

# LOCAL VOICES, ISLAND ISSUES

A GUIDE ON HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR  
COMMUNITY LED PLAN

ISSUED BY THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL PLANNING POLICY TEAM

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## INTRODUCTION

As the name suggests, a Community Led Plan (CLP) is a plan where the process has been undertaken by the local community, with a heavy reliance on volunteer activity. People in an area are best placed to know what is valued, what needs improving and what needs to change in their area. It is of course important that a CLP isn't produced in isolation, but is a partnership approach between the community and organisations with an interest in the area such as the local authority, the police, fire service, schools, health care and transport providers. It is also important to formally adopt such plans at a local level through the local Town or Parish Council and to involve the area's elected Councillor for the Isle of Wight Council.

CLPs can provide really important and useful information to the Isle of Wight Council and its partner public bodies and community and voluntary sector organisations involved in the Island Strategic Partnership (ISP). The ISP brings these organisations together to discuss issues, agree a strategic vision and actions for a sustainable future for the Isle of Wight. This is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy (Eco Island). The ISP, as a whole, and its individual partners are regularly assessed. Part of this assessment includes a consideration of how the local community has been able to influence their work.

The Local Development Framework (Island Plan) is the new statutory planning framework for the Isle of Wight. It is a spatial plan, which means that it must consider all community, economic and environmental issues and set out clearly how the Island will change in the future. The plan is also subject to various appraisals to make sure that it fulfils sustainability and environmental requirements. Consultation with communities and other organisations is an important part of this process and the Isle of Wight Council has set out in its Statement of Community Involvement exactly how this will be achieved.

Your Community Plan can play an important part in the future of the Isle of Wight by complementing the policies of the Island Plan and the vision and aims of the Eco Island Strategy. It can do this by considering and identifying issues at a local level, describing the character of your area and by bringing detail and evidence to the policies and strategic aims of these Island wide approaches. It can also influence the work of public sector and community and voluntary sector organisations that deliver services to your community.

The Isle of Wight Council Planning Service recognises the hard work that goes into a CLP and has written this guide to help you consider how your Community Led Plan can contribute to the policies of the Island Plan by being adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. This guide complements existing local, regional and national guidance on CLP and we have included references to sources of further help in the document.

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY LED PLAN?

The term Community Led Plan refers to a number of different initiatives all of which are run by the local community:

### **Parish Plans / Community Plans**

Developed by the local community, these plans describe a local area. They provide details on what people consider is important to them in the area and the things that they would like to see changed or improved. Crucially, they also include detailed Action Plans for how, when and who will carry out these actions. This may include actions being undertaken by the community itself, or by the community in partnership with others.

A Parish/Community Plan will cover social, economic and environmental issues some of these will be directly relevant to the Island Plan and its policies and could form a Supplementary Planning Document. Others will be useful to other local authority functions and services and to other public and community and voluntary sector organisations working in the area.

### **Market Town Health Checks**

A Market Town Health Check looks at the social, economic and environmental aspects of a town and its surrounding countryside. Worksheets help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the community and then help to formulate a plan of action to move things forward. Further information can be found on the Commission for Rural Communities [website](#).

The Island Plan Core Strategy describes our main towns and urban areas and sets out a spatial strategy for their future. These areas are likely to see the greatest level of change in the future. Existing Market Town Health Checks have resulted in a number of areas on the Island developing Town Plans. These or future revisions and updates may be able to help in future detailed policies within the Island Plan.

### **Village / Neighbourhood Design Statements**

A Village Design Statement (VDS) or Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS) describes the qualities, characteristics and local distinctiveness that people value in their village/neighbourhood and its surroundings. They set out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in the village/neighbourhood, based on its character. Their aim is to influence change so that it respects and adds to this character by helping future development to 'fit in'.

As a VDS/NDS is a detailed document, with a core purpose of influencing the design of future development in an area it is essential that it complements the Island Plan and its policies. This sort of CLP is the most likely to be able to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in its entirety due to this core purpose.

## WHY ARE COMMUNITY LED PLANS IMPORTANT?

Community Led Plans can:

- Create a real sense of community spirit.
- Provide evidence and agreement of community needs and priorities.
- Provide a clear plan of action for Parish/Town councils to adopt and take forward.
- Help with bids for grants and other funding.
- Show where help from partners is needed and encourage partnership working in general.
- Help to influence and inform the Community Strategy (Eco Island).
- Help to give a local perspective to the Local Development Framework (Island Plan) by supplementing its policies.

## WHY PRODUCE A COMMUNITY LED PLAN?

Over the last few years there has been a move by Government to strengthen the voice and involvement of people in the future of their local area. Organisations like the Isle of Wight Council now have an obligation to incorporate this into their work. This means that there has never been a better time for Community Led Plans to realise their true potential in bringing structure, action and influence to help public bodies achieve this.

If you already have a Community Led Plan for your area, now may be a good time to look at refreshing it. This will make sure that it continues to reflect the issues and priorities for action in your local area.

## WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Ultimately your Community Led Plan should be endorsed, adopted and have its delivery monitored by your local Town/Parish Council.

In the early stages you may want to set up a community led Steering Committee and a number of topic-based Working Groups to help with the work needed to formulate your plan. It is important that the Town/Parish Council is involved in this by either having members of the Council on the Steering Committee or by having regular updates on progress as part of Council business. You may wish to look at the Isle of Wight Council [Community Planning Resources Pack](#) to help you with this.

It is also important to involve other organisations and partners in the process such as the Isle of Wight Council (local elected Members and relevant departments for the issues you are considering), Police, schools, businesses, public transport operators, health care providers and community/voluntary groups active in the area. In this way the final Plan will be realistic in its aims.

Further information and advice on who may be able to help you is given in the next section of this guidance.

## HOW TO DO IT?

There are many sources of information and guidance on how to undertake a Community Led Plan available to help you. You may also want to look at Plans from other areas and you may want to make contact with them to discuss their experience of the process.

## Published guidance and information

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural Areas) has a website dedicated to [Community Led Planning](#) and a [CLP Toolkit](#)

The Department for Communities and Local Government have a number of publications promoting the empowerment of local communities which can be found on their [website](#). Their Community Power Pack gives examples of different ways to consult your community and get them involved [Community Power Pack](#).

West Berkshire Council has produced a useful guide to consulting young people called the [Big Buzz Challenge Toolkit](#).

The Commission for Rural Communities has made former Countryside Agency [Parish Plan Guidance](#) available to download from its website. They also have a very useful web based [Rural Communities Best Practice Database](#), which includes information of projects from Parish Plans across the country

Natural England has made the former Countryside Agency [Village Design Statement Guidance](#) available to download from its website.

The [Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation](#) is a national charity specialising in community participation, training and development. They developed and have trademarked the widely used and promoted "Planning for Real™" model for community engagement.

Alongside this guidance the Isle of Wight Council has published a [Community Planning Resources Pack](#). Electronic copies of existing locally produced Community Led Plans can be viewed [here](#).

## WHO SHOULD I CONTACT TO HELP ME WITH MY COMMUNITY PLAN?

### Local information and advice

Island Strategic Partnership has details of the [Eco Island Strategy](#) on its website. The Eco Island Vision states that 'By 2026 the Island will be a world renowned Eco Island, with a thriving economy, a real sense of pride and a place where residents and visitors feel safe and are treated with respect.' There are four main themes to the Eco Island Strategy Thriving Island, Healthy and Supportive Island, Safe and Well Kept Island, and Inspiring Island. There is also a link to the [Isle of Wight Information Observatory](#) where you can find web based statistical information, they may also be able to help you with your mapping needs from the Isle of Wight Council's corporate Geographical Information System.

[Isle of Wight Council](#) has a number of departments that will have an interest in many of the issues that you will be exploring in your CLP.

### **Planning Policy**

This guidance has been produced by the Planning Policy section of the Isle of Wight Council to help you to consider how best to link your CLP into the Island Plan process. On our [website](#) you can find out more information or you can contact us by [e-mail](#) or telephone us on 01983 823552.

### **Housing**

Peter Griffiths is the Isle of Wight Council Housing Research and Enabling Manager and Jackie Johnson is the Isle of Wight Council Housing Research and Performance Officer. Both can be reached by [email](#) or by telephoning 01983 823040. They can give you information on housing need, tenure, size, and affordable and market housing issues. [Sharon Packer](#) is the Isle of Wight Council Rural Housing Enabler. She can be reached by telephoning 01983 539383. She can help you undertake a Rural Housing Needs Survey and advise you generally about rural affordable housing issues.



### ***Historic Environment***

The [Conservation and Design](#) team can help with information on Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Parks and Gardens of historic interest. They can also provide information on buildings of local significance on the local list. More information can be found on the [Conservation and Design](#) website. Information on Historic Environment Action Plan, Historic Landscape Characterisation Project and the Island's important archaeology can be obtained from the Isle of Wight Council [Archaeology and Historic Environment Service](#) website. They can also be reached by telephoning 01983 823810.

### ***Local distinctiveness and Character***

[Jo Murray-Smith](#) is the Isle of Wight Council Urban Designer and she can help you to include information on local distinctiveness and character in your CLP (see also AONB below). To do this you may wish to consider undertaking a local Character Area Appraisal more details on this can be obtained from the [Conservation and Design](#) Team.

### ***Natural Environment and Biodiversity***

The [Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan](#) gives details of the importance of wildlife and habitats across the Island. [Colin Pope](#) is the Senior Ecology Officer and [Anne Marston](#) is the Assistant Ecology Officer and they can be reached by telephoning 01983 823893. The [Ecology team's](#) website has more information.

### ***Green Infrastructure***

Green Infrastructure is the term used to describe sites that have a particular landscape, biodiversity, amenity and/or recreational value. The Isle of Wight Council is developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy that will become an Island Plan Supplementary Planning Document. This will bring together individual Green Infrastructure assets as a comprehensive network, give them protection and look for opportunities for new provision. Open Spaces and other Green Infrastructure assets in your CLP can help with this work. Planning Policy Officer [Lisa Scovell](#) can help you with Green Infrastructure issues.

### ***Transport***

[Chris Wells](#) is the Transport Policy Manager and he can help you with issues of transport policy, including cycling, walking and public transport. [Cycling](#) route information can be found on the Council's website. Information on Island buses can be found on the [Southern Vectis](#) website.

### ***Highways and Traffic***

[Kevin Burton](#) is the Traffic and Road Safety Team Leader and he can help you with issues of traffic, parking, speed management and road safety. He can be reached by telephoning the Isle of Wight Council Call Centre on 01983 821000. He can also put you in touch with the right person to discuss highway maintenance issues.

### ***Rights of Way***

The [Public Rights of Way Section](#) is responsible for the recording, protection, management and promotion of the extensive footpath, bridleway and byway network across the Island. They can help you with information about access to the countryside. You can contact them by [email](#) or by telephoning the Isle of Wight Council Call Centre on 01983 821000.

### ***Parish and Community Development***

The [Parish Support Team](#) can help you on a wide range of issues affecting Parish and Town Councils and the communities that they serve. They are also responsible for developing and co-ordinating parish initiatives and best practice in community involvement and public participation. They have produced a [Community Planning Resource Pack](#). They may also be able to help you link your non-planning related CLP issues to the work of other departments of the Isle of Wight Council. They can be reached by telephoning 01983 823698.



### **Other local organisations**

[Isle of Wight Rural Community Council](#) can help with planning, executing and monitoring Parish Plans and can provide advice on whether there is funding available to help you. They have links to the [South East Rural Community Council Network](#) and [Action for Communities in Rural England \(ACRE\)](#), both of whom are strong advocates of Community Led Planning. [Estelle Thomas](#) is the Rural Services Manager and she can be reached by telephone on 01983 524058. A new online [Community Led Planning database](#) is soon to be promoted by the RCC. This system will allow local communities to add information about their CLP to the website directly and to update details on the delivery of the actions within their plans. The database will also allow public sector and community and voluntary sector organisations to have easier access to information from local CLPs. This may help to reflect local needs in their policies, and service delivery.

The [Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership \(AONB\)](#) can help with information about the AONB, its special characteristics and qualities and their management. CLP can provide more information on what is locally distinctiveness in the area of the plan and what local people value in the area. [Fiona Hanna](#) is the AONB Lead Officer and you can reach her by telephone on 01983 823855.

### **Consultants and other advice**

Many communities have used external consultants to help them with their CLP at various stages in the process, from helping to describe the history, landscape and character of the area, to turning issues into actions, to editing and design of the final plan. Electronic copies of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements that have been completed on the Isle of Wight can be found on the [Planning Policy](#) website. Once you have looked at these you may wish to make contact with the local parish or town clerk to ask them about their experiences of using external consultants.

[Planning Aid](#) is a national organisation part funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Royal Town Planning Institute. They provide a low cost service to communities to help them to get involved in planning issues in their area, this can include community planning, and planning application, planning appeal and planning enforcement issues. Their regional office for the South of England can be reached by telephoning 01865 798673 or by [e-mail](#).



# SOME EXAMPLES OF LOCAL BEST PRACTICE

The following extracts from existing local Community Led Plans we feel are good examples of best practice.

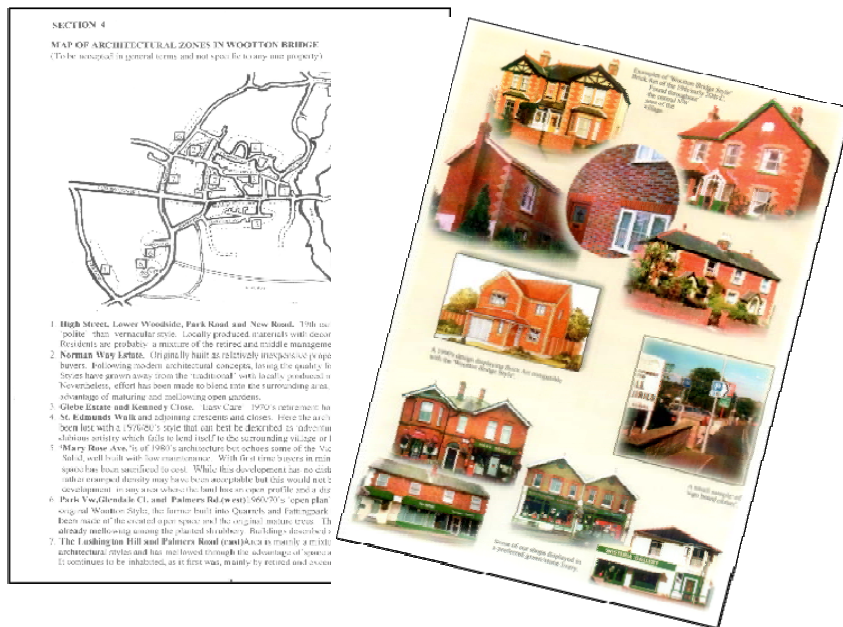
## Local character

The Chale Village Design Statement successfully describes the local character of the parish in detail under a number of headings and uses a large number of good quality photographs to help in its description.



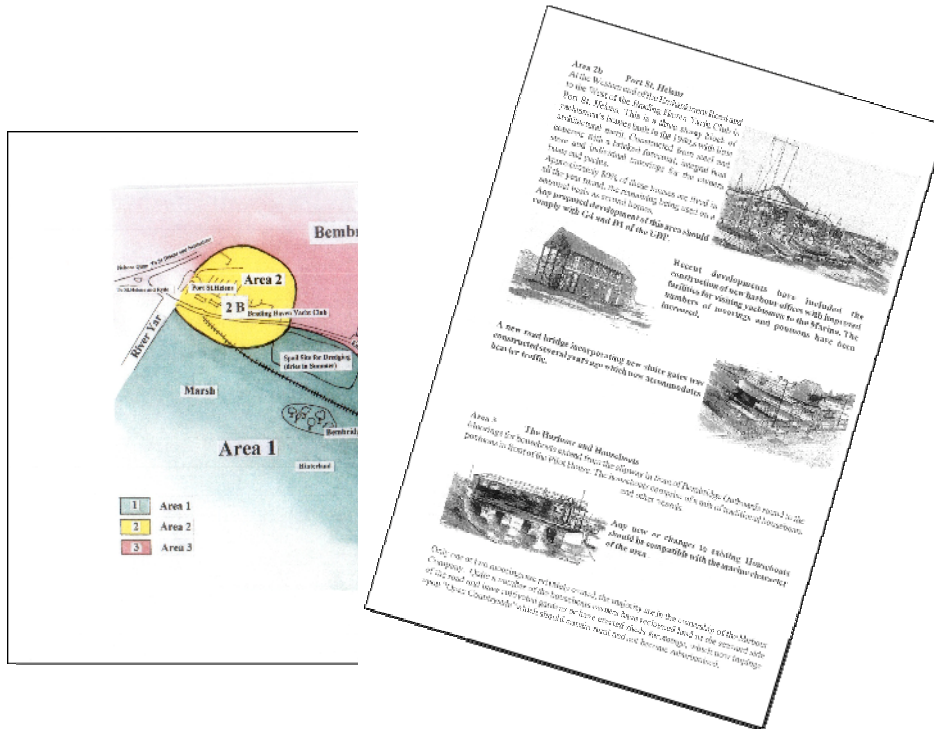
Extracts from the Chale Village Design Statement

The Wootton Bridge Village Design Statement identifies and describes Architectural Zones in the area.



Extracts from the Wootton Bridge Village Design Statement

The Bembridge Village Design Statement also divides the parish into zones and then provides details of each zone and its characteristics.



Extracts from the Bembridge Village Design Statement

The Brighstone Parish Village Design Statement describes in detail the character of area and uses photographs to illustrate the points that it makes.

## Boundaries and enclosures

Boundaries and enclosures define property and ownership whilst also giving a distinctive pattern and character to settlements and wider landscapes. Traditionally, local materials such as stone walls, hedges, and native species hedgerows kept clipped or layered was used to create boundary features and in the countryside to enclose areas for livestock. More modern materials can have an urbanising impact and may jar with adjacent boundary treatments that are more in keeping. This is particularly important for road and path facing plots.

**Walls:**  
Stone walls are a strong feature in Brighstone Parish both in the settlements such as in Brighstone Village alongside St Mary's Church and in Rectory Lane and the wider parish such as those at Pitt Place and in Brook. Although more permanent than fencing, stone walls still require maintenance and repair to ensure that they continue to contribute to the character of the parish. When such repairs are actioned care needs to be taken with mortaring and pointing.

**Hedges:**  
Both in village locations and in the wider countryside, hedges provide means of enclosure and as living structures they also provide food and shelter for wildlife. In rural locations outside village centres native hedge species are preferred and advice should be sought on what planting is appropriate. In villages and settlements more ornamental species can be more appropriate, but care should be taken to ensure that these are in keeping. The use of fast growing conifer species for hedging can be particularly jarring in character and unless kept in check through regular clipping these hedges may lead to decreased light for neighbouring properties and an oppressive feel to adjacent public paths.

**Fencing:**  
In Brighstone Parish the main form of enclosure is hedging and stone walls. Fencing in villages and other settlements has the potential to quickly change character, particularly if low quality materials are used or colour varies due to the use of stains. If fencing is needed on plots fronting roads and paths, it should be low and of post and rail or post and wire construction rather than closeboarded.

**Gates and driveways:**  
The character of vehicle and pedestrian gates at the entrances to property also play a major part in the 'street scene' and character of the parish. Simple gates of a rural character will help to strengthen the strong sense of place whereas overly ornate and grand structures will be urbanising unless they reflect the grandeur of the building to which they give access. Driveway treatments can also have an impact on the character of the parish and rural treatments such as gravel are preferred.





Development can either contribute to character or undermine it. Often as simple as recognising that every building is part of the greater form and character of any settlement. Sensitive treatment of boundaries helps to define the character of public spaces between buildings. Boundaries and front gardens are an important part of the character of the parish.





17. Low hedges and low brick/stone walls should be used to enclose boundaries onto roads, lanes and tracks. Close board fences, large metal gates, over ornamentation and other urbanising features should be avoided.
18. Traditional stone walls must be protected and maintained.
19. New development should provide for off road parking. Garages, hard standings and carports should have their appearance softened by appropriate adjacent planting. Mature screening of parking areas should be retained and new parking integrated into landscape design. Large areas of non-permeable hard surfacing should be avoided and driveway materials carefully chosen to avoid any urbanisation of village character.

Extracts from the Brighstone Parish Village Design Statement



## Local need

The Gurnard Parish Plan clearly shows how the views of the community have led to identifying issues. It also uses themes and colour coding to cross reference aims to action.

GURNARD PARISH PLAN	
Action plan	
AIMS	GURNARD PARISH COUNCIL ACTIONS
<b>Planning Policy and Land Use (page 1317)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Pass the General Councils plan for...</li> <li>b. Control any unaccommodated house development</li> <li>c. Plan the expansion of the Parish</li> <li>d. Provide a range of services</li> <li>e. Improve road infrastructure</li> </ul>	Monitor all proposed developments, community involvement and to refer unaccommodated demands.
<b>Traffic and Parking (page 1615)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Improve public safety on roads</li> <li>b. Remove some traffic signs</li> <li>c. Improve road layout</li> <li>d. Improve traffic signage</li> <li>e. Improve car parking facilities</li> <li>f. Remove redouted pavements</li> </ul>	Continually monitor with the appropriate agencies.
<b>Public/Community Transport Services (page 1617)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Improve bus services</li> <li>b. Investigate alternative bus services and/or car sharing schemes</li> </ul>	Take other measures to provide and provide a range of bus services, taxis, car sharing and other services.
<b>Housing (page 1817)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase availability of affordable housing for all age groups</li> <li>b. Encourage second home ownership</li> </ul>	Carry out housing needs surveys. Monitor planning applications.
<b>Recreation, Sports and Leisure Facilities (page 30)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Improve access to Leisure Park</li> <li>b. Provide children play area</li> <li>c. Provide recreational ground</li> <li>d. Provide community centre to include tennis, internet cafe and other adult leisure facilities</li> <li>e. Set up leisure and leisure open spaces</li> </ul>	Seek improvements through W.C. and others. Identify suitable locations and investigate sources of funding. Monitor and encourage private enterprise.



Extracts from the Gurnard Parish Plan

The Fishbourne Parish Plan uses photographs to illustrate issues of importance to the community and to strengthen the actions that the plan proposes as a result.

**Traffic and Road Issues**

**Traffic noise**  
The majority of people in the Parish are concerned about traffic noise, but that concern is focused on the roads nearest to home. This more than 40% of those who live in the A1011 are concerned, and very concerned about traffic noise on the A1011 and approximately 30% of those who live in Fishbourne Lane are concerned about the speed of traffic in Fishbourne Lane.

**Traffic speed**  
There is considerable concern about the speed of traffic on the narrow Fishbourne Lane south of Fishbourne Church.

**Volume of traffic**  
60% of people in the Parish are concerned or very concerned about the volume of traffic on the A1011 with those living close to the A1011 being the most concerned. Similarly 70% of Fishbourne Lane are concerned or very concerned about the volume of traffic to and from the ferry terminal with over 50% of those living in Fishbourne Lane being very concerned.

**Dangerous road junctions**  
60% of people in the Parish are concerned or very concerned about road junctions. Residents have given the opportunity to name the junctions that give them concern. Most residents named the junctions they use to reach the major roads. A count of the number of times each junction was named is illustrated in the diagram to the left.

**Ferry terminal/Fishbourne Lane junction**  
In with other junctions, the most concern about the junction was expressed by those living near to it. Those most often had 100% concern, were very concerned or concerned about traffic coming from the ferry terminal with 70% being very concerned. This percentage for the Parish as a whole were 60% and 30% respectively.

**Aims**  
• Increase availability of affordable housing for all age groups  
• Encourage second home ownership  
See related Action Plan on page 30-31

Extracts from the Fishbourne Parish Plan



## HOW TO LINK YOUR COMMUNITY PLAN TO THE ISLAND PLAN

Community Plans will link into the Island Plan through the policies in the Core Strategy. The Isle of Wight Council expects the formal adoption of the Core Strategy to be in 2011.

Once this has taken place, existing Community Plans can be considered for adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). There are a number of requirements that we will look for before we start the adoption process.

### ***Evidence of local consultation***

Consultation is at the heart of Community Led Planning.

It is also highly important in the Island Plan process where there are statutory requirements for consultation. If your plan is going to be adopted (as an SPD), we need to be sure that it has had a robust local consultation and that the results of this have influenced your final plan.

We will look for a detailed account of the Consultation Process in your plan and, if this isn't shown, we may ask for you to provide a separate document or appendix that gives us this information.

### ***Island Plan linkage***

We will look at your plan and see if it can be considered for adoption as it stands.

If not we will work with you to extract those objectives and policies within your plan that link into the Core Strategy policies of the Island Plan. You may of course wish to do this yourself, either within your document or as a separate annex. You may want to also repeat this to show how your plan links to the Eco Island strategy and send it to the Island Strategic Partnership.

### ***Local Adoption***

We will expect your plan to have been adopted by your local Town or Parish Council.

## ADOPTION AS A SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Once these requirements have been met, there will be a need for us to carry out a further consultation on your plan as part of its formal adoption as a SPD. This statutory process requires a six-week public consultation. We will make reference to the fact that your plan has already had a detailed local consultation and will involve both the Town/Parish Council and Isle of Wight elected Councillor for the area.

It will be important for us to consider all comments that come forward from the consultation and we will discuss with the Town/Parish Council any changes that may be needed. Once these have been agreed we will take a paper requesting its formal adoption as SPD to the next available Cabinet meeting of the Isle of Wight Council.

We would aim to see this whole process completed within three months from the end of the consultation period and we will keep you updated on the timetable throughout. There may be a delay if we receive a large number of requests for adoption of CLPs at any one time.

Please contact us as soon as you are considering requesting adoption for your plan so that we can start to develop a timetable for the process.

In the interim period, Community Plans can still be used as informal guidance.

## Current Status of the Island Plan Core Strategy

The Core Strategy will form part of the Local Development Framework (Island Plan). It was submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2009, with Examination Hearings by an independent Planning Inspector timetabled for Autumn 2009. Following discussions with the Inspector the Council suspended the Examination and sought the withdrawal of the Core Strategy in order to re-submit an improved document with a view to providing greater certainty that the Core Strategy will be found sound. At the time of the publication of this guidance, the Council had not received the formal Directive to Withdraw from the Secretary of State. It is expected that the main principles established in the withdrawn Core Strategy will be developed where necessary and appropriate in the revised Core Strategy.

Once finalised, a timetable for the Core Strategy will be made available to view on our [website](#).

When the Core Strategy has been formally submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration, this guide will be updated to include a table comprising a list of Community Led Plan 'themes' or 'issues', e.g. housing, transport, open space, and links to appropriate detailed policies.

