

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1999

REPORT OF AN INQUIRY INTO THE DRAFT AREA PLAN FOR THE EAST

Dates of Inquiry: 10 September to 2 October 2019

Inspector: Michael Hurley BA DipTP

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Preamble	1
Chapters 1-3	
Lifespan of the Area Plan	10
General Development Brief	14
Spatial Vision	16
Development Boundaries	21
Large Developments Outside Settlements	23
Chapter 4 – Landscape	
Landscape Character Areas	25
Landscape North of Douglas and Onchan	31
Howstrake Holiday Camp	33
Chapter 5 – Natural Environment	
Objectives	36
Outcomes	38
Green Gaps	39
The Uplands	48
Chapter 6 – Urban Environment	
Registered Buildings and Conservation Areas	49
Urban Environment Proposal 3	51
Archaeology	52
Railway Architecture	53
Chapter 7 – Transport and Utilities	
Traffic Congestion	54
Cycle Parking	57
Park and Ride	58
TT Access Road	59
Gas Supply	62
Flood Risk	63
Sewage Treatment	65
Renewable Energy	68
Chapter 8 – Employment	
Employment Proposals 1 and 2	74
Need for Employment Land	77
Employment Proposal 3 - Site BE002a – Cooil Road	104
Employment Proposal 4 – sites BE002b and BE006 – Cooil Road	107
Site BE001 – Ballalough Depot	115
Site BE009 – Clybane	121
Site BE010 – Middle Farm	124
Richmond Hill Waste Site	134
Site BE025 – Adjacent to Tromode Industrial Estate	142

Chapter 9 – Town Centre

Town Centre Boundary	148
Mixed Use Area 3	154
Mixed Use Area 5	155
Mixed Use Area 8	156
Mixed Use Area 8	158
Town Centre Conservation Areas	165

Chapter 10 – Tourism

Tourism Proposal 6	166
Raad Ny Foillan	167

Chapter 11 – Open Space, Education etc

Accuracy of Table 10	168
Children’s Play Space	169
Education	174

Chapter 12 – Residential

Population and Households	187
Housing Need	205
Vacancies	206
Housing Need in the East	208
Release of Reserve Sites	218
Housing Supply	224
Distribution of Proposed Housing	230
Groups of Dwellings in the Countryside	237
Low Density Housing in Parkland	241
Types of Accommodation	245
Housing Allocations	249
Sites DBH002 and BH030 – Braddan Road/Ballaflletcher Road	251
Site BM006 – Vicarage Road, Braddan	269
Site BH031 – Camlork	274
Site DH001 – Westmoreland Road, Douglas	290
Sites DH002, DH057 and DM001 – Johnny Watterson’s Lane	294
Site DH009 – Ballanard Road, Douglas	305
Site DH011 – Ballanard Woods, Douglas	312
Site DH039 – Park Road, Douglas	318
Site DH046 – Victoria Road Prison, Douglas	319
Site OH011 - Ballachrink, Onchan	321
Site OH017 – Summerhill, Douglas	332
Site OH018 – Governor’s Road, Douglas	337
Site BH032 – Coronation Terrace, Strang	343
Sites GH011/ GH015 – Ballacollister Road, Laxey	349
Site GH020 – Ard Reayrt, Laxey	356
Site GH038 – Ballacollister Road, Laxey	360
Site GH013 – Baldrine Road, Baldrine	364
Site GM001 – Baldrine Road, Baldrine	371
Site MH001 – Ballaglonney Close, Crosby	382

Site MH003 – Close Jaig Beg, Crosby	386
Site MH023 – Ballagarey Nursery, Glen Vine	393
Site MM001 – Ballaglonney Farm, Crosby	394
Site OH004 – Ashley Road, Onchan	405
Site SH013 – Newtown	410
Site BH001 – Trollaby Lane, Union Mills	422
Site BH007 - Ballamillighyn Mansion, Mount Rule	425
Site BH042 – Ballafletcher Cottage, Peel Road, Braddan	428
Site BH013 – West Baldwin	431
Site BH014 – Hampton Court, Quine’s Hill	434
Sites BH015/BH019 – Woodstock and Hilltop Nurseries	437
Sites BH016/BH017 – Port Soderick	443
Site BH021 – Ballaveare Farm, Port Soderick	446
Site BH022 – Colooney’s Road, Bradda	448
Site BH039 – Bridge House, West Baldwin	451
Site BH041 – Oak Hill, Port Soderick	453
Site BM008 – Castleward Farm, Braddan	456
Late Site 3 – Braaid	461
Site DH008 – Ellenbrook, Douglas	464
Rear of Shoprite, Victoria Road, Douglas	467
Site GH023 – Prince’s Motors, Laxey	468
Site GH002 – Clay Head Road, Baldrine	471
Site GH033/GH040 – Baldrine Park, Baldrine	472
Site GH032 – Main Road, Baldrine	475
Site GH039 – Lamb’s Lane, Laxey	479
Old Laxey Hill, Laxey	484
Site MH002 – Ballagarey, Glen Vine	487
Sites MH009/MH010 – Eyreton Farm, Crosby	495
Site MH015 – Ballahutchin Hill	498
Site MM002 – Ballafreer, Glen Vine	500
Site OH002 – Bibaloe Mooar Farm, Onchan	505
Site OH003 – Belgravia Road, Onchan	507
Site OH007 – King Edward Bay Golf Course	511
Site OH009 – Howstrake Holiday Camp	519
Site OH013 – Ballacottier Road, Onchan	525
Site OH025 – Little Mill road, Onchan	527
Site SH003 – Ballanoa Meadow, Newtown	529
Site SH010 – Main Road, Newtown	534
Late Site 2 – Conister, Main Road, Newtown	537
Antillas, Ballanard Road, Douglas	539
Summary of Residential Allocations	541
Chapter 12 – Comprehensive Treatment Areas	
CTA Proposal 4 – Peel Road	546
CTA Proposal 6 – General	547
Conclusions	548

REPORT OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE DRAFT AREA PLAN FOR THE EAST

PREAMBLE

- 1 I have the honour to report that I was appointed to hold a public inquiry into the draft Area Plan for the East, in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 and Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999. On 18 July 2019, I held a pre-inquiry meeting to establish the procedural arrangements for the inquiry. A note summarising these arrangements was subsequently sent to all prospective participants and posted on the inquiry website.
- 2 The inquiry sat on 15 days between 10 September and 2 October 2019, and heard representations from more than 70 individuals and organisations in respect of more than 100 separate issues and sites. In addition, I have considered more than 50 written representations.
- 3 The inquiry included five round-table sessions, which respectively considered the following issues:
 - population and household projections and general proposals for housing;
 - the adequacy of infrastructure provision;
 - landscape and the environment;
 - town centre and comprehensive treatment areas; and
 - development briefs.

A more formal, adversarial approach was adopted for the consideration of representations concerning the treatment of specific sites. In addition, on 25 September, an evening session was held. This enabled members of the public, who had been unable to attend the daytime inquiry sessions, to be heard on any relevant matters which concerned them.

- 4 All of the documentary material considered by me at the inquiry or in written submissions is published on the inquiry website. This includes a substantial number of Core Documents (CDs). Paper copies of the CDs were also made available in the inquiry room, and in various public buildings throughout the East.
- 5 The Programme Officers for the inquiry were Mr Andy Johnstone and Mr Andrew Joyce, who are officers in the Chief Secretary's Department. They were responsible for arranging and maintaining the inquiry programme; managing the inquiry documents and website; and providing a link between inquiry participants and myself when the inquiry was not in session. I here record my thanks for the assistance and support which they gave me before, during and after the inquiry. I also record my thanks to all who participated in the inquiry, for the courteous and helpful manner in which they made their contributions.
- 6 The draft Area Plan for the East was prepared by the Cabinet Office, and was published for public consultation in May 2018. Subsequently, in the light of the responses made by consultees, the Cabinet Office published a series of proposed changes to the draft Area Plan,

which are contained in Public Inquiry Paper (PIP) 5 (CD54). Unless otherwise indicated in this report, I do not consider that any modification is required to the draft Area Plan as amended by those proposed changes.

- 7 Once the Area Plan has been adopted by the Cabinet Office and approved by Tynwald, it will form part of the Island Development Plan, which also includes the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016. In accordance with Section 2(4) of the 1999 Act, the proposals in the Area Plan must be in 'general conformity' with the Strategic Plan, which provides the strategic planning framework for the whole Island. A key role for the Area Plan is to show how the broad policies set out in the Strategic Plan are to relate to precise areas of land.
- 8 Prior to inquiry, I sought the advice of the Attorney General on the interpretation of the legal requirement for 'general conformity' between the Area Plan and the Strategic Plan. My question and the Attorney General's response are published on the inquiry website. During the course of the inquiry, I also received a written submission on this matter from Mr Stephen Morgan of counsel, which is also published on the website. I am grateful to the Attorney General and Mr Morgan for their advice, which is self-explanatory.
- 9 This report follows the structure of the draft Area Plan, and deals with objections and other representations chapter by chapter.

CHAPTERS 1 – 3: AREA APPROACH; THE ROLE OF THE AREA PLAN; AND SPATIAL VISION

The Lifetime of the Area Plan

- 10 These preliminary chapters of the draft Area Plan provide background information, much of which is uncontroversial. Section 1.7 explains that, like the Strategic Plan 2016, the Area Plan is to cover a 'plan period' extending from 2011 to 2026. However, its currency will not automatically terminate in 2026, but may extend beyond this date, to ensure continuity and an orderly transition between successive development plans. Accordingly, the draft Area Plan proposes that 'Strategic Reserve' sites should be allocated for both residential and employment uses, which are intended for development in the longer term (beyond 2026) or possibly earlier than that, should there be a demonstrable need. This accords with the approach described in Chapter 13 of the Strategic Plan.
- 11 However, Section 1.8 of the draft Area Plan lists the operational plans which the proposed Area Plan would replace, and which currently provide details of the allocation of land for development in the East. They include those parts of the 1982 Development Plan that cover the administrative parishes of Marown and Santon; the Braddan Local Plan of 1991; the Douglas Local Plan of 1998; the Onchan Local Plan of 2000; and the Laxey and Lonan Local Plan of 2005. All of these plans predate the original Isle of Man Strategic Plan of 2007, which was the forerunner of the present Strategic Plan of 2016. None of them reflect current strategic policy. For many years, in the absence of up to date land use allocations, planning applications in the East have been decided largely on an ad hoc basis. In my view, it has been

wholly unsatisfactory that neither prospective developers, nor members of the general public, have been able to tell, with any certainty, where particular development proposals are likely to be acceptable to the planning authority, and where they are not.

- 12 During the inquiry, it was suggested that the Area Plan might not be reviewed until 2029 or later. Paragraph 1.7.1 of the draft Area Plan indicates that a full review of the Strategic Plan is likely to begin by 2021, incorporating the results of that year's Census. I consider that there should be a corresponding commitment to review the allocations of land for development in the Area Plan as soon as possible after the Strategic Plan has been updated, so as to provide comprehensive and coherent planning guidance for the period beyond 2026. The updated Strategic Plan may well contain new policies, for instance to reflect the Government's response to the issue of climate change. At present it is not possible to tell how much housing land will be required after 2026. I see no reason to assume that all of the extensive Strategic Reserve sites shown in the draft Area Plan (as modified by the proposed changes in PIP5) will be required.
- 13 **I recommend that the third and fourth sentences of paragraph 1.7.2 of the draft Area Plan are replaced by the following.**

... However, it is intended that the allocation of land for development in the East will be reconsidered as soon as is practicable after the next review of the Strategic Plan has been completed. In the meantime, in addition to land allocated for immediate development, the Area Plan contains some 'Strategic Reserve Sites', which identify land for future residential development, should this be required. Until these sites are released for development, they will be subject to General Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan. The arrangements for the future release of the 'Strategic Reserve Sites' are set out below, where the sites in question are identified.

General Development Brief

- 14 Paragraph 2.9.1 of the draft Area Plan indicates that development briefs will be provided in the plan, as appropriate, to guide the development of particular sites. In PIP6, the Cabinet Office proposes that a General Development Brief, which would apply to all development proposals, should be inserted after that paragraph. More detailed Site Specific Development Briefs are also proposed.
- 15 In my view, the proposed General Development Brief replicates or elaborates on matters that are already contained in the Strategic Plan. Its contents are not specific to the East, but would apply equally to development in any part of the Island. I can see no purpose in having separate (and potentially different) General Development Briefs in each of the Area Plans. If there is a need for a general provision of this sort (and I am not convinced that there is) I consider that it should be included in the Strategic Plan, rather than in Area Plans. Furthermore, I can see no purpose in site specific development briefs replicating general policies that are set out in the Strategic Plan. (For instance, Housing Policy 5 of the Strategic Plan indicates that, normally, 25% of the accommodation in developments of 8 dwellings or

more, shall be in the form of affordable housing. I see no purpose in repeating this in development briefs). Residential Proposal 2 and paragraph 12.20.2 of the draft Area Plan refer to a list of general matters that should be taken into account in the preparation of any planning applications, which I endorse.

Spatial Vision

- 16 The strategy for the East is usefully summarised in paragraph 5.9 of the Strategic Plan (which is repeated verbatim in paragraph 2.4.1 of the draft Area Plan). Its main themes include a policy of constraining further 'greenfield' development; and a policy of urban containment. This should aid the process of regeneration within the urban area; help to maintain the distinctive character of existing settlements; and protect the countryside.
- 17 Other key Strategic Policies of general application are set out in Chapter 4 of the Strategic Plan. In particular, Strategic Policy 1 indicates that development should make best use of resources by optimising the use of previously developed land; ensuring efficient use of sites; and being located so as to make best use of existing and planned infrastructure and services. Strategic Policy 2 states that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements, or in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements; and that development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified exceptional circumstances. Strategic Policy 3 indicates that physical separation should be maintained between settlements, so as to avoid their coalescence. Strategic Policy 9 provides that, subject to certain exceptions, retail and office development must be sited within town and village centres, on land zoned for those purposes. Strategic Policy 10 aims to minimise car journeys; make best use of public transport; encourage pedestrian movement; and maintain road safety. Strategic Policy 11 specifies that there should be sufficient development opportunities for 5,100 additional dwellings to be provided on the Island between 2011 and 2026. Housing Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan indicates that 2,440 of these dwellings should be in the East.
- 18 Paragraph 5.29 of the Strategic Plan identifies Douglas as the Isle of Man's main employment and service centre. Onchan is also recognised as a service centre where development is to be concentrated to provide regeneration, and as a location for housing and employment. Union Mills and Laxey are identified as service villages, where it may be appropriate to increase employment and housing opportunities.
- 19 The Strategic Plan lists Crosby, Glen Vine, Strang, Baldrine and Newtown as villages which rely on other centres for various services, and where development should be of an appropriate scale to meet just local needs. Paragraph 3.4.5 of the draft Area Plan sets out a vision for these villages. The Schedule of Proposed Changes (PIP5) suggests that '... In the smaller settlements ... there will be some strategic reserve sites to ensure the long-term development of communities with the right services ...'. I consider such speculation about events beyond the period covered by the present development plan to be unwarranted, and see no immediate need for the extension of these villages beyond their present physical limits.
- 20 **I recommend that paragraph 3.4.5 of the Area Plan be modified to read as follows:**

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.

Development Boundaries of Settlements

- 21 The Spatial Policies in the Strategic Plan provide that Area Plans will define the ‘development boundaries’ of the specified service centres and villages. Although the draft Area Plan Proposals Maps show Existing Settlement Boundaries for Douglas, Onchan, Laxey, Union Mills, Strang, Crosby, Glen Vine, Baldrine and Newtown, these boundaries exclude areas that are proposed for development in sustainable urban extensions. In my view, the required development boundaries should include these areas (which are recognised as being suitable for immediate development). However, they should exclude Strategic Reserve Sites, until the mechanism for the release of such sites is engaged. Pending their release, the Strategic Reserve Sites are to be subject to General Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan, which would preclude their development (except in certain specified and limited circumstances).
- 22 **I recommend that the Area Plan Proposals Maps show the development boundaries of the relevant settlements identified in Chapter 4 of the Strategic Plan, drawn to include sustainable urban extensions, but excluding Strategic Reserve Sites.**

Large Developed Areas Outside Settlements

- 23 There are a number of substantial areas of consolidated development in the East, which lie outside the Existing Settlements Boundaries shown in the draft Area Plan Proposals Maps, and are not designated for future development. They include the Snugborough Trading Estate; the residential areas at Mount Murray and Braddan Hills; and the complex of waste management uses at Richmond Hill (adjacent to and including the Energy from Waste incinerator). Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan indicates that land which is outside the settlements defined in Appendix 3 of that document, and which is not designated for future development in an Area Plan, is to be treated as ‘countryside’.
- 24 However, it seems to me that it would be wholly inappropriate to apply the policies that apply in the countryside to these areas that are already substantially developed. Employment Proposal 7 of the draft Area Plan provides that certain unspecified areas of employment land, shown with white background colouring on the Proposals Map, will be treated as industrial land, if it can be demonstrated that development there would not result in an incursion into the countryside. However there is no corresponding proposal for residential areas. Proposed Change 75 (in PIP5) now indicates that appropriate colour washes should be applied to the Proposals Map, to show the Mount Murray and Braddan Hills areas as ‘Predominantly

Residential’; and the Snugborough Estate as ‘Industrial’. I agree with this. **I also recommend that the whole of the waste management area at Richmond Hill should be similarly delineated and washed over as a site for ‘Special Industry’ (as defined in paragraph 9.2.3 of the Strategic Plan).**

CHAPTER 4 – LANDSCAPE

Landscape Character Areas and Areas of High Landscape Value

- 25 Chapter 4 of the draft Area Plan is headed ‘Landscape – Character and Appearance’. It draws on a Landscape Character Assessment Report which was prepared for the Government by consultants in 2005. The report describes the qualities of a series of Landscape Character Areas, and identifies landscape features that are worthy of protection. It excludes consideration of the urban areas of Douglas and Onchan.
- 26 Landscape Proposal 1 of the Area Plan states that the broad landscape strategies and key views for each Character Area are to be regarded as policy statements on matters of landscape in the East. Applicants for planning approval must demonstrate that consideration has been given to these strategies and key views. Twenty different Character Areas are identified. The key strategy for each of them is to ‘conserve’ (or ‘conserve and enhance’) the ‘character, quality and distinctiveness’ of the area; and of certain specified landscape features. During the inquiry, a number of objectors to proposed land allocations argued that this policy of landscape conservation should outweigh other considerations which might tell in favour of development. In my view, if landscape policy fails to distinguish between areas of outstanding beauty or cultural interest on the one hand, and less sensitive areas of countryside on the other, it may become increasingly difficult to find sites for essential development.
- 27 The approach set out in the Area Plan is intended to replace a landscape policy which has been in place since 1982, and is encapsulated in Environment Policy 2 of the present Strategic Plan. That policy identifies Areas of High Landscape or Coastal Value and Scenic Significance (AHLV). Within each AHLV the protection of the character of the landscape is normally the most important consideration for development control purposes. By implication, outside of AHLVs, other factors can be given relatively greater importance. I consider this to be a useful policy tool, in so far as it identifies those areas which can best absorb necessary development without harming the most sensitive landscapes. A similar policy applies in England, where the protection of the landscape is given priority in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The general extent of AHLVs is shown in the Strategic Plan’s Key Diagram.
- 28 Some necessary development will inevitably change and possibly detract from the character of the landscape. Examples might include the extraction and processing of minerals, the management of waste, the generation and transmission of electricity, the construction of roads, or the erection of factories and houses. In my view, it is important that landscape policy should provide guidance as to where such development might best be absorbed into the landscape with minimum harm.

- 29 Accordingly, it seems to me that consideration should be given to the continued designation of Areas of High Landscape Value in the Area Plan, and that priority should be given to the protection of the landscape in those areas. The Area Plan should define the precise boundaries of the AHLV. (I note that the rural areas of both Braddan and Onchan are currently covered by a blanket AHLV designation, which may be difficult to justify). I am aware that development control officers find the descriptive material set out for each Landscape Character Area in the draft Area Plan to be useful. I see no reason why the material in question should not be retained in the Area Plan, alongside AHLV.
- 30 **I recommend that consideration be given to the designation, in the Area Plan, of Areas of High Landscape Value, with precise and justified boundaries. Environment Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan would continue to apply within such areas.**

Effect of Proposed Development on the Landscape North of Douglas and Onchan

- 31 Miss P Newton and Dr K Kilmurry each referred to the potential impact of proposed development of sites on the northern edge of Douglas and Onchan, referring particularly to the adverse effect of building on the skyline, and the need for an overall scheme of landscaping. I consider it important that development briefs for the sites in question should make provision for the preparation of masterplans which would include comprehensive landscaping schemes. Details of these would best be considered as part of the development control process, rather than in the Area Plan.
- 32 Dr Kilmurry argued that there were no specific landscape proposals in the Area Plan for Crosby, Glen Vine and Union Mills. However, it seems to me that section 4.7.7 of the Area Plan provides for the conservation and enhancement of the character, quality and distinctiveness of this well-treed valley. Key views there include open vistas toward the Northern Uplands and the upper slopes of Foxdale, as well as glimpses of the urban fringe of Douglas.

Howstrake Holiday Camp

- 33 Allprop Ltd objected to Landscape Proposal 9 and Landscape Character Area E4, on the grounds that no account had been taken of the presence of derelict and vandalised structures associated with the former Howstrake Holiday Camp. They argued that these structures detracted from the landscape of this coastal area, and that their removal and replacement with a small residential development would improve the local scene.
- 34 I note that the Howstrake Holiday Camp has been disused since 1973. The derelict buildings on the site are visible from the Raad Ny Follan; and, more distantly, from Groudle Glen and the Sea Lion Rocks Tea Room. However, the future of this site was given detailed consideration in the Onchan Local Plan 2000, paragraph 4.13 of which concluded as follows:

... the most appropriate option for the Howstrake Holiday Camp site is to designate the land as Open Space. Whilst this does not achieve an instant improvement of the site in

visual terms ... it does not change what many have become accustomed to see. The Department considers that whilst there may be benefit from tidying up the site and reclaiming part of it, the cost of this is the permanent visual impact of new dwellings on the site where there have been none previously. Few if any headlands in Onchan remain free of development, and bearing in mind its exposed and rural location, the Department considers that this too should remain free from new development.

- 35 I see no reason to come to any different conclusion, and recommend continued adherence to this established policy. Since 2000, the structures on the site have probably fallen further into dereliction. Eventually they will be reclaimed by nature. There are many derelict buildings in the Isle of Man. In my view, few of them would warrant any particular reference in the relevant Landscape Character Appraisal. I see no good reason why an exception should be made for the former Howstrake Holiday Camp.

CHAPTER 5 – THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Objectives

- 36 Mr A Martin considered that the draft Area Plan failed to quantify potential losses to the natural environment, and weigh these against the need for development. However, it seems to me that, generally, a balanced approach has been adopted. The development plan properly seeks to conserve environmental assets, for instance by protecting the countryside and its ecology. The intention is to contain development within existing built-up areas as far as is possible. However, some limited development on 'greenfield' sites will be necessary, in order to provide for expected growth in population and the economy. The extent of this is a matter for consideration.
- 37 Manx National Heritage argued that Section 5.3 of the draft Area Plan should include reference to the objective of protecting the cultural environment in rural areas. I agree. **I recommend that the words 'and cultural' be inserted after the word 'natural' in Section 5.3 i of the draft Area Plan.**

Outcomes

- 38 Manx National Heritage also sought a reference to the protection of the cultural environment in Section 5.4 of the draft Area Plan. **I recommend that the words 'cultural assets,' be inserted after the word 'vulnerable' in Section 5.4 iv of the draft Area Plan.**

Green Gaps

- 39 Spatial Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan indicates that Area Plans must assess the need for Green Gaps between settlements, to avoid their coalescence. Section 5.15 of the draft Area Plan provides for the establishment of such gaps between Douglas and Onchan; between Laxey and Baldrine; and between Glen Vine and Crosby. Natural Environment Proposals 1 to 3

would impose restrictions on development within the specified gaps, which are shown diagrammatically on the relevant Proposals Maps. However, in my view, these gaps should be shown with precise boundaries, so as to avoid doubt about whether any particular piece of land is within a Green Gap, and therefore subject to the relevant policy restrictions. It is a function of the Area Plan to relate the broad policies set out in the Strategic Plan to precise areas of land. Ideally the boundaries of the Green Gaps should follow features that are identifiable on the ground. However, the local knowledge of Cabinet Office staff is superior to mine, and I leave it to them to identify the appropriate boundaries.

- 40 Mr D Quirk and J and M Bucknall were concerned that particular areas of undeveloped land between Douglas and Onchan should remain open, including Site OH012 (Blackberry Lane) and the 'land to the west above the old boys' football'. These are shown as open space in the draft Area Plan, and could clearly be included within the Green Gap.
- 41 **I recommend that the precise boundaries be defined for the proposed Green Gaps shown on the draft Area Plan Proposals Maps.**
- 42 A large number of objectors argued that Green Gaps should be established between the settlements of Douglas, Union Mills and Strang, and I agree. These three settlements are in close proximity to one another. They are probably at greater and more immediate risk of coalescence than Laxey and Baldrine, or Crosby and Glen Vine. They are separately identified in the Strategic Plan's settlement hierarchy; and they each have a distinctive function and character.
- 43 Particular schemes for Green Gaps, to prevent coalescence between these three settlements, were put forward by the Braddan Parish Commissioners, and by Messrs Ellis Brown Architects. The Cabinet Office argued that there was no need to identify such gaps in the Area Plan; but (somewhat inconsistently) also argued that a green area should be left open in the centre of the proposed Camlork development, so as to prevent the coalescence of Union Mills and Strang.
- 44 I consider that the Green Gap between Union Mills and Strang should be defined by the existing settlement boundaries of these villages, as shown on Map 8 of the Area Plan. To the north it should include the whole of Field 521522 at Camlork. To the south it should be bounded by the River Dhoo to the west; the Braddan Hills Estate to the south; and Braddan Road to the east. I do not consider that the retention of Site DBH002 is necessary to the maintenance of the separate identities of Strang or Union Mills.
- 45 Paragraph 9.4.4 of the draft Area Plan indicates that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining existing open space within the Nobles Hospital site. I consider that the western part of this area should also be included in the Green Gap around Strang, to preserve the separate identity of that settlement.
- 46 The Green Gap between Union Mills and Douglas is somewhat wider. It may best be defined by reference to the southern settlement boundary of Union Mills, and existing field

boundaries to the south. In my view, it should exclude the Snugborough Trading Estate, and the finger of low density commercial development that extends to the south, between Peel Road and the River Dhoo.

- 47 **I recommend that the draft Area Plan be modified to show Green Gaps to avoid coalescence between the built-up areas of Douglas, Union Mills and Strang.**

The Uplands

- 48 Manx National Heritage argued that reference should be made to the heritage value of the uplands in Section 5.16 of the Area Plan. I agree. **I recommend that the following text be added to paragraph 5.16.1:**

Furthermore, the uplands are a rich repository of cultural and archaeological remains, which are sensitive to change and can easily be damaged by inappropriate development.

CHAPTER 6 – THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Registered Buildings and Conservation Areas

- 49 The Isle of Man Natural History and Archaeological Society questioned paragraph 6.8.2 of the draft Area Plan, which states that ‘Registered Buildings and Conservation Areas, which might not necessarily achieve such status in the United Kingdom, have gained a higher status in the Isle of Man, where their contribution to national identity and the Island’s story is highly valued’. I do not accept that this denigrates the Island’s heritage assets; on the contrary it underlines their importance. I do not consider any modification of this part of the text of the draft Area Plan to be necessary.
- 50 The Braddan Parish Commissioners sought the designation of Mount Rule, the Baldwins, and part of Port Soderick as Conservation Areas. However, the procedure for the designation of such areas is set out in Section 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999, and makes no reference to the development plan. The purpose of the Area Plan is to formulate proposals for the development or other use of land. It is not within its scope to create new Conservation Areas. In order to prevent further misunderstandings on this matter, **I recommend that Urban Environment Policy 7 be deleted from the draft Area Plan.**

Urban Environment Proposal 3

- 51 This states that ‘development proposals ... which are contemporary in style and which clearly demonstrate innovative design solutions ... will generally be supported’. DEFA considered that contemporary styles might be inappropriate in some areas, which have a more traditional urban form. I agree. **I recommend that Urban Environment Proposal 3 be modified to read as follows:**

Development proposals must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Traditional or contemporary approaches may be appropriate, depending upon the nature of the proposal and the context of the surrounding area.

Archaeology

- 52 Environment Policies 40 and 41 of the Strategic Plan deal with the development of known or potential archaeological sites. It is not clear to me that Urban Environment Proposal 8 adds anything useful to these policies. The final sentence of Urban Environment Proposal 8, which states that there is no presumption against the development of archaeological sites, appears potentially to contradict Environment Policy 40 of the Strategic Plan, which indicates that development which would damage, disturb or detract from an archaeological site or its setting will not be permitted. **I recommend that Urban Environment Proposal 8 be deleted from the draft Area Plan.**

Railway Architecture

- 53 Urban Environment Proposal 9 refers to the protection of station buildings, gate-keeper's huts and other line-side structures. However, it seems to me that if they are worthy of preservation, these buildings should be registered. While I do not doubt their cultural importance, in the absence of their registration, it is not clear to me how the planning authority could prevent their demolition or removal. **I recommend that Urban Environment Proposal 9 be deleted from the draft Area Plan.**

CHAPTER 7 – TRANSPORT AND UTILITIES

Highways

Traffic Congestion

- 54 The Area Plan recognises that there is already traffic congestion at the Quarterbridge junction; at the junction between Mountain Road and Governor's Road; and at the junction between Glencrutchery Road and Victoria Road. The evidence is that if all the development sites identified in the draft Area Plan were to be built-out, and no improvements were made to the road system, there would be a significant increase in congestion in Douglas and Onchan. Modelling commissioned by the Government suggests that, in the worst case, the average speed of traffic during the afternoon peak could decrease from 19mph to 12mph. Some journey times would be likely to increase by more than 100%, when compared with 2016 data. This would affect both private and public transport. However, it seems to me that, in practice, this worst case scenario is unlikely to arise.
- 55 Opportunities for additional carriageway provision are very limited and none are proposed in Douglas or Onchan in the Area Plan. However, there may be potential for limited highway improvements in the proposed Comprehensive Treatment Areas. Additionally, there is scope

for the installation of an improved system of traffic signals, which could improve the capacity of the existing road network, particularly at junctions. Further mitigation could result from the introduction of the Active Travel Strategy, whereby drivers are to be encouraged to walk or cycle to their destinations, where this is practicable. Children living reasonably close to their school could be encouraged to walk there (perhaps in a supervised 'walking bus'); or go by bike. Reduced car use might also be achieved by a modal shift in favour of public transport; or car travellers could be encouraged to share a single vehicle, wherever possible. There may also be increasing scope for some office workers to undertake their duties at home, by making use of IT facilities.

- 56 Experience has shown that increasing peak period road congestion often results in 'peak spreading', where car users choose to begin their journeys a little earlier (or later) in order to avoid the worst delays. Congestion charging has also been shown to be an effective way of managing peak period delays. However, a degree of peak hour congestion is characteristic of most urban areas, and is perhaps an inevitable consequence of mass car commuting.

Cycle Parking and Changing Facilities

- 57 The Braddan Parish Commissioners argued that the provision of cycle parking and changing facilities should be encouraged at places of employment. I agree. Chapter 11.5.3 of the Strategic Plan already states that 'consideration should be given to cycle parking for staff ... in non-residential development'. However, I consider that such provision could appropriately be required as part of a development brief for any proposed employment site. I also consider that employers should be encouraged to introduce Travel Plans, with the aim of reducing the level of car commuting. **I recommend that the provision of cycle parking and changing facilities, and the production of a Travel Plan, should be considered for any proposed employment development.**

Park and Ride

- 58 The Braddan Parish Commissioners, Miss P Newton and others urged that consideration be given to the introduction of a 'park and ride' scheme, whereby drivers entering Douglas would be encouraged to leave their vehicles at a peripheral car park and complete their journeys by bus. I understand that a previous 'park and ride' scheme had only limited success, and no firm proposal to try again has been put forward by any Government Department. I see no purpose in allocating land for a park and ride facility in the Area Plan, unless there is a good prospect of the requisite investment being made to bring such a scheme to fruition during the plan period.

The TT Access Road

- 59 The TT Access Road provides the sole vehicular route to and from the interior of the TT course when racing is in progress. It is a single track carriageway with passing places, which follows the line of a disused railway, and passes beneath the TT Course near the Quarterbridge junction. Importantly, at race times, it provides the sole means of vehicular access to Noble's Hospital from the greater part of the Isle of Man. I understand that it already becomes

congested, and there is widespread concern that this problem would be aggravated by the scale of development, proposed in the Area Plan, inside the TT circuit.

60 However, there is evidence that the Department of Infrastructure propose to improve the Access Road, so as to enable 2-way working by 2022. This should ease the potential congestion problem. It has important implications for the development proposals contained in the draft Area Plan. In my view, it should be treated as a firm proposal. **I recommend that a bullet point be added to Transport Proposal 2 as follows:**

- **Improve the TT Access Road to provide for a traffic lane in either direction by 2022.**

Utilities

61 DEFA sought the deletion of Utilities Proposals 1 to 6, on the grounds that they duplicated Strategic Plan policies, particularly General Policy 2(j) (which deals with new development being connected to the necessary services); Environment Policies 10 and 13 (which deal with flood risk); and Energy Policy 5 (which deals with energy efficiency). However, the draft Area Plan's proposals go into greater detail than these Strategic Plan policies. Some of this detail may well overlap with regulations that apply to the connection of new development to utility services; and its inclusion in the Area Plan may therefore be redundant. However, as I have little knowledge of the regulations in question, I am reluctant to recommend the deletion of this material.

Gas Supply

62 Utilities Proposal 3 includes the requirement that, where available, a reticulated gas supply system must be provided to new development. DEFA considered that this could be considered contrary to the aim of reducing carbon emissions. I agree. **I recommend that the final paragraph in Utilities Proposal 3 be amended to read as follows:**

If a reticulated gas supply system is to be connected to new development, this must be designed in accordance with the requirements of the relevant gas supply agency.

Flood Risk

63 There was widespread concern about the adequacy of drainage and the risk of flooding, particularly in parts of Braddan, Onchan and Laxey. Environment Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan indicates that where development is proposed on any site where there is a potential risk of flooding, the prospective developer will be required to submit a flood risk assessment, together with details of proposed mitigation measures. This approach is reinforced in Utilities Proposal 6 of the draft Area Plan, which (among other things) requires the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into new developments, to attenuate the rate of surface water run-off. I consider these policies to be reasonable. Clearly, without adequate mitigation measures, new building should normally be resisted on land which is at serious risk of flooding, or where the proposed development would increase the flood risk elsewhere.

- 64 In my view, the format of Utilities Proposal 6 could be improved. First, as a Proposal of the Area Plan, I consider that it should be in a bold typeface, to differentiate it from the supporting text. (The same applies to a number of other policies e.g. Transport Policy 2, and Utilities Policies 2 and 5). Second, there appears to be an error of syntax at the start of the second sentence of Utilities Proposal 6, which should perhaps read ‘Strategies to achieve this will include ...’. Third, the third bullet point of this Proposal introduces SuDS. Subsequent bullet points describe features of SuDS, and are therefore subordinate to the third bullet point. For clarity, I consider that they should be indented. **I recommend that the draft Area Plan be modified accordingly.**

Sewage Treatment

- 65 There was also some public concern about the adequacy of the sewerage system, both in terms of its capacity to accommodate the effluent from proposed residential development areas, and in terms of the current practice of discharging untreated sewage into the sea. Infrastructure Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan indicates that developments entailing the erection of multiple dwellings should take place only on sites that will ultimately be connected to the IRIS system, which takes sewage to a treatment works at Meary Veg. (IRIS is an acronym for Integration and Recycling of the Island’s Sewage). However, as long ago as 2006/7, a review was undertaken to decide whether to continue with the IRIS strategy. This concluded that it would be beneficial to adopt a regional sewage treatment strategy (RSTS) for those settlements that were not already connected to the IRIS system, including Laxey, Baldrine and settlements in the Central Valley. To that extent, Infrastructure Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan is now out of date.
- 66 I understand that a planning application will soon be submitted for the development of a local sewage treatment facility for Laxey. Feasibility studies for the provision of a similar facility to serve Baldrine are ongoing. A replacement sewage works at Ballagarey, serving part of the Central Valley became operational in 2018. However, capacity limitations mean that planned development in Crosby is likely to have to rely on standalone sewage treatment for the time being, until the existing treatment works is replaced as anticipated in 2022. The Programme for Government (2016-2021) indicates an intention to complete the regional sewage treatment infrastructure within the lifetime of the present administration.
- 67 It seems to me that these considerations should be taken into account in the allocation and phasing of land for development. I will return to this matter when considering the draft Area Plan’s proposals for housing.

Electricity

Renewable Energy

- 68 Peel Energy considered that the Area Plan should contain a detailed and specific chapter on renewable energy, providing measurable criteria against which applications for the development of renewable power generating facilities would be assessed. They cited the States of Jersey Island Plan 2011, which includes such material. And they pointed out that a Climate Change Emergency has recently been declared on the Isle of Man; that a Climate Change Bill is soon to be presented to Tynwald; and that there has been strong public support for the Government's Climate Change Mitigation Strategy. They argued that, in failing to provide detailed guidance on renewable power generation, the Area Plan was inconsistent with the Strategic Plan; and that since the Area Plan post-dated the Strategic Plan, its largely negative provisions would prevail.
- 69 Energy Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan applies to development proposals for renewable energy generated by wind, water, tidal or solar power. It indicates that any such proposals will be judged against that Plan's environmental objectives. Proposals for wind, water or tidal power would need to be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment. The supporting text indicates that renewable energy schemes will be given similar scrutiny as is given to other development proposals, and will not be subject to a less rigorous test on the grounds that they are environmentally friendly.
- 70 Utilities Proposal 3 of the draft Area Plan states that 'the generation or use of renewable energy at site or neighbourhood level are encouraged'. Otherwise the Area Plan is virtually silent on the question of renewable energy. Paragraph 5.19.1, which deals with the marine environment, notes that although off-shore developments (such as wind farms and tidal power generating facilities) have economic benefits, they also have negative environmental impacts. The Cabinet Office now agrees that the bulk of this paragraph is unduly negative, and that all but its opening sentence should be deleted. Since the draft Area Plan says nothing specific about renewable energy, I do not see how it could prevail over Strategic Plan policy on that matter.
- 71 However, the Landscape Strategies set out in Chapter 4 of the Area Plan seek to conserve the existing landscape character of every rural part of the East. Against this background, it is difficult to envisage that an on-shore wind farm or solar farm would be acceptable anywhere in this area. I have recommended elsewhere in this report that a distinction should be made between Areas of High Landscape Value, where the protection of existing landscape character should be given priority, and other areas, where a more balanced approach might be appropriate. That might help highlight those areas where renewable energy facilities might best be absorbed into the rural scene with minimum harm.
- 72 In my view, the general policy for renewable energy is a matter of nation-wide importance, which should be dealt with in the Strategic Plan. It may well be that, in the light of the Climate Change Emergency, a more positive approach toward the development of renewable energy

resources might be adopted when the Strategic Plan is next reviewed. However, I do not consider that it would be appropriate for the Area Plan to subvert the approach set out in the existing Strategic Plan, which currently makes no concessions in favour of the generation of carbon-free power, despite its clear environmental benefits.

- 73 **I recommend that all but the first sentence of paragraph 5.19.1 be deleted from the draft Area Plan, but that otherwise no action be taken in respect of this objection.**

CHAPTER 8 - EMPLOYMENT

Employment Proposals 1 and 2

- 74 Employment Proposal 1 deals with the development of industrial land which is not the subject of a site specific proposal in the Area Plan. It lists potential uses of such land, which would be supported by the planning authority. Miss P Newton indicated that this proposal appeared not to be specific to the East. Employment Proposal 2 refers to designated industrial sites, and covers much the same ground as Employment Proposal 1. Miss Newton considered that these two proposals could be combined. The Cabinet Office accepted that there was an element of duplication between these two proposals, and I agree.

- 75 **I recommend that Employment Proposals 1 and 2 be merged to read as follows (after paragraph 8.10.2 of the draft Area Plan):**

The development of existing industrial land, including the following sites, will be supported for the following uses only: manufacturing; warehousing and distribution; office accommodation (subject to compliance with Strategic Plan Business Policy 7); or retail outlets (subject to compliance with Strategic Plan Business Policy 5) ...

- 76 If this recommendation is accepted, consequential amendments to the numbering of the Employment Proposals will be necessary. However, for the purposes of this report I will continue to refer to the numbers used in the draft Area Plan of May 2018.

The Need for Employment Land

The Employment Land Review

- 77 The Area Plan's provision of additional land for employment development is based on an Employment Land Review (ELR) commissioned by the Government. The ELR was undertaken by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) in 2015 and updated in 2017. On the basis of certain assumptions, the updated Review suggested that the total requirement for employment land in the East, between 2014 and 2026, would be 8.43ha - made up of 6.4ha of land for manufacturing; 1.34ha of land for warehousing and distribution; and 0.64ha for out-of-town offices. (It anticipated that future office requirements would largely be met in central Douglas, in accordance with Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan). This requirement for

8.43ha of employment land forms the basis for the employment land allocations proposed in the draft Area Plan for the East. However, the Cabinet Office has increased the base requirement by 50% to make allowance for 'choice and churn' (which had not been taken into account in the ELR) to give a revised target of 12.65ha. As 2.88ha of employment land has been developed since 2014, the outstanding requirement is for sufficient land to be available to meet a residual target of 9.77ha by 2026.

- 78 Employment Proposal 2 of the draft Area Plan indicates that the development of designated industrial land within existing settlement boundaries could contribute about 7.1ha toward meeting this target. In addition, Employment Proposal 3 of the draft Area Plan provides for the allocation of Site BE002a (south of Cooil Road) for employment development. This undeveloped site, which lies outside the existing settlement boundary, has a gross area of more than 9ha, and could contribute about 5.2ha net to meeting the residual employment land target. Furthermore, Employment Proposal 4 of the draft Area Plan, would designate Sites BE002b and BE006 as a Strategic Reserve for employment development. This undeveloped land, to the south of Cooil Road and north of New Castletown Road, has a gross area of almost 29ha.
- 79 The ELR also recommended that provision should be made for the development of a new Technology Park, which would be additional to the base requirement for employment land. The draft Area Plan allocates a site of 5.31ha for this purpose on Site DE004, at Sangster's, Field, Douglas.

The Case for Eden Park Developments Ltd

- 80 Eden Park Developments Ltd challenged the adequacy of the employment land provision in the draft Area Plan. They owned existing employment land to the south of Cooil Road, together with the whole of Site BE002. They had received firm enquiries from a variety of prospective users of their land, who would jointly require some 9ha gross. These proposed developments would include a second phase of Jackson's existing multi-franchise car dealership (1.32ha); a second phase of the existing Eden Park light industrial units (1.71ha); an additional warehouse for Robinson's fruit and vegetable packaging business (0.69ha); a high quality manufacturing facility (1.2ha); a new HQ for Hartford Homes/Eden Park Developments Ltd (0.53ha); a private medical cluster (1.33ha); and a corporate office facility (1.35ha).
- 81 In 2018, Eden Park Developments commissioned GL Hearn to reassess the Island's employment land requirement. GL Hearn concluded that the ELR had significantly underestimated the need for additional employment land for several reasons. First, it had covered too short a period. A span of 15 to 20 years was generally considered to be an appropriate timeframe for planning purposes. Therefore, ideally the ELR should have covered a longer period, up to 2034.
- 82 Second, in estimating the future number of office jobs, the ELR had adopted the 'realistic scenario' used in the Government's Vision 2020 forecast, which postulated annual growth of 0.7% to 1.0%. However, the long term annual growth rate in the number of jobs in the Isle of

Man had been 1.1% averaged over the 65 years between 1951 and 2016. Between 1991 and 2011, jobs had increased by an average of 1.5% per annum. It appeared that the growth rate used in the ELR had focussed too strongly on short-term trends in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. The consequent recession had unnecessarily been projected forward into the 2020s.

- 83 Third, the ELR assumed that 75% of future office development would be in Douglas town centre. However, the supply of sites there would be insufficient to meet 75% of the predicted demand. Much of the existing vacant office floor space in central Douglas was in older premises, of a relatively poor quality, and unattractive to potential users. The rental value of office buildings in Douglas would be insufficient to make the redevelopment of existing outworn office space commercially attractive. By contrast, there was a strong demand for the provision of modern office facilities on out-of-centre business parks, in attractive environments, with adequate parking space.
- 84 Fourth, the updated ELR appeared to have made no provision for inward investment, which in the past had made a substantial contribution to the Island's economy and employment growth. A suitable allowance should be made for this to continue.
- 85 GL Hearn's conclusion was that there would be a requirement for at least 16.5ha of employment land in the East, between 2014 and 2026 (as compared to the 8.43ha forecast in the ELR). However, 16.5ha should be treated as a minimum figure. A further 5-year's supply (10.6ha) should be added, to provide for market competition and flexibility. That would bring the total requirement to about 27ha. Eden Park Developments concluded that Sites BE002b and BE006 should be allocated for immediate development for employment purposes, rather than kept back as a Strategic Reserve for future employment use.

The Case for Peel Land

- 86 Similarly Peel Land challenged the adequacy of the provision of employment land proposed in the draft Area Plan. They are the owners of part of Site BE006, measuring about 6.7ha. They had commissioned consultants Hatch Regeneris to review the employment land provision in the draft Area Plan.
- 87 The results of this review indicated that the ELR commissioned by the Isle of Man Government substantially understated the need for additional employment land that would arise during the period covered by the Area Plan. First the Area Plan was to cover the 15 year period between 2011 and 2026, but the ELR calculation of the employment land requirement covered only the 12 years between 2014 and 2026. It was therefore necessary to increase that requirement to provide for the missing three years.
- 88 Second, it was unrealistic for the ELR to have assumed that 75% of future office development would be concentrated in central Douglas. It would be more reasonable to assume that 50% of future office growth would be in out-of-town business parks. That would better reflect the needs of office occupiers.

- 89 Third, at little more than 5ha, the proposed technology park at Sangster's Field would be too small to be successful. The average size of technology parks in the UK was about 12ha, and an area of about 10ha should be regarded as the minimum requirement for a development of this type.
- 90 Fourth, there should be a 15% uplift in the employment land requirement to allow for inward investment. This had been allowed for in the original ELR of 2015, but had been omitted from the 2017 update. It would be essential to the success of the Isle of Man economy to continue to secure a meaningful amount of inward investment.
- 91 The adjustments for these four factors meant that there would be a need for about 28ha of employment land during the plan period (including a site for the technology park) rather than about 15ha as proposed in the draft Area Plan. In the circumstances, Sites BE006 and BE002b should be allocated for immediate development rather than held back as a Strategic Reserve.
- 92 The ELR envisaged that there would be a continuing need for employment development after 2026 and up to 2029. In order to accommodate this, sites would have to be assembled and planning approval granted before 2026. It followed that the requisite land for development after 2026 should now be identified in the Area Plan. There was no doubt about the suitability of Sites BE002b and BE006 for employment development. There was no good reason not to allocate these sites for immediate employment use.

The Case for Douglas Borough Council

- 93 The Borough Council supported the allocation of employment land as set out in the draft Area Plan. However, it sought to restrict the use of land outside of central Douglas for office development, in accordance with Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, it objected to the potential use of Sites BE002 and BE006 for office development.
- 94 Douglas town centre had the largest concentration of office floor space in the Isle of Man. In 2015, it contained about 190,000m² of office accommodation, which provided jobs for about 14,000 office workers. It was the Island's most sustainable location for office employment, being at the centre of the network of public transport services.
- 95 However, there had been a recent increase in the amount of unoccupied office accommodation in central Douglas; and there were a number of town centre sites that had been awaiting redevelopment for a long while. It was accepted that some office development in out-of-town business parks might be appropriate, in accordance with Strategic Plan Business Policy 7. However, it would be necessary to regulate the scale of this, so as to protect the role of Douglas town centre as the Island's dominant office location.
- 96 Eden Park Developments and Peel Land had each overstated the need for new office accommodation outside central Douglas. For instance, GL Hearn's projection of the future growth in the number of office jobs was based on a long term trend that included the 1990s.

Between 1991 and 1996, employment in banking and insurance had grown by about 36%; between 1996 and 2001, that rate of growth had increased to over 50%. But subsequently growth in the financial services had dwindled away. To an extent growth in the e-gaming sector had compensated for the decline of office employment after the financial crash. However, there was now evidence that some e-gaming employment was relocating to other jurisdictions, such as Malta. It would be unwise to assume that office employment would increase at a rate exceeding 1% per annum over the Plan period. Rather reliance should be placed on the lower growth rate assumed in the Government's Vision 2020 Report and the ELR.

Inspector's Conclusions on the Need for Employment Land

- 97 There is clearly a dispute about the appropriate growth rate to be used to project the future number of office jobs, and hence the future need for employment land. GL Hearn use a growth rate based on trends over a long period that includes a period of rapid employment growth in financial services in the 1990s, as banks and insurance companies expanded their activities in the Isle of Man. That rapid growth has now petered out. For the purposes of the Area Plan, I consider it more prudent to adopt the more limited growth rate assumed in Vision 2020 and the ELR.
- 98 I am not persuaded that 50% of future office provision in the East should be sited outside of central Douglas. Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan clearly states that new office floor space should be located within existing settlement centres, on land which is zoned for that purpose. Only exceptionally may approval be granted for new office development on approved business parks, for corporate headquarters (which do not receive day to day callers). The term 'corporate headquarters' is not defined in the Strategic Plan, or in the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development) Order 2012. Unless specific restrictions apply, once erected, a 'corporate headquarters' building could be used for the purpose of any office activity falling within Class 4 of Schedule 4 to that Order.
- 99 Business Parks are defined in Appendix 1 to the Strategic Plan. That definition provides for their use for 'light industry', but excludes their use for 'general' or 'special' industry, as defined in paragraph 9.2.3 of the Strategic Plan. In indicating that 6.45ha of land is required for manufacturing, the ELR makes no distinction between light, general and special industry. I do not consider it safe to assume that newly allocated land for manufacturing should be made available only for light industry (which could be carried on in any residential area without detriment to its amenity); and not for general or special industry. In my view, provision must be made for industries which generate noise, for instance by the use of powered tools or machinery; which produce smells and fumes, for instance by the use of paints or solvents; or which produce smoke or soot, for instance by the use of furnaces or boilers. I consider that it would be mistaken to provide all the newly allocated employment land in the Area Plan in the form of business parks.
- 100 It is clearly unsatisfactory that the ELR covers a shorter period than either the Strategic Plan or the Area Plan. I understand that no account was taken of the need for employment land

during the years between 2011 and 2014, which are included in the plan period. However, the use of a pro-rata increase in the estimated need for employment land during the remainder of the plan period, to cover the missing three years, would be sensible only if it were assumed that no employment development took place during those years, to off-set the augmented need. In the absence of evidence on that matter, I would not be justified in making such an assumption.

- 101 The projection of future job creation in the ELR is based on past rates of employment growth. These would necessarily reflect the past rate of inward investment in employment generating activities on the Isle of Man. In the circumstances, I do not accept that an uplift of the employment land requirement described in the ELR is necessary, to take account of the effect of inward investment.
- 102 At the inquiry, the Cabinet Office submitted a 2014 report produced by Regeneris Consulting, concerning the Longbridge Regional Investment Site in Birmingham. Table 6.1 of this report gives details of the main science and technology park developments in the West Midlands at that time. Of the eight sites listed in that table, five had areas smaller than 6ha. In view of this, I do not consider the 5.1ha technology park proposed at Sangster's Field, would be unusually or unacceptably small.
- 103 In the circumstances, I consider the provision made for employment land in the draft Area Plan to be ample. Whereas the ELR specified a need for 8.43ha, the net employment development land listed in Employment Proposals 2, 3 and 5 of the draft Area Plan amounts to some 18.8ha. I understand that there is an error in Employment Proposal 4 of the draft Area Plan, and that the proposed Strategic Reserve employment land, comprising Sites BE002b and BE006, measures a further 28.9ha (gross).

Employment Proposal 3 - Site BE002a – Land South of Cooil Road, Braddan

- 104 Site BE002a has a gross area of 9.3ha. It is an area of open farmland, outside (but adjacent to) the existing settlement boundary. Employment Proposal 3 of the draft Area Plan provides for its designation as industrial land.
- 105 In its original form, the second bullet point of Employment Proposal 3 indicated that development of this land 'will not have any unacceptable environmental impacts (including any significant landscape impacts)'. However, following representations by Manx National Heritage, Proposed Change (PC) 36 provided that the wording of this bullet point be amended to state that 'the proposal [will] not have any unacceptable landscape, ecological or archaeological impacts'. DEFA subsequently pointed out that this formulation omitted to cover a variety of potential environmental issues (such as the effect of development on air quality, land contamination, water pollution, noise, odour, and so on). I agree. The original reference to 'environmental impacts' plainly includes ecological and archaeological impacts. (A similar issue arises in PCs 37 and 64). **I recommend that PCs 36, 37 and 64 be reversed.**

106 Miss P Newton considered that the reference to 'Kewaigue', in the description of Site BE002 in Employment Proposals 3 and 4 of the draft Area Plan, was misleading. However, there were no objections to the allocation of this land for employment development. The terms of a site specific development brief were discussed at the inquiry. I consider that the allocated employment sites should be developed sequentially, and that development on Site BE002a should not be permitted if that development could reasonably and acceptably be located on one of the sites listed in Employment Proposal 2, inside the existing settlement boundary. I also consider that part of Site BE002a should be reserved for general industrial use, rather than for use as a business park, and that this should be shown in the required Master Plan. **I recommend that a development brief replace the existing text of Employment Policy 3 as follows:**

Site BE002a, to the south of Cooil Road, is designated for industrial and business park uses. This allows for manufacturing (including light and general industry); research and development; storage and distribution; and offices (subject to compliance with Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan).

- 1 Development will not be permitted on Site BE002a if it could reasonably and acceptably be located on one of the sites listed in Employment Proposal 2.**
- 2 No planning approval will be granted for the development of any part of Site BE002a until a Master Plan for the whole of that site has been submitted to and approved by the planning authority. This must show all spatial elements, including areas intended for general industrial and business park uses, open spaces and landscaped areas, and circulation arrangements; and it must show how these elements will be phased.**
- 3 There must be no net qualitative loss of biodiversity as a result of the development of this site.**
- 4 The Master Plan must demonstrate how the high-pressure gas pipeline (on Cooil Road) will be protected to ensure that no adverse effects will result as a consequence of the development of this site.**
- 5 Notwithstanding Strategic Plan Business Policy 5, no retail development (including bulky goods) will be approved on this site.**
- 6 An Environmental Impact Assessment will be needed for any development proposed on this site.**

I further recommend that, if necessary, the word 'Kewaigue' be deleted from the descriptions of site BE002 in Employment Proposals 3 and 4.

Employment Proposal 4 – Sites BE002b and BE006 – Land South of Cooil Road and North of New Castletown Road, Braddan

- 107 These sites have a combined gross area of 28.9 ha. Site BE0002b is owned by Eden Park Developments Ltd. Site BE006 is partly owned by Peel Land, partly owned by Douglas Borough Council, and partly owned by the Isle of Man Government. The draft Area Plan proposes that Sites BE002b and BE006 should be shown together as a Strategic Reserve for employment use.
- 108 There were no objections to the use of this land for employment purposes. At the inquiry, the Cabinet Office’s representative could not identify any harm that would result from its immediate release for development. I acknowledge that there would be benefit in allocating sufficient land to ensure a continuous supply of sites for employment development up to and beyond 2026. I am aware of the critical problems that have recently arisen from the shortage of sites for industrial development in the East, due to the absence of up to date land allocations in the development plan. The lead time required for assembling land, undertaking surveys, obtaining planning approval and so on, suggest that land required for development after 2026 should be identified and allocated well in advance of that date. The combined sites clearly have locational advantages for employment development, and I am aware of no serious constraints.
- 109 I think it reasonable that the development of the proposed employment land to the south of Cooil Road should be phased, such that the proposals for the development of Sites BE002b and BE006 would not be permitted if the development in question could reasonably and acceptably be accommodated on the sites set out in Employment Proposals 2 or 3. This would overcome the need for Sites BE002b and BE006 to be held back as a strategic reserve; and would obviate the need to give further consideration to the mechanism for their release from that status.
- 110 In the circumstances, I consider that these sites should now be allocated for employment use (subject to an appropriate development brief) rather than held back as a Strategic Reserve. This would necessitate the deletion of Sections 8.11 and 8.16 of the draft Area Plan.
- 111 A draft development brief for Sites BE002b and BE006 was considered at the inquiry. This included provision for the south-western part of this area (known as Ballakinnish) to be considered for use as an emergency bailing facility for the nearby Energy from Waste (EfW) facility. However, it seems to me that such a use could be quite offensive, and detract from the quality of the remainder of the allocated land as an employment site. I note that Braddan Parish Commissioners would object to such a development. In my view, a waste baling site would be better located on land immediately adjacent to the existing cluster of waste management facilities at Richmond Hill.
- 112 Part of Site BE006 would be within 300m of the Government’s Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility, and its development potential would be limited by the proposed buffer zone around that site (see paragraph 141 below).

113 As with Site BE002a, I consider that it would be inappropriate for the whole at Sites BE002b and BE006 to be treated as a business park, thereby precluding any opportunity for general industrial development. In my view, a Master Plan should be prepared to show which parts of this large area would be treated as a business park, and which would be available for general industrial use.

114 Otherwise, I consider the development brief submitted to the inquiry by the Cabinet Office to be acceptable. **I recommend that Section 8.11 of the draft Strategic Plan be deleted, save for Employment Proposal 4, which should be amended to read as follows:**

Sites BE002b and BE006, to the south of Cooil Road and north of New Castletown Road, are jointly designated for industrial and business park uses. This allows for their development for manufacturing (including light and general industry); research and development; storage and distribution; and offices (subject to compliance with Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan).

- 1 Development will not be permitted on these sites if it could reasonably and acceptably be located on the site referred to in Employment Proposal 3.**
- 2 No planning approval will be granted for the development of any part of these sites until a Master Plan for the whole of both sites has been submitted to and approved by the planning authority. The Master Plan must show all proposed spatial elements, including areas intended for general industrial and business park uses; open spaces and structural landscaping areas; and circulation and parking arrangements. The Master Plan must show how these elements will be phased.**
- 3 There must be no net qualitative loss of biodiversity as a result of the development of this site.**
- 4 The route of the high-pressure gas pipeline to the south of Cooil Road must be safeguarded.**
- 5 Notwithstanding Strategic Plan Business Policy 5, no retail development (including bulky goods) will be approved on this site.**
- 6 An Environmental Impact Assessment will be needed for any development proposed on this site.**

I further recommend that the table in Employment Proposal 4 be amended to show the correct areas for these two sites under each of the three headings; and that Section 8.16 of the draft Area Plan be deleted.

Employment Sites Omitted from the Draft Area Plan Allocations

Site BE001 – Ballalough Depot, Richmond Hill, Braddan

- 115 This site measures about 1.2 ha and contains some 3,000m² of buildings, plus extensive areas of hardstanding. It is situated on the south side of the A5, immediately to the west of the waste management complex centred on the Energy from Waste facility. Otherwise, it is surrounded by open countryside. The site was previously used as an agricultural merchant's depot, by Isle of Man Farmers Ltd. However, following restructuring, this business now requires only 40% of the buildings available, and has let some of the surplus floor space to others.
- 116 Isle of Man Farmers indicated that the site was zoned as Agricultural Merchant's Premises in the Braddan Local Plan 1991. In the replacement draft Braddan Local Plan, which was subsequently aborted, it was proposed for general industrial use. In the present draft Area Plan, it was unallocated.
- 117 The buildings on the site were now in need of refurbishment. They were uninsulated, and clad and roofed in asbestos, which was nearing the end of its lifespan. Failure to allocate this land for employment use would give rise to difficulty in attracting tenants to provide an income that would justify the requisite rehabilitation works. Accordingly, a new Employment Proposal should be inserted to designate this site for manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, and other permitted uses.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 118 Employment Proposal 7 of the draft Area Plan indicates that proposals for the development of existing warehousing and distribution depots, which are outside existing settlement boundaries and are shown with white background colouring on the Proposals Map, will be assessed as if they were for the development of industrial land (in accordance with Employment Policy 1) provided that they would not result in an incursion into the countryside.
- 119 In my view, this gives rise to potential confusion, as Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan defines 'countryside' to include all land which is outside the defined boundaries of settlements, or which is not designated for development on an Area Plan; and Strategic Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan states that 'development will be permitted in the countryside only in the exceptional circumstances identified in paragraph 6.3'. It is not clear to me that the redevelopment of the Site BE001 would necessarily comply with these Strategic Plan policies. For the avoidance of doubt, I consider that Site BE001 should be colour washed on the Proposals Map as 'industrial' in a similar manner to the Snugborough Trading Estate (see paragraph 24 above). **I recommend that the Proposal Map be modified accordingly.**
- 120 Site BE001 would fall within 300m of the Government's Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility, and its development potential would be limited by the proposed buffer zone around that site (see paragraph 141 below).

Site BE009 – Clybane, Vicarage Road, Braddan

- 121 This site, which has an area of about 8.7ha, lies on the north side of Vicarage Road, Braddan, immediately opposite the Isle of Man Business Park. It is currently in agricultural use. It is owned by Dandara Ltd who sought its allocation for employment use. It is unallocated in the draft Area Plan.
- 122 Dandara Ltd argued that this site would provide an extension to the Isle of Man Business Park. They referred to the evidence produced by others on the need for employment land, and suggested that their site could make a useful contribution to meeting the requirement for employment development. It was well placed in relation to Cooil Road and the A5 corridor, and would benefit from its proximity to the Isle of Man Business Park Service Centre.
- 123 I accept these arguments. However, at present this site is plainly in the countryside. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in the countryside will only be permitted in specified exceptional circumstances. The draft Area Plan allocates sufficient land for employment development elsewhere, to meet expected requirements. While I recognise that the Clybane site may have much to commend it as a potential location for employment development, I am not persuaded that it should be preferred to the sites proposed for allocation in the draft Area Plan for this purpose; nor do I consider there to be a present need for the allocation of additional land for general employment use. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BE010 – Middle Farm, Braddan

- 124 This site has an area of about 39ha and is currently in agricultural use. It is bounded by New Castletown Road (A5) to the north, and by the A6 to the east. A cul-de-sac runs from east to west through the centre of the proposal site. This provides access from the A6 to the complex of waste management facilities around the Government's Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator, which lies at the western edge of Site BE010. In addition to the EfW, this complex contains the Government's Animal Waste Processing Plant; its Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility; some private industrial units; and private facilities for the storage and recycling of waste materials. The south-eastern boundary of the Middle Farm site is marked by an unmade road.
- 125 Site BE010 is owned by Dandara Ltd. They considered that it would provide an appropriate location for employment development, adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Douglas. However, they recognised that the identified need for employment development might be insufficient to justify the allocation of a site of this size.
- 126 Nevertheless, Dandara Ltd considered that a part of Site BE010, measuring about 6.9ha, and located immediately to the east of the existing complex of waste management uses, could be

allocated for development for specialist industrial processes – particularly, the processing, storage and recycling of waste. The requirement to allocate land for such a purpose had been recognised in the aborted draft Braddan Parish Plan of 2003, which had proposed the allocation of land immediately to the east of the EfW plant for such development. That land was now fully developed, and was recognised as a dedicated waste site. In future, there was likely to be a continuing demand for land for waste management activities, but no specific provision had been made in the draft Area Plan for development of this sort. Dandara asked that the 6.9 ha site now be allocated for special industrial use, and that the remainder of their Middle Farm site be treated as a Strategic Reserve for future employment use.

- 127 I consider that the proposal to allocate land at Middle Park Farm for waste management use has much to commend it. It seems to me that there is likely to be a growing need for waste management and recycling facilities as the problems of environmental degradation and pollution become increasingly apparent. The ELR focussed on manufacturing, warehousing and office employment, and appears not to have taken account of waste management. The draft Area Plan makes no specific allocation of land for this activity. Paragraph 12.2.1 of Strategic Plan records that the Government recognises that it will need to encourage the development of facilities for the re-use, recovery and recycling of waste.
- 128 Paragraph 8.13.1 and Employment Proposal 6 of the draft Area Plan suggests that some waste development may be akin to manufacturing or warehousing and distribution, and be permissible on general employment land. However, I am not convinced that this would apply to most waste management uses.
- 129 In my view, there would be considerable advantage in concentrating waste management and other ‘bad neighbour’ uses adjacent to the existing complex around the EfW Plant. The Middle Farm site is served by a long cul-de-sac, where there would be little passing traffic. Waste management development here would not be particularly conspicuous, or detract significantly from the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses. The site would have easy access to the A6 and A5 corridors. I consider that this land should be allocated for special industrial development as proposed. However, it would be within 300m of the Government’s Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility, and its development potential would be limited by the proposed buffer zone around that site (see paragraph 141 below).
- 130 The remainder of the Middle farm site is plainly in the countryside. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified exceptional circumstances. The draft Area Plan allocates sufficient land for employment development elsewhere, to meet expected requirements. I am not persuaded that Middle Farm should be preferred to the sites proposed for allocation as employment sites in the draft Area Plan; nor do I consider there to be a need to identify additional land either for general employment, or as a strategic employment reserve, at present.
- 131 **I recommend that paragraph 8.13.1 of the draft Area Plan be amended to read as follows:**

Additional facilities may be required for the collection, sorting, processing, recycling and disposal of waste. There is a dedicated waste site adjacent to the Energy from Waste facility (BE024), which is an existing site for a specialist use outside the existing settlement boundary. The expansion of this area is proposed by the allocation of 6.9ha of additional land for specialist waste management purposes at Middle Farm, Braddan.

132 I further recommend that Employment Proposal 6 of the draft Area Plan be amended to read as follows:

Part of Site BE010 at Middle Farm, Braddan, measuring some 6.9ha, and lying immediately to the east of the existing waste management complex at Richmond Hill, is allocated for special industrial use, particularly the management processing, recycling and storage of waste.

- 1 No planning approval will be granted for the development of any part of this site until a Master Plan for the whole of the 6.9ha site has been submitted to and approved by the planning authority. The Master Plan must show all proposed spatial elements, including areas intended for buildings; open work areas; structural landscaping areas; and circulation and parking arrangements. The Master Plan must show how these elements will be phased.**
- 2 There must be no net qualitative loss of biodiversity as a result of the development of this site.**
- 3 An Environmental Impact Assessment will be needed for any development proposed on this site.**

133 I further recommend that the Proposals Map be amended to show the 6.9ha site allocated for special industrial purposes, as shown in Appendix 2 of the evidence submitted to the public inquiry by Dandara Group Holdings Ltd in respect of this site

The Waste Infrastructure Site at Richmond Hill

134 The Department of Infrastructure (DoI) operates a waste management complex at Richmond Hill, which includes the Island's Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator, the Animal Waste Processing Plant (AWPP), and the Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility (HWTF). It sought the zoning of these facilities in the Area Plan, and the establishment of a 300m buffer zone around them (edged in red in CD75). It also sought the allocation of land, which is currently used mainly for commercial waste management, to the east and south of the EfW and AWPP, and the establishment of 300m buffer zone around that land (edged in blue in CD75).

135 The DoI argued that there was a strategic need to zone the land in question for waste management. The existing EfW contract would run until 2029, and the present facility was expected to remain operational well beyond that date. However, in future, new facilities may

be required as legislative changes require plant modification; or as existing plant ages and requires replacement. Unless the relevant land was zoned for waste management, the requisite development would be contrary to the development plan, and subject to the restrictive presumption set out in General Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan.

- 136 The proposed buffer zones were necessary to prevent the possibility of land adjacent to the waste management facilities from being permanently developed for purposes that would be incompatible with established waste management uses. Such development might prohibit or inhibit the further expansion, modification or replacement of the existing waste management facilities. There have already been complaints from adjacent users about the adverse effects of waste management activity. The buffer zones would also minimise the risk of harm to the health and wellbeing of the users of adjacent land from a critical incident in one or other of the strategic waste management facilities. The HWTF, where hazardous waste was stored whilst awaiting shipment to specialist treatment facilities in the UK, was an obvious potential source of danger, for instance in the event of an explosion or fire, or the escape of toxic material.
- 137 There was clear guidance in UK planning policy and case law regarding the need for buffer zones around waste facilities. It was common practice in the UK to have buffer zones of 250m around landfill sites, to guard against migration of landfill gas.
- 138 The buffer zones now proposed might also provide a suitable location for the development of replacement strategic waste management facilities, as and when the need for these arose.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 139 I have already recommended that the waste treatment complex at Richmond Hill should be allocated for 'Special Industrial' use in the Area Plan (see paragraph 24 above). I recognise the potential danger that arises from the storage of hazardous waste. Accordingly, I consider that an area with a radius of 300m from the centre of the HWTF at Richmond Hill should be shown as a Major Hazard Site on the Infrastructure Constraints Map of the Area Plan (Map 1b). Within that zone, there should be a presumption against development for purposes in which members of the public would be particularly vulnerable, including housing, educational and medical establishments. However, in my view, there should be no such presumption against industrial, storage or waste management uses, on land allocated for those purposes.
- 140 I do not consider that it would be reasonable to regard the whole of the buffer zone, with a diameter of 600m, as being land safeguarded for the relocation or redevelopment of the EFW. Its purpose would be solely to protect vulnerable members of the public against the adverse effects of waste handling.
- 141 **I recommend that a zone with a radius of 300m from the centre of the HWTF at Richmond Hill be shown as a Major Hazard Site, on the Infrastructure Constraints Map of the Area Plan (Map 1b). I further recommend that a new Proposal be inserted into the draft Area Plan after Employment Proposal 6, to read as follows:**

Within the Major Hazard Zone at Richmond Hill, there will be a presumption against development for purposes in which vulnerable members of the public would be present, including housing, and educational and medical establishments.

Site BE025 – Land Adjacent to the Tromode Industrial Estate

142 This 2.5ha site has a developable area of about 0.8ha, the remainder consisting of woodland. It lies to the north of Ballafletcher Road, on the west bank of the River Glass. The existing Tromode industrial Estate lies on the east bank of the River Glass, opposite the objection site.

The Case for Clucas Ltd

143 Site BE025 consisted of previously developed land and was formerly used for employment purposes. In 1972, planning approval in principle was granted for its redevelopment for industrial purposes. It would now form a logical extension to the Tromode Industrial Estate, to which it could be linked by a bridge. This industrial estate accommodated a mixture of businesses, including precision engineers and IT companies; and provided employment for approximately 400 people. There was a strong demand for new high-quality employment premises in the Isle of Man. The proposed development could be successfully incorporated into the adjacent woodland, which would be suitably conserved through an ecological management plan. However, the proposed employment area should be excluded from the Tromode Dam Wildlife Site.

Inspector's Conclusions

144 'Previously developed land' is defined in Appendix 1 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016. The definition excludes land on which the remains of previous built structures have blended into the landscape with the process of time. I consider that that exclusion applies in the present case.

145 The Tromode Dam Wildlife Site was designated by the Manx Wildlife Trust in 2008. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, submitted by the site's owners, indicates that that part of the site now proposed for employment development is of no more than moderate ecological value. However, I do not consider that to be a sufficient basis on which to disregard the ecological potential of this land.

146 The promoters of the site have submitted a flood risk assessment. This confirms that the eastern part of the site is in a flood risk zone. It states that, whilst flood defence structures and ground raising could protect the site, either measure would result in a significant reduction in flood plain storage, and might therefore have an unacceptable impact on third party flood risk, by increasing flood water levels upstream or downstream of the proposed development. It is not clear that it would be possible to provide the requisite compensatory flood water storage volume within the site.

- 147 In view of these considerations, I conclude that Site BE025 is unsuitable for development for employment use. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

CHAPTER 9 – TOWN CENTRE

Proposed Boundary of Douglas Town Centre

- 148 The boundary of Douglas Town Centre has not previously been defined in any development plan. However, the non-statutory Central Douglas Masterplan describes an area extending from the Villa Marina in the north, to South Quay in the south, and to the point at which the steam railway begins to run westward alongside the River Douglas. The western edge of this area includes the commercial area of St George's; and its eastern edge is marked by the sea front and the port.
- 149 The Town Centre as defined in the draft Area Plan is similar, except in one important respect. That is that it includes a large area to the west of the centre as defined in the Master Plan, bounded by Peel Road to the north and east, and by the railway and the Rivers Douglas and Glass to the south and west. This elongated strip of land (which is identified as 'the Riverside Gateway' in the draft Area Plan) ends close to the Quarterbridge junction. It includes the Hills Meadow Industrial Estate; and commercial development, and 'The Bowl', to the north of Pulrose Road.
- 150 Douglas Borough Council objected to the inclusion of the 'Riverside Gateway' within the boundary of the town centre. It argued that that area did not possess any of the characteristics of a town centre. Its inclusion within the proposed town centre boundary could result in its use for extensive retail and office development, in accordance with the established Strategic Plan policies. That would dilute the chance of attracting office and retail developments to sites that are either vacant or ripe for redevelopment in the commercial core of Douglas, for instance in The Fort, the Strand Street area, St George's, or South Quay. The western boundary of the town centre should be in the vicinity of Bank Hill and Douglas Bridge.
- 151 In a 2010 appeal decision concerning a proposed extension to the Tesco supermarket in Lake Road, the Inspector concluded (and the Minister agreed) that the Tesco site was not within Douglas Town Centre, however defined. The Tesco site was close to the eastern end of 'the Riverside Gateway'. It followed that none of the area lying to the west of that site should properly be regarded as being within the town centre.
- 152 I have a considerable degree of sympathy with these arguments. The Quarterbridge junction is best part of a mile from the western edge of the central area as described in the Central Douglas Masterplan; and almost two miles from the Sea Terminal. The Hills Meadow Industrial Estate, and the land to the north of Pulrose Road, do not have the characteristics of a town centre. Although the Central Douglas Masterplan envisages that there might be some office development in the 'Riverside Gateway' area, to the south of Lake Road, I am not

persuaded that that area can properly be regarded as part of the town centre. In my view, office and retail development should be concentrated in the commercial heart of Douglas, which properly excludes the Riverside Gateway. I note that there is a substantial amount of vacant land and unused retail and office floor space in central Douglas, awaiting re-occupation or redevelopment.

- 153 **I recommend that the boundary of Douglas Town Centre, as shown on the draft Area Plan Proposals Map, be modified to exclude the whole of Mixed Use Area 8 (the Riverside Gateway). I also recommend that the first two sentences of paragraph 9.8.8 of the draft Area Plan be amended to read as follows:**

Mixed Use Area 8

This area, adjacent to the town centre, presents an opportunity to accommodate changing and evolving leisure time pursuits. The continuation of existing uses would be supported in the short to medium term, with potential comprehensive development in the longer term for bulky retail, leisure activities and residential purposes ...

Mixed Use Area 3 – Site DM003 (Loch Promenade)

- 154 Mixed Use Area 3 contains Strand Street, Douglas's main shopping area. Site DM003 (sometimes referred to as the Villiers site) is a prominent lot between the shopping precinct and Loch Promenade. It has been vacant for some years. Miss P Newton urged that it was essential to secure the early redevelopment of this site, and to retain the existing building line. I agree, but can see nothing in the draft Area Plan to preclude such an objective. The site's inclusion in a Comprehensive Treatment Area should help facilitate its early redevelopment. **I recommend that no modification be made to the Mixed Use Proposal 3 of the draft Area Plan.**

Mixed Use Area 5 – DM008 (Lord Street)

- 155 Mixed Use Area 5 is identified in the draft Area Plan as being suitable for a range of uses, including tourism/hotel; leisure; entertainment; food and drink; public transport; multi-storey parking; office; and residential. Miss P Newton referred to the need for the provision of an undercover bus terminus on Site DM008, which might also be redeveloped to include a cinema, a hotel, retail outlets, catering establishments and residential uses. However, I can see nothing in the draft Area Plan that would preclude the development of this site for any of these purposes. **I recommend that no modification be made to the Mixed Use Proposal 5 of the draft Area Plan.**

Mixed Use Area 7 – Sites DH004 and DH019 (South Quay)

- 156 Miss P Newton referred to the presence of historic buildings on these sites, which were not registered at present. An example was ‘The Trafalgar’, a key gateway building that should be retained in any redevelopment proposal. Consideration should be given to designating this part of Douglas as a Conservation Area, and potential Conservation Areas should be shown in the Area Plan. Redevelopment in Fort Anne should be sensitively designed, and should not be too high, as this would mar the setting of the South Quay.
- 157 However, it is the function of the Protected Buildings Register (and not the Area Plan) to identify buildings of special architectural or historic interest that are worthy of preservation. If there are such buildings on the South Quay, they should be registered in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 14 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999. Similarly, Section 18 of that Act sets out the procedure for the designation of Conservation Areas. In so doing, it makes no reference to the development plan. In my view, it would be unnecessarily confusing for the Area Plan to propose possible future Conservation Areas, or buildings with potential for registration, thereby pre-empting the established statutory procedures. **I recommend that no modification be made to Mixed Use Proposal 7 of the draft Area Plan.**

Mixed Use Area 8a - Site DM002 (Lake Road); Site DH021 (Bridgeworks); and Site DH022 (Peel Rd)

- 158 Mixed Use Area 8a comprises the easternmost part of the Riverside Gateway. It includes the steam railway station, sidings and workshops; some industrial and residential buildings; the Tesco superstore; and areas of vacant land. The draft Area Plan proposes that consideration will be given to its comprehensive redevelopment for residential and leisure purposes, and for retail warehouses dealing in bulky goods.
- 159 Dandara Group Holdings Ltd own three designated development sites within this area. Site DM002 lies on the south side of Lake Road, opposite the existing Tesco supermarket. It has an area of about 1.15ha and is currently vacant. Dandara considered that, in view of its central location, it would be suitable for a wider range of retail uses, including a supermarket, and for offices. Douglas Borough Council agreed that this edge-of-centre site might be suitable for office development if it could be demonstrated that there were no suitable sites or premises available for such development within the town centre.
- 160 Site DH021 lies between Castletown Road and the River Douglas, immediately to the west of Douglas Bridge. It has an area of about 0.09ha and is currently occupied by unused commercial sheds. Planning approval has previously been granted for its redevelopment for either residential or office purposes. Dandara considered that an office development might also be appropriate here, and that the Area Plan should make provision for this. They note that the draft Area Plan provides for office development in that part of Comprehensive Treatment Area 3 (which includes both Sites DM002 and Area DH021); and in Mixed Use Area 8b, which is further away from Douglas’s central business district.

- 161 Site DHO22 measures some 0.79ha. It lies on either side of Peel Road, to the east of the junction with Circular Road. Only a small backland part of this site, lying to the south of Peel Road, comes within Mixed Use Area 8, as shown in the draft Area Plan. (The remainder is in Mixed Use Area 4 (St George's) and lies within the undisputed boundary of Douglas Town Centre). There is an extant planning approval for the erection of apartments on part of the site to the south of Peel Road. Miss P Newton was concerned that the redevelopment of the site should not adversely affect the former Drill Hall, which was presently used for retail purposes, and was of architectural or historic interest (though not registered). The owner of this building was opposed to its redevelopment.
- 162 As indicated above, I do not consider that the Riverside Gateway area should be included within the boundary of Douglas Town Centre. It follows that, in my view, further supermarket development here would be contrary to Business Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan, which provides that new retail development will be permitted only in established town centres. Similarly, office development would be contrary to Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan, which provides that new office space should be located within existing town and village centres, on land which is zoned for the purpose on the appropriate Area Plan. Sites DM002, DH031 and DH022 would be suitable for redevelopment for any of the other uses specified in Mixed Use Policy 8a of the draft Area Plan. There is at present no proposal for the compulsory acquisition of the Drill Hall, contrary to the wishes of its owner, to facilitate its redevelopment,
- 163 **I recommend that no change be made to Mixed Use Proposal 8a of the draft area Plan, save for the deletion of the words 'Town Centre' from its heading. I further recommend that clearly defined boundaries between Mixed Use Areas 8a, b and c be shown on the Area Plan Proposals Map, in accordance with the plan submitted to the inquiry by the Cabinet Office.**

Mixed Use Areas 8b and 8c

- 164 Mixed Use Areas 8b and 8c comprise the central and north-western parts of the Riverside Gateway. The draft Area Plan provides for office development as part of the mixture of uses that would be appropriate in either of these areas. However, as indicated above, I do not consider that the Riverside Gateway area should be included within the boundary of Douglas Town Centre. It follows that office development in either of these areas would be contrary to Business Policy 7 of the Strategic Plan, which provides that new office space should be located within existing town and village centres. Accordingly **I recommend that references to office uses be deleted from Mixed Use Proposals 8b and 8c; and that the words 'Town Centre' be deleted from each of their headings.**

Town Centre Conservation Areas

- 165 The Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society considered that Mixed Use Proposals 5 to 7 should refer to the existing Conservation Areas in the areas covered by these proposals.

However, I do not consider this to be necessary, as the Conservation Areas in question are shown on Map 1a (Environmental Constraints) of the draft Area Plan. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

CHAPTER 10 – TOURISM

Tourism Proposal 6

166 Tourism Proposal 6 of the draft Area Plan states that the continued use of the Island’s heritage horse tram and railway network (including any associated infrastructure) will be supported; and that development which would entail the loss of land or buildings associated with the operational tram and rail network will not normally be supported. Miss P Newton considered that separate references should be made to the steam railway, the mountain railway and the electric tram network; and also that specific protection should be given to the stables used in connection with the horse tram. However it seems to me that the general term ‘railway network (including any associated infrastructure)’ adequately covers these matters.

Raad ny Foillan

167 Miss P Newton sought the introduction of a new Tourism Proposal relating to the Raad ny Foillan long-distance footpath. This would protect this route from development proposals that would detract from its environment; and would make provision for those parts of the path that were inland to be realigned, so as to follow the coast more closely. I consider that such a policy would have merit. **I recommend that a new Tourism Proposal 10 be introduced into the Area Plan, to read as follows:**

The environment of the Raad ny Foillan long-distance footpath will be protected from unsympathetic development. Where development proposals provide an opportunity to re-align inland sections of this route closer to the coast, these will be taken whenever possible.

CHAPTER 11 – OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Open Space and Recreation

Accuracy of Table 10

168 Miss P Newton asserted that there were inaccuracies in Table 10 of the draft Area Plan, which gives details of open space and community facilities in each parish. In particular, she indicated that there were no allotments in Lonan, but that there was children’s play space in that parish; and that there were equestrian centres in both Braddan and Marown. **I recommend that any requisite corrections be made to Table 10 of the draft Area Plan.**

Provision of Children's Play Space

- 169 Isle of Play is a registered charity which promotes the provision of opportunities for children on the Isle of Man to fulfil their right to play, in accordance with Article 31 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. The charity pointed out that paragraph 11.4.1 of the draft Area Plan referred to the desired outcome that each settlement should have sufficient open space and recreational facilities to meet its needs. Paragraph 11.7.1 set a benchmark against which recreational open space provision should be assessed. This is that there should be at least 0.6ha of children's play space, and at least 1.8ha of outdoor pitches, per 1,000 population. However, Table 11 showed that none of the parishes covered by the Area Plan came close to meeting either of these standards. Furthermore, the draft Area Plan contained no proposals to make good these deficiencies, by allocating suitable sites for additional outdoor recreational provision. In addition, the plan contained no evidence of the quality and suitability of existing children's play spaces and outdoor pitches. Isle of Play objected to these omissions.
- 170 Isle of Play cited Recreation Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan, which imposed a duty on each Area Plan to assess the recreational needs of its area, and identify suitable sites to make good any deficiency in provision. This had not been done. The Recreation and Leisure Act 1998 empowered the Government to provide recreational facilities (including play areas). Local authorities seemed to have similar powers.
- 171 I note that the development plan requires children's play areas and other outdoor recreational facilities to be provided as part of new residential development schemes. However, that does not address the existing deficiencies in provision. It appears that, despite the call for sites, no governmental body, nor any private organisation or individual, has suggested to the Cabinet Office any particular piece of land that should be allocated for the provision of additional outdoor recreational space, to meet existing deficiencies. That remains the case following the public inquiry.
- 172 The allocation of land for open space would be likely to affect its value. In my view, no purpose would be served by making such an allocation in the development plan, unless some agency, with the requisite resources, were willing and able to carry out the work needed to bring such a project to fruition. Regrettably, no such agency has been identified. There is no evidence that any public or private body has a budget to fund a large scale provision of additional recreational open space. In the circumstances, there is, at present, no prospect of land being allocated for additional children's play provision.
- 173 I recognise that this must be very frustrating to Isle of Play. In view of the content of Recreational Policy 1 of the Structure Plan, the Cabinet Office may consider it appropriate to initiate a joint study with the relevant public and private bodies, to establish where the most pressing deficiencies in the provision of children's play space are, and what steps could be taken in future to remedy them.

Education

- 174 Paragraph 12.14.1 of the draft Areas Plan records that the provision of over 2,000 additional dwellings in the East would entail a requirement for 1,000 extra school places (500 primary and 500 secondary). The Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC) reported that there were particular constraints in the north Douglas/Onchan area, where primary school provision was over-subscribed, and permanent capacity had been supplemented by the provision of mobile classrooms.
- 175 Despite demand, additional children could not be accommodated at either Scoill yn Jubilee, or Cronk y Berry Primary Schools. The delivery of the draft Area Plan would necessitate the expansion of Onchan Primary School from two to three form entry. Ashley Hill Primary School would also soon need replacement. This would require a campus of about 4ha, possibly within Comprehensive Treatment Area 5. Alternatively, DESC considered that Government owned land in Blackberry Lane might be zoned for this purpose. Given the capacity issues in Laxey and Onchan, it would also be prudent to retain the existing zoning of land for school use in Baldrine.
- 176 DESC considered that the Park Road site (Site DH039) should be retained for educational use, to facilitate the replacement of the Scoill yn Jubilee Primary Sschool, which currently had a split site. Site DH039, which was previously used for educational purposes, was now owned by the Department of Infrastructure, and was allocated for residential development in the draft Area Plan.
- 177 Willaston Primary School was over-capacity and would need to be extended from one to two form entry. This could be accommodated on its existing site, but further development in north Douglas would necessitate the provision of a new school site of about 2ha, perhaps as part of the development of Site DH057.
- 178 Braddan Primary School currently had some spare capacity but was on a constrained site. Provision should be made for its eventual replacement within Site DBH002, with a new two form entry school on a site of about 2ha. This would provide the extra capacity that would be required to serve planned residential development.
- 179 Marown Primary School in Glen Vine was poorly located on the opposite side of the A1 from its catchment population in Glen Vine, and suffered acute congestion when parents brought or collected their children. It was also remote from Crosby, where planned housing provision would necessitate the provision of a new one form entry school.
- 180 As to secondary schools, DESC reported that Ballakermeen High School in Douglas was over capacity, and used temporary classrooms. There was, however, spare capacity at St Ninian's High School, with land available for the provision of additional classrooms.
- 181 Finally, land was required for the expansion of the University College of Man (UCM). DESC had been in discussion with Douglas Borough Council about the use of existing Council-owned

residential properties for this purpose. It sought the rezoning of the properties in question for education purposes, and the Borough Council supported this.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 182 I note that at present there is no budget for the provision of the additional educational provision described, the cost of which would be considerable. Plainly, new housing development, of the magnitude currently proposed in north Douglas and north Onchan, would require substantial investment in additional school places. However, that would be contingent on the eventual number and phasing of new dwellings to be supplied.
- 183 The draft Area Plan proposes that open land in the Blackberry Lane area should be preserved as a Green Gap, to prevent the further coalescence of Douglas and Onchan. I do not consider that its development for educational purposes would be consistent with this. It appears that a replacement site for the Onchan and Ashley Hill Primary schools could be provided as part of the redevelopment of Comprehensive Treatment Area 5, although plans for this appear not to be clearly defined at present. In the circumstances it may be prudent to retain the allocation of land at Baldrine for educational purposes; and to make provision for a new primary school to be eventually provided as part of the development of land to the north of Johnny Watterson's Lane. I deal with these matters further in considering proposed housing allocations in Baldrine and Douglas.
- 184 It seems to me that it would be prudent to reserve part of Site DBH002 for the replacement of Braddan Primary School, expanded to two form entry. I deal with this matter further in dealing with the proposal to allocate that site for housing. The need for additional primary school provision in Glen Vine and Crosby would be contingent upon the amount of new housing proposed in those settlements.
- 185 The Park Road site (Site DH039) is allocated for residential use in the draft Area Plan. This is previously developed land in the built-up area of Douglas. In my view it should be restored to beneficial use as soon as possible. I do not think that it should remain vacant indefinitely, pending a decision about the replacement of the Scoill yn Jubilee. Rather it should be treated as part of the stock of land available to meet the requirement for additional housing during the plan period. Of course, for the time being, it would remain open to the DESC to acquire this land, and apply for planning approval for its development for primary school purposes, as a departure from the Area Plan. The existing Scoill yn Jubilee sites could then become available for eventual residential development to restore the potential for increase in the housing stock.
- 186 I have reservations about the rezoning of existing residential properties to facilitate the expansion of UCM. There is no evidence that the occupants of these premises have been consulted about this scheme. The Cabinet Office suggests that the houses in question should remain in predominantly residential use until such time as plans have been approved to redevelop this area for educational purposes. I agree.

CHAPTER 12 – RESIDENTIAL

Population and Households

Censuses and Projections

187 At the time of 2011 Census, the Isle of Man had a population of about 84,500. This had increased reasonably steadily since 1961, when it had numbered fewer than 50,000. The 2011 Census figure formed the basis of a population projection which informed the housing policy set out in the Strategic Plan 2016. This projection indicated that the Island's population would increase from about 84,500 in 2011, to about 87,600 in 2016, and to about 93,500 in 2026 (an increase of around 9,000 over a 15-year period). The projection assumed a net inward migration of 500 persons a year, so approximately 7,500 of this projected 9,000 increase, would have been directly attributable to migration.

188 However, the 2016 Census indicated that, far from increasing as previously projected, the Island's population had in fact decreased from about 84,500 in 2011 to about 83,300 in 2016. Importantly there appears to have been little (if any) net inward migration to the Island during this period; the annual number of deaths on the Island began to exceed the annual number of births; and there were increasing numbers of elderly residents.

189 Some concern was expressed about the accuracy of the 2016 Census, particularly by Mr Stephen Carse, who was formerly the government's Economic Advisor. He pointed out that, unlike previous Censuses, the 2016 Census was conducted by post, and there had been an acknowledged degree of under-reporting. Although the published results were adjusted to take account of this, he argued that that exercise had been incomplete. Furthermore, during the period between 2011 and 2016 there had been strong economic growth in the Isle of Man, where GDP had increased by over 3% per annum. In the past there had been a positive correlation between economic growth and population size, such that the economic growth which occurred between 2011 and 2016 could have been taken to suggest a population increase of about 3,000, rather than a decrease. That would have been broadly in line with the population projection used in the 2016 Strategic Plan.

190 Other indicators, suggesting that the population increased between 2011 and 2016, included a growth of more than 2,000 in the number of electricity accounts during that period. Mr Carse also referred to tax records, which did not provide evidence of a reduction in the number of people in employment during these years.

191 On the other hand, Mr Corden argued that house prices had fallen by between 20% and 50% since the 2008 financial crisis, a clear sign of a lack of effective demand. He provided evidence that there had been some 3,000 dwellings on the market on the Isle of Man, also indicating a lack of effective demand. However, Mr Groves, of Black, Grace, Cowley, reported a recent resurgence in the property market. In mid-2019, his survey revealed that there had then been fewer than 1,500 dwellings available for sale. My own view is that, while the number of

residential properties available for sale or rent may have fluctuated over time, there is no evidence to suggest that there has been a housing shortage, sufficient to inhibit inward migration to the Isle of Man, at any time since 2011.

- 192 Mr Paul Craine's evidence was that, prior to 2016, there had been significant decreases in the number of applications for work permits; in the number of registrations with GPs; and in school rolls. These each confirmed the decline in population. By 2016, the economy was in recession, and there had been a substantial reduction in house prices.
- 193 I attach weight to the fact that the Cabinet Office has not resiled from the results of the 2016 Census. No census is without a degree of inaccuracy, and it is impossible to be certain about the precise scale of population change. But I consider there to be strong evidence that the projected population growth between 2011 and 2016, which helped inform the current Strategic Plan's housing policy, failed to materialise.
- 194 The Cabinet Office has now made fresh population projections on the basis of the 2016 Census, assuming various levels of net inward migration. These suggest that, with zero net inward migration, the Island's population would be about 84,300 in 2026 (i.e. there would be a small decrease in population during the 15 year period covered by the Strategic Plan). However, with a net inward migration of 500 per annum from 2016 onwards, the projection indicates that the Island's population could grow to about 87,400 by 2026 (CD24, Table 9). The Cabinet Office reckons that of these, some 85,671 would be in private households (CD43, Table 4).
- 195 In a written submission, the Isle of Man Green Party estimated that by 2026 the Island's population will have decreased to about 82,100. However, this assumed zero inward migration and an extrapolation of the rate by which mortality had exceeded fertility during the past three years. In the light of the evidence available, I consider that it would be most unwise to rely on there being zero net inward migration to the Isle of Man over a sustained period.

Evidence of Net Inward Migration

- 196 There is evidence to suggest that, in the latter part of the twentieth century, the net rate of inward migration to the Isle of Man averaged about 800 persons a year. That seems to have been largely due to a rapid increase in the availability of jobs on the Island, particularly in financial services, and an associated inward movement of labour. However, since the global financial crisis of 2008/9, there has been a reduction in employment in financial services on the Island, with a consequential negative effect on the rate of inward migration. To an extent, this has been cushioned by the local growth in the e-gaming industry. However, the evidence of Mr Guy Templer and Mr John Webster (each of whom have positions of authority in that industry) is that e-gaming has an uncertain future on the Isle of Man, in the face of competition from different regulatory regimes, such as in Malta.

- 197 The recent level of net inward migration also appears to have been influenced by the propensity of young people to leave the Isle of Man, for instance to complete their education in the UK. A number of these evidently settle overseas after graduating, and do not return permanently to the Island.
- 198 However, the assumed net inward migration of 500 a year reflects the Government's policy, which is to build the Island's economy and population. In his report on the inquiry into the Strategic Plan 2016, the Inspector noted that net inward migration during the first four years of the plan period had been well below 500 persons a year. However, he took the view that the level of migration was not 'policy neutral'; and he regarded the population projection, based on an assumed level of net inward migration, as a pre-determined input to the Strategic Plan.
- 199 The Cabinet Office's current evidence is that, in the three years following the 2016 Census, net inward migration has increased to an average of 377 persons per annum. However, there is no evidence to suggest that net inward migration of 500 persons has been achieved in any year since 2011. Although the level of migration may be influenced by Government policy, more than half way through the plan period there is no clear evidence that the assumed level of net inward migration of 500 persons per annum is likely to be achieved in future.
- 200 Mr Templer has reworked the most recent population projection based on the 2016 Census, but with net inward migration of 377 persons a year up to 2019, and 500 persons per year between 2019 and 2026. On this basis, he estimated the population in private households by 2026 would be about 85,350.

Household Size

- 201 The average household size in the Isle of Man fell from 2.37 persons in 2001 to 2.33 persons in 2011, a decline of 0.04 persons in 10 years (or 0.004 persons per annum). The Strategic Plan 2016 assumes that mean household size will continue to diminish at this rate until 2026, by which time there would be an average of 2.27 persons per household.
- 202 The Cabinet Office now considers it appropriate to plan for mean household size to diminish by 0.0048 persons per annum, in line with the 20-year trend between the 1996 and 2016 Censuses. On that basis, the average household size in 2026 would be 2.24 persons. I have no reason to prefer any different figure. However, it seems to me that the assumed rate of net inward migration is likely to have a more significant impact than changes in household size on housing need up to 2026.
- 203 The Cabinet Office estimates that, if the Island's population living in private households in 2026 is 85,671, and the average household contains 2.24 persons, then there would be about 38,317 resident private households on the Island at the end of the plan period. Mr Templer's alternative figure (using the reduced net inward migration figure for the period between 2016 and 2019) would be only marginally lower, at about 38,100.

- 204 In 2011 there were 35,559 private households on the Isle of Man. So on the basis of the Cabinet Office's current estimate, by 2026 there would be an increase of about 2,718 private households over the 2011 figure, Island-wide.

Housing Need

Strategic Planning Policy

- 205 Housing Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan 2016 states that the Isle of Man's housing needs will be met by making provision for sufficient development opportunities for 5,100 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be built, or created by the conversion of existing buildings, between 2011 and 2026. Housing Policy 3 indicates that 2,440 (48%) of these additional dwellings should be in the East. These figures include a 4% vacancy factor, to allow for the fact that a proportion of the housing stock is likely to be vacant at any given time, for instance because a dwelling is being refurbished or is in the course of being sold. An identical vacancy factor of 4% was also used in Strategic Plan 2007. This seems to me to be reasonable.

Vacancies

- 206 Many people making representations about the housing policies in the draft Area Plan referred to the fact that the 2016 Census reported that 6,470 dwellings (or about 15% of the Island's total housing stock) had been vacant. However, the Cabinet Office's 'Vacant Property Review' (CD59) suggests that this figure may be misleading. The Census defined vacant dwellings as properties that Census enumerators could not establish as having been occupied on Census night. They might include (for instance) holiday homes, which may be relatively common in an attractive holiday destination such as the Isle of Man; and houses whose usual occupants were temporarily away on holiday or business. These dwellings would not necessarily be permanently empty, or available for re-occupation. Electricity consumption data suggest that there are about 660 properties in the Isle of Man where little or no power has been used in the past two years, of which about 340 are in the East. This seems to me to provide a more robust measure of the number of residential properties that have fallen into permanent disuse.
- 207 It was widely argued that, before fresh land was allocated for residential development, disused housing should be brought back into use. However, it is not clear to me that there is any mechanism whereby the Government can compel the re-use of privately owned property. There appear to be no planning powers that would secure such an objective.

Housing Need in the East

- 208 The Cabinet Office's current projection indicates that the number of private households on the Isle of Man might increase by 2,718 between 2011 and 2026, assuming average net inward migration of 500 persons per annum from 2016 onwards. If 48% of this growth takes place in the East, in line with the assumption made in the Strategic Plan, there would be a

need for 1,358 additional dwellings to be provided in this part of the Island between 2011 and 2026 (CD58, Section 8.0(vii)) .

- 209 I consider that these findings should be recorded in paragraph 12.9.2 of the draft Area Plan. In addition, there appears to be an error in that paragraph, which asserts that the housing need calculations in the Strategic Plan are based on a predicted 2026 population of 85,671, living in private households. The projected number of residents in private households in 2026 is given as 91,898, in Table 8.3 of the Strategic Plan.
- 210 A lower need would result if the average annual net inward migration were to remain below 500 persons. In order to justify the need for 2,440 additional dwellings as specified in the Strategic Plan, it appears that average net inward migration would have significantly to exceed 500 persons per annum for the remainder of the plan period. On the evidence currently available, this seems unlikely to happen.
- 211 Nevertheless, the Cabinet Office continues to seek to meet the requirement set out in Housing Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan 2016. In its view, the housing figures in that document should not be set aside too quickly. Although the need for the amount of housing proposed in the Strategic Plan may not now be apparent, housing need could increase in future. In support of this, the Cabinet Office pointed out that the rate of net inward migration had been increasing in response to recent Government policy initiatives. Accordingly, it still intended that the Area Plan should provide sufficient housing land to enable 2,440 additional dwellings to be provided in the East during the plan period. That would clearly be in general conformity with the Strategic Plan. Representatives of the volume builders supported this view. However, it was strenuously opposed by Mr B Shimmins MHK, Mrs J Poole-Wilson MLC, and many others.
- 212 Paragraph 8.4.9 of the Strategic Plan indicates that the planning authority is committed to a 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' approach to the provision of housing land. This approach accepts that the 'monitoring of housing and population statistics over time may require corresponding changes to be made in the provision of new housing land'. The definition of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage', in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Plan, indicates that that this is a broad approach to determining the amount of land needed to be allocated for housing in Area Plans; and that it entails managing the release of land for development to avoid either under-provision or over-provision.
- 213 In the light of the results of the 2016 Census and the subsequent population projections prepared by the Cabinet Office, my own view is that the allocation and release of land to meet the requirement of Housing Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan would be likely to result in a serious over-provision of housing. New housing on the extensive 'greenfield' sites proposed might be taken up in preference to the development of vacant or underused 'brownfield' sites in the existing urban area. It seems to me that that would be contrary to Strategic Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan, which seeks to ensure that best use is made of resources. Accordingly, I consider that the release of development land should be managed to reflect current demographic circumstances.

214 Calculations of housing need are necessarily crude and imprecise. In the circumstances, I consider that, to meet the quantitative need expected on the basis of the 2016 Census results, it would be prudent to ensure the initial provision of sufficient land to enable approximately 1,500 additional dwellings to be provided in the East between 2011 and 2026. That would provide for a degree of flexibility of somewhat more than 10% against the possibility of some allocated sites not being brought forward for development during the plan period. That seems to me to be a reasonable figure, since a number of the allocated sites are controlled by their prospective developers, and are said to be immediately available for development.

215 **I recommend that paragraph 12.9.2 of the draft Area Plan should be amended to read as follows:**

The findings of this work are:

- i) The housing need calculations in the Strategic Plan are based on a projected Island-wide population, living in private households, of 91,898 by 2026. This assumed net inward migration of 500 people a year between 2011 and 2026.**
- ii) With an average household size of 2.27 persons, this indicated that there would be 40, 484 resident households on the Isle of Man by 2026.**
- iii) At the time of the 2011 Census there were 35,599 resident households in the Isle of Man. So there was expected to be an increase of 4,885 households between 2011 and 2026. After allowing for vacancies and rounding, this resulted in a total housing requirement of 5,100 additional dwellings for the period 2011 to 2026, as set out in Housing Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan. Assuming that 48% of these dwellings would be needed in the East, the housing requirement for the East was for 2,440 additional dwellings, as set out in Housing Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan.**
- iv) A more recent projection based on the results of the 2016 Census, and assuming net inward migration of 500 people a year between 2016 and 2026, shows that by the end of that period, there would be an Island-wide population of 85,671 living in private households.**
- v) With an average household size of 2.24 persons, this indicates that there would be 38,317 households on the Isle of Man by 2026.**
- vi) Whereas the Strategic Plan assumed an increase of 4,885 resident households between 2011 and 2026, the later projection points to a smaller increase of 2,718 households during that period.**
- vii) The Strategic Plan assumes that 48% of the additional households would live in the East. On that assumption, there would be 1,358 additional households in the East between 2011 and 2026.**

viii) In order to provide some flexibility, and allow for the possibility that some allocated sites might not be brought forward for development, it would be prudent to make provision for some 1,500 additional dwellings in the East during this period.

216 I do not entirely discount the possibility that the 2016 Census may have under-enumerated the resident population at that date; or the possibility that the rate of net inward migration could increase significantly as Government initiatives, such as the Locate Isle of Man Strategy and the National Insurance Holiday, begin to bite. In the light of the Strategic Plan requirement for there to be opportunities for the provision of 2,440 additional dwellings in the East up to 2026, I consider that reserve sites with a capacity for a further 940 dwellings should be identified.

217 I do not consider it necessary or desirable to identify reserve sites for more than 940 dwellings. I attach weight to the argument, advanced by Mr Templer, Mr Shimmins and others, that there would be costs incurred if the development plan showed too much reserve land as being suitable for eventual residential use. This could give rise to public uncertainty, affect the operation of the market, and inhibit investment in the use of the reserved land for non-residential purposes.

Release of Strategic Reserve Sites

218 The Cabinet Office's proposed Methodology for the Release of Strategic Reserve Sites is set out in PIP7. This indicates that responsibility for changing the status of a site from one held 'in reserve', to one which is released for development, should rest with the Cabinet Office, who would produce Assessment Reports from time to time. The Assessment Reports would consider whether the release of all or part of a Strategic Reserve Site was warranted. It would take account of the impact on, and need for, supporting infrastructure; the scale of development approved and under construction; and the status of the Strategic Reserve Sites at the time. Evidence to be considered could come from Government Departments or from an external source, but there would be consultation across Government, before the Cabinet Office made a recommendation as to whether it was 'minded to release' or not. Before making a decision, the Cabinet Office would publish its recommendation, and there would be an opportunity for public consultation.

219 This does not seem to me to be unreasonable. However, in my view, the release of a Strategic Reserve Site for residential development should be contingent on some objective criterion, such as the Island's resident population having increased to at least 89,000 by the time of the 2021 Census. (That figure approximates to the mid-point between the Island-wide population of about 84,500, as shown in the 2011 Census, and the projected Island-wide population of 93,500, on which the Strategic Plan housing requirement is based). I consider that such a criterion should be written into the Area Plan.

220 Mr R Callister and Mr B Shimmins argued that the final decision on the release or Strategic Reserve Sites should be taken by Tynwald, in the light of the Cabinet Office's Assessment

Reports and recommendation. Others considered that assessments should be made at specified regular intervals, and that there should be an early opportunity for public consultation, of which account would be taken. However, in my view, the release of reserve land should be a decision for the planning authority rather than Tynwald; and the timing of the Assessment Report's should be a matter for the planning authority's judgement.

- 221 Nevertheless, I consider that a release mechanism requiring a decision to be made by either the Cabinet Office of Tynwald might well be redundant. In practice, if a prospective developer considered that there was a strong case for the development of a Strategic Reserve Site, there would be nothing to prevent the submission of a planning application in respect of that land. The prospective developer would not have to wait for the Cabinet Office to make an Assessment Report; and unlike an Assessment Report, a planning application would provide a right of appeal.
- 222 The determination of a planning application would not fall to the Cabinet Office. Rather, in the first instance, the decision maker would be either an officer of DEFA or the Planning Committee (or in exceptional cases the Council of Ministers). In accordance with Section 10(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999, in considering the application, the decision maker would have to have regard to the material provisions of the development plan, and to all other material considerations. The material considerations would almost certainly include whether there was a sufficient need for additional housing to justify a departure from development plan policy.
- 223 **I recommend that paragraph 12.20.1 of the draft Area Plan be replaced by the following text:**

A Strategic Reserve Site is land which may be suitable for residential development, but which will be held 'in reserve' until the need for such development has been established. Strategic Reserve Sites will not be released for development until the population of the Isle of Man exceeds 89,000. The identification of Reserve Sites in this Plan allows for flexibility in land supply, should it be found that additional land is necessary. This accords with the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach identified in the Isle of Man Strategic Plan; and is necessary to ensure that the Plan can react to changing circumstances. The status of Strategic Reserve Sites will be reconsidered when the development plan is next reviewed.

Housing Supply

Existing Capacity

- 224 The Cabinet Office's Evidence Paper 3, Updated in June 2019 (CD57) indicates that 270 dwellings were completed or started in the East between mid-2011 and mid-2018. In addition, in mid-2018, there were outstanding planning approvals for 195 dwellings in the East. As, on average, about 27% of planning approvals are not taken-up, this could translate

to a potential increase of 144 units. The Cabinet Office also projects a net yield of 187 additional dwellings from the conversion of existing buildings between 2018 and 2026. The sum of the additional dwellings from these three sources would be about 600 dwellings. I consider that these data, which were not challenged at the inquiry, should be recorded in paragraph 12.8 of the draft Area Plan; and that that paragraph should be repositioned to follow paragraph 12.9.2.

225 **I recommend that paragraph 12.8 of the draft Area Plan be amended to read as follows:**

Urban Capacity Findings

- **Between mid-2011 and mid-2018, 270 dwellings were completed or started in the East;**
- **In mid-2018, there were outstanding planning approvals for a further 195 dwellings in the East. At an average take-up rate of 73%, this could be expected to yield a further 144 dwellings;**
- **It is forecast that, between 2018 and 2026, 187 dwellings will be created by the change of use of existing buildings in the East;**
- **In aggregate, 601 additional dwellings could be provided from these three sources.**

I further recommend that this amended paragraph should follow paragraph 12.9.2 of the draft Area Plan.

226 Assuming the supply of 600 dwellings from these three sources, there would be a residual requirement for housing land for about 900 additional dwellings in order to meet the projected requirement for 1,500 additional dwellings by 2026. Together with reserve sites with a capacity for 940 dwellings, that would provide sufficient land for up to 2,440 dwellings to be built in the East, in accordance with Strategic Plan Housing Policy 3, should the need arise.

227 It is to be expected that, between 2018 and 2026, there will be additional planning approvals for new housing, granted and taken up, on land that is washed over as predominantly residential, but has been excluded from any of the allocated or reserve housing sites. Some of this land would have been referenced in the Call for Sites. It is not possible to predict, with any accuracy, the number of dwellings that will be built on such land before the end of the plan period. However, it may be regarded as a further buffer against under-provision on allocated sites, due for instance to sites failing to be brought forward because of ownership constraints or infrastructure problems.

The Capacity of Proposed Housing Sites

228 In Table 1 of Evidence Paper 3 (CD57) the Cabinet Office sets out the assumptions it makes about discounts to be applied to the gross area of allocated housing sites, and about the density to be achieved on the residual developable area, to estimate a site's potential yield in

terms of the number of dwellings that might be provided. These assumptions were not challenged at the inquiry, and I consider them to be reasonable.

The Distribution and Type of Proposed Housing

Strategic Policy

229 Strategic Policy 2 and Housing Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan 2016 provide that new housing will be located primarily within existing town and villages, or, where appropriate in sustainable urban extensions of these settlements, where identified in adopted Area Plans. New housing will be permitted in the countryside only in specified exceptional circumstances.

Geographical Distribution of Housing Proposed in the Area Plan

230 In the draft Area Plan, as published in May 2018, proposed housing allocations included urban extensions to seven of the eight settlements in the East – Douglas, Onchan, Laxey, Union Mills, Strang, Baldrine, Crosby and Newtown. However, in proposed changes published in July 2019, the Cabinet Office revised these housing allocations, to provide for a reduced capacity. Urban extensions would be concentrated in parts of Douglas, Onchan and Braddan, that are within 2.5 miles of the Sea Terminal, and therefore within the area covered by the Government’s Active Travel Investment Plan (ATIP). Allocations in urban extensions elsewhere were demoted to the status of Strategic Reserve Sites, which would be released for development as and when circumstances dictated.

231 The Isle of Man Green Party objected to the allocation of any undeveloped rural land for residential development, as this would reduce its capacity for carbon sequestration and be likely to result in increased carbon emissions. They referred to the fact that a climate emergency has been announced by the Isle of Man Government. I am mindful of this, but do not accept that future housing requirements can be met exclusively by using only previously developed land in existing built-up areas.

232 Ellis Brown objected to the proposed distribution of housing allocations. They argued that there was a disconnection between the proposed location of new residential development (which would be concentrated in the northern parts of Douglas and Onchan); and the proposed employment areas (which would increasingly be concentrated to the south-west of Douglas, in the Cooil Road, Peel Road and Nunnery Corridors; and around Ballasalla and Ronaldsway Airport). As well as being accessible to these employment areas, residential development to the south-west of Douglas would be accessible to the town centre by road, via South Quay, without having to pass through the congested Quarterbridge and Jubilee Oak junctions.

233 With others, Ellis Brown also argued that the Active Travel Plan did not provide a sound basis for determining the location of new residential development. There seemed no good reason for the Active Travel Area to be confined to land within 2.5 miles of the Sea Terminal. Similar Active Travel Areas could be defined around existing concentrations of employment

elsewhere, for instance in Cooil Road, at Noble's Hospital, or in central Onchan. Settlements such as Newtown, Glen Vine, Crosby and Baldrine would respectively fall within such areas. There was no good reason to postpone the extension of those settlements.

- 234 I accept that there may be a case for a greater concentration of housing land to the south-west of Douglas, close to the Cooil Road and Nunnery Corridors, and I shall return to this point when considering particular sites. However, I do not accept that there is a strong case for the creation of urban extensions to Newtown, Crosby, Glen Vine or Baldrine. At present, these villages rely on other centres for various services, having limited provision of their own. Paragraph 5.26 of the Strategic Plan notes that that they may have little or no potential for further development over the plan period. Of course there may be some scope to provide new dwellings within the existing built-up areas of these settlements, for instance through infilling, redevelopment, or the subdivision of larger plots.
- 235 I consider the Active Travel Initiative to be worthy of support; and I endorse the proposed concentration of new residential development in the East, in the area within 2.5 miles of central Douglas, where the provision of existing services and the network of public transport routes are likely to be richest. Paragraph 5.9 of the Strategic Plan makes it clear that, in the East, the focus of development will be in and around Douglas. There may be a case for establishing other Active Travel Zones in future, centred for instance on Cooil Road or Noble's Hospital, but the network of bus routes within those area is unlikely to be as intense as in the present Active Travel Zone.
- 236 It seems to me to be highly likely that the occupants of new dwellings in outlying villages would be more likely than their counterparts, living in Douglas or Onchan, to be dependent on car travel, for a wide range of purposes. Strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan urges that new development should be located in such a way as to minimise car journeys, make best use of public transport, and encourage pedestrian movement. I consider that the concentration of new housing within 2.5 miles of central Douglas would contribute to each of those objectives.

Groups of Houses in the Countryside

- 237 Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan contains an undertaking that 'in future Area Plans, all groups of houses in the countryside will be assessed for development potential by identifying the village envelope or curtilage, and providing the opportunity for appropriate development within this area'. Initially, Residential Proposal 3 of the draft Area Plan identified West Baldwin and Quine's Hill as locations where feasibility studies would be undertaken to determine future development potential, pursuant to that undertaking. However, PC62 would have the effect of deleting this proposal. Instead an Island-wide study of this issue is now considered appropriate. A number of objections have been raised about the omission of particular groups of rural dwellings from Residential Proposal 3, and about the intention to delete that Proposal from the Area Plan.
- 238 Nevertheless, Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan does not have the status of a policy. It is embedded in the supporting text, the normal purpose of which is to set out a reasoned

justification for development plan policies. However, Section 8.8 does not refer to any particular Strategic Plan policy, but sits awkwardly with Strategic Policy 2, Spatial Policy 5, and Environment Policy 1. Each of those policies seeks to restrict development in the countryside, except in specified circumstances (which do not include the re-enforcement of isolated clusters of rural dwellings). Nor does it comply with the 'continued policy of urban containment' referenced in paragraph 5.9 of the Strategic Plan. On the contrary, Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan itself highlights the conflict between building further dwellings in the countryside and the Strategic Plan's sustainability objectives. Additional dwellings in the countryside would be likely to generate more lengthy journeys by car, contrary to Strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan.

239 However, the Cabinet Office has carried out the assessment promised in paragraph 8.8.3 of the Strategic Plan. The results of that assessment have been published in Evidence Paper 4 (CD42). The conclusion, now reached, is that no groups of houses in the countryside should be identified in the Area Plan, as having potential for additional residential development at present. It seems to me that any other approach would have been counter to established strategic policies for protection of the rural environment, for the settlement pattern, and for transport and communications.

240 In my view, Section 12.21 of the draft Area Plan adequately covers the issue of residential development in the countryside. However, I consider that an additional sentence could be added to explain the position regarding Groups of Houses in the Countryside. **I recommend that the following text be added at the end of paragraph 12.21.1 of the draft Area Plan:**

In accordance with Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan 2016, an assessment has been made of groups of houses in the countryside, but no such group is identified in the Area Plan as having potential for further residential development.

Low Density Housing in Parkland

241 Section 12.22 of the draft Area Plan deals with Low Density Housing in Parkland (LDHP). This is a designation that is contained in the 1982 Development Plan, and in some subsequent Local Plans. It is also covered by Circular 8/89, which distinguishes between LDHP within and outside settlements. The Circular indicates that, within settlements, there may be further residential development in areas of LDHP, but each dwelling must be substantial and sited in grounds of at least 0.4ha. In areas of LDHP outside settlements, the erection of further dwellings will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. All trees within areas of LDHP are deemed to be registered.

242 There is no reference to LDHP in the Strategic Plan. I understand that, in the Area Plan for the South, LDHP zones are retained in rural areas, but are subsumed into predominantly residential areas within settlements. Initially, the draft Area Plan proposed that they should be treated similarly in the East. However, in response to objections on this point, from Miss P Newton and others, the Cabinet Office has indicated that it would have no objection to all LDHP areas being retained as they are, and shown as such in the Area Plan.

- 243 I have some difficulty with this. Site DH011 (Ballanard Woods) is within the existing settlement boundary of Douglas. It is shown as LDHP in the Douglas Local Plan 1998, but as a housing allocation in the present draft Area Plan. In my view, it would be an inefficient use of this land to restrict its development to a density of fewer than three dwellings per hectare. The fact that it remains largely vacant suggests that there may be little effective demand for the development of such low density housing.
- 244 It seems to me that if areas of LDHP have a special character that is worthy of conservation, they should be designated as Conservation Areas; and if they have trees that justify registration, those trees should be registered. Otherwise, I can see no particular justification for retaining the LDHP designation in the development plan. **Accordingly, I recommend against the modification of the draft Area Plan to show areas of Low Density Housing in Parkland, either within or outside settlements.**

Types of Accommodation

- 245 Paragraph 8.1.2 of the Strategic Plan refers to 'the aspirations of the population to live in particular parts of the Island'. Paragraph 8.3.2(a) seeks to ensure provision of 'a choice of housing sites in terms of their location, type and size'. Paragraph 3.4.4 of the draft Area Plan itself indicates that a broader choice of homes would provide the flexibility needed for individuals and families to remain on, and be attracted to, the Island. However, at the inquiry, it was argued that these objectives would not be met by effectively concentrating all new housing in the East, in Douglas and Onchan.
- 246 Ellis Brown particularly expressed their concern that all the residential allocations in the draft Area Plan were for general housing, with no specific provision being made for individual dwellings on large plots, or specialist housing for older people in the form of bungalows, sheltered accommodation or care homes. As presently proposed, the Area Plan would not be in general conformity with the Strategic Plan, as required by law.
- 247 The draft Area Plan is not prescriptive about the quantity, form or location of specialist housing for particular social groups, such as elderly people. Although paragraph 8.4.4 of the Strategic Plan suggests that some of the issues associated with an ageing population can be addressed through the preparation of Area Plans (including the provision of land for residential homes) this is not mandatory. It seems to me that specialist accommodation for elderly people could potentially be provided within any of the general housing allocations. Ideally, such provision should be as close as possible to public transport facilities and other relevant services. However, the providers of such accommodation, whether in the public or private sectors, may be best placed to determine the precise quantity, type and location of the development needed, within the general framework established by the housing land allocations.
- 248 There will continue to be opportunities to build individual dwellings on plots of various sizes within each of the settlements in the East, for instance by infilling, the sub-division of large curtilages, or redevelopment. This would add to the choice and range of dwellings available.

However, a choice of housing will be provided through the recycling of the existing housing stock, as well as by the provision of newly built homes.

Housing Allocations

249 I consider that priority should be given to the development of land allocated for residential development within existing settlement boundaries. That land would provide about 560 dwellings, as shown in the Table 1 below. Much of it consists of vacant or underused sites in Douglas, which detract from that town’s appearance and vitality. It is important that this land should be restored to beneficial use as soon as possible. Taken together with the 600 dwellings that were either built between 2011 and 2018, are likely to be the product of extant planning approvals, or will be the likely output of future conversions, this would leave a need for the allocation of sufficient land for the provision of about 340 additional dwellings, to meet the identified immediate requirement for 1,500 additional dwellings.

Table 1 – Sites proposed for residential allocation within existing settlement boundaries

Site	Name	Number of dwellings
DH001	Westmoreland Road	39
DH004	South Quay	30
DH011	Ballanard Woods	40
DH016	Anna Cur House	10
DH019	South Quay	86
DH021	South Quay	7
DH022	Circular Road	63
DH025	Fairfield	9
DH037	Lower Dukes Lane	6
DH039	Park Road	27
DH042	Albany Road	8
DH046	Victoria Road Prison	44
DM002	Lake Road	41
DM003	Loch Promenade	17
DM004	Lord Street	21
DM007	Masterplan TF1 & TF2	10
DM008	Masterplan TF3 & TF6	33
DM012	Summerland	7
DM013	Little Switzerland	22
DM014	Milestone	6
OH016	Follies Cabaret	15
BH034	Mannin Infirmary Site	23
Total		562

250 I shall consider first objections to the housing allocations and strategic reserve sites set out in the All Sites List produced by the Cabinet Office in August 2019. These constitute the Cabinet Office’s current proposals for residential development, following the Proposed Changes issued

on 11 July 2019. I shall then consider objections concerning allocations that have been omitted from the draft Area Plan.

Allocated Housing Sites

Sites DBH002 and BH030 – Land at Braddan Road and Ballafletcher Road

251 Site DBH002 lies to the east of Braddan Road (A23) and Peel Road (A1), has a gross area of about 30ha, and is owned by Hartford Homes. It is currently in agricultural use, and consists mainly of grassland with some arable. It comprises a dome-shaped area, with significant changes of level to the west and south. To the north-west it abuts the Kirk Braddan Cemetery. To the west, its frontage to Braddan Road is marked by a retaining wall, up to 4m or more in height and topped by a belt of registered trees. This tree belt also extends along the southern edge of the site, which is marked by a steep embankment. To the south, the site is bounded by Port-e-Chee meadows, which form the flood plain of the River Glass, and are used as playing fields by the Douglas Rugby Club. To the east, Site DBH002 is bounded by existing residential areas, including the Tromode Woods Estate. To the north, it is bounded by Site BH030, an area of open land owned by the Braddan Burial Authority, which has a frontage to Ballafletcher Road.

Objections

252 Objections to the allocation of these sites were made by the Braddan Parish Commissioners, Dandara Ltd, Ellis Brown, and numerous local people, many of whom were represented by Ms M Warwick (who presented a petition signed by 326 people). The objectors variously referred to:

- the degree to which development of this site would result in the coalescence of separate settlements;
- the loss of productive farmland;
- the visual impact of residential development on this elevated land, including the loss of registered trees;
- access problems and increased traffic congestion;
- problems of surface water drainage, and flood risk;
- problems of water supply;
- the capacity of local schools to accommodate additional children;
- the effect on wildlife;
- the effect on historic buildings and archaeology; and
- lack of need for the amount of residential development proposed.

Inspector's Conclusions

253 In my view, the appeal site is generally well contained. The proposed housing would be prominent when seen from parts of the adjacent cemetery; and it would also be apparent

from a section of Ballafletcher Road to the north, and from some of the residential areas to the east and south. However, in most close views, it would be well screened and relatively inconspicuous. In long views from further afield, it would be unlikely to have more than a limited adverse impact. Plainly much would depend upon the detailed layout and design of the proposed buildings, and the landscaping of the proposed development. The landscape would undoubtedly change as a result of development here. There would certainly be a substantial loss of open land, which is currently visible to many people living nearby. However, I do not consider that the visual impact, from public vantage points, would be so severe as to be unacceptable.

- 254 Access to the proposed development from Braddan Road would entail the breaching and relocation of part of the existing retaining wall, and the removal of some of the registered trees. There is a dispute between highway engineers about the required geometry of the new access, and the length of visibility splays that would be needed. This would affect the length of the retaining wall to be relocated, and the number of registered trees that would have to be felled. However, it is important to note that the retaining wall was relocated, and registered trees were felled, as a result of road works here some 20 years ago. The existing registered trees (above the retaining wall that would be relocated) are replacements that were planted at that time, and are juveniles rather than mature specimens. There is no dispute that the formation of the requisite access is feasible, and that the registered trees lost could be replaced by new planting, which would mature with time. It is not necessary for me to come to a view on the appropriate geometry of the proposed access from Braddan Road – that would be a matter for consideration when a planning application was made.
- 255 In my view, the green gaps described in paragraphs 42 to 47 above would be sufficient to maintain Union Mills and Strang as distinct communities, with separate identities to that of Douglas. I recognise that, on a map, the development of Site DBH002 might appear to result in the coalescence of Tromode Woods and Braddan Hills. However, these estates do not constitute separate settlements (as identified in Appendix 3 of the Strategic Plan); and I do not consider it necessary that a green gap should be maintained between them. The sharp change in the ground level along the western edge of the site, together with the belt of registered trees above the repositioned retaining wall there, should help ensure that the proposed housing area would be scarcely visible from Braddan Road and Braddan Hills.
- 256 There is no technical evidence that indicates that the proposed housing site consists of especially versatile farmland – it is not shown on the Agricultural Land Classification Map, being enclosed by a largely urban area. Nor is there any evidence that this site is of particular ecological importance. Although local residents report having seen various types of wildlife here, the site is not the subject of any nature conservation designation. Mitigation measures may be required if protected species are found to be present on this land, if and when a planning application for its development is considered.
- 257 I accept that traffic congestion in Braddan Road already gives rise to inconvenience, and that additional traffic from the proposed development would aggravate this. However, the

problem appears to be largely confined to peak periods. Furthermore, potential peak hour congestion could be eased by the various means outlined in paragraphs 55 and 56 above.

258 I note that the Cabinet Office and the Department of Infrastructure would prefer the provision of two vehicular accesses to this site, with the main access being from Ballafletcher Road, across Site BH030. I accept that it would be advantageous to have two vehicular access points; but I am conscious of the fact that Site BH030 is owned by the Burial Authority, and may not be available for development of any sort within the plan period. I am not convinced that reliance on access from Braddan Road would give rise to such serious highway problems as to justify the deletion of the proposed allocation of Site DBH002.

259 I am aware that air quality at the Quarterbridge junction falls below EU standards. However that junction is some distance to the south of Site DBH002, on the far side of the Port-e-Chree Meadows. There is no evidence that air in the vicinity of Site DBH002 would be similarly polluted. Inevitably, people living close to Site DBH002 may suffer some disturbance due to noise and vibration during the construction period, but that would have a limited duration. I can see no reason why there should be a permanent problem of this sort.

260 I have seen no technical evidence to suggest that drainage and flood risk would be a serious problem. The site is elevated above the flood plains of the Rivers Glass and Dhoo. I would expect the development of this site to include sustainable drainage provision, whereby the rate of run-off would be attenuated and controlled. Similarly, I am aware of no technical evidence to suggest that there would be difficulty in providing an adequate water supply.

261 The capacity of Braddan Primary School may give rise to problems. The DESC has asked that land for a new two form entry primary school should be reserved as part of this allocation. In my view, that is a matter which could be covered in a development brief and in a master plan for the site. I consider that it would best be matter for negotiation between the prospective developer, the planning authority, and DESC.

262 I understand that there may be some archaeological remains below part of this site. In my view, it would be necessary for an appropriate investigation to be made before any planning approval was granted. I note that the illustrative layout submitted by Hartford Homes at the inquiry would leave the higher part of the site free of buildings; and that this is the area most likely to be of archaeological interest.

263 The Braddan Cemetery Office, a registered building, is within the cemetery, close to its frontage to Braddan Road. The extent to which it would be affected by the development of Site DBH002 would plainly depend upon details of the layout and design of the proposed buildings and other structures. That would be a matter for consideration when and if a planning application is considered. However, I do not consider that it should present an insurmountable obstacle to the allocation of that site for development in the Area Plan.

264 Site DBH002 is reasonably close to the employment, shopping and other facilities in central Douglas; and to the concentrations of employment in the Cooil Road area and at Nobles

Hospital. It is close to public transport routes and to the long-distance cycle path that links Douglas and Peel. It is within easy reach of schools and recreational opportunities. I consider that it has good sustainability credentials.

- 265 It has a developable area of about 21ha. At a density of 20dpha that would provide enough space for some 420 dwellings. However, I note that the indicative layout prepared by Hartford Homes would provide a generous amount of open space and landscaping, including the retention or replacement of the registered tree belts. The prospective developers envisaged a potential yield of about 340 dwellings. If space is to be provided for a new primary school, that might be reduced to around 300 dwellings.
- 266 I consider that a development brief for these sites should recognise the potential for Site DBH002 to be developed in isolation. The Braddan Burial Authority have indicated that they are not committed to the release of Site BH030 for development, and have queried whether the allocation of this land could result in its compulsory acquisition. However, the allocation of land in a development plan does not necessarily imply its compulsory purchase. It would be for the landowner to decide whether to make that land available for development.
- 267 **I recommend that Sites BH030 and DBH002 be retained as allocated for predominantly residential development in the Area Plan.**
- 268 A development brief for these two sites could read as follows:
- i Together, these two sites form an area contained by Ballafletcher Road; Braddan Cemetery and Braddan Road; a registered tree belt north of Douglas Rugby Club; and the Tromode Woods housing estate. The sites are close to existing services and public transport links. Although this land is mostly well contained, development would have some visual impact, and should be sensitively designed to minimise this. Development should also minimise any impact on registered trees, and mitigate any tree loss by replacement tree planting.
 - ii Although it is acknowledged that the sites are in separate ownership, they should be the subject of a comprehensive Master Plan, which will include a phasing strategy. The two sites may be developed at different times, but the development of one should not prejudice the subsequent development of the other. The Master Plan should provide for the possibility of an eventual vehicular access between Ballafletcher Road and Braddan Road, through the proposed development; and should provide for pedestrian and cycle routes, so as to promote active travel.
 - iii There are various access points that could be used. However, until a detailed assessment has been undertaken these options cannot be fully appraised and compared. The detailed assessment should also consider whether bus access can be delivered through the site. It should be submitted as part of any planning application for development of this land.

- iv The sites shall be used for residential development (of about 300 dwellings) with associated infrastructure, including provision for a two form entry primary school, community facilities, and open space (including landscaped areas, children’s play space and amenity space). Consideration should also be given to the provision of specialist accommodation for elderly people. The Master Plan should show how the present provision of land for burials could be maintained within the scheme design.
- v Ground conditions must be taken into account, and the Master Plan should show the extent of any marshland within the site, and how this is to be treated.
- vi Any proposals for the site should include a full assessment of the impacts on registered buildings and areas of potential archaeological interest.
- vii Any planning application must include sectional drawings showing how account has been taken of the sloping topography of this land.
- viii An Environmental Impact Assessment will be required to be submitted in support of any planning application.

Site BM006 – Land to the North of Vicarage Road, Braddan

- 269 Site BM006 consists of about 11ha of open land, on the north-side of Vicarage Road. It is allocated for residential development in the draft Area Plan, and the Cabinet Office estimates that about 100 dwellings could be built here. To the east it adjoins a small industrial area. To the north and west it is bounded by mainly open land. The built-up area of Douglas extends to the south, on the opposite side of Vicarage Road. The site is within the area covered by the Active Travel Plan, and within easy reach of a range of employment sites and other facilities. It is also outside the TT Circuit, in an area that appears to be relatively free of traffic congestion.
- 270 The owner of this site, Mr A Campbell of Kirby Farms Ltd, has sought its allocation for mixed use development, including an industrial component. However, in my view, the draft Area Plan makes ample provision for the allocation of industrial land in the Cooil Road Area. Site BM006 appears to be reasonably well located for residential development.
- 271 Miss P Newton argued that part of this site could be reserved for use as a ‘park and ride’ facility, where drivers entering Douglas could leave their cars and continue their journey by bus, thereby reducing the problem of traffic congestion at the Quarterbridge and elsewhere; and reducing the demand for parking space in the town centre.
- 272 However, I am aware of no firm proposal of this sort from any agency with the resources to fund such a scheme. I consider that this site has much to commend it as the location of a future urban extension. I consider that to reserve part of it for use as a surface car park, which may never come to fruition, would be wasteful of an important opportunity.

Accordingly, **I recommend that no modification be made to Site BM006 as shown in the Area Plan.**

273 A development brief for this site could read as follows:

- (i) Any planning application for the development of part of this site must be accompanied by a masterplan for the whole site. The site shall be used for predominantly residential development (of about 100 dwellings) and any requisite infrastructure, including recreational open space and children's play space. Consideration should also be given to the provision of community, retail and health care facilities; and to the provision of specialist residential accommodation for elderly people.
- (ii) The main access shall be from Vicarage Road.
- (iii) The registered trees along the site's western boundary must be retained and protected during the course of development.
- (iv) There is an industrial estate to the east of the site. The applicant must show how this has been taken into account in the design of the scheme, in terms of layout, proximity of proposed dwellings to the boundary, and landscaping.
- (v) Proposals must demonstrate that the sloping topography of the site has been taken into account, and any detailed application must include section drawings across the site.
- (vi) An Environmental Impact assessment must be undertaken and the results submitted with any planning application.

Site BH031 – Camlork, Braddan

274 This site, which is part of the wider holding of Camlork Farm, has an area of about 20ha. As shown in the draft Area Plan proposals map it consists of four fields, currently to grass, lying immediately to the north of the built-up areas of Union Mills and Strang. The land slopes up from south to north. On its eastern side it is bounded by a residential area in Mount Rule Road. To the north, there is open countryside. To the west, the site is bounded by a small watercourse, the Trollaby River, beyond which there are low-density residential properties in Trollaby Lane. The Cabinet Office now proposes that the site should be enlarged by the addition of a parcel of land fronting the north side of Peel Road (A1) to the west of Trollaby Lane. This would provide for access from Peel Road to the proposed development site.

275 The site is partly owned by Dandara Group Holdings Ltd and partly by Baccarat Ltd. It would be available for development in the short-term. The Cabinet Office estimates that it would have capacity for about 140 dwellings.

- 276 The site was previously allocated for residential development in the 1982 Development Plan, but was subsequently shown as agricultural land in the Braddan Local Plan of 1991. It was recommended for zoning as a strategic reserve site for residential use by the Inspector who held the inquiry into the abortive Braddan Parish Plan in 2003.
- 277 This site provides one of the few opportunities to provide additional housing to meet local housing need in Union Mills. Its development would also provide an opportunity for the creation of a new road link between Peel Road and Mount Rule Road. This link could also be extended across Site BH032, to the east of Mount Rule Road, thereby providing a through route from Peel Road to Ballaoates Road and Noble's Hospital. That would enable traffic to avoid using Strang Road, a narrow residential street, where the movement of traffic is frequently impeded by parked vehicles.

Objections

- 278 Objections to the allocation of this site were made by the Braddan Parish Commissioners, Save Camlork, Ellis Brown, Miss P Newton, Mr and Mrs B Woods, Mr MacNeill, Mr S Crerand and numerous other local residents. The main points of objection were:
- the coalescence between Union Mills and Strang resulting from the proposed development;
 - the loss of good quality farmland;
 - the visual impact of the proposed development;
 - the impact of the proposed access road;
 - potential flood risk and water pollution; and
 - lack of need for the amount of additional housing proposed.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 279 I have previously concluded, in paragraphs 42 to 47 above, that the Area Plan should make provision for a green gap between Union Mills and Strang, and that this should include the whole of Field 521522 at Camlork. I do not consider that a narrower corridor of open space would be sufficient to ensure the maintenance of the separate identities of Strang and Union Mills. For this reason, I consider that the allocation of Field 521522 for housing would be unacceptable.
- 280 The Agricultural Land Use Capability Map of the Isle of Man indicates that part of the Camlork site comes within Category A2, with soils in Class 3/2. A more detailed survey drawing indicates that this description applies to the eastern part of the site, including parts of Fields 521519, 521522 and 524239. Although there is no evidence of the number of soil samples that were taken to establish the classification of this land, I have seen nothing to persuade me that that classification is wrong. The southern parts of the fields in question are incorrectly shown in the survey drawing to be within the built-up areas of Union Mills and Strang. However, they are plainly in agricultural use at present, and I have no reason to believe that they are of an inferior agricultural quality to the adjoining farmland. In 'Agricultural Soils of

the Isle of Man', by J Harris et al, land in agricultural category A2 is described as having 'potentially fertile soils, capable of high crop yields and of supporting high stocking rates'.

- 281 Environment Policy 14 of the Strategic Plan applies to Class 2 soils falling within areas annotated as Class 3/2 on the Agricultural Land Classification Map. It says that development which would result in the permanent loss of such versatile agricultural land will not be permitted, unless there is an overriding need for the development, and land of a lower quality is not available. In my view, that must tell against the development of the eastern part of the Camlork site. In view of the limited housing requirement discussed in paragraph 208 *et seq* above, and the availability of land of a lower agricultural potential elsewhere, I do not consider there to be an overriding need for the allocation of this land for development.
- 282 Policy 13.3 of the Braddan Local Plan 1991 indicates that this rural area is of High Landscape Value. In his report on a 2007 planning appeal, concerning an application for approval in principle for residential development on the Camlork site, the Inspector wrote that 'the key view of this site is from Lhergy Crippety'. He considered this to be 'one of the more attractive views available from the Manx public road system'. He concluded that 'the proposed development would appear as intrusive and unsightly urban sprawl, alien to the character of the rural area and the antithesis of the urban containment envisaged in the Island Spatial Strategy'.
- 283 However, the Inspector who held the inquiry into the abortive Braddan Parish Plan in 2003 considered that development at Camlork 'could be assimilated without any serious visual impact on the area'. In my view, a smaller residential development on the westernmost of the four fields at Camlork, would be reasonably well contained between the built-up area of Union Mills to the south and the existing ribbon of development along Trollaby Lane to the west, and would have a limited visual impact.
- 284 I have no reason to doubt that access to the proposed Camlork site, which would be satisfactory in highway terms, could be achieved from the A1. The proposed vehicular access from Peel Road to the Camlork site would pass through the 15m wide gap between the curtilages of 'Marygate' in Trollaby Lane and 'Brookvale Cottage' in Main Road. In my view, that would be likely to detract from the amenity of the occupants of each of the adjacent properties to some degree, but not to such an extent as should rule out a limited residential development at the western end of the Camlork site.
- 285 I understand that there has been repeated flooding of 'Brookvale Cottage' adjacent to the Camlork site. Mr MacNeil, the occupier of that property, was formerly the Government's Environmental Protection Officer for controlled waters. He fears that the risk of flooding would increase as a result of the introduction of hard surfaces on the Camlork site. He also considers that the Trollaby Stream would have limited capacity to accommodate treated sewage effluent from the Camlork development, without harm to its water quality.
- 286 I recognise his concerns. However, if the Camlork site were allocated for development, I would not expect planning approval for this to be granted unless the responsible body was

satisfied that a drainage system was available to ensure that run-off from the site would not increase the risk of flooding to neighbouring properties; and that foul sewage would be managed in such a way as not to harm the environment. I understand that it would be possible to connect the proposed development to a public sewer in Union Mills.

- 287 I consider there to be sufficient land to meet the immediate need for residential development in the East on sites within existing settlement boundaries, or within sustainable urban extensions of Douglas. In the circumstances, I do not accept that there is an immediate need to allocate undeveloped land in the countryside, outside the existing settlement boundaries of the villages of Union Mills or Strang. There is no evidence to suggest that development on the scale proposed at Camlork would be necessary to meet any local need.
- 288 In my view, the proposed development on the scale envisaged in the draft Area Plan would change the character of these two villages. I consider that the residential allocation of the eastern part of the Camlork Site should be deleted from the Area Plan, in order to maintain a gap between the villages of Union Mills and Strang, protect the more versatile agricultural land, and conserve the rural landscape of this area. The provision of a new road link between Peel Road and Mount Rule Road is not a proposal of the draft Area Plan. However, I consider that the westernmost of the four fields at Camlork should be shown as a Strategic Reserve Site with a capacity for about 50 dwellings. This would allow for a limited urban extension of Union Mills, if this should become necessary in future.
- 289 **I recommend that the allocation of the eastern part of Site BH031 be deleted from the Area Plan; but that Field No 521518, at the western end of this site, be shown as a Strategic Reserve Site, with capacity for about 50 dwellings.**

Site DH001 – Westmoreland Road, Douglas

- 290 This previously developed site, in the urban area of Douglas, has an area of about 2.5ha, and is owned by Douglas Borough Council. It currently contains various buildings, some of which appear to be unused; and it includes the Finch Hill Sports Activity Park, which boasts a bowling green, tennis courts, a basketball court, a club house, a Victorian pavilion with facilities for snooker and pool, and some public gardens. This recreational facility is actively used, and is clearly an asset to the local community. The site is proposed for a mixed use development in the draft Area Plan, and the Cabinet Office envisages that it could have capacity for 39 dwellings.

Objections

- 291 Objections to this proposal were made by Mr S Moore and many others. They were concerned that the Finch Hill Sports Activity Park should be retained in recreational use, and omitted from the proposed development site.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 292 Paragraph 9.4.4 of the draft Area Plan indicates that, in mixed use areas outside Douglas Town Centre, there will be a presumption to retain any existing open space, sports and recreational facilities, which serve as assets for the community. This applies specifically to Site DH001 (Westmoreland Road). The Cabinet Office has indicated that it now intends to elevate paragraph 9.4.4 to the status of a Proposal.
- 293 I think that that would be a good idea. Since it was always intended to retain this leisure facility, this should have no effect on this site's capacity for new housing. However, I think that it would be better to show the Finch Hill Sports Activity Park coloured green (as open space) on the Area Plan Proposals Map, and omit that land from the mixed use allocation. **I recommend accordingly.**

Sites DH002 and DM001 – Johnny Watterson's Lane; and Site DH057 – East of Ballanard Road

- 294 These three sites, are adjacent to one another, but are in multiple ownerships. They consist of farmland, which also extends to the north, and includes some stables. Site DM001 is bounded to the south by Johnny Watterson's Lane and to the east by Scollag Road. It is allocated for residential development in the draft Area Plan, and has a developable area of about 9ha. The Cabinet Office estimates it to have a capacity for about 125 new dwellings.
- 295 Site DH002 lies immediately to the south-west. It also has a frontage to Johnny Watterson's Lane. It is allocated for residential development in the draft Area and has a developable area of about 6ha. The Cabinet Office estimates it to have a capacity for about 157 new dwellings.
- 296 Site DH057 extends eastwards from Site DM001 to Ballanard Road. It has a developable area of about 27ha. In the draft Area Plan the southern part of this site is allocated for residential development, but the northern part is shown as a strategic reserve.

Objections

- 297 Objections to the proposals for these sites were made by the Onchan Commissioners, Ms D Caine MHK, M Perkins MHK, G Manley, M Kerruish and numerous other local residents. The main points of objection were:
- the reduction of the green gap between Douglas and Onchan;
 - the adverse effect on the landscape and loss of countryside;
 - access and traffic congestion problems;
 - the absence of need for the amount of additional housing proposed.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 298 These sites would provide for a substantial northward extension of the urban area of Douglas. However, their development would not encroach into any gap between settlements, or cause

further coalescence between Douglas and Onchan. These two settlements are already conjoined, to the south of Signpost Corner, by the development on either side of Hillberry Road. However, the built-up area of Onchan does not extend as far north as Signpost Corner, and there is no proposal in the draft Area Plan that it should do so.

- 299 There are fine views across the allocated land from Johnny Watterson's Lane; and residential development here would clearly entail a regrettable loss of open countryside. I note that the Onchan Local Plan 2000 expressly rejected the possibility of developing land adjacent to Scollag Road on landscape grounds; and that the draft Area Plan's proposed landscape strategy for this area is to conserve and enhance its present character, quality and distinctiveness. I attach weight to these considerations. However, as circumstances change, it may become necessary for the urban area of Douglas to extend across this land.
- 300 I recognise that there is already peak hour congestion in Johnny Watterson's Lane and Hillberry Road. The development of the allocated land would be likely to exacerbate this. However, potential mitigation measures, such as the installation of an improved system of traffic signals, could help minimise the additional delay.
- 301 The three sites would provide a substantial area of land which could eventually be developed as a sustainable urban extension to Douglas, if this became necessary. Such a development would have to be provided with adequate infrastructure, including community facilities, such as a primary school, recreational facilities, and possibly a neighbourhood centre. I consider it important that three sites should be developed together, in accordance with a single masterplan. However, I understand that as they are currently in multiple ownerships, this may take some time to negotiate.
- 302 The scale of their potential development would probably be excessive in relation to the immediate need for additional housing. Accordingly, I consider that they should be shown in the Area Plan as Strategic Reserve Sites. Their combined gross area is about 58ha. Applying discounts to allow for roads and structural landscaping, and for the provision of community facilities, including recreational open space, a neighbourhood centre and a primary school site, that should leave a potential developable area of more than 30ha. At a density of 20dpha, there would be space for approximately 600 dwellings.
- 303 **I recommend that the whole of Sites DH002, DH057 and DM002 should be shown as a Strategic Reserve Site in the Area Plan.**
- 304 A development brief for the three sites might read as follows:
- (i) The three sites would provide for a sustainable urban extension to Douglas. Their development potential is significant and provides an opportunity to create a new community.
 - (ii) They shall be developed in accordance with a Master Plan for the whole of the urban extension area. This would include details of proposed phasing; areas of public open

space; arrangements for safe access; sustainable transport options which recognise the need to encourage active travel; substantial structural landscaping buffers; and consideration of appropriate community facilities, including a primary school, health care provision, retail facilities, and recreational open space.

- (iii) The combined development should include provision for about 600 dwellings, and consideration should be given to the inclusion of specialist housing for elderly people.
- (iv) The main access points to the development shall be from Johnny Watterson's Lane.
- (v) The public footpath that crosses part of the site must be integrated into the proposed development.
- (vi) Development proposals must take account of the sloping nature of the land and any detailed planning applications must include section drawings across the site.
- (vii) An Environmental Impact Assessment shall be submitted with any application for development of this site.

Site DH009 - Ballanard Road

305 Site DH009 is an undeveloped 'greenfield' parcel on the west side of Ballanard Road, Douglas. It has a gross area of about 7.5ha, and is promoted for development by Hartford Homes, who envisage a scheme of some 60 or 70 dwellings, with substantial provision of public open space. To the south, the site is bounded by a low-density residential area in The Castleward Green, which marks the existing northern limit of Douglas's built-up area. To the west and north, Site DH009 is bounded by open countryside.

Objections

- 306 Objections to this allocation were made by Mr P Greenhill and other residents of The Castleward Green and Ballanard Road, a number of whom he represented. Crosby Nominees Ltd also objected to the allocation of this site. The main points of objection were:
- the lack of easy access to local services, and inadequate public transport;
 - visual impact and the effect on the landscape;
 - the ecological impact of the proposed development;
 - the risk of flooding;
 - the implications for traffic congestion in Ballanard Road;
 - the absence of need for the additional housing;
 - the loss of 'greenfield' land, when more appropriate 'brownfield' sites were available;

Inspector's Conclusions

- 307 Although the site is within the Active Travel Investment Plan Area, it is not particularly close to existing services. It is about a kilometre from the nearest bus route, and further from the nearest school, retail outlet and other community facilities. The terrain is hilly and pedestrians and cyclists might well be deterred by the steep gradients. It seems to me that prospective residents would probably be highly reliant on car transport, contrary to Strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan. However, I note that a residential development here could be linked to a proposed footpath route which is planned to run into Tromode, alongside the River Glass.
- 308 Access to the proposed development would be via Ballanard Road. Typically, numerous vehicles park at the kerbside in this road, impeding the free flow of traffic. I note that there is peak hour congestion at the junction between Ballanard Road and Johnny Watterson's Lane, which would be likely to worsen as a result of the proposed development.
- 309 The development on Site DH009 would plainly have a visual impact, making this area at the edge of the countryside more urban in character. There is a designated wildlife site along the River Glass immediately to the west. However, I have seen no technical evidence to suggest that the development of this site would have a significant adverse ecological effect.
- 310 I note that the gardens of some residential properties in this area have recently been flooded, but the site is outside the fluvial flood zone associated with the River Glass. I would expect any further housing development here to be provided with adequate drainage.
- 311 However, on balance, I do not consider that the proposed housing development would contribute much to the objectives of sustainability. Given the current projection of housing need up to 2026, the extension of the urban area of Douglas into the countryside at this point seems to me to be unnecessary. Accordingly, **I recommend that Site DH009 be deleted from the Area Plan as a proposed allocation for residential development.**

Site DH011 – Ballanard Woods

- 312 Site DH011 has a gross area of about 9ha, and is owned by Dandara Group Holdings Ltd. It is located on the west side of Ballanard Road, immediately to the south of The Castleward Green, a low-density residential estate. To the west, the site is bounded by a reservoir fed by the River Glass; and by an area of industrial development.
- 313 The site is within the existing settlement boundary of Douglas as shown in the draft Area Plan. In the Douglas Local Plan, much of it is allocated for Low Density Housing in Parkland (LDHP) with the remainder shown as a proposed residential area. There is an extant planning approval for the erection of 21 dwellings on this land, dating from 2007. However, only four of these have been built, evidently due to a lack of demand for low-density housing in this

location. The remainder of the site is undeveloped. The Cabinet Office considers that this site would have the capacity to provide about 40 additional dwellings

Objections

- 314 Miss P Newton objected that this site should continue to be reserved for LDHP, rather than allocated for general residential development. She was also concerned about the flood risk, as were Crosby Nominees Ltd. A number of local residents referred to traffic congestion in this area. Mr H Kennaugh sought the provision of a vehicular route through the site from Castleward Green to Tromode Road.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 315 This site consists largely of undeveloped and unused land within the urban area of Douglas. Its early development would be consistent with Strategic Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan. Given the apparent lack of demand for low-density housing in this location, I consider that its continued allocation for LDHP would be unnecessarily wasteful. Although it is close to the River Glass, it is outside the 100 year fluvial flood zone. I have seen no technical evidence to show that a satisfactory drainage system could not be installed here, to serve future residential development. The suggested route linking the site to Tromode Road via the residential area to the south could help ease congestion at the junction of Ballanard Road and Johnny Watterson's Lane. However, this would have implications for residents of the housing to the south, who have not had an opportunity to comment. For this reason, I am reluctant to recommend that such a proposal should be included in a development brief.

- 316 **I recommend that no action be taken in response to these objections.**

Site DH039 – Park Road School and the 'Bowling Green' Public House

- 317 This vacant site of about 0.8ha is allocated for residential development in the draft Area Plan. I deal with the suggestion that it should be reserved for educational use in paragraph 185 above. Miss P Newton referred to the Bowling Green Public House, which had recently been acquired by the Government. In her view, this was a building of some architectural interest, which was not registered, but should be retained.
- 318 However, the procedures for protecting buildings of architectural or historic interest are set out in Section 14 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1991. It is not within the remit of the Area Plan to pre-empt those procedures by identifying unregistered buildings that are worthy of preservation. In my view, that would be tantamount to operating two separate systems for preserving buildings, and could give rise to considerable confusion. **I recommend that no modification be made to Site DH039 as shown in the draft Area Plan.**

Site DH046 – Victoria Road Prison

- 319 This site of about 1.4ha is allocated for residential development in the draft Area Plan. Miss P Newton referred to the fact that it included 'Eastcliffe', a registered building which had formerly been used for social work and the rehabilitation of offenders, but was now disused. She considered that this building should be protected in any redevelopment scheme.
- 320 I agree that if 'Eastcliffe' is a registered building it should be protected. No works which would affect its character could be carried out without specific authorisation in accordance with Section 15 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999. However, that would not necessarily preclude its conversion to residential use as part of the redevelopment of Site DH046. The Cabinet Office has produced a development brief for this site, in respect of which I have no comments. **I recommend that no modification be made to Site DH046 as shown in the draft Area Plan.**

Site OH011 - Ballachrink

- 321 Site OH011 is an area of grazing land, with a gross area of about 10ha, owned by Dandara Group Holdings Ltd. It lies to the north of existing residential development in Birch Hill Crescent and Maple Avenue, Onchan. The draft Area Plan proposes that this land should be allocated for residential development, and the Cabinet Office estimate that it could have capacity for about 140 dwellings. Dandara indicated that access to the proposed development would be from Birch Hill Crescent.
- 322 The allocation of part of this site for residential development was recommended by the Inspector who held the inquiry into the Onchan Local Plan in 2000. However, that recommendation was not accepted, and the site was shown as open space in that plan, so as to prevent the spread of development into the countryside.
- 323 In 2004, a proposal to build 135 dwellings on part of the site was the subject of a planning appeal. The Inspector on that occasion concluded that the proposal with which he was concerned would not result in harm to landscape, highway or amenity interests. Nevertheless the appeal was dismissed for reasons relating to the open space zoning in the Local Plan, and the proposal's visual impact.

Objections

- 324 Objections to the proposed allocation of Site OH011 were lodged by the Onchan District Commissioners, Mr Rob Callister MHK, Julie Edge MHK, Miss P Newton and a number of others. The main points of objection were:
- urban sprawl and the loss of open countryside;
 - visual impact;
 - adverse effect on wildlife;
 - pressure on local schools;

- local traffic congestion and the inadequacy of the highway network;
- drainage and flood risk issues.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 325 The proposed site is effectively a backland area behind the existing housing in Birch Hill Crescent and Maple Drive. Nevertheless, residential development here would be visible from the Mountain Road to the south of Creg-Ny-Baa, and have an adverse effect on this rural view. The built-up area of Onchan would be seen to spread into the countryside. However, I have seen no technical evidence of nature conservation issues that would preclude the future development of this site.
- 326 The DESC have confirmed that there are capacity problems in primary schools serving this part of Onchan. Plans to expand Onchan Primary School and replace Ashley Hill Primary School seem to be at an early stage, and firm proposals backed by the requisite funding are not yet in place. I consider that that should tell against the early development of the allocated land.
- 327 Furthermore, the Ballachrink site is in a peripheral location, lying at the edge of (and partly outside) the zone covered by the Active Travel Investment Plan. Although Birch Hill Crescent is on a bus route, it seems to me that many of the occupants of any additional housing built here would be heavily reliant on the private car.
- 328 There is evidence of peak hour traffic congestion in this area, particularly along Hilberry Road. The development of the allocated land would be likely to exacerbate this. That would add weight to the case against immediate development here, before the effectiveness of potential mitigation measures, such as the installation of an improved system of traffic signals and the adoption of active travel strategy, have been fully assessed.
- 329 Manx Utilities does not consider that soakaways should be used for surface water drainage on this site. However, they suggest that a sustainable drainage system could be used to attenuate the rate at which run-off would be discharged to a suitable watercourse. They would require a prospective developer to carry out localised sewerage improvements where necessary.
- 330 I do not consider that this extension to the urban area of Onchan would be immediately necessary. However, in my view, Site OH011 could contribute to the provision of additional housing, if required in future, subject to there being an adequate supply of primary school places; subject to the introduction of measures to mitigate peak hour traffic congestion; and subject to the resolution of local drainage problems. The Cabinet Office has produced a development brief for this site, in respect of which I have no comments.
- 331 **I recommend that Site OH011 be shown as a Strategic Reserve Site in the Area Plan.**

Site OH017 – Land west of Summer Hill, Onchan

332 This is a largely undeveloped area of about 3ha, which also includes the buildings of Hague Farm. It is bounded by the backs of residential properties fronting Governor’s Road to the north, and fronting Summer Hill Road to the south-east. On its eastern side it abuts Hague Walk, and to the west it adjoins an area of open land around Blackberry Lane. A belt of registered trees stands within the site’s western boundary. In the draft Area Plan, Site OH017 is washed over as predominantly residential land.

Objections

333 Objections to this designation were made by Mr D Quirk, Mr C Berry, Miss P Newton, and J and M Buckland. The main points raised were:

- the area had never been developed and was not residential;
- the landowner did not want it to be developed
- development would have an adverse impact on the landscape in general and Hague Farm in particular;
- access was unsatisfactory, via an unadopted road;
- the site should be zoned as open space (or for low density housing in parkland).

Inspector’s Conclusions

334 The Onchan Local Plan 2000 recorded that most of this site (then known as Area 7) had been identified for residential use in the 1989 Onchan Local Plan; and it perpetuated that zoning. It indicated that the site was appropriately placed in relation to the facilities available in Onchan, and could be adequately served in terms of infrastructure. However, it recognized that the land might not be available for development. It proposed the south western part of the site for development as ‘low density housing in parkland’ (LDHP).

335 The draft Area Plan maintains that approach, but has subsumed the LDHP element into the general ‘predominantly residential’ allocation. In my view, this site could provide an important opportunity for development within the existing built-up area of Onchan, which might have a potential capacity for a number of dwellings. The registered trees on the site could be protected and provide an attractive feature in any future development scheme. Although it is not without interest, Hague Farm is not a registered building. Nevertheless, it could be retained and incorporated in a residential development of this area. My views on LDHP are set out elsewhere in this report. I consider that it would be an inefficient use of urban land to require its development at a density of less than three dwellings per hectare; and I support the proposal that part of this site previously allocated as LDHP should be subsumed into the general area allocated for predominantly residential use. Residential development on Site OH017 would not encroach into the green gap between Onchan and Douglas around Blackberry Lane.

336 I recognise that the present owner of Site OH017 may not wish to see this land developed, and that the provision of housing here may not be deliverable within the plan period. For this

reason, I accept that it would not be appropriate for this site to be identified as a specific housing site. Nevertheless, landowners (and their intentions) may change with the passage of time. I consider it appropriate that the Area Plan should recognise the potential of this land for development. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to these objections.**

Site OH018 – Governor’s Road, Onchan

- 337 This small, sloping, undeveloped site, on the south side of Governor’s Road, contains a number of registered trees. The site is bounded on all sides by residential development; and in the draft Area Plan, the site is shown to be part of a ‘predominantly residential’ area. It was similarly zoned in the Onchan Local Plan 2000.
- 338 Since 1990, the site has evidently been the subject of eight planning applications, of which three have been approved (but never implemented) and five refused. The most recent of these, in 2015, was refused on appeal, because of the effect of the proposed development on the registered trees; and because of the presumption against a new access being formed from Governor’s Road.
- 339 The objector, Mr C Berry, considered the development of this site to be undeliverable. He considered that it should be removed from the ‘predominantly residential’ notation in the Area Plan.
- 340 The fact that a site is in a ‘predominantly residential’ area does not necessarily imply that planning approval would automatically be granted for its development for residential purposes. Section 10(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act requires that, when determining any application for planning approval, the decision-making body must have regard to the provisions of the development plan, but also to other material considerations. Those other material considerations would include the effect of the development on registered trees, and the suitability of the proposed access arrangements. It appears that on three past occasions, schemes for the development of this site were found to be acceptable. In the circumstances, I cannot pre-judge the outcome of any future planning application.
- 341 Even if the site were to be excluded from the ‘predominantly residential’ notation, that would not preclude future planning applications from being made. I can see no reason for the draft Area Plan to be modified. In my view, it accurately reflects the fact that this site is part of a ‘predominantly residential’ area.
- 342 **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Strategic Reserve Sites

BH032 – Land North of Coronation Terrace, Strang

- 343 This site has a gross area of about 11ha, and is shown in the draft Area Plan as a Strategic Reserve site for residential development and community facilities. It consists of open farmland, and is owned by Dandara Ltd. On its southern side, the site is bounded by Ballaoates Road, beyond which lie the grounds of Noble’s Hospital. To the south-west, it abuts the built-up area of Strang. The Camlork site (BH031) lies to the west, on the far side of Mount Rule Road. There is open countryside to the north and east of site BH032.
- 344 The Cabinet Office considers that Site BH032 has a potential capacity for 115 dwellings, and could also provide for the eventual relocation of Braddan Primary School. The proposed link road across the Camlork site could be extended across Site BH032 to create a new through route between Peel Road and Noble’s Hospital.

Objections

- 345 Dandara Ltd considered that Site BH032 should be allocated for immediate residential development, rather than kept back as a Strategic Reserve site. Many of those who objected to the allocation of the Camlork site also objected to the potential development of Site BH032.

Inspector’s Conclusions

- 346 I do not consider there to be a case for an urban extension of Strang. Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that the existing character of this village should be maintained, and that development here should be of an appropriate scale to meet local needs. However, the allocation of Site BH032, either for immediate development or as a strategic reserve, would almost double the built-up area of this settlement. I have seen no evidence that there is a foreseeable need for development on such a scale.
- 347 The development of Site BH032 would adversely affect the countryside, contrary to Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan. It would appear also to entail the permanent loss of some versatile A2 agricultural land, falling within Class 3/2 as shown on the Agricultural Land Use Capability Map of the Isle of Man. This would be counter to Environment Policy 14 of the Strategic Plan. In my view, this should tell against the retention of this land as a Strategic Reserve Site.
- 348 **I recommend that the proposal to show Site BH032 as a Strategic Reserve Site for potential residential development be deleted from the Area Plan.**

Site GH011 – Ballacollister Road, Laxey; and Site GH015 - Briar Dale, South Cape, Laxey

- 349 Site GH011 consists of about 2ha of open land on the east side of Ballacollister Road, Laxey, immediately to the north of that village's existing built up area. It is allocated for residential development in the Laxey and Lonan Area Plan 2005, but is outside the existing settlement boundary of Laxey as shown in the draft Area Plan. In 2007, planning approval in principle was granted for six dwellings on this land, but this was never taken, up and has now lapsed.
- 350 Site GH015 is contiguous with Site GH011, to the north-east. It has an area of about 0.22ha, and is shown as woodland in the Laxey and Lonan Local Plan 2005. It is outside the settlement boundary of Laxey, as shown in the draft Area Plan.
- 351 In the draft Area Plan as published in May 2018, these sites were allocated for residential development. However, in the Schedule of Proposed Changes published in July 2019, the Cabinet Office indicated that they would be relegated to the status of Strategic Reserve Sites.
- 352 Mr M Perkins referred to current sewage problems in this area, although I understand that new provision for sewage treatment is planned for Laxey. Miss P Newton felt that the development of this land would detract from the visual amenity of Laxey. It would be visible across a wide area, and would require the removal of trees. M Turner and A Kennaugh referred to the poor access, and considered that Site GH011 should remain in agricultural use.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 353 I consider that, at present, access to these sites is unsatisfactory. Ballacollister Road is a single-track lane, which would require widening to permit two vehicles to pass one another without difficulty. Its junction with the A2 is sub-standard.
- 354 In view of this, I am not convinced that these small sites should be considered as providing an appropriate location for a sustainable extension to Laxey. Furthermore, I have seen no evidence that there is a local housing need that would justify the extension of this settlement into the surrounding countryside. In the circumstances, I am not persuaded that there is a case for either site to be reserved for future development.
- 355 **I recommend that neither Site GH011 nor Site GH015 be allocated for residential use in the Area Plan, either for immediate development, or as strategic reserve land.**

Site GH020 – Land adjacent to Ard Reayrt, Laxey

- 356 Site GH020 comprises about 1.5ha of undeveloped land within the existing settlement boundary of Laxey, as shown in the draft Area Plan. It is within an established housing area, in a hillside location, on the northern side of the village. It was allocated for residential development in both the 1982 Development Plan and the Laxey and Lonan Local Plan 2005. In the draft Area Plan as published in May 2018, it was proposed as a residential allocation for

immediate development. However, in the Schedule of Proposed Changes published in July 2019, the Cabinet Office indicated that it would be relegated to the status of a Strategic Reserve Site.

- 357 Mr M Perkins referred to the surface water drainage problems in Laxey. There had been recent flooding events in the village and these could be expected to increase in frequency and intensity as a result of climate change. Development of this site would exacerbate this problem, by accelerating the rate of run-off from the newly installed hard surfaces. The soils here are shallow and overlie rock. As a result soakaways quickly overflow.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 358 During the course of the inquiry, there was a serious flood event in Laxey, and it is important that the risk of further such events should not be exacerbated. In my view it would be poor planning to provide for the development of this site without being certain that measures could be taken to ensure that there would be no increase in the rate of surface water run-off. On the evidence available to me, I am not certain that this would be possible. In the circumstances, I consider that the allocation of this site should be deleted from the Area Plan.
- 359 **I recommend that Site GH020 be deleted from the Area Plan as either a specific housing allocation or as a reserve site for residential development.**

Site GH038 – Land between Balacollister Road, Rencell Hill and Axenfel Lane, Laxey

- 360 This is a parcel of about 0.8ha of undeveloped land. The draft Area Plan shows it to fall outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Laxey, which runs along its northern and western edges. Access to the site is from a network of narrow, winding country lanes, which terminate at sub-standard junctions with the A2.
- 361 In the draft Area Plan as published in May 2018, this small site was allocated for residential development. However, in the Schedule of Proposed Changes published in July 2019, the Cabinet Office indicated that it would be relegated to the status of a Strategic Reserve Site.
- 362 I have seen no evidence that there is a local housing need that would justify the extension of the settlement of Laxey into the surrounding countryside. In the circumstances, I am not persuaded that there is a case for this site to be reserved for future development.
- 363 **I recommend against Site GH038 being allocated in the Area Plan, either for immediate residential development, or as a reserve site.**

Site GH013 – Land north of Baldrine Road, Baldrine

- 364 This undeveloped site of about 2ha lies outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Baldrine as shown in the draft Area Plan. It is bounded to the south-east by existing housing in Highfield Crescent which comes within the Existing Settlement Boundary. To the north-east it abuts Site GH026, in respect of which planning approval in principle has recently been granted for the erection of seven dwellings. Access to that development would be from Baldrine Road, by a route that would pass through the centre of Site GH013. To the north and west, site GH013 is bounded by open countryside.
- 365 In the draft Area Plan, as published in May 2018, this site was allocated for residential development. However, in the Schedule of Proposed Changes, published in July 2019, the Cabinet Office indicated that it would be relegated to the status of a Strategic Reserve Site.

Objection

- 366 Ellis Brown sought the reinstatement of the allocation of Site GH013 for immediate residential development. The access road between Baldrine Road and Site GH026 would be built in the near future, and this could equally serve new development on Site GH013. The reason why Site GH013 had been demoted to the status of a Strategic Reserve Site was that it fell outside the area covered by the Government's Active Travel Investment Plan, being more than 2.5 miles away from the Sea Terminal in Douglas. However, it was within 2.5 miles of employment areas in Onchan, and would certainly come within an Active Travel Zone centred on one of these. The Active Travel Plan suggested that people could comfortably cycle such a distance to work. In addition, there were good public transport services between Baldrine and Onchan.
- 367 As a result of Cabinet Office's Proposed Changes to the draft Area Plan, there would be no provision of sites for immediate residential development in Baldrine. This would fail to comply with the objective of providing a choice of housing in terms of size, type and location.
- 368 Paragraph A.3.3 of the Strategic Plan suggested that most villages would benefit from additional housing to support local schools, shops and other services. Without further residential development in Baldrine, retail development in this village would not be commercially viable. Accordingly, Site GH013 should be reinstated as a specific residential allocation for immediate development.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 369 Planning approval has already been granted for the provision of additional housing in Baldrine during the plan period. Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that, development in this village should be of an appropriate scale to meet the local need for housing. I have seen no evidence that there is a local housing need in Baldrine, sufficient to justify the allocation of further sites for immediate residential development; or to justify the extension of the built-up area into the surrounding countryside. However, in view of the fact that approval has been

granted for the construction of a new access road across Site GH013, it seems to me to be appropriate that this site should be reserved for future residential development, if and when a local need for this can be demonstrated.

- 370 **I recommend the Site GH013 be shown in the Area Plan as a Strategic Reserve for possible future residential development.**

Site GM001 – Land south-west of Baldrine Road, Baldrine

- 371 Site GM001 consists of undeveloped land, with a gross area of about 5.88ha. It lies outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Baldrine as shown on the draft Area Plan. On its north-eastern side, it is bounded by Baldrine Road and the village's main built-up area. The Manx Electric Railway and the A2 run close to the site's south-eastern boundary. There is a railway station, Baldrine Halt, immediately adjacent to this land. Otherwise the site is bounded by open land.
- 372 In the Laxey and Lonan Area Plan 2005, the northern part of this site is zoned for educational use. The southern part is shown as open land within an Area of High Landscape Value.
- 373 In the draft Area Plan, as published in May 2018, the whole of this site was designated for predominantly residential development. However, in the Schedule of Proposed Changes, published in July 2019, the Cabinet Office indicated that it would be relegated to the status of a Strategic Reserve Site.

Objections

- 374 Ellis Brown originally proposed that this land should be allocated as a mixed use site, to include shops, a public house, community facilities and amenity space located close to Baldrine Halt, with residential development on the north-western part of the site, and an area for a new primary school to the south. The Department of Education Sport and Culture, sought the retention of the educational zoning as shown in the existing Local Plan for the possible future development of a new primary school.
- 375 Ellis Brown now sought the reinstatement of the allocation of Site GM001 for immediate development for mixed use. The reason this land had been demoted to the status of a Strategic Reserve Site was that it fell outside the area covered by the Government's Active Travel Investment Plan, being more than 2.5 miles away from the Sea Terminal in Douglas. However, it was within 2.5 miles of employment areas in Onchan, and would certainly come within an Active Travel Zone centred on one of these. The Active Travel Plan suggested that people could comfortably cycle such a distance to work. In addition, there were good public transport services between Baldrine and Onchan.
- 376 The retail and community facilities now proposed would make Baldrine more sustainable, by reducing the need for local people to travel elsewhere for their everyday needs. Paragraph

A.3.3 of the Strategic Plan suggested that most villages would benefit from additional housing to support local schools, shops and other services. Without further residential development in Baldrine, retail development in this village would not be commercially viable. Accordingly, Site GM001 should be reinstated as a specific allocation for immediate residential development. A failure to provide any sites for immediate residential development in Baldrine would be contrary to the objective of providing a choice of housing in terms of size, type and location.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 377 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development is to be located primarily within existing town or villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements; development will be permitted in the countryside only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. I consider that the development of Site GM001 would detract from the rural character of this area, contrary to Strategic Plan policy.
- 378 Paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan identifies Baldrine as one of a number of smaller settlements with few facilities, which rely on other centres for various services. Provision has already been made for an extension to its built-up area as a result of planning approval having been granted for new housing on Site GH026 (adjacent to Highfield Close); and land contiguous with that site is now proposed as a strategic reserve with potential for future residential development. In my view, the further extension of this small village within the Plan period would be disproportionate. Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in Baldrine should maintain that settlement's existing character. It should be of an appropriate scale to meet local needs for housing, and limited employment opportunities. The Strategic Plan does not envisage that Baldrine should perform the role of a 'service village'.
- 379 I have seen no evidence that there is a local housing need in Baldrine, sufficient to justify the allocation of further sites for immediate residential development; or to justify the extension of the present built-up area into the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, the scale of residential development that would be required to make the provision of shops, a public house and other community facilities viable is not clear to me.
- 380 Nevertheless, in view of the capacity problem in primary schools in parts of the East, I consider that it would be prudent to retain the allocation of part of Site GM001 for educational purposes, as shown in the Laxey and Lonan Area Plan 2005. However, I do not consider that any part of this site should be allocated for housing, or shown as a strategic reserve for future residential development.
- 381 **I recommend that part of Site GM001 be shown for future primary school provision in the Area Plan, but that no part of this site be allocated for housing or shown as a Strategic Reserve Site for future residential development.**

Site MH001 – Ballaglonney Close, Crosby

382 This site has an area of about 4.5ha. It lies in open countryside, to the north of the built-up area of Crosby, and falls outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of that village, as shown in the draft Area Plan. Bluebell Lane runs along this land's northern boundary, and the site has a potential access from Ballavitchell Road to the west. It is shown as a Strategic Reserve in the draft Area Plan.

Objections

383 The Marown Parish Commissioners considered that there would be problems in providing satisfactory access, and adequate arrangements for drainage and sewage.

Inspector's Conclusions

384 I do not consider there to be a strong case for provision to be made for the extension of the built-up area of Crosby in the foreseeable future. This village is listed in Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan as being on the lowest level of the hierarchy of settlements in the East. That policy states that development here '... should maintain the existing settlement character and should be of an appropriate scale to meet local needs for housing ...'. It seems to me that, taken together with proposals for other strategic reserve sites at the edge of Crosby, this proposal could result in a dramatic change in the character of this small settlement, effectively doubling the size of its built-up area.

385 Furthermore, I have seen no quantitative assessment of the local need for additional housing in Crosby. I note that, during the plan period, approval has been granted for the erection of 28 additional dwellings at Ballaglonney Farm, which are now under construction. That development will increase Crosby's housing stock by about 10%. It seems to me that any greater provision of housing would be likely to be disproportionate in relation to local need. Accordingly, **I recommend against Site MH001 being shown as either a residential allocation or a strategic reserve in the Area Plan**

Site MH003 – Close Jaig Beg, Old church Road, Crosby

386 This site is an area of about 2.6ha of undeveloped land, with frontages to Peel Road (A1) and Old Church Road. It is adjacent to, but outside, the Existing Settlement Boundary of Crosby as shown in the draft Area Plan. Initially, it was proposed to be allocated for residential development in the draft Area Plan as published in May 2018; but in the Schedule of Proposed Changes issued in July 2019, the Cabinet Office indicated that its status would be changed to that of a Strategic Reserve.

Objections

- 387 The Marown Parish Commissioners were opposed to the development of this site, because they considered that it would encroach on the wetlands corridor (currags) of the Central Valley, which were of ecological importance.
- 388 Mr and Mrs J Corlett also objected to the development of this land, which was within an Area of High Landscape Value. There was no evidence of need for its development either in the short-term or the long-term. The Marown Memorial Playing Fields Ltd also submitted a written objection.
- 389 Ellis Brown objected to the proposal to downgrade this land, from a residential allocation for immediate development, to a strategic reserve. The Cabinet Office's reason for this had been that the site fell outside the area covered by the Government's Active Travel Investment Plan, being more than 2.5 miles away from the Sea Terminal in Douglas. However, if the Active Travel Zone had been based on an employment centre such as Cooil Road or Noble's Hospital, Crosby would have been within its defined 2.5 mile radius. The objection site was adjacent to the Heritage Trail, which provided a route for cyclists and walkers between Peel and Douglas; and also provided access to the Marown Primary School in Glen Vine. It was also adjacent to the A1 which was a main bus route. In addition, the Marown Memorial Playing Fields were adjacent to the site, in Old Church Road; and two new shop units were under construction nearby in Crosby. The site had excellent sustainability credentials. There was a strong demand for additional housing in this area. The residential development of 28 dwellings nearby (at Ballaglonney Farm) had been sold out whilst still under construction. In view of these considerations, site MH003 should be restored to its original status, and allocated for immediate residential development.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 390 I have seen no technical evidence to indicate that the development of site MH003 would adversely affect any designated site of importance for nature conservation. I recognise that this site is close to reasonable public transport services; and close to an important route for cyclists and walkers. I am also aware of the range of facilities available in Crosby.
- 391 However, I do not consider there to be a strong case for provision to be made for the extension of the built-up area of this village in the foreseeable future. Crosby is listed in Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan as being on the lowest level of the hierarchy of settlements in the East. That policy states that development here '... should maintain the existing settlement character, and should be of an appropriate scale to meet local needs for housing ...'. It seems to me that, taken together with proposals for other strategic reserve sites at the edge of Crosby, the development of Site MH003 could result in a dramatic change in the character of this small settlement, effectively doubling the size of its built-up area.
- 392 Furthermore, I have seen no quantitative assessment of the need for additional housing in Crosby. I note that, during the plan period, approval has been granted for the erection of 28

additional dwellings at Ballaglonney Farm, which are now under construction. That development will increase Crosby's housing stock by around 10%. It seems to me that any greater provision of housing would be likely to be disproportionate in relation to local need. Accordingly, **I recommend against Site MH003 being shown either as a residential allocation or as a strategic reserve in the Area Plan.**

Site MH023 – Ballagarey Nurseries, Glen Vine

393 This vacant area of 0.9ha was initially allocated as a specific housing site in the draft Area Plan, as published in May 2018. However, the Cabinet Office subsequently proposed that it be re-zoned as Strategic Reserve land. In a written representation, Hartford Homes argued that it should be washed over as predominantly residential, to enable its early development as a windfall site. I agree. This unused land is within the built-up area of Glen Vine. In my view, it should be restored to beneficial use as soon as possible. Its designation as a strategic reserve would impose an unnecessary restriction on its development, prior to its formal release. **I recommend that Site MH023 be washed over as part of a predominantly residential area, in the Area Plan.**

Site MM001 – Land at Ballaglonney Farm, Crosby

394 Site MM001 consists of about 22ha of agricultural land. It lies to the south-west of Peel Road (A1) adjacent to, but outside, the Existing Settlement Boundary of Crosby. The built-up area of Crosby extends to the north-east of the site, on the opposite side of the A1. To the south-east, the site is bounded by land which is currently being developed with 28 dwellings and two retail units (Site MH021); and by the Marown Memorial Playing Fields. The site's southern boundary is marked by the Heritage Trail, a long distance footpath and cycleway that runs between Douglas and Peel. Beyond this there is open countryside, which includes an area of wetlands adjacent to the River Dhoo. Open countryside also extends to the north-west of Site MM001. The draft Area Plan proposes Site MM001 as a Strategic Reserve Site.

Objections

395 Ellis Brown promoted the eventual use of Site MM001 for mixed development, to include facilities for sports and outdoor recreation, as well as residential development. They argued that parts of this site should be allocated for immediate development, as Phase 1 of a comprehensive scheme for the whole area. Phase 1 would include the erection of 20 houses immediately to the south of the existing construction site (Site MH021); and a new football pitch on land between those houses and the Heritage Trail. It would also include the provision of new sheltered housing and a care home, facing Peel Road, to the north-west of Site MH021. The remainder of Site MM001 would be retained as a strategic reserve, eventually to be developed with a further 80 dwellings, together with a sports pitch and amenity areas.

396 The Marown Parish Commissioners were opposed to the development of Site MM001, including its retention as a strategic reserve. They referred to the prospect of increased traffic

congestion; inadequacies in the local sewage treatment system; problems of access to Marown Primary School; visual intrusion; and impact on the ecology of the adjoining wetlands. Marown Memorial Playing Fields Ltd also objected to the development of this land.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 397 I do not consider there to be a strong case for the extension of the built-up area of Cosby in the foreseeable future. This village is listed in Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan as being on the lowest level of the hierarchy of settlements in the East. That policy states that development here '... should maintain the existing settlement character, and should be of an appropriate scale to meet local needs for housing ...'. It seems to me that, taken together with proposals for other strategic reserve sites at the edge of Crosby, the development of Site MM001 would result in a dramatic change in the character of this small settlement, effectively doubling the size of its built-up area. The development would be at the expense of an area of existing countryside and would be likely to have a substantial impact on the local scene.
- 398 I have seen no quantitative assessment of the need for additional housing in Crosby. I note that, during the plan period, approval has been granted for the erection of 28 additional dwellings at Ballaglonney Farm, which are now under construction. That development will increase Crosby's housing stock by around 10%. I consider that any greater provision of housing would be likely to be disproportionate in relation to local need.
- 399 I recognise that there is likely to be a need to make additional provision of specialised accommodation for elderly people in the East, in the form of sheltered housing, care homes and nursing homes. However, it seems to me that such provision could be made in general housing areas, and that sufficient land to meet the general need for housing land could be made available elsewhere, particularly in or near to Douglas. Paragraph 5.9 of the Strategic Plan states that the focus for development in the East will continue to be in and around Douglas.
- 400 I understand that it would not be possible to connect Site MM001 to the public sewerage system before 2022. That must also tell against the immediate development of this land.
- 401 The DESC has drawn my attention to the access and traffic congestion problems at the Marown Primary School in Glen Vine. Children living in the proposed housing on Site MM001 could cycle or walk to that school, using the Heritage Trail. However, in view of the distance to be covered, and the age of the children in question, I doubt that many of them would do so. It seems to me that the provision of additional family housing in Crosby would add to the existing access problems at the school.
- 402 I acknowledge that there is a deficiency in the provision of recreational open land (including sports pitches) in Marown. However, the proposed sports pitches on Site MM001 would not be provided without a substantial amount of enabling residential development, which in my view, would be inappropriate.

403 I have seen no technical evidence to indicate that the development of site MM001 would adversely affect any designated site of importance for nature conservation. However, on balance, I do not consider this site to be suitable for allocation, either for immediate development or as a strategic reserve.

404 **I recommend against the allocation of Site MM001 in the Area Plan, either for immediate development or as a strategic reserve.**

Site OH004 – Ashley Road, Onchan

405 This site, on the north side of Ashley Road, Onchan, has a gross area of about 10ha. It consists mainly of open land. In the draft Area Plan it is shown as a strategic reserve, outside but adjacent to the Existing Settlement Boundary of Onchan. The southern part of the site comes within Comprehensive Treatment Area (CTA) 5, which also extends to the south of Ashley Road. The Area Plan indicates that the redevelopment of CTA5 for educational, light industrial and residential purposes would be supported.

Objections

406 The Onchan District Commissioners opposed any extension to the built-up area of Onchan. They pointed out that, in the existing development plan, this site came within an Area of High Landscape Value. There was no evidence to suggest that it would be needed for residential development before 2026. Ms J Edge MHK pointed out that it was an objective of the Strategic Plan to protect the countryside for its own sake, and this applied to Site OH004. She also referred to the present deficiencies in primary school provision in Onchan. Mr J Atherton also submitted a written objection, referring among other things to the poor access to Site OH004.

Inspector's Conclusions

407 I have previously recommended that Site OH011 (Ballachrink) should be treated as reserve land, which could provide for the future sustainable extension of Onchan. In the light of the current population projections, I do not consider it likely that there will be a need for two such extensions in the foreseeable future. In my view, development of Site OH004 would entail an unnecessary incursion into the countryside, contrary to the objectives of Structure Plan policy.

408 It is not clear to me why part of this site has been included in CTA5, the proposals for which are rather vague at present. However, if the development of the land in question is essential to the satisfactory redevelopment of the CTA, a departure from development plan policy may be justified for that reason.

409 **I recommend that the proposal to allocate Site OH004 as a strategic reserve be deleted from the Area Plan.**

Site SH013 – Land at Newtown

- 410 This Site has an area of about 3.5ha. It consists mainly of grassland, but includes a small woodland thicket. It has a frontage to the south-west side of Clannagh Road. To the south-east, it abuts residential properties in the built-up area of Newtown. To the south-west and north-west it is bounded by open countryside, which also extends to the north-east on the opposite side of Clannagh Road. The site is owned by Dandara Ltd.
- 411 In the draft Area Plan as published, in May 2018, Site SH013 was shown as being adjacent to (but outside) the Existing Settlement Boundary of Newtown. Nevertheless, it was proposed for allocation for residential development. The Cabinet Office estimated that about 40 dwellings could be built here. However, the Cabinet Office has subsequently issued a Proposed Change to the draft Area Plan, whereby the status of this land would be demoted to that of a Strategic Reserve Site. The Cabinet Office has also proposed that Field 510455 (to the north of the junction between Clannagh Road and the A5) should be shown in the Area Plan for future road improvements and landscaped open space. Map 1a of draft Area Plan shows part of Site SH013 to be within a draft Area of Ecological Importance.

Objections

- 412 Dandara Ltd sought the reinstatement of the allocation of Site SH013 for immediate residential development. They considered that its development would make an important contribution to meeting housing demand up to 2026.
- 413 Ellis Brown objected that a precautionary approach should be applied to that part of the site lying within the draft Area of Ecological Importance, which should not be developed.
- 414 Other objectors included ‘Save our Santon’ (a group of local residents); Mr G Templer; and Miss P Newton. They variously referred to:
- the lack of need for residential development on this relatively remote site;
 - the scale of the proposed development in relation to the size of Newtown;
 - visual impact and loss of countryside;
 - ecological issues;
 - traffic congestion and hazard at the junction of Clannagh Road and the A5; and
 - surface water drainage.

Inspector’s Conclusions

- 415 Newtown is a small village, with only about 90 dwellings. It is on the lowest level of the settlement hierarchy described in the Strategic Plan. It has virtually no public facilities – no school, no shops, no public house, and no church. Its existing residents must go elsewhere for a wide range of their everyday needs, and the same would be true of the prospective occupants of new housing provided on Site SH013. I do not consider that site to be a suitable location for a sustainable urban extension. There are better sites elsewhere to meet the general need for additional housing.

- 416 Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in Newtown should maintain the existing settlement character and be of an appropriate scale to meet the local need for housing. It seems that to me that the development of Site SH013 could increase the number of dwellings in this village by up to 50%. That would be likely to change its character. I have seen no evidence to suggest there is a significant local need for additional housing in Newtown.
- 417 Although residential development on Site SH013 might not be particularly conspicuous from the A5, it would be apparent from Clannagh Road and other public vantage points. It would clearly entail a loss of open countryside.
- 418 The ecological importance of the site is a matter of dispute between different experts in this field. However, it seems to me that further study would be required to be sure of the potential impact that development might have on biota and habitats of interest, and the extent to which this might be mitigated. In the circumstances, I consider a precautionary approach to be appropriate.
- 419 I recognise that, at certain times, drivers seeking to exit Clannagh Road to join the A5 experience delay. However, there is scope for the relevant junction to be improved and the speed of traffic to be further regulated. In the circumstances, I do not consider the potential for increased traffic congestion would be sufficient to rule out future development on Site SH013.
- 420 As to surface water drainage, I see no reason why run-off from a residential development on this site could not be attenuated to a degree that would match the rate of run-off from the existing fields.
- 421 However, on balance, I do not consider that it would be appropriate for this land to be allocated for immediate residential development or designated as a strategic reserve in the Area Plan. Accordingly, **I recommend that Site SH013 be left unallocated in the Area Plan.**

Omitted Sites

Site BH001 – Land at Trollaby Lane, Union Mills

- 422 This site consists of about 1.8 of undeveloped land. It has a frontage to the north side of Ballahutchin Hill (A1), which is lined on its southern side by a ribbon of five residential properties. To the east, the site is bounded by Trollaby Lane, on the far side of which there is a row of houses. To the north and west the site adjoins open countryside. Land immediately to the north-west of the junction between the A1 and Trollaby Lane is under consideration for the provision of a vehicular access to Site BH031 (Camlork) and is excluded from Site BH001.
- 423 The site is outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Union Mills as shown in the draft Area Plan, and is not allocated for development in that document. The objectors, Bramhall Park

Investments Ltd, sought the allocation of this land for residential development. Their architect has submitted a plan to show how seven detached houses could be provided here, with access from Trollaby Lane.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 424 Strategic Policy 1 and Spatial Policy 5 of the Strategic Plan state that development will be located primarily within existing settlements. Development will be permitted in the countryside only in specified exceptional circumstances. The objection site is within the countryside, and none of the specified exceptional circumstances apply in this case. I do not consider there to be sufficient housing need for further land to be allocated to extend the built-up area of Union Mills. Accordingly, **I recommend against the allocation of Site BH001 in the Area Plan.**

Site BH007 – Ballamillaghyn Mansion House Land, Mount Rule, Braddan

- 425 Site BH007 is an undeveloped area of about 2.7ha, on the east side of Mount Rule Road. It consists mainly of grass paddock, but includes a small area of woodland in its north-eastern corner. To the west of the site, on the opposite side of Mount Rule Road, there is open country. To the south, the site is bounded by the Ballamillaghyn Estate, a relatively modern and isolated development of about 30 dwellings, built around a cul-de-sac. To the east, there is further open countryside. On its northern side, the site is bounded by buildings in the hamlet of Mount Rule. The site is not proposed for development in the draft Area Plan.
- 426 The site is owned by the Executors of the Estate of Thomas Regan, who sought its allocation for housing. They pointed out that in preparing the abortive Braddan Local Plan in 2003, the planning authority had considered that there was an opportunity to provide land for 32 additional dwellings here. Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan indicated that future Area Plans would assess the development potential of existing groups of houses in the countryside. Mount Rule was one such group, and the site should be identified in the Area Plan as being suitable for development. The objection site had obvious potential for the provision of additional housing as infilling. Such development would be within easy walking distance of the various facilities in Strang Road.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 427 I deal with the issue of groups of houses in the countryside, as raised by Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan, in paragraphs 237 to 240 above. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements, or in sustainable extensions to those settlements. Development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified exceptional circumstances. Site BH007 is not within, or adjacent to, any of the defined settlements listed in Spatial Policies 1 to 4 of the Strategic Plan. In my view, it is clearly within the countryside. None of the exceptional circumstances, referred to in Strategic Policy 2 and listed in General Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan, apply in this case. I therefore

conclude that the allocation of this land for development would be contrary to Strategic Plan policy. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BH042 – Ballafletcher Cottage, Peel Road, Braddan

428 This site has an area of about 0.5ha and forms the southern part of the large curtilage of Ballafletcher Cottage, a residential property. The site is bounded to the east by the River Dhoo; to the south by Braddan Bridge; and to the west by Peel Road (A1), on the far side of which is Kirk Braddan. Access to the site is available from the existing roundabout at the junction between Peel Road and Saddle Road. Planning applications for residential development on this land have previously been refused on policy grounds. However, in preparing for the abortive Braddan Local Plan, the planning authority considered that the site could be appropriate for limited residential development. The objector, Mr D Moore, now seeks the allocation of this land for the erection of a single dwelling.

Inspector's Conclusions

429 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements, or in sustainable extensions to those settlements. Site BH042 is not within, or immediately adjacent to, any of the defined settlements listed in Spatial Policies 1 to 4 of the Strategic Plan. It therefore seems to me that a proposal to allocate this isolated parcel for residential development would be at odds with the relevant Strategic Plan policy. There is no case for this land to be allocated for residential development on the basis of housing need.

430 **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BH013 – Land at West Baldwin

431 This site is an undeveloped area of about 2ha, on the east side of the B22 road in the West Baldwin valley. The site is remote from any of the settlements referred to in Spatial Policies 1 to 4 of the Strategic Plan, and currently forms part of the countryside.

432 The objector considered this land to be suitable for the erection of a single dwelling, which would increase the choice of housing in this area. My attention was drawn to Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan, which concerns the possibility of adding to existing groups of houses in the countryside. I deal with that matter in paragraphs 237 to 240 above.

433 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns or villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable extensions to those settlements. Development in the countryside will be permitted only in defined exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. In my view, the proposed allocation of Site BH013 would be contrary to this Strategic Plan policy, as it would not be in an existing

settlement, or in a sustainable extension to such a settlement. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to his objection.**

Site BH014 – Hampton Court, Quine’s Hill

434 Site BH014 consists of about 1.4ha of open land on the north side of the A25 at Quine’s Hill. It is bounded to the east by an isolated cluster of dwellings, and is otherwise in a largely rural area. The objector sought the allocation of this site for the erection of four dwellings.

435 The site is remote from any of the settlements referred to in Spatial Policies 1 to 4 of the Strategic Plan, and currently forms part of the countryside. The objector has drawn attention to Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan, which concerns the possibility of adding to existing groups of houses in the countryside. I deal with that matter in paragraphs 237 to 240 above.

436 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns or villages, or, where appropriate in sustainable extensions to those settlements. Development in the countryside will be permitted only in defined exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. In my view, the proposed allocation of Site BH014 would be contrary to this Strategic Plan policy, as it would not be in an existing settlement, or in a sustainable extension to such a settlement. Development here would give this area a more urban character. Prospective residents would have to travel some distance for a range of everyday activities, and would probably be heavily reliant on car transport, contrary to Strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BH015 – Woodstock and Fairway; and Site BH019 – Hilltop Nurseries, Vicarage Road, Braddan

437 These are adjacent sites, with a combined area of about 1.1ha on the north side of Vicarage Road, Braddan. Site BH015 is a backland site, which contains some existing residential buildings. It is bounded to the south by a detached house, ‘Copper Beeches’, which fronts onto Vicarage Road. A tree lined vehicular access to the objection site runs along the eastern edge of this property. To the west Site BH015 is bounded by open land. To the north, there are some farm buildings. To the east, Site BH015 abuts Site BH019.

438 Site BH019 is also previously developed land, having formerly been a horticultural nursery, and subsequently used for hydroponic cultivation. It has a frontage to Vicarage Road, with access from the roundabout junction between that road and Stevenson Way.

439 In my view, these two contiguous sites should be considered together. They are outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Douglas, which runs along Vicarage Road, but in this respect are in a similar position to Site BM006, a little to the east, which is proposed for residential development in the draft Area Plan. They are within walking or cycling distance of the existing and proposed employment areas in Cooil Road; and they are within easy reach of primary

school facilities. They are within the Active Travel Plan Investment Area. I understand that development on these sites could be connected to mains services. I consider that they have good sustainability credentials.

- 440 Importantly the two sites are outside the TT circuit; and Vicarage Road appears to be less susceptible to peak hour congestion than some other routes in Douglas (such as Braddan Road, Ballafletcher Road, Johnny Watterson's Lane and Hillberry Road). Furthermore, residential development on Sites BH015 and BH019 would be accessible to central Douglas via routes that would avoid use of the congested Quarterbridge junction.
- 441 On balance, I consider that these sites should be treated as a strategic reserve for residential development in the Area Plan. A development brief should require that they be developed together in accordance with a masterplan; that access should be from the existing roundabout adjacent to site BH019; and that the sites should provide an aggregate of about 15 dwellings.
- 442 **I recommend that Sites BH015 and BH019 be shown in the Area Plan as a strategic reserve for residential development.**

Sites BH016 and BH017 – Land at Port Soderick

- 443 These two sites are areas of open land, in a rural area, on either side of the A25 at Oak Hill. They are both owned by Mr and Mrs C Atkinson. Site BH016, on the south side of the road, has an area of about 2.4ha. Its allocation was sought for development with a single dwelling. Site BH017, on the north side of the road, has an area of about 15ha. Its allocation was sought for the development of five dwellings.
- 444 My attention was drawn to Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan, which concerns the possibility of adding to existing groups of houses in the countryside. I deal with that matter in paragraphs 237 to 240 above.
- 445 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns or villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable extensions to those settlements. Development in the countryside will be permitted only in defined exceptional circumstances, none of which appear to apply in either of the present cases. In my view, the proposed allocation of Sites BH016 and BH017 would be contrary to this Strategic Plan policy, as they are neither in an existing settlement, nor in a sustainable extension to such a settlement. Development on either of these sites would detract from the rural character of this area. Prospective residents would have to travel some distance for a range of everyday activities, and would probably be heavily reliant on car transport, contrary to Strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to these objections.**

Site BH021 – Ballaveare Farm, Old Castletown Road, Port Soderick

- 446 This undeveloped site of about 1.15ha is zoned as open space (agricultural) in the Braddan Local Plan 1991. It is not within, or close to, any of the settlements listed in Spatial Policies 1 to 4 of the Strategic Plan. However, it is within a loose knit scatter of sporadic residential development along Old Castletown Road. I note that in the past, planning approvals have been granted for the replacement of dwellings in this area with larger residential buildings. The objector, Mrs G Kingston, sought the allocation of Site BH021 for residential development, citing Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan, which deals with ‘Groups of Houses in the Countryside’.
- 447 The draft Area Plan identifies no ‘Groups of Houses in the Countryside’ in which additional housing is proposed, and I set out my general conclusions and recommendation with regard to this matter in paragraphs 237 to 240 above. Strategic Policy 2, Spatial Policy 5 and Housing Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan each state that new housing will be permitted in the countryside only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply to Site BH021. I consider this site to be in the countryside. Accordingly, I do not support its allocation for residential development. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BH022 – Colooney’s Road, Braddan

- 448 Site BH022 is an undeveloped area of about 1.7ha, lying to the west of the junction between Cooil Road and Colooney’s Road. There is an existing dwelling, ‘Glebe Cottage’, immediately to the west of this crossroads. On its south-eastern side, the site has a frontage to Colooney’s Road. On the opposite side of Colooney’s Road, there are two or three residential properties, and then open fields. To the south-west and north-west the site abuts open countryside. To the north-east, it has a frontage to the A24, beyond which is open countryside. The site is outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Douglas as shown in the draft Area Plan.
- 449 The promoters of this site, Ellis Brown, revised their original proposal and sought the allocation of plots for three dwellings, along part of the site’s frontage to Colooney’s Road, adjacent to ‘Glebe Cottage’; and the extension of the settlement boundary to include these plots. They pointed out that residential development here would be close to public transport services; and would benefit from easy access, on foot or by bicycle, to the neighbouring employment areas in the Cooil Road and Nunnery corridors. It would also offer good access to Douglas, without the need to negotiate the congested Quarterbridge junction. It would be on the fringes of the existing Active Travel Zone, and would be within any future such zone, based on the Cooil Road employment area. Allocation of this site would provide an opportunity for the development of three individual, one-off houses, thereby adding to the choice of housing available.
- 450 These are cogent arguments. However, Site BH022 is in a rural area, and is not contiguous with the existing boundary of any settlement. Its development would consolidate a cluster of isolated buildings, rather than constitute the extension of an existing urban area. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within

existing settlements, or in sustainable urban extensions to towns and villages; and that development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. Spatial Policy 5 and Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan contain similar restrictions. In my view, it follows that the allocation of any part of this site would be counter to the relevant Strategic Plan policy, and would detract from the rural character of this area. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BH039 – Bridge House, West Baldwin

451 Site BH039, which measures about 0.1ha, is regarded as a detached garden to ‘Bridge House’, a residential property sited to the west, on the opposite side of the B22 road. The site is bounded to the north and east by the River Glass. West Baldwin constitutes a scatter of buildings interspersed by open spaces. It is not listed as a settlement in Spatial Policies 1 to 4 or Appendix 3 of the Strategic Plan. In my view, it falls within the countryside, as defined in Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan

452 The owners of the site, Mr and Mrs P McNamara, considered that this land should be allocated for residential development in the Area Plan. However, Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns or villages, or in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements; and that development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. Spatial Policy 5 and Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan contain similar restrictions. In my view, it follows that the allocation of Site BH039 would be counter to the relevant Strategic Plan policies, and would detract from the rural character of this area. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BH041 – Land at Oak Hill, Port Soderick

453 Site BH041 has an area of about 5ha, and is sited on the north side of the A25, at Oak Hill. With the exception of two dwellings, it comprises mainly open, undeveloped land, with a parkland character. It is neither within (nor adjacent to) any of the settlements listed in Spatial Policies 2 to 4 or Appendix 3 of the Strategic Plan. I therefore consider it to be within the countryside, as defined in Environment Policy 1 of that plan.

454 The objector sought the allocation of land here for the provision of a single dwelling, in accordance with a development brief. It was argued that such a dwelling, on so large a site, would not detract from the parkland character of this estate, or from the landscape of the surrounding area.

455 However, Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns or villages, or in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements; and that development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified

exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. Spatial Policy 5 and Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan contain similar restrictions on development in the countryside. In my view, it follows that the allocation of Site BH042 would be counter to the relevant Strategic Plan policies. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site BM008 – Castleward Farm, Strang Road, Braddan

456 This rural site consists of about 68ha of farmland, and includes the remains of Castleward Fort, an Ancient Monument. It is bounded to the south by Noble’s Hospital; to the west by the A22 (Ballaoates Road); to the north by St George’s Bridge; and to the east by the River Glass. In the Braddan Local Plan of 1991, this land was proposed as an area for recreation, leisure and tourism (including a golf course, a hotel and associated facilities). A part of the farm, adjacent to what is now Noble’s Hospital, was allocated for Department of Health purposes. This was subsequently the subject of the Braddan (Ballamona Estate) Planning Scheme (No 2) Order 1996.

457 In the draft Area Plan for the East, this land is unallocated, including a part of the area previously reserved for use by the Department of Health. However, the eastern fringes of the site, alongside the River Glass, are now shown as being within the Tromode Dam Designated Wildlife Site.

458 Mr A Caine, the landowner, objected to this wildlife designation. He also considered that he should now be permitted to develop that part of his land which was no longer required for DHSS purposes (which he has previously been prevented from doing). Finally, he considered that the existing allocation of the land for recreation, leisure and tourism should be maintained, so that the land could be developed for public enjoyment. However, in order to finance this, provision would have to be made for an element of enabling residential development.

Inspector’s Conclusions

459 Paragraph 5.11.1 of the draft Area Plan records that Wildlife Sites are designated by the Manx Wildlife Trust, with the support of DEFA. As I understand matters, the Tromode Dam Wildlife site has already been designated. Map 1a of the draft Area Plan simply records this, to show where one of the restrictions on development, set out in Environment Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan, will apply. I have seen no technical evidence to indicate that this designation is unwarranted.

460 Although land at Castleward Farm was allocated for recreational, leisure and tourism development in the Braddan Local Plan in 1991, no such development seems to have taken place in the ensuing 28 years. I understand that there would be little prospect of it taking place in future, in the absence of enabling residential development. However, the Strategic Plan indicates that new residential development will be permitted in the countryside only in

specified exceptional circumstances, none of which would apply in the present case. In the circumstances, I am not satisfied that there is a case for allocating any part of Castleward Farm for housing, or for development for the purposes of recreation, leisure or tourism, contrary to Strategic Plan policy. That includes the land which is no longer reserved for DHSS requirements. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Late Site 3 between Braaid Hall and Braaid Cottage, Braaid

- 461 This site, which measures about 0.06ha, consists of one of four plots which formerly formed part of Braaid Farm. In the 1970s it was granted planning approval for residential development, but this was not taken up. However, the plots on either side have now been developed. The plot to the west is now occupied by the Braaid Young Men's Club Hall. The plot to the east has now been incorporated into the garden of Braaid Cottage, and contains a domestic garage. Late Site 3 is not allocated for development in the draft Area Plan.
- 462 The owner of this site objected that it was inequitable that this site should not be allocated for residential development. He referred particularly to Section 8.8 of the Strategic Plan, which deals with the potential for additions to be made to existing groups of houses in the countryside. I deal with that matter in paragraphs 237 to 240 above.
- 463 Braaid is a small cluster of dwellings and other buildings, grouped around a crossroads in a rural area. It is not one of the listed settlements in Spatial Policies 2 to 4 or Appendix 3 of the Strategic Plan. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements, or in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements; and that development in the countryside will be permitted only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. Spatial Policy 5 and Environment Policy 1 of the Strategic Plan contain similar restrictions on development in the countryside. In my view, the allocation of Late Site 3 for development would not conform with the relevant Strategic Plan policies. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site DH008 - Land adjacent to Ellenbrook, Douglas

- 464 Site DH008 consists of about 5ha of undeveloped farmland, immediately to the south-west of Kewaigue Hill (A6) and the Ellenbrook Estate, an established residential area. To the south-east it is bounded by Castletown Road (A25); and to the north-west, by the Isle of Man Steam Railway. Otherwise it is in an area of open countryside. The site lies outside (but contiguous with) the Existing Settlement Boundary of Douglas, as shown in the draft Area Plan. It is not proposed for development in the draft Area Plan, but Messrs Ellis Brown sought its allocation for residential development.

- 465 The site is within the Active Travel Investment Plan Area, being little more than 1¼ miles from the town centre of Douglas, which could be reached via South Quay, without having to negotiate the congested Quarterbridge roundabout. Housing here would be within easy reach of the existing and proposed employment opportunities in the Nunnery corridor, and in the Cooil Road area, either on foot or by bike. And it would also be close to the bus route along Castletown Road. Furthermore, the site would be reasonably accessible to the employment centres at Ronaldsway Airport and in Ballasalla. Within a kilometre of the site there are two schools, shops (including a pharmacy) and a doctor's surgery. Access to the proposed development could be through Ellenbrook Drive, an adopted road to which the site has a frontage. It appears that the mains utilities that serve the Ellenbrook Estate could be extended to serve Site DH008. The Cabinet Office is aware of no critical constraints affecting this site.
- 466 Development of this site would undoubtedly result in a loss of countryside, and have a visual impact which some local residents may find regrettable. However, in my view, it would have considerable advantages in terms of sustainability. **I recommend that Site DH008 should be shown in the Area Plan as strategic reserve land for possible future residential development.**

Land to the rear of the Shoprite Store, Victoria Road, Summerhill Village, Douglas

- 467 Open land, which was shown for predominantly residential use in the Douglas Local Plan 1998, is shown as open space in the draft Area Plan. In a written submission, the objectors, Isle of Man Enterprises plc, sought the retention or restoration of the residential zoning. This site contains a number of registered trees, and the Cabinet Office regards it as part of a green infrastructure corridor. Although the site is not a public open space, it clearly has public amenity value. Recreation Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan provides that development which would result in the loss of open space will not be permitted, unless alternative provision of equivalent benefit can be made. It is not clear to me that that criterion could be satisfied in this case. Accordingly, **I recommend that no further action be taken in respect of this matter.**

Site GH023 – Former Prince's Motors' Site, Laxey

- 468 This vacant site of about 0.2ha is in a prominent location, within the built-up area of Laxey, adjacent to the A2 and the Manx Electric Railway. It has been disused for many years. In 2009, planning approval was granted for the erection of a 4-storey sheltered housing block on this land, but this was never taken up and has now lapsed. In the draft Area Plan this land was shown as a specific housing site, but following the Proposed Changes of July 2019 it is now shown as washed over as part of a predominantly residential area.
- 469 Miss P Newton pointed out that this site had previously been used for employment purposes. Laxey needed to have sites in employment use if it was to retain its character as a 'service village'. However, the number of such sites in Laxey had recently been in decline. As the

planning approval for residential development had not been taken up, she considered that Site GH023 should now be allocated for mixed use development.

- 470 The Cabinet Office agreed that the site may be suitable for uses other than residential; and so do I. I consider it important that this prominent disused site should be restored to beneficial use as soon as possible. **I recommend that site GH023 be allocated in the Area Plan for Mixed Use development.**

Site GH002 – Clay Head Road, Baldrine

- 471 This undeveloped site of about 0.5ha is situated on the south side of Clay Head Road, some distance to the east of the built-up area of Baldrine. It is not proposed for development. The objectors sought its allocation for residential development. The site is neither within nor adjacent to any settlement, but is in the countryside. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development will be permitted in the countryside only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. I note that the Laxey and Lonan Area Plan 2005 made provision for the erection of an additional dwelling near this site, and that that development has now been carried out. However, I do not consider that this can justify further development in this area, contrary to Strategic Plan policy. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site GH033/GH040 – Land adjacent to Baldrine Park, Baldrine

- 472 This site is a strip of unused land, measuring about 1.2ha, which runs along the south-eastern side of the A2 road, as it enters Baldrine from the south. It rises steeply from the roadside. To the south-east, the site abuts the curtilages of residential properties in Baldrine Park. Site GH033/GH040 is not proposed for development in the draft Area Plan.
- 473 The objectors, M and D Casson, sought the allocation of this land for residential development. On their behalf, it was argued that there was a need for small residential units in Baldrine, especially for elderly people and first time buyers. At present, such people were often forced to leave Baldrine, because of the lack of suitable accommodation in this village. The site was not in the countryside, and was of no use as farmland. It had been zoned for residential use in the 1982 Development Plan, and in the Eastern Sector Plan of 1991. It would be suitable for infilling, to round-off the built-up area of Baldrine. It was sufficiently wide to accommodate an access road, leading from Baldrine Park to the north, to serve the proposed dwellings. Although the building plots would not be particularly deep, approval had been granted for development on smaller plots elsewhere. Mr M Hooper also sought the allocation of this land for housing, referring to the difficulty in obtaining accommodation in Baldrine.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 474 Site GH033/GH040 lies outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Baldrine as shown on the draft Area Plan, and is plainly outside the existing built-up area of that settlement. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development is to be located primarily within existing town or villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements. Paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan identifies Baldrine as one of a number of smaller settlements with little or no service provision, which rely on other centres for various services. Provision has already been made for an extension to its built-up area as a result of planning approval having been granted for residential development on Site GH026 (adjacent to Highfield Close). In my view, the further extension of this small village within the Plan period would be disproportionate. In view of the fact that residents of this village must travel elsewhere for a range of services, it would also be contrary to the strategic objective of reducing the need for travel, especially by car. In the circumstances, I do not consider that it would be appropriate to allocate Site GH033/GH040 for residential development. **I recommend that no action be taken in respect of this site.**

Site GH032 – Land to the East of Main Road, Baldrine

- 475 This undeveloped site consists of agricultural land with a frontage to the east side of Main Road (A2); and a return frontage to the north side of Beach Road. It is outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Baldrine as shown on the draft Area Plan, although this extends along the west side of Main Road to a point opposite Site GH032. To the north of this site, there is a ribbon of housing along the east side of the A2, but this is isolated from Baldrine's main built-up area. There are also two isolated dwellings on the south side of Beach Road, but otherwise Site GH032 adjoins open country. In my view, it is in the countryside, rather than in the built-up area of Baldrine.
- 476 The objectors, represented by Ellis Brown, sought the allocation of site GH032 for residential development with four detached dwellings. These would be within 3 miles of Onchan (which could comfortably be reached by bicycle); and within 5 miles of central Douglas (which would be within cycling distance for a fit and experienced cyclist). There was also a bus route along the A2. The draft Area Plan failed to make provision for a diversity of housing sites. Allocation of Site GH032 would help rectify this by creating plots for individually designed 'one-off' dwellings.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 477 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development is to be located primarily within existing town or villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable urban extensions to those settlements; development will be permitted in the countryside only in specified exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. I consider that the development of Site GH032 would detract from the rural character of this coastal area, contrary to Strategic Plan policy.

478 Paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan identifies Baldrine as one of a number of smaller settlements with few facilities, which rely on other centres for various services. Provision has already been made for an extension to its built-up area as a result of planning approval having been granted for new housing on Site GH026 (adjacent to Highfield Close); and land contiguous with that site is now proposed as a strategic reserve with potential for future residential development. In my view, the further extension of this small village within the Plan period would be disproportionate. In view of the fact that residents of this village must travel elsewhere for a range of services, it would also be contrary to the strategic objective of reducing the need for travel, especially by car. In the circumstances, I do not consider that it would be appropriate to allocate Site GH032 for residential development. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site GH039 – Land adjacent to ‘Blue Horizon’, Lamb’s Path, Pinfold Hill, Laxey

479 This site is an open, clifftop area, of about one hectare. It extends to the north, east and south of a detached dwelling, now known as ‘Blue Horizon’ (but formerly as ‘Thornycroft’ or ‘Seascape’). It is on the eastern side of Lamb’s Lane, a winding, single-track road, which descends steeply from Pinfold Hill (A2) at Fairy Cottage, and crosses the Manx Electric Railway, before terminating in a dead end at ‘Blue Horizon’. There is residential development on the west side of Lamb’s Lane. Site GH039 is outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Laxey as shown in the draft Area Plan, and is not allocated for development in that document.

480 For the objectors, Ellis Brown considered that this land should be allocated for residential development. The site could accommodate two or three individually-designed, ‘one-off’ dwellings, which would add to the choice of housing available. Lamb’s Lane could be widened to provide passing places, and its sub-standard junction with the A2 could be improved. Development here would result in a beneficial use of this land, which was currently unused. Although the Cabinet Office had originally considered that this site was subject to ecological constraints, it now accepted that this was incorrect.

481 The Garff Commissioners and local residents argued that the development proposed on this headland would be seen from coastal viewpoints to the north and south. It would mar the attractive local scene. Furthermore, the site provided an important habitat for twelve different species of protected birds, including herring gulls (which were in a serious state of decline locally) falcons and Manx shearwaters.

Inspector’s Conclusions

482 There is contradictory evidence about the ecological value of Site GH039, which I cannot resolve. However, I do not consider this site to be part of the built-up area of Laxey. It is an important area of coastal landscape, which, in my view, should remain free of development. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns or villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable extensions to those settlements. I do not consider that the erection of two or three dwellings at the end of a

single-track road would amount to a sustainable extension to Laxey. Development of this site would be likely to obstruct public views of the sea from Lamb's Lane, contrary to General Policy 2(e) of the Strategic Plan. At present Lamb's Lane provides a very sub-standard access. Although it might be possible to widen this route to provide one or more passing places, I do not consider that visibility at its junction with the A2 could be improved to a degree that would render its use by additional traffic acceptable. I do not consider that Site GH039 should be allocated for development.

483 **I recommend against the allocation of site GH039 for development in the Area Plan.**

Field No 614595, Old Laxey Hill, Laxey

484 This small, undeveloped, backland site, to the north-west of Old Laxey Hill, is shown as open space in the draft Area Plan. The surrounding area is shown as being 'predominantly residential' in character. The site is within the Existing Settlement Boundary of Laxey.

485 In a written submission, R and G Corrin sought the inclusion of this land within the 'predominantly residential' area. Their evidence is that in the Laxey Local Plan 1989, it was zoned in that way. However, in the Laxey and Lonan Local Plan of 2005, it was shown as open space, and this is perpetuated in the draft Area Plan.

Inspector's Conclusions

486 The reasons for the decision to zone this land as open space were set out in paragraphs 4.36 and 4.37 of the Laxey and Lonan Plan 2005. They included problems of access and gradient, which would make the site difficult to develop. They also referred to sewerage and surface water drainage difficulties. It was also considered desirable to preserve this green space, which provided a backdrop to a public footpath, and formed part of a wider open area that was of nature conservation interest. As far as I am aware, these considerations continue to apply. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site MH002 – Land at Ballagarey, Glen Vine

487 Site MH002 consists of about 5.5ha of agricultural land, immediately to the south-east of the built-up area of Glen Vine. It is outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Glen Vine as shown in the draft Area Plan, and is not proposed for development in that document. The site was promoted by Dandara Ltd, who considered that it should be allocated for residential development, to meet the local need for housing, and provide affordable dwellings and accommodation for older people if required.

488 The draft Area Plan identified only two sites in Glen vine for residential development. One of these (Site MH018 – Ballabeg) was currently being developed to provide just seven dwellings. The other (Site MH023 - Former Ballagarey Nursery Field) had now been demoted to the

status of a Strategic Reserve Site, in view of doubts about its deliverability in the short-term. Unless Site MH002 was allocated for development, there would therefore be little opportunity to add to the housing stock in Glen Vine during the Plan period.

- 489 Access to Site MH002 would be via King Orry Road, in Glen Vine; and the proposed housing could be connected by a public sewer to the Ballagarey treatment works, which had recently been upgraded. The site was within easy walking distance of Marown Primary School in Glen Vine, which was understood to have some spare capacity.
- 490 No serious constraints affecting Site MH002 had been identified. Miss V Quayle, who has an interest in this land, supported its allocation for development. However, the Marown Parish Commissioners opposed this proposal.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 491 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns and villages; or, where appropriate, within sustainable urban extensions to those settlements. Site MH002 is plainly in the countryside, outside the existing built-up area of Glen Vine. Glen Vine is not a 'service village', as defined in paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan. It is one of a number of smaller settlements, which have limited service provision, and which rely on other centres for various purposes. In view of this, I do not consider it to be an appropriate location for an urban extension. The prospective occupants of any dwellings built here would be likely to travel to other centres, for a range of everyday requirements, contrary to the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Although there are bus connections between Glen Vine and other centres, it think it probable that much of this travel would be by car.
- 492 Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in Glen Vine should be of an appropriate scale to meet local housing needs. I have seen no evidence of a local need for accommodation in this village which would justify the allocation of so large an area as Site MH002 for residential development. In addition to Site MH018, there may also be opportunities for additional housing to be provided within the existing built-up area of Glen Vine, for instance through infilling, or redevelopment. In my view, Site MH023 should be washed over as part of a predominantly residential area, rather than shown as a strategic reserve. It is currently unused urban land, and I consider that its early re-use should be encouraged.
- 493 I acknowledge that there is likely to be a need for additional specialist housing for elderly people in the East, but I consider it important that such provision should be made in a settlement where there are shops (including pharmacies), medical practitioners, and other appropriate services, within easy reach. Glen Vine does not appear to offer such facilities.
- 494 Accordingly, **I recommend against the allocation of Site MH002 for residential development in the Area Plan.**

Sites MH009 and MH010 – Land at Eyreton Farm, Crosby

495 These sites consist of pasture and woodland on either side of Eyreton Road, Crosby. They lie outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Crosby as shown in the draft Area Plan. The objectors sought the allocation of the two sites for residential development. An illustrative layout showed how some 15 detached dwellings could be provided, together with landscaping, and such amenities as a woodland walk, picnic areas, and a wildflower meadow.

Inspector's Conclusions

496 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns and villages; or, where appropriate, within sustainable urban extensions to those settlements. Sites MH009 and MH010 are plainly in the countryside, outside the existing built-up area of Crosby. Crosby is not a 'service village', as defined in paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan. It is one of a number of smaller settlements, which have limited service provision, and which rely on other centres for various purposes. In view of this, I do not consider it to be an appropriate location for an urban extension. The prospective occupants of any dwellings built on these sites would be likely to travel to other centres for a range of everyday requirements, contrary to the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Although there are bus connections between Crosby and other centres, I think it probable that much of this travel would be by car.

497 Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in Crosby should be of an appropriate scale to meet local housing needs. I have seen no evidence of a local need for accommodation in this village, which would justify the allocation of Sites MH009 and MH010 for residential development. Accordingly, **I recommend against the allocation of either of these sites for residential development in the Area Plan.**

Site MH015 – Land at Ballahutchin Hill

498 This site is open farmland, on the north-east of Ballahutchin Hill (A1). It lies immediately to the south of the built-up area of Glen Vine, and overlaps Site MM002. It is unallocated in the draft Area Plan. In written submissions, Hartford Homes Ltd sought the allocation of this land for residential development. They referred to the fact that the draft Area Plan made no provision for any expansion of Glen Vine, whereas it made such provision in Crosby, a much smaller settlement.

Inspector's Conclusions

499 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns and villages; or, where appropriate, within sustainable urban extensions to those settlements. Site MH015 is plainly outside the existing settlement boundary of Glen Vine. Glen Vine is not a 'service village', as defined in paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan. It is one of a number of smaller settlements, which have limited service provision, and which rely

on other centres for various purposes. In view of this, I do not consider it to be an appropriate location for an urban extension. I take a similar view in relation to Crosby. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site MM002 – Ballafreer, Glen Vine

500 This site, which is promoted by Ellis Brown, is split into two separate parcels, each of which consists of open farmland, outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Glen Vine as shown in the draft Area Plan. Neither parcel is proposed for development in that plan. Parcel A has an area of about 3ha. It lies immediately to the north-east of the existing built-up area of Glen Vine; and to the north-east of Site MH002, as discussed above. The objectors proposed that it should be allocated for low density residential development. Parcel B has an area of about 2ha, and lies over 100m to the east of the built-up area of Glen Vine. The objectors proposed that this site should be developed as a nursing home set in parkland. Access to each of these parcels would be from Ballafreer Lane.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 501 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located primarily within existing towns and villages; or, where appropriate, within sustainable urban extensions to those settlements. Parcel A of Site MM002 is plainly in the countryside, outside the existing built-up area of Glen Vine. Glen Vine is not a 'service village', as defined in paragraph 5.8 of the Strategic Plan. It is one of a number of smaller settlements, which have limited service provision, and which rely on other centres for various purposes. In view of this, I do not consider it to be an appropriate location for an urban extension. The prospective occupants of any dwellings built on Parcel A would be likely to travel to other centres for a range of everyday requirements, contrary to the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Although there are bus connections between Glen Vine and other centres, I think it probable that much of this travel would be by car.
- 502 Spatial Policy 4 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development in Glen Vine should be of an appropriate scale to meet local housing needs. I have seen no evidence of a local need for accommodation in this village that could not be met within its existing built-up area, for instance by infilling or redevelopment.
- 503 Parcel B of Site MM002 is not contiguous with the built-up area of Glen Vine. A nursing home (or any other building) erected on this land would not constitute an extension to the existing settlement. Rather it would be seen as isolated development in the countryside, and detract from the rural character of this area. Although I accept that there will be a need for additional nursing homes to serve an ageing population, I consider that these should be in existing settlements, or planned extensions to such settlements, in accordance with Strategic Plan policy.

504 **I recommend against the allocation of either part of site MM002 for development in the Area Plan.**

Site OH002 – Bibaloe Moor Farm, Onchan

505 This is an extensive area of farmland to the north of the built-up area of Onchan. It lies outside the Existing Settlement Boundary as shown in the draft Area Plan, which follows the line of the River Groudle. The site is plainly within the countryside. The objector sought its inclusion within the development boundary of Onchan.

Inspector's Conclusions

506 Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan indicates that new development will not be permitted in the countryside other than in defined exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. It also states that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements, or, where appropriate, in suitable urban extensions to those settlements. I can see no case for the extension of the built-up area of Onchan beyond the natural boundary marked by the River Groudle. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site OH003 – Belgravia Road Tennis Courts, Onchan

507 There are seven tennis courts in Belgravia Road Onchan, of which three are currently in use. The courts are owned by the Onchan District Commissioners, who seek the allocation of this land for residential development, with the objective of providing much needed sheltered housing here. The site would be a good location for such development being in a relatively flat area, and close to a range of services. The tennis courts would be replaced by an equivalent facility in Onchan Park nearby. The proposed sheltered housing would enable the Commissioners to redevelop existing sheltered accommodation, which they own, at Springfield Court, Second Avenue, Onchan. When that site is redeveloped, an area of recreational open space could be provided as part of that project, to compensate for the loss of open space at Belgravia Road.

Inspector's Conclusions

508 This scheme may have much to commend it. However, it would result in a reduction in the amount of recreational open space available in Onchan, for an indefinite period. Although the tennis courts would be replaced, that would be at the expense of open space currently available for general recreational use in a public park. It is not clear when, and in what form, compensatory open space would be made available in Second Avenue, or whether this would be of equivalent benefit to the open space that had been lost. Furthermore, it seems to me that there would be opportunities to provide sheltered housing on sites that are specifically

proposed for general residential development in the Area Plan, or on land that is shown as being predominantly residential.

- 509 Recreation Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan indicates that development which would entail the loss of open space of recreational value will not be permitted, except where alternative provision of equivalent benefit and accessibility is made available, and the loss of open space would have no significant effect on recreational provision, or on the character of the area. I am not satisfied that those criteria would be satisfied in the present case.
- 510 Accordingly, **I recommend against the allocation of Site OH003 for residential development in the Area Plan.**

Site OH007 – King Edward Bay Golf Course

- 511 The King Edward Bay Golf Course covers a dome-shaped area of elevated open land, measuring some 54ha, immediately to the east of the built-up area of Onchan. It is bounded to the west by urban development; to the south and east by the Manx Electric Railway and King Edward Road (A11), beyond which is the coast; and to the north by Groudle Road and Groudle Glen.
- 512 The objectors, Golf and Leisure Ltd, sought the allocation of two parts of the golf course area, each measuring about 7ha, for residential development. Development Area A would be on the south-western slope of the golf course in an area currently occupied by holes 16 to 18. The new housing here would be adjacent to the existing built-up area of Onchan, and would be accessed from King Edward Road. Development Area B would be on the site's northern slope, along the south side of Groudle Road, and would affect none of the existing holes. Access to new housing here would be from Groudle Road. A total of up to 250 dwellings could be provided in the two development areas. These would be confined to the lower slopes of the headland and would be relatively inconspicuous.
- 513 There would be no residential development on the higher parts of this headland, which would remain in use as a golf course. The income from the proposed development would help secure the future of the King Edward Bay Golf Club, which has up to 150 members and is not currently self-sustaining financially. In addition, it would fund the reconfiguration of the golf course, to replace the holes that would be lost as a result of the proposed development; and it would also provide for investment in new planting and landscaping; the provision of new public open space; and the improvement of public access.
- 514 There would be no serious constraints to the proposed development. Surface water from Development Area A would drain to King Edward Road and the sea; and from Development Area B it would drain to Groudle Road and the River Groudle. An existing foul sewer serves the site. If this had insufficient capacity it could be upgraded, or a private sewage treatment works could be installed. All other utility services could be provided.

- 515 Mr I Price, a local resident, opposed the allocation of this land on ecological grounds. However, the site has not been designated as being of nature conservation interest. He also referred to land stability and flood risk. However, I have seen no technical evidence to indicate these would be insurmountable problems.
- 516 Like Mr Price, the Cabinet Office is opposed to this proposal because of its potential impact on the landscape. This headland is a prominent feature, being visible across a wide area. It seems to me that residential development on its flanks would be likely to detract from its scenic value.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 517 New housing built here would be relatively inaccessible. Development Area B would fall almost entirely outside the 2½ mile radius of the Active Travel Investment Plan zone. Prospective occupants of any housing there would be likely to be highly dependent on the private car for a wide range of everyday trips. Development Area B would be just within that zone, and would be close to stopping points on the Manx Electric Railway. However, that service appears to operate largely as a tourist attraction, and does not run in the winter months. It would be of limited value to residents needing a year-round service. In my view, there are many potential sites in and around Douglas, on which residential development would be more readily accessible to workplaces, educational facilities and retail outlets, by more sustainable modes of travel.
- 518 I accept that the A11 may be less susceptible than some other routes in Douglas to peak period congestion. However, on balance, I do not consider that either part of Site OH007 should be allocated for residential development. **I recommend that no modification be made to the draft area Plan in response to this objection.**

Site OH009 – Howstrake Holiday Camp

- 519 This site comprises about 3.6ha of unused land. It includes the derelict remains of the former Howstrake Holiday Camp, which closed in the early 1970s. It is bounded to the west by King Edward Road (A11) and the Manx Electric Railway, beyond which is the domed landform of the King Edward Golf Course. To the north, the site is adjacent to Groudle Glen. Otherwise, Site OH009 is bounded by steep coastal cliffs.
- 520 The objectors, Allprop Ltd, sought the allocation of part of this previously developed site for residential development. They argued that about 15 dwellings could be provided here. This would help meet acknowledged housing need, and facilitate the removal of the derelict and vandalised structures, which currently scarred the landscape. Access to the proposed development would be directly from King Edward Road. Such an access had previously been approved in connection with a proposal to build a single dwelling here, for which planning approval had been granted in 2015, and subsequently renewed. The footprint of the

development now proposed would be no greater than that previously approved. Mr Quirk supported this objection to the draft Area Plan.

Inspector's Conclusions

521 However, Site OH009 is neither within, nor contiguous with, the Existing Settlement Boundary of Onchan, as shown in the draft Area Plan. Strategic Policy 2 of the Strategic Plan states that new development will be located within existing towns and villages, or, where appropriate in sustainable urban extensions to these settlements. I do not consider that this site could reasonably be regarded as an urban extension to Onchan. In my view, its allocation for development would be counter to the relevant Strategic Plan policy.

522 Furthermore, this site lies wholly outside the Active Travel Investment Plan Area, being more than 2½ miles from central Douglas. Although there is a stopping place nearby, on the Manx Electric Railway, this appears to serve as tourist attraction, and does not operate in the winter months. It would be of limited value to prospective residents in meeting their everyday travel needs. Although King Edward Road is a bus route, I consider it likely that the occupants of any new housing built on this site would be heavily reliant on use of the private car, contrary to Strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan.

523 The future of this site was given detailed consideration in the Onchan Local Plan 2000, paragraph 4.13 of which concluded as follows:

... the most appropriate option for the Howstrake Holiday Camp site is to designate the land as Open Space. Whilst this does not achieve an instant improvement of the site in visual terms ... it does not change what many have become accustomed to see. The Department considers that whilst there may be benefit from tidying up the site and reclaiming part of it, the cost of this is the permanent visual impact of new dwellings on the site where there have been none previously. Few, if any, headlands in Onchan remain free of development, and bearing in mind its exposed and rural location, the Department considers that this too should remain free from new development.

524 I see no reason to come to any different conclusion, and favour continued adherence to this established policy. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site OH013 – Land adjacent to 'La Serene', Ballacottier Road, Onchan

525 This site consists of undeveloped land, in the countryside to the north of the built-up area of Onchan. It is neither within nor adjacent to the Existing Settlement Boundary of Onchan as shown in the draft area Plan. Its owners, Mr and Mrs Coulter, sought the allocation of land here for development. They referred to the fact that there are a number of long-established homesteads and farmsteads nearby, and that clusters of dwellings are a feature of this area.

526 However, Strategic Policy 2 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan indicates that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements, or in sustainable extensions to those settlements. It will be permitted in the countryside only in defined exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. I consider that, residential development on Site OH013 would detract from the rural character of this area. Accordingly, **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site OH025 – Land at Little Mill Road, Onchan

527 This site is an open field of about 1.4ha on the west side of Little Mill Lane. It is situated in open countryside some distance to the north of the built-up area of Onchan. Its owners live nearby, at No 1 Brookfield, a property with steep and narrow stairs, which they are finding increasingly difficult as they grow older. They proposed the allocation of the objection site for low density housing, so that they could build a more suitable dwelling for their own occupation. That would give them a better quality of life, and enable them to remain in this area and keep their independence. The field would be large enough to accommodate three or four houses. Mr D Quirk supported this objection to the draft Area Plan.

528 However, this site is neither within nor immediately adjacent to the Existing Settlement Boundary of Onchan, as shown in the draft Area Plan. It is clearly in the countryside. Strategic Policy 2 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan indicates that new development will be located primarily within existing settlements or in sustainable extensions to those settlements. It will be permitted in the countryside only in defined exceptional circumstances, none of which apply in the present case. Residential development on Site OH025 would detract from the rural character of this area, and would continue to do so long after the landowners' present circumstances cease to be material. Accordingly, I cannot support their objection to the draft Area Plan. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site SH003 – Ballanoa Meadow, Newtown

529 Site SH003 is an unused, backland area, of about 0.2ha, to the south of residential properties in Ballanoa Meadow, Newtown. To the east it is bounded by the site of the former Lancashire Hotel (on which two new dwellings have recently been erected); and a small area of undeveloped land. To the south and west there is open countryside. The objectors (Wardsley Ltd) sought the allocation of Site SH003 for the erection of a single dwelling; and the adjustment of the development boundary of Newtown, to encompass their site and the adjacent vacant land to the rear of the former hotel.

530 On their behalf, Ellis Brown argued that this would help rectify the lack of provision in the draft Area Plan for the development of individual, one-off houses. The site would be accessible from the planned employment areas to the south-west of Douglas, in Cooil Road; and at the Nunnery and White Hoe. If a 2½ mile Active Travel Area were to be centred on Cooil Road, Site SH003 would come within it. It would also be within relatively easy reach of

central Douglas, via the Cooil Road roundabout and South Quay, avoiding the congested roads in the vicinity of the Quarterbridge junction. And it would be readily accessible to the important employment opportunities at Ronaldsway and in Ballasalla, as a bus route passes along Main Road, Newtown. There were no serious constraints to the development of this land. There were a number of options for achieving access.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 531 Newtown is a small village, with only about 90 dwellings. It is on the lowest level of the settlement hierarchy described in the Strategic Plan. It has virtually no public facilities – no school, no shops, no public house, and no church. Its existing residents must go elsewhere for a wide range of their everyday needs, and the same would be true of the prospective occupants of new housing provided on Site SH003.
- 532 However, building waste has evidently been deposited on Site SH003 at some time in the past. It seems to me that unless this land is developed as proposed, it is likely to remain without a beneficial use. To the east, north and west, it abuts the Existing Settlement Boundary of Newtown as shown the draft Area Plan. I consider there to be a strong case for defining the development boundary of this settlement to include Site SH003, together with the residual vacant land at the rear of the former Lancashire Hotel. The small area thereby enclosed by this 'rounding-off' could then be washed over as part of the adjoining 'predominantly residential' area, so as to facilitate a limited residential development.
- 533 **I recommend that the development boundary of Newtown be drawn to enclose Site SH003 and adjacent vacant land to the east; and that the area thereby enclosed be washed over as part of the adjacent 'predominantly residential' area.**

Site SH010 – Land to the South-East of Main Road, Newtown

- 534 This site of about 2.3ha has a frontage to the south-east side of Main Road, Newtown (A5). It is currently undeveloped and lies outside the Existing Settlement Boundary of Newtown, as shown on the draft Area Plan. Its owner, Mr J Bateson, sought its allocation for residential development to include perhaps six dwellings, and a shop and/or a garage. Access could be from Main Road or from Ballavartyn Road. The site was well-drained and connected to an existing sewer; and was of no wildlife interest.

Inspector's Conclusions

- 535 Newtown is a small village, with only about 90 dwellings. It is on the lowest level of the settlement hierarchy described in the Strategic Plan. At present, it has virtually no public facilities – no school, no shops, no public house and no church. Its existing residents must go elsewhere for a wide range of their everyday needs, and the same would be true of the prospective occupants of new housing provided on Site SH010. I do not consider that site to

be a suitable location for a sustainable urban extension. There are better sites elsewhere to meet the general need for additional housing.

- 536 Although Main Road is a bus route, it seems to me that the prospective occupants of any dwellings provided on site SH010 would be likely to rely heavily on the private car for a wide range of everyday purposes. This would be counter to strategic Policy 10 of the Strategic Plan, and contrary to sustainability objectives. **I recommend that no action be taken in response to this objection.**

Site Late 2 – Land at the rear of ‘Conister’, Main Road, Newtown

- 537 This site is a small backland area at the rear of a row of dwellings that line the north-west side of Main Road, Newtown. To the north-west it is bounded by Site SH013. It is included within the existing settlement boundary of Newtown in the draft Area Plan, and is shown as an area of open space. However, it appears to have been used as part of the residential curtilage of ‘Conister’ for some time. An application for a certificate of lawfulness, asserting that this land had been part of the residential curtilage for over 50 years, remained to be determined at the time of the inquiry. The landowner, Mr V Nyawai, sought the allocation of this site for residential use.

- 538 Elsewhere in this report, I have recommended against the allocation of Site SH013 for residential development, as that site is in the countryside, outside the existing settlement boundary, and I can see no case for provision to be made for an urban extension to this village. However, as Late Site 2 is within the existing settlement boundary, and appears to be used for residential purposes, I consider that it should be washed over as part of the primarily residential area of Newtown. **I recommend that the draft Area Plan be modified accordingly.**

‘Antillas’, Ballanard Road, Douglas

- 539 In a written submission, Crosby (IOM) Nominees Ltd, referred to their property, ‘Antillas’, on the east side of Ballanard Road, Douglas. They argued that the draft Area Plan included most of this property within the existing settlement boundary of Douglas, and within a ‘predominantly residential’ area. However, the northern part of its curtilage was shown as unallocated land outside the settlement boundary. They asked that this mistake be rectified. On the other hand, the Cabinet Office contended that the land in question was not within the curtilage of ‘Antillas’, and declined to modify the existing settlement boundary.

- 540 It is not for me to resolve disputes about property boundaries. As matters stand, the land in question is an anomalous, narrow, unallocated strip, left between the predominantly residential area to the south, and a Strategic Reserve Site (Site DH003) to the north. In my view, it would be logical to include this land within the development boundary and within the predominantly residential area. **I recommend accordingly.**

Summary of Recommended Residential Land Allocations

- 541 The foregoing recommendations provide for 2,440 additional dwellings to be delivered in the East, between 2011 and 2026. This provision is summarised in Table 2 below.
Taken together, development completed or started between 2011 and mid-2018, the expected yield from outstanding approvals in mid-2018, and anticipated conversions between 2018 and 2026, should provide more than 600 dwellings; sites recommended for immediate development would provide space for more than 900 dwellings; and Strategic Reserve Sites could be available for over 900 additional dwellings, should the need arise.
- 542 On the evidence available to me, it seems unlikely that the development of the Strategic Reserve Sites would be required before 2026. My concern is that, had these mainly 'greenfield' sites been allocated for immediate development, to meet the quantitative requirement set out in Housing Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan, it is likely that they would have been taken up in preference to more sustainable and better located sites, on previously developed land, in central Douglas. In the absence of sufficient demand, there is a danger that these 'brownfield' sites would remain vacant or underused, long into the future. That would be regrettable on a number of counts. It is important that residential development should be located close to workplaces, schools, retail outlets, public transport and other services and facilities, in order to minimise the distances that residents must travel for their everyday requirements, especially by car. It is also important that the vitality and viability of Douglas as a commercial centre should be protected and enhanced; and that its townscape and built fabric should be restored and rehabilitated.
- 543 It is equally important that rural landscapes are protected; that the most versatile farmland is conserved; and that ecological interests are safeguarded. The provision of additional housing on the scale proposed in the Strategic Plan would require the use of previously undeveloped rural land. In my view, that should occur only when it is absolutely necessary.

Table 2 – Summary of Recommended Residential Land Provision

Source		Notional Number of Dwellings
A Dwellings completed or started between mid-2011 and mid-2018		270
B Expected yield from outstanding planning approvals at mid-2018		144
C Projected conversions 2018-2026		187
Total of A + B + C		601
D Allocated Sites		
BM006	Vicarage Road	100
DBH002/BH030	Braddan Road/Ballaletcher Road	300
DH001	Westmoreland Road	39
DH004	South Quay	30
DH011	Ballanard Woods	40
DH016	Anna Cur House	10
DH019	South Quay	86
DH021	South Quay	7
DH022	Circular Road	63
DH025	Fairfield	9
DH037	Lower Dukes Lane	6
DH039	Park Road	27
DH042	Albany Road	8
DH046	Victoria Road Prison	44
DM002	Lake Road	41
DM003	Loch Promenade	17
DM004	Lord Street	21
DM007	Masterplan TF1 & TF2	10
DM008	Masterplan TF3 & TF6	33
DM012	Summerland	7
DM013	Little Switzerland	22
DM014	Milestone	6
OH016	Follies Cabaret	15
BH034	Mannin Infirmary Site	23
Total of Allocated Sites		964
E Recommended Strategic Reserve Sites		
BH015/BH019	Woodstock & Fairway/Hilltop Nursery	15
BH031 (part)	Camlork (Field No 521518)	50
DH002/DH057/DM001	Johnny Watterson's Lane, Douglas	600
OH011	Ballachrink, Onchan	140
GH013	Baldrine Road, Baldrine	10
DH008	Ellenbrook	60
Total of Strategic Reserve Sites		875
Grand Total		2,440

544 I recommend that the Tables in Chapter 12 of the Strategic Plan be amended to reflect the content of Table 2 above.

CHAPTER 13 – COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT AREAS (CTA)

545 The final chapter in the draft Area Plan proposes the designation of five Comprehensive Treatment Areas in accordance with Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999. There were relatively few representations made in respect of these proposals.

CTA 4 – Peel Road (West)

546 Isle of Man Enterprises plc sought the extension of CTA4 to include their warehouse and industrial premises in Pulrose Road, and adjacent properties to the west of the River Douglas. As currently proposed, this CTA is confined to a relatively narrow strip of land bounded by Pulrose Road to the south and by Peel Road to the east. Only a small part of its western boundary is marked by the River Douglas, and it excludes an extensive area on the east bank of that river, including 'The Bowl'. I can see no particular justification for what would be a large extension of this area, to embrace land on the west side of the river. **I recommend that no action be taken with regard to this matter.**

CTA Proposal 6 - General

547 DEFA have suggested a re-wording of CTA Proposal 6, which deals with the preparation and content of feasibility studies for each of the proposed CTAs. The main changes sought appear to be an increase (from 12 to 24 months) in the period with which the feasibility studies are to be published; a requirement to publish only those studies which are considered worthy of being taken forward; and a requirement that the studies identify land in Government ownership. However, in the absence of any explanation of the reasons for these proposed changes, I have no view as to their advantages or disadvantages; and I make no recommendation on this matter.

CONCLUSIONS

548 I recognise that many people will be disappointed with the recommendations in this report. However, I have attempted to make provision for the amount of development required by the Strategic Plan, should the need for this be demonstrated by changing demographic circumstances. At the same time, I have attempted to limit the amount of 'greenfield' land to be released for immediate development, so as to encourage the re-use of vacant and under-used land, particularly in the urban area of Douglas. I have attempted to focus development in the main service centres and service villages, rather than in smaller settlements that have relatively few facilities and services, in order to limit the amount of unsustainable travel that prospective residents would have to make for their day to day needs. And I have attempted to limit the amount of development proposed in the countryside, so as to protect the most versatile agricultural land and conserve the rural landscape, in accordance with Strategic Plan

policy. I reiterate my strong view that it is imperative that plans allocating land for development should be kept up to date.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "y".

Michael Hurley
Inspector
25 November 2019

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