



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

Health Impact Assessment

Aseu'r Effaith ar Iechyd

Deposit Local Development Plan
Cynllun Adeneuo Datblygu Lleol



Report on the Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC)

Further Information

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Key Mitigation Measures for the Local Development Plan

Theme	
1.	Economic Activity Support existing employment strategy with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate skills, knowledge and training;• Increased opportunities in self employment;• Local labour market agreements; and• Affordable community childcare.
2.	Refer to the 'Learning City' concept as part of joined-up initiatives in Education (training), especially regarding greater retention of younger people.

1.

2.

3.

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Waste

- 1. Provide more links to recycling
- 2.

Executive Summary

This consultation report outlines the views expressed at the rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) workshop which was held to discuss the proposed strategy of the draft Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) in terms of its negative and positive impacts on the health and well being of the Blaenau Gwent population.

The workshop was held on Friday 11th December 2009, at the Llanhilleth Institute, Llanhilleth. The event brought together eighteen key internal and external stakeholders from the local authority area (see Appendix A for a full list).

The purpose of the workshop was to identify:

- How the LDP might impact, both positively and negatively, on the health and well-being of the population, in particular, vulnerable groups; and
- What further work is required to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts.

Workshop Session 1: Impact on Vulnerable Groups

The first workshop session involved participants identifying who are the vulnerable groups within Blaenau Gwent's overall population. The participants identified a range of population groups under the following categories:

- Disabilities and Carers;
- Mental Health Concerns;
- Minority Sexual Orientation;
- Age dependent risk;
- Ethnic Minorities;
- Income Related;
- Groups who suffer social disadvantage;
- Geographical Issues; and
- Groups where food and exercise are health concerns.

The participants were asked to keep these groups in mind, as the results would be used in workshop 2.

- 1.5 In the first instance, this definition says that the health of an individual is determined by their age, sex and constitutional factors. Although, individual lifestyle factors, social and community networks and general socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions are also important. These include a range of ‘determinants’: living and working conditions, agriculture and food production, education, the work environment, unemployment, water and sanitation, health care services and housing (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991, 1993).
- 1.6 The resources available determine the majority of HIAs. HIAs can be classified in two ways; ‘in-depth’ or ‘rapid’. In-depth HIAs are comprehensive assessments that can take many months to complete as they involve systematic literature reviews, new data collection and expert analysis. Rapid HIAs, by contrast, can be completed in hours or days. Both approaches involve stakeholder meetings and a report. The only previous rapid HIA undertaken on a LDP in Wales was undertaken for Wrexham County Borough Council.²
- 1.7 In the autumn of 2009, a rapid HIA was considered suitable for the LDP by the BGCBC planning policy section and the Blaenau Gwent Public Health team. During the summer and autumn of 2007, the Council undertook a number of community engagement events at which a range of local stakeholders had an opportunity to consider where we are (identification of key issues facing the Borough), where we want to go (development of a vision), and how do we want to get there (consideration of three strategy options). These events generated valuable feedback which assisted the Council in preparing the Preferred Strategy for the LDP.
- 1.8 It was agreed that the rapid HIA would be in the form of a participatory half-day workshop. It would follow the systematic methodology for a rapid HIA outlined above which is also given in greater detail in *Improving Health and Reducing Inequalities: A Practical Guide to Health Impact Assessment* (WAG, 2004).

2.0 The Workshop

² See CISHE (2008)

3.0 Workshop Session 1 – Impact on Vulnerable Groups

3.1 The aim of workshop 1 was to identify the vulnerable population groups in Blaenau Gwent using Appendix 2 from the Welsh HIA guidance (WAG, 2004). The health of vulnerable groups tends to be impacted much more than the rest of the population by negative health pathways (Popay *et al*, 1998), something that is missed by other impact techniques such as Environmental Impact Assessment which do not use the WHO's broad definition of health.

3.2 As the workshop participants began to identify a range of population groups, these were collated at the front of the room under the following categories:

Disabilities and Carers

- Disabilities;
- People living with physical disabilities;
- Sensory impairment;
- Deaf community;
- Those with long-term limiting illness;
-

- Young people i.e. risk-taking behaviour;
- Ex-offenders;
- Older people; and
- Children.

Ethnic Minorities

- Ethnic minority groups moving into the area – language barriers;
- Travellers/migrants/ asylum seekers; and
- Cultural expectations.

Income Related

- Poverty;
- Low income;
- Unemployed;
- Lack of education / knowledge;
- Poor literacy;
- Those with poor basic skills;
- School leavers with low academic achievements; and
- Economically inactive.

Groups who Suffer Social Disadvantage

- Single parents and those who work full-time;
- Single parent families;
- Homeless people; and
- Children with parents who abuse alcohol.

Geographical Issues

- People living in isolated areas;
- People unable to access services and facilities;
- People who don't/ can't drive;
- Access to the natural environment and the ability to use it; and
- People living in areas known to exhibit poor economic and/or health indicators.

Groups where Food and Exercise are Health Concerns

- Those with obesity; and
- Those with low physical literacy.

3.3 At the end of this first session, having identified a range of potentially vulnerable groups it was pointed out that participants should have these groups in mind as they begin workshop 2.

Health Impact Summary: Leisure and Natural Environment

Potential Positive Impacts Identified

- Diversifying the economic base through the tourism sector;
- Increased tourism opportunities would lead to positive impacts on the health and well-being of individuals in the area in terms of mental health, physical benefits and employment; and
- Local people making greater use of new facilities in the natural environment like cycle trails and walking routes.

Potential Negative Impacts Identified

- Lack of accessible accommodation for tourists.

Retailing and Town Centres

retained in the area. Leakage of profits is a significant structural factor that can reinforce low incomes and poor investment (Warnaby, 1998).

4.15 The group also suggested that healthy convenience retailing in town centres should be encouraged, perhaps in the form of a market. The Principal and District Town Centre Policy, which restricts the number of hot food takeaways and public houses operating to 10.0% and 5.0% respectively, was welcomed. It was felt that too many of such outlets with their negative impacts on health, operate in town centres.⁴

4.16 It was also questioned what role can planners play in preventing town centres being areas of anti-social behaviour with drug and alcohol misuse. Boy racers were also considered a problem in town centres.

<u>Health Impact Summary: Retailing and Town Centres</u>
Potential Positive Impacts Identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The aim of the plan to regenerate town centres and boost retail activity was welcomed;• The local economy, and hence the health of local people, ought to benefit more if there is a greater retention of retail profits in the area; and•

- More should be done to increase the standard of housing in the private rented sector.
-

Some participants also considered that increased road use by HGVs may further discourage people to walk and cycle. Greater investment in the maintenance of roads was also considered an important issue by several participants.

- 4.24 The extension of the rail line to Blaenau Gwent was felt to have been an excellent strategic move in recent years and several participants questioned if more could be done. Stakeholders suggested increased train links that are better integrated with bus services would help to decrease the number of vehicles on Blaenau Gwent's roads and improve accident rates. It would also cut CO₂ emissions to help create a more sustainable and healthier outcome.
- 4.25 Another suggestion went beyond the LDP's increased provision of cycle lanes through partners like Sustrans to providing hybrid bikes for rental which are more appropriate to the local terrain. It was questioned if they could be offered to the public using a hire service currently seen in places like Cardiff, London and Paris.
- 4.26 Another suggestion was to consider removing all street signage except for directions. This can improve the public realm, naturally slow vehicles and so cut road accidents. Such changes were pioneered in the 1990s by a Dutch traffic engineer, Hans Monderman (Hamilton-Baillie, 2008).
- 4.27 Private bus companies were a concern to several stakeholders. Commercial decisions have led to the withdrawal of certain services in the area (there lacks a commercial incentive to link the three valleys). This increased isolation for some individuals impacts upon mental health and well-being and can reduce access to better quality healthy food, for example.

<u>Health Impact Summary: Transport</u>
Potential Positive Impacts Identified
Increased opportunities to walk or cycle through the proposed cycle network.

Extension of rail line to Blaenau Gwent important strategic move, which could reduce vehicle usage.

Potential Negative Impacts Identified

Increased road use by HGVs may further discourage people to walk and cycle
 Isolation due to lack of bus services could impact upon mental health and well-being and opportunity to access healthy food.
 Isolation of the three valleys by having no link bus services.

Waste

4.28 In terms of waste management, there was relatively little discussion by the stakeholders despite there being a number of uncertainties linked to future waste-related plans in the LDP. One group member suggested more recycling facilities and also the use of recycled materials would be beneficial in health terms given the impact on the broader environment. Another was interested in learning more about BGCBC’s approaches to environmental issues in general.

Health Impact Summary: Waste

Potential Positives Identified

- More recycling will lead to less landfill usage, energy waste and air pollution.

Potential Negatives Identified

- Less recycling, however, will lead to greater landfill usage, energy waste and air pollution.

5.0 Workshop Session 3 – Mitigation of Impacts

- 5.1 The final workshop session focussed on identifying what further work was required

Specific Ideas for Possible Mitigation of Positive and Negative Impacts

Theme	Lead
Economic Activity	

1. Support existing employment strategy with:

- Appropriate skills, knowledge and training;
- Increased opportunities

2.

3.

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Sustrans	Engineering Services
3. Removal of all street signage	Regeneration, Engineering Services
4. Ensure that there are transport links to public facilities	Engineering Services
5. Link transport connections to businesses and their provision for their workers ability to travel to work e.g. encouraging private provision of showers and bike racks	Planning Policy
6. Encourage operators to link three valleys	Private bus companies, Engineering Services
7. Develop transport providers as social enterprises	Engineering Services
8. Set up council run transport	Engineering Services

		Services Planning Policy
2.	Encourage the use of recycled materials.	Planning Policy
3.	Consider free disposal of commercial waste to encourage recycling-	Environmental Services

7.0 The Way Forward

- 7.1 The workshop was useful in identifying how the Local Development Plan (LDP) could impact on the health and well-being of people in Blaenau Gwent, both positively and negatively. It also identified what further work was required to maximise the positive and mitigate the negative impacts. The views expressed at the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Workshop will be taken into account by the Council as it finalises the draft deposit, which will be formally consulted on in late summer 2010. During this time anyone can make representations to the Council on the contents of the Plan.

8.0 References

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Appendix A – List of Attendees

Name	Organisation
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- To contribute to the provision of new research, and provide access to existing evidence, that will inform and improve judgements about the potential impacts of policies, programmes and projects.

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Appendix C – Summary Leaflet on the LDP Strategy

Appendix D – Agenda

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