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Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at
Aberystwyth University

A land based production study in the rural wards of Torfaen

report prepared for:

**Torfaen Rural Local Action Group
(CreaTe)**

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author:

Iain Cox

+44 (0)8452 696105
info@ecostudio.org.uk
www.ecostudio.org.uk

“ *to create a place in which people take opportunities to thrive and motivate themselves and others, developing a strong entrepreneurial culture, with improved economic wellbeing and a sustainable society*

A vision for Torfaen Rural Wards

Torfaen County Borough Council Rural Development Plan
Local Development Strategy 2007-2013, p16

Contents

Executive summary	
1.0 Overview	1
2.0 Methodology	2
3.0 Key findings and achievements	4
3.1 The outlook for land based producers in the rural wards of Torfaen	4
3.1.1 The global and political context	4
3.1.2 The gaps in rural business support provision	5
3.1.3 A framework for supporting land based producers	6
3.2 Stakeholder Engagement	8
3.2.1 Survey results	8
3.2.2 Engaging with 'hard to reach' stakeholders	8
3.2.3 Aligning local production with consumption	10
3.2.4 Tailoring support to rural business needs	11
3.2.5 Overcoming the barriers to local production and consumption	12
3.3 The theoretical potential of the productive capacity of the land in the rural wards of Torfaen: a summary	14
3.3.1 The landscape	14
3.3.2 Current land use and agricultural output	14
3.3.3 Livestock	15
3.3.4 Soils	16
3.3.5 The opportunities for future production	17
3.3.6 Related considerations	17
3.3.7 Fact sheets for each rural ward	18
4.0 Conclusion and recommendations	26
4.1 Developing sustainable business	27
4.2 Re-localising the supply chain	30
4.3 Social enterprise models	31
4.4 Niche product development and diversification	33
4.5 Action planning table	35
Appendix A	
i. Survey questionnaire and results: farmers and producers	
ii. Survey questionnaire and results: buyers (processors and distributors)	
iii. Site visits: strategy reviews and action plans for the 5 companies	
iv. Site visits: sustainable business questionnaire	
v. Semi structured interviews: List of interviewees	
Appendix B	
i. A review of the theoretical potential of the productive capacity of the land in Torfaen rural wards. Prepared by IBERS at Aberystwyth University	

Executive summary

The Land based production study in the rural wards of Torfaen was commissioned by Torfaen Rural Action Group (CreaTe) at Torfaen County Borough Council in September 2011 and completed in February 2012. The study provides accurate intelligence about how land is currently used in the seven rural wards of Torfaen, the capacity for land based production and the business case for developing a sustainable supply chain for Torfaen produce.

Key findings

- **Gaps in rural business support provision mean that many land based producers and small enterprises that make a living off the land in Torfaen are not always in a position to benefit.** This can be due to their capacity, confidence and capability to scale-up, along with limitations in access to the business support infrastructure in Wales.
- **Business support for land based producers in Torfaen must enable them to sell direct whilst aligning their offer with demands from buyers in conventional supply chains.** This will help to build long term economic sustainability.
- **Innovation can be stimulated by tailoring rural development support to meet specific business needs.** Torfaen farmers and producers want help in considering renewable energy generation, developing tourism-related business, adding value to produce and finding new routes to market. Processors and distributors want help with marketing, new product development, packaging and delivery.
- **Leadership is required to encourage better environmental practices in rural businesses.** Evidence shows that the combined impact of small businesses contributes significantly to the overall volume of waste created in Wales. New policies such as Glastir and pending reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy will impact land based businesses.
- **A strong willingness exists for collaboration amongst supply chain businesses in Torfaen.** Projects that bridge gaps in local production and consumption may provide quick wins. For example meat is in significantly more demand in the Borough than is currently being supplied by local livestock producers.
- **Biodiversity, low impact agriculture and renewable energy can buck the trend in the decline of traditional farming in Torfaen.** This will provide opportunities for tourism, forestry, crafts, and community based initiatives that will lead to the sustainable regeneration of rural wards.

Recommendations

Collectively these study findings have led to 12 recommendations for business support mechanisms to encourage sustainable practices in the region and provide a foundation for a co-ordinated supply chain for Torfaen land based produce. A framework has been designed to assist in setting goals and priorities to implement these recommendations during the current Rural Development Plan which runs until the end of 2013, and for activities that can be done beyond 2013.

Theme	Recommendation
Developing sustainable business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a business to business mentoring scheme 2. Develop toolkits and guidance for rural business innovation 3. Provide tailored support for farmers 4. Waste reuse and recycling
Re-localising the supply chain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Farmers and producers markets 6. Producer directory and produce catalogue 7. Farm open days
Social enterprise models	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Producer co-operatives 9. Community supported agriculture
Niche product development and diversification	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. 'Made in Torfaen' producer quality mark 11. Producer hubs and tourism clusters 12. Providing support for emerging sectors

1.0 Overview

Challenges such as unpredictable weather patterns, population growth, water scarcity, increasing energy and commodity prices all pose risks to globalised supply chains. Even at a local level all businesses are now exposed to global competition.

The Torfaen Rural Development Plan (RDP) recognises that encouraging innovation and better environmental practices in rural businesses will lead to opportunities for economic growth in the region and help to meet sustainable development policy goals.

This report describes the programme of work, the key findings and achievements from the land based production study that was commissioned by Torfaen Rural Local Action Group (CreaTe) at Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) in September 2011 and completed in February 2012.

It aims to provide accurate information and intelligence about how land is currently used in the seven rural wards of Torfaen¹, the capacity for land based production and the opportunities for developing a sustainable supply chain for Torfaen produce.

It draws together the lessons learned through undertaking this work and proposes a strategic framework containing 12 recommendations for projects that can be lead by Torfaen Rural Development Team.

It concludes with an action planning table to assist in setting goals and priorities for practical tasks to implement these recommendations during the current RDP that runs until the end of 2013 and for activities that can be done beyond 2013.

An appendix is included containing the detailed findings that are referenced in the main body of the report.

¹ Torfaen Borough contains seven rural wards that are targeted for RDP support, these are: Abersychan, Blaenavon, Cwmynyscoy, Llantarnam, Llanyrafon South, Two Locks and Henllys and Wainfelin.

2.0 Methodology

A multi-phase methodology was designed to meet the aims of the study and to bring strategic and practical added value within the project budget and timeframe. Each phase is described below.

Phase 1: Desktop research

The project began by building an evidence base to provide the context for projects, action plans and strategies to be developed. Data and information was gathered from a variety of publications including policy, academic and market research. We reviewed local, national government and non governmental organisations intervention programmes and capacity building initiatives for rural development.

Torfaen Rural Development Team supported this process by organising a meeting for Torfaen Council Policy Officers to discuss different initiatives with which they are involved.

An index of these findings has been created and made available to the client for future reference.

Phase 2: Mapping Exercise

An approach was designed to provide the best opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in the sector. Promotional activity raised awareness of the project and food and farming businesses were invited to enter a competition to win tailored sustainable business consultancy. A contact list was created using details supplied by Torfaen Rural Development Team and through Ecostudio networks.

Phase 3: Interviews with current land based producers

Objectives in this phase were to identify the support needs of farmers and rural businesses and to understand what motivates them to act.

An approach was designed to provide an opportunity for engaging with these stakeholders based on best practice. This approach combined telephone and online surveys with farmers, producers, processor and distributor businesses in Torfaen and a number of site visits. Semi structured interviews with a selection of food and farming agencies and public and private sector buyers were undertaken to support this process.

It was designed as a competition to offer entrants a chance to win free sustainable business coaching and to raise awareness of the £3,000 Taste of Torfaen grant. A letter was sent to every farm and business on the contact list, it was featured on Ecostudio and TCBC websites and details were sent to agencies and organisations that had offered to promote to their contacts through own newsletters and web media.

Phase 4: A technical review of the land resource

A review of the theoretical potential of the productive capacity of the land in the rural wards of Torfaen was prepared by the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at Aberystwyth University.

The key information sources used were Welsh Government (WG) Agricultural Small Area Statistics 2002 to 2009², a Rural Audit undertaken in 2009 for CreaTe, Geological and soil type maps held by Aberystwyth University, LANDMAP³ data was assessed using a Geographical Information System (GIS), and mapping layers from Torfaen Borough Council which provide contextual analysis of the land in the county.

It was undertaken as a desktop study to satisfy the following research needs:

1. an assessment of the current land use within each rural ward in the Borough;
2. the potential for alternative land uses including land based renewable energy sources within each rural ward;
3. the biodiversity issues including changes to land use in relation to Glastir and wider government policy, and;
4. predicted climate change patterns that may effect land use in the rural wards.

² Agricultural Small Area Statistics, 2002 to 2009. See: wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/agriculture2010/100811/?lang=en (accessed Nov 2011)

³ LANDMAP is the national information system, devised by the Countryside Council for Wales, for taking landscape into account in decision-making. See: <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/methodology/> (accessed Nov 2011)

3.0 Key findings and achievements

3.1 The context for land based producers in the rural wards of Torfaen

3.1.1 The global and political context

Challenges such as unpredictable weather patterns, population growth, water scarcity, increasing energy and commodity prices all pose risks to globalised supply chains. This emphasises the urgent need to create resilience in the way we produce and consume goods and services.

Even at a local level all businesses are now exposed to global competition. The decline in farming in rural parts of Wales⁴ provides an indication of the impact this has had on land based producers. The Torfaen RDP recognises that encouraging innovation and better environmental practices in rural businesses will lead to opportunities for economic growth in the region, and that this will help to meet sustainable development policy goals.

In May 2009 the WG vision for a sustainable future One Wales: One Planet was launched. It positions sustainable development as the central organising principle of the WG. This means that all local and national government policies and interventions are obligated to work towards goals laid out in this strategy.

In response to this a number of policy documents have been developed. Several of these are directly relevant to this study, including:

- Sector Plans to help industry to reduce and prevent waste will be launched to help meet the objectives of the WG Towards Zero Waste strategy. Separate plans for farming and food manufacturing, service and retail are currently being drawn up⁵. These will focus on ways to reduce food and packaging waste in supply chains.
- The WG Green Jobs Strategy sets a framework for how renewable technologies and the development of environmental goods and services can bring sustainable jobs, wealth and economic growth to Wales.
- A new food strategy for Wales: 'Food for Wales, Food from Wales 2010-2020' was launched in December 2010. This builds on several key policy documents such as the Local Sourcing Action Plan and the Food Tourism Action Plan and the Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Horticulture Industry that aim to achieve the objectives laid out in the RDP for Wales.
- Glastir is a new farm and land management scheme that runs from 2012. It replaces existing WG agri-environment schemes. It encourages biodiversity and habitat development. The higher level targeted elements of the Glastir scheme may offer significant additional income to farmers and landowners that embrace the scheme. This is subject to each farm's location and some areas of land in the seven rural wards of Torfaen may not be eligible.

⁴ The number of active holdings in Wales dropped from 25,314 to 23,884 over the 2002-2009 period, representing a 6% drop in registered holdings. Within Torfaen, there is a reduction of ten active holdings, giving an 8% drop – slightly above the national average

⁵ http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/waste_recycling/bysector/?;jsessionid=gGLIPNCWhrRLN4gMR00pyDVvbFdRLqCh4JkzLGRhvKq5xzZkpWks!-1163452955?lang=en [accessed Jan 2012]

- reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)⁶ are planned to be implemented in 2014 (although this date is yet to be confirmed). Until that time the CAP will remain at the centre of debate and lobbying by farming led agencies and environmentally focussed organisations that tend to view future land use in different ways.

3.1.2 The gaps in rural business support provision

A broad number of WG funded initiatives that might offer support to land based producers in Torfaen are described below. They are all limited in scope but help illustrate where the gaps exist for supporting rural business in Torfaen.

Business Innovation

Business Innovation is part of the WG. It provides businesses in Wales with an integrated package of support to help them at different stages of the innovation process. It is available from April 2012. It is likely to have a strong technology focus that small rural businesses in Torfaen may need additional support to be positioned to gain value from.

Farming Connect

The gateway to information, advice and support for farmers and foresters in Wales. Farming Connect helps farmers and their families to run their business more efficiently, and to safeguard the future of their farms. This is the main project for supporting farm businesses in Wales. Farmers must register and be operating as a farm business to receive assistance. This can exclude those that do not own and operate a farm business, for example small holders and farm workers, and can create barriers to entry for new farmers.

Total Food Marketing

Total Food Marketing offers a tailored practical sales and marketing resource for Welsh food business to develop the UK market. Mentoring is delivered by food marketing specialists in addition to a range of short training courses and workshops to develop skills in sales and marketing. This can provide useful support to small rural businesses that have the confidence and capacity to grow and develop capacity to meet new demand for products and services. Small rural businesses in Torfaen may need additional support to benefit from this initiative.

Waste Resources Action Programme

WRAP is a UK Government funded organisation to encourage waste recycling and resource efficiency in business. WRAP Cymru is regional office providing grants and support geared towards assisting business to meet government targets. The WG is currently working with WRAP to establish how they might adapt their support for small businesses that at this stage it is geared towards larger business.

⁶ The CAP is a set of regulations and mechanisms agreed between members of the European Union to control the supply, marketing and pricing of farm produce.

The following projects have received funding through the Supply Chain Efficiencies Scheme (SCES)⁷. They provide useful examples of best practice and although some are focussed on geographical areas and are sector specific, they may offer ways forward for supporting small rural businesses in Torfaen. At the time of writing the SCES is currently under review by WG:

Cambrian Mountains Initiative

The Cambrian Mountains Initiative began as a way to help improve the financial returns to Welsh sheep and cattle farmers in the Cambrian Mountains area, through a collective marketing initiative and based on a royalty fee paid by final retailer. It is a wide-ranging project that aims to help promote rural enterprise, protect the environment and add value to products and services in Mid Wales.

Cywain

The main aim of Cywain is to help and support the agriculture sector to add value to primary produce. This is achieved through developing new products or markets with the emphasis on collaboration. The assistance available involves various support including facilitation, expert advice and a quality mentoring service which has a strong emphasis on adding value. The service is available to both individuals and groups and is focussed on primary producers in Wales.

Horticulture Wales

Horticulture Wales is a project focused on delivering expert support to enhance the efficiency of medium, small and micro businesses involved in both the edible and amenity horticulture supply within Wales.

Sustainable Supply Chains initiative

The Sustainable Supply Chain initiative assists microenterprises to embrace sustainable practices through innovation by developing tools and techniques. It has created a practical framework to help benchmark sustainability in food supply chains.

3.1.3 A framework for supporting land based producers

Ways of supporting rural land based producers to innovate along their supply chains through re-localising supply chains, developing niche products, labelling and establishing community co-operatives and social enterprise are well documented. Examples include farmer and producer markets, fruit and vegetable box delivery schemes, community supported agriculture and responsible product branding such as organic and fair-trade. These approaches can play an important role in building resilience in local supply chains by reconnecting consumers with producers and enabling farmers to sell direct.

⁷ SCES is an element of the RDP for Wales 2007-2013 (RDP). They are part funded by European funds and by the WG and are designed to develop supply chain partnerships to a stage where they are confident to adopt a new supply chain process - subsequently leading to greater physical benefits. The key aim of SCES is to assist farmers, growers and foresters in developing a collaborative, supply chain-focused initiatives by providing the capacity building support that is not available through any other mechanism.

In Torfaen several notable initiatives⁸ that have received support through the RDP in Torfaen can provide a foundation for supporting land based producers to innovate. They include:

- the refurbishment of **Llanyrafon Manor**;
- a fruit and vegetable delivery box scheme through **CoStar** and the **Garnsychan Partnership**;
- exploring the potential for renewable energy across Torfaen via **Cwmynyscoy Community Action Trust**, and;
- a cross boundary project working in Monmouth and Blaenau Gwent as well as Torfaen the **Forgotten Landscapes Partnership** will help conserve and restore the built features that create the historic character of the landscape and natural landscape features around Blaenavon.

Manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers also play an important part in supply chains through adding value and convenience in getting goods and services to consumers. Some of these stakeholders are leading the way by innovating to build resilience along their supply chains and this creates opportunities for small producers.

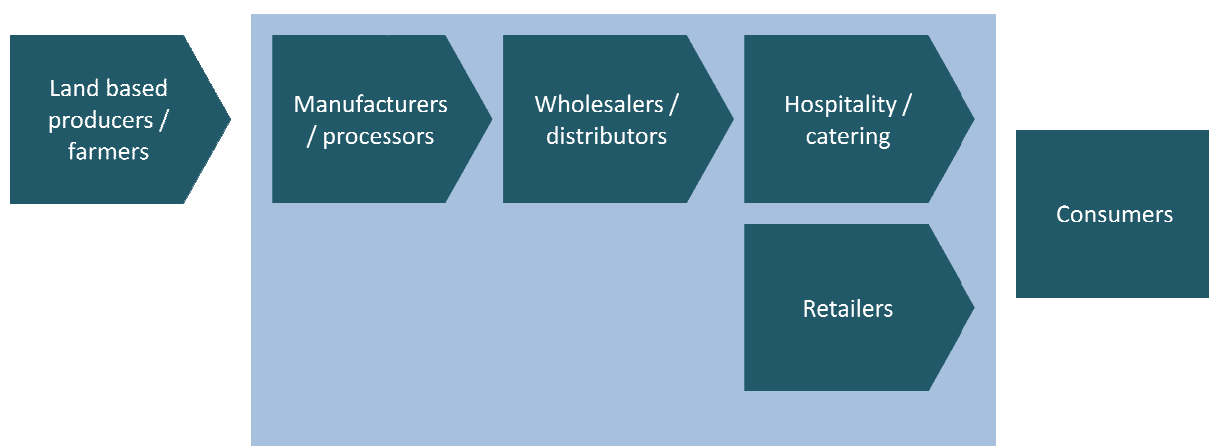
Examples of supply chain innovations by market leading companies

In October 2011 **Sainsburys** launched its '20 by 20 Sustainability Plan'⁹ that sets out twenty sustainability targets that they aim to do by 2020, one of these commitments is to double the amount of British food they sell.

In March 2011 Ian Cheshire CEO of Kingfisher announced that **B&Q** is rethinking its whole business model to decouple growth from environmental impacts by creating products with fewer resources and by changing consumer behaviour. The company is examining a number of options including shifting from selling products to leasing them.¹⁰

Recognising the market opportunity for food produced in Wales, Welsh wholesaler **Castell Howell** offer a dedicated 'Produce from Wales' service¹¹. This service connects small Welsh producers with caterers across Wales via an established distribution network.

The diagram below illustrates the key stages and stakeholders in a conventional supply chain.



⁸ These are described in a report titled: A Rural Audit, CreaTe, 2009 p6-7

⁹ See: www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/responsibility/20-by-20-commitments [accessed Jan 2012]

¹⁰ See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainable-business/b-q-ceo-ian-cheshire-capitalism-reappraisal?intcmp=239> [accessed Jan 2012]

¹¹ See: http://producefromwales.co.uk/home/gtwp_section_leader.php [accessed Jan 2012]

For rural development projects and initiatives to be successful, all parts of the supply chain must be considered, from producer through to end consumer. On the one hand, land based producers must be encouraged to seek opportunities at the local level through marketing and selling their produce direct; whilst on the other they must align their offer with the demands of buyers in more conventional regional or national supply chains.

Building the capacity, confidence and capability in land based producers and enabling businesses to produce, process, distribute and market their products in ways that are environmentally sustainable is central to achieving success.

3.2 Stakeholder engagement

This part of the study aimed to identify the current and future supply chain opportunities for land based produce from Torfaen. Over 150 Torfaen based farms, food processors, rural businesses and a range of food and farming agencies, public sector and private sector buyers were identified and a contact list was made available to the client.

Run as a competition, a telephone and online survey was designed to gather up to date, primary research on the challenges facing farmers, land based producers, processors and distribution businesses in Torfaen. Five site visits were undertaken. Semi structured interviews with a selection of food and farming agencies, public and private sector buyers were undertaken to support this process.

An eligibility criteria¹² was used to enable a shortlist of survey respondents to be drawn up. Following a review with Torfaen Rural Development Team five companies were selected to receive sustainable business coaching. A supplementary sustainable business questionnaire¹³ was completed by these companies and site visits were undertaken. Each company then received a strategic review and action plan tailored to their specific business project needs.

These company reports are intended for use by Torfaen Rural Development Team to generate **case studies** and promotional opportunities to raise awareness of the Taste of Torfaen initiative and extend the reach of the CreaTe brand. The survey results provide a number of **project opportunities** for the Torfaen Rural Development Team to follow up and the sustainable business questionnaire can be developed for use as a **diagnostic tool**.

The survey results, company reports, list of interviewees and supporting documentation can be found in Appendix A.

An analysis of these findings is described below. This provides an understanding of Torfaen land based producers support needs and what will motivate them to act.

3.2.1 Survey results

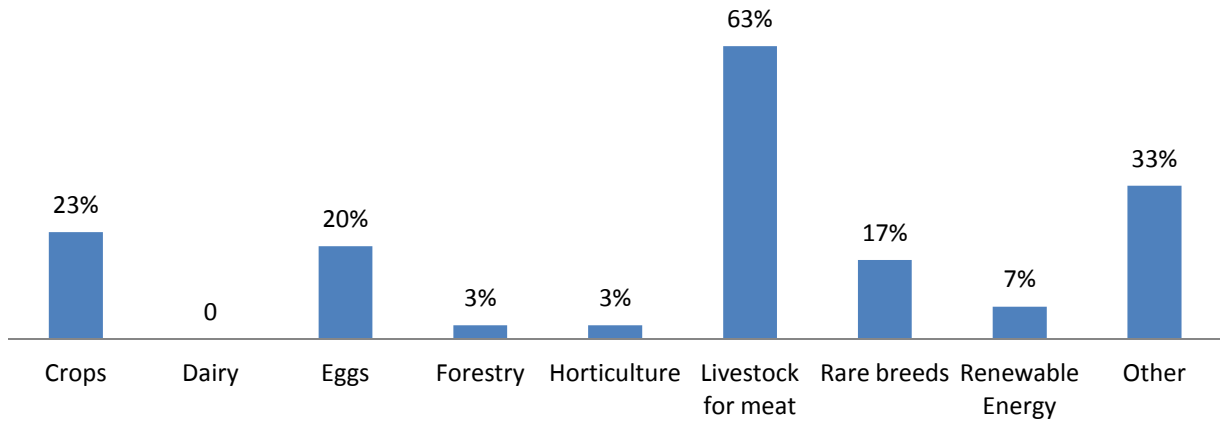
30 land based producers completed our farm survey from a total of 105 (29% response rate)

¹² An eligibility criteria was designed to identify; businesses that demonstrate leadership potential through economic and environmental performance, projects that offer diversity along supply chains, and in doing so the potential contribution that they can bring to benefit the aims of CreaTe

¹³ The sustainable business questionnaire was adapted from the judging methodology used by the True Taste Wales Contribution to Sustainable Development Award

19 of these respondents (63%) produce livestock for meat. Crops, eggs and rare breeds are produced by approximately 33% of respondents. Whilst forestry, horticulture renewable energy production were poorly represented. No dairy farms responded.

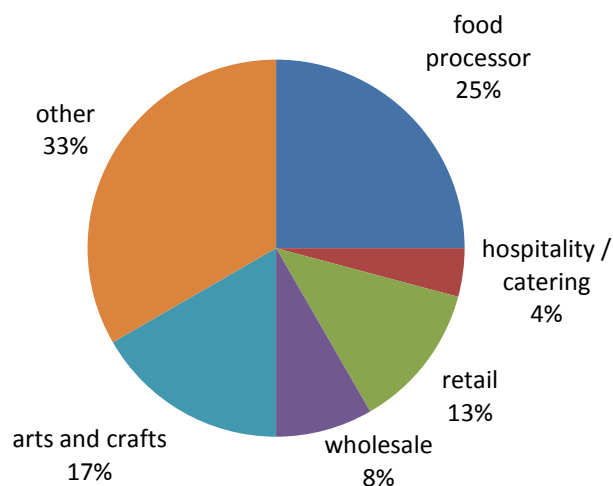
The graph below illustrates responses to the farm survey question 3: *What do you produce from the land? Tick all that apply.*



24 processor and distributor businesses completed our buyer survey from a total of 45 (53% response rate)

Of these 12 were from food related industries, 4 were from arts and crafts related industries. The remainder were from other supply chain businesses consisting of community/charity, building/conservation, education and farm services.

The pie chart below illustrates responses to the buyer survey question 2: *Which of the following best describes your sector.*



3.2.2 Engaging with ‘hard to reach’ stakeholders

There are many complex issues that create barriers to engaging with some stakeholders. These include competitiveness, the perceived value of free support, communication challenges, resource

limitations, knowledge gaps and personal motivation. These are common challenges and are not exclusive to the rural wards of Torfaen.

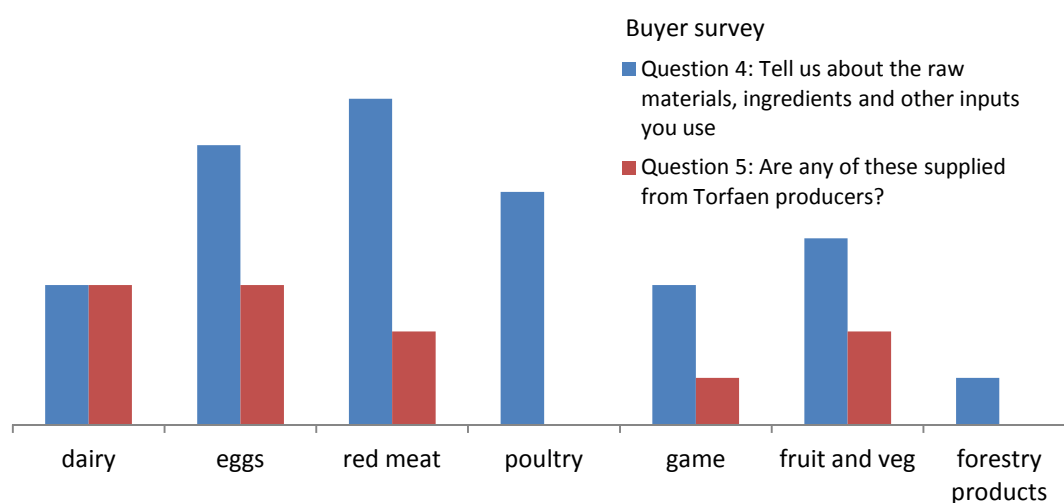
A higher percentage of buyers responded to the survey than farmers. Findings from this study correlate with other recent initiatives in South Wales¹⁴ in providing evidence that local supply chains are most easily stimulated by working with intermediaries in the supply chain rather than farmers and primary producers.

With this in mind we recommend that a particular effort is made to engage with processors, and distributors, because these are more likely to initiate innovative opportunities that will lead to commercial benefits.

3.2.3 Aligning local production with consumption

The survey findings show that for eggs, red meat, poultry, game, fruit and vegetables there is significantly more demand in the Borough than is currently supplied by local producers. The only area where demand appears to match supply is in dairy products, although no dairy farmers responded. So whilst the provenance of supplies to buyers is in some cases traceable to local producers, most noticeably for meat, we cannot generally assume that local produce is consumed within the Borough.

These results are illustrated in the graph below. They reveal gaps between local production and consumption and offer supply chain opportunities for producers in the rural wards. Work will be needed to make this happen, producers will need the ability to get produce to customers and the benefits of buying from them will need to be demonstrated. The survey results suggest that a strong willingness exists for collaboration along this supply chain, with 90% of producers and 100% of buyers responding positively when asked if they were interested in working with other businesses to develop commercial opportunities. So prioritising support for projects that bridge these gaps may provide quick wins.



¹⁴ for example the Sustainable Supply Chains project. See: www.sustainablesupplychains.org.uk [accessed Jan 2012]

3.2.4 Tailoring support to rural business needs

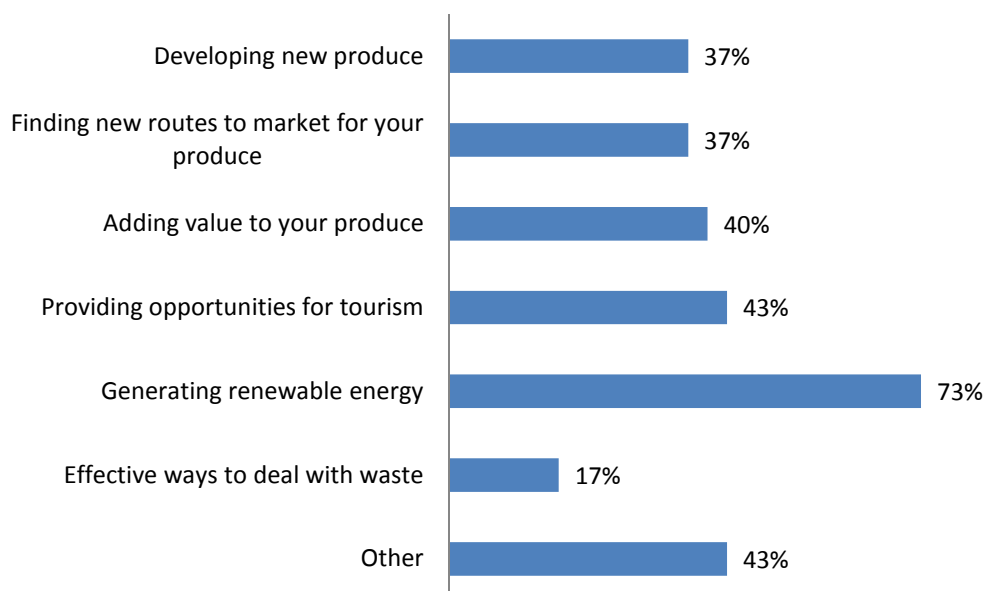
Survey respondents were asked to rate the challenges they face and which areas of their businesses they would like support with.

For buyers over 2/3rds of respondents see marketing to their customers as their main challenge, followed by cost of inputs (42%) and then distribution (25%). Farmers see things the other way around with 80% of respondents stating cost of inputs as their biggest challenge, followed by finding new customers (16%). This suggests that producers are more inclined to look at ways of saving money whereas buyers are more interested in generating it through increasing sales.

Help with marketing was seen as the main support need for buyer businesses (70%), followed closely by new product development, packaging and then distribution. For farms almost 75% of respondents want help in considering renewable energy generation. Approximately 30% want help with developing tourism-related business, adding value to produce, finding new routes to market and developing new products.

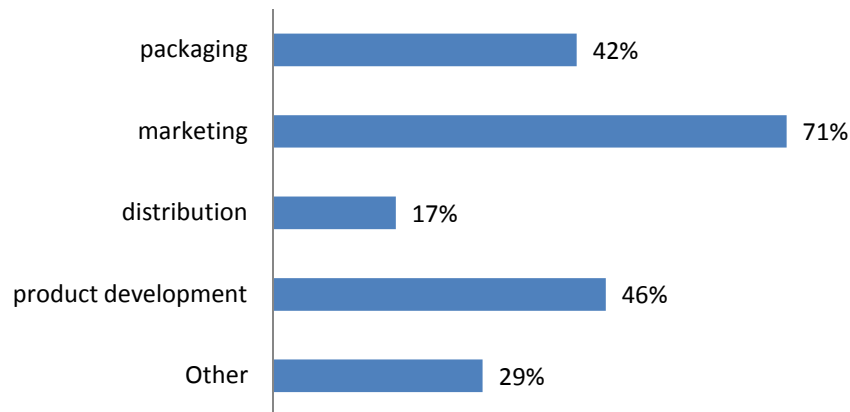
Dealing with waste and staying up to date with legislation and accreditation are not seen as a problem by most survey respondents. This is contrary to Welsh Government¹⁵ statistics that show food and packaging waste as a serious burden for many small businesses. The challenges of new policies such as Glastir and pending reforms to the CAP mean that land based businesses will be required to aware of and stay ahead of legislation.

The graph below illustrates responses to the **farm** survey question 7: *Would you like support with any of the following? tick all that apply.*



¹⁵ In Wales Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) account for 87% of the total food waste produced by the wholesale and retail sector, 99% of the food waste generated by the service sector, 9% of the production of food waste by the food manufacturing sector. Companies with fewer than 10 employees have a relatively low reuse/recycling/composting rate of 31% and a high landfill disposal rate of 68%. Source: Draft Food Manufacture, Service and Retail Sector Plan, Welsh Government Consultation 2011

The graph below illustrates responses to the **buyer** survey question 7: *Would you like support with any of the following? tick all that apply.*



Providing help and information on these issues is critical in motivating harder to reach producers and incentivising rural businesses to engage with RDP support. It indicates how RDP support should be promoted and where it should be targeted to maximise business take-up.

3.2.5 Overcoming barriers to local production and consumption

The research findings indicate that buyers base their procurement decisions primarily on **quality, cost and convenience**. They like to enter contracts with a single supplier that can provide a regular supply or single collection point. Single – rather than multiple – invoices are more convenient and allow regular payments to be made. They want to ensure that produce supplied is of a consistent quality and reliable quantity. **Provenance** is valuable criteria of food purchasing decisions amongst many buyers, whilst **local procurement** is a policy objective of the WG because it is linked to sustainable development.

Several public sector led ‘meet the buyer’ initiatives were noted in relation to this, these include an event by the NHS Wales Procurement Services held on 9th February 2012 and the Welsh Universities hosting a Saint Davids Day local food week.

Small land based producers in Torfaen can only produce goods in small quantities and, in the case of livestock in particular, the regularity and consistency of the product will often be a barrier to most buyers if they try to sell direct. Delivering goods to customers can be expensive if done independently. Producers may ask for payment on delivery, which buyers rarely offer, and the producer may not work within quality systems which give confidence to the buyer. The only way, therefore, that small producers can overcome these issues is by working in collaboration with others to common quality standards¹⁶ and as part of a local supply chain which has the infrastructure to offer the buyer what they want. This is a failure in the supply chain and for progress to be made these gaps must be bridged.

¹⁶ Several quality schemes exist that may be appropriate to land based producers: The Safe and Local Supplier Approval scheme (SALSA) is designed to help local and regional food and drink producers supply their products to national and regional buyers. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) provides a certification system for forestry and forest products.

3 examples identified from the site visits contrast these issues:

Douglas Willis. An established meat processor with own retail premises based in Cwmbran. They source meat from across SE and SW Wales. 1% of this comes from their family farm and they are expanding the farm to step this up. None of the meat is sourced from Torfaen livestock farmers. Quality, cost and reliability of supply are cited by the company as reasons for this.

Penyparc Farm. High quality agricultural feed is processed at the farm using grain grown on the farm. They provide feed in smaller quantities than their competitors which means that their customers can buy what they need and have the space to store. Cashflow can be a problem for this company due to unpaid customer invoices. Distribution is a significant challenge as short runs with small loads are expensive. Quality is a barrier to gaining more customers and the company is seeking accreditation.

Blaenavon Cheese Company. Supplying cheese to catering businesses is done through third party distribution companies such as Vin Sullivan and Castell Howell. They are able to maintain a steady supply of consistently high quality cheese to their customers via a mutually beneficial relationship with third party distributors.

Opportunities exist for Douglas Willis to engage with livestock farmers from Torfaen to help them understand and meet their supply requirements; for Penyparc Farm to collaborate with other producers to share distribution runs; and for Blaenavon Cheese to share knowledge and experience with to help other small businesses meet customer needs.

3.3 The theoretical potential of the productive capacity of the land in the rural wards of Torfaen: a summary

This section of the study was designed to review the land resource in terms of productive capacity.

A desk based review of the theoretical potential of the productive capacity of the land in the rural wards was prepared by IBERS. The review began in November 2011 and was completed in December 2011.

The full report is included in Appendix B with digital mapping made available to the client.

The main findings are summarised below.

3.3.1 The landscape

The rural wards in Torfaen comprise a varied hilly landscape, including open upland moorland and rough grazing, mixed agriculture, woodland and post-industrial land. The LANDMAP¹⁷ survey of the Borough was first published in 2002 this analysed the landscape under headings of Geological, Landscape Habitats, Visual and Sensory, Historic and Cultural.

The landscape of the County has been summarised in a recent report¹⁸ as follows:

"The physical and cultural landscape of the area reflects the industrial legacy associated with iron and coal production, together with their associated extractive industries. The resultant manmade landscapes are interspersed with the surrounding countryside. Over the past twenty years there have been a number of reclamation schemes that have removed much of the dereliction that existed, however affected areas still remain.

The County Borough contains a range of distinctive landscape types ranging from the open, exposed uplands to the north of Blaenavon to the rolling, agricultural landscapes to the south and west of Cwmbran where the landscape runs over into the lower Usk Valley.

There are areas of both coniferous and broad leaved woodland throughout the area. The north and eastern boundaries of Torfaen about the Brecon Beacons National Park and this indicates the underlying qualities of this northern section of the County Borough. This is complemented by the designation of the historic industrial landscapes around Blaenavon as a World Heritage Site as well as on the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales produced by Countryside Council for Wales, Cadw, and the International Council on Monuments and Sites."

3.3.2 Current land use and agricultural output

WG Agricultural Small Area Statistics 2002 – 2009¹⁹ provide the basis for an analysis of current agricultural output. One should note, however, that this dataset contains some inherent

¹⁷ LANDMAP is the national information system, devised by the Countryside Council for Wales, for taking landscape into account in decision-making. See: <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/methodology/> (accessed Nov 2011)

¹⁸ Designation of Special Landscape Areas - TACP, May 2011. See:

www.torfaen.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/ForwardPlanning/Publications/SLAStudyReportPartA.pdf (accessed Jan 2012)

¹⁹ Agricultural Small Area Statistics, 2002 to 2009. See: wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/agriculture2010/100811/?lang=en (accessed Nov 2011)

inaccuracies, as responses on average across the Borough were received from less than 25% of the registered holdings. Also, a new satellite based mapping system was used to reference the single farm payment system²⁰ in late 2008/2009.

Within Torfaen there is a reduction of ten active holdings, giving an 8% drop. This is slightly above the national average. The average size of the holdings in Torfaen is between 25 and 32 hectares (ha). This is half that of holding size in the whole of Wales which is between 57 and 62 ha.

Total grassland increased within Torfaen by over 10%, an area of 340ha. This could in part be due to the drop in the level of arable land within the area, as the level of crops and horticulture within the Torfaen region dropped from 132ha to 2ha. With much of this land returned to permanent pasture or to a grass/arable rotation.

The area of farm woodland across Wales and Torfaen has increased substantially between 2002 and 2008. This is due in part to incentives in agri-environment schemes that have removed a significant proportion of marginal and lower quality land from farming use.

3.3.3 Livestock

Sheep and cattle numbers within Torfaen generally followed the Welsh national trend exhibiting a significant drop in numbers between the 2002 and 2009 survey. Torfaen exhibits a disproportionate level of decline in livestock numbers compared to the Wales results, particularly in sheep. The drop of 8,100 ewes over the period represents a decrease of over 40% in sheep numbers compared to the Welsh national figure of below 20%. This could be attributed to the high level of severely disadvantaged land within the Torfaen region, with most of the land being of marginal or low quality, making livestock production economically challenging without a degree of financial support to encourage it.

Cattle numbers have decreased by 702 within Torfaen, with a significant proportion of this drop being attributable to the dairy sector, seeing a drop of 432 in the period 2002-2009.

Pigs and poultry are in small numbers likely due to smallholder activity. This may have increased since 2009.

A further trend exhibited by the 2009 results is a significant increase in the number of horses, both within Torfaen and Wales. An increase of 67 horses within the area over the 7 year period is significantly above the national trend. It's probable that this increase is due in part to the level of population within the region, given the fact that the vast majority of horses are kept for amenity/recreational purposes. Although no more recent statistics are available at present, from anecdotal evidence this number is likely to have decreased since 2009, given the financial constraints, and the relatively high cost of feeding and maintaining a horse in good condition. The market value of "recreational" horses nationally has reduced significantly since 2009, suggesting that the demand for these horses has dropped due to the ownership costs.

Current land tourism is limited in the main to Forestry Commission trails and on the urban fringe where there are heritage sites.

²⁰ The Single Farm Payment is an initiative under the CAP which calculates farmers' subsidies with reference to the amount of land used in production, as well as the total eligible livestock or crop output.

3.3.4 Soils

Soil is one of the key components that affects productive capacity of the land. The following soil types are found in the rural wards. Soil maps for each ward are included in the IBERS report:

Soil type	Characteristics	Opportunities and constraints
721 Wilcocks 1	Often peaty or sticky clay topsoils which tend to be seasonally or even permanently waterlogged.	Often support semi natural grassland and extensive grazing by sheep. Needs careful management avoiding poaching to minimise soil damage.
721d Wilcocks 2	Wet loamy soils, with very low natural fertility, often waterlogged for long periods.	Mostly in permanent pasture or rough grazing with semi natural vegetation and forestry. Significant intervention such as drainage, liming and fertiliser is needed for productive agriculture.
654c Gelligaer	Coarse ferric soils which are very acidic with peaty tops of varying depths.	Subsoils do tend to be free draining, but water can lie on the surface when at field capacity.
654b Lydcott	Ferric soils over red sandstone, similar to Gelligaer, being extremely acidic with a peaty layer which has a tendency to seasonal waterlogging, even where the layer below is free draining.	Soils support rough grazing with limited opportunity for improvement or cultivation. Typical vegetation is bilberry heath and heather so will support only native livestock.
611d Withnell 1	Loamy soils over sandstone which are permeable and rarely wet, with some stones.	Suitable for improvement on less steep areas and good extensive grazing. Topography often constrains more intensive agricultural use.
611d Revidge	Shallow peaty soils over stone, very acidic, infertile and often wet. Supports heather and mosses.	Precludes agricultural improvement and soils are easily eroded so over-grazing should be avoided.
541d Eardiston	Well drained coarse loam soils that are moderately acidic.	Winter rain is well absorbed and poaching less of a risk than on many soils of this area, although dry summers could result in droughted plants. Well suited for sheep grazing and can accommodate trails and footpaths.
571 Bromyard	Well drained fine silty soils over silty shale.	Prone to compaction under continuous cultivation and thus water logging. Suitable for mixed farming and short term ley grassland but care is needed when conditions are wet.
572b Middleton	Similar to 571b Bromyard above.	
541a Milford	Well drained fine loamy reddish soils over rock.	They tend to be permeable and well drained. Suitable for improved grassland and possible arable forage cropping.

3.3.5 The opportunities for future production

The productive capacity of the rural wards varies. Therefore fact sheets on each ward are included at the end of this section. These summarise the key messages from the full study by IBERS.

In general the report notes a limited and declining level of agricultural production. There is a small scope for increasing productive agriculture and possibly horticulture in Llantarnam, Llanyrafon South and a small proportion of Henllys and Two locks. Industrial mining, steel activity and generic land quality limit the scope in most of the remaining areas.

There is low input sheep farming on the common land areas in over 75% of the wards. This is and will remain an important component of land use.

3.3.6 Related considerations

Common land, topography and climate change affect the opportunities and limitations to of the potential productive capacity of the land in the rural wards. These aspects are discussed below along with biodiversity and renewable energy production.

Common land is usually regarded as land that is available to farmers based on common grazing rights linked to their holdings and is generally grazed by sheep owned by a number of different farmers or graziers. There are six areas of common land within Torfaen's administration. Within these areas it can be difficult to impose land management recommendations due to the multiplicity of owners. Agreements between commoners can be complex and subject to negotiation.

Elevation and gradient (topography) limits the productive opportunities significantly, with much of the land in the rural wards rising to mountainous upland to 500m above sea level. Steep sided valleys typify many areas. However, in Llantarnam and Llanyrafon South the land includes more undulating land at lower elevation and in areas such as Two Locks and Henllys there are gentle south facing gradients which could lend themselves to more intensive uses.

Climate change effects to the region may include longer growing seasons and consequently wide fluctuations in water availability. Given the topography in many wards this would result in a risk of soil erosion and damage if cultivation and livestock management methods are inappropriate. Detailed management plans and soil and land assessment would be needed at the individual holding level to take advantage of warmer temperatures and longer growing seasons.

The inherent quality of much of the land restricts the agricultural development of Torfaen as a whole. However this conversely allows opportunities for **biodiversity**, conservation and habitat creation. Torfaen has three designated sites of Special Scientific Interest and six designated Local Nature Reserves.

Options under The Welsh Government **agri-environment scheme** for farmers, Glastir All Wales Element, can enable development of habitat, and other improvements leading to improvements to the sustainability of farming. The higher level targeted elements of the Glastir scheme may offer significant additional income to farmers and landowners that embrace the scheme. This is subject to each farm's location and some areas of land in the seven rural wards of Torfaen may not be eligible.

There is potential for **energy production** from cropping and from alternative sources including wind, solar and anaerobic digestion. High level feasibility studies lead by TCBC Economic Development Department have identified several viable sites for generating energy from hydro and regional wind speeds have been mapped. Due to the proximity of urban areas there could be scope for community based energy projects but all initiatives would need detailed feasibility studies including planning permissions, logistics and financial viability especially in view of government's proposed reduction in the Feed in Tariff (FIT) rates which requires energy network operators to buy micro-generated electricity at set prices.

Wind speeds in some higher areas do appear to offer potential²¹. However, wind energy developments in Wales are guided by TAN 8: Planning for Renewable Energy, and subsequent guidance. TAN 8 defines 'areas of search' for large windfarms, none of which fall within Torfaen. Whilst small turbine proposals at a community scale might be considered, the visual impacts especially from the Brecon Beacons would be likely to present significant barriers to development.

Solar photovoltaics have been an attractive opportunity for anyone with a large roof, such as a barn. However, the current review of the FIT indicates that the current investment required would have a much longer pay-back time, perhaps 20 years, and therefore as a source of income it is not attractive. Generic regional estimates of sunlight may mask micro-climatic variations, with more cloud in some upland areas which would reduce performance.

Micro-hydro and farm scale **anaerobic digestion** may offer income opportunities but these again will be subject to the review of the FIT.

3.3.7 Fact sheets for each rural ward

The productive capacity of each of the rural wards varies. Therefore fact sheets on each ward are included on the following pages. These summarise the key messages from the full study by IBERS.

²¹ A useful quick reference to wind speeds is found at <http://www.rensmart.com>

Abersychan

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	In the main the land within Abersychan is upland, unenclosed open mountain and moorland, with a significant amount of reclaimed open cast and discarded mine material. Developed valley bottom along the A4043. Area covered = 2,476 ha. Urban population of just under 7,000.
Soils	Lighter soils to the east of the ward (Wilcocks 2 and Revidge); contrasts with those found to the west of the ward (Lydcott),
Topography	Ranging from 180m to 500m above sea level, with steep slopes to the west of the ward.
Land use	Approximately 30% of the land area is represented by open cast spoil and a further 20% is built up. Large areas are within a coniferous plantation. Much of the area at Mynydd Llanhileth and Coity is common land.
Notable features	Slow reclamation process on colliery spoil. Some historical evidence of earlier agricultural land uses.

Potential future land uses

The area is one of limited possibility with regards future land use. The dominance of open upland and post industrial land limits agricultural use. Areas in the east will be more productive but will still fail to be sufficiently adequate to support much productive agriculture, other than upland sheep grazing. Forestry will continue to be the most evident opportunity in many areas.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	Current coniferous plantation is maturing. One of the main productive opportunities for much of the ward. Initiatives could include wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts, and wild foods.
Arable cropping	Unlikely to be a viable option.
Horticulture	Small scale community-based production.
Grazing	Upland sheep farming will continue to be the only viable opportunity on upland and steep sided valleys. Short term grassland is unlikely to be a worthwhile considering.
Biodiversity	Opportunities for conservation and improvement, in forestry and common land, relating to existing nature reserves.
Recreation / amenity	Potential scope for amenity uses such as cycle trails in forestry areas and steep valleys.
Energy production	Land quality is insufficient to support sustainable yields of energy crops and topography presents harvest challenges. Small scale renewable energy developments might be considered.

Blaenavon

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	Blaenavon is the most northerly ward in the Torfaen borough, bordering with the Brecon Beacons national park to the north. The town lies high on a hillside above the valley. Area covered = 1,783 ha. Approximate population = 6,000.
Soils	The predominant soil classifications are 721c- Wilcocks 1, 92c- Disturbed land-open cast works, U- Unsurveyed land, 645c- Gelligaer.
Topography	Rising from 250m in the valley bottom, to 550m at the peak of the surrounding mountains, with steep sided valleys.
Land use	The rural landscapes of the region are dominated by typical moorland grasses, and ranges of a mixture of deciduous and coniferous tree plantations. Most of the surrounding mountain land is within common land, and tends to be grazed only by sheep and managed in a relatively sustainable extensive manner. A large proportion of the Blaenavon ward is reclaimed open cast works.
Notable features	Blaenavon is now in the process of revival and attempts to recreate it as a Book Town, and Big Pit Mining Museum. Designation of World Heritage landscape status is focused on the Blaenavon iron works.

Potential future land uses

With a large proportion of the land being open cast spoil or unsurveyed land, much of the Blaenavon ward is unproductive in terms of soil. The 654c Gelligaer land within the ward represents part of the Bloreng common, whilst the 721c land in the main is found on the Coity and Mynydd James mountains and common land to the west of Blaenavon.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	A possible use on some of the more marginal/steep land, which will add stability to industrially damaged soils.
Arable cropping	Unlikely to be a viable option.
Horticulture	Potential for very small scale community-based production.
Grazing	A proportion of the land is already within commons and is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
Biodiversity	Opportunities for conservation and improvement on common land and forestry, as well as the development of the local nature reserves within the ward.
Recreation / amenity	The re-generation of Blaenavon as a World Heritage site and link to the Brecon Beacons should provide a strong base for alternative land uses, particularly in the leisure, tourism and amenity sector, such as mountain bike tracks.
Energy production	Land quality is insufficient to support sustainable yields of energy crops and topography presents harvest challenges. Small renewable energy developments may be a consideration.

Cwmynyscoy

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	<p>Predominantly sparsely populated upland.</p> <p>The majority of the farmland within Cwmynyscoy is found within two open mountains- Mynydd Llwyd to the north, and Mynydd Twyn Glas to the south, separated by Cwm Lleucu - a steep sided narrow valley.</p> <p>Area covered = 668 ha. Approximate population = 1,300</p>
Soils	<p>Predominant soil types found, in order of quantity, are:</p> <p>611d- Withnell 1, 654c- Gelligaer, 541d- Eardiston 2 and U- Unclassified or urban areas.</p>
Topography	<p>Rises from approx. 100m above sea level in Pontypool, to 460m at the peak of Twyn Calch.</p>
Land use	<p>Most of the grassed area within the ward is made up of unimproved, unenclosed mountain or moorland, with very few enclosed fields towards the North east of the ward, showing signs of improvement.</p>
Notable features	<p>Cwm Leucu Pond and Cwmynyscoy Quarry nature reserves.</p>

Potential future land uses

Due to the heavy soils, elevation, steep nature of much of the land and historical industrial use, much of the land within the Cwmynyscoy ward will be of limited potential for food production.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	<p>This is likely to be the main growth sector in the ward. One of the main productive opportunities for much of the ward. Initiatives could include wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts, and wild foods.</p>
Arable cropping	<p>Unlikely to be a viable option.</p>
Horticulture	<p>Potential for small scale community-based production.</p>
Grazing	<p>Upland sheep farming will continue to be the only viable opportunity on upland and steep sided valleys.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Potential for growth given the common land and forestry found currently, as well as the development of the local nature reserves</p>
Recreation / amenity	<p>Potential scope for amenity uses such as cycle trails in forestry areas and steep valleys.</p>
Energy production	<p>Land quality is insufficient to support sustainable yields of energy crops and topography presents harvest challenges. Small renewable energy developments may be a consideration.</p>

Llantarnam

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	Llantarnam is based to the south of Cwmbran and incorporates much of the urban region of Cwmbran within its ward boundary. It is predominantly developed in terms of land use. Area covered = 775 ha. Approximate population = 5,000.
Soils	Soil types include U- Unsurveyed- urban/developed land, 571b- Bromyard, 572b Middleton, and 541a Milford.
Topography	The land is generally undulating plain in a gently to moderately west dipping alluvium tributary valley with a narrow flood plain.
Land use	The south of the ward is dominated by semi-improved and improved grassland.
Notable features	There are several historical buildings within the ward, including Llantarnam Abbey, Llantarnam Hall, Trawsmawr house and the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal. Magna Porta Grange common comprises a remarkably intact irregular fieldscape and an associated pattern of dispersed settlement of medieval/early post-medieval origin.

Potential future land uses

The rural regions within the Llantarnam contain semi improved and improved grassland areas, with gently undulating/sloping land, predominantly of a relatively fertile soil in comparison with many of the neighbouring wards. This could support a range of agricultural or horticultural outputs. Where historical land features are present, such as within the Magna Porta Grange and common, then land use changes will be constrained.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	A possible new use on some of the more marginal land. Initiatives for hedgerow management could include wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts and wild foods.
Arable cropping	Whilst potentially an option on the better soils, growing arable crops within the ward may be constrained by the fact that much of the land is registered permanent pastureland. However, the climate and land fertility might not sustain a long term arable rotation.
Horticulture	Opportunities for some less demanding root crops such as swedes, but unlikely to be viable on a large scale with more demanding crops such as potatoes. Opportunities for community-based horticulture projects.
Grazing	Sheep grazing could continue on existing areas of lower fertility.
Biodiversity	Opportunities for conservation and improvement, especially in relation to historic landscapes.
Recreation / amenity	Scope for amenity uses such as trails and visitor circuits incorporating historic features.
Energy production	The land could sustain crops such as close coppice willow or Miscanthus, a local infrastructure to process the crop and to give access to local markets must be considered.

Llanyrafon South

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	<p>A relatively small ward to the South East of the Torfaen borough. Geographically, it is dominated by a single and relatively steep narrow valley along which the Afon Llwyd flows.</p> <p>Predominant landscape habitat is improved and semi improved grassland, with little forestry.</p> <p>Area covered = 444 ha. Approximate population = 2,500 (mostly within the villages of Ponthir and Llanfrechfa).</p>
Soils	Predominantly 541a Milford.
Topography	Undulating terrain with steep valley sides vulnerable to erosion.
Land use	Dominated by hedgerow and tree-lined grazing fields, of traditional small scale.
Notable features	Medieval/post medieval agricultural landscape and ancient woodland, unscathed by the industrial works common elsewhere. Llanyrafon Mill is a tourist attraction.

Potential future land uses

With much of the rural land made up of relatively steep aspect along the narrow Afon Llwyd valley, little can be done other than to maintain as improved or semi improved grassland. However, it is an area of relatively good soil in comparison with the remainder of Torfaen, and with a relatively high population to be found in nearby Cwmbran there could be potential for horticultural land use and amenity grazing for horses.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	Possible land use on some of the more marginal/steep land found along the valley.
Arable cropping	Potential on some of the flatter land, but fertility may be lacking to sustain a long term arable rotation.
Horticulture	Opportunities for some less demanding root crops such as swedes, but unlikely to be viable on a large scale with more demanding crops such as potatoes. Opportunities for community-based horticulture projects.
Grazing	Sheep grazing could continue on existing areas of lower fertility and steep sided valleys.
Biodiversity	Opportunities for conservation and improvement in association with historical landscapes.
Recreation / amenity	Potential scope for amenity uses such as trails in association with historical landscapes.
Energy production	The land could sustain crops such as close coppice willow or Miscanthus, a local infrastructure to process the crop and to give access to local markets must be considered.

Two Locks and Henllys

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	A large proportion of the land within the ward dominated by the Henllys mountain common to the East, with urban land at Cwmbran to the North. Includes some common land. Area covered = 1,252 ha. Approximate population = 6,500
Soils	Soil types include 571b- Bromyard- found mainly to the south and east of the ward; 572b- Middleton- found in a relatively small patch to the North-east of the ward; 611d- Withnell- found primarily under the Henllys common land and forested area to the west of the ward.
Topography	A wide range in elevation within the ward, ranging between 80 and over 400m above sea level. Generally southward facing in aspect.
Land use	Comprises a significant level of forestation, with the ridges above Henllys common and the south of the ward around Coed Y Twrch and Coed Penrinam being the largest areas of coniferous and deciduous trees. Much of the land to the South and East of the ward is dominated by grassland. A significant proportion of the land within this ward is not currently registered as agricultural and may be used for horse grazing.
Notable features	Henllys Bog. Mynydd Henllys and Mynydd Maen are noted for their historical significance.

Potential future land uses

The area includes some of the most productive soils found within the borough, it is not overly steep and generally southward facing in aspect. The better land could support horticultural activity, especially if small scale and intensively managed.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	One of the main productive opportunities for much of the ward. Initiatives could include wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts and wild foods.
Arable cropping	Potential on some of the flatter land towards the east of the ward, but fertility may be lacking to sustain a long term arable rotation.
Horticulture	Potential on some of the flatter land, and may be suitable for small scale community-based production.
Grazing	Sheep grazing could continue on existing areas of lower fertility and steeper slopes.
Biodiversity	Opportunities for conservation and improvement in association with historical landscapes.
Recreation / amenity	Potential scope for amenity uses such as trails in association with forested areas.
Energy production	Land quality is insufficient to support sustainable yields of energy crops and topography presents harvest challenges. Small scale renewable energy developments may be considered.

Wainfelin

The landscape resource

Landscape element	Existing features
General description	Wainfelin is a suburb of Pontypool and runs east to west from Pontypool towards Crumlin across Cefn Crib. A significant proportion of the ward is within Pontypool town's curtilage. Open cast mine work has left a significant scar on the Wainfelin land use with approximately 25% of the ward affected. Area covered = 766 ha. Approximate population= 2,500 inhabitants
Soils	Soils include: 611d- Withnell 1, 92c- open cast mine works, 654c- Gelligaer, U- Unclassified or urban areas.
Topography	Wainfelin rises to 400m at its highest point, from a low of 120m along Cwm y Glyn.
Land use	Approximately half of the land area within the Wainfelin ward, along the north of the ward consists of rough open hill land. Given the elevation, and the steep aspect, much of the undeveloped land is under forestry, with Graig Ddu, Blaen y Cwm and Plas y Coed being the largest plantations.
Notable features	Iron working began in the 15th century.

Potential future land use

Potential future land uses are limited. Currently productive land remains as either sheep upland grazing or coniferous forestry, with a large proportion of the land significantly damaged and of little productive capacity. Land currently within forestry or upland hill grazing may have the potential to develop a degree of amenity value, such as equine-tourism, mountain bike riding given required consents.

The future opportunities as summarised as follows:

Land use	Potential
Forestry	Current coniferous plantation is maturing. One of the main productive opportunities for much of the ward. Initiatives could include wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts, and wild foods.
Arable cropping	Unlikely to be a viable option.
Horticulture	Unlikely to be a viable option.
Grazing	Upland sheep farming will continue to be the only viable opportunity on upland areas. Short term grassland is unlikely to be a worthwhile considering.
Biodiversity	Opportunities for conservation and improvement in forestry areas.
Recreation / amenity	Potential scope for amenity uses such as cycle trails in forestry and upland areas.
Energy production	Land quality is insufficient to support sustainable yields of energy crops and topography presents harvest challenges. Very small renewable energy developments might be considered.

4.0 Conclusion and recommendations

This study has involved desk based and applied research and drawn on the expertise of leading practitioners and technical specialists to provide a rich understanding of the challenges and opportunities for land based production in the seven rural wards of Torfaen.

Interviews and consultancy with farmers, producers and businesses throughout the rural wards of Torfaen and beyond have provided a broad understanding of the extent of land based production in the rural wards. Crucially this has enabled a needs analysis to identify the support requirements and factors that motivate rural land based producers and businesses. These are 'here and now' issues and provide a focus for the Torfaen Rural Development Team to tailor and prioritise their support offer.

This work has also identified, reviewed and detailed five businesses that can provide examples of good practice. These should be used to promote and raise awareness of Torfaen Rural Development Team's services to the region through local media and by establishing a dedicated website.

A technical review of the potential productive capacity of the land in the rural wards has shown where opportunities might exist for land based produce. This provides long term view of how rural development activities can bring sustainable economic benefit to the rural wards Torfaen.

Key conclusions are summarised as follows:

- **Gaps in rural business support provision mean that many land based producers and small enterprises that make a living off the land in Torfaen are not always in a position to benefit.** This can be due to their capacity, confidence and capability to scale-up, along with limitations in access to the business support infrastructure in Wales.
- **Business support for land based producers in Torfaen must enable them to sell direct whilst aligning their offer with demands from buyers in conventional supply chains.** This will help to build long term economic sustainability.
- **Innovation can be stimulated by tailoring rural development support to meet specific business needs.** Torfaen farmers and producers want help in considering renewable energy generation, developing tourism-related business, adding value to produce and finding new routes to market. Processors and distributors want help with marketing, new product development, packaging and delivery.
- **Leadership is required to encourage better environmental practices in rural businesses.** Evidence shows that the combined impact of small businesses contributes significantly to the overall volume of waste created in Wales. New policies such as Glastir and pending reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy will impact land based businesses.
- **A strong willingness exists for collaboration amongst supply chain businesses in Torfaen.** Projects that bridge gaps in local production and consumption may provide quick wins. For example meat is in significantly more demand in the Borough than is currently being supplied by local livestock producers.
- **Biodiversity, low impact agriculture and renewable energy can buck the trend in the decline of traditional farming in Torfaen.** This will provide opportunities for tourism, forestry, crafts, and community based initiatives that will lead to the sustainable regeneration of rural wards.

Collectively these findings have led to a series of 12 recommendations for support mechanisms that will encourage sustainable practices in the region whilst providing a foundation for a co-ordinated supply chain for Torfaen land based produce. These are described below under the following four themes: developing sustainable business, re-localising supply chains, social enterprise models and niche product development and diversification.

All the following opportunities will need to be actively facilitated by Torfaen Rural Development Team. External expertise should be bought in to add value.

4.1 Developing sustainable business

Conventional businesses exist to make a profit. Sustainable businesses are different because they profit in ways that are beneficial to people and the environment. Businesses small and large that innovate and embrace sustainable practices will thrive.

Reducing environmental impacts through energy efficiency measures, preventing food and packaging waste and recycling water, building better relationships with customers and local communities, working together with businesses and suppliers are all actions that forward thinking businesses can take to create stronger more resilient supply chains.

Recommendation 1: Establish a business to business mentoring scheme

To offer help to other farmers and businesses to develop practical and affordable strategies for change. Mentoring can be a valuable way to help motivate and inspire others. Businesses respond well to other businesses and farmers are accustomed to learning by doing.

A number of companies that received sustainable business coaching through this study have already been identified as 'rural business champions'. With support these can become mentors to others, and in turn create mentors of the future.

Douglas Willis want to source meat locally and are conscious of the barriers that exist for livestock farmers to meet their quality requirements for supply. They could collaborate with livestock farmers to help work through this.

An example of a meat producer-processor-retailer collaboration

Dunbia²² launched a Welsh lamb supply chain initiative in 2009 in collaboration with Sainsburys. It was supported by the YFC and Meat Promotion Wales. Over 46 farmers are involved. The Welsh lamb is sold exclusively in all Sainsbury's stores in Wales. It carries a secondary label so customers can find out more about where their lamb comes from. Dunbia instigated this specifically to support young farmers in the industry to encourage them to stay in farming at a time when so many are leaving. They do this by paying a premium for lamb (approx 10p more per kilo) and providing training courses, whilst generating a market for lamb in the UK.

Blaenavon Cheese Company recognises an opportunity to link the town to the UNESCO heritage sites and the benefits that this will bring to the community and their business. They could mentor other small businesses to develop products, services and work together with

²² See: <http://dunbia.com/>

specialist support to create a co-operative 'Made in Blaenavon' brand. A logo and reward card could be developed to alongside this to help promote the brand to attract tourism to the town.

Torfaen Rural Development Team's role will involve identifying 'rural business champions' and other knowledgeable experts to provide opportunities for mentoring, facilitating training and managing a programme of mentor appointments and budgets for each beneficiary. This will help to bridge skills gaps in business, agriculture, crafts, food tourism and other rural skills.

Recommendation 2: Develop toolkits and guidance for rural business innovation

Torfaen rural businesses face specific challenges when trying to innovate along their supply chains. These have been identified through this study and create barriers to growth. These challenges can be overcome through the provision of toolkits and guidance that can be developed specifically to meet the needs of land based producers and rural businesses in Torfaen.

Activities that will stimulate innovation in the rural wards of Torfaen stem from collaborative approaches for **distributing produce to customers, marketing and promoting goods, and developing new products and services.**

Environmental performance is subject to increasing legislative and market led scrutiny. **Input costs, particularly energy and transport; dealing with waste, particularly food and packaging waste; and developing responsible business plans** will lead to sustainable economic growth.

A suite of practical tools and guidance can be developed and offered online and in hard copy to enable rural businesses to consider and take practical steps towards innovation. Examples of best practice from Torfaen can be used to ensure these are intuitive that they meet the needs of land based producers and rural businesses in Torfaen. This approach will also help reduce the burden on the Rural Development Team's resources by providing the means for businesses to work remotely and in their own time.

Torfaen Rural Development Team's role will be to make these tools available to rural businesses. They could be uploaded to a dedicated website. Themed producer network meetings can be held to raise awareness of these and disseminate best practice. This could be developed alongside the mentoring scheme to help identify and assist the delivery of bespoke support.

Recommendation 3: Provide tailored support for farmers

The decline in numbers of traditional farms is a problem that exists not just in rural Torfaen. Younger generations are less inclined to take over responsibility of running a family farm.

Rural skills that are possessed by older generations are at risk of being lost if this trend continues. Conversely this trend is in part due to a lack of entrepreneurial skills that the

younger generations may be more likely to possess (such as market awareness and computing).

Farmer forums could be established by Torfaen Rural Development Team to bridge the gap in skills that affect different generations. Partnership opportunities exist for working alongside local colleges, the regional Machinery Ring (who offer training to farmers across the region) and Farmers Union Wales.

Raising awareness of health and safety issues to regional farmers²³

A recent event held in Usk College of Agriculture was organised by the Health and Safety Executive. Regional farmers were invited to attend a 'Safety and Health Awareness Day'. Practical demonstrations were given on workplace transport, machine safety, working at height, handling livestock, safe lifting, and working with chemicals.

Recommendation 4: Waste reuse and recycling

Waste is an inherent by-product of a supply chain and becomes an environmental burden when it is disposed of. The survey findings indicated that most rural businesses don't see dealing with waste as a problem. However evidence has been provided that suggests otherwise. Landfill tax is already becoming an increasing cost to businesses that don't act to take preventative action to recycle and reuse their waste.

Action is needed to tackle waste in ways that enable businesses to see waste as a resource. Examples of where this is happening in Torfaen include Penyparc Farm who collect sugar beet (a by-product) from other farms and process this with their own grain to produce animal feed; and Douglas Willis that is investigating installing an anaerobic digester at their meat processing site to convert waste into energy.

The WG is currently carrying out research into the feasibility of mechanisms to help small businesses get access to environmentally friendly packaging and thereby reduce the amount of waste created through discarded packaging. Packaging hubs will provide a regional facility for collaborative ordering, storage and collection of eco-packaging by small businesses that might otherwise lack the resources to purchase better packaging. They will also offer opportunities for training and awareness sessions that are geared towards building the capacity for informed decision making in small business.

Green waste processing in Powys

Cwm Harri Land Trust²⁴ collects green waste from businesses and households under a service level agreement with the Council and composts the material for re-sale as a garden soil improver. This provides a net profit for the organisation.

The viability of composting bracken from upland commons areas is currently being investigated through the Forgotten Landscapes Project. This may provide opportunities for collaboration with the Rural Development Team. A long term aim needs to be to develop a

²³ See: www.hse.gov.uk/press/2011/coi-w-agricultureshad.htm [accessed: 11 Apr 2012]

²⁴ See: www.cwmharrylandtrust.org.uk

green waste collection and processing infrastructure in Torfaen that could produce compost for use in improving the soils in the rural wards of Torfaen.

4.2 Re-localising the supply chain

A growing population coupled with an insatiable consumer appetite has led to technologies being developed that enable goods and services to be produced to short lead times and on a mass scale. This has brought significant economic benefits and provided convenience to many people, but there have also been consequences.

Many farmers and producer businesses have seen their livelihoods squeezed by buyers demanding more for their money, whilst competition has grown to provide more choice. Farmers and businesses need to adapt or they will fail.

One way they can adapt is by operating in a local market place, essentially simplifying and taking ownership of their supply chain. This is about marketing and selling their produce direct to consumers.

Recommendation 5: Farmers and producers markets

Farmer and produce markets have for a long time been an important means for farmers to sell directly to consumers. When successful they can be a very good way of supplementing their income.

An example from a number of farmers markets run in areas of Cardiff

These are run by Riverside Community Market Association²⁵. Their experience shows that success depends on a number of factors: being accessible by a large pool of affluent consumers, an awareness and interest in local food, and reaching a critical mass of around 15 diverse stalls. Weekly markets are also more successful as they begin to change the weekly food shopping patterns of consumers rather than the markets being seen as an 'event', but the pool of producers needs to be adequate to support this. Pricing is important, as is committing to a set of rules that allow more than one producer to sell similar produce if sufficient demand exists. This can be a difficult balance to strike and requires an administrative structure to support it.

The newly refurbished Llanyrafon Manor offers a good space to hold an outdoor market, being close to the large urban population of Cwmbran, having parking facilities nearby and potentially offering space to producers at council subsidised rates. However, markets in nearby Pontypool have been piloted to mixed success.

Therefore we recommend that occasional food and craft fayres are held at Llanyrafon Manor and producer markets continue to be held at the TCBC supported festivals²⁶ where visitors may already be and a higher footfall can be readily achieved. This can act as a pilot for future farmers' markets. By monitoring these over the course of time will enable Torfaen Rural Development Team to assess if the demographics of the area permit a critical mass that will operate well for both producer and consumer.

²⁵ See: www.riversidemarket.org.uk.

²⁶ Garn Lakes Country Fair, Cwmbran Big Event, Pontypool Carnival are festivals where farmers markets can be piloted

Recommendation 6: Producer directory and produce catalogue

Farmers and small producer businesses often lack the resources to market their produce. These needs can be supported by establishing and managing a directory of Torfaen producers.

A dynamic producer directory could be developed as a live and online system to allow self-editing and enable product lists, with descriptions, indications of volumes available and pricing²⁷. Following this, a next step is to work with private sector partners such as Vin Sullivan and Phillip Jones (Torfaen based wholesalers) to develop a local produce catalogue.

The information gained from the survey responses during this study provides a useful basis for developing a producer directory.

Recommendation 7: Farm open days

A key part of re-localising supply chains is to give people an opportunity to re-connect with farming and the countryside. Seeing how food is produced can also help restore value in local supply chains and encourage people to seek out regional produce.

Open farm Sunday

Open Farm Sunday is a UK wide initiative run by LEAF²⁸. Farms across the UK open their doors to the general public once a year. Similar initiatives have been held in Bridgend (for example at Ty Tanglwyst Dairy farm²⁹) and have been successful in helping individual farmers connect with local communities.

Torfaen Rural Development Team could initiate this type of initiative potentially in collaboration with other RDP regions and in partnership with FUW.

4.3 Social enterprise models

Re-connecting people with food and farming is an important aspect in bringing about positive change in rural areas. The concept of social enterprise provides innovative ways for business and communities to collaborate in their decision making. A variety of producer focussed co-operatives and community based models are now well tested across the UK and have been shown to bring benefits through empowering people to take ownership of supply chains.

Recommendation 8: Producer co-operatives

Co-operatives could be established to enable the collaborative development of producer businesses in Torfaen. Arts and crafts groups such as the Gwent Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers already hold structured meetings at Greenmeadow Farm. Others such as Woodland Turnery, Form Contemporary Craft, Torfaen Textiles and Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre have all expressed interest in working with others to develop commercial opportunities.

²⁷ A software solution called Producer Direct provides an example of this. See: www.producerdirect.co.uk [accessed Jan 2012]

²⁸ See: <http://www.farmsunday.org/ofs/home.eb> [accessed Jan 2012]

²⁹ See: <http://www.tytanglwystdairy.com/> [accessed Jan 2012]

Food co-operatives are an important way to get food to urban groups with no direct access to farms and the countryside. In Torfaen the local Co-Star initiative was set-up to provide low cost bags of fruit and vegetables to help families get easy access to healthy food.

Phillip Jones is a Torfaen based fruit and vegetable wholesaler that supplies the co-ops and this contributes to a significant proportion of his turnover. The Torfaen Rural Development Team could facilitate the development of a small scale horticultural supply chain, focussing on pockets of land that this study has identified where productive agriculture can happen³⁰, and potentially using Phillip Jones as a central point for supply. Or by developing a distribution infrastructure for producers to sell direct to particular buying co-ops.

Community food co-operatives in Wales

The Rural Regeneration Unit (RRU) support a number of food co-ops³¹ across Wales. These are generally held weekly and run by volunteers. Customers pay in advance and collect the following week. Orders are placed with a nearby wholesaler that supplies the co-op. This generates business for suppliers and presents a marketplace for local growers. The challenge is in finding local growers that can supply.

Recommendation 9: Community supported agriculture (CSA)

CSA is a partnership arrangement between producers and consumers. The basic model is simple: consumers provide support for growers by agreeing to pay for a share of the total produce, and growers provide a regular share of food of a guaranteed quality and quantity. They also reconnect people to farming because people get to know where their food comes from and become more aware of the seasonal implications of food production.

Torfaen Rural Development Team may be able to support CSA development in the rural wards by facilitating groups of interested individuals to take over unused land to grow vegetables for themselves; or if sufficient demand exists by establishing shared community ownership of the land and employing people to grow and deliver on their behalf.

CSA in Stroud

A model of interest is StroudCo³² where producers and customers each have a 50% stake in the business. This model operates around an online ordering facility offering a range of local produce, which is dropped off to a school hall once a week and collected by parents. Prices are less than in normal retail environment but higher than wholesale prices so it's good for producers and consumers.

From April 2012, pending the outcome of a current review, the TCBC Facilities Management team will aim to encourage tenants and residents to take custodianship of parcels of land. Several small scale examples are underway, these include: a gardening group established to make decisions and take control of the enclosed communal land to the rear of their block in Fairview Court, Pontnewydd; and a group have been given permission to plant an area up with fruit-bearing trees in Broadweir Road, Old Cwmbran.

³⁰ There is small scope for increasing the productive agriculture and possibly horticulture in Llantarnam, Llanyrafon South and in a proportion of Henllys and Two locks.

³¹ See: <http://www.ruralregeneration.org.uk/> [accessed Jan 2012]

³² See: www.stroudco.org.uk [accessed Jan 2012]

These examples provide opportunities for joining up activities across departments of TCBC particularly if land for community growing is built into the planning decision making process.

4.4 Niche product development and diversification

Fair Trade and responsible sourcing account for a significant share of the consumer led demand for ethical products and services. Whilst organics have not fared so well during the recent economic downturn, where there is access to the right marketplaces appropriate labelling and branding may offer a more secure future for producers.

Distinctive products such as Welsh Black Beef and Forestry Stewardship Council accredited wood continue to find a marketplace amongst discerning consumers and higher end outlets. Torfaen businesses that add value to primary produce such as the Blaenavon Cheese Company also stand to benefit from this marketplace. For diversification of this nature tailored business and marketing support will be required.

Recommendation 10: 'Made in Torfaen' producer quality mark

The 'Taste of Torfaen' name may appear restrictive to businesses that operate outside of the food sector. This study has shown that Torfaen provides more opportunities from other rural sectors, including forestry, tourism and arts and crafts. Therefore adapting to a 'Made in Torfaen' mark will more readily encompass other sectors.

A benchmarking system for 'Made in Torfaen' approved products that meet TCBC and the WG commitment to sustainable development could be established. This can begin by creating access to a practical self assessment methodology for producers and businesses to enable best practice to be shared.

To incentivise businesses to engage this could be linked to an award and accreditation scheme. This would set the standard to other RDP regions. Over time this could perhaps become a Wales wide initiative and provide supportive links to the True Taste Wales brand³³.

Recommendation 11: Producer hubs and Tourism clusters

Working together to share experience, knowledge and resources can help producers and small businesses overcome barriers to common challenges such as accessing new markets, getting new customers, sharing distribution and the cost of inputs.

Penyparc Farm provides a collection and delivery service for its animal feed across the Borough and beyond. The farm premises could be used as a hub for collection of other produce or it could form the basis for exploring shared distribution with others.

The town of Blaenavon has a huge potential to benefit from its UNESCO heritage sites by attracting tourism to the town. Opportunities for this development are discussed in

³³ The True Taste Wales 'Contribution to Sustainable Development Award' has devised a unique benchmarking system that sets new standards to the food industry in line with WG policy goals. At the time of writing the True Taste was pending a funding review. See: www.walesthetrue taste.co.uk [accessed Jan 2012]

Recommendation 1. Developing links with a wider tourism trail across Torfaen could create opportunities for clusters of businesses to thrive.

Other opportunities exist for Torfaen Rural Development Team to enable the development of new marketing groups such as a meat producer hub³⁴ to collaborate to reduce input costs through group purchasing, potentially in partnership with a Machinery Ring.

Brockweir & Hewelsfield Village Shop and Café³⁵

Based near Chepstow this farm shop has become recognised as an award winning retailer. It is an example of a community and producer hub. It sells local produce, some of which is made on site, provides postal services for the rural community and showcases local arts and crafts whilst demonstrating renewable energy projects on site. It also provides training facilities and meeting rooms for local business. Greenmeadow Farm in Cwmbran could develop in a similar way having the added benefit of being a farm in its own right.

Recommendation 12: Providing support for emerging sectors

Recent studies that focus in South East Wales³⁶ across the Heads of the Valleys region³⁷ have identified **forestry and wood production** as a potential source of economic development for Torfaen. Regional hubs are recommended as a route forward for the development of a local supply chain for wood. Initiatives could include bio-mass /wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts and wild foods. Section 3.3 of this report provides evidence for where forestry opportunities may be best positioned in the rural wards.

Evidence from the survey undertaken as part of this study and discussed in Section 3.2 indicates a significant level of interest in generating **renewable energy** amongst farm businesses. Energy crops, wind, solar, hydro and anaerobic digestion are all potential sources of renewable energy that can create economic wealth and contribute to a sustainable future for Torfaen. High level feasibility studies lead by TCBC Economic Development Department have identified several viable sites for generating energy from hydro and regional wind speeds have been mapped.

These are opportunities for the Rural Development and Economic Development teams to explore together. These should be prioritised to establish the practical steps forward for both of these emerging areas for Torfaen and the wider region.

³⁴ For an example of a collaboration of five livestock farmers who work together and have opened a butchers shop in Treharris. See: www.cigmynyddcymru.co.uk [accessed Jan 2012]

³⁵ See: <http://www.bandhvilageshop.co.uk/index.html> [accessed Feb 2012]

³⁶ Developing Woodfuel Production and Use in South East Wales. *South East Wales Energy Partnership*. March 2011

³⁷ Woodfuel potential and opportunities in the Heads of the Valleys Region. *Forestry Commission Wales*. July 2010

4.5 Action planning table

This report concludes with an action planning table that summarises practical tasks to implement these recommendations during the current Rural Development Plan (RDP) that runs until the end of 2013 and for activities that can be done beyond 2013.

This is found on the following pages and is intended as a 'living document' to assist in setting goals and priorities. Recommendations, actions, outcomes and benefits have been included. Resource implications and economic outputs should be looked at internally before prioritising actions to take forward.

Theme	Recommendation	Description	Action to take now (during current RDP)	Actions to take next (RDP - 2014 on)	Outcomes	Which rural wards benefit?
Developing sustainable business	1. Establish a business to business mentoring scheme	To offer help to farmers and rural businesses to develop practical and affordable strategies for change. Mentoring can be a valuable way to help motivate and inspire others.	A number of companies that received sustainable business coaching through this study may be able to support others. - Providing coaching and training to these businesses now can enable them to be mentors to others in the near future.	- Develop a mentor training structure. - Facilitate opportunities for mentoring by managing a programme of mentor appointments and budgets for each beneficiary.	This will help to bridge skills gaps in business, agriculture, crafts, food tourism and other rural skills. It will enable Torfaen RDP support to be responsive to rural business needs as they arise.	Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmynyscoy Llantarnam Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin
	2. Develop toolkits and guidance for rural business innovation	Torfaen rural businesses face specific challenges when trying to innovate along their supply chains. A suite of practical tools and guidance can be developed to enable rural businesses to consider and take practical steps towards innovation.	- Produce straightforward guidance documents for supporting real and not perceived business needs. - Introduce environmental considerations that meet WG and RDP objectives. - Make these available by uploading to a dedicated website. - Hold themed producer network meetings to raise awareness of and disseminate best practice.	- Develop this alongside the mentoring scheme to assist with the delivery of bespoke support. - Examples of best practice from Torfaen business can be used to ensure tools and guidance are intuitive that they meet the needs of land based producers and rural businesses in Torfaen.	This will help meet current support needs that have been requested by business through this study (ie. distribution, new product development, and marketing). Environmental sustainability can be included in line with WG and RDP objectives (ie. energy and resource use, dealing with waste, responsible	Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmynyscoy Llantarnam Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin

				business planning). This can reduce the burden on RDP resources by providing the means for businesses to work remotely and at their own pace.	
3. Provide tailored support for farmers	Rural skills that are possessed by older generations of farmers are at risk of being lost to younger generations that are less inclined to take over family farms. Conversely younger generations may be more likely to possess entrepreneurial skills (such as market awareness and computing)	- Explore partnerships with the regional Machinery Ring (who offer training to farmers across the region) and Farmers Union Wales to assist in establishing and promoting focussed 'Farmer Forums'.	- Explore opportunities with local colleges to provide courses and training that is not catered for through other support mechanisms (such as Farming Connect)	Torfaen RDP team can extend its reach by collaborating with like minded organisations. It will aim to bridge the gap in skills that affect different generations with a long term view to keep young people in farming.	Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmynyscoy Llantarnam Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin
4. Waste re-use and recycling	Waste is an inherent by-product of a supply chain and	- Provide support to Torfaen businesses that can use waste as a resource or provide	- Feasibility into development of a green waste collection and processing	Assisting rural businesses to recycle, compost and reuse waste	Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmynyscoy Llantarnam

		<p>becomes an environmental burden when it is disposed of.</p> <p>The survey findings indicated that most rural businesses don't see dealing with waste as a problem.</p> <p>However WG evidence suggests otherwise and waste is a priority area for government intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore opportunities to join-up with the Forgotten Landscapes project that is currently investigating the viability of composting bracken from upland commons areas. - Link with WG policy to explore potential for establishing a Torfaen Packaging Hub for small business to gain access to environmentally friendly packaging (less waste). 	<p>infrastructure in Torfaen that can produce compost for use in improving the soils in the rural wards of Torfaen.</p>	<p>will lead to innovation in the sector and provide best practice examples to others.</p> <p>Enabling business to stay ahead of legislation.</p> <p>Setting up a waste collection infrastructure will encourage waste separation for recycling and help businesses avoid landfill tax.</p>	<p>Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin</p>
<p>Re-localising the supply chain</p>	<p>5. Farmers and producers markets</p>	<p>These can be an important means for farmers to sell directly to consumers.</p> <p>The newly refurbished Llanyrafon Manor offers a good space to hold an outdoor market.</p> <p>However, markets in nearby Pontypool have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design a pilot to gauge the success of future producers' markets at Llanyrafon Manor. - Hold occasional food and craft fayres at the Manor and continue to hold producer markets at TCBC supported festivals. - Monitor visitors and purchase patterns over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use findings from the pilot to assess if the demographics of the area permit a critical mass that will operate well for both producer and consumer. 	<p>This can be a very good way of supplementing a farmer's income. It will help farmers learn business skills by selling direct. It will help regenerate local supply chains by putting consumers directly in touch with where there food comes from.</p>	<p>Dependent on the location of the market and the wards where producers come from.</p>

		been piloted to mixed success.				
6. Producer directory and produce catalogue	Farmers and small producer businesses often lack the resources to market their produce. This can be supported by establishing and managing a directory of Torfaen producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish and manage a producer directory. - This can begin as a static list of producers, location, their produce, volumes and where available. - Then developed as a live and online system to allow self-editing and enable product lists, with descriptions, indications of volumes available and pricing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with private sector partners such as Vin Sullivan and Phillip Jones (Torfaen based wholesalers) to develop a local produce catalogue. 	The information gained from the survey responses during this study provides a useful basis for developing a producer directory. Provides an accessible way to promote what is produced in Torfaen. Offers a new route to market for producers in Torfaen.	Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmyrnyscoy Llantarnam Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin	
7. Farm open days	By opening their doors to the general public at pre-arranged times farms can provide an opportunity for people to re-connect with farming and the countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish any legal / liability considerations upfront. - Then explore potential collaboration with FUW and the local Machinery Ring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore collaboration with other RDP regions such as Bridgend where similar initiatives have been successfully held. 	Seeing how food is produced can help restore value in local supply chains and encourage people to seek out regional produce. Helping individual farmers connect with local communities.	Dependent on location of farm.	
Social enterprise models	8. Producer co-operatives	Co-operatives can enable the	Several opportunities exist where feasibility can be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the development of a small 	Can lead to commercial	All wards where producers can

	collaborative development of producer businesses in Torfaen.	quickly explored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Arts and Crafts a number of individuals and small businesses have expressed interest in working collaboratively. - For food, the Co-Star initiative or the RRU food co-ops programme can be enhanced by linking to local suppliers. 	scale horticultural supply chain, focussing on pockets of land that this study has identified where productive agriculture can happen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potentially involve wholesalers such as Phillip Jones as a central point for supply. Or develop a distribution infrastructure for producers to sell direct to particular buying co-ops. 	opportunities and business innovation through collaborative working. Enables producers to gain easier access to customers through providing a delivery mechanism.	contribute. The study has indicated scope for increasing productive agriculture and possibly horticulture in Llantarnam, Llanyrafon South and in a proportion of Henllys and Two locks
9. Community supported agriculture (CSA)	CSA is a partnership arrangement between producers and consumers. The basic model is simple: consumers provide support for growers by agreeing to pay for a share of the total produce, and growers provide a regular share of food of a guaranteed quality and quantity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An opportunity exists for the RDP dept to join-up with the Facilities Management Dept and support CSA development in the rural wards by facilitating groups of interested individuals to take over unused land to grow vegetables for themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If sufficient demand exists explore opportunities to establish shared community ownership of the land and employ people to grow and deliver produce on their behalf. - Make land for community growing part of the planning decision making process. 	Direct benefits are associated with reconnecting people with the land, alternative land use and 'growing your own'. Small examples of this are underway in Pontnewydd and Old Cwmbran - lead by Facilities Management. This offers opportunities for joined up working across TCBC departments.	There is scope for increasing productive agriculture and possibly horticulture in Llantarnam, Llanyrafon South and in a proportion of Henllys and Two locks. Furthermore TCBC Facilities Management intend to encourage tenants and residents to take custodianship

<p>Niche product development and diversification</p>	<p>10. 'Made in Torfaen' producer quality mark</p>	<p>The 'Taste of Torfaen' name may appear restrictive to businesses that operate outside of the food sector. Torfaen provides more opportunities from other rural sectors, including forestry, tourism and arts and crafts. Therefore adapting to a 'Made in Torfaen' mark will more readily encompass all sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin by creating access to a practical self assessment methodology for producers and businesses to enable best practice to be shared. - To incentivise businesses to engage this could be linked to an award scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over time this could become a Wales wide initiative and provide supportive links to the True Taste Wales brand. 	<p>A benchmarking system for 'Made in Torfaen' approved products that meet TCBC and the WG commitment to sustainable development can be established. This would set the standard to other RDP regions.</p>	<p>of parcels of land.</p> <p>Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmynyscoy Llantarnam Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin</p>
	<p>11. Producer hubs and Tourism clusters</p>	<p>The concept of hubs and clusters provides ways for small businesses to collaborate on shared initiatives where it can be beneficial to share resources and experience for the</p>	<p>Several opportunities exist where feasibility can be quickly explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penyparc farm as a distribution/collection hub for agricultural supplies. - Linking heritage sites in Blaenavon together to encourage visitors to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once established hubs can benefit from longer term opportunities including training provision and awareness raising sessions that are geared towards building the capacity for informed decision making in small 	<p>Working together to share experience, knowledge and resources can help producers and small businesses overcome barriers to common challenges such as</p>	<p>Abersychan Blaenavon Cwmynyscoy Llantarnam Llanyrafon South Two Locks and Henllys Wainfelin</p>

	benefit of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a tourism trail across Torfaen (specifically for outdoors activities). - Further development of Greenmeadow Farm as a local produce, community hub or renewable energy centre. - Establishing a meat co-operative. 	town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitation will be needed to enable hubs to be financially self-sustaining. 	business.	accessing new markets, getting new customers, sharing distribution and the cost of inputs.
12. Providing support for emerging sectors	<p>Recent studies have indicated that forestry and renewable energy generation (specifically wind and hydro) are potential sources of economic development for Torfaen.</p> <p>Evidence indicates a significant level of interest in generating renewable energy amongst farm businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These are opportunities for the Rural Development and Economic Development teams to explore together. - They should be prioritised to establish the practical steps forward for both of these emerging areas for Torfaen and the wider region. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependent on practical outcomes of exploratory work. 	<p>Initiatives could include bio-mass /wood-fuel, small timber for rural crafts and wild foods. Energy crops, wind, solar, hydro and anaerobic digestion are all potential sources of alternative energy that can create economic wealth and contribute to a sustainable future for Torfaen</p>	<p>This study has provided evidence for where forestry opportunities are best positioned across the rural wards and where opportunities for community scale alternative energy generation exist in the rural wards.</p>