

Section 6: Growth



Our approach towards sustainable development and growth

- 6.1** Planning plays a major role in enabling sustainable development, which is the central pillar of the national planning policy framework (NPPF). This is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.2** The Government expects the planning system to actively encourage growth, giving local people the opportunity to shape communities while providing sufficient housing to meet local need and supporting economic activity. This approach is entirely consistent with the council's vision and aspirations for the Island. In this context, it is important that the planning system does everything possible to support economic growth and sustainable development, an issue heightened by the recent Covid-19 pandemic and the need for businesses to be supported during the recovery period.
- 6.3** Ensuring that all development on the Island is sustainable and delivers what we need and where we need it is crucially important to everyone on the Isle of Wight. The policies in this part of the plan are designed to give clear direction on how the council intends to achieve this.
- 6.4** Our approach towards sustainable development and growth is complemented by the nationally established presumption in favour of sustainable development that is set out in the NPPF and gives a clear commitment to sustainable development. What this means in terms of where development will be located on the island is set out in **priority locations for development and growth**.
- 6.5** There is also a responsibility to ensuring that development is viable and can deliver what is required by the policies of this plan. The approach is explained in **developer contributions** and **managing viability**. If planning permission is granted, the council want to see it delivered. Council powers are limited on this front, but **ensuring planning permissions are delivered** provides a clear message to the development community over what is expected in terms of delivery.

- 6.6 The policies confirm that the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF. The draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS), when read as a whole, includes policies that provide an interpretation of what sustainable development means for the Isle of Wight. This includes policies that indicate where development would be restricted, for example relating to protected sites, designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.

G1

Our approach towards sustainable development and growth

To contribute to achieving the council's vision for the Island, new development will be of the highest possible design quality that contributes to a strong sense of place. It will be located in the most sustainable settlements on the Island, and through managed growth a number of settlements will see their sustainability improve.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in the IPS (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Once granted, planning permissions are expected to be delivered in a timely fashion.

The council will seek to deliver the island realistic housing requirement over the plan period to 2038, through allocated housing sites, windfall sites and those already with planning permission with the majority being built on previously developed land. The allocations offer a range of sites of differing scales and delivery rates, with a focus on smaller and medium sized developments. These will be complemented by key priority sites allocated at Camp Hill and Newport Harbour.

Job creation opportunities will be provided through employment site allocations, support for intensification and expansion of existing industrial estates and by facilitating home working. The role of town centres will be strengthened through the provision of appropriate retail and commercial floorspace and support for businesses to be flexible and agile. By locating development in the most sustainable locations the need to travel will be reduced.

To facilitate travel on the Island, improvements to the existing road network, particularly in Newport are planned and a crossing over the River Medina is being investigated. The provision of a multi-user route between the West Wight and Newport and the completion of the East Cowes to Newport multi-user route will help facilitate more journeys by sustainable modes of transport.

The health and wellbeing needs of Island residents are recognised through the planning system. People are able to live independently for as long as possible, with appropriate access to medical facilities and the ability to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

The high-quality environment and natural resources are assets that will be protected, enhanced where appropriate and celebrated, by locating development away from the most sensitive and important features and areas. If required appropriate mitigation should be provided.

Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, the council will grant permission unless:

- 1 the application of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- 2 any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Framework as a whole.

- 6.7** The policy sets out a clear statement of what the council considers sustainable development and growth will look like on the Island over the plan period. It takes its cue from national policies and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and couples these with the local issues that have been identified by evidence collecting and through public consultation and engagement.
- 6.8** The prime focus of the plan is on delivery and what is achievable and practicable given the island's detachment from the mainland and the additional costs and uncertainties that come with this. There is a focus on meeting island needs, particularly housing, using previously developed land and on seeking development that is realistically achievable. It is also essential for the policies of the plan to provide a flexible environment that allows both the community and businesses to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and also to respond to some of the social changes that will occur as a result of this period.
- 6.9** Where solutions cannot be achieved through negotiation planning applications will be refused. The use of pre application advice is encouraged in the case of large or complex applications, planning performance agreements may be considered.
- 6.10** The council will engage positively with statutory consultees and infrastructure providers to identify ways to support the delivery of sustainable development. To support this process, applications should be accompanied by appropriate supporting information to enable a positive and timely determination. This will be greatly assisted where applicants actively engage in pre-application discussions with the local community, the council and other consultees.
- 6.11** Where there are breaches of planning control, enforcement action will be taken where justified following the guidelines set out in the council's planning enforcement policy plan.
- 6.12** The policies of the plan, either individually or as a whole, will contribute to achieving sustainable development, and the spatial elements of the approach set out in the above policy are summarised on the key diagram.

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.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fulfil their potential.
- A well-educated and skilled community.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- The community feels safe and is the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.
- Vulnerable people are supported and protected

Priority locations for development and growth

G2

Priority locations for development and growth

The focus for sustainable growth is within the settlement boundaries of the island's primary and secondary settlements and the rural service centres:

Primary settlements: Cowes, East Cowes, Newport, The Bay (Sandown, Lake and Shanklin) and Ryde.

Secondary settlements: Bembridge, The West Wight (Freshwater and Totland), Wootton and Ventnor

Rural service centres: Arreton, Brading, Brighstone, Godshill, Niton, Rookley, St Helens, Wroxall and Yarmouth

Development in sustainable rural settlements will be carefully managed and will only take place where it improves their sustainability and addresses local need through exception sites:

Sustainable rural settlements: Calbourne, Chale Green, Havenstreet, Nettlestone, Newchurch, Seaview, Shalfleet, Wellow and Whitwell

Development proposals for non-allocated sites will be expected to:

- a** be located within the settlement boundaries of the Primary Settlements, Secondary Settlements and Rural Service Centres (as shown on the Policies Map);
- b** clearly contribute to delivering the Island's identified housing need, economic aspirations or achieving Island-wide regeneration aspirations; and
- c** make as much use as possible of previously developed land in line with H9; and
- d** deliver all policy requirements of the Island Planning Strategy.

Outside the defined settlement boundaries, proposals for development will only be supported if they accord with H4 – infill opportunities outside settlement boundaries, H6 – housing in the countryside and H7 rural and first home exception sites.

- 6.13** This approach is about ensuring the right level of development takes place in the right places. The policy seeks to direct new development to settlements that are already considered sustainable (where there are services, facilities, homes and jobs, and where there are the most sustainable modes of transport), or settlements where planned growth will enable them to become more sustainable.
- 6.14** The settlements identified as primary settlements, secondary settlements and rural service centres all have settlement boundaries, and development located within these will be prioritised. Amendments have been made to some of the current settlement boundaries to incorporate allocated sites, and these can be viewed on the draft policies map.

- 6.15** The location of a potential development site within a settlement boundary is the first test in establishing the suitability of a site, in principle, for development. Once this principle is established more detailed issues covered by other policies in the IPS such as design, density and potential impact on the surrounding area are considered. If, on the planning balance, the development proposal is unacceptable in relation to these detailed issues it will be refused.
- 6.16** The council has proposed allocating sites for housing, employment and mixed-use schemes. Through this plan-led approach sites have been identified which are known to be available and deliverable. By growing settlements in this way, growth can be managed, and the proposed allocations provide certainty to all. However, the policy approach allows non-allocated sites to be considered. This ensures that there is a continuous and deliverable pipeline of developments to meet the island's housing needs and reflects the fact that the housing number in the plan is a minimum rather than a target or ceiling.
- 6.17** Sustainable rural settlements will not have settlement boundaries, as the council wishes to improve their sustainability through carefully managed growth focused on exception sites in line with H7 rather than through speculative development. No site allocations are made in these settlements.
- 6.18** Proposals for residential development on non-allocated sites should demonstrate how they meet the criteria in policy H3, together with other policy requirements of the plan. It is important that such proposals provide the right type, size, mix and tenure of housing in line with policies H5 and H8. This can be identified through a variety of sources, particularly the most recent housing needs assessment and local housing needs surveys. Evidence can also be supplied by the applicant, relating to localised issues that may not be picked up in the housing needs assessment and local housing needs surveys.
- 6.19** The council recognises that the provision of an element of 'aspirational' housing improves the island's ability to attract professional workers and higher income groups. This can include all dwelling sizes and costs, but factors such as the physical environment of the area and the availability of good schools are attractive. The council will support in principle proposals that bring forward such a housing offer, in line with our housing mix policies and other relevant policies of the plan.
- 6.20** The council wishes to use land effectively and development proposals should make as much use as possible of previously developed land. The council will use the definition of previously developed land set out in the glossary of this document unless the definition is updated at a national level.

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.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.

Developer contributions

G3

Developer contributions

The council will work in partnership with other public sector providers, utility companies and developers to ensure that development provides high quality infrastructure commensurate with the scale of the development and the needs of different communities across the Island.

The council will support development proposals which secure the necessary related infrastructure to make the development acceptable in planning terms, are directly related to the development and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

The council will seek provision of the following infrastructure where necessary:

- 1** Affordable Housing.
- 2** Highway infrastructure, including the provision of sustainable transport routes and facilities. Where relevant, contributions or provision shall relate to projects that have been identified through the council's infrastructure delivery plan and detailed junction design work related to it.
- 3** Ecological/environmental mitigation and/or compensation including, but not restricted to, the Solent special protection area (SPA) Solent recreation mitigation strategy, demonstration of nitrogen neutrality and Biodiversity net gain.
- 4** Provision of educational infrastructure. This requirement applies to housing developments of 10 dwellings or more.
- 5** Provision of health infrastructure. This requirement applies to developments of 10 dwellings or more.
- 6** Coastal and flood risk reduction, water management.
- 7** Provision of digital infrastructure.
- 8** Open space, SANGs, cultural, public realm provision, community and sports infrastructure/ facilities.

An applicant is expected to provide evidence that dialogue has taken place with relevant infrastructure providers. The above infrastructure will be secured through planning conditions, planning obligations or on-site delivery.

- 6.21** The delivery of good quality infrastructure underpins the social, economic and environmental regeneration envisaged by the council over the plan period. It is essential for the Island's population to have confidence in the key infrastructure needed, such as safe and sustainable means of transport, access to housing for all, high quality areas for recreation and relaxation, ecological mitigation and other infrastructure required to support sustainable development.
- 6.22** New development can place additional burdens on existing infrastructure or create a requirement for wholly new infrastructure. Therefore, developments will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of the infrastructure needed to support growth on the Island, as required by the relevant policies within the draft IPS.
- 6.23** While the council will expect developers to provide the infrastructure required to deliver sustainable development, an open book viability assessment of a development should be provided in circumstances where the requirements of the policies within the plan may not be met. The assessment should outline why each requirement cannot be met in full. The council will publish this information and expect developers to meet the council's full costs for evaluating the open book viability assessment.
- 6.24** The types of contribution (either financial or actual) that may be required for development may vary, depending on the location, type or constraints to proposed development.
- 6.25** It should be noted that in accordance with Bird-aware Solent guidance, housing developments within a 5.6km radius of the Solent and Southampton Waters special protection area should provide the relevant contribution towards mitigating the recreational impact of additional housing on the designated site, unless suitable alternative mitigation is provided in agreement with Natural England.
- 6.26** Developments must also demonstrate biodiversity net gain through the completion of a biodiversity metric to submitted as part of any planning application. Where relevant, applications with a net gain of residential dwellings or tourist accommodation must demonstrate nitrogen neutrality in line with the council position statement and latest guidance from Natural England.
- 6.27** The council will explore all the mechanisms available to ensure delivery of infrastructure but because of changes expected to the collection of developer contributions the council has no current plans to introduce CIL.

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.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fulfil their potential.

- A well-educated and skilled community.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.
- Vulnerable people are supported and protected

Managing viability

G4

Managing viability

Should an open book viability assessment demonstrate that a proposal cannot provide the requirements of this plan, the council will work with applicants to understand whether any of the following approaches would be appropriate to facilitate the delivery of the site:

- 1** Securing public subsidy.
- 2** Flexibility in the affordable housing tenure, type and size mix.
- 3** Changes to the density of the proposal.
- 4** Re-phasing the proposal.
- 5** Deferment of the delivery of the plan requirements.
- 6** Reducing the policy requirements.

If none of the above are considered appropriate the council will refuse the application. Where the council requires the input of independent viability consultants to review the submitted assessment, these costs will be met by the applicant.

Any viability assessments submitted to the council, and the findings of any review of these will be made publicly available.

- 6.28** Through the policies of this plan the council is clear about what development will be expected to deliver, and it is reasonable to expect that those buying and selling land will take into account the requirements of this plan when undertaking valuations. However, it is also recognised that it may not always be possible to deliver the full requirements of the plan, for a number of reasons, for example, where previously unidentified land contamination is identified.

- 6.29** The council are fully committed to ensuring the delivery of housing and supports the delivery of development proposals that meet the requirements of this plan. While it will consider alternative approaches, should a scheme be clearly evidenced as not being viable, and the proposals to overcome this issue dilute the plan requirements to such an extent the proposal is unacceptable, it will be refused.
- 6.30** It is recognised that the assessment of viability on a site-by-site basis can cause uncertainty and delay, increasing land prices and undermine the delivery of this plan and the council's objectives. There are inherent difficulties in the assessment of viability at the application stage given input uncertainty and the sensitivity of viability appraisals to small changes in assumptions. Proposals requiring a viability appraisal will be carefully examined to ensure genuine barriers to delivery exist.
- 6.31** It is expected that the viability testing of a specific scheme should only be necessary where there are clear barriers to delivery that would make the delivery of obligations unviable. This will speed up the planning process and increase certainty for applicants and planning authorities, while supporting the implementation of planning policies and the delivery of sustainable development.
- 6.32** The council has undertaken a whole plan viability assessment for the development envisaged over the plan period. The assessment was originally undertaken in 2018 and updated in 2021, therefore land values and development costs are based on the rates available at that time. The viability assessment provides a high-level overview that allows the council to set realistic requirements for developer contributions and expectations for infrastructure. These will form the basis of negotiations with developers and landowners.
- 6.33** If an applicant wishes to make the case that viability should be considered on a site-specific basis, they should provide clear evidence of the specific issues that would prevent delivery, in line with relevant policies of this plan. Such issues should be raised through the council's pre-application advice service, prior to the submission of an application.
- 6.34** Where it is accepted that viability of a specific site should be considered as part of an application, the council will determine the weight to be given to a viability assessment alongside other material considerations, in order to ensure that the development remains acceptable in planning terms.

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.
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination.
- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fulfil their potential.

- A well-educated and skilled community.
- Community needs are met by the best public services possible.
- The community feels safe and the Island is resilient.
- People take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.
- Vulnerable people are supported and protected.

Ensuring planning permissions are delivered

G5

Ensuring planning permissions are delivered

The council expects to see development starting as soon as possible, once planning permission has been granted.

When dealing with applications where planning permission has previously been granted but has expired, or is soon to expire, the council will not approve the application unless sufficient evidence is provided that the site is deliverable, and an explicit start date is provided. In most circumstances if a further permission is granted the consent will only be valid for a further year.

For all major development proposals, the council will:

- a** require a delivery timetable to be provided as part of the planning application;
- b** impose a planning condition or legal agreement clause requiring development to be delivered in line with the submitted delivery timetable which must begin within a timescale shorter than the relevant default period;
- c** continually review how it might work with developers to ensure the delivery of the site;
- d** require a masterplan to demonstrate that different products on a site can compete in the market, at the same time, in the same location to maximise delivery;
- e** require a statement setting out the type, scale and results of public consultation carried out in advance of submission.

Where all reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the build-out on stalled sites, the council will actively use its compulsory purchase powers to support delivery.

- 6.35** There are over 1,500 dwellings consented across the Island which are yet to be commenced, albeit this is not a situation that is unique to the Isle of Wight nor significantly worse than authorities of a similar size. Given our delivery focus in the plan, it is however considered necessary to have a policy in place to strongly encourage the implementation of permissions. The council wants to discourage proposals where the failure to implement previous permissions suggests that there is no intention to build, or where there are insurmountable barriers to delivery on the site.
- 6.36** When considering further applications following the expiry, or impending expiry of planning permission for housing developments, it will be necessary for evidence to be submitted demonstrating the reason why the consent has not been implemented within the three years of the conditions of the permission.
- 6.37** Where planning permission is granted, the council expects to see development starting as soon as possible in line with a delivery timetable submitted as part of any application. The NPPF defines that for a site to be considered deliverable, they should be available now. If a site has not come forward in a three-year period it must be questioned whether it is deliverable. An exception to this may be if the delay in delivery has been down to a civil matter or consenting regime outside of the applicant's control, which at the time of the re-submission has been resolved.
- 6.38** A further consent, if granted would have a shorter time period to expedite the development. If it does not commence and meet an agreed delivery timetable within this period, a further permission should not be granted, unless circumstances change.
- 6.39** When considering the content of delivery timetables, the council will consider the track record of the applicant and/or agent on similar schemes they have submitted and/or gained consent for particularly on the Island. This is not about deterring new entrants to the housing market, but about understanding whether an applicant and/or agent's track record of strong or poor delivery may be relevant when considering the reliability of the delivery timetable.
- 6.40** To help ensure that proposals for development are implemented in a timely manner, the council will consider imposing a planning condition providing that development must begin within a timescale shorter than the relevant default period, where this would expedite the development without threatening its deliverability or viability.
- 6.41** The council will look to work with developers in a pro-active and positive manner to facilitate and support the delivery of permitted development sites and site allocations in the plan. This could range from help with unlocking infrastructure challenges through to innovative approaches such as land swap deals and could be provided by a range of council departments.

6.42 The council will also expect major development proposals to be the subject of meaningful pre-application public consultation to ascertain community feedback on the scheme. Details of the consultation undertaken and how the comments have helped shaped the application submitted should be provided. Engaging with the community as a scheme is put together can often assist with removing barriers to delivery after planning permission is granted.

6.43 To ensure stalled sites are built, once all other reasonable avenues for the delivery of sites have been explored, including taking any enforcement action following the guidelines set out in the council's planning enforcement policy plan, the council will actively use its compulsory purchase powers to intervene to support the delivery of the site.

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

- Businesses have the confidence to invest.
- People have a place to call home and can live with independence.