



## **Preliminary Publicity for the Area Plan for the North and West**

## **Main Consultation Document Paper No. PP1**

Consultation period 16th April 2021 to 25th June 2021

**Cabinet Office**

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## **Foreword - *The start of the Area Plan for the North and West***

The publication of these preliminary publicity documents marks the formal start in the process to deliver the Area Plan for the North and West. Having just been through the Tynwald approval process for the East Plan, I appreciate that the introduction of a new plan can be controversial and the process itself challenging. Nevertheless, it is a process that we must go through from start to end because an up-to-date plan protects land as much it promotes land for development.

In recent months we have taken comfort in the specialness of our Island. We have worked hard for it and we must continue to work hard on matters for the good of our Island. The published documents set about identifying and drawing together the planning issues and matters that the new Plan will address. As the responsible Minister for the Island's planning policy function, I am well aware of the benefits that come with having up to date development plans in place. I am committed to progressing with our plan-making to support the local needs of our economy, our environment and climate change goals, our public services, our infrastructure and the health and social well-being of our communities.

Bringing the Area Plan for the North and West remains one of the priority actions for planning in the Programme for Government 2016-2021.

I appreciate that preparing any development plan takes time, but the procedural requirements exist to ensure transparency and opportunities for full engagement by Government Departments, Local Authorities, land-owners and developers, local interest groups and residents alike. We have gained valuable experience by doing the East Plan and lessons learned are foremost in our minds as we embark on this new plan.

There is no doubt that any draft plan will be shaped by the responses that are received on these preliminary papers, but the Plan will be drafted to be in general conformity with the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016.

Engagement in the process is vital and I would like to encourage everyone with an interest to get involved from the start. Proper engagement is vital and makes for a more rounded and robust plan and ensures matters and sites are fully scrutinised.

We all know our Island is special; we want to ensure this specialness is entwined with sustainability and our future development goals and planning.

**Ray Harmer, MHK**  
**Minister for Policy and Reform**

## **How to comment or find out more about Preliminary Publicity**

1. This document is published alongside others as part of the 'Preliminary Publicity' Stage of the Area Plan for the North and West. This stage sets out publicly the issues that the area plan is to deal with. The findings of the Preliminary Publicity stage will feed into the process of compiling the draft plan. Once the draft area plan has been produced, there will be a further round of consultation.
2. Anyone can make comments/representations on this preliminary consultation and those that wish to do so are invited to set out their views via links on the Government Consultation Hub after reading all of the published documents. They can all be accessed through the Hub: <https://consult.gov.im/>
3. The Area Plan will deal with specific issues in the North and West, address development needs and translate these into 'Proposals' and 'Recommendations.' There may be some matters identified throughout the process which are best considered at an Island-wide level through the Strategic Plan Review and so will not be dealt with via the Area Plan.
4. The deadline for submitting views is 5pm on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021. All forms should be submitted via the Hub. If this is not possible then completed forms can alternatively be emailed to Cabinet Office at [northandwest@gov.im](mailto:northandwest@gov.im) or sent by post to: Planning Policy Team, Cabinet Office, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 3PN.
5. Further information on the Area Plan for the North and West process, as well as other planning documents (including baseline evidence for the Area Plan) and information on other policy projects can be found on the planning policy webpage [www.gov.im/planningpolicy](http://www.gov.im/planningpolicy).

# 1 Introduction – Starting a new Area Plan

## 1.1 What is Preliminary Publicity?

- 1.1.1 Preliminary Publicity is the first formal stage in the preparation of a statutory development plan. It aims to publicise and seek comments on the matters that a particular plan intends to deal with; in this case *The Area Plan for the North and West*. The Cabinet Office has a duty to prepare such plans and work is ongoing to complete a small set of plans which, together with the Strategic Plan, make up the “Island Development Plan”. Following the completion of the North and West Area Plan the Island Development Plan will be made up of two parts as set out below.
- 1.1.2 **A Strategic Plan** - This sets out a broad planning framework and spatial strategy and contains Island-wide written policies. It does not contain maps or allocate land or sites for development.
- 1.1.3 **Three Area Plans - The North and West, The East, and The South** These must be in general conformity with the Strategic Plan. They set out site specific and detailed land use ‘Proposals’, which include the allocation of sites for development and development briefs as well as ‘Recommendations’ on associated matters.
- 1.1.4 The long term aim is to have an updated Strategic Plan and one All-Island Area Plan in operation before 2025.

## 1.2 The Importance of Development Plans

- 1.2.1 Where works constitute “development”, such works (other than permitted development) require a specific planning approval before that development can take place. In deciding whether or not to grant approval for an application, decision makers take into account a number of matters which are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act (1999)<sup>1</sup>. One such matter to be taken account of is the Island Development Plan, meaning the Isle of Man Strategic Plan and any statutory development plan such as an Area Plan.

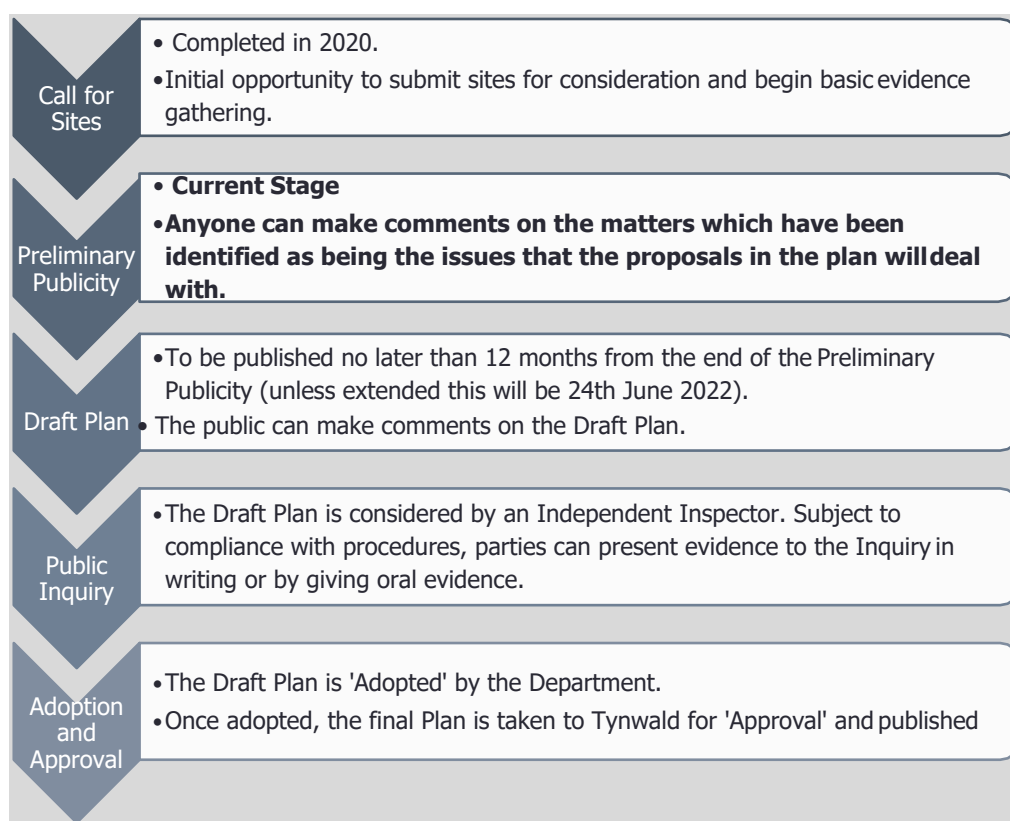
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<sup>1</sup> S10(4) Town and Country Planning Act 1999

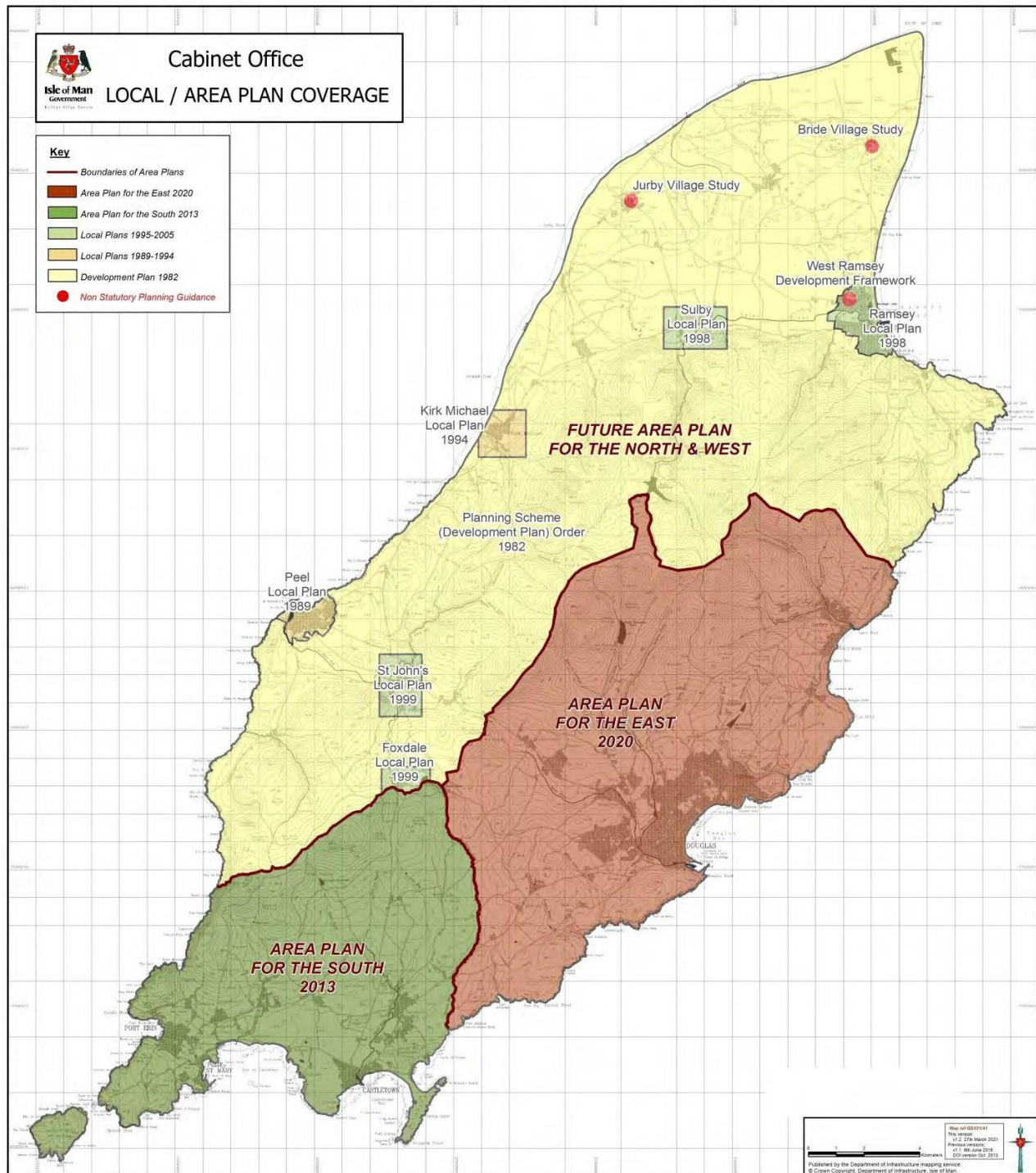
### 1.3 How New Plans come into Operation

- 1.3.1 All development plans or review thereof - and this includes the Strategic Plan, the Area Plan for the South 2013 and more recently the Area Plan for the East 2020 - are prepared using the Development Plan Procedure, as set out in Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1999). This Schedule refers to the 'Preliminary Publicity' stage for which prescribed guidelines are set out.
- 1.3.2 The stages and timescale for the production of the Area Plan for the North and West are summarised in Diagram 1, below. The geographical scope of the Area Plan for the North and West is shown on Map 1 below.
- 1.3.3 Given that the Area Plan for the North and West needs to be in general conformity with the Strategic Plan it must follow the same plan period so this means that the plan period is the 15 year plan period between 2011 and 2026.
- 1.3.4 When operational, the Area Plan for the North and West will replace a number of Local Plans as well as the remaining parts of the 1982 Development Plan which are still operational in much of the rural parts of the north and west.

### 1.4 Table 1: Stages in the Production of the Area Plan for the North and West



**Map 1: Geographical Coverage of Local Plans and Area Plans for the Island**



## **1.5 What will happen to the existing development plans in operation?**

- 1.5.1 The Area Plan for the North and West will replace the current development plans listed below. It is important to note that any development sites that have not been developed will not automatically be 'rolled forward' to the new plan but instead will added to the list of sites to be assessed during the initial stages of the developing the new draft plan.

<b>Existing Plans to be replaced by the North and West Plan</b>
The Planning Scheme (Development Plan) Order 1982 (All remaining parts)
Peel Local Plan 1989
Kirk Michael Local Plan 1994
Sulby Local Plan 1999
Ramsey Local Plan 1998
St John's Local Plan 1999
Foxdale Local Plan 1999

- 1.5.2 The following documents are not statutory plans but will be evidence taken into account in the development of the North and West Plan:

- The Bride Village Study
- The Jurby Village Study
- The West Ramsey Development Framework

## **1.6 The published papers which make up the Preliminary Publicity Stage**

- 1.6.1 Preliminary Publicity involves setting out baseline information with an indication of what the key issues that need addressing in a new plan will be. The Cabinet Office has started to build up key data sets, evidence and supporting documents and it is all of these documents that are now being released.



### 1.6.2 Table 2: Preliminary Publicity Documents

Paper	Content
Paper PP1	Main Consultation Document
Paper PP2	Site Identification Report - This explains how the long-list of sites has been compiled, the majority of which came as suggestions through the Call for Sites process.
Paper PP3 (as a set of documents)	Original Submissions (redacted) and standardised site plans/aerial photographs.
Paper PP4	Site Assessment Framework Report - This explains the methodology that will be followed for the individual site assessments that will be undertaken ahead of the Draft Plan.
Paper PP5	Housing Need in the North and West 2011 to 2026
Map 1	<p><i>All Sites Map</i> showing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The geographical area covered by the Area Plan for the North and West.</li> <li>2 All of the sites on the 'long-list' as a result of the call for site exercise</li> </ol> <p>Note: none of these are 'Proposals Sites' at this stage as Site Assessment Reports have not yet been fully drafted.</p>
Map 2	Early Proposals Map with Outline Inset Maps and existing settlement boundaries.

## **1.7 Additional points on published documents set out in Table 1**

### **The Site Identification Report**

- 1.7.1 The Site Identification Report (Paper PP2) lists all of the sites on Map 1. Where sites have been submitted to the Cabinet Office by site promoters, a copy of the submitted information is available (Paper Set PP3). Sites that have been identified by the Cabinet Office do not have a specific Call for Sites form but have still been plotted individually. For each site the Cabinet Office has produced a location plan and aerial photograph which will form part of the baseline information for each Site Assessment Report. These, in turn, will inform the decision making process when determining the suitability sites for inclusion within the Draft Area Plan. The Site Assessment Reports will be made available to view when the Draft Area Plan is published.

### **Site Assessment Framework**

- 1.7.2 The Site Assessment Framework is intended to provide a transparent and consistent methodology for assessing all sites on the long list (see Paper PP2). A summary of the process is set out in Table 3. Having a framework underpins the sensible identification of a short-list of realistic and appropriate development sites, and helps inform the Draft Plan. The approach to site assessment includes consideration of overall need, the overall pattern of growth, the impacts brought about by environmental and other constraints, as well as infrastructure capacity. Full Assessment Reports, which will be updated throughout the plan process, will be produced for Category 2<sup>2</sup> proposal sites (see 1.7.6 below).
- 1.7.3 It is likely that a number of sites on the long-list sites will not be in accordance with the Strategic Plan settlement hierarchy (e.g. a site proposed for housing which is isolated from existing settlements). Such sites will generally fail the first step of the Site Assessment Framework which is used to filter out sites that lie outside of and detached from an existing settlement boundary.

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<sup>2</sup>Sites that require a full assessment – further explanation is set out in the Site Assessment Framework (Paper PP4)

1.7.4 In the East Plan, some work was dedicated to identifying sites which could be suitable as development land as part of identified 'Groups of Houses in the Countryside.' This meant that rather than being eliminated from consideration because of their countryside location, they went on to undergo further assessment. The North and West plan process proposes a different approach from the start. It is not the intention to identify potential groups with a view to allocating additional land. The East Plan did not allocate any 'groups of houses' for additional development on sustainability grounds, and the level of development land needed for the North and West is considerably lower than the East.

1.7.5 The Site Assessment Framework (SAF) will be used to separate out those sites with potential which will go on to have a full assessment. There will be two initial categories:

- **Category 1** - Sites which **do not** need to be assessed through both stages of the SAF and which can either be subsumed within land use designations which reflect the surrounding areas, or set aside as having little or no merit for inclusion in the plan; and
- **Category 2** - Sites which **do** need to be assessed through the SAF i.e. there are policy decisions to be made about the proposed land use and therefore require a fuller assessment.

**Table 3: Brief outline of the Site Assessment Framework (Steps and Outcomes)**

Step	Activity	Details	Outcome
1.	Preliminary Screening	Sites which are in clear conflict with the policies of the Strategic Plan are screened out. Sites that fail this stage are not acceptable in principle.	Category 1 Sites and Category 2 Sites identified.  Sites screened out which are unsuitable due to their location.  <i>n.b. There may be exceptions</i>
2.	2a. Detailed Assessment	The concept of <b>critical constraints</b> is used initially as a trigger to identify those sites where the impact of development on the site, or the impact of the site's	Individual Site Assessment Reports which will follow each site throughout the process. Any new evidence will be attached to that report.

	2b. Detailed Assessment	<p>characteristics on potential development is such that development would be hindered, and mitigation or compensation would not be possible or appropriate.</p> <p>This step assesses the relative planning merits of sites which pass Step 1 and have no critical constraints. A combination of site scoring/colour coding and report writing enables each site to be assessed against the policy framework in the Strategic Plan.</p>	<p><i>n.b. Evidence of critical constraints will shorten the Report substantially.</i></p>
3.	Establishing if the site is developable	<p>The assessment criteria are concerned with the deliverability of the site. This includes issues relating to site availability and to some extent, viability.</p> <p>This stage allows an overall judgement to be reached about whether or not a site is developable.</p>	<p>Conclusions can be drawn about whether the sites are deliverable during the plan period. It may be that the sites are suitable as strategic reserve sites*. In some circumstances, where sites are not developable, such site may be ruled out and not considered further.</p>

## **\*Strategic Reserve Sites**

- 1.7.6 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan recognises the importance of a 'plan, monitor and manage' approach when it comes to development land supply. There are many variables which affect the take up of sites - even if they are allocated, and even if they have a planning approval. Monitoring such figures is important. One option which will be considered in the Plan to help provide flexibility is to identify Strategic Reserve sites.
- 1.7.7 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan covers the 15 year period from 2011 to 2026. The Area Plan for the North and West will cover the same period, but, in terms of allocating land for development, could include Reserve Sites which are intended for development in the longer-term (beyond 2026) or possibly before that should the need for sites exceed the predicted rate of take-up. The Isle of Man Strategic Plan states:

"The Area Plans will need to ensure that there is enough flexibility to react to pressures relating to both supply and demand. Site allocations known as Strategic Reserves are likely to be used in the Area Plans for this very purpose. The Area Plan for the South identified two Strategic Reserve sites for housing. The difference between the Reserve Sites and general allocations is that the Reserve Sites are not for immediate release. They will only be released when the Department is certain that there is a need for them and a defined methodology included within the Area Plan has been followed".

### ***Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 (paragraph 8.1.6)***

- 1.7.8 Therefore, sites which are considered suitable for development at some point but are not, at the time of the Plan considered 'developable', may be allocated as Strategic Reserves. The methodology for the release of Reserve Sites will be set out in the Draft Plan, and will involve consideration of the Island-wide picture as well as any local circumstances.

## **1.8 Documents which are being deferred until the Draft Plan Stage**

### **Mapping**

- 1.8.1 The following Maps will be published when the Draft Plan is published:

- **The Constraint Maps (Infrastructure, Environmental, Community).** It is important to note that these maps contain data from a number of Government

Departments and Agencies and may be updated between the Draft Plan stage and the final plan stage. Every effort is made to ensure that the final maps are up to date. The Constraints Maps represent a snap shot in time and it may be the case that some data might change outside of the plan process. For instance, the number of Registered Buildings may change or the extent of the flood zones may alter. In practice, this means that if, for example, Flood Zones are shown on the Constraints Map and then the flood zone data was subsequently updated by DOI after the plan came into operation, decision makers would take into account the approved map which formed part of the Statutory Plan and also any new flood data available at the time, as a material consideration.

- **Landscape Character Areas and Types.** This map is extracted from the Landscape Character Report published in 2008.
- **Inset Maps.** These Maps are produced at a larger scale than the Proposals Map and focus on the identified settlements.

## 2 The Long List of Sites (from the Call for Sites Exercise)

### 2.1 Site Data

2.1.1 The main output from the Site Assessment Framework work will be a short-list of sites. This list will form the basis of the site reports which may lead to sites being included as an allocated site, as a specific land use or as a strategic reserve within the Draft Area Plan for the North and West. There is at this stage only the long list of sites:

#### 2.1.2 Table 4: Summary of the Call for Sites findings:

Source of site	Number <sup>3</sup>
Response to consultation	169
Cabinet Office research	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>

#### Summary: Chapters 1 and 2

1. Preliminary Publicity marks the start of the formal process in the production of a new plan under the Town and Country Planning Act 1999.
2. The North and West Plan will cover the largest geographical area compared to the South and East plans.
3. All existing land uses and allocated sites will be reassessed before being may be identified on any new mapping.
4. The Draft Plan will be published for consultation within 12 months of the end of the Preliminary Publicity stage i.e. as timed from the end of the consultation.
5. 230 sites are to be considered for various purposes which will be subject to either basic or detailed assessments to produce individual Site Reports.

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<sup>3</sup> Where a site included more than 1 'option', the site was only recorded once to avoid double counting

### **3 Location of new development**

#### **3.1 Broad issues and land requirements**

- 3.1.1 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 sets out the broad planning framework for the Island and any new area plan must be prepared in that context. The Strategic Aim of the Strategic Plan is to plan for the effective provision of services and infrastructure, and to direct and control development taking into account the principles of sustainability whilst at the same time preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment.
- 3.1.2 This Aim is to be carried through to the Area Plan for the North and West as the Strategic Plan is the overarching guiding document. To date, the Cabinet Office has provided an opportunity for any party with an interest in the Plan to suggest areas which might be suitable for a particular land use/form of development through an exercise known as a 'Call for Sites'. Cabinet Office will use this information to help deliver, via the area plan, the right opportunities for sustainable development for the plan period (2011 to 2026)<sup>4</sup>.

#### **3.2 The spatial distribution of development**

- 3.2.1 The Island Spatial Strategy sets out where new development should broadly be located.
- 3.2.2 The Spatial Policies set out the Island's settlement hierarchy and support the Spatial Strategy. The hierarchy is crucial in preparing the Area Plan for the North and West, particularly when it comes to identifying where new development should be located.
- 3.2.3 Spatial Policies 1 to 4 refer specifically to individual settlements. Spatial Policies 2 - 4 are directly relevant to settlements in the North and West (see Diagram 2 below).

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<sup>4</sup> The plan period cannot go beyond 2026 as this is the plan period for the current Strategic Plan.



**Table 5: Summary of Spatial Policies 2-4 applied to the North and West**

Service Centres: Ramsey and Peel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Outside of Douglas, development will be concentrated on Service Centres to provide regeneration and choice of location for housing, employment and services.</li></ul>
Service Villages: Andreas, Jurby, Kirk Michael, Foxdale and St. Johns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Area Plans will define the boundaries of Service Villages so as to maintain and where appropriate increase employment opportunities.</li><li>•Housing should be provided to meet local needs and in appropriate cases to broaden the choice of location of housing.</li></ul>
Villages: Bride, Ballaugh, Sulby, Glen Mona, Glen Maye and Dalby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•In the Villages development should maintain the existing settlement character, and</li><li>•should be of an appropriate scale to meet local needs for housing and limited employment opportunities.</li></ul>

### **3.3 Why is Spatial Distribution important?**

3.3.1 The Spatial Vision at the heart of the Strategic Plan is to make the Island's communities more sustainable. The role of the area plans is to help facilitate that and in doing so, make appropriate decisions about the best location for development in those areas in line with the Island's settlement hierarchy and the particular circumstances of each plan area. Whereas the Strategic Plan sets out specific numbers for each plan there is no further breakdown for individual settlements so other policies are relied upon for guidance. There is strong policy support however for the focus of new development on existing settlements and sustainable urban extensions of those settlements.

3.3.2 During the preparation of the Area Plan for the East, options for the distribution of development were examined through 'Scenario Testing' and a Report was produced which assessed the relative merits of different scenarios for housing and employment growth.

3.3.3 The reason for doing this was partly because of the Inspector's Inquiry Report following the Public Inquiry into the Strategic Plan who reasserted the approach to focus new development in existing settlements but readjust proportions depending on local circumstances. At paragraph 5.51 of the Inquiry Report, he stated:

"the Strategic Plan does not actually allocate development locations, that is for Area Plans. These may well in practice adjust the figures for particular settlements upwards or downwards, on detailed examination, but within an overall general indication provided by Draft Housing Policy 3."

#### **3.4 What were the findings of the Scenario Testing in the East?**

3.4.1 Three different development scenarios were used to help explore and understand the infrastructure and environment implications of different growth distribution patterns within the East:

##### **3.4.2 Scenario 1: Growth based on the Settlement Hierarchy**

3.4.3 This scenario distributed housing to reflect settlement size. For example, it is relatively straightforward to breakdown the need for the Island across settlement types. All Service Centres can be allocated a certain number, all Service Villages another etc. Depending on the mix of settlements within an area the total and distribution would be slightly different for each area. Whilst the Strategic Plan does not give any more breakdown than 770 for the north for example, mathematically this would be broken down with the largest percentage for the Service Centre of Ramsey, then Service Villages, and finally for villages; this is repeated in the west. In terms of employment the broad approach is one of expanding key existing employment locations within the framework of the settlement hierarchy.

3.4.4 **Scenario 2: Urban Expansion.** This scenario was based on urban expansion at the very top of the settlement hierarchy. In terms of the East, this would result in housing and employment being focused in Douglas and Onchan.

3.4.5 **Scenario 3: Dispersal.** This scenario is based on increasing housing development along major arterial routes within settlements which provide easy access to employment opportunities within major settlements. For the East, this scenario was based on smaller urban extensions for employment purposes to the South of Cooil Road and around the Cooil Road/New Castletown Road junction.

3.4.6 The Draft Plan for the East was prepared in accordance with a distribution of housing in accordance with **Scenario 1: Settlement Hierarchy**. As the Plan headed into Inquiry, preferred development sites were in the main focused in and around the settlements of Douglas and Onchan and much more in line with **Scenario 2 – Urban Expansion**.

3.4.7 In paragraph 20 of his Report, the Inspector recommended that:

“The majority of these new homes will be located in Douglas and Onchan (making the best use of existing urban areas and previously developed land) and in sustainable extensions to those settlements. The focus will be on high-quality and well-designed housing, supported by the right infrastructure (including educational and health care provision, open space and recreational opportunities, and adequate transport and utility services). The existing character of the smaller settlements around Douglas and Onchan will largely be retained.”

3.4.8 In thinking about the right approach for the North and West it is important to take into account:

- i. The Inspector’s recommendations in relation to the East Plan;
- ii. The housing need figures in the North and West which are considerably lower than the East;
- iii. The need to apply consistency within the plan making process, and there is a very recent area plan to bear in mind;
- iv. Infrastructure capacity from the outset of the plan process.

### **3.5 General approach to the location of new development in the North and West**

3.5.1 So, at this point, the approach that will be followed for the Draft Plan for North and West is that any land that is required for housing and employment which are the most land hungry uses will be generally focused in and on the edge of Ramsey and Peel as sustainable urban extensions. They are recognised in the Settlement Hierarchy as being Service Centres. The impact of this approach on lower order centres will of course be examined as the plan develops.

### **3.6 Lessons learned from previous Scenario Testing which will be taken forward**

#### **3.6.1 General**

3.6.2 Census information provides baseline data on how people move around, their place of employment compared to where they live and the Census is a good indicator of how settlements such as Ramsey and Peel contribute to the local economy. For example, within the census district of Peel, 32% are employed within the Peel and 44% are employed in Douglas, with a small percentage working in other areas of the Island. Within the census district of Ramsey, 54% of residents work in Ramsey and 32% work in Douglas, with a small percentage of residents working in other areas of the Island.

#### **3.6.3 On Settlement Pattern**

3.6.4 A development model based upon urban expansion provides a good opportunity to maximise the amount of development that takes place on brownfield land that is located within existing settlement boundaries.

3.6.5 Urban sites can have more constraints such as an increased risk of flooding.

#### **3.6.6 Grey Infrastructure**

3.6.7 Examining grey infrastructure includes looking at the road network and general patterns of coverage for bus services. Ramsey has good links to settlements in the east and west. Likewise, Peel to Ramsey and Douglas. Public transport serving lower order settlements in the north is provided on a less frequent basis. Consideration will need to be given at an individual site stage to the impact of development on roads and services and other utilities. In the east, the Active Travel Strategy played a key role in identifying sites and will be sure to play an important role for the North and west as will other 'smarter movement' strategies emerging from the Department for Infrastructure.

3.6.8 Recent growth in the North has resulted in a new sewage treatments works at Balladoole, to the north of Ramsey and its capacity going forward will be an important factor in site assessment. Recent growth patterns in Peel and the surrounding settlements have led to a decision to invest in a new sewage treatment works within the West. This is evidenced in the recently submitted planning application for a new sewage treatment works at Glenfaba House in Peel and the planning process and outcome (refused) is evidence that wherever possible, such infrastructure should be planned into an area plan when possible.

3.6.9 Regard will be had to the National Infrastructure Strategy in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

#### 3.6.10 **Social Infrastructure**

3.6.11 Projected school roll figures published in 2017<sup>5</sup> showed a trend for increased numbers in primary schools located in the service centres of Ramsey and Peel. Most other schools show relatively stable roll figures. Dhoon School was trending towards an under-subscription. Evidence relating to school rolls will need to be updated as part of the next stage in the plan process.

3.6.12 The secondary schools of both Ramsey Grammar School and Queen Elizabeth II High School serve all of the respective settlements within the north and west and show relatively balanced roll figures.

3.6.13 In terms of health and well-being, one of the key issues is the impact of new development on non-hospital services (which has an indirect impact on the hospital). Key considerations in planning for new development include supporting healthy lifestyles, engaged communities with access to a range of services. Cabinet Office will continue to liaise with Health and Social Care about identifying best distribution/consolidation of growth to ensure specific land requirements and strategies regarding services are taken into account and what this means for travel times for peripatetic services. CoVID-19 may well have an impact on the location and need for services in the north and west as well as the rest of the Island.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard/20002020/k170404.pdf>

- 3.6.14 It is important to stress the role of informal play areas (for children) and also safe, attractive and accessible green space and footpaths for all adults in supporting health and active lifestyles, noting the positive health and well-being outcomes (both physically and mentally) of regular exercise and the resulting reduction in the need for formal health provision.
- 3.6.15 The Area Plan can incorporate the spatial elements of green infrastructure that empower individuals to take personal responsibility for their health and wellbeing. Careful consideration about the location of new development and how this integrates with existing communities can play a significant role in helping to provide linkages between existing and proposed open space.
- 3.6.16 Active Travel infrastructure is already underway – e.g. improvements planned for Peel to Kirk Michael former railway line.
- 3.6.17 In terms of facilities, both Ramsey and Peel have Swimming Pools which offer excellent local facilities and go some way in providing an alternative to the NSC but the Douglas facility does draw users from across the Island as a whole.
- 3.6.18 As part of the preparation of the Draft Plan a full audit of community facilities will be undertaken.

### **Summary - Chapter 3**

1. New development will be directed toward settlements in the settlement hierarchy with a focus on the Service Centres of Ramsey and Peel.
2. Development is not ruled out in the Service Villages and Villages but is likely to be low key especially given the low level of housing opportunities that need to be found up to 2026.
3. Previous scenario testing exercises and recent Plan outcomes demonstrate the need to look carefully at the capacity of our existing settlements - to make the best use of our urban spaces - which can help ensure new development has access to services and facilities.

## **4 Identifying key land requirements and opportunities – Housing and Employment**

### **4.1 Residential Development (Housing Land) – A broad approach**

- 4.1.1 The Strategic Plan 2016 has a 15 year plan period from 2011 to 2026. It sets out a housing need figure for the North for this period of **770** dwellings and similarly a housing need figure for the West for this period of **770** dwellings. Both figures are net of demolitions and include conversions. These numbers were calculated using the Census 2011 findings and the population projections which flowed from them. The Census 2011 findings showed a trend for a growing population, and the Strategic Plan sets out the estimated resident population growth from 84,497 in 2011 to 93,526 in 2026.
- 4.1.2 The Interim 2016 Census findings showed a trend for a declining population. Population had reached 83,314 in 2016, lower than what was expected and led to a paper being prepared entitled 'Meeting Our Population Challenges' (MOPC Report).<sup>6</sup> Using three different scenarios, this paper tested future estimates of population. Using a 'Moderate' scenario, the MOPC Report suggested an estimated population in 2026 of 87,385 and 89,872 persons in 2036.
- 4.1.3 In a similar way to the paper produced for the Area Plan for the East ahead of Inquiry, which identified the immediate and longer term need for housing using the 2016 Census (DP EP 5 updated June 2019<sup>7</sup>), a Paper has been produced for the North and West. Paper PP5 (Housing Need in the North and West 2011 to 2026) addresses the Strategic Plan Spatial Distribution in detail and takes into account:
- the 2016 population projections;
  - the MOPC Report, and
  - the latest Residential Land Availability Study figures (RLAS 13), published in November 2020.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.im/media/1360674/2018-02-27-meeting-our-population-challengesv2.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> DP EP5 was prepared to assist the Inspector at the Public Inquiry for the Area Plan for the East, in response to numerous challenges to the population projections by various parties.

- 4.1.4 Paper PP5 concludes that, based on the 2016 Census generated population projections, the housing need figure for the North and West for the plan period 2011 to 2026 can be lowered to approximately 950 from 1,540. This is the basis for going forward to the Draft Plan but will be examined further in the coming months.

## **4.2 What do the updated figures mean for the Area Plan for the North and West?**

- 4.2.1 These figures mean that fewer new homes need to be provided compared to the number set out in the Strategic Plan. It is already accepted that new homes already built since 2011, approved and in the development pipeline and those that are expected to be delivered via conversions and windfalls are counted as contributing to the housing requirements within a defined plan period. This was accepted in both the South and the East plans.
- 4.2.2 So, the figure '950' is not the number of new homes that the Plan is seeking to provide opportunities for as many of those units have already been built or are expected to be built. The actual figure is actually much lower.
- 4.2.3 The Residential Land Availability Study helps in this regard as it monitors planning approvals and take-up of those approvals and has done so since 2001. Cabinet Office published RLAS Update 13 in November 2020 and conclusions can be drawn from that data specifically data in the north and west between 2011 and 2020.
- 4.2.4 Based on RLAS 13 data, the number of units needed up to 2026 to meet the Strategic Plan housing target of **770** units in the West is **257**. The number of units needed up to 2026 to meet the Strategic Plan housing target of **770** units in the North is **238**. On this basis, both the North and West are close to their respective Strategic Plan requirements in terms of approvals granted which remain valid.

## **4.3 What do these revised figures mean?**

- 4.3.1 It appears from initial work that the immediate housing need for the North and West has been met. However, Strategic Reserves may need to be identified to fully prepare for changes in land requirements up to 2026 as identified in the Strategic Plan.
- 4.3.2 Further work on housing need will continue. And this will be the case for all proposed land uses. It will be necessary to balance how vital a use is against other factors and impacts.



#### **4.4 Will the housing need change for the north and west when the 2021 census figures are available?**

- 4.4.1 The 2021 Census is due to take place in May 2021. Full projections using the IOM Population Projection Model are unlikely to be available until early summer 2022. Depending on the progress of the North and West Plan and the date of the Inquiry it may be necessary to discuss at the Inquiry for the North and West any implications of newly available data. The proportion of allocated sites versus strategic reserves in particular may need to be further discussed and options set out.
- 4.4.2 As an aside, there is a commitment to bring an updated Strategic Plan to Tynwald before the end of 2023 taking into account the 2021 Census. It will define new housing policies based on 2021 Census and subsequent population projections but as set out above, data will not be available until summer of 2022. Cabinet Office is committed to delivering an Area Plan for the North and West even if this is eventually replaced by an all Island Area Plan within 2-3 years of the North and West coming into operation.
- 4.4.3 The early development of the Area Plan for the North and West will proceed to the Draft Plan Stage therefore on the basis of the existing Strategic Plan data, the 2016 Census and all other evidence available now.

#### **4.5 Affordable Housing**

- 4.5.1 The Housing Division in the Department of Infrastructure helps meet the Island's affordable housing need. It manages over 1,200 public sector properties, monitors the Housing Authorities on the Island and maintains a register of, and provides financial assistance to, first time buyers.
- 4.5.2 In terms of planning policy, the Isle of Man Strategic Plan - Housing Policy 5 - states that in granting permission on land zoned for residential development or developments of 8 or more dwellings in predominantly residential areas, 25% should normally be affordable housing.
- 4.5.3 This policy will be taken into account in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

## **4.6 Low Density Housing in Parkland**

- 4.6.1 Some of the existing development plans contain designations for Low Density Housing in Parkland (LDHP). Land in Lezayre (near to Ramsey) was allocated in the 1982 Development Plan, and LDHP was developed, resulting in the group of low density housing that now forms Glen Auldyn. The Isle of Man Strategic Plan does not contain policy guidance on the matter, however the issue was considered as part of the Area Plan for the East when new LDHP designations were put forward. The final outcome was that no LDHP sites were shown in the Plan.
- 4.6.2 In light of the above, and following on from the approach on this issue that was adopted for the Area Plan for the East, it is envisaged that existing LDHP designations will not be 'rolled over' into the Area Plan for the North and West. They will either be removed in their entirety or considered for other land uses such as residential, which was the case for former 'urban' LDHP areas in the East Plan.

## **4.7 Groups of Houses in the Countryside**

- 4.7.1 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan sets out a commitment to review potential Groups of Houses in the Countryside (para 8.8 Strategic Plan). The supporting text notes that although adding further dwellings to these groups may not accord with the strategic objectives relating to settlement growth and sustainability, some development may assist in, meeting the needs of rural areas. The possibility for development in groups of houses was investigated in both the south and east plans but no such groups were identified for further development.
- 4.7.2 In terms of the North and West, the Department will not be putting forward any proposals to look at the merits of countryside groups. And this is not simply because the work that was undertaken in the South and East Plans did not lead to any land allocations. Whilst this is a factor, it is also relevant that the housing need in the north and west for the remainder of the plan period is very low. This is not to say that opportunities will not be further investigated in the next Strategic Plan Review in terms of general approach and to the All-Island Area Plan in terms of naming and researching specific groups which fit the characteristics of a 'group' and which have potential.

#### **4.8 Employment Land Development - A broad approach to light industrial, special industrial, manufacturing, office needs**

- 4.8.1 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 does not set out precisely how much employment land is required over the plan period 2011 to 2026. However, various studies have looked at employment land needs across the Island and these are described in more detail below.
- 4.8.2 The **Employment Land Review Report 2015 (ELRR)**<sup>8</sup> provided some baseline figures in respect of anticipated need for employment land. An update was produced to this Report in 2017. Cabinet Office will work with DFE on the most appropriate way to update this evidence and anticipate future demand taking into account the allocations provided in the East and South of the Island.
- 4.8.3 **The Employment Land Development Order Project** 2016/2017 was eventually integrated into the Area Plan for the East. The data from this project fed directly into the outcome that saw land allocated for employment purposes south of Cooil Road, in Braddan. At that time, two sites in the north were suggested via the call for sites.
- 4.8.4 Whilst the Strategic Plan does not refer to specific size/land use needed, it does set out clear policy direction for employment land uses in area plans - industrial development including light industrial, special industrial buildings and office development - and also addresses, as part of the Business Chapter, Island-wide policies on retailing which is only suitable on employment land in certain defined circumstances.
- 4.8.5 Business Policy 5 restricts industrial land for such purposes only but sets out exceptions where this involves particular types of retailing which would not detract from the vitality and viability of the appropriate town centre shopping area. Business Policy 7 generally restricts new office floor space within appropriately zoned areas in existing town and village centres. Business Policy 9 sets out that new retail provision in existing retail areas should be at an appropriate scale and refers to the need for Retail Impact Assessments for major proposals. Business Policy 10 refers to when neighbourhood shops may be permitted.

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<sup>8</sup> DFE - *Employment Land in the context of the ELRR 2015 refers to land for industrial purposes including: manufacturing; storage and distribution; and some types of office development.*

#### **4.9 The approach to Employment land in the Area Plan for the East and implications for the North and West**

4.9.1 There was considerable discussion of the employment land requirements and examination of evidence during the Public Inquiry for the East. Throughout the Plan process, Cabinet Office supported part release of land south of Cooil Road with the majority held back as a Strategic Reserve. The Inspector recommended all of the employment land supported by Cabinet Office for Strategic Reserve to be released as general allocations subject to comprehensive development briefs. This was the approach adopted in the final plan and the approach approved by Tynwald. The experience of the East Plan will naturally influence the North and West Plan as it is the most recent public debate on the topic and the outcome remains relevant to the work being undertaken now.

4.9.2 So, in preparing the Draft Plan for the North and West, due regard will be had to the Employment Land Evidence Papers named above, the outcome of the Area Plan for the East as well any new evidence available between now and the publication of the Draft Plan. Such analysis will help to define the precise needs for the North and West and where this land should, if required, be located and how it should be defined for particular employment land uses. Analysis of the most recent ELRR Report findings and other evidence suggests that:

- Allocated employment land is still available at Jurby Industrial Estate, Kella Mill in Sulby, Kelly Industrial Estate in Kirk Michael, land to the west of Glenfaba Road and Middle Cooil Ushtey Industrial Estate in Peel, and the Clock Tower Industrial Estate in Foxdale, together with allocated greenfield sites at Vollan Fields, lower Milntown and Gardener's Lane in Ramsey;
- Existing employment allocations would appear to be sufficient to meet future demand in the North and West although specific requirements will be reappraised.

#### **4.10 Impact of CoVID 19 on Employment Land requirements**

4.10.1 In terms of what the Island needs in terms of spatial distribution and land requirements for employment land as a result of the pandemic is yet to be fully understood. Precise needs will be captured more appropriately in the review of the Strategic Plan which will begin towards the end of 2021.

- 4.10.2 Whilst the Island has escaped being subject to continuous lengthy lockdowns compared to others, circuit break breakdowns remain a reality. Investment has no doubt stalled to some degree. Development projects that would have occurred and working patterns that were once considered reasonably stable are just two casualties of the pandemic. It will take time to settle down and it will take time to have confidence that any patterns of working that we see now are stable enough to plan with relative certainty for the future.
- 4.10.3 There may be no alternative than to embrace that uncertainty and confidently plan-in flexibility particularly when it comes to the needs of our office sector. Both the private and public sector have embraced home working and either maintained a preference for it, or at least an acceptance that some home working is now part of the 'working week'. It may well be the case that business hubs in our lower order settlements to some extent replace the drive and the necessity to be in Douglas. More work is required on this in order to underpin any change in government policy going forward.
- 4.10.4 The Area Plan will still need to address the issue based on evidence but the key factor may well need to come down to ensuring sufficient flexibility and opportunities for specific uses and supporting infrastructure in a measured way. Any additional evidence work undertaken will feed into the plan-making process but it is anticipated that Covid-19 will have some long lasting impact on office demand, spatial distribution of other employment uses and levels of home working. It will be interesting to monitor demands for smaller office premises and home working premises as time goes on.
- 4.10.5 Preparations to review the Strategic Plan are likely to include an updated Employment Land Review. In the absence of an updated Employment Land Review Study at this time, planning application data from the 10th July 2020 to the 1st January 2021 provides a sample snapshot in time of the types of applications being received in the North and West, quite recently. This data suggests a latent demand for storage facilities. Additionally, there are examples of applications/approvals for the:
- conversion from retail use to professional services in the high street
  - diversification from buildings in agricultural use to other employment uses
  - Additional use of residential properties to specialist home working practices such as clinics
  - Removal of conditions restricting particular users of an industrial site, the number of activities which can take place and the number of days the site can be used for such purposes.

4.10.6 All in all, there does seem also to be evidence of applications for employment use in smaller premises in more dispersed locations connected to residential dwellings and farmsteads within the wider rural environment.

4.10.7 It is also noted that the Strategic Plan indicates that in the preparation of the Area Plans consideration will be given to the identification of suitable sites for commercial vehicle parking. At this stage, no sites have been specifically suggested for such purposes.

#### **Summary of Chapter 4 – Housing**

1. The housing need as set out in the Strategic Plan appears to have been largely met in the North and West if adjusted to take account of the findings of the 2016 Census.
2. The figures alone suggest limited housing land is required in the North and West, up to the Plan Period of 2026 but all extant allocations will be re-examined as part of the Draft Plan process.
3. Strategic Reserves may still need to be identified in the Draft Area Plan.
4. Housing need figures may need to be re-examined in the light of the 2021 Census figures when known, which could be prior to the Public Inquiry for the North and West Plan. An updated Paper PP5 will be produced where necessary.

#### **Summary of Chapter 4 - Employment Land**

5. When determining employment land requirements for an Area Plan, the Department is guided by the planning policies contained within the Strategic Plan - notably the Business Policies in Chapter 9, the Employment Land Review Report and any updates to that evidence as well as the outcome of the East Plan.
6. The most recent ELRR indicates that existing employment allocations remain sufficient to meet future demand in the North and West but further work is required.
7. A review of recent planning applications suggests a latent demand for storage facilities in the North and West, and the diversification of existing agricultural buildings for employment use.
8. A post CoVID-19 environment is showing examples of conversion from retail to professional services in the High Street, combined with specialist home working

practices.

9. Demand for employment use, as evident within recent planning applications, is showing a general trend towards smaller premises in more dispersed locations.

## 5 Other Key Issues the Plan will address

### 5.1 Other topic areas that the Draft Plan will address

5.1.1 This and the following chapters 6 - 11 outline the remaining broad topic headings that the Draft Plan will set out including:

- the Spatial Vision
- Landscape Character and Appearance
- Natural Environment
- Urban Environment and Town Centres
- Transport and Utilities
- Tourism
- Open space and Recreation, Education, Health and other Community Facilities

5.1.2 The remainder of this chapter outlines the intention to prepare a 'Spatial Vision' for the North and West.

### 5.2 Setting out a Spatial Vision

5.2.1 Both the Area Plan for the South and the Area Plan for the East have set out a Spatial Vision based on the Island Spatial Vision in the Strategic Plan. This states:

*"The Strategic Objectives and Strategic Policies direct that the focus of new development should be within existing towns and villages or in sustainable urban extensions, avoiding coalescence of settlements and maintaining their local identity. This translates into a Spatial Vision that by 2016 the Island's communities will have become more sustainable, prosperous, safe, healthy and vibrant. People from all sections of society will have been provided with better access to a range and choice of homes, jobs and services. This will have been achieved in ways that reduce the impact of society on the environment, improve the quality of design and the built environment and enhance the Island's natural environment and heritage assets."*



5.2.2 The Area Plan for the North and West will also set out a 'Spatial Vision.' A vision is all about thinking ahead and understanding how actions in the short term fit with long term goals. These visions can help ensure consistency and direction. It is about anticipating the future and instilling confidence in policy approaches and site identification. Drafting a vision helps in the desire to be creative and sets the scene for creating places that we want for the future based on the evidence that we have now. It allows the Plan to be a vehicle for delivering economic, social and environmental benefits. It will help provide more stable and predictable conditions for investment, secure community benefits whilst clearly promoting the prudent use of land.

5.2.3 In drafting the vision statement for the north and west, regard will be had to the desired outcomes for the plan as a whole and be similar to that expressed in the East Plan. Section 3.6 of the Area Plan for the East states:

- i. *"To focus appropriate development within and adjacent to the main settlements in accordance with the settlement hierarchy;*
- ii. *To facilitate the delivery of a range of housing, sufficient in number with improved design standards, to meet the East's needs;*
- iii. *To support existing established employment areas and provide for a mix of additional employment land;*
- iv. *To recognise and build upon the tourism opportunities the East offers in respect of its unique position combining the Island's major urban zone with countryside and coastal scenery;*
- v. *To ensure that all new development avoids adverse environmental impact and is resource efficient to maintain sustainable growth of the East;*
- vi. *To safeguard and reinforce the distinctive character of the various settlements;*
- vii. *To make best use of existing infrastructure and secure new or improved infrastructure as part of new development sites;*
- viii. *To build upon the excellent opportunities for communities to access good quality open space and space for recreational purposes;*
- ix. *To enhance accessibility and connectivity to and from key services between settlements;*
- x. *To encourage appropriate use of previously developed land;*

xi. *To support the Promenade redevelopment scheme;*

*Together, the Spatial Vision and the Desired Outcomes underpin and guide the Proposals set out within the Area Plan for the East allowing short term actions to be achieved within clear, future focused goals.”*

5.2.4 One of the consultation questions asks about the Spatial Vision and what it should contain.

## **6 Addressing Landscape Character and Appearance**

### **6.1 Translating the Landscape Character Assessment into Policy**

- 6.1.1 The North and West of the Isle of Man is characterised by a variety of landscapes; their value, measured both in terms of scenic value and cultural heritage. The protection and promotion of these landscapes is an important element in Government policy which is carried through to the Strategic Plan. Strategic planning policy supports the view that the unique landscape characteristics of the Isle of Man should be recognised and protected for the future; remaining free from inappropriate development.
- 6.1.2 Earlier statutory plans in the North and West used the landscape classification 'Areas of High Landscape or Coastal Value and Scenic Significance.' This Plan replaces this designation taking account of the Landscape Character Assessment Report 2008. This Assessment was commissioned in 2005 to examine and assess the countryside of the Isle of Man with a view to classifying the various types of landscape. The aim was to describe the qualities and characteristics of each type and identify the special features worthy of protection and enhancement. The Landscape 'Types' were then used to identify 59 Landscape Character 'Areas'.
- 6.1.3 The North and West have 8 of the 9 identifiable landscape 'types' on the Island and 34 of the 59 landscape character 'areas' (a Map showing the 'Landscape Assessment Areas' will be produced for the Draft Plan but it will reflect the Map in the 2008 Report which is already published). Geographically, the coverage of the plan is limited to 11 Local Authorities but landscape character and key views do not stop at a Local Authority boundary. There must be an appreciation of our landscape whether looking outwards from the eastern area or towards it. In terms of the Assessment Report, the settlements of Ramsey and Peel were identified only as 'Urban' and so not defined by either a landscape Type or Area. Again, the transition from one area to another is unlikely to be rigid but rather a gradual change. This should be noted in any interpretation of the landscape mapping.

#### **Landscape Character and Appearance Summary**

1. The Draft Area Plan for the North and West will identify Landscape 'Types' and

Landscape 'Areas' in line with the Landscape Character Assessment Report of 2008.

2. The Draft Area Plan will not refer to Areas of High Landscape and Coastal Value and Scenic Significance. Such an approach will be consistent with the approach for the South Plan and the East Plan.
3. The Draft Plan will set out a number of Landscape Proposals based on the applicable Character Areas and Types and any Key Views.

## **7 Addressing Natural Environment Issues**

### **7.1 What is the natural environment?**

7.1.1 The 'natural environment' refers to the countryside and its ecology and is intertwined with landscape recognition and protection. The North and West Plan will follow the guidance set out in the Strategic Plan under Environment Proposal 1 which starts with "The countryside and its ecology will be protected for its own sake." The supporting text sums up the approach that will be followed:

7.1.2 Paragraph 7.2.1 in the Strategic Plan, states:

"Whilst landscape and coastal change is inevitable, and in some cases desirable, the emphasis must be on the appropriateness of this change and the balance or equity between the needs of conservation and those of development. The primary goal must therefore be to respect, maintain and enhance the natural and cultural environment including nature conservation and landscape and coastal quality, and ensure its protection from inappropriate development."

7.1.3 In order to protect the countryside, the Draft Plan will identify:

- the settlement boundaries for Ramsey, Peel, Jurby, Andreas, Kirk Michael, St Johns, Foxdale (in part), Bride, Sulby, Ballaugh and Glen Mona;
- all statutory and important non-statutory designations in the North and West recorded on along with other constraints relating to Environmental, Community and Infrastructure on 3 specific Constraints Maps; and
- Green Gaps – identified to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

### **7.2 What are Settlement Boundaries?**

7.2.1 Settlement boundaries are shown on the Maps and depicted by a purple boundary line. All land outside a settlement boundary, unless otherwise shown, is taken to be countryside i.e. not allocated for development. All land within a settlement boundary will generally have a defined land use which may be open space, predominantly residential, mixed use etc.

7.2.2 Settlement boundaries are expected to change between the Preliminary Publicity and the Draft Plan stages and comments are welcome on the boundaries as defined on the published documents to ensure they are as accurate as possible.

### **7.3 What are Green Gaps?**

- 7.3.1 A Green Gap is defined in the Strategic Plan as being “an open space which serves to maintain the distinction between settlements; prevents the coalescence or merging of settlements; and may provide recreational opportunities”. Strategic Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan relates to the avoidance of coalescence between settlements; this is further strengthened in Spatial Policy 7 which states that Area Plans will assess the need for Green Gaps between settlements so as to avoid coalescence. The Draft Area Plan will consider the issue of identifying Green Gaps between settlements in the North and West which will wherever possible follow physical markers on the ground such as field boundaries.

### **7.4 How will this plan help achieve net zero carbon goals?**

- 7.4.1 The Isle of Man Government Action Plan for Achieving Net Zero Emissions by 2050 - Phase 1 (dated January 2020), sets out a number of Climate Change Commitments for the Island. The development of all Area Plans are based on principles of sustainable development, however now it is recognised that the Climate Change Bill will soon bring in additional requirements that will have implications for all development planning. In policy terms the Area Plan must be in general conformity with the Strategic Plan but there are work programmes underway to embed climate change goals in the Strategic Plan or a new National Policy Directive (NPD) if required, which will in due course affect the way future area plans are drafted. The Climate Change Action Plan can be found [here](#).

### **7.5 Cycling, Walking and Access to the Countryside**

- 7.5.1 There are an abundance of routes suitable for walking, cycling, and horse-riding in the North and West of the Island and generally speaking this is seen as a well-established and maintained network. However, Recreation Policy 5 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan sets out that Area Plans will identify areas where improvements to informal access to the countryside can be made and to the public footpath network. The Area Plan will address this issue to determine the need to identify where improvements need to be made. There is a link between these issues and others sections in this document relating to green infrastructure, active travel, health and wellbeing, and also encouraging journeys by modes other than by car.

## 7.6 Design (including Sustainable Construction)

7.6.1 Whilst the Isle of Man Strategic Plan gives some general design principles there is a need for the Area Plan to ensure that a high level of design is achieved at the local level. Specific Proposals which support development should reflect the local character, and take account of scale and materials where appropriate. Through the use of Development Briefs, the Area Plan will aim to identify potential sites that will allow for developments to integrate well into existing settlements and have the potential to create places which people are proud of and want to spend time in. Importantly, Strategic Policy 5 of the Strategic Plan already requires planning applications to be supported by a design statement that should illustrate how new development has been designed so as to make a positive contribution to the Island's environment.

## 7.7 Environmental Enhancement

7.7.1 In addition to the need for protection there is also a need to carry out enhancements to the natural environment if a sustainable vision for the Isle of Man is to be achieved. The Strategic Plan states that, *"Opportunities for environmental enhancement, such as tree planting, the removal of eyesores and the management of habitats will need to be identified in Area Plans with the full involvement and support of local communities"*. Such opportunities may include former mining areas which have been or are in the process of being reclaimed. Appropriate reclamation should protect or enhance features of industrial or archaeological significance.

7.7.2 A requirement for biodiversity net gain is set out in Commitment 5 of the Net Zero Carbon Goals<sup>9</sup>. This requirement will be embedded in the Strategic Plan in due course.

### Chapter 7 Natural Environment - Summary

1. The countryside and its ecology will be protected for its own sake.
2. Settlement boundaries will define development boundaries for Ramsey, Peel, Jurby, Andreas, Kirk Michael, St Johns, Foxdale (in part), Bride, Sulby, Ballaugh and Glen

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<sup>9</sup> Isle of Man Government Action Plan for Achieving Net Zero Emissions by 2050 - Phase 1 (January 2020)

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3. All statutory and important non-statutory designations in the North and West will be recorded on the Environmental, Community and Infrastructure Constraints Maps.
4. Green Gaps will be identified to prevent the coalescence of settlements.



## **8 Addressing the Urban Environment and Town Centres**

- 8.1.1 Our towns and villages should be places that bind communities together. Place-making is driven by making the most of existing urban fabric, making linkages between key areas, creating quality spaces that draw people and activity in. They should be well maintained which in turn gives a sense of pride and a solid foundation for further incremental improvements. A high quality urban environment contributes to a good quality of life and encourages walking, cycling and public transport as instinctive and attractive options. Good quality urban areas are designed, built and maintained on the principle that people come first. The plan will recognise the importance of built heritage in line with the Strategic Plan.
- 8.1.2 The above statement holds true for any part of the Island. Recognition is growing of the links between good places and mental health and well-being. Now is a perfect time to think about what we all want from our local centres which doesn't necessarily have to follow the strict pattern of the past, but we must strive for vitality, vibrancy, and the creation of places for all.

### **8.2 The Unoccupied Urban Sites Register**

- 8.2.1 Originally published in November 2020, the Register did not extend to the North and West but such sites will be examined as part of the evidence base in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

### **8.3 Conservation and public realm**

- 8.3.1 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 sets out strategic policies in respect of conservation areas and public realm, specifically Strategic Policy 4 and Environment Policies 35, 36 and 40. Development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Special features that contribute to the character and quality of the conservation area are protected against inappropriate development. This may relate to existing public realm, as well as buildings. Development will only be permitted where it will not detrimentally affect important views into and out of the Conservation Area.

- 8.3.2 Within the North and West, designated conservation areas can be found at Maughold, St. John's Village, Glen Wyllin, Kirk Michael, Ramsey and Peel. Proposed sites that are located within or adjacent to a conservation area will be assessed carefully.
- 8.3.3 The Area Plan will not seek to re-iterate strategic policy or cross over into areas that are dealt with by other legislative processes such as the designation of Conservation Areas. However, there is an opportunity to start to think about the conservation of our built environment and Proposals and Development Briefs that may take it into account at the local level. Preparing the Draft Plan may flag up those areas which might have merit in being explored further in terms of new or extended areas to existing conservation areas.

#### **8.4 Comprehensive Treatment Areas**

- 8.4.1 Consideration will be given to the introduction of Comprehensive Treatment Areas.
- 8.4.2 S.4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999 states that: "An Area Plan may designate any land specified therein as an area selected for comprehensive treatment by development, redevelopment or improvement, or partly by one and partly by another method."
- 8.4.3 It goes on to state in S.4 (2) that:
- "If an area is designated under this section by an area plan, the plan shall:
- (a) describe the treatment which is proposed by the Cabinet Office; and
- (b) specify the period, which shall not exceed 5 years beginning with the date on which the plan is adopted, within which that treatment is to begin."
- 8.4.4 The objectives are to:
- i. Optimise use of land and buildings;
  - ii. Unlock difficult sites;
  - iii. Assist with a co-ordinated approach to development;
  - iv. Improve the urban environment and visual amenity;
  - v. Encourage further investment;
  - vi. Provide for space for Douglas Town Centre to grow; and
  - vii. Improve access and provide better linkages.

- 8.4.5 The Draft Plan will identify any areas that are appropriate to be shown as Comprehensive Treatment Areas and define appropriate proposals.
- 8.4.6 At this stage, no town centre boundaries have been identified on the maps. There is a need to work on the merits of having specific 'Town Centre' proposals and identifying the boundaries of such areas on the maps for the North and West. Such delineation can provide clarity to the application of the relevant Strategic Plan Policies.
- 8.4.7 In the East, specific streets were identified for primary shopping and office uses. Consideration will be given to identifying similar key areas in the North and West – particularly in Peel and Ramsey.

## **8.5 Mixed Use**

- 8.5.1 It is important to both recognise existing areas of Mixed Use and to consider how best to approach proposals for new sites suitable for Mixed Use. Some of our existing settlements have areas where there is no dominant land use. Such areas may be appropriate to be designated for Mixed Use. Mixed Use designations and new allocations are a way of building flexibility into the Plan. An allocation for Mixed Use would normally be acceptable for a variety of uses which would be compatible with each other and the area generally. Development Briefs may restrict development of Mixed Use Sites to certain uses/types of development if deemed appropriate.

### **Urban Environment and Town Centre Summary**

1. Consideration will be given to the introduction of Comprehensive Treatment Areas.
2. Proposals will seek to make the most of the existing urban fabric and consider the potential of any identified unoccupied urban sites.
3. Town centre boundaries may be identified for Peel and Ramsey.
4. Specific streets/locations may be highlighted as primary shopping and office uses.
5. Urban centres will normally be shown as areas of 'mixed use' where this is appropriate – these will be shown on the Draft maps.

## 9 Transport and Utilities Infrastructure

### 9.1 Infrastructure underpins settlement intensification and growth

9.1.1 Ensuring that there is sufficient infrastructure of the right type in the right place at the right time is important to facilitate the successful implementation of any approach to the distribution of development. At an Island wide level, the National Infrastructure Strategy sets out the long term strategic approach to future investment for transport and utilities. The overarching aim of the National Infrastructure Strategy is to ensure there is an integrated, reliable, secure and resilient provision of Island wide infrastructure that meets the social and economic needs of the Island up to 2050. Investment should ensure value for money, whilst meeting future needs.

9.1.2 The Island's infrastructure includes:-

- Highways;
- Ports, harbours<sup>10</sup> and airport;
- Energy generation and supply;
- Flood and coastal defences;
- Waste;
- Sewerage and water supply<sup>11</sup>; and,
- Telecommunications.

9.1.3 Statement 3 of The National Infrastructure Strategy states that:

"The Department of Infrastructure will continue to recognise the spatial distribution as set out in the Island Spatial Strategy of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 (or any update to this document) and will continue to monitor the impact on the Island's infrastructure."

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<sup>10</sup> Ramsey and Peel are classed as commercial harbours.

<sup>11</sup> The Island's two water treatment plants were designed with the capacity to serve a population of 90,000 by 2021, assuming all systems remain serviceable.

9.1.4 The Draft Area Plan will identify the key assets in the North and West as set out in the National Infrastructure Strategy (NIS). It shall identify any issues in relation to network capacity whether relating to roads or utilities infrastructure and address any issues in relation to site specific matters such as the most appropriate locations for Regional Sewage Treatment.

9.1.5 The Draft Plan will also take into account other Strategies of relevance in establishing the objectives and desired outcomes and specific proposals relating to transport and utilities including:

- The Harbours Strategy
- The ARUP Report into the Laxey flood<sup>12</sup>
- Active Travel Strategy and the implications of the Smarter Movement Strategy
- National Strategy on Sea Defences, Flooding and Coastal Erosion (2016), as published by the Department of Infrastructure

9.1.6 In terms of infrastructure constraints, a key one to be noted will be the High Pressure Gas Pipeline which enters the western plan area at Greeba and linking with East Lhergydhoo in German, Ballaugh and Kirk Michael before finally terminating in Ramsey.

9.1.7 In terms of the road network, the Strategic Road Links in the North and West are as follows:

Highway	Route
A1	Peel to Douglas Road
A2	Ramsey to Douglas Coast Road
A3	Castletown to St Johns
A3/A4	Peel to Ramsey
A18	Douglas to Ramsey (Mountain Road)

9.1.8 The Strategic Plan sets out that if full strategic plan development levels were attained more congestion would be suffered at Parliament Square Ramsey (others were outside of the North and West).

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<sup>12</sup> The Flood Management Team has now been embedded into the DOI in response to Recommendations of the Report.

- 9.1.9 In terms of ensuring that utilities and other infrastructure are fully taken into account in the preparation of the Draft Plan, Cabinet Office will liaise with the DOI, Manx Utilities, Department for Enterprise, Department of Home Affairs, Telecommunications Operators, and Manx Gas.

**Transport and Utilities Summary**

1. The Draft Area Plan will identify the key assets in the North and West as set out in the NIS, identify any issues in relation to network capacity whether relating to roads or utilities infrastructure and address any issues in relation to site specific matters such as the most appropriate locations for Regional Sewage Treatment.

## 10 Tourism

### 10.1 Matters the Draft Plan will address

- 10.1.1 The Area Plan for the North and West will identify the established and key tourist attractions in the area.
- 10.1.2 Earlier Plans have noted the content of the Isle of Man Destination Management Plan 2016-2020 and this or its replacement will be material in the preparation of the Draft Plan.
- 10.1.3 It is important to note that the Strategic Plan Policies are important and any new tourist development must be in compliance with these policies. There is a presumption against development in the countryside whether this be for residential development or tourism development.
- 10.1.4 Where appropriate the Draft Plan will identify Proposals which will:
- Protect current hotel offer
  - Support tourism offer within existing settlements
  - Give guidance on low key tourist development in woodlands
  - Protect the Raad ny Foillan footpath

#### **Tourism Summary**

1. The Draft Plan will identify the established and key tourist attractions in the area.
2. The status of other tourism strategies will be taken into account but tourism proposals will be in line with the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016.
3. The Mapping will recognise existing tourism offerings.
4. The Raad ny Foillan footpath will be protected.

## **11 Open Space and Recreation, Education, Health and other Community Facilities**

### **11.1 Striving for the right levels of open space and social infrastructure**

11.1.1 The Strategic Plan requires that Area Plans should incorporate an assessment of indoor and outdoor sport and recreation needs and provisions (Recreation Policy 1). Work is ongoing to better understand the current provision of sport and leisure facilities and public open space which will form part of the evidence for the Draft plan.

11.1.2 It is the intention to include an audit within the Area Plan, and key existing facilities will be shown on the Inset Maps.

### **11.2 Area Plan objectives**

11.2.1 These are to:

- i. To assess sports and recreation provisions in the Plan Area.
- ii. To protect existing open space and recreation facilities unless there are circumstances to support a different use in line with Recreation Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan.
- iii. To support the space standards set out in Appendix 6 of the Strategic Plan.
- iv. To consider where improvements to informal access to the countryside could be made.
- v. Consider the need for neighbourhood centres where urban areas are to be expanded.
- vi. To protect existing community facilities.
- vii. To consider the needs for expanded or new school facilities, healthcare facilities, police stations and fire stations.



## **12 Mapping – A number of Maps will form part of the Draft Plan**

### **12.1 Developing the Mapping element**

12.1.1 A key function of an Area Plan is to provide map-based elements to more easily show what the proposals and written parts of the plan mean - the final Plan will be a written proposals document with explanatory text - the 'Written Statement' - plus a series of Maps. Inset Maps will be compiled for all identified settlements. In drawing up the draft existing land use designations it is acknowledged that corrections/amendments may need to be made to ensure that:

- the mapping is accurate;
- the information shown is sufficient, easy to understand and meaningful; and
- the boundaries between different land uses are clear.

### **12.2 What will the Maps show?**

#### **12.2.1 Settlement Boundaries**

12.2.2 Settlement boundaries define those towns and villages identified as 'settlements' in the Strategic Plan. They represent the general development limits of an area - outside of which will be recognised as countryside unless otherwise shown as a particular land use.

12.2.3 The Call for Sites published draft settlement boundaries for the settlements within the North and West i.e. Ramsey, Peel, Andreas, Foxdale, Jurby, Kirk Michael, St. Johns, Bride, Ballaugh, Dalby, Glen Maye, Glen Mona and Sulby.

12.2.4 The draft settlement boundaries exclude land which is allocated on extant development plans but which remains undeveloped. So far, areas such as public open space have been excluded but may as the plan develops be seen as integral to the character of a settlement and may in the final plan be included within a settlement boundary and annotated as open space by a green colour wash. The final position of settlement boundaries will depend on particular characteristics of each settlement. In terms of understanding the mapping in relation to Settlement Boundaries:

- The boundaries will be shown on the Proposals Map and the Insets depicted by a purple line.

- Where residential curtilages are clear, these will generally be included with the settlement boundary.
- Land uses within a settlement boundary will generally have a colour wash relating to a particular land use. Not all individual elements in an area will be picked out however e.g. areas of residential will have a pink colour wash, and elements such as include roads and small scale uses – e.g. a single shop unit will also be coloured pink. Judgements will be made as the Inset Maps are developed.
- Where an area is pink for predominantly residential or indeed, shown as another land use, this does not mean that planning approval for that development that would fit is with that zoning would be approved. Merits of such proposals would have to be dealt with at the planning application stage. Generally though, development which is in accordance with the land use zoning/area plan and with policies of the Strategic Plan will normally be permitted subject to compliance with specific criteria.

### **12.3 Land uses shown on the Maps**

#### **12.3.1 Uses will include (this list is not exclusive)**

- Areas of predominantly residential use
- Areas of employment land (including industrial, special industry, business park)
- Areas of mixed use
- Open Space (which may be for public amenity space – e.g. parks, for a particular purpose – play area or may be private green space e.g. private estates and woodland).
- Land or buildings for Civic or Community Uses - including education, tourism, sewage treatment, police station, ambulance and fire or blue light hubs)
- Railway use

### **12.4 Land Uses outside of settlement boundaries**

12.4.1 There is a presumption against most forms of development taking place on land outside of the development boundaries of settlements. Generally all land outside of development boundaries is considered countryside. However, there may be land that due to its land use, its size or particular characteristics warrants being identified as a specific land use outside of a settlement. Maps will recognise such existing uses for example maps in the past have identified golf course, isolated housing estates, land for civic use or strategic infrastructure.

## **12.5 Areas / Features with Particular Characteristics**

12.5.1 Plans will identify areas with particular characteristics (rather than a land use) that should inform planning decisions. Many will be identified on the Constraints Maps such as flood zones, major hazard sites etc. They may reflect designations made through different parts of the planning legislation other than which relate to the development plan, as well as other primary legislation. Examples include Conservation Areas, Registered Buildings, Registered Trees and Ancient Monuments, Bird Sanctuaries, Areas of Special Scientific Interest. The mapping will also identify watercourses and Main Roads and other physical features as appropriate. It is important to note that not all data/study findings/evidence will be represented on the maps. This would be impractical and unnecessary. Some features are designated under separate processes (i.e. not the development plan procedure) and in other cases different legislation altogether.

## **12.6 Specific numbered Proposal Sites and Strategic Reserves**

12.6.1 Where land is needed for development, the Maps will show it and the 'site number' will be used throughout the plan process. Numbered Sites may be identified within or outside an existing settlement boundary. Final Maps will include all sites for general allocation within the settlement boundary. Strategic Reserves will remain outside the boundary until they are formally released. Preferred sites will be included in the Draft Plan and decisions will be informed by the results of this Preliminary Publicity.

### **Summary of the Mapping approach**

Indicative List of Maps (some of the Insets may be combined):

- 1a. Environmental Constraints
- 1b. Infrastructure Constraints
- 1c. Community Constraints
- 2 Landscape Character Areas
- 3 Proposals

### **Inset Maps**

- 4 Ramsey
- 5 Peel

- 6 Andreas
- 7 Jurby
- 8 Kirk Michael
- 9 St. Johns
- 10 Foxdale
- 11 Bride
- 12 Sulby
- 13 Ballaugh
- 14 Glen Mona
- 15 Glen Maye
- 16 Dalby

## **13 What will happen after the Preliminary Publicity stage?**

### **13.1 Timeline**

- 13.1.1 Once the period for making comments has ended, Cabinet Office will analyse the comments and set about drafting the Draft Area Plan for the North and West in line with the issues and format set out in this document. The Department will take into account all evidence papers that have already been formally published, other evidence set to be completed (which will in due course be published) and proceed to satisfy the procedures set out in Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999.
- 13.1.2 A Draft Plan must be published within 12 months of the end of the Preliminary Publicity although the Department will work to produce a draft within 6 to 9 months.