

# Our Plan for Growth

Local Economic Development

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**Executive Summary**  
**2019-2021**

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Isle of opportunities –  
*delivering regeneration*

# Foreword

by the Leader of the Isle of Wight Council

**Welcome to Our Plan for Growth, the economic plan for the Isle of Wight. This plan sets out the Isle of Wight Council's key priorities for growing the local economy sustainably over the next three years and explains how we aim to achieve them.**

**Our Plan for Growth** over the next three years is both innovative and ambitious, and seeks to deliver a clear message that Isle of Wight is ready to do business.

Supporting economic development and investment is a clear priority in our Corporate Plan (2017-2020), where 'Delivering economic growth and prosperity' is a key strategic theme.

The Corporate Plan also includes a number of outcomes relevant to this plan.

- Business have confidence to invest in the Isle of Wight
- Support and stimulate sustainable economic growth
- A well-educated and skilled community
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination
- Outstanding digital and transport connectivity

We have consulted with local stakeholders in the formulation of our key plans and strategies. In consultation we have developed three key priorities to drive growth. These are;

- Strategic sectors and sustainable growth,
- Skills and employability,
- Infrastructure and connectivity.

These priorities are also reflected in the Island's Regeneration Strategy. Economic performance, growth, job creation and investment are all intrinsic to the delivery of our wider regeneration objectives.

The decision to review the Island Plan Core Strategy (2012) follows the manifesto commitment made prior to the local elections held in May 2017. The review will ensure that Island Plan is up-dated, fit for purpose and aligned the Regeneration Strategy.

**Our Plan for Growth** also needs to a sub-regional element, particularly given the development of the new Strategic Economic Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy by the Local Enterprise Partnership.

IMAGE



**Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Business Development**  
Councillor Wayne Whittle  
Isle of Wight Council

**“This plan will enable economic growth, sectoral diversification, employability and skills, regeneration, infrastructure investment and connectivity across the Isle of Wight.”**

# Introduction

## **Our Plan for Growth sets out the Isle of Wight's key priorities for developing the local economy.**

The Plan covers the three year period to 2021 and is aligned with the wider Solent Strategic Economic Plan with the ultimate aim of narrowing the gap in economic performance of the Island and the 'mainland'.

A key aspect of previous plans remains. Given limited local resources, those partners involved in economic development will continue to work together to achieve the desired outcomes. This will mean working at both the local and sub-regional levels, engaging with partners who will have direct responsibility for the delivery of outputs and through the Economic Development Board to ensure that our collective efforts remain aligned with our shared objectives.

The Plan relates to the key strategic documents of our partners, including:

- The updated Solent Strategic Economic Plan (SSEP) and emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)
- The Isle of Wight College – Strategic Aims 2017-2020
- The Chamber of Commerce, 2030 Vision for the Isle of Wight
- Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Island Infrastructure Investment Plan 2018
- Visit Isle of Wight, Isle of Wight Destination Management Plan 2015-2021

The refreshed Plan focuses on parts of the economy that needed to develop or change the most to accelerate growth. This is also set against a backdrop of:

- Exiting the European Union (EU), possibly also the single market and customs union.
- Technological change which is increasingly driving long-term economic growth, with the adoption of new ideas driving productivity gains and is creating "market disruption"; and
- The Industrial Strategy White Paper – Building a Britain Fit for the Future.

The Isle of Wight's economy has performed reasonably strongly in recent years, including growth in a number of specialist higher value sectors particularly where the Island benefits from the presence of leading international businesses.

Productivity levels are generally below the mainland, and there are challenges in terms of educational attainment and skills levels. As an Island economy, the labour market is relatively self-contained, with most residents working locally.

Latest economic forecasts commissioned by the Solent LEP indicate that employment on the Isle of Wight is expected to increase by 4,600 jobs between 2015 and 2036, a growth rate of nearly 8% which is broadly similar to the LEP average.

The Council's Regeneration Strategy sets out the potential to achieve higher levels of growth, to support regeneration of the Island's communities and increase prosperity. Development sites and opportunity areas have been identified across the Island to enable the delivery of new jobs, homes and an increase local revenues. Delivery of additional economic growth will be contingent on key infrastructure investments and in ensuring growth compliments our unique environment.

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# The Isle of Wight: At A Glance

The Isle of Wight needs to be more entrepreneurial, encouraging business start-ups and productivity.

The local economic vision includes an assertion that economic growth will take place as a result of providing an environment that promotes business.

## Key Employment Sectors

Accommodation & food 12%

Wholesale & retail 16%

Construction 4.5%

Manufacturing 9.5%

Professional, scientific & technical 4.5%

## Total Businesses

4,610

*Business base*

## Unemployment Rate

2.2%

*3<sup>rd</sup> highest in Solent*

## Isle of Wight GVA

£2.669 billion

## Area Population

140,300

*6<sup>th</sup> fastest growing council area*

## Total Workforce

80,300

*People of working age*

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# Theme 1: Strategic sectors and sustainable growth

The Isle of Wight is home to a number of specialist higher value sectors, particularly where the Island benefits from the presence of leading 'Tier 1' international businesses.

The private sector has particular strengths in advanced manufacturing, composites engineering, tourism, and retail, as well as the potential for future growth in areas such as digital, creative industries, business services, and green technologies.

This theme recognises that entrepreneurship, business start-up, inward investment, innovation and rural enterprise are all key drivers in further growing the Isle of Wight's economy on a sustainable basis.

It includes a range of business support interventions to help the Isle of Wight's businesses take advantage of all the emerging opportunities. It also seeks to ensure that the Island is recognised as an investment location regionally, nationally and internationally.

## Aims

### 1.1 Foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship

#### Actions:

- Develop an integrated and coordinated approach to business support, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Solent Growth Hub, Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business (FSB).
- Work with partners and key stakeholders to deliver an annual entrepreneurship event.

### 1.2 Support existing 'Tier 1' and growth businesses to drive productivity

#### Actions:

- Develop a formal register of 'Tier 1' strategic businesses and on-going engagement plan.
- Identify opportunities, expertise and career training needs to help retain and grow 'Tier 1' business activities.
- Improve links between research & development (R&D) focused businesses, university partners, UK Research and Innovate UK to support higher productivity growth.
- With Innovate UK, deliver an Island-based, sub-regional innovation event.
- Continue to support supply-chain developments in offshore wind, aerospace and marine.

### 1.3 Promote sustainable development

#### Actions:

- Promote sustainable development, including renewable energy initiatives.
- Support the development and expansion of the currently constrained local grid, increasing capacity through SMART network applications.
- Help business improve resource efficiency through the 'Green Impact Programme'.
- Organise an annual Environmental Conference to explore sustainable business practices.
- Promote the Isle of Wight as a national hub for sustainable development and energy technologies.

## 1.4 Promote further recognition of the Isle of Wight's sectoral strengths

### Actions:

- Work with partners and key stakeholders to organize and deliver an annual digital conference.
- We will develop and implement an Isle of Wight Digital Strategy to maximize the benefits of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence to our economy.
- Promote increased interactions with local universities based on local industrial specialisms and innovations.
- Ensure that the key economic development and regeneration actions are aligned.

## 1.5 Promote Isle of Wight as an investment location

### Actions:

- Liaise with key stakeholders in the co-ordination, development and relaunch of an investment prospectus, to be featured on business facing websites.
- Ensure that the key economic development and regeneration messages are aligned.
- Support and help develop ambassadorial based promotion.
- Rationalise inward investment related websites.
- Align local partners marketing programmes to encourage more investment.
- Work with local and sub-regional partners to promote the wider area and opportunities to international investors.

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# Theme 2:

# Skills and Employability

One of the main drivers of strong economic growth is the availability of a high performing skilled workforce.

This theme seeks to address the skills requirements in our key sectors, while at the same time ensuring that those not in employment or training have the opportunity and support they required to find a job, apprenticeship or training scheme which meets their needs.

Having the skilled workforce to meet the needs of Island based employers is crucial. The vital role of schools, colleges and training providers are central to this objective.

The vital role the public sector plays as an Island employer needs to be recognized with the best workers needed to deliver improved public services.

The regeneration programme can focus on helping address key areas including basic skills, maths and English to appropriate GCSE levels and increasing access to Higher Education.

As well as basic skills, creating the links between young people and the world of business is a key mechanism for raising aspirations of young people and making them aware of the range of work and training opportunities available with Island companies.

## Aims

### 2.1 Address sectoral labour market requirements

#### Actions:

- Promote the take-up of higher Apprenticeships, business related degree level qualifications and STEM subjects.
- Support the further development of the CECAMM by assisting to develop further links with local universities and businesses.
- We will develop social value clauses in all our third party contracts as part of any regeneration or housing development to encourage the creation of more construction apprenticeship positions.
- With-in the new Island Plan we will introduce planning policies that will require skills plans for any relevant developments.

### 2.2 Address training and employment needs

#### Actions:

- Support the further development of pre-Apprenticeship and partner employability programmes
- We will set-up a higher education steering group to drive forward the ambition of creating a consolidated and improved local higher education offer.
- We will continue to support an Annual Careers Fair with the Isle of Wight College, businesses and local training providers.
- We will continue to support the training of our workforce in basic skills acquisition through our adult education arm.

## 2.3 Address productivity constraints through in-job training

### Actions:

- Work with businesses and training providers to develop a plan for an increasing number of Apprenticeship placements and continue to reduce the number of those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).
- We will support businesses to take up the use of the apprenticeship levy and model by example through the creation of apprenticeship positions within the council.

## 2.4 Promote the development of a strong educated skills base

### Actions:

- Advocate for a strong link between education provision and the skills and job requirements of growth areas in-line with the new Regeneration Strategy (2018-2020).
- Lobby for adequate government spend on education and skills.
- Shared market intelligence to inform the planning of employment and skills provision.
- We will engage more young people and businesses in the Enterprise Advisor Network and showcase a wider range of work opportunities.



# Theme 3: Infrastructure and Connectivity

To facilitate growth among indigenous companies and potentially attract new inward investment, the Isle of Wight must have the requisite infrastructure and connectivity in place. Recent consultations have identified a significant number of 'not-spots' with limited 4G mobile phone coverage where-as Gigabit Island will provide a future proofed fibre-optic network.

In addition the need for serviced development land is often stated as being the most important business growth constraint.

The key focus of this theme relates to the work of the Island Transport Infrastructure Taskforce, reporting in July 2017 and the recently adopted Island Infrastructure Investment Plan (May 2018).

Infrastructure investment is one of the five 'foundations of productivity' set out within the Government's Industrial Strategy.

Gigabit Island is an enabling investment, funded 50% by private investment and 50% by the Government's Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund, with the ill support the development of new growth sectors and potentially provide us with a competitive advantage.



## Aims

### 4.1 Develop Strategic Infrastructure

#### Actions:

- Support any new interlinked highways (PFI) and ferry infrastructure improvements.
- Having considered the key recommendations of the Infrastructure Taskforce, work with local partners to agree and adopt the new Island Infrastructure Investment Plan.
- Develop and implement externally funded highways investments to open up regeneration opportunities in Newport.
- Support the continued delivery of legacy projects in Cowes and East Cowes, including at Venture Quays.

### 4.2 Develop Strategic Sites

#### Actions:

- Develop a serviced employment land bank for businesses and inward investors with the completion of business cases for the development of Nicholson Road (Ryde) and Island Technology Park (East Cowes).
- Obtain planning permission for a business park at Nicholson Road, Ryde.
- Maximise and profile opportunities of these sites to attract investment.
- Support the provision of specialist SME incubation space at 'Building 41' on the BAE site in Cowes.
- Complete an investment case and appraisal for the development of a new marine park (employment zone) and associated infrastructure in Cowes harbour.

### 4.3 Maximise opportunities emerging from infrastructure initiatives

#### Actions:

- Ensure synergies between economic development and regeneration activities, in line with the Regeneration Strategy (2018-2030). In terms of the Regeneration Strategy interrelationships will largely be focused on physical regeneration, (employment sites), economically beneficial infrastructure, skills and business development.
- Support for the construction sector to exploit procurement opportunities emerging from capital investments.
- Undertake a review of critical infrastructure (highways, transport, fibre broadband and district heating) in line with the Newport Forest Park - Garden Community proposal.
- Through Gigabit Island explore new, innovative approaches to the delivery of familiar public services in transport, health, social care, emergency and social services.

### 4.4 Improve Broadband and Telecommunications Provision

#### Actions:

- With technology partners, address broadband and mobile 4G 'not-spot' issues.
- Support the government's new Digital Infrastructure Fund investment in the 'Gigabit Island' programme.
- Explore opportunities for businesses to source funding to improve broadband access, coverage and speeds, particularly in rural areas.
- Examine the opportunities arising from the new "digital pledge" to help the council to deliver new online services.
- Stimulate further private investment in next generation technologies including 5G spectrum, FTTP and 4G rural infrastructure.



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# What we aim to achieve **by 2020**

**Local Investment** *totalling*

*£100 million* *minimum*

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**Employment & Training** *opportunities for*

*350* *participants*

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**Jobs Created & Sustained**

*1000* *jobs*

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**Businesses Supported**

*150* *businesses*

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**New Business Starts**

*200* *new businesses*

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## Contact us

Economic Development

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Our Plan for Growth is also available on our website:

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