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**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
ACT 1999**

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT

PLANNING & THE ECONOMY

**A Consultation Document
February 2012**



**Isle of Man
Government**

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

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Minister's Introduction

I am pleased to introduce this consultation paper on the Draft Planning Policy Statement on Planning & the Economy, which aims to clarify the interpretation of the Island's Strategic Plan.

This Draft Planning Policy Statement is just one of a number of proposed changes to the planning system aimed at increasing customer focus, improving efficiency and delivering better value for money during these difficult economic times.

I would therefore urge everyone who has an opinion about economic development on the Island to consider and respond to this consultation document.

David Cretney MHK

Minister for Infrastructure

Introduction

1. The Government is committed to promoting a strong, stable, and productive economy that aims to bring jobs and prosperity for all. In doing so the Government is committed to delivering further economic growth and diversification.
2. Achieving sustainable economic growth requires a fast, efficient and responsive planning system that includes a presumption in favour of development whilst protecting the countryside and enhancing the quality of the natural and built environment, which supports growth alongside regeneration, social and environmental sustainability, and has a greater emphasis on the quality of design.
3. It is essential that the planning system considers, and makes appropriate provision for the identified national needs of the entire economy and assists in steering economic development to the most appropriate locations. . The economy should not be constrained by a shortage of land for economic development uses.
4. The planning system should support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental sustainability. There is a general presumption in favour of development. Proposals will be considered on their merits bearing in mind the Development Plan and the need to protect the island's unique character, natural environment and quality of life.
5. This Planning Policy Statement (PPS) is issued by the Department of Infrastructure under section 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999, and specifies the manner in which the Department intends to deal with planning applications for development which would result in economic growth, within the context provided by the following principles:
 - In dealing with an application for planning approval or an application to vary or discharge conditions attached to a planning approval, the Department shall have regard to-
 - the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application;
 - such other considerations as may be specified in a development order, so far as material to the application; and
 - all other material considerations.

- In applying the provisions of the Strategic and Area Plans, particularly General Policy 1 and General Policy 3 of the Strategic Plan, the Department will seek proposals to be supported by evidence that demonstrates that the proposed development would secure sustainable, long term economic growth of Island wide benefit, which meets the wider objectives of sustainable development by weighing market and other economic matters alongside environmental and social costs and benefits.

Definition of Economic Development

6. For planning purposes the Isle of Man Government defines economic development as the development of land and buildings for activities that generate wealth, jobs and incomes. Economic development land uses include: the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as retail, leisure, and public services.

The Role Planning Can Play in Supporting the Economy

7. To this end, the planning system, including planning policies, will aim to ensure that the growth of output and employment in the Isle of Man as a whole is not constrained by a shortage of land for economic uses. The planning system will use an evidence base which will aim to facilitate the provision of land in appropriate locations that the market requires. In doing so, planning and economic development should aim to steer economic development to the most appropriate locations including those designated in an Area Plan, rather than prevent or discourage such development. If development is outside locations zoned for that purpose, it must be demonstrated by the applicant that alternative sites, including available land zoned for that purpose, have been considered and rejected as not appropriate for the proposed use.

8. In addition, wherever possible the planning system should seek to promote economic development, as defined in the Planning Policy Statement, to facilitate regeneration and promote social and environmental sustainability.

9. Although for planning purposes, it is not defined as economic development, it is recognised that house building and construction do play a valuable role in the economy.

10. In so doing, the planning system will aim to:

- (i) Recognise that economic development can often deliver environmental and social benefits;
- (ii) Recognise the wider benefits of economic development and consider these alongside any adverse impacts;
- (iii) Recognise that one of the benefits of economic development will that it may attract entrepreneurs who will invest in the Isle of Man economy.
- (iv) Through the Development Plan ensure that suitable locations are available for industrial, commercial, retail, housing, public sector (e.g. health and education) tourism and leisure developments, so that the economy can prosper;
- (v) Provide opportunities for land and premises to enable for improved productivity, choice and competition, particularly when technological and other requirements of modern business are changing rapidly;
- (vi) Recognise that the economy will always be subject to change; therefore planning will need to be sensitive to these changes and the implications for development and growth;
- (vii) Work with developers and Government Departments to ensure that infrastructure and services are provided to support new and existing economic development;
- (viii) Work with the Department of Economic Development and other Government Departments to identify opportunities for future investment to deliver economic objectives;
- (ix) Ensure that economic and employment growth supports regeneration, social and environmental sustainability.
- (x) Continue to apply the retail planning policy as set out in the Strategic Plan Business Policies 5, 9 and 10.

Development Control and the Economy

11. In the national interest, it is important that Planning Officers, the Planning Committee and Planning Inspectors adopt a positive and constructive approach to determining planning applications for economic development, taking account of advice on the indicated economic benefits of the development alongside social and environmental issues.

12. Planning applicants proposing development, which will provide significant economic benefits, should work with the Department of Economic Development to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed project are clearly demonstrated and assessed before submitting a planning application. This will enable adequate consideration to be given to economic matters along with social and environmental issues in the decision making process.

13. In determining applications for economic development uses, account will be taken of the likely economic benefits of the development using appropriate advice from the Department of Economic Development (based on validation and assessment of appropriate and proportionate evidence and data which is relevant to the development). In assessing these benefits, the Department of Economic Development will look at a number of key factors (which take appropriate account of commercial sensitivity) including:

- The numbers and types of jobs expected to be created or retained on the site after the construction phase (some consideration will also be given to those jobs created through the construction phase)
- Whether, and how far, the development will help meet economic growth opportunities, redress social disadvantage and support regeneration priorities.
- A consideration of the contribution to the Manx economy and local businesses.

14. When determining economic development proposals, the Strategic Plan and Area Plans should not be considered in isolation of other relevant material factors so as to deter economic development. Planning will look favourably on applications for economic development uses which may not be in accordance with the development plan, but only if based on a robust evidence base (which can withstand scrutiny, testing and cross examination) and the economic benefits of the development are demonstrated to outweigh adverse impacts on economic, social or environmental sustainability. Planning will give adequate weight to economic development issues even though these applications may not be in strict accordance with the Strategic or Area Plan. Such proposals will have to demonstrate a high quality design.

15. Planning will need to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed project are understood and that these are given adequate material consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision making process. Therefore it is essential that any

evidence is sufficient to meet these criteria. The decision makers in planning will continue to recognise that on occasions the economic benefits may outweigh social and environmental considerations.

16. Well designed employment and residential uses can in some cases be compatible and planning should have regard to the proximity and compatibility of proposed residential development adjacent to existing industrial and commercial uses to ensure that both amenity and economic development opportunities are not unduly compromised.

How to Respond

The Department welcomes representations by anyone who wishes to comment on the proposed wording in the Draft Planning Policy Statement.

We would encourage the submission of comments making clear reference to paragraph numbers via email to planning@gov.im.

Although there is a perception that an online consultation is biased against those without a computer or those who cannot use a computer, the Department feels this is the most effective way of collecting and collating responses. Therefore we would encourage everyone to use email for their responses.

Special arrangements will be put in place for those who do not have access to the Internet to submit paper copies of their responses to the address given below. Submissions should be marked clearly 'Consultation on Draft Planning Policy Statement – Planning & the Economy'.

Comments can be either sent electronically to planning@gov.im or by post to

Department of Infrastructure
Planning and Building Control Division
Murray House
Mount Havelock
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM1 2SF

It should be noted that all comments and information will be made available for public viewing.

We will assume, unless you notify us to the contrary, that you are content for your name and /or organisation to be published in any subsequent public review document.

This consultation begins on 21st February 2012 and will close on 3rd April 2012.

Next Steps

After publishing this paper we will;

- Publish on the Department of Infrastructure (DOI) website a summary of matters raised in the consultation with responses;
- Make amendments as a result of the consultation where appropriate;
- Work with representative groups in order to further inform the preparation of this planning policy statement, as appropriate; and
- If appropriate, arrange for the final Planning Policy Statement to be considered for approval by Tynwald.