

Isle of Wight Draft housing strategy consultation summary



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ISLE of
WIGHT
COUNCIL C-77

This is the summary of the full draft strategy and gives a short outline of the document. Much more detail and explanation can be found in the full draft.

Context

The Isle of Wight Council's housing strategy is supported by the existing corporate plan and regeneration strategy, and helps shape and inform our draft Island planning strategy which is going through the formal stages to adoption. The housing strategy also begins to offer the delivery solutions for the newly adopted rough sleeping and homelessness strategy. It also sits alongside the Island independent living strategy and is relevant to other strategies for children and young people.

Purpose

The strategy focuses on providing housing to meet the needs of our current population of around 140,000 and those that are projected to come over the next five years.



Themes and priorities

There are four overarching themes of **People, Properties, Place** and **Partnerships** which give focus to six strategic priorities:

Strategic priority 1: New housing supply – Ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing through the efficient use of land and capital resources including those the council owns or has control of.

Strategic Priority 2: Housing affordability – Defining 'affordability' on the Island through detailed research of both incomes and housing costs.

Strategic Priority 3: Private sector housing – Ensuring that the private housing sector provides enough good quality market housing through support for landlords and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.

Strategic Priority 4: Homelessness and housing need – Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping, expanding accommodation options and support services.

Strategic Priority 5: Special housing needs and vulnerable people – Ensuring that accommodation is available for vulnerable people including young people, people with disabilities and extra-care housing for older people.

Strategic Priority 6: Partnerships – Enabling housing associations and our other partners to build more new 'affordable' homes for Island residents whilst maintaining their current homes to a high standard.

The Island's unique environment

The Isle of Wight is a unique place to live and benefits from some of the most protected and beautiful landscapes and habitats within the United Kingdom. As well as having Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status since 1963, in June 2019 the Island became UNESCO's latest Biosphere Reserve which further recognises the unique characteristics of our natural landscape and the way in which human interaction with these characteristics is managed. It is these environmental and cultural advantages that encourage businesses to locate here and provide a great lifestyle for employees. New housing development can be perceived as a threat to the environment. But this need not be the case. The Isle of Wight Council is keen to ensure land use is kept to a minimum and where possible, mitigation and enhancements add to the landscape and ecology rather than subtract from it.

Considering that half of the Island is a designated AONB and our intention is to build on or around existing town centre sites wherever possible, we believe it is completely possible to conserve and enhance the unique environment and landscape of the Island whilst developing the homes Island families need. Furthermore, to sustain our communities now and in the future, we will promote where possible housing design that takes account of our geography, natural environment, and ecology. This includes the use of modern building methods such as modular methods of construction to produce zero-carbon homes.

Housing needs

The Isle of Wight Council's Housing Needs Assessment (2018) which has been calculated using the Government's standard methodology to identify the need for the Island to provide 641 new homes each year for the next 20 years. This analysis is based on projected population changes and other local socio-economic factors. However, the Isle of Wight has not achieved housing delivery on this scale for over a decade and the economics of house building on the Island has eroded this further with the main housing market failure being in the delivery

of 'affordable housing' of any type. Even if the requirement to build the target number of homes over the next 20 years is achieved, it is estimated that it would add just under one per cent to the current built environment on the Island. This would take that total built environment up to 11.5 per cent.

We have identified through the draft Island Planning Strategy work that we need to generate opportunities to meet the lifetime housing needs and social mobility for Island residents to move across and within the local jobs market. Our existing homes need to be improved to adapt to changing household circumstances, including for our ageing population and those with greater health needs, whilst providing enough homes to offer our young people to help sustain our Island communities for the future.

Getting the right balance right of social, economic and environmental factors alongside meeting housing needs to support the housing number will also be a key challenge to adopting the draft Island Planning Strategy. This means developing a clear vision of what our homes and neighbourhoods will look like in the longer term including achieving the right balance of homes to rent and buy.

The Isle of Wight Housing Needs Survey is open from 7 January 2020 to 16 February 2020. The Isle of Wight Council is seeking views on current and future housing needs over the next 15 years. The survey will also help find out what is needed to make homes truly affordable to buy or to rent. The responses will inform the council's planning policies for housing which will be consulted on later in 2020.

To participate in the survey go to:
surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IWHousingNeeds2020

Housing supply

We recognise that housing supply and housing affordability are the primary issues that we need to address on the Island throughout the lifetime of this strategy. These are particularly challenging issues for older, vulnerable, low income, and homeless households. Our key objective remains delivering high quality homes that are genuinely 'affordable' for Island people across all tenures to increase their housing options and choice in the market.

The reality is that 25 per cent of Island households struggle to accommodate themselves in the Island's housing market even at 80 per cent of subsidised market rent levels which is the government's definition of 'affordable housing'.

We have developed a sophisticated tool for identifying local definitions of "affordable housing" down to post code level as we understand those households on the lowest incomes would struggle to afford 50-60% not 80%, of market rents and prices.

The council will seek to intervene where the housing market fails to ensure that people have access to good quality housing at a cost they can afford.

To realise these objectives, the council has committed to working alongside those currently providing "affordable" and extra-care housing for Islanders to enable and support greater delivery of locally affordable housing for Island families and supported accommodation of all types for our vulnerable residents.

Tackling homelessness

We understand the devastating impact homelessness can have on families and our communities and remain ambitious to ensure that families and single people experiencing homelessness can access long-term secure homes with appropriate support services. We have also produced a new Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-24 adopted by the council in November 2019.

Special housing needs and vulnerable people

Throughout the life of this strategy we will continue doing more to meet the needs of people in our communities who have specific housing needs, such as older people needing extra-care or care leavers requiring accommodation by building new extra-care schemes and bespoke supported

accommodation where necessary. While helping the majority of people stay in and improve their own homes and living conditions wherever possible through providing help through disabled facilities grants and wider 'affordable warmth' schemes.

Commitments

We are committed to:

- setting out clear and strong planning requirements in our emerging Island planning strategy that appropriately balance social, economic and environmental considerations;
- continuing to champion sustainable development: sustainable in location, carbon footprint, building materials and sensitivity to the local environment;
- seeking high quality design from any new developments;
- helping residents understand why new development is key to ensuring the island's future sustainability;
- continuing to support the retrofitting of existing stock to improve energy efficiency (subject to funding).

Working in partnership

This strategy has been co-produced and widely consulted upon with housing stakeholders and interested parties over the last 12 months and is now subject to wider public consultation.

The agreed action plan to deliver these shared priorities is shown in full in the draft housing strategy.

Giving feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of the draft strategy – including not only the content as it stands but also things that you think should be included.

There are also some particular questions we want to hear your views on – these are highlighted in the strategy.

Please send all feedback to regeneration@iow.gov.uk