Isle of Wight Council

The Island Plan: Preferred Core Strategy

DRAFT FOR CABINET 30th JANUARY 2006

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1 Introduction

Overview

1.1 The Isle of Wight is changing. The vision is to establish a strong focus on regeneration using economic growth, new employment and the development of skills to drive prosperity.

1.2 The Isle of Wight has a critical role to play in the South East and UK economy. The Council and the Local Strategic Partnership are committed to economic-led regeneration as the central driver of improvements to the well-being and quality of life for everyone. This ***Island Plan*** represents the spatial strategy to achieve this change.

1.3 While the ***Island Plan*** is driven by the need for economic regeneration, the Council must also be guided by housing requirements established in current Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (the South East Plan). The guidance indicates an annual construction of 520 houses and that this should continue to 2026 subject to the necessary infrastructure being put in place. In the interim, prior to adopting the ***Island Plan***, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) will continue to be the statutory planning framework. The Council will use the current policies in developing planning obligations/agreements, to ensure that necessary and appropriate infrastructure is delivered.

1.4 This is your opportunity to get involved in shaping the policies that guide how the Island rises to this challenge.

The New Planning System

1.5 The *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires the Isle of Wight Council to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) to supersede the current Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

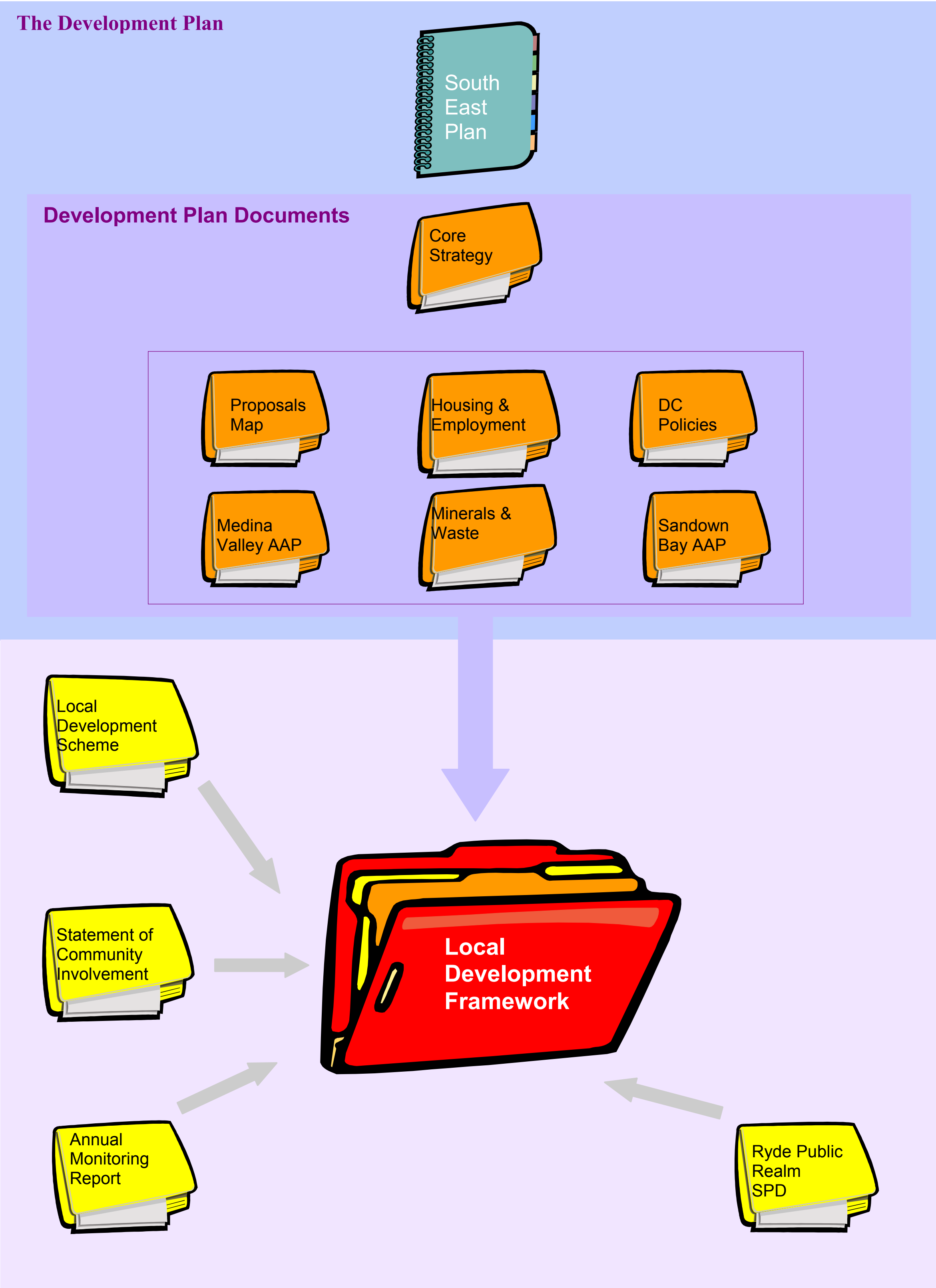
1.6 The documents forming the LDF will set out the Council's planning policies and proposals for meeting the community's economic, social, and environment needs in terms of spatial land use, and will be titled the ***Island Plan***.

1.7 This is an exciting opportunity to successfully shape and manage the future of the Isle of Wight, setting out a spatial vision of where investment in new development, infrastructure and services will occur.

1.8 The ***Island Plan*** will be much more than a land use plan. It will look at quality of life and well-being, and define the spatial policies and interventions that are necessary to create and maintain sustainable communities. Critically, it will look at the infrastructure needed to deliver the Plan.

1.9 The Plan can be thought of as a folder of related documents that will govern the Island's Core Strategy whilst conforming with the more strategic, regionally based South East Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy). The ***Island Plan*** will determine a suitable spatial distribution of development as a key part of the LDF process.

1.10 The ***Island Plan*** will consist of the following documents:



The Role of the Core Strategy

1.11 The first document of the ***Island Plan*** to be prepared is the Core Strategy. This sets out the Council's vision and strategic spatial objectives for the Island.

1.12 The Core Strategy will provide a broad strategy for the location of development. Subsequent LDF documents will need to conform to the Core Strategy while providing greater policy detail on particular areas and themes.

1.13 The Core Strategy will set:

- Long-term Vision for the Island until 2026;
- Strategic spatial objectives relating to the Vision;
- Approaches to the future sustainability of the Isle of Wight;
- Broad spatial distribution of development;
- Approach to the provision of employment and supporting economic regeneration;
- Approach to the provision of housing;
- Recommendations for the character of new development.

Relationship to Community Strategy & Local Strategic Partnership

1.14 The Island Futures Community Strategy, produced by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in 2002 is an important document which aims to shape the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the Island over the next ten years, whilst contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. The ***Island Plan*** package will need to compliment and, where suitable, adhere to the Community Strategy's key themes of:

- Safer Island;
- Healthy Island;
- Thriving Island;
- Skilled and Educated Island.

1.15 More recently, in 2005, the Isle of Wight has become a pilot Local Area Agreement Authority. The Council and Local Strategic Partnership's corporate objectives are being re-organised to tackle the four objectives of:

- Economic Development and Enterprise;
- Healthier Communities;
- Children and Young People;
- Safer and Stronger Communities.

1.16 The ***Island Plan*** will help deliver these objectives through its spatial strategy and detailed policies.

Purpose of the Preferred Core Strategy

1.17 This Preferred Core Strategy is the second step in the creation of the ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy. It is the formal Preferred Option Report in accordance with PPS12. The Issues & Options Report which was prepared and consulted on during September to November 2005 was the first in a series of documents designed to gather and test community opinion early and help set the Core Strategy.

1.18 This report is intended to build agreement between the Council, the local community, and statutory bodies on the spatial vision, objectives and core policy directions which will deliver future economic regeneration and enhance the quality of life for all living, working and visiting the Island. A preferred spatial vision and development strategy shows how the Isle of Wight will grow in the future.

1.19 All interested parties are invited to comment. Once all responses have been reviewed and considered, the ***Island Plan*** Submission Core Strategy will be prepared. Once again, this will be presented for public consultation and subsequent examination by an independent Government Inspector. Following the receipt of the Inspector's Report, the findings of which are binding on the Council, the ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy will be adopted.

1.20 The timetable for the preparation of the ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy is set out below:

Key Stages	Timetable	Status
Issues and Options Consultation	*Sept – Nov 2005*	*Completed*
Preferred Option Report Consultation	Feb – Mar 2006	In Progress
Submission Core Strategy Consultation	May 2006	On-Schedule
Examination	January 2007	On-Schedule
Inspectors Report	June/Jul 2007	On-Schedule
Adoption	August 2007	On-Schedule

Ensuring Sustainability: The Role of the Sustainability Appraisal

1.21 As part of the ***Island Plan*** preparation a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will be undertaken. This considers the potential impact of the ***Island Plan*** on the environment, people and the economy.

1.22 The first step is to set sustainability criteria that cover a range of issues that are important to the Island. This includes air quality, water, climatic factors, landscape, health and economic performance. The SA also has to satisfy the requirements of the European Union Directive on the assessment of the effects of plans and programmes on the environment (2001/42/EC), known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

1.23 The sustainability criteria have been subject to consultation with key local, regional and national stakeholders, including the Countryside Agency, Environment Agency, English Heritage and English Nature. The recommended criteria are included in a Sustainability Scoping Report that was published in July 2005.

1.24 The Preferred Core Strategy has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal against the sustainability criteria set by the SA process. The Sustainability Appraisal Report is available at **www.iwight.com/islandplan**, all Island libraries, and at Council information points.

How to Get Involved and Comment on the Preferred Core Strategy

1.25 We encourage you to help us to decide on the ***Island Plan*** preferred spatial vision and core policies. We are seeking your comments on the Preferred Core Strategy and its draft policy directions and welcome your response by writing to:

Island Plan: Preferred Core Strategy Consultation
Planning Policy
Isle of Wight Council
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

1.26 The Preferred Core Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal can be downloaded from the Council's website at:

www.iwight.com/islandplan

1.27 Electronic copies of the Preferred Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal can be requested from:

Planning.policy@iow.gov.uk

1.28 Additionally, paper copies of the document are available in all Council libraries, County Hall reception and the Isle of Wight Council's Seaclose Offices reception.

2 The Isle of Wight Today

A Spatial Portrait of the Isle of Wight

2.1 The Isle of Wight is a unitary local authority. The Island is separated from the mainland by the Solent and connected to the south coast of England by passenger and vehicle ferries to the ports of Portsmouth, Southampton and Lymington.

2.2 The Island is 380 square kilometres in area and stretches thirteen miles from Ventnor in the South to Cowes in the North and twenty-three miles from St Helens in the east to the Needles in the west. The largest towns are Newport, Cowes and East Cowes, Ryde and Sandown and Shanklin. Most of the Island's 136, 250 residents live in these towns in the centre, north and east of the Island. Totland, Yarmouth and Freshwater, are the significant settlements in the west of the Island. Ventnor is the largest of the smaller settlements beyond this.

2.3 Within its boundaries, the Isle of Wight contains a wide variety of natural, rural and urban landscapes. The Medina Valley runs into the centre of the Island and contains the Medina River. A range of chalk downs extending east from the Needles to Culver Cliff. The Island is home to a rich variety of important habitats and species. This is reflected in the fact that UK or European designations protect 70% of the Island.

2.4 The rich natural environment is one of the main attractions drawing tourists and enthusiasts to the Island. Tourism is one of the main industries on the Island with the resident population more than doubling during the busy summer holiday season between July and August. The unique nature of the Island has also drawn many retirees and second home owners.

2.5 This following summary of the issues faced by the Isle of Wight sets the stage for the policies outlined in subsequent chapters of the Preferred Core Strategy.

The Economy of the Isle of Wight

A Changing Economic Profile

2.6 The Isle of Wight shares some characteristics with the South East of England region, such as a growing population and an increasing reliance on the service sector. Beneath the headline statistics differences are evident. Characteristics on the Island, which are unlike on the mainland, include:

- A large retired population
- Health, retailing, education and hotels and catering dominate the service sector far more on the Island than in the rest of the South East

- Based on measures such as wages, productivity, educational attainment, GVA per head and unemployment, the Island ranks below the regional average

2.7 Recent data suggests the Isle of Wight has performed well relative to the Southeast and the rest of the UK. GVA growth averaged 4.5% a year between 1999 and 2004 compared with 2.9% a year in the South East and 2.5% for the UK. (Source. Experian: 2004). Sectors such as construction and financial and business services provided a significant boost to the Island economy during this period.

2.8 Employment growth in the past half decade has also been impressive on the Isle of Wight, achieving growth well in excess of the South East and UK average. Considering the 1994 to 2004 period, the number Full Time Equivalent employees increased from approximately 38,000 to 49,000, an increase of 28%. The South East region as a whole saw an 18% increase in employment over the same period.

2.9 A consequence of this growth is a changing sectoral composition on the Island. The non-manufacturing sector provided the bulk of job creation, with construction, financial and business services and other (mainly public) services performing particularly well. In 2004, the service sector was a similar size compared to what it was in 1999, but changes have occurred within the sector as a whole. The Island has witnessed a growing importance of financial and business services, while distribution, hotels and catering now accounting for a smaller proportion of the economy.

2.10 Historically the Isle of Wight's economy was based on tourism, manufacturing and farming.

2.11 Today tourism still plays a significant role in the economy hotels and catering employing 8% of the working population (Source: Experian 2004) and related employment means that the tourism economy employs around 15% of the Island's population. Both figures represent a higher proportion of employment than that found in the UK as a whole. However, the Hotels and Catering sector, an important part of the tourism market, saw GVA output decline from £88.19million in 2000 to £78.17million in 2004. The number of jobs in this sector also fell by 1,600 (FTE) between 1999 and 2004 (Source: Experian, October 2005).

2.12 The Island is home to niche manufacturing industries including aerospace, electronics, composites, renewable energy and marine technology. Manufacturing employment has fluctuated in recent years reflecting changes in aerospace and engineering sectors. It currently accounts for 13% of employment on the Island. Manufacturing is expected to recover and record healthy growth over the next decade (Source: Experian, October 2005). However, this growth is expected to be driven by growth in the metals, minerals and chemicals sector – mostly accounted for by the composites industries on the Island.

2.13 While agriculture accounts for 80% of the land use, it only employs only 1% of the population.

2.14 The public sector is the largest employer on the Island, with the Isle of Wight Council, NHS, HM Prison Service and Hampshire Constabulary providing a significant number of jobs. Over 14,000 people work in the public sector, with the majority employed in education and health. The public sector has generated 1,900 additional jobs over the 1999 to 2004 period (Source: Experian, October 2005).

2.15 Health remains an important sector. In 2004 the health sector had a GVA output of £103.3million making it the third most productive sector. However, health remains the second largest sector in terms of employment, accounting for 13% of the Island's jobs. This is higher than the UK average of 11% and reflected the health needs of the Island's older population.

2.16 In 2004, retailing was the strongest sector on the Island, with a total Gross Value Added (GVA) output of just under £155million. In 2004, the retail sector accounted for the single greatest proportion of employment on the Isle of Wight (18%), a significantly greater proportion than in the UK as a whole. The retail sector has increased significantly in recent years, at 9% per year, and its growth is set to continue.

2.17 However, both retailing and health sectors generate little value per employee as compared with other sectors.

2.18 The construction industry has become the second strongest economic sector on the Island in terms of output. Construction also generated 2,800 extra jobs on the Island between 1999 and 2004. This sector is expected to grow substantially throughout the lifetime of the ***Island Plan***.

2.19 Business Services have also increased their GVA output significantly with an output of £46million in 2000 increasing to £106million in 2004. This has been the fastest growing sector on the Island in recent years, creating 2,500 additional (FTE) jobs. However, this sector is still under-represented in terms of the proportion of people employed compared to the UK as a whole, where it is a significant growth sector.

2000		**2004**		**2016**	
Sector	**GVA £m**	**Sector**	**GVA £m**	**Sector**	**GVA £m**
Health	93.17	Retailing	154.93	Retailing	231.62
Hotels & Catering	88.19	Construction	131.47	Construction	194.24
Retailing	82.83	Business Services	106.30	Business Services	174.75
Public Admin & Defence	81.52	Health	103.30	Health	151.70
Transport Equipment	76.07	Other Services	86.88	Other Services	138.20

Source: Experian

2.20 Since 1999, the Isle of Wight Economic Partnership has assisted twenty-six companies to invest in the Isle of Wight, resulting in 900 new jobs. The largest investment was from NEG Micon Rotors (now known as Vestas Wind Systems), wind turbine manufacturers, which now employs around 550 people in the Medina Valley.

2.21 Over the same period, there have also been significant levels of redundancies on the Island due to restructuring and plant closures, largely in the manufacturing sector. The loss of nine major manufacturing firms alone accounted for over 1,300 jobs.

2.22 At the time of the 2001 Census there were 58,141 economically active residents on the Isle of Wight. Of this, 43,357 residents were employees (29,880 full-time and 13,477 part time) and 9,555 were self-employed. Of the remaining 5,229 economically active residents, 3,375 residents were unemployed and 1,854 residents were full-time students.

2.23 The 2001 Census showed that the proportion of economically active males on the Isle of Wight (78.8%) was slightly below the average for England and Wales (81.5%). Economic activity and inactivity for females on the Isle of Wight is in line with trends throughout England and Wales.

2.24 The proportion of households in higher socio-economic classification groups such as higher and lower managerial and professional occupations is consistently lower in the Isle of Wight than in England and Wales. The Isle of Wight has greater proportions of households engaged as small employers or as lower supervisory and technical occupations than England and Wales.

Economic Strengths

- Composites and materials, marine technologies, rural industries and tourism and hospitality have all been identified by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) as significant business concentrations and networks on the Island.

- The Isle of Wight has also been identified by SEEDA as a Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (PAER).

- There is an emerging high-tech, niche manufacturing and advanced engineering economy linked to the wind energy, marine, automotive and aerospace sectors.

- There is a good supply of potential employment land, a large proportion of which is understood to benefit from a lack of physical or planning constraint. (Employment Land Study: 1999). There is also an availability of employment sites with deep-water frontage suitable for marine related activities.

- Significant environmental qualities such as natural habitats, landscapes, coastlines including beaches, marinas and deep water quays, a high quality built environment, enhance the potential of a number of key sectors such as marine related industries and tourism. The Island also has a good reputation as a location for major international and national sporting events and festivals.

- Attractiveness and ease of access to a high quality environment and a high quality of life that is appealing for managers and business people who own or set up businesses on the Island.

Economic Weaknesses

- A narrow but recently diversifying employment base limited to a small number of sectors: 60% of the workforce is concentrated in five sectors.

- Perceived deficit between supply of skilled local labour and the requirements of industry.

- Below average earnings, especially among males

- Low representation of households classified as higher and lower managerial occupations

- The Island's poorest people suffer from a combination of high unemployment, seasonal work and low wages, which commonly traps them into benefit dependency.

- The 'island factor' weakens the Island's competitive position in attracting and retaining business investment because of higher costs in delivering goods and services.

A Repositioning Tourism Sector

2.25 Historically, the first tourists to the Isle of Wight were the gentry who started to arrive in the second half of the 18th century. This arrival was the result of improvements to mainland roads, better-designed coaches and a more frequent ferry service across the Solent. With these improvements, travellers started to include the Isle of Wight in their tours of the southern half of England in search of 'picturesque' and romantic scenery. The railway from London reached Southampton in 1840. By 1849, there were organised day trips, which allowed six hours on the Island. Queen Victoria's residence at Osborne established the Isle of Wight as a fashionable holiday resort and thousands followed in her footsteps. Tourist and visitor interest in the Island has continued ever since.

2.26 The Hotels and Catering sector produced a GVA output of £78.17million and employ 8% of the population (Experian: 2004). The Island attracts over two million visitors a year who come to visit a total of around 380 different leisure and visitor centres and attractions. Visitors spend over £300 million, which underpins the employment, directly and indirectly, of around 13,000 people. The multiplier effects of this income throughout the economy have been estimated as generating a further £100 million.

2.27 Tourism remains highly seasonal, with a summer peak. During the summer months the Island is particularly popular. Off peak the tourism sector generates limited business with the main market now being low value coaching and group business. However, short breaks and special interest holidays are growing in importance and there is scope to increase overseas visits on this basis.

2.28 International and national events draw visitors to the Island, particularly those related to yachting and watersports. Cowes Week alone is thought to attract in excess of 42,000 visitors and 6,000 yachtsmen and overall contributes £4.6 million to the Island's economy. The Island's music festivals are now well established and draw tens of thousands of people each year. The Nokia Music Festival is worth £9million and draws approximately 35,000 people a day.

Tourism Strengths

- The "Island" factor creates a perception of a unique, distinct but still British environment.

- The natural and built environment of the Isle of Wight is a major asset for the tourism sector. A substantial area of the Island is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (51%), whilst most of the coastline is designated Heritage Coast. The Island benefits from high-quality scenery with thirteen award-winning beaches and iconic landmarks and landscapes such as the Needles.

- The geological importance of the Island is significant particularly with regards to fossil and dinosaur finds, drawing enthusiasts from far and wide.

- The Island has a wealth of separate attractions e.g. Isle of Wight Zoo, Dinosaur Isle, Brading Roman Villa, Ventnor Botanical Gardens and many others. There is also a strong heritage sector including several English Heritage properties such as Osborne house.

- There are over a hundred events on the Island each year, ranging from big strategically important events such as Cowes Week, the Nokia Music Festival, and Cycling Festival, to small parish events.

- The Isle of Wight has a wide variety of accommodation, including bed & breakfast, hotels, self catering, caravans, seaside guest houses, farm houses and holiday parks, and camping sites.

- The Island has a comprehensive and well-maintained network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes.

- All year provision and opportunities for a wide array of outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, sailing, watersports, horse-riding and golf.

Tourism Weaknesses

- The Island remains over-reliant on a declining traditional family holiday market and low spend coach and school groups.

- The quality and range of accommodation supply is not considered adequate to meet the needs of new, short break markets.

- There is a general lack of recent investment in tourist accommodation on the Island.

- There is a significant demand for improvements to cultural assets such as museums.

- During the peak season, the volume of visitors' causes significant strain on the Island's infrastructure and environment.

Housing: A Buoyant Housing Market & an Affordability Gap

2.29 2005 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) figures show that in April 2005 there were 6,4184 dwellings on the Island – just under 3,000 more than there were in 2000. An average of 580 new properties have been built per year in the last ten years. Despite this growth, an increasing demand for second homes on the Island and a trend towards smaller households has meant that supply has not kept pace with demand. The affordability of local homes is an increasing problem and the affordable housing delivered has failed to keep pace with demand, with just 220 affordable dwellings constructed between 1999 and 2005.

2.30 A large proportion of homes on the Island are detached houses or bungalows, followed closely by semi-detached properties. The Island has a skewed housing stock with a relatively low proportion of smaller dwellings and cheaper accommodation. The income to housing cost ratio for the UK, South East Region, and the Isle of Wight is: 2.44 UK: 6, SE: 7, Isle of Wight: 7.3.

2.31 In keeping with national house prices, average house price trends have increased dramatically over the last 10 years. In June 2005 Land Registry figures showed that the average house price on the Island was just under £176,000 in comparison with £182,500 nationally.

2.32 Over 76% of households on the Island are owner occupied compared to 68% in England and Wales (Census: 2001). 10% rent from a private landlord/agency (9% in England and Wales) whilst 11% of households are rented from a Housing Association/RSLs (20% in England and Wales). The lack of social housing on the Island is a significant contrast with the mainland. In April 2005 there were 3,967 households on the Statutory Housing Register, whilst 317 families households were accepted as homeless.

2.33 The Isle of Wight also has a large proportion (5%) of second homes or holiday accommodation, compared with the whole of England and Wales (0.7%)(Source: 2001 Census). These homes are concentrated in the Island's coastal areas. The Island also has some 1,152 empty properties across all tenures.

Strengths

- High quality of life on the Island afforded by high environmental amenities.
- Strong residential property market with accordingly high and increasing values.
- Sufficient residential land sites have been identified to meet current requirements through to at least 2011.

Weaknesses

- The attractiveness of the Island results in significant levels of in-migration from wealthy households from the mainland. This serves to limit the supply of housing for local residents and artificially inflate house prices.
- Above average proportions of the Island's housing stock are large detached or bungalow type property. There is a mismatch between the oversupply of this type of housing and the increasing requirement for smaller units driven by changing trends in life-styles.
- There is currently a shortage of smaller affordable dwellings, especially those with one or two bedrooms. There are a large number of homeless families on the Island, many of whom are homed temporarily in B&B accommodation. Currently it is difficult to find accommodation for them to move to which is both affordable and available.
- Many of the Island's housing sites are relatively small and fall below the existing thresholds for securing new affordable housing.

Transport: A Developed Transport System with Gaps and Barriers to Overcome

2.34 The rural nature of the Island means there is a reliance on the car for many journeys. The majority of the population do however have access to the Island's public transport system, which provides a more sustainable mode of transport. The transport infrastructure is stretched to capacity during the holiday season with thousands of visitors arriving on the Island.

2.35 The Island has a 492 mile (791.8km) road network, with the majority of the Island's main roads converging in Newport where congestion is a major problem at peak times. The Island's 517 mile (827km) network of public rights of way allows urban access, links settlements and gives access to the countryside. These sustainable transport routes allow additional opportunities for those who wish to walk, cycle and travel by horse, both as means of sustainable transport and for recreation and tourism.

2.36 The Island 's main bus operator annually completes some 6 million passenger journeys with commuters and shoppers account for over a third, likewise for children and students, tourists account for 11% and senior citizens 19%. The 2001 Census showed that 3.9% of Islanders used this method of transport to travel to work, compared to 7.4% in England and Wales. In recent years the Island, like many other areas, has seen a decline in the number of bus passenger journeys. However the decline was halted in 2002/3 and a 0.6% increase was recorded in 2003/04.

2.37 The Island Line 8 mile railway system runs downs the eastern side of the Island from Ryde, through Brading and Sandown to Shanklin. Whilst the operators, Stagecoach, have reported an increase in train usage, only 1.4% of Islanders used this method of transport to travel to work (2001 Census). However, it is well utilised by tourists during the summer months as it provides an important role linking the fast ferry service at Ryde with the eastern coastal resort towns.

2.38 Since the 1991 Census, the number of households on the Island with more than one car has increased, and compared with England and Wales, the Island has a higher proportion of car ownership. Despite this, half (6,359) of non-car owners are single pensioners and 1,992 families with dependent children do not have a car. Such sectors of the population require easily accessible and frequent public transport if car reliance and social exclusion are to be reduced.

2.39 Commuters and visitors to the Island use the cross-Solent ferries arriving at Ryde, Yarmouth, East Cowes and Fishbourne. In 2003 the ferries carried approximately 9.3m passengers, 1.7m cars, 25,000 coaches and 26,000 commercial vehicles.

Strengths

- Developed road system with easy access to the main town of Newport.
- Over 500 miles of public rights of way providing access across the Island on foot, bike or horse.
- High quality, frequent, and convenient cross-Solent ferry crossings from a number of passenger, car and freight facilities.
- Public transport system is in place across the Island, including rural areas.
- Railway link between Ryde and Shanklin which takes pressure off the roads, especially during the holiday system.

Weaknesses

- Over reliance on private cars by residents
- High number of short trips (under 2 miles) by drivers travelling alone
- Perceived high cost of cross-Solent ferries and hovercraft. This is a particular deterrent for many seeking employment/education opportunities, or those requiring access to secondary health facilities currently not provided on the Island.
- Staging conflicts among freight, commuters and visitors at ferry points.
- Lack of funding has led to poorly maintained minor roads.

Social Issues: Education

2.40 The Local Education Authority operates a three-tier education system and maintain 69 schools . The Isle of Wight College is based in Newport and provides a wide variety of courses.

2.41 Despite a positive year on year trend, educational attainment on the Island remains on or just below the national average. In the academic year 2003/04, 43.9 percent of pupils in Isle of Wight achieved 5 or more GCSE's graded A* to C, compared to an average for England of 53.7. However, more positively the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 4 at Key stage 3 has changed from 64 percent in 1999 to 70 percent in 2004 for Mathematics and from 68 percent to 75 percent in English.

2.42 In 2001, 15% of the Island population aged 16-74 had attained level 4/5 (degree level) education. This compared with 22% for the South East and 20% for England and Wales. The

Island suffers from a brain-drain with many well-education young people leaving the Island for further or higher education, or for greater employment opportunities. The Island suffers from a poorly skilled workforce, with 33% of the adult population lacking basic numeracy skills and 15% lacking basic literacy skills. A poorly skilled workforce is a deterrent for employers seeking to set up business on the Island and is one of the main concerns of the Learning Skills Partnership.

Strengths

- 69 LEA maintained schools spread throughout the Island with several primary schools in rural areas
- Year-on-year educational improvements
- An active Learning Skills Partnership working to improve adult skills and the transition from schools into employment

Weaknesses

- Lower than average GCSE results
- Low proportion of the population with level 4/5 educational attainment
- Those seeking or with higher educational qualifications tend to leave the Island

Social Issues: Health

2.43 Generally, the Island enjoys better health than the average for England and Wales but it is not as good as elsewhere in the South East. Within the Island itself, there are health inequalities between different neighbourhoods. There are significant differences in life expectancy between different wards, with some ward-level correlation between lower life expectancy and higher deprivation.

Strengths

- There are 18 GP practices on the Island with secondary healthcare provided at St Mary's District General Hospital in Newport.
- The quality of the Island's environment is a factor local people rate highly in relation to their health.
- The Island has an established, public health department

- The Island has a successful healthy schools programme
- The Island is consulting on a proposal to integrate health and adult social services

Weaknesses

- A relatively high proportion of residents report that their health is 'not good'.
- Life expectancy of men of working age is not as good as might be expected.
- High suicide rates
- Many hospital treatments are not available on the Island, and need to be carried out on the mainland
- Residents can find travel to mainland hospital difficult
- The unit cost of providing some services (e.g. maternity) is high because of the relatively small population of the Island
- There is difficulty in recruiting to some specialist posts (e.g. mental health)

Social Issues: Communities

2.44 The Islands Settlement profile is of a number of main towns and then scattered villages with 52% of residents living in rural areas, younger age groups living in the main urban areas, while rural and coastal areas have more people from older age groups. Within this settlement profile are a range of thriving communities and neighbourhoods that are key to the future of the Island.

Strengths

- A strong sense of local identity in the Island population
- A strong network of town and parish councils
- Parish plans in place for many areas

Weaknesses:

- Rural isolation affecting access to public and community services

- The lower per capita income, compared to other parts of the region, leading to relative deprivation, especially concentrated in some communities

- Limited access to regular affordable and accessible transport for many Island residents affecting access to services, to affordable healthy food and to networks of social support.

Environment: A Beautiful and Sensitive Island

2.45 The Isle of Wight has a unique and important natural environment, which is protected by European, National and local designations. These designations cover both landscape beauty and ecological importance and help protect the character of the Island. 51% of the Island is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty whilst the Heritage Coast covers some 34km - half of the Island's coastline. The natural environment is seen as one of the Islands most valuable assets and the protection and enhancement of this resource is paramount. Issues such as coastal erosion, risk of flooding, and the detrimental effects of tourism on the landscape and bio-diversity are real concerns for the future

2.46 There are many ecological land designations on the Island these include:

Internationally important sites:

- Special Areas of Conservation – 22,305Ha

- Special Protection Areas – 1,736/4.57%

- Ramsar Sites – 1620Ha/4.26%

Nationally important sites:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest – 4,220Ha/11.1%

- National Nature Reserves – 286Ha/0.75%

Locally important sites:

- Local Nature Reserves – 79 a/0.2%

- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation – 4,295Ha/11.3%

2.47 A number of priorities have been identified for flora and fauna conservation on the Island through bio-diversity action plans. These include the following:

- Farmland;

- Lowland heathland, lowland meadows, lowland wood pasture and parkland, lowland calcareous grasslands, lowland dry acid grassland;
- Red squirrels;
- Freshwater systems and wetlands;
- Woodlands;
- Maritime cliffs and slopes, coastal salt marsh, coastal sand dunes, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, saline lagoons, Sea grass beds, mudflats and Solent Coastal Habitat.

2.48 The Island is home to 29 species that have been identified as being of conservation concern nationally. These include dormouse, song thrush, red squirrel, water vole, early gentian, skylark and starlet sea anemone. A further 205 species are seen as important on the local scale, these include butterflies such as the Adonis Blue and Pearl-bordered fritillary, marine life such as the native Oyster and Dogwhelk, Freshwater Fish such as Bullhead and Brook Lamprey, wild flowers such as the Cornflower and Field Cow-wheat, birds such as the Barn Owl and Nightjar, and many species of bats. In addition another 457 species, which are locally distinctive, have been identified by local experts and enthusiast. This includes a wide range of species such as Mantis Shrimps, Wasp Spiders, Wall Lizards and Pink Wax-cap fungi.

2.49 The Island has several zones of Grade 2 agricultural land, notably around Arreton and Atherfield. The highest proportion of agricultural land is Grade 3 which is valuable for a wide range of agricultural uses.

2.50 The Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1963. The total area designated was approximately 189 square kilometres, about half of the total area of the Island. The AONB is not continuous and is made up of five parcels of land across the Island.

2.51 The main rivers on the Isle of Wight are Eastern Yar and Medina, both flowing north. Almost the whole of the southern half of the Island is located over a major aquifer. Three quarters of public water supply is derived from groundwater, accounting for 86% of all groundwater abstraction. There are also a large number of groundwater abstractions for irrigation of arable land, especially in the south of the Island.

2.52 Regular sampling shows that the surface water quality is generally of average quality with some stretches of water showing poor overall quality. Intensive horticulture and mixed farming practices have resulted in elevated pesticide concentrations and silting in the Eastern Yar catchment. Water abstraction and low river flows can exacerbate these problems.

2.53 Water supply problems occur on the Isle of Wight due to limited groundwater yields, low flows in the Island's rivers and population increases during the summer due to tourism. This issue could be exacerbated by the predicted effects of climate change such as shorter aquifer recharge periods and drier summers.

2.54 At present flooding is predominantly a concern in the urban areas of Cowes, East Cowes and Newport. In Cowes it is mainly a result of high tides and rapid runoff from steep slopes, in Newport it is mainly a result of high tides.

2.55 The Island has a wide variety of rock forms within a relatively small area. The vegetation and land use is greatly influenced by the underlying geology. A key feature of the geology is the chalk ridge running from the Needles in the west to the Culver Cliff in the east. The Island's unique geology includes the coloured cliffs of Alum Bay, created by minerals in the sand. Erosion occurs in certain places on the Island, particularly around the coastline due to geomorphology, the nature of the geology and slope and coastal processes

2.56 Climate change may increase risks to the Island of higher rates of erosion, associated higher sea levels and increased number of storm events, greater instability due to increased rainfall and erosion (e.g. erosion at the base of cliffs), and flooding of low lying land particularly in coastal areas.

2.57 With thousands of visitors and local residents visiting the 60 miles of beautiful beaches on the Island, cleanliness and quality is an important issue. In 2004 all of the Islands 13 beaches met the most stringent standards. All beaches on the Island are Seaside Award winners. Seaside Awards are dependant on good water quality and management of the beaches. Beaches at Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin are also Blue Flag award winners. The Blue Flag requirements also include having a lifeguard at the beach.

2.58 No Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have been declared on the Island which means that air quality is generally good across the Isle of Wight. However there is a potential for exceeding some national air quality targets (from vehicle emissions and fuel storage) if traffic and ferry movements increase in the future.

2.59 The Island's historic environment resource is one of the most varied and important in England. There are 203 scheduled monuments, 60 ancient monuments and a total of 1,910 listed buildings, 31 of which are Grade I listed.

Strengths

- A unique and beautiful Island. The natural environment is one of the key attractions for visitors to the Island

- A rich historic environment
- The Island has a complex geology within a small land area and is considered to be of outstanding geological significance
- 13 award winning beaches
- A wealth of important flora and fauna

Weaknesses

- Threat from climate change and sea level rise may lead to flooding and an increase of undevelopable land
- Population increases and the high number of visitors to the Island place considerable strain on the landscape and biodiversity of the Island
- Increases in the levels of car usage has led to an rise in nitrogen levels
- Water shortages especially during the summer months.

3 Spatial Vision & Objectives

Introduction

3.1 This section sets out the preferred spatial vision and objectives for the ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy.

Vision

3.2 The vision for the Isle of Wight is established in the Island Futures Community Plan Strategy. The overall vision is for:

A progressive Island built on economic success, high standards and aspirations and a better quality of life for all.

3.3 The ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy is set firmly within the context of the Island Futures Community Plan Strategy and Local Area Agreement commitments. These strategies and plans emphasise the need for the regeneration of the Isle of Wight's economy in parallel with improvements to quality of life and the well-being of Island communities. The Preferred Core Strategy is founded upon and structured around the four themes within the Community Strategy:

- Safer Island;
- Healthy Island;
- Thriving Island;
- Skilled & Educated Island.

3.4 The South East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy identifies the Isle of Wight as a Special Policy Area, guiding the location of future development and investment to focus on existing urban settlements and brownfield sites, transport corridors, urban extensions and lastly greenfield sites. The South East Plan calls for:

- The development of infrastructure and inward investment opportunities in the Medina Valley;
- Support for inward investment and development to regenerate the key areas identified in Ryde, Sandown Bay, Ventnor and West Wight;
- Support for urban renewal and intensification.

Outcomes from the Issues & Options Report Consultation

3.5 The ***Island Plan*** Issues & Options Report was the subject of public consultation during September to November 2005. Written responses and comments were made during this time, and residents, businesses and stakeholders attended various workshops, exhibitions and events held to communicate the Issues & Options.

3.6 Consultation on the ***Island Plan*** Issues & Options Report confirms the Island Futures Community Plan Strategy and the regional approach set out in the emerging South East Plan. Consultation showed:

- A preference for the regeneration of existing towns and the conservation of the countryside, coastal areas and natural environment of the Isle of Wight.

- A preference for emphasis on areas that have the best access to cross-Solent transport connections and offered the strongest potential for the use of public transport and alternatives to the car.

- A preference for completion of the existing regeneration agenda for the Medina Valley and a phased geographic and sectoral transition to an emphasis on Ryde and Sandown and Shanklin and smaller service oriented businesses and a repositioned tourism sector.

3.7 There was considerable comment on the options presented by the Issues & Options Report. However, there was no clear opinion in favour of a single specific Spatial Option. Instead, consultation served to identify general preferences for the future and a set of requirements for how future growth should be managed.

3.8 These themes were raised across a range of settings, whether at shop front exhibitions in local high streets, focus groups with local residents, Parish Council briefings or meetings with the Local Strategic Partnership or Members of the Isle of Wight Council. They stand as cross cutting themes driving the Vision, Spatial Objectives and preferred options core policies:

- **Regeneration** - growth must be regeneration led

- **Infrastructure** - growth must be linked to infrastructure needed

- **Sustainability** - balancing & achieving environmental, economic & social goals

- **Quality** - growth must be attractive, high quality & integrated

- **Local Needs** - growth must be shaped to meet Island's diversity of needs

- **Delivery** - public, private and community sectors must be focused on implementation

3.9 The Sustainability Appraisal commentary on the Spatial Options presented in the Issues & Options Report supported options that emphasised the development of existing towns, existing cross-Solent and public transport connections and the potentially negative effects of development that was either dispersed or would be directed to West Wight.

3.10 These regional, local and consultation preferences provide the framework for the overall spatial policies that follow. These are followed by a series of policies addressing major functional areas the Core Strategy policies will address.

SO1: Spatial Vision & Objectives

The overarching spatial vision and objectives are to achieve a comprehensive framework that maximises opportunities for regeneration in all settlements while ensuring the sustainability of the economy, social structure and natural environment of the Isle of Wight. This will be achieved by:

- Focusing on and supporting the role of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor as the places with the greatest concentration of jobs, services, public transport connections, housing and people and the greatest opportunity to recycle brownfield land;

- Prioritising existing towns and places that are, or can be, served by public transport first, transport corridors second and extensions to existing towns as locations for new development;

- Implementing a phased sequential approach that supports regeneration initiatives in all settlements throughout the plan period, prioritising where policy and delivery steps are required given current commitments and future objectives;

- Completing the current focus on Newport, Cowes and East Cowes as places for the Island's regeneration strategy;

- Strengthening Ryde as a tourism gateway to the Island and as a place for people to live, work, shop and visit during all seasons;

- Strengthening the Bay Area, particularly Sandown and Shanklin as the centre for a repositioned, 21st century tourism offer and as places for people to live, work, shop and play during all seasons;

- Encouraging the evolution of Ventnor in conjunction with regeneration efforts focused on the Bay Area;

- Supporting Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth as centres for public services and shopping in West Wight;

- Encouraging and supporting the role and function of Cowes, East Cowes, Fishbourne, Ryde and Yarmouth as key Cross-Solent gateways to the Island.

Settlement Profile: Newport

3.11 Located in the centre of the Island, Newport, with its narrow streets and town squares, is the capital of the Isle of Wight. All major roads from across the Island converge in Newport. It is situated on the River Medina, which is a navigable estuary with access to/from the Solent. Its town Quay, now used mainly by pleasure craft, was historically used for cargo ships and barges bringing supplies to the Island. The town centre is a mix of bustling streets, twisting lanes, and grand Georgian buildings. St Thomas's Square, Church Litten and St James's Square provide the main public spaces in the town.

3.12 Georgian, Victorian, 1950s, and 1990s development predominate with a mixture of town houses, terraces, flats, bungalows, semi and detached type residential properties. Current development areas are focused around Carisbrooke, Gunville, and Pan.

3.13 Newport is the main employment centre on the Island with almost all major public sector employers based here, for example, Isle of Wight Council, HM Prison, and St Mary's Hospital.

3.14 Currently 17% of the Island's population live in Newport, with its development boundary incorporating 16% of the land. In the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, 19% of new housing and employment land has been allocated in Newport

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.1. Newport. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to ensure that Newport continues to evolve as the Island's primary centre and as a high quality place to live, work, access health, education and social services and connect to the Isle of Wight's other settlements. This will be achieved by:

- Maintaining Newport's central role as a civic, shopping, job, education and public service centre;
- Supporting Newport's role as home to the Island's larger businesses requiring larger sites along with a diverse range of other businesses to support the local economy;
- Encouraging new housing on brownfield sites;
- Ensuring that any housing developments on urban extensions offer a high quality, mixed-use environment that integrates them with surrounding neighbourhoods and the amenities and services Newport can offer;
- Supporting Newport's role as a public transport hub;
- Strengthening public transport connections to Ryde and the new public transport interchange and cross Solent services;
- Avoiding impacts on sensitive land and water environments in the Medina Valley.

Settlement Profile: Cowes and East Cowes

3.15 Cowes is famed around the world for its yachting activities, with the annual Cowes week in August attracting thousands of enthusiasts from around the world. Cowes and East Cowes sit astride the River Medina at the northern tip of the Island where a high-speed ferry takes foot passengers to Southampton. Cowes High Street is now mainly a pedestrianised thoroughfare of restaurants, cafes and shops selling outdoor and sailing gear aimed at the yachting and tourist market.

3.16 Cowes is home to a mixture of town houses, flats, semi and detached type properties many with a waterfront location. The town is predominantly Victorian along with 1950s and 1990s development and recent development fronting the water edge. There is considerable number of maritime related services and supply businesses along the waterfront.

3.17 East Cowes is situated on the east of the Medina river mouth and is accessible from west Cowes via the floating bridge, which is one of only a few left in service in the world. The Red Funnel car ferry service runs from East Cowes to Southampton. Osborne House, the holiday home of Queen Victoria and now a popular tourist attraction is situated on the outskirts of East Cowes. Industrial activity is contained along the waterfront of the Medina and the Solent. The town is home to GKN who make aircraft components and radar systems and are a major employer.

3.18 Currently 14% of the Island's population live in Cowes and East Cowes, with its development boundary incorporating 17% of the land. In the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, 32% of new housing and employment land has been allocated in Cowes and East Cowes - the highest proportion to be allocated on the Island

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.2.Cowes and East Cowes. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to ensure that the towns of Cowes and East Cowes evolve as important places to work, live and visit and connect to the mainland via its multiple cross Solent connections. This will be achieved by:

- Maintaining and expand the historic role of Cowes and East Cowes as an engineering town in conjunction with its role as a marine service, tourism and visitor destination;
- Encouraging tourism and visitor related development;
- Strengthening public transport links to Newport and Ryde;
- Supporting public transport links to the mainland;
- Directing housing to brownfield sites;
- Ensuring any larger housing developments on urban extensions offer a high quality, mixed-use environment that integrates them with surrounding neighbourhoods and the amenities and services Cowes or East Cowes can offer;
- Avoiding impacts on sensitive land and water environments in the Medina Valley.

Settlement Profile: Ryde

3.19 Located on the north-east of the Island, Ryde has developed into a linear town along the coast, and development over the years has expanded the urban area so that it now encompasses adjacent settlements such as Binstead, Haylands, Weeks, Oakfield, Elmfield and Appley.

3.20 Known as the gateway to the Island, Ryde is a pleasant Victorian resort town with a range of holiday facilities. The town's Victorian iron pier was built in 1814, is over half a mile long and is still in use today ferrying foot passengers to Portsmouth in under 20 minutes. The Victorian esplanade and Georgian and Victorian Union Street, the town's main thoroughfare, house many typical seaside shops, cafes and arcades. Ryde also has a significant year-round residential community.

3.21 Currently 17% of the Island's population live in Ryde, with its development boundary incorporating 13% of the land. In the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, 16% of new housing and employment land has been allocated in Ryde.

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.3. Ryde. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to ensure that Ryde builds on its role as a hub for high-speed, cross Solent connections and an Island public transport interchange to strengthen its role as a residential community, centre for small businesses and gateway for tourists and business visitors. This will be achieved by:

- Supporting the development of a diverse range of small businesses serving Island and mainland markets;
- Supporting Ryde's role as a tourism gateway especially for those coming without a car and using public transport to access East-Wight visitor resources;
- Directing housing to brownfield sites;
- Ensuring any residential growth to the south of Ryde will strengthen public transport services, particularly the Island Line railway;
- Ensuring any housing developments on urban extensions offer a high quality, mixed-use environment that integrates them with surrounding neighbourhoods and the amenities and services Ryde can offer;
- Safeguarding the route of the railway line;
- Avoiding impacts on sensitive coastal environments on the Solent;
- Avoiding impacts on sensitive lands to the south of Ryde.

Settlement Profile: Sandown & Shanklin

3.22 Further along from Ryde, located on the Southeast of the Island and linked to Ryde by the only remaining commuter railway on the Island, the resorts of Sandown and the quieter Shanklin have developed into a linear town along the coast. Sandown was developed by the Victorians who built its wide promenades, large villas and formal gardens. The town is separated into a number of distinct areas that include Shanklin Old Town, the Seafront, the High Street and the main residential areas.

3.23 Leisure is the main commercial activity of the town, with little industrial activity apart from some service business. Amusement arcades, hotels and seaside gift shops dominate the seafront. There is a mixture of predominantly Victorian town houses, terraces, flats, bungalows, semi and detached type properties with 20th Century housing predominantly developed in estates.

3.24 Currently 15% of the Island's population live in Sandown and Shanklin, with its development boundary incorporating 15% of the land. In the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, 9% of new housing and employment land has been allocated in Sandown and Shanklin.

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.4 Sandown and Shanklin. The Isle of Wight Council will encourage the repositioning of Sandown and Shanklin as a home for an evolving tourism industry, a more diverse business base and a stronger residential role. This will be achieved by:

- Supporting the consolidation, repositioning and strengthening of the tourism sector with greater focus on facilities for short-break, active, out-door and eco-tourism markets;
- Encouraging the development of a diverse range of smaller service oriented businesses located to meet local needs and maximising the value of rapid links to the mainland via the Isle of Wight railway;
- Maintaining and strengthen public transport connections to Ryde to the north and Ventnor to the south;
- Strengthening the residential role of Sandown and Shanklin;
- Directing housing to brownfield sites;
- Supporting residential growth to the west and north of Sandown and Shanklin were it can

be oriented to Island Line railway stations;

- Avoiding impacts on sensitive coastal, flood plain and wetland environments;
- Avoiding impacts on sensitive lands to the west of Sandown and Shanklin;
- Encouraging economic and tourism development where it can support the viability of Ventnor.

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.5 Ventnor. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to strengthen the town of Ventnor to continue to serve as a local centre for communities in the south of the Island. This will be achieved by:

- Supporting local shopping, health, education and social services in as a year-round centre of activity for local communities;
- Strengthening public transport connections to Sandown, Shanklin and Newport;
- Directing housing to brownfield sites;
- Supporting the tourism role of Ventnor.

Settlement Profile: West Wight Towns

3.25 To link in with the overall development options suggested later in this report, the western towns of Yarmouth, Freshwater, and Totland will be discussed collectively.

3.26 Yarmouth is the oldest town on the Island with its charter going back to 1135. It is a popular yachting centre with a colourful harbour and a 19th Century pier. The Lymington car ferry alights in Yarmouth bringing many summer visitors. The town centre is flanked by the 18th Century town hall and has a number of shops and restaurants. The town is physically constrained with the sea on one side, the River Yar on another, and a large expanse of wasteland on the rest.

3.27 Freshwater, the main town on the western side of the Island, sprawls beside the valley of the River Yar. The old part of the town has a small number of houses and limited facilities whilst the newer part, a mile down the Yar estuary is centred on two streets of shops which serve the majority of West Wight. The spread of the town in recent years means it now reaches the village of Totland which is the western most village on the north coast.

3.28 Totland with its similar architecture grew from mainland visitors building holiday mansions here as their healthy seaside retreats and has schools, churches and a few shops. Totland beach is popular with tourists and locals alike.

3.29 Currently 8% of the Island's population live in Yarmouth, Freshwater, and Totland with its development boundary incorporating 7% of the land. In the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, 6% of new housing and employment land has been allocated in Yarmouth, Freshwater, and Totland.

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.6 Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to strengthen the towns of Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth to serve as local centres for communities in West Wight. This will be achieved by:

- Supporting local shopping, health, education and social services in Freshwater as a year-round centre of activity for the communities that make up West Wight;
- Strengthening public transport connections to Newport;
- Directing housing to brownfield sites;
- Support the tourism role of Yarmouth and Totland.

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.7 Smaller Settlements. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to maintain the viability of smaller settlements on the Isle of Wight. This will be achieved by:

- Allowing a modest amount of housing within smaller settlements where it can support local services and contribute to village life;
- Maintaining local health, education and social facilities where they are viable;
- Directing any housing to brownfield sites;
- Strengthening public transport connections to the larger settlements to provide access to the services they provide.

SO2: Roles & Functions of Settlements

S02.8 The Countryside, Designated Coastal Areas and Sensitive Lands. The Isle of Wight Council will seek to maintain the viability, quality and sustainability of areas outside the major and smaller settlements. This will be achieved by:

- Supporting the rural economy and the role of agriculture and visitor services in rural areas;
- Limiting development where it will threaten the rural character of the countryside;
- Directing any housing to brownfield sites;
- Avoiding development or infrastructure that will impact sensitive or designated coastal areas;
- Avoiding development or infrastructure that will impact sensitive or designated lands.

SO3: Spatial Development Sequence

The Isle of White Council will seek to establish a phased sequential approach that supports regeneration initiatives in all settlements throughout the plan period, prioritising where policy and delivery steps are required given current commitments and future objectives.

1. Establish policies that emphasise the Medina Valley in the 2006 – 2010 period while supporting the development of necessary initiatives in other settlements:

- Encourage the completion of the existing regeneration and growth planned in East Cowes, Cowes & Newport;
- Strengthen transport links between Newport, East Cowes, Cowes and Newport;
- Establish early policy and regeneration initiatives in Ryde and the Bay Area to support housing, economic development and tourism objectives;
- Encourage investment that supports the viability of Freshwater, Totland and Yarmouth.

2. Establish policies that prepare the way for an emphasis on Ryde and the Bay Area as the focus for delivery of regeneration in the 2011 – 2015 period:

- Encourage economic and housing growth in Ryde;
- Support housing growth in the Bay Area;
- Encourage the re-use of obsolete hotel facilities and sites to meet housing objectives;
- Encourage investment in new tourism facilities in the Bay Area;
- Increase investment in local and Island wide public transport connections;
- Increase investment in port infrastructure at Cowes, East Cowes, Fishbourne and Ryde.

3. Establish policies that complete the regeneration of East Wight in the 2016 – 2025 period:

- Encourage economic regeneration and growth in Ryde;
- Complete the re-use of poor quality and obsolete hotel facilities and sites to meet housing objectives in the Bay area.

4 Core Policies

Introduction

4.1 This section sets out the core policy directions and justifications which the Core Strategy will include. These are organised to address a series of key issues faced by the Island, and the key policy directions that will respond to them. They are also intended to deliver on the goals set by the Community Strategy. The preferred Core Strategy, and the Community Strategy goals are linked as follows:

Economy

- Thriving Island
- Skilled and Educated Island

Housing

- Thriving Island

Transport

- Thriving Island
- Healthy Island

Community Facilities

- Skilled and Educated Island
- Healthy Island
- Safer Island

Natural Environment

- Healthy Island
- Thriving Island

Built Environment

- Thriving Island

THE ECONOMY

4.2 The Isle of Wight is faced by a set of key economic issues and driving forces:

- Declining levels of manufacturing and agricultural employment;
- Incomplete repositioning of tourism sector;
- Relatively narrow economic and employment base;
- A history of comparatively low Per Capita GDP, earnings and levels of economic activity;
- A mismatch between local skills and recent growth sectors;
- Perceived training and school to work transition gaps;
- Concentration of unemployment in the young;
- Poorest people suffer from high unemployment, seasonal work and low wages;
- The cost and logistical barrier of the Solent;
- Ageing transhipment and port infrastructure.

4.3 While facing these challenges, the Isle of Wight can also anticipate an evolving and growing economy. The service sector will continue to grow while the rate of decline in manufacturing will slow and current levels of engineering employment will stabilise. Key trends that have been identified include:

- Above average growth in Construction;
- Above average growth in Health and Education;
- Employment growth in Retailing;
- Strong employment growth in Communications;
- Modest growth in Hotels and Catering;
- Modest growth in Business Services;
- Maintenance of employment levels in Engineering;
- Contracting employment in Transport;

- Contracting employment in Public Administration and Defence.

4.4 The following are the Core Strategy Policies for responding to these key economic issues faced by the Island.

E1: Supporting Employment Generating Sectors

Economic regeneration and growth is at the heart of the Isle of Wight's future objectives. The Council will support employment-generating sectors that have the greatest potential for future growth, higher added value and a stronger income base for island residents. This will be achieved by:

1. Identifying a range of employment generating sites and premises that offer up to 70 hectares of employment land between 2006 and 2006. This will allow for the accommodation of growth in the anticipated growth sectors, continue to offer choices to employers that are growing on or attracted to the Island, and offer flexibility to the Isle of Wight Council.

2. Encouraging employment development proposals which contribute to the growth and creation of high Gross Value Added businesses offering high quality jobs and higher wage and salary levels in manufacturing, renewable energy technology, hi-tech, composites, marine, aeronautical and business service sectors.

3. Encouraging employment development proposals which contribute to the diversification of the rural economy, improving opportunities for smaller and medium sized enterprises in rural areas where viable and sustainable

4. Encouraging development proposals that extend the visitor and tourism offer of the Island particularly in terms of value and quality of offer and those which support tourism in off-peak seasons.

5. Supporting expanded capacity and ability of education and training providers to deliver appropriate skills and work-based and lifelong education and training.

6. Encouraging university related research and teaching facilities in Island related sectors of technology, science and environmental sectors related to current and future employers and employment.

7. Improving the level of service of transportation infrastructure through support for new and enhanced air and port, freight and goods handling and passenger transport facilities in appropriate locations, in line with transportation and sustainability objectives.

8. Improving the level of service of information technology infrastructure through identification of suitable sites, premises and delivery projects. Opportunities to maximise the pan-European fibre-optic network and the development of Wi-max broadband services will be supported.

E2: Economic Growth Locations

The urban areas of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and the West Wight settlements of Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth will be the principal locations for future economic growth. Smaller settlements and the rural areas of the Island will contribute to economic regeneration through the diversification of local economic activities. This will be achieved by:

1. Identifying and encouraging the release of employment land in locations that reflect the preferred spatial sequence of future development. While economic growth opportunities will be encouraged in all locations identified by overall spatial policies, the initial plan period will encourage the completion of the existing economic regeneration & growth in East Cowes, Cowes & Newport

2. Encouraging businesses with larger land requirements to consider employment sites in Newport, Cowes and East Cowes; and those that need immediate access to water for transport to consider the Medina Valley or the Cowes waterfront.

3. Encouraging those employers in the business services sector to consider all locations in Newport, Cowes and East Cowes, Ryde and Sandown and Shanklin.

4. Encouraging the economic development of Ryde as a gateway for tourism and retail sectors, and providing for the regeneration of the Sandown and Shanklin to reflect a 21st Century visitor offer aimed at serving new and emerging tourism markets.

5. Safeguarding existing employment sites and identifying new small footprint employment generating uses in urban areas where they are compatible with the amenity of the local community and contribute to the sustainability and vitality of the area where they are located. This will include identifying sites and premises for community businesses and social enterprise to support wider economic regeneration objectives.

6. Controlling the release of employment land for other uses against criteria and conditions that consider whether the site is no longer suitable or viable or surplus to requirements for employment uses.

HOUSING

4.5 The ***Island Plan*** is guided by housing requirements established in current Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) and in the South East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy. The guidance indicates an annual, minimum construction of some 520 new dwellings and that this should continue to 2026 subject to the necessary infrastructure being put in place. The Preferred Core Strategy is to recognise the requirements of the existing Regional Planning Guidance and the emerging South East Plan in identifying the amount of future housing to be provided. The levels of housing proposed can only be delivered subject to investment through public and private sources in necessary transport, social and community infrastructure.

4.6 Development land is a scarce resource for the Isle of Wight. It is being placed under pressure by increasing demands for new development. In order to optimise the use of available sites and reduce pressure on greenfield land, the Government has prioritised the use of brownfield land (land that has been in development in the past) and established minimum density targets of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare in PPG3. The emerging replacement to this, PPS3 identifies a broader range of appropriate densities, dependent upon the location of a particular site, extending up to 70 dwellings per hectare.

4.7 The Isle of Wight has seen average housing densities of above 40 per hectare over the past five years. The actual density at specific sites has depended upon the location and nature of the sites. It is also possible to create family homes with gardens at densities at 50 dwellings per hectare. Town centre and urban sites can achieve high quality development at densities within and above the target range as many such locations are appropriate and allow for apartment and flat developments. Higher density development need not be poorer quality development and the requirements for high quality and sustainable development will not be downgraded in the pursuit of higher densities.

4.8 In order to meet economic regeneration objectives as well as to protect the quality of environment and secure a form and scale of development which is sustainable, the Council will aim to achieve the optimum density of development that is compatible with quality urban design and amenity of existing and future residential occupiers.

4.9 The Isle of Wight has a buoyant demand for housing and a strong developer interest in provision driven by local demand and that created by retirees and 2nd home owners. Nevertheless, this market dynamism masks an increasing affordability gap generated by substantial year-on-year increases in house prices, and a skewed mix of house types, sizes, locations and tenures. The ***Island Plan*** must address the affordability gap through policy which increases the affordable housing supply and addresses the needs of different groups and individuals who require such provision.

4.10 The Island does not currently have any permanent sites for Gypsies and Travellers, nor does it have a transit site. The Council, with its partners has commissioned a joint survey of the housing needs of gypsies and travellers. This will inform the adequacy of provision for gypsies and travellers on the Island. The Council will also continue to work to co-ordinate its approach to meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers.

H1 – Housing Numbers

The Isle of Wight will make provision for a minimum of 10,400 new dwellings (at an average annual rate of 520 new dwellings) in the period 2006-2026 provided that regeneration is achieved, sufficient and appropriate infrastructure is put in place and high quality development frameworks and built forms are achieved to ensure the sustainable communities are created.

H2 – Housing Locations

The urban areas of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor and the West Wight settlements of Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth will be the principal locations for future housing growth.

To accommodate the levels of new housing provision through a housing location policy which supports the principles of sustainable development by:

1. Promoting the re-use of previously used, brownfield sites, setting a target of 70% of the Island's housing provision to be delivered on previously developed land;
2. Providing housing where sufficient community and transport infrastructure is available or can be readily made available;
3. Allowing for development on greenfield sites only where it can be demonstrated that this will bring forward additional community benefits, contribute to building sustainable communities in high quality neighbourhoods and is acceptable in terms of its environmental and greenspace impact;
4. Supporting housing development which provides an appropriate range and mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet local housing needs of island residents;
5. Providing new housing in smaller settlements and the rural areas where the development proposed demonstrates clear benefits to the existing local community in supporting local services, facilities or employment;
6. Requiring densities of housing development which are in excess of 30 dwellings per hectare, subject to character and environmental considerations. Higher density levels will be expected in the urban and sub-urban locations and in areas with good transport accessibility.

Housing Land Supply: 2006 - 2026

PHASES	Newport	Cowes-East Cowes	Ryde	Sandown-Shanklin	Totland-Freshwater-Yarmouth	Others	TOTAL
2006-2010	20.80	20.00	6.24	4.46	2.08	2.08	**55.66**
2011-2015	20.80	16.00	8.32	4.46	2.08	2.08	**53.74**
2016-2020	12.48	10.00	12.48	8.91	2.08	2.08	**48.03**
2021-2026	8.32	6.00	14.56	13.37	4.16	4.16	**50.57**
TOTAL	**62.40**	**52.00**	**41.60**	**31.20**	**10.40**	**10.40**	**208.00**

Housing Units Allocations: 2006 - 2026

PHASES	Newport	Cowes-East Cowes	Ryde	Sandown-Shanklin	Totland-Freshwater-Yarmouth	Others	TOTAL
2006-2010	1,040	1,000	312	223	104	104	**2,783**
2011-2015	1,040	800	416	223	104	104	**2,687**
2016-2020	624	500	624	446	104	104	**2,402**
2021-2026	416	300	728	669	208	208	**2,529**
TOTAL	**3,120**	**2,600**	**2,080**	**1,560**	**520**	**520**	**10,400**

H3 – Affordable Housing, Tenure & Size

Housing will be required to meet locally identified needs established in the Housing Needs Survey. Quality and choice of housing in terms of affordability, tenure and stock size is essential. Housing choice is essential to meeting the wider needs of the community to ensure well-being. This will be achieved by:

1. Giving affordable housing provision a high priority on all appropriate sites. 40% affordable housing will be required as provision on-site. As an exception, off-site provision or commuted payments may be acceptable provided there is sufficient justification. It is expected that affordable housing units will be provided without subsidy;
2. Ensuring that affordable housing units will be fully integrated and indistinguishable from non-affordable housing units built on the same site;
3. Encouraging a broad mix of housing tenure and sizes to reflect the diverse needs of the Island's residents, the nature and character of the development in question and the location of the development proposed;
4. Ensuring appropriate provision for gypsies and travellers through the identification of suitable site(s) tested against a criteria based policy which will include tests of sensitivity to adjacent uses, quality of community life as well as the need for adequate infrastructure facilities and proximity to public transport.

TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY

4.11 Future economic regeneration and enhancements to quality of life of the Island requires efficient and sustainable connections between all the urban centres and smaller settlements and, critically, between the Island and the mainland. The Isle of Wight Council will encourage the implementation of transport policies that support spatial, regeneration and sustainability objectives.

4.12 The ***Island Plan*** policy recognises national and regional policies that emphasise a sequential test for the preferred location of future development: existing settlements and brownfield sites, transport corridors, urban extensions and lastly greenfield sites. The policy conforms with the South East Plan: Isle of Wight Special Policy Area which identifies:

- The development of infrastructure and inward investment opportunities in the Medina Valley;
- Support for inward investment and development to regenerate the key areas identified in Ryde, Sandown Bay, Ventnor and West Wight;
- Support for urban renewal and intensification throughout the Island.

4.13 The ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy is developing in parallel with the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006 – 2011, submitted to Government in July 2005. The objectives of which included: improving accessibility; promoting economic prosperity and regeneration, improving road safety and health, improving air quality and the environment, tackling congestion and ensuring effective management. These objectives will be further developed in the final LTP to be submitted to Government in March 2006. These objectives are reflected in the outcomes of public consultation on the ***Island Plan*** Issues & Options Report. Consultation confirmed the transport issues that need to be addressed by the ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy including: over reliance on cars; in-town congestion at peak periods; air quality impacts; inefficiencies and gaps in the public transport network; high public transport fares; and inefficiencies in freight interchange, staging and loading facilities at ports.

4.14 ***Island Plan*** Issues & Options Report consultation also identified public preferences for an emphasis on areas that offer the strongest potential for the use of public transport and alternatives to the car and offer the best access to cross-Solent transport connections. This was further supported by the initial sustainability appraisal commentary on Issues & Options Report spatial options. The sustainability commentary supported options that emphasised the development of existing towns and area served by bus and rail public transport connections and proximity to cross-Solent ports.

T1 – Transport & Accessibility

Improvements to the entire Island's transport networks, including infrastructure and facilities are of critical importance to the successful economic regeneration and quality of life of the Island. It is essential that the ***Island Plan*** contributes to regional and sub-regional transport objectives to deliver sustained and sustainable improvements to transport including road, rail, water and air.

Development proposals will be required to contribute to the implementation of the Isle of Wight Local Transport Plan and its subsequent reviews to deliver improved accessibility through integrated and sustainable transport modes. This will be achieved by, where appropriate, working with our partners to:

1. Improve the road and rail networks and infrastructure to deliver improvements to Island-wide accessibility, improving travel choice, reduce congestion, improve freight distribution and cross Solent travel;
2. Reduce the predominant reliance on the car for accessibility to existing centres;
3. Improve access by sustainable means, public transport, cycle and on foot;
4. Ensure new residential, service and facilities developments are in locations, which are accessible by a full range of transport alternatives;
5. Help reduce the impact of seasonal traffic growth through the encouragement of car free tourism;
6. Strengthen and extend the cycle and pedestrian network and access as part of the public realm;
7. Safeguard existing and former rail transport routes for future use for sustainable transport purposes;
8. Widen travel choice particularly through car share, rail, bus, taxi, cycling and walking;
9. Encourage the development and implementation of Travel Plans for employment, education and health facilities (Work Place and School Travel Plans) by voluntary agreement as part of the formal planning process;
10. Encourage employers to allow "smarter choices" such as home working and flexitime to reduce travel needs and peak hour impacts;
11. Safeguard and upgrade Cross-Solent port gateways for future use for transportation, passenger and freight handling purposes;
12. Realise the potential of the Solent to function as a sustainable transport corridor for the movement of goods and people;

13. Provide for the development of high quality transport interchanges at key locations such as the Cross Solent gateways and within the principal towns;
14. Support modern port and interchange facilities at access points to the Island and at major transport hubs to achieve efficient staging, loading and unloading;
15. Establish effective bulk material handling infrastructure at suitable locations to improve capacity and support economic regeneration;
16. Apply maximum vehicle parking standards within the context of promoting economic regeneration and minimum cycle standards to reduce overall reliance on private vehicles in new developments;
17. Encourage local products and services for local communities to be sourced from the Island where possible to reduce the need for cross-Solent and cross Island transportation of goods and products.

COMMUNITY, SOCIAL & HEALTH FACILITIES

4.15 The Council's objective is to make the Island a healthier place where the well being of all communities is enhanced by better provision of social, meeting, health, education and sports facilities.

General Community, Social & Health Facilities

4.16 To meet the Island's sustainability objectives a range of social and community facilities to meet the diversity of local needs for all people in the community are required. There are existing deficiencies in provision and quality of many of these facilities which underpins the need to extend the range, availability and quality of facilities in a community environment. New development will need to contribute appropriately to meeting the community and social facility needs generated by the development.

Education Facilities

4.17 The Local Education Authority operates a three-tier education system and maintains 69 schools on the Island. The Isle of Wight College is based in Newport and provides a wide variety of courses.

4.18 Despite a positive year on year trend, educational attainment on the Island remains on or just below the national average. In the academic year 2003/04, 43.9 percent of pupils in Isle of Wight achieved 5 or more GCSE's graded A* to C, compared to an average for England of 53.7. However, more positively the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 4 at Key Stage 3 has changed from 64 percent in 1999 to 70 percent in 2004 for Mathematics and from 68 % to 75 % in English.

4.19 In 2001, 15% of the Island population aged 16-74 had attained level 4/5 (degree level) education. This compared with 22% for the South East and 20% for England and Wales. The Island suffers with many well-educated and skilled young people leaving the Island for further or higher education, or for greater employment opportunities.

4.20 The ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy needs to reflect this situation. The aim is to support the provision of high quality education and training provision to enable everyone to share in the Isle of Wight's growing prosperity.

4.21 The need to ensure that there is a relevant and appropriate supply of sites suitable for education purposes which are well located to serve urban and rural communities and form part of major new residential developments is critical to improving the quality of life for Islanders and in the attainment of the Island's economic regeneration objectives.

Health & Well Being

4.22 Generally the level of health on the Island is better than the average for England and Wales but not as good as elsewhere in the South East, which may be due to lower income levels. The Island has recently been designated an Associated Health Action Zone in recognition of health deprivation in some areas.

4.23 The 2001 Census showed 65% of Islanders perceived their health to be ‘good’ compared with 72% for the South East and 69% for England and Wales. 38% of Isle of Wight households had one or more persons with a Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI), compared with 29% for the South East and 34% for England and Wales.

4.24 There are 18 GP practices on the Island with secondary healthcare provided at St. Mary’s Hospital in Newport.

4.25 The ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy will make provision for the Health Authority and Primary Care Trust to continue to develop excellent health care facilities which are accessible to all. The provision of other healthcare facilities such as dentists, optometrists and care homes is also supported to ensure the well-being of all Island communities.

4.26 Healthcare and well-being are closely linked. The ***Island Plan*** supports the provision of well-being infrastructure in terms of sports, recreation and children’s play facilities in appropriate, accessible locations throughout the Island. New developments will be expected to make suitable provision or contributions towards such facilities, particularly where there are existing deficits.

SF1 – Health, Education, Community & Social Facilities

Inclusive and accessible health, education, community and social facilities to encourage well-being, healthy living, and lifelong learning across all sections of the community will be important to the sustainability of new and existing neighbourhoods on the Island. The Council will:

General Community, and Social Facilities

1. Protect and upgrade existing facilities and promote the development of new facilities in association with new development, with a focus on the principal centres of Newport, Ryde, Cowes and East Cowes, Sandown and Shanklin, Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth. Facilities of a suitable scale and nature are supported in smaller settlements and rural locations where appropriate;
2. Require all facilities to be accessible via public transport and meet the needs of the entire community, particularly socially excluded groups;
3. Complement and support other strategies and initiatives in education, health, and social care sectors;
4. Require opportunities for faith facilities to be provided through new residential developments where appropriate;
5. Ensure that new developments contribute appropriately to meeting community and social facility needs that they generate.

Education Facilities

1. Support the existing and future education infrastructure provision of Primary, Middle, and High schools in line with the development of new housing and in accessible locations;
2. Support the existing and future further and higher education provision in line with the development of new housing and in accessible locations;
3. Encourage the use of school premises and facilities for multiple uses after hours to maximise use and value to local communities;
4. Ensure that new developments contribute appropriately to meeting education needs that they generate.

Health & Well Being

1. Support the health infrastructure of the Island through adequate provision of GP surgeries, clinics, hospital accommodation, dentists and care homes on the Island, focused mainly in

the principal urban areas and in locations accessible by a range of means of transport;

2. Support the development of St. Mary's hospital in Newport as a major health centre and focus for specialist treatment;
3. Ensure that new developments contribute appropriately to meeting health and well being needs that they generate;
4. Promote healthy lifestyles by addressing existing and future deficiencies in provision, quality and access of sports facilities, playing pitches and children's play spaces throughout the Island.

TOWN CENTRES, RETAILING & LEISURE

4.27 The Isle of Wight Council is required, through the ***Island Plan*** to implement national and regional objectives by planning positively for the growth of and development in existing centres. Provision should be made for a range of shopping, leisure and local services that allow a genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community.

4.28 The vitality of Island town and village centres is essential to the Island's prosperity. Central to commercial health is the scale, mix and quality of the retail and leisure offer within a high quality environment. The opportunity is to make the Island's town centres attractive to local people and visitors offering activity and services 24 hours a day. The town centres should have a range of shopping, restaurants, pubs and a choice of entertainment and cultural activities. There should be a mix of quieter and more vibrant areas, but sufficient levels of activity to make it feel safe. Through such an approach the Council can secure vitality and viability of the Island's centres, strengthening the shopping and leisure roles in the face of competition from significant new retail and leisure developments in both Portsmouth and Southampton.

4.29 Recent review of the town centre and retail health of the Island's centres has identified gaps in provision and the need for additional retail floorspace in the period to 2026. The review identifies the existing town centres as the primary locations for additional retail and leisure development with Newport remaining as the principal retail destination in the Island.

4.30 In 1998 the Isle of Wight was losing 4.9% of available comparison goods expenditure to the mainland, although this is likely to have increased. Given the transport links much of this expenditure is likely to be leaking to Gunwharf Quays as well as central Southampton and Portsmouth. It is evident that Southampton and Gunwharf Quays offer high end retail and department stores and as such represent an attractive, accessible retail destination to residents of the Isle of Wight.

4.31 It is clear that facilities for comparison retailing are stronger in competing centres than on the Island. Retail provision in both Southampton and Portsmouth have significantly improved since the 1998 household survey and Gunwharf Quays has opened, therefore it is highly likely that leakage of comparison goods expenditure from the Island has increased.

4.32 Newport is currently the dominant comparison retail destination on the Island both in terms of both quantity and quality of retail floorspace; it has some 52% market share. The centre comprises a traditional town centre as well as a number of edge-of-centre retail warehouse units. Access to Newport by public and private transport is good although pedestrian linkages between the edge of centre units and the town centre are poor. In recent years rents have risen steadily and currently stand at £700 p/sqm with yields remaining steady. There is a low vacancy rate and retailer demand is reasonable given the size of the town.

4.33 It is evident that Newport as the principal centre does suffer from limited provision of high end/ comparison anchor stores. Newport town centre is lacking in store formats that meet modern retailer requirements and as such edge of centre retail warehousing has been developed. Many of the other centres provide a specialist niche or tourist role and any strategy going forward needs to focus and build upon these strengths.

4.34 Ryde appears to rely heavily on tourist income, which is evident from the large number of gift shops. Rents have not been experiencing the same growth of those in Newport and currently stand at £431 per sqm after increasing in 2004 for the first time in a number of years. Yields are high at 9% and have remained steady for a since 2001. There is some retailer demand for the town as well as a low vacancy rate.

4.35 Cowes main strength lies in its strong marine heritage and the specialist/ niche comparison offer reflects this. Although there is no published rental or yield data this centre appears to be healthy and performing well with few vacancies.

4.36 Shanklin appears to rely heavily on the tourist trade with a high number of gift, and cafes and fish and chip shops. The centre also has a high number of charity shops. Although there is no rental or yield data the low number of vacant units and busy feel to the town suggest that the town is an important destination throughout the year for residents.

4.37 The smaller centres of Sandown, Ventnor, Freshwater and East Cowes all provide essential local convenience and service needs. Due to its more isolated location on the west of the Island, the role of Freshwater in serving the local community is particularly important.

4.38 On the basis of retail/town centre analysis, Newport should be promoted as the main focus for retail activity on the Island. The quality of retail offer in Newport is essential to maintaining and/ or improving the Islands current market share. Newport needs to meet the mainstream comparison shopping needs of the Island’s population and maintain its role as a regional centre in line with the South East Plan. The overall approach to Newport should be to focus retail and leisure provision within the town centre, and ensure that any new development is well integrated into the town centre. This is to ensure that it does not function as a separate destination. Linkages between the town centre and the more recent edge of centre retail and leisure developments need to be improved to provide a cohesive town centre.

4.39 For neighbourhood and local centres, these will remain important resources which enable people to meet their daily needs without having to travel to the town centres. The ***Island Plan*** seeks to protect these valuable local facilities and to allow for the provision of additional local retail and service activities where appropriate in terms of the scale and nature of the retailing and services proposed, their impact on the character, sustainability and vitality of the centre in question.

4.40 Existing centres will be the preferred location for retail and leisure activities, although in some particular circumstances the Council recognises that this may not be appropriate due to locational constraints, or the ability to access the centre by sustainable modes of transport. In these situations it may be more appropriate to bring forward new retail sites and local centres which will address imbalances in overall provision and contribute towards creating sustainable communities.

SF2 – Town Centres, Retail & Leisure

The vitality and viability of the existing town centres on the Isle of Wight is essential to the Island's prosperity and its sustainability. High quality town centre environments with a vibrant mix of uses are important in ensuring quality of life and well being for local communities and in attracting visitors. Smaller settlements should retain, and where possible, enhance retail and leisure facilities provision to support their future sustainability. This will be achieved by:

1. Identifying Newport as the first preference for all forms of retail development and town centre uses attracting large numbers of people, followed by the other principal town centres of Cowes, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor, Totland, Freshwater and Yarmouth;
2. Requiring all new retail and leisure developments to be accessible and their location subject to the application of a sequential location test;
3. Requiring proposals for retail or leisure development outside defined town centres to demonstrate that there is a need for the proposed development and that it would contribute to meeting the needs of the Island, and suitable, alternative, sites in, or at the edge, of defined centres are not available;
4. Protecting and supporting existing retail and town centre functions within defined town centre areas. All new retail and leisure developments must be appropriate to the function, size and character of the centre concerned and must meet people's day to day needs. The predominance of A1 uses will be protected within town centres;
5. Maintaining retail and leisure facilities in local areas/neighbourhoods and rural villages to ensure the vitality and viability of these communities. Policies will encourage the prevention of the loss of local shops and facilities where possible;
6. Enhancing consumer choice by making provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, and particularly socially-excluded groups.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4.41 The Council places a strong premium on the responsible protection and use of natural resources, particularly the use of non-renewable energy and the consumption of water. The Island has seen increasing demands placed on all its natural resources and with significant future development and growth planned it is essential that adequate measures for protection and where possible reduction in natural resource consumption are put in place.

4.42 The Isle of Wight has a rich and varied natural environment, much of which is protected through European and national legislation. The Council has a duty to conserve, protect, manage and enhance the natural environment of the Island, ensuring that the environmental capital and assets are retained for future generations.

4.43 The Council will continue to protect and manage designated areas and sites of nature and environmental importance. Protection includes implementing policies which seek to direct development away from such sites and areas, maximising the use of previously developed land and buildings; controlling the release of greenfield sites for future development and seeking effective remedies for pollution impacts.

4.44 Management and enhancement of the natural environment is an active process involving the way in which land and coastal areas are used, balancing the economic and social demands against the needs of conserving the environment. Enhancement of the natural environment will be sought both through implementation of specific projects and interventions such as restoration, increasing habitats and species diversity and improving interpretation of environmental assets. It will require use of contributions from future development towards proactive measures in appropriate circumstances.

ENV1 – Conserving , Protecting, Managing & Enhancing the Natural Environment

Environmental capital will be conserved, protected, managed and enhanced in order to underpin the overall quality of life of the Island as a living environment and support wider social and economic sustainability objectives. This will be achieved by:

1. Protecting and managing designated nature, conservation and other environmental assets;
2. Maximising the use of previously developed land to minimise encroachment onto greenfield sites;
3. Providing for the effective management of land on the fringes of urban and village built up areas through landscape character assessments;
4. Preventing, reducing or remedying all forms of pollution including water, soil, air and noise;
5. Protecting the Island's bio-diversity of flora and fauna, sensitive landscapes and habitats and promoting their enhancement;
6. Protecting the Island's geomorphological assets and sensitive landscapes and promoting their enhancement.

ENV2 – Use & Protection of Natural Resources

The use and protection of natural resources is essential to the overall quality of life of the Island and to support wider social and economic sustainability objectives. This will be achieved by:

1. Promoting the greater use of renewable energy sources through a Local Energy Strategy which supports energy generation from biomass, marine, waste, solar and wind sources where available and acceptable in terms of impact on quality of life, amenity and viability;
2. Proactive water conservation through the management of demand and local abstraction through Catchment Abstraction Management Plans to reduce the dependence upon off-Island water importation. New developments will be expected to ensure greater use is made of water recycling and storage technologies;
3. Reducing the loss of non-renewable environmental assets caused by development proposals. Developments which result in the loss of renewable environmental assets, should mitigate and compensate for any loss and use natural resources more sustainably.

4.45 The ***Island Plan*** will seek to provide for sustainable waste management within the Island. The Council recognises the need to meet its existing waste management obligations and to ensure there is sufficient flexibility within the ***Island Plan*** to deal with future waste management requirements.

4.46 To date, the Island has been reliant on landfill like much of the UK, and exporting of waste off-island. The need for greater sustainability and reduction in local environmental impacts means the Island must minimise the waste it generates and look to new technologies, such as gasification plants, to recycle, recover from and treat its domestic and commercial waste stream.

4.47 The ***Island Plan*** provides the framework through which the Isle of Wight can maximise its contribution to self-sufficiency, recycling and waste minimisation. Where new waste facilities are needed a suitable site or sites will be identified to accommodate a range of strategic waste management facilities. Local sites for recycling, composting and other waste minimisation opportunities will also be identified as appropriate.

ENV3 – Sustainable Waste Management

The Isle of Wight will take a socially, environmentally and economically responsible approach to waste management which will show a positive trend in waste minimisation, significant increases in recycling and energy recovery and a decrease in waste sent to landfill.

Facilities for waste management will be provided to allow local self-sufficiency in waste handling and recycling. This will be achieved by:

1. Provision of sufficient waste sites to maximise the contribution to sustainable waste management;
2. Ensuring all new development will maximise its potential contribution to waste minimisation, re-use and recycling through promotion of waste minimisation, recycling and sustainable resource use in the development design, during construction and land remediation and over its lifetime. Adequate facilities for recycling must be provided in new developments;
3. Promotion of public awareness of waste issues and minimisation.

4.48 Climate change will have a profound impact upon the future environment of the Island, with long-term predictions for sea level rises and erosion of existing coastal and land beside rivers. The ***Island Plan*** recognises that development and use of land in areas of flood risk and those at risk of coastal erosion processes must be effectively managed as a priority.

4.49 Government policy emphasises the need for flood risk to influence the location of development and for development plans to follow a sequential test in relation to the level of flood risk, directing development away from areas at risk of flooding. This approach has to be balanced with the needs of the Island to deliver an economic regeneration and improve social well-being and the quality of life for all communities. Provision is made for the mitigation and minimisation of flood risk in areas prone to flooding and the Council will expect new development to provide a detailed flood risk assessment and demonstrate suitable mitigation and enhancement measures as part of the design.

4.50 Coastal locations are important habitat areas for many species of fauna and flora. The Council is in the process of preparing Shoreline Management Plans which will protect, manage and propose enhancement measures for the Island's coastal shoreline. It is appropriate for the Core Strategy to seek to protect coastal and shoreline areas from inappropriate development which would compromise the ability to protect or manage these areas. Protection must be balanced against the use of much of the coast and shoreline for public amenity, recreation and business and transportation purposes.

ENV4 – Flood Risk & Coastal Protection

Climate change coupled with increased flood risk and sea level change is an evident factor which the Isle of Wight must face. The use of land in and adjacent to areas of flood risk and those in coastal locations requires an approach which minimises those risks and gives priority to development in areas not considered to be at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.

Development in areas identified as at risk of flooding by the Environment Agency will be avoided unless mitigation is practicable and acceptable for the development itself and surrounding areas. Flood risk will be minimised by:

1. Implementation of Catchment Flood Management Plans;
2. Positive adaptation of developments to reduce the risk of flooding;
3. Natural coastal and river system restoration;
4. Implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS).

In coastal locations, the Council will implement the Shoreline Management Plans currently in preparation. Compensatory habitats will need to be provided where existing coastal habitats are affected over time. Access to the coastline for public amenity and maintenance will be secured.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

4.51 The quality of the built environment is critical to the regeneration and sustainability of the Isle of Wight. A high quality of place is required to support business retention and encourage continued local and inward investment; to provide pride of place, community stability, social cohesion, and a safe urban environment.

4.52 National objectives for design have been set by Planning Policy Statement 1 *Delivering Sustainable Development*, which outlines the common characteristics of what high quality and inclusive design should achieve. Key objectives include:

- Well-mixed and integrated developments;
- Well-planned public spaces;
- Long term quality and character;
- High quality and visually attractive buildings and spaces;
- Connecting people, places, jobs and services;
- Integration with existing built form and natural environment; and
- Maximising the efficient use of resources.

4.53 Planning Policy Guidance 3 addressing housing development calls for new housing and residential environments to be well designed and make a significant contribution to promoting urban renaissance and improving the quality of life. Addressing Town Centres, Planning Policy Statement 6 calls for the promotion of good design, improving the quality of public spaces, protecting and enhancing the architectural and historic heritage of centres, and ensuring that town centres provide an attractive and safe environment for businesses, shoppers and residents.

4.54 Planning Policy Statement 12 concerning Local Development Frameworks states that local policies must address design as a crucial element of the delivery of sustainable development. Well designed development is identified as responding to the local, physical, social and economic context, being safe, clean attractive and accessible for all users.

4.55 As the Isle of Wight anticipates a new generation of development of housing, business premises, public buildings, transport facilities, streets and open spaces, attention to the creation of high quality buildings, infrastructure and public spaces is required.

BE1 – Promoting Design Quality

Raising the design quality of new buildings, developments, the public realm of streets, parks and open spaces is essential to the future quality of place, quality of life and sustainability of the Isle of Wight. The Isle of Wight Council will achieve this by:

1. Encouraging innovation and excellence in design to create places of distinction through proactive design of urban form and the urban framework;
2. Focusing on the quality of buildings individually, and collectively and their forms such that they combine together to create an attractive, accessible, mixed use and safe environment;
3. Respecting local context, character and distinctiveness of existing places, spaces and buildings in designing new developments;
4. Encouraging the use of designing out crime mechanisms that enhance community safety by encouraging active frontages, greater pedestrian use, natural surveillance from surrounding buildings and a well lit public realm
5. Encouraging the use of approaches such as development frameworks, masterplans, design codes to establish integration with the existing context, design parameters and details at the earliest stage that can carry through to completion of the development;
6. Ensuring Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents contain detailed design statements and approaches.

BE2 – Conserving, Protecting and Managing the Built Environment

The historic built environment will be conserved, protected, managed and enhanced in order to underpin the overall quality of life of the Island as a living environment and support wider social and economic sustainability objectives. This will be achieved by:

1. Protecting and managing development in designated Conservation Areas through character and impact appraisals;
2. Protecting and managing the re-development and use of listed structures and Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
3. Maximising the use of previously developed land and buildings to actively contribute to the future built environment.

BE3 – Building Quality & Efficiency

Minimising the environmental impact of the construction and operation of new buildings is essential to creating sustainable communities and neighbourhoods. Sustainable design and construction standards will be expected for new developments to maximise use of renewable materials, reduce distances materials must travel to site, improve energy efficiency of building systems and appliances and allow the flexible re-use and of buildings in the future. This will be achieved by assessing development proposals in terms of:

1. Conformity to an excellent BREEM standard (or Sustainable Buildings Code standard once finalised by Government);
2. Measures to minimise consumption of natural resources, maximise the use of renewable resources, minimise the potential for emission of pollutants, reduce waste and reduce flood risk;
3. Flexibility and adaptability over a building's lifetime where appropriate to the role and function of the development;
4. Ability to use stored energy through reclamation of building materials in refurbishment and conversion of developments.

BE4 – Inclusive Development

Inclusive developments are required if the Isle of Wight is to thrive. The Council will encourage the creation of safe, socially inclusive and adaptable environments for a range of occupiers and users which meets the long term needs of all. To achieve this, particular attention will be paid to providing housing and services that meet the needs of:

1. An ageing population, particularly in terms of appropriate housing and access to health;
2. Young people, providing housing opportunities that allow them to stay in, or move into the Island;
3. People with special needs, including the disabled or those with learning disabilities;
4. Minority groups with distinct housing, public service or access issues.

DELIVERY, IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

4.56 The ***Island Plan*** must be capable of delivery and implementation over its lifetime. The *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act*, 2004 has made delivery and implementation issues critical in plan preparation. Part 2 of the Act requires the Council to prepare an Annual

Monitoring Report to measure, evaluate and guide performance in the delivery of the ***Island Plan***.

Delivery & Implementation

4.57 The ***Island Plan*** Core Strategy sets out a deliverable vision and objectives. Nevertheless. the vision and objectives of the ***Island Plan*** will only be achieved if the necessary infrastructure and provision of new facilities and enhancements to existing facilities are delivered and implemented.

4.58 Many of the ***Island Plan's*** objectives will be implemented through the development control process of considering planning applications and seeking developer contributions through planning obligations towards the provision of infrastructure and facilities related to the development proposed. This will, in itself, not be sufficient to meet the vision and objectives of regenerating the Island. It will be essential that adequate resources and the right business and market conditions are created and sustained to maximise the potential of land and property to bring forward inward investment and the provision of quality development in the required locations and forms.

4.59 While the Isle of Wight Council has a central role in co-ordinating, enabling, managing and funding projects and interventions that will deliver the necessary infrastructure and facilities, other public, private and voluntary sector partners also have significant roles to play. This can only be achieved by effective use of all funding opportunities and through such initiatives as:

- The implementation and draw down of Government funding through the Isle of Wight Local Area Agreement;
- Mainstreaming of the Council's public partners spending on services and facilities through the Local Strategic Partnership underpinned by the 20/20 Vision Community Strategy;
- Creation and implementation of Private Finance Initiative agreements which secure long term private partner funding for critical infrastructure and facilities;
- Creation of a Local Delivery Vehicle to co-ordinate and manage delivery;
- Effective use of Council owned land and property assets through active asset management driven by the Council's Asset Management Plan;
- Utilisation of Compulsory Purchase powers (CPO) available to the Council and other key public partners such as English Partnerships and the South East of England Regional Development Agency;

- Support for the Island's voluntary and community sectors to continue to provide a range of services, representation and advocacy which ensure the well-being of local communities and business across the Island;

- Exploring the implementation of new forms of developer contribution through Planning Gain Supplement, tariffs and thresholds as appropriate.

Monitoring & Review

4.60 The Annual Monitoring Report will include an assessment of the extent to which national, regional and local key objectives and key indicators are being met. Change and progress will be recorded against a baseline position developed at the time of implementation of the ***Island Plan***.

4.61 The Annual Monitoring Report will also review progress in the preparation of the ***Island Plan*** Local Development Documents against the adopted Local Development Scheme and any subsequent updates of it.

4.62 Analysis and assessment of Core Strategy monitoring data will be undertaken with particular emphasis on:

- Spatial implications of policies and their targets;

- Impact on urban and rural areas, specifically the profile, role and function of principal urban areas and smaller settlements;

- The delivery of economic regeneration in a sustainable manner to the Island's communities.

IMP1 – Delivery & Implementation

The delivery and implementation of projects and interventions that will provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support the growth and change of the Island according to the Island Plan vision and objectives is critical. Delivery and implementation will be achieved by:

1. Planning and working in conjunction with and supporting a wide range of national, regional and local level public, private and voluntary sector delivery partners;
2. Utilising Local Area Agreement finance; the development and implementation of appropriate Private Finance Initiative funding agreements; establishment of a Local Delivery Vehicle; and use of its own corporate asset base; to meet Island Plan objectives;
3. Making effective use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to assemble land to enable development schemes in appropriate circumstances;
4. Secure planning obligations to ensure development proposals meet the reasonable costs of new infrastructure, including transport, utilities, housing, education, health, community facilities, leisure, flood risk and environmental impact mitigation and waste management. Planning obligations will also be sought to provide compensatory provision where development proposals result in the loss of a significant amenity or resource;
5. Prepare Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents where appropriate to provide additional guidance on how developer contributions will be calculated and the application of any thresholds or tariffs to be applied.

IMP2 – Monitoring & Review

The Council will undertake regular monitoring of the Island Plan to:

1. Measure the effectiveness of its policies and proposals. This is critical to securing the vision and objectives of the Island Plan and ensuring that the Island benefits from the economic regeneration and enhancements to quality of life and community well-being which the Council and Local Strategic Partnership aspire;
2. Appraise the performance of the preparation of the Island Plan against the adopted Local Development Scheme;
3. Identify the need to refine, revise or modify Island Plan policies;
4. Identify the need to prepare additional Area Action Plan or Supplementary Planning Documents to support the vision and objectives of the Island Plan.

5 Draft Core Strategy Structure

Introduction

5.1 According with the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, and in line with Planning Policy Statement 12 concerning the preparation of Local Development Framework Core Strategies, the Council must consult on the structure of the draft Core Strategy document at the Preferred Core Strategy stage.

5.2 TO ADD: DRAFT CORE STRATEGY STRUCTURE BEFORE FINAL PUBLICATION

6 Getting Involved

How to Comment on the Preferred Core Strategy

6.1 We encourage you to help us to decide on the ***Island Plan*** preferred spatial vision and core policies. We are seeking your comments on the Preferred Core Strategy and its draft policy directions and welcome your response by writing to:

Island Plan: Preferred Core Strategy Consultation
Planning Policy
Isle of Wight Council
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

6.2 The Preferred Core Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal can be downloaded from the Council's website at:

www.iwight.com/islandplan

6.3 Electronic copies of the Preferred Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal can be requested from:

Planning.policy@iow.gov.uk

6.4 Additionally, paper copies of the document are available in all Council libraries, County Hall reception and the Isle of Wight Council's Seaclose Offices reception.

Key Dates

6.5 The public consultation period for the Preferred Core Strategy starts on **Monday 13th February 2006** and runs for a **six week period**. All comments must be received at the address above by **5pm** on **Friday 24th March 2006**.

What Happens to Your Comments?

6.6 Following the end of the public consultation period, all comments received will be reviewed and analysed by the Council, with the results of the consultation reported to Council Cabinet with a formal response to each comment.