



**Isle of Man
Government**

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Preliminary Publicity for the Area Plan for the North and West

Site Assessment Framework Paper No. PP4

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The number of sites expected to be assessed as part of the Area Plan for North and West is expected to reach into the hundreds. The following assessment methodology has been formulated to provide a fair, simple and effective process for selecting the most sustainable development sites.

2. Purpose of this document

- 2.1 The Site Assessment Framework (SAF) is intended to provide a transparent and consistent methodology for assessing development sites. This is the latest version and will be the basis for initially assessing sites for development as part of the Area Plan for the North and West. Earlier iterations were used for a number of projects, including the Area Plan for the South and the Area Plan for the East.
- 2.2 The SAF will help to identify potential development sites, highlight those sites which should be protected from development and inform the production of the Draft Area Plan. The overall approach to site assessment will include consideration of the overall pattern of growth and the impacts brought about by environmental and other constraints as well as infrastructure capacity.
- 2.3 The SAF was initially designed primarily to assess possible housing and employment sites. However, through its practical application it is now apparent that the assessment criteria set out are useful in the assessment of any type of site, and so the framework will be used as far as it is relevant for each site.
- 2.4 The overall output from the SAF will be a filtered long-list of sites that are acceptable in principle, where each site's detailed individual constraints are understood, and they are potentially developable (or could be identified as potential Strategic Reserve Sites).
- 2.5 This filtered long-list will therefore comprise realistic options which can inform further stages of the plan making process.
- 2.6 It is envisaged that for each site, a summary report of the performance of the site at each stage (as relevant) and an explanation will be provided. This will also provide an

opportunity to fully consider all aspects of a specific site within the wider context of the Strategic Plan Policies. This may include high-level issues (such as the need to avoid the coalescence of settlements) and points of detail which, if the site were to be allocated, may need to be considered as part of a design brief (e.g. any footpaths crossing the site or any important boundary features).

- 2.7 A separate report (Site Identification Report) is also available which sets out the process for identifying those sites which should be assessed using the framework.

3. Steps in the Assessment Process

- 3.1 The SAF is part of the drafting process for deciding which sites should be proposed as part of the Area Plan for the North and West. The SAF process is broken down into three stages:
- 3.2 **Stage 1** serves as a preliminary screening process and identifies sites that clearly conflict with the Strategic Plan. This stage enables an objective assessment to be undertaken in respect of issues relating to site location, settlement boundaries, settlement coalescence, and water supply. From a planning perspective, sites that fail this stage are not **acceptable in principle**.
- 3.3 **Stage 2** of the site assessment framework assesses the **relative planning merits** of a site. The assessment will involve careful consideration in respect of detailed planning criteria that originate from policies contained in the Strategic Plan 2016.
- 3.4 **Stage 3** assesses whether a proposed site is **developable** within the plan period.
- 3.5 Each stage is summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Site Assessment Framework Steps and Outcomes

Stage	Explanation	Outcome
Stage 1: Preliminary Screening	<p>This step is used to identify sites which are in clear conflict with the policies of the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>From a planning perspective, sites that fail this stage are not acceptable in principle.</p>	<p>Sites are screened out which are unsuitable due to their location.</p>
Stage 2: Detailed Planning Criteria	<p>This stage assesses the relative planning merits of proposed sites.</p> <p>A combination of site scoring and report writing enables the relative planning merits of each site to be assessed against the policy aspirations set out in the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The scoring for the first nine criteria introduces critical constraints.</p> <p>The concept of critical constraints is used as a trigger to identify those sites where the impact of development on the site, or the impact of the site's characteristics on potential development, is such that development would be hindered, and mitigation or compensation is not possible or appropriate.</p>	<p>In the assessment for the first nine planning criteria, sites are screened out that are unsuitable due to the presence of critical constraints that cannot be overcome.</p> <p>Proposed sites that pass the first nine planning criteria are then assessed against the remaining criteria in Stage 2.</p> <p>The information gathered in Stage 2 informs a fuller understanding of the planning issues that a proposed site will present.</p>
Stage 3: Consideration of whether the site is Developable	<p>Stage 3 examines whether a site is developable, or not.</p> <p>The assessment criteria are concerned with the deliverability of the site and site availability and viability.</p> <p>This stage allows an overall judgement to be reached about whether or not a site is developable (these terms are defined in Section 5).</p>	<p>This Stage may influence how a site can be taken forward within the Draft Area Plan. By way of example, sites not deliverable during the plan period may be suitable as strategic reserve sites.</p> <p>In some circumstances, concerns about whether a site is developable may be such that the site is not considered appropriate for further consideration.</p>

4. The Issue of Housing

- 4.1 The Area Plan for the North and West will be a comprehensive document which will set out a spatial vision and examine specific issues in the Plan Area including housing, the built and natural environment, employment land, retail and town centres, tourism, all forms of infrastructure including transport and utilities as well as sports and community facilities, education and health needs, open space, and specific land requirements for minerals and waste.
- 4.2 However, Housing will be fundamental and many of the sites submitted as part of the Call for Sites are for housing (which if allocated will be referred to as "Predominantly Residential Use"). Table 2 below is taken from the Site Assessment Framework 2008 which remains the base document for the Framework even though it has been refined. The density figures shown within it will form the basis for any assessment of site potential and it has been repeated here for convenience.
- 4.3 Table 2: Net density assumptions for different types of site

Density Level	Dwellings per hectare	Location and development type examples
Very High	100 - 450	Promenade or very centre of town development. Typically apartments.
High	40 - 100	Town centre development. Typically development which is apartments or terraced housing. Also could be development on smaller sites.
Medium	15 - 30	Larger sites close to the settlement centre, typically estates incorporating different dwelling types including some apartments and terraced housing.
Low	5 - 10	Larger sites towards the edge of settlements, consisting of mainly houses and bungalows with relatively few apartments or terraces.
Very Low	2	Houses set in parkland surrounded by substantial grounds.

- 4.4 These assumptions are indications of net density and should not be taken as targets. In reality, the development which takes place may be of a higher or lower density. Including

this information in the database of sites will ensure that the final selection of sites meets the estimated number of new dwellings required for each Area Plan. The term 'net density' generally includes housing and directly associated uses and excludes major distributor roads, primary schools, open spaces serving the wider area, and significant landscape buffer strips.

5. Previous versions of the Site Assessment Framework

- 5.1 The Site Assessment Framework (SAF) was first produced in 2008. It was designed as a question-based set of criteria which allowed sites to be identified which best met the objectives of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan and accorded with best practice for sustainable development. The original Framework was used to assess sites for both residential use and employment use. The overall aim of this approach was to bring a more robust methodology to the site selection process generally.
- 5.2 In light of experience gained from the practical application of the SAF in the Area Plan for the South (APS), updated SAFs were produced and published for employment land in August 2015 as part of the Development Order Project¹, and for housing sites in October 2015 as part of the Castletown Housing Land Review.
- 5.3 The methodology for the SAF was subsequently refined in 2017 to support the preparation of the Area Plan for the East (TAPE). This was in response to opportunities identified for improving a) the quality of assessment, b) the clarity of the framework, and c) reflecting changes to supporting documents and information.
- 5.4 The Public Inquiry for TAPE highlighted where improvements could be made in the assessment of sites when undertaking the SAF process. In response to this, the current SAF has been simplified, with a view to reducing duplication, whilst ensuring that the content of the assessment was retained.
- 5.5 Further refinements have been made to the Site Assessment Framework, prior to commencing the Area Plan for the North and West. The SAF has been amended to take into account the Island's Climate Change Action Plan 2020–2050². The SAF has also been amended to take into account the Independent Inspector's Report for the Area Plan for the East³.

¹ This was subsumed within the Area Plan for the East process

² IMPACT – Isle of Man Programme for Achievement of Climate Targets – Prof. James C. Curran, Oct 2019

³ Report of an Inquiry into the Draft Area Plan for the East, Michael Hurley BA DipTP (2019).

Stage 1: Preliminary Screening

6. Stage 1 Objectives and Assessment

6.1 The Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 aims to concentrate development in existing towns and villages, to make the best use of existing: natural resources, transport infrastructure, and community facilities and to reduce the need to travel, whilst preventing settlement coalescence. These policies additionally support climate targets. Proposed sites will be considered against four preliminary screening questions at Stage 1. Further detail is given below.

6.2 Sites will be considered against the two questions below. If the answers to both questions are 'no', the site fails stage 1 of the SAF⁴. The exception to this will be if, in considering PSQ.4, the site is connected to another site which passes either PSQ.1 or PSQ.2 then the site can progress to Step 2.

PSQ. 1 – Is the proposed site located within a settlement boundary of a town or village, as shown on the relevant Plan Settlement Boundary Map (Spatial Policies 1 to 4).

PSQ. 2 – Does the proposed site abut the settlement boundary of a town or village, as shown on the relevant Settlement Boundary Map (Spatial Policies 1 to 4).

The relevant policy provision is Strategic Policy 2 and Appendix 3 of the SP. The references for assessment are the existing draft Settlement Boundary Maps that have been published.

6.3 Sites will be considered against the question below. If the answer to this question is 'yes', the site fails stage 1 of the SAF.

PSQ. 3 – Is the site within a designated area that presents a danger of pollution to the water supply?

The relevant policy provision is Strategic Policy 1, in the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 (SP). The reference for assessment is the Infrastructure Constraints Map.

⁴ Potential residential development sites within "Groups of Houses in the Countryside" (Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016, Paragraph 8.6.3) will be assessed separately.

- 6.4 Sites will be considered against the question below. If the answer to this question is **yes**, the site fails stage 1 of the SAF.

PSQ.4 – Is the site situated within a Green Gap?

The relevant policy provision is Strategic Policy 3 and Spatial Policy 7, in the SP. The reference for assessment is the Environmental Constraints Map.

- 6.5 The site proposer (i.e. the person who submitted the Response Form) will be notified if the site fails the Stage 1 assessment, and provide with information in respect of the points of failure. . It should be noted that there are some sites that may fail Stage 1, but the proposed land use may still be acceptable in planning policy terms, such as Open Space, Cemeteries or other Civic or Special Land Use. Where policy allows, an exception will be made in these instances.

Stage 2: Detailed Planning Criteria

7. Explanation of Stage 2 Assessment

- 7.1 Sites that reach Stage 2 will be considered against each of the detailed planning criteria set out within this section. Individual assessments will identify the relative planning merits of each site.
- 7.2 The detailed planning criteria are designed using a colour based scoring system (see Table 3 below). This will allow a clear visual representation and summary of the 'pros and cons' of each site.
- 7.3 The scoring system for the first nine planning criteria includes a box that denotes a critical constraint. The concept of critical constraints is used as a trigger to identify those sites where the impact of development on the site or the impact of the site's characteristics on potential development, is such that development would be significantly hindered, and mitigation or compensation is not possible or appropriate. Where a critical constraint is identified, sites will be deemed unsuitable and screened out.
- 7.4 Proposed sites that pass the first nine planning criteria are then assessed against the remaining criteria in Stage 2. At this point, proposed sites will not 'pass' or 'fail'. Further information will be obtained in respect of the planning merits of a proposed site.
- 7.5 The information gathered in Stage 2 provides a more complete understanding of the planning issues that a proposed site will present.

Table 3: Detailed Criteria Scoring

Category	Broad Interpretation
Green	Positive Impact
Yellow	Minimal Impact (positive or negative)
Orange	Negative Impact
Red	Significant Negative Impact
Critical Constraint	Due to a critical constraint, the site is unsuitable for development.

Detailed Criteria Questions

8. DC.1 Compatibility with adjacent land uses

- 8.1 It is important to consider compatibility of adjacent land uses. This is in order to avoid allocating sites where vulnerable members of the public would be present,, for example in areas where noise, odours, light pollution and disturbance issues etc. from employment uses are likely to affect educational and medical establishments or residential properties. Land for Special Industrial and General Industrial uses will be examined particularly carefully and may require infrastructure consultation zones⁵ to be identified. Issues relating to noise, air and light pollution are addressed by Policies of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan. When assessing a proposed employment use against this criterion, it could score lower if it is close to existing housing, and vice versa.
- 8.2 The relevant policy for this criteria is General Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan 2016.
- 8.3 If the site is located within a safety buffer zone, the lowest score should be assigned. Some designated safety buffer zones have been mapped, but not all.
- 8.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	The site would not result in residential uses being in close proximity to incompatible uses (no mitigation is necessary)
Yellow	Not used
Orange	The site would result in residential uses being in close proximity to uses which are only compatible with residential uses with mitigation, and such mitigation is realistic
Red	Not used
Critical Constraint	Existing uses on surrounding land are highly incompatible and cannot be made compatible through mitigation measures. Critical Constraint applies. The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.

⁵A consultation zone would be a mapped area showing where there would be a presumption against development for purposes in which vulnerable members of the public would be present – e.g. schools, housing, medical/health facilities.

9. DC.2 Hazardous land uses and contamination

- 9.1 A number of installations and existing land uses on the Island represent a constraint on development in their vicinity because of health and safety considerations. These are essential Island facilities and include LPG and petroleum storage. In addition, some land is known to be contaminated by previous uses. However, it may be possible to remediate the land to make it suitable for some forms of development.
- 9.2 In accordance with Strategic Plan Environment Policy 26 (and supporting text) successful remediation is where the development site is free of contamination which may constitute a hazard to occupiers or potential users of the development or land, and precautions can be taken to ensure that contaminants cannot escape from the site which may cause airborne or waterborne pollution or pollution of nearby land.
- 9.3 The possible scores are as set out below⁶.

Green	Site and surrounding land is contaminated and could be successfully remediated through development for the proposed use
Yellow	Site and surrounding land was either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• previously hazardous or contaminated but has been successfully and fully remediated, or• unlikely to be hazardous or contaminated.
Orange	Not used
Red	Not used
Critical Constraint	The site is hazardous/contaminated, or has the potential to be hazardous/contaminated, and cannot be satisfactorily addressed as part of the development (i.e. mitigation/remediation). Critical Constraint applies⁷. The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.

⁶ The scoring has been amended to reflect the policy aspiration set out in the Strategic Plan for contaminated land to be remediated (i.e. development which would lead to remediated land is preferable to development on uncontaminated land).

⁷ This criteria will impact upon site deliverability.

10. DC.3 Preservation of future mineral reserves

- 10.1 This is a new detailed planning criteria, and forms an addition to the 2020 framework.
- 10.2 Minerals Policy 1 and paragraph 12.2.1 of the Strategic Plan 2016 recognises the need to ensure an adequate supply of minerals to meet our needs. The Island has a long history of mineral extraction, and this has enabled the Island to be self-sufficient, when sourcing mineral supplies. Maintaining self-sufficiency in this regard will contribute to the long term sustainability of the Island.
- 10.3 Some Mineral Reserves have been mapped, but not all. Further dialogue with others may be required to establish whether a site is located on a future mineral reserve, to ensure due diligence in the plan making process.
- 10.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	The site is not located on a future Minerals Reserve.
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Not used
Red	Not used
Critical Constraint	<p>The site is located on a future Minerals Reserve.</p> <p>Critical Constraint applies.</p> <p>The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.</p>

11. DC.4 Maintaining landscape character

- 11.1 Development should respect the character of the landscape by ensuring that high quality landscapes are maintained and development is compatible in scale and design. The relevant policies are General Policy 2 and Environment Policy 2 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016.
- 11.2 The Landscape Character Assessment (2008)⁸ provides an Island-wide landscape and coastal quality assessment and has identified landscape character 'types' and 'areas' and determined their sensitivity to development. This classification has been used to inform criterion DC.4 as it is a more recent study and will supersede the designation of high landscape/coastal value areas across the whole Island as new Area Plans are approved.
- 11.3 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Development of the site would improve the landscape character (for example the site might fall into the category 'previously developed land')
Yellow	Development of the site would fit with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape
Orange	Development would have some impact on the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, but the proposal (including potential mitigation) would not result in the partial loss of any key features
Red	Development of the site would not fit the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, resulting in the partial loss of one or more key features
Critical Constraint	<p>The development does not fit the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, resulting in the total loss of, or major alteration to one or more key features.</p> <p>Critical Constraint applies.</p> <p>The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.</p>

⁸ An Island wide assessment of landscape character has been undertaken. This assessment is a **new reference** that sets out the baseline position for assessment of impacts to landscape character. It replaces the designation relating to Areas of High Landscape Value and Scenic Significance, in accordance with EP 2 of the Strategic Plan 2016.

12. DC.5 Protecting valued wildlife habitats and species

- 12.1 The Strategic Plan gives protection to the countryside and ecology for its own sake. The relevant policies are Environment Policy 4 and 5 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016. Statutory designations will be identified on the Environmental Constraints Map.
- 12.2 The final constraints map may also identify sites which do not have a statutory designation or are recognised by law, but are which are considered to have high wildlife value. Appendix 1 gives further detail in respect of relevant agreements. Sites may also be identified which have the potential for 'interest' but have not yet been surveyed in detail.
- 12.3 In developing the Area Plan, a precautionary approach will be adopted when assessing sites and considering their nature conservation interest, including using available information and considering existing designations.
- 12.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Site and adjoining area is unlikely to have any nature conservation interest
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Adjacent land (but not the site) has potential nature conservation interest - including designation in an existing Local Plan or the 1982 Development Plan.
Red	Potential nature conservation interest has been identified on the site – including designation in an existing Local Plan or the 1982 Development Plan.
Critical Constraint	<p>The site or adjacent area is a nationally or internationally designated site (RAMSAR or Area of Special Scientific Interest), Marine Nature Reserve, National Nature Reserve, Emerald Site, Bird Sanctuary or Area of Special Protection.</p> <p>Critical Constraint applies.</p> <p>The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.</p>

13. DC.6 Maintaining the historic built environment

- 13.1 Whilst there is a general presumption against the demolition of Registered Buildings, new development can affect the historic setting to varying degrees. The effect of new development on historic buildings and Conservation Areas will be dependent on the importance of the setting of each building related to the function that it performed historically and the particular impact on the Conservation Area. Deciding on the magnitude of the effect will inevitably involve a degree of judgement.
- 13.2 The relevant policies are set out in Environment Policies 30 – 36 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 and the reference for assessment is the Environmental Constraints Map. Appendix 1 sets out a summary of heritage assets.
- 13.3 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Development of site will have no adverse effect on a Registered Building and its setting or a Conservation Area
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Development of site likely to have a minor effect on a Registered Building and its setting or a Conservation Area
Red	Development of site likely to have a moderate effect on a Registered Building or its setting or a Conservation Area
Critical Constraint	Development of the site is likely to have a major effect on a Registered Building (including its setting), or a conservation area. Critical Constraint applies. The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.

14. DC.7 Protecting archaeology and Ancient Monuments

14.1 Archaeology is an important part of the Island's national heritage and needs to be protected against damage or disturbance that could result from new development. The relevant policies are set out in Strategic Policy 4 and Environment Policies 6, 40 and 41 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016, and the reference for assessment is the Environmental Constraints Map. Appendix 1 sets out the relevant agreements relating to archaeology.

14.2 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	There are no Ancient Monuments on site and there is very low potential for archaeological interest (for example due to previous disturbance or demonstrated through investigation)
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Not used
Red	There is potential for archaeological interest on the site (which may include some evidence of past 'finds' on the site or in the general area)
Critical Constraint	The site includes an Ancient Monument which would be affected by development. Critical Constraint applies. The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.

15. DC.8 Minimising the risk of flooding

- 15.1 The Strategic Plan indicates development will not be supported on land subject to unreasonable risk of erosion or flooding (General Policy 2). It seeks to prevent the loss of natural flood plain, guide development away from areas at risk of flooding, and ensure that development that does take place is safe. It notes that the development of sites which may flood can lead to problems not only for the new development itself, but also for adjacent land. Environment Policies 10 – 13 of the SP are also relevant.
- 15.2 Flooding maps are available in relation to coastal, fluvial, and surface water flooding. The reference for assessment is the National Strategy on Sea Defences, Flooding, and Coastal Erosion (Overview Map and Management Areas, including Flooding and Coastal Erosion Predicted Risk Hotspot Map), and the Infrastructure Constraints Map. The coastal and fluvial maps are well established and were used to inform the preparation of the SAF. The surface water flood maps indicate a large area at risk - they will be used to highlight the need for separate more detailed assessment at a later stage. For the purposes of applying the SAF, the Coastal Flood Zone is the area at 1 in 200 risk and Fluvial Flood Zone is defined as 1 in 100 risk (both plus Climate Change).
- 15.3 Coastal flooding does not result in lower scores for sites within existing settlement boundaries, as this reflects the nature of settlement patterns and also that Coastal flooding can more easily be mitigated without displacing the impact. Brownfield sites within Fluvial Flood Zones within existing settlement boundaries are scored 'yellow', and so higher than sites outside existing settlement boundaries which are not within Fluvial or Coastal Flood Zones. This is on the basis that redevelopment of existing buildings brings opportunities to review the use and move to a less vulnerable use, improve the standard of defence for occupants and/or reduce the rate of run-off and discharge from the site (e.g. through SuDS) to reduce the existing impact on surrounding properties.

15.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Brownfield or Greenfield Site inside the existing settlement boundaries and outside the Fluvial Flood Zone (irrespective of whether inside the Coastal Flood Zone)
Yellow	Brownfield site inside the existing settlement boundaries and inside the Fluvial Flood Zone (irrespective of whether inside the Coastal Flood Zone)
Orange	Brownfield or Greenfield Site outside the existing settlement boundaries and outside both the Fluvial and Coastal Flood Zones
Red	Greenfield site inside the existing settlement boundaries and inside the Fluvial Flood Zone (irrespective of whether inside the Coastal Flood Zone)
Critical Constraint	<p>The site is outside the existing settlement boundaries and inside either the Fluvial or Coastal Flood Zones.</p> <p>Critical Constraint applies.</p> <p>The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.</p>

16. DC.9 Protecting high quality agricultural land

- 16.1 The policy framework of the Strategic Plan recognises the importance of agriculture to the rural economy and society, and aims to protect its commercial viability and the principle of self-sufficiency in food production. The relevant policy for this criteria is Environment Policy 14 of the Strategic Plan 2016.
- 16.2 The Agricultural Land Use Capability Study shows how the quality of soils varies across the Island, using a classification system of 1 to 5. The best and most versatile agricultural land falls within classes 1 and 2 and there is a general presumption against its release for development, as reflected in Environment Policy 14 of the Strategic Plan (loss only permitted where there is an overriding need).
- 16.3 The above takes into account the publication, 'Agricultural soils of the Isle of Man, Centre for Manx Studies' (2001). This document is a helpful starting point but it is recognised that it is limited by its scale and detailed interpretation at field level may need additional investigation.
- 16.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Previously developed land with limited agricultural value or marked as Urban on the Agricultural Soils Land Use Capability Map
Yellow	Soil in the area supports low levels of crop production/agricultural use/soil quality falls into Classes 4, 4/5 and 5
Orange	Soil in the area supports moderate levels of crop production/agricultural use/soil quality falls into Class 3, 3/4 and 4/3
Red	Soil in the area supports high levels of crop production/agricultural use/soil quality is Class 2/3 and 3/2
Critical Constraint	Soil in the area supports high levels of crop production/agricultural use/soil quality is Class 1 or Class 2 Critical Constraint applies. The site is unsuitable and should be screened out.

17. DC.10 Prioritising previously developed land

- 17.1 The relevant policy for this criteria is Strategic Policy 1 and Environment Policy 43 of the Strategic Plan 2016. The first part of Strategic Policy 1⁹ sets out that "Development should make the best use of resources by a) optimising the use of previously developed land, redundant buildings, unused and under-used land and buildings and reusing scarce indigenous building materials..."
- 17.2 The reference for assessment is the definition of 'previously developed land' in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Plan 2016.
- 17.3 Should the site be proposed for Open Space and Recreation, Cemeteries, or Civic Uses that have specific requirements, criteria DC.9 will not be applied.
- 17.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	The site is comprised entirely or predominantly of previously developed land ¹⁰
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Not used
Red	The site is comprised entirely or predominantly of greenfield land
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

⁹ Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016, Paragraph 4.2.1.

¹⁰ As defined in Appendix 1 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 (Glossary of Terms)

18. DC.11 Preservation of Settlement Character

18.1 This is a new detailed planning criteria, and forms an addition to the 2017 framework.

18.2 The relevant policy is set out in Environment Policy 42 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016. New development in existing settlements must be designed to take account of the particular character and identity of the settlement, in terms of buildings and landscape features of the immediate locality. Inappropriate backland development, and the removal of open or green spaces which contribute to the visual amenity and sense of place of a particular area will not be permitted.

18.3 Open or green spaces which are to be preserved will be identified in the Area Plans. Reference may also be had to defining features within settlements, as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment 2008

18.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Development of the site will preserve or enhance the character and identity of an existing settlement.
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Not used
Red	Development of the site will result in <ul style="list-style-type: none">• inappropriate backland development, and/or• the removal of open spaces or important landscape settings that contribute to the visual amenity, sense of place and overall settlement character.
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

19. DC.12 Protecting Visual Amenity

- 19.1 Decisions in respect of development sites should be sensitive to the impact on views from valued landscapes, urban areas, footpaths and recreational areas. Ideally, new development should be compatible with surrounding buildings and avoid obstructing prominent views.
- 19.2 The relevant policies are set out in Environment Policy 6 and 24 and Appendix 5 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016. The reference for assessment is the Landscape Character Assessment (2008)¹¹.
- 19.3 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Development would have no adverse impact on visual amenity as viewed from adjacent land uses such as residential areas, public footpaths or recreational areas
Yellow	Development would have limited impact on visual amenity as viewed from adjacent land uses such as residential areas, public footpaths or recreational areas but could be mitigated through design and layout
Orange	Development would have an impact on visual amenity as viewed from adjacent land uses such as residential areas, public footpaths or recreational areas and could not be easily mitigated through design and layout
Red	Development would have a significant impact on visual amenity as viewed from adjacent land uses such as residential areas, public footpaths or recreational areas
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

¹¹ An island wide assessment of landscape character has now been undertaken. This assessment is a **new reference** that sets out the baseline position for assessment of impacts to landscape character. It replaces the designation relating to Areas of High Landscape Value and Scenic Significance, in accordance with EP 2 of the Strategic Plan 2016.

20. DC.13 Protecting Trees

20.1 The assessment of this impact is based on Tree Protection Policy, as published by DEFA in January 2021. Appendix 3 of this publication contains a decision tree for assessing applications that involve trees. Four categories of sensitivity are identified that require a detailed arboricultural assessment are set out below.

Categories of Sensitivity
Registered trees
Groups of trees comprising of over 5 large trees or 30 medium trees
One single large tree
Medium tree within a conservation area or built up area

20.2 The relevant policies are set out in General Policy 2 and Environment Policies 3 and 42 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016.

20.3 The possible scores are as set out below:

Green	Site does not contain any trees that fall within a category of sensitivity
Yellow	Site does not contain any trees that fall within a category of sensitivity that cannot be satisfactorily accommodated within the development
Orange	Not used
Red	Site does contain trees that fall within a category of sensitivity that cannot be satisfactorily accommodated within the development
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

21. DC.14 Ensuring sites are accessible via the existing road network

21.1 This criterion seeks to make best use of the existing road network, in particular to avoid a) the creation of new junctions onto key routes outside existing settlement¹² boundaries; and b) inappropriate traffic movements taking place on smaller roads. Consideration of the implications for new development in relation to the TT course will take place separately to the SAF process. The relevant policies are set out in Strategic Policy 1 and Transport Policies 1, 2, 4 and 7 of the Strategic Plan 2016.

21.2 The scoring system refers to the Department of Infrastructure's new document called 'A Manual for Manx Roads' which sets out the concepts of Place Status, Link Hierarchy and Place Level¹³. It is understood that a revised and updated Manual for Manx Roads is due to replace this guidance and will be published in the near future. Until the revised publication is published, we will continue to refer to the existing version.

21.3 The possible scores are as set out below¹⁴.

Green	Nature and location of site: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• will not require a new access to a Primary or District Link; and• will not result in a significant increase in the volume (or nature) of vehicle traffic movements on Local or Local Access Roads.
Yellow	Nature and location of site: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• would require a new access to a Primary or District Link; and• will not result in a significant increase in the volume (or nature) of vehicle traffic movements on Local or Local Access Roads.
Orange	Nature and location of site: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• would require a new access to a Primary or District Link; or• will result in volume/nature of vehicle traffic movements on Local or Local Access Roads that would be inappropriate.
Red	Site is not located on the existing road network and would require a significant access route (relative to the scale of the proposal) to be constructed to link to the existing road network
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

¹² 'Settlement' means a town or village referred to in Spatial Policies 1 - 4 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016.

¹³ See tables 4.2 – 4.4 of the Manual for Manx Roads for more details on the Link and Place hierarchies

¹⁴ For the purposes of applying the scoring criteria, the use of an access which currently only used for agricultural use (e.g. access into a field) to serve built development (e.g. a new housing estate) will be considered a new access.

22. DC.15 Encouraging the use of public transport

- 22.1 This criterion assesses the potential to travel by bus, thereby reducing car usage and resulting greenhouse gas emissions as well as local environmental and social impacts associated with car use and road construction. The distances used are based on advice from Bus Vannin (DOI). When assessing a site which is large enough to accommodate a spine road which could be designed and function as a bus route, the distances should be measured from the edge of the site nearest the bus route. For smaller sites the distance should be measured from the middle of the site. Please note that the rail network on the Island is primarily a tourism and leisure facility and is therefore excluded from the assessment.
- 22.2 The relevant policies are set out in Strategic Policy 10, Business Policy 2, Recreation Policy 4 and Transport Policies 1 and 8 of the Strategic Plan 2016.
- 22.3 The need for a site to have an internal bus route on completion of a development scheme or a new bus stop added to the existing highway network close to the site will be considered as part of any Assessment Report. It is assumed that the option to cycle or walk is widely available and would therefore not help to distinguish between sites. It should also be noted that this criterion does not consider proximity to community services and facilities; this is covered within criterion DC.5.
- 22.4 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	The site is within 200m of a bus route with a peak time service every 30 minutes
Yellow	The site is within 400m of a bus route with a peak time service every 30 minutes
Orange	The site is within 400m of a bus route with at least an hourly peak time service
Red	None of the above apply
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

23. DC.16 Maximising access to community services and facilities

23.1 The relevant policy is set out in Recreation Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan 2016. The reference for assessment relies on distances to community facilities.

23.2 The following points should be noted.

- this criterion only applies to housing sites.
- community services and facilities are, for this exercise taken to include: a school, a shop, a Post Office, GP surgery/health centre, a public park/outdoor sports facilities, indoor sports facilities, a community centre/hall, library, or place of worship.

23.3 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Site is located within 1 km walking distance of 4 or 5 of the services/facilities listed above and is within 1 km of a school bus route.
Yellow	Site is located within 1 km walking distance of 2 or 3 of the services/facilities listed above.
Orange	Site is located within 1 km walking distance of 1 of the services/facilities listed above
Red	Site is more than 1 km walking distance from all of the services/facilities listed above
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

24. DC.17 Ensuring there is sufficient provision of open space

- 24.1 Open space is defined in the Strategic Plan 2016 as land used for recreational purposes, both formal and informal, including amenity space whether privately or publicly owned.¹⁵ It includes sports pitches, children's play space and amenity space.
- 24.2 The scoring system to be used for this criterion is based on Recreation Policy 2 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016. This includes a presumption against development that will result in the loss of open space unless alternative provision can be made, or there would be an overall community gain and the effect on open space would not be significant. Areas where there is limited existing open space should be prioritised for open space provision. The reference for assessment is Appendix 6 of the Strategic Plan.
- 24.3 For the purposes of this exercise Open Space shall be taken to be:
- land laid out as a public garden or amenity space or used for the purposes of public recreation. Can include playing space for sporting use (pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and miscellaneous sites such as training areas in the ownership or control of public bodies including the Department of Education where facilities are open to the public);
 - areas which are within the private, industrial or commercial sectors that serve the leisure time needs for outdoor sport and recreation of their members or the public; and
 - land used as children's play space which may contain a range of facilities or an environment that has been designed to provide opportunities for outdoor play, as well as informal playing space within built up areas.
- 24.4 For the purposes of this exercise Open Space shall not be taken to be: verges, woodlands, the seashore, Nature Conservation Areas, allotments, golf courses, water used for recreation, commercial entertainment complexes, sports halls, and car parks.

¹⁵ Paragraph 10.3.2 Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016

24.5 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Development would not result in the loss of open space
Yellow	Not used
Orange	Development would result in the loss of open space in an area that is currently well-served
Red	Development would result in the loss of open space in an area where there is limited existing open space
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

25. DC.18 Facilitating Active Travel

25.1 The relevant policy is set out in Transport Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan 2016. The reference for assessment relies on distances to identified Active Travel Routes.

25.2 The possible scores are as set out below.

Green	Site directly links with an identified active travel route.
Yellow	Site is located within a 0.5km distance of an active travel link.
Orange	Site is located within a 1km distance of an active travel link.
Red	Site is located more than 1 km distance from an active travel link.
Critical Constraint	No Critical Constraint applies

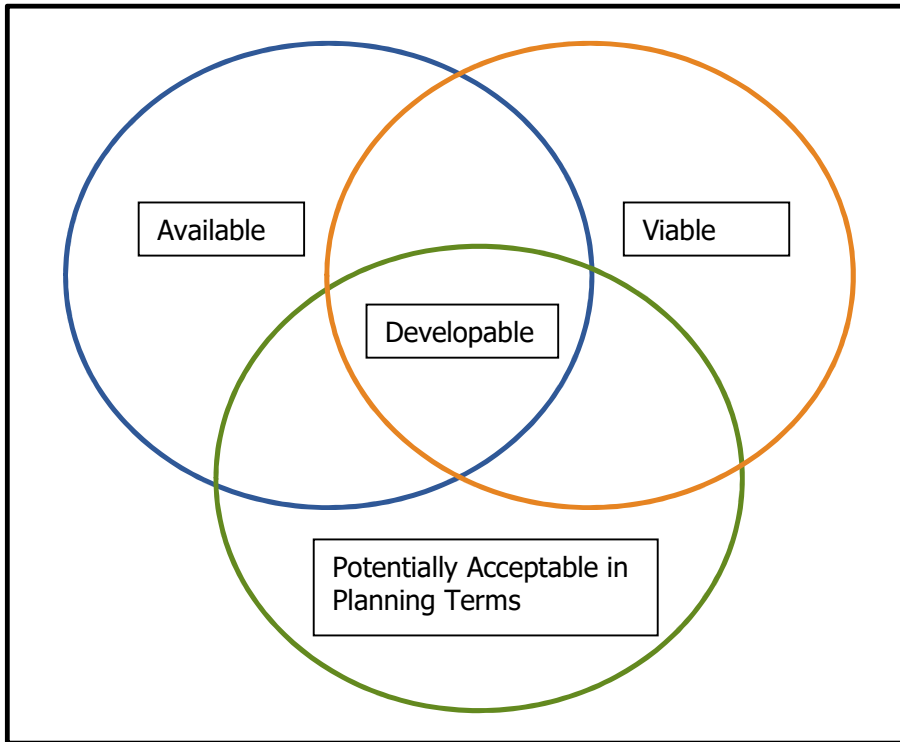
Stage 3: Is the site developable in the plan period?

25. Explanation of Stage 3 Assessment

25.1 It is important to understand whether a site is developable within the plan period. Developable sites are those sites which are broadly acceptable in planning terms and there is a reasonable prospect that, at the point envisaged, they will be available and viable. For the purposes of this assessment, the definitions set out below are used.

- **Potentially Acceptable in Planning Terms:** Where no fundamental objection to the principles of the Strategic Plan have been identified (i.e. sites which pass stage 1 and have no critical constraints)
- **Available:** Where there is a landowner willingness to develop and no existing uses which cannot cease
- **Viable:** Where there are no serious barriers to delivery in terms of the cost and practicality of issues such as: ground-works/remediation; access, services and other infrastructure; and any necessary developer contributions in relation to affordable or social housing/open-space etc.
- **Deliverable:** Developable sites that could be brought forward in the short-term (sites with planning approval will normally be considered to be deliverable)
- **A Strategic Reserve Site** is considered suitable for development but is held 'in reserve' until a time when there are compelling reasons to release it. This could include sites which are currently considered likely to become developable after the end of the current Plan Period, but where these circumstances could change and/or where additional allocations are considered appropriate in order to provide flexibility to maintain supply during or beyond the current Plan Period.

25.2 Figure 1: The components of a developable site



25.3 Stages 1 and 2 will inform whether a site is broadly acceptable in planning terms and screen out sites with a fundamental objection. Stage 3 tests whether a site is developable i.e. whether it is available and could be viably developed within the plan period (i.e. by 2026). Therefore, professional judgement will be used to assess these having regard to various issues which could include:

- whether the site is in multiple or split ownership;
- the current use of the site;
- infrastructure issues (including green and social infrastructure);
- the level of physical works required within the site; and
- information provided by the site proposer in relation to delivery.

25.4 Sites may not be allocated if they are considered to be undevelopable. However, where there are doubts about a site being (or becoming) deliverable during the plan period (i.e. by 2026) it may be considered for allocation as 'Strategic Reserves'. The overall total of sites proposed will need to have regard to maintaining a supply of housing land throughout the Plan Period.

26. Availability

- 26.1 Questions in relation to site ownership are included on the Call for Sites Response Form. Where sites are in multiple/split ownership, information may be required to confirm that all necessary landowners are supportive of the development. Where the site is currently in use, it will be important to understand the intentions for how and when that use could cease/relocate.
- 26.2 Strategic Policy 1 (point c) in the Strategic Plan aims to make best use of existing and planned infrastructure. This could include sewerage, water, gas and electricity supply and telecommunications. Some infrastructure issues (such as access to community facilities and public transport) are referenced in Stage 2, but may also be relevant in this Step.

27. Viability

- 27.1 Physical works may include actions such as site clearance (including demolition), site remediation for contaminated or hazardous material (either improvement of or mitigation for), ground stabilisation, piling, cut and fill works, site access/junction works/boundary works internal road construction and landscaping. Works may also be linked to drainage/sewerage works, other utility and telecommunications infrastructure and landscaping, and so relate to the point above.
- 27.2 The site proposer may be able to provide additional information which helps to confirm the site is developable - this may include demonstration of market interest/demand, master-planning work, site surveys or responses to specific issues/concerns.

Appendix 1: Environmental Law and Agreements

A1.1 **Agreements in respect of Ecology** - The Island contains "Ramsar Sites" which are areas of wetland of international importance and are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Island also applies:

- the Berne Convention on European Wildlife and Natural Habitats;
- the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; (including the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds
- the Eurobats Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats;
- the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels;
- the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas); and
- the Ospar Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic.

A1.2 **Environmental Law** - Nationally important wildlife species and habitats are protected under the Wildlife Act 1990 and also under the Manx Museum and National Trust Act 1959. These include:

- Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI);
- National Nature Reserves (NNR);
- Areas of Special Protection for Birds (ASPB) and Bird Sanctuaries; and
- Manx National Heritage or National Trust Land.

A1.3 **Summary of Heritage Assets** - In relation to heritage, the Island currently has 250 Registered Buildings and 19 Conservation Areas. There are also a number of other buildings and areas that are unscheduled or unidentified but may be afforded protection under section 17 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999 (Building Preservation Notices). There are approximately 140 Scheduled Ancient Monuments under Section 7 or Section 13 of the Manx Museum and National Trust (MMNT) Act 1959 or included under a Preservation Order through Section 11 of that Act.

A1.4 **Agreements in respect of Archaeology** - The Isle of Man is a signatory to the Valetta Convention (The European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage 1992)

and therefore has a range of international obligations in relation to the identification, recording, protection, conservation and management of archaeological heritage.