



**Isle of Man
Government**

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

REFORM OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM

PROGRAMME FOR
GOVERNMENT
2016-2021



INTRODUCTION

Hon. Howard Quayle MHK
Chief Minister

The planning system has a crucial role to play in maintaining the Isle of Man's reputation as a special place to live and work.

Planning decisions affect the community, the economy, the environment and the interests of individuals, landowners and developers.

One of the objectives in the Programme for Government is to have a planning system that supports sustainable growth.

We want to generate the economic prosperity and inward investment needed to create jobs for our people and to fund the public services we all rely on.

It is in all our interests to have a modern, dynamic and responsive planning system that promotes our national priorities, while taking into account environmental and social considerations.

In common with planning frameworks elsewhere in the British Isles, the planning system in the Isle of Man is designed and operated to manage development. It often has to take into account competing priorities.

The need for reform is clear.

This is evidenced by the feedback to a recent public consultation and reviews carried out on behalf of the Council of Ministers, including:

- The report of the Select Committee on Planning and Building Control (petition for Redress) 2015-16.
- High Level Strategic Review of Planning in the Isle of Man.

Our intention now is to address the issues that have been identified and put in place an effective planning system that provides the right level of regulation and certainty, is proactive not just reactive, and can clearly demonstrate its value to the public.

Some of the proposed improvements will be straightforward to introduce. Others will require changes to legislation and will take more time to implement.

The work that we are outlining in this document complements other work also being undertaken by the Government to modernise its regulatory framework and regeneration activity.

The Isle of Man Government is committed to delivering the right changes to the planning system to ensure it best meets the needs of our people and businesses, now and in the future.

We have produced an action plan that will drive a programme of improvement to ensure the Isle of Man continues to be a special place to live, work and visit.

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Government's commitment to undertaking a review of the Island's planning system is set out with Programme for Government under the "Sustainable Island" Theme. One of the key Outcomes is to have a planning system which supports sustainable growth.

Relevant Policy Statements linked to this Outcome are:

- We will shape and design a planning system informed by recent reviews and consultation;
- Make it easier for Government's priorities to be reflected in the way planning applications are considered; and

- Review our processes and desired goals in respect of the conservation of our built environment.

This document is intended to clarify how we will achieve those outcomes, as indicated in the recently revised Programme for Government which committed to propose reform of the Planning System in Tynwald May 2018.

We Asked

In order to gather public feedback on the possible changes to the planning system being considered by Government, a consultation was published as an Online Survey on the Consultation Hub. It consisted of 55 questions and ran between 20th October 2017 and 8th January 2018.

You Said

There were 171 responses although the respondents could choose not to answer some of the questions. All in all, those who did submit comments to the survey whether online or via email/letter provided comprehensive comments which will shape the future work programme set out in this document in terms of Planning Processes as well as Planning Policies.

We Did

The feedback received through the consultation has been analysed and summarised in a document that can be accessed at <https://consult.gov.im/>. Consultation responses have been published in full or anonymously, where such permission has been given by the respondent. The ideas contained in the consultation have been assessed in terms of public support, the benefits that each change would be expected to deliver and the ease of implementation. This process helped to establish a number of actions that will deliver a clearer, simpler and more effective planning system that works for the interests of our residents and businesses.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE THE PLANNING SYSTEM

What we will do	Why this is important	When
<p>By October 2018, we will bring forwards amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act which introduce:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New powers for the subsequent introduction of National Policy Directives which, with Tynwald approval, could override the Development Plan to better meet our needs. 2. A new Community Infrastructure Levy taking effect in early 2020. 3. The powers to introduce a method for faster minor amendments to existing planning approvals by the end of 2019. 4. Introduce a definition of ‘General Importance to the Island’ as set out in Section 11(1)(a) of the Act. 5. Discretionary powers for the Cabinet Office to appoint a planning advisory body under Section 40 of the Act. 6. Explicitly define the statutory basis for Planning Committee(s) and their decisions. 	<p>These specific changes are intended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable changes in policy to be brought about more quickly, when necessary, to continue to meet the Island’s needs. This will make the planning system much more responsive to changing circumstances and expectations. 2. Ensure new developments help fund the accompanying wider changes which bring economic, environmental and social benefits. 3. Reduce bureaucracy and ensure a proportionate approach to very minor changes. 4. Ensure applications which are key to Government priorities are better identified and considered (‘called in’) to Council of Ministers. 5. Allow more flexibility in how Government involves stakeholders in policy matters, to ensure we are able to fully understand their views, without extra bureaucracy. 6. Provide further definition regarding the legal status and powers of Planning Committees. 	In 2018
<p>In parallel, over the next 8 months, we will undertake a range of procedural changes, which introduce:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved criteria regarding who is awarded ‘Interested Person Status’. 2. Faster processes to allow new smaller telecoms improvements. 3. Allow the scope for questions of clarity or fact, during the Planning Committee meetings, to avoid delays whilst information is obtained. 4. Measures to encourage more appeals to be dealt with by written submissions, rather than awaiting hearings. 5. New and improved design guidance and new minimum standards for most new developments. 	<p>These changes are intended to ensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The planning appeals process is available to those with a legitimate and relevant planning concern, whilst reducing scope for unreasonable delays. 2. Our community and businesses receive the most modern and comprehensive mobile phone service and coverage, which helps make our lives easier and businesses more profitable. 3. Decisions are based on the most accurate information available on the day and people have confidence in the system. 4. Appeal decisions are faster and the process less bureaucratic, and reducing tax-payer cost. 5. Our properties contribute to making our Island an even better place to live and work. 	
<p>Council of Ministers have agreed the following Policy with immediate effect:</p> <p>In order to continue to incentivise and support site redevelopment and the associated economic development, Planning Approval should not normally be given for brownfield sites to be used as temporary car parks.</p>	<p>To ensure faster brownfield site redevelopment and encourage socio-economic development.</p>	

ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE THE PLANNING SYSTEM

What we will do	Why this is important	When
Complete the Area Plan for the East as a matter of urgency and progress it to approval by Tynwald. The North and West will then start immediately with an expectation of completion by late 2021, followed by frequent reviews of the full set of Area Plans.	The Area Plans are a vital part of the Island's Development Plan, which identify areas which should be developed. The Area Plan for the East covers the majority of the Island's population. Having an up-to-date development plan ensures sustainable development, gives confidence to investors and communities, through showing a clear vision of how our Island should develop.	During 2019
Use the newly established legal powers to introduce National Policy Directives which enable sustainable economic development to meet the community needs in urban and rural areas.	To ensure a thriving economy continues to enable and support the community's and environment's success.	
To review how the use of Compulsory Purchase powers and the reduction in Rate discounts associated with brownfield sites can be changed to stimulate early development.	To stimulate development of brownfield sites within towns to both gain economic activity and improve the feel and appearance of those locations.	
Launch the new Community Infrastructure Levy.	So that larger developments bring economic, environmental and social benefits through the use of a fair and transparent levy to fund wider requirements which complement the developments.	During 2020
Continue to modernise the planning system by bringing forward things like online planning application submissions.	To continue to make the planning system more efficient and easier to use.	
Carry out a full review of Strategic Plan policies (including Agriculture, Tourism, Retail and Employment policies) and the associated Planning Policy Statements.	To ensure that our Development Plan continues to meet our needs and we have the right guidance in place to assist applicants to meet policies.	
Carry out a full review of the Planning Act to make sure it's as effective as possible in meeting the Island's needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of minor improvements which address operational aspects. Investigate whether more simple changes to the planning system can be made faster by moving some procedures from primary to secondary legislation. 	To make the system easier to improve and become more responsive.	
Undertake an audit of the Island's built heritage assets.	To ensure we conserve and celebrate the Island's best and unique architecture.	