no change in the number of construction jobs and a

3.4.1 Since the preparation and adoption of the LDP, there have been changes to the evidence base which indicate that the LDP may need to be revised in order to remain appropriate for the area. Most significantly, the Welsh Government has released new population and household projections.

3.4.2 The LDP is based on the Welsh Government's 2008 population projections which estimated that Blaenau Gwent's population would increase from 68,914 to 70,849 between 2006 and 2021. The corresponding household projections indicated a need for an additional 3,925 households to meet this growth in population.

3.4.3 Since the LDP was adopted, the Welsh Government ha(ro)-3(( )-3(i)10(n)-4( )6(p) Tm)-191(as)-16

3.4.5 Corresponding household projections have also been released by the Welsh Government based on 2011 Census data (published 2014) and the 2014 population

consideration of solar farm developments as a stand-alone technology. The revised toolkit also provides new advice on how to translate renewable energy assessments into policies which guide appropriate renewable and low carbon energy development to the most suitable locations.

3.5.4 The renewable energy assessment, which informed the policies within the LDP, was based on the Welsh Government's best practice guidance, and will therefore need to be updated to address the new requirements identified above.

3.5.5 Chapter 4 of PPW has been updated to reflect the requirements of Sections 11 and 31 of The Planning (Wales) Act 2015, which relate to the consideration of the Welsh language in on-going surveys and the preparation of an LDP, and the determination of a planning application respectively. The Welsh Government also published practice guidance in 2014 to assist Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) with the consideration of Welsh language issues during the preparation, monitoring and review of LDPs.

3.5.6 PPW states that LPAs must consider the likely effects of their development plan on the use of the Welsh language in the Sustainability Appraisal of their plans, and should keep under review the extent to which the Welsh language is used in their area (paragraph 4.13.3). Moreover, TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language (2013) also indicates that all LDPs should include a short reasoned justification of the regard had to the needs and interests of the Welsh language, and an explanation of how any policies relating to the Welsh language interact with other plan policies (paragraph 3.7.2).

3.5.7 Chapter 12 of PPW and TAN 21: Waste (2014) have been revised to reflect changes to the waste policy context set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC on waste) and Welsh Government policy (TZW) and the (CIMS) Plan. These changes have been made to update the way in which the planning process facilitates the delivery of sustainable waste management infrastructure. It also takes into account specific principles central to sustainable waste management, including the waste hierarchy, self-sufficiency and the concept of the nearest appropriate installation.

3.5.8 PPW indicates that LPAs need to have particular regard to the aspirations and requirements of TZW and the CIMS Plan, information within waste planning monitoring reports and waste management priorities relevant to the local area (paragraph 12.6.1). In addition, LDPs should identify suitable locations for

achieving those goals. The short term programme sets down those schemes that are priorities for the next 5 years up to 2020, while the longer term programme identifies aspirations up to 2030.

3.7.4 The majority of Blaenau Gwent related schemes are identified in the LDP. Two additional schemes need to be facilitated through a revised LDP, namely, the cycle route between Sirhowy Valley, Bedwellty Pits and Hollybush and the bus rapid transport corridor between Aberdare and Abergavenny. A further scheme needs to amended, namely, the bus priority corridor improvement between Abertillery, Blackwood and Newport as the LDP currently starts the improvement at Brynmawr.

3.7.5 The t that informed the adopted LDP was produced in 2011 and identified the need for a further 4 pitches in Blaenau Gwent. In 2015, the Council updated the

4.1.1 The Vision of the LDP provides a clear expression of what the County Borough should look like in 2021, and it is essential that it remains relevant to local needs and aspirations beyond the current plan period. The LDP Vision was developed through collaboration with key stakeholders and was informed by a range of plans and strategies, including the Council's . The LDP's Vision states that:

4.1.2 Since the adoption of the LDP in 2012, the has been supplemented by the publication of the ( ) which was published in 2013. The SIP provides a shorter term four year 'action plan' on how the overarching vision for the County Borough will be worked towards and what the priorities will be between 2013 and 2017.

4.1.3 Given that the overarching vision of the remains unchanged, it is not considered that the LDP's vision currently requires revision. Moreover, the LDP's themes and objectives have been considered against the updated themes and outcomes of the , and it has been found that they are broadly compatible with no significant revisions required at this time to improve alignment.

4.1.4 Notwithstanding the current compatibility between the LDP and , it is acknowledged that the latter will shortly be replaced by a Local Well-Being Plan (LWBP) for the County Borough, which is a requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). The latter places a duty on public bodies, including local authorities, to carry out sustainable development and to set objectives which maximise its contribution to achieving each of the seven well-being goals. Each public body must take all reasonable steps, in exercising its function, to meet those objectives.

4.1.5 An assessment of whether the LDP contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals has therefore been undertaken by considering how closely they align with the key themes of the LDP. It has been found that all seven well-being goals are already embedded within the LDP, aligning closely with one or more of the LDP's key themes.

4.1.6 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) Act also establishes Public Service Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales who must improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by working to achieve the well-being goals. PSBs are responsible for preparing and publishing a Local Well-being Plan (LWBP) which sets out its objectives and the steps it will take to meet them. The Blaenau Gwent PSB has already undertaken a local Well-being Needs Assessment and the Well-being Plan is anticipated to be in place by April 2018. A revised LDP will therefore need to complement the LWBP and ensure that it expresses, in appropriate land use terms, those elements of the LWBP that relate to the development and use of land.

4.1.7 An assessment of whether the LDP's strategic objectives require amending was also undertaken as part of the wider LDP review work. It has been found that minor amendments will be required to the majority of strategic objectives to update the reference to the plan period, and more specific changes will be required to the following strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective 1 may require updating depending on the outcome of the reassessment of undelivered retail commitments and allocations and the revised retail strategy.

Strategic Objectives 2 and 3 will need to be updated in line with a revised strategy, population and household projections.

Strategic Objective 3 will need to be updated in line with a revised affordable housing and gypsy and traveller accommodation need requirement.

Strategic Objective 9 will need to be updated in line with a revised employment land requirement.

Strategic Objective 10 will need to be updated to reflect the successful delivery of the 'Learning Zone' on 'The Works' site.

Strategic Objective 15 needs to be updated to reflect the apportioned tonnage of aggregates required by the most up-to-date regional technical statement.

4.2.1 The LDP is based on the 'Spatial Strategy of Growth and Regeneration' which seeks to regenerate the area through building a network of district hubs around the principal hub of Ebbw Vale, whilst recognising that there is a north south divide in terms of opportunities for growth. Essential to the success of this Strategy is the need to ensure good connectivity between the principal hub of Ebbw Vale and the district hubs of Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery, and good accessibility between the hubs and the areas that they serve. In the case of the Upper Ebbw Fach area, the Brynmawr District Hub is also supported by the Local Town Centre of Blaina.

4.2.2 The LDP's strategy seeks to deliver 3,500 dwellings by 2021 in order to meet an increase in the population to 70,849 by 2021. This equates to an average build rate of 233 dwellings per annum. Whilst this average build rate has been exceeded in the past, most notably during the first half of the 1990s, the LDP's level of housing growth is ambitious when compared to the level of dwelling completions experienced in the years leading up to the start of the plan period in 2006 (see Figure 5 below).

4.2.3 As of 1st April 2017, 1,171 dwellings had been delivered within the County Borough, which represents approximately a third of the housing requirement (3,500) anticipated to be delivered by 2021. Whilst this represents a significant number of dwellings, the LDP is now in its final phase (2016-2021)

operations and focussing their interests in areas that offered more secure prime market opportunities, such as Cardiff and the M4 Corridor.

4.2.5 Whilst the recession officially ended in 2009, a period of weak growth was experienced for a number of years with quarter falls in growth experienced in to 2012. A period of economic growth has however been experienced post 2012 and the national economy has performed better than expected in the aftermath of the referendum result to leave the European Union.

4.2.6 Despite the improved economic conditions, Blaenau Gwent has not experienced a positive trend in

available to provide a 5 year supply for housing (paragraph 9.2.3). The Council has not achieved a 5 year land supply for housing since the LDP was adopted in 2012. Moreover, since 2012, it has decreased year-on-year to its current figure of 1.27 years in 2017 (see Figure 6 below).

4.2.10 It is important to note that the ability to maintain a 5 year land supply is one of the key factors in determining how the LDP should be revised.

4.2.12 In order to ensure that sufficient employment land is provided to increase employment activity and economic development needs, the LDP allocates 50 hectares of new employment land (B use class). As highlighted in Section 3 above, the amount of employment development delivered since the start of the plan period in 2006 has not been sufficient to meet the requirements of the LDP's strategy. By the end of March 2016, just 0.18 hectares of allocated employment land had been delivered, with a further 35,861.5 3.6 hectares of new employment floorspace delivered elsewhere in the County Borough. The target of delivering 23.8 hectares of employment land by 2016 was therefore missed, and it appears very unlikely that the target of delivering 50 hectares of employment land by 2021 will be achieved when the amount of employment development either under construction or with the planning permission is taken into account.

4.2.13 There are a number of positive contextual changes that have the potential to be a catalyst for economic development within County Borough, including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, the South East Wales Metro, Enterprise Zones, and the on-going dualling the A465. The City Deal is anticipated to deliver £25,000 new jobs across the region and leverage an additional £4 billion of the private sector funding over its 20 year lifespan, while the Enterprise Zones will be the focus of a £100 million Welsh Government investment in an automotive business park over a 10 year period. In combination with the proposed transport infrastructure improvements, these public sector investments in the regional and local economy should stimulate economic development within the County Borough, facilitating the delivery of allocated employment sites and enabling the expansion of existing businesses over the longer term.

4.2.14 Notwithstanding the opportunities presented by the above public sector interventions, it should be noted that it appears unlikely that the Circuit for Wales development will be taken forward in light of the Welsh Government's decision to not provide financial support for the project. The economic outlook also remains uncertain while the future relationship between the UK and European Union is negotiated.

4.2.15 All undeveloped employment sites should therefore be reassessed as part of the preparation of a revised LDP to ensure that they are deliverable over an extended plan period. A reconsideration of the overall supply of employment land will also need to form part of this work to ensure that the level of provision is not wholly out of sync with the level of housing growth and the needs of the employment market, and that the development of employment sites for other land uses is not being frustrated.

4.2.16 In order to maintain thriving town centres and ensure that future retail needs are met in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner, the LDP establishes a retail hierarchy and identifies land for 10,200 square metres and 2,445 square metres of comparison and convenience floorspace respectively, over the plan period. This need was expected to be met through the delivery of a range of retail commitments (sites with planning permission), allocations and redevelopment schemes within existing town centres.

4.2.17 As indicated in Section 3 above, retail commitments have not come forward as anticipated despite having planning permissions in place. In addition, no planning applications have been received in respect of allocated retail proposals and it remains uncertain as to whether they will be delivered by 2021.

4.2.18 The LDP also anticipates that 585 square metres of convenience floorspace and 1,060 square metres of comparison floorspace will be met through redevelopment schemes within town centres. To date, just one development has been delivered, relating to a 227 square metre extension to the Aldi Store in Ebbw vale. Three other edge of centre retail developments have also been granted planning permission within the Brynmawr area, with a combined floorspace of 2,756.5 square metres.

4.2.19 The delivery target for 2016 (9,100 square metres) has therefore been missed, and it appears very unlikely that the longer term target of delivering 11,500 square metres of retail floorspace by 2021 will be achieved. All undeveloped retail commitments and proposals should therefore be reassessed as part of the preparation of a revised LDP to ensure that they are viable and deliverable when economic conditions improve. The retail evidence base will also need to be updated in order to identify the comparison and convenience retail floorspace requirements over an extended plan period, taking into account, amongst other things, future levels of population and expenditure growth, shopping patterns and expenditure retention rates.

4.2.20 The LDP's strategy recognises that there is a north south divide in terms of opportunities for growth and, accordingly, splits the County Borough into a Northern Strategy Area (NSA) – Growth and Regeneration and a Southern Strategy Area (SSA) – Regeneration. The NSA includes the three hub areas of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Upper Ebbw Fach, and emphasises sustainable growth and regeneration with most of the growth concentrated on the principal hub area of Ebbw Vale. The SSA covers the lower Ebbw Fach Valley and focusses on regenerating the area and maximising the potential offered by the area's unique setting and cultural qualities.

4.2.21 The LDP focusses the majority of housing development within the NSA (2,853 dwellings), with more limited housing growth in SSA (228 dwellings). To date, both

4.2.25 All retail proposals are allocated within Ebbw Vale Town Centre and all retail commitments fall within the wider Ebbw Vale area. The LDP's proposals and commitments reflect the LDP's Strategy, which places Ebbw Vale at the top of the retail hierarchy as the Principal Town Centre.

4.2.26 The T

	be reviewed as part of the reconsideration of the regeneration strategy.
	Revise to reflect any change in approach to town centres and updated retail requirements over an extended plan period. Revise to reflect the reconsideration of the development strategy, viability of housing allocations, affordable housing requirements and

	Revise to reflect changes in national policy and improve clarity.
	Functioning effectively – minor amendments required to improve clarity.

	for allocations to remain deliverable over an extended plan period and updated retail requirements.
	Revise – certain housing sites have been delivered and a review of undeveloped allocations and commitments is required taking into account updated housing requirements.
	Revise to address additional Gypsy and Traveller need.
	Revise – certain cycle routes have been delivered, a review of undelivered routes is required and new cycle and active travel routes need to be added.
	Revise – certain rail improvements have been delivered and a review of undelivered rail improvements is required.
	Functioning effectively.
	Revise – certain bus improvements have been delivered, a review of undelivered bus improvements is required and new bus improvements need to be added.
	Remove – new roads delivered.
	Revise – certain highway improvements have been delivered and a review of undelivered highway improvements is required.
	Revise – an employment allocation has been delivered and a review of undelivered employment allocations is required taking into account updated employment land requirements.
	Revise to reflect any change in the status of sites within the employment hierarchy.
	Revise – education allocation has been delivered, another is coming forward as anticipated and any new education provision needs to be added.
	Remove – planning permission has been granted and one of the two community centre buildings is now in operation.
	Revise – tourism related activities have been delivered on certain sites and a