

Section 5: Community



- 5.1 The council is committed to creating sustainable, strong and healthy communities and this policy family is designed to contribute to achieving this. The design of new development is crucial, and **high quality design for new development** recognises this, and in the same vein the council's approach to **improving our public realm** is established. There is a wider commitment to **improving our health and wellbeing**, which also links to the requirements set out for a **health hub at St Mary's Hospital**.
- 5.2 In order to enable people to stay as independent as possible for as long as possible, there are policies covering **facilitating independent living** and **providing annexe accommodation**. Contributing to the provision of public services there is support for **delivering locality hubs** and **facilitating a blue light hub**.
- 5.3 Setting out the council's commitment to renewable energy and lowering carbon emissions are policies **renewable energy and low carbon technologies** and **lowering carbon and energy consumption in new development**. Infrastructure is critical, both in terms of **maintaining key utility infrastructure** and **providing social and community infrastructure**. Finally, the contribution non-formal planning documents can make is recognised through policy **community-led planning**.

High quality design for new development

C1

High quality design for new development

Development proposals will be expected to:

- a** provide an attractive, functional, accessible, inclusive, legible, safe and adaptable built environment, with the incorporation of soft landscaping to provide a sense of place;
- b** optimise the potential of the site but have regards to existing constraints, such as adjacent buildings and topography and take account of and protect and enhance where appropriate views, water courses, hedgerows, trees, wildlife corridors or other features which significantly contribute to the character of the area;
- c** respect the character of the area, particularly in conservation areas and the AONB;
- d** Incorporate appropriate amenity/ living space relative to the nature of accommodation being proposed and adhering to national prescribed space standards;
- e** protect the living conditions of existing and resultant residents, by ensuring appropriate outlook and natural light is maintained/ provided. Basement accommodation where limited natural light or outlook would be available to habitable rooms will not be supported;
- f** respect the diverse character and appearance of an area through their layout and design, especially in larger scale housing developments;
- g** incorporate areas of green infrastructure within housing developments to encourage healthy and active lifestyles;
- h** preserve the integrity of traditional shop front or building detailing;
- i** ensure advertisement respect the amenity of the area, with appropriate levels of illumination to avoid unacceptable levels of light pollution, especially in conservation areas;
- j** incorporate measures considering appropriate wider safety, security and defence requirements;
- k** development affecting existing public rights of way (PROW) will only be permitted where their recreational and amenity value is protected, or the route can be satisfactorily diverted. Diversions must deliver a recreational and amenity value at least as good as the route being replaced. Enhancement of PROW through new links to the existing network and the provision of improved facilities must be taken up where appropriate and viable;
- l** minimise pollution and where possible contribute to protecting and improving air, land and water quality.

- 5.4 There is a requirement for the local planning authority to support sustainable development. Good design is considered to be a key element to achieving this. Many of the towns and villages on the island have an existing strong sense of place and cultural history with early twentieth century design being evident in many places. It is important that any new development within these respects this, working with the existing character and constraints to enhance the identity of the communities living, working and visiting, for the lifetime of the development.
- 5.5 The council wishes to move away from larger scale housing development that comprise buildings which have a generic external appearance, poor layouts and road networks that do not respect the varied and organic characteristics of towns and villages across the Island. The council expects that principles within the national model design code will be used as tools to help steer the design of new development.
- 5.6 In areas where available, community-led design codes, landscape character assessments and characterisation studies should be used to further inform the design and layout of new development.
- 5.7 The council will refuse applications for poor design that fail to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.
- 5.8 In line with national policy the council will support proposals with outstanding or innovative designs which promote high quality sustainability, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. It is also considered essential that environments are created that are accessible and legible to all generations. Permeable layouts should support active travel through walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.9 The council expects nationally prescribed space standards for residential development in respect of room sizes and amenity space, to be met. A habitable room for the purpose of applying this policy is defined as a room used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating purposes, excluding bathrooms, circulation spaces etc.
- 5.10 It is considered that open space plays a vital role in high quality design due to its importance to health and wellbeing. The necessity and importance for people to be able to access areas for activity that are in close proximity to their home was highlighted during the pandemic. Development should therefore provide open space to maximise opportunities for physical activity, visual amenity and biodiversity enhancements. Sport England's active design should be used when designing places and spaces to create opportunities for all types of physical activity. The council will encourage nature conservation and biodiversity enhancements. The Town and Country Planning Association and The Wildlife Trust's planning for a healthy environment – **good practice guidance for green infrastructure and biodiversity (2012)** has a wide range of best practice design options for biodiversity. The ecological network shown on the Policies Map, identifies features of ecological importance so they can be considered in development proposals, protected and in appropriate cases enhanced.

- 5.11** Schemes should consider the features which are prevalent in the area, whether this be window proportions, detailing, materials or scale or in the case of a householder application; the existing property itself and demonstrate how the design of the proposed scheme has taken these into account.
- 5.12** Buildings should be designed to be adaptable to the needs for future users or residents, to ensure that the most viable use could be sought for the building with changes in circumstances and occupants can stay in their homes longer, as mobility needs change and allowing for 'right sizing'. Consideration should be given to documents such as [Building for a healthy life \(udg.org.uk\)](http://udg.org.uk).
- 5.13** The design of areas where large numbers of people may be expected to congregate should be considered early in the process together with any measures to reduce the vulnerability to malicious threats, crime and disorder. Where it is appropriate because of the scale or nature of development, further advice can be sought from the police and other agencies. A security considerations assessment should be considered in relevant cases.
- 5.14** Hard and soft landscaping is critical to the high-quality design of any development. Landscape design needs to be an integral part of design development from the outset. Landscaping should also be used, where possible to provide biodiversity enhancements to an area providing a dual function. Applications should clearly outline how these areas will be maintained to ensure that they provide the same level of amenity in perpetuity.
- 5.15** A number of the town centres across the Island contain listed buildings or are within conservation areas. In acknowledgement of this the council wish to preserve the character of these areas and historic shop fronts. It is therefore essential that the size, design and illumination of advertisements respect the form of the shop fronts, the general character of the building and wider street scene. Light spillage can be a significant problem, changing the character of our town centres if multiple shops have highly illuminated advertisements. It is therefore considered necessary for this to be appropriately controlled to ensure the character of areas are protected.
- 5.16** Any external lighting of advertisements should be down lighting and of a warm white light, to reduce light pollution and protect the visual amenity of town centres and street scenes. Within conservation areas the preference will be for projecting signs to be hung from traditional wrought iron brackets as opposed to projecting straight out from the fascia.
- 5.17** Early engagement through pre-application discussions is encouraged in order to positively respond to constraints and opportunities sites present. Applications will need to demonstrate that the submission has taken into consideration the local vernacular, included key design features, materials and proportions, where they are important to the character of the area and its sense of place.
- 5.18** Design and access statements are only required for certain types of development. However, they can be a useful tool to assist in explaining the design development of a scheme and how it has responded to the local context.

5.19 The public rights of way network is a vital and highly valued resource and includes footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle routes. They have a range of uses and benefits; providing shortcuts within settlements, connecting settlements to the wider countryside and can be practical in getting from one place to another without having to drive. They can also give access to beautiful views and/or landscapes. Protecting and seeking to enhance the public rights of way network benefits the local environment, quality of life and the rural economy through reducing car dependence, improving health and well bring and promoting tourism and recreation. The council will seek to protect and enhance these amenities and grow their extent and improve their quality where possible.

This is a strategic policy and links to the following Island Planning Strategy (IPS) objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.

Improving our public realm

C2

Improving our public realm

All proposals for major development must ensure that existing and new public realm is well integrated into the design, with street layouts and public spaces allowing for easy, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle connections, high quality public spaces and green infrastructure or access to it.

Development proposals that enhance the public realm to improve soft landscaping, visual amenity and pedestrian connectivity will be supported.

5.20 Good quality design of the public realm and the provision of green infrastructure is an essential component to the environmental aspect of sustainable development and ensuring healthy and safe communities.

5.21 Towns and villages on the Island have a distinctive character and appearance and when developing these areas it is essential that these are not only protected but enhanced where possible. Development should be about more than just the buildings within the application boundary. Consideration also needs to be given to how these buildings, including curtilage and boundaries address the existing street scenes and surroundings. It is felt that this has been overlooked in past development and public realm, both within and out from the site has not been given sufficient consideration.

5.22 This policy seeks to ensure that development has a legible relationship with its surroundings and provides space to allow for layouts to breathe and free movement, to encourage sustainable routes and alternative means of travel to the private car where practicable. Applications will be expected to demonstrate that they have provided sufficient space for the end users wellbeing, the character of the area including existing streets and context and that best practice is considered. The level of provision will be wholly dependent on the location of the site and the nature of the development. The context of the area should be used as a starting point, but a key consideration of this policy is enhancement and therefore if the context is dense, this should not set a precedent to repeat this at the expense of resultant residents or users.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Improving our health and wellbeing

C3

Improving our health and wellbeing

To contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of Island residents development proposals for 25 or more dwellings should include a health impact assessment. All development proposals should demonstrate how they:

- a** provide flexible community open spaces that can be adapted to the health needs of the community and encourage social interaction;
- b** maximise the opportunity for physical activity either on site or off site through the use of open space, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities and providing or enhancing active travel networks in appropriate locations;
- c** provide safe and legible age and mobility friendly access between development and the surrounding area.

Development proposals that contribute to achieving place based initiatives championed by the Island's Health and Wellbeing board will be supported in principle.

- 5.23** The Isle of Wight's health and wellbeing board has produced a strategy that takes a life course approach of 'start well, live well, age well'. Its vision for health and wellbeing is for an Island where: "people live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities with timely and easy access to high-quality and integrated public services when they need them". The IPS can contribute to achieving this through land use policies.
- 5.24** Providing open space provides opportunities for physical activity with associated health benefits. The provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities in new development should be based on the most up to date standards provided by the council. Alternative provision would be considered when sufficient information is provided by the applicant.
- 5.25** The built environment can reduce issues associated with ageing and mobility by enabling social interaction and connecting people with places and other people. The provision of accessible open spaces and walkable neighbourhoods can also encourage and facilitate increased physical activity amongst the elderly. It is crucial that these spaces and routes are safe, well-maintained and link to the surrounding area.
- 5.26** Safe, legible, age and mobility friendly environments should ensure that issues such as, but not limited to, the following are addressed:
- Public footpaths are well-lit and evenly surfaced.
 - The transition between changing ground levels are gradual.
 - The provision of railings where steps are unavoidable.

- Accessible public transport links, such as bus stops within walking distance from people’s homes, are also crucial in maintaining independence.
- The ability to rest between key places (for example between a bus stop and a library), although this doesn’t necessarily need to be through ‘traditional’ public benches.

5.27 Health impact assessments (HIAs) ensure that the effects of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process. Land use planning and development can shape a wide range of social, environmental and economic factors that have an impact on human health and wellbeing. Ensuring these issues are considered at the planning and design stage can improve both the physical and mental health of the population and contribute to reducing health inequalities.

5.28 The HIA could be submitted to the council as a stand-alone assessment or as a part of part an existing supporting document such as an equality impact assessment or design and access statement. The exact format is not prescribed, providing that it considers the appropriate issues, although a template HIA will be available on the council’s website.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.
- Vulnerable people are supported and protected

Health hub at St Mary’s Hospital

**C4
Health hub at St Mary’s Hospital**

The council supports the effective and efficient provision of NHS services to meet the future needs of the Island’s population. It therefore allocates land (as shown on the policies map) for development proposals that deliver:

- a** the alignment of the estate with the future clinical strategy;
- b** health-care and care-related employment;
- c** a step-down (or sub-acute) facility, if required;
- d** extra care village incorporating dementia care, assisted living complex, independent living lodges;
- e** a justified level of residential development that includes key worker, affordable and open market housing.

The council will work with the relevant partners to develop a masterplan for this part of the hospital estate and surrounding land under the council’s ownership.

- 5.29 The outcomes of applying this policy will contribute to service provision and commissioning being delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective way across the whole system. The council is working with the Isle of Wight NHS Trust, which is the only integrated acute, community, mental health and ambulance health care provider in England, to improve the health and wellbeing of the Island's residents by delivering care at the right time and in the right place, and to ensure that people receive co-ordinated care that is appropriate to their needs.
- 5.30 Under the Island Plan core strategy this site was allocated for employment uses. The allocated development has not happened and following consideration of service user and provider needs and changes in market conditions a different approach is required to bring the site forward and contribute to sustaining health care provision.
- 5.31 A step-down (or sub-acute) facility provides an intermediate level of care for patients who are able to step down from an acute care setting. Such a facility can play an important role in patient care through the healthcare system and can be tailored to meet a range of patients and their needs to give better patient outcomes.
- 5.32 It is recognised that to help bring the development forward an element of residential development is likely to be required. There are opportunities to provide a range of types and tenures, particularly key worker and affordable housing. Market housing could also be provided. Development proposals should demonstrate why the level of residential development proposed is necessary.
- 5.33 There is an opportunity to explore links with surrounding sites allocated for residential development to look at whether a comprehensive development package for the area can be brought forward, particularly thinking about how access could be achieved.

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Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
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Facilitating independent living

C5

Facilitating independent living

The council will support the delivery of a range of accommodation types and tenures that enable people to live as independently as possible. Development proposals will be supported where they:

- a** contribute to the delivery of the Island's independent living strategy; and/or
- b** provide buildings that can be adapted over time.

Proposals for major residential development will be expected to provide at least 20 per cent of the total dwellings as being suitable for older people and/ or those with mobility problems.

- 5.34** The Island has an ageing population and a high percentage of people with mobility problems, which in turn is placing increased demands on services. Through its policies the council wants to ensure that future development contributes to creating environments that are accessible to all generations (and associated health issues) and by doing so improve residents' health and wellbeing.
- 5.35** The council aims to help people to maintain and improve their wellbeing and to live as independently as possible. We recognise that Independent Island Living, which is the name given to extra care housing by the council, provides an important alternative for those who rely on care and support and would otherwise be placed in residential care if suitable accommodation were not available.
- 5.36** There are many ways of providing adaptable buildings, and the council does not wish to be prescriptive or stifle innovation on how to do this. However, the council recognises the benefits of meeting Part M4(2) of the building regulations and expects developments to ensure that design maximises utility, independence and quality of life, while not compromising other design issues such as aesthetics or cost effectiveness.
- 5.37** Inclusive design should aim to give the widest range of people, including those with physical and/ or sensory impairments, older people and children, convenient and independent access into and around the built environment (externally and internally) and also equal access to services. Particular attention should be given to circulation within the home and external routes to transport infrastructure. Pathways, hallways, stairways and access to floors above, doorways and spaces to approach and reach essential facilities and controls in the home should be taken into consideration.

- 5.38** Providing adaptable buildings has many benefits, not just for the occupants but also for the council and other service providers. Being adaptable means that a building can be simply adapted to meet people’s changing needs over time or to suit the needs of different users, for example, account should be taken of the need to store and charge mobility scooters. Any subsequent adaptations should be more cost-effective because the original design accommodates their future provision from the outset.
- 5.39** Non-apparent integral design features should be integrated ready to assist adaptation. For example, a building could be designed to allow a member of the household, or a visitor, to live, sleep and bath solely on the entrance level for a short period, or to benefit from step-free access to upper floor facilities. Where a household that has a family member with a temporary or permanent disability or a progressive condition that is making movement around the home or between floors difficult this could make a real difference.

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Providing annexe accommodation

C6

Providing annexe accommodation

The council will support the provision of a single domestic annexe related to existing dwelling houses whether within or outside of the defined settlement boundaries where it would comply with the following criteria:

- 1** The footprint and scale of the annexe would be subservient to the main dwelling.
- 2** The annexe would be occupied by dependent relatives of the occupants of the main dwelling, or their carer.
- 3** At all times, the annexe would be retained within the same ownership as the main dwelling and would not result in the sub-division of the curtilage of the main dwelling.

Where planning permission is granted, the council will impose planning conditions to control occupancy, ownership and sub-division of curtilage.

- 5.40** Providing a residential annexe to an existing dwelling can help families to provide the independence and support that relatives need. Annexes can allow a more flexible way of living while reducing the need for further dwellings or external healthcare. Annexed accommodation can also result in increasing the supply of existing housing, by freeing up properties.
- 5.41** To allow genuine support to be provided, or a suitable level of independence being achieved, it is preferable if a proposed annex is connected to the main dwelling with the ability to be absorbed in to the dwelling if necessary, in the future. Thus, annex accommodation and the related main dwelling should be, or have the potential to be connected by an internal link or otherwise have a close relationship with shared facilities and space where possible.
- 5.42** The council will not support annexes that would be unduly large, given the potential to impact on the appearance of the surrounding area and to create an economic burden. This could create pressure to sever an annex and main dwelling and result in a new dwelling with poor means of access, a lack of suitable amenity space and a poor relationship with the main dwelling. Therefore, annexes should be subservient to the main dwelling.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

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- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.
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Delivering locality hubs

C7

Delivering locality hubs

The council supports the creation of locality hubs across the Island and will work with its partners to deliver. Land is allocated for such uses at the following locations (as shown on the policies map):

- 1** A Bay locality hub, which incorporates a range of leisure, public health and wellbeing support services.
- 2** A central locality hub, which incorporates an element of housing.

- 5.43** The council wishes to see the delivery of integrated locality hubs. A locality hub brings together health and wellbeing services in fit-for-purpose buildings, bringing services closer to local communities. They significantly improve the patient/customer experience and maintain a good service provision both in quality (retaining NHS community services) and capacity (increasing the size of the GP practice to accommodate the demand and size of the current patients' list). Land has been allocated at Pyle Street community hub, Newport and The Heights/Barracks community hub, Sandown.
- 5.44** While the principle of the locality hubs is supported, the final proposals for these locations will still need to demonstrate compliance with the other relevant policies of the IPS. It is anticipated that providing safe and legible access to both pedestrians, cyclists and all forms of vehicles will be important to the success of both schemes, and if required information submitted as part of a planning application will need to demonstrate how this is achieved.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- All young people will have the best start in life so that their potential community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- Vulnerable people are supported and protected.

Facilitating a blue light hub

C8

Facilitating a blue light hub

The council supports the delivery of a suitably located shared blue light hub in the Newport area. It will work with partners to establish whether such a facility is required and if so the best location for it.

- 5.45** The council and partners are working together through the 'one public service' programme to understand whether a blue light hub, shared between the ambulance, fire and police services is feasible. This work is complex and has many different elements that are still to be resolved. This policy does not pre-determine the outcomes of this work but provides a reference point in a land-use plan so that the principle is established. Because of the cycle of plan production and the timescales involved, the opportunity to embed this policy has been taken in advance of the background work being completed.

- 5.46 The local planning authority will work with the various partners at the earliest possible stage to establish, from a planning perspective, the suitability of any proposed locations.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.
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Education provision

C9

Education provision

Proposals for the provision of new, replacement and extended or altered schools will be supported where the scale is in keeping with the location, the location is accessible and where it accords with other local plan policies.

- 5.47 National planning policy, requires weight to be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools to meet the needs of existing and proposed communities. The council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available within the area for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one.
- 5.48 Approximately 17,000 students are educated in Isle of Wight schools, through provision at 39 primary schools, six secondary schools, a four to 16 years all-through school, one studio school, two special schools, nurseries and an education centre. There are also two independent schools catering for approximately 900 pupils.
- 5.49 School places are no longer, solely provided by the council. Since 2011, new providers of school places have been able to establish state-funded 'free schools'. There are also academies, which are independent of local authority control. Work must be therefore undertaken with other education providers to ensure that need for school places is met.
- 5.50 The local plan mechanisms for enabling new schools and school extensions to be built and for the provision of new school places in association with residential development are:
- safeguarding land for education purposes where required;
 - collecting developer contributions via Section 106 agreements from residential developments which are likely to increase pressure on school capacity.
- 5.51 The council prefers new provision to be provided by extending existing school premises. However, where a new school is to be provided it should be a maximum of 2FE in size to reflect the nature of the island and to support financial stability.

- 5.52 The council has undertaken building feasibility work to understand the potential of existing schools on the Island to expand and where new school provision is required when expansion is not possible or desirable to serve new residential development.
- 5.53 The school capacity survey (2018) indicated demand from development can be accommodated by improving existing facilities.
- 5.54 Additional likely need generated from new development for primary education will be in the areas of potential deficiency at Cowes, Newport and Ryde with pressure on secondary provision at Newport and West Wight.
- 5.55 Post-16 education provision must meet all demand on the Isle of Wight. The council may require a developer to make a capital contribution towards the development of additional post-16 years education and skills provision.
- 5.56 A high proportion of early years education provision is run by third party providers using schools and community centres as venues. There is a potential requirement to increase childcare places within the areas of Cowes, East Cowes, Newport, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin to support the local community.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

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Renewable energy and low carbon technologies

C10

Supporting renewable energy and low carbon technologies

The target of becoming self-sufficient in renewable electricity production is estimated to require an installed capacity in the region of 220-300MW to meet current demand. This figure may increase over time with the electrification of heating and transport. To support achieving this the council will support proposals for:

- a** domestic and medium scale, localised provision across the Island;
- b** large-scale, grid-connected renewable energy schemes in appropriate locations where there is appropriate grid capacity and/or storage;
- c** large-scale heat projects where it can be demonstrated that there is benefit to the Island and/ or help to reduce the carbon emissions from existing housing and commercial buildings;
- d** the provision of infrastructure for the connection of projects to electricity and heat networks (including, but not limited to sub-stations and heating mains);
- e** smart grid infrastructure;
- f** Energy storage systems, such as battery storage and hydrogen production facilities;
- g** energy centres for the provision of heat and/ or power to local communities;
- h** community-led initiatives;

Within areas of protected and sensitive landscapes and townscapes, development should generally be small scale or community based. It is expected that large-scale wind and photovoltaic schemes will be located outside of the AONB and designated areas, and grade 1 to 3a agricultural land (for photovoltaics). Schemes within the AONB will be considered when there are no alternative sites outside of the AONB and where a considerable community benefit is demonstrated and considered to outweigh the landscape impact.

Proposals outside the settlement boundaries or site allocations should demonstrate they have taken account of:

- a** the visual impact on the character of the area;
- b** the consistency of the proposal with nature conservation and heritage asset objectives.

It is accepted that a range of new technologies, other than those above are likely to emerge and these will be considered on their own merits against the policies of the Island Planning Strategy.

- 5.57** In July 2019, the Isle of Wight Council declared a climate emergency and stated an aim to achieve net zero emissions across the Island by 2030. The council's climate and environment strategy will outline the Isle of Wight's options for a pathway to net zero emissions and proposals that should make a positive contribution to this aim. This policy provides a framework for appropriate renewable energy and low carbon technologies to facilitate opportunities to achieve the ambition of becoming self-sufficient in renewable electricity production. In short, this means generating enough electricity from renewable sources on the Island to meet our annual electricity consumption.
- 5.58** The policy provides flexibility to meet future energy demands and incorporate new generation systems as advances are made to technologies and new ones are designed. In doing this, the policy provides a strategy for increased energy security and resilience; thereby reducing the need for reinforcement of grid infrastructure, addressing future global energy supply constraints and developing the energy system for future needs. Not only this, it also provides opportunities for inward investment and jobs and for the Island community to benefit from the energy spend by having a more localised energy system.
- 5.59** The policy also seeks to facilitate a continuation in the year on year carbon dioxide emissions reduction that is required nationally. This acknowledges that there has been a decrease and that this is in part due to the switch in the fuel mix for electricity generation from coal and gas to renewables.
- 5.60** The policy also supports associated infrastructure relating to renewable energy and low carbon technologies and community level schemes. Where schemes require a fuel source, for example, wood fuel and waste, the council expects the source to be from Island resources and able to be provided on a long-term basis. Where this is not possible, evidence will be required to demonstrate why and provide information on where the renewable fuel sources originate.
- 5.61** Proposals intending to use waste as a fuel source will need to comply with other areas of the Island Planning Strategy and also consider the current and relevant adopted waste policy. Proposals should demonstrate how the proposal supports and does not undermine the waste hierarchy.
- 5.62** The council has estimated that the target to be self-sufficient in renewable electricity production across the Island requires an installed capacity in the region of 220 to 300MW. This is based on the Island's annual consumption of approximately 537GWh (gigawatt hours) (2016 figures).

- 5.63** Proposals that contribute to the installed capacity target will be supported where they comply with other policies within the IPS. Proposals should include commentary on the environmental and economic benefits of the scheme. This supporting information should be commensurate to the scale of the proposal and could for example include reference to community benefits, local supply chains, job creation, and the sustainability of Island businesses. Supporting information should demonstrate and set out how the energy generated will be distributed to nearby development, the grid or to storage. Applications should also demonstrate the degree to which the proposal will facilitate other projects especially low carbon projects or be part of a whole system approach. For example, a solar farm with battery storage that could feed charging points/heating at a nearby development.
- 5.64** Planning can provide opportunities for, and encourage energy development which will produce waste heat, to be located close to existing or potential users of the heat. Planning can also help provide the new customers for the heat by encouraging development which could make use of the heat.
- 5.65** Where proposals are outside of settlement boundaries consideration will be given to the technology and associated infrastructure on the visual impact and character of the area as well as local amenity. It is important that new renewable energy and low carbon technologies proposals do not result in unacceptable impacts on the area by virtue of the technology or as a result of the infrastructure needing to store energy or to connect to the grid. Furthermore, they must not cause unacceptable harm to the area's nature conservation interests or heritage assets.
- 5.66** Applicants will be expected to undertake appropriate surveys and/ or site investigations as required taking account of site specific characteristics in relation to the technology being applied for. These will be expected to be undertaken in advance of and submitted with an application. Depending on the technology being applied for, localised air quality impacts and mitigation aspects may need to be considered. Appropriate liaison with council officers and specialists is expected in advance where relevant.
- 5.67** Consideration will be given to any cumulative impacts on the landscape and local amenity in relation to renewable energy and low carbon technologies, particularly for wind turbines and large scale solar installations.

This is a strategic policy and links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.

Lowering carbon and energy consumption in new development

C11

Lowering carbon and energy consumption in new development

The council will support proposals that contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as meeting and exceeding the national targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Development proposals should include measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from energy use, in accordance with the following energy hierarchy:

- 1** Minimising energy requirements.
- 2** Incorporating renewable energy sources.
- 3** Incorporating low carbon energy sources including heat networks.
- 4** Consider off-site solutions, retro-fitting and carbon reduction schemes.

Proposals for major residential development will include a simple energy statement that should demonstrate how they will:

- a** implement the highest possible standards of energy efficiency;
- b** take account of the site's orientation and landform to minimise the energy consumption of the development;
- c** utilise, where appropriate, decentralised renewable and low-carbon energy supply systems;
- d** promote the re-use and recycling of materials during construction;
- e** provide for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials.

Proposals for non-residential development should exceed wherever possible the minimum required level of 'very good' standard for BREEAM or equivalent. Proposals for all major development should incorporate renewable energy systems to provide at least 10 per cent of the predicted energy requirements.

Opportunities to draw energy from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems are encouraged. Proposals for residential development containing in excess of 250 housing units should seek to incorporate community district heating systems that use low carbon heat sources including waste heat.

The council will consider the viability and feasibility of each case on its merits and will consider evidence demonstrating why such a system should not be provided.

- 5.68** The council has an aim to achieve net zero emissions across the Island by 2030 and the climate and environment strategy will outline the Isle of Wight's options for a pathway to net zero emissions and proposals should make a positive contribution to this aim.

- 5.69** The Isle of Wight has extensive opportunities to reduce energy and water demand as well as increasing energy generation from low carbon sources. This policy seeks to facilitate this by adopting a proactive approach to new development. The policy encourages more ambitious projects and facilitates 'place shaping' which, in this context, means a desire to create a low carbon community. The policy will also assist in the Island's ambition of becoming self-sufficient in renewable energy production as well as tackle fuel poverty by reducing future energy costs by promoting a higher standard of building for the end user.
- 5.70** In general, travel is a key emitter of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas. The concentration of development in mostly larger settlements or where settlements have a number of facilities or concentration of people helps reduce the need to travel by private vehicle and subsequently helps reduce carbon emissions. This forms a key element in the sustainable development aspect of the Island Planning Strategy which is supported by the provision of improved infrastructure, sustainable transport and employment opportunities in the growth locations.
- 5.71** New development, however, in these and other areas will play an important role in the overall energy demand. New developments that positively contribute to the Island's energy use will mean that less onshore generation development will be required. New development that provides more energy-efficient space, heating and water savings than older properties while reusing building materials will result in a reduction of overall carbon emissions.
- 5.72** There are also options to reduce energy dependence through design by incorporating district heating. This is particularly applicable in larger developments, where shared schemes are likely to be viable. For example, district heating schemes based on renewable sources such as biomass, heat pumps, hydrogen or waste heat. Proposals for development containing in excess of 250 housing units shall be expected to install community district heating systems that use low carbon heat sources, where feasible and viable. This can be achieved by connecting to existing community heating systems where they exist.
- 5.73** It is acknowledged that building regulations legislation has increasing sustainability targets for both residential and commercial buildings, with the 'future homes standard (FHS) ([The FHS: changes to part L and part F of the building regulations for new dwellings – www.gov.uk](#)) likely to be introduced by the Government in 2025 that may supersede elements of this policy; however, the timescale and indeed content of the FHS may be revised. Taking this into account, and with the need to reduce carbon reductions to help meet the Council's net zero ambitions, the falling costs of many low carbon technologies, the ambition to become self-sufficient and reduce fuel poverty, it is considered that the requirements of the policy are at this stage appropriate, viable and feasible.
- 5.74** The council will expect all applications for major development to be accompanied by an energy statement, proportionate to the proposal, to demonstrate the measures taken to meet the policy criteria. This should include a description of the predicted performance of the development, both before the measures are applied and subsequently.

5.75 The energy statement can form part of a larger document, eg, design and access statement or environmental statement and should not be overly complex. It could include, for example discussion on the following aspects:

- How the proposal will provide at least 10 per cent of the predicted energy requirements from renewable energy systems or off-site equivalent.
- Energy efficiency by siting, design, layout and buildings' orientation to maximise sunlight and daylight, avoidance of overshadowing, passive ventilation.
- Grouped building forms in order to minimise external wall surface extent and exposure.
- Landscape or planting design to optimise screening and individual building's thermal performance.
- Renewable energy production e.g. external solar collectors, wind turbines or photovoltaic devices.
- Sustainable urban drainage systems, including rainwater and waste water collection and recycling.
- Significant use of building materials that are renewable or recycled or locally sourced.
- Waste reduction and recycling measures.
- Carbon neutrality, either on-site or off-site.
- How development will adhere to the relevant parts of the building regulations or other nationally prescribed standards (for example, future homes standard) that seek to lower carbon emissions from new development.

5.76 An example of how a proposal could set out how it provides at least 10 per cent of the predicted energy requirement is shown in the table below:

Table 5.1 – How a proposal could set out how it provides at least 10 per cent of the predicted energy requirement

Property number	Predicated energy consumption (kWh per year)	Renewable energy system	Energy production of renewable energy system (kWh per year)
1	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
2	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
3	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
4	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190

Property number	Predicated energy consumption (kWh per year)	Renewable energy system	Energy production of renewable energy system (kWh per year)
5	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
6	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
7	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
8	16,400	Solar PV (rooftop) – 2.3kW	2,190
9	16,400	None	0
10	16,400	None	0
Total	164,000		17,520
Percentage			10.7%

- 5.77** This example shows a site with 10 units, all of which are predicted to have the same annual energy consumption. Rooftop solar PV systems of 2.3kW will be installed on eight of the units; PV is considered to be ineffective on the other two units because, for example, shading or orientation. The total predicted output of the eight systems is 17,520kWh per year, which equates to 10.7 per cent of the total predicted site energy use (164,000kWh) and therefore complies with the policy. Renewable energy systems are defined as those technologies which are specified by the microgeneration certification scheme (MCS).
- 5.78** Where there is difficulty meeting the 10% target on-site, the council will consider proposals for nearby off-site solutions, funded by the developer, which generate an equivalent amount of renewable energy.
- 5.79** There may be times where viability or feasibility may impact the delivery of a proposal and in these instances the energy statement should set these out. It should include what measures have been taken to ensure the standards can be met. Where they cannot be it should set out the aspects where a proposal can comply, and what alternative solutions are proposed to achieve the highest possible standards.
- 5.80** In terms of waste, this aspect deals with systems to reduce waste on the construction site and to encourage waste recycling by the future occupants. Proposals should describe the measures to reduce, reuse or recycle construction waste. Wasted materials on new build sites can be as high as 20 per cent. Much can be done to reduce this, to help the environment and cut costs, for example:
- minimise amount of excavation;
 - waste arising on site is reused or recycled in the construction;
 - on-site facilities for sorting and storing waste for reuse elsewhere;
 - better handling and storage of new materials;
 - not over-ordering materials.

- 5.81** The above should not be seen as an alternative to the policy requirement, it is set out to facilitate the application process and the type of areas expected to be covered in the energy statement.
- 5.82** The council is always trying to improve the way in which it treats refuse, consequently sufficient space for storage of refuse and recyclable materials will need to be included in all relevant developments.
- 5.83** BREEAM is a methodology for validating the sustainability performance of commercial buildings. It is a tried and tested system which helps to lower running costs of buildings and there is evidence that it can increase the market value of buildings and attract and retain tenants. As well as improving resource (energy and water) efficiency in buildings, higher BREEAM standards produce healthy workplaces, improving the quality of life of the workforce.
- 5.84** BREEAM certification is based on a set of quality and performance standards. The BREEAM rating reflects the performance achieved by the project, as verified by an independent, third party assessor. Within the framework, developers have considerable flexibility to determine how they will achieve the required performance and can therefore choose which categories to focus on.
- 5.85** Evidence (Delivering sustainable buildings: savings and payback – J. Prior et al, Currie & Brown / BRE, 2017) suggests that the additional cost of achieving a BREEAM rating at the lower end of the scale is modest. The capital cost uplift of achieving a BREEAM ‘very good’ rating can be as little as 0.25 per cent. Against this should be factored the lifecycle savings from a more sustainable and resource-efficient building.
- 5.86** Decentralised energy broadly refers to energy generation that is produced at the local level and connected to the distribution network. It can refer to energy from waste plants, combined heat and power, district heating and cooling, as well as geothermal, biomass or solar energy and micro-renewables. Schemes can serve a single building, new development, a whole community or town.
- 5.87** In terms of district heating system requirements these can be deployed at varying scales, from a few hundred metres between homes and flats to several kilometres serving entire communities and industrial areas. A district heating network facilitates the distribution of heat from a diverse supply of sources including waste heat captured from industrial processes and power generating units such as gas-fired CHP, as well as low carbon options such as heat pumps (air and water) and geothermal sources.
- 5.88** It is considered that proposals of a certain scale provide the economies of scale not only to be viable but also to provide carbon savings across the site. Applications of a certain size will be expected to install district heating schemes in line within this policy. If district heating is not proposed, an applicant should provide both viability and feasibility evidence and justification to demonstrate why it has not been included. Details on what other measures are included to reflect the essence of this policy and the council’s overarching ambition to become energy autonomous should be included.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.

Utility infrastructure requirements for new development

C12

Utility infrastructure requirements for new development

The council will support proposals for improvements in the provision of the Island's utility infrastructure, to meet identified needs and that would not adversely impact on the ability and/or capacity of the Island's utility infrastructure to function.

Proposals for new development will need to demonstrate that a strategy is in place following discussion with the council and appropriate providers to connect to public utilities infrastructure and/or deliver the required infrastructure to support development.

- 5.89** Detailed proposals for development will need to ensure that through either their location or design, they do not adversely impact on existing utility infrastructure's ability and/or capacity to function.
- 5.90** While this policy is applicable to all utility infrastructure provision (electricity, gas, telecommunications, wastewater/water), it is particularly applicable to water and wastewater infrastructure provision. All development proposals should ensure suitable access is maintained for water supply and drainage infrastructure and development layouts will be expected to be designed to take these into account.
- 5.91** The provision of new and supporting utilities, connections to existing utility infrastructure, exploring space capacity and the required additional capacity are essential elements of the island's future development needs and discussion between the developer, the council and infrastructure provider is expected to take place. Responsibility for the supply and maintenance of existing utility services rests largely with the statutory undertakers.
- 5.92** In specific relation to water and wastewater infrastructure, the council will generally condition planning permission approvals that no development will occur until the applicant can demonstrate that a strategy is in place following discussion with Southern Water to provide connections to public utilities infrastructure and/or deliver the required infrastructure to support development.

- 5.93 If the applicant would rather secure permission without such a condition, then a range of information within their application is required, such as capacity calculations (from Southern Water), a plan indicating intended connection points, connection routes (from the development to the proposed connection point) together with how this will be achieved and, where necessary, soakaways, attenuation and overland routes of surface water.
- 5.94 Developers are strongly encouraged to work with infrastructure providers and consider opportunities to address infrastructure requirements as part of their proposal. Applicants should demonstrate that engagement has taken place with the required statutory Undertakers and infrastructure providers to provide a strategy on how connections will be made to public utilities infrastructure and/or deliver the required infrastructure to support development.
- 5.95 On larger sites, or where several sites are coming forward together, infrastructure may need to be phased. This will enable the infrastructure needed for the site as a whole to be provided in a coherent and comprehensive manner. Where sites are close together or form part of a larger development, work should be undertaken between multiple developers to identify joined up solutions.

This is a strategic policy and links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.

Maintaining key utility infrastructure

C13

Maintaining key utility infrastructure

The council recognises the importance of key pieces of infrastructure to the Island, and will support the principle of development that maintains and/or improves the current provision particularly at the following locations (as shown on the policies map):

- 1** Wastewater treatment works, Sandown
- 2** Wastewater supply treatment works, Golf Links Road, Sandown
- 3** Cross-Solent water connection, Gurnard
- 4** Cross-Solent electricity connection, Thorness Bay
- 5** Cross-Solent gas connection and regulator station, Gurnard

Development proposals in the surrounding areas should adequately consider the existing facilities and should not prejudice their future operation and/ or expansion.

The council will support the provision of storage options for gas, electricity and water that contribute to maintaining supplies and increasing resilience.

- 5.96** Being an Island has implications for utility provision and management. It is critical that providers have the confidence to invest in improving the facilities, and the policy gives clear support to such an approach. There are also issues relating to reliance on the cross Solent utility pipelines and implications on the Island's resilience when it comes to the provision of utilities.
- 5.97** Sandown wastewater treatment works (WWTW) is the largest WWTW facility on the Island and is an essential infrastructure facility for The Bay, which also serves a large percentage of the Island's population. The council is proposing to redraw the settlement boundary in this area but recognises the importance of the WWTW and does not want to unduly restrict the ability of the utility provider to improve the existing facility, or if necessary, to expand it.
- 5.98** Approximately 30 per cent of the Isle of Wight's current water supply is provided by the cross-Solent main, a fresh water pipeline connection between Gurnard and Lepe on the mainland which has capacity for 20 million litres per day.
- 5.99** The Island currently relies upon importing electrical power from the mainland via a series of three high voltage undersea interconnectors, which land at Thorness, and all of which are reported to be operating at maximum capacity. The Island's demand typically varies between a minimum of approximately 40MVA (mega volt amps) and a maximum of approximately 130MVA, which normally results in the Isle of Wight importing electrical power from the mainland.

- 5.100** The high-pressure twin gas pipelines under the Solent connect the mainland in New Forest District and the Isle of Wight at Gurnard, where there is a gas pressure regulation station that distributes gas further through an intermediate and medium pressure network.
- 5.101** There may be the need to undertake development to improve or expand the existing infrastructure to accommodate the level of growth planned on the Island or, where relevant, to take into account stricter environmental standards (which are covered by a separate consenting regime to planning).
- 5.102** To prevent unacceptable risks from pollution the council will ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. The effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, will be considered.
- 5.103** By ensuring that provision is made on the Island for storage options for gas, electricity and water we can maintain supplies and be more resilient. Such an approach will also support new technologies and enable renewable energy generated on the Island to be captured and stored. It is recognised that the provision of such facilities is likely to need to be located near their source or to the on-Island connection points for cross-Solent infrastructure.

This is a strategic policy and links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient

Providing social and community infrastructure

C14

Providing social and community infrastructure

The council will support sustainably located development proposals that provide or improve cultural, educational, leisure and community facilities.

Development proposals will be expected to:

- a** consider the needs and requirements of all people in the community (both immediate and wider) it will serve;
- b** provide opportunities for multi-functional facilities;
- c** ensure that any provision of social and community infrastructure is accessible by cycling and walking and, wherever possible, public transport;
- d** be delivered to agreed timescales to ensure the needs of the community are met in a timely manner.

The council will only permit the loss of existing social and community infrastructure facilities, when it can be demonstrated that:

- a** the facility is no longer needed for its original purpose, or viable for any other community use; or
- b** a proposed alternative use would be of equal or greater quality and would provide equal or greater benefits for the local community or economy; or
- c** if appropriate, an alternative facility will be provided in a location with at least an equal level of accessibility for the community it is intended to serve.

The council will work positively with Island communities and support proposals to develop, retain, improve or re-use essential facilities, including those identified in neighbourhood development plans or orders (including community right to build orders), along with suitable supporting development which may make provision economically viable.

5.104 The policy sets out the approach that the council will take in respect of the provision and loss of social and community infrastructure on the Island and gives specific guidance for planning applications. This policy approach will be applied through the Island Planning Strategy to ensure that the Island maintains a level of social and community infrastructure to serve the needs of its residents.

5.105 For the purpose of this policy, the definition of social and community infrastructure includes (but is not limited to):

- schools and other education facilities, including libraries and childcare premises;
- health care facilities, including healthcare centres, GP surgeries and dentist;
- local shops;
- post offices;
- pubs;
- places of worship;
- community buildings including community centres and village halls;

- indoor and outdoor recreation and sports facilities including playing fields, indoor sports facilities and leisure centres, swimming pools, tennis and netball courts, bowling greens, golf courses/driving ranges, multi-use games areas, grass pitches and water based facilities e.g. canoeing and other outdoor sports space;
- youth facilities including indoor and outdoor facilities for children and young people.

- 5.106** Facilities can provide a focus for activities and foster community spirit and, more importantly, can provide essential services to local communities. In respect of this policy, the term community means the wider community and needs to consider areas outside of defined settlement boundaries and across parish boundaries as to the users of such services and facilities.
- 5.107** Developers should consider identified local needs within neighbourhood development plans or community-led supplementary planning documents where, for example, any deficiencies in services and/or facilities are identified. Developers should also work closely with the community to consider any further needs that have not been identified within neighbourhood development plans or community led supplementary planning documents.
- 5.108** Planning applications that would result in the loss of social and community infrastructure facilities must show evidence of alternative provision, financial viability, or that the proposed alternative use would provide equal or greater benefits for the local community or economy. Applications should evidence that community engagement has taken place and that the proposal will address any identified deficiency in provision. Developers should also consider the provision of these types of facilities (where sports and leisure facilities are being provided) in conjunction with other relevant policies in this document.
- 5.109** This policy also seeks to support proposals for new essential facilities that would meet identified local needs. The focus for new social and community infrastructure will be within defined settlement boundaries where the majority of the Island's growth will be accommodated over the plan period. Development located outside of defined settlement boundaries will only be accepted where there is evidence that this type of facility is required to be in a rural location due to the type of service or facility, or is required to meet a local need and this would result in a more sustainable and accessible location. Any application for new development outside of, defined settlement boundaries should be supported by evidence of a local need or through its identification in other plans (such as neighbourhood development plans).
- 5.110** In terms of new residential development, the council will expect that, in the first instance, accommodation of social and community infrastructure is on-site where possible. If on-site provision is not achievable, any social and community infrastructure needs generated from new development should be met through the provision of financial contributions. Policy G3 'developer contributions' outlines how the council will secure financial contributions from developers that will contribute to the delivery and maintenance of social and community infrastructure.

- 5.111** When proposing new social and community infrastructure, developers should design the facility so that it is capable of being flexible in the way(s) that it is used and to accommodate a variety of community needs, eg, healthcare centre, clubs, societies etc. The types of uses that the proposal will need to accommodate and its location and design will be informed by the developer’s engagement with the community.
- 5.112** In addition to this policy, the council will work proactively with local communities including through neighbourhood planning and the community right to build, to help communities plan for and deliver facilities that meet local needs where there is the required level of support from local neighbourhoods.
- 5.113** Implementation will be through development management and planning application decisions. Neighbourhood planning could also bring forward local facilities and services where there is an identified need and community support.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential A well-educated and skilled community.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- The community feels safe and is the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Community-led planning

C15

Community-led planning

Where town and parish councils have undertaken place plans and/ or masterplanning work that has been endorsed by the council, development proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to achieving the aims of the community-led plan.

Major development proposals will be required to submit a statement setting out the type, scale and results of public consultation carried out in advance of application submission.

- 5.114** The council recognises that community engagement often benefits from starting with what people and communities are interested in and what their concerns are, not the statutory duties and programmes of public authorities.

- 5.115 There are a number of routes for community-led work to be formalised into planning policy, particularly neighbourhood development plans. The council has also adopted a number of community-led documents as supplementary planning documents. The processes for adopting neighbourhood development plans and supplementary planning documents are regulated, which often puts communities off engaging in community-led planning.
- 5.116 Community-led place plans or masterplans can provide a better understanding of local issues to help shape future service delivery and a more co-ordinated way of working with the resources available. The council, through its regeneration team, has engaged with a number of communities to raise public awareness of the regeneration programme and its aims.
- 5.117 The council will work with and/ or support communities undertaking place plans or masterplans. In order to formalise such documents within the planning process the council will need to ensure that community aspirations are in general conformity with the vision and objectives of this plan and contribute to the delivery of its vision and objectives. This is not to say that the council will be unecessarily prescriptive in this process, but it will need to be comfortable with the outcomes.
- 5.118 Community-led place plans or masterplans could be endorsed through a formal council-led process, such as a supplementary planning document.

This policy links to the following IPS objectives and key priorities:

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.