

# Section 8: Economy



- 8.1** Job creation and economic growth are fundamental to a strong Isle of Wight as it grows as an island and recovers from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The right planning policies can contribute to job creation and sustainable economic growth whilst supporting the objectives in the regeneration strategy. **Supporting and growing our economy** sets out the overall direction, and this is supported by a series of allocations to give certainty and support to the market that land is available to support job creation. The wider regeneration conversation is not just about job creation, it is also about flexibility, resilience and ensuring the Isle of Wight has the right skills to support development growth and the right digital infrastructure, and **upskilling the Island** and **Future-proofing digital infrastructure** embeds the provision of these elements into the planning process.
- 8.2** There are a range of other elements that make up a strong and resilient economy, an issue that has taken on more importance since the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is policy recognition and support for these. **Supporting the rural economy** and **maintaining employment sites with water access** provide planning approaches for these specialised areas of our economy. **Supporting and improving our town centres** addresses the retail element of our economy and the function it plays, along with **supporting the evening economy**. The other key component is tourism, and there is a suite of policies dedicated to supporting a high quality tourism offer; **supporting high quality tourism, The Bay tourism opportunity area** and **'Ryde tourism opportunity zones**.

## Supporting and growing our economy

### E1

#### Supporting and growing our economy

The council wholeheartedly supports an environment where businesses have the confidence to invest. It will therefore support the sustainable growth of the Island's economy and proposals that deliver jobs via a range of sectors while increasing local wages, skills and job opportunities.

To contribute to achieving this, the council allocates the following sites (as shown on the policies map):

- 1 2.8 hectares at Pan Lane, Newport for class E offices and B2 uses.
- 2 14.7 hectares at Nicholson Road, Ryde for Class E Offices, B2, B8 and community uses.
- 3 1.9 hectares at Somerton Farm, Cowes for Class E Offices, B2 and B8 uses.
- 4 6.2 hectares at Kingston Marine Park, East Cowes for Class E Offices, B2 and B8 uses.
- 5 0.7 hectares at Lowtherville, Ventnor for Class E Offices and B8 uses.
- 6 2.9 hectares at Sandown Airport, Sandown for Class E Offices, B2 and B8 uses.

The council will also support the principle of intensification and/or expansion of existing employment uses in the following employment opportunity areas (as shown on the policies map), including improving the range and flexibility of commercial uses that may be located within them:

- 1 Golden Hill Industrial Estate, Freshwater.
- 2 Land at Afton Road, Freshwater.
- 3 Cowes Industrial Estates, Cowes.
- 4 College Close Industrial Estate, Sandown

- 8.3** The aim of the Island Planning Strategy (IPS) is to promote a sustainable, diverse economic base that delivers skilled jobs to benefit the population. The IPS also aims to provide the certainty to attract investment and new business while promoting the upskilling of the Island's population and a reduction in unemployment. The council will work with partners including the Solent Local Economic Partnership (SLEP) to ensure that the right uses, jobs, infrastructure and investment can take place in the right locations in order to support the economy. Ensuring appropriate levels of flexibility are available for businesses to be agile in changing markets and respond to trends underpins much of this section of the plan. As the economy recovers from the financial impacts of COVID-19, businesses across the commercial spectrum must be fully supported to ensure jobs are maintained and wherever possible, increased.

- 8.4** To do so, the council proposes to allocate over 29 hectares of land for employment uses, which will support a range of private and public sector employment uses, generate jobs and wellbeing for the population. The council will support the provision of the infrastructure required to deliver development, informed through the findings of the infrastructure delivery plan.
- 8.5** As well as formal allocations, there are also areas that the council considers have the potential to intensify existing uses and/ or bring forward more employment creating opportunities. The council will work with landowners to understand the opportunities these sites may provide and how they will be realised. The council will also support the principle of proposals that seek to provide additional flexibility to the range of commercial uses that could be located within an existing or newly expanded employment area.
- 8.6** The council will seek to locate employment development within or adjacent to the defined settlement boundaries and will where possible prioritise the re-use of brownfield land. The council will also support sustainable growth of existing employment sites, including rural sites, the re-use of redundant rural buildings and sites and well-designed suitably justified new rural employment development subject to the requirements of the **supporting the rural economy** policy.
- 8.7** Following the evidence contained within the ELS, the council will allocate strategic employment land within the Island Planning Strategy in order to deliver a range of sites that can meet the needs of the local economy while supporting the regeneration of the Island's key towns.

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

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

## Employment allocations

### EA1

#### Employment allocation land to the east of Pan Lane

The east of Pan Lane site is allocated to deliver a range of Class E offices and B2 uses suitable for a mixed-use scheme. The site is brownfield and extends to an area of approximately three hectares. Development proposals should:

- a** provide the internal infrastructure of the site from the Pan Meadows spine road;
- b** integrate the new employment provision with the existing, to ensure a coherent provision of employment uses;
- c** minimise impact on existing properties by ensuring the most compatible uses are suitably located and to provide appropriate landscape buffering between new development and existing residential properties;
- d** retain the southern end of the site to be used to provide the bridleway link (being delivered through the wider Pan Meadows development) and a suitable buffer between new development and the new country park;
- e** maintain the hedgerow along Pan Lane on the western edge of the site.

- 8.8** The site east of Pan Lane is an allocation that was previously made in the Island Plan core strategy. Even though it is a small site it plays an important role in contributing to the wider development of the Pan Meadows area, which includes a significant level of residential development. The residential and road infrastructure elements of the scheme are being built out and the allocation of the employment element completes the overall scheme. The majority of the allocated site is council-owned, with the northern part of the site under separate ownership and providing existing employment uses.
- 8.9** While the final type and mix of provision will be determined at the planning application stage, it is expected that Class E offices and research and development will form the majority of the provision. The nature of employment uses should be compatible with being located in a mixed-use area close to residential units, both in terms of the built form and scale and use. In general, it is expected that small units will be appropriate, potentially in the form of either individual units or as some form of managed workspace(s).
- 8.10** The established employment on the north of the site is a garage. The council will continue to work with the landowner to ensure that the new employment provision on the rest of the site is integrated to deliver a coherent allocation.
- 8.11** It is expected that a detailed scheme will be designed avoiding areas of flood risk and minimising disturbance (both visual and noise) and impact on amenity to existing properties. This will be achieved by ensuring that the most compatible uses are located nearer to the existing residential properties. Furthermore, appropriate landscape buffering between the new development and the existing residential properties will be provided.

- 8.12** At the southern edge of the site is the route of an existing bridleway (N40) that will link with a new footpath that will run along the edge of the Pan Meadows development and the country park providing access to the river. This area will be safeguarded for the retention of the bridleway and to provide an appropriate buffer between the employment site and the country park.
- 8.13** The site has a well-established hedgerow on its western edge and the council wishes to see this retained, particularly as it forms the external boundary of the site that fronts onto a public highway.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

**EA2**

**Employment allocation at Nicholson Road, Ryde**

The site is allocated to deliver a mix of Class E offices, B2 and B8 uses, with a variety of building sizes, along with potential supporting uses that would benefit the local population, such as health centres or creches. The site is greenfield and extends to an area of approximately 14.6 hectares. Development proposals should:

- provide access to the site from Nicholson Road and examine the suitability of a secondary access point onto the existing road network or through wider infrastructure improvements;
- develop the site in a phased approach, to be agreed through the planning application process;
- minimise impact on existing properties by ensuring the most compatible uses are suitably located and to provide appropriate landscape buffering between new development and existing residential properties;
- maintain the existing rights of way network on the site and examine the possibility of improving footpath R52a, in line with the rights of way improvement plan;
- retain and utilise existing hedgerows and field boundaries wherever possible, especially those that form the external boundary of the site;
- avoid both direct and indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of protected habitats and species and, if necessary, provide appropriate mitigation measures.

- 8.14** The allocation extends to an area of 14.6 hectares, is under council ownership and directly adjacent to the existing successful small-scale Ryde Business Park, which houses small and medium-size units. The land was previously allocated as an employment site in the Island Plan.

- 8.15** The council wishes to build on the success of Ryde Business Park and extend the range of employment uses while investigating the potential for community facilities with good links to nearby housing and the highway network. In light of the identified social deprivation in the area and need for the provision of further employment land, the council will promote the site via the Regeneration Strategy having secured outline planning permission (ref: 19/00922/OUT).
- 8.16** Access to the site, and the main road within it, will be provided by extending Nicholson Road. Whilst the council does not believe that further improvements to the junction of Nicholson Road and Great Preston Road are required, further work will be undertaken to ensure that the junction complies with the relevant safety requirements. Proposals for the site should investigate whether further highway capacity could be achieved via alternative accesses to highway network and future infrastructure projects.
- 8.17** The development will be designed to provide the most efficient use of the land, with the majority of the employment provision located in the upper sections of the site. A phased approach to the delivery of the site will help to ensure a steady supply of employment land and facilities to meet demand from a range of employers.
- 8.18** It is expected that a detailed scheme will be designed to minimise disturbance (both visual and noise) and impact on amenity to existing properties and that this will be achieved by ensuring that the most compatible uses are located nearer to the existing residential properties. Furthermore, appropriate landscape buffering between the new development and the existing residential properties will be provided.
- 8.19** A footpath (R55) runs across the site along its northern edge and a bridleway (R54) along the length of its western edge. R55 provides east/west access from the urban edge of Ryde into the wider rights of way network and the countryside beyond. The council will expect the retention of the footpath, although an amended route incorporated within the site could be considered. Both R54 and R55 link to R52a, a footpath which crosses the railway line. The Isle of Wight Rights of Way Improvement Plan has identified opportunities to improve R52a by implementing safety improvements to the footpath where it crosses the railway line and the potential to upgrade it to a bridleway to help create improved links into the Swanmore area. Development proposals will be expected to examine how the development can positively contribute to achieving these aims.
- 8.20** The site has a number of strong external and internal hedgerows, particularly the western and southern external boundaries and the north/ south elements of the internal field network. The external hedgerows should be retained and improved, where possible and appropriate, to contribute to the buffering outlined in the policy. The stronger internal field boundaries should be retained and should be used to inform the overall layout of the site and the approach to phasing.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential.
- A well-educated and skilled community.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.

#### **EA3**

##### **Employment allocation at Somerton Farm, Cowes**

The site is allocated to deliver small to medium scale employment uses within the Class E Offices, B2 and B8 uses. The site is greenfield and an area of approximately 1.9 hectares should be provided for employment uses as part of a joint allocation with HA022. Development proposals should:

- a** be designed in conjunction with housing allocation HA022;
- b** provide a mix of small to medium scale employment uses;
- c** provide access to the site from Newport Road, either via the existing Somerton Business Park or a purpose-built site access. Pedestrian connections will also be required;
- d** allow space for a multi-use route to allow connection between the Newport to Cowes cycle route and the employment uses centred around Newport Road;
- e** complement the existing employment uses to the north, while having regard to the housing allocation on land to the south and within the control of Somerton Farm;
- f** integrate the mix of uses with existing, to ensure that the site integrates into the wider context of the area. Employment uses should be compatible with the immediate surroundings and not conflict with town centre uses;
- g** minimise impact on existing and future properties by ensuring the most compatible uses are suitably located;
- h** retain existing trees and hedgerows to form landscape buffers and complement the character of the surrounding area;
- i** avoid both direct and indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of designated sites and, if necessary, provide appropriate mitigation measures.

- 8.21** The site at Somerton Farm is in private ownership and is located immediately south of the existing Somerton Business Park. The land is greenfield and in agricultural use. The land is visible from Newport Road and surrounded by a mix of trees and well established hedgerows. Land further south is the subject of a housing allocation and the allocations should work together to design a mixed use scheme that responds to the existing landscape character. Design work may result in the employment land being spread over different areas of the site rather than being concentrated on the land immediately south of Somerton Business Park.

**8.22** The site is adjacent to Newport Road and therefore, potential access routes should be carefully considered. There are three potential options which include the formation of a new access to the serve the employment site, a shared access to serve both the employment site and future housing to the south or access via the existing Somerton Business Park. The wider area includes a range of employment uses and this site would allow the potential to release land to provide a link between the Newport to Cowes multi-user route and Newport Road. This is a key project for the council, and if achieved would provide sustainable transport choices for the many employment sites within the area. Therefore, development proposals for this employment site and the linked housing site to the south, should be designed to provide the link.

**8.23** Development proposals for this site should complement the existing business uses to the north while taking account of existing and proposed housing within the area. The site to the north includes a range of uses and building types and this site should be designed to build upon providing a variety of uses through buildings that would allow flexibility for new and evolving businesses. Buildings should be designed to provide a transition between employment and housing uses and to take account of potential impacts to existing and proposed housing.

**8.24** The site is not the subject of ecological designations. However, the River Medina is located to the east and is the subject of a range of international, national and local designations. Given the undeveloped nature of the site, its proximity to designated sites and the trees and hedgerows that surround it, development proposals should demonstrate that potential impacts have been fully considered, along with the need for mitigation. Development proposals should where possible retain existing trees and hedgerows and where demonstrated to not be possible, provide mitigation.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.



## EA4

### Employment allocation at Kingston, East Cowes

The site at Kingston benefits from planning permission for a marine business park comprising class E, B2 and B8 uses. The site is council owned and extends to an area of 6.2 hectares development proposals should:

- a** provide suitable access from Saunders Way;
- b** develop the site in a phased approach;
- c** provide a range of use types and building sizes to promote small, medium and large scale employment uses, allowing flexibility for potential expansion of businesses;
- d** minimise impacts on existing uses and surrounding landscape through the use of landscape buffers and planting and suitably locating compatible uses;
- e** retain existing hedgerows that form the boundaries of the site that contribute to screening the development and protect biodiversity;
- f** avoid both direct and indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of designated sites and, if necessary, provide appropriate mitigation measures.

- 8.25** The site at Kingston is council owned and extends to a site area of 6.2 hectares of land east of the River Medina. The site benefits from planning permission that allows for a mix of office, research and development, light industrial, industrial and storage and distribution uses. The site would be suitable for large scale employment buildings, given links to existing industrial employment uses within East Cowes. While appropriate for large scale buildings, proposals should demonstrate a reduction of impacts through high quality design and landscaping.
- 8.26** Proposals should demonstrate a flexible approach to employment provision through providing a range of building types and sizes, to allow small, medium and large scale employers to occupy the site and potentially forge complementary uses. Buildings should be designed to allow potential for expansion. The site is well located for all employment uses; however, proposals should demonstrate avoidance of areas of flood risk and how impacts on nearby residential developments have been considered and include locating the most compatible uses within the eastern section of the site. Development proposals should also incorporate landscaping and screening in order to reduce the impact of large-scale buildings while retaining existing hedgerows. Access to the river should be maintained.
- 8.27** The site is located adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA)/ Ramsar site and the Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It is also adjacent the Medina Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Therefore, proposals should demonstrate that impacts on designated site and species have been taken into account, outlining impacts and mitigation.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

## **EA5**

### **Employment allocation at Lowtherville, Ventnor**

The site at Lowtherville is allocated to deliver employment within the class E, B2 and B8 uses. Other job generating uses may also be appropriate. The site is brownfield and extends to an area of approximately 0.7 hectares, and redevelopment would require demolition of existing buildings, site clearance and re-profiling of levels.

Development proposals should:

- a** provide access to the site from Lowtherville Road with improvements to onsite access arrangements and may require off-site improvements. Pedestrian connections will also be required;
- b** integrate the mix of uses with existing, to ensure that the site integrates into the wider context of the area. Employment uses should be compatible with the immediate surroundings and not conflict with town centre uses;
- c** minimise impact on existing properties by ensuring the most compatible uses are suitably located and to provide appropriate landscape buffering between new development and existing residential properties;
- d** undertake an assessment of previous uses and potential contaminated land and implement a full remediation strategy that is compliant with the relevant non-planning consenting regimes;
- e** avoid indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of designated sites and, if necessary, provide appropriate mitigation measures.

- 8.28** In the IPS, Ventnor is classified as a secondary settlement, and it is therefore important that employment land can be provided in order to provide local residents with access to jobs. However, the town is located within a geographically constrained area and therefore, the use of existing employment sites will be important over the plan period.
- 8.29** The site at Lowtherville is council owned and extends to a site area of 0.7 hectares. The site is brownfield and occupied by a range of employment uses around areas of open space and woodland. Existing buildings are dated, and the site is in need of regeneration. The site is adjacent to existing housing and schools.
- 8.30** Given its current land use, the site lends itself to development comprising small scale business units and other low impact employment uses. The site slopes from north to south and therefore, proposals should take account of changes in land levels.
- 8.31** Access to the site could be gained via Lowtherville Road to the east and St Margaret's Glade to the northwest. However, both roads pass through residential areas and therefore development proposals should consider ways of minimising traffic impacts on amenity and road safety. The junction of Lowtherville Road and Newport Road lacks visibility and therefore, development proposals should consider potential improvements to the junction.

- 8.32** Because the site is surrounded by existing housing and close to schools, the proposed employment uses should be carefully located in order to provide suitable buffers, reduce impacts and ensure that uses with greater impacts are situated away from receptors.
- 8.33** Due to existing and previous uses, redevelopment proposals should demonstrate that potential sources of contamination have been considered and if necessary, mitigated.
- 8.34** The site is elevated and benefits from screening offered by existing trees and tree-lined hedgerows. Development proposals should where possible retain existing trees and hedgerows and where demonstrated to not be possible, provide mitigation.
- 8.35** The site is not the subject of ecology designations; however, the down land to the north and east is designated as a SAC and SSSI. Therefore, development proposals should demonstrate that potential indirect impacts on designated sites have been considered. Moreover, due to the existing open areas of grassland, trees and hedgerows, development proposals should be supported by ecological information to investigate potential protected species on site and provide mitigation and biodiversity enhancements where necessary.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

**EA6**

**Employment allocation at Sandown Airport, Sandown**

The site at Sandown Airport benefits from existing links to the current uses at the site, which include general industrial and the airport use. The site would be suitable for Class E Offices and B2 uses, potentially through the use of large scale hanger style buildings. Due to access issues, storage and distribution uses should be avoided. The site is part greenfield and part brownfield and extends to an area of 2.99 hectares.

Development proposals should:

- a** provide suitable access from the principal highway;
- b** provide improved pedestrian connectivity to the east;
- c** develop the site in a phased approach;
- d** minimise impacts on existing uses and surrounding landscape through the use of landscape buffers and planting and suitably locating compatible uses;
- e** retain existing hedgerows that form the boundaries of the site to screen the development and protect biodiversity;
- f** ensure that the proposed development would not compromise the future use and potential expansion of the airport;
- g** avoid both direct and indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of designated sites and, if necessary, provide appropriate mitigation measures.

- 8.36** The site at Sandown Airport extends to a site area of 2.99 hectares. The site is currently undeveloped farmland, located between the existing airport, the employment uses that surround it and Newport Road. The site is surrounded by hedgerows but due to topography, visible from surrounding landscape and Newport Road.
- 8.37** The council is aware that the current vehicle access to the site lacks visibility at its junction with Newport Road, thus constraining operational capacity. Therefore, proposals should include a fully compliant means of access to serve the site, investigating the potential for a wholly new means of access or improvement of existing routes. In addition, a new pedestrian link to connect with existing pavements to the east should be provided as part of development proposals.
- 8.38** Given its proximity to the airport and existing employment uses, the site lends itself to large employment units, set within well landscaped grounds. Due to the visibility of the site, appropriate landscape buffering should be provided, and buildings should be set back from the highway. The site is surrounded by existing established hedgerows and various trees that contribute to landscape character and therefore, these should be retained.
- 8.39** The site area is large and therefore, proposals should set out a phased approach to development in order to minimise landscape and visual impacts.
- 8.40** Proposals should be designed to take account of existing uses in order to minimise potential impacts. Moreover, proposals should demonstrate that the development would not compromise the continued operation or potential for expansion of the airport.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

## Sustainable economic development

### E2

#### Sustainable economic development

Sustainable economic development that will generate, maintain, grow and attract business will be pro-actively supported, especially where it provides jobs in technology, composites, engineering, the marine sectors (including research and development) and horticulture (particularly within the Arreton Valley).

Proposals for economic development will be supported where they:

- a** deliver the strategic employment allocations;
- b** allow for the intensification and/ or expansion of existing industrial estates or employment sites;
- c** result in the re-use of previously developed land and/ or buildings.

To deliver economic development, support will be given to a range of employment development types from small and medium enterprises to larger organisations, through the promotion of flexible starter units, larger scale developments and mixed use development where the uses are compatible and would aid the viability of the development.

The loss of employment land and uses will be resisted where the site:

- a** is of 0.1 hectares or above, where those sites assist in sustaining the local economy or where a flexible mix uses would not maintain the viability of the sites;
- b** provides available water access for employment uses.

The council may support the loss of some employment sites for non-employment or mixed uses, where redevelopment would assist in the regeneration of an area and the loss of employment land would not compromise the local economy.

- 8.41** The need to protect existing viable employment sites is an important issue for the Island's economy. In recent years, there has been a loss of traditional employment uses on sites throughout the Island as a result of conversion of premises to higher value uses such as retail, trade counters etc. This has led to the loss of employment units, raised land values and placed increased pressure for speculative development away from employment hubs. Therefore, unless a suitable justification has been demonstrated, the council will seek to retain existing employment sites above a site area of 0.1 hectares.

**8.42** Prior to accepting the change of use of employment sites, the council will require developers to demonstrate that a site is no longer viable for employment use or that it is unlikely to be used or redeveloped for employment purposes. The council will require a justification to set out why a site is no longer required, including the demonstration of marketing for a period of at least 12 months, a viability appraisal and why the site could not be promoted for a range of uses that would retain the majority of the land for employment uses. For the purposes of the justification, rental values and development costs should reflect the local market and be provided by a suitably qualified surveyor or viability consultant. In line with the development viability policy of the Island Planning Strategy, the council will publish this information and expect developers to meet the council's full costs for evaluating the open book viability assessment. The justification should include the following information:

- The layout of the site, existing uses and occupancy rates, including length of any periods of vacancy.
- The current level of accessibility to the site.
- The quality of existing buildings and infrastructure together with details of recent upkeep and efforts to market the site including means of attracting different employment uses.
- Options for re-use that include refurbishment, sub-division and redevelopment.
- An assessment of costs for refurbishment or redevelopment for employment uses.
- The manner that a non-employment use of the site would impact on the viability of other uses within the vicinity of the site

**8.43** Where justified and in accordance with the other policies within the IPS, the council will support mixed-use development of employment land, through the provision of options such as work/live units or a mix of employment and non-employment uses. In addition, there are examples of employment uses located within town centre or residential areas, where sustainable redevelopment of sites would result in wider regeneration benefits, through releasing land and neighbouring land for additional housing and/ or infrastructure. In such circumstances, the council will support the loss of employment land where it would not outweigh the regeneration benefits for the site. In such circumstances, proposals should consider whether a mix of low impact employment uses could be incorporated with housing in order to provide a sustainable form of development.

**8.44** Where the development of employment land is provided as part of a mixed use scheme, the sites will be phased to ensure that the overall strategy for economic led regeneration will be achieved and where this includes town centre locations this will be promoted where this makes a positive contribution to the character of the town, and does not reduce the provision of retail floorspace.

- 8.45** The council will consider proposals for employment land that includes an element of enabling development. This is in recognition of the history of delivery of economic development on the Island and is considered an appropriate mechanism to enable employment land to be delivered. The provision of enabling development would not necessarily be required on the site of the employment and an open-book viability assessment would need to be undertaken by the developer to demonstrate why enabling development is required and to justify the level of enabling development proposed.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

## Upskilling the Island

### E3

#### Upskilling the Island

The council will support development proposals that:

- a** improve workforce skills and employability;
- b** promote and support skills and employment in existing employment clusters, especially within the construction, digital, high tech, renewable and marine sectors.

An employment and skills plan will be required for the construction stage where development proposals would result in a net gain of 25 or more dwellings or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more of non-residential floor space.

- 8.46** Enhancing the ability of Island residents to access jobs and training on the Island will promote better economic performance, reduce social exclusion, poverty and reliance on benefits, improve health and reduce longer distance in-commuting.
- 8.47** An employment and skills plan (ESP) can provide an opportunity for young people and adults to up-skill through Apprenticeships, become work ready through traineeships and provide work experience opportunities for schools and college age young people through work placements and site visits.
- 8.48** ESPs also provide opportunities for contractors to be involved in providing young people and adults with relevant industry careers guidance and help them to consider the wide range of opportunities in the construction sector. They also carry the wider benefit of driving economic growth by providing jobs to local residents in need of more permanent employment. They also provide a platform to up-skill existing members of the construction workforce be they employees of the contractor or subcontracted employees.
- 8.49** This planning policy approach will be complemented by similar approaches in other areas, such as procurement.

- 8.50** An ESP will be required for the construction phase when development proposals would result in a net gain of 25 or more dwellings or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more of non-residential floor space. The measurement for non-residential floor space will be based on the gross external area of the development and will also incorporate land used for car parking.
- 8.51** The expectation is that the ESP will relate to the construction phase of the development. However, it is recognised that some developments may have scope for generating employment opportunities after the build is complete include retail, leisure and office developments, and once the requirement for an ESP has been established, the council will work with applicants to agree the bespoke scope of the ESP for each development.
- 8.52** The council will monitor the number of ESPs being created to understand whether they are coming forward in sufficient numbers. The Island Futures team will be responsible for facilitating the ESPs and importantly monitoring them to ensure all the measures and requirements are implemented. If monitoring indicates that the ESP is not being implemented in accordance with the planning permission and/or legal agreement, the council will consider appropriate enforcement action.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fulfil their potential.



## Supporting the rural economy

### E4

#### Supporting the rural economy

To ensure a strong rural economy the council will support economic uses in the rural area where proposals are for:

- a** farm growth, particularly in the food production sector;
- b** farm diversification, where farming remains the principle land use;
- c** the intensification/ expansion of existing rural industrial estates or employment sites;
- d** the conversion of existing redundant permanent buildings to employment uses where this expansion/ change of use would not impact on the rural character of the area; or
- e** a new small-scale building or extension of an appropriate scale and design for a rural area which is located next to an existing settlement or employment site. Evidence supporting the scale of development will be required;
- f** the reuse of historic redundant farm buildings, which are no longer suitable for modern day farm practises, for agricultural workers dwellings where evidence is provided to demonstrate that there is a need/ requirement for such a dwelling on site and that any features of architectural or historic interest are conserved;
- g** sustainable rural tourism and leisure activities which do not impact on the character of the countryside;

Developments should consider the impact on local roads including the type of traffic generated, the appropriateness of the local highway network and any impact on their character. Proposals should consider how development can contribute to sustainable transport.

Any conversion of existing historic farm buildings to agricultural workers accommodation must be of a size and scale which would remain affordable/ low cost and appropriate for someone working in agriculture.

The council will resist development on best quality agricultural land, unless it is required for the purposes of working the land itself and cannot be provided elsewhere.

- 8.53** The importance of the rural economy to the Island's identity is widely recognised, and through its planning policies the council wants to support a prosperous rural economy. By providing more explicit support for the growth of rural enterprise it can become more sustainable and viable for rural business to expand and for farm workers to live closer to the areas in which they work.

- 8.54** Evidence demonstrates that 85.5 per cent (Inter Departmental Business Register, ONS) of jobs in industry across the Island are classified as micro enterprise (Micro is defined as nought to nine employees). There is an acknowledgement that with advances in communications technology small business operators do not need to travel to existing Island centres to run their businesses, while shifting working patterns as an outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic have also reduced the frequency of face to face meetings. As a result, the council considers that in some circumstances it would be more sustainable for people to work closer to where they live.
- 8.55** The council acknowledges that across the Island there are some farms which contain historic stone farm buildings, which are under used or empty because they are not suitable for modern farming practises. These buildings can be better utilised by being converted to housing which is more affordable to agricultural workers or bases for rural business that need to be located in the countryside. Developments of this nature would also preserve these types of buildings, which are important to the history of farming and the countryside but are often lost or poorly maintained as they do not provide any economic gain.
- 8.56** The council wish to support the re-use of existing buildings, or sensitively designed new buildings, for employment, providing that proposals are of an appropriate scale and design for the character of the rural location. Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings will need to be supported by ecology studies, which identify that there would be no impact on any protected species such as bats, which may be roosting in the buildings.
- 8.57** Consideration should be given to the accessibility of any proposed new employment sites by sustainable modes of transport and therefore where possible development should be located adjacent to existing rural industrial estates or employment sites.
- 8.58** The council acknowledge that in some circumstances the location of a site would be essential to the nature of the use/operations proposed, which would limit the ability to utilise existing sites or buildings. In these instances, proposals should be supported with evidence to demonstrate a functional need to be located on a specific site, that they would contribute to the growth of the rural economy and are of an appropriate scale for the requirements of the operation. Ownership in isolation will not been considered as a reasonable justification as to why a site is acceptable or an alternative more sustainable site is not.
- 8.59** The council recognises the strong potential for growth in the farming and food production sectors and will support proposals for expansion within the agricultural industry. It is also recognised that for many years, farm holdings have been diversifying with uses such as farm shops, cafes, visitor attractions and tourism accommodation. This has helped to support many agricultural businesses. It is essential that for schemes for farm diversification that agriculture remains the primary land use on site and any changes would not impact on the ability of this function. Equestrian development would be considered under this policy.

- 8.60** It will be expected that proposals which seek to diversify the farming enterprise should where possible prioritise the re-use of existing buildings. In instances where new buildings can be justified, they should relate well to the existing buildings on the farm, and designed, laid out and of a scale that respects the character of the farm and the surrounding landscape, especially when located within the AONB.
- 8.61** The council will not support schemes to convert 'at cost' barns or more modern structures which do not add to the rural or historic character of the area, other than in exceptional circumstances where there would be a significant benefit to the rural economy.
- 8.62** Applications for dwellings which would be over and above the requirement of an agricultural worker or extensions which would increase the value of the property over that which would be attainable by an agricultural worker will not be supported.
- 8.63** If applications for agricultural workers dwellings are supported they will include conditions resisting occupation of the dwelling not for this purpose and remove permitted development rights to extend and alter the building, both to ensure the size of the unit remains appropriate and to protect the character of the building itself and the wider rural area.

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

- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

## Maintaining employment sites with water access

### E5

#### Maintaining employment sites with water access

The council has identified a tidal access cut-off point on the River Medina (as shown on the policies map). This will be used in the determination of development proposals with waterfront access, as follows:

To the north of this line;

- a** loss of existing employment sites will in principle be resisted and will require evidence to support the loss of such a site to other uses. Such evidence should include demonstration of no net loss of employment use;
- b** proposals for new employment sites requiring waterfront access will in principle be supported.

To the south of this line

- c** proposals that are compatible with the zones identified in the Solent Waterfront Strategy will be supported in principle;
- d** all other proposals will need to demonstrate how they would access the water without unacceptable impacts on either the environment or other estuary users.

- 8.64** There are a number of navigable rivers on the Island that provide some level of marine-related employment. The River Medina is the main navigable river on the Island, and with its 6.8km long tidal limited navigable channel, provides the main potential to meet any existing and future demand for waterfront access from employment uses.
- 8.65** Being an island, such waterfront sites are critical in terms of both employment provision and transportation infrastructure, mainly relating to the import/export of goods and materials. It is an important issue to the Island's economic functionality whether there is the need and then the opportunity to retain existing marine and other industry-related employment requiring such sites, to facilitate the potential for growth and the location of new businesses.
- 8.66** The marine and maritime sector can include, but not be limited to, activities associated with component manufacturing, ports, defence, leisure, ship and boat building and research across a product or service cycle. There is a significant level of activity relating to small boat/leisure craft maintenance and other related services such as brokerage and chandlery.
- 8.67** The sector is changing rapidly with technological advancements opening up new business lines and markets, as testified by the growth in marine technology and the offshore renewable energy sector. There is also growth in the recreational boat (and water-based recreation) sector, which is of primary importance to the Island.
- 8.68** The Solent Local Enterprise report states the provision of suitable land, accommodation and business support systems within locations have long been recognised as a driver of competitive economic advantage. This is seen in the Solent area, which has a high representation of marine and maritime businesses co-locating, some of which are highly specialised and of international renown. Many of these businesses are interlinked through the business supply chain, with smaller firms providing specific products and services supporting larger ones.
- 8.69** To ensure that a clear and consistent approach is taken in applying this policy, the council is using the following definitions.

**Table 8.1 – Definitions**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Employment uses</b>	Uses that provide any kind of employment opportunities (excluding retail uses).
<b>Employment sites</b>	Sites that currently or previously have sustained employment uses and has not changed its use under the Use Class Order.
<b>Water access</b>	Any length of the estuary waterfront that provides an access point for a specific use or uses, which requires some form of formal on-going management and maintenance

- 8.70** The assessment of whether a site has water access in all states of tide (and thus the tidal access cut off point) has been made through the council's Employment Sites with Waterfront Access Project (2013). It has been based on whether the site maintains water access (i.e. there is no intertidal area between the site and the River Medina) rather than any structures that project from it into the water (such as a pontoon).
- 8.71** It is important to note that while sites have been identified as accessible through the project, the owners/operators may consider that for the purposes of their operation the site is not accessible by water at all states of tide.
- 8.72** Evidence to support the loss of an employment site with water access to an alternative use should include market testing for the demand for such sites by the marine and maritime sectors and a sequential demonstration for the most appropriate site of the proposed use, based upon the waterfront sites register (as set out in the Maritime Future: Solent Waterfront Sites Final Report), updated with relevant information from the commercial property market.
- 8.73** The report developed a vision for the area to guide new investments and development opportunities. The aim of the document was to attract new investment to provide the opportunities, facilities and attractions that both local people and visitors could enjoy. Investment would enable the growth of local businesses and the attraction of new businesses.
- 8.74** The strategy also identified five zones associated with the Medina Estuary and went on to describe the zones and highlight their key opportunities. The work (2013 employment sites with waterfront access) carried out by the council verifies the zones identified in this strategy as still being relevant and applicable. Thus, where a development proposal is made that is compatible with the zones identified in the Cowes waterfront strategy, they will be supported in principle.
- 8.75** The Medina Valley has a number of interests that will need careful consideration by development proposals, where relevant, including potential impacts upon sites designated for nature conservation and the Harbour Authorities and the Marine Maritime Organisation where the physical scope of any proposal crosses into their jurisdiction.

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

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.

## Future-proofing digital infrastructure

### E6

#### Future-proofing digital infrastructure

Enhancing digital connectivity is a key priority for the council, helping to make the Island's economy more competitive, attracting a greater range of businesses, facilitating modern work practices and reducing the need to travel.

The council will expect development proposals to:

- a** achieve greater digital connectivity than set out in the relevant Building Regulations;
- b** ensure that sufficient ducting space for future digital connectivity infrastructure is provided and, where appropriate, explore infrastructure sharing;
- c** demonstrate how digital infrastructure requirements are taken into account when phasing the development;
- d** meet requirements for mobile connectivity within the development and take appropriate mitigation measures to avoid reducing mobile connectivity in surrounding areas;
- e** support the effective use of the public realm (such as street furniture and litter bins) to accommodate well-designed and located mobile digital infrastructure.

- 8.76** The council wishes to see speeds of up to 1GB available across the Island, which is significantly higher than the basic standard of 30Mbps being sought by the government. The council recognises the benefits of having the best possible digital infrastructure in place, not least as working patterns change as a result of the pandemic. It can positively impact on peoples live/work behaviours; create the right conditions to facilitate growth and make public services more accessible to more people.
- 8.77** By ensuring that the best possible infrastructure is in place people and businesses will have choices around technologies and providers. It can also open a wide range of possibilities including education provision, health care, energy management, digital entrepreneurial ship and a positive impact of the retention and attraction of certain age groups on the Island.
- 8.78** It is recognised that not all areas currently benefit from the infrastructure to support speeds of up to 1GB. However, a current lack of infrastructure should not prevent the installation of technologies, either as part of the provider's infrastructure roll-out, or from the terminal chamber to the access point on the host property. To achieve the best possible speeds the council will expect the installation of full fibre networks, rather than copper-based networks.
- 8.79** The policy requirements will be applied to all development proposals for residential, employment and retail uses. It is also recognised that due to the potential impacts on the historic fabric of providing appropriate access points etc, proposals relating to listed buildings may need to be considered on their merits.

- 8.80** Consideration must be given to the likely timing of infrastructure provision. As such, development may need to be phased either spatially or in time to ensure the provision of infrastructure in a timely manner. Conditions or a planning obligation may be used to secure this phasing arrangement.
- 8.81** The council will monitor the number of permissions granted where digital infrastructure provision will be required. It is expected that the providers monitor digital infrastructure coverage and speeds and the council may request this information, if required, when considering the effectiveness of this policy.

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

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- A well-educated and skilled community.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.

## Supporting and improving our town centres

### **E7**

#### **Supporting and improving our town centres**

The council will actively encourage and support proposals for commercial uses (class E) that can contribute to the diversity, choice, vitality and viability of town centres across the island. Varying the range of businesses located in town centres, adding flexibility for premises to provide a varied commercial offer and increasing footfall are all essential to help support our town centres and aid economic recovery.

Proposals for new retail development are expected to be located within town centre boundaries (as shown on the policies map). For Newport town centre, new retail development is expected to be located in the primary shopping area (as shown on the policies map) and the re-use of existing buildings is encouraged.

Applications within the Newport and Ryde heritage action zones (HAZ) will be expected to adhere to any design guides or other appropriate documents prepared as part of the respective HAZ projects.

Applications to bring upper storeys of buildings into use, particularly for residential uses, will be supported, provided they would not adversely impact on the viability of the ground floor use.

Any applications which result in the loss of traditional shop fronts or remove display windows will be resisted, where the feature is important to the character of the area.

Applications for farm shops or small scale 'convenience' stores which assist in making settlements more sustainable will not be subject to the sequential approach.

Any proposal for new retail development which falls outside of the identified primary shopping area in Newport or town centre boundaries elsewhere will be assessed on a sequential basis as outlined in national policy. Such applications, including those for changes of use and variations of condition to remove or amend restriction on how units operate in practice, must be submitted with a retail impact assessment based on the following local floorspace thresholds:

- 750 sqm gross for Newport;
- 500 sqm gross for Ryde and Cowes; and
- 350 sqm gross for Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor, Freshwater and East Cowes.

Any applications for out of town retail and commercial developments must also clearly demonstrate how they contribute to enhancing links to the existing centres and improving the quality of the public realm within them, to encourage linked trips and ensure that trade is not diverted from these areas.



**8.82** Town centres are recognised as being at the heart of communities, a role that is even more important as the island recovers from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the council wants to promote new retail and commercial development in the right locations that does not prejudice the vitality and viability of our existing town centres. In line with the NPPF, new retail development is expected to be located within the town centre boundaries, and the primary shopping area in Newport.

**8.83** The council has defined a network and hierarchy of centres across the Island, as shown in the table below:

**Table 8.2 – Main retail town centres of the Island**

<b>Main town centres</b>	Newport	Ryde	Cowes
<b>Local centres</b>	Sandown	Shanklin	Freshwater
	Ventnor	East Cowes	
<b>Village centres</b>	Arreton	Bembridge	Brading
	Brighstone	Godshell	Niton
	Rookley	St Helens	Wootton
	Wroxall	Yarmouth	

**8.84** These centres play differing roles in the Island retail market and the council wish to build on the existing individuality of centres and extend the ‘dwell time’ and spend of visitors/residents visiting the town and in turn the vitality and viability of the centre. The council will support a range of commercial uses within all of the centres that help to bring people into the areas. It is noted that of the ‘main town centres’ Newport contains a higher number of national retailers of general goods/ clothes and bulky goods, while Cowes, although containing national retailers is more focused around sailing, specialist retail and leisure. Ryde contains more independent retailers and Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor reflect the tourism market.

**8.85** By acknowledging the differences between the centres, as outlined above, they do not compete with each other and can therefore be successful in their own offer. It is important to understand the strengths of a centre to ensure that development complements and enhances its specific role in the community it serves. The Retail Study Update 2021 includes town centre health checks, which should be given due consideration when looking at new development within them.

- 8.86** There is some limited demand from national retail operators seeking a further presence in Newport (six in total), Ryde (eight in total) and Cowes (one in total) (Isle of Wight retail study update, April 2021 combined report and appendices), while the policy also seeks to encourage smaller scale retailers and commercial uses back into the town centres through the re-use of existing buildings, providing wider customer choice.
- 8.87** The council are not currently proposing to allocate land for the purpose of retail given the relatively low floorspace needs across the retailer demands outlined above. However, the council would support applications which demonstrate that they are sequentially preferable and would allow for the expansion of the retail offer, without impacting on the town centre(s). Where they require planning permission, consideration will be given to changes of use in existing centres to provide greater diversity and help extend the economic activity.
- 8.88** To enhance the town centre offer the council will support applications for schemes that would enhance the appearance of existing buildings within the centre, with consideration being given to an increase in soft landscaping and a removal of large areas of ground level car parking.
- 8.89** Newport and Ryde were both successful in bidding to become high street heritage action zones in 2019 and project work commenced in April 2020. The majority of funding comes from Historic England, with match funding from the Isle of Wight Council's regeneration budget, section 106 contributions, Ryde Town Council and Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council. The HAZ programmes are delivered by a partnership between each community council (as lead partner) the Isle of Wight Council and Historic England.
- 8.90** The HAZs aim to restore key buildings and traditional shopfronts, improve public spaces and bring unused parts of buildings back into use as homes, workplaces and community spaces. The work will help our high streets recover and evolve, with one eye on the past and one on the future.
- 8.91** The two HAZs have jointly commissioned a commercial frontages design guide, which will help property owners, shopkeepers and planners ensure that the quality of shopfronts in the towns will improve and be maintained at a high standard. This work is expected to conclude in early Summer 2021. Ryde High Street has seen the pedestrianisation extended and work is underway in both towns to codesign public realm schemes with the local community. Case studies on key buildings in each town have been undertaken and these will lead to a programme of works, including some grant-funded physical improvements. Proposals within the HAZ areas will be expected to take account of this work and the documents produced as part of those projects.
- 8.92** The council will welcome bold proposals, such as the demolition and regeneration of sites such as the multi-storey car park on South Street, Newport, which would allow for a more legible pedestrian flow and public realm enhancements. The council will work in partnership with other organisations in order to deliver improvements.

- 8.93** Any applications for main town centre uses that are outside of town centre boundaries and the primary shopping area in Newport will need to be supported by a sequential assessment (in line with national policy) and impact assessments (in line with the thresholds outline in policy E7). If an application would result in a negative/ adverse impact on the viability or vitality of a town centre it will be refused.
- 8.94** An edge of centre site for the purposes of this policy is considered to be one which is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area and town centre boundaries. An out of centre site is considered to be one which is not in or on the edge of a centre, but not necessarily outside the urban area.
- 8.95** If proposals are submitted for out of centre retail developments the council will expect to receive supporting information that explicitly demonstrates how they will encourage and facilitate linked trips to the nearest town centre, and provide a contribution towards public realm enhancements in the town.
- 8.96** In considering whether something would have an adverse impact consideration should be given to the Town Centre Health Checks and the trading information contained within the Retail Study Update 2021.

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

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.

## Supporting the evening economy

### **E8**

#### **Supporting the evening economy**

The council will support development proposals that seek to increase the footfall into the town, local and village centres in the evenings. All proposals that lead to an increase in the evening economy will need to demonstrate how public safety, disturbance and antisocial behaviour have been considered.

- 8.97** The council wishes to improve the evening offer in the various centres across the Island. This will support their ongoing vitality and viability, by diversifying the offer and encouraging people to visit town, local and village centres at different times of day and for different reasons.

- 8.98** The council has sought to improve the viability and vitality of smaller centres by removing 'retail only frontages' to allow for a mix of uses in town centres, extending the potential activities times and improving vitality.
- 8.99** Together with this change the council will support schemes which seek to increase the footfall into the centres in the evenings (between 5 and 8pm).
- 8.100** It is recognised that the benefits of a functioning evening economy can only be realised when the management of it is coherent across a number of consenting regimes. Critical to the success of this approach will be to ensure that the evening offer is one where people are safe, welcomed and measures to minimise and manage antisocial behaviours have been implemented. The quality of the public realm will also play a fundamental role in achieving this.

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

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.

## Supporting high quality tourism

**E9**

**Supporting high quality tourism**

The council will support sustainable growth in viable, high quality tourism, and proposals should demonstrate how they:

- a** utilise the unique characteristics of the historic and natural environments, without compromising their integrity;
- b** develop green and new niche tourism products;
- c** increase the quality of existing tourism destinations and accommodation across the Island; and
- d** maintain a mix of tourism accommodation that offers a range of styles; and
- e** contribute to creating an all year round tourism offer, which takes full account of seasonal significant impacts on European protected sites and species;
- f** where relevant, make use of current or former tourism sites.

Within the core tourist accommodation areas, as shown on the policies map, the council will resist the loss of tourist accommodation.

Proposals for the removal of restrictive conditions relating to tourism accommodation will be resisted and will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

- 8.101** The council wishes to see the Island be a leading UK visitor destination, and to achieve this it will be important to have the right planning policies in place. By doing so the Island will benefit from improved economic prosperity by increasing the proportion of high end/ high value visitors to the Island over the whole year. This will require an increase in the overall quality of the tourism offer in terms of accommodation, eating out opportunities, events, attractions and related leisure activities.
- 8.102** The Island caters for a wide range of different visitor markets and therefore it is important that a diverse range of types and quality of accommodation, attractions and facilities can be provided to satisfy the range of market demands and maintain its place as a popular UK visitor destination.
- 8.103** Within the core tourist accommodation areas, the council will resist the loss of tourist accommodation as the areas are in prime locations. By clearly setting out this approach the council is seeking to prevent the speculative purchasing of tourist accommodation stock and attempts to redevelop for residential purposes.
- 8.104** The tourism sector has evolved in recent years and customer's expectations for accommodation have increased with a change towards more flexible tourism accommodation products such as 'Airbnb.' It is therefore accepted that the retention of traditional tourist accommodation and destinations, however desirable, may not always be possible. The Island does contain examples of poor quality hotel stock and other forms of accommodation and these products can harm the tourism economy through deterring repeat visits and degrading the appearance of the Island. Poorly located tourism accommodation is unlikely to be able to generate suitable levels of demand to maintain a sustainable business.

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

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.

## The Bay tourism opportunity area

### E10

#### The Bay tourism opportunity area

The council supports the principle of development that contributes to improving the tourism offer within The Bay area and will give significant weight to proposals within the tourism opportunity area (as identified on the policies map).

Major development proposals should take account of both current and future sea and fluvial flood risks in the area and seek to reduce these, including making suitable provision on site and financial contributions towards improving the off-site coastal flood defence infrastructure embankments protecting the Eastern Yar valley.

The council will consider the use of local development orders within the tourism opportunity area.

- 8.105** The Culver Parade area is already a focal point for large scale visitor attractions, such as Isle of Wight Zoo, Dinosaur Isle and Sandham Gardens. The area represents the only seafront location within Sandown that can accommodate tourism development that has the ability to contribute significantly to The Bay's regeneration. It is considered that there is significant potential to enhance and extend the existing tourism offer in the area of land between Fort Street and land at the Isle of Wight Zoo.
- 8.106** The council does not intend to be prescriptive over the kind of development that could improve the tourism offer. Specific proposals could come forward individually, or as part of a wider scheme. They could exclusively relate to tourism accommodation and/or destinations and could include enabling development where this can be appropriately justified.
- 8.107** Development proposals to improve the tourism offer do not necessarily need to be large-scale built development. It could be in the form of a series of small-scale interventions and activities, and the refurbishment of existing buildings and attractions. The type of uses envisaged would be largely open in character with minimal built development and would complement and enhance the character of the site and surrounding area but creating new reasons to visit Sandown. Opportunities to improve and highlight connectivity between the town centre and the tourism opportunity area will be supported.
- 8.108** While the council and its partner organisations can play a crucial role in creating the right environment for proposals to come forward, it is for the market to determine what will improve the tourism offer and whether it will be viable. However, it expects to see uses that improve and enhance existing tourism facilities and widen their range to include activities such as (but not limited to) those that relate to outdoor recreation/ attractions, education, heritage, nature conservation and use of the lake. This could include low-impact holiday accommodation and proposals that create a year-round operation/ destination, subject to appropriate flood risk assessments.

- 8.109** It is considered that the Culver Parade area could support the wider tourism-led regeneration of the Sandown area by generating reasons to visit Sandown and increasing footfall along the seafront. This would benefit existing visitors and would provide business for hotels, restaurants and existing attractions.
- 8.110** The Bay tourism opportunity area is within the Eastern Yar valley floodplain, which is at risk if the large embankments at both Culver Parade in Yaverland and Embankment Road in Bembridge Harbour are not maintained. The risk of breach and also overtopping will increase in the future, and these defences/embankments will need to be strengthened and raised in the future. Therefore, decision-making in this area must continue to be made in full accordance with potential future risks, and contributions from major development will be required towards future coastal defence improvements.
- 8.111** Local development orders (LDO) are a planning mechanism intended to relax planning controls for particular areas or categories of development, where the impacts would be acceptable, and in particular where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains for the area, such as boosting enterprise. Under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), the local planning authority, through an LDO grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or class(es) of development and this is a mechanism the council may explore within the opportunity area.

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

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

## Ryde tourism opportunity zones

### E11

#### Ryde tourism opportunity zones

The council supports the principle of development where it can be demonstrated that it contributes to achieving the aspirations outlined in the supporting text for each of the zones listed below and shown on the policies map:

- 1 Old town
- 2 Town square
- 3 Town beach
- 4 Waterfront
- 5 Gardens
- 6 Family beach
- 7 BBQ zone
- 8 Sports beach
- 9 Leisure beach
- 10 Ecology

Where relevant, proposals must demonstrate that they align with any relevant design guides prepared as part of the Ryde HAZ project.

**8.112** This policy builds on the aspirations and objectives set out in the community led [Ryde Place Plan \(iwhaz.uk\)](#). The council does not intend to be prescriptive over the kind of development that could improve the opportunity zones. Specific proposals could come forward individually, or as part of a wider scheme. However, in order to guide any development proposals, the general aspirations for each of the zones to support the achievement of the town's potential are set out below. The different zones identified in the policy are shown on the Policies Map. Whilst the term development is used, it is not necessarily expected that this will be in the form of large scale buildings, but it could be small-scale improvements that are standalone and self (or community) funded projects.

**8.113** Ryde Old Town (area RT1(1)) is an area where there are improvements made to the shopping and visitor experience. Improvements could be made in a range of different ways, but are likely to involve enhancing local character, existing heritage assets of the town and the existing public realm. It is also likely that the introduction of new public realm would contribute to meeting local aspirations. It is not necessarily expected the proposals and schemes would need to be grandiose or extensive in nature and could focus on discreet areas or serve to link separate sections of the area.



- 8.114** RT1(2) is the town square, where there is the aspiration for it to become an increasingly important focal point for the community. Improvements here could be, or be linked to, improvements in facilities that would benefit residents and visitors. It is considered that the area would also benefit from co-ordinated improvements in the public realm, where a clear and distinctive palette of materials could be used drawing on the town's heritage. A link from this area to Eastern Gardens and the Esplanade beyond, the pier and Union Street is also an aspiration.
- 8.115** The Town Beach (RT1(3) on the policies map) is an area where the community-led aspiration is for it to be restored to its former glory. By doing so it is expected that the beach would provide a 'short-visit' facility where visitors benefit from being in close proximity to improved links to the town's retail offer.
- 8.116** RT1(4) is known as the Waterfront, which broadly includes the current harbour area along with car parking and the ice rink. The aspiration for the area is to see it develop a mix of tourism, leisure and retail offers. Key to the success of such an area will be the maximisation of its visual outlook, both to and from the area.
- 8.117** Within the gardens area (RT1(5)) there is the aspiration to create a vibrant and attractive environment that, through a green corridor, links the Western and Eastern Gardens and beyond, the town to the beach. It is envisaged that achieving this will offer a higher end visitor experience.
- 8.118** The beach area, which is split into several zones, is a significant asset to the town that could be utilised even more to the benefit of the town. It is the aspiration that each zone of the beach could be dedicated to specific uses or users covering a family beach (RT1(6)), a BBQ zone (RT1(7)), a sports beach (RT1(8)) and a leisure beach (RT1(9)). It is not anticipated that all improvements that could contribute to achieving this aspiration will need planning permission, and as already outlined that not all proposals will be 'big' schemes requiring significant levels of development.
- 8.119** The final area is identified as ecology (RT1(10)), which reflects Ryde Sand's international designations and importance for overwintering birds. A key aspiration in this area is to manage the interface between humans and wildlife and to ensure that recreational impacts are avoided, and where required mitigated. Part of the approach will be raising the awareness of the significance of the area and the important role it plays.

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

- The environment and unique island characteristics are celebrated.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.