

IPSR39 - STATEMENT ON MATTER 3
SPATIAL STRATEGY

Inspector's question 3.4 Are there any reasonable alternative spatial strategies for the Island? If so, have these been appropriately considered as part of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment process?

Response: A significant increase of electricity usage on the island is inevitable as fossil fuels reduce as confirmed by Centrica's 2025 announcement of low gas capacity. This together with increased demand due to population increases, emerging requirements for data centres, EV charging, Council's own emphasis on digital etc., increases the urgency of the Council's declared objective for local energy self sufficiency. Large scale local renewable energy infrastructure is urgent. Existing housing stock and buildings on the island built in the 1950's/1960's have roofs that are unlikely to support solar panels without refurbishment. Recent County Press coverage of Aerospace company GKN's usage of open land for solar panels, due to inadequate roofing, is an example of existing large scale non residential roofing structure unable to support solar panels. Allocation of open land for renewable energy generation, is therefore the most effective way of meeting urgent/future demand.

The Spatial Strategy fails to allocate open land for large scale local renewable energy generation, leaving a deficit of required renewable energy generation, for the plan period, and near future. Energy security is essential for economic growth; failure to allocate land for sufficient renewable energy generation, fails the Council key objective of self sufficiency in energy. The formulation of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) pre dates the lifting of the ban on onshore wind turbines by the new government, and therefore did not consider placement of onshore wind turbines. The ISA also pre dates recent stronger winds due to climate change. Regulation 19 responses pre dated these significant changes. The changes are very relevant to an Island with so much potential for renewable energy generation using open land and with the Vesta Wind Turbine Blade Factory (recently saved by government funding), set to benefit from national investment in on shore wind turbines - provided land is allocated for wind turbine placement.

Inspector's Question 3.12 (Is the distribution of proposed employment in policy E1 justified ... and will it be effective in supporting the Island's economic objectives over the plan period? Is the plan releasing the right type and amount of land for the employment needs (Class E office, B2 and B8) identified?

Response: The IPS is not allocating the right type and amount of land for employment needs. As an alternative to employment allocation site EA6, and following the sequential hierarchy for employment distribution, there is an urgent case for regenerating employment in Sandown town centre and surrounding area. There is disused brownfield land, and various semi derelict/neglected hotels and other buildings in Sandown High Street and its coastal environs. That area is appropriate for employment allocation, benefiting already from significant public transport infrastructure. The designation of employment on a greenfield site, is detrimental to the needs of Sandown High Street and its environs. The town centre area is shocking to tourists, requiring urgent attention. For years, necessary and urgent intervention has been required, using Council resources and that of other agencies including fire and police, have been required for a number of neglected large hotels and other buildings in this area. Some development of residential mixed with office space, indoor leisure/eating facilities, would increase footfall and regenerate Sandown High Street and environs; which are currently displaying boarded up windows, shocking to tourists, requiring attention. Mixed development would appear to be in line with NPPF Section 7 ss.90.d and ss.90.f. The site of EA6 is an example of an appropriate site for renewable energy generation. Renewable energy generation infrastructure would not interfere significantly with the 2.9 hectares of permeable surface, and so would not present flood risk to a vital road and housing and business opposite, which stand at lower ground level. Renewable energy generation would not interfere with every day traffic including the important number 8 bus.

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Inspector's question 3.13 Is the distribution of employment land allocations in Policy E1 consistent with the Spatial Strategy for growth in Policy G2 and otherwise aligned with housing growth to support sustainable patterns of growth?

Response: The allocation of site EA6 is not aligned with housing growth or supporting sustainable patterns of growth as its location is inappropriate to both housing and offices/industrial units as it can not support either sustainable housing/office/industrial infrastructure, or sufficient sustainable transport. The risk of traffic accident/delay and/or flooding is considerable.

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