

1 INTRODUCTION

What is the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)?

1.1 This plan provides the strategic and detailed framework to encourage and guide development on the Island and to protect and enhance the environment. The plan brings forward proposals for the use and development of land and, when adopted, will replace all existing statutory structure and local plans on the Island.

1.2 Unitary Development Plans are a relatively new format of development plan first introduced in 1986 for metropolitan authorities. The Isle of Wight was the first shire authority to be given the power to produce a UDP following the creation of the Unitary Authority in April 1995. (While the UDP is primarily concerned with land use and transportation matters, these have to be set in their wider economic and social context).

Why a UDP?

1.3 The UDP is being produced due to the change in Local Government Structure on the Island. Under the previous arrangement of a County and two District Councils there was a two-tier plan system consisting of the Structure Plan (produced by the County), and local plans (produced by South Wight and Medina Borough Councils). Until April 1995 the Island Planning Unit was engaged in a review of the 1988 Replacement Structure Plan, and a number of stages of consultation had been carried out resulting in the production of a Deposit Draft Structure Plan in October 1994. It was intended to progress this plan to Public Inquiry, however the subsequent change in legislation meant it could not be taken further. This did not mean that work carried out on the Structure Plan was lost or wasted. With the level of consensus that had been reached on its broad principles, that document has been taken as the starting point for the UDP. This approach was endorsed by the Isle of Wight Council in June 1995.

What Does the UDP Contain?

1.4 The legislation contained within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and advice set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance, states that the UDP must contain two distinct sections:

Part I: a broad development and land use strategy in which strategic land use policies provide the framework for the detailed Part II. This part of the plan looks at a period of up to 15 years ahead.

Part II: a justification of these broad aims with more detailed policies, proposals and guidance. This part of the plan looks at a period of up to ten years ahead. The Plan is set out on a topic by topic basis, with each subject containing distinct policies and reasoned justification.

1.5 The document also contains a proposals map (produced on 8 separate sheets), identifying those sites or areas of land likely to be developed during the period, and the constraints on development. Each chapter has an introduction giving the policy background. All policies should be read in conjunction with each other, but with particular attention to the General Development Policy G Section, which covers the principles of development as a whole.

How to use the Plan

1.6 People concerned with the broad strategy for development on the Island should consult Part I of the plan. Those interested in a particular site or building will need to refer to the proposals map which will indicate if it is covered by a policy or proposal in Part II of the plan. Some development proposals will have site specific policies relevant to them, while others will be covered by general policies only. The various appendices and supplementary guidance which accompany the plan should also be consulted.

Use of Normally in Policy Wording

1.7 In the consultation draft of the UDP, the word normally appeared in a large number of policies, indicating the local authority was prepared to apply such policies flexibly, where justified. Through plan inquiries and case law, practice has now determined that normally does not make clear the circumstances in which the policy may or may not apply. As a consequence of this, the Council has now reviewed the wording of all its policies for the Deposit Draft version of the UDP and has decided to delete the word normally, leaving specific criteria to define the requirements with which any proposals will need to comply.

1.8 The Council has also removed all cross-references in the policies as Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, now makes it clear that all policies are applicable and the plan should be considered in its entirety when evaluating planning proposals.

What Happens Next?

1.9 Following Council consideration of the representations received to the consultation draft plan, this deposit version has been prepared. Residents, interest groups and developers are now being asked for their views on the plan. There is a statutory six week public consultation period for objections to be received. If these cannot be resolved, a Public Inquiry into the plan will take place before an independent planning

inspector.

1.10 Following the Public Inquiry the inspector may propose modifications to the plan which are then advertised. If these are acceptable, the Council will issue a notice of intent to adopt the plan. The UDP does not need the approval of the Secretary of State, however he does retain the power to call in the plan if he feels it has not properly taken into account relevant Government guidance.

Other Policy Documents

1.11 The UDP is one of the Council's key corporate plans and strategy statements. Because of its statutory nature and lifespan, it will form the basis for the development of other Council policies and proposals. In preparing the plan, however, other Council documents have been taken into account including:

The Transport Policy and Programme.
The IW Tourism Strategy.
The Island Regeneration Strategy.

Timescale and Review

1.12 The table below gives an approximate indication of the expected timescale for the preparation and adoption of the UDP. This timetable will vary according to the number of objections, the length of the Public Inquiry or any unforeseen circumstances.

1.13 Policies and proposals are intended to cover the period up to 2011, which is the

o	21 March 1997	Approval by the Planning Committee of the Deposit Draft Plan
o	2 May 1997	Publication of the Deposit Draft Plan
o	2 May - 13 June 1997	Consultation Period
o	Nov-Jan 1997	Committee consideration of the objections/proposed amendments
o	March 1998	Pre Inquiry meeting
o	May 1998	Start of Public Inquiry
o	February 1999	Inquiry report
o	March 1999	Consideration of Inquiry report by Committee

lifespan of the plan. It is recognised that there is a need to review and keep the plan up to date and on this basis the Council will consider the need to make interim changes, or undertake a full review of the plan, in light of changing planning trends and issues, which affect the use and development of land.

Policy Context

Development Plans

1.14 The UDP has evolved from the broad land use principles established in existing structure and local plans, together with interim policies approved and operated by the Borough Councils and now endorsed for development control purposes by the IW Council. Until the Unitary Development Plan is adopted, the existing two tier system of Structure Plan and Local Plans will remain the basis of the statutory development plan

for the Island.

1.15 The current Structure Plan is an Islandwide document and was produced by the former Isle of Wight County Council. It replaced an earlier plan approved in 1976. It contains strategic policies, and a key diagram which provide the framework for local plans. The Replacement Structure Plan was approved in 1988.

1.16 Local plans were produced by the former Medina and South Wight Borough Councils. They set out detailed policies to guide development in particular areas and include proposals for specific sites, which are shown on the proposals map. There are currently six local plans in force on the Island, which give almost complete local plan coverage. Details of the plan areas are as follows:

Within the former Medina area there is also a non-statutory Newport, Wootton and

Former South Wight Area	- West Wight District Plan	- adopted 1984
	- South East Wight Local Plan	- adopted 1988
	- Rural Areas Local Plan	- adopted 1990
Former Medina Area	- Newport Local Plan	- adopted 1982
	- Cowes Local Plan	- adopted 1988
	- North East Wight Local Plan	- adopted 1988

Fishbourne Planning Policy Review (1992). This has now been superseded by the provisions of this plan.

1.17 The change from structure and local plans to a UDP has also coincided with the increasing importance of the development plan in the planning process. Whereas previously the development plan was one of a number of considerations to be taken into account when deciding planning applications, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 54A, clearly establishes it as the main consideration against which all proposals should first be considered.

Previous Consultation

1.18 Review of the Development Plan began with the Island 2000 Exhibition, which was staged at the end of 1992. An explanatory newspaper and questionnaire was circulated to around 35,000 homes, and the exhibition was visited by over 5,000 people. This process was not a formal or statutory part of the plan preparation

procedure, but it did allow for representations to be made and opinions to be put before the drafting of the plan began. It also assisted in highlighting the importance of the plan and the need for the public to become involved in the production of the statutory document.

1.19 In September 1993, a consultation draft of the Structure Plan was prepared and distributed in a magazine format, as an insert in the County Press. The closing date for comments was 6 December 1993, although this was subsequently extended until the end of the year. Over 300 objections, comments and suggestions were received, ranging from individual comments on single policies to summary reports covering specific topics. Responses were made to all consultees and the relevant comments incorporated into a revised version of the plan.

1.20 The Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan was formally placed on deposit for six weeks from 2 September 1994 to 14 October 1994, and over 150 comments were received. Under normal circumstances, the

next stage of the Structure Plan preparation would have been for representations to be taken forward and considered at the formal Examination in Public (EIP). Local Government reorganisation changed the process however, as detailed above.

1.21 The consultation draft of the UDP was published in February 1996 and made available for inspection over an 8 week period. Some 3,000 comments were received from over 1,400 respondents. Following consideration of these responses, this Deposit Draft version has been produced.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs)

1.22 The PPGs are a series of 24 guidance documents issued by the DOE, on a variety of subjects (see Appendix K). The UDP must take this guidance into account. Policy which is clearly contrary to government advice in PPGs may result in the plan being called in, unless locally there are very strong reasons to justify why such advice is not appropriate.

Minerals Planning Guidance (MPGs)

1.23 As with PPGs these provide the government's views on the extraction of minerals and have to be taken into account when formulating minerals policies.

Regional Guidance/SERPLAN

1.24 The UDP also has to consider the role of the Island within the region. As a member of SERPLAN (South East Regional Planning Conference) the Island contributes to the needs of the South East Region in terms of regional economic and housing growth, as well as the principles for environmental protection. For example, as well as providing housing to meet our own needs, the Island is also required to contribute to its share of the region's requirements

European Links

1.25 In addition to being part of the South East and the UK, the Island is also looking to develop improved links with continental Europe. The Council already has a successful track record in attracting funding from the European Commission, and has now opened an office in Brussels, which is jointly funded with Hampshire and Dorset. The office will be central to maintaining European links and ensuring that we continue to secure resources to support regeneration initiatives.

Implementation and Financial Resources

1.26 The resources of the local authority for implementing proposals of the plan are likely to remain extremely limited. It is therefore important that a range of options are available to bring forward appropriate development. The Council will seek to implement the proposals of the plan through a combination of the following:

- as Local Planning Authority the Council will determine planning applications and guide development.
- utilising planning powers to encourage mixed development and cross-subsidisation.
- being proactive in seeking grant aid/assistance from Government, European Union (EU), Rural Development Commission (RDC) and other agencies.
- by direct or indirect investment as landowner and enabler in conjunction and partnership with the private sector.
- by assistance through grants and other powers.
- by lobbying agencies that provide the Island with essential services (ferries, Southern Water, Health Authority etc) in order to allocate resources or make changes in service delivery to the benefit of the whole Island.

- o by developing its data-bases and field information on the extent, character and sustainability of the Island's natural and historic resources.
- o by adopting policies geared towards encouraging development.

Where appropriate the Council will enter into joint agreements (particularly in the provision of infrastructure)

1.27 The Council recognises that the scope for achieving development on the Island will depend on a number of factors including;

- o Government controls and guidance on national and local spending.
- o existing commitments to development.
- o the national economic climate.
- o the availability of grants and funding from other sources.
- o effective marketing of the Island as a tourist and business location.

1.28 The UDP is a necessary tool to ensure a consistent approach to development across the Island. The Council implements the policies established in the UDP through its development control powers in dealing with planning applications. It should be remembered that planning powers cannot ensure that development which is approved will be either built or occupied.

consult with public and appropriate bodies and agencies, including the statutory port operators and other statutory undertakers, in formulating its decisions. It should also be remembered that planning approval does not exempt any scheme from the powers of other legislation and authorities, including building regulations, fire, means of escape, water supply, environmental health, highways etc.

1.29 As part of this process the Council will

Island Regeneration Strategy

To fulfill its requirements under the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act Part III, the Isle of Wight Council is in the process of writing an economic strategy. The Island Regeneration Strategy (IRS) is being prepared in partnership with key economic agencies on the Island - Wight Training and Enterprise, Chamber of Commerce and Trade, Isle of Wight College, Rural Development Commission, Rural Community Council, Island Volunteers and the wider private sector. The IRS aims to create a new strategic direction for the Island, based on a shared vision and providing a coherent and integrated programme of economic regeneration. Our partnership vision is to "Provide wealth creation and quality jobs whilst widening personal choice and opportunity". In December 1995, the Council's bid for SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) funding was successful. A total of £6 million is available to spend on specific projects over a 7-year period. This was followed in December 1996 by an £8.2 million award from the Capital Challenge Programme. The Partnership will continue to build upon these earlier successes.

