



TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AXES 3 AND 4

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2007-2013



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu
Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Contents

Section	Page
1. Executive Summary	3-5
2. Introduction	6
3. Rural Development in Torfaen	7-11
• Eligible areas	
• SWOT Analysis	
• Key Issues	
4. The Partnerships	11-15
5. Links to other areas	15-16
6. Vision	16
7. Key Themes and Priorities	17-19
8. Target Groups	19
9. Links to other strategies	19-23
10. Links to other Programmes and Initiatives	24-25
11. Past Experience	25-30
12. Cross cutting themes	30-33
• Equal Opportunities	
• Environmental Sustainability	
• ICT	
• Welsh Language	
13. What success will look like	33-35

Appendices

1. The Partnership Membership and role	35-38
2. Terms of Reference for the Partnership	39
3. Memorandum of understanding the Partnership	40-41
4. Details of Lead body and Finance Co-ordinator	42-47
5. Details of the Local Action Group	48-53
6. Links to the Spatial Plan	54-56
7. Map of the Eligible Wards	57
8. Characteristics	58-60

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Local Development Strategy (LDS) represents Rural Torfaen's submission for Axis 3 and 4 funding under the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013. This LDS sets out the position of Torfaen's rural wards, with a focus on geography and demographics. It gives a detailed view of the needs to be addressed through the strategy and how they will be tackled.

The Rural Wards

The Rural Development Plan is a new experience for Torfaen, creating new opportunities for the rural Wards to work together to regenerate its communities. In 2007, seven wards were given rural status, Llanyrafon South and Blaenavon were designated the 2 full rural wards, located in opposite ends of the borough.

Rural Status	Name of Ward
Rural Ward	Llanyrafon South
	Blaenavon
Service Centre (or Named) Wards	Abersychan
	Wainfelin
	Cwmynyscoy
	Two Locks
	Llantarnam

Key issues to be addressed

Extensive research was undertaken to obtain the `real` issues of the rural wards to ensure the LDS creates a vision that meets the needs of the rural wards. The main concerns were as follows;

- ❖ Decline in incomes from conventional rural activities
- ❖ Ageing population engaged in farming
- ❖ Effects on the rural landscape and the environment

- ❖ Absence of diversification initiatives
- ❖ Low levels of sustainable economic activity
- ❖ Low levels of educational achievement
- ❖ Lack of skills and training
- ❖ Health and wellbeing

The Partnership Approach

A new Partnership Board and Local Action Group was set up in the spring of 2007 as a response to the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 – 2013. The Partnership Boards role is to give a strategic approach in implementing the LDS and the Local Action Group role is to implement the LEADER approach, ensuring all project delivered under Axis 4 of the programme are grass routes and meets the needs of the community.

Both groups have a balanced membership across the sectors of private, public, voluntary and community, with growing membership to giving a wide range of views.

The Vision

Together both the Partnership Board and Local Action Group came forward with a vision for Torfaen’s rural communities;

“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 ”

Key Themes

The Torfaen Local Development Strategy aims to meet its vision through developing a variety of objectives set down through extensive consultation with the community and businesses in all seven of the rural wards.

Through consultation with the local community in Torfaen’s rural wards and the Local action Group the following key themes and objectives have been identified for Business Case 2:

- ❖ Developing land based production
- ❖ Conserve local heritage
- ❖ Promote sustainable tourism
- ❖ Business support and advice
- ❖ Enhance skill development

Links to other Strategies

The table below highlights the links between EU, National and local strategies and policies.

EU	National	Local
Lisbon Agenda Gothenburg Agenda	Wales Spatial Plan One Wales Environment Strategy for Wales Turning Heads – A strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 Health Challenge Wales	Regeneration Strategy Tourism Strategy Biodiversity Action plan Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Implementation of the Strategy

The implementation of the strategy will be achieved through two Business Plans. The first Business Plan runs from July 2007 to February 2011. The Second Business Plan runs from March 2011 to December 2013. The Partnership Board and Local Action Group, with support of the Lead Body are currently developing ideas to implement for Business Case 2 over the up and coming months.

Introduction

- 2.1 This document is the response from Torfaen to the Scheme Guidance for the Rural Development Plan (RDP) for Wales 2007-2013 Axis 3 and 4. It sets out an all-inclusive programme for the seven eligible rural wards in the County Borough, indicating where synergy is planned with other investment programmes. It is Torfaen's bid to achieve 'Rural Development Status Approval', the main mechanism for which is the submission of this Local Development Strategy (LDS).
- 2.2 As specified in the Scheme Guidance, the document sets out the short, mid and long-term objectives that the Local Partnership seeks to achieve using Axis 3 and Axis 4 funding. It encompasses the needs of all those who can contribute to the future of the rural community within the local authority area, setting out key priorities for the area which will be pursued in Partnership to bring about sustainable development.
- 2.3 The preparation of this LDS has involved a wide range of organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors including the local authority. It has been endorsed by the Partnership, and the Local Action Group.
- 2.4 Between February and September 2009 the lead body held a series of consultation events to update this strategy. One to one meetings were held with farms, small holdings and micro enterprises across the eligible wards in Torfaen. A consultation took place in each of the rural wards together with the opportunity for people to complete questionnaires to express their views. The results from the consultation enabled the Local Action Group and Partnership Board to update the objectives in this strategy.

3. Rural Development in Torfaen

3.1 Eligible Areas

In Torfaen the eligible wards, the area covered and their full population figures are as follows:

Name of Ward	Area covered (hectares)	Full population figures	Population Density (persons per hectare)
<u>Rural Ward</u>			
Llanyrafon South	444	2,664	6.00
Blaenavon	1,783	5,763	3.23
<u>Service Centre (or Named) Wards</u>			

Abersychan	2,476	6,826	2.76
Wainfelin	766	2,422	3.16
Cwmyrnyscoy	668	1,283	1.92
Two Locks	1,252	6,572	5.25
Llantarnam	775	4,688	6.05
Totals	8,164	30,218	3.70

3.2 Key Issues to be addressed

The problems which need to be addressed in the rural areas of these wards include the following:

a) Declining Farming Incomes

The income derivable from traditional farming in the wards has been declining for the past 20 years. Out of the 179 farms in Torfaen, only 90 are operating on a commercial basis, and many of these survive only because there are other incomes coming into the household.

The farms not operating on a commercial basis are either only keeping a small amount of livestock as a hobby, or they may only have horses.

b) An ageing population engaged in farming

Many of the farmers are now elderly i.e. mid 60's to 80's, and the next generation has not stayed in farming. A number of farms will become for sale in the next few years as a result.

c) An aura of decline, evidenced in the neglected appearance of the rural landscape

In some areas there are walls which have broken down and lie un-repaired, fencing is cheap and visibly lacks maintenance, some out-buildings look like shanty town huts made out of recycled building debris, the land is encroached by non-productive plants.

Even the farms which are still operating are in a state of disrepair. Fencing is an ever-increasing burden. Stone walls are frequently raided for stone to use in the garden or landscaping industries.

d) Illegal Activities/Threat of Crime

There is fly-tipping, arson, wildlife crime, off-road motorcycling and theft. The perceived threat of crime to cars or fear of visiting isolated areas leads to a reluctance by people to visit some parts of the rural landscape.

e) Loss of cultural traditions

Quote from farmer: "We used to collect the sheep from all the farms together at the stone dipping pens up on Penyrheol. 15-20 men and their dogs would go up into the hills and each dog would know where to go to find the sheep. There used to be in excess of 2,000 sheep on Edlogan Common. The rest of the families would bring a picnic and it was a real fun family day out. That stopped about 15 years ago. We're the last to have sheep on the Common. What's going to happen when we stop because the Common will revert to shrub land and gorse. It's only the grazing which keeps it in the condition it's in now. Now that the other sheep have gone, our sheep wander all over the Common and get down amongst the housing. They used to stick in their own areas but now we regularly have to pay to get them from the animal pound."

f) Erosion of Community Infrastructure

"The community infrastructure has disappeared over the years. There have been many rows over land ownership, and families began to operate independently of each other. The community hall on top of Penyrheol stopped being used and was eventually demolished."

g) Absence of Diversification Initiatives

"We would try other crops if we could get some support."

h) Lack of investment

The number of working farms has decreased dramatically – this has impacted on the environment. Many fields have become overgrown and this has affected the land quality.

i) Lack of enterprise and innovation

There is some good work on which to build but Torfaen's rural wards cannot yet be described as having a 'community culture of entrepreneurship where looking for entrepreneurship opportunities over the widest range of activities and resources has become a way of life for local people'.

j) Over-dependence on neighbouring urban settlements

Each of Torfaen's rural wards has an urban settlement next to it, in some cases itself suffering from disadvantage. This has tended to overshadow the needs of rural areas and the Rural Development Plan offers an opportunity to focus attention on the rural areas of wards, fostering their regeneration in their own right.

k) Under-developed Tourism potential

This is generally true of the rural areas of Torfaen, though the designation of Blaenavon as a World Heritage Site has helped to put the tourism potential of that ward at the forefront. The challenge is to generate a critical mass of tourism product, not just in Torfaen but in the sub-region, underlining that tourism development requires a partnership approach with neighbouring local authorities.

l) Lack of attention to biodiversity

Torfaen has some exceptional biodiversity features e.g. the greatest concentration of lesser horse-shoe bats in Wales, the greatest concentration of white-clawed crayfish in Wales, the only location in Wales for a rare moth, collections of threatened plants such as the bee orchid, important wildlife corridors such as the canal.

However the knowledge of what exists is incomplete and there is a need to undertake habitat surveys of all the rural wards against the South East Wales Wildlife Sites criteria. There is also an opportunity to turn biodiversity into a visitor attraction in rural areas, and a priority would be to work with farm-based people to develop biodiversity action plans which enhance the whole visitor experience.

m) Lack of Sustainable Development initiatives

This is a critical factor on which the whole viability of the rural areas of Torfaen is going to depend. There is a need to help local people understand what a Sustainable Development initiative is, and to assist with resources to bring such initiatives about.

n) Unused, or under-used properties

Growing problem. Llanyrafon Farm has been flagged up in the needs and priorities table above and in the objectives listed below, but there are other buildings which need a new purpose

and more will become apparent as the ageing farm-based population cease to occupy the farm-buildings they have.

o) Under-documented, under-conserved and under-interpreted Heritage

An audit of the heritage assets in Torfaen is just being completed, highlighting many sites in rural area (e.g. Glyn Pits in Cwmyrnyscoy Ward, the surface remains of a colliery which includes a rare beam engine still in situ, and equally rare legacies of early iron-working on the British site. Llanyrafon Manor Farm has been mentioned above.). The audit is also identifying priorities for conservation.

The next step is for interpretation strategies and heritage leaflets to be drawn up on key sites. Llanyrafon Manor Farm is being undertaken first.

p) Isolated producers

There are no Torfaen-specific schemes to assist producers in finding markets e.g. niche speciality markets. Yet there is plenty of scope. Pontypool, for example, has an under-used market hall, but there is no evidence of local produce in the stalls or of a marketing campaign to explain to residents of Torfaen what their own farmers are producing in the way of speciality foods.

q) Low skills in some areas

The percentage of people with basic skill needs in Torfaen is 15% higher than the Wales average, and this rises to 50% higher in some of the rural wards. Improving adult basic skills, therefore, is a priority.

There is also a low percentage of the population who have any qualifications at all, and lower than average percentages with qualifications at levels 3 and 4 in particular. An important part of regenerating the economy, therefore, is to address these skills deficits.

r) Depopulation by those earning their living from the land

The younger generation from farm-based families is generally not staying in farming, and not staying in occupations which rely on land-based activity. This is depopulating the rural areas of Torfaen and under-mining community structures because they are no longer viable.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis has been produced as a result of consultation with the community, Local Action Group and Partnership Board. Key Strategies have also been analysed to produce the table below:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Farmers wishing to strengthen their business ▪ A developing tourism sector ▪ Increase in local produce ▪ Emerging arts and crafts sector ▪ Developing small holders ▪ Increase in diversification activities ▪ An establishing and professional voluntary sector ▪ Transport links to the M4 corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decline in traditional farming ▪ Lack of opportunities for unskilled and/or unqualified people ▪ Lack of support for smaller rural businesses ▪ Lack of support in developing local produce ▪ Loss of cultural traditions ▪ Only 2 full rural wards
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for larger rural businesses ▪ Support for smaller rural businesses and the art and craft sector ▪ Developing Tourism attractions and accommodation ▪ Increased demand for local produce ▪ Promotion of alternative land use, including energy and production of bio fuels ▪ Potential to capitalise on the natural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current economic position ▪ Increase in unemployment ▪ Further decline in employment opportunities ▪ Global Market ▪ Climate change ▪ Slow development of community participation

4. **Partnership Support**

4.1 **The Partnership**

4.1.1 Membership and Role

Torfaen Objective 1 Partnership Management Committee was originally adapted to form the Partnership. The Objective 1 Partnership was originally constituted on the 'thirds' principle i.e. one third private,

one third public, one third voluntary sector. This has been augmented with members drawn from the community representing rural interests. Since the launch of the Torfaen Rural Development Plan in April 2009 the Partnership Board has elected new members to bring new skills and experience to the group.

Appendix 1 sets out the membership of the Partnership including names and contact details of the Chair, full members, alternates and advisors.

4.1.2 Terms of Reference

The agreed Terms of Reference for the Partnership are attached as Appendix 2.

4.1.3 Legal Status of the Partnership

The Partnership is a non-constituted body.

A Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference setting out the status and roles of those involved in the management of the Partnership are set out in Appendices 2 and 3.

4.2 Local Action Group (LAG)

4.2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

A Local Action Group (LAG) has been formed of representatives from locally based interests. These include:

- ❖ A representative from the Community Group of Llanyrafon Farm (a Grade 2* listed building in the Llanyrafon South Ward which is to be a flagship project in the RDP in Torfaen).
- ❖ Representatives from a private sector business operating in the rural economy.
- ❖ Representatives from relevant associations and community groups.
- ❖ A representative from the voluntary sector.
- ❖ Farmers operating in the eligible areas.

Since the launch of the Torfaen Rural Development Plan in April 2009 the Local Action Group has elected new members to bring new skills and experience to the group.

We are in process of proposing cross-representation from neighbouring authorities such as the Monmouthshire LAG, or some equivalent means of facilitating local partnership working.

Details of the name, contact details, staffing structure, roles and responsibilities of key staff, membership, and terms of reference are set out in Appendix 5.

The Staff who will form the Secretariat supporting the LAG have extensive experience of administering EU funds and developing community led projects. Details are set out in below.

4.2.2 Day to Day Operations

Administrative and financial support arrangements for the LAG are set out in Appendix 5.

The LAG is supported by officers of the local authority with expertise relevant to the work of the group who will be invited to attend from time to time. The Chief Officer Regeneration and his service area will be called on when appropriate by the RDP Manager to support the development of the Axis 4 'LEADER' Action Plan,

The LAG will be able to call on specialist expertise in, for example, the agro-economy, forestry, the development of cooperatives, heritage, tourism, and new energy production methods.

4.2.3 Constitution

The formation of the Local Action Group was selected and endorsed to fulfil the requirements of the RDP, in both it's sectoral, gender and age requirements and it's ability to implement and deliver the LDS and it's projects, that will be identified in the Business Plan. It is important to emphasise that the membership is one of 'bottom up' from the designated rural community groups and organisations and in consequence will be led by the community in the strategic formation of the LDS and it's implementation and delivery

4.2.4 How the LAG meets the requirements of Article 61 of 1698/2005

The LAG has an area based local development strategy focused on the 7 eligible wards in Torfaen.

The membership is made up of representatives from the public and private sectors working in partnership. The projects which have been identified and will be identified are and will be characterised by the LEADER ethos of community ownership. The projects will be implemented through combinations of local people and sectors of the local economy.

There will be an ethos of innovation, encouraging people to pilot actions with a tolerance of risk, nurturing grass-roots initiatives, developing assets not previously exploited.

The aim will be to create a community culture of entrepreneurship, to change the thinking of local people so that looking for entrepreneurial opportunities over the widest range of activities and resources

becomes a way of life. Projects will include co-operative projects, and the development of social enterprises and community development trusts will be a feature.

The LAG will network with neighbouring LAGs and its staff will play a full part in Wales and UK wide networking opportunities. The development of local networks and partnerships will be fore-grounded in its method of operating.

4.2.5 How the LAG meets the requirements of Article 62 (1) of 1698/2005

There is an integrated Local Development Strategy based on the elements set out above.

The LAG represents partners from the socio-economic sectors in the eligible wards.

More than 50% of the members of the LAG are farmers, rural women, and other social partners.

The LAG has engaged with the development of the Local Development Strategy and will work with the lead body in developing the Business Plan.

The LAG has selected the local authority to act as its administrative and financial support as guarantors of its ability to administer public funds.

The LAG covers a population of 30,000 people over 7 wards in Torfaen, which offers a good critical mass to support its development strategy.

4.3 The Lead Body

4.3.1 The Local Authority is acting as the Lead Body, with the European Policy/External Funding Unit carrying out the following key functions in supporting the strategic lead provided by the Torfaen RDP Partnership;

- Management of the Torfaen RDP Programme of projects and the specified deliverables will be co-ordinated through the Rural Development Programme Manager.
- Providing Programme support/secretariat for the Partnership and LAG.

The Local Authority has extensive experience of managing grass routes partnerships and projects as well as Objective 1 ESF and ERDF programmes. The role of the lead body including demarcation of duties is set out in Appendices 3 and 4.

4.3.2 Financial Coordination

Financial Co-ordination will be undertaken by the finance staff of the Local Authority, ensuring due separation of function from the European Policy/External Funding Unit. Details of the Finance Coordinator, with a full description of the role and responsibilities are set out in Appendix 4.

4.3.2 Secretariat and Staff Structure

There will be secretariat support for the running of the Partnership, provided by the External Funding Unit of the Local Authority.

The contact details of the individuals responsible for the secretariat function are set out in Appendix 4.

5. Links to other areas

5.1 How the Partnerships will operate at Country Level

The Torfaen Partnership will take a full part in events organised as part of the European Network for Rural Development and the National Rural Network set up in Wales.

Case study good practice information which is shared across the Rural Development network will be used in briefing sessions for members of both the Partnership and the LAG.

Members of these groups will be supported to visit other parts of Wales to see how the RDP is or has been operating in those areas. The aim will be to assist the members to develop their perspectives on rural development issues and learn from good practice elsewhere in the system.

5.2 How the Partnerships will operate at Regional Level

Close relationships will be fostered with other Partnerships and LAGs in the South East Wales Region, particularly with Monmouthshire, Caerphilly and the Brecon Beacons. The aim will be not only to learn from the good practice of others but to develop cooperative projects.

Arrangements will be made for Torfaen Partnership and LAG members to take a full part in networking opportunities in the region and sub-region. A South East Wales Regional Network was established in July 2009, where the RDP Programme Managers meet to share experiences and practices.

Officers of Torfaen CBC are involved in the planning meetings for the Convergence Fund across the six valley local authorities. As projects take shape, synergy will be created between the Convergence Fund projects and those put forward to the Rural Development Plan.

The LDS has been developed conscious that all along the eastern border of Torfaen the wards of Monmouthshire are all eligible rural wards. These are, from north to south:

Llanelly Hill.
Llanwenarth Ultra
Llanfoist Fawr
Llanover
Goetre Fawr
Llanbadoc
Llangybi Fawr

The Torfaen Partnership acknowledges the importance of this because Monmouthshire has many years of experience of operating schemes under the predecessor programmes to the RDP and there is much for rural wards in Torfaen to gain from establishing close links with these wards.

On the Western side, there is just one contiguous ward in Caerphilly – Crumlin. Blaenau Gwent and Newport are not applying for the RDP.

5.3 How the Partnerships will operate at Local Level

Both the Partnership and LAG feed into each other to ensure synergy between the local level and strategic level. This will ensure that there is full synergy between any projects put forward for RDP funding.

The LAG works closely with neighbouring LAGs, undertaking joint projects in the fields of tourism, marketing and others to be identified over the next few months.

Torfaen has four Communities First Areas, only Blaenafon is in an eligible rural ward. The Co-ordinator sits on the LAG to create synergy with the Rural Development Plan.

6. **Vision**

Our vision for the Torfaen Rural Wards is:

“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 ”

7. Key Themes and Objectives

Through consultation with the local community in Torfaen's rural wards and the Local Action Group the following key themes and objectives have been identified:

1. DEVELOP LAND BASED PRODUCTION

- To build on the outcomes of the Farm Audit undertaken in year 1 to make land-based production in the rural areas of Torfaen more sustainable.
- To identify whether there are any new areas of produce for which the land can be used which could be sustainable in the future.
- Establish network links between land-based producers in Torfaen and surrounding areas to promote food and create closer working links with producers.
- Assist land-based producers in Torfaen to develop speciality foods which can contribute to the market.
- Promote awareness amongst urban residents in Torfaen of what is produced on the land in rural areas of the County Borough, where it is available for retail purchase.
- Establish opportunities for direct sales of local produce through developing a series of festivals and events, including a farmers market
- To create a sustainable infrastructure for land-based food production in Torfaen, well-linked to sub-regional networks and markets.
- Assist households and farms in the rural areas of Torfaen to make increased use of micro-renewable sources of energy.
- To complete the programme of investment in sites of special biodiversity interest, catering well for visitors, and supported by local land-owners.
- Increase opportunities to recycle land waste products.

2. CONSERVE LOCAL HERITAGE

- Exploit the connections between the rural areas of Torfaen and industrial and social heritage.
- Develop Llanyrafon Manor into the Rural Heritage Centre for the Borough.

- Identify other areas for development of heritage initiatives, such as the conservation of Glyn Pits.
- Develop a Heritage Trail through the rural areas of Torfaen, to mesh with the Torfaen Heritage Strategy. Providing opportunities for interpretation boards, explanation maps and guides.

3. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- To assess what potential increased tourism may have to provide sustainable economic activity in the rural areas of Torfaen.
- To implement a series of projects build better quality network of rights of way and cycle-paths across the rural areas of Torfaen, paying particular attention to the provision of bridleways.
- To implement a Garden Tourism route by assisting various locations to develop gardens of distinction.
- To support the development of accommodation ventures to draw in visitors.
- Increase potential for Green Tourism through developing tourist gardens and biodiversity trails through rural areas of Torfaen, raising awareness of local people and investing in habitat creation.
- Undertake physical improvements to identified areas to enhance the appearance of the landscape and encourage visitors.

4. BUSINESS SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- To assess what steps may be helpful to sustain community life in the rural areas of Torfaen.
- To support business start up and growth in the rural areas of Torfaen

5. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- To develop the skills of the population living in the rural areas of Torfaen so that they can engage in sustainable economic activity.
- To achieve self-sufficient rural community leadership, which is well-supported by the community, and skilful in championing the rural interests in Torfaen.
- To implement a programme of training for businesses and individuals in using ICT for communication and e-commerce purposes.

8. Target Groups

The LDS will focus on the following priority target groups:

- ❖ Micro and small enterprises (including farming families)
- ❖ Welsh speaking communities
- ❖ Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- ❖ Children
- ❖ The elderly
- ❖ The economically inactive and the under-employed
- ❖ Women
- ❖ Young people (including young farmers)
- ❖ Households with low incomes

9. Links to other Strategies

9.1 EU Strategies

9.1.1 Lisbon Agenda

To secure a prosperous, fair and environmentally sustainable future for Europe. The strategy can ensure that our economies are well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities offered by globalisation. It can put Europe in a strong position to cope with demographic changes that will mean more older people and fewer young people of working age in our societies.

9.1.2 Gothenburg Agenda

The Gothenburg Agenda, now called the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy sets out the European level vision for implementation sustainable development principles across the EU member states. Environmental sustainability remains a major cross-cutting theme for 2007-2013. The overall aim of the renewed Strategy is to "...support and promote actions to enable the European Union to achieve continuous improvement of quality of life for both current and future generations, through the creation of sustainable communities able to manage and use resources efficiently and to tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy, ensuring prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion."

9.2 National Strategies

9.2.1 Wales Spatial Plan

The elements of the Spatial Plan which have been taken into particular account in the development of this LDS are set out in Appendix 5. Themes from the recently circulated "South East Wales: The Capital

Network” interim statement of the South East Wales Spatial Plan which are of particular relevance to this LDS include:

- ❖ The fact that two of Torfaen’s eligible wards are in the Heads of the Valleys area and full use will be made of the potential for match funding for regeneration actions from that source.
- ❖ The importance of giving additional impetus to rural development by relating it to the development of relevant hub settlements (Cwmbran, Pontypool, Newport) and of surrounding settlements.
- ❖ The development of safe cycling and walking routes.
- ❖ The need to develop the creative industries, renewable energy, recycling and waste.
- ❖ The recognition that the tourism and leisure sector has the potential to contribute to a much greater extent to the economy of the mid and upper Valleys.
- ❖ The recognition that ICT has a major role to play in the economy of the area.
- ❖ The need to tackle economic inactivity.
- ❖ Capitalising on the fact that rural environments are generally safer for people to walk and cycle in than urban areas.
- ❖ Identifying the opportunities for increasing biodiversity, recognising that this needs both a local and a sub-regional perspective.
- ❖ The commitment to reducing carbon gas emission.
- ❖ The value in conserving and celebrating the area’s heritage, history, archaeology as a means of creating distinctiveness.

Links from the generic Spatial Plan document include:

- ❖ Adapt the land-based economy to focus on links with tourism and recreation; this should support the enhancement of landscape and biodiversity.
- ❖ Propositions for South East Wales: The tourism and leisure sector has the potential to contribute to a much greater extent to the area’s economy. This includes heritage, culture, events and countryside based activities and destinations.
- ❖ ‘Valuing our Environment’ – By safeguarding and enhancing both the natural and built environment, we will attract people to retain them in our communities and preserve the foundations for the future. We need to manage river catchment areas to prevent flooding. We need to develop footpaths. Land, sea and coastal management of ecology and environment needs to be carefully coordinated.
- ❖ Promote a Sustainable Economy.
- ❖ Achieve a critical mass of population and business activity in our key economic areas for our long-term competitiveness on the European and international stage.
- ❖ Support the work of the Wales Tourist Board and their review of the national tourism strategy “Achieving our Potential”.
- ❖ Reduce Wales’ contribution to climate change by, for example, increasing its share of renewable energy ... and by increasing

energy efficiency in industry, housing and transport, as well as by protecting existing carbon sinks.

- ❖ The WAG's Environmental Strategy.
- ❖ Foster social capital and improve people's personal aspirations and expectations.
- ❖ Invest in community facilities and the re-use of redundant or underused facilities for community purposes.
- ❖ Relate regeneration activities being carried out under different programmes to each other.

9.2.2 One Wales

The project will impact upon the main needs outlined in the plan, including;

- ❖ Access to healthy, locally grown food
- ❖ Sustainable enterprise
- ❖ Long term employment
- ❖ Increase in skills
- ❖ Regenerated communities
- ❖ Shared goals and best practice examples to exploit
- ❖ Community cohesion - Active participation
- ❖ Enriched cultural heritage

9.2.3 Environment Strategy for Wales

This strategy identifies climate change, declining wildlife and using up resources as some of the biggest challenges facing the environment in Wales now and in the future.

- Help adapt to deal with the affects of climate change
- Promote sustainable design and construction
- Promote recycling
- Protect and enhance our biodiversity
- Planting native species
- Protecting and creating high quality local environments
- Reduce risk of flooding

9.2.4 Turning Heads – A strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020

- A cultural rich, dynamic network of vibrant and safe communities
- A place where people want to live, work and play with a sustainable high quality of life
- Helping to drive the success of South East Wales as an internationally recognised Capital Region
- An attractive and well used natural, historic and built environment
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities
- A well educated, skilled and healthier population
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience
- Public confidence in a shared bright future

9.2.4 Health Challenge Wales

The programme offers a national focus in which policies come together to reduce inequalities and achieve sustainable development through high levels of wellbeing, creating a thriving and prosperous society.

9.3 Local Strategies

9.3.1 Links to the Torfaen Community Strategy

Community Strategy Vision	Examples of links into the LDS Action Plan
People are able to work, live and play because they are healthier	<p>Development of Informal Recreation opportunities which encourage physical activity.</p> <p>Supply of speciality healthy food linked to awareness raising on diet and nutrition.</p>
Through education people are able to make informed choices about their lives	<p>Outreach work with adults in rural areas to encourage the take up of learning.</p> <p>Training opportunities linked to the development of new rurally based business start-ups.</p>
Residents and businesses have developed their skills to embrace new technologies and global competition whilst treasuring their past	<p>Broadband connectivity for as many as possible business and dwellings in the rural areas, linked to training opportunities in e-commerce.</p> <p>Engagement of community groups in identifying heritage features which should be prized, developing interpretation strategies and heritage leaflets for them.</p>
People appreciate and enjoy the environment	<p>Development of biodiversity audits and management plans with land-owners. Development of interpretation and access for visitors.</p> <p>Improvements to the physical appearance of rural areas</p>

	(condition of buildings, fences, gates, walls, hedges. Development of networks of footpaths, cycle-ways and bridleways.
Organisations have a citizen focus	The LEADER ethos of community involvement in initiatives, local decision-making, empowerment through delegated budgets.

9.3.2 The Regeneration Strategy

- Capitalising on Torfaen’s Heritage – especially its industrial past and environmental assets, to promote viable and sustainable tourism, leisure and recreational product that meets the needs of visitors and local people.
- Re-energise town and neighbourhood centres as places of vitality, by developing and promoting them as attractive places in which to live, work, play and invest.
- Ensure that Torfaen is seen as a place which recognises the value of the environment.
- Create a holistic, well-formed, co-ordinated approach to implementing the Regeneration Strategy.

9.3.4 Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- Help adapt to deal with the affects of climate change
- Promote sustainable design and construction
- Undertake habitat surveys
- Prepare Management Plans
- Protect and enhance biodiversity

9.3.6 Tourism Strategy

- Enhance tourism activities for visitors and local people
- Promoting local prosperity
- Supporting community wellbeing and involvement
- Minimising tourisms environmental impact
- Protecting and giving value to natural heritage and culture

10. Links to other Programmes and Initiatives

10.1 Torfaen County Borough Council Corporate Priorities

- ❖ To improve services for vulnerable people and improve health outcomes for everyone by promoting healthier lifestyles
 - *Anti-Poverty Programme*
 - *Extended Healthy Schools*
 - *Deferring Higher Dependency and Promoting Independence*
 - *Work with older people to help them to age healthily:*

- ❖ To improve the quality of teaching and learning for young people and other students and to equip citizens of all ages with the necessary skills for employment and the regeneration of their local communities
 - *Basic Skills (16-25) to equip learners aged 16-25 to attain basic skills to improve employment prospects.*

- ❖ To improve waste management and recycling creating a cleaner and more energy efficient area
 - *Continue our approach to becoming an exemplar area for landfill diversion/recycling*
 - *To become an exemplar for 'green' procurement and 'green' energy*
 - *Become Green Dragon accredited in all areas and make this an explicit feature of all contact with the public*

10.2 Area Specific Integrated Approaches to Regeneration

As recommended by the Welsh Audit Office Report on regeneration, Torfaen County Borough Council now takes a holistic, integrated approach to regeneration on an area specific basis. This approach extends to the rural areas covered by this report. While the rural areas have distinctive features which differentiate them from the urban areas of Torfaen, regeneration actions are likely to have more impact and have more sustainable effects if they are part of a coordinated strategy. This coordination is reflected in this LDS, but also the steps proposed in the LDS are link into the area specific strategies the Council is developing.

10.3 Convergence Funding

Torfaen County Borough Council is working with five other local authorities across the valleys to Bridgend to develop collaborative proposals to be submitted for funding from the Convergence Fund. The priority areas include:

- ❖ ICT Skills
- ❖ Business incubation training
- ❖ Developing the potential of women in the workforce
- ❖ Basic skills
- ❖ Skills for the construction industry
- ❖ Access to Higher Education
- ❖ Assisting the economically inactive into work

- ❖ Business support for small and medium sized businesses
- ❖ Development of micro-renewables
- ❖ Development of the Creative Industry sector

All of these will apply to the rural areas of Torfaen, and will be used to complement any funds coming from the RDP.

10.4 Torfaen also has Objective 1 programmes already approved which run until 2008 which can make a contribution to the aims of the LDS. These are in the fields of:

- ❖ Adult Basic Skills
- ❖ Assisting people who have been out of work to return to work through training
- ❖ ICT training
- ❖ Community Capacity Building and training in Abersychan Ward.

There is also an extensive programme of support for the pre-school child, helping women access childcare so they can train or take up employment, and helping young people over the transition period 14-19, all of which are available to residents of Torfaen's rural areas.

10.5 Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal passes through Cwmbran southwards to Newport. This section is not currently navigable, but the Council is in process of submitting a bid to the Living Landmarks Lottery Programme to restore it to navigation down to Newport. This will be a major source of tourism and community regeneration if it is successful.

11 Past Experience

11.1 The LEADER approach

The LAG was formed in spring 2007 and therefore does not have previous experience of the LEADER approach as such.

However:

- ❖ Members of the LAG served for several years as the panel deciding on applications to the Objective 1 funded Rural Key Fund and Community Key Fund schemes which have been operating in Torfaen, which has the ethos of encouraging local initiatives to come forward for grants of up to £25,000. Projects are appraised initially by officers and any missing information sought, they are then put to the panel, who had a marking scheme to assist in their deliberations.

- ❖ Since the launch of the Torfaen Rural Development Programme new members have been recruited onto the LAG and represent 3 Community Strategy Areas and a Communities First Area to ensure the views of the community are represented.
- ❖ Training in the LEADER approach is being provided to the LAG, including sharing with them case studies of good practice projects from elsewhere. This includes coverage of the methodology which has been used to involve local people and build up community capacity.

11.2 Proof of ability to define and implement a development strategy for the area

Members of the LAG were longstanding members of the Torfaen Objective 1 Partnership Management Committee since its inception in 2001. In this role they have experience of defining and implementing a development strategy for the area, of approving projects for funding, and of monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the strategy.

One of the new members is a member of the area Tourist Association and herself an operator of a rural business.

The LAG will have officer support with extensive expertise in defining and implementing development strategies.

In its early meetings the LAG has shown itself to be very sympathetic to the LEADER approach and well able to engage with the emerging Local Development Strategy document.

The officers supporting the LAG have considerable expertise in defining and implementing development strategies and community lead projects and they will be working closely with the LAG at all times.

11.3 Details of previous experience in developing local networks, cross sectoral working and innovation

Individual members of both the Partnership and the LAG have several years experience of developing local networks, cross-sectoral working and innovation, including Communities First Partnership Board and Boards of Trustees relating to the Community Strategy Areas.

Also the officers supporting the LAG are very experienced in these approaches.

11.4 Detail of other EU funded activity

Torfaen County Borough Council officers are currently managing the following other EU funded activity:

Name Of Project	Description of Activity	Total Project Cost
OBJECTIVE 1 ESF		
RISE Learning Network (Incorporating Torfaen Adult Basic Skills, Parents Plus, Reach Further for IT)	Training for adults in basic skills and any other course for returnees to learning.	£3,173,088
Building Communities First	Capacity building and training in Communities First Areas	£758,000
Building Partnership Garnsychan	Capacity Building, training and social entrepreneurship in Abersychan Ward	£663,823
Genesis Wales	Support for childcare for parents training or working	£1,358,820
14-19	Support for the transition from pre- to post 16 education and training	£165,169
Support in the workplace	Grants to SMEs to access training	£695,804
OBJECTIVE 1 ERDF		
Community Key Fund	This project provided a grant scheme designed to allow constituted voluntary and community organisations access funding to support new and developmental projects that will help regenerate their area.	£821,797
Rural Key Fund	This project will delivered a grant fund to enable capital and revenue grants to be awarded to community-led economic regeneration projects that seek to enhance the quality of life and strengthen economic capacity within rural communities	£790,476
Business support grants	This project established grants to SME of up to	£1,750,000

	£5,000 to assist with re-equipping and business modernisation	
Torfaen Community Portal	<p>The aim of the project was to engage with individuals and their communities and assist in their development through the use of ICT.</p> <p>To improve ICT skills, basic learning and numeracy and access for both learners and providers</p>	£721,198
Torfaen Innovation Centre	The Torfaen Innovation Centre provides a physical base for the growth and development of innovative businesses that are in the very early stages of their development. The centre provides the business support services required by companies undergoing business incubation. The centre will also provide the focus for entrepreneurial activity in Torfaen.	£4,351,320
Cwmbran Interchange	This was a major infrastructure project with the aim of significantly increasing the use of public transport in the Cwmbran area and to reduce growth in traffic levels and congestion on the main road corridors.	£3.3 million
Informal Recreation Opportunities	Development of footpaths and cycle ways, with leaflets promoting their use for informal	£689,169

	recreation.	
INTERREG		
NEWTASC	Newtasc is a Transnational partnership project involving 7 partners, Stevenage, Basildon, Harlow, Senart (Fr), Marne La Valle (Fr), Zoetermeer (NI) and Torfaen (Lead Partner). The aims of the project have been to develop best practice and demonstrate solutions in respect of New Towns in the fields of Environment, Social Cohesion and Economic.	£4,000,000
REVIT	REVIT is a partnership project aimed at best practice and practical implementation related to the redevelopment of Brownfield sites.	£500,000
CULTURED	Cultured is a partnership project aimed to connect planners and stakeholders in different regions to study and discuss good and bad practice in relation to the built heritage. The project will specifically focus on built heritage in rural areas and the urban-rural partnership, as well as cultural heritage as an instrument of regional development	£55,000
BOUNDLESS PARKS, NATURALLY	This was a transnational project involving the following European countries, Netherlands, Belgium and the UK. The aim of the BPN project is realising a better spatial recreational dispersion and a better	£777,285

	and more accessible nature in densely populated North West Europe.	
CROSSCUT	Crosscut is a partnership project aimed developing and promoting guidelines for the classification of recreational waterways within North West Europe and to identify gaps / bottlenecks in the recreational waterway network	£700,000
ENCOURAGE	Developing eco-friendly solutions to physical regeneration.	£1,000,000

12. Cross Cutting Themes

12.1 The Partnership will abide by the following local authorities policies, copies of which accompany this LDS:

❖ Welsh Language

The Local Authority's Welsh Language Scheme.

❖ ICT

The Local Authority does not have a separate ICT Policy as such. The Comments below indicate how ICT is to be incorporated into the LDS.

[There is, however, an 'Information Security Policy Document' and a copy of this is enclosed.]

❖ Environmental Opportunities

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

❖ Equal Opportunities

The Equality Policy.

[There is also a Race Equality Scheme and an Older Person's Strategy, copies of which are not enclosed but will be sent on if needed]

❖ Sustainability

The Regeneration Service's Sustainable Development Action Plan 2006-2009.

[The local authority as a whole does not have a Sustainable Development Policy or Action Plan as yet] – check this

12.2 These policies are incorporated into the LDS as follows:

12.2.1 Welsh Language Policy

All published documents will be available in Welsh as well as in English.

Any member of the rural communities wishing to discuss the LDS using the language of Welsh will be able to do so. Any correspondence coming into the secretariat in Welsh will be answered in Welsh.

Teaching of the Welsh language will be part of the programme of training available in the Action Plan.

12.2.2 ICT

The vision includes a section which envisages all business and dwellings in the rural areas of Torfaen's being connected by broadband and this being actively used for emailing and e-commerce.

The Rural Development Plan will have its own web site using the high level functionality available in the Local Authority's content management system and linked to a new enhanced overall web site the Local Authority is developing linking all grant income streams. The RDP pages will include details of the Partnership, the Local Action Group, the Local Development Strategies, and each project.

In addition each ward will have a website, with high levels of local participation in their maintenance, providing a forum for information exchange, planning and comment. There will be a local history section that allows local residents to contribute directly to the growing body of knowledge on the area through, for example, digital storytelling, photographic images and local stories.

ICT will be actively used as a mechanism for attracting visitors and new residents to the locality through multi-media promotion of the full range of available local activities (walks, places of special interest, events, and so on) together with on-line access to available properties as well as access to local history and places to stay. People will be able to book local accommodation, find property, access employment opportunities, and gain information about biodiversity and sustainable development opportunities.

ICT will be a key tool in regenerating the local economy through the provision of additional capacity to the locality to enable existing rural businesses to sell electronically to broader markets; electronic interaction to address local issues; opportunities to explore and establish community co-operatives as well as promote key events such as farmers or other specialist markets. This will be used to reduce food miles by supporting 'buy local' principles.

12.2.3 The Environment

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan will play a key role in influencing the planning of actions, advised by the local authority's ecology officers. There will be a small grant scheme to act as an incentive to landowners manage land sustainably and deliver biodiversity gain, addressing targets in the Biodiversity Plan.

More land will be developed as species rich grassland offering high biodiversity value. This will be linked to measures to foster habitat for the food which encourages owls, bats and otters in the river courses.

Proposals to diversify will be properly informed by ecological surveys which have regard to protected species and offer advice on the active promotion of biodiversity gain.

The Action Plan contains proposals for creating biodiversity trails, offering visitors guided tours of the biodiversity resources. This will be underpinned by a pro-active range service ensuring the landscape and important wildlife and heritage sites are well managed. Local people will be involved in this process.

The development of the rural areas of Torfaen will actively promote the idea of connecting wildlife corridors allow species to move about in response to climate change. This will be developed on a sub-regional basis in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities.

12.2.4 Equal Opportunities

The LDS will contribute to the measures the local authority is developing to mainstream equalities. These include:

- ❖ Developing Informal Recreation Activities in rural areas which are congenial and safe for women to undertake, and accessible to those with a disability e.g. replacing styles with gates on footpaths.
- ❖ Ensuring full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act in the development of any building for public use.
- ❖ Providing activities which older people will enjoy.
- ❖ Developing activities which those who do not have transport or who are house-bound, using the broadband connectivity cited above.
- ❖ Creating employment opportunities for those who have learning difficulties or who are recovering from mental illness.

- ❖ Ensuring front-line staff, like rangers and guides, are well briefed on the the need to implement an equal opportunities agenda in all their dealings with the public.
- ❖ Specific initiatives to include the Traveller Communities in Torfaen in the programme.
- ❖ Targetted initiatives to reach out to those from disadvantaged areas who may never have had the opportunity to engage in the activities available in rural areas.

12.2.5 Sustainability

Embedding sustainability in all the work of the Council is a high priority. The LDS is itself an example of sustainable development in that it focuses on policy integration, area-specific holistic approaches to the regeneration of the communities in the eligible wards, and the setting of short-term action in the context of long-term aims. The whole focus is on delivering sustainable solutions and sustainability is at the heart of the plan.

13. **What Success will look like?**

13.1 The ultimate aim is to achieve the vision in section 6.

“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 ”

13.2 Performance Indicators and Targets

Outputs put forward under the Business Plan and associated projects will follow the Common Monitoring Evaluation Framework, an example of how this strategy meets this criteria is stated below:

Measure Code	Axis 3 Common Output Measure	Axis 3 Common Output Indicator
311	Diversification into non-agricultural activities	No. of beneficiaries Total volume of associated investments
312	Business creation and development	No. of micro-businesses supported/created
313	Encouragement of tourism activities in rural areas	No of new tourism infrastructure elements supported Total volume of investments
321	Basic services for the economy and rural population	No of supported actions (ICT initiatives and other)

		Total volume of investments
322	Village renewal and development	Number of villages where actions took place Total volume of investments
323	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	No. of rural heritage actions supported Total volume of investments
331	Training and information	No of participating economic actors to supported activities No of training days received by participants
341	Skills acquisition, animation and implementation of local development strategies	No of skills acquisition and animation actions No of participants in actions No of public-private partnerships supported

Measure Code	Axis 4 Common Output Measure	Axis 4 Common Output Indicator
41	Implementing local development strategies	No. of local action groups Total size of LAG area (sq km) Total population in LAG area Number of projects covered by LAGs
421	Implementing cooperation projects	No. of cooperation projects
431	Running the LAG, acquiring skills and animating the territory as referred to in article 59	No. of actions supported

SIGNATURE OF CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTNERSHIP

.....

Mr Stuart Smith

END OF MAIN TEXT

APPENDIX 1: THE PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE

Chair

The Chair is Stuart Smith,

Names and contact details of full members and advisers

Sector	Name	Representing	Email
Public	Gareth Phillips	TCBC, Countryside	Gareth.phillips@torfaen.gov.uk
	Bill Purvis	Environment Agency	bill.purvis@environment-agency.wales.gov.uk
	Peter Cole	Capital Region Tourism	peter.cole@capitalregiontourism.org
	Bill Hill	TCBC, Communities	Bill.hill@torfaen.gov.uk
	CCW	Phil Jayne	p.jayne@ccw.gov.uk
	Rachel O`Shaunessey	Sustainable Development Team, TCBC	Rachel.o`shaunessey@torfaen.gov.uk
Private	Simon Dawson	Bron Afon	simon.dawson@bronafon.org.uk
	Emma Cambrey Stacey	Garnsychan Partnership	emma@garnsychan.com
Voluntary	John Garwell	Torfaen Environmental Partnership	'jgarwell@pontypoolcc.gov.uk
	Peter Kennedy	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance	'peter@torfaenvoluntaryalliance.org.uk
Community	Stuart Smith	Chair	'smith6ju@btinternet.com'
	Adrian Lynch	Llanyrafon Manor Community Group	alph_77@hotmail.com
	Ray Evans	Llanyrafon Manor Community Group	chair2manor@mypostoffice.co.uk

Advisors	Rebecca Hartley Sally Partridge David Evans Denise Langman	TCBC, Neighbourhood Services TCBC, Communities TCBC - Pontypool Regeneration TCBC - Town Centre	Rebecca.hartley@torfaen.gov.uk Sally.partridge@torfaen.gov.uk David.evans@torfaen.gov.uk Denise.langman@torfaen.gov.uk
Lead Body	Nikki Davies Deyolden Stroud Katie Johns	TCBC, External Funding TCBC, External Funding TCBC, External Funding	Nicola.davies@torfaen.gov.uk Deyolden.stroud@torfaen.gov.uk Katie.johns@torfaen.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PARTNERSHIP [As agreed at the Partnership meeting 5 March 2007]

Terms of Reference

- 1 To ensure the proper running of the Partnership, including appointing a Chair, Lead Body and Finance Coordinator.
- 2 To develop the Local Development Strategy (LDS) before submission to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and review it as necessary over the life of the programme.
- 3 To develop the Business Plan before submission to WAG.
- 4 To approve systems and procedures for the day-to-day running of the Partnership and the financial management of any funds.
- 5 To monitor and approve reports on the progress in implementing the LDS and identify gaps in provision.
- 6 To be responsible for any sub-contracting to other appropriate and competent local delivery organisations, including the Local Area Group (LAG), and for monitoring the activities of any such delivery organisations.
- 7 To ensure that robust, good value for money and well developed projects are put forward and selected for appraisal and funded.
- 8 To promote the programme locally.
- 9 To ensure synergy between the Rural Development Plan and the Convergence Fund programmes in Torfaen.

Operational Protocols

- 1 The Partnership will meet bi-monthly.
- 2 An agenda and papers will be circulated 7 days in advance.
- 3 Minutes will be kept and approved subsequently by the Partnership.
- 4 The Partnership will receive regular progress and financial reports, advised by the Financial Coordinator.
- 5 The quorum shall be 40% of the membership.
- 6 Decisions shall be by consensus where possible, or if a vote is necessary by simple majority vote.

APPENDIX 3: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

- 1 The Partnership is a non-constituted body.
- 2 Those who serve on the Partnership do so in a voluntary capacity, agreeing to work within its Terms of Reference and help to bring about its objectives.
- 3 The Members of the Partnership are not financially responsible for the funding received from the Welsh Assembly Government under the Rural Development Plan, the Local Authority is. However they are responsible under the Terms of Reference for receiving regular financial reports on the work of the Local Development Strategy and for advising the Local Authority Finance Section if they are concerned about any aspect of these finances.
- 4 The Local Authority as the Lead body will provide key services in order to assist the Partnership to meet its responsibilities and to carry out its role under the Rural Development Plan. These services will be provided through the European Policy, External Funding and Community Networks Team. They include:
 - a) Programme management of the RDP ensuring synergy between Axes 3 and 4 and other relevant regeneration initiatives (in line with Prince 2 and ODPM guidance)
 - b) Project support for the Partnership and overseeing the effective operation of the Secretariat role.
- 5 The Finance Coordinator will be responsible to the Finance and Audit section of the authority, which reports to the Chief Finance Officer and Strategic Director Resources. The corporate finance team will set up the finance codes for the project, sign the acceptance of any grant, ensure that the terms of the grant are adhered to, sign off all claims for grant funding, maintain auditable records of all transactions, and provide monthly financial reports. These latter functions are separate from the line management accountability of the European Policy/External Funding Unit to the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 6 The Partnership will be responsible for monitoring the activities of the Local Action Group.
- 7 Members will be required to leave any meeting while a project in which they have a direct interest is being evaluated. Members will receive advice and training on other matters of conflict of interest which may arise.
- 8 Members will be provided with a copy of Torfaen County Borough Council's procedures on "Whistle Blowing".

- 9** Members may be represented by an agreed alternate.
- 10** Members who do not attend for three consecutive meetings (and are not represented by an alternate) will be assumed to have resigned.

APPENDIX 4: DETAILS OF LEAD BODY AND FINANCE COORDINATOR

Names and contact details of the Lead Body

Senior Responsible Officer

Rob Wellington
External Funding
Floor 5, Civic Centre
Pontypool
NP4 6YB
Tel: 01495 74214
E-mail: rob.Wellington@torfaen.gov.uk

Programme Manager

Nikki Davies
External Funding
Floor 5, Civic Centre
Pontypool
NP4 6YB
Tel: 01495 742147
nicola.davies@torfaen.gov.uk

Names and contact details of the Delivery Organisations

To be addressed during the business planning stage.

Description of the role of the Lead Body including clear demarcation of duties and responsibilities

The role of the Lead Body will be as follows:

- 1 To carry out Programme Management and undertake the administration of the work of the Partnership Board, including keeping records of all decisions and ensuring they are followed through.
- 2 To oversee the delivery of the Local Development Strategy on behalf of the Partnership Board, including preparation of progress reports on individual projects.
- 3 To ensure that projects supported underpin the overall aims and objectives of the Strategy.
- 4 To oversee the work of the Local Action Group and any other organisations contracted to deliver projects.
- 5 To ensure that the RDP grant is used solely for the purposes of the LDS and in accordance with the Funding Agreement, Scheme of Guidance and all approved systems and procedures of the Partnership.
- 6 To ensure compliance with WAG monitoring requirements.
- 7 To maintain comprehensive records of all activities of the RDP.

The External Funding Unit of Torfaen County Borough Council will act as the secretariat for the Partnership. The relevant names and contact details are as above.

The Secretariat will provide administrative support for the Partnership. The Secretariat will be responsible to the Head of External Funding, who in turn reports to the Assistant Chief Executive.

Role of the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is the individual responsible for ensuring that the Torfaen RDP Programme of change meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits. The (SRO) will be the owner of the overall change that is being supported by the programme and guided by the LDS. The SRO will ensure that the change maintains its focus, has clear authority and that the context, including risks, is actively managed. The SRO will take personal responsibility for successful delivery of the Programme. The SRO will be recognised as the owner throughout the duration of the Programme period.

The SRO will take decisions and be proactive in providing leadership and direction throughout the life of the Torfaen RDP programme. The SRO will be responsible for ensuring the Partnership can fully exploit the outcome of the change set out in the LDS such that the benefits are delivered as a result.

Specific responsibilities

The SRO will perform the following key, high-level functions:-

Ensure that the programme is subject to review at appropriate stages.

- Ensuring that the Torfaen RDP programme is subject to review at the key decision points identified by the Partnership and at other points considered necessary.
- Making certain that any recommendations or concerns from reviews are met or addressed before progressing to the next stage.

Own the programme brief and business case

- Oversee development of the brief for change set out in the LDS and the business case.
- Ensure that the aims of the planned change continue to be aligned with the LDS, and establish a firm basis for the programme during its initiation and definition.
- Secure the necessary investment for the business change.

Develop the Torfaen RDP programme organisation structure and logical plans

- Ensuring that there is a coherent organisation structure and logical plan(s)
- Engaging with the work of establishing the Torfaen RDP programme.
- Establish and maintain a collaborative relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government to align the governance of the two organisations.

Monitoring and control of progress

-Monitoring and controlling the progress of the LDS projected change at a strategic level (at an operational level this is the responsibility of project or programme managers) the project or programme manager is responsible for providing regular reports to the SRO on progress of the business change. There will be inevitable issues that arise requiring the SRO's advice, decision-making and communication with senior stakeholders, including the Welsh Assembly Government and the Commission.

Formal project closure

-Formally closing the project or programme and ensuring that the lessons learned are documented within the 'end of project' or 'end of programme' evaluation report: closure requires formal sign-off by the SRO that the aims and objectives have been met and that lessons learned are documented and disseminated.

-Planning the post programme/project review(s) when the entire benefits realisation process will be assessed.

Post implementation review

-Ensuring that the post implementation review takes place, the output is forwarded to the appropriate stakeholders and the benefits have been realised: the SRO is responsible for commissioning and chairing these reviews and ensuring the relevant stakeholders are consulted and involved in the review process.

Problem resolution and referral

-Referring serious problems upwards to top management and/or Ministers as necessary and to suppliers with the targeted areas of Torfaen, in a timely manner

-Regular consultation will be required between those delivering the change and the stakeholders and sponsors.

-Ensuring that the communication processes are effective and linkages are maintained between the change team/s and the organisation's strategic direction.

Role of the Programme Manager

The Torfaen RDP Programme manager

Purpose

The Torfaen RDP programme manager is responsible, on behalf of the Senior Responsible Officer, for successful delivery of the RDP through interaction with the Partnership the LAG and the Torfaen Chief officer Regeneration. The role requires the effective co-ordination of the projects and their inter-dependencies, and any risks and other issues that may arise.

The Torfaen RDP programme manager will work full-time on the programme, as the role is crucial for creating and maintaining enthusiasm and momentum.

The Torfaen RDP programme manager is responsible for the overall integrity and coherence of the Torfaen RDP programme, and develops and maintains the programme environment to support each individual project within it - typically through the Programme Office function.

Specific responsibilities

- Planning and designing the programme and proactively monitoring its overall progress, resolving issues and initiating corrective action as appropriate;
- Defining the Torfaen RDP programme's governance arrangements;
- Quality assurance and overall integrity of the Torfaen RDP programme - focusing inwardly on the internal consistency of the programme; and outwardly on its coherence with infrastructure planning, interfaces with other programmes and corporate technical and specialist standards;
- Managing the Torfaen RDP programme's budget in collaboration with the Financial Coordinator and on behalf of the SRO, monitoring the expenditures and costs against delivered and realised benefits as the Torfaen RDP programme progresses;
- Ensure agreement amongst stakeholders as to what the objectives and benefits are
- Ensure strategic fit of the Torfaen RDP programme objectives and benefits
- Obtain commitment from stakeholders to the delivery of the benefits; monitor delivery of the objectives and benefits taking appropriate action where necessary to ensure their successful delivery.
- Facilitating the appointment of individuals to the Programme/project delivery teams;
- Ensuring that the delivery of new products or services from the projects is to the appropriate levels of quality, on time and within budget, in accordance with the Torfaen RDP programme business plan and programme governance arrangements;
- Ensuring that there is efficient allocation of common resources and skills within the project portfolios;
- Managing third party contributions to the Torfaen RDP programme;
- Managing the communications with all stakeholders;
- Managing both the dependencies and the interfaces between projects;
- Managing risks to the Torfaen RDP programme's successful outcome;

- Initiating extra activities and other management interventions wherever gaps in the Torfaen RDP programme are identified or issues arise;
- Reporting progress of the Torfaen RDP programme at regular intervals to the SRO and the Chief officer Regeneration;
- On large and complex Programmes such as the Torfaen RDP it may be appropriate to appoint other individuals to support the Programme Manager for some of the particular responsibilities listed above, for example a communication manager or a financial manager.

APPENDIX 5: DETAILS OF THE LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Roles and Responsibilities

Name: There is just one local action group, titled CreaTe

Contact details of Members: Contact details for Members of the Torfaen LAG are as follows:

Chair

The Chair of the Local Action Group is Lorraine Hicks, CoStar Partnership

Names and contact details of full members, alternates and advisers

Sector	Name	Representing	Email
Public	Liz Vann Jim Wright Kate Holly	Environmental Health Officer TCBC - SSD Greenmeadow Community Farm	Liz.vann@torfaen.gov.uk Jim.wright @torfaen.gov.uk Kate.holly@torfaen.gov.uk
Private	Agneta Harris Suzi McIntyre Chris Morgan Julie Nelson Martyn Hughes	Ty Shon Jacob Farm Pet Plus (Vice Chair) Cwrt Henllys Farm Raspberry Catering Altama Construction	'tyshonfarm@aol.com' susanna@petplus.info 'chris@cwrtthenllysfarm.com'; Julie@raspberrycatering.co.uk Martyn.Hughes@altamaconstruction.co.uk
Voluntary	Lorraine Hicks Jacky Rue Hywel Pontin	CoStar (Chair) CCAT Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre	Lorraine.hicks@torfaen.gov.uk Jacky.rue@torfaen.gov.uk director@lgac.org.uk
Community	Tracey Marsh	Forgotten Landscapes Partnership	Tracey Marsh

	Deb Lear Lisa Owen Deborah Edwards Lowe Tracey Morris	Artist and Artisans Horsey Fun Pentranch Farm Mountain View Produce	deb.lear@btopenworld.com mailto:Keithowen1@sky.com cabian@hotmail.co.uk pentranch@hotmail pttmorris@btinternet.com
Lead Body	Nikki Davies Deyolden Stroud Katie Johns	TCBC, External Funding TCBC, External Funding TCBC, External Funding	Nicola.davies@torfaen.gov.uk Deyolden.stroud@torfaen.gov.uk Katie.johns@torfaen.gov.uk

Lead Body

Staffing structure

Senior Responsible Officer – Rob Wellington

Programme Manager – Nikki Davies

Contact details as in Appendix 4.

Roles and responsibilities of key staff

The LAG will receive administrative support from the External Funding Team of the local authority, and financial support from the Finance Coordinator. The administration of its funds will be undertaken for the LAG by the local authority.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the LAG are as follows:

- 1 To assist with the development of the Local Development Strategy (LDS), focusing in particular on Axis 4.
- 2 To develop innovative projects that fit with the aims and objectives of the LDS and which follow the LEADER approach.
- 3 To assist in building community consensus behind the LDS.
- 4 To monitor Axis 4 expenditure and the preparation of grant claims, working closely with the Finance Coordinator.
- 5 To promote cross-sectoral working, e.g. with Monmouthshire LAG.

Methodology

The LAG will meet monthly initially.

There will be agendas of local relevance, with topics which are perceived to be up-to-date, and offer members the opportunity for active involvement.

The meetings and sub-groups will be used to co-create initiatives, exchange views and access information on what has worked well in other rural areas.

Minutes will be kept and will be approved at subsequent meetings to maintain an agreed record.

The LAG will receive financial reports to enable it to monitor the progress of expenditure.

Day to day operations

Information on individuals, including costs, salaries, job descriptions, personnel specifications and administrative activities will be supplied with the Business Plan.

APPENDIX 6: LINKS TO SPATIAL PLAN

Actions on Building Sustainable Communities

Investment in health to help people look after their health through healthier lifestyles.

Investment in community facilities and the re-use of redundant or underused facilities for community purposes.

Improve the quality of ... public spaces.

Promoting a sustainable economy

GVA is low in Wales, primarily because of high levels of inactivity.

There is a link between being economically inactive and being low-skilled. Wales has a long tail of people with low skills, which inhibits the widespread adoption of new technologies and practices.

Successful places will, increasingly, be the ones that retain and attract well-qualified people. Their presence will increase jobs in the service sector, which those with lower skills can take up. There is, therefore, a close connection between these two issues.

Objectives

There is a need to:

- ❖ focus attention on improving skills. This will require specific investment in less well-off communities.
- ❖ There is a need to achieve a critical mass of population and business activity and skills, which means making places the kind that people want to live in, and they have jobs.
- ❖ Develop areas to function as broader based economic units with complementary activities in different centres.
- ❖ Increase the pool of skilled people within the areas and build on local strengths of places rather than each competing to be the same.
- ❖ Attract and retain well-educated people, as well as attracting back young people born in Wales.
- ❖ Build on distinctive economic advantages and potential, from tourism to specialist high-tec industries.
- ❖ Promote the efficient use of resources.

- ❖ Work to achieve high speed internet.
- ❖ Enhance the natural and built environment as a means of promoting tourism, and to contribute to the quality of life.

Actions

Provide people with the skills employers need.

Regeneration activities under different programmes and carried out by a range of actors.

Programmes that support companies relocating or investing in Wales.

Support the development of a healthy and active workforce.

Taking forward the Creative Industries Strategy.

Valuing our Environment

By safeguarding and enhancing both the natural and built environment, we will attract people to retain them in our communities and preserve the foundations for the future.

Develop sustainable development projects to promote best practice in delivering economic as well environmental and social benefits.

Local Authorities will need to reflect WAG's commitment to mitigating Wales' contribution to global warming.

They will also need to implement sustainable procurement, production and consumption, as set out in the Sustainable Development Action Plan.

There is a need for a major awareness raising exercise for Council Officers, Members and Partners. This should lead to the Council's committing itself to being an exemplar of green practice and sustainable development.

Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

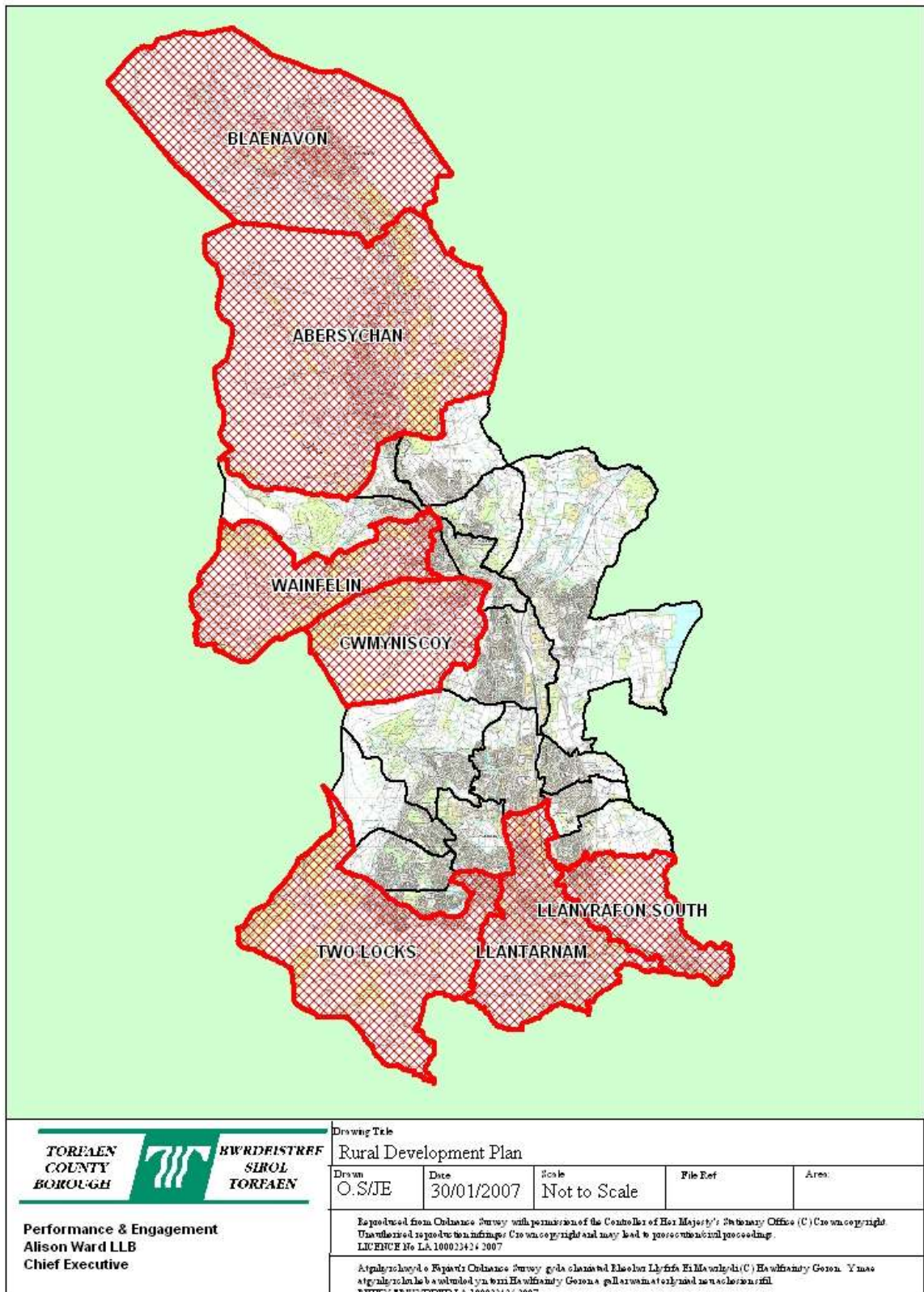
Develop ICT to provide innovative solutions for the delivery of public services, education and business opportunities locally. This needs to be complemented by strategies to ensure social inclusion and capacity building.

Respecting distinctiveness

Encourage better sustainable design initiatives and encourage design to reflect local distinctiveness. (The Welsh Procurement initiative and its support for better design and more sustainable sourcing of products and services).

Support directly small scale initiatives that contribute to environmental, social and economic improvements – and to a sense of community identity – at the local level.

APPENDIX 7: MAP OF THE ELIGIBLE WARDS



APPENDIX 8: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELIGIBLE WARDS

Llanyrafon South

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population is 2,664 in 1067 households.
- ❖ The age distribution is skewed towards the 65+ group and away from the 20-44 age band compared with Wales' averages.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 who have retired is 50% higher than the Torfaen and Wales averages.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 with no qualifications is 33% less than the Torfaen and Wales averages.
- ❖ There is more than double the Torfaen average percentage of people with a qualification at level 4 or 5 (i.e Higher education).

The ward contains Llanyrafon Farm, a former country manor house with features going back to Elizabethan times and a Grade II listed building. Bringing this building back into beneficial use is one of the flagship projects of the LDS.

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

Llantarnam

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population is 4,688 in 2,061 households.
- ❖ The age distribution is skewed towards the 65+ group and away from the 20-44 age band compared with Wales' averages.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 who have retired is 50% higher than the Torfaen and Wales averages.

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

Two Locks

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population is 6,570 in 2,579 households.
- ❖ The age distribution is skewed towards under 5 group and away from the 65+ age band compared with Wales' averages.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 who are economically active full-time is 20% higher than the Wales average.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 with no qualifications is 33% less than the Torfaen and Wales averages.

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

Cwmynyscoy

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population 1,284 in 532 households.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 with no qualifications is 33% more than the Wales average.
- ❖ There percentage of people with a qualification at level 4 or 5 is 50% less than the Welsh average.

The Ward contains the surface remains of the Glyn Pits Colliery, including a rare beam engine still in its original position. The restoration of this site to make it safe for visitors with comprehensive interpretation information is a flagship project of the LDS.

The Ward also contains a landscape feature known as 'The Scouring', which is the remains of the early system for surface mining in which a torrent of water was used to scour the hillside to expose the iron ore. This will be one of the features of the industrial heritage trail which is proposed in the LDS.

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

Wainfelin

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population is 2,422 in 956 households.

- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 who are economically active full-time is 20% higher than the Wales average.
- ❖ There is more than double the Torfaen average percentage of people with a qualification at level 4 or 5 (i.e. Higher education).

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

Abersychan

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population is 6,826 in 2,761 households.
- ❖ The percentage of people aged 16-74 with no qualifications is 21% more than the Wales average.
- ❖ The percentage of people with a qualification at level 4 or 5 is 50% lower than the Wales average.

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

Blaenavon

Particular features include:

- ❖ The population is 5,763 in 2,552 households.

The businesses or individual entrepreneurs based in the rural area of this ward are active in the following commercial sectors:

- ❖ Farming based on sheep and cattle
- ❖ Dairy farming
- ❖ Offering grazing for horses
- ❖ Offering alternative land use e.g. accommodation

END OF DOCUMENT