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Poulsom Park, Castletown – Context for Design

- Objectives
- Key Vision
- Core Design Principles
- Specific Enhancements and Key Features
- Constraints
- Consultation and Actions

Appendix (relevant policy):

- Isle of Man Strategic Plan
- Area Plan for the South
- Landscape Assessment
- Planning Circular: 1/93 Landscape Guidance Notes
- Isle of Man Biosphere Strategy



Satellite image: Poulsom Park and surrounding context

**Objectives:**

The aim of the project is to transform Poulson Park into a vibrant, multi-use community destination, celebrating its natural beauty and enhancing its functionality to serve both locals and visitors. Designed as a town and country park, it will be designed to cater to people of all ages and abilities, supporting community well-being, tourism, and fostering a sense of place in Castletown.

Key Vision:

- **Destination Venue:** Create a landmark park that attracts both local residents and tourists, with flexibility to accommodate various events, seasonal activities, and everyday recreational use.
- **A Celebration:** Highlight the park's unique qualities as a country park and its connection to the local area, providing spaces that encourage community gatherings, leisure, and celebration of the park's natural and historical heritage.
- **Family-Friendly:** Design with families in mind, ensuring safe, fun, and accessible spaces for children, parents, and grandparents alike.
- **Accessibility for All:** Ensure universal access throughout the park, including pathways, play areas, and facilities, making the space welcoming for disabled visitors and those with mobility issues.

Core Design Principles:

1. **Flexibility for Different Uses:**
Develop a masterplan that allows different sections of the park to support varied uses, from day-to-day relaxation to larger organised events.
2. **Community and Tourist Attraction:**
Enhance the appeal of the park for both the local community and visitors to Castletown, ensuring its amenities and activities cater to a broad audience.
3. **Integration with Surrounding Area:**
Improve connectivity to the town centre, nearby housing estates, the steam railway, and existing footpaths like the Millennium Way, through accessible pathways and links. This will include the provision of family-friendly and disabled parking.
4. **Health and Wellness:**
Incorporate design elements that promote physical activity, relaxation, and mental wellness, such as walking paths, green spaces, and areas for yoga or outdoor fitness activities.



Specific Enhancements & Key Features:

Public Amenities & Accessibility:

Install essential public facilities such as WCs, baby changing areas, water fountains, information boards providing details on park features, history, and wildlife, and improved seating throughout the park. New seating areas will include benches, sheltered seating, and dark sky viewing benches, which will encourage visitors to enjoy stargazing in the park's more tranquil areas. DDA-compliant access will be prioritised, ensuring the park is welcoming for all visitors, regardless of ability.

Nature Enhancements:

Enhance the park's natural environment by introducing a variety of features that support local wildlife and contribute to biodiversity. The creation of new hedgerows will provide food sources and habitats for bat and bird populations, while also supporting pollinators such as bees and butterflies. These hedgerows, along with the planting of native trees and wildflower meadows, will enhance the park's ecological value, creating a more diverse and thriving environment. The introduction of a nature trail along the river corridor will allow visitors to engage with the local flora and fauna while promoting conservation education. A designated duck feeding area will be established along the riverside, encouraging interaction with local wildlife in a safe and sustainable way. These enhancements will contribute to the wellness benefits of the park, offering peaceful spaces for relaxation and nature appreciation, while reinforcing its role as a sustainable, ecologically rich green space.

Events and Community:

Poulsom Park will support a wide range of regular and seasonal events organised by local businesses, schools, and community groups, encouraging active community participation and ownership. The park's concessions area will host pop-up ice-cream/food and drinks vans, food events, market stalls, and farmers' markets, providing opportunities for local vendors in both day and evening time. The flexible pods will accommodate classes and school group events, while the pavilion will be available for community theatre group performances, meetings, and larger cultural events. The park's meadow area will serve as a venue for larger gatherings, including TT events, festivals, and outdoor cinemas. The community will be encouraged to develop a sense of ownership over the park through community-led events such as spring bulb planting, birdwatching, harvest and Christmas celebrations, and river clean-up days. These activities will foster a strong connection between the park and its users, promoting stewardship and long-term care for the space, while enhancing its role as a vibrant, community-centric destination.

New Children's Play Area:

The design of the new children's play area will integrate ideas from the Poulsom Park Playscape Development Package, creating a dynamic and engaging space for children of all ages. The area will include a central focal point surrounded by three distinct zones: learning, conservation, and development. These areas will provide opportunities for children to explore nature, engage in educational play, and develop physical and cognitive skills. The play area will be designed with accessibility in mind, ensuring that all children, regardless of ability, can enjoy a safe and enriching environment.

**Public Art:**

Explore opportunities to link the enhancement of Poulson Park with the Silberburn Art Trail, incorporating unique artistic features throughout the park. This could include a dedicated art and sculpture trail that weaves through key areas of the park, offering visitors a visually engaging experience. Public art installations and sculptures would serve as focal points for visitors, celebrating local culture and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the park. This initiative would contribute to Castletown's cultural identity, connecting the park to the wider artistic landscape of the Isle of Man.

Exercise and Leisure:

Create dedicated running trails and new walking and cycle routes to promote physical activity and provide scenic, safe routes for exercise. BMX trails will be introduced to complement the enhanced BMX/skatepark, offering exciting terrain for young people and enthusiasts. Opportunities for both indoor and outdoor exercise classes could be supported with flexible, open areas designed for fitness groups or yoga sessions. Running clubs could also be encouraged to use the park's trails and running routes for regular activities, fostering a community of fitness enthusiasts. The introduction of a climbing/bouldering wall will encourage more active engagement with the park, adding a dynamic leisure element for all ages.

Pathways & Connectivity:

Upgrade existing footpaths to improve accessibility and connectivity between the park, the town centre, and nearby attractions and improving the visibility of the park via signage. This will create better flow for pedestrians and cyclists, with improved connections to the nearby railway station for easier access by visitors and tourists. The enhancement of pathways will include improved lighting to ensure safety for visitors during evening hours, particularly along riverside paths and areas of high footfall. This lighting will not only improve visibility and security but also add to the aesthetic appeal of the park, making it more welcoming for after-hours use. The upgraded pathways will strengthen the park's integration with the surrounding community and popular routes like the steam railway and Millennium Way. Improved signage will improve both the promotion and way-finding to the park for those arriving by foot, car or public transport.

Repairs and Upgrades:

Address necessary repairs to riverside railings and the stone wall at the northern boundary, ensuring these features blend with the park's aesthetic and provide safety. In addition, new level access will be introduced to improve accessibility throughout the park, including new paving, steps down to the park, and paving leading to the railway platform. New entrance signage will enhance visibility and welcome visitors. Parking facilities will be upgraded or newly provided to improve accessibility for families and disabled visitors. These parking improvements will ensure convenient access to the park's key areas, enhancing the overall visitor experience.



Constraints:

As part of the Poulson Park enhancement project, several site-specific and broader external factors need to be considered to ensure successful and sustainable development:

- **Funding:**

The project will be phased over time, potentially spanning 20 years, reflecting available funding and evolving community needs.
- **Flood Risk:**

The park is located within a high-risk flood zone, particularly from the Silverburn River, which poses a risk of river and tidal flooding. This requires flood mitigation strategies, such as sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), raised pathways, and floodplain areas to manage excess water during flood events.
- **Environmental Impact:**

Enhancing the natural environment must balance the preservation of existing ecosystems, particularly along the river corridor. The introduction of new features like footpaths and seating should align with the protection and enhancement of local wildlife habitats.
- **Existing Uses on Site:**

The park currently accommodates an existing rugby pitch, which will need to be relocated to a suitable location. This will also involve the repurposing or rebuilding of the clubhouse for the purposes of the whole community.
- **Planning Permissions & Regulatory Compliance:**

All developments must comply with local planning permissions and regulatory requirements, particularly regarding flood risk, environmental impact, and accessibility. Early consultation with planning offices and environmental agencies will be essential to ensure smooth progression. Refer to section “**Relevant Planning/Government Policy**” for further information.
- **Budgetary Constraints:**

The project will be delivered in phases, reflecting available funding. Prioritisation of more costly developments, such as flood mitigation measures or large-scale landscaping, may be necessary to align with budgetary limits.
- **Existing Infrastructure & Utilities:**

The park's proximity to infrastructure like the railway line and existing car park requires careful design to avoid interference and maintain accessibility. In addition, there is a land drain from Janet's Corner housing that crosses the site. A utilities search will be essential to ensure no disruption to underground services or pipelines during construction.
- **Wider Constraints:**

The park falls under the Ronaldsway Airport flight path, limiting certain design elements such as lighting and tall structures, which may have to comply with aviation regulations.
- **Access to Site:**

Car access and parking will need to be enhanced to accommodate increased visitor numbers, especially during events, while public transport options like bus routes and the nearby railway



station should be integrated through improved pathways. Pedestrian and cycle access routes will also be upgraded to ensure safe and easy access from surrounding areas.

- **Community & Stakeholder Engagement:**

While fostering community ownership is a key goal, it also presents challenges in balancing diverse stakeholder interests. Ongoing public consultation will help manage expectations and ensure alignment with broader community needs.

Consultations & Actions, during design and beyond:

- **Site Visit & Assessment:**

Conduct a site visit to assess current conditions, take photographs, and analyse the park's context.

- **Topographical Survey and Utilities Search:**

Commission a topographical survey of the park and surrounding areas to inform design decisions, particularly in terms of drainage, levels, and pathways in conjunction with utilising utilities search information.

- **Engage with Stakeholders:**

Ongoing consultations with the Client (Castletown Commissioners), Planning Office, Highways, Railways, Development Control, DEFA Ecology, Arborist, and Inland Fisheries to ensure all considerations are accounted for in the design process.

- **Public Consultation:**

Consider appointing a visual artist to produce artistic impressions for key views of the park for a public consultation to gather feedback and inform the final design.

- **Funding and Phasing:**

In collaboration with Castletown Commissioners, establish a phasing plan to prioritise developments based on funding availability, beginning with essential repairs and enhancements, such as the new play area and improved lighting.

Summary:

This project will transform Poulson Park into a key community asset and destination town and country park, promoting health, well-being, and enjoyment for all who visit. The project aims to create a 20-year strategic vision to create a welcoming, multi-functional space that balances recreation, community engagement, and environmental preservation. By integrating new play areas, exercise facilities, and nature trails, the park will become a destination for all ages, fostering both physical activity and relaxation.



Appendix (Relevant Policy)

This section details relevant Planning/Relevant Government documents and policies that have informed the design proposals and will likely be considered as part of any subsequent full planning application for the development of Poulson Park, Castletown.

In brief, the relevant documents are:

- Isle of Man Strategic Plan
- The Area Plan for the South
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Planning Circular 1/93 Landscape Guidance Notes
- Isle of Man Biosphere Strategy

Isle of Man Strategic Plan

Chapter 10 Sport , Recreation, Open Space and Community Facilities:

10.3 Appendix 1 – Definition: *Open space – Any land, whether enclosed or not, on which there are no buildings or on which not more than 5% is covered with buildings*

10.3.3 - *The Strategic Plan needs to facilitate sport and recreation opportunities and to ensure that areas of open space are retained and provided to meet local needs. The Strategic Plan will facilitate this by a three-pronged approach: a) protecting existing assets; b) making good deficiencies in existing provision; and c) providing adequate provision within new development. In pursuing these three objectives, it is recognised that developers will not be expected to make good existing deficiencies in recreational facilities as a requirement of carrying out their developments.*

Recreation Policy 1 – *Area Plans should incorporate an assessment of the indoor and outdoor sport and recreation needs of the plan area, and the wider context and include proposals to:*

- *retain existing sporting facilities and open space provision unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit and of equivalent or better accessibility is made available.*
- *identify suitable sites to make good any deficiency in provision both for existing and future residents of the area; and*
- *ensure appropriate provision is made as part of any proposed residential development, in accordance with the Open Space Standards set out in Appendix 6 to the Plan, related to the needs generated by the development, unless the specific housing provision within the development justifies a reduced provision in relation to specific types of open space requirement.*

Recreation Policy 2 – *Development which would adversely affect, or result in the loss of Open Space or a recreation facility that is or has the potential to be, of recreational or amenity value to the community will not be permitted except in the following circumstances:*

- (a) where alternative provision of equivalent community benefit and of equivalent or better accessibility is made available; and*



(b) where there would be an overall community gain from the development, and the particular loss of the open space or recreation facility would have no significant unacceptable effect on local open space or recreation provision or on the character or amenity of the area.

Recreation Policy 5 - *Area Plans will identify areas where improvements to informal access to the countryside can be made and to the public footpath network. Existing public rights of way should be retained and any development which affects these will be permitted only if it provides diversions which are no less direct or attractive than existing routes.*

10.5.2 Civic and Community Facilities - *It is not for the Strategic Plan to address or determine the needs for community facilities, but to address the land use issues arising from such proposals. Where there are known site requirements these will be safeguarded in the relevant Area Plans for that area. Proposals for such uses will therefore be assessed against general criteria-based policies.*

Others:

Strategic Policy 1:

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.*

Strategic Policy 2:

New development will be located primarily within our existing towns and villages, or, where appropriate, in sustainable urban extensions of these towns and villages. Development will be permitted in the countryside only in the exceptional circumstances identified in paragraph 6.3

Strategic Policy 3:

Proposals for development must ensure that the individual character of our towns and villages is protected or enhanced by:

- a) avoiding coalescence and maintaining adequate physical separation between settlements; and*
- (b) having regard in the design of new development to the use of local materials and character.*

Strategic Policy 4:

Proposals for development must:

- a) Protect or enhance the fabric and setting of Ancient Monuments, Registered Buildings Conservation Areas, buildings and structures within National Heritage Areas and sites of archaeological interest.*
- b) protect or enhance the landscape quality and nature conservation value of urban as well as rural areas but especially in respect to development adjacent to Areas of Special Scientific Interest and other designations; and*
- c) not cause or lead to unacceptable environmental pollution or disturbance.*



Strategic Policy 5:

New development, including individual buildings, should be designed so as to make a positive contribution to the environment of the Island. In appropriate cases the Department will require planning applications to be supported by a Design Statement which will be required to take account of the Strategic Aim and Policies.

Strategic Policy 10:

New development should be located and designed such as to promote a more integrated transport network with the aim to:

- a) minimise journeys, especially by private car.*
- b) make best use of public transport.*
- c) not adversely affect highway safety for all users, and*
- d) encourage pedestrian movement*

General Policy 3(h) :

Development will not be permitted outside of those areas which are zoned for development on the appropriate Area Plan with the exception of:

- h) buildings or works required for interpretation of the countryside, its wildlife or heritage.*

Environment Policy 10 :

Where development is proposed on any site where in the opinion of the Department of Local Government and the Environment there is a potential risk of flooding, a flood risk assessment and details of proposed mitigation measures must accompany any application for planning permission. The requirements for a flood risk assessment are set out in Appendix 4.

Environment Policy 7 :

Development which would cause demonstrable harm to a watercourse, wetland, pond or dub, and which could not be overcome by mitigation measures will not be permitted. Where development is proposed which would affect a watercourse, planning applications must comply with the following criteria:

- a) all watercourses in the vicinity of the site must be identified on plans accompanying a planning application and include an adequate risk assessment to demonstrate that works will not cause long term deterioration in water quality.*
- b) details of pollution and alleviation measures must be submitted.*
- c) all engineering works proposed must be phased in an appropriate manner in order to avoid a reduction in water quality in any adjacent watercourse; and*
- d) development will not normally be allowed within 8 metres of any watercourse in order to protect the aquatic and bankside habitats and species.*

Environment Policy 1 :

The countryside and its ecology will be protected for its own sake. For the purposes of this policy, the countryside comprises all land which is outside the settlements defined in Appendix 3 at A.3.6 or which is not designated for future development on an Area Plan. Development which would adversely affect the countryside will not be permitted unless there is an over-riding national need in land use planning terms which outweighs the requirement to protect these areas and for which there is no reasonable and acceptable alternative

Environment Policy 2 :



The present system of landscape classification of Areas of High Landscape or Coastal Value and Scenic Significance (AHLV's) as shown on the 1982 Development Plan and subsequent Local and Area Plans will be used as a basis for development control until such time as it is superseded by a landscape classification which will introduce different categories of landscape and policies and guidance for control therein. Within these areas the protection of the character of the landscape will be the most important consideration unless it can be shown that:

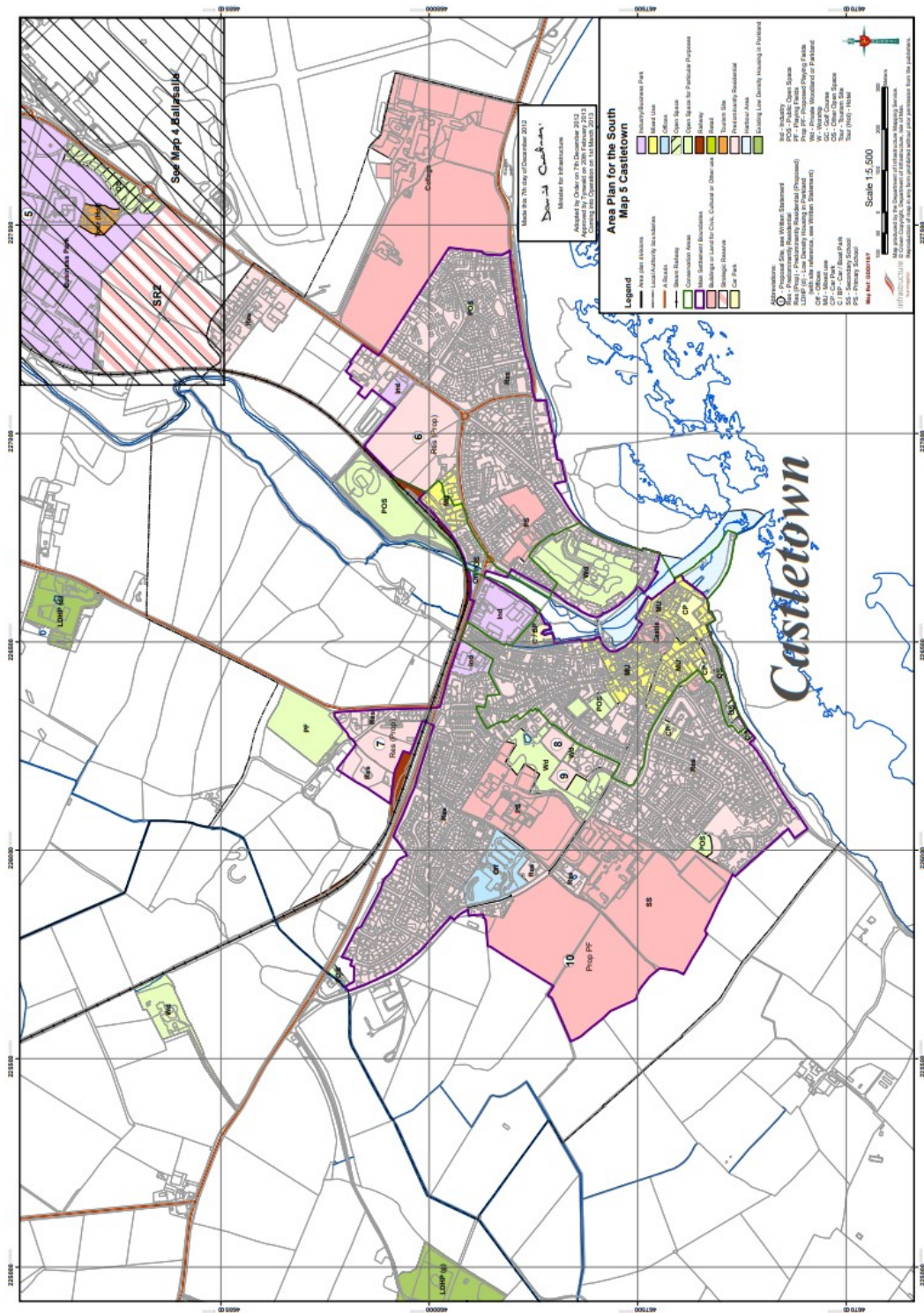
- a) the development would not harm the character and quality of the landscape; or*
- b) the location for the development is essential.*

Environment Policy 3 :

Development will not be permitted where it would result in the unacceptable loss of or damage to woodland areas, especially ancient, natural and semi-natural woodlands, which have public amenity or conservation value.



the Area Plan for the South:



Castletown, Map 5 – Poulson Park designed P05 : Public Open Space. Note: As it lies outside “Main Settlement Boundary”, suggests in the countryside.



3.2: Spatial Vision:

Taking into account all that makes up the South and its future requirements, the Department has formulated the following Spatial Vision for the future development of the South of the Island:

To provide for the needs of our communities such as to –

- a. strengthen the separate identity of each of its settlements: by enhancing what is special and different in each; by careful management of growth and development; by employing local materials and high quality design details in new development wherever it is practical; and by protecting the gaps which separate the settlements; and such as*
- b. to preserve the landscape, consisting of the natural, cultural and historic environments which, together, provide the setting and the common heritage binding these settlements together to form 'The South'*

3.3: Landscape Character Assessment:

The Manx landscape is what makes the Isle of Man unique and special to the Manx Nation: it is varied and interesting; it supports diverse, often unique wildlife habitats; it is a valuable resource for agriculture and food production; and is of such quality that it makes the Island a popular destination for tourists. There are a number of different landscapes on the Island each contributing to its special quality. In order to give adequate protection to this variety and devise appropriate strategies and proposals, it has been important to identify and name particular landscapes on the Island.

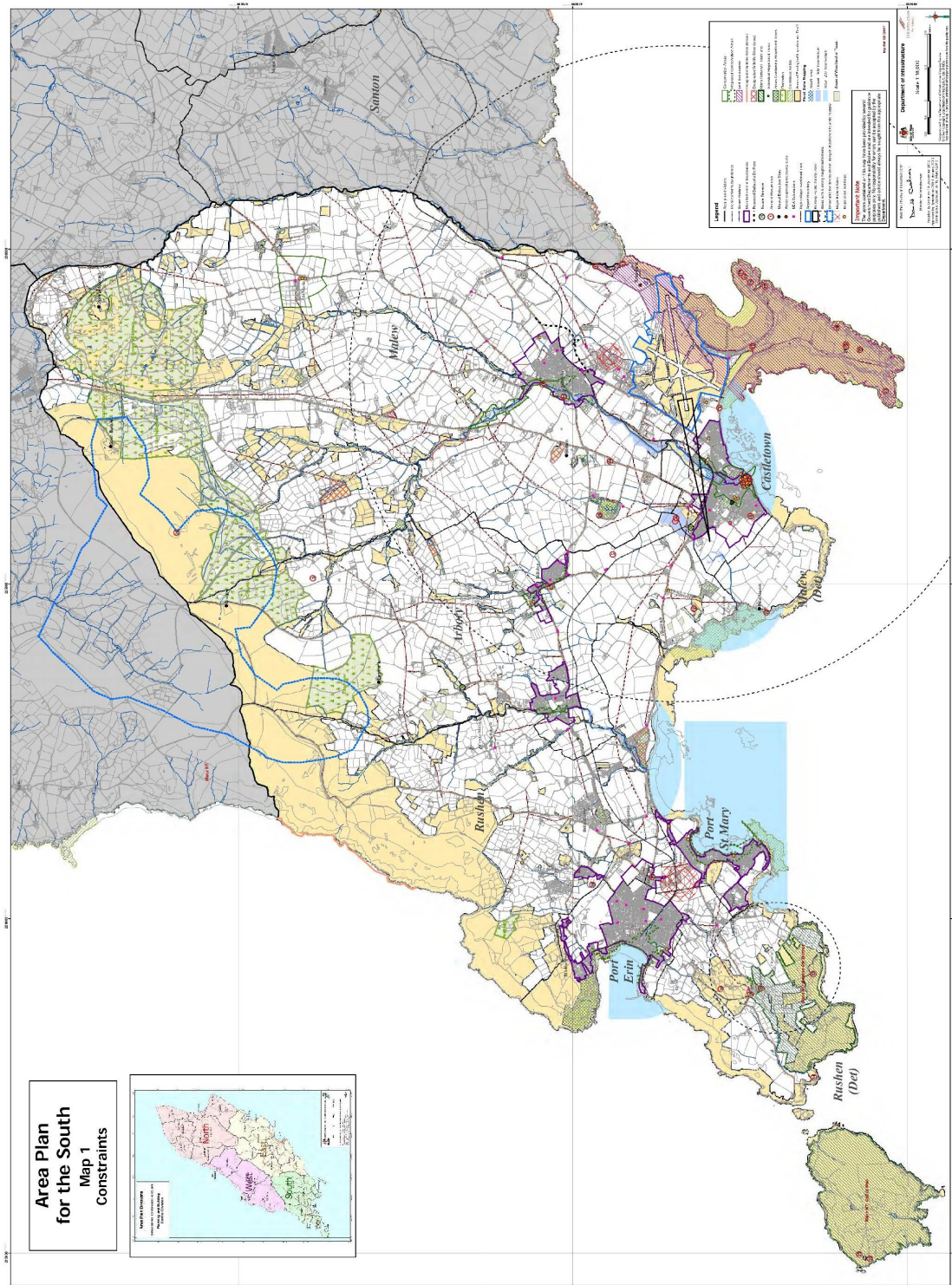
3.4: Landscape Strategies – Castletown and Ballasalla (F7):

The overall strategy is to conserve the character, quality and distinctiveness of this open area that contributes to the setting of Castletown and Ballasalla, to enhance the river field pattern and to conserve the aquatic habitat corridor of the Silverburn.

Key Views - Open and panoramic views out to sea and over Langness' rocky shoreline beyond the Airport. Key views to the prominent landmarks of Castle Rushen and King William's College.



Southern Area Plan - Constraints Map (Map 1):



Key constraints:

- Tidal and fluvial
- Area containing registered trees
- Inland Environment RA 04/3



5.2 The Natural Environment:

5.3 Wildlife and Nature Conservation:

5.3.1: *The diverse mix of wildlife habitats and species contribute significantly to the landscape character and the interest of the countryside in the South. The coastal grasslands are ablaze with squill in the spring, then the heathlands (both hill and coastal) providing great colour in late summer. The coast, with its limestone beach fauna and flora in some areas contrasts with the high cliffs that host nesting seabirds, particularly around the Meayll Peninsula and the Calf, where the highest concentration of nesting choughs is also found. The Calf has the only Manx site for breeding Manx shearwaters (for which the British Isles homes most of the world's breeding colonies).*

5.9. Wildlife Importance of Rivers and Streams:

5.9.1: *The Southern Area includes a number of important rivers and streams. One of these, the Silverburn, is recognised as an important river for migratory salmonids as well as holding significant populations of resident brown trout. Smaller rivers in the area include the Colby River, again known to hold brown trout populations and possibly sea trout in the lower stretches of river and there is an extensive network of small streams, all of which should be protected from damage and disturbance. The Area borders the Santon Burn, another important river known to support salmon, sea trout and brown trout. DEFA has created a new fish pass on this river, with the aim of encouraging migratory salmonids to utilise the pristine habitat in the upper sections of this river.*

5.11 Woodland Plantations and Tree Cover in the South:

5.11.1: *There is generally little naturally occurring tree cover in the South although the exceptions include the riverbanks, and areas of Woodland and Registered Trees. There are also three National Glens located within the Plan Area at Bradda Glen and Headland, Colby Glen and Silverdale. There are also a number of residences recognised as being within areas of 'Low Density Housing in Parkland'³⁰ such as 'Kentraugh' and 'Billown'. New development should be so sited and designed so as to avoid having an adverse impact on nearby woodland and individual trees of amenity value (see Environment Policy 3 in the Isle of Man Strategic Plan, 2007). The Development Briefs associated with the Proposal Sites (1 - 27) have, where necessary, taken into account any impact on nearby trees to ensure that there are no long term negative effects on tree health. Development schemes are also required, where appropriate, to make provision for new tree planting as part of overall landscaping schemes.*

5.12 Flood Risk in the South:

5.12.1: *Flood Risk Maps have been produced by the Isle of Man Water and Sewerage Authority and the data contained therein has been used to identify Flood Risk Areas in the South (see Constraints Map 1). Data for the Silverburn, Dumb and Colby Rivers and the associated Tidal Zones is based on LiDAR Survey Data. The Tidal Flood Risk Areas for Port St Mary and Port Erin (Lower Promenade) have been produced via Ground Survey Data. The risk areas shown relate to Tidal Flooding, and Fluvial Flooding. For Fluvial, the maps illustrate a 100 year return period and for Tidal a 200 year return period. Land outside of these areas is considered to be at low risk of flooding from Main Rivers and the sea, although it may be at risk from other sources such as surface-water and ground-water flooding. As support to the Flood Risk Areas identified, and as part of the Isle of Man Water and Sewerage Authority's commitment to publish Flood Risk Maps for the Island as a whole, the Department is committed to publish a revised Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on 'Development and Flood Risk' and an accompanying 'Technical Guide'. These documents are being jointly prepared by the Department of Infrastructure and the Isle of Man Water and*



Sewerage Authority. The revised Draft PPS will explain how the Department intends to deal with planning applications for development which may be subject to flood risk, or which may increase the risk of flooding on other land. It will also explain how flood risk will be managed through the Area Plans, essentially by including flood risk as one of the factors taken into account when allocating sites for development, indeed it was a 'critical constraint' within the Site Assessment Framework. Further information regarding the Flood Maps can be found on the Government website via the following link - <http://www.gov.im/transport/floodwatch/propertyrisk.xml>

8.0 Sport, Recreation, Open Space and Community Facilities:

8.11 Open Space and Recreation:

8.12 IoM Strategic Plan Context:

8.12.1: The Isle of Man Strategic Plan identifies that Open Space in towns and villages on the Island forms an integral part of the fabric of community life, taking various forms and serving many purposes. Open Space ranges from the formal, such as formally laid parks and play areas, to the informal, such as open countryside, glens and the extensive public footpath network. The need for Open Space is that it forms part of the Island's heritage as well as being an attractive and usable asset. In the wider context, it provides visual and spiritual relief from the developed urban settlements on the Island, and provides recreational enjoyment in respect of various active and some less active forms of sporting activity. Open Spaces also provide a means of improving the health and fitness of the Island's population.

8.13 Open Space/Recreation within Settlements:

8.13.1: In delivering the aims of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan, the Area Plan will need to facilitate sport and recreation opportunities and to ensure that areas of open space are retained, and provided to meet local needs. This means protecting existing assets, making good deficiencies in existing provision, and providing adequate provision within new development.

8.13.2: The extent of formal open space within settlement boundaries in the South is identified on the Proposals Map (Map 3) and Inset Maps (Maps 4-7). The Isle of Man Strategic Plan (Environment Policy 42) seeks to protect these open spaces and indicates that:

8.13.3: "Inappropriate backland development, and the removal of open or green spaces which contribute to the visual amenity and sense of place of a particular area will not be permitted."

8.13.4: In addition, there are a number of areas of open space within the settlements of the South which are not designated as open space and have no formal use. They do still have an important amenity value and contribute well to the settlements.

8.13.5: One area which the Plan seeks to support as an area of public amenity space is any area to the south of the Main Road, Ballabeg opposite Arbory Parish Hall. The Arbory and East Rushen Plan (1999) included this area as 'proposed park' and in an effort to improve the outdoor recreational facilities for the local community, the designation of 'park' has been retained (Site 26).

Appendix 6 – Audit of Community Facilities:

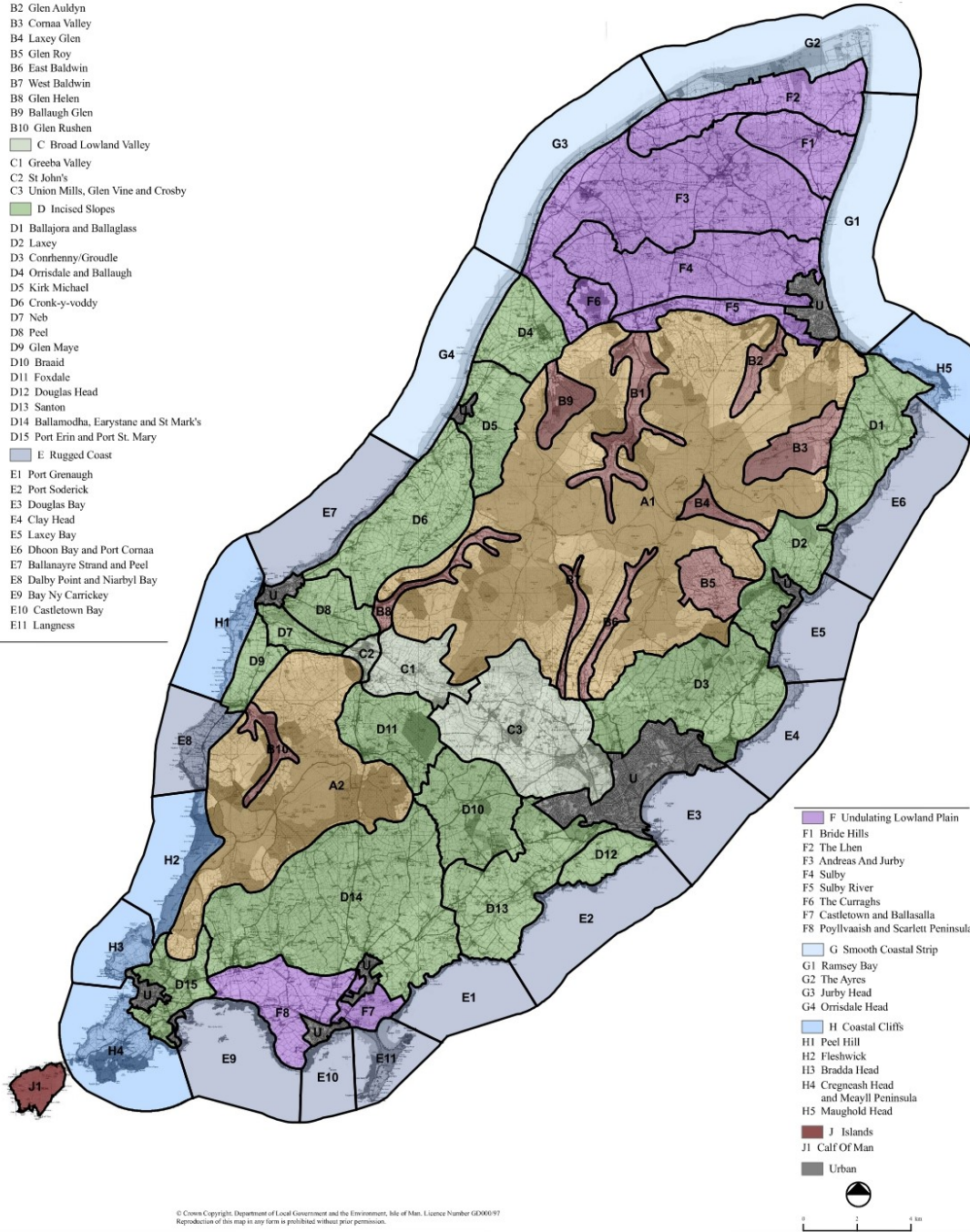
- Formal Open Space – Listing as Poulson Park
- Recreation Facilities – Listing as Poulson Skate park
- Sports pitch - Listing as Poulson Park Rugby Pitch



Landscape Character Assessment:

Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A Uplands
- A1 Northern Uplands
- A2 Southern Uplands
- B Narrow Upland Glens
- B1 Sulby Glen
- B2 Glen Auldyn
- B3 Cornaa Valley
- B4 Laxey Glen
- B5 Glen Roy
- B6 East Baldwin
- B7 West Baldwin
- B8 Glen Helen
- B9 Ballaugh Glen
- B10 Glen Rushen
- C Broad Lowland Valley
- C1 Greeba Valley
- C2 St John's
- C3 Union Mills, Glen Vine and Crosby
- D Incised Slopes
- D1 Ballajora and Ballaglass
- D2 Laxey
- D3 Conrheny/Groudle
- D4 Orrisdale and Ballaugh
- D5 Kirk Michael
- D6 Cronk-y-voddy
- D7 Neb
- D8 Peel
- D9 Glen Maye
- D10 Braaid
- D11 Foxdale
- D12 Douglas Head
- D13 Santon
- D14 Ballamosdha, Earystane and St Mark's
- D15 Port Erin and Port St. Mary
- E Rugged Coast
- E1 Port Grenaugh
- E2 Port Soderick
- E3 Douglas Bay
- E4 Clay Head
- E5 Laxey Bay
- E6 Dhoon Bay and Port Cornaa
- E7 Ballanayre Strand and Peel
- E8 Dalby Point and Niarbyl Bay
- E9 Bay Ny Carrickey
- E10 Castletown Bay
- E11 Langness



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Figure 3.1
 Landscape Character Types and Areas

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 www.cba.co.uk
 March 2007

ISLE OF MAN
 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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Fig 3.1 – Type F7 Castletown and Ballasalla Landscape Types and Areas



Undulating Lowland Plain (Type F):

- *Low-lying gently undulating predominantly arable farmland with patches of pasture, rough grassland and wet meadow.*
- *Medium sized predominantly rectangular field pattern.*
- *Network of narrow hedgerow lined lanes with occasional mature deciduous trees within hedgerows and patches of fragmented woodland.*
- *Open and glimpsed views to the sea from higher areas.*
- *Relatively dispersed settlement pattern, consisting of small (historic/vernacular), often nucleated settlements and individual farmsteads/crofts and dwellings.*
- *Numerous small rivers straightened and canalised drainage channels flow along field boundaries to drain the landscape.*
- *Areas of standing water surrounded by wetland vegetation and Curragh woodland.*
- *Views to an upland backdrop.*
- *Marl pits filled with water in the north.*
- *Use of Limestone as a building material in areas surrounding Castletown.*

7 – Castletown and Ballasalla (P. 123):

Key Characteristics

- *Flat land with strong coastal influence.*
- *Area dominated by Ronaldsway Airport and the numerous associated aeroplane hangers, car parking, runways, control towers and access roads.*
- *Built-up areas of Castletown and Ballasalla influence the visual character of the area with the prominent crenulated tower of Castle Rushen visible from the surrounding areas. • Riparian vegetation grows thickly on the banks of Silver Burn.*
- *Rectilinear arable and pastoral fields in a variety of sizes to the north and west of the airport with low Manx hedges.*
- *Busy A5 road corridor.*
- *Little sense of tranquillity.*
- *Route of the Isle of Man Steam railway runs along the area's western boundary with three stations.*
- *Ronaldsway Industrial Estate with large warehouses and areas of car parking.*
- *Open and panoramic views out to sea and over Langness' rocky shoreline beyond the Airport's numerous runways.*

Overall Character Description

This flat, low lying area of land has sea to the east and south that exerts a strong coastal influence to the area with little substantial vegetation to enclose in views out to sea and over to Langness' rocky shoreline. Ronaldsway Airport dominates this small area with numerous runways, terminal buildings, access roads and roundabouts, car parking facilities, plane hangers and storage warehouses amongst other things. North of the airport are a number of rectangular arable fields, delineated by low manx hedges that run along the B53 which forms the area's northern boundary meeting the narrow coastal area of Langness. Along Derbyhaven Road the A12 forms the area's southern boundary beyond which lies a string of predominantly white sea facing houses as well as the blocky form of King William's Collage with a prominent angular bell tower that is visible from surrounding areas due to the flatness of the landscape.



The built-up edge of Castletown forms an abrupt but definite south-eastern boundary that includes the relatively modern extension consisting of culs-de-sac of Janet's Corner. The influence of the built-up area of Castletown on this area is substantial with Castle Rushen's red limestone tower visible from many places. Urban influences also occurring in the north of the area around the settlement of Ballasalla. Silver Burn with its lush bankside vegetation and fragmented riparian woodland forms the western boundary of the area. This is the only substantial woodland in an area largely devoid of trees. Rectangular fields are aligned geometrically between Silver Burn and the busy A5 road corridor and are interrupted by large warehouses and areas of car parking at Ronaldsway Industrial Estate. This estate is located next to the Ronaldsway Halt Station on the Isle of Man Steam railway that runs parallel with Silver Burn. The area has an overall urbanised character with industrial buildings and those associated with the airport. These land uses all detract from the coastal character of the area as the built up areas of Ballasalla and Castletown, the railway and the A5 give the area a distinctly active character with a low sense of tranquillity.

Key Views

- *Open and panoramic views out to sea and over Langness' rocky shoreline beyond the Airport.*
- *Key views to the prominent landmark's of Castle Rushen's and King William's College.*

Historic Features

- *Hango Hill ruin.*

Ecological Features

- *Farmland and grassland habitats.*
- *Fragmented hedgerow habitats.*
- *Aquatic and riparian habitats along Silver Burn.*

Evaluation of Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

- *King William's College (Registered Building) and its setting.*
- *Rural character of land between Ballasalla and Castletown.*
- *Valuable aquatic, riparian and wet meadow habitats alongside Silver Burn river.*
- *Open and panoramic views out over Langness south-east of the airport and to hills.*
- *Open fields in a variety of sizes to the north and west of the airport with low Manx hedges.*
- *Hango Hill historic site.*

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategies should be to conserve the character, quality and distinctiveness of this open area that contributes to the setting of Castletown and Ballasalla, to enhance the river fields pattern and to conserve the aquatic habitat corridor of the Silver Burn.



PLANT SELECTION & SPECIFICATION

TREES

| | |
|------------|----------------------|
| Ash | (Fraxinus excelsior) |
| Alder | (Alnus sp) |
| Aspen | (Populus tremula) |
| Birch | (Betula sp) |
| Cherry | (Prunus avium) |
| Crab apple | (Malus sp) |
| Eucryphia | |
| Gum tree | (Eucalyptus sp) |
| Hawthorn | (Crataegus monogyna) |
| Holly | (Ilex aquifolium) |
| Maple | (Acer sp) |
| Oak | (Quercus sp) |
| Rowan | (Sorbus aucuparia) |
| Poplar | (Populus sp) |
| Willow | (Salix sp) |

SHRUBS

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) | Cotoneaster |
| Elder (Sambucus nigra) | Elaeagnus |
| Gorse (Ulex gallii/europaeus) | Escallonia |
| Hazel (Corylus avellana) | Fuchsia |
| Shrub roses (Rosa sp) | Griselinia |
| Willow (Salix sp) | Hebe |
| | Olearia |
| | Potentilla |
| | Pyracantha |
| | Senecio |

BULBS/WILDFLOWERS

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Bluebell | Chicory |
| Cow parsley | Cornflower |
| Crocus | Dog Daisy |
| Narcissus species (Manx doubles) | Hardhead |
| Lady's smock | Sweet cicely |
| Meadow buttercup | Pignut |
| Snowdrop | Red campion |
| Wood anemone | |

PLANTS TO AVOID

The following plants should **not** be used as they can be invasive and damage native vegetation:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Giant Hogweed | Petasites fragrans |
| Gunnera | Japanese knotweed |

Prior to undertaking any major planting scheme or development reference should be made to the Biological Records Officer at the Manx Museum to ascertain if the proposed site holds any unusual flora or fauna. Where wildflower planting or seeding operations are being considered reference should be made to The Wildlife Committee.

WHILST the Island suffers from some climatic restrictions to plant establishment (strong, salt laden winds and heavy rainfall), together with generally poor acidic soils, once established, plant growth rates are excellent and, given protection, even tender plants will survive and thrive. The key to success is to utilise those plants which can be seen growing throughout the Island as "key" species which will offer interest in their own right as well as long term protection for less hardy plants grown in their shelter.

As general guidance native/indigenous plants should be used for larger scale structure planting with more ornamental species utilised in garden or formal settings.

The indicative plant species listed are generally adaptable to conditions on the Island. Local knowledge and observation of plants growing in the vicinity will extend the list to ensure variety and diversity.

Initial impact from planting schemes can be achieved by specifying whips and shrubs within the 600-1200 mm height range and increased planting densities of 2-4 per square metre depending on location. Increased densities afford increased mutual protection to plants on exposed sites increasing survival and growth rates. On very exposed sites protective windbreak fencing must be considered and maintained throughout the establishment period. Thorough ground preparation is also essential before planting, and weed growth should be checked throughout the establishment period. Follow planting instructions and do not allow plants to dry out or plant in waterlogged ground or in frosty weather.

Always ensure that plants are hardy, i.e. adapted to local conditions, and preferably buy local stock.



Vision and Strategy 2021-2026

‘Care Areas’ inc. registered trees (P. 7)

These include sustainably managed ecological and/or heritage areas which enrich people’s lives. They include Manx Wildlife Trust nature reserves, Manx National Heritage land, ancient monuments, uplands, glens, public footpaths, plantations, registered trees, water catchment areas and the rest of the Isle of Man’s inshore waters, where commercial fishing is more carefully managed.

WHAT IS UNESCO BIOSPHERE ISLE OF MAN?



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WHAT IS UNESCO BIOSPHERE ISLE OF MAN?

WHAT IS UNESCO BIOSPHERE ISLE OF MAN?

The Isle of Man was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere in 2016 in recognition of its special environment, culture, heritage and economy and its people’s desire to cherish and nurture them. The island is at time of publication (June 2021) the only entire nation biosphere and all our land and our territorial sea is included.



CARE AREAS:

These include sustainably managed ecological and/or heritage areas which enrich people’s lives. They include Manx Wildlife Trust nature reserves, Manx National Heritage land, ancient monuments, uplands, glens, public footpaths, plantations, registered trees, water catchment areas and the rest of the Isle of Man’s inshore waters, where commercial fishing is more carefully managed.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AREAS:

These are the areas where most people live, the towns, villages and the connecting infrastructure, and areas of our sea where we live, work and conduct everyday activity, mindful of our need to live sustainably.

CORE AREAS:

These are habitats worthy of the highest protection and already protected in law. They include the Ayres National Nature Reserve, Areas of Special Scientific Interest, the Ballaugh Curraghs Ramsar site, the Call of Man, Ramsey Bay Marine Nature Reserve, Port Erin Bay Closed Area, Bale-ny-Carrickey Closed Area, Douglas Bay



Key aspects of the Isle of Man’s natural and historic environments have legislation and policies in place to identify their significance and assign levels of protection. We generate a range of products and services that support the protection of the natural and historic environment. Individual features such as Ancient Monuments and Registered Buildings are protected alongside Conservation Areas in towns and villages. Natural sites have legal protection, including Areas of Special Scientific Interest and Marine Nature Reserves, alongside the protection of key species.

Photography: Peter Kelly, Leigh Morris, Laura Devereux, Catherine Dunne

Five ‘E’s (Economy, enjoyment, environment, engagement, education)

OUR VISION AND STRATEGY AND THE FIVE ES

Our vision is an island where people and the rest of nature have a sustainable future.

Our shared aim is 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'. To achieve this, we will deliver our work under five headings.

EDUCATION

- Ensure our people understand our Biosphere and its principles
- Foster understanding of how the way we live, and the decisions we take, affect our sustainability
- Encourage learning about, and adoption of, more sustainable ways of living

ENJOYMENT

- Celebrate and promote all that is special about the Isle of Man and its surrounding seas
- Encourage people to access and appreciate our nature, culture, heritage and community
- Encourage enjoyment and participation to foster health and wellbeing
- Celebrate, promote and help people access our heritage and culture, past and present
- Celebrate and contribute to our 'sense of place'

EDUCATION VISIT



- Be a catalyst for good decision-making and innovative solution-finding
- Identify and encourage opportunities on Biosphere-related topics

ENJOYMENT INITIATIVES



ENVIRONMENT

- Connect people with nature and their surroundings
- Help people to understand the importance of, and the challenges facing, the environment
- Contribute to preserving and enhancing our land and seascapes and biodiversity
- Recognise and value the environmental, social and economic benefits we gain from our natural systems
- Inspire people to volunteer and take action in their environment



ECONOMY TAKEAWAYS

ECONOMY

- Encourage people to live in, work in and visit the Isle of Man
- Add to our vibrant economy
- Enhance our reputation as an island that cares and has a conscience
- Encourage a green economy and sustainable ecotourism
- Promote the value of the Isle of Man's unique culture, heritage and community
- Promote the diversity and quality of Isle of Man goods, produce and crafts

ENGAGEMENT

- Engage our entire community in Biosphere's ethos and aims
- Enable people to more easily connect with nature, culture, heritage and community life
- Engage our population on issues and challenges relating to conservation and sustainability
- Empower individuals to drive change and make a difference, no matter how small
- Inspire our community to be ambassadors for our Biosphere
- Encourage organisations to collaborate with each other to benefit our Biosphere



ENGAGEMENT CO-PROBLE



**Assessment:**

The project aligns with the Isle of Man Biosphere Strategy, contributing to the key pillars of Economy, Enjoyment, Environment, Engagement, and Education in the following ways:

- **Economy:**
The project will directly support the local economy by introducing a concessions area for “pop-up” businesses, offering opportunities for local entrepreneurs to operate within the park. The inclusion of flexible pods provides space for classes such as art or exercise, fostering local engagement and skill-sharing. Additionally, the pavilion will serve as a venue for community events, further supporting local businesses and tourism. The intangible benefits include improving the mental and physical well-being of the community through new gym equipment, dedicated running and walking routes, and promoting active travel within the area by enhancing footpaths and connections to the town and nearby areas.
- **Enjoyment:**
The park will enhance enjoyment for visitors by providing diverse recreational opportunities. These include flexible spaces for leisure, play, fitness, and relaxation, catering to a wide range of ages and interests. It will become a community hub, offering both everyday enjoyment and seasonal or one-off events in a natural setting.
- **Environment:**
The project contributes to environmental enhancement through the creation of a habitat-friendly nature trail, improving the river corridor, and introducing new trees, wildflowers, and hedgerows that support native wildlife species. These ecological improvements will enhance biodiversity and create a thriving, sustainable green space that benefits both the community and the local ecosystem.
- **Engagement:**
The park will offer a variety of sensory and visual experiences, with both open and enclosed spaces, indoor and outdoor environments, and natural paths that guide visitors through meadows and wild spaces. These elements will encourage community interaction with the natural environment, offering peaceful retreats and opportunities for social engagement in carefully designed settings.
- **Education:**
The park provides educational opportunities for schools and wildlife groups by offering both indoor and outdoor spaces for hosting events. These settings will be ideal for teaching about nature, ecology, and local wildlife, reinforcing the park’s role as a community resource for learning and environmental awareness. The park’s varied landscapes and habitats will serve as an outdoor classroom, enriching educational experiences for local groups.

In summary, the project aligns well with the Isle of Man Biosphere Strategy by delivering economic support, enhanced enjoyment, environmental stewardship, community engagement, and educational opportunities.