

Local

Plan

Contents

	Page Number
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Purpose of the Report	3
3.0 Integration with the Community Strategy	3
4.0 Visioning Workshops	4
5.0 Conclusions	7
6.0 Preferred Vision Statement	7
7.0 Next Stage	9
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Stakeholders who attended the Issues and Vision Workshop – Friday 27 th July 2007	10
Appendix 2 – Examples of generated Vision Statements at the Issues and Vision Workshop	11
Appendix 3 – Members and Stakeholders who attended the Vision and Strategy Options Workshops	12
Appendix 4 – Examples of generated Vision Statements at the Vision and Strategy Options Workshop	15

(Appendix 2 lists the vision statements generated in the Issues and Vision Workshop).

- 4.5 For more detailed information on the Issues and Vision workshop refer to the Issues and Vision Workshop Report of Consultation (August 2007) which is available from the Planning Policy Team or from the planning policy pages of the council's website at www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
- 4.6 Following this workshop, Planning Policy Officers drew on the opinions and visions created at this workshop to create a draft vision. The following draft vision was devised:

Draft Vision

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities, through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will

requirement was that the Vision should be clear, realistic, and based on the objectives, and priorities of the Community Strategy. 4 out of the 8 groups commenting on this requirement, all considered that the draft Vision met this requirement.

4.11 The second set of requirements was based on advice received from the Welsh Assembly Government training workshop. It was advised that a Vision should be:

- a) A succinct statement of intent;
- b) A point of reference for all parts of the plan and all participants;
- c) Distinct to the area.

4.12 When considering if the draft Vision was a succinct statement of intent, a mixed response was received. Over half (5 out of the 8) of the workshop groups stated that the draft Vision was a succinct statement of intent. The 3 remaining workshop groups considered that the draft Vision contained a heavy content and that it should be 'short' and 'punchy'. All 3 of these groups commented that the detailed issues contained in the draft Vision should be incorporated into the objectives of the Local Development Plan, and not the Vision.

4.13 7 out of the 8 workshop groups commented on requirement b), that a Vision should be a point of reference for all parts of the plan and all participants. All agreed that the draft Vision satisfied this requirement.

4.14 In terms of considering if the draft Vision was distinct to the area, all 8 groups accepted the Vision was distinctive to the area. However, 2 groups pointed out that the draft Vision could be applicable to other Local Authorities in South Wales such as Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf, as these areas face similar issues as Blaenau Gwent. Overall, the draft Vision was considered to be as distinctive as possible, as the draft Vision takes into account the priority issues associated with the area.

4.15 The second task of this workshop was to allow the attendees to suggest improvements to the draft Vision.

4.16 Firstly, the workshop groups identified a number of strengths to the draft Vision, in that it was a positive statement with a good range of detail and not too general. It was also distinct to Blaenau Gwent in that it had a local focus and covered many of the significant issues facing Blaenau Gwent. It was also considered that incorporating the community plan vision at the end of the draft vision was a good idea.

4.17 However, 2 of the workshop groups pointed out that the draft vision wasn't easy to read as one long paragraph and so it was suggested that bullet points be inserted.

4.18 A further weakness identified by one of the workshop groups was that the language in the vision was not reader friendly for communities and that the

draft vision was bland and not dynamic. All the workshop groups suggested word improvements to the draft Vision.

4.19 In addition, all the workshop groups considered that there were a number of key issues missing from the draft Vision. These included:

- x Accessibility and sustainable transport
- x Health and well-being
- x Education and skills
- x Recreation and leisure
- x Accessibility to services
- x The need to place a greater emphasis on biodiversity and environmental issues.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The Visioning exercises have provided a valuable insight into the land use issues facing the County Borough that are of importance to the stakeholders who attended these events.

5.2 Whilst the issues raised at these sessions span across service areas and organisations, there was a general consensus in terms of the key land use issues that need to be considered as an integral part of plan preparation. There was also a general recognition that many of these issues are inter-related and that many have implications beyond the boundaries of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, for neighbouring local authorities and other partner organisations.

5.3 There were a number of key issues that reoccurred throughout each of the workshop sessions and it is recommended that these are the issues that should serve to revise the vision statement for the LDP. Taken together they express the need to develop a vision for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council which promotes:

- x Provision of land to provide for employment opportunities , supported by appropriate housing and ancillary facilities and services (including community facilities, recreation and leisure etc) – promoting a mix of uses where appropriate;
- x Establishing safe and thriving town centres;
- x Sustainability – protecting the environment as a whole whilst

- 6.4 In developing the Vision for the LDP, it is vitally important that the proposed vision statement does not constrain any future discussion in terms of the Strategic Development Options for the plan. As a result of this analysis, the Planning Policy Team have prepared the following draft Vision as a working Vision for the early stages of plan preparation:

Through collaborative working, by 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities, where people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life and residents will live in safe, healthy and thriving communities, with access to a range of good quality affordable homes and thriving town centres. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected and enhanced to create a place where people want to live, work and visit.

- 6.5 It is important to recognise that, as the preparation of the LDP progresses through the various stages, there will be a need to review the Vision as an integral part of the process to f >>BDC2v5TfT10nowlu7ITri.T22TfE60CID 13 >d-various F0f

Appendix 1 - Stakeholders who attended the Issues and Vision
Workshop – Friday 27th July 2007

Name	Organisation
Angela Chard	BGCBC Chief Accountant - Corporate Service
Alan Reed	BGCBC Head of Environment Management & Highways
Alun Evans	BGCBC Transportation Strategy Manager
Alwyn Hughes	BGCBC Business Development Officer
Alyson Tippings	BGCBC Tourism Officer
Andrew Long	BGCBC Team Leader, General Services
Andrew Parker	BGCBC Research Officer
Bernadette Elias	BGCBC Head of Policy Performance & Development
Bethan Cartwright	BGCBC Ebbw Vale and Tredegar Town Centre Manager

|

Appendix 2 - Examples of generated Vision Statements at the Issues and Vision Workshops

Group 1

By 2020 Blaenau Gwent will offer a valleys experience that will benefit local people, visitors and those who work in Blaenau Gwent by providing:

- x quality housing
- x a sustainable, diverse economy
- x towns that have specific roles
- x lifelong learning opportunities
- x a vibrant visitor destination

Group 2

By 2021 Blaenau Gwent will be a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities, providing a high quality of life.

Group 3

Blaenau Gwent, vibrant valley communities, where people feel proud, happy, valued and included.

Blaenau Gwent, rich past, dynamic future.

Blaenau Gwent, communities for the future.

Appendix 3 -

Rob James

Partnership

Appendix 4 - Examples of generated Vision Statements at the Vision and Strategy Options Workshops

Vision Statement 1

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities ; through:

