LINKED URBAN SCHEMES WHICH IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

- 4.19 Walking is important for many trips and it is in everyone's interest that pedestrian safety and convenience is improved, however the growth in traffic is making walking increasingly unpleasant, particularly in the urban areas. Particular efforts will be made to improve the urban pedestrian route network, aimed at persuading more people to walk as an alternative to using private transport. Already significant improvements have been undertaken in

Abertillery, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar town centres through the implementation of partial pedestrianisation schemes.

T8 NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

WITHIN NEW DEVELOPMENTS PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR SAFE, CONVENIENT AND PLEASANT PEDESTRIAN ROUTES CONSISTENT WITH CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES. THE LINE OF EXISTING FOOTPATHS WILL NORMALLY BE SAFEGUARDED EITHER BY INTEGRATION INTO THE OVERALL SCHEME, OR BY DIVERSION WHERE AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE IS AVAILABLE.

- 4.20 Where new developments are proposed, arrangements for pedestrians will need to be considered at the initial planning stages. Pedestrian routes segregated from vehicles, giving direct access to community facilities will be preferred. The design of routes will need to be consistent with the requirements of crime prevention. It will usually be necessary to retain the line of existing footpaths within new developments as these represent the "desire lines" for pedestrians walking to existing facilities. However, diversions may be acceptable where an alternative route of an equivalent character can be devised.

T9 CYCLE ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO THE NEEDS OF CYCLISTS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF CYCLE TRACKS, CYCLE CROSSINGS AT MAIN ROADS AND CYCLE PARKING FACILITIES.

A CYCLE ROUTE NETWORK IS BEING DEVELOPED AND THERE ARE PROPOSALS TO CONSTRUCT CYCLE ROUTES THROUGHOUT BLAENAU GWENT AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

- 4.21 Increased use of cycles can assist in reducing congestion and pollution. The Council intends to provide a number of strategic cycleroutes, either by upgrading existing routes or by creation of new rights-of-way. The routes will integrate with the National Cycle Network and will provide important long distance links connecting major centres and provide a core network to which other new routes can be joined. These routes can also compliment the Authority's and other organisations Green Transport Plans.
- 4.22 New developments and highway improvements should take account of the needs of cyclists. In assessing what provision is required for cyclists, consideration will be given to:-
- (a) the scale and character of development;
 - (b) the degree to which the facility will add to the quality of the scheme, in particular highway safety;
 - (c) the relationship between the project and the planned network of cycleroutes.

T10 CAR PARKING

THE PROVISION OF OFF STREET CAR PARKING WILL BE REQUIRED IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S APPROVED STANDARDS.

- 4.23 Car parking is an essential element in the overall strategy for transport and the provision made for car parking can have an important bearing on the use of the highway network. Suitable off street parking arrangements will be required in new developments to reduce the possibility of indiscriminate parking causing safety and environmental problems, or restricting the capacity of the highway network. The Council has approved car parking standards which are used to assess the adequacy of car parking provision in development proposals.

T11 AVIATION

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR FLYING SITES FOR ALL TYPES OF AVIATION ACTIVITY OR CHANGES TO OPERATIONS AT EXISTING SITES, WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA.

- (A) **THE ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANTAGES ARISING.**
- (B) **THE BROADENING OF THE RANGE OF RECREATION PROVISION AVAILABLE WITHIN THE REGION.**
- (C) **THE LIKELY IMPACT UPON RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER NOISE SENSITIVE PROPERTIES IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY (I.E. UNDER FLIGHT PATHS AND CIRCUITS), BY VIRTUE OF NOISE AND DISTURBANCE.**
- (D) **THE BENEFITS TO SERVICES SUCH AS THE PUBLIC UTILITIES.**
- (E) **THE SITE'S ROLE IN THE OVERALL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE REGION, HAVING REGARD TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES.**
- (F) **VISUAL IMPACT.**
- (G) **THE EXISTENCE OF SUITABLY LOCATED ALTERNATIVE FLYING FACILITIES.**
- (H) **ACCESS FROM THE MAIN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRES IN THE REGION AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS.**
- (I) **PROTECTION OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS.**

RESTRICTIONS UPON THE NUMBER, TYPE AND TIMES OF MOVEMENTS WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO ANY GRANT OF PERMISSION AS REQUIRED IN THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF

THE CASE AND IN NEGOTIATION WITH THE OPERATOR, HAVING REGARD TO THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE SITE.

- 4.24 General Aviation (GA), which covers all civil aircraft activity other than that carried out by the commercial air transport sector, is the largest part of the UK aviation community. The number of GA aircraft represents a growing proportion of the total aircraft on the UK register. GA is important as it can play a vital role in a region. It can form an essential element in the overall transport infrastructure. It can encourage the economic competitiveness of the area and foster its links with Europe. It can broaden the range of recreational facilities available in the region. It can assist services such as the public utilities, police and hospitals.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

**5. TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL
DEVELOPMENT**

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 The retail industry is constantly evolving and over the past twenty years there has been a considerable change in shopping activity and patterns nationally and within Blaenau Gwent. The main factors which have impacted upon retailing in Blaenau Gwent are:

- (a) Population decline/Ageing population.
- (b) Increasing mobility through wider car ownership.
- (c) Growth in the retail sales of comparison goods.
- (d) Changes in retailing such as the move towards out of town centre shopping.
- (e) Changes in customer expectations and the move towards retailing as a leisure activity.

5.2 Current national planning advice recognises the impact that out of town centre retailing has had upon the existing town centres, and also the need to reduce car travel in particular, which has led to a greater emphasis being placed on enhancing existing town centres.

5.3 Aside from the retail element, town centres in Blaenau Gwent provide an important community facility with uses such as Council area offices, health facilities and leisure activities providing services to many people. The County Borough Council are placing a high priority on preserving and enhancing the existing town centres through mechanisms such as Abertillery Action (now replaced by Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr Action) and Tredegar Action. When considered in the light of previous work implemented in Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale, the main retail centres have all benefited from recent improvement. However, given the dynamic nature of town centres, the Unitary Development Plan will need to identify areas for further enhancement as retail centres have to effectively compete with adjoining areas for retail trade.

5.4 The low car ownership rates in Blaenau Gwent, together with high levels of deprivation mean that the Council needs to, in addition to the previously mentioned aims of protecting and enhancing town centres, ensure that all members of the community can access the town centres. This relates to access to centres by bus, car, walking and cycling together with internal circulation within town centres. This section of the Unitary Development Plan outlines policies and proposals which:

- (a) Take account of the dynamic nature of the retail industry.
- (b) Protect and enhance existing retail areas.
- (c) Improve accessibility to and within retail areas.

Recent Changes

5.5 Since 1987, the following larger retail (food and non-food) stores have opened in Blaenau Gwent:

Abertillery	-	Lo Cost	1,655 sq m	(17,825sq ft)
	-	Tesco	2,452 sq m	(26,405sq ft)
Ebbw Vale	-	Focus	2,322 sq m	(25,069sq ft)
	-	Aldi	1,393 sq m	(15,069sq ft)
	-	Tesco	4,645 sq m	(50,893sq ft)
Tredegar	-	Kwik Save	1,309 sq m	(14,047sq ft)
	-	Lidl	1,653 sq m	(17,825sq ft)
Total			15,814 sq m	

5.6 In addition there have been planning permissions for retail/commercial uses on:

Remainder of Focus site, Ebbw Vale	2.56 ha
Land north of Ebbw Vale Cemetery	4.05 ha

Total 7.06 ha

Warwills site, Abertillery	1,299 sq m	(13,993 sq ft)
The Walk, Ebbw Vale	7,737 sq m	(83,285 sq ft)
Dunlop Semtex, Nantyglo	2,500sq m	(28,000 sq ft)
Rassau Est. Rd Entrance, Ebbw Vale	299 sq m	(3,229 sq ft)

Total 11,835 sq m

5.7 This demonstrates that the area has reflected recent retail change in terms of this type of development. Running in parallel with this have been the change of uses in the town centres. The high vacancy rates within the towns are not unsurprising given the problems facing the area. However, the Council through mechanisms such as Commercial Improvement Grants and Town Centre Strategies are endeavouring to address this problem. Further changes in the town centres have seen the reintroduction of residential uses within retail areas both 'above the shop' and in converting retail premises to residential uses.

5.8 To further demonstrate the changes in retailing in Blaenau Gwent, in 1997 Wales first factory outlet shopping centre was opened on part of the former Garden Festival Site near Ebbw Vale. This site provides for approximately 8,500 sq.m of retail floorspace and associated car parking.

5.9 Despite the works undertaken to the town centres, there is a risk that these areas could continue to decline in the face of competition from nearby retail centres outside the County Borough. Whilst these competing facilities are accessible to the more mobile members of the community, the impact upon existing centres could be continued decline leaving less mobile people with less choice. Therefore future provision will place great emphasis on strengthening and enhancing the role and attractiveness of the town centres.

POLICIES

S1 STRATEGIC TOWN CENTRE POLICY

TOWN CENTRES AND LOCAL CENTRES WILL BE THE FOCUS OF SHOPPING, COMMERCIAL, CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITY AND BE THE PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

5.10 The aim is to create a framework to protect and enhance the retail centres to safeguard employment and the interests of the less mobile shoppers. As part of this process, a continued widening of the range of activities other than shops and services will be encouraged, to strengthen the attraction and use of the centres. In addition to retail, uses best located in town centres include major leisure development, (eg theatres, multiplex cinemas, bingo halls and bowling alleys), government and commercial offices, hospitals and tertiary education facilities.

S2 TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE VIABILITY, VITALITY, QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE FIVE CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS OF ABERTILLERY, BLAINA, BRYNMAWR, EBBW VALE AND TREDEGAR WILL BE ENCOURAGED, ESPECIALLY BY THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

- (A) THE UPGRADING AND MODERNISATION OF EXISTING SHOPS, OFFICES AND OTHER COMMERCIAL PREMISES BY MEANS OF REFURBISHMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT;**
- (B) THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES;**
- (C) THE PROVISION OF BETTER VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CIRCULATION ARRANGEMENTS, IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES AND PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING SPACES WHERE NECESSARY;**
- (D) THE PROVISION OF SCHEMES FOR PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY, LANDSCAPING, BETTER QUALITY STREET FURNITURE AND OTHER VISUAL IMPROVEMENTS;**
- (E) THE IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY.**

5.11 The most effective method of achieving the aims of this policy will be through the continued implementation of the Action Plans for the town centres. These can be implemented through a variety of funding mechanisms such as the Welsh Capital Challenge, ERDF and the WDA. In addition the private sector will be encouraged to contribute to the enhancement of retail areas through direct investment in properties, and in the range and nature of services provided in town centres.

5.12 As the town centres are enhanced, the County Borough Council will, in partnership with occupiers and users of town centres develop and implement Town Centre Management Plans (subject to funding). These will seek to protect existing investment and continue to improve the town centres.

S3 TOWN CENTRE USES

WITHIN THE CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP FOR ABERTILLERY, BLAINA, BRYNMAWR, EBBW VALE AND TREDEGAR THE FOLLOWING USES WILL BE PERMITTED:

- (A) RETAIL;**
- (B) PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES;**
- (C) ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE.**

- 5.13 In order to maintain and strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centres a range of uses must be encouraged to extend the operating hours of the centre and to provide services that are all-inclusive, including provision for the less able-bodied and non car owning households.

S4 OUT OF CENTRE RETAIL AND LEISURE DEVELOPMENTS

OUTSIDE THE DEFINED CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS RETAIL AND LEISURE DEVELOPMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF:

- (A) THERE IS A NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT;**
 - (B) THEY MEET THE LOCATIONAL SEQUENTIAL TEST FOR SITE SELECTION;**
 - (C) THE PROPOSAL, EITHER BY ITSELF OR CUMULATIVELY WITH OTHER PROPOSALS OR DEVELOPMENTS, WILL NOT HARM THE VITALITY OR VIABILITY OF A NEARBY TOWN CENTRE;**
 - (D) AN ADEQUATE LEVEL OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS, OR WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE;**
 - (E) THEY HAVE CLEAR AND ATTRACTIVE PEDESTRIAN LINKS WITH A TOWN CENTRE; AND**
 - (F) THEY ARE NOT LOCATED ON LAND USED OR ALLOCATED FOR INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS.**
- 5.14 This Policy is directed at all new retail and leisure proposals, except for minor schemes such as corner shops. In order to meet the aims of enhancing the town centres, and to provide accessibility for non car owning households, it is vital that any new premises are located within or adjacent to established town centres. Careful attention will be given to the linkages with existing town centres, this is especially important given the topographical constraints which exist in valley areas. Further out of centre developments in Blaenau Gwent could have a detrimental impact upon the existing shopping facilities and, therefore a retail impact assessment will be required for any scheme exceeding 2000 sq metres (Gross) of internal floor space. Applications for extensions to existing out of centre retail premises will be critically examined against the aims underlying town centre enhancement.
- 5.15 The Council believes that there may be leakage of trade from Blaenau Gwent to the main concentrations of non-food based retail warehousing at Cwmbran, Merthyr and Newport. There may therefore be scope for such development within the County Borough, although this will be a matter for a developer to establish. The size of the units in such schemes may be controlled by condition.
- 5.16 The sequential approach to be adopted in meeting Criterion (B) will also be applied to other uses that need to be accessible to a large number of people (see 5.10 above), and should match that set out in Planning Policy Wales (March 2002). Where work to the public highway is needed to facilitate the development, the Council will expect the developer to meet the cost. To protect existing resources, the use of land in industrial or business use, or proposed as such, must be avoided.

S5 RESIDENTIAL USES IN TOWN CENTRES

WITHIN THE DEFINED CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS THE CONVERSION OF THE FIRST AND SECOND (BUT NOT GROUND) FLOORS OF SHOP PREMISES AND THE LIKE TO RESIDENTIAL USE WILL BE PERMITTED. OUTSIDE THE DEFINED AREAS CONVERSION OF ANY FLOOR TO RESIDENTIAL USE WILL BE PERMITTED.

- 5.17 The conversion of vacant/redundant floorspace in retail areas can provide a useful addition to the residential stock, bringing new life to town centres and improving the appearance of vacant premises.
- 5.18 Retail development should be located within or adjacent to established shopping centres or on purpose built retail parks. Proposals to site retail uses on existing industrial estates, whether in new or existing buildings, not only involves the loss of badly needed industrial land and premises, but also give rise to parking and traffic circulation difficulties. In the case of undeveloped land which has been designated for an industrial, warehouse or office use, these are clearly the preferred uses and the land should not be used for retail purposes.

S6 FOOD AND DRINK

WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREA, FOOD AND DRINK ESTABLISHMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- (A) **THEY WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE AMENITIES OF OCCUPANTS OF NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; AND**
 - (B) **THERE IS NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK OR HIGHWAY SAFETY; AND**
 - (C) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT HARM THE VITALITY, VIABILITY AND RETAIL MIX OF THE AREA AS A RESULT OF A PROLIFERATION OF THIS TYPE OF USE.**
- 5.19 Food and drink establishments can present considerable problems if sited too close to residential properties. In such circumstances, it is considered desirable to ensure the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers are protected from undue harm. Where appropriate, conditions will be attached to the grant of planning permission which will ensure that opening hours, noise and cooking smells do not create unacceptable living conditions for occupiers of adjacent residential properties.

S7 SHOP FRONT ALTERATIONS

ALTERATIONS TO SHOP FRONTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- (A) **EXISTING VICTORIAN, EDWARDIAN AND OTHER SHOPFRONTS OF QUALITY AND HISTORIC VALUE ARE RETAINED OR RESTORED;**

- (B) THE STYLE AND DESIGN OF NEW AND REPLACEMENT SHOPFRONTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH AND RESPECT THE STYLE OF THE BUILDING INTO WHICH THEY ARE INSERTED AND THE CHARACTER OF THE STREET SCENE IN WHICH THEY ARE SITUATED.**

5.20 Shop fronts are an important feature of the townscape. They are also the subject of many planning applications. There is a need for careful consideration of their design to ensure they respect their context. Wherever shopfronts of merit survive, every effort should be made to retain them. New shopfronts (where these are appropriate and necessary) should not be applied without regard to the rest of the building or the buildings on either side. The Council will publish Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes on the matter to assist property owners and developers.

S8 LOCAL SHOPS

PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE NEW LOCAL SMALL SHOPS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING SMALL SHOPS, OUTSIDE THE FIVE DEFINED CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS, BUT WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREA WILL BE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO UNACCEPTABLE EFFECT ON:

- (A) THE VISUAL AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF THE NEIGHBOURING AREA, AND**
- (B) HIGHWAY SAFETY.**

5.21 Local shops within walking distance are important in catering for immediate day to day needs, and for households without access to a car. Therefore, existing local shops should be retained if at all possible, especially uses such as post offices and chemists which are important to the local community.

S9 RETAIL/OFFICE SITES

THE FOLLOWING SITES AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ARE ALLOCATED FOR RETAIL/OFFICE DEVELOPMENT:

PROPOSALS

Policy No.	Site	Area
S9 (1)	James Street (South) Ebbw Vale Office (A2)	0.2ha
S9 (2)	Gas Holder Site Ebbw Vale Retail (A1 non-food)	0.6ha
S9 (3)	Crown Business Park Tredegar Hotel (C1) Retail (A1) Warehousing only	2.0ha
S9 (4)	Kenmore NMC site Nantyglo Retail (A1 Commercial A2 & A3)	1.1ha
S9 (5)	N.E of Leos Ebbw Vale Hotel (C1),Retail (A1) Warehouse only,Commercial (A2) (A3) (C2)	2.4ha
S9 (6)	Rassau Estate Road Ebbw Vale Petrol Filling Station	0.6ha
S9 (7)	The Walk Ebbw Vale Retail (A1)	2.6ha
S9 (8)	Dunlop Semtex Nantyglo Retail (A1)	2.0ha
S9 (9)	Abertillery Town Centre Commercial (A1) (A2)	0.15ha
	TOTAL	11.65ha

5.22 All developments on retail and office land proposals should be checked with SWALEC records for overhead lines etc.

S10 CAR PARKING

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF CAR PARKING IN THE FIVE DEFINED SHOPPING AREAS OF ABERTILLERY, BLAINA, BRYNMAWR, EBBW VALE AND TREDEGAR WILL BE PERMITTED. SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING THE FOLLOWING SITES WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR CAR PARKING:

S10 (1) WORCESTER STREET, BRYNMAWR

S10 (2) MOUNT STREET, TREDEGAR

S10 (3) BUS STATION, BRYNMAWR

S10 (4) OPPOSITE LCR FACTORY, TREDEGAR

5.23 Sufficient car parking, of a good quality is important to maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres. Demand for car parking facilities in Blaenau Gwent continues to grow in line with increases in car ownership. As a result of the intensity and older type of development, on street car parking is a feature of almost every shopping area and residential street. In addition to the above sites opportunities for additional public off street car parks will be investigated throughout the area. Furthermore the Council will provide additional taxi ranks in appropriate locations as opportunities arise and need is established.

S11 NON-CONFORMING USES

PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH OR INTENSIFY UNSYMPATHETIC NON-CONFORMING COMMERCIAL USES WITHIN OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO EXISTING OR PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL AREAS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

5.24 Environmental conditions within residential areas need to be safeguarded. In this regard, it is necessary to prevent the establishment or intensification of activities which detract from the amenity of residential areas due to lorries, noise, dust, and smell, etc. Proposals which would lead to an improvement of the situation would be considered and might entail: reduction in noise, the grant of planning permission for the same use in a more acceptable location, together with an agreement that the existing site will no longer be used for such purposes. Industrial estates may be acceptable provided the use does not detract from other occupants of the estate. Policies T2, T5, T8 and E4 (outlined in other chapters) have implications for commercial development.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

6. ENVIRONMENT

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Local planning authorities must take account of the environment in the widest sense. This includes not only traditional issues of concern such as landscape quality, nature conservation and built heritage, but also the wider issues such as global warming, the consumption of non-renewable resources and pollution of water and the atmosphere. The importance of environmental considerations in maintaining and improving the quality of life is now widely recognised. Green issues and the concept of sustainable development has been firmly placed on the political agenda. A new era is emerging in which global concerns for the environment, changes in the economy, new technology and shifting social values, demand that more attention is paid to the environment. Consequently environmental considerations have a key role in the assessment of planning applications. The Environment Agency's Eastern Valleys Local Environment Plan plays a key role in local environmental management and is an important source of data and information relative to the implementation of this UDP.
- 6.2 The Unitary Development Plan contributes to the role of local government as the local steward of the environment. Local Agenda 21 is being used as the management framework for environmental stewardship. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the needed enhancement and conservation of the urban and rural physical environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

- 6.3 Blaenau Gwent borders the Vale of Usk and the Brecon Beacons National Park, resulting in a wide variety of landscape and industrial heritage. Blaenau Gwent is characterised by its uplands and a close association between densely urbanised communities and large tracts of open countryside. The main urban communities are located in the three main valleys - the Ebbw Fawr, Ebbw Fach and Sirhowy Valleys - centred upon Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. Steel and coal industries were responsible for the urban growth of the valley settlements with their local communities and local cultural traditions. Environmental degradation and pollution were by-products of rapid industrialisation. In recent years there has been a dramatic improvement in the local environment due to investment by the Welsh Development Agency in derelict land reclamation schemes.
- 6.4 The landscape has changed - most of the spoil tips which once dominated the valleys have been removed or landscaped - and large areas of old housing have been replaced or upgraded. Large areas have benefitted from urban regeneration schemes and the development of the Garden Festival Site has had an important impact on the environment.

STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

- 6.5 The Plan's Strategy emphasises the importance of protecting and improving the local environment, not just for environmental reasons, but also for the benefits that a good quality environment can bring to local residents and for the image of Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.6 The UDP aims to contribute towards the goal of ensuring that development and growth are sustainable. The plan is therefore concerned, in line with Welsh Office Guidance [Planning Guidance (Wales): Unitary Development Plans] to put in place a policy framework which will ensure that environmental considerations are at the forefront in considering future development proposals.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

EN1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD CONSERVE THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND AMENITY OF LAND. FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE WHICH ARE OF IMPORTANCE FOR WILD FLORA AND FAUNA OR HABITATS AND SPECIES WILL BE PROTECTED AND MANAGED.

EN2 THE DESIGN OF ALL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING CONVERSIONS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, SHOULD BE SUSTAINABLE IN TERMS OF SCALE, DENSITY, LAYOUT, HEIGHT, MASSING, ACCESS, MATERIALS, APPEARANCE AND LANDSCAPING. DESIGNS SHOULD RESPECT THE TOPOGRAPHY, NATURAL SETTING AND IMPORTANT EXISTING BUILT FORM IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSAL.

- 6.7 The main aim of the environment-led policy is to ensure that environmental resources are fully taken into account, to improve the physical environment, to protect high quality environments, to control pollution and to improve poor environments. Biodiversity, habitats, species and the wider environment will be protected through the planning process. Planning agreements and obligations will be used to bring about the conservation and sustainable management of the above features and interests.
- 6.8 In this section policies are intended to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of both the built and natural environment. Policies and proposals are particularly concerned with conserving aspects of value, initiating further improvements, controlling new development and encouraging better quality and design. In this context the Blaenau Gwent Landscape Improvement Initiative and the Countryside and Landscape Strategy have been developed to provide guidance and advice on how the countryside and landscape can be developed and managed. In addition the Blaenau Gwent LA21 strategy and the Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Action Plan contain objectives for the conservation protection and improvement of the local natural and built environment. An emphasis on "quality" is intended to help maintain or enhance the attractiveness of Blaenau Gwent and help to attract investment and promote the Council's developing role associated with leisure and tourism activities. The intended effect of the environmental policies are to protect and conserve the area's natural attributes and to create and sustain a more attractive urban environment and landscape, whilst also improving the quality of life of local residents.
- 6.9 To achieve the broad aims for the environment set out in the Strategy, a number of more detailed objectives and aims are identified below. Each of the objectives are listed, followed by the relevant actions. It should be noted that some of the targets may relate to more than one objective, and where this occurs the target has been listed with what is felt to be the most appropriate objective.

1: To protect or enhance the built environment.

- (a) The maintenance of the character, as well as the vitality, of Blaenau Gwent's towns and villages.
- (b) The conservation of the built heritage.
- (c) The encouragement of good design in new developments.
- (d) The implementation of on-going building improvement programmes.

- 2: To protect or enhance the natural environment.**
- (a) The protection of areas supporting valuable habitats and species.
 - (b) The promotion of nature conservation.
 - (c) The encouragement of work towards improving the natural environment
- 3: To retain trees and hedgerows and encourage new planting.**
- (a) The retention of woods, copses and trees and hedgerows.
 - (b) The encouragement of new and replacement planting.
- 4: To protect or improve landscape quality.**
- (a) The conservation of landscapes of special value.
 - (b) The encouragement of high standards of landscape design.
- 5: To improve the environmental quality of the County Borough.**
- (a) The implementation of on-going environmental improvement programmes.
 - (b) The reclamation of contaminated and derelict land.
 - (c) The improvement of other physically poor environments.

EN3 DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL:

- (A) IS ESSENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURE OR ANOTHER SERVICE WHICH IS REQUIRED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, OR**
- (B) IS THE CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING BUILDING.**

- 6.10 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the qualities of the open countryside, including its recreational value, are not lost to future generations. It is important that development proposals do not encroach upon open countryside. Policies H5 and H7 respectively deal with residential development in the countryside and replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside. Certain developments by their nature are often required to be located in the countryside such as telecommunications, forestry or open waste facilities.

POLICIES - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EN4 BUILDINGS OF HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH BY VIRTUE OF ITS LAYOUT, DESIGN AND MATERIALS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OR ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY OF THE PLAN AREA.

- 6.11 This policy reflects the Council's concern to improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's built environment. Within this concern, there will be an emphasis on protecting and where appropriate enhancing buildings and artefacts of architectural, historical or archaeological

interest. (refer to Environmental Policy EN6, EN7, EN8). Increasing regard will also be paid to the quality and design of new developments. Improvements in these respects will go a long way towards improving the image of the area and its potential to attract visitors and investors. The long term intention is to prepare a Conservation Strategy for Blaenau Gwent.

EN5 TOWN AND VILLAGE CHARACTER AND BUILT DESIGN

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH WILL HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE PARTICULAR CHARACTER OF TOWNS, VILLAGES AND OTHER SETTLEMENTS. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD RELATE TO LOCAL CHARACTER WITH RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:

- (A) EXTERNAL APPEARANCE,**
- (B) SCALE,**
- (C) DENSITY,**
- (D) LAYOUT,**
- (E) HEIGHT,**
- (F) USE OF MATERIALS,**
- (G) ACCESS ,**
- (H) LANDSCAPING**

6.12 Individual and groups of buildings, their relationship to each other and to the whole environment; as well as the visual character and effect of smaller elements such as signs, trees, walls, surfaces and street furniture, provides an area with its character and atmosphere.

6.13 The established character of parts of Blaenau Gwent could be harmed by insensitive development out of scale with and unrelated to, the identity of particular settlements. New buildings should respect desirable precedents in the surrounding area. The Council will be prepared to work closely with developers to achieve a satisfactory design from the earliest planning stages. Two important contributions involving development proposals are: -

(a) Public Art

The incorporation of art in appropriate new developments will be favoured.

Buildings in prominent locations with public access or large business and retail elements can be made more interesting by the use of sculpture or paintings, within or outside the building. In addition, attention to small scale detail on the facades and at ground floors of buildings can create interest.

(b) Crime Prevention

Development proposals which includes design features which will help to discourage crime will be favoured.

Much can be done to reduce opportunities for crime through management, design or changes in the environment. The design and layout of new proposals can make crime more difficult to commit and/or increase the risk of detection for potential offenders. Measures can include: Improving security and siting of car parks and open spaces so that they are visible from surrounding buildings; higher standards of street lighting; walls, footpaths and landscaping set out so that blind spots are avoided. Development proposals should take account of the principles of 'secured by design'. The Council will encourage this process through giving advice to developers and disseminating information.

- 6.14 In seeking to conserve the positive elements in the built environment, the Council must ensure that important buildings are not demolished, or altered in such a way as to detract from the character of the town and that any new buildings in close proximity are of a sympathetic design. In the case of individual buildings of particular merit, their listing as being of architectural historic interest is the obvious means of achieving this end. In the case of groups of buildings, designation of a conservation area is more appropriate. It also needs to be borne in mind that the urban landscape is as important as buildings and it is appropriate that policies are implemented to safeguard them both.
- 6.15 The rows of terraced housing with their original Pennant sandstone and natural Welsh slate roofs form a distinct urban environment which contributes to the unique character of mining communities in South Wales only. In recent years, much has been done to improve these older houses, often with the benefit of Improvement Grants. However, the alterations which had been made to the external appearance of these dwellings have often involved the replacement of traditional features and materials with unsympathetic ones. Natural slate roofs have been replaced by coloured concrete tiles and original Pennant stonework by cement pebble-dash finishes for example.

EN6 DESIGN QUALITY AND VISUAL AMENITY

NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE LAYOUT, DESIGN, MATERIALS AND LANDSCAPING WILL RESPECT OR ENHANCE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT. EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS WHICH HAVE REGARD TO THE DESIGN AND SCALE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AND WHICH COMPLEMENT THE AREA IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED, WILL BE PERMITTED.

- 6.16 The quality of the built environment needs to be enhanced, especially if further investment is to be attracted to the area. In order to protect and enhance the built environment, it is important that careful control is exercised over the relationship of new to existing development, both in respect of new build schemes and of extensions and alterations to the existing built environment. Only development proposals which are generally consistent with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes on layout, design, materials and landscaping will be accepted.

- 6.17 The focus is on good design rather than stifling innovation, originality or initiative. However, there is a desire to retain much of the traditional appearance of particular parts of Blaenau Gwent. In certain cases, the design quality of an exceptional scheme and the contribution it makes to the landscape or townscape may justify a departure from this policy.

EN7 CONSERVATION AREAS

THE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL FOR THE RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE WILL PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT UNACCEPTABLY DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER OF A CONSERVATION AREA WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

- 6.18 The aim of this policy is to ensure that areas of special character are protected and where appropriate improved. The only Conservation Area in Blaenau Gwent is at Tredegar namely Bedwellty House and Park. Identification of areas worthy of conservation will be constantly under review. Possibilities include Garden City, Ebbw Vale, St. Michael's Church area in Abertillery, St. Iltyds Church area in Brynithel, Castle Street and the Circle, Tredegar. The Council will designate conservation areas and bring forward enhancement plans for their improvement or protection as appropriate. The Council will not agree to the demolition of buildings within a Conservation Area unless a realistic and appropriate scheme for the site is advanced. If the overall character of a Conservation Area is to be maintained then proposals for development within, adjacent to or visible from the area must be strictly controlled in terms of design, materials, and landscaping in order not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. The sensitive character of a Conservation Area justifies proposals being given special attention requiring extra controls to ensure a positive contribution in terms of their aesthetic quality.
- 6.19 Protection and enhancement of the Conservation Areas can be furthered through individual Conservation Area Strategies which establish a framework to provide co-ordination between conservation projects and as a basis for development control decisions. Such Strategies will help to define in detail the aspects of character and appearance which are worthy of preservation. These can assist in providing advice for developers on design which is of critical importance. However, the imitation of historic styles will not necessarily be sought.

EN8 LISTED BUILDINGS

DEVELOPMENT WHICH PRESERVES AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, ENHANCES THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STRUCTURE AND SETTINGS OF LISTED BUILDINGS WILL BE PERMITTED, INCLUDING: -

- (A) ALTERATIONS AND/OR EXTENSIONS WHICH ARE COMMENSURATE WITH THE FORM, SCALE, MASSING AND MATERIALS OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING;**
- (B) A CHANGE OF USE, WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THIS IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF THE BUILDING, AND THE ALTERATIONS REQUIRED TO**

ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSED USE WILL RESULT IN NO OR MINIMAL LOSS OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES.

DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDINGS WILL ONLY BE GRANTED CONSENT IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WHERE IT IS DEMONSTRATED TO BE NECESSARY, FOR EXAMPLE AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT OF A SITE.

- 6.20 The Assembly is responsible for compiling a list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest, under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This responsibility is undertaken by Cadw, which grades buildings on merit (I, II* or II). The listing of a building encompasses the exterior, interior and the structures within the curtilage. Listed building consent from the local authority and planning permission are required for any works intended. Details of listed buildings within Blaenau Gwent are held by the Environment and Development Department of the council.
- 6.21 The fact that a building is 'listed' does not mean that it will be 'preserved' intact in all circumstances, but it does mean that demolition will not be allowed unless the case for it has been fully proven. Alterations must preserve the character of the building. It is an offence to demolish or alter a listed building in any way that affects its character without listed building consent which must first be obtained from the Local Planning Authority. There may be circumstances where listed buildings have fallen into such a state of disrepair as to severely detract from the environment and prejudice worthwhile development of the site or adjoining land. In such circumstances the Council may well support the case for demolition. The Authority and the Assembly also have powers to Compulsory Purchase Listed Buildings that are not being properly preserved.
- 6.22 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is striving for investment, in the built environment, a flexible approach will be adopted in land allocation when dealing with planning applications for a change of use, where it is deemed vital for the preservation of the building. Demolition of a listed building, however, will only be granted approval when all material issues and options have been evaluated, in relation to the intrinsic architectural and historic interest of the building.
- 6.23 The setting of Listed Buildings can be enhanced and their appearance improved by ensuring that new developments in their vicinity are complementary, and do not detract or prejudice the character of the buildings.

EN9 ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT MONUMENTS

IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS, BOTH SCHEDULED AND OTHERWISE WILL BE PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT LIKELY TO HAVE A DESTRUCTIVE OR ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THEM. DEVELOPERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO ENABLE PROPER ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL ON ANY ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS.

- 6.24 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Blaenau Gwent consist of those scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Development on such sites requires Scheduled Monument Consent, in addition to planning permission. Unscheduled

ancient monuments which are shown to be of national importance, will also be encompassed by this policy. Details of Scheduled Ancient Monuments within Blaenau Gwent are held by the Environment Department of the council.

- 6.25 Archaeological remains are irreplaceable, representing a finite and non-renewable resource of past human activity. Interest in archaeology is gaining in significance and the Welsh Office, Circular 60/96, recognises the importance of archaeological remains "for their own sake" as well as their obvious role in education, leisure and tourism.
- 6.26 Development affecting the structures of unscheduled ancient monuments will be required to comply with the following criteria:-
- (a) an archaeological assessment that follows the advice of an archaeological consultant will be submitted by the developer with the planning application;
 - (b) In order to secure appropriate protection and development, conditions are imposed upon planning consents and/or agreements under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are entered into.
- 6.27 The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust is responsible for maintaining the Sites and Monuments Record of Archaeological Sites in the County Borough. This record has been adopted by the County Borough for planning purposes. The County Borough will follow the guidance outlined in Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy and Circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment in determining planning applications affecting archaeological sites.
- 6.28 An Archaeological Assessment of the site will be required to determine its archaeological significance and, if planning permission is granted, to ascertain whether:-
- (a) The remains present justify preservation in situ;
 - (b) Or (if not) whether satisfactory arrangements for the excavation and recording of remains can be provided.

EN10 HISTORIC PARKS, GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE EFFECT ON GARDENS, PARKS AND LANDSCAPES OF HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AESTHETIC, ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR ECOLOGICAL INTEREST INCLUDING, ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES.

AREAS COVERED BY THIS POLICY ARE:

- (A) BEDWELLY PARK (TREDEGAR)**
- (B) THE GORSEDD CIRCLE (EBBW VALE)**
- (C) THE WELFARE PARK (BRYNMAWR)**
- (D) PILGRIM'S PARK (BLAINA)**
- (E) DUFFRYN PARK (BLAINA)**
- (F) ABERTILLERY PARK (ABERTILLERY)**
- (G) FESTIVAL PARK, VICTORIA (EBBW VALE)**
- (H) BLAENAVON (BRYNMAWR)**
- (I) CLYDACH GORGE (BRYNMAWR)**

- 6.29 Bedwellty Park is the only site in the Blaenau Gwent area included in Cadw's Register of 'Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales'. This park is also designated as a Conservation Area and will be protected under Policy EN6. Cadw's Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales lists Blaenavon, part of which is within Blaenau Gwent. The Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest lists Clydach Gorge, part of which is also in Blaenau Gwent. The conservation of these, and the other historic parks, gardens and landscapes identified, will be implemented by development control decisions.
- 6.30 There are a number of other historic natural and industrial landscapes which this policy also covers. The Council will use the Blaenau Gwent Countryside and Landscape Strategy as a source of Supplementary Planning Guidance on this Policy.

EN11 THROUGH-ROUTES AND GATEWAYS

NEW PROPOSALS FRONTING MAJOR THROUGH-ROUTES AND AT THE IDENTIFIED GATEWAYS INTO BLAENAU GWENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO INCORPORATE A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING.

- 6.31 The main impression of Blaenau Gwent can be formed on travelling along the main through routes, at certain points of arrival and at "gateways" to urban areas and town centres. The appearance of these areas is therefore important. Where the impression is good the image of the area is raised. This adds not only to the quality of life of local residents, but also enhances the ability to attract potential investors and visitors. There will be an emphasis on removing dereliction and preserving and enhancing existing features of importance. LANDMAP assessment will help to inform the implementation. Limited resources will be concentrated to produce environmental improvements at the gateways and along the main through-routes and natural valley forms listed below:
- (a) **Highways:** A465, A467, A4048, A4046.
 - (b) **Waterways:** The Rivers Sirhowy, Ebbw, Ebbw Fach and Tillery.
- 6.32 At certain points along the major through-routes there is a sense of "arrival" at a town boundary. These "gateways" are of the utmost importance, where development and landscaping should achieve exemplary standards. At the gateways, it will be essential that the appearance of the properties, open spaces and highways are of high visual quality.

POLICIES - THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

EN12 NATURE CONSERVATION

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE RETAINED, PROTECTED AND ENHANCED WHEREVER POSSIBLE, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO AREAS OF WILDLIFE INTEREST.

- 6.33 In referring to the so-called "natural" environment it is recognised in an area like Blaenau Gwent that what is taken to be natural is in reality the product of man's activities over many years. Nevertheless, interest in the quantity and quality of the natural environment and the habitats and species it supports, is of increasingly important public concern. Strategic Guidance indicates the need to protect areas of scientific and ecological importance.

- 6.34 This policy recognises the concern for the natural environment and its interest for aesthetic, scientific, recreational and educational activities. Once destroyed, the natural environment is difficult or impossible to replace. The Council is already committed to protecting the natural environment in the approved Countryside and Landscape Strategy and this document will be used as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

EN13 SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS) AND LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs) WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OUTWEIGHS THE LOSSES TO BIODIVERSITY AND THESE LOSSES CAN READILY BE MITIGATED WITHIN THE BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA.

EN14 NATIONAL SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, ON SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSIs), NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES (NNRs), SITES IDENTIFIED UNDER THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION REVIEW (NCRs) OR GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION REVIEW (GCRs) WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL IS OF NATIONAL OR GREATER IMPORTANCE; AND**
- (B) THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT CANNOT BE LOCATED ELSEWHERE.**

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED, PLANNING CONDITIONS AND/OR OBLIGATIONS WILL BE USED TO ENSURE PROTECTION OR ENHANCEMENT OF THE SITE'S NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST.

- 6.35 These designated sites are the areas of greatest nature conservation interest in the County Borough and will continue to be the cornerstone of long-term wildlife protection and management policies.

- 6.36 There are currently three SSSIs in the plan area -

- (a) Cwm Merddog Woodlands, Ebbw Vale
- (b) Brynmawr Sections, Brynmawr
- (c) Llangattock Moors

- 6.37 These sites are designated for the national importance of their character and features. The Brynmawr Sections is a site of outstanding stratigraphical and palaeographical significance. Cwm Merddog is an example of ancient semi-natural woodland. Only proven national need and a lack of alternative sites will justify exceptions to Policy EN13 being made, and proposals will be subject to rigorous examination of their potential for adverse environmental effects. Development within SSSI Consultation Areas as defined by the Countryside Council for Wales will be subject to rigorous scrutiny in order to ensure that the

scientific interest of the adjoining site is not compromised. Development on Sites of Special Scientific Interest or adjacent to them can have a detrimental effect on the features or qualities of an SSSI, either physically or through noise, water pollution or other forms of disturbance.

6.38 There are currently two declared Local Nature Reserves -

- (a) Silent Valley, Cwm, Ebbw Vale.
- (b) Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar.

Further designations are due within the plan period -

- (a) Cwmtillery and Roseheyworth.

6.39 Other opportunities may also emerge. LNRs provide mechanisms for protection, public use and educational opportunities to explore the wildlife value of sites. SINC's will also be designated in accordance with criteria that have been adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and after consultation with landowners with whom management agreements may be sought.

6.40 In considering proposals the Council will use the Blaenau Gwent Landmap Initiative as a source of information. Where planning permission is granted, ecological resources may need to be protected by conditions or planning obligations.

EN15 FEATURES OF ECOLOGICAL VALUE

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH IMPACT ADVERSELY ON THE INTEGRITY OR CONTINUITY OF HEDGEROWS, MATURE TREES, PONDS AND OTHER WATER FEATURES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

6.41 The retention of ecological features is of benefit to wildlife and the sensitive incorporation of natural features into development proposals makes good design practice. This policy is intended to protect from unnecessary loss, all areas of flora, fauna, geological and physiographical interest which are subject to development proposals. Such action, will help to foster nature conservation as well as serving to add a valuable input into development control decisions. Proposals may be acceptable where mitigating measures are provided which reinstate the integrity and continuity of these features. Appropriate management will be encouraged by the imposition of conditions, the use of planning obligations and management agreements with landowners and developers where appropriate.

6.42 In assessing features of ecological value, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Phase I Habitat Survey will be of assistance in identifying features which are important both for their intrinsic value and in meeting the present and future needs of the natural environment.

6.43 The transplanting of valuable flora, which is under threat can be a difficult operation and should only be carried out as a last resort, following a thorough evaluation of all available options.

6.44 The wildlife value of land depends to a large extent on its management. Thus, the management of land in accordance with nature conservation principles is necessary to

enhance the quality and quantity of wildlife habitats. A future biodiversity strategy will detail the requirements and methods of management for sites of nature conservation value, as well as promoting the social, educational and environmental benefits accessible natural areas can bring to the local community.

EN16 ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH IMPACT ADVERSELY ON WILDLIFE OR THE ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF THE SITE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

EN17 HABITATS & SPECIES

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON HABITATS AND PROTECTED SPECIES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

- 6.45 The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the County Borough by conserving species of local, regional, national or international importance. In addition, for habitats in the area, management will ensure the greatest diversity of species. Whilst the current management of habitats is important, the Rio Convention obliges supporting nations to undertake conservation through the development of species and habitat action plans. The Countryside Council for Wales has already identified a number of species in the County Borough for which action plans are required such as the white clawed crayfish, grey partridge, otter, brown hare and the marsh fritillary butterfly. Internationally protected species are those listed in Annex II of the Habitats and Species directive 1992. Nationally protected species are those listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Locally protected species are those identified in the Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The weight to be attached to safeguarding the welfare of a particular species will be relative to the hierarchical level at which the need for its protection has been recognised.
- 6.46 For many less endangered species the correct management of land is a vital tool in securing their long term future. Wildlife corridors allow wildlife to move between fragmented sites and they facilitate genetic exchange. Species reintroduction would only be supported where there were sufficient available habitat of the right type and where reintroductions would not adversely affect the existing biodiversity.

EN18 SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN AREAS DESIGNATED AS SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS WILL BE REQUIRED TO DEMONSTRATE RESPECT FOR THEIR SETTING IN TERMS OF DESIGN, SITING AND LANDSCAPING. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS DETRIMENTAL TO THE FEATURES OR QUALITIES OF SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED

- 6.47 The designation is typically applied to areas which make a substantial contribution to Blaenau Gwent's identity, diversity and quality with their own features and distinctive sense of place. LANDMAP assessment helps in the formation of these designations. For instance Nant Trefil constitutes an uncluttered valley with it's own separate and individual identity with fields bordered by limestone walls. Cwm Carno is included for its steep heather sides

and distinctive groups of trees. All these areas are considered worthy of 'Special Landscape Area' status and the Council will endeavour to:

- (a) control and regulate the impact of development;
- (b) resolve the conflict between agricultural, recreational, forestry and woodland interests;
- (c) protect and improve the landscape and wildlife resources.

6.48 The Blaenau Gwent Landscape initiative is a source of information which will be material in determining applications within Special Landscape Areas. This policy is not intended to prevent works of land improvement which would not have a detrimental effect upon the landscape.

6.49 The distinctive character of landscapes is dependent upon a combination of many different elements including topography, the type and location of trees, woodlands and other vegetation, the character of settlements, the nature of river valleys and local farming techniques. Landscape elements such as fencing, walling and hedgerows also contribute towards a 'sense of place'. These various landscapes serve a valuable open land function. Encouraging and developing the quality of landscapes can give rise to areas of ecological interest.

6.50 The Government is encouraging Councils to include land-use policies designed to secure the conservation of natural beauty and amenity of land. Policy EN17 sets out the Council's commitment to conserving this resource, which is fundamental in not only raising the quality of life for residents, but also in improving the image for potential investors and visitors. Landscape enhancement schemes, can restore and even produce new landscape features by creating distinctiveness through sensitive design and positive reclamation of derelict land. Landscape Strategies and Programmes for the County Borough are contained in the Countryside and Landscape Strategy and the Landscape Improvement Initiative which provide Supplementary Planning Guidance. Habitat surveys will highlight areas of ecological interest and will determine the nature of any proposed enhancements. Development proposals in Special Landscape Areas adjacent to the National Park will need to take into account the purposes of the National Park as well as the distinctive character of the landscape. Proposals adjacent to the National Park boundary are subject to consultations with the National Park Authority.

6.51 Agricultural and associated development should be designed and sited to minimise any significant adverse effect on the landscape where this occurs, but with due regard to the practical constraints of function and economy inherent in an upland farming district. Development by statutory undertakers must occasionally take place in locations outside built up areas. Where associated development within Special Landscape Areas can not be avoided, development should be designed and sited to minimise any significant adverse effect on the landscape.

EN19 LOCAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

LOCAL LANDSCAPE AREAS ARE DESIGNATED AT:

- (A) PARC CWM GOFILION, EBBW VALE**

- (B) VALLEY ROAD, EBBW VALE**
- (C) BEAUFORT GREEN NETWORK, BEAUFORT, EBBW VALE**
- (D) FESTIVAL PARK, EBBW VALE**
- (E) REAR OF TY BRYN ROAD, CWMTILLERY, ABERTILLERY.**

WITHIN SUCH AREAS DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL CHARACTER OR FUNCTION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

- 6.52 Local Landscape Areas provide urban communities with access to areas of natural landscape. These areas have been identified as an important part of the environment by the local communities in which they exist. Agenda 21 recognises that one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is public involvement and participation. Generally, the areas are open spaces where natural or urban landscape is essential to the quality of the environment. The extent of development on allocated sites within the areas will be limited and must retain and enhance the existing landscapes and planting. These areas will be safeguarded for the purposes of informal leisure and local amenity whilst providing valuable natural environment within existing built urban settlements.

EN20 PROVISION FOR OPEN SPACE

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING.

- 6.53 Developers should demonstrate, wherever appropriate, that they have considered the wider settings of buildings. Within this, the appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings is of great importance. Attention should be paid to the retention of trees, hedges and other ecological features within development sites and to the carrying out of new planting.
- 6.54 Where proposals about the open countryside, landscaping can soften the harsh line between open land and the built-up area. Appropriate landscaping will give relief to the built environment and enhance important aspects of the countryside. The aim is for any development to result in a “gain” in environmental and landscape terms. Where appropriate, developers should provide incidental and amenity open space in their proposals particularly in the urban areas. The amount of open space provided should reflect user requirement. Links with the open countryside and the provision of ‘Green Wedges’ will be an important consideration for new developments. In some instances commuted sums maybe applicable to protect the surrounding public open space.

EN21 LANDSCAPING SCHEMES

WOODLAND/AMENITY PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING SCHEMES WILL BE PERMITTED PARTICULARLY ON SITES THAT ARE INTENDED TO BE SAFEGUARDED AS OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACE OR WHERE THEY PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS. THE

APPEARANCE OF UNTIDY LAND WILL BE IMPROVED WHERE THIS WOULD NOT DAMAGE NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS.

- 6.55 The use of mixed woodland planting will help to improve the landscape setting of the built environment as well as putting large areas of reclaimed land to a positive use. Tree planting will help to provide shelter belts and screen eyesores. Afforestation schemes will be undertaken in partnership with the Forestry Commission and the Welsh Development Agency, where appropriate. The establishment of native broadleaved woodlands will be encouraged while large scale conifers afforestation will be discouraged.
- 6.56 Community forests provide wooded landscapes for recreation, education, conservation and employment. The Council will investigate the feasibility of establishing such large scale forestry schemes utilising their own land, and encouraging others to participate where possible and appropriate
- 6.57 Liaison will take place with Forestry Enterprise and the authority to secure the potential for environmental improvement and recreation in existing forest plantations.
- 6.58 This policy targets the Council's fundamental environmental priorities, which are concerned with the reclamation and improvement of untidy and derelict sites. The Land Reclamation Programme, together with other initiatives, will continue to be concerned with reclaiming, tidying-up, landscaping and putting to positive uses untidy and derelict sites, particularly where they can provide beneficial community uses such as public open spaces. Land classed as derelict or untidy may still have nature conservation value. These interests should be acknowledged and be protected from damage.
- 6.59 Within this policy, public involvement and awareness campaigns will be actively promoted, encouraging environmental education as a means to achieving long term environmental care.

EN22 ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE**PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE PROTECTED AND EXTENDED AND RIGHTS OF WAY WILL BE MAINTAINED.**

- 6.60 Rights of way are the primary access system to the countryside for both residents and visitors to the County Borough. The network is historical and does not always meet the need of users. This is especially true in the case of byways and bridleways which are much fragmented. The council will keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review. Rights of way provide a key access/transport and recreational function. The council will take account of the Welsh Assembly Government's "Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales"
- 6.61 Public rights of way are legally required as the Definitive Map is the legal recognition of a right of way and the County Borough has a duty in law to maintain it as an up to date record. Many anomalies in the Definitive Map exist and need correction, in addition to diversions, creations and extinguishments. The Authority also has a duty to maintain rights of way under the Highways Act 1980. The existing network of public rights of way is less than complete. There are gaps in the network which the Council will endeavour to see rectified.

EN23 GREEN WEDGES**POLICY EN23A****GREEN WEDGES ARE DESIGNATED BETWEEN:**

- (A) **BEAUFORT AND BRYNMAWR**
- (B) **TREDEGAR AND EBBW VALE**
- (C) **RASSAU AND HOUSING AREAS TO THE SOUTH**
- (D) **TAFARNAUBACH AND HOUSING AREAS TO THE EAST**

POLICY EN23B**IN THE ABSENCE OF VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS IN A GREEN WEDGE UNLESS IT IS FOR:**

- (A) **AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY NEEDS;**
- (B) **ESSENTIAL FACILITIES FOR OUTDOOR SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, CEMETRIES, AND OTHER USES OF LAND WHICH MAINTAIN THE OPENESS OF THE GREEN WEDGE AND WHICH DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSE OF INCLUDING LAND WITHIN IT;**
- (C) **LIMITED EXTENSION, ALTERATION OR REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING DWELLINGS; OR**
- (D) **SMALL SCALE DIVERSIFICATION WITHIN FARM COMPLEXES WHERE IT IS RUN AS PART OF THE FARM BUSINESS.**

6.62 The purpose of Green Wedges includes managing urban form, protecting the setting of an urban area, and assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict land. The most important attribute of Green Wedges is their openness. There will be a presumption against development within them, which can only be outweighed by the presence of very special circumstances.

6.63 If the open land between Beaufort and Brynmawr and between Ebbw Vale and Tredegar is developed, a continuous built up area would be created which would seriously affect the character of the area. The open area secured would also provide important views of the adjacent uplands. Additionally, it is considered necessary to maintain the separation between the major industrial estates at Tafarnaubach and Rassau, and adjacent housing areas.

6.64 The re-use of buildings within a Green Wedge is not inappropriate provided that

- (a) the original building is substantial, permanent and capable of conversion without major reconstruction;
- (b) the new use will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green

- (c) Wedge and the purposes of including land within it; and
the building is in keeping with its surroundings.

EN24 WOODLAND AND TREES

TREES, WOODS AND COPSES WILL BE RETAINED OR MANAGED AS APPROPRIATE; FURTHERMORE DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD DESTROY, OR UNACCEPTABLY DAMAGE OR INVOLVE LOSS OF THE IMPORTANT INDIGENOUS BROADLEAVED WOODLANDS IN BLAENAU GWENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

Tredegar

- EN24(1) - SOUTH OF TROEDRHIWGWAIR
EN24(2) - DARREN DUE

Blaina

- EN24(3) - COED TROESTRE
EN24(4) - CWM CELYN WEST
EN24(5) - CWM CELYN EAST

Ebbw Vale

- EN24(6) - GARN CAM ISAF, WAUNLLWYD
EN24(7) - EAST OF PENRHIWGWNGI, CWM
EN24(8) - DERI MERDDOG, CWM

Abertillery

- EN24(9) - WEST OF BLAENTILLERY FARM, CWMTILLERY
EN24(10) - NORTH OF HENDRE GWYNDWR, CWMTILLERY
EN24(11) - WEST OF CWMTILLERY RESERVOIR
EN24(12) - LLANNERCH PADERN EAST, CWMTILLERY
EN24(13) - LLANNERCH PADERN WEST, CWMTILLERY
EN24(14) - EAST OF GWASTOD FARM, CWMTILLERY
EN24(15) - EAST OF GWASTOD TERRACE, CWMTILLERY
EN24(16) - COEDCAE TYLE
EN24(17) - CWM BIG NORTH, ABERBEEG
EN24(18) - COEDCAE COCH, ABERBEEG
EN24(19) - COED ARGOED, ABERBEEG
EN24(20) - COED Y GILFACH, ABERBEEG
EN24(21) - CRAIG SYFFRYD

- 6.65 Interspersed within the town centre and housing areas are numerous trees or groups of trees making a significant contribution to the visual enhancement of these areas, by framing buildings or screening untidy areas. Such features provide an attractive and pleasing element in the urban environment. In pursuing this policy it will be important to encourage new tree planting, to incorporate trees in new developments and to protect and improve existing woodland areas and trees. The Council will pursue grant aid from a variety of sources involving the Forestry Commission for woodland establishment and management.
- 6.66 The woodlands of the former county of Gwent constitute a very valuable landscape and wildlife resource. However, the Small Woods Survey carried out by the former Gwent County Council revealed that management practices such as grazing under tree canopies threatened numerous small woods through the county. The Council will encourage their

protection and positive management through Tree Preservation Orders designations as SINC's and woodland management agreements.

- 6.67 The Council (in consultation with the Countryside Council for Wales and other relevant bodies) will develop woodland conservation policies. In particular, the Council hopes to draw up management agreements with the owners of some of the woodlands highlighted in the Small Woods Survey, using Section 39(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 6.68 The Council will promote the Coed Cymru principles and practices of 'Continuous Cover' woodland management wherever possible and will attempt to regenerate native semi-natural woodlands throughout the County Borough whenever possible.

EN25 LAND RECLAMATION

182 HECTARES OF LAND ARE ALLOCATED FOR RECLAMATION OF DERELICT OR CONTAMINATED LAND AND BUILDINGS. SITES ARE:

		Hectares
EN25(1)	TY PWCCA TO BEAUFORT, EBBW VALE	6h
EN25(2)	TY PWCCA - BEAUFORT, NANTYGLO	37h
EN25(3)	CABAN GWYN, NANTYGLO	20h
EN25(4)	RACEHORSE-BRYNMAWR-CLYDACH	1h
EN25(5)	BLAENAVON ROAD, BRYNMAWR	9h
EN25(6)	BLAENANT FARM, BRYNMAWR	21.5h
EN25(7)	CWMCRACHEN (II), BRYNMAWR	15h
EN25(8)	HAFOD-Y-COED, LLANHILLETH	2h
EN25(9)	VALE TERRACE, TREDEGAR	7h
EN25(10)	PENNANT STREET PHASE 2, EBBW VALE	3h
EN25(11)	WEST OF ANEURIN CRESCENT, BRYNMAWR	2h
EN25(12)	BLAINA PLASTICS SITE, NANTYGLO AND BLAINA	1h
EN25(13)	SIX BELLS COLLIERY SITE, ABERTILLERY	21h
EN25(14)	DUNLOP SEMTEX, NANTYGLO	15h
EN25(15)	LAND WEST OF BRYNSERTH, EBBW VALE	20h

- 6.69 Apart from using the derelict land programme to secure the reclamation of derelict land it will also be used to clear derelict buildings which are even more likely to be detrimental to the urban fabric but represent particularly suitable sites for new development. It may also be used for the treatment of contaminated land. Private sector schemes are likely to play a part in this process.
- 6.70 Proposals for the reclamation of derelict land will also need to take into account the impacts of remediation and reclamation upon the natural and historic environment. The policies in the Environment Chapter will be applied to proposals for reclamation and subsequent development.

EN26 RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS

THE RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT ALL THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET.

- (A) THE BUILDING IS SUITABLE FOR THE SPECIFIC RE-USE WITHOUT MAJOR OR COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION;**
- (B) THE FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN OF THE PROPOSAL INCLUDING ANY EXTENSIONS RESPECTS THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**
- (C) THE PROPOSAL INCLUDING CURTILAGE AND ACCES IS IN SCALE AND SYMPATHY WITH THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND DOES NOT REQUIRE THE PROVISION OF UNSIGHTLY INFRASTRUCTURE AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS;**
- (D) CONVERSION DOES NOT LEAD TO THE DISPERSAL OF ACTIVITY ON SUCH A SCALE AS TO PREJUDICE TOWN AND VILLAGE VITALITY;**
- (E) CONVERSION DOES NOT RESULT IN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACTS UPON THE STRUCTURE, FORM, CHARACTER OR SETTING WHERE THE BUILDING IS OF HISTORIC AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST;**
- (F) THE PROPOSED USE WOULD NOT CREATE ANY UNACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL OR TRAFFIC PROBLEMS.**

6.71 The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. Redundant rural buildings can often be provide suitable premises for business and other uses without damaging the rural character of an area or the surrounding environment.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

7. COMMUNITY SERVICES

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The quality of everyday life is greatly influenced by the nature and extent of local community facilities. Local schools, community buildings, and medical services play an important role in the life of an area. The Unitary Development Plan provides detailed guidance regarding the nature, scale and location of future development in Blaenau Gwent. The guidance is provided in part to enable organisations responsible for community services to co-ordinate their own capital programmes and relate them to the planned pattern of housing and industrial development. In this way, the limited resources available should be used to maximum community benefit.

POLICIES

C1 COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED IN ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS. THIS WILL NORMALLY BE TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES.

- 7.2 The Council will encourage the organisations concerned with the provision of community services, for example Health Authority by every means at its disposal, to provide sufficient quality services within easy reach of the Blaenau Gwent population. Where any proposals for a reduction, rationalisation or diminution of community services/facilities are put forward by the relevant private/public body, they will be examined carefully, and, if adverse effect on Blaenau Gwent residents would arise without adequate justification, objections will be made. Conversely, any proposed improvement in the distribution of local community services/facilities will be strongly supported provided development accords with relevant Plan policies.

C2 SPECIAL COMMUNITY NEEDS

IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT IS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED TO BE IN THE INTEREST OF THOSE WHO WILL BE SERVED, COMMUNITY FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED IN LOCATIONS SEPARATE FROM EXISTING CENTRES PROVIDED THAT: -

(A) THE DEVELOPMENT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED WITHOUT CAUSING UNDUE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOOD;

(B) THERE WILL BE NO DETRIMENT TO HIGHWAY SAFETY.

- 7.3 Generally, community facilities should be provided in locations accessible to the largest number of people willing to use them. They should be accessible on foot to as many users as possible and close to public transport routes. Particular consideration should be given to the needs of those who are least mobile, whether it is the result of disability or lack of access to a car. The most appropriate location for community facilities is usually in, or adjacent, to town and local centres.
- 7.4 However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for community facilities to be provided in locations separate from existing centres. Proposals to provide a facility separate

from existing centres should therefore be considered in relation to the needs of the community it is intended to serve. Such proposals will, however, need to be capable of accommodation without giving rise to problems of disturbance for occupiers of adjacent premises or prejudicing highway safety. As community facilities encompass a diverse range of functions and activities it will be particularly important to ensure that any unacceptable future use of the premises is prevented. In appropriate cases conditions will be attached to planning permissions to achieve this.

C3 EDUCATION FACILITIES

SITES FOR NEW SCHOOL FACILITIES ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AT: -

(A) LLANHILLETH

(B) SIX BELLS

- 7.5 Education facilities are major users of land and they have particular locational requirements. It is the duty of the Council as Local Education Authority (LEA) to provide sufficient school places to meet local demand. However, it is not possible to determine future demand for individual schools from demographic trends alone as other facilities such as land allocations, parental choice and schools opting for grant maintained status can affect the level of demand. Specific requirements for new schools have been identified at Six Bells and Roseheyworth near Abertillery for new Primary Schools and a need for a new primary school to serve the Llanhilleth area has also been recognised.
- 7.6 The Corus site Ebbw Vale is anticipated to incorporate the new 'Ebbw Vale Learning Campus' which will integrate the provision of post-16 education for Blaenau Gwent.

C4 PLACES OF WORSHIP

PROPOSALS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OR USE OF PREMISES FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT HAS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY AND THE AMENITY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS.

- 7.7 Religious meeting places have an important role in many local communities. They should be sited where they will be convenient for members of the religious group, near to public transport and with adequate parking. In many instances the most appropriate locations for places of worship will be the same as for other community facilities that is, in town and local centres. However, there may be circumstances when the most suitable location is in a residential area, in which case highway safety and the amenity of local residents will need to be safeguarded. Consequently, it may be necessary to require off-street car parking, soundproofing and to place restrictions on the hours of use.

C5 CHILD CARE FACILITIES - DAY NURSERIES**THE PROVISION OF DAY NURSERIES EITHER BY NEW BUILD OR CHANGE OF USE OF PREMISES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:-**

- (A) THERE IS NO DISTURBANCE TO THE OCCUPIERS OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES; AND**
- (B) THERE IS ADEQUATE PARKING FOR STAFF AND VISITORS; AND**
- (C) THERE IS NO DETRIMENT TO HIGHWAY SAFETY.**

- 7.8 Day nurseries are increasingly in demand. Whilst it is anticipated that sites within or on the edge of residential areas will be preferred by applicants, sites in established business areas could be acceptable locations for day nurseries especially where they would serve employees in local businesses. A concern in every case will be the anticipated effect of the nursery on any adjacent user. A limitation on days or hours of use may enable permission to be granted in locations where an unrestricted permission would be unacceptable. The provision of day nurseries in association with schools may be appropriate and the Authority is currently implementing a policy of increasing the number of local nursery units attached to primary schools that may require additional facilities.
- 7.9 Day nurseries may generate a considerable amount of traffic, usually first thing in the morning and again late in the afternoon. Satisfactory arrangements will be required for car parking and to prevent conflict between cars leaving and entering the site or queuing on the highway. The vehicular activity should not cause undue disturbance to neighbouring properties. Large nurseries in residential streets may be considered unacceptable because of the amount of traffic generated.
- 7.10 The provision of affordable employment related childcare will help to promote equality of opportunity in access to jobs, and give employers the widest possible choice of employees. Where development providing employment is proposed the inclusion of arrangements for childcare will be a consideration.
- 7.11 Where developments are likely to attract substantial numbers of visitors there may be a need for crèche facilities. This is particularly likely in the case of large shopping facilities and also education and training and other community facilities. Provision of a crèche would increase the opportunities for potential users to avail themselves of the facilities. However, as developments substantially differ, a flexible approach is needed. In appropriate cases legal agreements will be sought to secure such provision.
- 7.12 Developments such as shopping or entertainment facilities which attract substantial numbers of visitors, and especially those located in town centres where there are large numbers of visitors, should incorporate toilets and facilities for nappy changing and baby feeding by persons of either sex. These facilities should be accessible to disabled people. This will enhance the attractiveness of the development and ensure that visits by disabled people and groups including young children are not deterred. The appropriate scale of provision will vary according to the scale of the development and the availability of other facilities in the locality. In appropriate cases legal agreements will be sought to secure such provision.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

**8. LEISURE, RECREATION AND
TOURISM**

8. BACKGROUND

- 8.1 The activities involved in recreation and tourism are interrelated and involve a wide variety of activities pursued during varying times of the day with differing land use requirements. Within Blaenau Gwent the opportunities and facilities for recreation, leisure and tourism are diverse. There are four leisure centres, a factory outlet shopping centre, a country park of regional significance at Bryn Bach, four rugby grounds with grandstands, a Cinema, an indoor cricket school, an 18 hole golf course and numerous countryside walks and playing fields.
- 8.2 An increase in the leisure time available to individuals coupled with an increase in the diversity of activities and pursuits could contribute to improving the quality of life of the local community. Indeed an increase in physical recreation and activity can also have direct health benefits both physically and emotionally. In this context, the management of existing and the provision of new facilities need to reflect the needs of the public and be accessible to all sectors of the community. The Unitary Development Plan takes into account the Council's Leisure Strategy and it will also be important to ensure that the recreational and tourism benefits are not outweighed by environmental costs arising from the impact of the development or the intensity of the activity accommodated by the local community.
- 8.3 Leisure, whether informal or formal, casual in terms of play or active in terms of sport, represents an important element in the quality of life of an area. Such provision is important in the development of children and fulfilment in adulthood.
- 8.4 The policies listed below aim to provide a rational framework within which the development of tourism and leisure facilities can grow; an effective tool for reintegrating people into the community and an opportunity for all sectors of the community to improve their quality of life. The policies also aim to assist in sustaining a viable valley community and to regenerate the local economy. Additionally they:-
- (a) take account of the variety and diversity of recreation, leisure and tourism and its constantly changing requirements.
 - (b) protect and enhance existing facilities and provision.
 - (c) protect existing open spaces used for recreation, leisure and tourism and also aim to provide new open spaces to serve new development.

POLICIES

R1 RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RECREATIONAL, LEISURE AND TOURISM FACILITIES WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF:-

- (A) THE NEED TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY; AND
- (B) THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE NETWORK OF RECLAIMED LAND THAT HAS BENEFITED FROM PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

R2 LEISURE, RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM FACILITIES WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREA.

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW OR EXISTING LEISURE, RECREATION OR TOURISM FACILITIES WITHIN THE URBAN AREA AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- (A) THE SCALE, INTENSITY, AND EXTENT WILL NOT RESULT IN A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT UPON THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY; AND**
- (B) APPROPRIATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR ACCESS BY ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY INCLUDING THE FACILITY FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT; AND**
- (C) THE PROPOSAL WILL BE IN A TOWN CENTRE LOCATION UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT A SEQUENTIAL APPROACH HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THE LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT.**

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE FOR ALL NEW DEVELOPMENTS OR ALTERATIONS RELATING TO LEISURE, RECREATION OR TOURISM FACILITIES, SUITABLE PROVISION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

- 8.5 The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for residents of Blaenau Gwent whilst seeking to widen the economic base by encouraging diversification into areas such as tourism. Care will be taken to ensure that the developments are acceptable in terms of accessible location, intensity, size and nature to the local community. The sequential approach to location of development is set out in paragraph 10.2.9-11 of Planning Policy Wales – March 2002.
- 8.6 The Council currently has a Sport and Recreation Strategy 2000/2005. This document identifies major changes in leisure provision, which will have an impact on future land use. Its recommendations will be incorporated into subsequent reviews of the UDP.

R3 CONVERSION OF PROPERTY TO LEISURE, RECREATIONAL OR TOURISM USE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREA, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THE CONVERSION OR REHABILITATION OF BUILDINGS TO A TOURISM, LEISURE OR RECREATIONAL USE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (A) THE EXISTING BUILDING IS STRUCTURALLY SOUND OR CAPABLE OF BEING MADE SO WITHOUT MAJOR EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS OR RECONSTRUCTION; AND**
- (B) THE EXISTING BUILDING IS CAPABLE OF CONVERSION OR REHABILITATION WITHOUT MAJOR EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS OR RECONSTRUCTION; AND**

(C) THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING IS RESPECTED (PARTICULARLY IF IT HAS ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC MERIT) AND THE CONVERSION IS IN KEEPING WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS.

- 8.7 The conversion of derelict and underused buildings in the countryside to leisure, recreation and tourism uses can assist in diversifying the rural economy whilst improving the visual appearance of the countryside.

R4 PLAY AREA PROVISION

EXISTING PLAY AREAS WILL BE PROTECTED AND IMPROVED.

PLAY AREA FACILITIES WILL BE DEVELOPED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:-

- (A) ABERTILLERY PARK, ABERTILLERY**
- (B) CENTRAL PARK, BLAINA**
- (C) BEDWELTY PARK, TREDEGAR**
- (D) BRYNMAWR WELFARE PARK, BRYNMAWR**

AND A MULTISPORTS AREA AT:-

- (E) WILLIAM STREET, CWM**

SITES FOR ROLLERBLADING HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AT:

- (F) ABERTILLERY LEISURE CENTRE CAR PARK, ABERTILLERY**
- (G) BRYNMAWR WELFARE PARK, BRYNMAWR**
- (H) EBBW VALE LEISURE CENTRE, EBBW VALE**

- 8.8 The National Playing Fields Association recommends that no child should have to walk more than 400 metres to a playspace or have to cross a major road on the way. However, due to the dense linear nature of development in Blaenau Gwent and the unique topographical constraints that exist (steep valley sides) it is unrealistic to expect all areas of Blaenau Gwent to be adequately served by local play area provision, without embarking on selective redevelopment. The Council will however, continuously seek to provide play area facilities in areas lacking such a facility (resources permitting). Land reclamation schemes in particular offer potential to accommodate such provision and careful consideration will be given to incorporate playing fields and play areas provision into the design of any scheme offering such potential.

- 8.9 In December 1996 the Council's Leisure and Community Services Committee agreed to the future provision of children's play areas on the basis of a ratio of 1 play area to 250 children (based on 1991 Census statistics). It was also agreed that a site for a visit play area will be investigated at Ebbw Vale in particular an area adjacent to Gorsedd Stones. Sites for multi sports areas will be investigated at Dukestown Infants School, Tredegar; Abertillery Comprehensive School and Banna Park, Nantyglo. Sites for a further two Rollerblading areas are also to be designated in Tredegar and Nantyglo/Blaina.

R5 PLAYING FIELDS AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

LOSS OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS PLAYING FIELDS AND SPORTS GROUNDS, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FACILITIES CAN BE SHOWN NOT TO BE NEEDED OR EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT FACILITIES PROVIDED.

243 HECTARES OF LAND ARE ALLOCATED FOR THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PLAYING FIELDS AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP. THE SITES INCLUDE:-

	<u>HECTARES</u>
WEST OF ANEURIN CRESCENT, BRYNMAWR	3
CWMTILLERY COLLIERY, ABERTILLERY	6
PARC BRYN BACH, TREDEGAR	165
FESTIVAL PARK, EBBW VALE	47
PARC NANTYWAUN, NANTYGLO	20
CHARTIST WAY, TREDEGAR	1
DUKE STREET, TREDEGAR	1
TOTAL	243

- 8.10 Blaenau Gwent experiences great demand for its recreation grounds including playing fields, indeed Blaenau Gwent is deficient in playing field provision, consequently existing facilities will be protected from development and sites have also been identified for future proposals.

R6 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON AREAS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WHICH PROVIDE A RECREATIONAL FACILITY FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT SPACE IS PROVIDED IN THE VICINITY.

- 8.11 Formal and informal public open spaces can have a significant recreational or amenity value, contributing to quality of life, biodiversity and to the environment generally. Unless such spaces can be replaced with land which exhibits equivalent benefits it should be protected from development.

R7 ALLOTMENTS

PROPOSALS INVOLVING DEVELOPMENT ON ALLOTMENTS, OR LAND LAST USED AS ALLOTMENTS, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED, UNLESS REPLACEMENT ALLOTMENTS ARE TO BE PROVIDED OR WHERE THERE IS NO UNSATISFIED LOCAL DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS. ALL PROPOSALS SHOULD MAKE PROVISION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF VISUAL AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND ESTABLISHED WILDLIFE.

- 8.12 The cultivation of allotments is a popular and long established pastime. Proposals for development on allotments, unless making the provision of replacement allotments, will only be acceptable if the Council can be satisfied that there is no unmet local demand for allotments. All proposals will also be considered in terms of their impact on the character of the surrounding area and established wildlife. Development will only be permitted where visual and residential amenity, together with established wildlife can be adequately safeguarded.

R8 MULTIPLE USE OF RECREATION FACILITIES

THE COUNCIL WILL FAVOUR THE MULTIPLE USE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES BY SCHOOLS, CLUBS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- 8.13 Given the existing deficiencies in provision and the scarcity of resources to provide additional facilities, it is vital that optimum use is made of existing (and planned) facilities. In this context, the Council will promote the multiple use (by both schools, clubs and the community) of facilities. This applies particularly to the use of school playing fields and changing rooms.

R9 DEVELOPMENT AT PARC BRYN BACH

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEISURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES AT PARC BRYN BACH WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:-

- (A) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER OF AND APPEARANCE OF THE PARK; AND**
 - (B) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT CREATE ENVIRONMENTAL, AMENITY, TRAFFIC OR OTHER PROBLEMS; AND**
 - (C) **THE PROPOSAL IS CONSISTENT WITH THE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN.**
- 8.14 Parc Bryn Bach is located off the A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road) and provides a recreation resource of regional significance. The Country Park is the result of a comprehensive land reclamation scheme completed in 1981 and covering approximately 250 hectares of land and a 15 hectare lake. The park attracts around 300,000 visitors a year, and provides the opportunity for local residents and visitors to appreciate the scenery of the local environment.

R10 PROVISION OF SERVICED ACCOMMODATION

PROPOSALS FOR NEW HOTELS, MOTELS AND GUEST HOUSES, THE EXTENSION OF EXISTING SERVICED ACCOMMODATION, THE PROVISION OF SERVICED ACCOMMODATION IN PUBLIC HOUSES, AND THE CONVERSION OF LARGE HOUSES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE BUILDINGS FOR USE AS SERVICED ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PERMITTED,

PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ON A SCALE APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCALITY AND WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO, AND NOT DETRACT FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA; AND**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES; AND**
- (C) APPROACH ROADS TO THE SITES ARE OF ADEQUATE STANDARD TO ACCOMMODATE ANY INCREASE IN TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- (D) SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CAR PARKING PROVISION CAN BE ACCOMMODATED ON SITE.**

8.15 The supply of serviced accommodation in Blaenau Gwent is very limited. However, there is an opportunity to develop new markets and the potential to provide serviced accommodation by encouraging the renovation and full utilisation of the upper floors of the public houses throughout the area. Encouragement will be given to local people to provide bed and breakfast accommodation in those properties suitable to accommodate such facilities.

R11 STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVANS AND CHALET SITES**PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN AND CHALET SITES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-**

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT OCCUPY A HIGHLY VISIBLE SITE;**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN, INCORPORATING RELEVANT LANDSCAPING TO PREVENT IT DETRACTING FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
- (C) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES;**
- (D) SATISFACTORY CAR PARK PROVISION AND VEHICULAR ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED TO THE SITE, WITH SUCH ROAD PROVISION TO ACCOMMODATE ANY INCREASE IN TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- (E) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SAFEGUARDED.**

- 8.16 At present there are no static holiday caravan and chalet sites in Blaenau Gwent. However with the scope to develop tourism in the locality there is potential to develop such facilities. To be given favourable consideration, any proposed static caravan, chalet or cabin development will need to be of a high standard. Detailed design should ensure a low density development with an informal layout which can be assimilated sympathetically into the local landscape. The impact of any proposed development will need to be kept to a minimum with its site location having to satisfy strict environmental, amenity and highway safety criteria.

R12 TOURING CARAVAN SITES

PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP TOURING CARAVAN SITES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT OCCUPY A HIGHLY VISIBLE SITE;**
 - (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN, INCORPORATING HIGH QUALITY LANDSCAPING TO PREVENT IT DETRACTING FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
 - (C) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES;**
 - (D) PRIVATE SITE ACCESS ROADS WILL BE WITHIN APPROXIMATELY ONE KILOMETRE OF AN ADOPTED HIGHWAY HAVING SUFFICIENT WIDTH, ADEQUATE ALIGNMENTS AND GRADIENTS TO ACCOMMODATE THE SAFE USE OF TOWED VEHICLES;**
 - (E) SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED TO THE SITE, WITH SUCH ROAD PROVISION BEING OF ADEQUATE STANDARD TO ACCOMMODATE ANY INCREASE IN TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT;**
 - (F) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SAFEGUARDED.**
- 8.17 Touring caravan holidays are becoming increasingly popular, at present the only touring caravan park site is at Parc Bryn Bach. The Council recognise the potential to increase touring caravan provision and will give favourable consideration to touring caravan site development, provided that the proposals satisfy the same criteria as those applied to static holiday caravan, chalet and cabin developments. There is also potential to combine caravan and camping sites to allow an inter-changeability between touring caravans and tent pitches to meet market needs.

R13 CARAVAN STORAGE SITES

WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREA, PROPOSALS FOR THE STORAGE OF CARAVANS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER AND VISUAL QUALITY OF THE SURROUNDING AREA; AND**
- (B) THAT SATISFACTORY WORKS ARE UNDERTAKEN TO SECURE AN APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT E.G. LANDSCAPING; AND**
- (C) THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES; AND**
- (D) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SAFEGUARDED.**

8.18 The Council has identified a need for sites for the storage of touring caravans, in order to provide a facility for caravan owners who illegally store their vehicles on roads and public car parks. Sites should be suitably located and screened so as to avoid having a significant impact on the surrounding area.

R14 TENTED CAMPING SITES

PROPOSALS FOR TENTED CAMPING SITES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT OCCUPY A HIGHLY VISIBLE SITE;**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN INCORPORATING RELEVANT LANDSCAPING TO PREVENT IT DETRACTING FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
- (C) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES;**
- (D) THE DEVELOPMENT INCORPORATES SUCH ROAD PROVISION OF ADEQUATE STANDARD TO ACCOMMODATE ANY INCREASE IN TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- (E) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SAFEGUARDED.**

- 8.19 The Council has limited influence over the distribution and provision of camping facilities for short term use, as planning permission is not usually required. However, if camp sites are to be developed on a more permanent long term basis with on-site facilities then they will be subject to formal planning control. Campers rarely use large towed vehicles, thus camp sites need not require access roads of similar standard to those required by touring caravans.

R15 OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CENTRES

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CENTRES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT OCCUPY A HIGHLY VISIBLE SITE;**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN AND INCORPORATE RELEVANT LANDSCAPING TO PREVENT IT DETRACTING FROM THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
- (C) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES;**
- (D) APPROACH ROADS TO THE SITES ARE OF ADEQUATE STANDARD TO ACCOMMODATE AN INCREASE IN TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- (E) SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CAR PARKING PROVISION CAN BE ACCOMMODATED ON SITE;**
- (F) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SAFEGUARDED.**

PROPOSALS FOR RIDING STABLES OR PONY TREKING CENTRES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THERE ARE ADEQUATE, CONVENIENT AND SUITABLE BRIDLEWAYS OR UNCLASSIFIED ROADS FOR HORSE RIDING IN THE VICINITY.

- 8.20 Outdoor activity centres are defined as residential or non-residential establishments specifically used as a base for outdoor recreational or educational purposes. Such establishments will include outdoor recreational pursuit centres, educational field study centres, pony trekking centres and riding stables. The provision of such facilities which attract visitors who are interested in the natural, historical and cultural assets of the area will prove an important contributor to the development of tourism in Blaenau Gwent.

R16 FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

THE EXISTING NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, OTHER PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND DISUSED RAILWAY FORMATIONS WILL BE SAFEGUARDED. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL:-

- (A) **NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, BYWAYS AND OTHER RIGHTS OF WAY; AND**
- (B) **MAKE PROVISION WHERE APPROPRIATE, FOR NEW OR ENHANCED FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, BYWAYS AND OTHER PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.**

8.21 The Council places great emphasis on the local community being able to use a convenient system of pedestrian routes and bridleways and other public rights of way, in addition to its statutory duty to ensure that such routes are kept open. It is critical that the network is protected, enhanced and where appropriate extended and that the needs of different user groups including the elderly and those with disabilities are recognised in ensuring accessibility to the footpath network. It is also important that development control decisions do not result in the loss of useful footpaths and bridleways and that where appropriate, development proposals contain provision for new or enhanced facilities. The Countryside Council for Wales recognises that the Rights of way network is a very important means by which the general public enjoy the countryside and the links that these can provide to leisure, tourism and community initiatives as well as providing a sustainable transport option. Tremendous potential exists throughout Blaenau Gwent to develop the footpath and bridleway network.

R17 ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS

PROPOSALS FOR ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT CREATE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OR AMENITY.

8.22 A wide variety of social, entertainment and arts facilities help to create a diverse culture, and in this context proposals will be supported provided there is no adverse impact to the local community. Leisure and entertainment uses that would be accessible to a large number of people require a sequential approach to their location as set out in Planning Policy Wales March 2002.

R18 GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSALS FOR THE CREATION OF NEW GOLF COURSES OR THE EXTENSION OF EXISTING COURSES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THEY WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE:-

- (A) **VISUAL QUALITY AND THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE; OR**
- (B) **LOCAL WILDLIFE; OR**
- (C) **ENJOYMENT OF EXISTING RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS AREAS; OR**
- (D) **HIGHWAY SAFETY; OR**

(E) EXISTING USES OF SURFACE OR GROUND WATER RESOURCES.**ANY NEW BUILDINGS SHOULD NOT EXCEED WHAT IS REASONABLY REQUIRED FOR PLAYING OF GOLF AND MAINTAINING THE COURSE.**

- 8.23 There is potential for golf course development in Blaenau Gwent and interest has previously been expressed in Parc Bryn Bach. However, it is important that any new courses or course extensions are designed to incorporate planting and land forms which are in harmony with the established landscape character and bring improvement to the landscape. They should also safeguard and enhance existing wildlife value. It will be advantageous should a proposal bring about the restoration of derelict or degraded land, not only because it will provide a beneficial use of the land, but also, through planting and course design, bring visual improvement and benefit to wildlife. Applications for proposals must provide details of course layout and landscape management plan as well as development details.
- 8.24 Golf is a sport which involves potential hazard to others in the vicinity and therefore new courses and extensions will need in their design to avoid prejudicing the safety of people using established rights of way and access areas in the locality.
- 8.25 The establishment or extension of a golf course may be seen as an opportunity to develop additional facilities beyond those required by golfers and for the maintenance of the course, taking advantage of an attractive setting and potential custom from golfers. However, new buildings to provide facilities such as hotels and conference and indoor leisure centres will not be acceptable in association with golf course development unless they accord with other policies in the plan.

R19 GOLF DRIVING RANGES**PROPOSALS FOR GOLF DRIVING RANGES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON:-**

- (A) THE AMENITY OF ANY ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY; OR**
 - (B) THE VISUAL QUALITY AND THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE; OR**
 - (C) THE LOCAL WILDLIFE; OR**
 - (D) HIGHWAY SAFETY.**
- 8.26 As a result of growing participation in golf, interest is growing in the provision of golf driving ranges. Proposals normally involve driving sheds (which can be two storey) an administrative block including changing rooms, floodlighting, high fencing and parking facilities. Consequently, driving ranges have a significant visual impact and are unlikely to be appropriate in open countryside. They may be acceptable if located in association with a golf course or other major recreation facility, where screening can be provided by trees, landform and facilities such as changing rooms, and, parking areas can be integrated. Any proposal to establish a driving range will need to demonstrate that residential amenity, landscape quality and wildlife interest will be safeguarded.

R20 MOTOR, AIR AND OTHER SPECIALISED OUTDOOR SPORTS**DEVELOPMENT FOR MOTOR, AIR OR OTHER SPECIALISED OUTDOOR SPORTS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:**

- (A) THE SCALE AND SITING OF ANY ANCILLARY BUILDINGS, SPECTATOR ACCOMMODATION, ACCESS ROADS AND PARKING WILL NOT EXCEED WHAT IS REASONABLY REQUIRED FOR THE SPORTING ACTIVITIES PROPOSED;**
- (B) THERE WILL BE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE, WILDLIFE, TREES OR WOODLAND, AND THE ENJOYMENT OF RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS AREAS WILL NOT BE IMPAIRED;**
- (C) TRAFFIC MOVEMENT, NOISE AND OTHER DISTURBANCE WILL BE MINIMISED.**

8.27 Although there are only limited opportunities in Blaenau Gwent for motor sports and flying, interest in these activities and other relatively new leisure pursuits may increase. Some are likely only to involve small scale activity, others may require extensive land areas and generate considerable noise and disturbance. In order to safeguard environmental interests development proposals will be evaluated against the policy criteria.

R21 SPORTS STADIA**PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR RELOCATION OF SPORTS STADIA WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLY ADVERSE IMPACT ON:-**

- (A) RESIDENTIAL AMENITY;**
- (B) NEIGHBOURING LAND USES;**
- (C) VISUAL QUALITY;**
- (D) THE CAPACITY OF THE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK; OR**
- (E) PUBLIC SAFETY.**

DEVELOPERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SATISFACTORY PARKING ARRANGEMENTS AND TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO THE FACILITY BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

8.28 Consideration of proposals for the development or relocation of sports stadia will involve evaluation against a range of factors and the Council will need to be satisfied that there will be overall benefits from proposals put forward. Sports Stadia that would be accessible to a large number of people require a sequential approach to their location as set out in Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy. Matters of particular concern, arise from the potential numbers of spectators; and the large scale of the structures required; the impact on residential areas, both adjacent to the proposed site and through which traffic to the stadium will need to pass; potential conflict with neighbouring land uses; impact on visual amenity; particularly if the site is on the periphery of the built up area; and the adequacy of access by both private and public transport. It would also be beneficial if there was community benefit for the use of the proposed facilities by amateur sports clubs and the public at large.

- 8.29 A further concern will be whether any other uses proposed in association with the stadium are acceptable in terms of other policies in the plan. Many proposed schemes for new stadia incorporate substantial retail facilities. While a limited amount of retail floorspace might well be considered appropriate, facilities which are clearly equivalent to free standing shopping centres will not be acceptable.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

9. MINERALS

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1 Minerals are essential to meet the nation's needs, particularly energy requirements and the raw materials for the construction, manufacturing and agricultural industries. Mineral exploitation contributes to the national, regional and local economies and provides employment. However, mineral workings can have a severe environmental impact destroying landscapes and wildlife habitats, disrupting agriculture and causing disturbance such as noise, dust and traffic.
- 9.2 As minerals can only be worked where they are found, a satisfactory integration must be sought between the need for the mineral, safeguarding resources and protecting the environment. The mineral policies within the UDP will form the primary guidance against which all mineral planning applications will be determined. Where appropriate, other material planning considerations must also be taken into account. These may, for example, include future changes in Government guidance, or exceptional circumstances which individual policies in the Plan could not reasonably have allowed for. This approach is in accordance with Planning Guidance (Wales)¹ and current legislation².

Minerals Development and a Sustainable Environment

- 9.3 Modern industrial society places huge demands on the world's resources and environment. Unless fundamental changes occur, these demands are expected to increase rather than decrease. The problems this will create for existing and future generations have been subject to widespread international concern, as highlighted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992³. Following the 'Earth Summit', Government has produced "Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy" (Feb 1994) which parallels the EC's initiative of the Fifth Action Programme on the environment. Both should be reflected at the level of local communities through Local Agenda 21 (LA21). More recently The National Assembly has published "A Better Wales" (2000).
- 9.4 Against this background mineral extraction, which involves the depletion of finite natural resources, cannot, by definition, be entirely compatible with the objectives of sustainable development.
- 9.5 The minerals and waste policies in the UDP can help achieve a more sustainable approach to minerals and waste development in a number of ways. First, mineral resources must be protected from unnecessary sterilisation and natural minerals can be conserved by promoting the use of alternative waste materials. Developers must also consider the removal of remnant shallow coal enabling the land to be stabilised and treated rather than the less sustainable option of attempting to grout fill any voids and consequently sterilising the asset. Secondly, the Plan can help ensure that the quality of the environment is sustained. This can be done by protecting sensitive areas, minimising the impact on local communities and requiring proper reclamation. Indeed, the latter can bring advantages where mineral workings can be reclaimed to create habitats destroyed by other human activities.

1. Planning Policy Wales – March 2002 and related TANs

2. Town & Country Planning Act 1990 - Section 54A (as amended by Section 26 of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991).

3. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) 1992.

Blaenau Gwent - its Geology and Mineral Resources

(i) Coal

9.6 Historically Blaenau Gwent has been dominated by coal extraction. At its peak (1913) there were approximately 150 deep mines plus associated small drift mines. Around this time (1913) there were in excess of 28,000 'colliers' which compares to the 270,000 Welsh miners producing 57 million tonnes (mt) of coal, 39 mt of which was exported. The coal industry in Wales (1997) directly employs almost 2000 people.¹ Blaenau Gwent currently (1997) has 1 small drift mine left (Blaencuffin). There is limited potential for opencast coal mining which is restricted to the 'upper coal measures'. Similarly there remains limited potential for coal recovery from old coal tips.

(ii) Aggregates

9.7 Blaenau Gwent has an operational limestone quarry at Trefil, Tredegar. The quarry was granted planning permission under the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, by the former Gwent County Council, for extraction until 2024. Part of the access comprises a bridleway, which has planning permission for access to the quarry until 2024. There are several small historical quarries. The Environmental Act 1995² established the review of old mining permissions (MPG14)³. Consequently, any re-working of old sites will require planning permission. Renewal of activity on dormant sites can not commence unless revised conditions are approved under the above review. However, there are no dormant sites within Blaenau Gwent. Secondary aggregates extraction from old coal tips are limited as is the exploitation of quarry waste.

Environmental Protection

9.8 Mineral extraction by its very nature destroys the existing fabric of the land. Agriculture, woodland, wildlife habitats and archaeological features can all be affected. Even when reclamation is rapid and progressive, this cannot compensate for the loss of mature landscapes. Beyond site boundaries the amenity of the surrounding areas can be affected by visual intrusion, noise and dust from both extraction and associated plant. Transport of minerals, especially by road, can have implications many miles away from the site. Nevertheless, mineral extraction can bring environmental benefits. For example, derelict or degraded land can be reclaimed, and reclamation to nature conservation can help replace the loss of habitats that has resulted from modern agricultural practices and drainage 'improvements'.

9.9 The UDP sets out broad/strategic policies which seek to protect the environment from the harmful effects of all forms of development. Mineral extraction, however, differs from other development in that minerals can only be worked where they occur, thus increasing the potential conflict. Whilst the environmental impact of mineral extraction can never be totally eliminated, careful planning can ensure that adverse effects are minimised.

1. The Economic Significance of the Welsh Coal Industry - Welsh Economy Research Unit, Cardiff Business School.

2. Environment Act 1995, Section 96, Schedule 13 & 14

3. Mineral Planning Guidance 14 - Environment Act 1995: Review of Mineral Planning Permissions - September 95

POLICIES

M1 MINERALS

PROPOSALS FOR MINERAL EXTRACTION, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES FOR RESTORATION AND AFTER USE OF THE SITE, WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THAT THEY HAVE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON:

- (A) THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING LANDSCAPE, WATER RESOURCES AND NATURE CONSERVATION;**
- (B) RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND HIGHWAY SAFETY;**
- (C) THE LOCAL ECONOMY;**
- (D) THE PROPORTIONAL LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NEED FOR AGGREGATE MINERAL SUPPLY;**
- (E) DESIGNATED SITES OF LANDSCAPE OR NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE; OR**
- (F) SPECIES RECOGNIZED AS HAVING NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE**

- 9.10 Applicants are advised to discuss their proposals with the Environment Department and Environment Agency Wales prior to the submission of an application. Such pre-application consultations can enable early identification of potential constraints. Where proposals are within, adjacent to or in close proximity to an SSSI or affecting a species affected by statute, applicants should contact the Countryside Council for Wales. Where development proposals adjoin the Brecon Beacon National Park then applicants should contact the National Park Authority. Applications for minerals development must be accompanied by evidence of the need for, and extent and quality of the mineral concerned, together with full details of the proposals for its working, reclamation and afteruse. This information is required in order to make a balanced assessment of whether the benefits and need for the proposed development outweigh any environmental and social disruption which may arise.

M2 PLANNING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

APPLICATION FOR MINERALS DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO INCLUDE, AS APPROPRIATE, DETAILS OF:

- (A) PRESENT USE OF THE SITE;**
- (B) RECYCLING OPPORTUNITIES;**
- (C) GEOLOGY;**
- (D) ESTIMATED MINERAL CONTENT, OUTPUT AND LIFE OF WORKINGS;**
- (E) QUALITY OF MATERIAL;**
- (F) NEED FOR THE MINERAL;**
- (G) METHOD OF EXTRACTION WITH DEPTH, DIRECTION AND PHASING OF WORKING;**
- (H) SURFACE DRAINAGE AND HYDROGEOLOGY;**

- (I) LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF BUILDINGS AND OPERATIONAL AREAS (INCLUDING HAUL ROADS);
- (J) SOIL SURVEY AND SOIL CONSERVATION MEASURES;
- (K) TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS (INCLUDING ACCESS, TRAFFIC GENERATION AND ROUTING);
- (L) HOURS OF OPERATION;
- (M) EMPLOYMENT;
- (N) MEASURES TO MINIMISE POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISTURBANCE;
- (O) IMPACT ON EXISTING LAND USE;
- (P) AN ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE;
- (Q) AN ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AND HISTORIC FEATURES AND MEASURES FOR THEIR PRESERVATION AND RECORDING;
- (R) IMPACT ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY;
- (S) LANDSCAPING MEASURES AND BOUNDARY TREATMENT OF THE SITE;
- (T) AFTERCARE;
- (U) AFTERUSE;
- (V) MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS;
- (W) BUFFER ZONE PROTECTION.

9.11 Where proposals are likely to have a significant environmental impact an Environmental Statement will be required in accordance with Government Regulations and Guidance. Pre-application discussions with the Planning Department are advised to establish if an Environmental Statement is needed, and what issues are most important.

9.12 When planning permission is granted, a comprehensive set of conditions is attached to ensure the satisfactory working and reclamation of the site. Planning conditions are used to regulate the development or use of land, and normally most matters can be adequately covered. Broadly, conditions can only relate to the control of the use of land and are imposed in order to allow development where it would otherwise be refused.

M3 MINERALS RESOURCE USE.

THE PRODUCTION OF SECONDARY AGGREGATES FROM THE WINNING OF NATURAL MATERIALS OR THE RECYCLING OF INDUSTRIAL WASTES WILL BE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA LISTED IN POLICY M1.

9.13 Recycling of aggregates and the conservation and efficient use of natural mineral resources will be promoted.

M4 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

THE COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS (UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990) AS MEASURES FOR CONTROLLING MINERAL OPERATIONS WHICH CANNOT BE ACHIEVED BY THE USE OF PLANNING CONDITIONS. WHERE APPROPRIATE THESE AGREEMENTS MAY INCLUDE

THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEVELOPER TO PROVIDE A BOND TO ENSURE ADEQUATE RESTORATION OF THE SITE.

9.14 In order to control certain matters beyond the legal scope of planning conditions, the County Borough Council will utilise its powers to use planning obligations. These comprise either legal agreements between the Council, the applicant and any relevant third party, or unilateral undertakings made by the applicant. Circumstances where planning obligations may be sought include:

- (a) the provision of off-site works such as highway improvements;
- (b) where funding is required, such as to allow for archaeological works;
- (c) where third parties are involved, such as long term management provisions;
- (d) where financial guarantees are required for the long term management of mineral sites, or to ensure implementation of matters where there is a real concern that planning conditions will not suffice.

M5 VISUAL IMPACT**ALL PLANT, BUILDINGS AND STOCKPILE AREAS WILL:**

- (A) WHERE PRACTICABLE, BE GROUPED TOGETHER TO PREVENT THE CREATION OF AN UNSIGHTLY SPRAWL OF DEVELOPMENT AND TO FACILITATE THEIR SCREENING;**
- (B) BE KEPT AS LOW AS PRACTICABLE TO MINIMISE VISUAL INTRUSIONS;**
- (C) BE OF APPROPRIATE COLOUR, CLADDING OR SUITABLY TREATED TO REDUCE THEIR VISUAL IMPACT;**
- (D) BE SATISFACTORILY MAINTAINED TO PRESERVE THEIR EXTERNAL APPEARANCE;**
- (E) BE REMOVED UPON CESSATION OF EXTRACTION AND THE SITE RESTORED.**

9.15 The main sources of visual impact resulting from mineral extraction are fixed plant, stockpiles, overburden and soil storage, operational and extraction areas and removal of vegetation. Visual intrusion can be reduced by careful site design, taking account of natural screening features, topography and impact on the skyline. Furthermore the impact of plant, buildings and stockpile can be significantly reduced through suitable site layout, height retentions, screening, appropriate colour schemes and regular maintenance.

M6 SCREENING OF WORKINGS

WHERE NECESSARY SCREENING AND LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS TO REDUCE VISUAL IMPACT WILL BE SUBMITTED BY DEVELOPERS OF PROPOSED MINERAL WORKINGS, THESE PROPOSALS WILL INCLUDE:-

- (A) **MEASURES TO RETAIN, PROTECT AND MANAGE EXISTING FEATURES OF INTEREST AND VALUE FOR SCREENING AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE RECLAMATION OF THE SITE;**
- (B) **MEASURES TO SCREEN THE SITE BY THE USE OF EARTH MOUNDING AND/OR TREE PLANTING;**
- (C) **DETAILS OF METHOD OF WORKING AND PHASING TO CAUSE LEAST VISUAL INTRUSION;**
- (D) **DETAILS OF THE LOCATION, SIZE, SHAPE AND TREATMENT OF ANY TEMPORARY SOIL, OVERBURDEN OR WASTE MOUNDS;**
- (E) **THE LOCATION, FORM, NUMBER, SPECIES, SIZE, METHOD OF PLANTING, SITE PREPARATION AND ANY NECESSARY MEASURES FOR REPLACING PLANT MATERIAL WHICH FAILS FOLLOWING INITIAL PLANTING.**

9.16 A suitable landscaping scheme including tree planting and earth moulding, can help screen and reduce visual impact. The effectiveness of these measures can generally be increased by advance planting. Where existing peripheral hedgerows and trees can screen the site, priority should be given to their retention, maintenance and protection. Off site landscaping may also have a role. Where possible, such features should also be capable of forming part of the final reclamation.

M7 NOISE

MEASURES TO REDUCE THE NOISE IMPACT OF MINERALS DEVELOPMENT WILL BE IMPOSED WHERE APPROPRIATE BY:-

- (A) **RESTRICTING HOURS OF OPERATION;**
- (B) **SOUND PROOFING OF FIXED MOBILE PLANT;**
- (C) **SETTING MAXIMUM NOISE LEVELS AT SENSITIVE LOCATIONS;**
- (D) **THE USE OF ACOUSTIC SCREENING SUCH AS BAFFLE MOUNDS OR FENCING.**

9.17 Mineral workings can cause a wide range of environmental pollution, principally noise, blast vibration, dust, mud and water contamination. Legislation controlling these matters is contained within various Acts, notably the Control of Pollution Act 1974, the Water Resources Act 1991, the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environment Act 1995. Whilst these provide an important degree of protection (especially where planning controls are absent), they are not sufficient to prevent mineral development giving rise to unacceptable levels of pollution. Planning Controls can therefore be used to reinforce and supplement these powers.

9.18 The primary sources of noise arise from the processing plant and heavy mobile equipment such as dump trucks and scrapers. Noise impact can be minimised by locating processing

plant and other noisy operations away from sensitive areas, and by restricting hours of working. Sound proofing measures include cladding fixed plant, using conveyors instead of dump trucks, and electric instead of diesel pumps.

- 9.19 Noise sensitivity is also dependent on existing background levels. For example, a plant located next to a busy road is unlikely to create as much noise impact as one situated in a quiet rural setting. Where practicable, it may be appropriate to impose maximum noise levels at sensitive locations.

M8 BLASTING

MEASURES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF BLASTING WILL BE IMPOSED WHERE APPROPRIATE BY: -

- (A) SETTING A MAXIMUM VIBRATION LIMIT;**
- (B) RESTRICTING THE HOURS WHEN BLASTING CAN OCCUR;**
- (C) LIMITING AIR OVER-PRESSURE LEVELS.**

- 9.20 Disturbance arises mainly from ground vibration and air over-pressure. Although property damage is very rare, the nuisance and concern caused by shaking buildings and rattling windows is nevertheless very real. Standard maximum vibration levels have been established to avoid property damage and general disturbance. Techniques such as delayed detonation of multiple charges, and burying detonation cables can do much to reduce maximum vibration and air overpressure levels. Accordingly, with site testing and monitoring, it should be possible to keep blasting down to predetermined acceptable limits. Restricting the hours when blasting can take place may also be appropriate in sensitive areas.

M9 DUST

MEASURES TO SUPPRESS DUST GENERATION FROM MINERALS DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED. SUCH MEASURES WILL INCLUDE WHERE APPROPRIATE:-

- (A) THE USE OF WATER BOWSERS ON HAUL ROADS;**
- (B) SCREEN BANKS;**
- (C) ENCLOSING DUST GENERATING FIXED PLANT AND MACHINERY;**
- (D) SHEETING OF LORRIES.**

- 9.21 Many mineral operations are prone to generating dust especially when conditions are dry and windy. Processing areas, stockpiles, haul roads and the stripping and replacement of soil and overburden are likely to be amongst the worst offenders. Infilling operations can also present dust hazards.

- 9.22 Ameliorative measures include the use of water bowsers to dampen down land roads, proper plant maintenance, screening banks, the sheeting of lorries and enclosing dusty processing operations. Tree screens may also help to trap dust and reduce wind blow. Total dust suppression is however difficult to achieve and even the most diligent mineral operator may experience occasional lapses in control.

M10 MUD

MEASURES TO PREVENT MUD FROM MINERAL WORKINGS CONTAMINATING PUBLIC HIGHWAYS WILL BE IMPOSED, SUCH MEASURES WILL INCLUDE WHERE APPROPRIATE:

- (A) WHEEL CLEANING FACILITIES;**
- (B) METALLING HAUL ROADS NEAR THEIR POINT OF ACCESS TO THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- (C) SHEETING OF LORRIES.**

- 9.23 Unmetalled internal haul roads and plant areas usually become very muddy and unless precautions are taken, quarry traffic can soon spread mud onto adjoining public highways. Whilst this is an offence and subject to control under highway law, planning conditions can impose measures to minimise the risk. These include wheel cleaning facilities and metalling quarry access roads for a reasonable length from their access onto the public highway. Sheeting of lorries also helps prevent spillage.

M11 WATER CONTAMINATION

MEASURES TO PROTECT SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER FROM POLLUTION BY MINERALS DEVELOPMENT AND/OR ASSOCIATED WASTE DISPOSAL WILL BE REQUIRED. SUCH MEASURES WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, WALES.

- 9.24 Surface and groundwater can be polluted by minerals development in a number of ways. Within active sites, surface run off is likely to be laden with mud and silt which can clog up ditches and cloud larger watercourses. Diverting drainage to collecting ponds, which trap fine particles, and/or to cleaning out ditches may be the most effective remedies. Wet processing usually results in large quantities of slurry, which must be allowed to settle out in lagoons before being discharged into the drainage system. Chemical pollution may occur, for example, surface run off from unrestored colliery tipping areas may be rich in chlorides. The most serious threat to groundwater comes from the disposal of non-inert waste into landfill sites.

M12 ROAD TRAFFIC

PRIOR TO PERMITTING MINERALS OPERATIONS THE COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED THAT:-

- (A) THE VEHICLE MOVEMENTS LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT CAN BE SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATED BY**

THE HIGHWAY NETWORK AND WITHOUT CAUSING UNDUE DISTURBANCE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES;

- (B) WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO ENSURE CONTROL OF VEHICLE ROUTING OR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS ON LOCAL ROADS THAT SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE PRIOR TO THE GRANTING OF PLANNING PERMISSION;**
- (C) TRANSPORTATION OF MINERALS BY NON ROAD MEANS SUCH AS RAIL HAS BEEN EXPLOITED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.**

9.25 The movement of extracted minerals and/or the importing of waste to infill mineral workings/to landfill, can generate large volumes of traffic. Different types of transport will be appropriate in different circumstances. Options include rail, water, pipeline or conveyor, as well as road.

9.26 Most mineral operations involve transport of at least some mineral by road. In some cases site development can also involve substantial road movement of construction materials. Such road traffic can have a significant environmental impact on the countryside and residential amenity, and can cause structural damage to the highway network. The main problems caused by heavy lorry traffic are: noise, vibration, mud, dust, fumes, damage to buildings and roads, visual intrusion and a reduction in road safety. These problems are potentially most severe close to the point of access to the site from the public highway, where lorries use minor roads unsuited to their weight and size, and where they pass through residential areas. For minerals development, measures to limit adverse effects include: sheeting of lorries, installation of wheel cleaning facilities, highway improvements, agreement over lorry routing and hours of working. These can best be achieved by the use of conditions, or, where appropriate, planning obligations.

M13 PHASING

MINERAL EXTRACTION SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ALLOW A PHASED SEQUENCE OF EXTRACTION, RECLAMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLANNED AFTER-USE.

9.27 It is essential that mineral extraction and reclamation are properly designed at the planning application stage to ensure that both are technically and economically feasible, and that their impact can be fully assessed. Whenever practical, reclamation should be phased to minimise the area of land taken out of beneficial use at any one time, and to ensure reclamation is achieved as quickly as possible.

M14 SOIL CONSERVATION

RECLAMATION SCHEMES WILL INCLUDE MEASURES TO ENSURE THE PROPER STRIPPING, STORAGE AND REPLACEMENT OF THE ORIGINAL OR SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE SOILS PROFILE. WHERE SOILS ARE ABSENT OR DEFICIENT, SCHEMES SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT A VIABLE VEGETATION COVER CAN BE ESTABLISHED.

9.28 Such measures may include:

- (a) concentrating soils within areas where they will provide most benefit;
- (b) utilising on-site, or imported soil making materials which with suitable treatment are capable of supporting plant growth.

Soils are an important and valuable reclamation material and their proper handling and conservation is essential. This is especially the case for topsoil, and where an agricultural after-use is proposed. If soils are damaged or lost the standard of reclamation is likely to be seriously prejudiced and difficult to rectify. For most sites a detailed soil survey will be required to identify soil types, profiles and depths. Where different soils are recorded, separate stripping, storage and replacement may be required to allow reinstatement of the original or suitable alternative soil profiles. Where soils are absent or insufficient, it may be possible to create adequate soil-making materials from fill or overburden, treated with ameliorants such as sewage sludge or waste derived compost.

M15 LANDSCAPING

LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS FOR MINERAL OPERATIONS/RECLAMATION SHOULD INCLUDE: -

- (A) AN OVERALL LANDSCAPE CONCEPT OR BRIEF;**
- (B) DETAILS OF THE FINAL LANDFORM WHICH SHOULD HARMONISE WITH THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER;**
- (C) THE LOCATION, FORM, NUMBERS, SPECIES, SIZE, METHOD OF PLANTING, SITE PREPARATION AND ANY NECESSARY MEASURES FOR REPLACING PLANT MATERIAL WHICH FAILS FOLLOWING INITIAL PLANTING;**
- (D) MASTERPLAN INDICATING ALL LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS;**
- (E) MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS;**
- (F) PROPOSALS FOR HABITAT RESTORATION.**

9.29 Landscape proposals for reclamation should include a descriptive outline of the design concept behind the scheme (landscape brief). The brief should demonstrate that the scheme will be assimilated back into the surrounding landscape and that it is compatible with the proposed after-use. Full details will need to be submitted at the planning application stage.

M16 ALTERNATIVE RECLAMATION

CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED ON THE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE MINERALS OPERATION TO ENSURE THAT AN ALTERNATIVE RECLAMATION SCHEME IS SUBMITTED AND IMPLEMENTED, IN THE EVENT OF PREMATURE CESSATION OF THE MINERALS OPERATION OR WHEN THE ORIGINAL RECLAMATION CONDITIONS BECOME IMPRACTICAL TO IMPLEMENT.

9.30 In cases where mineral extraction or tipping may cease temporarily this can seriously

prejudice approved reclamation schemes. Conditions will be imposed to define cessation of extraction, and to require the implementations of an alternative reclamation scheme. For most mineral development proposals, the potential problems created by premature cessation of activity need to be considered.

M17 AFTERCARE

AFTERCARE CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED ON PLANNING PERMISSIONS FOR MINERAL OPERATIONS WHERE RESTORATION IS TO BE TO AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY OR AMENITY USE.

- 9.31 The purpose of the aftercare requirement is to ensure that newly restored land is properly cultivated, planted and managed during the early years of development. The aftercare condition can either specify the steps to be taken following restoration, or the steps to be taken in accordance with a scheme approved by the Council.
- 9.32 In most cases the aftercare condition will cover a maximum period of 5 years from completion of basic restoration. Whilst this period can be varied, aftercare conditions cannot be used to secure the long term management of land - such requirements have to be controlled by appropriate planning obligations.

M18 AFTERUSE

APPLICATIONS FOR MINERALS OPERATIONS WILL INCLUDE FULL DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED AFTERUSE, AND THIS AFTERUSE SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT.

WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED THAT LONG TERM MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS ARE NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF AN AFTERUSE, PLANNING OBLIGATIONS WILL BE SECURED PRIOR TO GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION.

- 9.33 Afteruse options include agriculture, woodland, nature conservation, recreation and, less commonly, built development. At some sites more than one after use may be possible. It is therefore essential that the after use is detailed at the planning application stage.

M19 AGRICULTURAL AFTERUSE

PROPOSALS FOR RESTORATION TO AGRICULTURAL USE WILL TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE POTENTIAL FOR CONSERVING AND WHERE APPROPRIATE ENHANCING LANDSCAPE AND WILDLIFE INTEREST BY THE INCLUSION OF SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- (A) MIXED WOODLAND PLANTING COMPATIBLE WITH MODERN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE;**
- (B) MIXED SPECIES HEDGEROWS AND HEDGEROW TREES;**

(C) **WATERCOURSES, PONDS AND ASSOCIATED MARSH OR 'WET' AREAS;**

(D) **LOW MAINTENANCE, WILDFLOWER GRASSLAND, OR HEATHLAND.**

9.34 In the past, inadequate restoration and aftercare measures, including poor soil conservation, meant that land reclaimed to agriculture often suffered from long term, if not permanent, losses in productivity. With proper soil handling and cultivation it should be possible to reclaim even the best and most versatile land back to its original standard.

9.35 The opportunity should be taken with agricultural afteruse schemes to include a range of environmental features such as hedgerows, dry stone walls, broadleaf woodland, ponds and other wetland features, and areas of native upland grassland. Such measures require a long term commitment to aftercare management, and must be compatible and managed in conjunction with the main agricultural afteruse of the land.

9.36 Where woodland has been lost to mineral extraction, there will be support for woodland reclamation. Furthermore, mineral extraction may create an opportunity in creating new nature reserves and wildlife habitats. Proposals for nature conservation afteruse should be based on a masterplan indicating how the site will be established and managed, together with an indication of the extent of public access.

M20 AGGREGATES: STONE

IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR THE WINNING AND WORKING OF STONE THE COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO MAINTAIN BLAENAU GWENT'S PROPORTIONAL LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NEEDS FOR AGGREGATES MINERALS.

9.37 The aim is to maintain supplies of crushed rock to continue to satisfy existing market share, as agreed with the Regional Aggregates Working Party, by responding to changes in market demand so as to avoid placing an unfair burden of supply on adjoining Local Authorities and without allowing a proliferation of quarries. There are sufficient permitted reserves at Trefil Quarry to provide a land bank of limestone in excess of 10 years. The estimated annual production is 250,000 tonnes per annum. The reserve is estimated to be 2.5 million tonnes. Accordingly, no shortfall is expected in the foreseeable future or the timescale of this Plan.

M21 BORROW PITS

BORROW PITS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

(A) **THERE ARE OVERRIDING ENVIRONMENTAL OR OTHER PLANNING BENEFITS COMPARED TO OBTAINING MATERIALS FROM ALTERNATIVE SOURCES;**

(B) **ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS OF THE REQUIRED SPECIFICATION ARE UNAVAILABLE IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES;**

- (C) **THEY ARE CONTIGUOUS WITH THE PROJECTS THEY ARE INTENDED TO SERVE;**
- (D) **THEY ARE TIME LIMITED TO THE LIFE OF THE PROJECT AND MATERIAL IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE SPECIFIED PROJECT;**
- (E) **PROPOSALS INCLUDE APPROPRIATE RECLAMATION MEASURES WHICH MAKE FULL USE OF SURPLUS SPOIL FROM THE PROJECT;**
- (F) **PROPOSALS INCLUDE MEASURES WHICH PROTECT THE WATER ENVIRONMENT.**

- 9.38 The term 'borrow pit' is applied to a temporary mineral working required to supply material for use solely in a specific construction project, particularly roads. Borrow pits are typically located next to the construction site, and in the ideal situation are soon backfilled with waste materials, such as clay, that often have to be removed from the construction area - hence the material excavated is 'borrowed'. Normally, large quantities of material, are required over a short time. The advice of the Environment Agency Wales should be sought for any application where borrow pits are proposed.
- 9.39 With the exception of small borrow pits developed within the boundary of highway construction sites, planning permission is required. Proposals for borrow pits will be treated in the same way as any other mineral extraction scheme. This means that borrow pits must be justified in terms of being the most suitable source of material to meet demand, and that appropriate environmental safeguards covering both working and reclamation are included.
- 9.40 Advance planning is essential to ensure that the borrow pit can be developed within the timescales required. For example, if archaeological remains are present these may require a full and lengthy investigation before any mineral can be extracted. Submitting proposals after contracts are let is unlikely to allow sufficient time if such complications exist.
- 9.41 It is important to ensure that borrow pits only supply the construction project intended. Therefore in granting planning permission for borrow pits, the County Borough Council will take appropriate measures to control access and routing, and permission will be time limited to the life of the construction project. In considering 'need', the quantities and specifications of materials required for the construction project will be assessed in the context of the level and location of existing permitted reserves. Minerals won from borrow pits contribute to the County Borough's aggregates requirements and may help to avoid the use of better quality reserves from established quarries.
- 9.42 In general, however, it should usually be possible to meet requirements from the local established quarry or from waste materials. In such circumstances borrow pits can only be justified where they offer clear environmental gains over alternative sources of supply. For example, where borrow pits are adjacent to construction sites the most obvious environmental benefits will be the avoidance of heavy traffic on public highways. There will also be significant economic and energy savings because of the reduced haulage costs.

M22 BUFFER ZONES

A 200M BUFFER ZONE IS IDENTIFIED FOR TREFIL QUARRY. PROPOSALS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE BUFFER ZONE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. PROPOSALS FOR MINERAL EXTRACTION WITHIN THE BUFFER ZONE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE THIS ENCROACHES TOWARDS ANY SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT.

- 9.43 Policy M22 aims to restrict non-mineral development in areas of permitted and potential future working. The objective of the buffer zone is to protect land uses that are most sensitive to the impact of mineral operations by establishing a separation distance between potentially conflicting land uses. A 200m buffer zone around Trefil quarry is defined to protect existing and proposed sensitive development in particular residential dwellings to the south.

M23 MINERAL EXTRACTION (COAL AND HARDROCK)

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY STERILISE SIGNIFICANT MINERAL RESOURCES, WHICH ARE, OR MAY BECOME OF COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED OUTSIDE THE DEFINED MINERAL EXCLUSION ZONE.

- 9.44 The importance of coal and hardrock reserves in Blaenau Gwent is recognised and they need to be safeguarded where this is acceptable. However, due to the need to minimise impact on local communities and protect sensitive environments, there are large areas of Blaenau Gwent where further mineral extraction would not be acceptable. These have been defined as a Mineral Exclusion Zone on the Proposals Map. The Mineral Exclusion Zone includes: sites or areas designated for protection for nature conservation reasons; SLAs and Green Wedges; areas of archaeological or historic interest; areas in close proximity to housing, recreational or tourist attractions or where there would be an undue impact on the environment. A buffer zone of 500m is considered necessary in relation to an acceptable distance from the defined urban area for mineral workings. For Trefil refer to Policy M22.
- 9.45 Outside of these areas, it is necessary to safeguard mineral resources from sterilisation by other permanent development. Mineral proposals outside the defined Mineral Exclusion Zone will be assessed against the criteria set out in Policy M1.

M24 MINERAL EXCLUSION ZONES

PROPOSALS FOR COAL OR MINERAL EXTRACTION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE DEFINED MINERAL EXCLUSION ZONE

- 9.46 Sites for coal and mineral extraction will not be permitted in sensitive locations. These have been defined as a Mineral Exclusion Zone on the Proposals Map. The Exclusion Zone includes: sites or areas designated for protection for nature conservation reasons; SLAs and Green Wedges; areas of archaeological or historic interest; areas in close proximity to housing, recreational or tourist attractions or where there would be an undue impact on the environment. A buffer zone of 500m is considered necessary in relation to an acceptable distance from the defined urban area, within which mineral extraction would not be acceptable. For Trefil refer to Policy M22.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

10. WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

10. BACKGROUND

National Waste Strategy

10.1 National guidance on the management of controlled waste is contained in *Wise About Waste* the National Waste Strategy for Wales published in June 2002. The guidance is based on the principle of sustainability, with the three key areas of sustainable waste management being:-

- (a) reducing the amount of waste produced
- (b) making the best use of waste
- (c) selecting waste management options which minimise the risk of environmental pollution and harm to human health

10.2 The guidance is based on the hierarchy of waste management options encompassing: -

- (a) Waste reduction
- (b) Reuse
- (c) Recovery - Incineration with energy recovery
 - Composting
 - Materials recovery (recycling)
- (d) Disposal - Landfill being the least desirable option, although for some wastes this may still be the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO)

10.3 At present, waste management in the UK is currently "heavily weighted towards the bottom of the hierarchy", with 85% of Controlled Waste going to landfill. The intention is to increase the proportion of waste managed using the options towards the top of the hierarchy, through a 5 pronged approach to the promotion of sustainable waste management including:-

- Regulatory Strategy based on legislation notably through the Environmental Protection Act 1990
- A Market Strategy based on economic instruments i.e. Landfill Tax
- A Planning Strategy where local planning authorities take account of the National Waste Strategy
- A Promotion Strategy where all sections of society are encouraged to adopt Environmental Technology Best Practice i.e. the "Green Initiative"
- A Data Strategy with more accurate figures available in order to set realistic targets for waste reduction

10.4 The targets as stated in *Wise About Waste 2002* include:

- By 2003/04 achieve at least 15% recycling/composting of municipal waste with a minimum of 5% composting (with only compost derived from source segregated materials counting) and 5% recycling
- By 2006/07 achieve at least 25% recycling/composting of municipal waste with a minimum of 10% composting (with only compost derived from source segregated materials counting) and 10% recycling
- By 2009/10 and beyond achieve at least 40% recycling/composting with a minimum of 15% composting (with only compost derived from source segregated materials counting) and 15% recycling

- 10.5 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is part of a consortia of local authorities seeking a regional solution to the problems associated with siting and financing of waste management activities.
- 10.6 Technical Advice Note 21 on Waste sets out guidance on sustainable waste management. One of the requirements is that a Regional Waste Plan (RWP) be prepared and adopted by the Regional group of authorities by November 2003. The RWP is intended to identify areas of need and search for potential sites and indicate predicted tonnages of each type of waste likely and the facilities required. Each LPA is then required to transpose their requirements into the UDP and any subsequent reviews.
- 10.7 All waste development proposals will not only need to have regard to BPEO but also sustainable waste management options (SWMO) and Health impact Assessment (HIA).

Current Position in Blaenau Gwent

Land required in UDP to accommodate additional capacity of Waste Facilities as assessed in South East Wales Regional Waste Plan				
Waste Facility	Capacity required(tpa)	Land required(approx) (square metres)	Indicative number of typical sized facilities	
	(according to SE RWP)		Typical size	Indicative number
MRF	101,943	17,000 at least	15,000	6.8
Open windrow composting	5,709	2,000-7,500	5,000	1.1
In-vessel composting	22,837	20,000-30,000	10,000	2.3
Inert recycling	101,809	9,000-12,000	30,000	3.4
MBT	31,355	10,000	60,000	0.5
Civic Amenity	6,517	1,600	5,000	1.3
Transfer	26,794	up to 10,000	60,000	0.4

- 10.8 In accordance with the South East Wales Regional Waste Plan and TAN 21 entitled 'Waste,' specific sites or suitable areas for all types of waste sites should be identified. In relation to landfill such areas likely to be favoured are: -
- derelict, contaminated or similarly despoiled land of no significant ecological value
 - current or former unrestored mineral sites of no significant ecological value and
 - brownfield land of no significant ecological value

- 10.9 In Blaenau Gwent a major landfill site has been established at Silent Valley, Waunllwyd, Ebbw Vale with a capacity of 2,500,000 m³.
- 10.10 In relation to all other waste facilities referenced in the Regional Waste Plan potentially suitable areas have been identified. However, until a detailed assessment of the suitability and practicability of these sites is carried out there is a requirement that sufficient land is available to accommodate the various waste capacities required within the County Borough. This detailed assessment will be undertaken as a matter of priority with the results incorporated in a SPG, to be produced by December 2007.

WM1 WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

PROPOSALS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES, INCLUDING DISPOSAL AND TREATMENT PLANT, WILL BE PERMITTED WITHIN SITES LISTED FOR B2 EMPLOYMENT USE IN POLICY E2

- 10.11 It is considered that the most suitable locations for new waste facilities are on general industrial areas until further agreement is reached about the location of regional or national scale waste management facilities. There is enough capacity within Blaenau Gwent on existing or future industrial sites to accommodate the waste management facilities required to accord with the Regional Waste Plan.
- 10.12 Sites on general industrial sites would be suitable for many of the future waste facilities including waste processing and treatment facilities, transfer stations and possibly mechanical biological treatment, in vessel composting and anaerobic digestion.
- 10.13 Industrial sites are not likely to be suitable for landfill or windrow composting, the latter are more suitable on farms as part of farm diversification. The provision of such developments are covered by the provisions of Policy EN3 – ‘Development in the Countryside’ that makes provision for such proposals in rural locations.

Provisional allocation of waste facilities within the borough

MRF (Metal Recovery) - Land required 1.7ha

The most appropriate site E2(11) Blaenant, next to existing scrap yard

Open Windrow Composting - Land required 0.2-0.75ha

Possibly land at Hafod y Dafal Farm, Aberbeeg

In-Vessel Composting – Land required 2-3ha

Silent Valley

Inert Recycling – Land required 0.9-1.2ha

3 possibilities

- Northern area of Trefil Quarry removed from Special Landscape Area at recommendation of Inspector
- Former Marine Colliery site, has the potential for rail access but would require considerable screening
- Hafod y Dafal Farm, possible problems could include regulation and control and the fact that land is allocated within a Special Landscape Area.

MBT – Land required 1ha

Rassau Industrial Estate
Silent Valley

Transfer Station – Land required 1ha

Waun y Pound

- 10.14 While there is sufficient land at all these locations to accommodate the various facilities detailed assessments of all these sites will be produced to identify the exact locations of sites.
- 10.15 Our recycling rates in the UK are currently the lowest in Europe and Legislation is now requiring local authorities to encourage the public to re-use and recycle more materials to divert them from landfill. Blaenau Gwent's current recycling rate is just under 10%.

WASTE TRANSFER SITES

- 10.16 These are 'civic amenity sites', 'transfer stations' and 'bring sites'. They provide a local service for members of the public to take their waste. Many of the sites have now expanded to include provision for recycling facilities such as cans, textiles, glass, cardboard, plastics, waste oil and aggregates etc. Local Authorities are required to make adequate provision for such sites – i.e. One for each 750 domestic properties. It is aimed to provide a maximum of 40 sites spread throughout the Borough to manage the demand identified as required in the Regional Waste Plan.
- 10.17 Blaenau Gwent has four Civic Amenity Sites:
- New Vale Civic Amenity Site, Waun – Y – Pound Industrial Estate, Ebbw Vale
 - Bournville Civic Amenity Site, Bournville Road, Blaina, Abertillery
 - Silent Valley Civic Amenity Site, Cwm, Ebbw Vale
 - Llanhilleth Civic Amenity Site, Llanhilleth Ind Est, Llanhilleth, Abertillery
- 10.18 Not all of the four civic amenity sites have good access to the public. The site at Llanhilleth is in a poor location, of necessity, due to the lack of suitable sites within that area and, due to its small size, its recycling facilities are poorly appointed. This site is due to close shortly and an alternative site identified. Of the three civic amenity sites that will remain, two are limited in view of the facilities that can be included given the permanent site layouts. The civic amenity site at New Vale however, whilst being the largest site available, requires redevelopment and re-siting of facilities, which are currently poorly appointed.
- 10.19 The Hazardous Waste Directive 2005 stipulates that authorities must have licensed facilities for the disposal of hazardous wastes in place. The council is making preparations for such facilities at New Vale Site.
- 10.20 Future proposals for waste disposal are likely to continue to be through recycling, landfill and specialist disposal. It is no longer acceptable to rely on landfill disposal as a means of managing waste. National trends indicate a decrease in volume of commercial and industrial waste through the implementation of the packaging regulations. If these regulations become more stringent then the volume of commercial waste in Blaenau Gwent might be decreased.

- 10.21 Using waste to supply useful energy is a well established method of obtaining added value before final disposal. Most waste to energy plants, to date, have not proven cost effective and economies of scale would need to be rigorously examined to make a project feasible. To date in Blaenau Gwent, the infrastructure does not exist to make it a feasible alternative to landfill. On a local scale Silent Valley Waste Services are engaged in a project which provides energy from waste already landfilled. Whilst this project is still in its early stages the intention is to provide energy from gases located in the disposal site in partnership with electricity companies and the national grid.
- 10.22 Landfill has considerable potential to pollute groundwater, contaminate land and cause an adverse impact on land amenity in terms of litter, pests and unpleasant odours and give rise to hazards such as landfill gas which might migrate into adjacent land and constrain development and use of land.
- 10.23 In order to operate a landfill site a Waste Management Licence is required from the Environment Agency. The Licence deals with the engineering and day to day management and operation of the landfill site needed to protect public health and the environment and to prevent pollution. Whilst a Waste Management Licence cannot be issued in the absence of a planning permission, it and not planning control is intended to be the primary means of preventing pollution resulting from waste disposal. Where the dividing line between planning and pollution control is not clear cut, close consultation between the planning and the waste pollution regulation authorities will be required at all stages.
- 10.24 The location of waste disposal, treatment, storage and transfer facilities, the appropriateness of the use of individual sites for waste disposal purposes and the appropriateness of locating other land uses adjacent to such potentially polluting development and the afteruse of completed landfill sites are planning matters. Locations such as the important woodlands listed in EN23, SSSIs, LNRs and SINC's will be protected when considering extensions to Silent Valley.
- 10.25 Material planning considerations are how well the public interest is served by the use and development of land for waste management, the impact on the local road network of any change in traffic flows or the appropriateness of alternative transportation, restoration to enable beneficial use of the site, prevention of nuisance such as noise and the impact upon amenity including potential visibility and unsightliness.
- 10.26 Stability, contamination and the need to maintain aftercare arrangements often for a considerable period of time, to prevent pollution may severely constrain the afteruse of former landfill sites dependent on materials deposited. Planning permission for landfill should require restoration to forestry, amenity or agricultural after uses. Other after uses should require separate permissions after landfill operations are complete and ground conditions and the potential constraints of the land on the proposed alternative use can be fully assessed.
- 10.27 Waste reduction is essential, but this requires collaboration by everyone in the waste chain from raw materials suppliers to manufacturers and consumers. At the current time it seems unlikely that significant reductions in waste will be achieved in the short term. Indeed, most authorities will have to plan for some increase in waste volumes even with reduction and recycling programmes. However, even if waste reduction does not proceed at the levels which many people would favour in principle, waste can be regarded as a

resource which can replace virgin raw materials and which can contribute to energy gain and lessen our dependence on fossil fuels.

- 10.28 The optimisation of recycling and waste recovery is dependent upon integrated waste management strategies at the local level. There is no one strategy which is relevant to every authority. Decisions on appropriate strategies requires consideration of:
- (a) the characteristics and volume of waste in an area and likely changes to these over time
 - (b) the appropriate collection and transport systems which minimise costs and environmental impact but maximise the potential for recycling whilst being appropriate to the economic and demographic characteristics of an area
 - (c) the availability of recycling, treatment and disposal facilities, particularly over the long term, and of new sites where such facilities could be sited
 - (d) the relative costs of the different treatment and disposal options, considering both investment and operational costs and the likely changes in the costs of different options over time
 - (e) the relative environmental impacts of all of the options, considering the nature of the local environment
- 10.29 These are difficult decisions, not least because of uncertainties in markets for materials, the costs of different options and even the likely volumes of waste which will need to be managed in the future.
- 10.30 These decisions require the input of all those who have both responsibilities and interests. A balanced debate is required to achieve decisions which are appropriate and acceptable to local areas. Most importantly education and awareness raising is required. Everyone who generates waste needs to be made aware of the seriousness of the management problem and to be given information so that they can take action on an individual household basis and be able to participate in local decisions about appropriate solutions. This process of education and discussion takes time and needs careful planning. It also requires ongoing effort. Experience indicates that the development of appropriate and acceptable local waste strategies may take many years.
- 10.31 The management of household waste has to be a partnership between those responsible for this task, those who provide the waste collection, recovery and disposal services, and those who generate the waste, who ultimately pay for its management and who need to have facilities in their local communities (i.e. the public). Whilst it may take time to provide information and to involve people in the debate, there is much evidence that a failure to plan, to provide for integrated strategies and to involve people can have serious adverse consequences, not least in the ability to achieve recycling and recovery targets and to develop required facilities.
- 10.32 As stated previously, Government policy is aimed at reducing the volume entering the waste stream. Consequently, the policies listed below indicates the Council's aim to conserve resources, develop recycling, waste minimisation, and thus reduce the requirements for landfill capacity.

WM2 WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR WASTE DISPOSAL, STORAGE, TRANSFER, TREATMENT AND RECYCLING WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY HAVE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON :-

- (A) THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT IN TERMS OF NOISE, DUST, SMELL AND OTHER AIRBORNE POLLUTION, TRAFFIC GENERATION, VISUAL AMENITY, ADJOINING TOPOGRAPHY; AND**
- (B) CONSERVATION INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE; AND**
- (C) WATER RESOURCES, AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND.**

AND THAT:

- (A) PROPOSALS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF WASTE SHOULD DEMONSTRATE THAT ALL MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY DESIRABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXPLORED AND EXHAUSTED;**
- (B) A SUSTAINABLE MODE OF TRANSPORT IS WHERE POSSIBLE PROPOSED TO SERVE THE SITE; AND**
- (C) PROPOSALS INCLUDE SUSTAINABLE PROVISION FOR VEHICLE ROUTING AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS; AND**
- (D) ADJOINING LAND IS PROTECTED FROM LANDFILL GAS AND LEACHATE MIGRATION; AND**
- (E) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF A BENEFICIAL AFTERUSE OF THE SITE FOLLOWING THE CESSATION OF WASTE DEPOSITION, INCLUDING A PERIOD OF AFTERCARE MANAGEMENT.**
- (F) A LANDSCAPING SCHEME IS SUBMITTED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROPOSAL.**

10.33 The Government's general policy towards waste management is based on a hierarchy of:- reduction, re-use, recovery (including material recycling, energy recovery and composting); and safe disposal. A sustainable approach to waste management required greater emphasis on reduction, re-use and recovery and less reliance on disposal without recovery.

10.34 Planning authorities in determining applications, are obliged by EC Directives on waste, primarily to ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without harming the environment, endangering human health or causing a nuisance through noise, or adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest and to consider the proximity principle and regional self-sufficiency. Where facilities for waste management are proposed they should, where appropriate, be served by sustainable modes of transport such as rail.

10.35 Civic Amenity sites are, for Waste Management Licensing purposes, now classified as Transfer Stations. Currently, the Authority has 4 such sites located at Bournville, Waun-y-Pound, Llanhilleth and Silent Valley. These sites which are managed for the Authority by Silent Valley Waste Services, are restricted to the deposition of household and recyclable materials.

- 10.36 The four sites currently generate 7,800 tonnes per annum and it is estimated that this waste is likely to increase by 8%.
- 10.37 Scrapyard operations in the main constitute a marginal landuse but provide a considerable recycling facility if managed properly, they are characterised by low running costs and low capital investment. Typically they have been established over many years, often in inappropriate locations and in the majority of cases, without planning controls to protect local amenity. Scrap is stored in the open and often stacked because of lack of space, so that adverse effects on visual amenity are increased.
- 10.38 Such operations have been encompassed into the Waste Management Licensing regime which requires controls over potential pollution to land or ground water, there is little scope for securing significant improvements through the use of planning powers.

WM3 WASTE TRANSFER, RECYCLING AND HANDLING

PROPOSALS FOR THE USE OF LAND FOR THE RECEIPT, STORAGE, TREATMENT INCLUDING "WASTE TO ENERGY" AND RECOVERY OF USEFUL MATERIALS AND TRANSFER OF WASTE INCLUDING THE USE OF LAND AS A SCRAPYARD WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:-

- (A) THAT THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS, DOES NOT CAUSE DETRIMENT TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND THE QUALITY OF THE LANDSCAPE OR TOWNSCAPE SETTING;**
 - (B) THAT PROVISION CAN BE MADE FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF NOISE, DUST, ODOUR, SMOKE AND FLUE GAS EMISSIONS FROM THE SITE SO THAT THE AMENITY OF OCCUPIERS OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES, IN PARTICULAR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IS PROTECTED;**
 - (C) THAT CONTAMINATION OF LAND AND POLLUTION OF GROUND WATER AND SURFACE WATER, ON AND OFF THE SITE CAN BE PREVENTED;**
 - (D) THAT ACCESS, VEHICLE MANOEUVRING AND CUSTOMER AND EMPLOYEE CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE;**
 - (E) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT CONFLICT WITH ACKNOWLEDGED NATURE CONSERVATION GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL INTERESTS.**
- 10.39 Sites for waste facilities will not be permitted in sensitive locations, i.e. sites or areas designated for protection for nature conservation reasons; SLAs and Green Wedges; areas of archaeological or historic interest; in close proximity to housing, recreational and tourist attractions or where there would be an undue impact on the environment. Areas that are not

precluded from the development of waste facilities will be considered in relation to the above criteria.

10.40 One of the primary objectives of the government is to achieve 25% recycling or composting of household waste by 2005, 30% by 2010 and recover value from 40% of household waste by 2005, 45% by 2010.

10.41 It is the County Borough's intention to achieve these national targets through the: -

- (a) waste banks located at various civic amenity sites
- (b) initiatives in conjunction with private recycling companies
- (c) introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme

10.42 The importance of re-use of waste is regarded as being second in importance only to waste reduction in the waste hierarchy. Waste recovery is to be preferred to landfill. Developments for re-use or recovery of materials from waste will therefore be encouraged. However, such proposals should not outweigh the need to protect the environment and local communities from any harm associated with the development.

WM4 CONTROL OVER THE DISPOSAL OF SPECIAL WASTE

DEVELOPMENT FOR THE DISPOSAL, STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIAL WASTE WILL BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ACCEPTABLE IN RELATION TO NEIGHBOURING LAND USES, IN PARTICULAR RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND SITES DESIGNATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

10.43 Within the South West and South East Wales regions there is a need for hazardous waste facilities but it is extremely difficult for individual authorities to justify site provision within their own areas to meet regional need. The Regional Waste Plans have identified the capacity requirement for such waste per unitary authority but have not given adequate guidance on this issue to-date to enable the sustainable waste management planning of such sites within the region. Whilst the need for such sites is acknowledged the issue will need to be discussed further by technical working parties as part of the regional waste planning process and monitored and reviewed under the formal UDP review procedure.

WM5 WASTE MINIMISATION AND RECYCLING

ALL PROPOSALS FOR MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCLUDE PROVISION FOR THE COLLECTION AND WHERE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT OF WASTE LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE FUTURE USE OF THE LAND.

10.44 Management of waste is a key aspect of new proposals. Proposals should consider how waste is to be minimised and managed (or disposed of) as close to the point of its generation as possible, in line with the proximity principle.

1. Local Government Wales Act 1994.
2. Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy, May 1996.
Technical Advice Note (Wales) 9. "Planning, Pollution Control and Waste Management, 1996".
3. Making Waste Work: A Strategy for Sustainable Waste Management in England and Wales (1995).
4. European Directories (Article 5, EC Framework Directive on Waste).
5. Household Waste Management - DTI (March 1998).

6. Less Waste More Value - Consultation Paper on the Waste Strategy for England and Wales (1998).

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

11. ENERGY

11. BACKGROUND

- 11.1 Conservation of energy is a key factor reducing environmental problems such as global warming. The location and design of new development has an impact on how energy is used, not only in terms of the efficiency with which energy is used within buildings but also in the travel patterns which are generated.
- 11.2 It is important to use all viable opportunities to generate power without producing harmful emissions to the environment. Further, it is important to promote the development of locally-generated power, where it is acceptable and will contribute towards regeneration measures, in order to increase the self-sufficiency in Power and sustainability of the Welsh economy.
- 11.3 Renewable energy is energy obtained from those sources, which occur and recur naturally in the environment. They include geothermal energy, solar energy, power obtained from wind and water, and energy obtained from easily replenished plant material and from domestic, industrial and agricultural waste. Increased use of renewable energy resources needs to be encouraged in the interests of the global and more local environment. The Government wishes to stimulate the exploitation of renewable energy resources, wherever they have the prospect of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable, in order to reduce the use of non-renewable sources of energy.
- 11.4 The layout and design of buildings can have a marked impact on their energy efficiency. The orientation of dwellings to maximise the use of passive solar collection reduces the need for energy derived from fossil fuels. Similarly, the avoidance of particularly cold or exposed sites or the creation of more sheltered microclimates can minimise the amount of energy needed. Traditional building designs and urban layouts will often take energy conservation into account. The insulation of buildings is also, of course, important. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be produced to provide more detailed advice on this subject.
- 11.5 Local Planning authorities should include detailed policies in development plans for developing energy sources and should identify broad locations, or specific sites, suitable for various types of energy installation. Local authorities are advised to consider the contribution that their area can make to meeting future energy needs on a local, regional and national basis and, in particular, to consider the impact of renewable energy proposals on the local environment as well as their wider contribution in reducing emission of greenhouse gas. Technical Advice Note (Wales) 8; Renewable Energy (1996) highlights the environmental implications of renewable energy and suggests criteria against which applications should be assessed. Local Planning authorities are also advised that they should consider locational and technical requirements of related infrastructure.

LOCAL CONTEXT

- 11.6 Suitable sites for wind energy to be exploited are generally those upon the upland ridges and these would constitute a potentially intrusive feature in the landscape. Applications in neighbouring areas for such development will be responded to on their merits.
- 11.7 Standing Conference on Regional Policy in South Wales (SCRPSW), in conjunction with Energy Technical Support Unit (ETSU), on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry

(DTI), undertook a joint study of the planning issues associated with the development of renewable energy in the SCRPSW area. This document provides a strategic framework and detailed design advice which will be material in considering proposals for wind power development.

- 11.8 A proposal for a gas fired power station upon Rassau Industrial Estate was submitted in 1998. It remains undetermined by the Secretary of State for Energy at the request of the developers.
- 11.9 Additionally, the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group is to publish policies for the sub-region which complement the general approach of these policies which follow herein.

POLICIES

EG1 ENERGY

THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT PROPOSALS WHICH DEMONSTRATE GREATER ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND USES AND MODES OF TRAVEL, THE LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE MATERIALS USED, AND THE USE OF NON-FOSSIL FUEL AND RECOVERED SOURCES OF ENERGY UNLESS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD CAUSE DEMONSTRABLE HARM TO INTERESTS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE. PROPOSALS WILL COMPLY WITH RELEVANT PLAN POLICIES.

- 11.10 Pollution and its effects on the global and local environment is in large part the result of the way we generate and use energy. For example the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas in buildings and power stations produced carbon dioxide in such quantities as to greatly contribute to global warming – known as “the greenhouse effect”. Sulphur dioxide condenses in the atmosphere to form “acid rain”. These problems can be ameliorated by reducing the amount of energy used and by developing non-fossil fuel means of generating energy.

EG2 ENERGY EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT

IN DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE PROVISION MADE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENT USE OF ENERGY IN THE SITING, LANDSCAPING, DESIGN, USE OF MATERIALS, LAYOUT AND ORIENTATION OF BUILDING.

- 11.11 The Government advises that energy conservation is a legitimate aim of development planning and it intends to provide further advice on the means of achieving this following research it has commissioned. Meanwhile, the Council intends to continue to encourage energy efficient development. Building upon other policies in the plan which seek to conserve energy through the sustainable distribution of land uses, this policy also complements other controls on development, such as the Building Regulations, in encouraging developers to consider the best ways of laying out and designing their developments to reduce their energy needs.

EG3 RENEWABLE ENERGY

IN CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHERE:

- (A) ACCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC CAN BE PROVIDED BOTH WITHOUT DANGER TO HIGHWAY SAFETY OR SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT;**
- (B) THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT TO AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST;**
- (C) THERE WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE QUALITY OR VISUAL AMENITY;**
- (D) NO SIGNIFICANT HARM WILL BE CAUSED TO THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING OCCUPIERS THROUGH NOISE EMISSION, VISUAL OR OTHER IMPACT;**
- (E) NO UNACCEPTABLE ELECTROMAGNETIC DISTURBANCE WILL BE CAUSED TO EXISTING TRANSMITTING OR RECEIVING SYSTEMS. ADEQUATE MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO REMEDY OR MITIGATE ANY SUCH DISTURBANCE WHICH MAY BE CAUSED;**
- (F) NO UNACCEPTABLE DAMAGE WILL BE CAUSED TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE AREA BY TRANSMISSION LINES BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR POINT OF CONNECTION TO THE NATIONAL GRID;**
- (G) THERE WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE IMPACT ON WATER RESOURCES;**
- (H) THERE WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE IMPACT ON PROTECTED SPECIES OR NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS.**

EG4 WIND POWER DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSALS FOR WIND POWER DEVELOPMENT OR INDIVIDUAL TURBINES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:

- (A) THE SCALE OF THE DEVELOPMENT IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF TURBINES AND AREA OF LAND COVERED WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT UPON NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS OR THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE;**

- (B) THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL IN TERMS OF INTER-VISIBILITY AND ITS CUMULATIVE EFFECT IN RELATION TO OTHER CONSTRUCTED AND PERMITTED WIND POWER DEVELOPMENTS OR TURBINES WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE;**
- (C) THE COLOUR, HEIGHT, DESIGN, LAYOUT AND DENSITY OF WIND TURBINES, ROADS AND OTHER ANCILLARY WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE;**
- (D) THE SITING, COLOUR, DESIGN AND MATERIALS OF TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT ROADS AND OTHER ANCILLARY STRUCTURES WILL HAVE REGARD TO ANY NEARBY DEVELOPMENT;**
- (E) PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE TURBINES AND THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE SITE SHOULD THE TURBINES CEASE TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF TIME, WHICH IS TO BE AGREED WITH THE COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL;**
- (F) THE PROPOSALS WILL NOT HARM RESIDENTIAL AMENITY IN TERMS OF NOISE OR SHADOW FLICKER;**
- (G) THE PROPOSALS WILL NOT HAVE AN IMPACT UPON ELECTROMAGNETIC TRANSMISSION WITH EXISTING AND PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES.**

11.12 Planning guidance (Wales) Technical Advice Note (Wales) 8 Renewable Energy, points out the advantages of using renewable energy and its substitution for valuable finite energy sources in order to limit the emissions of greenhouse gases. The upland plateau and valley sides which characterise the topography of the Plan Area means that a number of locations may be commercially viable for wind farm development. The prominence and intrinsic character of these areas means that they are, however, sensitive to development. Whilst the visual effect of development in these locations would not be benign, this policy seeks to provide a framework for considering the acceptability of the location, scale and design of such proposals in accordance with government guidance contained in Technical Advice Note (Wales) 8.

11.13 Where necessary an environmental impact assessment (EIA) under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999 will be required to be submitted with planning applications for wind power development in accordance with statutory requirements.

11.14 There are a number of other policies contained in this Unitary Development Plan which will be applicable in considering the wind power development proposals, particularly relating to designated areas of national, regional and local landscape, nature conservation, highway and

amenity issues.

- 11.15 The Council will also use the Blaenau Gwent Landscape Initiative as a source of Supplementary Planning Guidance on this Policy.

EG5 RECOVERABLE AND OTHER ENERGY

PROPOSALS FOR THE GENERATION OF POWER FROM RECOVERABLE ENERGY SOURCES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THAT THERE ARE NO ADVERSE IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS.

- 11.16 Recoverable energy would include the positive use of landfill gas captured from the waste disposal site at Silent Valley.
- 11.17 Examples of such development could include: proposals to use recovered (waste) energy through combined Heat and Power (CHP) schemes, biomass (quick rotation wood planting) and recycled waste fuelled projects. Jointly developed schemes elsewhere are “in principle” models of good practice and the Council will participate in and support such schemes where appropriate.
- 11.18 Nevertheless, the Council will wish to ensure that any proposals for renewable and/or recoverable energy do not adversely effect existing environmental quality and accordingly will be weighed carefully against policies in the plan for environmental protection.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

12. PUBLIC UTILITIES

12. BACKGROUND

- 12.1 The Unitary Development Plan provides a detailed basis for co-ordinating development and other uses of land. Such co-ordination is particularly important for service agencies, such as the suppliers of gas, water, electricity and telecommunications. The adoption of the Unitary Development Plan will enable these agencies to prepare their own programmes for the provision and improvement of their services.
- 12.2 Consultation has also been undertaken with the relevant organisations in relation to individual development sites. In general terms, it is anticipated that the majority of future development sites within Blaenau Gwent can be readily serviced and will not be constrained by any notable deficiencies within the existing systems.

POLICIES

PU1 WATER SUPPLY

NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ADEQUATE WATER SERVICES EXIST, OR WHERE THEY ARE REASONABLY ACCESSIBLE OR CAN BE READILY/ECONOMICALLY PROVIDED.

- 12.3 Water service provision in Blaenau Gwent is the responsibility of Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru. Extensive consultation has been undertaken to ensure that any new development in the area will not be unduly restricted by major inadequacies within the existing system.

PU2 WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS FOUL SEWERS AND SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS OF ADEQUATE CAPACITY AND DESIGN ARE AVAILABLE OR WILL BE PROVIDED TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT.

- 12.4 Development requires satisfactory arrangements to be made for the disposal of sewage. Many existing sewerage systems and sewage treatment works and the Western Valley trunk sewer are becoming overloaded. Unless additional infrastructure is provided further demands placed on existing facilities may result in the pollution of watercourses. Consequently, development should only take place where existing infrastructure is adequate or where new facilities can be provided to coincide with the new demand.
- 12.5 The use of septic tanks and private sewage treatment plants will only be considered where connections to the mains system are not feasible, ground conditions are satisfactory, the plot of land is of sufficient size to provide an adequate subsoil drainage system and where such a development would not adversely affect the surrounding environment. The developer will be required to demonstrate that these requirements can be achieved prior to any planning permission being granted. Criteria set out in Welsh Office Circular 10/99 must be satisfied. The developer will also be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council for the long term maintenance of any private sewage treatment facilities provided for the development.

PU3 PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES AND WATER FEATURES

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE QUALITY AND/OR QUANTITY OF SURFACE WATERS OR GROUNDWATER RESOURCES, OR IMPACT UPON EXISTING ABSTRACTIONS, RIVER FLOWS, FISHERIES, CONSERVATION, NAVIGATION OR AMENITY INTERESTS.

- 12.6 Maintaining and enhancing water resources, which includes rivers, lakes, ponds and other water features is important for a wide range of uses. The derogation of such resources in terms of quality or quantity can affect the supply of water for domestic, industrial and agricultural uses, water based recreation, fisheries, nature conservation and general amenity. Consequently, development will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that suitable measures have been undertaken to protect water resources and will generally encourage initiatives that result in an improvement of these resources. Conversely, development that threatens water resources or the features dependent upon these resources will not be permitted.

PU4 SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF

DEVELOPMENT WHICH COULD INCREASE THE RISK OF FLOODING DUE TO ADDITIONAL SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF MUST INCLUDE APPROPRIATE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SYMPATHETIC MITIGATION MEASURES, DEFINED BY THE COUNCIL, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES. SUCH MEASURES INCLUDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LONG TERM MAINTENANCE/REPLACEMENT OF ANY STRUCTURES OR OTHER MITIGATION MEASURES, MUST BE PROVIDED BY THE DEVELOPER TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE COUNCIL PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROCEEDING.

- 12.7 Guidance on dealing with surface water run-off from development is contained within Technical Advice Note (Wales) 15 "Development and Flood Risk". New developments may result in a substantial increase in surface-water run-off as permeable surfaces are replaced by impermeable surfaces such as roof and paving. This can result in an increase in the risk of flooding downstream to an unacceptable level and a reduction in infiltration to groundwaters. Other consequential effects include increased pollution, silt deposition, damage to watercourse habitats and river channel instability. New developments will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that suitable measures, designed to mitigate the adverse impact of surface water run-off and provision for the long term maintenance of these mitigation measures is included as an integral part of the development. Any mitigation measures required must be provided prior to the development proceeding or as a minimum, provided in parallel with the development.
- 12.8 Wherever practicable surface water should be disposed of as close to the source as possible. Where potential risks are identified appropriate flow attenuation facilities or mitigation measures may be a pre-requisite for development. Consideration should be given to the use of softer engineering structures collectively referred to as Sustainable 'Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). SUDS is a concept that focuses decisions about drainage design, construction and maintenance on the quality of the receiving environment and people. SUDS are physical structures built to receive surface water runoff. They typically include

swales, ponds, infiltration basins and porous surfaces and should be considered as alternatives to conventional drainage where appropriate. The Environment Agency Wales can provide guidance on the design of SUDS and has produced a document entitled "Protecting the Quality of our Environment, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems - An Introduction".

PU5 WETLANDS, WATERCOURSES AND WATERBODIES

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE VICINITY OF WETLANDS OR WATERCOURSES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSED USE OF LAND IS SATISFACTORY IN TERMS OF WATER CONSERVATION, WATER QUALITY, NATURE CONSERVATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS.

- 12.9 It is the intention of the Council to promote wetlands and river corridors as important areas of open land, which have particular value for the ecology of the Plan area and for public access. River corridors in particular are territories for a variety of wildlife, including fish. River corridors and wetland areas also offer opportunities for informal recreation and should remain zones within which the possibility of contamination is avoided.
- 12.10 Environment Agency Wales has produced a leaflet entitled "Environment Agency Policy Regarding Culverts" which provides detailed explanation of the Agency's policy with regard to culverts. The Agency considers it beneficial for watercourses to remain in an open state for both flood defence and environmental purposes and it is therefore generally opposed to the culverting of watercourses.

PU6 DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING THE RAISING OF LAND) WHICH WOULD RESULT IN AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK OF FLOODING, EITHER ON OR OFF SITE, OR WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT FLOOD MANAGEMENT OR MAINTENANCE SCHEMES, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

- 12.11 As well as being at risk itself, new development in areas of flood risk may exacerbate existing or create new flooding problems on other land or property through reductions in floodplain storage capacity or impending flood flows. In exceptional circumstances, where a development is essential for the economic viability of the area, and there are no other suitable sites capable of providing the necessary stimulus, a scheme will be considered but only if the developer can conclusively demonstrate that appropriate and environmentally sympathetic flood protection and mitigation measures can be implemented.
- 12.12 In Blaenau Gwent areas along the Sirhowy, Ebbw Fawr and Ebbw Fach rivers and also some minor watercourses are identified as potentially affected by flood risk. This for the most part is limited to areas directly adjacent to the rivers or areas that are uninhabited. However some areas in Cwm, Abertillery, Six Bells and Llanhilleth have been identified as being located in fluvial flood areas (Within zones C1 and C2). While affecting these areas the potential for significant new developments in these areas is limited and the floodplain is not a significant constraint for development. Flooding does not therefore significantly constrain development options. Whilst sites have been allocated prior to the publication of TAN15 only a small number of allocated sites in the plan have been identified as being

potentially affected by flooding. A number of these have planning permission already and others represent allocations such as historic parks and gardens or play areas which do not fall in the built development categories. A small number of allocated built development sites (without a current planning permission) are identified as being affected (2 stations , 1 employment site and part of the Six Bells School site) these sites are all brownfield sites and with the exception of the affected employment allocation at Crown Business Park (E2(22)B) are required for the regeneration of the area and no alternative sites exist. Allocated sites that are located within or close to identified flood plain areas have been assessed in accordance with TAN 15. The Full assessment of all these sites is included in supporting Document FR1. Whilst a number of sites are affected some already have planning permission. Others are considered necessary to fulfill the regeneration objectives of the plan and are retained following the assessment procedure. Resulting allocations affected will include annotation of flooding as a constraint for the individual site and individual briefs will specify the requirements which pertain to the development of that site.

- 12.13 Where there is a risk of flooding, developers will be required to provide at their own cost details of hydraulic investigations to determine the impact of the proposed development, having regard to the recommendations of the Environment Agency. Prior to the occupation of the buildings and/or commencement of a new use all mitigation works shall be carried out and an agreement entered into to secure their future maintenance.

PU7 DEVELOPMENT BY STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

WHERE FORMAL CONSENT IS REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT BY STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE DESIGN/MEASURES PROPOSED DO NOT RESULT IN:

- (A) A LOSS OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES,**
- (B) A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE, OR**
- (C) A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL OR GEOMORPHOLOGICAL INTERESTS.**

- 12.14 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 provides that specified works by statutory undertakers do not require planning approval. This policy only relates to developments which require planning approval. The Council recognises that the provision of statutory services is economically and socially essential. This policy seeks to ameliorate any detrimental effect on sensitive locations by stipulating that the most sympathetic measures and routes are implemented. It is desirable that new connections to the electricity grid are located underground, but it is recognised that this can only be done within reasonable financial and technical limits.

- 12.15 SWALEC has identified the following proposals for the alteration/improvement of the electricity network that may come forward during the life of the Plan:

- (a) An extension to the Rassau West 132/11kv sub station may be required to meet additional demand from industrial development in the Rhyd-y-Blew, Rassau and Tafarnaubach areas;

- (b) A 132kv circuit may be required from Rassau 400/132kv sub station to Dowlais/Brecon;
- (c) Minor alterations and extensions to the 33kv, 11kv and low voltage systems will be required; and
- (d) Diversions of the 132k, 33kv and low voltage circuits will be required in respect of the proposed dualling of the Heads of the Valleys A465 trunk road.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

**13. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
CONTROL**

13 BACKGROUND

13.1 Development plans should give developers and communities' certainty about the type of development that will be permitted at a given location. Development plans should also provide clear indications of local planning authorities' design expectations. In order to be equitable and effective, standards must be set for the assessment of proposals. These standards must then be applied consistently and uniformly.

13.2 These policies are to be read in conjunction with Supplementary Planning Guidance which have or will be prepared by the Local Planning Authority. The following Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes have already been adopted:

- Note 1 - Shop-fronts
- Note 2 - Security Fixtures for Shop-fronts
- Note 3 - Residential Extensions
- Note 4 - Advertisements
- Note 5 - Telecommunications

13.3 The intention is to prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes for the following subjects:

- (a) Pigeon Cotes, Stables and similar structures
- (b) Blaenau Gwent Landscape Initiative
- (c) Domestic Garages

POLICIES

D1 LAYOUT AND DESIGN

DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (A) **THE PROPOSAL IS IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA IN TERMS OF QUALITY, DESIGN, SCALE, MATERIALS, DENSITY AND LAYOUT (OR SEEKS TO IMPROVE THEREON).**
- (B) **RESIDENTIAL AMENITY IS NOT PREJUDICED.**
- (C) **A SITE APPRAISAL IS USED AS THE BASIS FOR DESIGNING THE LAYOUT. THIS WILL ENABLE THE TOPOGRAPHY AND EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND WILDLIFE INTERESTS OF THE SITE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.**
- (D) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE SITE CAN BE ACHIEVED. ALL NEW ROADS WILL CONFORM TO THE STANDARDS SET OUT IN THE AUTHORITY'S ROADS DESIGN GUIDE. PARKING PROVISION SHOULD CONFORM WITH THE COUNCIL'S ADOPTED GUIDELINES.**
- (E) **A LANDSCAPING SCHEME IS SUBMITTED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROPOSAL. THIS TAKE ACCOUNT OF EXISTING**

SITE FEATURES AND LINKS TO ADJOINING OPEN SPACES/LANDSCAPE FEATURES.

13.4 The key aims on Residential Layouts is to ensure that the context of development sites are taken into account in formulating proposals and that developments are of a good standard in terms of layout and design.

13.5 In addition reference to the following documents should be made:-

- a) Design Guide for Residential and Industrial Estate Roads in Gwent 1990.
- b) Parking Guidelines (Revised Edition) 1993, prepared by - The Standing Conference on Regional Policy in South Wales.

D2 RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES ROADS

ALL NEW DEVELOPMENTS WHICH INVOLVE ALTERATIONS TO OR HAVE A MATERIAL EFFECT ON THE EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET THE STANDARDS SET OUT IN THE DESIGN GUIDE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ROADS PREPARED BY THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY.

13.6 New development will often affect the road network and it is a duty of the planning system to ensure that any adverse effects are avoided. The Local Planning Authority will consult the Highways Authority on all applications for planning permission placed before them. Regard will be had for the above mentioned Design Guide which has been prepared in the light of all relevant government guidance.

D3 CONVERSION OF PROPERTIES INTO FLATS OUTSIDE THE DEFINED CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS

THE CONVERSION OF PROPERTIES INCLUDING VACANT CHAPELS AND COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES INTO FLATS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (A) **SATISFACTORY CAR PARKING CAN BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PARKING GUIDELINES; AND**
- (B) **ADEQUATE PRIVATE AMENITY SPACE WILL BE PROVIDED; AND**
- (C) **SUITABLE INTERNAL LAYOUTS AND ADEQUATE SPACE STANDARDS WILL BE PROVIDED; AND**
- (D) **THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES.**

THE CONVERSION OF SMALL TERRACED PROPERTIES AND THE BASEMENTS OF PROPERTIES INTO FLAT ACCOMMODATION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

- 13.7 Within Blaenau Gwent there are many disused buildings that may be suitable for conversion into flats, however, to safeguard against the creation of sub-standard units the County Borough Council have adopted the specified standards. The proposed flats must be of a suitable size and design and provide adequate amenity/play space to meet the needs of the future occupants. Provided that a proposal meets the specified criteria, it will be given favourable consideration by the Council.
- 13.8 The Local Planning Authority consider that smaller terraced properties are only suitable for occupation as one residential unit, and the subdivision of such properties into flats will, in most cases result in overdevelopment, lack of amenity space, problems of access and lack of car parking provision in areas which the flats are developed. Irrespective of floorspace standards, it is considered that the subdivision of small terraced properties is almost always unacceptable.
- 13.9 Basement flats are also considered to be unacceptable, as most proposals would be poorly ventilated and lack natural lighting, thus creating substandard units, and overdevelopment within a property. Proposals for basement flats will not be permitted.

D4 EXTENSIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

EXTENSIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE: -

- (A) THE EXTENSION CAN BE SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATED ON THE SITE WITHOUT LEADING TO AN UNACCEPTABLE LOSS OF PARKING PROVISION, VEHICLE TURNING SPACE OR GARDEN SPACE; AND**
 - (B) THE EXTENSION WILL NOT DETRACT SIGNIFICANTLY FROM VISUAL AMENITY OR FROM THE AMENITIES ENJOYED BY THE OCCUPIERS OF ADJOINING DWELLINGS OR ANY OCCUPIER OF ADJACENT LAND; AND**
 - (C) THE EXTENSION IS TO THE REAR AND WILL PROJECT NO MORE THAN 4.5 METRES BEYOND THE ORIGINAL BACK WALL OF THE DWELLING AT FIRST FLOOR LEVEL; AND**
 - (D) THE EXTENSION RESPECTS THE DESIGN FEATURES OF THE EXISTING HOUSE AND ADJACENT BUILDINGS, INCLUDING MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION, WINDOW OPENINGS, ROOF STYLES AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILING.**
- 13.10 The Council has adopted a Supplementary Guidance Note on Residential Extensions. This provides detailed guidance on extensions and should be used in the formulation of proposals. Copies of the guidance are available from the Environment Department.
- 13.11 This policy is intended to provide general guidelines and a consistent approach to decision making on residential extensions. Proposals for house extensions to provide improved and modernised living conditions are usually accepted subject to the proposals meeting the above standards. The standards may be varied in exceptional circumstances to allow a

flexible approach to complex or innovative design solutions, but adjoining occupiers will always be protected from an over-large or poorly designed extension close to the boundary with their property.

D5 DORMER EXTENSION TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

DORMER EXTENSIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:-

- (A) THE DORMER EXTENSION WILL HAVE NO UNACCEPTABLE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES; AND**
- (B) THE DORMER EXTENSION WILL NOT PROJECT ABOVE THE RIDGE OF THE DWELLING OR, IN THE CASE OF A HIPPED ROOF, BEYOND THE SLOPE OF ANY CHANGE IN ROOF DIRECTION; AND**
- (C) THE DORMER EXTENSION WILL NOT PROJECT BEYOND THE ORIGINAL BACK WALL OF THE DWELLING; AND**
- (D) THE DORMER EXTENSION WILL NOT DOMINATE THE ROOF OF THE DWELLING; AND**
- (E) THE SCALE, DESIGN AND EXTERNAL MATERIALS OF THE DORMER EXTENSION WILL HARMONISE WITH THE EXISTING BUILDING AND BE IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY.**

DORMER EXTENSIONS PROJECTING BEYOND THE PLANE OF THE ROOF AT THE FRONT (OR MAIN) ELEVATION OF TERRACED PROPERTIES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED EVEN WHERE THE ABOVE CRITERIA ARE MET.

13.12 This policy is intended to ensure that dormer extensions, which can be very prominent features, do not spoil the appearance and character of the locality. Dormer extensions are often the most suitable means to extend a property and in order to prevent unsympathetic dormer extensions and avoid unsatisfactory proposals being submitted to the Environment Department it is considered that the above criteria must be adhered to.

13.13 A dormer extension at the front of a terraced property is usually considered unacceptable as it would be visually obtrusive and incongruous in the street scene.

D6 DOMESTIC GARAGES

DOMESTIC GARAGES TO FACILITATE OFF-STREET CAR PARKING WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE: -

- (A) GARAGES CAN BE SAFELY ACCESSED AND WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY; AND**

- (B) THE SCALE, DESIGN AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE GARAGE IS IN KEEPING WITH THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY; AND**
- (C) THE GARAGE CAN BE SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATED ON THE SITE WITHOUT LEADING TO AN UNACCEPTABLE LOSS OF AMENITY SPACE; AND**
- (D) THE GARAGE WILL NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLY DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE AMENITIES ENJOYED BY THE OCCUPIERS OF ADJOINING DWELLINGS OR ANY OCCUPIER OF ADJACENT LAND.**

13.14 It is important that all garage developments are in keeping with their surroundings and do not exacerbate problems of highway safety. The standards adopted will ensure that the garage will be acceptable to users of the highway and occupiers of adjoining properties. Domestic garages should not be used for any purpose other than that incidental to the enjoyment of the occupier of the dwelling.

13.15 Where possible all garage proposals requiring a planning consent should be set back from the boundary edge of the application site to a distance of 1.2m from the edge of a rear lane. The Council has adopted these setback standards for the following reasons:-

- (a) To provide additional width to allow a car to manoeuvre in and out of the garage, particularly off rear lanes.
- (b) To provide a vision splay which allows the driver of a car emerging from the garage to view oncoming vehicles or pedestrians.
- (c) most garages utilize 'up and over' doors and the setback is required to accommodate the outward swing of this model.

D7 STABLES, PIGEON LOFTS AND OTHER SIMILAR STRUCTURES

PROPOSALS TO ERECT STABLES, PIGEON LOFTS AND OTHER SIMILAR STRUCTURES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (A) THE LOCATION IS NOT VISUALLY INTRUSIVE; AND**
- (B) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE AMENITIES OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; AND**
- (C) THE SCALE, DESIGN AND EXTERNAL MATERIALS ARE APPROPRIATE IN RELATION TO THE LOCATION; AND**
- (D) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN AN OVER-CONCENTRATION OF SUCH STRUCTURES IN AN AREA; AND**
- (E) ADEQUATE LANDSCAPING/SCREENING CAN BE PROVIDED.**

- 13.16 The Council will prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance on this topic. This will give detailed advice on the formulation and submission of development proposals. Copies will be available from the Environment Department.

D8 TAXI OPERATORS

PROPOSALS FOR THE USE OF PREMISES BY TAXI BUSINESSES OR PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (A) THERE IS NO DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE AMENITIES OF OCCUPIERS OF NEARBY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; AND**
- (B) ADEQUATE CAR PARKING CAN BE PROVIDED WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE SITE AND THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT HAVE ANY ADVERSE IMPACT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY; AND**
- (C) INTERFERENCE TO TELEVISION OR RADIO RECEPTION WILL NOT RESULT; AND**
- (D) AERIALS AND ASSOCIATED APPARATUS ARE SITED UNOBTRUSIVELY.**

- 13.17 There is considerable potential for this type of use to result in loss of amenity for residents where they are sited in residential areas. In certain cases, the Council may grant a temporary permission for these uses. This would normally give a 6 month trial period in order for the effect of the proposal on residential amenities to be assessed.

D9 ADVERTISEMENT HOARDINGS

PROPOSALS FOR ADVERTISEMENT HOARDINGS WILL BE PERMITTED IN OR ADJACENT TO THE DEFINED SHOPPING CENTRES WHERE:-

- (A) THE SCALE AND DESIGN OF THE ADVERTISEMENT IS APPROPRIATE TO ITS HOST BUILDING OR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ITS SETTING; AND**
- (B) THE ADVERTISEMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT VISUAL AMENITY OR PUBLIC SAFETY; AND**
- (C) THE ADVERTISEMENT DOES NOT PREJUDICE HIGHWAY SAFETY.**

OUTSIDE THE COMMERCIAL CENTRES BUT WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN AREA, PROPOSALS FOR ADVERTISEMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY WOULD HAVE NO UNDUE EFFECT ON ROAD USERS, DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER AND VISUAL APPEARANCE OF THE AREA AND ARE OF A SUITABLE SCALE AND DESIGN.

THERE WILL BE A STRONG PRESUMPTION AGAINST ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE, SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS AND AREAS OF SPECIAL CONTROL.

- 13.18 The Council has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on advertisements. This gives detailed advice on the topic. Copies of the guidance note are available from the Environment Department.
- 13.19 This policy applies to advertisements requiring advertisement consent under the Advertisement Regulations. It is of particular relevance to advertisement hoardings which by their very nature have a high degree of visual impact. They are considered to have a useful function in screening unsightly areas, in certain cases.
- 13.20 In recent years the Council has invested considerable finance in environmental improvements throughout the County Borough. In areas where improvements have taken place, the Council will consider taking action to discontinue the display of hoardings which detract from the appearance of the area.
- 13.21 Signs on business premises (which require consent) should:
- (a) reflect the scale, detailing and architectural style of the building;
 - (b) only extend to the minimum amount of signs necessary to identify the occupier of the building and the nature of the business concerned.

D10 UNSTABLE LAND

THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNSTABLE, OR POTENTIALLY UNSTABLE, LAND INVOLVING THE ERECTION OF BUILDINGS OR OTHER STRUCTURES, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS PRACTICABLE MEASURES ARE TO BE TAKEN TO INTRODUCE SUFFICIENT LOAD-BEARING CAPACITY TO MAKE THE LAND CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT RISK OF DAMAGE TO BUILDINGS ON THE SITE OR ADJOINING LAND, OR INJURY TO THEIR OCCUPIERS. THE MEASURES PROPOSED MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT BEGINS.

- 13.22 Much of the Blaenau Gwent area was subject to past underground mining activities. The Local Planning Authority will consult the Coal Authority and the Director of Engineering on stability issues. The Local Planning Authority will be guided by their advice as to whether conditions requiring ground stability precautions should be attached to any permission.
- 13.23 The Council emphasises the critical difference between development on unstable land and development affecting a landslip area. The issue of development potentially affecting a landslip area is addressed in Policy D11.

D11 LANDSLIP AREAS

ALL APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE STABILITY OF A KNOWN LANDSLIP AREA WILL BE REQUIRED TO

SUBMIT A GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION TO ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION. THIS GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION AND STABILITY REPORT MUST BE UNDERTAKEN BY A SUITABLE, COMPETENT PERSON AND MUST PROVIDE AN EXPERT SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE STABILITY OF THE GROUND AND TO IDENTIFY ANY REMEDIAL MEASURES REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH ANY INSTABILITY. THE INVESTIGATION AND REPORT SHOULD INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RISK OF THE DEVELOPMENT CAUSING INSTABILITY ON NEIGHBOURING LAND. THIS STABILITY REPORT WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED BEFORE A PLANNING APPLICATION IS DETERMINED.

- 13.24 Planning Policy Wales (March 2002) sets out the Government's guidance on instability and contamination as they affect development proposals.
- 13.25 This policy sets out the requirements of the Local Planning Authority in respect of development proposals which may affect landslip areas. Planning decisions on such proposals must take into account any potential hazard instability may cause.
- 13.26 It is also in the interests of the developer that any such problems are identified and investigated at an early stage. In this way unnecessary expense may be avoided, such as abortive land acquisition costs and detailed design should a site prove unsuitable for development. Also, precautionary measures may be incorporated into the design to take account of the recommendations of the stability report.
- 13.27 The Local Planning Authority will require the submission for approval of an investigation report containing recommendations for safe development of the site. This investigation may show that the development proposed on the site is not possible for safety or economic reasons.

D12 CONTAMINATED LAND

AN APPLICANT PROPOSING DEVELOPMENT ON OR NEAR A SITE WHERE THERE IS CONTAMINATION OR GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT CONTAMINATION MAY EXIST, SHOULD CARRY OUT A SITE ASSESSMENT AND SUBMIT A REPORT OF THE FINDINGS TO ESTABLISH THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE CONTAMINATION. DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS PRACTICABLE AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES ARE TO BE TAKEN TO TREAT, CONTAIN OR CONTROL ANY CONTAMINATION SO AS NOT TO:

- (A) EXPOSE THE OCCUPIERS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURING LAND USERS TO UNACCEPTABLE RISK; OR**
- (B) THREATEN THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF ANY BUILDING BUILT, OR TO BE BUILT, ON OR ADJOINING THE SITE; OR**
- (C) LEAD TO THE CONTAMINATION OF ANY WATERCOURSE, WATER BODY OR AQUIFER; OR**

- (D) CAUSE THE CONTAMINATION OF ADJOINING LAND OR ALLOW SUCH CONTAMINATION TO CONTINUE; OR**
- (E) CAUSE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE.**

13.28 Blaenau Gwent was formerly an area characterised by coal mining and heavy industry. The Council therefore considers it appropriate for issues of potential contamination to be addressed in the submission of proposals. The objective of this policy is to ensure that any contamination that may pose a threat to health, safety or the environment is dealt with before the development begins in accordance with a scheme approved by the Council beforehand.

13.29 The disturbance of contaminated land can have risks to public health and the environment through, for example, the mobilisation of pollutants into the aquatic environment or problems associated with landfill gas. Where development is proposed on sites known or suspected to be contaminated or where the site is in the vicinity of a former or active landfill site, the developer will be required to carry out a risk assessment to establish any possible pollutant pathways and identify all necessary mitigation measures, if any, to reduce the risks and allow development to proceed. To enable the Planning Authority to assess the sites suitability for the intended end use, this information will be required before planning permission is granted.

D13 RETAINING WALLS

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR RETAINING WALLS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE: -

- (A) SATISFACTORY DETAILS, INCLUDING STRUCTURAL DRAWINGS AND CALCULATIONS ARE SUBMITTED TO ACCOMPANY A PLANNING APPLICATION; AND**
- (B) THE RETAINING WALL IS OF AN APPROPRIATE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTED FROM SATISFACTORY MATERIALS;**

13.30 As a general guideline the excavation and construction of retaining walls in excess of 1.5m in height are considered to constitute an engineering operation and therefore require planning permission. Comprehensive details will be required in order for a planning application to be considered. Where the wall forms an integral part of the public highway, a design certificate is required to be obtained from the highway authority.

D14 AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY DEVELOPMENTS

NEW AGRICULTURAL OR FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (A) NEW BUILDINGS ARE LOCATED WITHIN OR CLOSE TO AN EXISTING GROUP OF BUILDINGS. DEVELOPMENT ON ISOLATED SITES WILL BE ACCEPTABLE IF THERE ARE DEMONSTRABLE OPERATIONAL REASONS FOR THE CHOICE OF**

LOCATION AND THERE IS NO UNACCEPTABLE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE LANDSCAPE; AND

- (B) EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND TOPOGRAPHY ARE USED TO MINIMISE THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT. LANDSCAPING USED WHERE APPROPRIATE TO BLEND THE DEVELOPMENT INTO THE EXISTING SURROUNDINGS; AND**
- (C) THE MATERIALS, COLOUR, DESIGN AND SCALE OF THE DEVELOPMENT HARMONISE WITH ANY EXISTING DEVELOPMENT IN THE VICINITY; AND**
- (D) THE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT UNACCEPTABLY DETRIMENTAL TO NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS.**

13.31 Planning permission will be required for most agricultural buildings or extensions to such buildings on holdings of less than 5 hectares, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Some agricultural proposals, whilst not requiring planning permission, must be submitted to the Council so that a decision can be made within 28 days as to whether the Local Planning Authority wishes to exercise control over details of siting and design of the building. Where such proposals are received the Council will consider the effect of the development on the landscape and other amenity, traffic and conservation interests and, where significant effects are envisaged, shall require the proposal to be dealt with as an application for planning permission.

D15 TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

PROPOSALS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT:

- (A) VISUAL IMPACT UPON THE BUILT OR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE MINIMISED. PARTICULAR CARE WILL NEED TO BE TAKEN WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK, SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS AND OTHER SENSITIVE AREAS;**
- (B) THE POSSIBILITY OF ERECTING ANTENNAE ON AN EXISTING BUILDING, MAST OR OTHER STRUCTURE, OR OF SHARING AN EXISTING MAST SITE, HAVE BEEN FULLY EXPLORED;**
- (C) THE POTENTIAL FOR THE DESIGN OF ANY MAST INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSAL TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE NETWORK NEEDS HAS BEEN FULLY EXPLORED;**
- (D) THE VISUAL AMENITIES OF NEARBY RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN SAFEGUARDED.**

IN APPLYING THESE CRITERIA THE COUNCIL WILL RECOGNISE ANY TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS THAT NEED TO BE MET BY THE APPLICANT.

- 13.32 The objective is to facilitate the growth of new and existing systems. The Council has prepared a Supplementary Planning Guidance note on telecommunications. This provides detailed advice for developers on the installation of telecommunications equipment. Copies are available from the Environment Department.
- 13.33 This policy gives the criteria which will be applied in determining whether prior approval of siting and appearance is required (for notifications under the General Permitted Development Order) or when applications for planning permission are being considered.
- 13.34 The Council will expect applicants to comply with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development (July 2003) The Council considers it essential that the reasons for selecting the site are fully explained and all other possibilities are explored. Future needs of the network should be allowed for to avoid the need for yet more masts.

D16 SATELLITE DISHES/ANTENNAE

PROPOSALS FOR THE ERECTION OF SATELLITE ANTENNAE ON A DWELLING WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE; -

- (A) THE DISH WILL NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL VISUAL IMPACT; AND**
 - (B) THE APPARATUS WILL NOT BE LOCATED HIGHER THAN THE RIDGE LINE OF THE ROOF OR MOUNTED ON A CHIMNEY STACK; AND**
 - (C) EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THAT THE CHOSEN LOCATION MINIMISES THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT.**
- 13.35 This policy sets out the criteria against which proposals for satellite dishes which require planning permission will be considered.

D17 AMUSEMENT CENTRES AND ARCADES.

PROPOSALS FOR AMUSEMENT ARCADES AND AMUSEMENT CENTRES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (A) THERE IS NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK; AND**
- (B) THERE IS CAR PARKING PROVISION FOR CUSTOMERS AND STAFF; AND**
- (C) THERE IS NO DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING OCCUPIERS OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN TERMS OF NOISE AND GENERAL DISTURBANCE; AND**
- (D) NEW BUILDINGS OR ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING PREMISES WILL NOT CAUSE DETRIMENTAL VISUAL IMPACT; AND**

- (E) **THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT HARM THE VITALITY, VIABILITY AND RETAIL MIX OF THE AREA AS A RESULT OF A PROLIFERATION OF THIS TYPE OF USE WITHIN THE RETAIL AREA.**

PROPOSALS FOR AMUSEMENT CENTRES OR AMUSEMENT ARCADES OUTSIDE THE DEFINED CENTRAL SHOPPING AREAS WILL BE RESISTED.

- 13.36 Amusement arcades and centres are best located within existing town centres. Such activities generally add vitality to town centres but to allow a proliferation of the use would reduce the viability of a shopping centre. Where a trend of that nature is detected, such applications will be resisted.
- 13.37 Measures will be taken to reduce potential nuisances when granting planning permission for such uses. This would include limiting opening hours and imposing noise attenuation measures. The policy is also intended to apply to establishments where two or more amusement machines are installed but are ancillary to the main use of the building.
- 13.38 When planning permission is granted for amusement premises in designated retail areas conditions will normally be applied requiring the maintenance of a window display in keeping with adjacent premises in order to preserve the character of the street.

D18 FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

PROPOSALS FOR BUILDINGS WHICH ARE TO BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC WILL INCORPORATE SUITABLE PROVISIONS FOR ACCESS TO THE PREMISES VIA THE MAIN ENTRANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. WHERE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES PUBLIC OR SHARED OFF-STREET CAR PARKING FACILITIES, APPROPRIATELY MARKED CAR PARKING SPACES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AT A RATE OF 5% (MINIMUM ONE SPACE) OF THE TOTAL. PROVISION WILL ALSO BE MADE WITHIN THE SITE FOR ACCESS TO AND FROM THE PARKING AREA FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

- 13.39 Government Guidance in Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy and Technical Advice Note (Wales) 12 requires that developers have due regard to ensuring that a building is accessible to all potential users. This policy sets out the Council's basic criteria for disabled access, principally to public buildings.
- 13.40 The Council will seek to ensure that all development proposals have considered the needs of disabled people.
- 13.41 Part M of Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations imposes requirements on how non-domestic buildings should be designed and constructed to secure specific objectives for people with disabilities. The Council will draw applicants' attention to their statutory obligations.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PART 2

**14. IMPLEMENTATION,
MONITORING AND REVIEW**

14. BACKGROUND

- 14.1 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides the planning framework to guide development until 2011. If the County Borough is to meet the challenges ahead, and the needs of residents and visitors alike are to be satisfied, it is essential that the policies and proposals in the Plan are implemented. The implementation of the various policies and proposals are seen as a community-wide initiative. This will involve the public, private and voluntary sectors, acting either separately or in partnership, against the background of furthering the Plan's overall objectives of improving the Blaenau Gwent's physical environment and fostering economic regeneration, whilst working within the framework determined by national policy and economic forces. To this end, the Plan will not only guide development, but will also be used to support the Council's bid to the National Assembly, Europe or other sources, for funding to implement the Plan.

THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

- 14.2 Many agencies will be involved in the implementation of the Plan, but the principle ones can be identified as:

The Council

- 14.3 The Council will play a significant role in the implementation of the UDP, through its own development proposals and work programmes. Environmental Improvement Programmes are intended to be implemented in Tredegar, Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr. Implementation is also achieved through the Councils' development control powers, or by identifying development opportunities through the UDP for others to implement.
- 14.4 Where appropriate the Council will attach relevant and reasonable conditions to planning consents, to regulate development, in accordance with the UDP policies and proposals. It may also refuse planning consent where it conflicts with the Plan's policies and proposals. The Council may use its enforcement powers to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with planning consents and that unauthorised development is dealt with as appropriate.
- 14.5 In order to ensure that development proposals are sympathetic to the UDP's policies and proposals, the Council will, in some instances, prepare supplementary planning guidance or development briefs, or enter into planning agreements with developers. This will provide positive guidance to developers on both general planning considerations and site specific issues, and will ensure conformity with the Plan.

Other Bodies or Agencies

- 14.6 In addition to the Council, there are many other bodies and agencies which can be expected to have an involvement in the implementation of the policies and proposals of the Plan.
- 14.7 The National Assembly, Welsh Assembly Government, Regional Health Authority, statutory undertakers and Housing Associations will seek to undertake their own development programmes during the Plan period, be this new development or alterations to existing development. Such proposals will, where required, be controlled by the Council

through its development control powers, but can make a significant contribution to the implementation of the Plan where in conformity with its policies and proposals.

(a) Private Sector

- 14.8 Development proposals by the private sector will undoubtedly constitute the greatest impact in terms of the Plan's implementation. This could range from major development projects of large businesses to relatively minor proposals from individual householders. Through its development control powers the Council will ensure that such proposals conform with the Plan.

(b) Voluntary Sector

- 14.9 The work of the voluntary sector is largely related to social, environmental or recreational areas of work. Local groups will play an important role in this respect and often the Council will work in partnership with such groups by providing the necessary expertise or administrative support required. In terms of the Plan's implementation the work of these voluntary groups must not be underestimated.

RESOURCES

- 14.10 The successful implementation of the Plan requires not only agencies who are able or prepared to undertake development or other proposals, but also the availability of the necessary resources, particularly land and capital for investment.

Land as a Resource

(a) Public Sector Land

- 14.11 The Council is a major land owner and as such can be a significant contributor to the supply of land both for disposal for development and retention for public use. In its role as land owner, the Council will be required to comply with the policies and proposals of the Plan in the same way as any other land owner and the release of land for development will be subject to the same considerations. The Council's role as land owner will be clearly differentiated from its role as local planning authority. The way in which the Council manages its existing stock of land which will be retained in public ownership is equally important in terms of the Plan's implementation.

(b) Private Sector Land

- 14.12 By far the majority of the Plan's proposals will be implemented on privately owned land. A steady supply of private land has come forward for development in the past and it is anticipated that this will continue throughout the Plan period. The rate at which such land will come forward for development will of course be directly influenced by the economic climate. All future development proposals will be considered in the light of the Plan's policies and proposals and be controlled by the Council through its development control powers.

Financial Resources

(a) Public Sector Finance

- 14.13 The Council will continue to make bids to both the National Assembly and the European Commission for resources to support its capital programme and other work programmes. Proposals will be submitted annually to the National Assembly housing expenditure in the Housing Strategy and Operational Plan (HSOP), for highways capital expenditure in the Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 14.14 In addition, the Council obtains financial support from various bodies or Lottery funding such as the Countryside Council for Wales, the Sports Council for Wales, and Cadw and will continue to seek funding from whatever source, so as to maximise the level of financial resources available for investment in the County Borough.

(b) European Structural Funds

- 14.15 The European Commission are looking to concentrate funding in fewer areas. Support has previously been granted under Objective 2 (Industrial Re-structuring). And work is currently well advanced on arrangements to take advantage of Objective 1 funding.

(c) Private Sector Finance

- 14.16 This will form a great source of investment during the Plan period and includes all levels of investment from individual households to large developers and businesses. Whilst investment throughout the Plan period will be effected by the prevailing national and local economic climate at the time, successful implementation of plans in the past has shown that even in times of financial restraint, economic activity, together with linked environmental benefits, can be stimulated by clear statements of where development opportunities exist within the Borough. To this end, every encouragement will be given to potential investments in accordance with the Plan's proposals.

Labour as a Resource

- 14.17 A substantial amount of work is undertaken at the local level by national or regional voluntary groups, particularly in the field of leisure, recreation and nature conservation. The time and effort put in by voluntary workers in these groups has been of great benefit to the improvement of the County Borough and will continue to be so. Several voluntary sector organisations are active in Blaenau Gwent.

IMPLEMENTING THE UDP

- 14.18 The preparation of the UDP is very much just one step in the development of an effective planning framework to guide and control the future development of the area. Further work will be essential to ensure that the policies and proposals of the plan that are acted upon are supplemented by appropriate measures to take them through to implementation.
- 14.19 Implementation requires the existence of suitable working arrangements and the undertaking of additional work to ensure that the implementation procedures are themselves put into place and carried out.

- 14.20 More detailed planning guidance and programmes for action will ensure the effective implementation of the Plan. This will take various forms, dependent upon the particular issues in question.
- 14.21 The Council will, where necessary, prepare supplementary planning guidance which will take the form of Development Briefs in the case of site specific issues; Strategies in respect of topic based issues, such as countryside and landscape; Management Plans for areas such as the Parc Bryn Bach and Local Nature Reserves and Area-based Action Plans for areas such as town centres, where there is a need for a comprehensive approach to deal with wide ranging, but inter-related, planning issues.

Regeneration Strategy

- 14.22 In response to the problems facing Blaenau Gwent, a range of area based regeneration initiatives have been pursued including:

(a) Victoria, Ebbw Vale

- 14.23 Since 1992 an urban village project has been developed on part of the site of the former Garden Festival Wales. This project has attracted substantial commercial and residential development including a factory outlet shopping complex. Further private sector investment in the leisure sector is ongoing.

(b) Tredegar

- 14.24 Tredegar Action was established as a partnership between Blaenau Gwent Borough Council, Gwent County Council and the WDA in 1992. During 1994 a three year strategic Action Plan was approved by the Welsh Office, which has succeeded in attracting in the region of £30 million for the regeneration of the town.

- 14.25 The programme of initiatives within the Tredegar 2000 programme will continue to be implemented. The town received a major boost when the Welsh Capital Challenge Bid to create Tredegar Business Park was approved in December 1997 and work is well advanced on this project. The land reclamation work has been completed and work has commenced on the access road and construction of the industrial units.

(c) Abertillery

- 14.26 The Abertillery Action partnership between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Gwent County Council, the WDA and Welsh Office was established in 1988 and has resulted in the implementation of a range of projects including new retail development and environmental improvement. The projects undertaken by Abertillery Action have successfully assisted in sustaining the towns role as a retail centre and have had a positive impact on the local economy including the redevelopment of the former Roseheyworth Colliery site to provide industrial units. These units have already been let and there is a strong demand for further units in the area.

(d) Ebbw Fach Valley

- 14.27 In 1996 the Abertillery Action partnership was extended to cover the whole of the Ebbw Fach Valley, the Ebbw Fach Action Forum was formed and the Ebbw Fach Regeneration Strategy was approved.
- 14.28 At a strategic level the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Forum was established in April 1996, this provides the operational framework within which the County Borough Council, WDA and Gwent TEC contribute towards the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent.
- 14.29 This activity demonstrates that there is a strategic approach to regeneration, however the severity of the problems facing the most deprived unitary authority in Wales, requires long term investment.
- 14.30 It will be necessary to maintain existing/establish new working relationships with all other agencies involved in the Plan's implementation.
- 14.31 The Council must actively seek funding for the implementation of the Plan from all possible sources, both public and private. It must also ensure that its own capital programme reflects the Council's own responsibilities and aims in terms of the UDP's implementation.

MONITORING

- 14.32 Having prepared the UDP and indicated how it will be implemented, the Council will also need to ensure that the policies and proposals of the Plan continue to be relevant and to this end, the Plan will be kept under review. In this way, it will be possible for the Council to ensure that the Plan remains effective as a land-use planning document for the County Borough for the duration of the Plan period.
- 14.33 The Strategy for the Plan has set out in broad terms what the Plan is aiming to achieve and, at a more detailed level, objectives and targets have been identified for each policy area. In monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan, it will be important to assess the performance of policies and proposals against the objectives and targets which have been set.
- 14.34 This will involve the collection, collation and interpretation of data on those matters which are relevant to the planning and development of the County Borough and which will influence the Council's ability to implement successfully the Plan's policies and proposals. The Council will continue to monitor information such as housing and industrial land availability, the incidence and reclamation of derelict or vacant land, traffic and transportation, population and unemployment trends.

Environmental Appraisal

- 14.35 The Environmental Appraisal of the UDP generally takes the form of the methodology provided in the Government guide - Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide, 1993. But the approach has been broadened to become a sustainability appraisal which incorporates economic and socio-cultural issues.

14.36 The key tasks of the appraisal are:

- (a) characterising the environment
- (b) scoping the plan
- (c) appraising the plan content

14.37 The local environmental quality concerns elements of the built and natural environment which are resource based and particular to Blaenau Gwent. This provides the base line for subsequent analysis and assessment. It is also necessary to ensure that the scope of the UDP is in accordance with, and encompasses the environmental concerns raised in, relevant National Government Guidance and other guidelines. The scoping exercise is to ensure that the plan covers the right policies and proposals with the aim that it embraces the principles of sustainable development. The potential effects of individual policies and proposals are then assessed against sustainability criteria.

14.38 In addition, the Council will also monitor the policy situation in which the planning system operates. At the national level, this relates to the statutory requirements of new or amended legislation in the form of Acts of Parliament, Statutory Instruments or EC Directives, or policy guidance in the form of Government Circulars, Planning Policy Guidance or White Papers.

14.39 Planning Guidance Wales: Unitary Development Plans already places a duty on the Council to keep under review matters which may be expected to affect the development of planning of development in the County Borough.

14.40 Strategic Guidance may also refer to the need to monitor a changing situation and such monitoring has already begun in South Wales. This will continue throughout the Plan period and the Council will play its part in this exercise. The results of this monitoring will be used not only to enable the Council to ensure that the UDP remains relevant in terms of the policy advice given in Strategic Guidance, but at the same time, will also enable the relevance of Strategic Guidance itself to the changing planning needs of South Wales to be assessed and kept under review.

REVIEW

14.41 The results of monitoring will determine whether or not it will be necessary to make alterations to the Plan and the Council will review the Plan from time to time on that basis. Alterations could range from relatively minor amendments to more substantial changes, but in any event, the Council will only make such changes as are statutorily required or are necessary to ensure that the Plan remains up to date, relevant and viable as a land use planning document.

14.42 The need for full public consultation on any possible changes will depend on the extent of any proposed change and the Council will consider the situation at the appropriate time. Because the policies and proposals in the Plan will generally be able to accommodate change in the Plan period, it is unlikely that there will be any need to consider revisions to the Plan in its early years. However, it is possible that by the middle of the Plan period there may be a need to revise certain elements of the Plan in response to natural change even if the policy basis of the Plan remains unchanged.

Monitoring Report

- 14.43 An important element of the monitoring and review of the Plan will be the preparation of a Monitoring Report. This will be presented to Council on a regular basis though it may be necessary to make ad hoc reports in response to certain circumstances, or new legislation or advice. This report will assess the changes which have taken place, the effects this is having or is likely to have on the implementation of the Plan's policies and proposals, and will indicate the areas where amendments to the Plan are either necessary or likely to become necessary in the future. On that basis the Council will judge the effectiveness of the Plan and the need to make changes to it.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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