

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Local Development Plan

Hearing Session 6: Employment

Thursday 28 June 2012

Examination 2012

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Submission

Examination Statement Reference No:	ES6.1
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## Introduction

This Statement has been prepared by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in order to help facilitate appropriate discussion at the Employment Hearing Session. The Paper provides a response to the questions set by the Planning Inspector (Mr Vincent Maher).

Where the Council does not intend to provide any additional written evidence the Inspector's attention is directed to the relevant part of the Evidence Base, which in the view of the Council addresses the matters raised. The paper will not repeat evidence previously submitted for consideration.

The Council's detailed response to the representations received to employment are contained in the Report of Representations (SD07b).

## Council Response to Inspector's Questions (questions in bold)

**1. What is meant in Objective 9 of the Plan by the phrase "By 2021, 50 hectares of employment land and a range of premises have been delivered"? How might this term "delivered" be interpreted? Is this a precise target? What evidence base underpins this figure?**

**What is meant in Objective 9 of the Plan by the phrase "By 2021, 50 hectares of employment land and a range of premises have been delivered"? How might this term "delivered" be interpreted?**

The term "delivered" in objective 9 means that a range of premises have been built on the 50 ha of allocated employ

that 50 hectares of employment land was required. The Plan therefore allocates 50 hectares of employment land.

It is accepted that the employment land requirement figure is both precise and challenging therefore the Council propose to monitor employment land development through the Monitoring Framework identified at Appendix 2 of the Statement of Focussed Changes (SD10a, page 155).

**2. What are the implications of pursuing an employment land allocation of this scale in the context of forecast declines in some sectors, especially manufacturing and other Use Class B2 activity? Does the Council acknowledge that some vacant stock may not be developed for employment or other uses during the**

The Council consider that there is not a significant amount of empty stock as evidenced in SD77 (pages 68-69). The issue of vacant stock is taken into account in the synthesis forecast which identifies future employment floorspace demand.

SD77 identifies that within the industrial (B2) and warehouses (B8) uses 9% of the premises are vacant which is marginally above the 8% accepted

**3. Why is the Council seeking to promote the regeneration of so much employment land when other initiatives (e.g., improved transport accessibility) might improve access to jobs for local people outside of Blaenau Gwent?**

The Annual Population Survey (2009) identifies that in Blaenau Gwent, people are less likely to work within their authority of residence. Appendix 1 identifies that only 52% of residents are working in their home authority which, is the second lowest when compared to other local authorities in Wales. It is questionable on sustainability grounds that Blaenau Gwent should look to rely on decreasing this number further.

In addition to this, the people that are being encouraged to return to work are likely to be in low paid jobs, which would not enable them to travel any distance for work. Around 76% of the working age population



In addition to this, the Employment Sites and Premises Study (SD77) set out recommendations to de-designate employment land allocations or re-designate to other uses (SD77, pages 74-75).

The Study suggested that the following sites be de-designated from employment:

Employment Land Allocation Reference in UDP (SD127a)	Site Name	Current Area (ha)	Council Response
E2 (1)	Rassau Extension (West)	33.02	Agree. The Council has not allocated the site in the LDP.
E2 (3)	Crown Avenue (East)	1.15	Agree. The Council has not allocated the site in the LDP.
E2 (6)	Bryn Serth Road	12.55	Disagree. The site has planning permission and therefore is allocated to reflect this permission.
E2 (7)	North of Waun y Pound	9.47	Disagree. The site has planning permission and therefore is allocated to reflect this permission.

**How should the Plan respond to other uses that might complement employment activity (e.g., training)?**

For all employment land categories listed



6. Is there an overlap between criteria (3) and (4) of Policy DM11 and criterion (3) of Policy DM218?

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in the local development plan need to prove deliverability no allocation was made.

The Plan does however show support for a major tourist attraction in criterion (f) of Strategic Policy 1 (SD01, page 25) that would draw large numbers of people to the area and provide a significant number of jobs.

**8. How does the Plan help implement national policies (for example, in “Economic Renewal: a new direction” (W17)) to support priority sectors including ICT; energy and the environment; advance materials and manufacturing; creative industries; life sciences; and financial and professional services)?**

The Plan implements national policies such as Economic Renewal: A New Direction (W17) to support priority sectors including ICT; energy and the environment; advance materials and manufacturing; and financial and professional services through objective 8 of the Plan (SD01, page 18). Objective 8 supports employment growth by diversifying the economic base into construction, business services, health and social care, tourism and leisure and environmental industries, whilst supporting the manufacturing sector.

It is acknowledged however that the wording of these sectors is slightly different to that in W17, as the sectors listed in the objective is taken from the Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy (SD124, pages 33-37) .

It is also recognised that the creative industries and life sciences sectors have not been reflected in the objective. The Council are aware of the economic development section embarking on a life science project therefore it is suggested to the Inspector that the objective be updated to reflect these sectors.

