



Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan (to 2021)

Annual Monitoring Report 2019-21

October 2021



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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Torfaen Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted by Torfaen County Borough Council on 13th December 2013. The LDP sets out the Council's objectives and priorities for the development and use of land within Torfaen and its policies and proposals for implementing them. Together, with the Welsh Government's development plan 'Future Wales: The National Plan 2040' (24th February 2021), it provides the land use framework which guides the future use and development of land in the County Borough up to 31st March 2021 and beyond (i.e. until it is superseded by the adopted Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), hopefully in October 2023).
- 1.2 Following adoption of the LDP the Council has a statutory duty under Section 76 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for submission to the Welsh Government by the 31st October each year, which is based on the preceding financial year. The AMR normally has two key roles, firstly to consider whether the LDP Strategy and Policies are being implemented successfully and secondly to consider all the information gathered from the various monitoring indicators to determine whether a full or partial review of the plan is required. However, as a full review of the plan was required to be undertaken 4 years after implementation in 2017, this was carried out and reported to Council on 17th April 2018.
- 1.3 Therefore, the AMR will continue to monitor the effectiveness of delivery of the adopted Plan, the Plan's sustainability credentials and any contextual issues that will influence its implementation.
- 1.4 An AMR was not produced in October 2020, due to the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; as the Welsh Government Minister for Housing and Local Government in a letter dated 7th July 2020 to all Welsh LPAs stated *"To assist preparation of LDPs I will not require Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) to be submitted this October. I strongly encourage LPAs to continue with data collection, as this will help shape and inform policy and plan development. If LPAs wish to publish an AMR, they can of course do so. I will expect the next formal AMR submission in October 2021."*
- 1.5 Therefore, this is the sixth AMR report, and is based on the two-year period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2021 and is required to be submitted to the Welsh Government by the 31st October 2021. The AMR provides an opportunity to identify the progress in the delivery of the LDP policies and allocations and the impact on key social, economic and environmental objectives.
- 1.6 It is noted that as a decision has already been made to review the adopted LDP, the AMR will also feed into the Torfaen Replacement LDP which is currently being prepared, with an anticipated adoption date hopefully in October 2023.

Monitoring Requirements

- 1.7 The Council has a statutory obligation, under Section 61 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA), to keep all matters under review that are expected to affect the development of its area or the planning of its development. These matters include:
- The principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area of the authority (including the extent to which the Welsh language is used in the area);
 - The principal purposes for which land is used in the area;
 - The size, composition and distribution of the population of the area;
 - The communications, transport system and traffic of the area;
 - Any other considerations which may be expected to affect those matters;
 - Such other matters as may be prescribed or as the Assembly in a particular case may direct.
- 1.8 In addition, under Section 76 of the PCPA, the Council has a duty to produce information on these matters in the form of an Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Welsh Government at the end of October each year following plan adoption.
- 1.9 In producing the AMR, the Council has had regard to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015; Regulation 37 of which requires the AMR to: -
1. where a policy specified in an LDP is not being implemented, the annual monitoring report must identify that policy; and for each such policy the report must include a statement of: -
 - a) the reasons why that policy is not being implemented;
 - b) the steps (if any) that the LPA intend to take to secure that the policy is implemented; and
 - c) whether the LPA intends to prepare a revision of the LDP to replace or amend the policy;
 2. specify the housing land supply taken from the current Housing Land Availability Study; and
 3. specify the number (if any) of net additional affordable and general market dwellings built in the LPA's area both in the period in respect of which the report is made; and in the period since the LDP was first adopted or approved.
- 1.10 However, a recent Welsh Government 'Review of the Delivery of Housing through the Planning System' found that many adopted LDPs were failing to deliver the number of new homes required, with allocated sites not being brought forward for development or being developed at a slower than anticipated rate (as per the Torfaen LDP); and it was concluded that this was due to the policy framework for ensuring housing delivery and the associated monitoring mechanism not being sufficiently aligned with the LDP process.
- 1.11 Therefore, on 26th March 2020, in a letter from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) was amended to remove the five-year housing land supply policy. It was replaced with a policy statement which makes it explicit that the housing trajectory, as set out in the adopted LDP, will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of the development plan housing requirements as part of LDP

Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs). At the same time, Technical Advice Note 1 (TAN1), January 2015 on 'Joint Housing Land Availability Studies' (JHLAS) was revoked in its entirety; and thus, the need to produce an annual Torfaen JHLAS. Similarly, the Welsh Government's 'Development Plans Manual' (DPM) was amended to provide details of how to monitor housing delivery under this new system; including the response to under-delivery.

- 1.12 Therefore, the latest 3rd edition of the Welsh Government's Development Plans Manual (DPMv3), March 2020 (Table 29, page 185) requires that all monitoring frameworks include a range of indicators as follows: -

Indicators Required by Legislation	
Number of net additional affordable and market dwellings built in the LPA area.	LDP Regulation 37. All AMRs must include the annual affordable and market housing completions in the plan area.
Key Indicators Applicable to all Plans	
Spatial distribution of housing development	To monitor housing completions each year in line with the growth strategy and the settlement hierarchy
The <u>annual</u> level of housing completions monitored against the Average Annual Requirement (AAR)	Annual housing completions ... For those plans published prior to the publication of the DPMv3, completions will be measured against the Average Annual Requirement (AAR) set out in the plan. This must be presented clearly in the AMR both in numerical and percentage terms (plus/minus x%). The components of housing supply, including site allocations, large and small windfalls should also be monitored separately.
Total cumulative completions monitored against the cumulative average annual housing requirement.	... For those plans published prior to the publication of the DPMv3, completions will be measured against the cumulative average annual housing requirement set out in the plan. This must be presented clearly in the AMR both in numerical and percentage terms (plus/minus x%).
The level of affordable housing completions monitored against the plan's overarching target. The tenure of affordable housing completions.	To monitor affordable housing completions delivered through the planning system each year against the target set in the plan. A separate indicator should monitor the tenure split (social rented and intermediate) in line with need identified in the LHMA.
Employment land take-up against allocations. Job growth.	To monitor the take-up of employment land in the plan. Indicators monitoring Class B job growth in line with the strategy.
Delivery of affordable housing policy - thresholds and percentage targets for each sub-market area.	To monitor the delivery of affordable housing in line with policy targets and thresholds in each sub-market area (where relevant) including any deviation above or below the target.
Viability	LPA should monitor trends (positive and negative) in key determinants of market conditions and viability such as, house prices, land values, build costs.
The rate of development on key allocations (completions linked to phasing trajectories and	To monitor the development of land uses and associated infrastructure on key development sites in the plan. The rate of development will need to be

infrastructure schemes, where appropriate).	considered against the anticipated trajectory, Placemaking principles and delivery appendix.
The delivery of key infrastructure that underpins the plan strategy.	This will monitor the development of new infrastructure, such as road and rail improvements and utility enhancements on which the plan strategy is dependent.
The completion of Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet identified need.	This will monitor the development of allocated gypsy and traveller sites to meet identified need over the full plan period. A separate indicator will also be required to monitor and make provision for any newly arising need outside of the GTAA
The scale / type of highly vulnerable development permitted within C2 flood risk areas.	To demonstrate the effectiveness of avoiding highly vulnerable development in the areas at most risk.

1.13 DPMv3 (Table 31, page 190) also sets out the following five key questions to be considered in the AMR in relation to the delivery of the LDP strategy (with Q4 being added in 2020): -

1. What new issues have occurred in the plan area, or changes to local/national policy?
2. How relevant, appropriate and up to date is the LDP strategy and its key policies and targets?
3. What sites have been developed or delayed in relation to the plan's expectations at both places and in the phasing programme (as set out in the trajectory)
4. What is the degree of variance from the anticipated annual and cumulative build rate? Is there a two-year trend of under delivery (annual completions not number of AMRs submitted)?
5. What has been the effectiveness of delivering policies and preventing inappropriate development?

Format and Content

1.14 The purpose of the AMR is to monitor the effectiveness of the Strategy and Policy Framework in the LDP and to consider whether amendments to these are required. The principal function of the whole monitoring process is to identify if and when a revision to the LDP should take place; a decision on which has already been made in this case.

1.15 The monitoring process for the LDP involves the collation and interpretation of significant datasets. The Council considers that the inclusion of this more detailed information within the AMR would lead to the report being overly long and complex, therefore the report focuses on just the inclusion of the key results.

2. Monitoring Framework - Overview

- 2.1 The AMR will report progress on the LDP Strategy, policies and proposals.

The Monitoring Framework

- 2.2 The Monitoring Framework sets out the mechanism by which the implementation of the LDP Policies and the LDP Strategy will be assessed. However, the DPMv3 advises against assessing every LDP Policy as this would be onerous and cumbersome and would result in a long-winded assessment process.
- 2.3 In monitoring the effectiveness of the LDP it makes sense to monitor what the LDP is seeking to achieve i.e. the LDP Objectives. It is from the Objectives that the LDP Strategy and Policies have been derived. The LDP identifies the Policies, which support each of the 18 LDP Objectives; this information is also contained in the Monitoring Proforma for each LDP Objective as part of this Monitoring Framework.
- 2.4 The seven Strategic Action Areas (SAA's) (excluding the British SAA5, which is a land reclamation scheme during the plan period) identified in the LDP as land use allocations make up the majority of the provision of residential units, employment land and community facilities to be allocated in the LDP and therefore, the successful implementation of the seven SAA's will provide the greatest impact in the LDP Strategy. They will provide a reasonable gauge on how the other LDP Policies are performing and whether there are any policies not being implemented e.g. provision of residential dwellings and employment land.
- 2.5 The Monitoring Framework sets out the indicators against which the LDP will be monitored. As outlined above it is intended to monitor the LDP Objectives and the seven SAA Policies.

Site Monitoring

- 2.6 As part of the AMR an update on the delivery status of all allocated housing/employment sites and other allocations will be submitted. This will highlight what activity has taken place in any given year including preparation of studies / pre-application discussions / planning permissions, etc. If sites are not being progressed as anticipated, this will be interpreted as a trigger and appropriate action will be taken by the Council as needed.

3. Contextual Changes

- 3.1 This chapter sets out significant contextual changes that have occurred since the previous 2019 AMR, as Torfaen does not exist in isolation, and it is important to understand how the implementation of the LDP has and will be influenced by local, regional, national and international factors, many of which are out of the Council's control. Any potential implications for the LDP as a whole are outlined where appropriate. However, as the Council has already decided to review its plan, any actions as a result of relevant contextual changes will also be considered in the current development of the Replacement LDP.
- 3.2 The following section looks at the factors that may have influence on development in Torfaen CBC and may need considering in the Replacement LDP: -
- National Context (Overview, Legislation, Policy & Evidence);
 - Regional Context (Policy & Evidence); and
 - Local Context (Policy & Evidence).

National Context Overview

- 3.3 **Brexit** - In June 2016 the UK electorate voted in favour of leaving the European Union (EU), known as 'Brexit'. Therefore, the UK formally left the EU on the 31st January 2020 and entered a 11-month transition or implementation period which ended on the 31st December 2020. Since the 1st January 2021, the UK has no longer been part of the EU single market or the EU customs union. On 27th April 2021 the European Parliament formally approved the post-Brexit EU-UK trade deal (known as the 'Trade and Co-operation Agreement' (TCA) which ensures that tariff and quota-free trade continues) which finally came into force on 1st May 2021 (having already been operating provisionally since 1st January 2021).
- 3.4 The TCA covers EU-UK trade in goods, but not services (the UK economy is dominated by services sectors such as banking, insurance, advertising and legal advice), but has still resulted in more paperwork, extra costs and less trade between the two sides, since the UK left the EU. It will take some time before the long-term effect on trade becomes clear, but UK exports to the EU were still down by 17.2% in February 2021 compared to an average of February 2018 to 2020. A significant part is down to Brexit, although the Covid pandemic is also a major factor, and judging the long-term effects is uncertain.
- 3.5 Brexit also means free movement of citizens between the UK and EU no longer applies; and whilst the rights of the roughly one million UK citizens living in the EU, and three million EU citizens in the UK (the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme applications was 30th June 2021) are protected under the TCA; the new restrictions have deepened labour shortages. Similarly, Government subsidies are now under intense scrutiny on both sides, as the EU insists on a "level playing field" in trade, and courts will have to decide in cases where subsidies are allegedly unfair.
- 3.6 **Covid-19 Pandemic** - the world has been greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, associated deaths and long-term recovery period for some. The impact of the pandemic on the economy, the costs of materials and goods, housebuilding levels, town centres, and people's physical & mental well-being will not be truly known for some time; as businesses try and adapt to a post lock-down environment, which will

be quite different from life before, with social distancing in some form, still likely to be needed. Similarly, there have been impacts on the way people work, travel, shop, socialise and use of open green spaces, the urban environment and public realm.

- 3.7 As part of planning for the recovery, there is now a focus on 'green' economic growth (development that provides for growth in employment and income, but is resource efficient and socially inclusive, with reduced carbon emissions & pollution; and prevents the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience), infrastructure, addressing housing need - including homelessness, active travel, homeworking, and improving public spaces and the public realm. The Welsh Government have published 'Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures - Placemaking and the Covid-19 Recovery', July 2020, which sets out the planning policy priorities of the Welsh Government in the post Covid-19 recovery phases and identifies eight 'Key Policy Issues' (see paragraph 3.20 below).
- These matters have been considered in the RLDP (see Covid-19 Assessment below) as well as the wider role that planning can have in assisting in the recovery.

- 3.8 **Covid-19 Assessment** - Following a request from the Welsh Minister, the Council produced a Covid-19 Assessment that considers the consequences of the pandemic on both the Plan's supporting evidence base and the RLDP Preferred Strategy in September 2020. In summary, the Assessment concluded that it is too early to assess the full impacts of the pandemic, but the evidence base, vision, objectives and 17 strategic policies of the RLDP Preferred Strategy, including the proposed levels of new housing and employment growth, remain sound, appropriate and flexible enough to facilitate the recovery and mitigate Covid's other impacts. However, five Preferred Strategy key issues needed to be updated, i.e. those relating to 'Commuting to Work', 'Town Centres', 'Traffic Issues', 'Public Transport' and 'Deprivation'; and one new key issue on the 'Economic Impacts of Covid-19 and Enabling the Recovery' was added.

National Legislation and Policy

- 3.9 **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and The Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021** - see paragraphs 3.49 and 3.50 below as they have been reported under the Strategic Development Plan Section.
- 3.10 **The Town and Country Planning (Major Residential Development) (Notification) (Wales) Direction 2020 and Guidance, January 2020** - WG amended the provisions regarding "Significant Residential Development" set out in The Town and Country Planning (Notification) (Wales) Direction 2012 (the 2012 Direction) and paragraphs 16 to 18 of Welsh Government Circular 07/12 because they had evidence that speculative and unsustainable residential developments have been proposed outside the provisions of adopted LDPs. The 2020 Direction applies to applications made on or after 15th January 2020. The Direction requires the Welsh Ministers to be notified of applications made on or after that date for any proposed residential development of 10 or more residential units, or residential development on 0.5 hectares or more of land, which is not in accordance with one or more provisions of the Development Plan in force and which the Local Planning Authority does not propose to refuse.
- The content of this direction is noted.

- 3.11 **The Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2021 (March 2021)** - In December 2020, the Climate Change Committee published its progress report 'Reducing Carbon Emissions in Wales'. This is the first report on Wales' progress towards meeting its emission reduction targets, as required under Article 45 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The progress report and advice recognise the actions taken in Wales to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; including achieving some of the highest national recycling rates in the world, taking a proactive role in supporting the large-scale deployment of renewable energy generation, and integrating a response to the climate and nature emergencies throughout its priorities for the reconstruction of the economy following the Covid-19 pandemic. In February 2021, the Welsh Government announced its commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 through the publication of The Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2021 which came into force on the 19th March 2021. The Regulations establish the legal commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The new Regulations form part of the wider statutory framework for the reduction of emissions in Wales, set out in Part 2 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, amending the previous set targets for 2030 and 2040 targets from 45% and 67% to 63% and 89% respectively.
- The new carbon reduction targets in these Regulations, are noted and will be considered in the Deposit RLDP.

National Policy Documents

- 3.12 Since 1st April 2019, the following relevant policy 'documents', etc. were issued by the Welsh Government: -
- 3.13 **Future Wales: the national plan 2040, 24th February 2021** - is a 20-year plan with an end date of 31st December 2040; and replace the current 20 year 'Wales Spatial Plan - People, Places Futures' 2004 / Updated 2008. Future Wales is the development plan for the whole of Wales; and planning decisions must be made in accordance with Future Wales unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Future Wales sets out Welsh Government land use priorities and provide a national land use framework for regional SDPs and LDPs. It concentrates on development and land use issues of national significance, indicating areas of major opportunities and change, and also highlighting areas that need protecting and enhancing.
- 3.14 Future Wales has 18 general policies covering issues such as transport, connectivity, heat networks, biodiversity, the need for a significant amount of new tree cover, and a detailed policy on strategic placemaking; 1 policy that specifies the content of an SDP; and 4 policies in relation to the detailed content of the SE Wales SDP, see Table 3.1 below for their titles. It sets out where housing, employment and infrastructure should be developed to support town centres; achieve decarbonisation and climate resilience; and improve the health and wellbeing of Wales' population in the period up to 2040. Future Wales focuses on growing existing urban areas and ensuring that homes, jobs, and services are located in the same area. It identifies four nationally significant areas for growth; including Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys. The focus of housing policy remains on delivering new affordable homes. There is a requirement to prepare a green belt in south-east Wales, which should cover an area to the north of Cardiff and Newport and the eastern part of the region. Future Wales identifies 10 'pre-assessed areas' where significant onshore wind farms can be located. The 'town centre first' principle will be at the heart of urban policymaking. It highlights that Ministers will be investing significantly to improve active travel and public transport; combined with the implementation of policies in PPW11 which require development

to be directed towards sustainable locations and designed to make it possible for everyone to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys.

3.15 Future Wales is subject to a 5-year review period but can be revised at any time. Local planning authorities have a duty (section 62(3A) of the PCPA 2004 states that an LDP must be in general conformity with the NDF {now known as Future Wales} and the SDP) to review their LDP as soon as possible following its publication to ensure it is in ‘general conformity’ with it, particularly where new policy or issues have arisen. If an LDP is not in general conformity it will need to be revised. The RLDP Inspector will consider if the Deposit RLDP is in conformity with the adopted Future Wales during the Examination.

3.16 The DPMv3 paragraphs 2.17-2.19 state, *“In Wales, the development plan system consists of a suite of three documents with each plan having to be in ‘General Conformity’ with the upper tier plan. General conformity is achieved when the lower tier plan supports and upholds the general principles of the most up-to-date higher tier adopted plan(s). Only where there is an inconsistency or omission in the lower tier plan that would cause significant harm to the implementation / delivery of the strategy of the upper tier plan(s) would a plan then be considered not to be in general conformity. For example: -*

- *Substantial change in policy context;*
- *Substantial change in strategy / focus / direction;*
- *Substantial change in spatial distribution / role of function; or*
- *Substantial change in levels of growth (e.g. housing / economy).*

The fact that a development plan may be inconsistent with one or more policies in the upper tier plan, either directly or through the omission of a policy/proposal, does not, by itself, mean that the plan is not in general conformity. Rather, the fundamental point is how significant the inconsistency is from the point of view of delivery of the upper tier plan. Whilst it would be acceptable for the lower tier plan to provide further detail in relation to making it more locally distinctive, it fundamentally must not undermine the overarching strategy, policies or proposals in the upper tier plan(s).”

- The Welsh Government Future Wales development plan will be considered in the RLDP to ensure general conformity; and a statement of general conformity with the Torfaen LDP has been produced below in Table 3.1. **However, in conclusion, the Torfaen LDP is in ‘general conformity’ with the Strategy / Policies of Future Wales.** A ‘RAG’ status has been given for each Future Wales Policy, with no LDP policies having a ‘red’ status, which would indicate ‘significant harm’ to the implementation / delivery of Future Wales: -

Table 3.1: Torfaen LDP: Statement of ‘General Conformity’ with Future Wales	
Relevant NDF Policy	Comments on Torfaen LDP
Policy 1 - Where Wales will grow	Torfaen lies within <i>“The National Growth Area”</i> of <i>“Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys”</i> ; where the Torfaen LDP proposes <i>“growth in employment and housing opportunities and investment in infrastructure”</i> in line with Future Wales.
Policy 2 - Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration - Strategic Placemaking	Whilst the Torfaen LDP has several policies that encourage placemaking (including Policy S4 on Placemaking / Good Design), they are not as cohesive and extensive in defining ‘placemaking’ as this Future Wales Policy.

Policy 3 - Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration - Public Sector Leadership	This Future Wales policy is considered administrative rather than a land use policy; and thus, is not prejudiced by the Torfaen LDP.
Policy 4 - Supporting Rural Communities	The Torfaen LDP identifies the rural settlements (with a population of less than 10,000 people) of Blaenavon, Varteg and Ponthir and defines them with an urban boundary, within the network of integrated communities' LDP strategy.
Policy 5 - Supporting the Rural Economy	The Torfaen LDP identifies the rural settlements (with a population of less than 10,000 people) of Blaenavon, of Varteg and Ponthir and defines them with an urban boundary, within the network of integrated communities' LDP strategy.
Policy 6 - Town Centre First	Whilst the Torfaen LDP retail policies seek to direct new retail development to the three Town Centres, or neighbourhood centres if small local shops; this does not extend to commercial, education, health, leisure and public service facilities as envisaged by this Future Wales policy; but such uses are not precluded in town centres, subject to LDP retail frontage protection policies and the sequential test requirements already in PPW11.
Policy 7 - Delivering Affordable Homes	LDP Policy H4, sets an affordable housing target of 1,132 dwellings (24.1% of all completions) over the 2006 to 2021 plan period; and LDP Policy H9 provides for small affordable housing exceptions sites within or adjoining urban boundaries.
Policy 8 - Flooding	Flooding is addressed by LDP Policies S3 - climate change; S8 - planning obligations; and BW1 - general DM policy.
Policy 9 - Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure	Whilst the Torfaen LDP has policies (S2 - sustainable development, S3 - climate change, S4 - placemaking, S7 - conservation of the natural and historic environment, S8 - planning obligations, BW1 - general DM policy, and BG1 - locally designated sites for biodiversity) that protect species and habitats, strategic networks, locally designated SINCs, important urban open spaces, and recreation facilities, and policies that address climate change, connectivity; it does not have a full set of policies as envisaged by Future Wales; that ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure; or identify what ecosystems services or net benefits are.
Policy 10 - International Connectivity	This policy refers to named " <i>Strategic Gateways to facilitate international connectivity</i> " none of which are found in Torfaen - so FW Policy 10 is not relevant.
Policy 11 - National Connectivity	With the exception of not addressing EV charging or supporting the uptake of ULEVs (which is not precluded) the Torfaen LDP (Policy S2 - sustainable development) makes provision to improve the national active travel, bus and rail networks; as well as locating several strategic sites near these facilities.
Policy 12 - Regional Connectivity	With the exception of not addressing EV charging or supporting the uptake of ULEVs (which is not precluded) the Torfaen LDP (Policy S2 - sustainable development) makes provision to improve the regional active travel, bus and rail

	networks and reduce car parking in sustainable locations; as well as locating several strategic sites near these facilities.
Policy 13 - Supporting Digital Communications	The Torfaen LDP does not address the provision of digital communications infrastructure or identify the future needs of their area or require new developments to include the provision of Gigabit capable broadband infrastructure from the outset. However, it does not preclude its provision.
Policy 14 - Planning in Mobile Action Zones	The Torfaen LDP does not prevent proposals to increase mobile phone coverage, noting that the WG has not yet identified 'Mobile Action Zones' showing locations where there is little or no mobile telecommunications coverage. Indeed, the Council already works with mobile telecommunications operators to achieve increases in mobile coverage.
Policy 15 - National Forest	The Torfaen LDP does not identify opportunities or safeguard areas for the 'National Forest' as per Future Wales, which was identified after its adoption; but does not preclude the identification of such areas.
Policy 16 - Heat Networks	The Torfaen LDP does not identify opportunities for 'heat networks' in Cwmbran and Pontypool as per Future Wales, which were identified after its adoption; but does not preclude them from being permitted.
Policy 17 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure	Whilst encouraging renewable energy schemes on strategic sites, the Torfaen LDP does not give the matter " <i>significant weight</i> " as per this Future Wales Policy. However, the LDP does not preclude such schemes or contain any proposals that would prejudice the Pre-Assessed Areas for Wind Energy.
Policy 18 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance	The Torfaen LDP does not prejudice this Future Wales policy for determining renewable energy applications which are Developments of National Significance.
The Regions	
Policy 19 - Strategic Policies for Regional Planning	The Torfaen LDP does not prejudice this Future Wales administrative policy, which is effectively a list of the content of the SDP.
South East Region	
Policy 33 - National Growth Area - Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys	Torfaen lies within " <i>The National Growth Area</i> " of " <i>Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys</i> "; where the Torfaen LDP proposes " <i>strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; and transport infrastructure</i> " and " <i>co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys area to improve well-being, increase prosperity and address social inequalities.</i> " LDP site allocations " <i>to support investment, including in the manufacturing sector, and to ensure a regional approach is taken to addressing socio-economic issues in the Valleys</i> "; are all in line with Future Wales.
Policy 34 - Green Belts in the South East	The Torfaen LDP has identified a 'Green Wedge' (Policy C1) to prevent the coalescence of Newport and Cwmbran; which almost serves the same function as a Green Belt in line with the intention of Future Wales.

Policy 35 - Valleys Regional Park	The Torfaen LDP does not mention the Valleys Regional Park, which was identified after its adoption. Notwithstanding this, there are no proposals in the plan that would prejudice the concept; indeed, proposals like the reclamation of The British, under Policy SAA5, or Policy S7 on 'Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment' or HE2 on the 'Blaenavon ILWHS'; can be seen as complimentary.
Policy 36 - South East Metro	Again, the Torfaen LDP does not mention the SE Metro, which was identified after its adoption. Notwithstanding this, there are no proposals in the plan that would prejudice the concept; indeed, Policy T1/2 allocates the Pontypool & New Inn Park & Ride facility, which has recently been approved and the £7.1m scheme is now being delivered as the first SE Metro scheme in the region. Similarly, the Mamhilad SAA4 mixed use site is near the new facility; and the Eastern Strip Central SAA1 mixed use site is located opposite Cwmbran train station, both intended to have links to the stations as envisaged by this Future Wales policy.

- 3.17 **Welsh Government - Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP), November 2019** - Sets out Welsh Government policy for the next 20 years for the sustainable use of the Welsh seas, for which Welsh Ministers are the marine planning authority (i.e. for the inshore region (from the mean high water spring tides out to 12 nautical miles from the shore) and the offshore region (12 to 200 nautical miles); including 32,000 km² of sea and 2,120 km of coastline). The 'Tests of Soundness' in the WG Development Plans Manual Ed.3 (March 2020) require the RLDP to be '*consistent with other plans*' by having '*regard to the Welsh National Marine Plan*', especially where it may have the potential to affect the Marine Plan area.
- 3.18 The WNMP includes policies in relation to a wide range of general considerations (set out as a series of 'General Policies') including: - nature conservation, water quality, sustainable use, seascapes, coastal communities and economic growth, cumulative impacts, heritage, etc. The WNMP also contains sector objectives and 'Sector Policies' for 11 different sectors that operate in the marine area. These sectors are: Aggregates, Aquaculture, Defence, Dredging & Disposal, Fisheries, Renewable Energy, Oil & Gas, Ports & Shipping, Subsea cabling, Surface water and Wastewater treatment & disposal and Tourism & Recreation. Sector Policies include 'supporting' and/or 'safeguarding' policies to help ensure each sector can develop in a sustainable way. The Marine Plan makes provision for publication of Marine Planning Notices and identification of Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs); which will safeguard areas with natural resources of particular importance to a sector (e.g. tidal energy, wave energy, sand for construction etc.) and will be within wider resource areas of relevance to that sector.
- The RLDP will fully consider the Welsh National Marine Plan.
- 3.19 **Planning Policy Wales (PPW1) 11th Edition** (February 2021) - Planning Policy Wales (edition 11) was published alongside Future Wales: The National Plan 2040; and replaced PPW10 (December 2018). It reflects the change in the Development Planning hierarchy introduced by the publication of Future Wales. PPW11 provides further emphasis on how the planning system can contribute towards tackling the climate emergency; provides greater clarification on placemaking with reference to the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Charter; promotes the incorporation

of drinking water fountains or refill stations as part of development in public areas; a requirement to put active travel and public transport infrastructure in place early in the development process; the design of new streets supports the wider Welsh Government work on making 20 mph the new default speed limit and preventing pavement parking; increasing the supply of affordable housing through identifying affordable housing led schemes within LDPs which should be DQR compliant; and to take into account potential changes to land use planning as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic and 'Building Better Places'. PPW11 refers to the application of the Socio-economic Duty 'to reduce inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage in the planning system' which came into effect on 31st March 2021. PPW11 removed the five-year housing land supply policy and replaced it with a policy statement making it explicit that the housing trajectory set out in an adopted Local Development Plan will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of development plan housing requirements as part of LDP Annual Monitoring Reports. PPW11 has also removed reference to Strategic Search Areas, reflected the **revocation of TAN8 on 'Renewable Energy'**; referred to Local Energy Planning and the introduction of the Welsh Government's local ownership policy for all renewable energy projects in Wales. In line with national guidance future LDPs must have regard to PPW11 and Future Wales, alongside any implications these may have on AMRs.

- PPW11 has been taken into account in the preparation of the Replacement LDP.

3.20 **Welsh Government - 'Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures - Placemaking and the Covid-19 Recovery', July 2020**, which is to be read in conjunction with Welsh Government Planning Policy Wales. In summary, 'Building Better Places' sets out the planning policy priorities of the Welsh Government in the post Covid-19 recovery phases. The document outlines the need for good, high quality developments, which are guided by placemaking principles; and directs growth to sustainable locations, preventing the creation of car dependent developments. It acknowledges that delivery of good places at this time requires Planners to be creative and dynamic. 'Building Better Places' also identifies the following eight Key Policy Issues: -

1. Staying local: creating neighbourhoods;
2. Active travel: exercise and rediscovered transport methods;
3. Revitalising our town centres;
4. Digital places - the lockdown lifeline;
5. Changing working practices: our future need for employment land;
6. Reawakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors;
7. Green infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience; and
8. Improving air quality and soundscapes for better health and well-being.

- The RLDP will fully consider Building Better Places.

3.21 **Development Plans Manual (DPM) 3, March 2020** - The updated Development Plans Manual (formerly the LDP Manual), was issued alongside changes to PPW and the revocation of TAN 1: Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (January 2015). It contains guidance on the preparation, monitoring and revision of development plans, underpinned by robust evidence, to ensure that plans are effective and deliverable, and contribute to placemaking. The Manual sets out the new requirements for the monitoring of housing delivery both for existing and replacement LDPs; outlining the changed approach to be taken, including a revised list of 'Indicators Required by

Legislation' and 'Key Indicators Applicable to all Plans'. The main changes arise from the removal of the five-year housing land supply policy under TAN1, and its replacement with a policy statement making it explicit that the 'housing trajectory', as set out in adopted LDPs, will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of development plan housing requirements.

- The monitoring requirements of DPMv3 have been considered in this AMR; and will be incorporated into the 'monitoring framework' of the RLDP.

3.22 Clarification of Planning Policy in Wales - Since the monitoring period of the 2019 AMR (up to 31st March 2019), there have been some points of clarification on Planning Policy in Wales issued by Welsh Government in what are known as '**Policy Clarification Letters**' that will impact on the Replacement LDP. These include:

April 2019 - Suicide prevention measures in building design and planning. The planning system is advised to play its part in helping to create better places which reduce opportunities for people to wilfully harm themselves or others. This matter will be considered in the Deposit RLDP.

July 2019 - Increasing supply of affordable homes through planning. Following the findings of the Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply, it has been clarified that when reviewing LDPs, local planning authorities must make provision for affordable housing led housing sites. Such sites will include at least 50% affordable housing. In the first instance affordable housing led housing sites should make use of public land. Where public land is not available, privately owned land may be identified. This matter will be considered in the Deposit RLDP.

October 2019 - Securing Biodiversity Enhancements. Guidance was issued to clarify that in light of the legislation and PPW, where biodiversity enhancement is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission. Planning authorities are reminded that they should be proactive and embed appropriate policies into local development plans to protect against biodiversity loss and secure enhancement; which will be considered in the Deposit RLDP.

January 2020 - Publication of the Town and Country Planning (Major Residential Development) (Notification) (Wales) Direction 2020 and guidance - detailed in paragraph 3.10 above.

March 2020 - Changes to planning policy and guidance on the delivery of housing - Following a WG 'Review of the Delivery of Housing through the Planning System', the Minister announced the revocation of TAN1 on 'Joint Housing Land Availability Studies' (January 2015) and changes to the 'Housing Delivery' section of PPW and the DPM. These changes removed the five-year housing land supply policy and replaced it with a policy statement making it explicit that the housing trajectory, as set out in the adopted LDP, will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of development plan housing requirements as part of the LDP Annual Monitoring Report; with the new DPMv3 providing additional guidance on the process of monitoring against the housing trajectory. Under these revisions, the Average Annual Requirement (AAR) methodology will be used for monitoring housing delivery in the adopted Torfaen LDP (see paragraphs 3.67 to 3.68 below); and the Anticipated Annual Build Rate (AABR) method will be used for the RLDP.

March 2020 - Coronavirus: guidance to planning authorities - In response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the planning system the Chief Planner for Wales (CPW) wrote a letter (27/03/20) advising on how the Council could make rapid

changes to its working practices. Advice was given on planning applications, planning committee, appeals, enforcement, etc. As for LDPs, the CPW referred to his letter of 18th March 2020, in which WG are sympathetic about the workload placed on LDP staff through this crisis and acknowledge this will lead to delays in the preparation of the new LDP. He also accepted that any consultation with the public would need to be suspended at this time and a new Delivery Agreement (DA) timetable would need to be submitted to WG when there is more certainty, however, LPAs should continue to prepare technical documents etc. for the RLDP. The Torfaen RLDP: Preferred Strategy had just been approved for consultation at Council in March 2020; and the letter recognised that it was unlikely that Torfaen could fulfil the consultation obligations [mainly documents being available for public inspection at its principal office] in both the DA and Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) contained therein under the current circumstances. Indeed, following the cessation of the first 'lockdown', a new RLDP DA was not agreed by Council until October 2020; and thus, consultation on the RLDP: Preferred Strategy did not commence until November 2020.

April 2020 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): updated guidance to planning authorities

- This further CPW letter recognised that, as the Council adapted to new working practices, the main priority remained to protect the NHS and save lives; whilst also ensuring a functioning planning service can be maintained to respond urgently to development proposals and economic recovery. The updated advice clarified what the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 meant for planning services, particularly in relation to site visits and publicity; and drew attention to the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 22nd April and enabled local planning authorities to reconvene planning committees online.

July 2020 - Planning and the post COVID-19 recovery - The Minister wrote to LPAs regarding ways of moving to recovery from the pandemic, noting that some of the changes have been beneficial; such as improvement of our natural environment, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality, greater reliance on active travel to access local services and the ability of people to recalibrate their work / life balance. Tackling homelessness, increasing social housing and providing fair work were prioritised; with the recognition that the planning system is central to shaping a better future for Wales. Whilst work on the preparation of the National Development Framework (NDF) was paused; it is a priority and will be completed and published in early 2021. The Minister also detailed the Local Government and Elections Bill, with the view to it becoming law in early 2021; which provides for the creation of Corporate Joint Committees and requires the preparation of SDPs. Similarly, LPAs must reflect on the impact of the pandemic on their areas and consider the consequences for LDPs under review or being implemented (see resultant Covid-19 Assessment at paragraph 3.8 above). Also, the Minister noted that with many public buildings temporarily closed, stakeholder's inability to attend consultation events and issues arising from social distancing, and existing CISs cannot be complied with. For these reasons, the CIS will need to be adjusted in light of the latest Government advice and social distancing principles to enable plan preparation to progress and alternative means of engagement (with several examples being provided) will need to be put in place and communicated to all concerned when submitting a revised DA and CIS. Finally, to assist preparation of LDPs, the Minister did not require Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) to be submitted in October 2020; but strongly encouraged LPAs to continue with data collection and expects the next formal AMR submission in October 2021.

September 2020 - Local Development Plan (LDP) end dates. The Minister noted that The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 was amended through the Planning (Wales) Act (PWA) 2015; which amongst other matters, introduced provisions specifying the period to which a plan has effect and providing that it shall cease to be the LDP at the end of the specified period. With many LDPs nearing the end of their plan period, particularly from 2021 onwards (including the Torfaen LDP), the perception has been that LDPs will no longer be extant once they have reached the end of their plan period. In order to clarify the position, the Minister stated *“The provisions in the PWA 2015 regarding the period to which a plan has effect were commenced on 4 January 2016. These provisions do not have retrospective effect. This means that the provisions do not apply to LDPs adopted prior to this date. Plans adopted prior to 4 January 2016 will remain the LDP for determining planning applications until replaced by a further LDP.”*

- **Therefore, the Torfaen LDP, which was adopted on 3rd December 2013 (before the above 4th January 2016 date when the expiry legislation came into force) thus, remains an extant ‘development plan’ until it is replaced by the Torfaen RLDP.**

September 2020 - Fire Safety Planning Guidance. The Minister wrote to LPAs regarding fire safety and the role of the planning system in ensuring the needs of the Fire and Rescue Authorities are considered early in the planning and design process; and encouraged LPAs to engage with them about the fire safety issues, and involve them in the preparation and review of your Local Development Plan. Consideration must, be given to the provision of water supply for firefighting and sprinklers early in the planning process to ensure adequate arrangements for water provision are available and to address all known operational scenarios, such as the installation of water storage tanks. These matters will be considered in the Deposit RLDP.

3.23 **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Manual, March 2021** - was published as part of WG’s commitment to strengthening the use of compulsory purchase powers by local authorities and dispelling myths on compulsory purchase. The CPO Manual resource provides: -

- technical guidance and best practice on project management including an “end to end” overview of the CPO process; how to make a CPO including step-by-step advice; engaging and negotiating with affected parties; and making compensation payments;
- case studies on the successful use of compulsory purchase powers; and
- a suite of standard templates and examples of CPO documents.

The CPO Manual supplements the national planning policy on use of compulsory purchase powers and the high-level guidance contained in Circular 003/2019: Compulsory Purchase in Wales and 'The Crichel Down Rules (Wales Version 2020)'.

3.24 Finally, the Welsh Government’s response to the consultation on streamlining and modernising legislation underpinning the CPO process in Wales was published on 19th March 2021; and options for establishing a technical examination service of draft CPOs in Wales are currently being finalised.

- The content of these letters has been noted for potential use to help deliver the LDP/RLDP.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

- 3.25 **TAN1: Joint Housing Land Availability Studies, January 2015** - The Welsh Government undertook a 'Review of the Delivery of Housing through the Planning System', which indicated that many adopted LDPs were failing to deliver the number of new homes required, with allocated sites not being brought forward for development or being developed at a slower than anticipated rate; the latter being the case for the Torfaen LDP. It was concluded that this was due to the policy framework for ensuring housing delivery and the associated monitoring mechanism not being sufficiently aligned with the LDP process.
- 3.26 Therefore, TAN1 was revoked by a Ministerial letter, dated 26th March 2020, which also amended Planning Policy Wales 10th Edition and published the Development Plans Manual v3 (DPMv3). Therefore, there is no longer a requirement for the Council, with the housing industry, to produce an Annual JHLAS and report the findings and response to any under-delivery against a 5-year land supply requirement in the LDP AMR. PPW10 was amended to remove the five-year housing land supply policy; which was replaced with a policy statement, making it explicit that the housing trajectory, as set out in the adopted LDP, will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of development plan housing requirements as part of LDP Annual Monitoring Reports. In addition, DPMv3 now contains details on how the 'trajectory' should be prepared as part of the development plan process and form part of the plan. However, there is an intermediate monitoring methodology for those LPAs who have yet to revise their LDPs; which Torfaen will have to follow.
- Paragraph 3.68 below details the monitoring of housing delivery in the Torfaen LDP using the Average Annual Requirement (AAR) methodology as prescribed in DPMv3; noting that the Council will set a 'housing trajectory' for the RLDP in due course.
- 3.27 **TAN8: Renewable Energy** - the publication of Future Wales and PPW11, on 24th February 2021, has revoked TAN8; which has been superseded by guidance in those two documents, and is noted in terms of both the LDP and RLDP.
- 3.28 **TAN11: Noise** - Between 10th February 2020 and 4th May 2020, the Welsh Government issued a call for evidence and a consultation on a review of the 1997 TAN11 on 'Noise'; to incorporate policy guidance and technical advice on air quality and soundscape, as well as noise. The review of TAN11 is intended to provide support to the new planning policy in PPW relating to these areas. The new TAN11 once reviewed will be the subject of a further consultation.
- Progress on this TAN will be reported in a future LDP AMR; and the RLDP will consider these matters once the replacement TAN11 is published.
- 3.29 **Draft TAN15 - Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion** - The Welsh Government consulted on changes to the 2004 TAN15 on 'Development and Flood Risk' between 9th October 2019 and 17th January 2020, following a review of its effectiveness in 2017. The new TAN15 contains a number of proposed changes and factual updates to terminology and references, replacing the Development Advice Map (DAM) with a new Wales Flood Map to be maintained by Natural Resources Wales, policy for the new flood zones, which places greater emphasis on development plans and the role of the Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment; and updating guidance on coastal erosion currently set out in TAN14 on 'Coastal Planning' and

integrating it within TAN15 (which will enable TAN14 to be cancelled). The new TAN15 was soft launched on 28th September 2021, to allow time for current planning applications to take its guidance into account before it is formally published on 1st December 2021 (alongside TAN14 being cancelled and the issuing of an updated Notification Direction with regards development in areas of flood risk).

- The details and requirements of the new TAN15 will be reported in the 2022 LDP AMR and will be considered in the Deposit RLDP.

National Strategies

3.30 **Welsh Government - Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, March 2019** - This plan sets out the Welsh Government's approach to cut emissions and increase efficiency in a way that maximises wider benefits for Wales, ensuring a fairer and healthier society. It contains 100 policies and proposals that directly reduce emissions and support the growth of the low carbon economy, which will help meet their 2016 to 2020 carbon budget and 2020 emission reduction targets. Of particular relevance to planning are targets and policies introduced in relation to: Energy; Transport; Buildings; Industry; Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry; Agriculture; and Waste Management.

- The RLDP will fully consider Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales.

3.31 **Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales, November 2019** - This document is the second climate change adaptation plan for Wales. It sets out legal requirements, the risks from climate change, research priorities and the actions being taken. Of particular note in relation to planning are the actions being taken in respect of the following: -

- Protection of people and buildings from flooding;
- Protecting public water supplies;
- Risks to ecosystems and agriculture businesses;
- Planning Policy Wales and the National Development Framework; and
- The Historic Environment.

- The RLDP will fully consider Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales.

3.32 **Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales, August 2020** - The Clean Air Plan for Wales includes measures to improve air quality to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations; support the natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity; support a prosperous Wales and support sustainable places. The proposed measures include: -

- enhancing air quality monitoring and assessment capabilities;
- proposals for a fit for purpose legislative and regulatory air quality management framework for Wales;
- increasing public awareness about air pollution and behavioural change communications to help everyone improve air quality and encourage others to do the same; and
- promoting the shift from the private motor vehicle to active travel and public transport.

- The RLDP will fully consider the Clean Air Plan for Wales.

3.33 **Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy, March 2021** - Sets out the Welsh Government's ambitions for the next 20 years and priorities for the next 5 years. The

central aim of the strategy is to reduce the impact that transport has on climate change, setting a target for 45% of all journeys within Wales to be undertaken sustainably by 2040. The overriding vision is for “*an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system*” and the priority is to “*actively aim to achieve a shift away from private car use to more sustainable transport modes for the majority of journeys*”. The three main priorities in the Strategy are to:

1. Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel, which will mean an increase of local services;
2. Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure; and
3. Encourage people to make the change to a more sustainable transport option by making public transport more affordable and reliable.

3.34 The Strategy will be supported by a 5-year investment programme to be set out in a National Transport Delivery Plan (NTDP) that shall set out the specific transport interventions to be financed by the Welsh Government, based on the priorities in the Strategy, including the delivery of projects that are already underway. Additionally, the Strategy will also require the establishment of Regional CJs that will oversee the preparation of Regional Transport Plans to be aligned with ‘Future Wales: The National Plan 2040’ and the emerging SDPs.

3.35 **Manual for Streets 2 (Urban and Rural Streets), May 2019** - extends the Manual for Streets to include urban and rural situations; and fills the gap in advice between ‘Manual for Streets’ and ‘The Standards for Trunk Roads’. It sets out how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets; and is intended to assist those in the planning, construction and improvement of our streets to deliver more contextually sensitive designs.

National Evidence

3.36 **2018 Based Population and Household Projections** - In February 2020 the ONS published (and republished on 11th June 2020 revising an error discovered in the February data release) the Welsh Government **2018 Based Local Authority Population Projections for Wales** for the period 2018 to 2043; which forecast that, by 2021, the population of Torfaen will increase to 93,856. In comparison, the previous 2014 based projections forecast that, by 2021, the population of Torfaen would increase to 92,273. The latest June 2020 mid-year population estimate for Torfaen was 94,832; compared to 93,961 in June 2019. This shows that the LDP strategy for an increase in population in Torfaen appears to be happening and that population growth in Torfaen is greater than predicted.

3.37 Similarly, the **2018 Based Local Authority Household Projections for Wales** were published February 2020 (and republished in August 2020, taking account of the above correction). The 2018-based local authority household projections provide an indication of the future number of households and their composition in Wales for the period 2018 to 2043; which forecast that, by 2021, the number of households in Torfaen will increase to 40,485. In comparison, the previous 2014 based projections forecast that, by 2021, the number of households in Torfaen would increase to 39,963.

- It is noted that the LDP’s 4,700 dwellings housing requirement is in excess of the latest WG 2018 based household projections; and that growth is happening (as confirmed by the latest 2020 mid-year estimate). Population and Household estimates will be considered in the LDP Review.

- 3.38 **The Second State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020), December 2020 / March 2021** - The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales (CNC/NRW) to report on the state of Wales' natural resources (animals, plants & other organisms; air, water & soil; minerals; geological features & processes; physiographical features; and climatic features & processes) and assesses the extent to which natural resources are being sustainably managed and detail their ability to respond to pressures and adapt to climate change in a '**State of Natural Resources Report**' (SoNaRR); which was first published in September 2016 and then again in December 2020; with assessments of 'Biodiversity', 'Broad Ecosystems' (urban; mountain, moorland and heath; semi-natural grassland; freshwater; enclosed farmland; woodland; coastal margins; and marine) and 'Cross-cutting themes' (biodiversity; climate change; land use & soils; invasive non-native species; air quality; water efficiency; waste; and energy efficiency) published in March 2021.
- 3.39 SoNaRR2020 builds on the evidence base in the first SoNaRR, illustrating some of the key challenges, priorities and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources (**SMNR**). It has four long term aims: -
- Aim 1. Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced;
 - Aim 2. Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change;
 - Aim 3. Wales has healthy places for people, protected from environmental risks; and
 - Aim 4. Contributing to a regenerative economy, achieving sustainable levels of production and consumption.
- 3.40 At its heart is the ambition to bridge the gap between where we currently are and where we need to be. It responds to the climate emergency, the Covid-19 pandemic and the green recovery. SoNaRR2020 includes the traditional focus on management of natural resources within the eight broad ecosystems. It also proposes a transformational approach using the ecosystem, economic and social spheres as levers to redesign our society and economy. It identifies three areas for transformative change: the food, energy and transport systems; and uses a transformational approach to move us towards a regenerative economy setting out a range of opportunities for action to move towards a sustainable future.
- It is considered that the SoNaRR2020 has no significant implications for the LDP itself. However, it has and will continue to be taken into account in the preparation of the Torfaen RLDP.
- 3.41 For information, the Act also requires the Welsh Ministers to produce a '**Natural Resources Policy**' (**NRP**) setting out priorities and opportunities for sustainable natural resource management; which was published in 2017. The NRP identifies the national challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources; which include: reversing the decline in biodiversity by developing resilient ecological networks; carbon storage; soils; reducing the risk of flooding; supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem approaches; reducing noise & air pollution; water quality and quantity; reducing the pressures on natural resources through resource efficiency and renewable energy; preventative approaches to health outcomes, with a particular focus on key public health issues of transport related air and noise pollution, tackling physical inactivity and mental health; community cohesion; and supporting secure and stable employment.

3.42 **The Placemaking Wales Charter, September 2020** - launched by the Minister for Housing and Local Government, has been developed by the Design Commission for Wales (DCW) and Welsh Government in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership (a multidisciplinary group representing professions and organisations working within the built and natural environment across Wales). The Charter builds on the strengthening focus on Placemaking in policy and practice and aims to provide a common understanding of the range of considerations that go into placemaking. Placemaking involves thinking about whole places, not a single development site in isolation or single land use. It is about creating people-focused, active and distinctive places. Critical to placemaking are early decisions about where to develop, how much, what uses to include, how to connect to other places, the quality of streets and spaces and the features that make up the distinct identity of the place. Fundamentally placemaking is focused on people to ensure we deliver inclusive, socially connected, vibrant communities. The charter outlines the following six placemaking principles that cover the range of considerations that contribute to establishing and maintaining good places: -

- People and community - The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.
- Location - Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.
- Movement - Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network, and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.
- Mix of uses - Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.
- Public realm - Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.
- Identity - The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location, including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes, are identified and responded to.

3.43 The Placemaking Wales Partnership welcomes any organisation involved in delivering places or shaping the built environment to sign up to the Charter, having considered the wording of the Charter, and agreed to sign up to these principles. Once this has been received the organisation will be added to the list of signatories on their website and will be able to use the Charter logo.

3.44 **Placemaking Guide, September 2020** - Alongside the Placemaking Charter, the 'Placemaking Wales Partnership' also published a more detailed 'Placemaking

Guide'; which covers: What is placemaking? Placemaking in practice; Why placemaking matters; Case studies; and an Appendix with links to a plethora of further reading.

- 3.45 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) also published a complimentary Practice Advice Note '**Placemaking in Wales: Learning from Wales Planning Award winners demonstrating aspects of good placemaking**', **September 2020**; which provided information on some excellent case studies to highlight the six 'placemaking principles'; including reference to the Council's negotiated 'Meritor site, Cwmbran' planning permission under 'Location' - which won the RTPI Wales Award in 2016 as "*the scheme aimed to promote behavioural change by providing substantially better links to the town centre and railway station.*"
- The Council has yet to formally consider signing up to the Placemaking Charter, but has already integrated placemaking in its published **Torfaen RLDP: Development Brief / Masterplan Guidance - September 2020**; which makes reference to the requirement for and value of placemaking in PPW10 (including the 'National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes'); and other Welsh Government documents including 'Building Better Places'; DPMv3; and the 'Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site' (2016); as well as the Design Council *et al's* 'Building for Life 12 Wales' (2015) and other documents. This Council Guidance applies to both the current LDP / large windfall sites and the future RLDP; and will be updated in due course to reflect the latest guidance in PPW11, Future Wales and the content of the Placemaking Guide, September 2020.

Regional Context - Policy & Evidence

- 3.46 **Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)** - The CCRCD is a 20 year / £1.28 billion investment programme which aims to achieve a 5% uplift in the Region's GVA ('*Gross Value Added*' - a measure of the value of the goods produced and services delivered in the area) by delivering a range of programmes which will increase connectivity, improve physical and digital infrastructure, as well as regional business governance. Over its lifetime, local partners expect the CCRCD to deliver up to 25,000 new jobs and leverage an additional £4 billion of private sector investment by 2036. The CCRCD has 6 Objectives: -
1. Connecting the Cardiff Capital Region;
 2. Investing in innovation and the digital network;
 3. Developing a skilled workforce and tackling unemployment;
 4. Supporting enterprise and business growth;
 5. Housing development and regeneration; and
 6. Developing greater city-region governance across the Cardiff Capital Region.
- 3.47 The CCRCD includes funding of £734m for the proposed South Wales 'Metro' integrated transport improvements; of which over £500 million is provided by the Welsh Government and £125m from the UK Government. The UK Government has provided an additional £375m contribution for other investments, and the ten local authorities have agreed a commitment to borrow a combined total of £120m as part of the Wider Investment Fund.
- It is considered that the 'Cardiff City Region City Deal' currently has no significant implications for the LDP. However, from the next section on the S.E. Wales SDP, it is expected that when the SE Wales Corporate Joint Committee comes into

effect on 28th February 2022; the CCRC will transition into the CJC. The work of the 'City Deal' will continue under that body; and any implications will be considered in future LDP AMRs as programmes are agreed.

- 3.48 **South East Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP)** - The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced (now repealed) powers for the Welsh Ministers to designate 'strategic planning areas' and for local authority based 'Strategic Planning Panels' (SPP) to be established for these areas; to be responsible for preparing a 15-20-year Strategic Development Plan (SDP) as part of the formal 'development plan' for that area.
- 3.49 However, whilst resolutions to prepare a Cardiff Capital Region SDP were being progressed by each of the ten constituent local authorities (including Torfaen in October 2019), this work has now effectively been superseded. There is now a statutory duty (introduced by the Welsh Government under the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** (which received Royal Assent on 20th January 2021)) to prepare an SDP through a **Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)**; a new model of collaborative regional local governance in four defined Welsh Regions (North Wales, Mid Wales, South East Wales and South West Wales) for specified functions (relating to: 'strategic development planning'; 'regional transport planning'; and 'economic well-being of their areas'; with other functions potentially to be added at later dates).
- 3.50 **The Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021** establish the procedural requirements for the preparation, monitoring and review of SDPs; and were laid before the Senedd in March 2021, and for SE Wales, will come into force on 28th February 2022, the date on which the SE Wales CJC becomes fully operational; at which time the CCR will transition into the CJC. The SDP Regulations reflect the main stages of plan preparation and review requirements outlined in the LDP Regulations and provide details about the key stages, procedures and consultation arrangements that must be followed by CJsCs when preparing an SDP. They set out the requirements for the preparation, examination, monitoring and revision of SDPs and associated matters. The regulations also set out the provisions for the content, availability, and publication of documents. Under the Regulations the CJC's membership is one member (executive leader or the elected mayor) for each of the ten constituent councils, and a member from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority who is only permitted to vote on matters relating to the strategic planning function. Therefore, given the time to set up the necessary processes and undertake the work, etc., it is not expected that a 'Delivery Agreement' for the production of the SDP will be submitted to the Welsh Government until September 2022 at the earliest; and then with 4-5 years to prepare the plan, an SDP is not expected to be adopted until Sept 2026 - Sept 2027.
- 3.51 In addition, we generally know what the SDP is likely to cover, from Chapter 10 of the DPMv3 on 'Strategic Development Plans' (which is expected to be updated in the future) and from 'Future Wales: The National Plan 2040', Policy 19 on 'Strategic Policies for Regional Planning' (and Policy 33 on the 'National Growth Area'; Policy 34 on 'Green Belts'; Policy 35 on the Valleys Regional Park; and Policy 36 on the 'South East Metro'), where the Welsh Government states: -
- "Policy 19 - Strategic Development Plans should embed placemaking as an overarching principle and should establish for the region (and where required constituent Local Development Plans):*
- *a spatial strategy;*

- *a settlement hierarchy;*
- *the housing provision and requirement;*
- *the gypsy and traveller need;*
- *the employment provision;*
- *the spatial areas for strategic housing, employment growth and renewable energy;*
- *the identification of green belts, green corridors and nationally important landscapes where required;*
- *the location of key services, transport and connectivity infrastructure;*
- *a framework for the sustainable management of natural resources and cultural assets;*
- *ecological networks and opportunities for protecting or enhancing the connectivity of these networks and the provision of green infrastructure; and*
- *a co-ordinated framework for minerals extraction and the circular economy, including waste treatment and disposal.*

The Welsh Government requires the adoption of Strategic Development Plans in the North, Mid Wales, South West and South East regions.”

3.52 Therefore, whilst TCBC is proceeding with its RLDP, collaborative working will continue to be undertaken with neighbouring authorities and within the broader region to prepare a joint evidence base which, wherever possible, can also be used for an SDP in due course.

- It is considered that emerging processes for the preparation of a South East Wales SDP currently have no significant implications for the LDP itself. However, future progress on the SDP and any subsequent implications for the Replacement LDP will be reported in future AMRs.

3.53 **Area Statements** - The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires CNC/NRW to prepare Area Statements to help facilitate the implementation of the NRP and build on the evidence set out in the SoNaRR. Seven ‘Area Statements’ for Wales were published by CNC/NRW in April 2020. Each Area Statement outlines the key challenges facing that particular locality, what we can all do to meet those challenges, and how we can better manage our natural resources for the benefit of future generations. The Area Statements will be updated regularly and improved year-on-year through engagement and as new evidence is gathered.

3.54 The **South East Wales Area Statement** was published on 1st April 2020, and covers the Local Authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen; where a landscape scale approach was taken in its production, to build ecosystem resilience (to realise the benefits that nature can provide) and allow the increasingly complex and widespread environmental, social and political challenges, such as the climate and nature emergencies to be addressed. These landscapes are defined as: the Gwent Levels, Central Monmouthshire, Newport (which includes Cwmbran & Pontypool), Brecon Beacons & Black Mountains, Wye Valley & Wentwood, and the South Wales Valleys (Eastern Valleys) (which includes Blaenavon). In order to ensure that everyone involved in the Area Statement process is thinking of South East Wales in the same context, the following four strategic themes have been identified: -

1. Linking our landscapes - identifying local opportunities for protected sites, and natural and built environments to contribute towards the resilience of wider priority habitat networks in the region. These opportunities for improving ecosystem

resilience should support ecological connectivity between sites, across boundaries and at a landscape scale;

2. Climate ready Gwent - identifying landscape and regional scale opportunities and collective interventions for climate adaptation and mitigation which enhance local ecosystem and community resilience;
 3. Healthy active connected - identifying opportunities and collaborative interventions that protect and improve health and well-being; connecting people, communities and service delivery to nature for the benefit of both people and the environment; and
 4. Ways of working - identifying the benefits of strategic regional collaboration and identifying what we need to do once, well, at a regional scale to maximise local delivery. This strategic theme adds value to the ways in which our natural resources are managed collaboratively, maximising the benefits they provide.
- It is considered that the South East Wales Area Statement has no significant implications for the LDP itself as it already protects the natural and built environments, addresses climate change and health and wellbeing. However, it has been taken into account in the review of the LDP; given that is a 'test of soundness' in DPMv3.

3.55 **SWRAWP: Regional Technical Statement, 2nd Revision, September 2020 (RTS2)**

- To ensure the managed supply of land won aggregates (i.e. crushed rock and sand & gravel) through the planning system, the Council (as a Minerals Planning Authority - MPA) is required by Welsh Government 'Minerals' Technical Advice Note 1 (MTAN1), via the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP), to produce a Regional Technical Statement (RTS) on aggregates every 5 years; and for any recommendations therein to be considered in its Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). The SWRAWP has asked that the Council considers endorsing the Regional Technical Statement Second Review (RTS2), which recommends that: -

- using a methodology based upon 'historical sales data / share of housing completions', Torfaen makes provision for 258,000 tonnes of 'crushed rock' aggregate p.a. in its LDP Review (2018-2033) and 10 years thereafter; which equates to a total 25 year 'apportionment' of 6.441 million tonnes. There is no requirement to make provision for 'land won sand and gravel', given there are enough supplies from dredging in the Severn Estuary / Bristol Channel;
[However, this 'crushed rock' apportionment was based upon a calculation error relating to historical housing completions in Torfaen, and Officers have asked the Welsh Government to make a correction via a 'Clarification Letter'; which if accepted, would result in a reduced 150,000tpa (3.75Mt in total) apportionment for Torfaen and a proportional increase for other MPAs in South East Wales to make up any regional shortfall].
- a 'Sub-Regional Statement of Collaboration' for the total aggregate requirement for the former 'Gwent' area (of Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) be agreed in due course; and
- the LDP maximise the use of secondary 'recycled' aggregates; and safeguards primary aggregate resources, wharves and railheads.

3.56 The Welsh Minister endorsed RTS2 in March 2021; but is expected to issue an associated Clarification Letter to correct the above calculation error in due course. Therefore, the Council is waiting to receive this Clarification Letter before it formally

considers endorsing RTS2. However, whatever the decision of Council, the above 'crushed rock' aggregate apportionment for Torfaen in RTS2 will now need to be considered in the Torfaen RLDP and a 'Former Gwent Statement of Sub-Regional Statement of Collaboration' agreed in due course.

- As regard the Torfaen LDP, Policy M3 already makes a 7.2Mt Preferred Area aggregate allocation at Tir Pentwys, with no access route shown on the proposals map. Therefore, subject to an acceptable access being provided (a new northern access has been proposed as part of an RLDP Candidate Site, which is currently being assessed), this LDP allocation more than meets the latest RTS2 apportionment for Torfaen. Similarly, LDP Policy M1 on 'Mineral Safeguarding' already safeguards primary aggregate resources, and there are no wharfs or railheads in Torfaen to be safeguarded. Finally, this matter and a Sub-Regional Statement of Collaboration' will be addressed in the preparation of the Deposit Torfaen RLDP.

3.57 Local Development Plan Reviews of Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) - All of Torfaen's neighbouring LPAs have an extant LDP. However, Blaenau Gwent (BGCBC), the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA), Caerphilly (CCBC), Monmouthshire County Council (MCC), and Newport (NCC) are all also currently reviewing their Local Development Plan. The timetables of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Blaenau Gwent are further ahead in the process as they consulted on their Preferred Strategy's in July-August 2019 and January-February 2020 respectively. Monmouthshire, whilst consulting on an initial Preferred Strategy in early 2020, consulted on a second Preferred Strategy in June-July 2021. Caerphilly commenced preparation of a Replacement LDP in early 2020; and Newport commenced their review in October 2020. Torfaen is committed to working collaboratively with its neighbouring authorities and a number of joint pieces of evidence have been produced, with further joint research currently underway. All neighbouring authorities attended the Torfaen pre-deposit participation workshops and regular officer meetings are held on the emerging RLDPs.

3.58 M4 Relief Road - On the 4th June 2019, the new First Minister Mark Drakeford announced that the Welsh Government would not build the est.£1.6bn M4 Relief Road around Newport; following the conclusion of a public inquiry into the project and the publication of the Inspector's Report. Ministers decided that the scheme would not go ahead because of its escalating expense and the impact it would have had on the Gwent Levels and the global climate crisis. The legal TR111 protection notice for the proposed route of the relief road was subsequently removed; and in addition, the Welsh Government appointed the South East Wales Transport Commission to investigate sustainable ways to tackle congestion on the M4 in South East Wales (see next section for details).

- It is difficult to comment on this decision either way; as the congestion on the M4 around Newport was always seen as a 'bottleneck' for economic development in the region, but the negative impacts of constructing the Relief Road on the Gwent Levels and climate change cannot be denied either. Much will depend on what 'network of alternatives' are delivered from the recommendations of the Transport Commission or are contained in the future Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan prepared by the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (see below). However, the implications for the Adopted LDP and the RLDP will be reported in future AMRs as more is known over time.

- 3.59 **South East Wales Transport Commission: Final Recommendations, November 2020** - Often referred to as the 'Burns Report' (Lord Burns, Chair of the South East Wales Transport Commission). The First Minister established the Commission to find alternative ways of reducing congestion on the M4 following the abandonment of a proposed scheme for an M4 Relief Road around Newport. In December 2019, the Commission published a 'Progress Update', which recommended three 'fast-track' measures, all designed to improve traffic flow on the M4. These were to: introduce an average speed control of 50mph (which was quickly implemented between junctions 24 and 28 to tackle congestion; and for safety and air quality reasons); provide additional lane guidance on the westbound approach to the Brynglas Tunnels; and enhance Welsh Government Traffic Officer support.
- 3.60 The Final Report (November 2020) made specific recommendations for Ministers; with an overarching recommendation for a 'Network of Alternatives' in South East Wales concentrated on travel through the west to east corridor, reflecting the role played by the M4, delivered through five packages: infrastructure, network policies, behaviour change, governance, and land use & planning. As such these 'alternatives' were seen as a natural complement to existing plans for the South Wales Metro, which is largely focused on north to south travel between the Valleys and Cardiff. This 'network' is designed to give people and businesses new, credible transport options that do not involve the motorway or indeed the use of a car; much of which could be delivered through modification to the existing rail / road network. The 'land use and planning package' recommended, to: -
1. plan new developments around the public transport network rather than the motorway;
 2. use South East Wales' forthcoming Strategic Development Plan to master plan the region, proactively identifying well connected sites for development;
 3. Equip Corporate Joint Committees to make land use and transport decisions in the round; and
 4. Encourage Welsh Government to continue to call in planning applications which are inconsistent with sustainable transport.
- It is difficult to comment on the implications of the SE Wales Transport Commission: Final Recommendations on the LDP at this early stage following publication, much will depend on what 'network of alternatives' are delivered or are contained in the future Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan prepared by the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (see below). However, the implications for the Adopted LDP and the RLDP will be reported in future AMRs as more is known over time.

Local Context - Policy & Evidence

- 3.61 **Publication of Torfaen RLDP: Preferred Strategy, associated documents and supporting evidence, November 2020** - the Council consulted on the **Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy** for 5 months rather than the statutory 6 weeks (due to the Covid-19 Pandemic), between 23rd November 2020 and 30th April 2021. In conjunction with the Preferred Strategy, views were also sought on the associated **Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISA)**, the **Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (HRA)** and the **draft Candidate Sites Assessment Report (CSAR)**. In summary, *inter alia*, the RLDP: Preferred Strategy (over the 2018-2033 plan period) is proposing to allocate 5,600 dwellings to meet a requirement of providing 4,800 dwellings - primarily located within and around existing 'sustainable' settlements (250 in North Torfaen, 1,750 in

Pontypool and 2,800 in Cwmbran) and 50 ha of new land for employment purposes. At this stage, 4 strategic sites, essential to deliver the new RLDP strategy, have been proposed: -

- **Llanfrechfa** Strategic Action Area (SAA1), Cwmbran - 1,200 dwellings and associated facilities, 'reserved' hospital expansion space, employment land, hotel, education provision and village centre served by a new B4236 relief road;
- **Craig-y-felin** Strategic Action Area (SAA2), New Inn - 300 dwellings, 10ha employment land and associated facilities;
- **Pontypool College** Strategic Housing Site, Pontypool - up to 140 dwellings and associated facilities; and
- **Llantarnam Business Park**, Strategic Employment Site, Cwmbran - 6 plots of land totalling 10ha for industrial uses.

There are also **17 Strategic Polices**, which cover Creating Sustainable Places and Placemaking (S1 - Strategic Sustainable Growth; S2 - Spatial Distribution of Development; S3 - Strategic Sites; S4 - Managing Settlement Form: Urban Boundaries; S5 - Sustainable Placemaking and Design Context; and S6 - Climate Change); Creating Healthy & Social Places (S7 - Sustainable Transport; S8 - Delivery of Homes; S9 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation; S10 - Development in Town and Local/Neighbourhood Centres; and S11 - Promoting Healthier Places); Creating Productive & Enterprising Places (S12 - Employment Land Strategy; S13 - Sustainable Minerals Management; S14 - Sustainable Waste Management; and S15 - Energy); and Protecting and Enhancing Distinctive & Natural Places (S16 - Green Infrastructure; and S17 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment).

- The result of these RLDP / Candidate Site / 2nd Call consultations are currently being analysed; with a view to submitting a new RLDP **Delivery Agreement** (DA) to the Welsh Government in November 2021 (given the delays due to the Covid-19 Pandemic); and for the Deposit RLDP and associated / supporting documents to be considered by Council in July 2022; and hopefully Adoption in October 2023.
- In addition, a programme of Stakeholder / Member Workshops is currently underway (on Low Carbon / Renewable Energy; Review of the Proposed Vision; Town Centre Issues; Green Infrastructure / Biodiversity and the Resilience of Ecosystems / Countryside Policies; Employment; and Housing); and a Housing Industry Workshop is also planned to cover detailed housing matters - all to inform the content of the Deposit RLDP.

3.62 The Council also published the following supporting evidence alongside the RLDP: -

Development Brief / Masterplan Guidance (September 2020) - details in paragraph 3.45 above.

Torfaen RLDP Preferred Strategy: Pre-Deposit Participation: Report of Consultation (March 2020) - provides a summary of the Stakeholder / Member Workshops held in 2018/19 to identify the RLDP issues, vision and associated objectives; and discuss the future strategy and policy direction, including the location and scale of growth in the plan after considering various options.

Torfaen RLDP: Covid-19 Assessment (September 2020) - In response to a request from the Welsh Minister for the Council to reflect on the impact of the pandemic on their areas and undertake an assessment of the evidence base, strategy and policies in terms of sensitivity to the consequences of the pandemic. In conclusion, the Assessment shows that the majority of this evidence was considered robust / still

valid, and did not need to be updated or reviewed at this time; or the impacts of the current pandemic can be assessed in evidence yet to be updated or produced; especially as the longer term impacts on housing, employment, travel open space, town centres, etc. were not fully known.

Torfaen RLDP Preferred Strategy: Updated Housing Background Paper (September 2020) - The DPMv3 requires the Council to produce a Housing Background Paper that identifies the amount of land the Council will be required to allocate for housing in the Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) in order to meet the level of growth justified in the RLDP Preferred Strategy by identifying the various components of housing supply including: the number of dwellings already completed since 2018 (the start of the RLDP plan period); sites with planning permission (Landbank Sites); and trend based small and large windfall site completions expected over the RLDP plan period (to 2033).

Torfaen RLDP Preferred Strategy: Sustainable Settlement Assessment (March 2020) - PPW and DPMv3 also require the Council to analyse the location, role and function of Torfaen's settlements; as well as their relationship with other settlements in the region; and identify a settlement hierarchy to inform the RLDP. The assessment has identified the most appropriate locations to accommodate future growth in the County Borough in order to achieve sustainable development and placemaking, minimise unsustainable patterns of movement and support local services and facilities. To aid consistency, a regional methodology was used which is based on the population size of each settlement and the following three principles: -

1. the level of sustainable transport and accessibility;
2. the availability of local facilities and services; and
3. the level of employment opportunities.

In conclusion, the 'Sustainable Settlement Assessment' identified the following settlement hierarchy in Torfaen: -

- Tier 1: Primary Settlements: Cwmbran and Pontypool;
- Tier 2: Main Settlement: Blaenavon; and
- Tier 3: Minor Settlements: Ponthir and Varteg.

Regional Employment Study: Larger than Local (March 2020) - for Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils, was prepared in accordance with WG guidance; and recommended that 220ha, in a suite of strategic employment sites, be allocated in the region, the majority in Newport; with a 10ha site at Craig y Felin, and in addition, the specialist Llanfrechfa Grange Medi Park site, both in Torfaen.

Torfaen Employment Land Study (ELR) (March 2020) - This Torfaen Study, informed by the regional study and WG guidance, recommended that Torfaen allocate 20-30ha employment land to 2033 in addition to the realistic long-term supply still available (26ha) from the existing LDP sites which should be rolled forward into the RLDP and protected. Noting that large sites will be required, focused in Cwmbran and Pontypool, which can meet multiple large business requirements, of 2.5ha - 8ha each and also accommodate a range of smaller requirements.

Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen: LDP Demographic Evidence (June 2019) and November 2019 / September 2020 Updates - The DPMv3 requires that the Council should consider a variety of growth scenarios, based on a series of assumptions, both for jobs and homes; and that the consideration of a variety of alternative demographic, jobs, dwelling or policy led 'Growth Scenarios' will align with,

inform and deliver on the RLDP strategy and key issues. A variety of such growth scenarios were produced over time; the latest (Sep 2020) being based upon the most up to date WG 2018-based population and household projections.

- In addition, the following supporting evidence is also expected to be prepared in time to be published alongside the Deposit RLDP later next year: further demographic and employment evidence; Regional and Torfaen Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (RELC) Studies (including a landscape sensitivity study); Torfaen Retail Study; Regional and Torfaen Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA); draft South East Wales Green Belt Study; Countryside, Waste and Minerals Background Papers for Torfaen; a 'Former Gwent' Sub-Regional Statement of Collaboration (on aggregates); updated Torfaen Housing Background Paper (incorporating an Urban Capacity Study); Torfaen Settlement Boundary Review; Torfaen Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment; Torfaen Green Infrastructure Strategy; Torfaen Open Space Assessment, Torfaen Infrastructure Plan, Integrated Planning & Transport Strategy for Torfaen, etc.

3.63 2nd Call for Candidate Sites / Additional Information for Existing Candidate Sites

- Alongside consulting on the RLDP: Preferred Strategy, the Council undertook a 2nd Call for Candidate Sites / Additional Information for Existing Candidate Sites exercise, for 9 weeks between 23rd November 2020 and 22nd January 2021.

- The responses to this 2nd Call consultation are currently being analysed.

3.64 Affordable Housing Delivery

- The Torfaen LDP (Policy H4) seeks to achieve approximately **1,132** affordable homes out of the 4,700 new dwellings expected to be built over the plan period to 2021. This equates to a **24.1%** provision of affordable housing or the delivery of 75 affordable homes per year. As of April 2021, **1,143** affordable units have been delivered (101% of the target); which also equates to **32.8%** of all completions. In the 2019-2021 monitoring period **240** affordable dwellings were delivered.

3.65 Torfaen 2020 Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), June 2021

- the 2020 LHMA was agreed by the Executive Member for Adult Services and Housing in June 2021. The required affordable housing tenure split is now 75% Social Rented and 25% Intermediate; from 90% / 10% in the 2017 LHMA - mainly due to more people registering on the 'Help2Own' (low cost home ownership) waiting list. As regards need, over the next five years the 2020 LHMA, shows (from Table 3.2 below) a need for 240 affordable dwellings p.a. in Torfaen.

Table 3.2: Total Housing Need per annum (2020 Torfaen LHMA)				
Area	Social	Intermediate		Torfaen
		Low Cost Home Ownership	Intermediate Rent	
Torfaen	184 (76.6%)	46	10	240 (100%)
		56 (23.3%)		

- The 2020 Torfaen LHMA will also be considered in the Torfaen RLDP. However, the adopted Planning Obligations SPG will need updating with this new affordable housing tenure split to be required on all relevant planning applications going forward. Other factual updates will be required to the SPG, including updates to references, such as Future Wales / PPW11 / TANs, the latest Welsh Government Acceptable Cost Guidance (ACG) for affordable housing, the Torfaen LDP Annual

Monitoring Reports, the latest CSS Wales / CSS Cymru - Wales Parking Standards, the recreation capital and maintenance costings to reflect current prices, the latest (2021) calculation of education yield from new dwellings, etc.; which is a recommendation of the Council covering report to this AMR.

- 3.66 **Housing Delivery in Torfaen** - The Torfaen LDP Policy S5, set a 4,700 dwellings housebuilding target over the 2006 to 2021 plan period, and by 1st April 2021, 3,480 dwellings (74%) had been built, some 1,220 dwellings (26%) short of the target.
- 3.67 The DPMv3 advises that, for adopted LDPs, the Average Annual Requirement (AAR) (i.e. the LDP housing requirement / plan period in years = 4,700 dwellings / 15.25 years = 308) methodology and Tables 19-21 and Diagram 16 be used within the AMR with the 'best information' in conjunction with the Housing Study Group to monitor the delivery of housing. Therefore, Table 21 and Diagram 16 below (from DPMv3) showing housing completions in Torfaen for the LDP plan period 1st January 2006 - 31st March 2021 have been agreed by the Torfaen Housing Study Group.
- 3.68 **Housing Supply in Torfaen** - Going forward, DPMv3 Tables 19-20 below have been combined into AMR Table 3.3 (which shows the timing and phasing of large housing sites (10 or more dwellings) with planning permission or LDP/RLDP housing allocations in Torfaen (2021-2026) @ 1st April 2021), which has also been agreed by the Torfaen Housing Study Group. Table 3.3 shows that over the next five years, it is forecast that an average of 392 dwellings per annum (dpa) will be built in Torfaen. Indeed, this is above the Torfaen LDP Average Annual Requirement of 308 dpa; and the proposed 320 dpa in the Torfaen RLDP: Preferred Strategy. Therefore, this demonstrates that housing supply will not run out in the County Borough before the new Torfaen RLDP is adopted (hopefully in October 2023).

Table 21: Calculating the Average Annual Requirement (AAR) for housing delivery in Torfaen @ 1st April 2021

LDP Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
A Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
B Remaining years	15.25	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
C Total housing provision	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740	5,740
D Total LDP housing requirement	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700
E completions on large sites during year	241	184	96	116	145	154	143	223	133	134	211	256	326	423	271
F Actual recorded completions on small sites	44	58	37	27	41	13	18	17	32	30	15	30	33	22	7
G Anticipated completions on allocated sites during year	N/A														
H Anticipated land bank completions during year	N/A														
I Anticipated completions large windfall during year	N/A														
J Anticipated completions small windfall during year	N/A														
K Total completions (E+F+G+H+I+J)	285	242	133	143	186	167	161	240	165	164	226	286	359	445	278
L Average Annual Rate	308														
M Total projected cumulative completions	285	527	660	803	989	1,156	1,317	1,557	1,722	1,886	2,112	2,398	2,757	3,202	3,480
N Remaining housing completions (housing requirement minus completions by year)	4,415	4,173	4,040	3,897	3,711	3,544	3,383	3,143	2,978	2,814	2,588	2,302	1,943	1,498	1,220

Diagram 16: Housing Development: Torfaen Average Annual Requirement (AAR) Monitoring (2006-2021) @ 1st April 2021

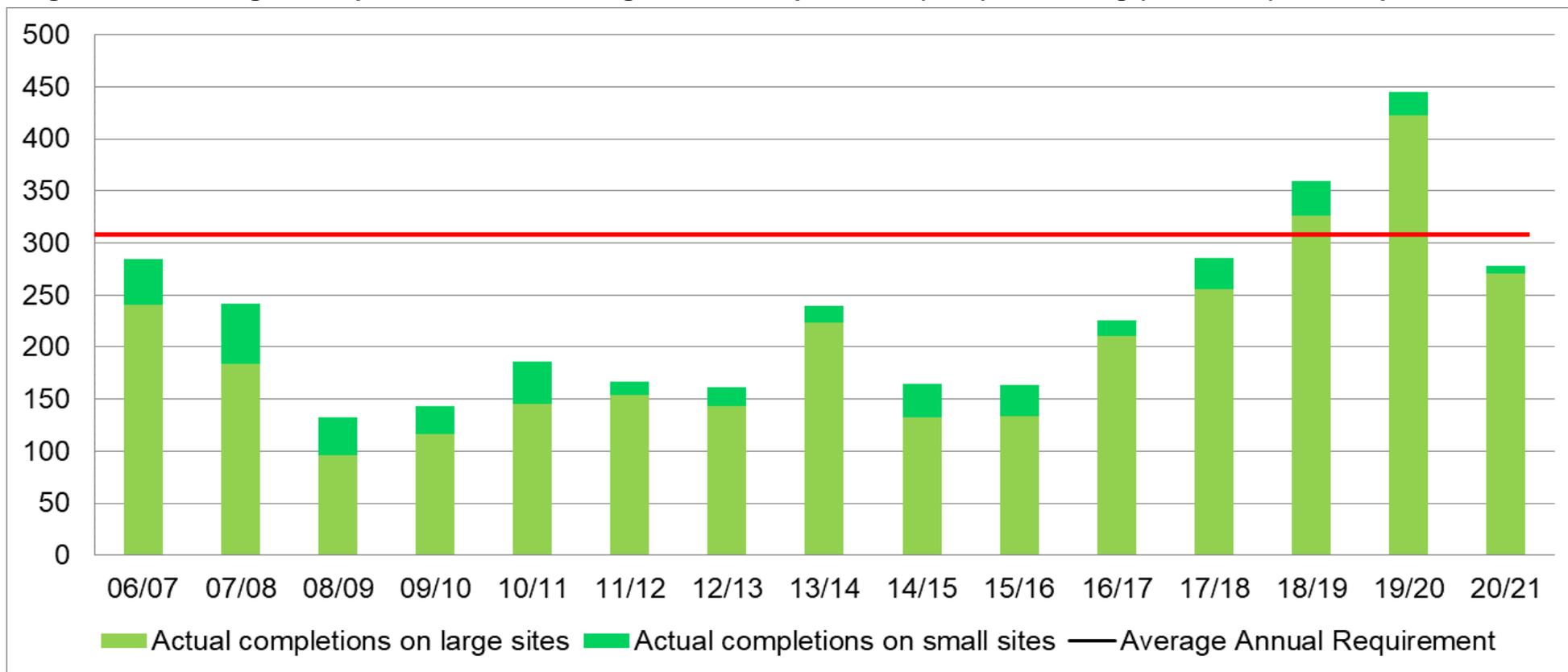


Table 3.3: The timing and phasing of housing sites with planning permission / LDP/RLDP housing allocations in Torfaen (2021-2026) @ 1st April 2021

Site	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Permitted Large Sites (based upon DPMv3 Table 20)					
South Sebastopol - Wrens Nest / Uplands / Maesgwyn (TW)	60	105	100	92	90
South Sebastopol - Village Core (TW - flats)	8	0	0	0	0
South Sebastopol - Village Core (Barratts)	40	40	49	0	0
Llantarnam Comp (Barratts)	19	0	0	0	0
Police College (Taylor Wimpey)	31	0	0	0	0
Llantarnam Neighbourhood Centre (Bron Afon)	22	0	0	0	0
Malthouse Lane, Llantarnam (Enzo Homes)	15	80	69	0	0
County Hall (Pobl)	0	0	23	60	60
Caldicot Way, Cwmbran (Bron Afon)	28	0	0	0	0
Foundry Cottages, Griffithstown (Pobl)	1	30	0	0	0
Ruby's Bar & Grill, Thornhill (Bron Afon)	19	0	0	0	0
Llantarnam Road, Llantarnam (Melin)	29	0	0	0	0
Manor Way, Abersychan	0	10	0	0	0
Lower Shepherds Hill G&T Site, Pontypool (21)	0	10	0	0	0
Rifle Club Victoria St / Ventnor Rd, Cwmbran (Bron Afon)	0	13	0	0	0
Penywain Lane, Pontypool	0	0	33	0	0
Former Pontypool Hospital (34)	0	?	?	?	?
LDP Allocated Large Sites (based upon DPMv3 Table 19)					
SAA2 - Canalside Cwmbran (150)	0	0	0	0	0
SAA4 - Mamhilad (JEUK) (850) (approved subject to S106)	0	0	85	85	85
SAA4 - Mamhilad (PPE) (425)	0	0	0	?	?
SAA7 - Llanfrechfa Grange, Cwmbran (300)	0	0	0	0	0
H1/1 - Police HQ (77)	0	?	?	?	?
H1/2 - Police College Phase 3 (Barratts) (100?)	0	0	35	35	30
H1/4 - Ty'r-ywen Farm, Fairwater (25)	0	?	?	?	?
H2/2 - Animal Pound & Adj. Land, Wainfelin (70?)	0	?	?	?	?
H2/3 - Pontypool College (100-140)	0	0	40	40	40
H2/4 - Coal Yard, Station Road, Panteg (15)	0	?	?	?	?
H3/1 - Garn-yr-Erw Terrace, Blaenavon (26)	0	0	0	0	0
H3/2 - Blaenavon Health Centre (17)	0	?	?	?	?
H3/3 - St Peters School, Blaenavon (18)	0	?	?	?	?
H3/5 - Giles Road, Blaenavon (20?)	0	?	?	?	?
H3/6 - Old Co-op, High Street, Abersychan (24)	0	0	0	0	0
H7/1 - Rose Cottage G&T site, Pontypool (10)	0	10	0	0	0
RLDP Allocated Large Sites (based upon DPMv3 Table 19)					

Craig y Felin SAA, Cwmbran (300)	0	0	0	0	30
Llanfrechfa SAA, Cwmbran (1,200)	0	0	0	0	30
Large Site Total (A)	272	298	434	312	365
Large Windfall Sites Allowance from RLDP (B)	0	0	50	50	50
Small Windfall Sites Allowance from RLDP (C)	26	26	26	26	26
	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
TOTAL A+B+C	298	324	510	388	441
5-year average completions	392				

3.69 **Town Centre Vacancy Rates** - Officers have been monitoring the vacancy rates of retail units in Torfaen's three town centres since the start of the LDP plan period in 2006. The latest monitoring figures are detailed in Table 3.4 below; which shows that there has been an increase in vacancy rates in each of the town centres over the last 2 years. This increase can be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and a continued increase in on-line retailing. However, it should be noted that the increase in vacancy rates has not massively increased, despite the vast change in the retail environment which Covid-19 has accelerated.

Table 3.4: Town Centre Vacancy Rates in Torfaen (2006 -2021) (% of retail units)			
Year	Town Centre		
	Cwmbran	Pontypool	Blaenavon
2006	2%	16.2%	26%
2010	4.3%	24%	12%
2015	5.4%	13.75%	18%
2016	7.4%	11.5%	25%
2017	7%	13%	19%
2018	6.4%	17.5%	24.1%
2021	10%	20%	28%

3.70 **Grange University Hospital, Cwmbran** - First proposed in 2004 and finally opened in November 2020; the 471 bed, 55,000m² new build (£360m) Grange University Hospital, within a 60 acre suite, serves over 600,000 people in South-East Wales (Gwent and south Powys); and provides emergency and urgent care (a 24-hour specialist assessment facility, intensive care facilities, and comprehensive diagnostic facilities, inpatient beds for major emergencies and complex surgery, and theatres) and brings together services previously provided at the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport and Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny. The hospital created over 600 jobs during its construction; and now employs over 3,000 people, with circa 600 staff on shift at any one time.

- It is considered that whilst now being a valuable major regional facility, the delay in opening the Grange University Hospital has had an impact on the timing of the associated benefits of housing / employment demand following its completion; given it was envisaged to be completed much earlier in the LDP strategy / plan period.

3.71 Torfaen's 21 Century Schools Programme / other educational asset developments - is progressing as follows: -

1. The replacement Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School, built on the site of the old school, was opened in November 2019;
2. The new Council / Coleg Gwent Torfaen Learning Zone (sixth form centre), south of the Morrisons superstore and within the Cwmbran Eastern Strip SAA1, was opened in January / April 2021;
3. In December 2017, the Welsh Government approved, in principle, the Council's Band B proposals for the 21st Century Schools Programme (2019-2024), which would deliver: -
 - a new and extended school on the current Maendy Primary school site in Cwmbran;
 - a new 3-16 Roman Catholic school, replacing St Albans secondary school (Pontypool) and St David's and Our Lady of the Angels primary schools in Cwmbran - plans for which were abandoned in December 2019 by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese; and
 - significant refurbishments at Ysgol Cwmbran and Ysgol Bryn Onnen (in Varteg, Pontypool);
4. In September 2018 the Welsh Government announced support, subject to a statutory consultation (which was completed in June 2019), to extend the age range (to 3-18 years) of the current Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw Welsh-medium comprehensive school (11-18) in Trevethin, Pontypool - the new primary provision of which is set to open in September 2022;
5. There is a 50-place extension at Crownbridge School, in Croesyceiliog, due to open in January 2024, statutory consultation for which has now been completed (January 2021);
6. Negotiations continue with the applicant / landowner as regards to the allocated primary school to serve the Mamhilad SAA4 mixed use site which, has been granted planning permission subject to the provision of an associated S106 Planning Agreement; and finally
7. Coleg Gwent and developers are working up proposals for their now closed Pontypool College site, which is allocated for housing in the LDP (Policy H2/2). However, more should be known for the 2022 AMR.
 - In writing the LDP the Council was aware of its school proposals, even though they could not be fully integrated into the Plan; which is considered flexible enough to accommodate them without the need for a review. It is expected that, as provided for by the LDP, new primary school capacity to accommodate LDP housing sites, especially in Cwmbran South & East, can be provided through the 21st Century Schools Programme with appropriate S106 funding if necessary. A planning application for the redevelopment of Pontypool College, which is allocated for up to 140 dwellings, will hopefully be submitted shortly, and will be revisited in the 2022 AMR once more information is known. Therefore, it is considered that Torfaen's 21st Century Schools Programme and other educational asset developments currently have no significant implications for the LDP.

4. Local Development Plan Strategy & Policy Monitoring

- 4.1 The 2021 AMR is the sixth monitoring report to be prepared following adoption of the Torfaen LDP in December 2013. The purpose of the monitoring process is to review whether the policies of the LDP are being implemented and the plan strategy being delivered.
- 4.2 The following overview of the LDP monitoring data provides an insight into the implementation of the LDP over the last 24 months (1st April 2019 - 31st March 2021). As this is the sixth AMR, we are able to draw comparisons of trends over time.
- 4.3 An overview of the LDP Monitoring Data for the 2021 AMR provides an interesting insight into the implementation of the LDP over the monitoring period. In addition, in combination with the 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 AMRs, trends can be identified over the wider monitoring period. Table 4.5 of this AMR (page 50) includes details of the 'required and key indicators' specified by Welsh Government in DPMv3. Similarly, Table 4.2 (page 44) and Table 4.3 (page 45) provides information on the delivery of LDP strategic sites and all other site allocations, respectively. Of particular note are the following monitoring results identified between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2021: -

Housing

- As regards the 'housing trajectory' required by DPMv3, over the next five years, it is forecast that an average of 392 dwellings per annum (dpa) will be built in Torfaen; which is above the Torfaen LDP 'Average Annual Requirement' (AAR) of 308 dpa. [Therefore, this demonstrates that housing supply will not run out in the County Borough before the new Torfaen RLDP is adopted (hopefully in October 2023); which is an important 'material consideration' in the determination of residential planning applications / appeals];
- The Torfaen LDP Policy S5, sets a 4,700 dwellings housebuilding target over the 2006 to 2021 plan period, and by 1st April 2021, 3,480 dwellings (74%) had been built (of which 2,337 were market dwellings and 1,143 were affordable dwellings). The remaining 1,220 dwellings (26%) are expected to be delivered within the next three years; [which should be seen as a success of the plan when considering the effects of two major periods of economic recession, Brexit and the pandemic on housing delivery during the 15 year plan period];
- The plan has performed very well in terms of enabling the provision of affordable housing; with a further 240 affordable units being delivered in the last two years. To date against the LDP Policy H4 - 1,132 dwellings target; 1,143 dwellings or 101% has now been delivered;
- An Outline Planning Application and Listed Building Application was approved subject to the signing of a S106 Agreement, in July 2020, for part of this major mixed-use regeneration scheme at the Mamhilad Strategic Action Area near Pontypool (LDP Policy SAA4);
- Detailed planning permissions were granted (in January 2019 and June 2021) for the remaining two residential phases and neighbourhood centre of the Llantarnam Strategic Action Area (LDP Policy SAA3); and
- Full planning permission was granted (May 2020) for the construction of 143 dwellings on the County Hall part of LDP housing site H1/1.

Employment

- 12.7ha (32%) of the allocated 40.3ha of LDP employment sites (excluding the two (35.0ha) regional employment sites added for flexibility) were delivered in the plan period, with a further 3.7ha (9%) currently under construction, and a further 6.9ha (17%) expected to be developed in the next 1-2 years.
- The allocated (Policy EET2/6) Usk Vale employment site at Mamhilad is almost built out; with Phases 1-3 (4.1ha / 10,640m²) already built; and Phase 4 (2.6ha / 5,899m²) is under construction, and will hopefully be completed in 2021; and
- Gwent Police's new, £32m headquarters in Llantarnam (on LDP employment sites EET2/1&3 - 1.1ha) is well under way. Building work began in November 2019 and is expected to be completed shortly.

Minerals

- In March 2021, the Welsh Minister endorsed the SWRAWP Regional Technical Statement 2nd Review; which now requires TCBC to make a crushed rock aggregate apportionment in its LDP/RLDP; the tonnage for which is yet to be confirmed as there was an error in its calculation. [The matter is to be brought before Council when WG formally confirm the actual tonnage, which is expected shortly].

Rail Infrastructure

- The allocated Pontypool & New Inn Park and Ride scheme (LDP Policy T1/2) was granted planning permission in May 2020.

Health Infrastructure

- the regional 471 bed, 55,000m² new build (£360m) Grange University Hospital element of LDP Policy SAA7, opened in November 2020. The build of the hospital created over 600 jobs during its construction; and now employs over 3,000 people, with circa 600 staff on shift at any one time.

Education Infrastructure

- A replacement Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School opened in January 2020; and
- The new Coleg Gwent Torfaen Learning Zone (6th Form College) element of LDP Policy SAA1 opened in January / April 2021.

Flooding

- No applications for residential or employment uses have been approved in a C2 flood zone between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2021.

S106 Contributions from new development

- Under LDP Policy S8 on 'Planning Obligations', through planning permissions granted during the 2019-2021 monitoring period, alongside provision of affordable housing, financial contributions totalling £296,125 were negotiated by planning from new development, for the provision of community facilities: including highways and canal improvements, open space, adult recreation, children's play, etc. as follows:-

Location (Development)	S106 details		
	Infrastructure - £	Paid	Affordable Units
New Road Farm, Blaenavon (50 dwellings)	Adult Recreation - £58,800 Children's Play - £24,400	pending viability review	0*

Kemys Fawr, Pontypool (32 dwellings)	Adult Recreation - £36,352 Children's Play - £27,452 Open Space - £7,168	yes yes yes	32
Trico, Pontypool (Aldi Food store)	Canal improvements - £30,000	yes	N/A
Yew Tree Inn, Cwmbran (11 dwellings)	Adult Recreation - £12,496 Children's Play - £5,588 Open Space - £2,464	yes yes yes	11
Former Pontypool Hospital (34 dwellings)	Adult Recreation - £38,624 Children's Play - £1,611	not yet due	9
Cold Stores, Llantarnam (48 dwellings)	Pedestrian Crossing - £35,778	yes	14
Penygarn Heights, Trevechin (2 dwellings)	Affordable Housing - £12,104 Children's Play - £1,016 Adult Recreation - £2,272	yes yes yes	£ payment
TOTALS	£296,125	£172,690	66*

* Whilst no affordable units were secured in the S106 for the New Road Farm site; 25 units were subsequently secured on the site using WG social housing grant.

LDP Strategy Monitoring

- 4.4 The following 'traffic-light' system colour scheme is used to monitor actions in implementing the Torfaen LDP objectives: -

Figure 4.1: Torfaen LDP Objectives - Monitoring Actions

Continue Monitoring
Officer Training; Production of Supplementary Planning Guidance / Development Briefs; or Policy Research Required
Policy Review or Plan/Strategy Review Required

- 4.5 Table 4.1 below summarises the results of the monitoring with respect to each of the 18 LDP Objectives. The results of previous AMRs are also shown to indicate whether there has been a change in the situation from 2015 to 2021.

Table 4.1: LDP Strategy Monitoring - Summary							
LDP Objectives		AMR					
		2021	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
1	To ensure the provision of an appropriate quality & range of employment sites and retail opportunities to support high and stable levels of employment in Torfaen and deliver a competitive, modern and sustainable economic and thriving town centres						
2	To promote health and well-being through the provision of development including community facilities, leisure and outdoor recreational opportunities, accessible to all						
3	To ensure that the location of development does not result in unacceptable risk from flooding, subsidence or health hazards						
4	To ensure the highest quality of design in all developments and delivering safe, healthy and attractive environments						
5	To provide opportunities for the establishment of a network of quality educational facilities						

	which serve local communities and are accessible for all sections of the current and future population						
6	To protect, manage and enhance sustainable tourist attractions and facilities in Torfaen for the benefit of tourists and the community						
7	To conserve and enhance the distinctive cultural and historic resources of the County Borough						
8 & 11	To ensure that all new development reflects best practise in sustainable design and location, construction and operation AND To minimise climate change impacts through reduced emissions of greenhouse gases in both new and existing development, and to adapt to climate change through considerations of its effects in the design and location of new development						
9	To allocate mineral sites if required and safeguard appropriate mineral resources from sterilization						
10	To protect, manage and enhance biodiversity and ecological networks across Torfaen						
12	To protect and enhance the valued landscape character of Torfaen, including important open space and sense of rurality between settlements						
13	To protect Greenfield land by enabling and promoting the most efficient use of appropriate brownfield sites for redevelopment across Torfaen						
14	To ensure all development contributes to improving water quality, protecting water supply and maximising the efficiency of water consumption						
15	To identify and conserve important soil and geological resources including Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and maintain their quality						
16	To ensure the allocation of an appropriate quantity and variety of housing sites to deliver high quality choice in sustainable locations, well served by essential facilities and accessible by a range of transport modes						
17	To develop integrated and efficient transport infrastructure, public transport and communication networks which are accessible and attractive to all, and encourage a reduction in private car use						
18	To ensure people and organisations reduce, reuse and recycle waste and to foster this through the provision of regional and local waste management facilities						

- 4.6 From Table 4.1 above it can be seen that the monitoring has shown that for 11 of the 18 LDP Objectives the indicators suggest the LDP policies are being implemented effectively and no further action is required.
- 4.7 The monitoring has shown that for a further 7 of the LDP Objectives the indicators suggest the LDP policies are not currently being achieved, and that in relation to 3 the situation cannot be addressed without a full review of the Plan (i.e. Objectives 1, 9 & 16). A short summary of the main reasons why these objectives have been indicated as not being achieved is provided below.
- **Objective 1 - Delivery of Employment Sites (Red)** - Delivery of allocated employment land is below the 40.3ha of LDP target; with 12.7ha (32%) having been built by 2021, a further 3.7ha (9%) currently under construction, and a further 6.9ha (17%) expected to be developed in the next 1-2 years. In addition, the majority of small allocated employment sites in Cwmbran have all been sold or are under construction; and from evidence of Torfaen companies relocating, enquiries/demand and the Torfaen Employment Land Study (March 2020), all have shown there is a qualitative lack of serviced sites, especially for multiple large business requirements. The need for available and deliverable employment sites of all sizes to meet demand, the rolling forward of existing allocations, and the protection of existing employment land / premises will be key issues for the LDP Review.
 - **Objective 9 - Provision of an Aggregate Landbank (Red)** - The SWRAWP Regional Technical Statement 2nd Review (RTS2), endorsed by the Welsh Minister in March 2021, now requires the Council to make an 'apportionment' of 258,000 tonnes of crushed rock aggregate per year in its LDP Review (2018-2033) and 10 years thereafter; which equates to a total of 6.441 Million tonnes of primary aggregate 'apportionment'. However, this apportionment was based upon a calculation error relating to historical housing completions in Torfaen, and Officers have asked the Welsh Government to make a correction via a 'Clarification Letter'; which if accepted, would result in a reduced 150,000 tonnes per year (3.75 Million tonnes in total) apportionment for Torfaen and a proportional increase for other Mineral Planning Authorities in South East Wales to make up any regional shortfall. However, a planning application for part (4.75 Million tonnes) of the 7.2 Million tonnes LDP aggregate allocation (Policy M3) at Tir Pentwys Quarry, near Pontypool, was refused by the Council and upheld at appeal by the Welsh Minister, mainly for an unsatisfactory access road. Therefore, Torfaen does not have a permitted aggregate 'landbank' to satisfy this LDP monitoring objective. This requirement will now be addressed when Council considers endorsing RTS2 shortly and has already been recognised as a matter to be addressed in the RLDP Preferred Strategy.
 - **Objective 16 - Delivery of Housing Target (Red)** - After a slow start due to the great recession at the end of 2007 and delays in bringing strategic sites forward, the LDP started to enable the delivery of the required dwelling numbers in both 2018/19 & 2019/20, as several Strategic and large windfall sites came on stream. However, the effect the Covid-19 pandemic took delivery back down below the required level in 2020-21. Therefore, by 1st April 2021, of the Torfaen LDP Policy S5, 4,700 dwellings housebuilding target over the plan period, 3,480 dwellings (74%) had been built. However, with a number of allocated sites now being implemented (South Sebastopol, Llantarnam, and the Former Police College (Phase 2)); and a large windfall site at the Former Llantarnam Comprehensive, along with recently permitted sites (County Hall, Llantarnam (Malthouse Lane) and

Mamhilad (part) (subject to S106)) or sites with an expected planning application shortly (Former Police College (Phase 3) and Pontypool College) build rates should see a significant upturn in the next few years. However, this will not meet the required remaining LDP housing target until mid-2024; but in conclusion the greater majority of the LDP housing sites were deliverable, but over a longer time period than first envisaged. Finally, this situation is not likely to occur with the RLDP, because of the DPMv3 requirements at an early plan stage, for a 'housing trajectory' to be prepared alongside robust evidence of site deliverability and viability.

LDP Policy Monitoring

- 4.8 Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below show a monitoring summary of the progress of every LDP Strategic Action Area and site allocation or proposal respectively, with any actions the Council proposes to take to aid in their implementation also listed.

Table 4.2: Strategic Action Area Monitoring - Summary			
Site		Progress	Actions
SAA1	Eastern Strip Central, Cwmbran	This brownfield strategic mixed use site has already received planning permission; the Morrisons store and Torfaen Leaning Zone are now built; the 5.6ha B2 Meritor factory has been reduced in size, retained & refurbished; and the residual 2.7ha B1 / Hotel site is now ready to be developed.	Continue ongoing discussions with landowners to bring forward the remaining elements of this regeneration scheme.
SAA2	Canalside, Cwmbran	This brownfield strategic mixed-use site is allocated in the LDP for 150 dwellings. No planning application has been submitted to date and therefore delivery is behind schedule	Work on going to look at opportunities by the Council's Planning Policy and Regeneration teams to bring this site forward for redevelopment in whole or in part
SAA3	Llantarnam, Cwmbran	Majority of site obtained outline planning permission (July 2015) for up to 450 dwellings, B1 employment uses and a neighbourhood centre. So far 102 dwellings have been built; 22 dwellings and neighbourhood centre approved in January 2019 (subject to S106); with a further 164 dwellings approved June 2021. So, a total of 288 rather than the 450 dwellings envisaged in the LDP are likely to be delivered on this site. Employment uses are not being progressed and residential Candidate Site submitted on Cottage Farm land - rejected in dCSAR.	Progress the completion of the associated S106 Agreements. Continue discussions with landowners to bring forward the remaining employment elements (8ha).
SAA4	Mamhilad, Pontypool	Outline Planning Application approved subject to S106 Agreement, in July 2020, for approx. 2/3 (brownfield element) of the site for a mixed-use	Progress the completion of the associated S106 Agreement; and liaise with the remaining

		development - including, housing, open space, a primary school and re-use of the Grade II* Listed Building.	landowner to establish if the residual (greenfield) residential allocation will be pursued in due course.
SAA5	The British, Talywain, Pontypool	This brownfield land reclamation site, within the Pontypool Housing Sub-Market Area, is not likely to involve new built development within the Plan Period. The site has been bought by the Council and a Cleaning and Greening scheme for the reclamation and subsequent regeneration and redevelopment of this key site in North Torfaen is being progressed.	The Council to continue progressing proposals for the site
SAA6	South Sebastopol, Cwmbran	This large greenfield site obtained outline planning permission in 2014; with several reserved matters applications being approved since on a phased basis. Construction has commenced on site by three developers who have delivered 382 dwellings by April 2021 and are expected to deliver the remaining 818 units in due course.	Continue to facilitate delivery of this scheme through the Development Management process
SAA7	Llanfrechfa Grange, Cwmbran	Whilst planning permission was granted in 2014 for the Grange University Hospital (GUH), WG did not confirm that it would invest around £350 million in the new hospital until October 2016. Construction started in July 2017, and the hospital opened in November 2020. The remaining residential, transport & employment elements are unlikely to be delivered in the form envisaged in the LDP; and are now being considered via a new larger mixed used allocation proposed in the Torfaen RLDP Preferred Strategy.	Work commenced in relation to planning a future proposed development that is to be considered as part of a wider area in the RLDP.

Table 4.3: LDP Site Allocations Monitoring - Summary

Site		Progress	Actions
H1/1	County Hall & Police HQ, Llanyravon - 220 dwellings	County Hall part of site permitted for 143 dwellings (with condition to enter into a S106). Site sold to developer by the Council.	Encourage signing of S106 and construction of County Hall site & submission of planning application for Police HQ site
H1/2	Former Police College & Adj. Land, St. Dials - 350 dwellings	Phase 1 completed and Phase 2 under construction. Phase 3 submitted as residential RLDP candidate site -	Continue to press landowners to investigate biodiversity issues relating to Phase

		rejected on biodiversity grounds in dCSAR	3 and consider accordingly.
H1/3	Former Belle Vue Nursery, St. Dials - 16 dwellings	Site completed	No action necessary
H1/4	Ty'r-ywen Farm, Fairwater - 25 dwellings	Site sold by Council; planning application submitted.	Determine current planning application, but policy concerns over GI (SINC and green corridor) and unsustainable location contrary to FW & PPW11.
H2/1	Former Trevethin School, Penygarn - 115 dwellings	Site completed	No action necessary
H2/2	Animal Pound & Adjacent Land, Wainfelin - 135 dwellings	Site stalled. Not being progressed	Site stalled. Encourage & support site planning application from landowners
H2/3	Pontypool College, Cwmynyscoy - 140 dwellings	Site vacated (by January 2021) and put to the market; with interested housing developers now on-board.	Encourage and support landowner / developers to submit planning application.
H2/4	Coal Yard, Station Road, Panteg - 15 dwellings	Site now in one land ownership and being considered by housing developer.	Encourage & support site landowner to submit planning application and bring the site forward.
H3/1	Garn-yr-Erw Terrace, Blaenavon - 26 dwellings	Site stalled and landowner unlikely to bring forward as unviable. Planning application disposed off	No action necessary
H3/2	Blaenavon Health Centre, Blaenavon - 17 dwellings	Site was occupied for employment uses, following change of use permission in 2015, but now vacant. Residential RLDP Candidate Site submitted and being evaluated.	Encourage and support landowner / developer to submit residential planning application, subject to protection of employment premises LDP Policy EET5.
H3/3	St Peters School, Blaenavon - 18 dwellings	Site recently cleared	Encourage and support landowner to bring site forward
H3/4	Hillside School, Blaenavon - 64 dwellings	Site completed	No action required
H3/5	Land off Giles Road, Blaenavon - 25 dwellings	Site recently put to market and purchased by a housing developer	Encourage and support developer to bring site forward
H3/6	Old Co-op, 39-43 High Street, Abersychan - 24 dwellings	Site unlikely to be brought forward in the plan period	No action required

H7/1	Rose Cottage, Pontypool - 10 pitches	Currently stalled invalid planning application for site	Encourage & support progressing planning application and site delivery
H7/2	Former Race AFC Football Pitch, Pontypool - 32 G&T pitches	Granted full planning permission in January 2015 for 31 G&T pitches. 10 pitches completed.	Council to monitor demand and consider implementation of further phase(s)
EET1/1	Ty Coch Way, Two Locks	Site now built out - 1.4ha delivered	No action required
EET1/2	Llantarnam Park A	Site permitted & under construction for Gwent Police HQ	No action required
EET1/3	Llantarnam Park B	Site permitted & under construction for Gwent Police HQ	No action required
EET1/4	Llantarnam Park C	No planning application - Site recently sold	Encourage and promote site development
EET2/1	Former Gas Works Site, New Inn	0.9ha granted permission as part of household waste recycling centre (now built) - 1.2ha remaining	Encourage and promote site development
EET2/2	Lower Mill Field (North), Pontymoile	No Planning permission - undeveloped	Encourage and promote site development
EET2/3	Lower Mill Field (South), Pontymoile	No Planning permission - undeveloped	Encourage and promote site development
EET2/4	Land South of Travel Lodge, Pontymoile	No Planning permission - undeveloped	Encourage and promote site development
EET2/5	Mamhilad Business Park	No Planning permission - undeveloped, but interest from adjacent firms to expand here	Encourage and promote site development
EET2/6	Usk Vale, Mamhilad	Planning applications approved for Phases 1-4 (Phase 1-3 built and Phase 4 U/C)	No action required
EET3/1	Varteg Road, Garndiffaith, Pontypool	Site developed for car parking purposes	No action required
EET3/2	Gilchrist Thomas Ind. Est., Blaenavon	Site has been part developed (0.7ha) - 0.5ha remaining.	Encourage and promote site development
EET3/3	Kays and Kears, Blaenavon	Land sold by WG. Landowner has proposed RLDP employment Candidate Site and planning application PAC consulted upon for 1/3 of site	Encourage and promote site development - consider candidate site in RLDP
EET4/1	Craig Y Felin, Cwmbran	No planning permission and landowner not progressing 100%	Encourage and promote site development of this

		employment site, but submitted as a 100% residential candidate site (rejected in dCSAR) but allocated in RLDP: Preferred Strategy for mixed use scheme	key LDP/RLDP strategic site
EET4/2	Former Ty Coch Tip, Cwmbran	14.0ha Site not suitable for employment - landowner has proposed RLDP Candidate Site for a 3MW solar farm (5.73ha) (now permitted October 2019) and a canal-based tourism facility.	None required - consider tourism candidate site in RLDP
RLT2/1	Cwmbran Town Centre (Eastern Side)	No Planning permission - taking account of current retail demand it is considered that this specific expansion area is no longer required.	No action required
T1/1	North Torfaen Highway Improvements	All the highway schemes will be completed by March 2022.	No action required
T1/2	Pontypool & New Inn Park and Ride	A planning application was approved in May 2020 for the construction of a car park, access slip roads from the A4042; a new passenger footbridge / lift and improved station facilities.	No action required
T1/3	Cwmbran Town Centre Improvements	Part completed through Morrison's / Arvin Meritor schemes under SAA1 Still requires public funding to complete	Continue seeking public funds; and relevant S106 / S278 schemes.
T1/4	Llanfrechfa Grange Link Road	The link road, residential & employment elements are unlikely to be delivered in the form envisaged in the LDP; and are now being considered via a new larger mixed-use allocation proposed in the Torfaen RLDP Preferred Strategy	Integrate into proposals for the Llanfrechfa SAA in the Torfaen RLDP.
T3/1	NCN492 Varteg Road Bridge to Blaenavon Town Centre	Scheme implemented	No action required

T3/2	NCN492 to Abersychan Town Centre	Awaiting investigation	Outline	Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
T3/3	Abersychan Town Centre to NCN492 at Merchant's Hill, Pontypool	Scheme implemented		No action required
T3/4	Pontypool & New Inn Train Station to Pontypool Town Centre.	Awaiting investigation	Outline	Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
T3/5	Pontypool & New Inn Train Station to Mamhilad	It has recently been decided by WG and SWTRA to include this scheme within the A4042 Corridor WeITAG study		Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
T3/6	Usk (Monmouthshire) to Coed-y-Gric Road, Griffithstown	Parts of the current and future Active Travel Network may provide partial links. An Active Travel route on Usk Road between the Horse & Jockey roundabout and the canal towpath has been designed. The canal towpath does have an existing access at Coed-y-Gric, but not to Active Travel standards.		Liaise with Highways with planning input if necessary
M3	Tir Pentwys Preferred Area for Aggregates	Planning application refused by TCBC and appeal refused by Welsh Minister for part of site. Site re-submitted as a RLDP Candidate Site by landowner with a proposed new northern access - currently being assessed.		Liaise with landowner to establish if a new planning application will be submitted, subject to assessment of proposed new northern access.
CF1	Blaenavon Primary Care Resource Centre	Scheme Completed		None required
CF2	Panteg Primary School	School opened February 2017		None required
CF6	Playing Field - Eastern Fields, Cwmyrnyscoy	Uneconomic to develop new playing field due to excessively high remediation costs (£753,600 + land costs). However, Council is now looking to identify another playing field site in the locality		Council to continue pursuing other playing field sites in the locality

4.9 Table 4.4 below details LDP policies where there are issues with their effectiveness either in part or as a whole. All other LDP policies are considered to be performing effectively. Table 4.4 also details the actions the Council will undertake to remedy these LDP performance issues.

Table 4.4: LDP Policy Effectiveness Monitoring - Summary			
Policy		Issue	Actions
S1	Urban Boundaries	The British SAA5 - Regeneration area is included within the Urban Boundary. Concern that the inclusion of the wider site in the urban area is encouraging potential sporadic, piecemeal development in this area, not part of a comprehensive regeneration scheme. Similarly, the urban boundary around Varteg allowed the implementation of a residential scheme allowed at appeal. This permission has now lapsed, and the settlement is now not considered sustainable in relation to Future Wales Policy 2 and guidance in PPW11.	Review of urban boundaries to be considered in RLDP; Future Wales and PPW 11 should be considered in relation to the determination of planning applications.
S5	Housing	Only 3,480 dwellings have been completed which is below the LDP target of delivery of 4,700 dwellings by 2021.	Plan assessed as requiring review. Implement actions from Tables 4.2 & 4.3 above
S6	Employment and Economy	Behind on delivery of employment land on allocated LDP Sites. However, an identified lack of readily available sites for new development. New employment opportunities required to meet demand	Whilst the allocated sites have yet to be developed there is an identified lack of available sites for new development. The protection of existing employment sites and the need for the identification of new employment opportunities should be a priority
HE1	Buildings and Structures of Local Importance	Policy not effectively being used; as the	Council to develop programme of

		Heritage SPG / 'Local List' and associated Article 4 Direction (to remove demolition Permitted Development rights) has not yet been prepared / made	Conservation work including Heritage SPG, 'Local List' and associated Article 4 Direction
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Legislative and Key Indicators

4.10 DPMv3, March 2020 (Table 29, page 185) requires that all monitoring frameworks include a range of 'Legislative and Key indicators'; Table 4.5 below reports on the results for these indicators. Neither the LDP Regulations nor DPMv3 set out a requirement to analyse the information set out in respect of the mandatory indicators. Albeit, many of these indicators are included in the LDP Monitoring Framework and are thus subject to analysis and consideration as part of the monitoring process.

Table 4.5: Legislative and Key Indicators	
Indicators Required by Legislation	
Number of net additional affordable and market dwellings built in the LPA area.	Over the 2006 to 2021 plan period, 3,480 (net) dwellings were built in Torfaen, of which 2,337 were market and 1,143 were affordable. In 2019-2020, 445 (net) dwellings were built in Torfaen; of which 317 were market and 128 were affordable. In 2020-2021, 278 (net) dwellings were built in Torfaen; of which 166 were market and 112 were affordable.
Key Indicators Applicable to all Plans	
Spatial distribution of housing development	Policy S5 of the Torfaen LDP set a 4,700 dwelling housing target between 2006 and 2021, split between three Housing Sub-Market Areas (which generally correspond with the three towns in the settlement hierarchy) as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Torfaen (Blaenavon and North Pontypool) = 550 dwellings - 497 dwellings delivered (90.4%); Pontypool (mid and south) = 1,875 dwellings - 1,122 dwellings delivered (59.8%); and Cwmbran (south & east and north & west combined) = 2,275 dwellings - 1,862 dwellings delivered (81.8%)
The <u>annual</u> level of housing completions monitored against the Average Annual Requirement (AAR)	The AAR for the Torfaen LDP is 4,700 dwellings target / 15.25 years plan period = 308 dwellings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019/20, 445 dwellings were built = +137 dwellings / +45% against the AAR In 2020/21, 278 dwellings were built = -30 dwellings / -10% against the AAR <p>The LDP Policy S5 envisaged the delivery of the 4,700 dwelling (2006-2021). However, housing targets for large windfall and small windfall sites were not set until the Deposit LDP using April 2010 as the start date; as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Windfall Sites (2010 to 2021 = 300 dwellings target); and 404 such dwellings were delivered over this period = +104 dwelling / +35%; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large Windfall Sites (2010 to 2021 = 289 dwellings target); and 1,054 such dwellings were delivered over this period = +765 dwelling / +265%.
Total cumulative completions monitored against the cumulative average annual housing requirement.	The Torfaen LDP Policy S5 , set a 4,700 dwellings housebuilding target over the 2006 to 2021 plan period, and by 1 st April 2021, 3,480 dwellings (74%) had been built, some 1,220 dwellings (26%) short of the target.
The level of affordable housing completions monitored against the plan's overarching target. The tenure of affordable housing completions.	<p>The Torfaen LDP Policy H4, set a 1,132 dwellings (24.1% of all completions) affordable housing target over the 2006 to 2021 plan period, and by 1st April 2021, some 1,143 affordable dwellings had been built; which equates to 32.8% of all completions.</p> <p>DPMv3 states “A separate indicator should monitor the tenure split (social rented and intermediate) in line with need identified in the LHMA” - Unfortunately, given that this indicator was only introduced in March 2020, no data has been collected on the tenure split of affordable housing provided over the plan period 2006-2021.</p>
Employment land take-up against allocations. Job growth.	<p>Allocated LDP employment sites have been taken up as follows: -</p> <p>EET1/1 - Ty Coch Way, Two Locks: Site now built out - 1.4ha delivered;</p> <p>EET1/2 - Llantarnam Park A (0.7ha): Site permitted & under construction for Gwent Police HQ;</p> <p>EET1/3 - Llantarnam Park B (0.4ha): Site permitted & under construction for Gwent Police HQ;</p> <p>EET1/4 - Llantarnam Park C (1.4ha): Site recently sold for employment uses and planning application expected shortly;</p> <p>EET2/1 Former Gas Works Site, New Inn: 0.9ha used for household waste recycling centre - 1.2ha remaining;</p> <p>EET2/2 - Lower Mill Field (North), Pontymoile (1.2ha): No Planning permission - undeveloped;</p> <p>EET2/3 - Lower Mill Field (South), Pontymoile (0.5ha): No Planning permission - undeveloped;</p> <p>EET2/4 - Land South of Travel Lodge, Pontymoile (2.1ha): No Planning permission - undeveloped;</p> <p>EET2/5 - Mamhilad Business Park (3.0ha): Undeveloped, but interest from adjacent firms to expand here, with planning applications expected shortly;</p> <p>EET2/6 - Usk Vale, Mamhilad (6.7ha): Planning applications approved for Phases 1-4 (Phases 1-3 (4.1ha / 10,640m²) built and Phase 4 (2.6ha / 5,899m²) currently under construction);</p> <p>EET3/1 - Varteg Road, Garndiffaith, Pontypool (0.8ha): Site developed for alternative car parking purposes;</p> <p>EET3/2 - Gilchrist Thomas Ind. Est., Blaenavon: Site has been part developed (0.7ha) - 0.5ha remaining with interest to develop shortly;</p> <p>EET3/3 - Kays and Kears, Blaenavon (6.0ha): Land sold by WG. Landowner has proposed RLDP employment Candidate Site and planning application PAC consulted upon for 2ha of site;</p>

EET4/1 - Craig Y Felin, Cwmbran (21.0ha): No planning permission and landowner not progressing 100% employment site, but submitted as a 100% residential candidate site (rejected in dCSAR) but allocated in RLDP: Preferred Strategy for mixed use scheme; and

EET4/2 - Former Ty Coch Tip, Cwmbran (14.0): Site not suitable for employment - landowner has proposed RLDP Candidate Site for a 3MW solar farm (5.73ha) (permitted October 2019) and a canal-based tourism facility.

SAA1: Eastern Strip Central, Cwmbran - (2.7ha B1/hotel & 5.6ha B2) - 5.6ha B2 site retained as a refurbished Meritor factory; only 2.7ha B1/hotel site remains and is being marketed as such.

SAA3: Llantarnam, Cwmbran - (8ha B1) no progress; and residential candidate site submitted on Cottage Farm land under the RLDP, but rejected in dCSAR.

SAA7: Llanfrechfa Grange, Cwmbran - (8.4ha total, 4.8ha in plan period) - no progress, employment land now being considered under the new RLDP Llanfrechfa SAA, through the Council's 'medi-park' proposals on alternative land to the south of the new hospital; as well as further hospital developments.

In summary, based upon the above information, Table 4.6 below (based upon LDP 'Appendix 7: Employment Allocations Table') shows that **12.7ha** of the required **40.3ha (32%)** (17% including regional sites, which were added for flexibility) of the LDP employment allocations were delivered in the plan period, with a further 3.7ha (9%) currently under construction (U/C), and a further 6.9ha (17%) expected to be developed in the next few years.

Table 4.6: Employment land take-up against allocations

Employment Allocations	Allocated (ha)	Delivered (ha)	U/C	Anticipated (1-2 years)
Cwmbran	16.7ha	7.0ha (42%)	1.1ha	1.4ha
Pontypool	15.6ha	5.0ha (32%)	2.6ha	3.0ha
North Torfaen	8.0ha	0.7ha (9%)	0ha	2.5ha
LDP Sub Total	40.3ha	12.7ha (32%)	3.7ha (9%)	6.9ha (17%)
Regional	35.0ha	0ha (0%)	0ha	0ha
TOTAL	75.3ha	12.7ha (17%)	3.7ha (5%)	6.9ha (9%)

"Indicators monitoring Class B job growth in line with the strategy"
 - Again, given that this indicator was only introduced in March 2020, no jobs growth target was set in the adopted LDP (December 2013); and thus, cannot be monitored.

Delivery of affordable housing policy - thresholds and percentage targets for each sub-market area.

"To monitor the delivery of affordable housing in line with policy targets and thresholds in each sub-market area (where relevant) including any deviation above or below the target." - Again, given that this indicator was only introduced in March 2020, whilst a site size threshold and affordable housing % target was set in LDP

	<p>Policy H4 for each housing sub-market area, it was never monitored.</p>
Viability	<p>House Prices - In the two year AMR monitoring period between April 2019 and March 2021, the Land Registry House Price Index (HPI) for the resale of existing properties, shows that the average second hand house price in Torfaen has risen from £146,072 to £164,232; a rise of £18,160 / 12.4%.</p> <p>For new build properties, the HPI data shows that the average house price in Torfaen, over the same period, has risen from £270,434 to £300,720; a rise of £30,286 / 11.2%.</p> <p>Land Values - very little comparable data exists for land sales, so this factor has not been monitored to establish trends.</p> <p>Build Costs - The average build cost for an estate dwelling (using the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) mean average tender price adjusted for Torfaen) in April 2019 was £1,132m² (gross internal floor area) (using the BCIS locational index of 90%); compared to £1,154m² in March 2021 (using the BCIS locational index of 91%). A rise of £22m² (2%) over the 2-year AMR monitoring period.</p>
The rate of development on key allocations (completions linked to phasing trajectories and infrastructure schemes, where appropriate).	<p>Firstly, given that such requirements were not introduced until the publication of the DPMv3 in March 2020, the rate of development of the following strategic sites cannot be considered against the anticipated trajectory, placemaking principles and delivery appendix; as these were not set in the LDP.</p> <p>However, key development (strategic) sites in the plan have been monitored in the detailed Table 4.2, but in summary: -</p> <p>SAA1: Eastern Strip Central, Cwmbran - This brownfield mixed use site has already received planning permission; the Morrisons store and Torfaen Leaning Zone are now built; the Meritor factory has been reduced in size, retained & refurbished; and the residual 2.7ha B1 / Hotel site is now ready to be developed.</p> <p>SAA2: Canalside, Cwmbran - No planning application has been submitted for this brownfield mixed-use site in its current form due to viability issues; and therefore, delivery is behind schedule.</p> <p>SAA3: Llantarnam, Cwmbran - This greenfield mixed-use site has obtained planning permission (July 2015). So far 102 dwellings have been built and the remaining units (186 dwellings) and neighbourhood centre are expected to be built in the near future. So, a total of 288 rather than the 450 dwellings envisaged in the LDP are likely to be delivered on this site. The employment sites have stalled, and a developer is seeking an alternative residential use through the RLDP candidates site process, which has been rejected in the dCSAR.</p> <p>SAA4: Mamhilad, Pontypool - Outline planning application approved (subject to the signing of a S106 Agreement, which remains pending), in July 2020, for approx. 2/3 of site for a mixed-use development - including, housing, a primary school and re-use of the large Grade II* Listed Building; which are expected to be progressed in due course. Remaining 1/3 residential site unlikely to be progressed by the landowner.</p>

	<p>SAA5: The British, Talywain, Pontypool - This brownfield land reclamation site, is now not likely to involve new build residential development, as originally envisaged. The site has been bought by the Council and a 'Cleaning and Greening' scheme for the reclamation and subsequent regeneration is being progressed.</p> <p>SAA6: South Sebastopol, Cwmbran - This large greenfield site obtained outline planning permission in 2014; Construction has commenced on site by three developers who have delivered 382 dwellings so far and are expected to deliver the remaining 818 units in due course.</p> <p>SAA7:Llanfrechfa Grange, Cwmbran - This brownfield mixed use site has received planning permission for only the Grange University Hospital element (2014) which opened in November 2020. The remaining residential & employment elements are unlikely to be delivered in the form envisaged in the LDP; and are now being considered via a new larger mixed used allocation proposed in the Torfaen RLDP Preferred Strategy.</p>
<p>The delivery of key infrastructure that underpins the plan strategy.</p>	<p>Progress on delivering key road, rail, active travel, education and health infrastructure, on which the plan strategy is dependent, is as follows: -</p> <p>Road Infrastructure, as follows: -</p> <p>Policy T1/1: North Torfaen Highway Improvements - All the highway schemes will be completed by March 2022.</p> <p>Policy T1/3: Cwmbran Town Centre Improvements - Part completed through Morrison's / Arvin Meritor schemes under SAA1. Still requires public funding to complete.</p> <p>Policy T1/4: Llanfrechfa Grange Link Road - Currently part of the allocated SAA7 site at Llanfrechfa Grange under the LDP. No progress, and now linked to proposals for a larger Llanfrechfa SAA under the Torfaen RLDP: Preferred Strategy.</p> <p>Rail Infrastructure - Allocated under Policy T1/2, a planning application was submitted for the £7.1m Pontypool & New Inn Park and Ride scheme (construction of a 160 space car park (with EV charging), new slip roads access from the A4042T, a new passenger footbridge/lift and improved station facilities) in December 2019 (which was approved in May 2020; and with funding now in place, is expected to commence construction shortly).</p> <p>Active Travel Infrastructure - The greater majority of active travel routes allocated in the LDP (see Policy T3 in Table 4.3) have been delivered and continue to be delivered as funds become available.</p> <p>Education Infrastructure - Under the Council's 21st Century Schools Programme, in addition to the opening of several new or refurbished primary schools since 2006, both a replacement Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School (January 2020) and the new Torfaen Learning Zone (January / April 2021) were opened in this 2019-2021 AMR period; with further primary school re/developments planned going forward.</p>

	Health Infrastructure - the regional 471 bed Grange University Hospital element of Policy SAA7 , opened in November 2020.
The completion of Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet identified need.	<p>The Torfaen Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA, February 2016) identified a need for 6 additional pitches between 2016 - 2021, therefore, 10 new pitches were built on the Council's Lower Shepherd Hill, Pontypool site in March 2016. A new Torfaen GTAA is currently being prepared.</p> <p>The Torfaen LDP allocated two Gypsy and Traveller Sites under Policy H7: -</p> <p>The Council's Lower Shepherds Hill site, which was granted planning permission for 31 pitches in January 2015 - Phase 1 of which delivered 10 pitches in 2016, with the further two phases of 10 and 11 pitches to be delivered over time, subject to the monitoring of demand; and</p> <p>A private Rose Cottage site in Pontypool for 10 pitches, where an invalid planning application submitted in 2013 remains stalled - Council officers are currently liaising with the landowner to encourage and support progressing the planning application and site delivery.</p>
The scale / type of highly vulnerable development permitted within C2 flood risk areas.	No applications for residential or employment uses have been approved in a C2 flood zone between 1 st April 2019 and 31 st March 2021.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- 5.1 This 2021 AMR is the sixth monitoring report prepared since the adoption of the Torfaen LDP in December 2013. The findings of the AMR provide an important opportunity for the Council to assess the effectiveness of the Plan. DPMv3 (Table 31, page 190) now sets out the following five key questions to be considered in the AMR in relation to the delivery of the LDP Strategy (with Question 4 being added in 2020):-

1. What new issues have occurred in the plan area, or changes to local / national policy?

- 5.2 The AMR needs to consider whether any significant changes in local circumstances or to national legislation, regulations and policy planning have any significant implications for the LDP.
- 5.3 Nationally, the impact of Brexit and the Covid pandemic on the economy, housebuilding levels, town centres, and people's physical & mental well-being will not be truly known for some time; as businesses and people try and adapt to this new environment.
- 5.4 Welsh Government has now issued Future Wales: the national plan 2040 which is the part of the development plan for the whole of Wales; and planning decisions must be made in accordance with Future Wales unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Future Wales sets out Welsh Government land use priorities and provide a national land use framework for regional SDPs and LDPs. Planning Policy Wales (edition 11) was published alongside Future Wales; and replaced PPW10 (December 2018). It reflects the change in the Development Planning hierarchy introduced by the publication of Future Wales. PPW11 provides further emphasis on how the planning system can contribute towards tackling the climate emergency; and provides greater clarification on placemaking.
- 5.5 Regionally, there is now a statutory duty (introduced by the Welsh Government under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to prepare an SDP through a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) in 2022; which also has economic development powers and will also produce a Regional Transport Plan for the region. Therefore, whilst TCBC is proceeding with its RLDP, collaborative working will continue to be undertaken with neighbouring authorities and within the broader region to prepare a joint evidence base which, wherever possible, can also be used for an SDP in due course.
- 5.5 Locally, within Torfaen, the Council has declared a 'Climate Emergency' and consulted upon the Torfaen RLDP: Preferred Strategy and associated documents. In addition, a raft of supporting evidence has been published and is currently being prepared to inform the Deposit RLDP. Also, the new Grange University Hospital and Torfaen Learning Zone are now complete. Using the new WG methodology for monitoring housing delivery, the 2021 AMR has also concluded that housing supply (in line with the required annual growth levels in the LDP) will not run out in the County Borough before the new Torfaen RLDP is adopted. Finally, the Welsh Minister has confirmed that the Torfaen LDP remains extant until it is superseded by the adopted Torfaen RLDP; whereas previously the Council had understood that it would cease to have effect on 31st March 2021.

5.6 These contextual matters will be taken into account in the production of the replacement Torfaen LDP as none require alteration to the existing plan.

2. How relevant, appropriate and up to date is the LDP Strategy and its key policies and targets?

5.7 It is considered that the evidence collected from this sixth AMR following adoption of the LDP in 2013 indicates that the strategy, whilst still sound, is taking longer to deliver than anticipated, both in relation to housing and employment development. This can be attributed to the impacts of the 'great recession'; the uncertainties around Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic in recent years; and the delays in bringing forward key strategic sites. This sustained downturn in the economy has had a marked effect on house building rates. Whilst a number of these sites are now starting to deliver housing numbers; and this has been supplemented by some acceptable windfall sites the number being delivered are still below the projected plan targets. It is considered the plan moved in the right direction in terms of the achievement of its objectives. Viability continues to be an issue in overall house building; and this has an adverse impact on the levels of affordable housing that can be delivered through the planning system.

5.8 From a regional perspective, the LDP is assisting in the planning of future health services for the region through facilitating the delivery of the new Grange University Hospital at Llanfrechfa Grange which serves 'Gwent' and South Powys.

5.9 The development strategy remains fundamentally sound however due to slow progress there is considered a need for intervention at this stage in the form of a review of the Plan; which is now underway.

3. What sites have been developed or delayed in relation to the plan's expectations at both places and in the phasing programme (as set out in the trajectory)?

5.10 Tables 4.2 (page 44) & 4.3 (page 45) of this AMR provide a detailed analysis of the delivery of each individual LDP site allocation; and where this is behind schedule a statement to facilitate delivery.

5.11 The monitoring results indicate generally that the plan policies are performing effectively and the LDP Objectives are generally being met. Work has commenced on several allocated strategic housing sites, including: part of Llantarnam (SAA3), South Sebastopol (SAA6) and the Former Police College (H1/2). However, [despite planning approvals for the County Hall site (H1/1), the remainder of Llantarnam (SAA3) and part of the Mamhilad site (SAA4 - subject to a S106)] significant delays in bringing forward the remaining strategic sites at Canalside (SAA2), the remainder of Mamhilad (SAA4), Llanfrechfa Grange (SAA7) and the Animal Pound & Adjacent Land, Wainfelin (H2/2) has meant the plan has not delivered the housing envisaged in the plan period. However, planning applications are expected to be submitted shortly for the land adjacent to the Former Police College (H1/2 - Phase 3) and Pontypool College (H2/3).

5.12 However, the LDP allocations are being delivered, albeit in general over a longer than anticipated timescale and are contributing towards the delivery of the LDP Strategy.

4. What is the degree of variance from the anticipated annual and cumulative build rate? Is there a two-year trend of under delivery?

- 5.13 The house building rate increased in 2018/19 (359 dwellings) and in 2019/20 (445 dwellings) to levels above the 308 dwellings Average Annual Requirement (AAR) in the LDP; but decreased below the AAR in 2020/21 (278 dwellings). This reduction in the build rate level was as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic (from March 2020) which led to the closure of residential site sales offices and construction sites due to national, regional and local lockdown requirements throughout the UK. It is likely that Covid-19 and the resultant economic impact will also have a continuing effect on the build rate for 2021/22, which will be reported in the 2022 AMR. Albeit the housing market was boosted by the reduction in the Land Transaction Tax (LTT) (Stamp Duty) in Wales; which temporarily raised the LTT threshold during the pandemic from £180,000 to £250,000, in line with other UK governments. The exemption, originally for sales until March 2021, was extended to 30th June 2021.
- 5.14 As regard the cumulative build rate, the Torfaen LDP, set a 4,700 dwellings housebuilding target over the 2006 to 2021 plan period, and by 1st April 2021, 3,480 dwellings had been built, some 1,220 dwellings short of the target.
- 5.15 The Council is preparing a Replacement LDP which will need to consider this issue, amongst others, and this will be reflected in the housing trajectory for the RLDP.

5. What has been the effectiveness of delivering policies and in discouraging inappropriate development?

- 5.16 It is clear that parts of the plan, namely housing delivery and employment delivery is slower than anticipated. Delays to the bringing forward of the strategic sites, the downturn of the economy on two occasions and the pandemic has resulted in slower delivery of housing. However, the affordable housing target has been met; and the overall LDP housing target is expected to be met within 3 years. Similarly, 32% of the employment target has been built, and another 25% is expected to be delivered within the next two years.
- 5.17 However, the LDP has so far proved effective in discouraging inappropriate development with only one major allocated minerals application (at Tir Pentwys - LDP Policy M3) requiring to be refused and being subject to a dismissed appeal for an unsatisfactory access road, but not the principle of the allocated extraction site under the LDP Policy.
- 5.18 **Recommendation of the 2021 Annual Monitoring Report**

As a result of the above, the LDP Annual Monitoring Report 2021 concludes that: -

Notwithstanding the statutory duty to review the Torfaen LDP 4 years after adoption (in December 2017), there is evidence to indicate the need for a review of the plan at this time because progress in delivery of the strategy is slower than expected primarily due to the global recession and its impact on the housing and employment markets. A review of the plan was carried out in 2018 and a replacement plan is now in preparation.