



# **Development Brief for the Former Victoria Road Prison Site**

**September 2014**



**Isle of Man  
Government**

*Reiltys Ellan Vannin*

**Ministerial Introduction**

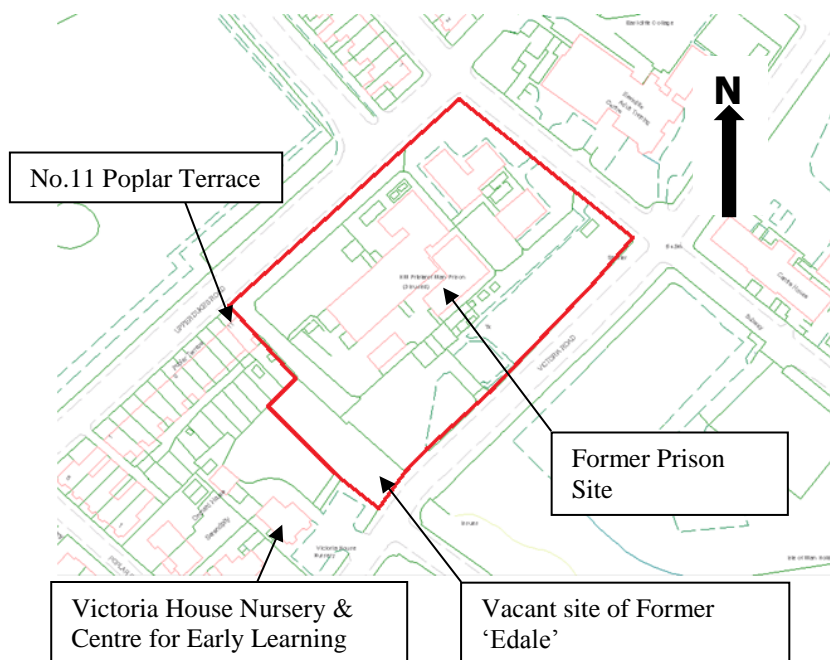
I am pleased to introduce the 'Development Brief for the Former Victoria Road Prison Site', which aims, pending the preparation of the Area Plan for the East, to provide interim planning guidance to developers and the public alike on our vision for the site.

**Phil Gawne MHK**

**Minister for Infrastructure**

## 1.0 The Site and Existing Situation

- 1.1 The redevelopment site is formed by what was the Victoria Road prison and an adjacent vacant site to the south west also in Government ownership. In total these two sites have a total site area of approximately 0.89ha, which the Department believes should be redeveloped in a cohesive way as a single site. The site is situated on a corner plot facing onto Victoria Road, Victoria Avenue and Poplar Terrace.
- 1.2 The vacant site to the south west of the former prison site previously contained a residential property, which was called 'Edale'.
- 1.3 A surface water sewer runs down the south-western boundary of the former prison site and a foul sewer partially crosses the south-western boundary of the former 'Edale' site.
- 1.4 The former prison was the first purpose-built prison to be constructed on the Isle of Man, and held prisoners from April 1891 to August 2008. The prison was demolished in early 2013 and the site has recently been cleared and levelled.
- 1.5 Adjoining the site to the south west is the residential property of No.11 Poplar Terrace and a pre-school nursery (Victoria House Nursery & Centre for Early Learning). No.11 Poplar Terrace fronts onto Upper Dukes Road. Victoria House Nursery & Centre for Early Learning fronts onto Victoria Road. To the north west of the site is the public highway of Upper Dukes Road. On the opposite side of Upper Dukes Road is Noble's Park. To the North East is Eastcliffe Adult Training Centre and to the South East is the public highway of Victoria Road.



*Note: Aerial photograph taken in March 2012.*

## 2.0 What is a Development Brief?

- 2.1 A Development Brief provides guidance on how a site should be developed. It provides an indication of the kind of development the Department would encourage and support. It may include general development principles as well as any specific requirements. A brief is not intended to be exhaustive (for there may be other requirements necessary at the planning application stage) or replace the requirements of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan or in this case of this brief the Douglas Local Plan 1998.
- 2.2 Development Briefs are usually contained within Development Plans for a wider area; however, in exceptional circumstances for instance where an unusual site becomes

vacated outwith the Development Plan process it is prudent for the Department to set out any constraints/opportunities for applications relating to a particular site. The aim in these circumstances is to provide sufficient detail for those interested in the redevelopment of the site to understand:

- i) the background of the site;
- ii) the site's current situation; and
- iii) what Government expectations are for the site in the future.

### **3.0 Key Objectives of Development Briefs**

- 1) To set out clear guidelines that will assist in how any scheme could be developed.
- 2) To set strong design principles, which will be vital in both the preparation of schemes and the successful delivery of the development.
- 3) To provide guidance that will be used as a material consideration by those determining Planning Applications and if necessary any subsequent Planning Appeals.

### **4.0 Planning Policy background and Site Planning History**

- 4.1 The Development Plan for the area comprises the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2007 and the Douglas Local Plan 1998.
- 4.2 In respect of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2007, Strategic Policy 1 states that:-

“Development should make the best use of resources by:

  - (a) optimising the use of previously developed land, redundant buildings, unused and under-used land and buildings, and re-using scarce indigenous building materials;
  - (b) ensuring efficient use of sites, taking into account the needs for access, landscaping, open space and amenity standards; and
  - (c) being located so as to utilise existing and planned infrastructure, facilities and services.”
- 4.3 This Development Brief will assist in meeting the aims of this policy by providing guidance on how the site could be redeveloped to its full potential.
- 4.4 The Douglas Local Plan 1998 zones various sites within the Borough of Douglas for different land use types. The existing land use designation for the former prison site is set out in the Douglas Local Plan as an “Area of Buildings for Civic, Cultural & Other Special Uses”, with an annotation stating that it is a prison. This land use

designation now needs to be considered within the context of the subsequent closure and demolition of the former prison. However, it should be noted that this brief does not alter the land use zoning of the site. The site remains zoned as an "Area of Buildings for Civic, Cultural & Other Special Uses". The rezoning of the site is a matter for the Area Plan for the East.

- 4.5 It is important to set the site into the context of the area. The site is surrounded by the following land use zonings - offices, a community site, public open space and residential, as identified on the Douglas Local Plan 1998.
- 4.6 The vacant site of 'Edale' is zoned as predominantly residential. This site was the subject of a planning application in 2006 for the erection of a building for tourist related and respite care accommodation together with on site car parking. Planning approval was granted; however, it has since lapsed, and the site remains vacant.
- 4.7 This Development Brief has been produced in advance of any work on the Area Plan for the East. It will provide interim planning guidance for the site, which will eventually be reviewed and put forward for consideration through the Area Plan process as necessary.

## 5.0 Aim

- 5.1 The aim of the Development Brief for the former Victoria Road prison site is:

***To encourage and influence the redevelopment of a vacant former prison site in Douglas for suitable uses including residential, which may incorporate some residential care/day care uses, and/or any uses as identified in the extant Douglas Local Plan, i.e. Civic, cultural and other special uses.***

## 6.0 The Development Brief for the former Victoria Road Prison site

The paragraphs 6.1 to 6.5 form the Development Brief for the site.

### 6.1 Development Opportunities

- a) The use of the site shall be limited to the creation of a residential development (which may also feature residential care and/or day care uses and/or sheltered housing) and/or any uses as identified in the extant Douglas Local Plan, i.e. Civic, cultural and other special uses.

## 6.2 Affordable Housing

- a) If the proposal involves any element of residential development then affordable housing must be provided in accordance with Housing Policy 5 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2007 or its replacement.

## 6.3 General

- a) There is a need for a high quality design on this prominent site.
- b) The siting, height and mass of buildings will need to be carefully considered and schemes should be mindful of the impact on the street scene. Any application for development must include cross section drawings to allow the understanding and appreciation of the proposed height and massing, and any impact on nearby buildings.
- c) The former prison gatehouse was a three storey building, which sat well back from the public highway of Victoria Road. The building did not appear to be a dominant or an overbearing feature within the street scene. It is considered that any building greater than two storeys abutting the back of the footpath on Victoria Road would appear too dominant within the street scene and would look out of place, it would therefore not be advisable to design a scheme with more than two storeys in this area of the site.
- d) Proposals will have to demonstrate consideration of the surrounding land uses.
- e) The siting of any building close to the residential property of No.11 Poplar Terrace will need to be carefully considered so as to ensure that the development does not impact on the residential amenity of No.11 Poplar Terrace. Proposals will need to demonstrate that the development will not result in demonstrable harm to the residential environment of No.11 Poplar Terrace in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, loss of privacy and visual intrusion.
- f) The siting of any building close to Victoria House Nursery will also need to be carefully considered so as to ensure that the development does not result in overlooking and loss of privacy of the nursery. Proposals will need to demonstrate that these considerations have been taken into account.
- g) Proposals must include a full breakdown of the proposed uses and any proposed phasing.
- h) In addition to the above, all proposals must be accompanied by a Design Statement which shall:
  - i) demonstrate how the development has been designed to a high quality and will contribute positively to the visual amenity of the locality. This

should incorporate an assessment of the character of the site and the area. Also, this should include how the development relates to the three road frontages of the site.

- ii) include an assessment to identify the key views into and out of the site.
  - iii) include drawings/illustrative material to clearly indicate scale and massing and retention/enhancement of identified key views.
  - iv) include a statement regarding materials and finishes to be used within the development.
  - v) demonstrate that the scheme takes into account the principles of energy efficiency in terms of minimal use of energy in construction and final use. In doing so the design of the building should, as far as possible given other design constraints, make use of building width, depth and orientation to maximise the active frontage, daylight and ventilation etc.
- i) The development must provide open space in accordance with Recreation Policies 3 and 4 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2007 or its replacement.
  - j) There is a surface water sewer that runs down the south western boundary of the prison site. It is known that this sewer takes land drainage from Nobles Park along with surface water runoff from Upper Dukes Road/ Victoria Avenue & the Police station area. Any development within the area must take into account this sewer which may need to be diverted. Any proposal must include a drainage plan for the proposed development. Potential applicants are advised to discuss any proposals with the Manx Utilities Authority.

### **6.4 Transport and car parking**

- a) Proposals must:
  - i) promote different transport uses – e.g. visible cycle parking close to building entrances and evidence that end users will be able to utilise public transport.
  - ii) include an assessment of the car parking and servicing needs of the development. This must assess any access/road implications and detail any required improvements. The car parking provision must be in accordance with Appendix 7 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2007 or its replacement.
  - iii) show that any vehicular access for the site must be in accordance with Transport Policy 4 of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2007 or its replacement.



## **6.5 Area Plan for the East**

- a) There must be an awareness of the Area Plan for the East (whatever stage it has reached).