

ISLAND VOICES  
Speak out for the future



# The Agenda 21 Strategy for the Isle of Wight



Cover picture by Emily Graham.



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## THE AGENDA 21 STRATEGY FOR THE ISLE OF WIGHT "ISLAND VOICES SPEAK OUT FOR THE FUTURE"

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

So many people have given their time enthusiasm and commitment to the Island Agenda 21 process. Grateful thanks go to all those Islanders who despite sometimes storm conditions took the trouble to participate in the Roadshows and give their views. Special thanks go to the 'A' Team and 'Platform1', without whom none of the videoing would have been possible and who helped make the events so much fun. Also sincerest thanks to the members of the Special Interest Groups for their faith, determination and hard work in helping to put the Strategy together.

The biggest thanks of all has to go to the Agenda 21 Coordinating Group who for the last 18 months have worked so hard in managing the Roadshows, the Special Interest Groups and all the data and information that has flowed from the Island Voices process. This resulting Strategy is a testament to their belief in and commitment to the Isle of Wight and its people, and to ensuring that their voice is heard.

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## ***Preface***

Here on the Isle of Wight we are deeply aware of the precious heritage which has been passed to us through the generations.

We are equally deeply committed to passing on this heritage, undiminished, to future generations.

Through the Island Agenda 21 process, we have had the unique privilege of coming together to work for the Island of the future, sharing knowledge and understanding on how we can each make a difference.

It seems a long time now since the world leaders came together at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and some might argue that the commitment and good intention that arose from that conference now seem to be a relic of the 20th Century.

However, here on the Island we are determined to follow through on our pledge to care for and protect our beautiful environment at the same time as working tirelessly for a fair and just society and a thriving local economy. This, the first Agenda 21 Strategy for the Isle of Wight, is just the beginning of the process.

Through it we will involve all of the Island's communities in working together for a better future for ourselves, generations yet to come and for our uniquely beautiful Island.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Smart".

*Councillor Shirley Smart  
Leader of the Council*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Butchers".

*Councillor Terry Butchers  
Spokeperson for Agenda 21  
& Countryside matters*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M G Barton".

*Councillor Morris Barton OBE  
Chairman Economic  
Development, Tourism and  
Leisure Services Select  
Committee*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ernie Fox".

*Councillor Ernie Fox  
Chairman Environment and  
Transport Select Committee*





*Born of the wind,  
Born of the waves,  
Born of the timeless sands,  
Born of the people of  
centuries gone,  
Beautiful now she stands.*

*Hopes for the future,  
Dreams of the past,  
Captured and uttered anew,  
God bless this Island and all here  
who dwell,  
That their hopes and their dreams  
may come true.*

## ***Foreword***

In common with all other local authorities in the UK the Isle of Wight Council has developed an Agenda 21 Strategy for the Island. The purpose of an Agenda 21 Strategy is to bring social, environmental and economic well-being to us all at the same time as ensuring that we leave the world at least as good a place as we found it. (Known as sustainable development).

The Agenda 21 Strategy has been developed in close partnership with the Isle of Wight Health Authority, the Isle of Wight Partnership and most importantly, with the Island's communities.

The Strategy represents an honest and wholehearted attempt to involve as many local people as possible in having their say about how our Island develops into the future. Through this inclusive process a Strategy has been developed which as far as possible reflects the views of the community.

However, the proposals and actions which are included in the Strategy can obviously only be a very small step towards improving our social, economic and environmental prospects. Furthermore, they cannot fully reflect the ongoing and changing circumstances that affect our everyday lives.

Therefore, the true worth of this Strategy will be judged by its ability to respond to the changing social, economic and environmental concerns which develop through time and by its ability to maintain a steady course towards sustainable development.

Thus, the Strategy will be constantly evaluated and re-evaluated by a process of community participation and consultation, which not only seeks people's views but which actively involves them in securing a happy and healthy future for the Island and its communities.



# ISLAND VOICES SPEAK OUT FOR THE FUTURE- THE AGENDA 21 STRATEGY FOR THE ISLE OF WIGHT

## ***Introduction***

"I want all local authorities in the UK to adopt Local Agenda 21 Strategies by the year 2000"  
Tony Blair, New York, UN general Assembly Special session on the Environment, 23 June 1997

In the guidance to local authorities on the preparation of Agenda 21 Strategies published by the DETR in 1998 we are reminded that "The greatest challenge now is to connect Local Agenda 21 to the 'mainstream' decision processes of local authorities and other corporate bodies so that Local Agenda 21 really does change the way we live".

Since May 1999 the Isle of Wight Council has co-ordinated work across the Council and across the Island in preparing the Island Agenda 21 Strategy.

Because the process of working towards the preparation of the strategy plays so vital a role in ensuring that the vision and action plans achieved really do reflect the hopes and aims of the Island community, it forms the very basis of the Strategy.

In the following sections this process is described, together with the resulting short and longer term aims, which were identified through it. The Strategy then goes on to describe how it is intended to turn these aims into reality and what plans are being put in place to ensure that they are achieved.

Finally, consideration is given as to how the Agenda 21 process will be developed to ensure the continuing involvement of the island's communities in working with the Council, the Health Authority and others in creating the Island of the future.





## ***Getting back to grassroots***

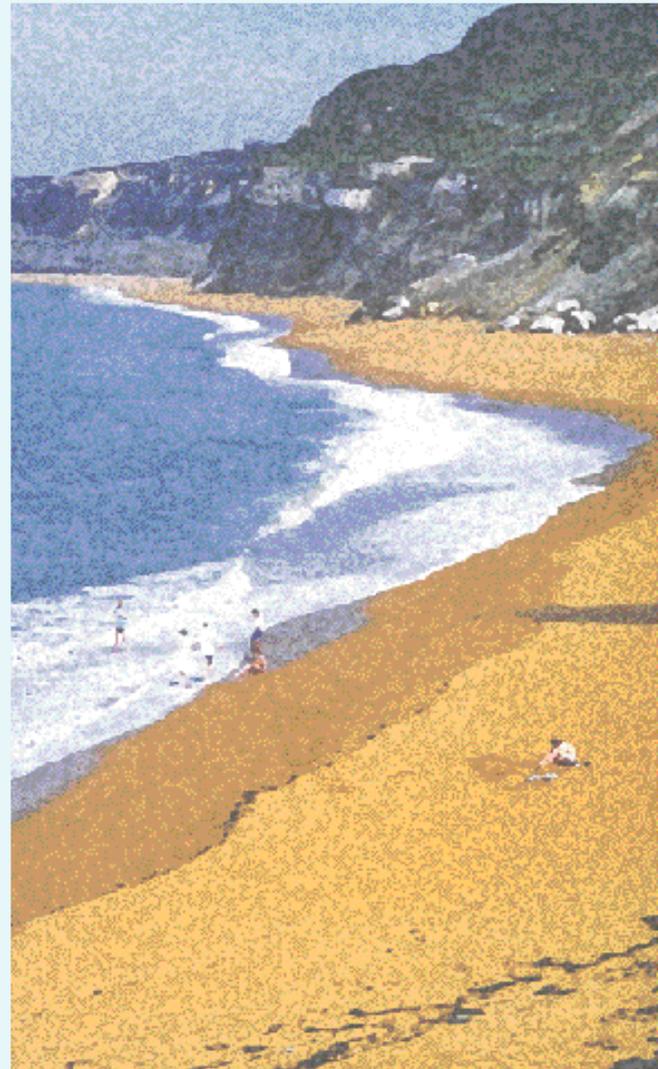
The Island's Agenda 21 Strategy is a unique piece of work born out of the care and commitment that Island people have for their home. It reflects the energy and vision that fired the original Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit in 1992, where ordinary people, by joining together, were able to influence the decision-makers and make their voice heard.

We now know on the Island that Agenda 21 is the Action Plan for achieving sustainable development. We even know what sustainable development is - a way of living and working together which brings social, environmental and economic benefit to us all and which ensures that we leave our world at least as good a place as we found it.

Above all we know that this can only be achieved if we work together as a truly participative community founded on social equity and inclusiveness.

This Island of ours is uniquely beautiful with a natural boundary of 100 kilometres of diverse and stunning coastline and over 50% of its land mass declared as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It does experience high levels of poverty and deprivation but nevertheless it has living towns and villages, which are real communities and not reduced to the pretty facade of the chocolate box commuter dormitory.

Living on an Island we have the great benefit of truly being able to distinguish the exact area and extent of our local social, environmental and economic responsibilities and accountabilities. And together we have the immense privilege and duty of protecting it into the future.



### *1.1 The Island Agenda 21 process - why and how we did it*

The Island has a Unitary local authority, which is responsible for the overall governance of the Island. This is fortunate as local government has a special significance for Agenda 21. At the Earth Summit in 1992 it was made very clear that up to two thirds of Agenda 21 depends upon local government for its successful implementation. World leaders acknowledged that only by all of the world's communities acting locally, can we ever succeed in bringing about sustainable development. And that only by empowering those communities through and by genuine local participative democracy, can we together achieve the changes that are so urgently needed.

## 1.2 The Vision for the Island

The awareness of this responsibility led Members and Officers of both the Isle of Wight Council and the Isle of Wight Health Authority to come together in facilitated workshops to express their vision for the Island of the future. (Appendix 1)

Together they worked on identifying the key issues and actions vital to achieving their vision of a healthy, harmonious and sustainable Island community.

The vision for the Island of the Members and Officers was defined as:



*“a happy, contented and prosperous Island, where each member of the community enjoys the highest quality of life and where we work together to ensure that the Island’s natural beauty and cultural heritage is passed undiminished to future generations”*

### 1.3 Turning Vision to Reality

It was agreed that to achieve this vision, action must be particularly focused on:

- ★ creating an economy which brings maximum social, economic and environmental gain to local people - **a sustainable economy**;
- ★ developing transport systems which are affordable, accessible, networked across the Island and which minimise environmental pollution and degradation - **sustainable transport**;
- ★ protecting and enhancing the Island’s natural and built environment - **environmental stewardship**;
- ★ making the best use of the Island’s natural resources and reducing the generation of waste - **sustainable resource management**.

It was acknowledged by everyone involved in the workshops that progress in these areas is critical to individual and community health and well-being, and to the sense of belonging and self-esteem so vital to an inclusive and harmonious society. (Appendix 2)

It was also agreed that central to achieving this progress, is the need for real communication with, and the participation and involvement of all the people of the Isle of Wight.

Thus, it was decided to identify the above four crucial areas i.e. Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Economy, Sustainable Resource Management and Environmental Stewardship as the main core of the Agenda 21 Strategy and to invite the community to give their views and join with us in developing strategic direction and actions within those key priorities.

To coordinate the process an Officer and Member Group the Agenda 21 Co-ordinating group was constituted with specific responsibility for the co-ordination of the consultation process and the development of the Island Agenda 21 Strategy. (Appendix 3)

## 1.4 The Voice of the People

To tap into the commitment and enthusiasm that Island people have for their home and to encourage them to express their ideas and hopes for the future, new ways of engaging with them needed to be found.

Agenda 21 is all about involving communities in planning for the future and the whole of the consultation programme is rooted in this principle.

Music, street theatre, street art, a coming togetherness in a well-used public open space was felt to offer the best opportunity of creating a welcoming, sparky and non-threatening setting. Any sense of bureaucratic glad-handing was distinctly avoided. Furthermore the voice of the people needed to find expression in as many ways as possible and as easily as possible. It was felt that speaking out in answer to three vital questions would be a simple but all encompassing first step:

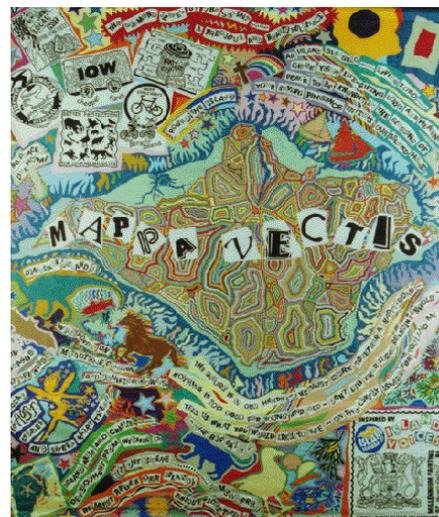
- ★ ***What do you like best about the Island,***
- ★ ***What do you like least, and***
- ★ ***What single thing would you do to change it?***

These questions could either be answered by filling in a simple response sheet or speaking to a video camera.

To give visual expression of peoples' feelings for their Island the "Mappa Vectis" came into creation. This artistic representation of the Island is comprised of a collage of people's thoughts and hopes for the Island expressed as prose, verse, symbols, paintings or embroidery.

The public were also invited to participate in four Special Interest Groups based on the key priority areas identified through the Member and Officer workshops (Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Economy, Sustainable Resource Management, Environmental Stewardship) by ticking a box on the questionnaire or by chatting to a member of the Agenda 21 Team. It was made clear to the public that the main function of the Special Interest Groups is to work on the development of the Island Agenda 21 Strategy and Action Plan, using the information gathered through the "Island Voices" process.

The proposals for involving the community were shared with key partners (Appendix 4) whose support and co-operation was crucial to the success of the participation programme. They included local environmental and social needs groups, the Isle of Wight Partnership and, crucially important, a local Youth Arts project whom, as part of their 'upskilling' in media and performance arts, would play a vital part in the street entertainment and video filming. (Appendix 5.)



## 1.5 LAUNCH OF ISLAND VOICES

The launch event "Island Voices Speak out for the Future" took place in St Thomas' Square Newport on Saturday 9 October 1999. The focus of the launch event was on a sense of fun and celebration of the Island, so that everyone passing through the Square would be encouraged to become involved and give their views, ideas and hopes about how we can all work together to create a happy, healthy, and sustainable future. The Square was dominated by a large and lively Agenda 21 marquee and was bustling with activity, including a 'recycled band' Urban Strawberry Lunch which made riotous music from old discarded pipes, barrels etc. and provided performance street theatre on environmental themes.

An in-depth post-launch evaluation took place to look at how we could best plan and manage a 'Round the Island' Roadshow.

### 1.6 *The Island Voices Roadshow*

The launch event formed an integral part of a process which was followed up during the ensuing weeks and months by a 'Roadshow' which visited communities all around the Island to give local people the opportunity of participating and becoming involved in Island Agenda 21. Although the community events could not be on the same scale as the launch, a similar approach was maintained with a small but colourful marquee, street music, video box and roving video crew. Most importantly local people had the same opportunity of making their voices heard and contributing towards the future of the Island.

### 1.7 *Working Together*

These events all took place on Saturdays and were remarkable in the sense of team working and common purpose which they generated. Officers and Members of the Local Authority, Health Authority and Isle of Wight Partnership, together with members of environmental groups and the youth video project gave their time, goodwill, and creativity in a genuine attempt to help the public feel at ease, welcomed, and thus confident that their views would be heard and taken seriously.



The community responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to participate. Despite sometimes freezing temperatures and squalling rainstorms, the public made genuine efforts to give their views. Altogether 30 hours of video has been recorded, yielding 274 responses to the 3 Island Voices questions and 1,417 questionnaires were returned.

### 1.8 *The Way Ahead*

Islanders were asked to join with us in planning for the future of the Isle of Wight. They knew that the government had requested the Agenda 21 Strategy and eagerly took the opportunity to talk of their vision for the Island and to contribute their thinking as to how we can plan to make it a reality.

Therefore the results of the consultation and the work of the Special Interest Groups are at the heart of the Island Agenda 21 Strategy. It is based on the actual voice of the people and rooted in genuine partnership working. The Island Roadshow locations population densities and numbers and types of response are illustrated on pages 10 and 11.



## 1.9 Results of the Island Voices Consultation

### What are the Voices saying?

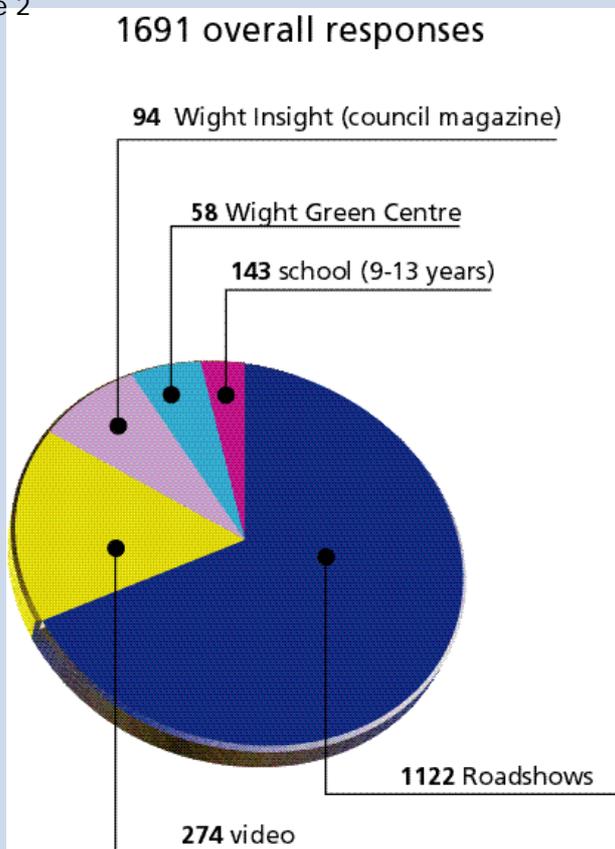
The Island Voices Road shows were not the only opportunity for Island people to have their say.

Questionnaires were also distributed through Wight Insight, Wight Green Centre and taken into schools (see Figure 2). A video sweep of rural areas not covered by the roadshows was also recorded.

### 1.10 Numbers and source of responses

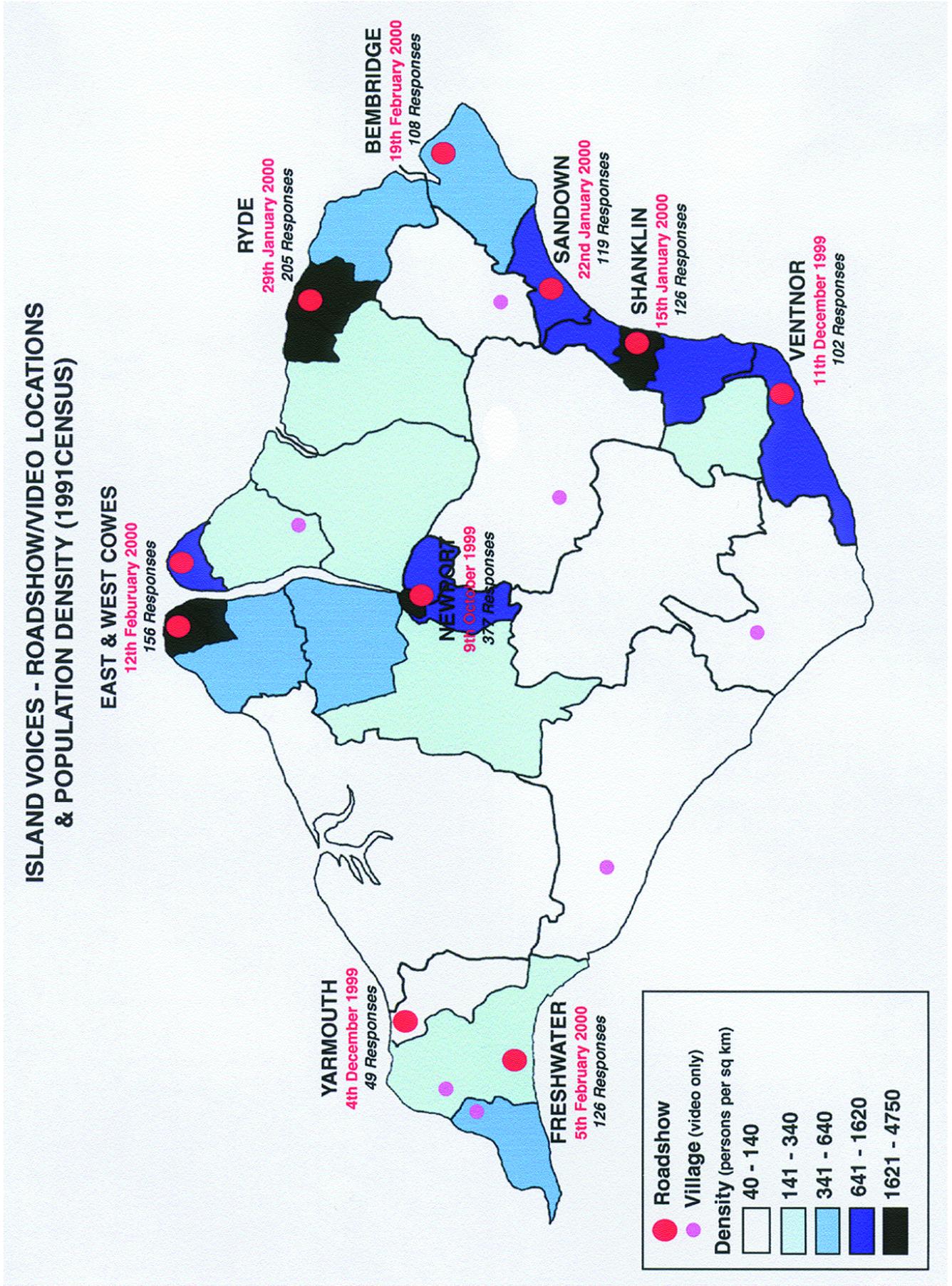
#### Numbers participating

Figure 2



The results were categorised according to the topic areas identified by the Officers and Members workshops: Environmental Stewardship; Sustainable Economy; Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Resource Management plus an additional category of Quality of Life. Individual issues were also recorded.

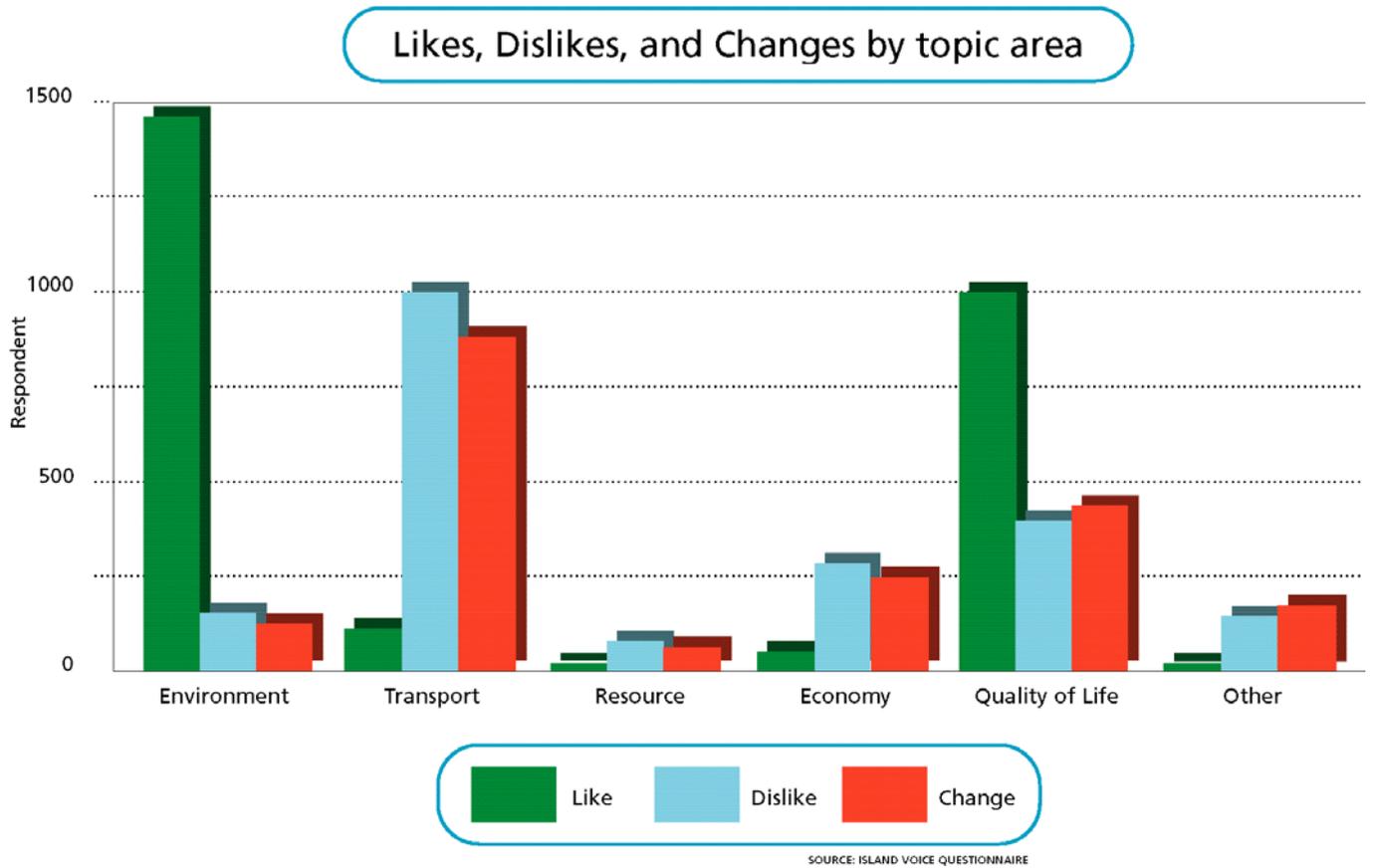
Figure 1



### 1.11 Topic Area Results

Overwhelmingly Island people identified with the overall environment and the quality of life as being the most valued feature of Island life (see Figure 3).

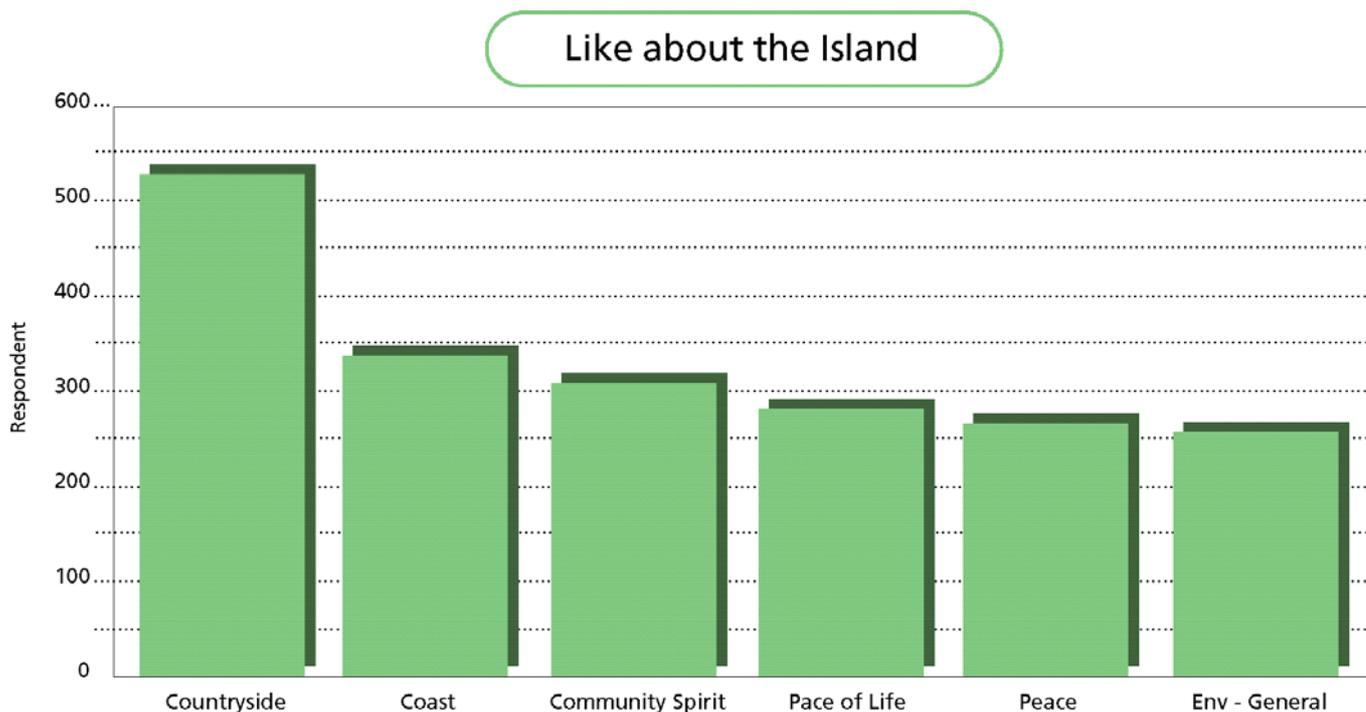
Figure 3



### 1.12 Individual Issues

The countryside was the top 'like' with 530 responses (see Figure 4). The most disliked feature was the cost of the ferries (see Figure 5) and not surprisingly the single biggest desired change was to reduce the cost of travel to the mainland (see Figure 6).

Figure 4



SOURCE: ISLAND VOICE QUESTIONNAIRE



Figure 5

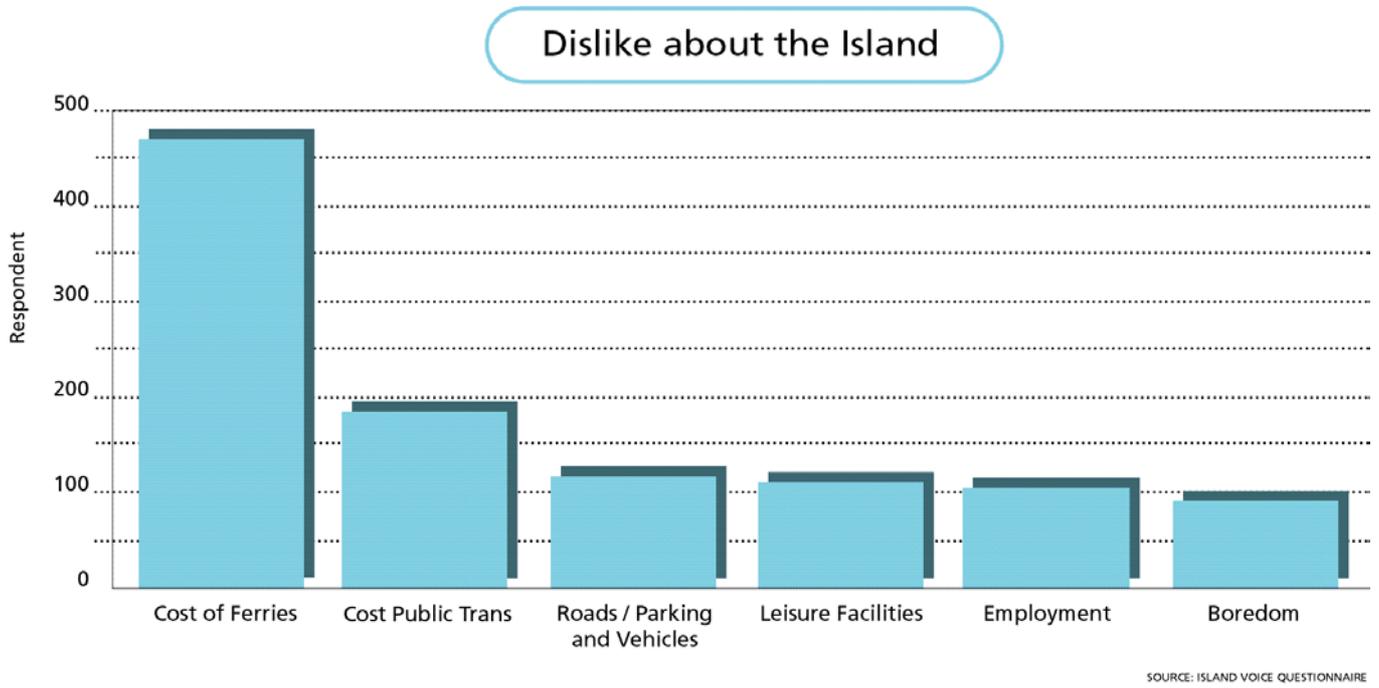
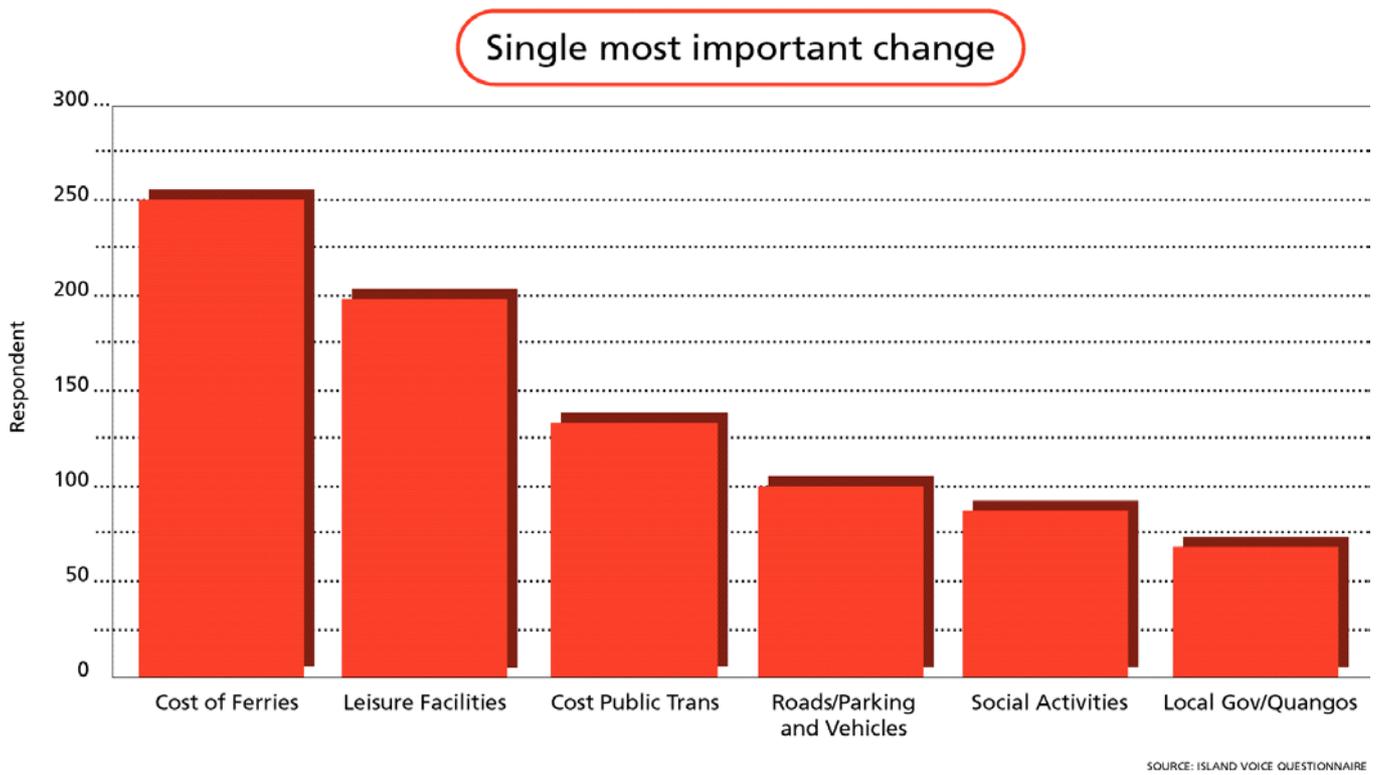


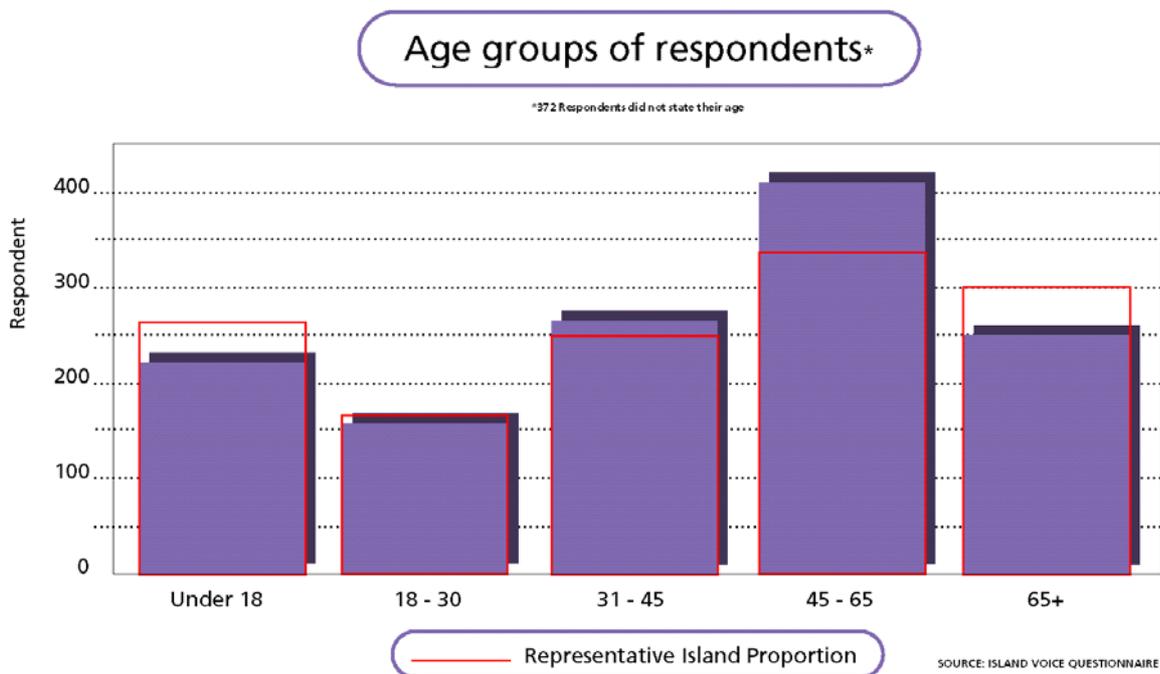
Figure 6



### 1.13 Validity of Results

Altogether 1,691 people participated in the Island Voices which represents 1.3% of the Island's population. In statistical terms this represents a good response, as population surveys of this type usually aim for 1% of total numbers but will accept a sample as low as 0.8%. Although not all participants stated their age, analysis of the results show that a good representation of the current age structure has been obtained (see Figure 7).

Figure 7



All the results have been subjected to analysis by age and area and therefore offer very real opportunities to 'feel the pulse' of local communities and different age groups.

Finally, the broad range of involvement opportunities offered to the community has led to a wide range of participation. For example the video attracted young people and those people who had difficulty filling in a questionnaire. Also people with visual or writing difficulties were able to seek help in completing their form from the Agenda 21 Team. The easygoing atmosphere and street music also encouraged people to feel relaxed and confident in coming forward to express their views. (Appendix 6)





## SECTION TWO

### ***Turning Island Voices Into Island Action Setting up The Process For The Development of The Agenda 21 Strategy***

During the Island Voices consultation many members of the community also signed up to work with the Specialist Interest Groups (see Figure 8) focusing on the four priority areas identified by the Officers' and Members' workshops (Environmental Stewardship; Sustainable Economy Sustainable Transport; Sustainable Resource Management) - see Section 1.4.

Figure 8



The Specialist Interest Groups worked from January to May 2000. The Co-ordinators of the Groups were drawn from officers of the IW Council and IW Partnership and are all members of the Agenda 21 Co-ordinating Group. The Officer/ Member Agenda 21 Co-ordinating Group has led the Island Voices process and the development of the Agenda 21 Strategy. The work of the Co-ordinating Group has been essential to the success of the process and can be summarised as follows:

## 2.1 THE WORK OF THE AGENDA 21 CO-ORDINATING GROUP

### *In developing the Island Voices programme*

The planning, arranging and organisation of the consultation process  
Liaison with the Community Art Unit  
Liaising with and developing the work of the Youth Group (the 'A' Team)  
Liaising with and guiding the artist responsible for Mappa Vectis  
Organising the music and marquees  
Co-ordination with the Island's towns and villages

### *In developing the Island Agenda 21 Strategy*

Monitoring and evaluating the feedback from the launch and Roadshow  
Assessing and analysing the Island Voices responses  
Arranging managing and co-ordinating the Special Interest Groups  
Undergoing focus group training to help facilitate the Special Interest Groups most effectively  
Considering the outcomes of the Special Interest Groups and the role of the Council in "putting its own house in order", to instil confidence and demonstrate good faith  
Developing the internal priorities Action Plan as a response to:  
(a) the Council's overarching role in leading on Agenda 21 and setting examples of best practice  
(b) the concern of the Special Interest Groups that the Council would listen to their views and continue to work in partnership with the community

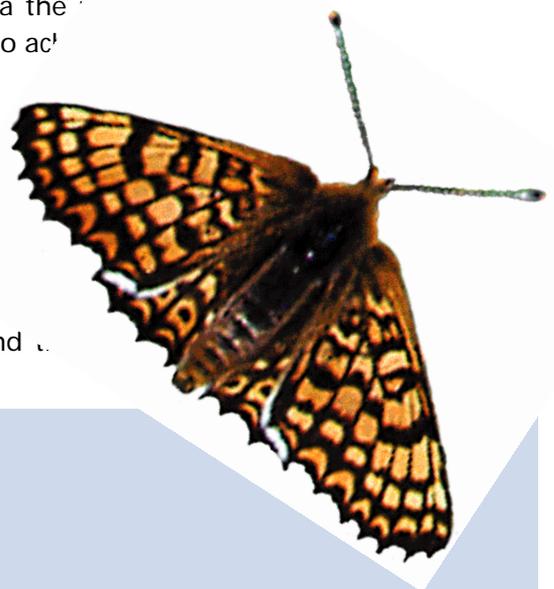
The responses from the Island Voices consultation formed the basis of the Special Interest Groups' work and helped inform the development of each Group's vision for a sustainable future for the Island (the key strategic aims).

After agreeing these key strategic aims for each topic area the Groups then identified the priority issues to be addressed in order to achieve their vision.

Through a process of discussion, with each participant contributing their own views, expertise and experience, the Groups identified key recommendations for action for the Island Agenda 21 Strategy Year 1 Action Plan.

Thus, the content of the Island Agenda 21 Strategy has been developed through the work of the Co-ordinating Group and the four Specialist Interest Groups and has centred upon:

- ☆ The role of the Council in leading by example
- ☆ The four priority areas identified through the:
- ☆ Island Voices consultation process:  
Environmental Stewardship, Sustainable Economy, Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Resource Management



## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Although the Special Interest Groups (Appendix 8) separately addressed issues specific to their particular remit, certain cross-cutting concerns were raised independently by all of the groups identifying the urgent need :

- ★ for the Isle of Wight Council to be seen to be leading by example and to set the Island-wide framework within which sustainable development can be achieved
- ★ to educate and promote awareness at all levels of society so that each person from childhood through to old-age understands the importance and impact of their own individual actions and the contribution they can make to a healthy and equitable society;
- ★ to reduce the generation of waste and the production of litter and the need to recycle more efficiently;
- ★ to develop Island-wide public transport systems which are comprehensive in service provision, affordable, accessible and environmentally sustainable;
- ★ to fully utilise the Island's capacity for the generation of renewable energy, the implementation of energy conservation programmes and the development of alternative technologies, all of which will reduce adverse environmental impact, and offer sustainable employment opportunities;
- ★ to promote and develop tourism by marketing the Island as a year-round, friendly, safe environmental destination where tourists can enjoy locally produced produce and experience the unique natural environment of the Island's countryside and coast.

Since the commencement of the public participation programme in October 1999, the Agenda 21 Co-ordinating Group has received continuous feedback from the consultation process and the work of the Groups.

As well as their role in the facilitation of this community involvement and in the development of particular proposals for action arising from it, Officers and Members of the Group have since May 1999 also been responsible for investigating the Council's role and obligations in working towards sustainable development. This has led to the identification and recommendation of specific proposals and initiatives aimed at putting the Council at the forefront of sustainable development.

Consequently Section 3 briefly describes the current legislative and political framework within which the Council operates with respect to sustainable development and identifies specific proposals for the Year 1 Action Plan which will help the Council 'lead by example' and set the standard for the delivery of social, economic and environmental well-being to the Island's communities.

Section 4 describes the key strategic aims relating to the four major issues agreed as being crucial to the future of the Island (Environmental Stewardship; Sustainable Economy; Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Resource Management) and summarises the current situation before going onto identify specific proposals for the Year 1 Action Plan.

## SECTION THREE



### **3.1 Leading By Example - *Putting the council's house in order***

The Government has identified four broad objectives of sustainable development:

- ★ social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- ★ effective protection of the environment;
- ★ prudent use of natural resources;
- ★ high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Dating back from the Earth Summit in Rio local authorities have been charged with the major part of the responsibility for achieving sustainable development. When the Action Plan for achieving Sustainable Development in the 21st Century (i.e. Agenda 21) was signed up to by the 180 world leaders at the Summit in 1992 it was acknowledged that two thirds of the actions required could not take place without the active involvement of local authorities.

This is because :

- ★ they have a range of important functions through which they may contribute to sustainable development and help to improve the quality of life of their communities - through regeneration, education, social affairs, planning, housing, transportation, and their environmental management responsibilities;
- ★ they are well placed to influence others, to harness the energy and imagination of local communities and to co-ordinate with business, Government and other bodies;
- ★ and they are major employers and consumers in their own right, with a responsibility to organise their own business in a sustainable way.

Most importantly of all, local authorities are democratically accountable. Through their powers to plan, invest, regulate, manage and enforce, they come closest to the people who are affected and they can respond most directly to local views and wishes. Local Government is the pivotal point where the community's views, values and aspirations can be translated into public sector policies, plans and programmes and then be turned from words into action.

Thus it is spelt out in 'Sustainable Local Communities for the 21st Century - why and how to prepare an effective Agenda 21 Strategy' (February 1998) just what local authorities should be seeking to achieve.

Local Authorities should be:

- ★ managing and improving sustainability performance;
- ★ integrating sustainability issues into policies and activities;
- ★ raising awareness and educating;
- ★ consulting and involving the wider community and the general public;
- ★ working in partnership with others - central Government, agencies, business, community groups and the general public;
- ★ measuring, monitoring and reporting.

In other words sustainable development has to be at the heart of policy making. It is core to effective community planning, to the achievement of Best Value and to the efficient, provident and empowering management of resources (including human resources). It is integral to all service delivery, social and community development, planning, transportation, community safety and good health.

Since making these earlier proposals in respect of Agenda 21, the Government has continued to develop thinking and guidance on how we achieve sustainable development. The White Paper, Modern Local Government "In Touch with the People" (July 1998) is very clear about what is expected from local government. As levels of participation on local elections fall to an all-time low, Councils are being forced to examine both the relevance and quality of the services they provide as well as their overall accountability and responsiveness to local communities.

In "In Touch with the People" the government has coined the phrase "Best Value" to describe the process whereby new standards of service delivery and accountability will be achieved. This process is based upon the implementation of Performance Reviews which will ask four fundamental questions of all service provision:

- ★ Are the services relevant?
- ★ Can it be proved that they are what local people want?
- ★ Do they bear comparison with national best practice?
- ★ Are they cost-efficient and competitive?

According to "In Touch with the People" the Government *"will enshrine in law the role of the Council as the elected leader of their local community with a responsibility for the well-being and sustainable development of its area"* and, following on from this, *"this new duty will be underpinned with a discretionary power enabling Councils to take steps which in their view will promote the well-being of their area and those who live, work and visit there"*.

The Local Government Act (July 2000) now actually places such a duty on principal local authorities in England and Wales. According to the Act they will be required *"to prepare a 'community strategy' for promoting the economic, environmental, and social well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development"*.

New guidance has now been published specifically dealing with the development of community strategies. In it, the importance of community strategies to the achievement of Best Value is very clearly stated: *"The development of a comprehensive community strategy is inextricably linked to the delivery of a local authority's duty of Best Value. A community strategy provides the basis from which an authority can best determine its own contribution to the long-term economic, social and environmental well-being of its community"*.

The Guidance also recommends that the Community Strategy and Agenda 21 have common aims and common processes and can be taken forward together, combining the best ingredients of both.



# Year One Action Priorities

## 3.2 Isle of Wight Council

*‘People need Councils which serve them well. Councils need to listen to, lead and build up their local communities. We want to see Councils working in partnership with others, making their contribution to the achievement of our aims for improving people’s quality of life. To do this Councils’ need to break free from old fashioned practices and attitudes’*

John Prescott

Deputy Prime Minister

July 1998

During the course of the last year as a result of the Agenda 21 process and the Island Voices consultation the Agenda 21 Strategy Co-ordinating Group has identified the following priorities:

### **3.2.1 PRIORITY STAFF AND ELECTED MEMBER AWARENESS AND TRAINING**

It is critically important that all those involved at all levels of operation within the Council and other public services and agencies understand what sustainable development is and the crucial part that they have to play in achieving it. The new modernising agenda is rooted in the need to be flexible and responsive and in working collaboratively to achieve a more sustainable society. Such fundamental reform depends for its success upon an informed, confident understanding of the issues and clarity of vision for what we are seeking to achieve. This can only be brought about by comprehensive training and awareness raising programmes and the staged implementation of prioritised policies and initiatives.

#### **ACTION PROPOSED - Think Tank on Integration - Senior Management and Members**

Think tank on the integration of Best Value, Community Planning (to consider also innovative and inclusive methods of consultation and participation), Health Improvement Plan, Agenda 21 Strategy, (to include the principles and practice of environmental management), Corporate Objectives, Community Safety Strategy, Regeneration Strategy, Unitary Development Plan, Local Transport Plan, Housing Strategy and Rural Development Strategy.

- *Identification of cross cutting key sustainability performance Indicators for the above.*

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council wants to ensure the effective integration of all the various Plans and Strategies that together will influence the future progress of the Island. These will include the Health Improvement Plan, Agenda 21 Strategy, Corporate Objectives, Community Safety Strategy, Regeneration Strategy, Unitary Development Plan, Local Transport Plan, Housing Strategy and Rural Development Strategy. This integration will occur through the development of a Community Strategy which will seek to build upon and develop innovative and inclusive methods of consultation and participation.

The sustainability performance indicators will be developed in conjunction with the Island set of National, Best Value and Local Sustainability Indicators referred to in Priority 3.2.5

#### **ACTION PROPOSED Middle-Management Training**

Re-familiarisation of middle management with the concept and implications of the above policies and initiatives. Introduction to the IW performance indicators (as determined by the Think Tank).

Facilitated workshops to further understanding and to devise plan of application and measurement .

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

Each Directorate Management Team will be responsible for developing staff awareness programmes aimed at promoting the understanding of sustainable development and other cross cutting issues. This should include familiarisation with the key performance indicators relevant to the work areas in question and introduction to the monitoring and evaluation process

### **3.2.2 PRIORITY PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Our Healthier Nation - Saving Lives is the Government's action plan to tackle poor health. It is recognised in this document that *"communities can tackle poor health, which springs from a range of wider community factors - including poverty, low wages, unemployment, poor education sub-standard housing crime and disorder and a polluted environment"*. The White Paper charges local Authorities to *"work in partnership with the NHS to plan for health improvement"*. Already the Isle of Wight Health Authority and Isle of Wight Council are implementing the Health Improvement Plan, which works across organisational boundaries and with the community in bringing about policies and service delivery which promote good health.

Building on this, and in particular to address inequalities in health, local authorities are being required to consider the use of Health Impact Assessments. That is, local decision-makers are being asked to think about the effect which their policies have on health and in particular how they can reduce health inequality. They must ensure that health is on the agenda of all local organisations and agencies outside the health field.

An important part of this role will be to encourage all local agencies to make local health impact assessments when planning investment in, for example, amenities, buildings or local communities and in the location of services.

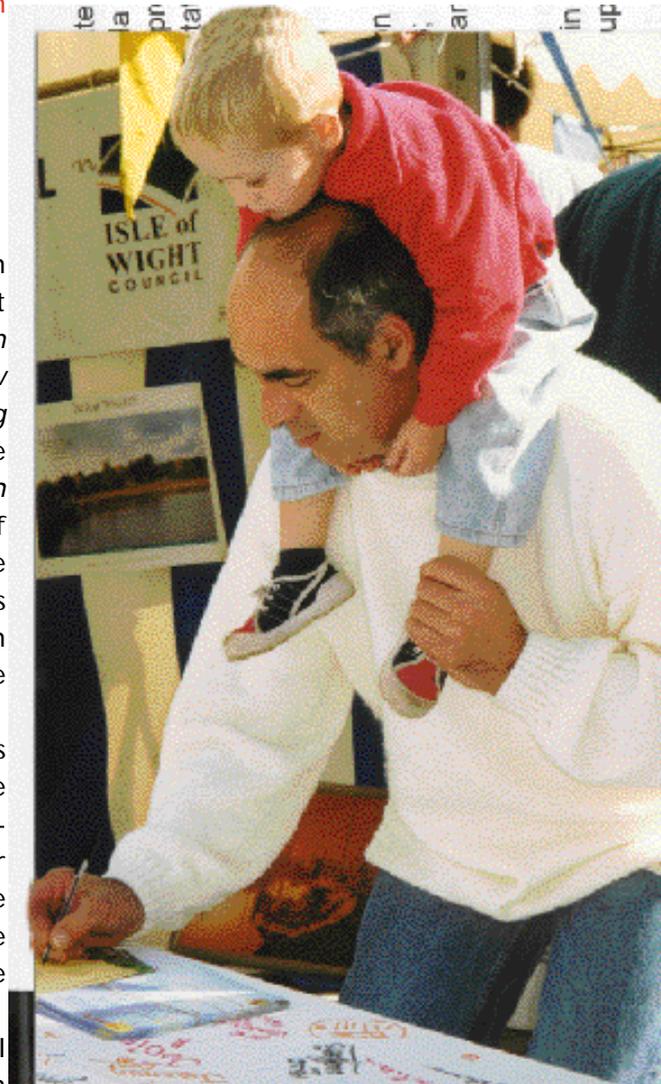
### **ACTION PROPOSED Health Impact Assessment**

Working with the Health Authority to identify links between health and policy so as to influence the implementation of policies, programmes and other initiatives to reduce the harmful effects on health and to increase the beneficial effects.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Health Authority in partnership, with the Council has identified the following courses of action:

- 1.To work through the Health Improvement Programme Action Group to develop local skills in Health Impact Assessment
- 2.To work through the Health Improvement Action Group to identify areas of Island activity where there is scope for the reduction of harmful effects on health and develop a timed and costed plan for health impact assessments and other action to be taken.



### **3.2.3 PRIORITY - IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

Environmental management systems are procedures whereby everyday activities and operations which impact on the environment can be identified, measured and subsequently improved.

Environmental management systems are critically important in achieving resource efficiency. By implementing such schemes, not only is the environment protected, but money is saved as well. The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) has specifically stated that an integral part of Local Agenda 21 has to be *“the implementation of environmental management systems, using the new international environmental management systems standard (ISO 14001) or the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme for UK Local Government (LA-EMAS) to ensure that the authority’s stated aims are followed through into action”*.

Throughout the Council there are examples of good practice in in-house waste reduction and recycling, energy conservation, ‘green’ purchasing and ‘green’ transport. However, there is currently no authority-wide commitment to a corporate environmental management system. Therefore there is no systematic measurable process whereby we can assess our environmental management and build in ongoing improvements.

#### **ACTION PROPOSED - Introduce environmental management systems for:**

- ★ Waste management and minimisation.
- ★ Procurement and purchasing.
- ★ Fleet management.

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

An internal review will take place to assess the significant effects of current practice in the areas outlined below. Currently the Agenda 21 budget situation is being explored with a view to employing an Officer for 6 months to initiate and support this work.

##### ***Waste management and minimisation***

A priority task of the above officer will be to set up and implement internal recycling and waste reduction systems which will eventually be operational throughout the council

##### ***Procurement and purchasing***

The Purchasing Advice Office in conjunction with the Agenda 21 Officer will help as far as reasonably practical the purchase of environmentally sensitive goods and services within the Isle of Wight Council. Specifically this will include:

1. The identification of many of the products purchased by the Authority and an assessment of their basic environmental impact.
2. Researching and gathering information on appropriate environmental purchasing standards.
3. Publication of some practical guidelines on environmental issues for use by purchasers within the Council, and the development of suitable environmentally focused specifications for commonly purchased items.
4. Collaboration and networking with other local authorities' purchasing departments to share relevant information about emerging environmental procurement initiatives.
5. Liaising with our key suppliers to further encourage the spotlight on environmental factors throughout the supply chain.

##### ***Fleet management***

The Council has already initiated a programme of acquisition of Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)/dual fuel vehicles where appropriate, and is also investigating the possibility of undertaking a vehicle lifetime cycle appraisal of environmental impact and the development of an environmental strategy for fleet vehicle operations. This will be achieved with the support of the new officer post referred to above.

### **ACTION PROPOSED -**

*Further develop energy management strategy and efficiency measures.*

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council will further develop the energy management strategy and efficiency measures in the Isle of Wight by consulting and working with partner organisations. This work will be linked with projects developed in partnership with the Southern Home Energy Conservation Act Network which are aimed at reducing fuel poverty and promoting energy conservation.

### **ACTION PROPOSED - Investigate and develop a sustainable construction policy,**

*ie. to develop measures and procedures to assist in determining the sustainability of buildings and infrastructure and their impact on the environment, particularly the cost effectiveness of decisions affecting energy use, waste and recycling over the life of the building (houses, schools, hospitals or offices).*

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council will develop a framework for sustainable build policies which specify sustainable build practices. An IOW Council Officer Group has been set up in partnership with Wight Green Centre to investigate best practice and to identify ways in which sustainable construction practices can be promoted as an integral part of future development on the Island. It is intended to involve other key groups such as developers and housing associations who will contribute to the development of the specific guidance and policy frameworks.

### **ACTION PROPOSED - Develop and implement a Green Travel Plan.**

A Green Travel Plan is a package of measures tailored to suit the individual circumstances of the organisations involved. The aim is to minimise the impact of travel on the environment.

It will cover:

- ★ commuter and school journeys;
- ★ business travel;
- ★ visitors;
- ★ deliveries;
- ★ fleet vehicles.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

Currently the Council is considering the results of the Staff Travel Survey undertaken earlier this year. It is anticipated that the information gained from the Survey will form the basis of a series of initiatives which will aim to reduce car use and identify acceptable alternatives for staff travelling to and from work and within work.

### **3.2.4 PRIORITY - ENCOURAGING GENUINE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

*"It may be asking too much to expect local government to get people shouting from their rooftops. But it is not too much to expect most people to care enough to vote or to know who to praise or blame for what is going on in their locality. But it is not just representative democracy that needs to be strengthened. We also need to look at other democratic initiatives that will strengthen community leadership. Councils need to avoid getting trapped in the secret world of the caucus and the party group. They should let local people have their say."*

*Source Rt. Hon. Tony Blair*

The Isle of Wight Council has made great strides in reaching out to the community to seek its views and has re-styled the Council structure to promote open and inclusive decision-making (Appendix 7). As yet this process is incomplete but the Council is determined to take a lead on identifying and implementing best practice and in improving local people's access to the decision-making process.

#### **ACTION PROPOSED - Promoting active community involvement & participation**

The Council should lead on initialising an audit of all current consultative mechanisms used within the Council and other Island organisations and groups and assess for inclusivity and participation rates.

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Head of Communications has begun work on mapping Council consultations, comparing methods of consultation, target audiences etc. so that we can co-ordinate consultation where possible. This work still needs to be progressed further when resources are in place after 1 November 2000.

A Citizens Panel has now been established for the Council (Speak Up!) Other agencies have expressed an interest in the Panel and in time we hope to be able to offer them the opportunity of co-ordinated consultation by making the Panel available to them. However, Council use of the Panel would have to remain a priority.

Wight Insight, The Council magazine, also offers opportunities for consultation - both by the Council and by other public sector organisations.

#### **ACTION PROPOSED - Community involvement & participation pilot schemes**

Pilot schemes for extending community development and participation will be an important first step in effectively involving communities in the decision making process.

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council aims to develop communication and consultation networks, which will promote and encourage meaningful input and interaction by the Island's communities and their more active involvement in the decision-making process. This would aim to build upon and develop current initiatives such as community forums

Currently proposals are being taken forward to support the development of an Older Person's Forum for the Isle of Wight which will provide a mechanism for including older people in decision making and ensuring they are able to raise issues of concern about their communities and the wider environment

### **3.2.5 PRIORITY - THE IDENTIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS ACROSS KEY PRIORITIES**

However effective we may have been in drawing together the views of our Island communities the vision developed through the Agenda 21 process and other Island-wide strategic planning will only be realised by identifying, and measuring progress towards key goals along the way. Therefore the setting of performance indicators, standards and targets will be crucial to success.

Apart from developing specific local indicators based on the Island Voices consultation it is

intended to cross-reference to the national sustainability performance indicators:

- ★ the DETR menu of Local Indicators;
- ★ Department of Social Security social exclusion Performance Indicators (income, employment, health, housing, crime fear);
- ★ Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators.

### **ACTION PROPOSED** - *Sustainability Indicators*

Using the Island Voices consultation responses and current government guidance on performance indicators, identify a range of local sustainability indicators and a programme of measurement and evaluation which will lead to year on year demonstrable improvement in the environment, health and well being of Island people.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

An Indicators Reports is currently being prepared based on the Island Agenda 21 process and the work of the Special Interest Groups. The Report has been divided into six sections; the work of the Council, environmental stewardship, sustainable economy, transport and resource management. There is also an additional section covering the Island's quality of life.

As well as using simple Indicators, such as photographic evidence to determine changes in landscape, the report is also using a number of national indicators produced by the DETR. By including these national indicators we will be able to judge our progress against other counties in the UK.

Performance Indicators are also required for the Council to meet its requirements for Best Value and we are looking at ways to incorporate the Best Value Indicators to produce a complete set of Indicators for the Island. These would then all be the subject of a single system of publication requirements and verification processes. This approach would thereby avoid the necessity of further resources being committed to creating a bureaucracy to parallel that which already exists to satisfy the requirements of the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP).

### **3.2.6 PRIORITY** - *SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS ON ALL POLICY DECISION-MAKING*

To ensure that all Council policies and initiatives promote the social economic and environmental well-being of our Island community, a system of assessments and checks should be built in at every level of the decision-making process. The DETR has issued very precise guidance and specimen checklists from which an Island-based set of criteria can be developed.

Of course, such checklists cannot be used in isolation from in-depth staff training and awareness raising at the appropriate levels. There is a very real risk that such checklists will become devalued and meaningless if imposed on staff who have little understanding of their role and purpose.

### **ACTION PROPOSED** - *Sustainability Assessments*

Using current best practice guidelines pilot the use of a Best Value Sustainability Check List through the Best Value Reviews.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

Our Service Review Template (which outlines how to carry out a Best Value Review) contains a section about sustainability under 'Challenge'

We are adopting the Best Value and Sustainability Checklist (developed by the DETR) to give more detailed guidance on how sustainability issues can be addressed in Reviews.

The facilitator for each Review meets with the Agenda 21 Officer to ensure that the sustainability issues relevant to a specific review are taken into consideration.

The standard review report format contains an Appendix item which will pull together any Agenda 21 issues which have been dealt with in the review.

# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## ***Energy Management within the Isle of Wight Council***

In March 1999 the Council adopted the Isle of Wight Council Energy Policy and in doing so committed to:

- ★ Reduce energy and water consumption by 15% over a 5 year period
- ★ Review the environmental impact of energy and water consumption as part of the Agenda 21 process
- ★ Promote and share associated issues in the local community
- ★ Take account of energy efficiency in the use and maintenance of vehicles and plant
- ★ Encourage research and development of renewable energy sources
- ★ Keep informed of latest developments and practices

The comparison of weather corrected consumption figures for the periods April 1998 to March 1999 and April 1999 to March 2000 indicates that electricity consumption fell by 86000kWh (0.76%), gas consumption fell by 831000kWh (3.4%), oil consumption fell by 5000 litres [529000kWh] (11%) and water consumption fell by 13000cu/m (6.7%)

THESE ENCOURAGING DECREASES IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION HAVE RESULTED IN A 328 TONNE REDUCTION IN CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS TO THE ATMOSPHERE.

## ***Heritage and Leisure***

Officers from Heritage & Leisure areas worked together to develop a workshop for front-line staff to give an introduction to Local Agenda 21, providing a departmental overview and linking to Best Value. The workshop attended by 26 staff covered 3 areas :-

- ★ Identifying the key components of the quality of life on the Island.
- ★ Achievements required from an Agenda 21 Strategy.
- ★ How leisure & heritage services help Agenda 21 by safeguarding the quality of life

## ***The Island Plan for Health & Well-being***

The Island Plan for Health and Well-being is the Health Improvement Plan (HImp) for the Isle of Wight. The concept of a Health Improvement Programme recognises that the factors which promote positive health status and well-being in communities are almost entirely beyond the remit of health services. Whilst high quality health services are essential, a range of partners outside the Health Service need to work together to ensure the social, economic and physical environments within which people live, promote positive health. Action on cross cutting issues such as housing education crime and disorder, social inclusion, regeneration, Agenda 21 and transport all have the potential to impact on health. Officers from the Health service worked with the Isle of Wight Council to ensure these areas were reflected in the action plans of the HImp.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE ISLAND'S HIMP IDENTIFIED IT AS ONE OF THE TOP THREE IN THE SOUTH-EAST REGION BECAUSE OF ITS HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## ***The Ecological Footprint of the Isle of Wight***

The Isle of Wight has become the first community in the UK to undergo a comprehensive analysis of its 'ecological footprint'. An ecological footprint is a way of measuring the amount of resources we are consuming and how much we can afford to carry on consuming if we are to become a sustainable society. Thus the findings of the ecological footprint are a vital tool in helping Islanders to understand the effect their lifestyle is having on the environment and, most importantly, what they can each do to change it for the better.

## ***The Coastal Visitor Centre, Ventnor***

The Coastal Visitor Centre opened in Ventnor in 1998. It was funded under the Rural Development Programme and also gained support from the Government Challenge Fund and a range of public and private sponsors with the support of the Island Regeneration Partnership. This enabled the building which is considered a landmark building within the town itself to be re-used and converted to a Coastal Visitors Centre. It was felt that both the building and the site are perfectly situated to assist in the regeneration of this seaside town

The Centre provides an accessible point of contact for anyone with an interest in or concern about the coastline. It's main aims are to increase understanding and enjoyment of the coast as well as raising awareness of the issues facing this complex environment, both through the provision of information and as a forum for comment. The Centre is also actively involved in projects that encourage sustainable tourism to the Island that focusses on the natural environment and by participating in the visitor payback scheme 'Gift to Nature'. It is also spearheading an initiative aimed at demonstrating the benefits of environmental management systems to Island businesses.



## SECTION FOUR



### ***Turning Vision Into Reality***

#### ***- A Sustainable Future for the Island***

As described in Section 1 the Officer and Member workshops agreed their vision for the future of the Island:

*“a happy contented and prosperous Island, where each member of the community enjoys the highest quality of life and where we work together to ensure that the Island’s natural beauty and cultural heritage is passed undiminished to future generations”.*

The four areas of key importance in turning that vision into reality were identified as:

- ★ Environmental Stewardship;
- ★ Sustainable Economy;
- ★ Sustainable Transport; and
- ★ Sustainable Resource Management.

Each of these areas has been the subject of a Special Interest Working Group who together with the Agenda 21 Co-ordinating Group have defined the key strategic aims for their area and identified priority actions for the Year 1 Action Plan.





## 4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

### 4.1.1 *The Island of the Future (the Key Strategic Aims)*

An Island where:

- ★ the countryside and open spaces remain rich in wildlife and natural beauty;
- ★ the coast, beaches and marine environment are free of pollution and remain naturally beautiful;
- ★ commercial and residential development enhances the social and economic life of the Island and respects and protects the natural environment;
- ★ the local environment, culture, heritage, and civic pride of our towns and villages are maintained and protected.

### 4.1.2 *The Island in 2000*

#### “This Beautiful Island”

It is not surprising to find that the Island’s environment is of great importance to Island people. After all, the Island’s unique countryside and coast is the magnet which draws people back time and time again, often to stay. The vital tourist economy is based almost entirely upon the beauty of the Island landscape and environment. Little wonder that Island people value it so highly - over 65% of the responses to the question ‘What do you most like about the Isle of Wight?’ indicated the countryside, coast or environment. The most popular ‘most liked’ reply out of the whole survey was the Island’s countryside, with a huge 31% of all responses.

The diverse landscape of the Island supports an equally valuable wildlife resource. The biodiversity of the Island is uniquely affected by its geographical isolation. Animals such as red squirrels and dormice flourish in the Island’s woodland habitats in a way which is increasingly rare on the mainland. The unusual climate and geomorphology of the Island combine to create and maintain habitats of national and international importance - reflected in the large numbers of national and internationally protected sites on the Island and particularly around its coast. Many plants and animals found on the Island are rare or absent elsewhere in Britain or Europe, such as the beautiful Early Gentian or the rare Glanville Fritillary butterfly (see page 18).

The Island has for many years had relatively low levels of development, and consequently much of the urban and rural landscape is distinctive through its traditional appearance, with many areas such as Ryde and Ventnor retaining some urban landscapes from the past, as well as rural ones elsewhere. This is particularly the case when compared to the adjacent Southampton-Portsmouth conurbation - an area of intense economic activity, until recently one of the fastest developing areas in Europe. Pressures of development on the Island are different, and Island people themselves have strong and distinct views about it. Their love for the Island’s environment, both urban and rural, expressed clearly in these results, is tempered by concerns about how it is being maintained and developed. The debate which followed the surveys revealed worries about planning and planning policies, concerns about the management of countryside areas and countryside access, and a particular worry about the incidence of litter and other waste.

### 4.1.3 **The Way Forward** - Environmental Stewardship

#### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ES1

The provision of a comprehensive countryside interpretation service for Island people and tourists, by the integration of an expanded Ranger Service with environmental education and "green tourism" initiatives.

*(To identify the options available a feasibility study should be undertaken including a cost analysis of the various alternatives available).*

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council provides a small Ranger Service as part of the Countryside Section and has also a separate Rights of Way Section who have succeeded in becoming the only county to achieve the milestones goal of full access to public rights of way. Expanding the Ranger Service would have budget implications but the idea of a feasibility study to consider the costs and benefits of such a service is a good one and it is intended that officers will initiate this for consideration as part of the budget process.



#### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ES2

To consider increasing the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to cover the whole area of the Isle of Wight which currently lies outside development envelopes.

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council has previously discussed with the Countryside Commission whether the area of AONB which was designated by them could be increased. In previous submissions it has not been agreed by the Countryside Commission who were the responsible body for designation. Countryside Commission responsibilities have now been taken over by the Countryside Agency who have recently part funded the new Island AONB project with an associated Joint Advisory Committee to advise on management. It is intended to consider the issue of wider coverage by the AONB at an early meeting and approach the Countryside Agency on this basis. It should be recognised that designation as an AONB does place restrictions on opportunities for change and the implications of this on all of the Island's countryside needs to be carefully considered.

#### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ES3

To develop the Island as a centre for sustainable resource and environmental management, particularly focusing on best practice and demonstration initiatives.

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

It is hoped to further develop the Island's current Centre for the Coastal Environment to address the wider issues associated with sustainable environmental management. The Council would like to see the development of this Centre and the creation/expansion of existing centres of good practice focussing on particular areas of environmental management to create a network of visitors centres. A network such as this will provide an important tourism and educational attraction and launch the Island as a centre of environmental excellence.

## ***ACTION PROPOSED***

ES4

To work with local businesses and communities to develop strategies for the local management of litter which should include:

- ★ a litter bin survey;
- ★ litter audits at schools;
- ★ local campaigns targeting specific "hotspots".

## ***COUNCIL RESPONSE***

This has the potential of being worked up through partnership activities with local businesses and the community whereby a local school can be identified which could become the focus of a 'pilot' initiative.

## ***ACTION PROPOSED***

ES5

Lobby central government to introduce more stringent controls and penalties on manufacturers for packaging generated.

## ***COUNCIL RESPONSE***

The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations made in 1998 come into effect over a 3 year period. The regulations enforced by Trading Standards Officers impose limits on the heavy metal content of packaging and require that packaging be minimal subject to safety, hygiene and acceptance for the packed product and the consumer. Packaging should be designed to be recoverable through recycling, incineration with energy recovery, composting or biodegradation or be reusable.

(See also Sustainable Resource Management (SRM4 in respect of "lobbying".)



# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## ***The IW Unitary Development Plan***

The Plan, which guides new development on the Island over the next decade, is based on the fundamental principles of sustainability. It focuses new housing, shops, employment and community facilities on the main Island towns thereby reducing travel demands and ensuring that peoples's needs can be met in the most resource efficient way. In addition, by promoting the redevelopment of previously used land, such policies can become a major factor in minimising the impact of new development on the environment

## ***Coastal Protection***

The Council's approach to sustainable coast management is exemplified by the management of Castle Cove Ventnor. Here the dilapidated coastal defences were adjacent to an ecologically rich coastal slope. An area of species rich topsoil was identified and set aside whilst the coastal defences were renewed, then repositioned after the construction works were completed. Subsequent ecological studies have shown similar types and numbers of species to that before construction commenced.

## ***Wildlife on the Isle of Wight - an audit and assessment of its biodiversity***

This work was published in July 2000, and has received wide acclaim. It describes the extraordinarily rich biodiversity still to be found on our Island and the many threats to its long term future. It is the first stage in the Biodiversity Action Plan process, overseen by a Steering Group comprising representatives of both statutory and non-statutory organisations with an interest in the future of the Island's countryside. The next, crucially important step is to involve stakeholders in round table discussions to try to reach a consensus as to what can be done to protect and enhance our wildlife resource and how this can best be achieved. This will be delivered through Habitat and Species Action Plans

# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## ***Woodland Management on the Isle Of Wight***

The Isle of Wight has been chosen as the South East England regional site for introducing the 'Jigsaw Fund' a new national initiative which gives 100% funding for landowners to create corridors connecting ancient woodlands in selected parts of Britain. Woods form a vital part of the Island's landscape and ecology and are a vital resource for us all. The Isle of Wight Council, Forestry Commission, Wight Wildlife, Island 2000 Trust, Wight Nature Fund, Wight Green Centre, Wight Squirrel Project, consultants, contractors, and landowners are all helping to ensure that the Island's woods are managed sympathetically, and that new woods can become established.

As well as managing several areas of woodland, the IW Council's Countryside Section also provide support to the Woodland Forum, set up for Island landowners and anybody interested in woods to exchange news and views. The first issue of the Isle of Wight Woodland Link, came out in September 2000. This will play a vital role in connecting woodland owners with the timber merchants, builders, craft workers, firewood merchants and anybody else who uses woodland produce.

The Council also joined this year with the Earl Mountbatten Hospice and the County Press to plant trees in Seaclose Park in Newport near the hospice as the beginning of a "Millennium Wood".

## ***Wight Green Centre***

The Wight Green Centre is the Isle of Wight's Environment Centre and is situated in Lower St James St in Newport. The Centre has a rolling programme of activities and displays focussing on recycling, gardening for wildlife, water and energy efficiency, conservation volunteering, green tourism and Eco-friendly funerals. The Centre runs a number of activities for children during the school holidays and visits schools and youth clubs. Information is held on a wide range of 'green issues' along with a library containing over 1,500 books and publications

The Centre's aim is to create a positive image of environmental awareness linked to the Local Agenda 21 initiative..

Wight Green Centre is a project of Island Volunteers and is funded by the National Lottery Charities Board, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and voluntary donations. The Centre can be contacted by phoning (01983) 53 21 21.



## 4.2 SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### 4.2.1 *The Island of the Future (Key Strategic Aims)*

An Island where:

- ★ there is full and equitably waged employment with money spent and retained on the Island;
- ★ the local economy is actively promoted and supported;
- ★ the potential to generate income from renewable resources is fully exploited;
- ★ there is a minimising of waste production;
- ★ there is reduced dependency upon external capital resources;
- ★ the quality of life is sustained by ensuring that economic benefit is not at the expense of social or environmental harmony.

Consistently throughout the consultation process and through the work of the Sustainable Economy Group, the lack of employment opportunities and a low-waged economy ranked highly on the 'dislike about the Island' scale. Equally however, Islanders were optimistic about the opportunity for developing the Island's economy by local sourcing and local sustainable income generation based on the Island's natural assets.



### 4.2.2 *The Island in 2000*

Visitors to the Isle of Wight are attracted by its natural beauty, the perceptions of a slower pace of life and the 'ambience' of the Island. For many the Isle of Wight is a wonderful place to work, live and play. Indeed quality of life is important for all those who live here. However, behind the first impressions there is a different reality. The Isle of Wight is part of the prosperous South-East region, but does not share the prosperity (this is a fact acknowledged within the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) Regional Economic Strategy).

	Isle of Wight	South East	UK
GDP Per Head	£8,088	£11,455	£10,711

In considering the economic situation on the Island the following facts portray a different picture to the outstanding natural beauty of the Island. The Island has:

- ★ Consistently the lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures in the region and among the lowest in the country at 76% of the national average (1996 latest available figures).
- ★ The second lowest average gross weekly earning in the South-East -19.2% below the national average.
- ★ The highest proportion of registered long-term unemployed in the South-East - with 34.4% of unemployed having been unemployed for more than 12 months.
- ★ A reliance on seasonal and part-time work in the tourism sector.
- ★ 9.1% of Island households in receipt of income support.

## **FARMING**

Agriculture uses more land than any other activity on the Island - its effect on the landscape and countryside is therefore profound. However in recent years farming has undergone radical changes mainly enforced by the catastrophic impact of the BSE crisis and the influence of European farming policies. Consequently, traditional patterns of land management are being lost and there is real concern for the long-term consequences both in terms of agriculturally based livelihoods and in respect of the Island's countryside.

The Island's branch of the National Farmers Union tell a worrying story of increasing farm size and decreasing farm numbers:

- ★ In 1986 there were 200 dairy farms on the Island. By the year 2000 these had dwindled to just 20.
- ★ A 500 acre farm can now be managed completely by just one person.
- ★ Increasingly our land is farmed part-time as farmers are forced to seek employment elsewhere.
- ★ In 1996 arable prices (wheat, barley etc.) fetched from £120-150 per tonne but by the year 2000 this price had dropped to £90. This is particularly devastating when you consider that the farmer needs to achieve £100 per tonne to make a profit.
- ★ Even before the current crisis in pig farming our farmers were less competitive than their European counterparts because of the UK's compliance with animal welfare directive.

## **TOURISM**

The Island tourist industry provides 20% of all jobs and 24% of GDP. Visitors are attracted by the beauty of the Island's past and countryside (2.7 million visitors were attracted last year). As a capital asset this natural heritage is priceless and can form the bedrock of the future economy of the Island. The growth in new tourism markets is becoming ever more dependent upon the Island presenting itself as a destination which offers a year-round and all-round experience of natural beauty in all its diversity; sea, countryside culture and heritage. Furthermore, visitors can experience living rural communities, which is becoming an increasing rarity in the highly commercialised South East Region.

## **ISLAND BUSINESSES**

There is a strong tradition on the Island of self-employment and enterprise. Over 6,000 are self-employed working as sole traders without any employees. Further, over 95% of Island business employ less than 25 people, with 85% employing 10 or less. Only 14 businesses employ more than 200 people. The Island has a deserved reputation for a stable and loyal workforce - the quality of life on the Island means that workforce turnover is low. However, 73% of Island businesses rely upon the internal market and this raises issues of competitiveness.

However, there are recognised areas of growth - particularly niche markets:

- ★ Aviation/marine engineering.
- ★ Electronics.
- ★ Composites/plastics.
- ★ Horticulture.

### *Other Relevant Factors*

- ★ There is 35% net outward migration of young people - due to lack of accommodation and jobs.
- ★ The Island has the highest proportion of older people (over 75 years old) of any Local and Health Authority in the South East.
- ★ Housing stock on the Island is generally old, with a lower than average percentage in either private rented sector (5%) or the registered social landlord sector (7%). This restricts access to affordable housing.

The Sustainable Economy Group was concerned with the duality of life on the Island. It is difficult to reconcile the wonderful feelings of freedom and peace amongst areas of very real poverty. For many living on the Island the quality of life issue must be difficult also - it may be a great place to bring up the kids but if you have no job how do you pay for it?

## **THE WAY FORWARD - SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SE1

Support a 'green tourism' conference that looks to set local targets that are agreed by all key players.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

A proposal to hold (i) a series of workshops and (ii) a conference on sustainable tourism is currently being considered through the Rural Development Programme (RDP). This will be co-ordinated through the Sustainable Tourism Forum and will seek to identify a co-ordinated cross-Island approach to developing the Island as a year-round environmental tourism destination.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SE2

Encourage the development of Local Food Networks which bring together local growers, cooking and healthy eating projects, vegetable box schemes and community garden groups.

Key Target: Appointment of Project Development Worker.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

Currently a partnership initiative based at the Rural Community Council is working towards setting up an island local food network which will seek ways of promoting local growing, cheap local fresh produce for those on low incomes, and healthy eating clubs. The food network will link with allotment holders and associations and will promote inter-generational skill-sharing around gardening and horticulture.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SE3

Develop a round the Island rolling programme of Farmers Markets sourced from local growers providing fresh lower-cost fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat produce.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council is continuing to develop the Island Farmers and Producers Markets in partnership with Island 2000. A Steering Group is responsible for the ongoing progress of the project and will be meeting as soon as the year 2000 trading period is completed to evaluate the current position and to consider future development

## **ACTION PROPOSED**

SE4

Consider mechanisms by which empty properties can be brought back into use (commercial and residential).

Key Target : 25 residential properties and 5 flats over shops brought back into use.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

There are approximately 400 empty properties on the Island. With the cooperation of owners the Council is active in bringing these back into use particularly for affordable rental. Without owner co-operation however, and where extensive renovation is required, the situation becomes more intractable. This year 25 residential properties and 5 flats over shops will be brought back into use.

## **ACTION PROPOSED**

SE5

Co-ordinate cross Island initiatives to establish a "green technology" research and development unit.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The IW Partnership is investigating the possibility of establishing a "green technology" project as part of its regeneration strategy for Sandown Bay. The initiative will be explored further in liaison with local parties and other appropriate agencies over the coming 6 months.

It is intended to develop the Bay Area Strategy during 2001.

## **ACTION PROPOSED**

SE6

Investigate the feasibility of locating a University College on the Island with particular reference to faculty provision in the area of alternative technologies, sustainable agriculture, coastal management and tourism.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The IW Partnership has a "Campus Island" project group with a brief to develop and improve Further and Higher Education courses (FE/HE) provision on the Island. The primary focus of the Group has been upon working with the IW College to enhance their activities. The IW Partnership is also establishing an Innovation Centre based on the St Cross Business Park which will be developed as a Centre of Excellence in composite manufacture and related technologies.

The IW College currently works closely with Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth Universities to offer Island based students quality FE/HE courses (Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma(HND) and degree level.

# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## ***Isle of Wight Tourism***

In 2000 the Isle of Wight's Walking Festival became the largest of its type in the UK, with walks suitable for a range of abilities and interests. The festival is a key part of the Island's sustainable tourism development strategy which focusses on promoting walking cycling and sailing in the context of the enjoyment and enhancement of the Island's environment.

Strategically, the event stimulates off-peak tourism and its "Wise" approach is not only healthy and environmentally friendly but also socially inclusive. This strengthens the Isle of Wight brand making it more attractive to the growing lifestyle and environmental conscious short-breaks market.

## ***Isle of Wight Farmers and Producers Market***

The Isle of Wight Farmers & Producers Market Association Is a conglomeration of 45 businesses who have come together to market local Isle of Wight made products in a traditional and yet practical way through a two weekly market. It benefits both the local economy and local people who get fresh produce brought to their market town. People can find out how the produce is made or grown and speak to the producers direct, many of the producers offering farm or business visits if customers are interested in the production processes. Of course, it also does less damage to the environment through less food miles travelled and helps maintain the cultural identity of the Island landscape through encouraging sustainable, traditional country stewardship of the Island.

The Isle of Wight Farmers & Producers Market is managed by Island 2000, a not for profit Trust and is partly funded through the European Konver scheme

## ***ARTECO***

This unique Arts based project is a professional training, artist development, commissioning and education initiative deriving from the natural environment. The aim of the project is to help the community and professional artists explore their relationship with the landscape using locally produced materials. An example of this is the beautifully crafted way markers along the southern coastal path utilising oak from Briddlesford Copse and other locally sourced and crafted materials.

# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## ***The Crossways Community Garden Project***

Initially funded through Single Regeneration Budget Five (SRBV), the Crossways Community Garden Project uses a site within the walls of Quarr Abbey, Fishbourne, Isle of Wight.

This has enabled a good working relationship to develop between the monastic community and the wider community. The project employs a Project Manager and a Community Gardener.

The Project seeks to offer gardening knowledge and expertise to young people from local high schools, and special schools. It offers work placements to young adults with learning difficulties and also to single parents who then use the produce for their own family. The project also welcomes GP referrals and works closely with the Earl Mountbatten Hospice to offer a gardening placement to the bereaved.

A range of vegetables have been grown in this first season, Webbs lettuce, spring onions, cabbage, spinach, beetroot and turnip. The site also has a potting shed and small greenhouse, courtesy of the Abbey. The project is able to offer transport to volunteers wishing to become involved, and a vegetable box is offered to all volunteers. The local Women's Refuge is also donated a vegetable box weekly, and any surplus produce has been sold at low cost and proceeds have been donated to the hospice.

The Project supports the 4 open days each year that the hospice organises at Barton Manor.

If you would like to visit the site, or become involved please contact Fran Shelley, Project Manager on 811446 or 07970 009816

## ***Isle of Wight Origin Approved Scheme***

The Isle of Wight Origin Approved Scheme is an association of 60+ Island businesses established in 1994 to support the marketing of products genuinely produced on the Isle of Wight. The Scheme promotes high standards and mutual support. Members are accredited by the Council's Trading Standards Service and authorised to use a unique logo designed to help consumers identify those products that really do come from the Isle of Wight.



## 4.3 **SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

### *The Island of the Future (Key Strategic Aims)*

An Island where there is:

- ★ provision of comprehensive transport services for the Island which are accessible and affordable and which optimise the contribution of bus, train and taxi services to an overall integrated system;
- ★ fair and equitable fare structures for off-Island travel;
- ★ safe and welcoming cycle and pedestrian routes in and between the Island towns and villages;
- ★ reduced congestion, noise and air pollution on Island roads.

#### 4.3.1 *The Island in 2000*

During 1999/2000 6.8 million passenger journeys were made on local bus services on the Isle of Wight.

During 1999/2000 750,000 passenger journeys were undertaken by means of local authority subsidised or Rural Bus Grant funded services.

Only 13 miles of operating rail links exist.

Island taxis operate the highest level of tariffs in the UK.

The Solent crossing, mile for mile, is the most expensive water crossing in the world.

It is estimated that private car journeys on the Island Islanders (excluding tourists) account for approximately 553,599,200 kilometres each year (this is equivalent to 13,800 times around the equator!!!)



Transport impacts on the way we all live. The increased speed and accessibility brought about by faster and bigger vehicles have revolutionised our every day lives. Transport now travels the world delivering goods and people around the globe and society has now become used to the benefits that improved access can bring. Whilst the car has undeniably brought with it significant benefit to those who own one, it has also created local problems such as congestion, accidents and pollution which is contributing to the local and global problems. Those who do not have access to the car have suffered as modern living and changes in the way land has been developed, have left them reliant on other forms of travel and in some cases possibly excluded from a full range of employment, goods and services. Increased traffic and vehicle speeds have made our streets less inviting and more threatening for pedestrians, those with mobility problems and cyclists.

## THE ISLAND PERSPECTIVE

In the Island some 15,000 households have no access to a car at all whereas 25,000 have access to one car, 9,000 to two and 2,000 to three plus. Clearly, to reduce the need for car travel and to improve mobility and communication for those members of the community who do not have access to a car reliable, affordable and well-networked public transport systems are an urgent priority for the Island. Thus carbon emissions would be reducing at the same time as promoting social cohesion and community well-being.

There are some clear distinctions between the Isle of Wight and that of many other local authorities and being an Island brings particular difficulties for both internal and external transportation. These problems could be broadly described as follows:

- ★ Cross Solent Links - frequency and cost.
- ★ Rural transport issues - cost, availability.
- ★ High unemployment - seasonal variation.
- ★ Increased cross-Solent traffic - drop in bulk freight, increased roll on, roll off traffic.
- ★ Tourism development - impact of cars in summer months.
- ★ Social exclusion.

## CROSS SOLENT LINKS

The Island is reliant upon mainland connections and much rests on the cost and availability of these important links.

Although good quality, convenient and frequent links are provided by vehicle and pedestrian ferry crossings of the Solent, there are cost penalties associated with this type of travel. Although discount tickets are available on some journeys, costs may be higher for the occasional traveller with the result that mainland journeys may be less frequent or limited. Problems can be experienced by those wishing to explore work, health or educational opportunities on the mainland and in, maintaining family contact.

## THE ISLAND SITUATION

The Isle of Wight is a Unitary Authority; it is predominantly a rural area with the principal town of Newport at its centre and a number of smaller peripheral coastal towns

*Population main Island towns (1991 Census figures)*

★ Newport	25,033
★ Ryde	26,152
★ Cowes	13,028
★ East Cowes	6,891
★ Sandown	5,299
★ Shanklin	8,055
★ Lake	4,405
★ Ventnor	5,978
★ Freshwater	5,267



With a largely dispersed population, transport is inevitably an important issue on the Island. Whilst nearly 30% of households do not own a car and many more people within car-owning households do not have access to that car during the working day, the majority of households rely on the car as the main method of transport.

The Council is aware that, whilst this increase in car ownership has allowed a greater freedom of movement, it has also facilitated a change in land use patterns, created pollution, damage to the environment, increased energy consumption, congestion, delays and accidents. Despite these environmental concerns, the car is a well established part of modern living and traffic volumes are expected to rise on the Island.

For much of the year the Island enjoys a highway network which is not affected greatly by congestion apart from a number of key "hot spots" around Newport. During the summer season this changes significantly with the influx of tourist traffic. Clearly, the economy of Isle of Wight is heavily reliant upon the level of tourist activity achieved during the year. Part of this activity is linked to the ability of being able to travel around the Island safely and conveniently. Therefore whilst wishing to provide a transport system which is both sustainable and integrated, it needs to be recognised that tourism relies to an extent on the ability of people to use their private cars.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

There is no easy solution to traffic reduction, the rural nature of the Island means that there will always be a reliance on the car for certain types of journey and it is recognised that what may be achievable within an urban environment in terms of sustainable transport options may not always be applicable to the rural setting. Being unable to afford transport can be a limiting factor in modern day life. Accessing employment, job training and education can be limited, as is the choice and ease of access with regards to shopping, health care and other essential services.

The expansion of the road network has allowed people to travel greater distances faster than before, but it has also led to some rural jobs and services closing down, being rationalised or locating to out of town locations. This has added to the reduction in local services, exacerbated rural problems and the decline in vitality and viability of some towns and local centres.

The provision of public transport is a key factor in reducing car dependency and the Council is working with public transport operators on the Island to ensure that a good level of service is provided for the public.

## ***THE WAY FORWARD - SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT***

### ***ACTION PROPOSED***

ST1

Develop negotiations with ferry operators to identify cheaper fares options for Island residents and initiate a comprehensive study of comparable crossings elsewhere in the UK and Europe.

### ***COUNCIL RESPONSE***

The Isle of Wight Partnership have a "severance by sea" project group chaired by the Chief Executive and charged with developing a strategy to respond to the actual and perceived economic and social difficulties relating to our Island status. Together with the Health Authority, the Partnership aim to

commission a consultant's study investigating the possibility of establishing a subsidised fares scheme targeted at individuals travelling for employment, education/training and healthcare purposes.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST2

Negotiate a concessionary fare system for the use of Islanders referred to mainland based health care services.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

See above.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST3

Promote the introduction of new taxi vehicles which are accessible by all and which minimise pollution and exhaust emissions.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council is actively promoting the use of new taxi vehicles which are accessible by all and which minimise polluting exhaust emissions. This initiative is focusing upon identifying savings on the purchase of new vehicles. 'Accessibility by all' will also be considered when deregulation is reviewed by the Fire and Public Safety Committee

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST4

Investigate the deregulation of Island taxi services with a view to the promotion of a more flexible and responsive small vehicle public transport option, particularly in rural areas.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

These issues will be investigated by the Fire and Public Safety Select Committee. A programme of investigation has been discussed and agreed with the Chairman of the Select Committee.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST5

Specifically require the introduction of low floor buses through Council contractual mechanism.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council anticipates that access improvements to buses will naturally occur as the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Public Service Vehicles Regulations 1999 take effect from 1 January 2000. From that date all new vehicles have to be accessible to wheelchair users and will therefore have boarding lifts or ramps that will facilitate access for all.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST6

Investigate a more creative use of the Council derived travel subsidy to expand opportunities for excluded groups (low income, 14-18 years) to enable more equal access to Island wide bus networks.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

A full review of the concessionary fares scheme is already in progress.

## **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST7

To work with the shadow Strategic Rail Authority to ensure that current rail links flourish into the future and are used as a genesis for the development of further connections in the east and south wight.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

Currently a brief for a consultants' study to examine potential for rail development beyond current franchise is being put together with the shadow Strategic Rail Authority (sSRA).

## **ACTION PROPOSED**

ST8

To ensure that the Local Transport Plan, the Unitary Development Plan and the Biodiversity Action Plan are committed to and followed through.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Unitary Development Plan is a statutory document which the Council hopes to adopt in early 2001. As an adopted Plan the provisions of the document will need to be followed in respect of planning applications unless material considerations provide a valid reason for varying the Plan's policies and proposals. Applicants and objectors have opportunities to challenge decisions which are made outside the provisions of the development plan.

The Local Transport Plan indicates the Council's intentions in respect of future transport developments and is the basis for the receipt of Government funding. If the Council did not stick to the provisions of the Plan Government funding could be withdrawn.

The Biodiversity Action Plan, although a non-statutory document, will set the basis for priorities in biodiversity protection and enhancement on the Island. It is the Council's intention to commit to the key actions proposed by the Biodiversity Action Plan.



# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## **Cycling**

The Isle of Wight Council has signed up to the national cycling strategy and sought to increase cycle use by including in its transport strategies (the Local Transport Plan) projects to encourage cycle use. The capital budget for cycling schemes in the current year is £120,000 and priorities are set by consultation through the Cycle Forum.

The Council is looking to increase cycle use by the creation of a network of cycle routes by reusing disused railway lines. Additions to these routes are being made by the creation of new sections which can link towns and settlements and in doing so enhance their use by both commuters and tourists alike. There is considerable scope to improve cycling within the urban environment and it is hoped that the programme of improvements including new cycle lanes and routes, advanced stop lines and cycle parking will improve access, convenience and safety.

## **Cross Solent Links**

The Council recognises the importance of maintaining good cross Solent links and looks to encourage transport methods which can reduce the impact on the Island's roads.

The Island's coastal location means that it is well placed to receive bulk freight by sea. The recent development of a riverside factory in Newport which constructs wind turbine blades, has the benefit that it can make the best use of existing Island skills and at the same time reduce the need to transport the finished products by road.

## **Rights of Way**

Walking is actively pursued for leisure purposes on the Island which has an excellent network of public rights of way. The 500-mile rights of way network is extremely well used throughout the year and is valued by both local and visitors in terms of both its tourism and sustainable transport use.

In 1998 the Isle of Wight Council became the first local authority to reach the government's national target for rights of way - that all public footpaths and bridleways should be legally recorded, properly maintained and well publicised. We remain the only authority in England and Wales to have reached this standard.

The Council is now preparing a new Strategy to keep the network in peak condition and develop it further for the benefit of local people, the tourist economy and wildlife. This will guide the rights of way service over the period 2001 - 2006.

## **Green Travel Plans**

Traffic created by travel to work impacts heavily on Island road network. The Isle of Wight Council is looking to tackle peak time traffic problems by reducing single occupancy car journeys and increasing the numbers of people travelling to work by sustainable means. The council is seeking to introduce Green Travel Plans in partnership with the Island's larger employers and a number of schemes are currently being developed locally. The Council is looking to lead by example with its own staff which number in the region of 5000 people. St Mary's Hospital is also looking to develop its own plan. Both schemes are examining measures to increase travel choice and investigation is currently underway into the possible introduction of initiatives such as car sharing, discounted travel by public transport, cycle allowances and loans for bicycle purchase and other sustainable initiatives.

## 4.4 SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



### 4.4.1 *The Island of the Future* (Key Strategic Aims)

An Island where:

- ★ we fully value and build upon our human resources;
- ★ we improve and enhance our natural and built environment;
- ★ our agriculture is based upon healthy and environmentally sensitive methods of production, which build upon local and Island-specific markets and create local jobs;
- ★ we reduce our waste and see it as a resource;
- ★ we are efficient in our use of energy and where possible use our renewable resources to generate electricity.

### 4.4.2 *The Island in 2000*

The Isle of Wight covers approximately 38,098 hectares as follows:

★ Built Land	10,072
★ Arable Land	8,776
★ Pasture land	18,202
★ Forest Land	1,048

Total energy consumption on the Island is 665.5 GWh per year.

Domestic waste generated is 63,413.7 cubic metres.

Commercial waste generated is 83,699.8 cubic metres.

Islanders consume approximately 30 million litres of water a day (up to 10 million litres coming from the mainland).

To some extent, living on an Island with defined boundaries and a very clear beginning and end to our resources helps to concentrate the mind. Issues of sustainability and self-sufficiency are more clearly understood when we have a daily consciousness of our dependence on the transport of goods and services on and off the Island.

If we had to depend upon our own resources could we? This is the question that was the real focus of debate in the Sustainable Resource Management Group. Of course as things stand we very obviously could not.

Nevertheless, we could make very real progress towards self-sufficiency if we became more conscious of the impact we are having on the environment and made real efforts to think of ways in which we as individuals and as an Island community could help save our resources.

### **Waste**

Already through Island Waste Services we are recycling domestic waste way above the national target and by the year 2001 the Island is committed to achieving a 50% domestic waste recycling target. However, although recycling makes a major contribution we need to be seriously addressing the amount of waste we are producing and to be re-using or passing on 'waste' items wherever possible. Recycling will be of limited help if our waste production keeps climbing inexorably year on year. We have only one landfill site remaining on the Island and once that void is filled we shall literally no longer be able to 'bury' the problem. Reducing, re-using and recycling waste is the only real long-term solution.

## ***Energy***

Already large volumes of waste are utilised to generate electricity at the Newport waste to energy plant. However, all over the Island we have agricultural and woodland derived waste, which could be considered as a fuel source. There is also the potential for the production of energy crops which could offer real opportunities for agricultural diversification if an appropriate generating facility were to be sited on the Island.

As an island in the south of England we also have scope to harness our record-breaking sunshine hours to heat domestic water and reduce the reliance on imported electricity. Similarly our location in the sea means that we are exposed to frequent and often strong winds which could be driving wind-turbines and producing home-grown energy.

Energy conservation programmes in 'energy leaky' housing would significantly reduce the demand on resources at the same time as cutting back on fuel bills which is particularly important for those on low incomes.

The Isle of Wight Council has developed an Energy Policy, which by means of a raft of measures aims to achieve a reduction of energy consumption by the Council of 15% over the next 5 years.

## ***Food***

The local Farmers Markets are just one example of how we can improve our self-sufficiency at the same time as keeping Island generated income within the Island economy. Buying local food and products helps to stimulate the local economy and reduces reliance on the supermarket giants (who import most of their goods).

The Island is in a unique position to create a niche market in healthy Island authenticated foods and goods. Food scares and the industrialisation of food production has led to a more informed population seeking food which they can trust to be healthy and locally sourced. Throughout the country the Island is renowned for its natural beauty and together with this awareness there will normally be an assumption of its being unspoiled and health-giving. Therefore the development of organic non-GMO food etc. could well be a very real market opportunity, which will have the spin-off of a sustainable future for our countryside communities (both animal and human).

The excellent Isle of Wight Origin Approved Scheme is an ideal foundation on which to build. This scheme supports local manufacturers, improving sales volumes to consumers through an Isle of Wight brand providing associated spin-off for the Isle of Wight Farmers and Producers Markets.

## ***People***

Sustainable development can only be achieved in happy healthy, and fulfilled societies. Therefore the recognition of the value of each individual and their full integration into thriving communities is vital to our common future.

The relatively high levels of unemployment on the Island and the inflexibility of the (nationally dictated) job market and benefits system can mean that people of all ages are denied opportunities to share and develop their skills. There is a large pool of older people who might well wish to make a continuing contribution but who are denied access to the job market by dint of their age. Inter-generational skills exchange and mentoring can help to redress this imbalance together with creative use of jobshare and flexitime opportunities.

It should never be forgotten that much of Island life is sustained by the day to day concern and commitment of people who freely give of their time and energy to support their communities and the natural environment.

**PRIORITY** - *THE WAY FORWARD SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT*

**ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM1

To increase the uptake of grants promoting energy conservation by promotional campaigns and the active targeting of eligible groups.

**COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council is actively promoting current available grants. It is intending to link with Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) funding to release further funds to extend the scheme.

**ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM2

To develop an Island wide promotional campaign aimed at encouraging individuals, households and workplaces to be more energy efficient.

**COUNCIL RESPONSE**

This will be linked to current initiatives centring around the EC funded research into renewables (the ALTENER project) and the promotional activities arising out of the findings of the Ecological Footprint research.

**ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM3

To research the optimal use of the Island's natural and waste resources in the local generation of electricity and identify specific initiatives which will develop the use of this generating capacity.

**COUNCIL RESPONSE**

This will be the aim of the ALTENER project, which will commence in January 2001.

**ACTION PROPOSED**

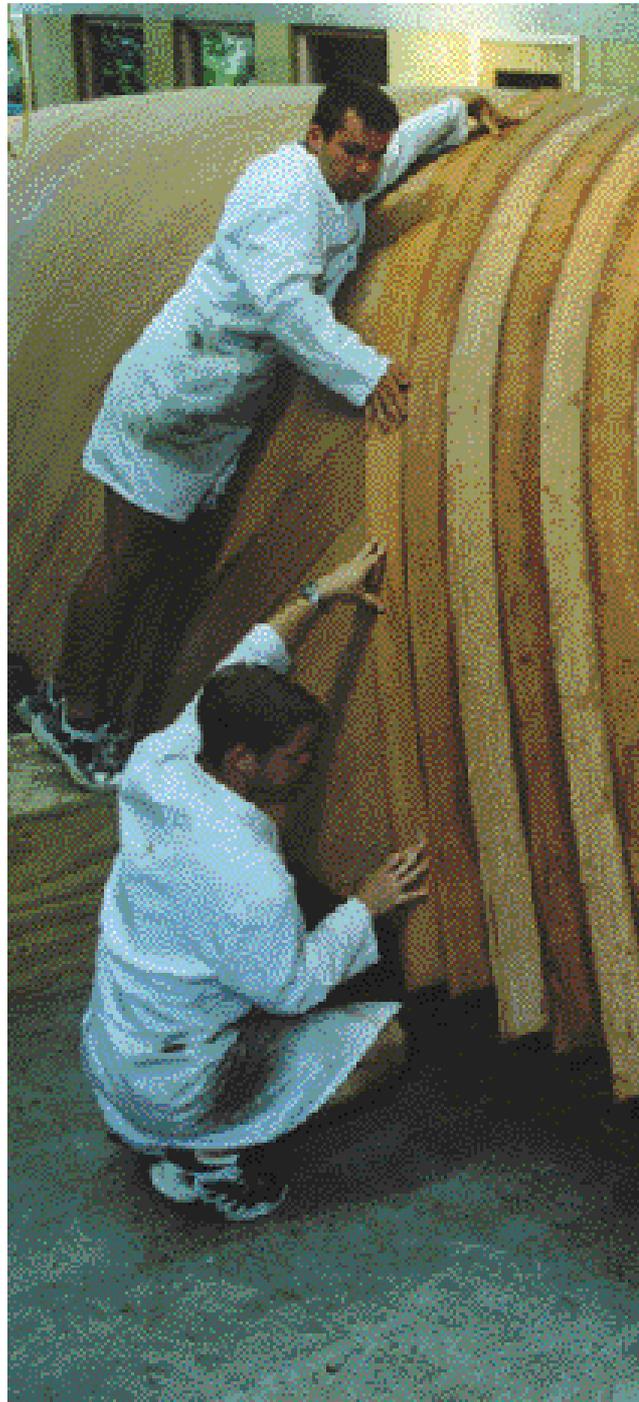
SRM4

To lobby Central Government to:

- (i) Remove unnecessary restrictions and implement incentives which will actively promote the incorporation of sustainable energy features and methods.
- (ii) Introduce legislative requirements sympathetic to sustainable buildings.
- (iii) Change the rating band so that energy efficiency performance reduces the amount levied.

**COUNCIL RESPONSE**

(i)/(ii) - Discussion papers will be prepared by the appropriate



officers for consideration by the Select committees and the Executive of the Isle of Wight Council. Decisions can then be made about the key governmental interventions required and approaches made to specific government departments and Ministers.

(iii) - Rating bands are set by the District Valuer who assesses according to value only. There is no discretionary power which will enable the Council to lower the bands on the basis of energy efficiency.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM5

To develop and implement sustainable build policies which specify sustainable construction practices, the integration of energy efficiency features and systems and the routine incorporation of grey-water systems into all new builds.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

This is a key element of the Sustainable Build Group which has now been established. (See Proposed Action under Internal Priorities - Environmental Management).

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM6

To raise public awareness and to promote behavioural change within the Island communities in respect of the generation and management of waste prioritising reduction, re-use and the recycling of waste.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Environment Agency and the Isle of Wight Council is setting up an Island Waste Minimisation Group involving the community and local businesses to become more actively involved in waste minimisation

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM7

To undertake a waste audit to establish the nature and origin of waste produced.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

This forms part of Island Waste's responsibilities

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM8

To promote a home-composting initiative based on the highly successful water butt promotion.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

Subsidised home composters are available from the Council's Contractor, Island Waste Services.

### **ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM9

To reassess policies and general employment conditions which exclude sections of the community, particularly those over the age of 65 years.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Isle of Wight Council has completed the writing of its Equalities Policy in draft form and the draft will be going out to consultation both within the Council and with outside bodies during Autumn/Winter 2000/01. Following this consultation process, the Equalities Policy document will be amended to take account of the feedback received from Island people and then put forward for

adoption by the Council. The consultation process will also enable an Equalities Action Plan to be drawn up so that the Policy can be put into practice throughout the Council. It is envisaged that implementation will commence during the financial year 2001/02 with monitoring of progress thereafter.

These issues will also be addressed by the cross cutting Best Value Review 'Enhancing Life Opportunities' scheduled to commence in April 2001.

## **ACTION PROPOSED**

SRM10

To ensure that brownfield sites are properly identified and developed and to protect as far as possible greenfield sites from development.

## **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Draft Unitary Development Plan prioritises the development of brownfield sites over greenfield sites but recognises the need to provide some greenfield sites for necessary development opportunity on the Island. The Council's approach has been endorsed by an Inspector who held an Inquiry into the Plan and who considered that the housing provisions of the Plan were sustainable. While the Plan has identified some greenfield sites for development these are all on the edge of existing urban areas and new housing allocations represent less than 15% of the Island's total housing needs. The Council does intend to promote the development of in-town and brownfield sites as far as it is practical and has undertaken an Urban Capacity Study to identify the capacity of further building within existing towns. It is intended to make every effort to ensure that available brownfield sites are developed before greenfield sites while ensuring sufficient development opportunities.

New legislation requires Councils to investigate contaminated land and produce a strategy on how they propose to investigate it by July 2001. The Council are investigating ways of resourcing this new duty.

An agreed protocol exists to ensure that the Countryside Section are consulted before any works which may affect hedgerows or roadside verges are implemented.



# SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

## **Playworks**

Playworks is a project of the Isle of Wight Rural Community Council. Playworks collects safe business waste and prolongs its useful life by offering it as arts and crafts materials to groups supporting children and special needs groups. In this way children are provided with stimulating resources, landfill is reduced environmental awareness is being raised, the cost of business disposal charges is being cut and groups that often operate with limited funds are being supported.

## **Integrated Waste Management - Island Waste Services**

By October 2000 integrated waste management operations on the Island were diverting 45.09% of domestic waste from landfill. This percentage is achieved through three main operations and their individual contribution can be broken down as follows:

Composting	18.3%
Waste to Energy	21.5%
Recycling	5.29%

It is anticipated that this figure will rise to well over 50% in 2001 through increased public participation in recycling and modifications to the waste to energy processes.

## **Sustainable Buildings**

The Unitary Development Plan of the Council seeks to ensure that all new buildings are sustainable through policy which requires that all new development to make efficient use of, or conserve, energy resources by careful choice of location, layout, orientation design and choice of materials. By applying the principles of good design the aim is to reflect local character and utilise local materials in new buildings allowing the special built character of the Island to be retained and enhanced.

## **Renewable Energy on the Isle of Wight**

The Isle of Wight has been successful in securing European funding (ALTENER) for a project aimed at assessing the potential for the development of renewable energy sources on the Island. The project is due to commence early in 2001 and will assess how much renewable resources such as wind, solar, biomass, wave and tidal systems can move the Island towards becoming more self-sufficient in 'home grown' energy production. A key element of the project will be the involvement of local communities in developing an action plan specifically tailored to the energy needs and potential of the Island.

## **Older People's Forum**

The need to create a way for older people on the Isle of Wight to express their views has been recognised for some time.

Since December 1999 officers of the Council and Health Authority have been working to support the development of an independent Forum to be run by older people for older people. Pump priming funding has been made available and the Older Voices Forum has now been established. It will work independently to raise issues of concern for older people working in partnership with local statutory and private sector agencies as they feel is appropriate.

## **Water Butts**

The Isle of Wight and Southern Water "Do your Bit with a Butt" initiative won national acclaim when the Environment Agency and Water UK identified it as an example of best practice in water efficiency.

The "Do your Bit with a Butt" campaign involved the subsidised sale of 200 litre water butts at seven sites across the Island. Every effort was made to promote a sense of working together to save water at the same time as saving money. Islanders responded with huge enthusiasm and during 2 separate days in summer 1999 more than 9,000 butts were sold, giving a potential saving of 3,600 cubic metres of water.



## SECTION FIVE



### ***Next Steps: From Words to Action to Long Term Sustainability***

This Agenda 21 Strategy is the first step on the way towards the sustainable Island of the future. It will only be successful if it measures our progress along the path and constantly adapts and changes as we go.

The involvement of the Island's communities is vital to its long-term success and to the future health and well-being of the Island.

All of those participating in the Island Agenda 21 process agreed that to ensure successful implementation of the Agenda 21 Strategy we must be very clear about what we want to achieve, how we are going to achieve it, and how we prove that we have achieved it.

#### ***What do we want to achieve?***

Maximum economic, social, health and environmental benefit for the people of the Isle of Wight by developing systems, which will ensure:

- ★ The highest standard of equitable, efficient and sensitive management of our natural and built resources.
- ★ The widest possible access at all levels to education, training and employment opportunities.
- ★ The generation of locally based environmentally sustainable business opportunities.
- ★ Across the board access to health, other services and information networks.

And which will retain and develop the involvement of the Island's communities.

#### ***How will we do it?***

By an Agenda 21 Strategy Group comprised of senior members of the Island's public voluntary statutory and business communities who are referenced back to an Island Voices Agenda 21 Forum which connects to the wider Island community.

#### ***How will we measure it?***

Each participating partner organisation and group will be responsible for ensuring that the aims and targets identified and agreed in the Island Agenda 21 Strategy and Action Plan are adopted and translated into action 'back at the ranch'.

The Agenda 21 Strategy Group will report back to the Island Voices Agenda 21 Forum and undertake periodic programmes of round the Island, Island Voices consultations.

The Agenda 21 Co-ordinating Group will continue to have a major role in facilitating the Agenda 21 process and will keep a watching brief for:

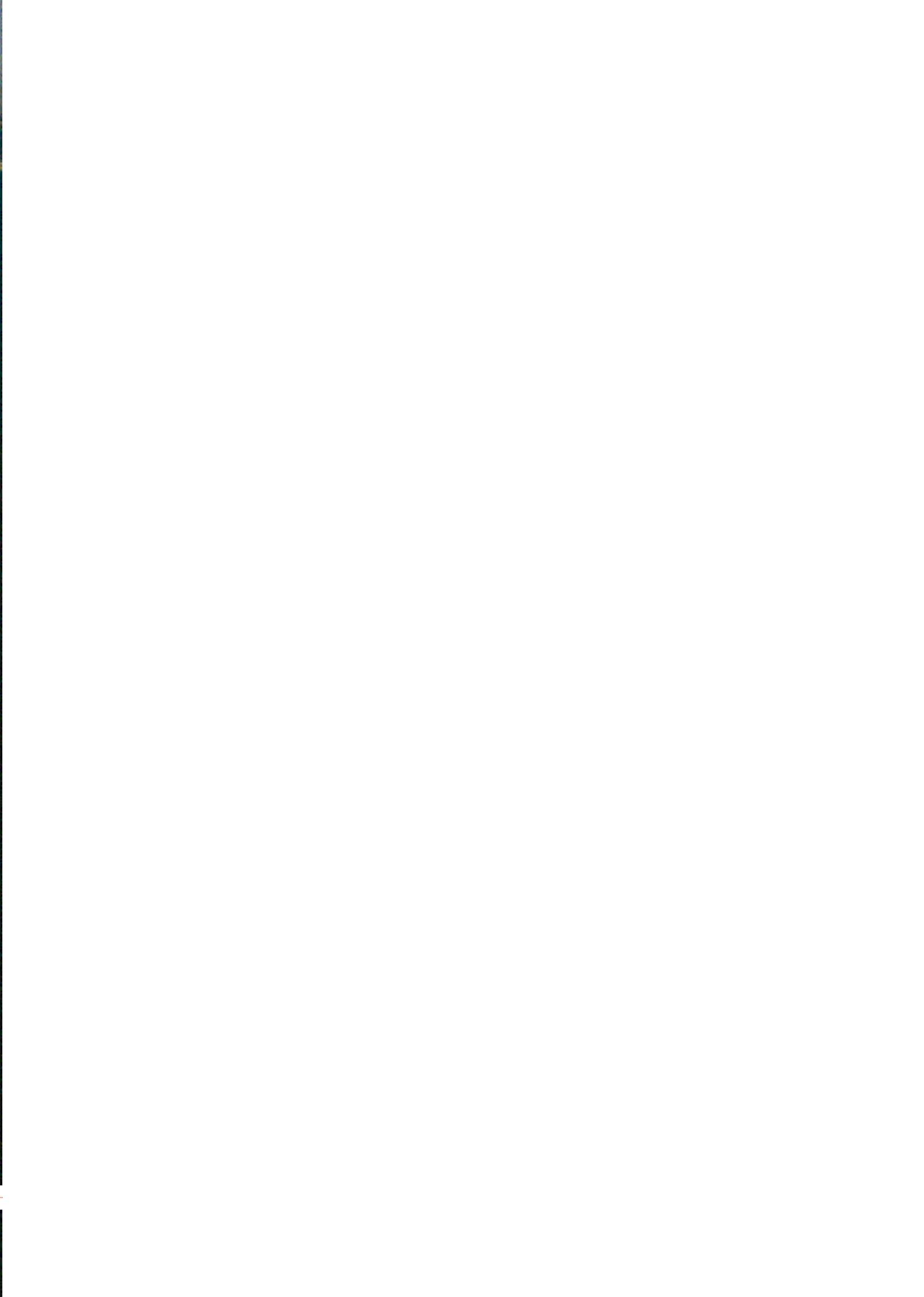
- ★ monitoring the implementation of the Year 1 Action Plan;
- ★ co-ordinating input to the Year 2 & 3 Action Plans;
- ★ co-ordinating consultation with the community and developing the Island Voices concept.

Those members of the community who have participated in the Special Interest Groups should be invited to remain as key members of these named groups which will become sub-groups of the Island Voices Agenda 21 Forum.

The public launch of the Agenda 21 Strategy and report back on Island Voices will constitute the beginning of the Island Agenda 21 Forum. This will also be an opportunity for inviting more participants to join the Special Interest Groups.

The Forum will then reconvene on a regular basis (6-12 monthly) either in the form of an Island Voices Roadshow or as a main central event with supporting mini-events in towns and villages.







THE DIAMONDS OF THE SOLENT ..... A PRECIOUS AND BEAUTIFUL PLACE

LOW  
cheapet fares

GLASS BOTTLES AND KITCHEN WASTE  
TEXTILES AND FABRICS  
PAPERS AND MAGAZINES  
THE RECYCLE  
STEEL CANS

AN ISLAND BLESSING ..... LIVING LOVE AND  
CAUSE YOUR LIFE-GIVING LOVE AND  
PEACE TO BE KNOWN IN THE BLESSING  
YOUR SAYING PRESENCE ON THIS OUR ISLAND H

BETTER PROTECTION  
FOR ISLAND WILDLIFE

MORE CYCLE WAYS  
the Bicycle Island

ROUND THE ISLAND

# MAP PAVECTIS

WILD POWER ON  
MOTISTONE COMMON  
AND VENTNOR DOWNS

THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS - WE MUST WORK TOGETHER A HAPPY BAND  
DON'T LET YOUR IDEAS REMAIN UN...  
TELL US WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE - ON THIS LOVELY ISLAND FOR YOU  
"THE BIG CA'S!"

WEA FAIR TAKE  
AND CRAFTS .....  
DEVELOPMENT FROM WITHIN!  
IT'S OUT THERE  
WE MUST RETAIN OUR ISLANDS  
UNIQUE IDENTITY!

INSPIRED BY  
ISLAND VOICES  
ALL THE BEAUTY IS

