

# **Central Malta Local Plan**

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**Covers the Local Council Areas of:**

**Attard  
Balzan  
Birkirkara  
Gharghur  
Hamrun  
L-Iklin  
Lija  
Mosta  
Naxxar  
Qormi  
Sta. Venera**

**Approved Document**

**July 2006**

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Purpose and Main Functions**

1.1.1 The Development Planning Act requires MEPA to prepare Local Plans for the whole of the Maltese Islands. This Local Plan is one of 7 plans, and covers some 33 sq. kms. with nearly one-third of the Maltese Islands population (about 108,490 persons as at 1998) living within it. The Local Plan includes 11 local council areas.

A Local Plan deals mainly with land-use and spatial development issues, and indicates where development can take place and the criteria against which development proposals will be assessed by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (hereforth referred to as MEPA). Its main function is to guide development by seeking a sustainable balance between economic, social and environmental needs. This remains a complicated task as society's requirements have to be balanced against the framework of a finite land supply, which is generally depleting.

More specifically the principal functions of the CMLP are:

- i. To apply the strategy, principles, policies and standards of the Structure Plan on a local scale;
- ii. To provide area and site specific, detailed guidance for development control by proposing allocations for particular land uses, defining areas in which particular development control policies will apply, and establishing standards and other criteria to which development must conform;
- iii. To designate any specific areas within the Local Plan boundaries that need to be planned further through the preparation of more detailed policies or subsidiary plans.
- iv. To provide a basis for promoting and co-ordinating public and private development within specified areas; and,
- v. To designate areas/sites that require protection from development for social, cultural, historical and environmental reasons.

## **1.2 Fundamental Planning Goals**

1.2.1 The Plan area has been subjected to substantial urbanisation in the last decades. This has led to increasing pressures from urban sprawl, lack of open spaces, transport problems and a general degradation of the local environment.

1.2.2 The Local Plan seeks the implementation of the three fundamental goals of the Structure Plan through the introduction of relevant policies that encourage the further social, economic and environmental development of the Local Plan localities. The Local Plan therefore ensures that sufficient land and support infrastructure are available to accommodate growth. The Plan also promotes the efficient use of land and buildings. This is achieved by channelling urban development activity into existing and planned development areas and by promoting the use of the existing fabric and infrastructure. It furthermore attempts to improve the environmental quality of both the urban and rural areas of the Local

Plan localities by designating and protecting listed and scheduled areas of environmental, historical and cultural importance.

### **1.3 The Legal Context**

- 1.3.1 The Development Planning Act establishes the MEPA and provides for a Structure Plan to be prepared and adopted under the Building Permits (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1988. The Structure Plan that came into force on 29 July 1992, established an overall strategic framework for land use planning and related development, over a twenty-year period. To deal with area planning on a detailed basis, and to respond to local issues, the Structure Plan makes provision for the preparation of subsidiary plans including Local Plans.
- 1.3.2 Article 27(2) of the Development Planning Act 2001 requires the Authority to seek endorsement of the Local Plan from the Minister responsible for Development Planning, and the Plan shall stay in force for a minimum period of 2 years following such endorsement, unless a review is necessitated by a review of the Structure Plan as required by Article 28(1) of the same Act. Changing circumstances may well require adjustments to the Plan after the minimum period of two years following final approval by the Minister, and such review of the Plan will be undertaken within the legal provisions of the Development Planning Act. Minor amendments to the approved Local Plan may be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Art. 28 of the Development Planning Act and in accordance with Legal Notice 27 of 2002. The principal source of policy guidance for the control of development remains the Structure Plan, and a Local Plan is intended to be subsidiary to, and in general conformity with, the Structure Plan document and its subsequent revisions.
- 1.3.3 Following the adoption of the Structure Plan, several other Subsidiary Plans/Development Briefs, Local Plans, Planning Policies and Guidance Notes/Circulars have been prepared and adopted by MEPA which establish the approved planning framework against which decisions can be made. This Local Plan is in general conformity with this policy framework. As individual development proposals will be affected by several policies, each covering a different aspect of planning, the local plan and all other relevant planning documents need to be considered together in evaluating a proposal in the development control process. Where several policies apply to a development proposal, these are to be complied with if the proposal is to be accepted.

### **1.4 The Structure of this Document**

- 1.4.1 The background documents of this Plan are the Report of Survey (Nov, 2000) and the Public Consultation Draft (Jun, 2002). The Report of Survey contains background information on the Local Plan area. The information contained in the Report of Survey is based on information compiled from various sources, including survey work, consultation meetings held internally and externally with various organisations, and on published sources. The Public Consultation Draft was followed by an analysis of comments and submissions received from the public and taken into consideration for this final Plan. These comments have been compiled into a Submissions Report which also includes MEPA's reaction to each submission.

- 1.4.2 The Central Malta Local Plan is divided into **general** and **area** policy chapters. These chapters contain policies that set criteria against which development proposals will be judged. Where these policies can be defined to a specific site or area it is shown on a detailed **map** within the chapter.

**General Policies Chapters** - set out major land use policies of importance and relevance to the whole of the Local Plan area and provide a strategic policy framework for the policies and proposals in the Area Policies Chapters. These chapters are set out by topics (e.g. Transport) and policies are backed up with written justification in relation to the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands (1992) and the Local Plan's own land use strategy.

**Area Policies Chapters** - These chapters are defined by local council areas. They contain detailed and local or 'site specific' policies. These are also backed with reasoned justification in relation to general policies or specific local circumstances.

## 1.5 General Description of the CMLP Area

- 1.5.1 The CMLP is made up of 11 local council areas comprising of Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Gharghur, Hamrun, L-Iklin, Lija, Mosta, part of Naxxar, Qormi and Sta. Venera. The Local Plan covers an area of about 33 sq. kms., Naxxar being the largest council area, geographically, while Balzan is the smallest area. This Local Plan area is bordered by four other Local Plans. These are namely the North West Local Plan including the Ta' Qali Action Plan area and parts of Naxxar, the North Harbours Local Plan and Grand Harbour Local Plan to the East, and the South Malta Local Plan. The Local Plan area is bounded at the extreme north by the coastal strip of Ghallis to Bahar ic-Caghaq, to the south by Wied il-Kbir, Qormi, to the east by Blata l-Bajda in the Inner Harbour Area, and to the west by Ta' Qali and the adjacent rural areas of Bidnija.
- 1.5.2 The Local Plan area is characterised predominantly by urban settlements and residential areas, however it possesses some of the finest examples of rural environment found on the Islands including important valley systems and the natural coast.
- 1.5.3 Commercial activity in the Local Plan is characterised by three major commercial areas consisting of the primary town centres at Birkirkara, Hamrun and Mosta. There are also two secondary town centres at Qormi and Naxxar, together with a number of Local Centres servicing local convenience needs in most localities. Commercial areas are also present along a number of main roads. As far as industrial activity is concerned, these are primarily concentrated in various industrial estates under the Malta Industrial Parks (MIP) ownership (namely part of the Mriehel Industrial Area, Mosta Technopark and Attard Industrial Estate) and the private industrial estate that consist of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) (at Mosta, Mriehel, Tal-Handaq, Qormi and Sta. Venera).
- 1.5.4 The Local Plan area has three main transport thoroughfares consisting of arterial roads. These all cross the Local Plan area East to West. One passes along the Naxxar Coast whilst the other two other major transport routes pass to the north and south of Birkirkara. The main transport problems affecting the localities in the Plan area include congestion, the lack of parking availability and a degraded environmental quality, excessive car use and declining public transport use.

- 1.5.5 The Local Plan area has a population of 108,490 (1998 data). This is about 27% of the entire population of the Maltese Islands. Birkirkara has the largest population with 21,550 persons, while Gharghur has the lowest population with 2,086. All localities increased in population during the period 1985-1998 except for Hamrun. The largest increase in population was in Mosta with 6,072 persons (1985-1998).
- 1.5.6 The Local Plan area is highly urbanised due to widespread urban sprawl and rapid development experienced in the past, when many green corridors and open space buffer zones between the towns and villages were developed. This development had proceeded to the extent that most localities such as Hamrun, Birkirkara and Sta. Venera no longer have a physically defined urban boundary. Gharghur is the only locality that still has a distinct rural belt surrounding it and separating it from Madliena, Naxxar and L-Iklin. The rise in urbanisation has led to an increase in the number of conflicting uses located in close proximity to each other. This has led to problems of incompatibility between different uses, necessitating the need to address this issue through suitable zoning and a clear definition of zone limits.

## **1.6 Other Considerations**

- 1.6.1 It is important to note that Area Policy Maps are subject to change through the PC application process, and therefore the public is directed to check directly with MEPA on the latest situation when interested on the details for a particular site or area. These Area Policy Maps are therefore not to be used for direct interpretation.
- 1.6.2 In terms of Structure Plan Policy SET 8, minor revisions to road alignments and zoning provisions within the settlement boundaries, including amendments to road alignments within UCAs, have been made in this Local Plan that do not merit a specific policy for each amendment. These amendments are indicated in the CMLP Planning Control Maps (Volume 3) and are to be adopted on approval of the Local Plan by MEPA. The purpose of these revisions are to improve traffic circulation within settlements, to address conflicts between the TPS (1988) and the Structure Plan regarding building alignments and road widening within UCAs and to carry out minor revisions to zoning provisions where appropriate in planning terms. Account has also been taken of submissions made by the general public proposing amendments to the TPS. Wherever considered reasonable, such amendments that contribute to the proper planning of the area have been included in the Plan.
- 1.6.3 All references to the DC2005 document in this Local Plan refer to the Development Control Policy & Design Guidance (2005) or any subsequent revisions approved by MEPA. Other reference to specific policies, sections or paragraphs in either dated supplementary guidance or the Use Classes Order referred to in this Local Plan are also taken to refer to the relevant reference in any subsequent approved revisions or amendments by MEPA should these come into force during the duration of this Local Plan.
- 1.6.4 Where floor areas are stipulated in the Policies of this Local Plan, this should be taken to mean the Gross Lettable Floorspace. The Gross Lettable Floorspace refers to the whole floor area within the premises and on all its floors. It includes circulation areas (excluding stairs) and stores, and excludes staircases, toilets, internal shafts, yards and other unroofed areas unless they are used as an integral part of the development (e.g. open air restaurant).

## **2. Overall General Strategy**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 This Chapter sets out the overall general strategy for the CMLP. It also describes in some detail the different objectives for the plan area in relation to a number of topic areas.
- 2.1.2 The Local Plan designates specific areas of land in the various localities for the development of required land uses. In the formulation of area policies it has been ensured that sufficient and suitably located land is reserved for different land uses, thereby ensuring the further social, environmental and economic improvement of the plan area.
- 2.1.3 Most of the urban areas in the CMLP localities are residential in character. The Local Plan's primary goal is therefore to improve the urban environment mainly by means of policies that protect the amenity of all residential areas. These policies safeguard residential areas against bad neighbour developments and from over development, promote residential rehabilitation projects, protect existing urban spaces and important streetscapes, restrain car usage, improve conditions for pedestrians and ensure the additional provision of open spaces. The remaining rural areas in the central localities also require protection and this is achieved by restraining further urban expansion, by protecting areas of conservation value and by designating strategic open gaps between existing settlements.
- 2.1.4 The detailed objectives for the CMLP are set out below. A summary of these objectives is indicated on the Overall Strategy Map SEM1.

### **2.2 Settlements and Housing**

- 2.2.1 The urban sprawl that has occurred in the past is mainly attributed to the rapid and widespread growth of urban settlements. This form of urbanisation has caused the coalescence of settlements, increased congestion in many locations, a general loss of amenity and a marked depletion of open spaces. In addition a substantial number of buildings have been developed outside development zone further adding to these problems. As an objective the Local Plan seeks to make an efficient use of the land designated for development in the TPS (1988) through the introduction of appropriate policies that enable further expansion to take place within existing settlements. Clusters of buildings located outside development zone are identified as Category 1 and 2 Rural Settlements and as Areas of Containment, and a policy of strict containment is adopted for these areas. This objective has been adopted since the potential supply of dwelling units within scheme for the central zone localities is estimated to satisfy the demand to beyond 2010, and therefore there is no need for further land allocation for housing during the Local Plan period.  
*(relevant Structure Plan (hereforth referred to as SP) Policies SET1, SET8, SET11, BEN4, HOU1)*  
*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG02, CG03, CG04, CG05, CG06)*

- 2.2.2 The Local Plan proposes the rationalisation of the existing Limits to Development as designated in the Temporary Provisions Schemes (1988). These rationalisations generally arise in situations where clusters of existing buildings are located outside, but directly adjacent to, the scheme boundary. Infill pockets of development have also been proposed for inclusion in the development scheme. The boundary changes also deal with situations where the scheme boundaries have included awkwardly shaped peripheral plots, or where the scheme passes along visually intrusive blank party walls. These rationalizations result in better defined Limits to Development, whilst not significantly altering the overall supply of land for development.  
(*relevant Policies SET8*)  
(*relevant CMLP General Policy CG02*)
- 2.2.3 Since the potential supply of dwelling units in the Plan area is considerably greater than the housing demand as highlighted previously, there is no need to revise the existing building height limitations for the residential areas in order to further increase the supply of residential units. Existing building height limitations are therefore mostly retained. This approach will safeguard the residential character and amenity of all residential areas by limiting residential densities. However building height limitation changes are generally proposed for the Primary Town Centres in order to promote their viability and vitality by directing further commercial and other compatible land uses within them. Other building height changes are shown on the Building Height Limitations Maps and are indicated in Policy CG06.  
(*relevant SP Policies SET1, SET2, BEN2, HOU3*)  
(*relevant CMLP General Policy CG06*)
- 2.2.4 Certain residential areas have become unpopular to live in due to the establishment over a period of time of a number of commercial and bad neighbourly uses. As a result, a number of urban areas have been transformed into areas of mixed use. The importance of safeguarding the character of all residential areas cannot be overemphasised, and to this effect the objective seeks to improve the residential environment by controlling bad neighbour developments.  
(*relevant SP Policies BEN1, IND7*)  
(*relevant CMLP General Policies CG07, CG08*)

## **2.3 Urban Environment**

- 2.3.1 The overall historical and architectural value of the older urban areas has been undermined by the gradual insensitive redevelopment and alterations effected to existing buildings. Within the UCAs, MEPA believes that the character of different streets vary and it would like to see the development of a planning framework which does acknowledge this and provide relevant guidance for streets and clusters of streets as appropriate. To this affect, MEPA proposes to carry out a classification exercise of all streets within UCAs according to their conservation importance based on a grading hierarchy.  
(*relevant SP Policies BEN2, UCO2, UCO6, UCO7, UCO10*)  
(*relevant CMLP General Policies CG09, CG10*)
- 2.3.2 The provision of public open spaces within the urban areas of the Central Localities is very limited. Policies are therefore required in order to ensure the protection of these important landscaped spaces. The progressive introduction of more greenery in strategic urban locations and the embellishment of public open spaces and



squares, including enhancement of the character of town and local centres will gradually upgrade the public realm. Within the various Urban Conservation Areas, internal open space enclaves play a very important role in maintaining a very high quality urban environment. This is especially relevant to the three villages (Attard, Balzan and Lija) which are renowned for their large and beautiful gardens. The plan therefore identifies and protects these open space enclaves. The conservation, protection and enhancement of existing public open spaces private open space enclaves and urban ‘lungs’ is an objective of the Local Plan for improving the urban environment.

*(relevant SP Policies BEN18, BEN19, UCO4, UCO6, UCO12, UCO13, RCO32)*  
*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG09, CG11, CG18)*

## **2.4 Commerce and Industry**

2.4.1 The total number of jobs in the central zone accounts for 16.5% of the total number of jobs in the Maltese Islands, whereas the economically active population in the plan area amounts to 27.3% of the national total. Most of the jobs in the manufacturing, the business/community services, and the wholesale/retail sectors in the Local Plan area are concentrated in the localities of Birkirkara, Hamrun and Qormi. On the other hand, the outer rapidly expanding residential areas are deficient in the provision of employment opportunities. As a consequence there is a clear mismatch between the number of jobs and the number of workers in the outer settlements (Attard, Mosta and Naxxar). The result is that travel distances and time between outer residential areas and inner area jobs has increased substantially thereby adding to peak time traffic congestion. In order to address this issue, the local plan attempts to identify and promote new employment sites in line with the Employment Topic Paper objectives, especially in the outer residential areas.

*(relevant SP Policies SET2, IND1, IND6, IND12, IND13)*  
*(relevant CMLP Policies CG14, CG15, MO03)*

2.4.2 Office development approvals in the CMLP are equivalent to 36% (1997) of the total approved national floorspace for office development. This is the highest figure as compared to other Local Plan areas (Employment Topic Paper, November, 2001, MEPA). However the development of large and medium scale offices within industrial estates is depleting the supply of industrial land for manufacturing industries. Between 1995-1997, office developments within Mriehel and Qormi industrial areas accounted for about 70% of total approvals within Central Malta. Other offices have been constructed in various residential areas to the detriment of the latter. The Local Plan strategy is to direct office development to appropriate and sustainable locations including town centres, commercial areas and the Is-Sghajtar Development Brief area at Mosta.

*(SP Para. 10.5)*  
*(relevant CMLP Policy CG12, CG13, CG14, MO03)*

2.4.3 Since designations for town and local centres have not been made in the past, there was an absence of clear locational criteria for the development of commercial and retail establishments leading to unwarranted mixed use areas with all their related problems. An objective of this local plan is to enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and local centres by directing the development of retail, commercial and complementary uses to these locations, and by improving the efficiency and attractiveness of these centres. The development of retail uses outside these centres will only be considered in the context of their likely impact on the vitality and

viability of centres within the catchment of the proposed development along with their impact on their environs. Specific commercial areas are being designated in the Local Plan for the development of showrooms, offices and related uses.

*(relevant SP Policies COM7, Para. 10.7)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policy CG12, CG13, CG14, CG17)*

- 2.4.4 MIP managed industrial estates in the CMLP are located at Attard, part of Mriehel and Mosta Technopark whereas private industrial land is located at Mriehel, Mosta, and Qormi including Tal-Handaq. In the CMLP micro-enterprises amount to about 31% of all national micro-enterprises, and a number of these are located within residential areas. The plan puts special emphasis on ensuring that the environmental impacts of proposed industrial uses are acceptable. In addition the need for comprehensive planning of relatively large undeveloped industrial sites is important in order to promote the efficient use of land and a higher standard in the design, layout, infrastructure and servicing of large projects. To this effect, the plan requires that development be carried out in the form of Comprehensive Development Areas (CDAs) within identified areas in the industrial areas of Tal-Handaq in Qormi, Tal-Balal in Iklin and Tal-Qares in Mosta. In these CDAs, development will be subject to a number of conditions in order to achieve the abovementioned objectives.

*(relevant SP Policies IND2, IND6, IND12)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG05, CG07, CG15, CG16)*

- 2.4.5 Warehousing activity is a large land user in the CMLP with Qormi being a major warehousing locality having 40% (1997) of national warehousing space. Warehousing approvals in the CMLP amount to 37% (1997) of the total approved national floorspace for warehousing development. This is the highest figure as compared to other Local Plan Areas (Employment Topic Paper, Nov. 2001, MEPA). A substantial part of existing warehousing is located inappropriately within residential areas. New sites for warehousing are identified in the CMLP to accommodate new demand and for possible relocations. The adopted objective for warehousing in the Plan is to appropriately locate new warehousing and to prevent the further development of warehousing in residential areas to protect their amenity and direct the provision of such new facilities in appropriate areas.

*(relevant SP Policies IND1, IND2, IND12)*

*(relevant CMLP Policies CG05, CG15, MO03, QO06)*

## **2.5 Community Facilities**

- 2.5.1 A number of social and community facilities are required in various localities within the local plan area. These are required either to meet the demand created by newly developed residential areas, or in order to cater for the relocation of existing community facilities that are presently situated in unsuitable locations or buildings. As an objective for community facility provision the Plan therefore aims at ensuring an adequate level of provision for a range of such facilities. This particularly applies to community centres, health centres, educational establishments and homes for the elderly.

*(relevant SP Policies SOC1, SOC8, SOC10, SOC13, SOC15, SOC18, SOC20, SOC25)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG19, CG20, CG21)*

- 2.5.2 The Central Zone has one of the lowest levels of provision of recreation and sports facilities within the Maltese Islands. This implies that existing facilities should be protected, as their loss will inevitably be irreplaceable. The Local Plan promotes the provision of new recreational and sports facilities within suitable urban locations, and seeks to introduce countryside walkways, cycle routes, heritage trails and other indoor/outdoor sports and informal recreational activities.  
(*relevant SP Policies BEN19, TOU11, SOC14, REC1, REC3, REC4, REC8, REC13*)  
(*relevant CMLP Policies CG18, CG26, CG40, MO07, MO08*)
- 2.5.3 The Structure Plan does not identify the CMLP area as a primary tourism zone, and the Central Zone has very limited tourism accommodation provision. The Local Plan however encourages the promotion of additional tourist facilities and attractions, particularly through the provision of heritage trails, the creation of a park on the outskirts of Mosta, and the upgrading of the walkways along the Victoria Lines and the Mosta valleys. The objective for the coast is to conserve the open, natural setting of the coast between Ghallis and Bahar ic-Caghaq and facilitate access to it by introducing a coastal walkway/cycle route.  
(*relevant SP Policies TOU4, TOU9, TOU11, REC3, REC13*)  
(*relevant CMLP Policies CG26, MO07, MO08, NA004, NA05*)

## 2.6 Rural Environment

- 2.6.1 The Central Zone is very urbanised with limited remaining open undeveloped land. This is a result of the extensive urban sprawl, coalescence and fast economic growth experienced in the past. The remaining rural areas however include a number of significant valleys, the coast and important strategic open gaps that form natural landscape buffers between urban areas. Most of these identified areas are of high conservation value and are listed for protection. In addition the archaeological sites found within the Central Zone are also identified on the Local Plan maps and are listed for protection. The Local Plan rigidly controls development within these identified sites and areas of conservation value together with areas of high landscape sensitivity. Areas of agricultural land are also identified in the various Environmental Constraints Maps, and the Plan emphasises the need for further studies to be undertaken in order to identify Areas of Agricultural Value. Specific sites are also indicated in the Plan as requiring the implementation of Environmental Management Plans. These EMPs serve as a management and implementation tool for the future rehabilitation of indicated rural areas.  
(*relevant SP Policies SET 11, RCO1, RCO2, RCO3, RCO6, RCO12, RCO20, RCO28, ARC1*)  
(*relevant CMLP General Policies CG22, CG23, CG24, CG25, CG27, CG28*)
- 2.6.2 The Local Plan area contains an important part of the coastline of Naxxar. This consists of natural coastal features that are of ecological, scientific and landscape value and that require protection from development and conflicting uses. The nature of development acceptable within these areas is limited to public access improvements along the coast. In tandem the development of coastal recreational uses is directed and focused at Bahar ic-Caghaq that is already committed to this type of development.  
(*relevant SP Policies RCO21, CZM2, CZM3*)  
(*relevant CMLP Policies NA04, NA05*)

## **2.7 Management of Water Resources and Quarrying**

- 2.7.1 The main issues related to infrastructure in the plan area concern flooding within built up areas and the protection of groundwater resources. The local plan deals with the flooding issue by identifying the areas prone to flooding risk, by controlling development within these areas, and by recommending required flood defence measures. Important groundwater resources are indicated on MapCV1 and the Plan seeks to prohibit developments that are likely to pose a pollution risk to such areas. Regarding quarries, the Local Plan identifies buffer areas between quarries and sensitive areas. The Plan also identifies suitable quarry reuses for strategically located disused quarries.

*(relevant SP Policies PUT4, PUT5, PUT8, PUT17, MIN13)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG29, CG30, CG32, CG33)*

## **2.8 Transport**

- 2.8.1 The general transport policies aim to achieve four main objectives. The first objective is the encouragement of greater use of public transport that could be achieved through increasing the attractiveness of bus services with supportive land use policies. The second objective relates to the need to control car parking, both the number of spaces available and their usage, so as to make best use of available resources, and to encourage the greater use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport. The third goal is the promotion of sustainable means and patterns of development and travel. The final objective aims to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the road network, particularly to support the other three objectives.

*(relevant SP Policies TEM2, TEM3, TEM7, TEM9, RDS1, RDS2, RDS4, RDS7, TRA4, PTR1, PTR2, PTR3, PTR9)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG34, CG35, CG36, CG37, CG38, CG39)*

- 2.8.2 The dramatic rise in car usage over recent years has produced significant problems. However car ownership will continue to increase. Therefore, if serious adverse environmental, economic and social impacts are to be avoided, car usage in some localities and particularly at peak periods needs to be restrained.

*(relevant SP Policies TEM3, TEM7, TEM9, TEM10)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG34, CG35, CG36)*

- 2.8.3 The use of public transport has declined and private car use increased. This has repercussions on the central localities as substantial through traffic uses this area's road network especially at peak traffic hours. Therefore in order to provide an attractive, convenient, alternative form of travel, a wide range of measures need to be introduced to halt and reverse the decline in the use of bus services. Additionally, conditions for pedestrians and cyclists need to be greatly improved, so that those undertaking short journeys are more inclined to use these environmentally friendly modes of transport.

*(relevant SP Policies RDS7, RDS9, TEM7, TEM9, PTR1, PTR2, PTR3, PTR9)*

*(relevant CMLP General Policies CG34, CG35, CG36, CG40)*

- 2.8.4 The Structure Plan highlights the need to co-ordinate land use and transport with the objective of reducing transport problems by minimising the requirement to travel. Building on this approach the local plan introduces the concept of strategic bus corridors. Along these corridors measures will be introduced to improve the speed, reliability and convenience of bus services, together with land use policies intended to promote greater bus usage. Concentrating major employment generating developments along, or close to, these corridors will increase the opportunity for good public transport provision.  
*(relevant SP Policies TEM2, TEM7, PTR3, PTR8, PTR9)*  
*(relevant CMLP General Policy CG34)*



# General Policies





## **3. General Policies**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 This chapter presents those policies that apply to the entire or substantial parts of the plan area. The General Policies being covered are in general conformity with Structure Plan policies and are in accordance with the goals and objectives set out in Chapter 2. These policies also set out the framework for more detailed area policies. They thus act as a link between the existing Structure Plan policy framework and the site specific planning requirements of the Local Plan area. The general policies contained in this chapter are grouped into the following topic area subdivisions:

- Settlements and Housing
- Urban Environment
- Commerce and Industry
- Community Facilities
- Rural Environment
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Transport.

### **3.2 Overall General Policy**

#### **CG01 Development in the Absence of Specific Policies**

**MEPA will determine the acceptability of development permission applications on land which is not covered by policies in the Local Plan in accordance with:**

- i. The zoning conditions and building alignments as indicated in the Temporary Provisions Schemes (1988) or such revised schemes as provided in this Plan. Furthermore, consideration shall be given to the existing building typologies on site and any other self-imposed building characteristics;**
- ii. The DC2005;**
- iii. Other relevant approved policies and design guidance;**
- iv. Structure Plan policies; and**
- v. Any other relevant material planning considerations relating to the site and to its context.**

**In the determination of development planning applications, MEPA will also take into full account all relevant constraints affecting the site.**

3.2.1 The Local Plan has attempted to indicate a complete range of acceptable land uses and development control criteria for the Plan area. However there may be exceptions where certain planning applications cannot be directly assessed in relation to Local Plan policies. To give guidance on how to assess such planning applications therefore, unless otherwise specified, it can be assumed that proposals which are compatible with the TPS (1988), with the DC2005, and all the relevant policy and design guidance and the Structure Plan will be acceptable. MEPA may

also have regard to pre-1988 schemes where these give guidance (particularly on building alignments) and to other material considerations relevant to the site and to the type and form of development proposed.

### 3.3 Settlements and Housing

#### CG02

#### Urban Development Boundaries

**The Local Plan recommends changes to the Limits to Development as designated in the Temporary Provisions Schemes (1988) in order to secure their rationalisation. These recommended changes are being indicated in the relevant Planning Control Maps in Volume 3; Part B of this Plan.**

**Confirmation of these recommended changes to the Limits to Development will, however, have to wait the finalisation of the Structure Plan Review that takes place after the approval of this Local Plan in accordance with Policy SET8 of the Structure Plan (1990). These recommended changes are also subject to Parliamentary approval.**

**Urban development will not be permitted outside the approved Limits to Development unless indicated through this Local Plan. In addition, it will only be considered if in the opinion of MEPA, and in accordance with Structure Plan Policies SET11 and SET12, the site is essential for the proposed development and no specific designation for the use to be accommodated within the development boundary has been made.**

- 3.3.1 The Local Plan recommends changes to the scheme boundary to secure the rationalization of anomalies in the existing Limits to Development. In accordance with Policy SET8, these rationalizations are subject to the approval of the Structure Plan Review and are also subject to Parliamentary Approval. The rationalization of the Urban Development Boundary is recommended where the situations described in paragraphs 3.3.2 to 3.3.5 arise.
- 3.3.2 Rationalisation is required where the Limit to Development in the TPS passes over existing peripheral buildings. In the first instance the Limit to Development is being amended where necessary in order to generally include the entire footprint of the peripheral buildings. In addition where the Limit to Development is passing along the backyards of peripheral buildings, and the existing building depth is less than 25 meters, then the Limit to Development is being shifted so as to allow a building depth of 25 metres. However, no additional land is being included within scheme where such land is listed for protection in accordance with Policies CG22 and CG23.
- 3.3.3 Rationalisation is also required for those situations where the Limit to Development passes along a visually obtrusive exposed third party wall of an existing building. In such cases the Limit to Development is being shifted outwards in order to include an additional plot of land for development (an “end of terrace“ or “end plot” development), with an imposed side garden of 3 metres, so as to conceal the existing blank party wall. The road frontage of this additional plot shall not exceed the width of 10 metres. Development on this end plot shall have a suitably and sensitively designed elevation fronting onto the imposed side garden. However no “end of terrace“ development is being designated where the inclusion of land would result in the felling of existing important trees that positively contribute to the

landscape and the townscape, and in those instances where the land to be included is listed for protection in this Local Plan under Policies CG22 and CG23.

- 3.3.4 Finally rationalisation involves clusters of buildings located directly adjacent to the main urban area, but outside development zone. These clusters of mainly residential buildings have emerged for various reasons such as their creation as a result of a number of permits being granted on the basis of the Building Development Areas Act (1983) to their exclusion from the TPS (1988) when these were approved. Although located outside development zone, these buildings are considered to form an integral part of the urban area. This policy attempts to rectify this situation by proposing a rationalisation of the scheme boundary through the inclusion of these clusters of buildings within scheme. Another category of scheme amendments relates to the recommended inclusion of infill pockets as indicated in Part B of Volume 3. These follow the recommended Policy CG03 of the Central Malta Local Plan Public Consultation Draft (2002) as approved by MEPA for public consultation. The inclusion of these areas within the Urban Development Boundary at the next Structure Plan review will not significantly increase the amount of land that is available for development.
- 3.3.5 Particular attention shall be given to the architectural design of new buildings on the edge of the Urban Development Boundary so as to ensure that no adverse visual impacts are created. In particular special attention shall be given to the design of all facades and back elevations, the location of services and the design of high garden walls. In cases of development or redevelopment on the edge of the Urban Development Boundary no new blank party walls will be allowed.

## **CG03**

## **Category 1 Rural Settlements**

**MEPA designates Category 1 Rural Settlements within which development will be carried out strictly within the designated boundaries as indicated in the relevant Planning Control Maps in Volume 3; Part B of this Plan. These are settlements which are located in close proximity to the main urban areas where due attention must be given to the design of new buildings. Particular attention must be given to the design of buildings on the edge of the boundary of the settlement so as to ensure that no adverse visual impacts are created especially through the creation of new party walls. A side garden of at least 3m, with an elevation fronting upon it, will be required for sites on the boundary's edge. Priority will be given to the rehabilitation of buildings of historical or architectural interest within these settlements. Land uses which fall within those identified by Policy CG07 will be permitted within this group of Category 1 settlements. Development within the designated Category 1 Rural Settlements shall not exceed the maximum building height limitation of two floors.**

- 3.3.6 The above mentioned rural settlements are being designated as Category 1 Rural Settlements so as to ensure their consolidation. The close proximity of these small settlements to the main urban areas, their building typology and the land uses within them does not clearly distinguish them from nearby urban areas. There is therefore no scope in recommending that sites located within these small settlements will continue to be considered in the context of policies that are applicable to rural conservation areas.

The settlements of Maghtab and Bidnija as indicated in Planning Control Maps NAB7 and MOB8 are designated as Category 2 Rural Settlements located within a wider rural area that should be conserved, consolidated and rehabilitated while protecting their rural character.

Within these Large Rural Settlements rehabilitation, development and re-development for the following land uses will be permitted.

- A. Dwelling units (new units on uncommitted land, redevelopment of existing buildings, rehabilitation of existing buildings, and extensions to existing buildings used for residential purposes) provided the units:**
- i. do not create a building with more than 150m<sup>2</sup> footprint measured externally at ground floor including any internal courtyards;**
  - ii. have not less than 120m<sup>2</sup> and not more than 200m<sup>2</sup> total floorspace measured externally;**
  - iii. have an independent access from any other residential unit;**
  - iv. do not create a building which is higher than two floors without basement above road level at any point along the street frontage, provided that it would not have a detrimental affect on the character of the settlement and the surrounding rural landscape;**
  - v. structures at roof level do not have a floorspace of more than 20m<sup>2</sup> measured externally, do not exceed 12 courses overall height measured externally from the lowest roof level, and are located to minimise their visual impact;**
  - vi. have a high quality design aimed at retaining and enhancing the existing character of the settlement and which demonstrates that due attention has been given to the impact of the new building on the character of the settlement and its surrounding rural environment, and which complies with any eventual Settlement Design Statement (SDS) prepared by MEPA; and**
  - vii. provide on site parking for not more than two car-spaces.**

**In addition, when the new dwelling unit is being proposed as complete re-development of an existing building:**

- a) the existing building is not worthy of retention due to its historical and/or architectural merit and/or the contribution it makes to the character of the settlement; and**
- b) the new building, if allowable under (a) above, occupies the same position on the land in relation to the street as the existing building.**

**For the purposes of this policy an existing building includes only any building with an external footprint of not less than 50sqm which is covered by a valid development permission or else has existed prior to 1968 and can be identified in the MEPA 1967 aerial photographs. An existing building does not include greenhouses, agricultural buildings which are essential for the operation of an agricultural holding, and abandoned and dilapidated structures which are isolated from the main settlement.**

**For the purposes of this policy uncommitted land includes only:**

- 1. infill sites with a street frontage of not more than 14.0m which abut blank party walls one storey high, or more, on both sides;**

2. corner sites defined by two public roads with a site area of not more than 300sqm which abut blank party walls one storey high, or more, on both sides;
3. sites which have a road frontage of not more than 10.0m which abut blank party walls one storey high, or more, on one side and which form the end of a terrace of at least 3 dwellings with frontage on the same street, provided a strip of land of at least 3.0m in width adjacent to the side elevation of the new dwelling is landscaped. No structures will be permitted below this 3.0m strip.

Boundary walls of gardens, yards, swimming pool areas and any other open space surrounding an adjacent land-use cannot be considered as a party wall in relation to this policy. Sites that contain mature trees which contribute to the character of the settlement do not constitute uncommitted land even if they fall within the definition stated above.

- B. Farmhouses for livestock farmers, arable farmers and other growers provided the criteria stated under “(A)” above are complied with.
- C. Agricultural buildings for livestock farming and for arable farming provided they comply with the criteria set out in the draft Policy & Design Guidance “Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (2005)”. The rural settlement is to be considered as an inhabited area for the purposes of the draft Policy & Design Guidance “Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (2005)”.
- D. Retail outlets provided that the shops:
  - i. are located at ground floor level only of an existing building or of a proposed new building on uncommitted land as defined by this policy;
  - ii. sell convenience goods only; and
  - iii. do not have a floor area of more than 50m<sup>2</sup>.
- E. Farm Retail Outlets provided they comply with the criteria set out in the draft Policy & Design Guidance “Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (2005)”.

The Settlement Design Statements (SDS) referred to in criterion A (vi) above, to be prepared by MEPA, should:

- i. Identify precisely the uncommitted land within these settlements which can be released for development;
- ii. Investigate the need to draw settlement boundaries around these settlements;
- iii. Make recommendations for possible settlement boundaries should a need for them be identified through the further studies carried out under (ii) above;
- iv. Provide additional guidance on the design of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings within these settlements;
- v. Identify additional measures to protect and enhance the character of these settlements.

The absence of an SDS for a particular settlement should not prejudice the implementation of the other provisions of this policy.

- 3.3.7 The two rural settlements covered by this policy include Bidnija and Maghtab. The Bidnija settlement includes two clusters of buildings situated at Tal-Hireb and Tal-Milord but excludes the villas found to the west of Tal-Milord. These villas are too distant and dispersed to be considered as part of the main rural settlement. On the other hand, the Maghtab settlement is spread out over a large linear area.

- 3.3.8 Maghtab lacks an identifiable core area and has a number of existing different uses apart from farmhouses. These existing uses include residential units of varying types and design, batching plants, plant yards, garage industries, animal husbandry farms as well as a substantial number of disused buildings. Due to these mixed and conflicting uses and the disorganised character of this settlement, Maghtab is affected by a fall in rural quality and amenity. The aim of this policy is to counteract these problems by preventing the further development of incompatible uses in the area and by directing further growth only to infill, corner and end of terrace sites as defined in the policy.
- 3.3.9 This policy seeks to reach a balance by allowing the consolidation of these settlements through sustainable rural development and protecting their rural character by preventing development, which may adversely affect those intrinsic features of the settlements (historical buildings, considerable gap sites between buildings, landscaping), and their setting.
- 3.3.10 The acceptable land uses in these settlements are aimed at ensuring the genuine needs of agriculture are met, the remnants of agricultural activity are retained and allowing for rural diversification. These settlements can also absorb some development, which might be necessary for diversification of the rural economy but could have an adverse impact if located in the open countryside.
- 3.3.11 Restrictions on site planning, footprints, building heights, and car-parking provision are being introduced to ensure that all new development will not create unacceptable environmental impacts. Settlement Design Statements will be prepared by MEPA for these settlements and these Design Statements would describe the distinctive character of the settlement and its immediate surrounding countryside; show how the character of the settlement can be identified by its landscape setting, its shape and the nature of the buildings themselves; and draw up design principles based on the particular distinctive character of the designated settlement. Most importantly it would identify the specific locations where opportunities exist for new development to take place and investigate the need for settlement boundaries around these settlements, and make recommendations where appropriate.
- 3.3.12 Strict criteria for the identification of “existing buildings” and “uncommitted land” are also identified by the policy to ensure that the minimum amount of fresh land is taken up by development, in line with the overall strategy of consolidation and conservation. The elimination of blank party walls, leading to the visual enhancement of the settlement, was the main objective of this definition.
- 3.3.13 Given that mature trees constitute important components of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and are also important aesthetic features of our rural landscape and within rural settlements, these will be protected. Trees associated with rural settlements are generally indigenous or archaeophytic species that are exploited for agricultural purposes such as carob trees, olive trees, almond trees and pomegranates. Although some of these trees, such as carob trees, were much more commonly exploited in the past, they are generally associated with the agricultural landscape that constitutes a predominant feature within the Maltese rural environment. In this regard, such trees complement the character and heritage value of rural settlements. Therefore apart from being of intrinsic, ecological and scientific value, trees within rural settlements are also deemed to be of high aesthetic value. The majority of indigenous or archaeophytic trees are protected by Legal Notice 12 of 2001. This Legal Notice also protects trees that are more than 50

years of age provided that they are not considered to be invasive (invasive species are listed in Schedule V of this Legal Notice), and provided that they are not causing any damage to the biological identity of trees listed in Schedules I and II of this Legal Notice.

## **CG05**

## **Areas of Containment**

**MEPA designates Areas of Containment in Iklin, Lija, Mosta, Naxxar and Qormi within which permitted development will be carried out strictly within the boundaries as designated in the relevant Planning Control Maps in Volume 3; Part B of this Plan.**

**Following the approval of this plan MEPA will on a case by case basis review industrial and commercial operations within such Areas of Containment, and identify acceptable operations within such areas together with required road layouts. Mitigation measures are to be implemented on the selected sites to reduce negative impacts in the form of comprehensive schemes to upgrade the visual elements of these areas, which would include landscaping and other embellishment measures, as well as the provision of adequate common parking areas.**

**Pending the finalization of this review, MEPA will only consider the change of use and/or minor alterations to existing buildings within the designated Areas of Containment provided that all the following conditions are adhered to;**

- 1. The use of the proposed development will be similar to any use already existing and permitted within the Area of Containment. However, if the proposed use is not considered to be desirable, then MEPA will consider a more acceptable alternative use;**
- 2. Compliance with any required mitigation measures that may be identified during the assessment process of the proposed development;**
- 3. It is demonstrated to the satisfaction of MEPA that no deleterious impacts will result from the proposed development on existing uses in the vicinity of the site; and**
- 4. Particular attention will be given to the design of the proposed development so as to ensure that visual impacts will be mitigated.**

**The provisions of Policy CG16 are also applicable to sites that are designated as CDAs.**

3.3.14 The existing industrial and commercial developments designated by this policy constitute urban development which is undesirably located outside development zone. All these developments should ideally have been planned within the Limits to Development and not in their present location outside development zone. Notwithstanding this, the relocation of these areas would be too difficult and costly a task, and is therefore not considered to be a feasible option. These existing built up areas are therefore being designated as Areas of Containment in order to prevent their further outward expansion. As far as possible the boundaries of the designated areas have been delineated to provide an appropriate building depth and block layout thereby improving the current irregular layouts.

In line with the Plan's overall strategy, building height limitations have been reviewed for each local council area and are detailed through the relevant area policies and Building Heights and Urban Design Maps. The Local Plan designates only limited relaxation of Building Height Limitations established by the Temporary Provision Schemes (1988).

Development shall comply with the maximum building height limitation indicated in the relevant Building Heights and Urban Design Maps, shall comply with the relevant area policies that regulate building heights, shall be in accordance with the criteria for building heights established in the DC2005, and shall comply with all the relevant sanitary regulations.

Where an additional recessed floor is allowed as indicated in the relevant Building Height Limitations Maps, the following conditions will apply;-

- i. The recessed floor is to be constructed with a recess of at least 4.25m from the building alignment; and,
- ii. No penthouses are to be constructed above the recessed floor.

Where the need arises for an existing school to extend so as to incorporate required ancillary facilities, and this expansion cannot be achieved by means of horizontal extensions due to site constraints, then MEPA in consultation with the Department of Education will consider the development of an additional floor for the school above the maximum building height limitation indicated in the relevant Building Height Limitations and Urban Design Maps. This additional floor will be considered irrespective of the predominant height of existing buildings located in the vicinity of the site in question. However, extension above the height limitation will not be permitted by MEPA in the following circumstances:

1. For additional classrooms which would result in an increase in the student population of the school;
2. For schools located within Residential Priority Areas; and
3. Where the additional floor would, in MEPA's opinion, create an unacceptable visual impact on important scheduled or landmark buildings as viewed in their setting and/or against the skyline.

MEPA will also consider relaxing building height limitations in relation to the provision of Public Civic Facilities in accordance with the criteria of Policy CG20, and in relation to the provision of CPPS Car Parks in accordance with the criteria of the relevant Area Policies. However, should the School, Public Civic Facility or CPPS Car Park land uses cease to operate and a change of use be approved by MEPA involving the demolition and reconstruction of the existing buildings on site, the development right for the additional floor shall be nullified and the building height of the new development is to conform to the maximum building height limitation as indicated for the site in the relevant Building Height and Urban Design Map. Furthermore, if the use of the structure for School, Public Civic Facility or CPPS Car Park land uses remains in operation for a period of ten years or longer, then the additional floor can be retained even where a change of use has been permitted by MEPA.

The maximum building height limitations indicated in this local plan override any approved supplementary guidelines with respect to building heights.



- 3.3.15 The Local Plan adopts a restrictive approach on building heights so as to safeguard the character and amenity of all residential areas by limiting residential densities. Within Urban Conservation Areas building height amendments have been effected to the TPS (1988) in line with the provisions of the 'Design Guidance: Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas'. Therefore within UCAs the designated building height limitations as indicated in the Building Height Limitations Maps actually reflect the predominant height of the existing buildings. Urban areas that were already developed in the 1960's have generally been developed without semi-basements. Therefore in order to safeguard the streetscapes of these urban areas as identified in the relevant Building heights Maps, no new buildings with semi-basements will be permitted. For sites and areas outside development zone that are being recommended by this plan to be included within the Urban Development Boundary during the Structure Plan Review, a restrictive approach to building heights is being taken in order to safeguard long distance views and the landscape.
- 3.3.16 Notwithstanding this general restrictive approach on building heights, an additional receded floor is being allowed in those parts of the Primary Town Centres of Birkirkara, Hamrun and Mosta that are located within the Urban Conservation Areas. This is aimed at enhancing the function of these Centres by allowing businesses to expand within these preferred locations. Furthermore, the consequent intensification of employment-generating uses along main transport routes in most of these centres is in line with the Local Plan transport strategy. The additional allowable floor is to be receded in order to ensure the least adverse effect on the skyline and the streetscape of the Centres. This height relaxation however does not apply to Triq il-Kungress Ewkaristiku in Mosta in order to preserve the existing uniform skyline of this street of scenic value.
- 3.3.17 Building height relaxation not exceeding one floor is being permitted on school sites if this is the only option available to accommodate school extensions needed for the provision of new ancillary educational facilities (e.g.; media room, computer labs, art rooms etc.). This is being sought so as to avoid the costly relocation of existing schools. However, these vertical extensions will be allowed by MEPA provided that they are strictly in line with the Department of Education's school design policy and regulations. MEPA will not permit that the new space provided by the extension be used for new classrooms as this would increase the student population and thereby lead to increased impacts in traffic generation and reduced amenity. School extensions above height limitation for sites located within RPAs or affecting important Local Views in UCAs are not being allowed in order to protect the environment and amenity of these areas. Other floor increases are planned for Public Civic Facilities subject to conditions, and for CPPS Car Parks in order to help cross-subsidise such projects.
- 3.3.18 Other building height changes to the TPS (1988) as shown on the Building Heights Limitations Maps concern existing government housing blocks and schools that are already constructed at higher levels than the overall height limitation of the locality. In addition, the Commercial Area at Blata l-Bajda in Hamrun presently consists of buildings constructed up to six floors. Taking into account the predominant height of existing buildings in this commercial area, townscape considerations and the omission of higher density development, a five-floor height limitation is designated for Blata l-Bajda.

The Local Plan designates Residential Areas (RAs) within the Urban Development Boundaries of the following settlements as indicated in the relative Area Policy Maps:

Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Gharghur, Hamrun, Iklin, Lija, Mosta, Naxxar, Qormi and Sta. Venera

The following is a list of acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the RAs.

- i. A mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) terraced residential development as detailed in the DC 2005, Part 3, and in accordance with the specific zoning conditions indicated in the same guidance, unless otherwise stated by a policy in this Local Plan;
- ii. Class 2 (Use Classes Order, 1994) residential institutions, provided that:
  - they are of a small scale and do not create adverse impacts on the residential amenity of the area;
  - Class 2 (a) institutions are located in close proximity to a town or local centre; and,
  - Class 2 (b) nursing homes and clinics are easily accessible from the arterial and distributor road network.
- iii. Class 3 (Use Classes Order, 1994) hostels.
- iv. Class 4 (Use Classes Order, 1994) small shops provided that:
  - the small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 sqm each, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 sqm each;
  - they comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and
  - they comply with any relevant section of the DC2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).
- v. Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy CG17.
- vi. Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices provided that:
  - the floorspace does not exceed 75 sqm;
  - they do not unacceptably exacerbate parking problems in a residential street that already has an acute under provision of parking spaces for residents; and,
  - they comply with any relevant section of the DC 2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).
- vii. Classes 7 and 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994) non-residential institutions, swimming bath or pool, skating rink, health club, sauna, sports hall, other indoor or outdoor land based sports or recreation uses not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, and interpretation centres, provided the facility:
  - is of a small scale and does not create adverse impacts on the residential amenity of the area;
  - is located on land already occupied by buildings and will replace these buildings provided they are not worthy of retention due to their historic/architectural merit and/or their contribution to the character of the area, unless land is specifically allocated for the facility by this Local Plan; and,
  - the immediate surroundings of the site are already of a mixed use character.

- viii. **Class 8 (Use Classes Order, 1994) educational facilities, provided that access and the character of the area are taken into account and are deemed adequate by MEPA to allow the safe and neighbour compatible use of such facilities.**
- ix. **Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry provided that:**
  - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products);**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);**
  - **The activity employs less than 5 people; and**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.**

**Examples of acceptable uses considered by MEPA include tailor, cobbler, lace making and computer and electronic repair. Moreover, examples of unacceptable uses include carpentry, panel beating, mechanic, mechanical plant servicing, spray painting and bakery.**

**Proposals to convert from existing Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994) general industry to Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry within designated Residential Areas shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA if all the conditions listed above are adhered to, and provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.**

- x. **Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles as per para. 6.15 of DC2005.**

**Land-uses falling outside those mentioned above will not be considered favourably within the designated RAs, unless there are overriding reasons to locate such uses within these areas.**

- 3.3.19 Residential Areas are the predominant land use in the urban areas especially on levels above ground floor. The range of non-residential activities, especially at ground floor level, tends to be a mix of uses and includes shops and offices, mostly of a local scale and serving local need, spread throughout the predominantly residential area. Garage businesses, schools, showrooms, bars and other uses can also be found in some residential areas, but the range and scale of the mix of uses is greatly influenced by the locality itself.
- 3.3.20 This policy seeks to guide the future growth of Residential Areas primarily by encouraging the location of more dwelling units within them. It is not the intention of MEPA to create “dormitory towns” through a rigid zoning policy, but it is important that these areas remain primarily an attractive place to live in and remain predominantly residential in use. This policy applies to all sites within the Residential Areas, unless a specific site is controlled by other policies in this Local Plan, in which case the site-specific policy should take precedence.
- 3.3.21 This policy also identifies those non-residential uses that can be located within the Residential Areas because they support and enhance community amenity (such as very small shops, old people’s homes or kindergartens) and/or do not create adverse environmental impacts (such as small offices and small health facilities or visitor attractions). The policy specifically excludes land-uses that are deemed to be incompatible with Residential Areas due to their nature and scale of activity, such

as bad neighbour industrial uses. In this regard, acceptable light industrial uses in residential areas shall only include very low impact industrial activities such as electronic repair, servicing and maintenance as well as handcrafts that do not inherently require the use of electrical machinery, especially those related to textiles. Activities which require the extensive use of manual percussive tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc) are not deemed compatible with residential areas.

## **CG08**

## **Residential Priority Areas**

**The Local Plan designates Residential Priority Areas (RPAs) within the Urban Development Boundaries of the following settlements as indicated in the relative Area Policy Maps:**

**Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Gharghur, Hamrun, Iklin, Lija, Mosta, Naxxar and Sta. Venera**

**The acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses and change of uses) within all frontages located within the RPAs are:**

- i. A mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) terrace houses, maisonettes and flats on sites zoned in the relative Area Policy Maps for these specific forms of residential development. This development is to be in accordance with the relevant conditions as detailed in the DC2005, Part 3, unless otherwise stated by a policy in this Local Plan; and**
- ii. A mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) detached and semi-detached dwellings on sites zoned in the relative Area Policy Maps for these specific forms of residential development. This development is to be in accordance with the relevant conditions as detailed in the DC2005, Part 3, unless otherwise stated by a policy in this Local Plan.**

**If a master plan agreed to by 75% of the owners of the gross floor area for each of the identified sites at Birkirkara, Hamrun and Santa Venera as indicated on Maps BKM1, HAM1 and SVM1 is submitted to MEPA, the re/development of the identified villa sites to terrace houses, maisonettes and flats may be considered favorably by MEPA under the following conditions:**

- a) The uses comply with Policy CG07 Residential Areas; and**
- b) The height limitation is for three floors plus semi-basement for all these sites notwithstanding that this does not conform to the building height limitation as indicated in the relevant Building Height Limitations Maps.**

**In the absence of an approved master plan, development of individual plots should follow the conditions set out in the DC 2005 for the relevant Villa Areas.**

3.3.22 Residential Priority Areas are generally used exclusively for residential purposes. RPAs are distinct from other urban areas because of the particular building design of the existing semi-detached/detached dwellings and bungalows, lower densities and appreciable landscaped areas within individual sites. These areas can be extensive such as in the case of Naxxar and Iklin, or may consist of small enclaves such as in Birkirkara, Mosta and Blata-l-Bajda. The proliferation of non-residential uses within these RPAs is likely to have a serious impact on their particular residential character and amenity, and is therefore not permitted by MEPA.

- 3.3.23 The second part of the Policy that is referring to the possible change from villa to terrace house zoning relates to specific blocks that had been zoned for villa development in the 1960s Town Planning Schemes and where, over the years, a number of developments both within the blocks and in the surrounding areas occurred which seriously compromised their low-density residential character. This policy is aimed at guiding the future development of these sites within their context and ensuring that a balance is reached between the demands to develop land more efficiently and intensively and the needs of the existing residents.

## **3.4 Urban Environment**

### **CG09**

### **Urban Conservation Areas**

**MEPA shall carry out a rigorous character appraisal of all the streets in the Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs) in the Local Plan area with the following aims:**

- 1. To generally revise and update the UCA boundaries of all settlements further to the revisions to the UCA boundaries as approved in this Plan;**
- 2. To establish a classification of streets according to their conservation value that takes into account the quality of the architecture, streetscapes, open spaces, the location and setting of listed/scheduled buildings and dwelling layouts;**
- 3. To establish a location specific, comprehensive policy framework to guide development proposals within the street hierarchies of the UCAs. In the interim period, development proposals within the designated UCAs will be required to comply with the relevant policies of the Structure Plan and with MEPA's "Design Guidelines: Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas (1995)" unless specific policies in this Local Plan indicate otherwise.**
- 4. To establish a comprehensive policy framework that encourages the sustainable regeneration of declining areas within UCAs; and,**
- 5. To identify measures aimed at mitigating existing negative visual impacts and to enhance the character and appearance of each specific UCA.**

**In the open space enclaves in the UCAs of Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Gharghur, Lija, Mosta, Naxxar and Santa Venera as designated on the relevant Area Policy Maps, MEPA will not consider any development or redevelopment proposals that create new independent residential/non-residential units, including garages for the parking of vehicles.**

**In the identified open space enclaves, development proposals will only be considered if they:**

- (i) Constitute an extension to an existing building aimed at increasing the amenity and enjoyment of the property; or**
- (ii) Form part of a conversion scheme aimed at bringing a disused or dilapidated building back into use, even if such a scheme will create new residential/non-residential units; or**
- (iii) Form part of redevelopment schemes provided these comply with all other policies relating to control of development in UCAs; or**
- (iv) Involve solely the construction or enlargement of a swimming pool together with its ancillary reservoir, pump room and paving or hard surfacing around the pool or such development if linked to (i) and (ii) above.**

**In addition, the development proposals listed above will be considered provided that all the following conditions are complied with:**

- a. The proposals under (i), (ii) and (iii) do not result in a building depth of more than 25m from street frontage;**
- b. The proposals under (i) and (ii) are physically attached with the main building and form an integral part of the main building;**
- c. The scale, bulk and design of the proposals under (i), (ii) and (iii) do not compromise the openness of the enclave and the architectural integrity of the existing building;**
- d. The design, materials and colours of the swimming pool and paving in (iv) are compatible with the character of the enclave;**
- e. The take up of soil or planted areas, irrespective of the existing condition of such areas, for the development permitted under (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) should be minimal and in no case exceed 15% of the total soil and planted areas of the site; and**
- f. They do not adversely affect existing features which are worthy of retention, including tall/mature trees (such as oaks, conifers or palms), but consideration may be given in exceptional cases to the relocation of such features within the same open space provided the existing location is not an intrinsic part of the character of the open space and the relocation will not result in the destruction or serious alterations of the same feature.**

**Development proposals in those parts of the open space enclaves which are scheduled will be controlled by the Legal Notice giving statutory standing to such scheduling, together with all other policies relevant to such scheduling.**

**The provisions of Part B paras. 2 and 3 of the Development Control within UCAs Design Guidance of 1995 are being replaced by this policy for the identified open space enclaves.**

- 3.4.1 UCAs consist of important historic, architectural and townscape elements which are fundamental to their character and which must be conserved. To this end MEPA considers it a priority to conduct a comprehensive exercise whereby UCA boundaries will be reviewed, and all the streets within the UCAs are classified according to their architectural qualities, their conservation importance and the quality of residential accommodation within them. This identification process would enable MEPA to identify those urban areas that are extremely important to the heritage of the locality and therefore highly sensitive to interventions, and other parts that can absorb some development without undue negative impacts. Once this classification is approved and adopted, all development planning applications within UCAs will be determined taking into full account of the provisions of this classification and the associated policy framework. The comprehensive policy framework will also seek to reverse the trend in declining urban areas that are experiencing problems of out-migration, an ageing population, vacant and substandard housing, overcrowding and poor environmental conditions by actively promoting sustainable regeneration projects.
- 3.4.2 Open spaces, both private and public, in UCAs perform essential functions of separating land uses in high density areas, protect amenity by supporting trees and vegetation, define the form of the urban settlement, and are an important element in local architecture and traditional urban character. Conservation policies in the 1990 Structure Plan and the 1995 Supplementary Planning Guidelines on UCAs provide

the current policy framework for controlling development in such spaces. As part of the Local Plan process, concern, based on experience in implementing the Structure Plan policies, was raised on the adequacy of the Supplementary Planning Guidelines to protect private open spaces in UCAs.

- 3.4.3 A detailed review of the guidelines in relation to private open space in UCAs revealed that through its generic statements, the policy document created loopholes that have given rise to development opportunities in open spaces which were not intended by the Structure Plan and would harm the UCAs themselves. The distinction in the guidelines between the core and the periphery of UCAs requires clarification and the criteria for assessing development have shortcomings, which needed to be addressed.
- 3.4.4 This policy prohibits any new development proposals in open space enclaves which will create new residential units, or any other type of new uses, as these will increase densities in UCAs, which will in turn have a direct negative impact on their character, especially due to additional traffic generation and parking requirements. The policy then identifies those development proposals which can be accepted because they will not seriously harm the value of the enclaves with the condition that certain constraints are applied. The conditions ensure that, while not hindering the enjoyment of private property or undermining the objective of revitalising deteriorating urban cores, physical development will not prejudice the intrinsic features and character of the open space.
- 3.4.5 This policy reflects an analysis, from maps and aerial photographs, of the internal private open spaces (those enclosed by existing buildings) in the UCAs in the Plan area. This analysis was based on the following guiding principles, developed to select those open spaces worthy of more protection. The open spaces identified for protection needed to:
- (i) on average, be more than 30m wide at the shortest distance from one side of the enclave to the other; and/or
  - (ii) have substantial tree cover; and/or
  - (iii) have a substantial number of dwelling units overlooking the enclave; and/or
  - (iv) have an unfragmented configuration.

The list of characteristics above was formulated to ensure that only those enclaves with significant group value were identified. Criterion (i) was required to establish a physical baseline around which to start the identification of the enclaves while criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv) establish the amenity value of each open space as it is being enjoyed by a substantial number of residents and contains good tree cover which gives them their intrinsic value. Criterion (iv) also ensures that enclaves which have already been compromised by significant development within them are not included. Small rooms, buildings or structures were not considered as leading to the fragmentation of the enclave.

- 3.4.6 In drawing up the boundaries of the enclaves indicated on the relevant Area Policy Maps, a flexible approach was taken to the 30m dimension if it resulted that a specific enclave achieved a considerably high conservation value when considering the other three criteria. Where an enclave was not completely surrounded by buildings and had a gap site with a frontage along an existing street, the depth of development within this gap site was decided on an assessment of the effect that this development would have on the overall value of the enclave.

## **CG10**

## **New Uses for Historic Buildings**

**MEPA will adopt a flexible approach in considering appropriate new uses (like the provision of schools) for scheduled historic buildings with a strong emphasis on putting such buildings to good use rather than just preserving them. Normal planning requirements relating to floor areas, use, parking standards or contribution to CPPS funds may be relaxed at the discretion of MEPA in order to achieve this aim. Proposals must, however, retain the original structure and architectural characteristics of the building or group of buildings, incorporate uses that do not have an adverse impact on the building's fabric or character, and must incorporate uses that are neighbour compatible.**

**In negotiations for rehabilitation or extensions to scheduled historic buildings, the replacement of existing non-traditional features with traditional alternatives will be sought. Additions and alterations to scheduled buildings will be required to be in scale and sympathy with the original character of the building. No development will be allowed that would detract from the setting of the building, or that would be contrary to other relevant policy guidance. MEPA will require the developer to submit a satisfactory justification of the need for any proposed addition/alteration.**

- 3.4.7 The best use for a scheduled building is that for which it was originally intended. In most cases this use can satisfactorily be continued, but some buildings were purpose designed for uses that are no longer required, and if left empty neglect becomes a considerable danger. In these circumstances, changes of use of a building may be suitable if it will help to achieve the long-term preservation of the building and does not result in considerable alteration or loss to its character.
- 3.4.8 This Policy prioritises the effective but sensitive re-use of scheduled buildings. By adopting a flexible approach to applying planning constraints that would normally apply to new-build schemes, MEPA will seek to ensure that the re-use of scheduled buildings is viable to developers.
- 3.4.9 The character or appearance of a historic building can easily be adversely affected by small changes such as alterations to balconies, windows, doors or the removal of original internal features, such as staircases. When considering applications for alterations to scheduled buildings, through this policy and other policies, MEPA will keep in mind the need to preserve the intrinsic character of the building. To do this, alterations should be kept to a minimum, repairs carried out in preference to replacement and the dangers of 'over restoration' guarded against. Extensions should never dominate the original building and, generally, the use of traditional or matching materials is considered the most appropriate. Great care should be taken to preserve all features of interest and original detailing.

## **CG11**

## **Soft Landscaping Schemes**

**MEPA in conjunction with the relevant agencies will encourage a programme of enhancement and landscaping through the planting of appropriate species of trees and shrubs particularly in the following locations:**



- i. **Along the periphery of Category 1 Rural Settlements as designated in Policy CG03 so as to screen these settlements from long distance views;**
- ii. **Along the periphery of Areas of Containment as designated in Policy CG05 so as to screen these built-up areas from long distance views;**
- iii. **In the public realm of Town and Local Centres as designated in Policies CG12 and CG13;**
- iv. **In public recreation and sports areas as designated in Policy CG18;**
- v. **Along main transport corridors as designated in Policy CG38;**
- vi. **To screen visually unattractive areas and particularly those in industrial areas; and**
- vii. **Where an existing carriageway defines a Limit to Development boundary, a development-free green corridor (between 3m to 10m wide) shall be designated on the outer side of the carriageway. Proposals by local councils to create green verges for public enjoyment shall be favourably considered in this green corridor.**

**Landscaping schemes are to be in accordance with MEPA's 'Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands' (2002).**

- 3.4.10 The highly urbanised central localities lack sufficient tree cover and landscaped areas. In contrast to rural areas, greenery in urbanized areas is insufficient to create a pleasant and healthy environment. The promotion of public and private initiatives for soft landscaping therefore needs to be encouraged through suitable programmes and planning obligations during the Local Plan timeframe. Any landscaping and enhancement works imposed on a developer as a planning obligation are to be carried out in the same local council area. The visual effect that this policy aims to achieve is that of enhancing all public spaces that are used by a large number of people including all main public open spaces and main routes, together with those parts of the urban fringe that are intrusive on the landscape. This enhancement will be achieved by means of the implementation of extensive soft landscaping schemes providing shade and shelter apart from visual improvement.
- 3.4.11 The upgrading of public spaces can be achieved by means of some or all of the following list of measures which could be implemented as part of an embellishment scheme, depending on the particular characteristics of the area and the needs of the locality. An emphasis is however made on the planting of trees so as to "green" the urban environment.
- i. Tree planting in accordance with the 'Guidance on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands';
  - ii. Improving pedestrian access and introducing cycling lanes;
  - iii. The provision of paving, lighting and soft landscaping;
  - iv. The provision of play areas and equipment;
  - v. Provision of reservoirs for the irrigation of planted areas; and,
  - vi. The introduction of street furniture and public art.

### 3.5 Commerce and Industry

#### CG12

#### Town Centres

MEPA designates the following town centres within the local plan area:

Type of Centre	Locality	Area Policy Map
Primary Centres	Birkirkara	BKM1
	Hamrun	HAM1
	Mosta	MOM1, MOM2
Secondary Centres	Naxxar	NAM1, NAM2
	Qormi	QOM1

The boundaries of these town centres are indicated in the relevant Area Policy Maps. The acceptable land uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within these designated town centres are listed below. However the listed town centre uses are only allowed at ground floor level in Triq il-Kbira, Triq Mike Pulis, Triq is-Santwarju and Triq Tumas Fenech in the designated Birkirkara town centre, with dwelling units allowed on upper floors.

- i. Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) dwelling units on upper floors only. Proposals for residential development at ground level will only be considered by MEPA provided that the proposed development scheme includes one dwelling unit only. Conversions from existing Commercial Uses at Ground Floor level to new Residential units will not be permitted by MEPA.
- ii. Class 2 (Use Classes Order, 1994) residential institutions on upper floors only.
- iii. Class 3 (Use Classes Order, 1994) hostels.
- iv. Class 4 (Use Classes Order, 1994) retail uses including, shopping malls and speciality shopping, but excluding showrooms, provided they comply with the provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).
- v. Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy CG17.
- vi. Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices.
- vii. Class 6 (Use Classes Order, 1994) Food and Drink, including hot food take-away. However take-aways are not to be allowed above ground level.
- viii. Class 7 (Use Classes Order, 1994) non-residential institutions including interpretation centres. However public halls are to have a floor area that does not exceed 150 sqm.
- ix. Class 8 (Use Classes Order, 1994) educational facilities.
- x. Class 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994) assembly and leisure.
- xi. Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry provided that:
  - The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products);
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);
  - The activity employs less than 5 people; and
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.

Examples of acceptable uses considered by MEPA include tailor, cobbler and computer repair. Moreover, examples of unacceptable uses include carpentry, panel beating, mechanic, mechanical plant servicing and spray painting.

**Proposals to convert from existing Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994) general industry to Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry within designated Town Centres shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA if all the conditions listed above are adhered to, and provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.**

- xii. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm.**
- xiii. Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles.**
- xiv. Band club and social club.**
- xv. Cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public, provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm.**
- xvi. Conference Centre.**
- xvii. Indoor shooting range provided that all the conditions of the Guidance on Shooting Ranges are fully adhered to.**
- xviii. Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.**

**MEPA will support initiatives from public agencies and the private sector that contribute to the enhancement of the external environment of town centres and add to their attraction as a community and retail hub. Proposals for appropriate pedestrianisation schemes, landscaping schemes and traffic management will also be considered favourably. MEPA will strongly encourage the establishment of town centre management initiatives in the primary town centres.**

- 3.5.1 The town centre is the focus for a range of commercial and community activities, resulting in a mix of, often interdependent, land uses that provide a focus for identity, social interaction and business opportunities. It includes a combination of features; historic buildings, cultural, civic and governmental buildings, as well as public open spaces. This physical form and mix of functions, which have evolved over a considerable period of time, makes a town centre different from a shopping centre and provides much of its character which can be further enhanced by introducing appropriate new uses into historic buildings. It also has a high level of accessibility to employment, services, and facilities for all the community. Shopping provision is a key component of town centres, and makes a major contribution to their vitality and viability. It is important therefore that they retain retailing as a core function.
- 3.5.2 The term "town centre" is used generally to cover city and town centres which provide a broad range of facilities and services and act as a focus for both the community and for public transport. It excludes small clusters of shops of purely local significance. The size of the centre will influence the range of activities that it offers and its function. The scale of development possible and the opportunities available will differ from place to place.
- 3.5.3 The Retail Strategy defined a primary town centre as a town centre with a regional or sub-regional function for non-food shopping. A secondary centre is a town centre with a significant non-food shopping element but serving local residents or residents of closely neighbouring villages and used at least by 2,500 people for non-food shopping. Non-food shopping is to be considered as comparison goods, which include clothing, footwear, furniture, household textiles, electrical goods, hardware, chemist goods, jewellery, recreational and other miscellaneous goods. Convenience

goods retail outlets are to be directed towards local centres that are the appropriate commercial areas for this type of shopping.

- 3.5.4 Although retailing is a dominant activity in a town centre, the attraction of each centre for the location of other businesses and social and community facilities were taken into account in identifying the acceptable range and mix of uses indicated in the policy. The vitality and viability of town centres depends on a varied mix of uses and activities that encourage people to visit the centre whilst ensuring that they remain an attractive place to live in.
- 3.5.5 Creating liveable communities requires integrated initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens. A quality physical external environment can act as the catalyst for investment, economic growth and social well-being.

## CG13

## Local Centres

MEPA designates the following Local Centres within the local plan area:

Location	Area Policy Map
Triq il-Mosta, Attard	ATM1
Triq il-Pitkali, Attard	ATM1
Piazza Tommaso Dingli, Attard	ATM1
Triq Wied Hal-Balzan, Balzan	BZM1
Piazza Bertu Fenech, Balzan	BZM1
Triq Fleur de-Lys, Birkirkara	BKM1
Misrah il-Knisja and Triq San Bartolomew, Gharghur	GHM1
Tar-Rabbat, Hamrun	HAM1
Misrah Ninu Cremona, Iklin	IKM1
Piazza Transfigurazzjoni, Lija	LJM1
Blata l-Gholja, Mosta	MOM2
Sta. Margherita, Mosta	MOM1
Is-Saghjtar, Mosta	MOM2
Triq San Pawl, Naxxar	NAM1
Malta Trade Fair Site, Naxxar	NAM1
Triq ix-Xambekk, Bahar ic-Caghaq	NAM4

Detailed comprehensive development plans for the Local Centres in the following locations are to be approved by MEPA before the Authority considers any development applications in these Centres:

1. Misrah Ninu Cremona in Iklin as per Policy IK01;
2. Blata l-Gholja as per Policy MO02;
3. Is-Saghjtar in Mosta as per Policy MO03; and,
4. Malta Trade Fair site as per Policy NA02.

The acceptable land uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within these designated Local Centres are as follows;

- i. Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) dwelling units on upper floors only. Proposals for residential development at ground level will only be considered by MEPA provided that the proposed development scheme includes one dwelling unit only. Conversions from existing Commercial Uses at ground floor level to new Residential units will not be permitted by MEPA.
- ii. Class 2 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) residential accommodation and care to people in need of care on upper floors only.

- iii. **Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994) retail uses including speciality shopping but excluding showrooms, provided:**
  - that the gross floor area does not exceed 250 sqm; and
  - they comply with the provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).
- iv. **Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy CG17.**
- v. **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 100 sqm.**
- vi. **Class 6 (Use Classes Order, 1994) food and drink including hot food take-away. However take-aways are not to be allowed above ground level.**
- vii. **Class 7 (Use Classes Order, 1994) non-residential institutions including interpretation centres. However public halls are to have a floor area that does not exceed 150 sqm.**
- viii. **Class 8 (Use Classes Order, 1994) educational facilities provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm.**
- ix. **Class 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994) assembly and leisure provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm.**
- x. **Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry provided that:**
  - The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products);
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);
  - The activity employs less than 5 people; and
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.

**Examples of acceptable uses considered by MEPA include tailor, cobbler and computer repair. Moreover, examples of unacceptable uses include carpentry, panel beating, mechanic, mechanical plant servicing and spray painting.**

**Proposals to convert from existing Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994) general industry to Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry within designated Local Centres shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA if all the conditions listed above are adhered to, and provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.**

- xi. **Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm.**
- xii. **Taxi Business of for the hire of motor vehicles.**
- xiii. **Band club and social club.**
- xiv. **Cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public, provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 50 sqm.**
- xv. **Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.**

3.5.6 Local Centres have a concentration of convenience shopping facilities serving the surrounding residential area. A local centre is identified as a cluster of shops primarily selling convenience goods or providing retail services (e.g. hairdresser, dry cleaners, video hire), together with other social and community services for the immediate locality. It is also easily accessible on foot from surrounding residential

areas, and located close to the geographical centre of the locality that it serves. Access and servicing arrangements together with goods storage should not adversely impact neighbouring residents, businesses, or other users.

## CG14

## Commercial Areas

MEPA will permit the development of Commercial land uses within the designated Commercial Areas listed below and as indicated in the relevant Area Policy Maps.

Location	Area Policy Map
Triq in-Naxxar and Triq Wied Hal-Balzan, Balzan	BZM1
Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida, Birkirkara (however the properties located above the level of Triq G. F. Agius De Soldanis are designated as Residential Priority Areas in accordance with Policy CG08)	BKM1
Triq in-Naxxar, Birkirkara	BKM1
Triq Dun Karm, Birkirkara	BKM1
Triq Salvu Psaila, Birkirkara	BKM1
Mriehel, Birkirkara	BKM2
Blata l-Bajda, Hamrun	HAM1
Triq il-Kappilan Mifsud, Hamrun	HAM1
Triq il-Kbira, Hamrun; Commercial land uses at ground floor level only, with residential units on upper floors	HAM1
Triq in-Naxxar, Iklin	IKM1
Triq il-Kostituzzjoni, Mosta	MOM1
Triq l-Imdina, Qormi	QOM1
Triq is-Sebh, Qormi	QOM1
Triq Salvu Psaila and Triq il-Kappilan Mifsud, Santa Venera	SVM1
Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida, Santa Venera	SVM1
Triq il-Kbira, Santa Venera; Commercial land uses at ground floor level only, with residential units on upper floors	SVM1
Triq is-Sebh, Santa Venera	SVM1
Triq il-Kanun, Santa Venera	SVM1

The following is a list of acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the designated Commercial Areas.

- i. Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994), dwelling units on upper floors. However dwelling units will not be allowed in the Commercial Areas designated in Mriehel (Birkirkara), in Triq is-Sebh (Qormi), in Triq is-Sebh (Santa Venera), and in Triq il-Kanun (Santa Venera). In addition, dwelling units will be allowed at ground floor level in the Commercial Areas designated in Triq il-Kbira (Santa Venera) and in Triq il-Kbira (Hamrun).
- ii. Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994), small shops only provided that:
  - The small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 sqm each, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 sqm each;
  - They comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and
  - They comply with any relevant section of the DC 2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).
- iii. Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994) supermarkets, provided that they comply with all the relevant provisions of Policy CG17.
- iv. Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994) showrooms provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).

- v. **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices on upper floors only.**
- vi. **Class 6 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) Sale of hot and cold food and drink for consumption on or off the premises.**
- vii. **Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), business and light industry provided that:**
  - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products);**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);**
  - **The activity employs less than 5 people; and**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.**

Examples of acceptable uses considered by MEPA include tailor, cobbler, lace making and computer and electronic repair. Moreover, examples of unacceptable uses include carpentry, panel beating, mechanic, mechanical plant servicing, spray painting and bakery.

Proposals to convert from existing Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994), general industry to Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), business and light industry within designated Commercial Areas shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA if all the conditions listed above are adhered to, and provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.

- viii. **Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm.**
- ix. **Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles.**
- x. **The sale or display of motor vehicles.**
- xi. **The sale of fuel for motor vehicles.**
- xiii. **The cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public.**

**In granting permission for the above-listed uses, MEPA is to be satisfied that the design of the commercial developments shall be complimentary with, and shall enhance the existing streetscape. Particular regard will also be given to the provision of advertising space in order to ensure that this will not be too conspicuous.**

3.5.7 Showrooms are defined as premises primarily used to display goods for sale where little direct (over the counter) retail sale is intended. Showrooms normally display a specialist range of bulky, non-food goods, such as: white goods; furniture; motor vehicles; household items, hardware and bathroom fittings. This type of retailing is expanding rapidly along certain arterial routes in the plan area, but these may create an undesirable form of urbanisation if not strictly controlled. So as to ensure that the plan's objectives towards sustainable transport patterns is not compromised, the plan designates limited commercial areas in specific locations. Office development, and in a number of cases residential development on the upper floors of showrooms, are considered to be compatible uses and are therefore normally permitted by MEPA. Other limited compatible uses are also considered as acceptable in these designated areas.

Subject to the provisions of the relevant Area Policies, the following is a list of acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the designated MIP Estate at Mriehel in Birkirkara (Map BKM2), the SME sites at Mriehel in Birkirkara (Map BKM2), and the SME site located within limits to development at Tal-Handaq in Qormi (Map QOM1);

- i. **Class 6 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) Sale of hot or cold food for consumption on or off the premises.**
- ii. **Class 8 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) kindergartens, crèches, day nurseries or day centres provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of the approved Policy document entitled “Child Day Care Facilities”.**
- iii. **Classes 11 to 16 (Use Classes Order, 1994) Industrial uses. However the scale of the operation will determine whether the development may be located within a designated SME site or whether it is to be located within a designated MIP Industrial Park. In addition the proposed industrial development may be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).**
- iv. **Classes 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994) Storage and Distribution.**
- v. **Classes 19 (Use Classes Order, 1994) Boatyards.**
- vi. **Classes 20 (Use Classes Order, 1994) Aquaculture to be located within designated MIP Industrial Parks only.**
- vii. **Taxi Business of for the hire of motor vehicles to be located within designated SME sites only.**
- viii. **Aqualung Filler to be located within designated SME sites only.**
- ix. **Scrap Yard or a Yard for the breaking of Motor Vehicles to be located within designated SME sites only.**
- x. **The manufacturing, processing, keeping or storing of a dangerous substance provided that it is considered to be acceptable and safe to locate the operation within the Industrial Area. In addition the proposed operation may be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).**
- xi. **The cleaning of clothes.**
- xii. **Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy CG17. However Supermarkets are not allowed within designated MIP Industrial Parks.**
- xiii. **The manufacturing or processing of concrete products. However the scale of the operation will determine whether the development may be located within a designated SME site or whether it is to be located within a designated MIP Industrial Park. In addition the proposed industrial development may be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).**
- xiv. **Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.**

3.5.8 Certain neighbour compatible small scale business uses can usually operate in residential areas without causing a nuisance. Expansion is however usually difficult as there may be problems arising for neighbours because of the scale of activities carried out. Where the industrial use has intensified and serious problems are being created for neighbouring uses the provision for relocation becomes necessary. This policy prioritises MIP Industrial Estates and SME Sites for these uses.

3.5.9 The areas listed in this policy, together with the other Industrial Areas as designated in the relevant Area Policies, primarily cater for the industrial and warehousing needs of the Central localities. These areas have a good geographical distribution, they sufficiently cater for the provision of local services, they are suitably located as employment generating areas, and they are situated conveniently next to main transport routes.



- 3.5.10 In accordance with Structure Plan policies, storage and distribution facilities can be accommodated within designated industrial areas. Other compatible and supporting facilities that are allowed within industrial areas include child day care centres for those children whose parents work within the Industrial estate, boatyards, fishfarms, scrapyards and other uses as specified in this policy.

## CG16

## Comprehensive Development Areas

The Area Policy Maps covering the following Areas of Containment indicate sites within which development is to be planned as Comprehensive Development Areas (CDAs) in accordance with the provisions of this policy. The provisions of Policy CG05 are also applicable to the CDAs.

Location	Planning Control Map
Tal-Balal, Iklin	IKB5
Tal-Qares, Mosta	MOB7
Tal-Handaq, Qormi	QOB3

Development within each designated CDA shall be subject to the following conditions;

- 1) Comprehensive development covered by a single development application for every CDA as designated in the relevant Area Policy Maps. This comprehensive development is to be carried out on a design/build/manage binding agreement with Government. However this development can be phased subject to MEPA approval.
- 2) Compliance with all existing legislation and regulations with particular reference to the Cultural Heritage Act 2002;
- 3) Adequate provision within the site curtilage of every CDA for;
  - a. Common administration and support services;
  - b. Common parking areas for both employees and visitors;
  - c. Adequate circulation space for heavy vehicles;
  - d. Common landscaped areas complying with the MEPA's Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands (2002);
  - e. Common recreational facilities e.g. canteen;
  - f. Common waste management facilities e.g. waste skip area; and
  - g. Adequate infrastructure services including water catchment facilities.

These requirements will be applied flexibly by MEPA for sites with less than 5000 sq m site area.
- 4) Maximum site coverage of 60% (excluding common facilities);
- 5) In the case of development for industry, the floor space for each micro-enterprise unit should not be less than 120 sq m and preferably not exceed 200 sq m, depending on the nature of the activity;
- 6) Compliance with any required mitigation measures that may be identified during the assessment process of particular planning applications;
- 7) Before the commencement of the development archaeological field evaluation works may be carried out as approved in advance by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage;
- 8) Adequate bank guarantees will be levied to ensure compliance with permit conditions especially in relation to archaeological field evaluation works; and

**9) Reasonable financial or other material contributions for a specific project as a planning gain aimed towards environmental enhancement.**

3.5.11 As highlighted during consultations with the relevant agencies, areas of containment especially those hosting industrial activities are facing a number of problems that include the haphazard provision of common services including a lack of parking provision, inadequate internal circulation and servicing areas, poor quality design of buildings, a poor working environment, a lack of pollution controls including noise and air pollution, and no attempt at screening and landscaping.

3.5.12 A major factor that has contributed to this existing situation is the piecemeal industrial development that has occurred in the past. Continued piecemeal development on relatively large industrial sites located outside development zone (ODZ) therefore needs to be checked through the implementation of CDAs. The criteria listed in this CDA policy ensures that the above-mentioned problems are avoided in major new industrial development ODZ. The need for the comprehensive planning of relatively large industrial sites is also essential to promote a higher standard in project design, layout, finishing and servicing.

## **CG17**

## **Supermarkets**

**Large supermarkets (greater than 500 sqm) should preferably locate within or on the edge of town centres, provided that accommodating standards of parking provision are fully catered for on site to the satisfaction of MEPA. Where it is not possible to bring forward sites which are in or on the edge of a town centre because of the site size requirements of large supermarkets, residential amenity, environmental constraints in Urban Conservation Areas, or because the road network does not have the capacity to cater for the additional traffic and service vehicles, then sites within the designated locations listed in the following order of sequence will be considered for the development of large supermarkets:**

- i. Local Centres;**
- ii. Commercial Areas;**
- iii. Mixed Use Areas; and**
- iv. SME Sites.**

**There shall be a presumption against the development of supermarkets within designated Residential Areas unless there is a strong planning justification for departing from the sequential approach stipulated above. Supermarkets will not be permitted within Residential Priority Areas. The development of supermarkets is also to follow the relevant criteria stipulated in the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).**

3.5.13 Supermarkets are an accepted component of the retail hierarchy since they serve mainly the large weekly convenience goods shopping requirements of families. Their preferred location is within or on the edge of town centres where public transport provision can be made available for shoppers who do not have the use of the car. However, since supermarkets generally require large clear areas of floorspace together with adjacent car parking facilities, it may not always be possible for developers to find sites of an appropriate size and location within town centres. Consequently the policy sets out a sequential approach in establishing the preferred locations for supermarkets. The aim of this sequential approach is to accommodate modern facilities in all urban areas whilst safeguarding the amenity of Residential Areas and Residential Priority Areas.

## **3.6 Community Facilities**

### **CG18**

### **Public Recreation and Sports Areas**

**MEPA designates Green Areas, Public Recreational Areas and Sports Areas as indicated in the relevant Area Policy Maps. Planning permission will not be granted for development resulting in the loss of Green Areas, Public Recreational Areas and Sports Areas unless:**

- i. Public open space or sports areas as applicable of equivalent or greater area are provided in the same locality within the development zone; or,**
- ii. Its use is complementary to the function of the public open space or sports area where the development occurs and occupies only a part of the open space; or,**
- iii. The space has been re-zoned for community or other uses through other policies within this Local Plan.**

3.6.1 In 2001, Public Recreation and Sports provision in the Plan area only amounted to about 12% of total national land in the case of sports facilities, and 18% of total national land in the case of recreational facilities. In addition, sports provision per person is 2.7 sqm, which is substantially less than the national average of 6 sqm per person, and recreational space per person is only 1.3 sqm as compared to the national average of 2.1 sqm per person. It is noted that the national strategic objective for open recreational space provision (including public gardens, playgrounds/playfields and other open spaces) as indicated in the Recreation Topic Paper is to achieve 2.4 sqm per person that is far higher than the existing 1.3 sqm per person in the central localities.

3.6.2 It is clear therefore that provision of sports/recreational areas in the Plan area is severely lacking and requires protection from development. Once such facilities are developed, they are next to impossible to replace considering the limited land available within scheme and the high cost of finding alternative spaces.

### **CG19**

### **Provision of Community Facilities**

**MEPA in conjunction with relevant agencies will ensure that the adequate and accessible provision of social and community facilities is sustained by:**

- i. Allocating and reserving appropriate sites through this Local Plan;**
- ii. Seeking the adequate provision of civic facilities within development schemes particularly by means of the Policy CG20;**
- iii. Seeking the provision of facilities within the residential areas they serve, particularly those for the elderly people, persons with special needs and children;**
- iv. Seeking to ensure that where a development results in the loss of a social or community facility which, due to changing circumstances, is surplus to need, then the new development will be expected to provide some alternative community facility of benefit to the community in the locality; and**
- v. Seeking to ensure that, where reasonable, provision is made for the needs of people with special needs.**

**Proposals for new or improved community facilities will be approved subject to the following criteria:**

- a. the proposal is located in a central location in order to serve the needs of the local community;**
- b. operating hours and operational requirements are compatible with the surrounding uses;**
- c. suitable access is provided into and within the site in accordance with MEPA's Access for All requirements;**
- d. any specific infrastructure or servicing requirements can be met;**
- e. the scale of the facility is related to the needs of the locality and there is no adverse impact on the local environment in terms of the scale, use and design of the proposed development;**
- f. the building is designed with a public frontage with doors and windows onto the street in order to provide a focal point for the local community;**
- g. they are conveniently accessible by both public and private transport and on foot from nearby residential areas; and**
- h. they conform to all relevant Local Plan policies.**

3.6.3 Settlement patterns are changing and the distribution of social and community facilities need to change accordingly. The TPS (1988) have largely been implemented as housing estates, with minimal planned provision in their layouts for community facilities, particularly schools, health centres and old peoples' homes. Therefore, proactive planning for these sectors is required. Community services will be promoted in locations which are accessible to the whole community, especially in population growth areas like Attard and Mosta. The scale of the facility should also be related to the needs of the community, discourage car journeys from beyond its natural catchment area and accord with the principles of sustainability. Where existing provision is poor or dispersed, new facilities will especially be encouraged within town and local centres.

## **CG20**

## **Provision of Public Civic Facilities**

**MEPA shall encourage the provision of required public civic facilities to be preferably located at ground floor level within designated Town Centres and Local Centres or near the periphery of such centres as designated on the relevant Area Policy Maps. The Local Council of a locality may seek partnership with the private sector to provide the said public civic facilities. The location of the relevant site should be acceptable to MEPA.**

**Where the private sector embarks on such a partnership, MEPA will consider relaxation of some planning criteria, including the relaxation of the building height limitation for the site preferably by not more than one additional floor in accordance with the provisions of Policy CG06, in order to promote such initiatives.**

**Relaxation of planning criteria (especially in terms of height limitation), will be subject to all the following conditions being adhered to;**

- i. This planning initiative is to be used only once for every relevant Local Council area and there may be some local councils where this relaxation is not deemed to be applicable;**
- ii. Part or all of the ground floor of the development is reserved for the required public civic facilities depending on the floor area required for such facilities.**

**Provision of public civic facility space at other floor levels instead of ground floor level will only be considered provided that:**

- a. **this is acceptable to MEPA and the relevant public sector agency; and**
  - b. **that it is served by separate access from the rest of the building; and**
  - c. **that it fully complies with MEPA's Access for All requirements;**
- iii. **There should be a legally binding contractual agreement between the applicant/developer and the Local Council or Public Sector Agency whereby the former transfers the ownership of the entire floor area devoted to the civic facility use to the relevant Local Council or Public Sector Agency as the case may be. This transfer of ownership is to be affected before the relevant development permit is issued by MEPA and a preliminary written agreement between the local council and the private sector representative should be submitted with the development planning application;**
  - iv. **The parking that is required for the civic facility is to be operated independently from the private parking facilities on site, and has to be fully accessible to the public. These requirements are to be adhered to even in the event that the ownership of the civic facility is transferred to another entity. The ownership of this public parking provision must be included with the transfer of ownership of the civic facility.**
  - v. **The management and operation of the public civic facility shall be undertaken by either the Local Council or by the Public Sector Agency as required;**
  - vi. **The floor area of the permitted additional floor/s is to be equivalent to a maximum of 115% of the floor area that is transferred to the relevant Local Council or Public Sector Agency;**
  - vii. **The public civic facility shall adhere to all the criteria (a) to (g) of Policy CG19; and**
  - viii. **The public civic facility shall be designed to provide in-built flexibility to allow for wider community use.**

**However the relaxation provisions of this Policy shall not apply where the additional floor/s will have a detrimental effect on local views of Urban Conservation Areas, of valley sides, or of scheduled buildings in their setting and/or against the skyline.**

- 3.6.4 Public civic amenity uses (e.g. uses related to health, social services, elderly, youths and other community facilities) should ideally be located within or adjacent to town and local centres since they constitute community uses that reinforce the function of these centres. However, in view of the general lack of vacant sites and buildings within established town and local centres, the actual provision of such facilities on many occasions proves to be difficult to achieve in practice. Consequently, MEPA will encourage the provision of public civic facilities by applicants/developers of suitable development schemes that are located within such centres. These civic facilities are to be administered and managed directly by the Local Council or Public Agency. As an incentive to promote the provision of these public civic facilities, the developer will be permitted to construct, above the designated height limitation, an equivalent of 115% of the floorarea of the civic facilities provided on site.
- 3.6.5 Preferably such community uses should be situated at ground floor level so as to facilitate access to the public. However, it may also be possible to reserve the first floor of the development instead of the ground floor for civic use provided that the facility can still function properly at this level and provided that public access to it is still acceptable to MEPA.

Proposals for development for non-educational purposes on land reserved for school use will only be considered where:

- i. It can be demonstrated that the land is surplus to educational requirements in the medium/long term;
- ii. the reserved site has no other beneficial social/community use;
- iii. the proposed development cannot reasonably be accommodated on alternative land; and
- iv. the proposed development does not result in the loss of a community/recreational facility.

3.6.6 Land reservations for future education purposes need to be accommodated in the Local Plan to protect sites from conflicting development proposals. There are instances where education establishments have been unable to expand on a single site due to lack of available space resulting in schools on numerous split sites. Only in very exceptional circumstances will a designated school site be surplus to educational requirements, and this policy offers guidance if this situation arises.

### 3.7 Rural Environment

MEPA designates Special Areas of Conservation as indicated on Maps CVM1, NAM10 and QOM4 and in accordance with LN 257/03 and GN 877/03. Areas of Ecological Importance (AEIs), Sites of Scientific Importance (SSIs) and Areas of High Landscape Sensitivity (AHLs) are indicated on the relevant Environmental Constraints Maps, and these are designated by MEPA to be conserved in accordance with Section 46 of the Development Planning Act, 1992. In these protected areas and sites development will only be permitted provided it accords with all the relevant Structure Plan Policies and Legal and Government Notices relating to SACs, AEIs, SSIs and AHLs. Proposed developments located within AHLs as indicated in Map CV2 are also to adhere to all the relevant provisions of MEPA's Supplementary Guidance document entitled 'Landscape Assessment Study of the Maltese Islands'.

3.7.1 In accordance with LN 257/03 and GN 877/03, Special Areas of Conservation including a NATURA 2000 Site of International Importance at L-Ghadira s-Safra and an SAC of National Importance at Wied Qirda/Wied il-Kbir, Qormi are protected by MEPA. In accordance with Structure Plan Policy RCO12, MEPA will endeavour to safeguard and protect all AEIs and SSIs within the Central Zone through the Local Plan process. Sites and areas to be protected also include *Garrigue* and *Maquis* containing indigenous and archaeophytic species that contribute to the typical Mediterranean setting and are of considerable ecological value.

3.7.2 A general presumption against development will apply on sites listed within the Local Plan as SACs, AEIs, SSIs and AHLs, particularly on crests and sides of faults, valleys and the edges of the coast. In this respect, unacceptable development also includes conflicting agricultural development and reclamation, roads and public utility services. A general presumption also exists against any activities likely to introduce pollution and damage risks to SACs, AEIs, SSIs and AHLs. In these areas

and sites, MEPA would favourably promote the removal of intrusive elements and the eventual rehabilitation of damaged areas and habitats. These listed sites also include buffer zones to further regulate developments near and adjacent to SACs, AEIs, SSIs and AHLs. Development that affects AHLs will be considered by MEPA following the requirements set by the Draft Landscape Assessment Study of the Maltese Islands (2004) and relative Structure Plan Policies. AHLs are indicated on Map CVM2 covering Areas of Landscape Importance including valleys.

## **CG23 Protection of Sites of Archaeological Importance**

**Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance, and their respective Buffer Zones, are indicated on the Archaeological Features Map CVM3 and on the respective Environmental Constraints Maps. These archaeological features are listed and classified in Appendix A of this Local Plan. Where Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance as indicated in this Local Plan are not already scheduled, MEPA will seek to schedule these features to secure their conservation in accordance with Section 46 of the Development Planning Act (1992). Proposals for development likely to adversely affect Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance will be refused if there is an overriding case for preservation.**

**Where MEPA, in consultation with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, decides that there is no overriding case for preservation, permission to development the site will only be considered after a planning obligation has been entered into by the developer that secures a satisfactory monitoring programme of archaeological excavation, recording and conservation by a competent archaeologist. In these cases development may be considered subject to modifications as required and as directed by MEPA in consultation with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage based on the mentioned assessment of the archaeological significance of the findings.**

**The buffer zones for Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance Classes A-E are established as follows:**

- i. A minimum of 100 m for Class A archaeological features in which no development is allowed; and,**
- ii. For Classes B, C, D and E archaeological features the buffer zones are as indicated in the relevant Environmental Constraint Maps. Within these buffer zones no development that would jeopardize the archaeological features will be allowed.**

**In the case of archaeological features identified through this Local Plan as Class E, no development will be permitted within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a scheme of investigation as approved by MEPA. MEPA in conjunction with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage will reserve the right to re-classify Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance listed as Class E following such investigations.**

- 3.7.3 The Local Plan area contains about 80 areas and sites of archaeological importance as identified in the Archaeological Survey Report for the Central Plan area. Development proposals on such archaeological areas and sites will be examined critically to determine whether remains or potential remains would be damaged or destroyed through such development. MEPA will seek to ensure that potential conflicts with developers are resolved by the carrying out of archaeological impact evaluation reports and by proposing suitable modifications to proposals. In general, MEPA in consultation with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage requires that**

archaeological investigations will be carried out prior to the issue of a permit if the level of certainty and the significance of the archaeological potential of the site are high. On the other hand, MEPA recommends that monitoring will be carried out after the issue of a permit if the level of certainty and the significance of the archaeological potential of the site are low. It is emphasized that preservation *in situ* is always preferred, and will be the primary objective of all planning obligations. Where there is no overriding case for preservation, proposals for development will only be considered after alternative layouts have been fully examined which attempt to avoid the area/site in question.

- 3.7.4 In the classification of Archaeological Classes, Class E sites are sites known to have existed and are referred to in written documents, prints, maps, paintings and photographs but are at present no longer visible.

## **CG24 Protection of Areas of Agricultural Value**

**MEPA will designate and classify all Areas of Agricultural Value (AAVs) within the Local Plan area following confirmation of the quality of agricultural land by the Authorities responsible for Rural Development and Agriculture. Within designated AAVs only buildings, structures and uses essential to the needs of arable agriculture will be permitted on condition that it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of MEPA that they will not adversely affect the quality of water resources, soil and landscape, and that they will not conflict with scenic, ecological, scientific, archaeological and mineral interests. In addition, applications for agricultural related development that will result in the subdivision of land holdings will not be permitted within AAVs.**

**In the interim period, until such designations have been fully confirmed, development proposals on agricultural land as indicated in the Environmental Constraints Maps will be required to comply with the relevant Structure Plan Policies and the relevant Policy and Design Guidance for Rural Development and Agriculture.**

- 3.7.5 The identification of the quality of agricultural land in the Central localities has been undertaken in conjunction with the Agricultural Department only for specific locations where the Plan required immediate feedback regarding development proposals. Following the confirmation of other surveys by the relevant Authorities responsible for Rural Development and Agriculture on agricultural land an overall and holistic indication of all agricultural quality areas determining all AAVs will be available for the Central Zone. These need to be identified and classified in accordance with Structure Plan Policies RCO1-3 and RCO7.

## **CG25 Protection of Strategic Open Gaps**

**MEPA designates Strategic Open Gaps in the following localities as identified in the relevant Area Policy Maps.**

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Area Policy Map</b>
<b>Attard</b>	<b>ATM1</b>
<b>Gharghur</b>	<b>GHM1</b>
<b>Iklin</b>	<b>IKM1</b>
<b>Lija</b>	<b>LJM1</b>
<b>Mosta</b>	<b>MOM1, MOM2</b>
<b>Naxxar</b>	<b>NAM1, NAM2</b>
<b>Bahar ic-Caghaq</b>	<b>NAM4</b>
<b>Qormi</b>	<b>QOM1</b>



**Except for areas indicated for inclusion within the Development Zone through the Local Plans Rationalization of Development Boundaries Exercise (2006) as approved by Parliament, MEPA will not permit any urban development in designated Strategic Open Gaps except for essential small scale utility infrastructure provided that such development satisfies the following conditions:**

- a) **It is demonstrated to the satisfaction of MEPA that the developer could not acquire a suitable site for the proposed development that is not located within a Strategic Open Gap;**
- b) **The development is to have a siting, massing, layout and design which least impinges on the scenic value and character of the Strategic Open Gap; and,**
- c) **The development is to be adequately screened by soft landscaping.**

**Within Strategic Open Gaps, MEPA promotes the following uses and activities:**

- i. **Maintaining and enhancing attractive landscapes and the improvement of derelict land through habitat recreation, rural afforestation and soft landscaping schemes where appropriate in line with Policy CG11;**
- ii. **Nature conservation and improved presentation of important habitats, where appropriate;**
- iii. **The promotion of arable agricultural land uses in all areas not scheduled for environmental protection;**
- iv. **Improved access to the open countryside through the provision of country pathways and cycle routes, where appropriate; and,**
- v. **Providing opportunities for public informal recreation in appropriate locations.**

3.7.6 Central Malta is heavily urbanized with about 27% of the population of the Maltese Islands living within it. In this respect the strategic open gaps situated outside development zone and between settlements are priority areas requiring protection. These open gaps are very important being the first step outside urban areas offering a brief respite from the monotone visuals of heavily urbanized townscapes. Any further urban development in these areas would seriously degrade existing landscape and townscape settings, replace valuable agricultural resources and possibly damage natural habitats.

3.7.7 Management and cooperation between Local Councils and all other relevant agencies is needed to enhance the appearance of Strategic Open Gaps that include derelict areas and obtrusive buildings, and so as to improve links to the countryside for informal recreation. The importance of these open gaps will increase in the future, especially as urban densities increase.

## **CG26 Promotion of Heritage Trails and Walkway Routes**

**MEPA in conjunction with other relevant agencies will promote the introduction of a Heritage Trail along the Victoria Lines, a new walkway route along the Mosta Valley System and a Coastal Walkway Route in Naxxar. These walkway routes are indicatively shown in the Mosta, Naxxar and Gharghur Area Policy Maps.**

**In conformity with the provisions of Policy CG27, Environment Management Plans are to be formulated and approved for the designated Heritage Trails and Walkway Routes, and all works are to follow the guidance and recommendations set out in these EMPs. MEPA will promote improved pedestrian access along these routes through the**

**upgrading of existing pathways and urban links, and through the creation of new access links where these are necessary and cause acceptable environmental impacts. MEPA will ensure that public access along these routes, and important local and panoramic views from these routes will not be compromised by any development in their vicinity. Where appropriate, these routes will incorporate tree planting schemes and picnic areas.**

- 3.7.8 The Victoria Lines (1870-1899) consist of a military line of fortifications built by the British, dividing Malta from west to east and intended to protect the harbour area from possible land invasion. The fortifications comprise a unique network of defences that includes forts, batteries, magazines, entrenchments, bridges and barracks linked by a continuous wall used by infantry. These Lines have been scheduled by MEPA as a Grade 1 monument. Furthermore the Lines are located in an area that has been scheduled as an area of high landscape sensitivity. This scheduling has integrated the value of the monument as a cultural asset with that of the Great Fault as a natural asset.
- 3.7.9 Apart from the Victoria Lines, a valley and coastal walkway route are planned along the Wied il-Ghasel valley system and the Naxxar coastal area respectively. There are a number of attractions that entice tourists and locals to visit these areas. These include sites of archaeological and historical importance, a number of chapels and the Gnien ta` L-Gharusa public garden. Given this context, these areas are ideal locations for such projects. The routes are extensive enough to allow for the planning of inter-locality, district level walkways. In conjunction with the planned Mosta heritage trail, an interpretation centre with feature signage, a site for outdoor informal recreation (refer to Policy MO08) and picnic areas are also planned to further attract the public and tourists to this area.
- 3.7.10 It has been noted from site surveys carried out that certain areas are currently accessible with difficulty, and only minor access improvement works are required to improve public access along these routes. Existing natural footpaths with limited interventions, including paving and signage, should be used where possible. All minor works must follow the guidance and recommendations of the EMPs to be formulated for these areas.

## **CG27**

## **Environment Management Plans**

**MEPA will support the early formulation of Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) to be drafted in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, the Works Division, Local Councils, NGO's and other relevant agencies for the following areas;**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Relevant Policies</b>	<b>Area Policy Map</b>
<b>1. Victoria Lines Heritage Trail, Mosta Valley Walkway Route and District Level Recreational Area</b>	<b>MO07, 08</b>	<b>MOM3</b>
<b>2. Coastal Walkway Route</b>	<b>NA04</b>	<b>NAM3</b>

**MEPA will only consider proposals for recreation related developments in the areas listed above following, and subject to, the recommendations of the relevant EMPs. MEPA reserves the right to require other EMPs, apart from those identified in the above mentioned priority list, if it deems the need for their preparation in respect of other proposals.**

**In general the EMPs will be required to:**

- i. Resolve existing conflicts between land users in the rural areas through conflict resolution mechanisms and mediation processes;**
- ii. Produce detailed management plans with site-specific proposals for the rehabilitation of abandoned and degraded agricultural areas, habitats and landscapes whilst defining allowable uses. These management plans are to include a detailed statement for any habitat engineering works;**
- iii. Provide for the conservation of areas of environmental value, and to promote the educational use of important habitats where appropriate;**
- iv. Introduce where appropriate public access and informal recreational activities in the countryside; and,**
- v. Initiate the implementation of rural rehabilitation programmes through site-specific agreements with involved key players.**

**EMPs shall be implemented under the supervision of qualified persons to the satisfaction of MEPA and other relevant agencies.**

3.7.11 Experience has shown that within rural areas although sites are designated for their environmental importance, proper management of these areas is either a long-term process or in cases never takes off. In addition, the Local Plan document is not site specific and detailed enough to initiate environmental management schemes for rural rehabilitation. This policy however sets out the framework for the early formulation of EMPs aimed to achieve the rehabilitation and upgrading of two priority areas. These EMPs are required to be prepared by MEPA similar in format to Action Plans/Development Briefs. The need for EMPs also follows the provisions of Structure Plan Policy RCO6 that requires the introduction of rural management initiatives. These EMPs would therefore serve as a management tool for future rural rehabilitation.

3.7.12 In the recreational and heritage appreciation projects indicated in the policy, the Plan follows the advice of the Environmental Resource Surveys that were carried out during the initial stages of the preparation of the Local Plan. The need for these EMPs has stemmed from the recommendations included in these survey reports that point out to the need for the proper management of these areas that are valuable from many environmental aspects.

## **CG28**

## **Protection of Trees**

**Where site management or habitat engineering is proposed, MEPA will seek to ensure that the ecological and visual effect of such proposals is compatible with the landscape character and conservation value of the area.**

**When a development permit is required, applicants will be required to submit details of existing trees and landscape features, details of retention and protection during construction work where applicable, and proposals including siting and species proposed for additional planting and maintenance.**

**MEPA will seek to retain important existing trees and landscape features in urban areas when considering applications for development in accordance with MEPA's approved 'Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands' (2002). Where trees are removed with Authority consent, conditions will be**

**imposed to ensure their replacement with species in accordance with the above-mentioned Guidelines.**

3.7.13 MEPA has a duty to protect important trees, and may even designate Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), in accordance with the Development Planning Act (1992) Section 48. TPOs can be applied to individual trees, groups of trees, maquis, copse or woodland, usually for amenity value or the protection of native species of trees having arboricultural, aesthetic or historical value. Uprooting, destruction, or damage to trees in gardens and other public open spaces, or on private land, will be prohibited unless authorised by the MEPA.

3.7.14 Trees are a very important part of the urban environment and soften and enhance the townscape. Buildings, trees and planting contribute to the character and appearance of historic areas. MEPA will require applicants to submit details, including a tree survey to show the location, ground levels, species, and canopy size of existing trees. Conditions may be attached when a development permit is granted. These can include measures to protect trees and other important features during construction. In accordance with the 'Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands' (2002), a scheme of new additional planting and landscaping may be required which will include the replacement of any trees or plants lost within a specified period of time. The Guidelines have been adopted by MEPA and this provides clear guidance as to which species are appropriate for planting.

## **3.8 Management of Water Resources and Quarrying**

### **CG29**

### **Areas of Hydrological Importance**

**Protected Areas of Hydrological Importance that include water protection areas, aquifer zones, public boreholes, underground gallery systems, springs, pumping stations and valley watercourses, are to be safeguarded from any development that is likely to pose a pollution risk and/or have an adverse bearing upon these important water resources. Protected Areas of Hydrological Importance are indicated in Map CV1. Development proposals within Protected Areas of Hydrological Importance will only be permitted provided that MEPA, the Malta Resources Authority and the Water Services Corporation are all satisfied that full ground and surface water protection is guaranteed. Development proposals are also to conform to MEPA's Policy Guidance on hazardous substances.**

3.8.1 Water is a very limited and valuable resource in Malta. Its protection and the maintenance of good quality water are therefore crucial. No development, including agricultural, commercial, residential, infrastructural or industrial development that risks damaging the water resource or impinge on its quality will be allowed by MEPA. Developments likely to pose a pollution risk could include the following;

- i. Industrial uses, including small scale industrial uses, that are likely to discharge or store fuels, chemicals and/or other hazardous substances;
- ii. Landfill sites;
- iii. Livestock and animal breeding farms that are not suitably equipped with spill and leak proof treatment facilities for satisfactory animal waste collection and disposal;

- iv. Agricultural practices including greenhouses where fertilisers, insecticides and/or any other chemicals are used that may pollute the water protection zones;
- v. Residential dwellings or other development in aquifer protection zones without adequate sewage disposal systems; and,
- vi. Other land uses including cemeteries, shooting ranges, obnoxious industrial plants, scrapyards, sewage treatment plants, petrol stations and other developments posing pollution risks.

3.8.2 Underground water resources specifically require constant monitoring and protection as any contamination to groundwater through pollutants such as sewage effluent, oils, chemicals, fertilisers etc. is difficult and expensive to remedy and may result in danger to public health. In most cases, pollution sources are difficult to detect and early warning systems are not available. Furthermore, the full and continuous monitoring and enforcement of permit conditions for the above-mentioned developments are difficult and costly once these are approved. Taking all these issues into consideration, the full protection of water resources should take precedence in any development decisions that are taken, and even where there is not sufficient evidence to prove that damage would be caused to Protected Areas of Hydrological Importance by a proposed development, the precautionary principle should be applied to safeguard the water resource. Under no circumstances, including economic considerations, can a development proposal that risks damaging Protected Areas of Hydrological Importance be considered as justified.

## CG30

## Catchment Management Plans

**MEPA supports proposals by relevant government agencies for major improvements to storm water runoff systems in the localities identified below in conjunction with the formulation of Catchment Management Plans (CMPs) for these areas in line with the emergent EU requirements on Flood Risk:**

Location	Area Policy Map
Birkirkara watercourse and flood risk prone area	BKM1
Balzan watercourse and flood risk prone area	BZM1
Qormi watercourse and flood risk prone area	QOM1

**Valley Watercourses are indicated in blue on the Area Policy Maps BKM1 and QOM1 and in the Birkirkara and Qormi Environmental Constraints Maps. MEPA will not permit any development or redevelopment within the identified Valley Watercourse areas, and all existing open spaces found within them are to be retained open and unobstructed. In addition, MEPA will not permit any new accesses (including garages) in the facades of buildings that directly front onto these Valley Watercourses.**

**Proposals for development or redevelopment below road level (excluding wells and reservoirs) for sites located within Flood Risk Areas but outside Valley Watercourse areas, as indicated in yellow on Maps BZM1, BKM1 and QOM1 and in the Balzan, Birkirkara and Qormi Environmental Constraints Maps, shall be permitted by MEPA subject to clearance from the Civil Protection Department.**

3.8.3 Surface water runoff within residential areas has intensified through the development and surfacing of once permeable spaces. This situation has been magnified through changes in weather patterns that have resulted in heavy storms producing large amounts of storm water run-off in short periods of time. This makes management of storm water runoff a priority. The flooding issue needs to be

managed in an integrative manner through catchment management plans for the whole of the water catchment, and MEPA supports immediate proposals for improvement.

- 3.8.4 Flooding problems are experienced with intensity in the central localities of Balzan, Birkirkara and Qormi. A general study on flooding has been carried out as part of the Hydrology and Geology background studies for Central Malta, and this identifies all flood risk areas and watercourses located within urban areas. This was followed by more detailed additional reports on flooding within Birkirkara and Qormi that dealt with a number of persisting problems including deficiencies in water catchment management. MEPA insists that the following management measures recommended in the mentioned reports are considered in the catchment management plans for the listed localities in order to alleviate existing flooding problems within these urban areas:

A: Birkirkara and Balzan watercourse and flood risk prone area

i ; Upstream

- a. The construction of a reservoir in Lija as per policy LJ07 and another reservoir at Is-Saghjtar Quarry as per policy MO03;
- b. Provision of a culvert on the east side of Triq il-Mosta;
- c. Consideration to be given to the possibility of diverting floodwater before it discharges into Triq Wied Hal-Balzan and Triq in-Naxxar by cutting a tunnel in order to form a drain gallery that would divert storm water to the Bahar ic-Caghaq area.

ii ; Within the urban area

- a. In Triq il-Qasab the subsurface culvert that leads storm water across to Triq Mannarino is to be enlarged;
- b. The cutting of a deep trench in order to facilitate the flow of water from Triq il-Wied directly to the watercourse in Triq il-Qasab;
- c. Removal of obstructions acting as blockages during the peak risk season, including the restriction of parking in the watercourse;
- d. Introduce a hydrographic station in Triq il-Wied to provide comprehensive run-off data to enable better monitoring of future flood behaviour.

B ; Qormi watercourse and flood risk prone area

i ; Upstream

- a. The construction of more dams in the Wied Incita area;
- b. The use of one of the Wied Incita Quarries as a natural reservoir and drain area as indicated in the Attard Area Policy Map and in Policy CG33;
- c. Wied is-Sewda to be cleared of debris and silt behind the existing dams.

ii ; Within the Urban Area

- a. Consideration to be given to the widening and deepening of existing culverts by at least 2 metres;
- b. Reconstruction of bridges with a wider span than the proposed culverts, built at a higher level, and with minimal supports within the width of the watercourse;

- c. Removal of obstructions acting as blockages during the peak risk season, including the restriction of parking in the watercourse;
- d. Introduce a hydrographic station in Triq il-Wied to provide comprehensive run-off data to enable better monitoring of future flood behaviour.

iii ; Downstream

- a. The widening of the culvert at L-Istabal to an adequate width as determined by the Catchment Management Plan for Qormi;
- b. The widening and deepening of the watercourse from Triq il-Wied down to the discharge point at il-Menqa;
- c. Reconstruction of bridges with a wider span than the watercourse and with minimal supports within the width of the watercourse;
- d. Downstream improvements to the Marsa Sports Complex culverts and to the discharge point at Albertown where it is preferable to have the culvert opening directly into Church Creek by means of the development of a bridge instead of the existing road.

## CG31

## Energy Conservation

**All new major developments will be expected to incorporate principles of energy conservation through design, massing, siting of buildings, landscaping and the use of materials, including taking account of:**

- i. **incorporating built forms, technologies, orientation and layout that will contribute to reduced energy consumption (e.g. ventilation, heating/cooling, lighting) and associated emissions;**
- ii. **avoiding negative micro-climatic effects (e.g. wind turbulence, noise reflection);**
- iii. **the potential for the re-use of existing buildings and materials, and the environmental effect of building materials used;**
- iv. **making adequate, integrally-designed provision for the storage and recycling of waste; and**
- v. **the potential for the management or recycling of water.**

**Renewable sources of energy such as solar power systems should be provided within new buildings where this is feasible and appropriate. Wherever possible these principles should also be included during the conversion or re-use of existing sites and buildings.**

**Proposals for major developments are to submit an Energy Conservation Plan detailing proposals for energy saving and efficiency, and indicating how energy conservation principles within the project will be achieved.**

3.8.5 The Plan's general strategy promotes energy conservation particularly by promoting the highest standards of thermal efficiency in new construction, by discouraging the excessive use of non-renewable energy sources, and by encouraging the provision and use of recycling facilities and the use of renewable resources.

3.8.6 Urban sustainability depends on the way towns and buildings are built, maintained and used. MEPA recognizes that buildings contribute directly and indirectly to the consumption of energy and resources and to environmental pollution. They also affect our activities, health and well-being. Energy efficient buildings and those designed and constructed sustainably are now recognised as likely to provide healthier and more comfortable conditions.

- 3.8.7 This policy is intended to encourage a more economic approach to the use of energy in new development taking place in the Central Zone. Buildings are estimated to be responsible for half of all energy consumption, with space heating/cooling accounting for the major part of this demand, contributing to Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Consequently, reducing energy consumption by cost-effective energy efficiency approaches to design and construction can make a major contribution towards reducing emissions. Integration of energy conservation measures into the design of new development and into the conversion or re-use of existing sites and buildings can achieve large savings in energy usage over the long term.
- 3.8.8 Energy conservation should be incorporated into the design process at an early stage, and generation of renewable energy can also be incorporated, for example through the use of solar panels, use of atriums to afford natural lighting, landscape sheltering, and the avoidance of overshadowing. Within buildings, high grade insulation and heat exchange/heat storage systems should be considered in order to retain/eliminate heat. Attention should also be given to opportunities to generate energy through solar power and photovoltaic cells. Major developments provide the opportunity to promote innovative approaches to heat and power supply which offer benefits in terms of energy efficiency. Greater energy efficiency is an objective common to all forms of development.

## CG32

## Quarry Buffer Areas

In accordance with the guidance established in the Minerals Subject Study, MEPA designates a 100m wide buffer area between existing quarry areas and designated Development Zones within which no new quarrying will be allowed. These Quarry Buffer Areas are designated in the following localities as indicated in the relevant Area Policy Maps:

Locality	Area Policy Map
Attard (Ta' Wied Incita)	ATM1
Iklin (Tat-Tabib, Ix-Xwieki)	IKM1
Mosta (Wied Filep)	MOM1
Naxxar (Targiet Ghomor, In-Nigret, Ta' Birguma, Tal-Wej and Wied Bordi)	NAM1, NAM2

Within the designated Quarry Buffer Areas, MEPA will only consider development which satisfies all the following conditions:-

- i. The proposed development by necessity has to be located within the quarry buffer area because no other suitable location is available (eg; essential utility infrastructure and agriculture related uses);
- ii. The proposed development and all its future occupants and users will not be adversely affected by quarry operations; and,
- iii. The proposal is in line with all relevant Local Plan policies and other relevant policies and regulations in force.

- 3.8.9 A number of quarrying areas within the central localities abut sensitive areas including Residential Areas and Residential Priority Areas. In this respect, 100m wide buffer areas are designated in the Local Plan following the guidance of the Minerals Subject Plan in order to safeguard the amenity of the protected areas and to reduce conflicts between the incompatible land uses.



MEPA supports the restoration and reuse of the following quarries for the specified after uses:

Location	Recommended Afteruse	Area Policy Map
Quarry at Wied Incita, Attard	On exhaustion of the mineral resource, the Wied Incita quarry is to be used as a natural reservoir and drain area.	ATM1
Quarries at Ix-Xwieki/Tat-Tabib, Iklin and at Misrah Basili, Gharghur	Restoration for agricultural purposes or nature conservation following infilling with inert waste, except as otherwise permitted in other approved subsidiary plans.	IKM1, GHM1
Quarry at Is-Sghajtar, Mosta	As per Development Brief in accordance with Policy MO03.	MOM2
Wied Bordi, Naxxar	Restoration for agricultural purposes or nature conservation following infilling with inert waste, except as otherwise permitted in other approved subsidiary plans.	NAM2

The restoration and reuse of these quarries is to conform to all the relevant provisions regarding the restoration of quarries as specified in the Minerals Subject Plan.

3.8.10 The restoration and reuse or after-use of quarries is supported in this Local Plan. Generally disused quarries located in rural areas and strategic open gaps are to be restored and reused for agricultural purposes through infilling with inert waste and topsoil cover in order to fully safeguard the rural character of these areas. This is in accordance with the guidance given in the Minerals Subject Plan. However other quarries identified in this policy are strategically located to allow for the development of necessary and appropriate uses as specified. These include the Wied Incita quarry in Attard that has been identified in the Hydrological Resources Survey as the most appropriately located quarry to be used as a water catchment basin and drain for the Wied Incita/Wied is-Sewda/Wied il-Kbir valley system. The implementation of this water catchment basin would significantly improve flooding conditions in the Qormi urban area. The Is-Sghajtar quarry in Mosta is strategically located for the development of a number of essential uses including a warehousing and distribution centre, a park-and-ride site and a reservoir (refer to policy MO03).

### 3.9 Transport

#### CG34

#### Strategic Bus Corridors

MEPA will support measures to increase the convenience and attractiveness of bus services along the four major bus corridors indicated on the Strategic Bus Corridors and Cycle Routes Map, namely:

Location	Bus Corridor
Mosta, Naxxar, Iklin and Birkirkara	Triq il-Belt Valletta/Triq in-Naxxar/Triq il-Wied
Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Sta. Venera and Hamrun	Triq l-Imdina/Triq San Guzepp
Hamrun and Qormi	Triq Hal-Qormi
Birkirkara	Birkirkara By-pass (with the opening of the new hospital).

**In conjunction with the Malta Transport Authority, relevant Government Agencies, Local Councils and developers of major sites located close to these corridors, MEPA will seek the following:**

- i. The introduction of bus priority measures;**
- ii. The improvement of facilities for passengers - for example bus shelters, timetables, and eventually real-time information;**
- iii. Improvements to make services more comfortable, frequent, and reliable;**
- iv. High employment densities within Primary Town Centres and other appropriate sites within the Strategic Bus Corridors as defined in the Area Policy Maps, with designs that facilitate good access for bus passengers;**
- v. Restrained numbers of parking places, particularly for commuters to be considered in the Structure Plan Review; and**
- vi. Where possible, a greater concentration of bus routes along these corridors.**

3.9.1 The first three of the above corridors already have a strong concentration of bus routes. The identified measures are intended to build on this, and make them into corridors where increased use of public transport is a realistic goal. The number of services using the Birkirkara By-pass is expected to increase to serve the new general hospital, thereby offering similar future potential.

3.9.2 There are a number of deficiencies in the provision of bus services across Malta, for example, the poor state of the bus fleet, and the absence of marketing (e.g. attractive season tickets and proper timetables). These are outside the scope of land use planning, nevertheless there are significant and valuable measures that can be promoted to stimulate greater use of buses.

3.9.3 In addition to road-based schemes, such as bus priorities, which improve journey times and reliability, and facilities, which increase passenger convenience (shelters and timetables), land use policies can promote greater bus usage. By allowing higher than normal employment densities as stipulated in (iv) above, by providing good accessibility to bus users, and by restraining parking provision at sites close to these corridors, greater levels of public transport patronage can be encouraged. Higher density employment developments with lower levels of car parking provision will only be permitted where all material planning considerations are met and subject to the proposals for lower car parking standards being confirmed by the Structure Plan Review.

## **CG35**

## **Park and Ride Site**

**MEPA will promote and safeguard the provision of a Park and Ride facility as part of the development of the disused Is-Sghajtar quarry subject to the provisions of Policy MO03. This facility would primarily aim to attract car drivers living in the Mellieha, St. Paul's Bay, Mosta and Naxxar areas. A fast, direct bus link would be provided to the University/Mater Dei Hospital, and Floriana/Valletta area.**

3.9.4 In areas where bus services are comparatively infrequent and development densities are low, it is more difficult to encourage existing car drivers to use public transport for some journeys. This strategically located Park and Ride site would intercept car trips between such areas and busy locations like the Mater Dei Hospital, the University, and Floriana/Valletta, where congestion is increasing and parking is limited. The convenience of the car is maintained, whilst congestion and parking demand are reduced in the more sensitive parts of the island. The proposed bus link

would benefit from the corridor improvements outlined in CG34, thereby increasing its attractiveness.

- 3.9.5 The Household Travel Survey undertaken in 1998 indicates that nearly 3,000 car trips per day occur between the Northwest, Mosta, Naxxar and nearby areas, and Floriana/Valletta. A further 850 trips to the University originate in these areas. The Mater Dei hospital will also generate a substantial number of similar journeys. If parking restraint measures are introduced at these destinations, then this Park and Ride facility will help reduce congestion in critical parts of the Inner Harbour zone.
- 3.9.6 The number of car parking spaces to be provided on this site is to be determined subject to further studies. If, or when, there is spare capacity, the park and ride site could also possibly be used to help relieve parking problems in the Mosta and Naxxar Town Centres. The other elements of the development (e.g. sports and recreational facilities) could complement the facility by utilizing the parking spaces at off-peak times, thereby ensuring an efficient use of resources.

## CG36

## Controlled Car Parking

**In town centres, major employment zones, and similar areas of high parking demand MEPA will encourage and support the introduction of controlled parking measures to ensure that available on-street and off-street parking is used most efficiently and effectively. Short stay restrictions can ensure that the needs of shoppers, short-stay visitors, and service vehicles are given priority. Where necessary, residents parking zones (RPZ's) can be introduced to safeguard the needs of residents. In line with these principles, MEPA recommends Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ's) and RPZ's as indicated in the relevant Transport Policy Maps.**

**In tandem with the car parking standards set out in the Structure Plan and its Review, the appropriate level of parking for a development will be determined having due regard to the level of public transport provision and the environmental conditions in the locality.**

- 3.9.7 The control of car parking is an essential element of any transport strategy. It is required not only to achieve broad objectives, like the greater use of public transport and better environmental conditions, but also to make more effective use of available resources and permit specific improvements, like bus lanes, cycleways, pedestrian facilities and environmental enhancements.
- 3.9.8 Parking in town centres and similar areas is often difficult because commuters occupy the prime spaces for much of the day. This is inefficient and undermines the attractiveness of these areas. Short stay controls, which overcome such problems, can be introduced in a number of ways, both with and without payment. These include limited-waiting regulations, parking discs, vouchers, and "pay and display".
- 3.9.9 In some areas, residential streets will need to be protected from existing extraneous parking, or future over-spill parking, by the introduction of RPZ's. By safeguarding spaces for residents and their visitors the quality of life in these areas will be improved.
- 3.9.10 Where there are good bus services, the above measures should be used to restrain the additional provision of commuter parking, so as to increase bus usage, thereby reducing congestion and improving environmental amenity in UCA's and other

sensitive areas. This approach will also be applied to new developments situated close to the main bus corridors. High employment densities and/or low parking standards will be applied in such cases in order to achieve more sustainable development.

- 3.9.11 The Local Plan includes a number of area policies relating to CPZ's and the respective policy maps indicate very broadly the areas likely to be covered by these zones. The precise boundary of the zones will be determined after detailed studies by the relevant authorities.
- 3.9.12 The issue of maximum parking standards for most land uses is to be examined as part of the work related to the Structure Plan Review. These should be related to public transport availability, levels of traffic congestion, and existing levels of available parking. In environmentally sensitive locations, like UCAs, parking provision will also be influenced by the impact extra parking would have on the character of the area.

## **CG37**

## **Traffic Calming and Road Safety**

**Working with the Local Councils and the Malta Transport Authority, MEPA recommends traffic calming measures to improve road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users, and discourage inappropriate through traffic, notably in residential areas and areas with high pedestrian activity. Specific recommendations are identified in the relevant Area Policies and Transport Policy Maps, however these do not exclude other required traffic calming measures as identified by the relevant authorities.**

**New developments should be designed in such a way as to inherently discourage non-access traffic and restrain vehicle speeds so as to produce a safe, pleasant environment and give priority to sustainable modes of transport.**

**New road layouts should conform to appropriate standards that ensure satisfactory visibility and geometry. Additionally, development proposals should not adversely affect safety and traffic flow at existing junctions and roads.**

- 3.9.13 Through traffic should be concentrated on the main road network (arterial and distributor roads) and therefore it is appropriate to use traffic management measures to prevent or discourage the use of unsuitable routes. Traffic calming measures, if well designed and comprehensively introduced can significantly improve road safety and create good conditions for walking and cycling.
- 3.9.14 The layout and design of roads within new developments and scribed areas should create a safe and attractive environment. The general alignment of roads within scheme is already established, however the carriageway widths and junction designs should restrain vehicle speeds, and footway widths should be adequate. Where appropriate, specific measures to improve access and segregate movements by pedestrians and cyclists should be provided.
- 3.9.15 Poor design of developments and the obstruction of visibility, both at junctions and along roads, unacceptably reduces road safety and interferes with the free flow of traffic. Consequently, MEPA will refuse permission for any development that does not meet standards and decreases road safety.

- 3.9.16 The Local Plan includes a number of area policies relating to traffic calming, traffic management and environmental improvements (embellishments) mainly in and around UCAs. These area policies broadly define the objectives for individual schemes and the policy maps indicate the main areas for treatment. The Local Plan does not seek to prescribe the detailed design of schemes, as this will be for local councils to determine within the established framework.

## **CG38**

## **Road Hierarchy**

**The road hierarchy for the local plan area is indicated on the Road Hierarchy Map. This includes a number of modifications intended to update and rationalise the network. The proposed changes will be considered as part of the Structure Plan review.**

**The road hierarchy will be used as the framework for transport planning, helping to determine the priority for highway investment (maintenance, improvements and new construction) and traffic management (route signing, lorry routing, bus priorities, local schemes, and traffic calming).**

- 3.9.17 The Structure Plan emphasises the need to have a hierarchical road system with traffic channelled onto appropriate main roads, thereby reducing impact elsewhere. Roads are designed and controlled in a manner consistent with their role in the hierarchy. The arterial and distributor roads are the important routes intended to carry most traffic, and as such direct access and parking is either prevented or limited.
- 3.9.18 The recommended changes to the hierarchy are mainly intended to rationalise the transport network and introduce consistency. Significant modifications are proposed in Mosta and Attard to reflect the emerging plans for these areas.

## **CG39 Junction Improvements and Accident Remedial Measures**

**MEPA will encourage appropriate government agencies to improve congested junctions on the main road network, particularly where buses, pedestrians and cyclists are experiencing delays.**

**The Transport Improvements Map indicates the junctions where highway improvements are recommended either to improve general conditions or as a consequence of future development. No development permits will be issued which might adversely affect the satisfactory improvement of these junctions.**

**Where major developments will produce a material adverse impact at junctions in terms of safety and/or congestion, MEPA will require the developer to undertake improvements or mitigation measures. These improvements or mitigation measures are to be fully implemented before the major development starts operating.**

**MEPA will support initiatives to reduce accidents on the road network. This would most effectively be achieved by the introduction of an accident investigation and remedial works programme.**

- 3.9.19 There is a need to have a good road system in the local plan area, especially where routes have a wider strategic importance. Junction improvements, and in some cases new road links, are necessary to improve the efficiency of the road network.

However, the primary purposes of any improvements must be consistent with overall transport policy, and therefore they should result in benefits for public transport and vulnerable road users. Highway improvements will only be justifiable where they form part of the sustainable and integrated transport strategy. It is not appropriate or feasible for schemes to be designed on the basis of “predict and provide”. Such an approach, which seeks to satisfy the demands of traffic growth, will not tackle underlying problems. To the contrary it is likely to stimulate further growth.

- 3.9.20 In terms of achieving the Local Plan’s transport objectives, it is recommended that highest priority should be given to implementing improvements along the Strategic Bus Corridors as these are intended to reverse the decline in public transport patronage.
- 3.9.21 In the case of road improvements required to mitigate the impact of a development, it will not be sufficient to simply increase highway capacity. Improvements should also aim to increase the use of public transport and other sustainable modes.
- 3.9.22 The number of road accidents is a particular cause of concern. In addition to the paramount need to improve the general standard of driving, significant benefits would stem from in-depth accident investigation and a programme of accident remedial measures. Realistically, this will not effectively be instituted until specialist staff is trained and a modern accident recording and analysis system is available.

## **CG40**

## **Cycle Routes and Related Facilities**

**MEPA will support the introduction of cycle ways and cycle routes as broadly shown on the Transport Improvements Map. Initially these routes are to provide good cycling conditions for local recreational cyclists and tourists, and in the longer term they should encourage more people to undertake short trips by bicycle. The routes should include complementary measures including secure cycle parking in pedestrian zones and at major attractions, traffic management to aid cyclists, and promotional measures (e.g. publicity material and educational campaigns) to encourage greater levels of cycling.**

**Development permission will not be granted for developments that will jeopardize the indicated cycle routes, and major developments located close to them will be expected to contribute towards their implementation and associated measures as a planning obligation.**

- 3.9.23 Cycling is not generally popular in Malta, in part due to hostile conditions and also because of the lack of good cycle ways and facilities. Nevertheless it is cheap and healthy and a potentially convenient way to undertake short journeys. In countries like Denmark, Holland and Belgium a wide range of physical and promotional measures are used to make cycling safer, convenient and attractive. These could be appropriately adapted to, at first, support cycling as a recreational pursuit, and then in the longer term to encourage a higher level of cycling.
- 3.9.24 In many areas, the CMLP promotes traffic calming in village cores and town centres. In part such schemes are intended to create pleasant and safe conditions for cyclists and other vulnerable road users. The cycle routes highlighted in this policy are intended to exploit recreational opportunities and to provide linkage across the CMLP area. Traffic management measures will be required to make such routes

possible and safe prior to their use. Related facilities such as cycle racks and route signing should be of high quality.

- 3.9.25 Some of the routes, for example those along the Victoria Lines and the Wignacourt Aqueduct, could be of interest to tourists. The Malta Tourist Authority's support for these routes is beneficial, especially in the highlighting of these features, attractions, and facilities to tourists through publicity material. More enthusiastic cyclists would of course venture beyond these core routes, however this will depend on them having access to good, detailed maps.





# **Area Policies**



## 4. ATTARD AREA POLICIES

### 4.1 Introduction

Area: 3.5 sq. kms.  
Population: 9,372 (1998)

- 4.1.1 Attard is bounded to the north and to the east by Lija and Balzan respectively. These three localities are known as the Three Villages due to their similar urban characteristics dominated by the presence of a number of large gardens and quiet residential neighbourhoods. Up to the middle of the last century Attard consisted of a tightly knit urban settlement centred on the parish church. However as a result of the subsequent planning schemes, rapid urban expansion has occurred in the areas of Misrah Kola, Tal-Fuklar and Ta' Fgieni resulting in extensive areas of low density villa and terrace house development. Further urban expansion is now defined by the presence of the Ta' Qali National Park to the west, Mount Carmel Hospital and the proposed Attard By-pass to the south, and with the proposed Strategic Open Gap to the north.
- 4.1.2 Between 1985 and 1998 the population of Attard increased by 65% from 5,681 to 9,372 as a result of the rapid urban expansion that occurred. The number of children up to 14 years of age has also increased significantly from 1,326 in 1985 to 2,307 in 1995. There was also a similar significant increase in the economically active population of Attard.
- 4.1.3 Although Attard is predominantly residential in character, commercial, industrial and tourist activity within the urban area need to be controlled in order to safeguard the amenity of the residential areas. The main causes of concern in Attard are the Attard Industrial Estates' industrial uses surrounded by villa development requiring mitigation measures and the commercial area at Triq il-Pitkali where a number of fruit and vegetable warehouses are located next to housing. There is also a general lack of sports facilities in Attard.
- 4.1.4 The main traffic problems in Attard are concentrated along Triq in-Nutar Zarb/Triq l-Mdina caused by the large volume of traffic that uses this arterial road. The Structure Plan proposed the construction of a by-pass to overcome these difficulties. In addition the unacceptable use of residential streets by commercial lorries associated with the fruit and vegetable distribution outlets in Triq il-Pitkali is a concern. Prior to the re-location of these outlets, as proposed in the approved Ta' Qali Action Plan (2000), it will be necessary to introduce measures to ensure that lorries use the most appropriate access routes thereby avoiding residential streets.

#### Summary of Issues

- Community facilities and local services are dispersed
- Lack of sports facilities
- Commercial uses, particularly at Triq il-Pitkali, are causing deleterious impacts on adjacent residential areas

- The Attard Industrial Estate contrasts with the villa area
- Historical monuments including the Wignacourt Aqueduct, the Old Railway Track, San Anton Gardens and Mount Carmel Hospital require further protection
- Problems of traffic congestion, road safety and poor environmental conditions along existing main roads
- Traffic calming measures required in the village core and along existing local access roads.

## Area Policies

### AT01

### Local Centres

**Local Centres are designated for Attard as indicated in the Attard Area Policy Map. Within these Centres MEPA will permit the development of local commercial, community and leisure uses as indicated in Policy CG13. MEPA will also favourably consider the construction of a civic centre in the western part of Gnien il-Palma as indicated in the Attard Area Policy Map on condition that this development will cause the least possible disruption to existing trees, and that the nearby site of archaeological value is fully protected in accordance with the provisions of Policy CG23.**

**The Plan expects that the existing fruit and vegetable warehouses located at Triq il-Pitkali will cease operating during the plan period and will be relocated to Ta' Qali as indicated in the approved Ta' Qali Action Plan (2000). MEPA will not allow the development of new warehouses or the extension of existing warehouses within the designated Local Centre.**

- 4.1.5 Traditionally the commercial and village core area of Attard was located in the parish church area at Piazza Tommaso Dingli. However new commercial development in the Gnien il-Palma area has resulted in an extension of the centre westwards. In effect, the junction at Triq il-Mosta has developed into an important urban node having a bank, a pharmacy, local shops, a public assembly hall and the primary school. Also planned in the vicinity is a sports centre and a civic centre. MEPA acknowledges the importance of this new node and, in addition to the traditional centre around the parish church, designates the area next to Gnien il-Palma as a local centre.
- 4.1.6 The planned civic centre at Gnien il-Palma is required so as to allow for the relocation of the existing Local Council and Police Station which are currently sited in unsuitable and old premises. In addition, Attard residents presently have to go to Balzan to visit the post office, the social services office and other community facilities. The planned civic centre at Gnien il-Palma in Attard would therefore provide the opportunity to cater for these essential facilities in a convenient and central location. A centrally located day care centre and possibly a library are also required within the designated core area.
- 4.1.7 Commercial outlets and particularly fruit and vegetable warehouses established along Triq il-Pitkali are causing a number of deleterious impacts on the adjacent residential areas due to general disturbance to neighbours, parking and traffic congestion caused by service vehicles. It is therefore necessary to prohibit any further spread of these commercial uses into adjoining residential areas. The Plan proposes to do this by establishing a strict boundary around the local centre and by

prohibiting the establishment of new warehouses and retail warehouses in the residential area.

- 4.1.8 The Plan expects that the amenity of the surrounding residential areas will be improved further through the proposed relocation of the fruit and vegetable depots that are currently operating from Triq il-Pitkali to the land that is reserved for such uses in Ta' Qali as per Area Policy NWTQ 29 (iii) in the Ta' Qali Action Plan (2000). The eventual relocation of these depots will also free valuable commercial space in Triq il-Pitkali that can be used for the establishment of additional convenience shops, local offices and other compatible uses thereby strengthening this local centre's function.

## **AT02**

## **Attard Industrial Estate**

**MEPA will only permit the development of Light Industrial Uses (Use Class 11 of the Use Classes Order, 1994) within the Attard Industrial Estate provided that these do not create any bad neighbourly impacts on adjacent residential areas. The areas designated for such industrial development are indicated in the Attard Area Policy Map.**

**MEPA will prohibit the extension and intensification of existing bad neighbour industrial activities within the Estate unless required mitigation measures are implemented in order to eliminate all existing adverse impacts being created by such industrial activities. In addition, MEPA will facilitate and support changes of use from existing bad neighbour industrial uses to light industry with neighbourhood compatibility (Use Class 11 of the Use Classes Order, 1994).**

**MEPA will promote the further upgrading and landscaping of the existing Estate particularly through boundary treatment and heavy tree planting within the green buffer areas as indicated in the Attard Area Policy Map.**

**Furthermore, should the MIP relocate the existing industrial activities in the future to a more appropriate location, MEPA will consider the comprehensive redevelopment of the Attard Industrial Estate for residential or office use.**

- 4.1.9 Attard Industrial Estate located at Misrah Kola is mainly surrounded by detached and semi-detached dwellings and is situated along the Triq L-Imdina arterial road. The Industrial Estate has been subject to numerous discussions in the past regarding its proximity to residential areas and the negative impacts caused by industry. Preliminary discussions had dealt with the possible relocation elsewhere of existing industrial uses. However this relocation may prove problematic due to the long-term emphyteutical leases that were granted to entrepreneurs by the respective authorities. Should this option be deemed feasible in the future, MEPA will encourage such a relocation and will subsequently plan the area for residential or office use. MEPA is recommending that measures are implemented so as to strictly control the existing situation and to incrementally upgrade the environment.

## **AT03**

## **Protection of Old Railway Track**

**MEPA will only grant permission for development having a frontage on Triq il-Linja and any development located within and adjacent to the area indicated on the Attard Area Policy Map once it is satisfied that such development will not compromise the conservation of the Old Railway Track and its embankment. In addition, MEPA will**

**ensure that access to, and important local views of this historical monument will not be compromised by any development in its vicinity. The Authority will also promote the restoration of this monument.**

4.1.10 The railway system in Malta was designed predominantly through the input of the Royal Engineers in the mid-19th Century. A stretch of this track still exists in Attard. The track that previously joined Floriana, Hamrun, Santa Venera and Birkirkara is barely traceable today apart from this site even though most of the street plan follows the path of this track. In many ways the rail connected these Victorian urban towns and the track was a true reflection of local 19th. century urbanization and the effect of industrialization in the Maltese Islands. The purpose of the railway was not only military and strategic, but it was also designed to bypass the then congested main street of Hamrun (Triq il-Kbira San Guzepp). The main station and train depot previously located at Attard had been demolished and developed into a public garden/playing field. The track area is of Grade 1 value and combines military, industrial, technological and urban value. This monument therefore requires protection from any development that is likely to cause a negative impact on its conservation value, access and setting.

## **AT04**

## **Rezoning of Residential Sites**

**The land at Triq il-Qarsajja indicated on the Attard Area Policy Map is being rezoned from detached and semi-detached dwellings to maisonettes and flats with front gardens.**

**Furthermore, MEPA will permit the development of the existing undeveloped urban space at Ta` Fgieni as shown on the Attard Area Policy Map for maisonettes and flats with front gardens, subject to:**

- i. the development abiding by the street alignments and zoning conditions as indicated in Planning Control Map ATA3; and,**
- ii. the provision of an electricity substation within the development according to the requirements of Enemalta Corporation.**

4.1.11 The land at Triq il-Qarsajja is surrounded on three sides by terrace house development and by industrial development on the fourth side. A change of zoning is therefore justified on the basis of the surrounding urban context and since a more efficient use of land is being achieved. Approximately 45 residential units (maisonettes and flats) can now be developed on the vacant sites located within this block.

4.1.12 The identified undeveloped urban space at Ta' Fgieni was zoned in the TPS (1988) as an unopened street. From a planning point of view, there is no requirement for such a wide space for street formation or for the development of a car park. The surrounding area is of a residential character, and in this respect the site is most suitably developed into maisonettes and flats with front gardens so as to retain the same predominant land use and urban character of the area. This site is also required for the development of an electricity substation to serve the needs of residents living at Ta' Fgieni.

## AT05

## Sites for Community Facilities

The sites at Triq it-Tahhan and at Il-Marg as indicated in the Attard Area Policy Map are being designated for the development of any of the following land uses as required;

- i. Religious non-residential institutions (Class 7 (e), Use Classes Order, 1994);
- ii. Residential Institutions (Class 2, Use Classes Order, 1994) subject to clearance from the Department of Health, the Department for the Welfare of the Elderly and the National Commission for Disabled Persons;
- iii. Education (Class 8, Use Classes Order, 1994); and,
- iv. The continued use of part of the site as a Convent.

Any development on these sites is to retain adequate open landscaped spaces.

4.1.13 Through consultation with the Archdiocese of Malta it has been indicated that a diplomatic quarters for the Church has already been provided elsewhere, and therefore there is no need to develop the site at triq it-Tahhan for such a purpose. On the other hand, the development of a pastoral centre and a church is required on this site to serve the rapidly developing residential areas of Misrah Kola, Ta' Fgieni and Tal-Mirakli. The tract of land in question is large enough to also cater for the development of other required social and community facilities including residential institutions and possibly a school.

4.1.14 The white area at Il-Marg, previously Sptar ta' Santa Katarina, is currently used as an old people's home and convent with its surrounding open spaces. Considering the increase in the number of elderly in Attard and the nearby settlements, and also the general requirement for the provision of bed spaces within homes for the elderly, the site is reserved for this purpose. In addition the site is large enough to accommodate a specialized residential complex for single parents and small families in need of care, based mainly on small 1 and 2 bedroomed units and a nursing home. Other possible uses for this site include a school and religious non-residential institutions.

## AT06

## Protection of Gardens

MEPA will protect all gardens and open spaces within the designated area as indicated in Maps ATM1 and ATM4 in order to safeguard their high townscape and landscape value. There will therefore be a presumption against the development of new buildings within the designated area. However, MEPA may consider applications for minor extensions to existing buildings provided that these are not likely to adversely affect the historical, landscape or architectural characteristics of the designated gardens.

4.1.15 This protective policy is fundamental for the proper conservation of Triq Sant Anton and the Sant Anton Gardens that are traditionally known for their high quality environmental value. The gradual development of these gardens would erode the distinctive environmental characteristic of the designated area. Such an urban transformation is not supported by MEPA.

## **AT07**

## **Mount Carmel Hospital**

**In order to promote the proper functioning of Mount Carmel Hospital, MEPA will favourably consider applications for refurbishment works, structural alterations and additions subject to the following conditions;**

- i. Only the development of ancillary uses and facilities that directly serve the hospital function will be allowed. These may include sports facilities within the grounds of the hospital;**
- ii. Given that Mount Carmel Hospital is a building of historical and architectural value, MEPA will ensure that proposed works will not adversely affect the conservation value of the building; and,**
- iii. MEPA will not permit any development in the proposed Green Areas and Tree Preservation Order (TPO) areas found within, and adjacent to, the hospital grounds and as identified in the Attard Environmental Constraints Map.**

4.1.16 Presently Mount Carmel Hospital is a specialised institution that serves about 650 interned patients and about 200 outpatients. It is envisaged that the hospital will remain functioning as a specialised hospital during the Local Plan period, and that it would need to be maintained and upgraded. Upgrading works are likely to involve various alterations, additions and refurbishment works. In fact such works were planned for Admission Ward 6, Ward 9 and the laundry. The upgrading of the hospital is planned to be a gradual and ongoing process, and no extensive development or redevelopment is envisaged. Being an important historical building, MEPA will ensure that full account is taken of conservation requirements in considering applications for any refurbishment and structural works.

4.1.17 The area outside the existing main gate of the hospital will be better utilised and organised through the development of ancillary facilities including a better organised car park and suitably located sports facilities. Subject to conservation and preservation requirements, these required facilities within the hospital grounds would be favourably considered by MEPA in order to promote the improved functioning of the hospital.

## **AT08**

## **Tourist Establishment Site**

**MEPA will give favourable consideration to proposals to upgrade the existing tourist establishment situated on the site as designated on Map ATM1. The extension and/or intensification of this existing hotel may be permitted by MEPA provided that all the following conditions are satisfied:**

- i. Prior approval by the Malta Tourism Authority is obtained;**
- ii. The scale and quality of design of the whole project is consistent with the character of the area and of the existing building;**
- iii. The proposed extension does not exceed the height of the existing hotel;**
- iv. Any existing detrimental impacts caused by the existing Tourist Establishment which adversely effect the amenity of the surrounding area are appropriately resolved;**
- v. The proposal will not cause any deleterious impacts on adjoining residences or other sensitive land uses due to noise, increased activity, operating times and general disturbance to neighbours;**
- vi. The proposal is subject to conditions regulating the scale, location, access, design, use, layout, landscaping, hours of operation and other requirements; and,**



- vii. **The proposal meets the required parking standards for the existing hotel and for the proposed extension and/or intensification.**

**In the event that the existing hotel ceases operating, MEPA will permit the redevelopment of this site predominantly for residential use subject to the following conditions:**

- a. **The retention of the old villa building that is of conservation value in any redevelopment proposal and the protection of its immediate setting;**
- b. **Development will not compromise the conservation of the Old Railway Track and its embankment in line with Policy AT03;**
- c. **The residential development is to be for detached or semi-detached dwellings in accordance with the requirements for the area as stipulated in DC2005; and,**
- d. **Prior approval of an overall comprehensive road scheme and layout plan for the entire site is granted by MEPA.**

4.1.18 The upgrading of existing tourist establishments is essential in order to improve the quality of the tourist product. However, the Local Plan is also concerned with existing or future impacts on residential areas that need to be addressed. This policy therefore seeks to support the existing tourist establishment in Attard by permitting upgrading proposals consisting of required extensions and alterations on condition that the developers will implement mitigation measures to resolve any impacts on adjacent residential areas. In order to safeguard and protect residences from unacceptable impacts including traffic and noise generation from late hours of operation, any upgrading proposal shall be made subject to stringent conditions regarding scale, location, access, design, use, layout, landscaping, hours of operation and other requirements. Should the existing tourist establishment cease operating, then the site may be redeveloped into villa developments in order to retain the existing character and environmental characteristics of the area.

## **AT09**

## **Water Run-Off at Misrah Kola**

**A suitable culvert system is to be provided in the Misrah Kola area so as to prevent flooding and ensure effective rainwater drainage from the Ta' Qali area to Wied Rmiedi/Wied Incita thereby avoiding residential areas.**

4.1.19 Triq Dun Gwann Theuma and adjoining streets in Misrah Kola are subject to regular flooding since no provision has so far been made for the suitable drainage of storm water run-off in the area. The run-off originates from the adjacent Ta' Qali area which consists of a large water catchment area. This problem is a cause of inconvenience to residents, and in heavy storms also causes a safety hazard. A suitable culvert system is therefore required in order to direct this water run-off to the adjoining valley whilst by-passing the residential areas altogether.

## **AT10**

## **Attard By-pass**

**In accordance with Structure Plan Policy RDS4, MEPA will support the construction of the Attard By-pass so as to upgrade the arterial road network and improve conditions along the existing main road. However, other transport options may be investigated by the ADT.**

**If the by-pass option is chosen for implementation, then the following provisions shall apply:**

- 1. Since the existing scheme alignment for the by-pass is both inadequate and inappropriate, this has to be significantly modified. Prior to a new alignment being adopted, MEPA will not permit any development that prejudices this highway scheme;**
- 2. Junctions at both ends of the by-pass shall be designed to discourage through traffic from gaining access to Attard and to give priority to bus movements;**
- 3. Comprehensive works to downgrade the existing main road, so as to discourage through traffic and improve the environment of the area, should accompany the construction of the by-pass; and**
- 4. The design of the by-pass shall safeguard the accessibility and amenity of nearby residential properties.**

**In order to address existing problems along Triq in-Nutar Zarb, prior to the possible construction of the by-pass, MEPA will support the introduction of traffic management and control measures, particularly in the vicinity of the Triq Valletta and Triq Haz-Zebbug junctions.**

4.1.20 The arterial road through Attard (Triq in-Nutar Zarb) currently carries some 2,100 vph during the weekday morning peak period and 29,000 vehicles per day. These heavy traffic flows cause congestion, road safety problems, and poor environmental conditions along this single carriageway road. Along Triq L-Imdina (west of the one-way system) the weekday morning peak hour and daily flows are 1,500 vph and 17,500 vpd respectively and consequently traffic problems are normally less marked.

4.1.21 If the transport option of the by-pass is chosen and implemented, then its construction around the periphery of the built-up area, as envisaged by the Structure Plan, will remove through traffic, reduce delays for bus services, and greatly improve the environment of the residential area. In order to achieve the objectives of Policy CG34 to improve conditions for bus services along the by-pass, the design of the junctions at each end of the by-pass will need to include bus priority measures. Equally, if the full benefits of the by-pass are to be achieved, environmental improvements and traffic calming measures should simultaneously be introduced along the existing main roads to effectively downgrade them to local access status.

4.1.22 There is also a need to consider existing problems and identify interim solutions prior to the implementation of the preferred road scheme for the area. Excessive speed and lack of control at some junctions appears to be major contributors to the current poor conditions. To this affect, it would be appropriate to introduce traffic management and control measures to help improve current conditions.

## **AT11 Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements**

**MEPA will support the further introduction and upgrading of traffic calming measures and environmental improvements in the village core.**

**In order to improve safety and amenity, and potentially discourage through traffic, MEPA will encourage the introduction of traffic calming and related measures along Triq Hal-Warda/Triq il-Mosta/Triq Santa Katarina. MEPA will also encourage the**

**introduction of comprehensive traffic calming measures along the whole length of Triq Victor Vassallo to help improve road safety in this straight and excessively wide street, and along Triq il-Linja, a local access road.**

- 4.1.23 Attard Local Council has already introduced some pedestrianisation and traffic calming around the parish church and this has greatly improved pedestrian conditions in this area. The quality of some features, like road humps, could be greatly improved to reflect the high architectural standard of the UCA, and calming measures should be increased and extended, so as to maintain constant low speeds and spread the benefits over a wider area. The Local Council's use of mini roundabouts at junctions close to the village core is to be applauded, however greater attention needs to be paid to detailed design and implementation.
- 4.1.24 It is evident that Triq Hal-Warda/Triq il-Mosta/Triq Santa Katarina, a local access route, is used by through traffic. Realistically, it is unlikely that such a use can be prevented. However, it would be appropriate to improve this route, by reducing carriageway widths, defining parking bays, upgrading pedestrian crossings, and other works to slow traffic. Some measures of this nature have already been introduced close to the local retail and community facilities. Further works would build on this success, and achieve a better balance between the needs of traffic movement and pedestrian comfort and safety.
- 4.1.25 Whilst Triq Victor Vassallo is only designated as a local access road, it serves a relatively large residential area. Unfortunately, its long, straight alignment and excessive carriageway width encourages speeding and other road safety dangers. If the problem is to be effectively tackled, extensive works will be necessary, which change the character of the road, thereby improving safety and beneficially also amenity.

## **AT12**

## **Lorry Movements in Residential Area**

**In advance of the relocation of fruit and vegetable depots from Triq il-Gradilja to Ta' Qali (refer to Policy AT01 and the approved Ta' Qali Action Plan (2000) Policy NWTQ29), MEPA will support the introduction of effective traffic management measures to prevent lorries from passing through residential side streets in this locality.**

**When full relocation has been achieved, MEPA will support the introduction of similar measures in Triq il-Gradilja to ensure that lorries associated with uses in Ta' Qali use the main road network, rather than pass through Attard.**

- 4.1.26 The fruit and vegetable depots currently generate significant movements of lorries through nearby residential side streets. A lorry prohibition sign has been introduced, however it is clear that this is not enforced. It is possible to physically prevent such movements by the introduction of width restrictions. These allow cars and other light vehicles to pass, but prevent lorry movements. If introduced at key points with due regard being paid to the needs of emergency vehicles, such restrictions are very effective.
- 4.1.27 In the longer term, it is intended that these depots should be relocated to Ta' Qali. When this is achieved it would be appropriate to introduce width restrictions in Triq il-Gradilja (near the reservoir) to prevent lorries using local roads to gain access to Ta' Qali.



## 5. BALZAN AREA POLICIES

### 5.1 Introduction

Area: 0.6 sq. kms

Population: 4,384 (1998)

- 5.1.1 Balzan forms part of the characteristic Three Villages (Attard, Balzan, Lija). Balzan has the smallest area in the CMLP, which is less than 1 sq. km. It is a completely urbanised settlement with a number of characteristic gardens found within the locality. It possesses a rich and architecturally significant urban core consisting of beautiful town houses and gardens, the parish church, old chapels and a large convent. Balzan in fact has been historically described as being a 'locality surrounded by gardens' (*hortibus undique septa*) and is described as a peaceful and picturesque settlement. Existing palaces also contribute to the character of Balzan. The gardens that are located in Balzan need to be conserved in order to protect its serene urban character.
- 5.1.2 The village is predominantly residential in character, apart from limited commercial uses within the designated Local Centre at Triq il-Wied ta' Hal-Balzan and has a population of about 4,384 persons (1998). Population was calculated in the 1985 Census as 4,781, but census boundaries have changed since 1985.
- 5.1.3 Development in Balzan will be guided towards the servicing of existing needs including requirements of the elderly population. There is a presumption against commercial development within residential areas, apart from local scale development, since this would contrast and alter the overall quiet characteristic and traditional urban character of the Three Villages.
- 5.1.4 Having a small area and being primarily residential in character, transport problems in Balzan are relatively modest. However, conditions in and around the village core do require attention to improve environmental conditions and discourage through traffic. Balzan has problems of parking especially around the main square area. A general lack of public open space makes the availability of parking problematic. In this regard, only local commercial development is planned in order to minimize traffic generation.

#### Summary of Issues

- Existing civic centre not situated in a convenient location
- Need to direct commercial development to defined locations in order to safeguard residential areas
- Need to identify sites for the development of social and community facilities
- Excessive traffic speed and inappropriate conditions for pedestrians in the area around the parish church
- Traffic management measures required in the urban core of Balzan.

#### Area Policies

## **BZ01**

## **Site for Civic Centre**

**In considering applications for development permission within the designated site at Triq il-Papa Alessandru VII indicated in the Balzan Area Policy Map, MEPA will support the uses given in the order of priority as listed below and will give permission only if it is convinced that there is no demand for other uses in the list that have greater priority:**

- i. A civic centre that is constructed in accordance with DC2005 regulations for detached/semi-detached dwellings ;**
- ii. Required indoor sports facilities; and,**
- iii. Detached/semi-detached dwellings constructed in accordance with the DC2005.**

5.1.5 Balzan is the locality with the smallest area in the Local Plan and available government owned vacant sites for development are very limited. The designated site consists of a centrally located derelict tract of government owned land that is available for the construction of required social and community facilities. Therefore in line with Structure Plan Policy SET7, this site is being reserved for the development of a civic centre and for the development of required indoor sports facilities only that are lacking in the locality. If MEPA is fully satisfied that the above-mentioned community facilities have been adequately accommodated in the designated area, and there is still extra vacant space left on site, then the Authority will allow the development of detached/semi-detached dwellings on the remaining land.

5.1.6 Presently, the existing civic centre at Triq il-Kbira is not situated in a convenient location. This is due to the fact that Triq il-Kbira is a narrow one-way street with very limited parking availability and is located at the periphery of Balzan. The designated site is the most appropriate site for the relocation of this existing community facility from its present unsuitable location. The new site will provide for the relocation of the Local Council Office, the Health Centre, Post Office and other required community facilities. Future use of the vacated local council office at Triq il-Kbira should follow the provisions of Policy CG07. The civic centre is required to be of a semi-detached villa design so as to retain the existing urban design of the area.

## **BZ02**

## **Rezoning of Land at Triq Birbal**

**MEPA designates the land at Triq Birbal indicated on the Balzan Area Policy Map for the following land uses:**

- i. Accommodation for single parents and small families in need of care (Class 2 (a), Use Classes Order 1994) based on small 1 and 2 bedroomed units to be provided on the western part of the site ;**
- ii. Land reserved for the possible future extension westwards of Stella Maris School (Use Class 8, Use Classes Order, 1994) together with a new vehicular pick-up and drop-off area to serve the school; and,**
- iii. the continued use of part of the site as a convent.**

**MEPA requires that adequate landscaped open spaces will be retained in any development proposals on this site.**

- 5.1.7 The land at Triq Birbal is currently used as a convent, for religious purposes and as a residential institution together with a number of fields. The Local Plan acknowledges the importance of these functions and supports their further intensification with particular emphasis on the further development of small specialized housing units providing accommodation for single parents and small families in need of care. There is also the possibility that in the future the Stella Maris primary school would need to be extended westwards in order to incorporate a secondary school. Therefore land within the designated area located adjacent to the existing school is reserved for this purpose.
- 5.1.8 The existing open spaces within this site provide for the required serene environment associated with these functions, and therefore a satisfactory amount of open space is to be retained and incorporated in the design of the above-mentioned development proposals. A singular vehicular access route from Triq Birbal leading to the area between the existing school site and the land in question is to be provided. This access route is intended to provide better access to the land to the west and also better parking provision and access to the existing school.

### **BZ03**

### **Rezoning of White Areas**

**The two areas of land located at Triq iz-Zekkuk and zoned in the TPS (1988) as white areas are designated for the development of maisonettes and flats without front gardens. These areas are indicated in the Balzan Area Policy Map. MEPA will only consider development planning applications in these designated areas following the approval by the same Authority of a comprehensive road scheme for these areas.**

- 5.1.9 These white areas are located within predominantly residential zones. There are no planning constraints on these sites, and they are not required for the development of any specific non-residential land use, such as community facilities. Therefore, in order to retain the amenity and existing residential character of their environs, and so as to promote a more efficient use of land, these sites are to be developed for maisonettes and flats without front gardens. The design of the alignments of the new road layouts for these white areas may either be initiated by MEPA on the request of one of the owners, or through a PC application from the relevant owners.

### **BZ04**

### **Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements**

**MEPA will encourage a scheme to enhance all the area around the parish church. The design of the improvement should pay particular attention to:**

- i. Reducing traffic speeds and improving conditions for pedestrians;**
- ii. Reducing the visual impact of parking, whilst maintaining good accessibility to local facilities;**
- iii. Providing more space for informal recreation; and,**
- iv. Improving the existing playground at Pjazza Bertu Fenech.**

**Within the remainder of the village core and nearby streets, MEPA will support and encourage traffic calming and other traffic management measures that:**

- a. Improve road safety;**
- b. Encourage greater levels of walking and cycling;**
- c. Discourage through traffic; and,**

**d. Improve environmental conditions.**

**Any improvement of Triq il-Kbira will include measures to reduce the size of the Triq Robert Mifsud Bonnici junction and provide additional pavement space. Traffic calming measures are also to be implemented at Triq il-Ferrovija.**

- 5.1.10 As in many villages, the space around the parish church potentially symbolizes the character of the area, and acts as a focus for village life. Currently tarmac and parked cars dominate the centre of Balzan, noticeably detracting from what could otherwise be an attractive area. With sympathetic planning and design a major transformation could be achieved. There is sufficient area available to create a better balance between the requirement for parking and the need for greater space for residents to meet, sit and relax.
- 5.1.11 Some rationalization of parking within the main square can be complemented by measures in adjacent streets to maintain the overall level of parking. Management and regulation of parking in the square should give priority to the needs of residents and short-term visitors. The designs of the improvements specifically need to accommodate the requirements of the feast, for example the siting of the bandstand and street fireworks.
- 5.1.12 There is concern that some motorists use the centre of Balzan as a through route between the Birkirkara By-pass and Triq l-Imdina/Mriehel By-pass. Traffic surveys undertaken at peak periods indicate that such flows are relatively modest. Nevertheless, measures intended to discourage and slow down such motorists are warranted. To the south of the centre there is noticeable movement in the opposite direction via Triq San Frangisk. Use of this route should be discouraged or prevented, with motorists being directed to use the distributor and local roads i.e. Triq Birbal, Triq il-Kbira and Triq Wied Hal-Balzan. If introduced comprehensively over a wide area, traffic calming and related measures can encourage a greater use of sustainable modes of travel.
- 5.1.13 It is important for villages like Balzan to be well served by public transport. However, the existing inflexible approach to the provision of scheduled services causes problems in UCA's because their narrow streets and tight junctions are often unsuitable for conventional sized buses.



## **6. BIRKIRKARA AREA POLICIES**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Area: 2.7 sq. kms  
Population: 21,550 (1998)

- 6.1.1 Birkirkara is the locality with the largest population in the Maltese Islands. Population growth between 1985 and 1998 was only about 6%, and Birkirkara has a progressively ageing population. Whilst there was a slight increase in the economically active population from 13,489 in 1985 to 14,256 in 1995, the child population (aged 14 and under) has decreased from 5,067 in 1985 to 4,424 in 1995.
- 6.1.2 Due to the urban sprawl experienced in the past most of the locality has been built up. The remaining schemed areas for further housing development are located at Tal-Qattus, Ta' Sqaq il-Ghogla and Il-Ftieh. Further urban expansion is unlikely since the built up area to the west has coalesced with the towns of Balzan and Iklin, and to the east with Santa Venera. In addition, Birkirkara is bound to the north by the by-pass and to the south by the Mriehel Industrial Estate that is a major private industrial area.
- 6.1.3 Birkirkara is mainly a residential area with a primary town centre that is focused along Triq il-Wied. However, commercial activity has also extended along Triq in-Naxxar, Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imnsida, Triq Dun Karm, and in Triq Salvu Psaila. Clear delineations to the boundaries of the primary town centre and commercial areas, supported by appropriate policies, are therefore required. The objective of these policies are to prevent the infiltration of inappropriate commercial uses within the residential areas whilst giving a clear indication of the locations where different commercial uses will be permitted by MEPA. In addition, designated local centres are required in order to serve newer residential areas.
- 6.1.4 As the town with the largest population, Birkirkara has a significant number of transport problems, particularly along the Triq in-Naxxar/Triq il-Wied corridor. Congestion along this corridor is commonplace. This causes delays for the considerable number of vehicles that use it, and produces poor conditions for those who live and shop in this area. Parking is a problem caused by shortage of spaces. A comprehensive approach is required if conditions along this corridor are to be improved. Parking can be improved through the Commuted Parking Payment Scheme in conjunction with a Controlled Parking Zone.
- 6.1.5 The St. Helen parish church area benefits from being somewhat removed from the main transport corridors. However, it is still the focus for much community activity, particularly the street market. To reflect its important role in the community this area needs upgrading to create better environmental conditions.
- 6.1.6 The Birkirkara By-pass is an important arterial road that continues to experience noticeable traffic growth. To ensure that it functions efficiently and safely in the future, measures to rationalize access and improve existing junctions are likely to be required.

## Summary of Issues

- Need to promote the vitality and viability of the Primary Town Centre
- Newly developed residential areas require local services
- Need to identify locations for the development of commercial land uses
- Lack of areas for sports and recreation
- Need for a comprehensive replanning of Mriehel Industrial Estate
- Measures required to control parking congestion
- Need to improve conditions for pedestrians and buses in the town centre
- Traffic calming and environmental improvement required in the urban core

## Area Policies

### BK01

### Birkirkara Civic Centre

**The land located adjacent to the civic centre as indicated on the Birkirkara Area Policy Map is reserved for the future extension of this centre, the development of additional social and community facilities and the development of a public car park. This development will be considered by MEPA provided that it will fully respect the local views and visual context of Torri ta' Ghar il-Gobon. MEPA will not permit any development on this site that would prejudice the implementation of this policy.**

6.1.7 The Birkirkara Civic Centre currently houses the Local Council offices, a hall, a regional library, a day care centre, public health and social services offices, a government pharmacy and a health centre. It is noted however that Birkirkara is the town with the largest population in Malta and is still gradually expanding. Thus the land adjacent to the centre is reserved for the possible future extension of the existing community facilities to serve an increasing population. The land in question is also ideally located for the development of a public car park since it is situated on the edge of the primary town centre and since it is excellently served by Triq Dun Karm which is an arterial road.

### BK02

### Sites for Old People's Homes

**The Dar tal-Kleru site as indicated in the Birkirkara Area Policy Map is being designated for the development of residential accommodation for people in need of care and a nursing home (Use Class 2, Use Classes Order, 1994). The development of Class 2 uses is to be approved by the Department of Health, the Department for the Welfare of the Elderly and the National Commission for Disabled Persons. Any development on this site is to retain adequate open landscaped spaces.**

**Development on the designated site located at Triq il-Knisja l-Qadima (off Triq il-Wied) is to incorporate the provision of an old people's home (Class 2 (a), Use Classes Order, 1994) as indicated in the Birkirkara Area Policy Map. To this end, a reasonable part of this site is to be developed into old people's institutional accommodation together with an adjoining and adequately sized private garden for exclusive use by the elderly. The development of this residential institution shall be subject to the prior approval by the Department of Health, the Department for the Welfare of the Elderly and the National Commission for Disabled Persons. The floors constructed above this old people's home, if any, are to be used solely for residential purposes, and the floors below ground floor**

**level are to be developed as a CPPS car park in line with the provisions of Policy BK06. Accesses to the upper residential floors and to the lower parking levels are to be physically separate from the old people's home and its garden.**

6.1.8 The Dar tal-Kleru site is currently used as an old people's home for the retired clergy with its surrounding open spaces. Considering the increase in the number of elderly in Birkirkara and the nearby settlements, and also the general requirement for the provision of bed spaces within homes for the elderly, the site is reserved for this purpose. In addition the site may prove to be large enough to accommodate a specialized residential complex for single parents and small families in need of care, based mainly on small 1 and 2 bedroomed units. The retention of an adequate amount of open space around this institution is required as this safeguards the amenity of the area.

6.1.9 Birkirkara is the locality with the largest elderly population in the Local Plan area and the second largest in the Maltese Islands. In fact the 75+ population in Birkirkara amounts to over 1000. The demand for institutional accommodation for the elderly is high, but the supply at present is inexistent except for Clergy. During the public consultation phase of the CMLP, MEPA has received numerous public submissions, including one from the Birkirkara Local Council, requesting that the CMLP designates a second site for an old peoples' home. In response to this demand, the Local Plan is designating a site for the development of an old people's home. The Triq il-Knisja l-Qadima site is conveniently located in relation to the commercial and social centres of Birkirkara and to the main public transport route that passes from Triq il-Wied, and is therefore in conformity with the requirements of Structure Plan Policy SOC20.

## **BK03**

### **Pjazza next to St. Theresa Church**

**The buildings fronting Triq in-Naxxar as indicated on the Birkirkara Area Policy Map that were previously zoned in the Temporary Provision Scheme (1988) to be demolished are now designated as part of the Primary Town Centre. The use of these buildings is to be in accordance with the provisions of Policy CG12. MEPA will not allow the horizontal extension of these buildings as indicated in Planning Control Map BKA1.**

6.1.10 The existing buildings located on this site currently include a number of retail outlets and some residential uses. These buildings should be retained firstly because they act as a buffer that separates the existing quiet square from the adjacent busy transport route along Triq in-Naxxar, and secondly since the cost to relocate the existing uses on site to another location would be considerable. For the above-mentioned reasons this area is rezoned as part of the existing primary town centre.

## **BK04**

### **Mriehel Industrial Area**

**Mriehel Industrial Area is designated as an industrial, warehousing, and commercial zone as indicated in the Mriehel Industrial Area Policy Map. MEPA will permit the development of land in the Mriehel Industrial Area in accordance with the provisions of Policies CG14 and CG15, and in accordance with the designations indicated in the Mriehel Industrial Area Policy Map for the following land uses;**

- i. MIP Estate; for the development of Industrial Uses as specified in Policy CG15;**
- ii. SME Park; for the development of Industrial Uses as specified in Policy CG15;**

- iii. **Commercial Areas for the development of land uses as specified in Policy CG14;**
- iv. **Areas for the development of offices; and**
- v. **A site for the provision of Waste Management Civic Amenity facilities and for an Electricity Substation.**

6.1.11 Mriehel Industrial Area is an important and strategically located industrial zone catering particularly for the industrial needs of the Central localities and those within close vicinity to the Inner Harbour Area. Mriehel is partly in private ownership and partly managed by the MIP, and has some parcels of Government and ex-Church land. The industrial zone is approximately 454,400 sqm. in area, including internal roads and public spaces, and is situated between Mriehel By-pass and Triq l-Imdina.

6.1.12 The developed areas contain a wide range of uses including factories, retail, showrooms, offices, warehousing and small and medium sized industries. Mriehel has, as do most private industrial areas, problems of land fragmentation with parcels of land belonging to different owners as well as a number of derelict sites lacking landscaping and infrastructure. Dumping of waste including industrial waste and fly-tipping of rubbish are evident all over the estate, but especially in the still undeveloped spaces.

6.1.13 The area was designated in the Structure Plan (Policy IND 2) for the development of manufacturing industry. However data for Mriehel indicates that between 1993-1997, only 34% of permits were granted wholly or in part for industrial developments, whilst 45% were for warehousing and retail warehousing projects and 21% were for retail and office developments (SPU Data, May 2000). Substantial areas (approximately 66% of all permits between 1993-1997) have therefore been taken over by non-industrial uses.

6.1.14 The existing problems experienced at Mriehel are likely to intensify if the remaining land within these areas is developed solely in accordance with the TPS (1988). Furthermore tenants may be discouraged from locating at Mriehel if current problems persist. However, it is still possible to further develop this industrial area in an organised manner. Therefore the aim of this policy is to clearly define the development requirements of all proposals on remaining undeveloped industrial sites through appropriate zoning. Areas designated for office use are intended to act as buffer areas between existing residential areas and the Industrial zones of Mriehel.

6.1.15 As part of the Government Waste Management Strategy, a site at Mriehel has been designated for a Civic Amenity Site to serve a number of central localities that are at present not catered for. In addition this Amenity Site will also serve the existing Industrial Area thereby resolving problems of waste management in the area.

## **BK05**

### **Commercial Area in Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida**

**The construction of commercial developments on any site that is located within the designated Commercial Area in Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida as indicated in Map BKM1 will only be allowed by MEPA provided that a minimum side curtilage of 3m is provided adjacent to existing third party property.**

6.1.16 Commercial properties fronting Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida have generally been developed with 3m side curtilages in accordance with previous zoning regulations.

Existing side curtilages in this area contribute positively to the streetscape since they visually break large commercial frontages and large glazed areas, thereby offering depth and relief to the streetscene. For these reasons MEPA will only allow commercial development fronting Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida provided that side curtilages are incorporated as stipulated in this policy.

- 6.1.17 Developments above the level of Triq G. F. Agius De Soldanis and located within the designated area are to be constructed as detached/semi-detached dwellings in accordance with all the relevant provisions of the DC2005. This will ensure that the residential priority character of this street is retained.

## **BK06**

### **Commuted Parking Payments Scheme**

**The CPPS for Birkirkara serves the primary town centre and adjacent commercial areas. Non-residential developments permitted within these areas will be required to contribute towards the CPPS fund for any shortfall in on-site parking.**

**Three sites have been identified as possible public car parks, namely:**

- i. A site in Triq il-Knisja l-Qadima (off Triq il-Wied);**
- ii. A site in Triq Gdida located between Triq Tumas Fenech and Triq il-Kavallier Giovanni Alentorn; and,**
- iii. A site at the end of Triq Falzun (off Triq in-Naxxar).**

**The development of the site at Triq il-Knisja l-Qadima is also to include the provision of an old people's home in conformity with the provisions set out in Policy BK02.**

**If suitable alternative or additional public car parking sites become available as a consequence of re-development proposals then these will be considered by MEPA.**

**MEPA would consider the development of an additional floor (above building height limitation as indicated in Map BKM4) for proposed public car park projects only if the Authority considers this as being necessary to help cross-subsidise the scheme.**

**CPPS funds will be used not only to construct public car parks, but also to introduce measures that manage parking demand, as for example RPZs and limited waiting areas. The number of spaces provided at each site and their operation will be consistent with Policy CG36 and the ability of the adjacent road network to accommodate the additional traffic movements. However a minimum of 50 publicly available parking spaces should be provided within CPPS Car Parking sites, together with entry signing and control.**

- 6.1.18 The CPPS, which was introduced in 2005 in Birkirkara, is intended to ensure that financial contributions are made towards public parking in congested commercial areas where individual provision is physically impossible or undesirable. CPPS provides the opportunity to provide and control parking in the common good in sensitive areas. For this reason the funds can also be used to introduce on-street parking controls, like short-stay restrictions and residents parking zones (RPZs). Additionally, funds should also be used to promote sustainable means of transport, which help reduce parking demand.

- 6.1.19 Birkirkara's elongated shape means that more than one car park is required if the shopping area is to be well served. The site at Triq Falzun is well sited to serve the

shops situated along Triq in-Naxxar provided measures are introduced to ensure safe and efficient movements at the main road junction. The land adjacent to the Civic Centre is ideally located for the development of a public car park since it is situated on the edge of the primary town centre, and since it is excellently served by Triq Dun Karm which is an arterial road.

- 6.1.20 The Triq il-Knisja l-Qadima site is conveniently located to serve the busy Triq il-Wied area, but access to this site is a little problematic. For this reason the number of spaces provided at this site may have to be limited, and some revisions for current traffic management measures are likely to be required.
- 6.1.21 If suitable additional or alternative sites close to the town centre become available as a consequence of re-development proposals in the area, then a pragmatic and flexible approach will be adopted to achieve the desired goal, that is, the creation of additional short-term parking spaces to serve the shopping centre.
- 6.1.22 The existing CPPS is based on individual developers paying about half the likely cost (per space) of the eventual car park. Whilst part of this funding gap can possibly be met from parking charges, it is likely that in order to make the projects economically viable some element of profitable development must also be permitted. To this end MEPA will therefore consider the development of an additional floor above building height limitation for proposals on public car park sites only if the Authority considers this as being necessary to help cross-subsidise the scheme. This flexible approach is being adopted with a view to achieving an increase in public off-street parking spaces at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.1.23 As indicated in Policy CG36, there is a need to review existing car parking standards and introduce targeted maximum levels. In conjunction with this, there is a need to consider how the CPPS actually operates and examine ways of speeding up delivery.

## **BK07**

## **Controlled Parking Zone**

**MEPA will encourage and support the Malta Transport Authority and the Local Council to introduce a CPZ in the area generally indicated on the Birkirkara Transport Policy Map. The developer(s) of CPPS car park(s) as indicated in Policy BK06 will be required, as part of their development, to fund the introduction of on-street parking controls to ensure the effective and efficient management and regulation of all parking in the locality. However the implementation of these on-street parking controls will be undertaken by the Local Council and not the developer(s) of CPPS car park(s).**

- 6.1.24 Policy CG36 identifies the need to comprehensively control and prioritise parking in areas of high parking demand. This is not only necessary to achieve sustainable transport objectives, but to efficiently use resources. Of particular importance will be the need to safeguard residents from problems associated with living close to commercial areas. The CPZ will therefore include a residents parking scheme.
- 6.1.25 It would be beneficial to introduce the CPZ, in some form, prior to the construction of the CPPS car parks so as to work towards general policy objectives and to make best use of existing parking resources.

## **BK08 Traffic Management at Triq in-Naxxar to Triq il-Wied**

As part of the Strategic Bus Corridors Initiative in line with Policy CG34, MEPA will support the introduction of traffic management measures from Triq in-Naxxar to Triq il-Wied including;

- i. Installation of traffic signals at key junctions;
- ii. Improved conditions for pedestrians;
- iii. Priority for buses;
- iv. Environmental improvements; and,
- v. Removal of on-street parking where it causes congestion.

The general location of such measures is shown on the Birkirkara Transport Policy Map. Major developments in the area will be expected to directly fund, or contribute towards, the costs of introducing these measures as a form of planning gain.

- 6.1.26 Triq il-Wied and main roads leading to it are congested for significant periods of the day, resulting in delays for the many buses that pass through it and poor environmental conditions. The roads are operating at their practical capacity, and it would be undesirable and impractical to create additional road capacity through this area. It is therefore necessary to introduce measures that reduce delays for buses and improve safety and amenity for those that shop and live in the locality.
- 6.1.27 A package of measures has been formulated that would help achieve these goals. The installation of traffic signals and the rationalization of parking will be generally beneficial, whilst the proposed bus lane in Triq in-Naxxar, and the bus gate (queue relocation) in Triq il-Wied ta' l-ImSIDA will specifically aid the movement of buses.

## **BK09 Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements**

Within the urban core and adjacent areas MEPA will support and encourage traffic calming and other measures that:

- i. Improve road safety;
- ii. Encourage greater levels of walking and cycling;
- iii. Discourage through traffic; and,
- iv. Improve environmental conditions.

The area around St. Helens parish church is of particular importance being a major focus of activity, including the twice-weekly street market. Consequently environmental improvements, possibly including the provision of additional public car parking, will be strongly supported.

MEPA will also encourage the introduction of comprehensive traffic calming measures along the whole length of Triq Ganu to help improve conditions along this local access road.

- 6.1.28 The rapid increase in car ownership and usage has resulted in a noticeable decline in safety, environment and amenity particularly in sensitive areas like historic cores. Policy CG37 promotes the introduction of measures to redress the balance and make such areas more pleasant and safe.

- 6.1.29 Many short, local journeys could be undertaken by sustainable modes of travel, but poor conditions currently discourage people from walking or cycling. Traffic calming can help overcome these problems and provide the opportunity to enhance the environment.
- 6.1.30 The area around the main parish church has great potential. However currently it suffers from excessive on-street parking, narrow pavements, and a lack of informal recreational space. In order to achieve a major improvement in this area it may be necessary to remove some on-street parking. To compensate for this it would be possible to increase the number of parking spaces in Triq Tumas Fenech by introducing angled parking on one side of the road. This would not only make more efficient use of the available road space, but would tend to limit traffic speeds by narrowing the width of the running carriageway. Additional car parking at the planned CPPS site next to the Civic Centre will also compensate for the reduction of on-street parking.

## **BK10**

## **Triq l-Imdina Corridor**

**As part of the Strategic Bus Corridors Initiative in line with Policy CG34, MEPA will support the provision of bus priority measures at the Mriehel By-pass and Fleur-de-Lys junctions. MEPA will also encourage the provision of a cycle way along the line of the scheduled Wignacourt Aqueduct. Major developments along this corridor will be expected to directly fund, or contribute towards these measures as a form of planning gain.**

- 6.1.31 Triq l-Mdina generally has free-flowing traffic conditions, however delays do occur at some junctions, particularly at Fleur-de-Lys. At the two signalised junctions on Triq l-Imdina, at the Mriehel By-pass and De Paule Avenue (Attard/Balzan border) it would be appropriate to install selective vehicle detection (a form of bus priority), so that buses experience minimal delays.
- 6.1.32 At the Fleur-de-Lys junction there is very little scope to generally increase capacity due to site constraints and the need to discourage through traffic from using Triq San Guzepp. An improvement scheme is required that reduces delays for buses and aids pedestrians. This may include the installation of traffic signals (in some form) and possibly bus lanes.
- 6.1.33 In order to encourage cycling both as a recreational/tourist activity and as a means of going to school and work, it is proposed that a cycle way should be provided along the line of the Wignacourt Aqueduct. For much of its length the cycle way can run alongside the aqueduct, thereby allowing a greater appreciation of this great historical monument, and also providing some physical protection for it by separating it from car use. In parts, the aqueduct passes through private land and consequently the cycle route will need to be diverted along nearby side streets until access can be negotiated by government. Traffic management techniques will be used along this diversion and in connecting streets to ensure safe conditions for cyclists.

## **BK11**

## **Birkirkara By-pass**

**MEPA will undertake a comprehensive review of the scheme alignments along the south side of the Birkirkara By-pass, from the road improvements for the Mater Dei Hospital**



**to the Triq Ganu roundabout. This will establish a road layout, consistent with modern design standards, which safeguards and improves road safety along this arterial road.**

**In conjunction with this exercise, MEPA together with the Malta Transport Authority will identify traffic management/road improvement measures to improve safety along the whole length of the By-pass, within the boundaries of Birkirkara. This will seek to solve problems associated with the sub-standard design of the roundabouts and the excessive number of junctions and access points.**

**MEPA will also promote the introduction of a cycleway/route possibly along the whole length of the Birkirkara By-pass. No development will be permitted which prejudices the successful conclusion of this exercise.**

- 6.1.34 The Birkirkara By-pass is a busy, important arterial road, carrying some 2,500 vph (two-way) at peak times. It is normal to ensure the safety and operational efficiency of such roads by adopting high design standards and minimizing the number of junctions and access points. Unfortunately, in the case of the By-pass such principles have not always been followed, and there is a danger that further problems may be created by the alignment and layout of proposed roads immediately to the south of the By-pass. Existing deficiencies need to be addressed and future problems need to be prevented.
- 6.1.35 Speeds along the by-pass are relatively high, often exceeding the speed limit. Surveys show that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed on the westbound carriageway, in the vicinity of Triq Hal-Gharghur is 66 kph. This speed is used for design purposes, for example determining visibility splays and stopping sight distances.
- 6.1.36 The current scheme alignment includes a service road along much of the south side of the by-pass, parts of which have already been constructed. Whilst such service roads can enable frontage development along an arterial road when otherwise it would be prevented, they do create dangers and problems. The design of the service road junctions creates inherent road safety risks associated with confused priorities, very sub-standard turning radii, and obstructions to visibility caused by parking along the service road. An example of such problems can be seen nearby at the Triq Geronimo Abos junction. A comprehensive review of the scheme alignment will allow a layout to be identified that permits the development of relatively large areas of land, whilst ensuring that modern road design practices and standards are met.
- 6.1.37 Simultaneously it is necessary to tackle existing deficiencies, the most obvious of which are the poorly designed roundabouts and particularly the one at Triq Tumas Fenech. The improvement of this junction should take account of the need to serve safeguarded industrial land as identified in the North Harbours Local Plan immediately to the north of the junction. The best way to access this land would be the provision of a fourth arm at the junction.
- 6.1.38 Considering the high catchment areas of the outer residential areas and the large number of persons accessing the Mater Dei Hospital and University grounds, it is beneficial to promote a cycleway along the Birkirkara By-pass as an alternative means of transport.



## 7. GHARGHUR AREA POLICIES

### 7.1 Introduction

Area: 2 Sq. Kms  
Population: 2,086 (1998)

- 7.1.1 Gharghur is a characteristic rural village situated between Naxxar to the west and Madliena to the east. The locality is an important example of a typical village still totally surrounded by rural areas of good quality agricultural land. This provides for the quiet, serene atmosphere found within this locality with abundant green natural areas around it. It is therefore quite different from the neighbouring localities of Mosta and Naxxar that have become heavily urbanized through development. Gharghur still retains a natural delineation all around the village, separating it entirely from surrounding localities. Considering that the whole Local Plan area is highly urbanized, localities like Gharghur provide the rural open spaces that are lacking in other localities.
- 7.1.2 Gharghur is predominantly residential in character with a typical village core surrounding the prominent church and square. Commercial and retail activities are limited to local shopping provision mainly within the Church area. This is positive, as the locality is not suitable for either larger scale commercial or industrial activities.
- 7.1.3 Gharghur has the lowest population in the Local Plan area with 2,086 people. The population has decreased since 1985 when 2,321 persons lived in the locality, with a decrease of 235 persons over more than a decade. However one has to take into account that census boundary changes have also taken place. The locality also has an increasing elderly population with 8.2% over 65 years in 1985 to 10.1% over 65 years in 1995, an increase of 23%.
- 7.1.4 Some of the best examples of areas of ecological value are found bordering Gharghur. These include Wied Anglu, Wied il-Faham, Wied ta' Santa Marija taz-Zellieqa, Wied ta' Piswella, Wied ta' Santa Katarina and Wied id-Dis. The Great Fault, an important geological feature, also passes within the limits of Gharghur. Gharghur is in fact situated on high ground and its prominent position overlooking the coast of Bahar ic-Caghaq was found suitable for the location of the existing Broadcasting Transmitting Station (previously the ex-Naval Signal Station). The Victoria Lines (1870-1899), a historical feature with recreational and tourism potential also passes through this locality.
- 7.1.5 Being relatively remote and self-contained, Gharghur has few traffic problems. Local access issues do require some consideration, as for example emergency access to the transmission station and the standard of Triq Santa Katarina. A suitable site for a bus terminus is required to ensure that buses can layover in the village, thereby removing the need for passengers to change or wait in Naxxar.

#### Summary of Issues

- Rows of terrace houses situated outside development zone
- Need to safeguard sites for sports and recreation

- Need to establish a local centre and safeguard sites for community facilities
- Important access routes being substandard in width require adjusting
- Potential to improve conditions for pedestrians in the area around the parish church
- Need for a bus terminus inside the village.

## Area Policies

### GR01

### Protection of Public Open Spaces

**The following areas indicated in the Gharghur Area Policy Map are designated as public recreation/sports areas, and these will be protected by MEPA for such uses in line with Policy CG18;**

- i. **The public garden at Triq Mattia Preti;**
- ii. **The football ground at Triq Stefano Zerafa;**
- iii. **The public garden at Triq San Nikola; and,**
- iv. **The proposed recreational area at Tax-Xwieki HOS.**

7.1.6 In line with the general strategy, this policy seeks to protect existing sports and recreational facilities and provide for additional facilities where required. The total existing recreational space in Gharghur excluding sports facilities amounts to 1,218 sqm. This is equivalent to 0.58 sqm per person that is far lower than the recommended national standard of 2.4 sqm per person.

7.1.7 A new public recreational space is planned just outside development zone next to Tax-Xwieki HOS where such facilities are lacking. This is the only available and suitable government owned site next to Ta' Xwieki Housing Estate for such a facility. The Policy also formally designates existing sports and recreational areas in Gharghur. Higher level district sports provision in the form of sports complexes are more suitably located elsewhere, and thus no such developments are planned within Gharghur in order to safeguard its quiet and low key character.

### GR02

### Sites for Community Facilities

**MEPA will support plans for the establishment of a community centre in Triq San Nikola as indicated on the Gharghur Area Policy Map. This will be done in consultation with the Gharghur Local Council and other relevant agencies. MEPA will also support extensions to the existing parish hall at Triq Emmanuel Perren to serve as a meeting hall and pastoral centre for Gharghur.**

7.1.8 Following consultations with the Gharghur Local Council, no need has been identified for additional community facilities apart from the designations made in this policy. Although the proposed facilities lie outside the Local Centre, they are within walking distance from the village core area. In addition, it is difficult to find suitable sites for the construction of community facilities within the Local Centre since the latter covers a very restricted land area. In this respect community facilities will be supported by MEPA in the designated locations.

## GR03

## Re-Use of Tal-Ferha Estate

MEPA, in conjunction with other relevant agencies, will support the future re-use of the Tal-Ferha Estate, as indicated in the Gharghur Area Policy Map, for the following possible uses:

- i. A field site for environmental interpretation and education;
- ii. Indoor sports facilities using existing buildings only;
- iii. An Eco-tourism project;
- iv. A youth hostel but excluding a hotel; and,
- v. Government agencies or institutes and an embassy.

This development shall be subject to the following conditions:-

1. The re-use of this site is subject to the prior approval by the Health Authorities;
2. The retention, re-use and appropriate rehabilitation of the military barracks structures and buildings shall be sought by MEPA. Only minor alterations and extensions to the existing structures and buildings may be considered by the Authority provided that they are located within the confines of the site and provided that the interventions do not compromise the integrity of the existing buildings of historical/architectural value; and
3. Built development shall not exceed the height of two floors without semi-basement above existing ground level.

7.1.9 The Tal-Ferha Estate is a government owned site located next to Wied Piswella. The site originally served as a military barracks and was subsequently used as a Medical Facility. Since there are indications that the use of the site as a hospital is being phased out during the Local Plan period, the opportunity exists for the appropriate and sensitive reuse of the buildings. The site is ideally located within the ecologically and scientifically important valley systems within the rural setting of Gharghur. It is therefore suitable for an environmental interpretation, education and field study centre. Alternatively, the site is also suitable for sports related uses, an Eco-tourism project and other uses as specified in the policy since it can capitalize on the site's setting within the surrounding valley and countryside.

## GR04

## Road Widening

MEPA will permit the widening of Triq Santa Katarina/Triq in-Naxxar and sections of Triq il-Gnien on one side provided this is undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to the semi-rural character of the area. The improved road widths should not exceed 6m excluding pavements and parking lay-bys. The lengths of road in question are shown in the Gharghur Transport Policy Map.

7.1.10 The Local Council is concerned about the narrowness of Triq Santa Katarina/Triq in-Naxxar which links Triq Tal-Balal, a distributor road, with the southern boundary of the village. There is also concern that parts of Triq il-Gnien near the chapel are too narrow. Whilst in places the road is substandard in width, traffic flows are relatively light and there is no evidence of a particular accident problem. Nevertheless, limited works to improve the width and alignment would be permitted, as long as appropriate design standards and practices are adopted. The design speed should not exceed 50 kph, and the carriageway width should not exceed 6 m, excluding parking bays (if required) and pavements where necessary. The widening road works are to be implemented on one side of the road so as to

minimise the disruption to the existing rubble walls, and furthermore any boundary walls that need to be replaced should be of a rubble wall construction.

## **GR05**

### **Enhancement of the Village Centre**

**Following the full construction of Triq Caravaggio around the east side of the village, MEPA will support the semi-pedestrianisation of the area surrounding the parish church as shown in the Gharghur Transport Policy Map.**

- 7.1.11 In traffic terms, Gharghur benefits from its relative smallness and isolation. There are few through movements and overall traffic flows are comparatively low. Nevertheless, the eventual completion of the local road network on the east side of the village will provide the opportunity to further improve conditions around the parish church. Semi-pedestrianisation will allow embellishments to be undertaken, whilst maintaining access to local social and community facilities.

## **GR06**

### **Gharghur Bus Terminus**

**In order to improve the public transport provision for Gharghur, MEPA will encourage the establishment of an on-street bus terminus in Triq E. Perren next to the community hall. The location for this bus terminus is indicatively shown on the Gharghur Transport Policy Map.**

- 7.1.12 Services No. 55 and 56 serve Gharghur, but despite this being the end of the route they do not terminate in the village due to the absence of a satisfactory location for a terminus. This causes inconvenience for residents when going towards Valletta, because the services layover in Naxxar for some time after leaving the village, thereby unnecessarily extending journey times. The opportunity exists to provide Gharghur residents with a centrally located bus terminus in order to solve the abovementioned problems. With relatively minor changes to the road layout, it would be feasible to establish a terminus next to the community hall at Triq E. Perren.

## 8. HAMRUN AREA POLICIES

### 8.1 Introduction

Area: 1 sq. km.

Population: 10,823 (1998)

- 8.1.1 Hamrun, together with Blata l-Bajda, forms part of the inner harbour area. Hamrun is completely developed and lacks open spaces especially for recreational purposes. The locality is also very densely developed yet possesses the highest amount of vacant dwellings amounting to 14.4% of properties in the locality (1995 data).
- 8.1.2 Between 1985 and 1998 the population of Hamrun declined by 2859 persons (or 21%) which is similar to the population of all of Gharghur in comparison. The most significant drop in population was registered in the 0 to 14 years age bracket where the child population has decreased from 2,949 in 1985 to 1,835 in 1995. The number of elderly is also increasing with 11.7% of the population aged over 65 in 1985 increasing to 17.5% in 1998. A less marked decrease has resulted in the economically active age bracket from 9,065 in 1985 to 7,346 in 1995. It is important for planning policies to counter this level of out-migration from Hamrun and regenerate and revitalise the locality. The need to counter the prevalence of substandard dwellings and vacant properties, and its related out-migration, is encouraged through the consolidation, redevelopment and reuse of poorly designed dwellings. This measure should attract new residents into Hamrun.
- 8.1.3 Hamrun lacks sports/recreational facilities. The existing sports and recreational spaces located within schools are often not easily accessible to the residents of Hamrun. Further use of these facilities is fully supported by MEPA. Possible redevelopment sites for non-residential uses in Hamrun are located at the Tar-Rabbat School area, the Multi-Gas Site and the Old Market Place Site at Triq id-Duka ta' Edinburgh.
- 8.1.4 Hamrun has a considerable number of schools that are catering for a much wider population. Many of these schools are old and lack present day educational facility requirements. The opportunity exists to further develop the Tar-Rabbat school area that is presently developed at low density in order to provide additional facilities.
- 8.1.5 Due to high building densities, parts of Hamrun are affected by traffic congestion and parking problems, resulting in a poor environment. Despite only being classified as a local access road, Triq San Guzepp is used by motorists as a through route, a tendency that should be discouraged. The main transport problems in Hamrun are concentrated around the town centre shopping area. Conditions for pedestrians are often poor, and buses are subject to unnecessarily delays through congestion at junctions. A CPPS is already in operation and this, together with an associated CPZ, will help to improve parking conditions in and around the primary town centre of Hamrun.

#### Summary of Issues

- Problems of out-migration, a large number of substandard dwellings, poor environmental quality and lack of parking facilities in residential areas

- Need to support the vitality and viability of the town centre whilst preventing its expansion into residential areas
- Need to identify a local centre for the newly developed residential area of Hamrun
- Potential to redevelop the Old Market site
- The educational facilities at Tar-Rabbat are not making full use of the land resources available
- Need to improve safety and environmental conditions along Triq San Guzepp
- Parking congestion in and around the town centre needs to be controlled
- A high concentration of schools in Hamrun and the consequent morning peak hour traffic congestion.

## Area Policies

### HA01

### Rezoning to Residential Use

**The area of land fronting Triq Willie Attard and Triq Atocia that is zoned as a green area in the TPS (1988) is being designated for the development of dwelling units without front garden (Class 1 of the Use Classes Order, 1994).**

- 8.1.6 The green area that was zoned in the TPS (1988) is heavily committed by existing buildings, and as such it is highly unlikely that in the future these existing buildings will be demolished in order to give way to the development of a small public garden. Consequently this site is being rezoned to allow for an efficient use of this space.

### HA02

### Multi-Gas Site Redevelopment

**Following the relocation of the Multi-Gas Plant from Hamrun, MEPA will support the comprehensive redevelopment of this site for mixed use development excluding industrial uses (Classes 11 to 17, Use Classes Order, 1994). Any development on this site is to ensure that no adverse impacts are caused to surrounding residential areas. The designated site is indicated in the Hamrun Area Policy Map.**

- 8.1.7 If the opportunity arises to redevelop this site efficiently and comprehensively for mixed use development with neighbourhood compatibility, then a reduction of industrial uses from this residential area will be achieved. In this respect, no new industrial uses will be permitted by MEPA following relocation of the existing use.

### HA03

### Tar-Rabbat Educational Area

**MEPA in conjunction with the Education Authorities will support the further development and upgrading of the Ta' Rabbat Educational Area for new educational and ancillary sports facilities. The designated area is indicated on the Hamrun Area Policy Map.**

**Development proposals are to secure higher density use of this school site. In addition, developments are to include sports and recreational areas that are to serve both the school and the community wherever possible. A 6m landscaped buffer is to be retained between the educational area and the arterial road as indicated in the Hamrun Area Policy Map.**



- 8.1.8 The educational facilities at Tar-Rabbat include a number of schools one of which is a school for children with special needs. The present facilities existing in this area are however constructed at a low density with a number of open spaces that could be more efficiently utilised by means of the construction of additional educational and ancillary sports facilities. It therefore affords an opportunity for the upgrading of the whole site through redesign and for the provision of new required facilities. The site can also cater for school relocations from other areas.

## **HA04**

### **Blata l-Bajda Transport Improvement**

**In accordance with the principles set out in Policy CG34 for major bus corridor areas, levels of commuter parking in the designated Commercial Area at Blata l-Bajda will be restrained. No further development, including car parking areas will be permitted in the Masgar Mizzi area as designated in Map HAM1. Following the commencement of operation of the Crown Works/Horn Works Park and Ride Project, MEPA will prevent the parking of cars in the Masgar Mizzi area, and the surfaced areas shall be re-instated as part of the green area.**

- 8.1.9 The commercial area facing Triq Nazzjonali at Blata l-Bajda is established with showrooms, petrol stations and offices. Showrooms, offices and other compatible uses as defined in Policy CG14 will continue to be permitted in the area in line with the transport strategy of promoting employment generating uses along strong bus corridors. New developments are however subject to restrained parking provision requirements since numerous bus routes service the area. In fact all the routes that converge on Valletta pass nearby.
- 8.1.10 The current showroom and office area has led to the use of an adjacent landscaped space for car parking. This practice will not be permitted by MEPA following the implementation of the Park and Ride Project in order to safeguard the visual amenity of the area. In addition the existing Masgar John Mizzi is to be upgraded through the removal of existing parking spaces.

## **HA05**

### **Hamrun Design Priority Area**

**In considering development applications on sites located within the Hamrun Design Priority Area as designated on Map HAM1, MEPA will ensure that proposals respect the following criteria:**

- i. The essential character of the Hamrun Design Priority Area must be maintained. In particular proposed developments must fully respect the area's streetscape by following the floor heights and proportions of the adjacent buildings; and**
- ii. The incorporation of projecting rooms in the facades of new development will not be allowed by MEPA.**

- 8.1.11 The Plan adopts as a general strategy the attraction of the population back to the inner harbour area and related measures to bring this about, particularly the strengthening of local communities. However, to be effective, such a strategy must recognise and adapt to the increasing sophistication of the housing market. Furthermore, in line with the Structure Plan, one of the main goals of this Local Plan is to promote rehabilitation and redevelopment projects that create good quality residential accommodation in the older urban areas.

- 8.1.12 It is evident that problems of out-migration, the number of substandard dwellings, poor environmental quality of the public realm and lack of parking facilities are most acute in the locality of Hamrun. The highest amount of vacant properties is in effect in Hamrun with 14.4% of all properties being vacant.
- 8.1.13 This policy affectively changes the major part of the Village Core to a Design Priority Area in order to remove UCA planning restrictions on redevelopment projects. The policy is therefore intended to underline the importance that the Authority attaches towards redevelopment and the modernisation of housing, by inviting the submission of this type of application. The Town Centre area is however to be designated as the Urban Conservation Area for Hamrun due to its high quality traditional streetscape.

## **HA06**

### **Triq id-Duka ta' Edinburgh Car Park**

**MEPA will support the development of a multi-storey underground car park providing for approximately 160 public car parking spaces at the vacant Market Place site in Triq id-Duka ta' Edinburgh in line with Policy HA08. The vacant Market Place site is indicated in the Hamrun Transport Policy Map.**

**The ground floor level of this site is to be upgraded as a landscaped public open space and for the provision of very limited commercial land uses so as to promote the CPPS car park. The public open space is to be designed so as to improve pedestrian access between Triq id-Duka ta' Edinburgh and Triq San Vincenz. In order to achieve satisfactory traffic circulation to and from the site, it will be necessary to modify the traffic management arrangements in the locality.**

- 8.1.14 The vacant Market Place site is planned as a multi-storey car park accommodating about 160 spaces as indicated in the CPPS for Hamrun that was approved by MEPA in 2002. The ground level is however required as a public recreational area with proper soft and hard landscaping since no recreational space is available in this part of Hamrun. Public access between Triq id-Duka ta' Edinburgh and Triq San Vincenz is to be retained and improved especially through the introduction of Access for All features which are at present not available.
- 8.1.15 To achieve safe and efficient vehicular movements to and from the car park it will be necessary to reverse the existing one-way arrangements in the lower ends of Triq id-Duka Ta' Edinburgh and Triq Anton Buttigieg, and to relocate the pelican crossing in St Joseph High Road (by the parish church) about 20 m eastwards.

## **HA07**

### **Improvements along St. Joseph's High Road**

**MEPA will permit measures to improve the environment and safety along the Triq San Guzepp corridor, as indicated in the Hamrun Transport Policy Map particularly in the town centre. These should aim to:**

- i. Improve conditions for shoppers and other pedestrians;**
- ii. Aid the movement of buses;**
- iii. Discourage "through" traffic;**
- iv. Provide parking space for loading/unloading of goods for shops;**
- v. Provide additional pedestrian crossing facilities; and,**
- vi. Complement the recent improvement of Piazza San Pawl.**

**In order to aid pedestrians, buses and general traffic conditions it is proposed that traffic signals be installed at the Mile End, Triq Hal-Qormi, and Triq Dun Nerik Cordina Perez junctions. Any developments that will have a significant impact on conditions at these junctions will be expected to contribute towards the cost of these junction improvements.**

- 8.1.16 Hamrun is a popular, busy shopping centre, but its linear characteristic creates problems with shoppers needing to cross the High Road. There is a need to pursue improvements, which aid crossing movements and generally make shopping a more pleasant experience.
- 8.1.17 Due to high building densities, parts of Hamrun suffer traffic congestion and parking problems, resulting in a poor environment. Despite only being classified as a local access road, Triq San Guzepp is used by some motorists as a through route, a tendency which should be discouraged. Congestion is common in the centre, particularly at the Triq Hal-Qormi and Triq Dun Nerik Cordina Perez junctions. This adversely affects a significant number of buses at an important point where two strategic bus corridors meet. The installation of traffic signals at these junctions, plus at the Mile End junction, would aid buses and provide crossing facilities for pedestrians in line with Policy CG34.
- 8.1.18 Piazza San Pawl is an attractive area at the heart of the town centre. Complementary traffic calming and other similar measures in the locality would build on the success of this embellishment.

## **HA08 Controlled Parking Zone and CPPS Car Parks**

**MEPA will encourage and support the Malta Transport Authority and the Local Council to implement the introduction of a CPZ in the area generally indicated on the Hamrun Transport Policy Map. The prime purpose of the CPZ should be to ensure that on-street parking is controlled and managed to support retail and commercial activities, to achieve general policy objectives as indicated in Policy CG36, and to safeguard the convenience of residents.**

**MEPA will continue to pursue the provision of an off-street car park to serve the town centre as part of the approved CPPS and as indicated in Policy HA06. The developer of the designated CPPS car park will be required, as part of the development, to fund the introduction of on-street parking controls to ensure the effective and efficient management and regulation of all parking in the locality. The implementation of these on-street parking controls will be undertaken by the Local Council and not the developer of the CPPS car park.**

**MEPA will give due consideration to other acceptable alternative new sites for off-street car parks should these become available during the lifetime of this Plan. MEPA would consider the development of an additional floor (above building height limitation as indicated in Map HAM3) for public car park projects only if the Authority considers this as being necessary to help cross-subsidise the scheme.**

- 8.1.19 Parking is at a premium in and around the town centre. It is therefore necessary to make the best use of available resources, and this means introducing controls that give priority to short-term visitors and residents.

- 8.1.20 The CPPS for Hamrun Primary Town Centre envisages the construction of a car park at Triq id-Duka ta' Edinburgh (about 160 spaces). The CPZ will be required prior to the construction of this site, and its boundary will need modification when this site is available to ensure comprehensive management of all parking.
- 8.1.21 Regarding the provision of alternative new sites for off-street car parks should these become available during the lifetime of this Plan, a flexible approach will be adopted towards the Hamrun CPPS, with a view to achieving an increase in public off-street parking spaces at the earliest opportunity. The existing CPPS is based on individual developers paying about half the likely cost (per space) of the eventual car park. Whilst part of this funding gap can possibly be met from parking charges, it is likely that in order to make the projects economically viable some element of profitable development must also be permitted. To this end MEPA will therefore consider the development of an additional floor above building height limitation for proposals on public car park sites only if the Authority considers this as being necessary to help cross-subsidise the scheme.

## **HA09 Traffic Calming and Junction Improvement**

**In order to improve safety and amenity, and potentially discourage through traffic, MEPA will encourage the introduction of traffic calming and related measures along Triq Giovanni Barbara and Triq il-Ferrovija/Triq I. Cilia/Triq Duluri.**

**MEPA will also encourage the introduction of traffic calming and environmental improvements in Triq J. Abela Scolaro to improve conditions along the whole length of this straight and excessively wide street.**

**MEPA will support the upgrading of the Triq M. Margi/Triq il-Mimosa junction to improve safety and efficiency at this six arm intersection.**

- 8.1.22 Motorists seeking to avoid the centre of Hamrun commonly use Triq G. Barbara as a short cut between Triq Hal Qormi and Triq San Guzepp. Whilst it may be difficult to prevent this short cut, traffic calming would improve safety and amenity along this street. Triq J. Abela Scolaro runs parallel to Triq G. Barbara, and may in due course become an alternative or additional shortcut. This would be particularly undesirable as two secondary schools are situated in this street. Measures to calm and embellish the area would produce much needed environmental improvements. Triq M. Magri forms part of a busy local access route and its junction with Triq il-Mimosa and other side streets is below standard. An improvement that rationalizes and simplifies the layout would be very beneficial. This could include signalisation of part of the junction. Triq il-Ferrovija, Triq I. Cilia and Triq Duluri form part of a popular short cut between the above Triq M. Magri junction and the town centre. Traffic calming measures would improve conditions in these streets.

## 9. IKLIN AREA POLICIES

### 9.1 Introduction

Area: 1.7 sq. kms  
Population: 3,158 (1998)

- 9.1.1 Iklin is the most recently developed urban settlement in the Local Plan area and consists of two distinct and separate urban areas; the bungalow area to the north with dwellings constructed on the slopes of Wied l-Iklin, and the terrace house area to the south that is bounded by two arterial roads. These arterial roads separate Iklin from the neighbouring localities of Lija and Birkirkara. The rural area to the east of the urban settlements mainly consists of dry agricultural land, but there is also a concentration of disused quarries, many of which have been successfully rehabilitated back to agriculture, together with a number of industrial and commercial developments located along Triq Tal-Balal.
- 9.1.2 Most urban development in Iklin has taken place during the late 70`s and the early 80`s. In fact most of the terrace house area was developed by 1985, and this predominantly consists of three bedroom terrace houses constructed on two floors. Iklin has a young population. At present there is minimal provision of sports and recreational areas to serve the younger generation in particular. In addition most of the land within scheme has been built up and therefore opportunities for new recreational projects are very limited. Another problem relating to the younger generation is that there is no primary school in Iklin, and presently pupils have to cross the arterial roads in order to go to school at Lija and at Birkirkara. Options for the possible development outside development zone are constrained by the existence of two fireworks factories which are located about 200 metres away from the residential areas.
- 9.1.3 Commercial uses are mainly concentrated along Triq in-Naxxar but are also being established within the adjoining residential areas. Protection of residential areas in Iklin is therefore required.
- 9.1.4 The main transport related concern in Iklin is the tendency for motorists to use Triq il-Wied and Triq Geronimo Abos as a through route. To some extent this is inevitable, but it would be appropriate to introduce traffic calming measures to safeguard safety and amenity in these areas. Triq in-Naxxar forms the boundary of the area, and consequently Iklin is adversely affected by the major congestion along this road and at the Lija Roundabout. The commercial development along Triq in-Naxxar also causes parking congestion in the area, which needs to be addressed.

#### Summary of Issues

- Need to establish a community centre for Iklin
- Concern over proliferation of commercial uses into residential areas
- Measures required to safeguard against over-development
- Lack of recreational, sports and educational facilities
- Parking congestion due to commercial developments in the vicinity of Triq in-Naxxar
- Measures needed to reduce speeds at Triq il-Wied and Triq Geronimo Abos.

## Area Policies

### IK01

### Local Centre

**A Local Centre is designated for Iklin as indicated in the Iklin Area Policy Map. Within this area MEPA will permit local commercial, community and leisure uses as indicated in Policy CG13.**

**Development within this designated Local Centre is to comply with the following conditions:**

- i. The Local Centre is to be planned comprehensively and as indicated in the relevant Map IKM1 (refer also to Planning Control Map IKA1). The sections of Triq Patri Anasta Cuschieri and Triq G. Ellul Mercer that currently pass through the designated local centre will be removed. Development within the designated area may be constructed in parts or in phases as approved by MEPA;**
- ii. Except for the church and pastoral centre, all developments within the local centre are to be constructed with their roof levels below the level of Triq Patri Anasta Cuschieri; and,**
- iii. A suitably designed and landscaped public open space is to be provided above the mentioned roof levels.**

9.1.5 MEPA has approved an outline application for the development of a number of community facilities in Misrah Ninu Cremona. The planned community facilities include a church, a pastoral centre, a community centre, local council offices, a small playground, a health clinic and five small shops to replace existing retail outlets on site. The site is therefore being designated as a local centre area for Iklin.

9.1.6 The designated area currently consists of a public open space. The elimination of this important open space through the construction of the projected commercial and community facilities would be a great loss for the Iklin community. From a planning point of view it is both feasible and desirable to construct the envisaged facilities below the level of Triq Patri Anasta Cuschieri, also forfeiting part of the existing road in order to provide for an upgraded public open space at Misrah Ninu Cremona. The retention of Misrah Ninu Cremona would ensure that the amenity of the residential units that have a frontage on the square is safeguarded, that the square is entirely retained for public enjoyment, and that the church is promoted as the landmark building for Iklin.

### IK02

### Triq San Mikiel Car Park and Recreational Area

**The designated area as indicated in the Iklin Area Policy Map is reserved for the development of a public recreation/sports area together with an underlying public parking area and a reservoir to serve the site's landscaping requirements. The recreational open space, the car park and the reservoir shall be planned and constructed as one comprehensive development. The public car park shall have its vehicular access located directly onto Triq San Mikiel.**

**In order to control on-street parking in the vicinity of this site, and to take account of the removal of parking along Triq in-Naxxar so as to allow it to be widened to a dual carriageway, MEPA will require as a condition of this comprehensive development that**

**the Malta Transport Authority and the Local Council introduce a controlled parking zone (CPZ). The CPZ is indicatively shown on the Iklin Transport Policy Map.**

- 9.1.7 There is a need to provide additional parking facilities for the commercial area off Triq in-Naxxar. The Iklin Local Council plans to develop the vacant, government owned site at Triq San Mikiel for the construction of an underground car park and a recreational area above it. Access to this site should be off Triq San Mikiel so as to limit extra vehicle movements within residential streets.
- 9.1.8 This additional parking will compensate for the loss of on-street parking along Triq in-Naxxar when this road is widened. To ensure that parking resources are used effectively and to safeguard residences located next to the commercial area, a CPZ is required.
- 9.1.9 Iklin has a relatively young population but existing provision of recreational open areas within scheme boundaries for children amount to one site in Misrah Ninu Cremona that has an area of only 275 sqm. There is therefore an immediate need to designate the area of government-owned land at Triq San Mikiel for this purpose apart from the public car park.

### **IK03**

### **Site Reserved for Education**

**The site designated on the Iklin Area Policy Map is reserved for the construction of a kindergarten and primary school for Iklin subject to a Risk Assessment Report verifying to the satisfaction of the Civil Protection Department that the site is situated at a safe distance from the fireworks factory. MEPA and the Education Authorities will consult with the Civil Protection Department on any measures required regarding safety. In addition, MEPA will only grant permission for the development of a school on this site provided that the required EIA and TIS indicate that development on this site is acceptable and any adverse impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.**

**If, as a result of the abovementioned risk and impact assessments, the principle of development of a school on this site is considered to be acceptable by MEPA, then the Authority shall permit the development of the school subject to the following additional conditions;**

- i. Any noise generating areas are to be located the furthest distance away from residential areas;**
- ii. Classrooms are to be located at the furthest possible distance away from Triq Dun Karm;**
- iii. A 6m wide heavily landscaped buffer area is to be provided between the proposed school and the arterial road;**
- iv. A suitably landscaped boundary is to be provided between the school and the residential area;**
- v. For safety reasons no vehicular and pedestrian access will be allowed from the school grounds to Triq Dun Karm; and,**
- vi. An adequate level of car parking for staff and other facilities will be provided within the site.**

- 9.1.10 Presently pupils from Iklin attend school in the nearby towns of Lija and Birkirkara. Apart from the distances of travel involved for these children to go to school, they also have to cross arterial roads which is not desirable from a safety point of view. There is therefore a need to reserve a site for pupils living in Iklin that is preferably

in government ownership for the construction of a new kindergarten and primary school that could accommodate about 400 pupils.

- 9.1.11 Given that no suitable land is available within scheme boundaries, an ODZ site is being indicated in the Iklin Area Policy Map to be further examined as a possible location for the school. The identified site has a suitable land area and is located directly adjacent to the scheme boundary. Approval of a school in this location will be subject to a Risk Assessment Report verifying the site as being safely located away from the fireworks factories. The policy also includes criteria intended to minimize the impact of the school on the adjoining residential area, and to reduce the impact of the arterial road on the school.

## **IK04**

## **Traffic Calming Measures**

**MEPA will support the introduction of traffic calming measures along Triq il-Wied ta' l-Iklin and Triq Geronimo Abos to reduce the speed of traffic along this local access road. Additionally, similar measures could be installed in the primarily residential area to the east of Triq Geronimo Abos to discourage through traffic as shown in the Iklin Transport Policy Map.**

- 9.1.12 Triq il-Wied ta' l-Iklin is a popular commuter route, carrying about 400 vph in the morning peak hour (during the quieter summer period). The Local Council is understandably concerned that the construction of the Birguma By-pass will increase this flow. It is unlikely that traffic levels could be reduced without an unacceptable reduction in accessibility however, measures to reduce speeds and thereby improve road safety would be justified. If meaningful reductions in speed are to be achieved, then intensive action is required, including a narrower carriageway width, horizontal and vertical variations, and a significant reduction in the size of the roundabout at Triq San Mikiel. To bring speeds down to 20 mph (32kph) speed-reducing features need to be installed at least at 60m intervals. Good landscaping is important as it not only reduces forward visibility, but also beneficially changes the street scene.
- 9.1.13 The extent of "short cut taking" within the residential area is unclear, but, if traffic calming measures are to be installed, the inherent problem of excessively wide roads will need to be addressed if the measures are to be fully effective.

## **IK05**

## **Iklin Residential Areas**

**For sites that are located within the Iklin Residential Area as designated in Map IKM1, the development or redevelopment of residential units will only be allowed by MEPA provided that the net floor area of each residential unit exceeds 120 sqm. The provision of this Policy supersedes the DC2005 policy relating to the minimum size of dwellings for residential development applications in the Iklin Residential Area.**

- 9.1.14 Current trends in Iklin show that developers' efforts in maximizing the use of each site is resulting in high density developments. The cumulative affect of this trend may result in the Residential Area of Iklin being developed in a manner that is excessively dense to the detriment of the quality of life of residents. This Policy is thus intended to ensure that any redevelopment takes place at a density that is more compatible with the surrounding areas.



## **10. LIJA AREA POLICIES**

### **10.1 Introduction**

Area: 1.1 sq. kms.

Population: 2,782 (1998)

- 10.1.1 Lija forms part of the traditional Three Villages (Attard, Balzan and Lija). This locality is characterised by villas, townhouses and gardens of high architectural and historical significance including Villa Preziosi and Villa Francia amongst others. Lija's other landmarks and characteristic features include the Belvedere 'It-Torri' (1857), Lija Cemetery also dating to the 1800s, Tal-Mirakli Chapel along with the characteristic narrow and winding streets providing this locality with a traditional streetscape.
- 10.1.2 The western extent of Lija consists, however, of new urban areas. Similar to Attard and Balzan, Lija's public open spaces and the private gardens located within the Urban Conservation Area need to be protected and conserved as these are fundamental to the traditional characteristics of the Three Villages. These gardens are the most important feature alongside the winding streets and vernacular architecture that give Lija its identity. Another important urban area in Lija is the parish church and square that needs to be defined as a community core area. This core area is well located with views onto the parish church and belvedere along the same axis providing an important central focal point for Lija.
- 10.1.3 Lija possesses an important rural area at Hal Mann. This constitutes a very important strategic open gap that separates and defines this locality from Attard, Mosta and Naxxar. One major goal is to protect this strategic open gap from development, thereby safeguarding the environmental quality of the area. There is a need to contain industrial growth that exists in the Hal Mann area, especially along Triq il-Mosta and Triq Pantar through the designation of Areas of Containment.
- 10.1.4 The population of Lija consisted of about 3,078 persons in 1985. In 1998 the population was registered at 2,782 persons. Boundaries have also changed so comparison on the changes in population is not possible since a substantial part of the terraced house areas of Iklin were included in the 1985 Lija census boundary. These results therefore do not imply a definite fall in population for Lija.
- 10.1.5 The major part of Lija benefits from being located away from the main road network. However some localized problems do exist in the village core that need to be addressed through traffic calming measures and related environmental improvements. The major problem in Lija, and adjacent areas, is the traffic congestion at the Lija Roundabout. This is a very important node on the arterial road network and a critical source of delays for buses. The problems are not just related to junction design and capacity since a significant element of the problem is the lack of road capacity along Triq in-Naxxar. Major improvements will be required to improve pedestrian conditions from the roundabout to the Lija Cemetery. Related traffic management and parking control issues will also need to be tackled.

## Summary of Issues

- Need to define a core area for Lija and to identify sites for community facilities
- Private gardens located within the Urban Conservation Area need to be protected and conserved
- There is an overall lack of recreational areas
- The expansion of the industrial and commercial area into the important strategic open gap between Lija and Mosta/Naxxar needs to be curtailed
- Problems of through traffic and lack of safety for pedestrians in the village core
- Need to address the traffic congestion problem at the Lija Roundabout
- Pedestrian access and environmental improvements required along Triq il-Mosta.

## Area Policies

### LJ01

### University Residence Site Development Brief

**Should the University Residence site as indicated in the Lija Area Policy Map cease to be used as a hostel, MEPA will only consider its redevelopment subject to the prior formulation of a Development Brief for the site. This Development Brief is to clearly indicate how the site is to be developed, including permissible land uses, densities, building heights, layout, design, access, retention of open spaces and landscaping to the satisfaction of MEPA. It is recommended that the Development Brief shall make provision for all of the following land uses on this site:**

- Residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (Class 2 (a), Use Classes Orders, 1994);**
- Dwelling units (Class 1, Use Classes Orders, 1994);**
- Sports and recreational areas (Class 9(d), Use Classes Orders, 1994) for joint private and public use;**
- The use of old quarries on this site as water reservoirs; and,**
- Areas containing trees and other vegetation that are protected by the ‘Guidance on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands’ (2002) are to be retained.**

10.1.6 The University Residence Site consists of privately-owned grounds currently managed by the University of Malta. It is acknowledged that a University Residence Complex is more appropriately located closer to the University of Malta at Tal-Qroqq as this would lower the travelling time for students using this facility. Thus if the existing use terminates within the Local Plan timeframe, this would create an opportunity to cater for alternative uses that are needed in Lija/Balzan. A limited proportion of residential development will also be allowed in order to secure an overall viable project.

10.1.7 The central localities have a growing elderly and single parent population thereby creating a demand for an elderly residential complex. The redevelopment of this particular site presents the opportunity to cater for such a residential complex with generous open space provision.

10.1.8 Lija also lacks public open space and has limited sports and recreational areas. In the CMLP localities including Lija, sports provision consists of less than 2.7 sqm per inhabitant as compared to the national average of 6 sqm per inhabitant. In this respect, further provision is required by MEPA for such use. The site in question constitutes an important urban open space for Lija and Balzan and therefore the

Development Brief is to carefully consider which parts of the existing open spaces are to be retained, and which trees are to be protected.

## **LJ02**

## **Villa Francia**

**MEPA will support the use of a part of the Villa Francia Gardens as a public formal garden, further to its official government use. The construction of additional floors and roof structures over existing buildings located within the security area as indicated in the Lija Building Height Limitations Map will not be permitted by MEPA.**

- 10.1.9 Villa Francia is a government owned site of historical and architectural importance. Although the site and building itself are required for government use, MEPA in conjunction with Lija Local Council will support public access to part of the Villa's beautiful gardens. This would create an alternative and quiet recreational area for the residents of Lija and other visitors.
- 10.1.10 The site may be planned in such a way so as to allow government to utilize the main building and parts of the gardens as private reserved areas, whilst allowing controlled public access at certain times of the day to a part of the gardens and certain features such as, possibly, the Old Mill. The possible public viewing of the historical and architectural features of Villa Francia itself should be considered.
- 10.1.11 The construction of additional floors and roof structures over existing buildings located within the area as indicated in the Lija Building Height Limitations Map will not be permitted by MEPA in order to ensure maximum security as required by government for Villa Francia.

## **LJ03**

## **Tal-Mirakli Residential Development**

**The undeveloped area of land at Tal-Mirakli as indicated in the Lija Area Policy Map shall be planned comprehensively for residential development with adequate recreational provision and an open buffer area next to the UCA. The development of this site shall adhere to all of the following conditions;**

- 1. Buildings are not to exceed a maximum height limitation of 3 floors plus semi-basement;**
  - 2. The developer is to provide for, as a planning obligation, one centrally located and publicly accessible open area that is to consist of a children play and amenity space in line with the requirements of the DC2005. This planning obligation is to be implemented prior to the residential development becoming operative;**
  - 3. An open and landscaped buffer area is to be provided between the planned residential development and the UCA to the north-east of the designated site. The total area of this open landscaped buffer together with the area of the children play and amenity space as required in 1 above is to be equivalent to 25% of the total area of the designated site; and**
  - 4. The design of the road layout, including widths and alignments, and the density and form of the planned residential development shall be sympathetic to the character of the nearby Urban Conservation Area, and pedestrian links shall facilitate easy movement towards the village core area.**
- 10.1.12 The development of this area that is zoned in the TPS (1988) for residential use has a total land area of 40,300 sqm. This constitutes a major residential project that

requires careful planning consideration. In this respect, any development in this large vacant area is to be planned comprehensively by means of a planning application covering the entire site. Through this application MEPA will ensure that planning requirements including the adequate provision of public open spaces, the provision of a green buffer area adjacent to the UCA, and a suitable street layout are satisfactorily implemented.

10.1.13 The area of Tal-Mirakli currently lacks recreational spaces. Furthermore, major residential development on this site will itself create further demands for recreational space thereby requiring that such an amenity be catered for on this site. Lija Local Council supports the provision of a recreational site in this still undeveloped area to cater for the recreational demands of new households. In line with these requirements, the project is to include substantial areas of open green space.

10.1.14 Many of the new residential developments built adjacent to the UCA are unsympathetic to the character of the historic urban fabric. Building layout and form of this new residential project are to pay particular attention to the qualities of the adjacent UCA. As this site must be developed comprehensively, the opportunity exists to produce a standard of development that adds, rather than detracts to the historical character of Lija.

## **LJ04**

## **Rezoning of White Area**

**The area of land located at Triq Antonio Bosio and zoned in the TPS (1988) as white areas is designated for the development of maisonettes and flats without front gardens. This area is indicated in Lija Area Policy Map. MEPA will only consider development planning applications in this designated area following the approval by the same Authority of a comprehensive road scheme.**

10.1.15 This white area is located within predominantly residential zones. There are no planning constraints on this site, and it is not required for the development of any specific non-residential land use, such as community facilities. Therefore, in order to retain the amenity and existing residential character of its environs, and so as to promote a more efficient use of land, this site is to be developed for maisonettes and flats without front gardens. The design of the alignments of the new road layouts for this white area may either be initiated by MEPA on the request of one of the owners, or through a PC application from the relevant owners.

## **LJ05**

## **Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements**

**MEPA will support and encourage the introduction of traffic calming measures and related embellishments throughout the urban core, as shown in the Lija Transport Policy Map, that:**

- i. Discourage through traffic;**
- ii. Improve road safety;**
- iii. Improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists; and,**
- iv. Improve the visual amenity of the UCA.**

**An area of great importance that requires upgrading is the square fronting the parish church.**

- 10.1.16 The centre of Lija is an area of particular charm and character, however this is undermined somewhat by the intrusion of traffic. Better management and selective improvements would help protect and enhance the village. Traffic surveys appear to indicate some degree of through traffic, however overall volumes are fairly modest. Measures to effectively remove through traffic would greatly reduce the accessibility of the area for residents and visitors. Therefore schemes to reduce speeds and enhance safety are more appropriate.
- 10.1.17 There are specific concerns about traffic using Triq il-Kbira, particularly since changes to traffic management arrangements were introduced in neighbouring Balzan. Surveys indicate that at peak times flows in this street are 150–200 vph. An alternative route for traffic going in the direction of Attard would be via Triq R. Mifsud Bonnici, but this would require the reversal of the direction of flow in the top end of Triq il-Kbira, Balzan. Currently there is a no entry restriction at the start and end of the school day. Such a restriction would be incompatible with proposals to re-route traffic along this street, and traffic calming measures would have to be introduced as an alternative. The advantages of reducing flows in Triq il-Kbira, Lija would need to be weighed against the increased flows in Triq il-Kbira, Balzan.
- 10.1.18 Improvements to the area fronting the parish church would be very beneficial as this is the prime public space in the village. A revised design will need to carefully balance the requirement for parking near the church, with the opportunity to improve the public realm, especially addressing the poor visual impact.

## **LJ06 Improvements to Lija Roundabout and Naxxar Road**

**MEPA will support the ADT to undertake a major junction improvement at the Lija Roundabout, together with the upgrading of Triq in-Naxxar/Triq il-Mosta between this junction and the Triq San Mikiel Junction. Other complementary improvements will be required, including:**

- i. The installation of traffic signals by the Lija Cemetery and at the Triq San Mikiel junction;**
- ii. The conversion of the existing zebra crossing to staggered pelican crossings;**
- iii. The banning of certain right turns and the simplification or modification of other traffic movements;**
- iv. Parking management including the introduction of a controlled parking zone (CPZ), near commercial premises, to make best use of available parking and safeguard the needs of residents;**
- v. Minor realignments of Triq Wied Hal-Balzan and Triq W. Muscat to ensure the efficient operation of the new roundabout;**
- vi. Traffic calming in side streets in Lija and Balzan to ensure the acceptable “re-routing” of local traffic; and,**
- vii. A bus lane on the Triq il-Mosta approach to the cemetery.**

**The design of the improvements should seek to satisfy the following objectives:**

- a. Protecting the amenity of residential properties fronting Triq in-Naxxar;**
- b. Safeguarding, where feasible, the mature trees in the area, particularly protected species (Holm Oaks); and,**
- c. Maintaining a service road, with some parking, along the Iklin side of Triq in-Naxxar.**

**Works to overcome the major storm water drainage problems in the area including measures covered by Policy LJO7 should be designed and undertaken as part of this road scheme. MEPA will not permit any development that would prejudice any element of the proposed improvement.**

**The ADT in consultation with MEPA will also investigate the feasibility of a new by-pass starting from the il-Qasbija area in Iklin, passing through the roundabout at Triq Geronimo Abos and leading to the area of the existing precasting plant fronting Triq il-Mosta, as schematically indicated in the Iklin Transport Policy Map, in order to relieve traffic congestion at the Lija roundabout.**

- 10.1.19 The Lija Roundabout and Triq in-Naxxar are situated on a key part of the arterial road network and consequently measures to reduce congestion and increase road safety are important. They are also situated on the Triq in-Naxxar/Triq il-Wied Strategic Bus Corridor and therefore, in addition to generally benefiting from the proposed improvements, buses should be accorded priority where possible.
- 10.1.20 Analysis shows that traffic conditions will improve markedly as a result of the package of improvements, but some delays may still occur in the evening peak hour along Triq in-Naxxar. This is a practical example of the fact that whilst real improvements can be achieved, it is futile to provide major increases in road capacity in order to accommodate future traffic growth.
- 10.1.21 There are a number of important protected trees in the area, and the requirements of road design need to be balanced against the desire to keep as many of these trees as possible. Of particular importance are the Holm Oaks situated along the north side of Triq in-Naxxar, between the service road and the main road. These are protected trees and require great attention. It is evident that the objectives of safeguarding these trees and creating a dual carriageway, whilst maintaining a service road, could be at odds. This conflict will require very close examination.
- 10.1.22 The currently preferred design solution for the junction is an enlarged roundabout with modified entry and exit points. As an alternative, it may be possible to provide a signalised gyratory, although this may require the closure of Triq Wied Hal-Balzan to ensure efficient and effective signalisation. The final design will only be determined after both options have been fully evaluated. To achieve a satisfactory improvement it will be necessary to acquire third party land on the west side of the junction. Congestion at this location is not just caused by inadequate junction capacity. A significant part of the problem is the lack of exit capacity along Triq in-Naxxar north of the junction. It is therefore vital that the improvement includes the creation of a dual carriageway up to the Triq San Mikiel junction. This may involve the acquisition of some land along the west side of Triq in-Naxxar.
- 10.1.23 Complementary traffic management measures, such as the banning of some right turns, will be needed to ensure the efficient and effective movement of traffic. However, good levels of accessibility to surrounding areas will be maintained. On the Lija/Balzan side it will be necessary to introduce traffic calming measures as part of the scheme, to ensure that only local use is made of side streets.
- 10.1.24 On the Iklin side some control of parking (e.g. a CPZ) will be required to manage demand close to the commercial premises and to complement the proposed Triq San Mikiel car park.

## **LJ07 Pedestrian Access and Afforestation Project at Triq il-Mosta**

**Within the designated area indicated in the Lija Area Policy Map, MEPA will support the provision of:**

- i. Adequate and safe pedestrian access along the Lija side of Triq il-Mosta as indicated in the Lija Area Policy Map and the Lija Transport Policy Map;**
- ii. An afforested area with landscaping in accordance with the provisions of the ‘Guidance on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands’ (2002); and,**
- iii. The construction of an adequately sized, natural recharge open reservoir to improve storm water run-off management.**

10.1.25 This stretch of road in Lija requires an improvement in pedestrian access since at present access is difficult and dangerous especially for emergency stops. Triq il-Mosta is a very busy road lacking any pavements along the side opposite the Blockrete precasting plant. A footway therefore needs to be introduced all along this side of the arterial road.

10.1.26 The further afforestation of the proposed TPO area that includes protected olive trees and Holm Oaks as indicated in the Lija Environmental Constraints Map will environmentally improve the green strategic open gap and buffer between the Lija settlement and the industrial and commercial functions that exist on the other side of Triq il-Mosta. The designated area also frequently floods. The construction of an open reservoir as a natural drain site together with the afforestation project should reduce the flooding situation existing in the area.

## **LJ08 Triq Santa Katarina and Triq il-Mithna Road Alignment Changes**

**In order to safeguard the rural character of the undeveloped sections of Triq Santa Katarina and Triq il-Mithna, and also to discourage through traffic in the Urban Conservation Area, it is proposed that the current schemed road alignment be modified for those parts of these streets as indicated in the Lija Transport Policy Map.**

10.1.27 The limit of development runs along the south side of Triq Santa Katarina/Triq il-Mithna, and consequently these streets are generally rural in character. Whilst their standard and alignments may be deficient in some respects, it would be totally unnecessary, inappropriate, and damaging to widen them to 12.2m (40 feet) (back of pavement to back of pavement).

10.1.28 Whilst these streets are not within the UCA, they form one of two routes to it from the west. Structure Plan Policy UCO14 seeks to protect such areas following a presumption against the widening of existing streets unless this is absolutely essential. Given that the section of Triq il-Mithna within the UCA is very narrow and in parts only wide enough for single file traffic, it would be highly undesirable to encourage further traffic to use this route. The scheme alignment should therefore be scaled down significantly to solely ensure that minimum carriageway widths are achieved and that pavements are provided where they do not exist.





# 11. MOSTA AREA POLICIES

## 11.1 Introduction

Area: 6.8 sq. kms.

Population: 18,220 (1998)

- 11.1.1 Mosta has grown extensively over these last decades to become an important residential and commercial area. This locality is centrally located and strategically placed. Mosta including the rural settlement of Bidnija is bordered by Naxxar to the east and Attard to the south. Many new neighbourhoods have been formed in this settlement including Sta. Margherita, Tal-Wej, Ta' Zokrija, Ta' Mlit, Tad-Daqqaq and il-Blata l-Gholja which are mostly residential areas.
- 11.1.2 Mosta has the second largest population following Birkirkara. The population of Mosta has increased from 1985 to 1998 by about 6,072 persons. Similarly the child population aged 0 to 14 years has increased from 3,188 in 1985 to 4,183 in 1995, and the population in the economically active age bracket has increased from 7,818 in 1985 to 10,888 in 1995. The number of elderly also increased slightly with 8.2% aged 65 years or over in 1985 to 8.6% in 1995. These results indicate that in general there is a need for the provision of additional facilities to serve all age groups.
- 11.1.3 Mosta also has one of the finest examples of valley systems with the Wied ta' L-Isperanza, Wied il-Ghasel, Wied is-Sir and Wied Gjananu valleys cutting right through the urban areas. Together with these, the rural areas and other valleys around Bidnija and to the west of Mosta also include areas of environmental importance. Bidnija itself is a characteristic rural settlement whose identity and character needs to be protected. The scientifically and ecologically significant Great Fault also passes to the north of Mosta.
- 11.1.4 Recreational facility provision is generally lacking. Mosta attracts a high number of tourists who regularly visit the Mosta Dome and other numerous attractions of historical, archaeological and natural interest. Every opportunity is being taken to provide new recreational facilities including sites at Is-Saghjtar, Blata L-Gholja and near Gnien ta' L-Gharusa tal-Mosta which is ideally located near to the Victoria Lines Heritage Trail.
- 11.1.5 Mosta is well served by a Primary Town Centre for retail and community facilities. New residential areas including Sta. Margherita, Is-Saghjtar and Tad-Dib are distant from the town centre. Existing employment provision for the Central localities is mainly located in the Inner Harbour area and within industrial areas, whilst the outer localities are mainly residential in character with limited employment opportunities. The strategy being followed is to provide employment opportunities in the outer areas where possible.
- 11.1.6 The construction of the Mosta Ring Road at Triq il-Qalbiena Mostin provides the opportunity to revise the traffic management arrangements in the centre of Mosta. Whilst the proposed changes are primarily based on commercial perceptions of improved accessibility for motorists, if the shopping centre is to become more attractive, equal attention needs to be paid to better parking management and control, including the provision of additional off-street parking, and measures to improve safety and the environment in the centre.

- 11.1.7 Independence Avenue separates the southern residential areas of Mosta from the rest of the settlement. If this severance created by the width and alignment of Independence Avenue is to be overcome, then significant measures need to be taken to downgrade this road. Benefits will arise from reducing traffic flows along Independence Avenue and a great opportunity exists to convert this road into an attractive boulevard. The Tal-Qares area suffers from the close proximity of residential and industrial areas. The associated traffic problems will only be resolved if the two areas are physically separated.

### **Summary of Issues**

- Need to conserve the rural identity, character and setting of Bidnija as a rural settlement
- Need to define the primary town centre and promote its vitality and viability
- Designated local centres are required to service the newer residential areas
- Need to identify main employment centres
- Clusters of industrial garages inappropriately located outside development zone at Tas-Sriedek that need to be contained
- New educational facilities are required
- Potential to develop a heritage trail and valley walkway along Wied il-Ghasel and the Victoria Lines together with a district level recreational area
- Need to safeguard spaces for recreational use
- Revised traffic management arrangements required in and around the centre of Mosta
- Problems of severance, lack of road safety and poor environment along Triq l-Indipendenza
- Need to control and manage on-street parking
- Control industrial traffic passing through the residential area at Tal-Qares.

### **Area Policies**

#### **MO01 Tal-Qares and Il-Hanqa Scheme Amendments**

The area of land at Tal-Qares that was zoned as part green area and part industrial area in the Temporary Provision Schemes (1988) is being designated as an undeveloped public open space. Similarly, the area of land at Il-Hanqa that was zoned as school grounds in the Temporary Provision Schemes (1988) is being designated as an undeveloped public open space.

Street alignments at Tal-Qares are amended so as to allow for suitable access to areas zoned for industrial development, to separate the industrial activity from the environmentally sensitive area to the east, and to minimise as far as possible visual impacts. Triq Gdida fi Triq Fortizza is to be extended to join Triq il-Ballut to allow through movement of traffic. The extension to the road network confined to these two peripheral streets will be expected to have a vertical retaining boundary wall to make up for any differences between site levels and street formation levels. A retaining boundary wall separating the area of ecological and scientific importance shall be incorporated within the road. MEPA will not allow construction materials to be deposited, and no construction machinery will be allowed access onto the listed area of ecological and scientific importance. New development on the industrial area to the west of the listed AEI and SSI at Tal-Qares will only be allowed following the formation of the above

**mentioned peripheral streets and following the coordinated provision of required drainage works to completely avoid any disruption to the environmentally sensitive area that is to be cordoned off before any works commence on site.**

- 11.1.8 The easternmost part of the area zoned for industrial development and as a green area at Tal-Qares, as indicated on the TPS (1988) (No. 23), consists of a rocky steppe area with a large number of freshwater rock pools which support highly specialised fauna and flora including endemic and rare species of ecological and scientific importance. This area qualifies as a Level 1 Area of Ecological Importance and Site of Scientific Importance in terms of Structure Plan Policies RCO1, RCO10, RCO11 and RCO12. For these reasons it is recommended that this area is not allowed to be developed in line with Policy RCO15. For similar reasons, the area of ecological and scientific importance at Il-Hanqa is also being designated as a green area.
- 11.1.9 Conditions are being imposed on the method of construction of the planned street which is to include the provision of required utility infrastructure, and on the construction of industrial development, so as to ensure the full protection of the ecologically and scientifically important areas. A retaining wall is required to physically separate the listed area from any construction works.

## **MO02**

### **Blata L-Gholja Local Centre**

**The designated area at Blata L-Gholja as indicated on the Mosta Area Policy Map is to be comprehensively developed for the following land uses:-**

- i. A local centre in line with Policy CG13;**
- ii. San Silvestru Chapel which is to be conserved;**
- iii. A pedestrianized and landscaped square linking the local centre to San Silvestru Chapel; and,**
- iv. Part of Triq l-Indipendenza the alignment of which is to be modified in line with the provisions of Policy MO10.**

**A comprehensive plan for the entire designated area is to be approved by MEPA before the Authority considers any development applications within this area.**

- 11.1.10 At Blata l-Gholja, a nucleus of local shops already exists next to San Silvestru Chapel. A local centre is designated in this area to satisfy the need for the provision of local retail services for this new residential area and to create a small social and urban core for the neighbourhood. This centre is designated in conjunction with the downgrading and pedestrian improvement plans for Triq L-Indipendenza in line with Policy MO10. These transport related plans will also integrate San Silvestru Chapel, which is currently acting as a roundabout, into a small pedestrianized square. Therefore the local centre, the chapel, the modification of this part of Vjal l-Indipendenza and the pedestrianized areas are to be planned comprehensively as one project.

## **MO03**

### **Is-Sghajtar Development Brief & CDA**

**The Is-Sghajtar (ex-quarry) area and the land adjacent to the Mosta Technopark, as indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map, are recommended to be included within the Urban Development Boundary. The recommended change to the Urban Development**

**Boundary for this area is therefore subject to the Structure Plan Review in line with Policy SET8, and is also subject to Parliamentary approval.**

**Should the Structure Plan Review and Parliament confirm this recommendation, a Development Brief will be prepared and approved by MEPA in order to guide any developments in this area. The Development Brief shall consider the following list of land uses:**

- i. An organised warehousing, storage and distribution facility (Class 17 of the Use Classes Order, 1994) constructed at the lower levels of the site and with access only from the side facing the Mosta Technopark area;**
- ii. A Local Centre to serve the Is-Saghjtar residential areas;**
- iii. Offices (Class 5 of the Use Classes Order, 1994) constructed at the upper levels of the site;**
- iv. Sports and recreational facilities located at the upper levels of the site next to the residential areas;**
- v. A parking area which may also serve in the future as a park and ride public car park site in line with Policy CG35;**
- vi. Required road links and junction improvements in line with Policy MO09; and,**
- vii. The provision of an underground water catchment reservoir that shall be a requirement in any development proposal for this site.**

**This Development Brief is to clearly indicate how the site is to be developed, including detailed parameters on permissible land uses, densities, building heights, layout, parking provision, design, access and landscaping to the satisfaction of MEPA. In addition, the Development Brief is to determine to what extent the developer is to provide for the community and transport related uses and facilities listed above as planning obligations. The whole site is to be planned comprehensively through an outline development application.**

**The land adjacent to the Mosta Technopark, as indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map, is designated for residential development following its confirmation by the Structure Plan Review and by Parliament. This designated area is indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map. MEPA requires that residential development in this designated area is planned in a comprehensive manner. Consequently, MEPA will only consider development planning applications in the designated area following the approval by the same Authority of a satisfactory comprehensive road scheme and layout plan that covers the entire extent of this area. Following such approval, MEPA may permit development in this area to be constructed in phases. As part of the comprehensive development of this area a 6 m wide landscaped buffer area with heavy tree planting is to be planned along the Mosta Technopark boundary as indicated on the Mosta Area Policy Map.**

**11.1.11 The Is-Sghajtar (ex-quarry) Area as indicated on the Mosta Area Policy Map is a strategically located area, central to Mosta, Naxxar and Attard. The permit for quarrying use has not been renewed by MEPA due to the proximity of the site to the residential areas. The area is practically completely enveloped by development on all four sides including substantial residential areas to the north, west and east, and the Mosta Technopark to the south which is also recommended to be included within the Limits to Development in line with Policy CG02 and Policy SET8.**

**11.1.12 This site and location are appropriate for the development of a prospective district level warehousing complex and for offices, creating new employment opportunities in the outer residential areas following Structure Plan Policy SET2. Over and above**

the site is well situated along the main transport route and therefore suitable for employment generation uses in line with Policy CG34. An organised warehousing and distribution facility is needed in the outer urban areas as this would allow for purpose built premises designed to satisfy specific operational requirements. Being strategically located this site allows for an efficient distribution site for the outer areas. This would also allow for the use of smaller distribution vehicles to transport goods and service the outer town centres.

- 11.1.13 The Brief should also provide for other required community and local centre uses and specifically for suitable sports and recreational facilities that are generally lacking in the area. These community uses are recommended to be located on the upper reaches of the site and facing the residential areas so as to create a buffer between the industrial/warehousing uses mentioned above and the residential areas bordering this site.
- 11.1.14 Also required for the area is an underground reservoir and the provision of a car park which can also serve in the future as a 'park and ride' car park site in line with Policy CG35. The whole site is to include the planned road links with Triq il-Qalbiena Mostin and Triq il-Htajriet, as well as suitable connections to the new junction planned at Triq il-Labour/Triq il-Belt Valletta in line with the requirements of Policy MO09.
- 11.1.15 The area of land being designated adjacent to the Mosta Technopark measures approximately 23,000 sqm. and currently consists of landlocked enclosed fields and derelict land. In order to secure an efficient use of land, the Local Plan considers the area to be suitable for the development of housing units. This residential development and the required street layout are to be planned in a comprehensive manner that respects the surrounding road layout and provides for efficient and safe accesses to the land. A 6 metre green landscaped boundary is also required to further separate the planned residential development from the Estate. This is considered sufficient in view of the fact that within the Mosta Technopark only clean non-polluting industries are permitted by MIP.

## **MO04**

## **Tal-Qares Industrial Area**

**The SME Site at tal-Qares as indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map is designated by MEPA for the following land uses:**

- 1. Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Business and Light Industry;**
- 2. Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994), General Industry; and**
- 3. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Storage and Distribution.**

**However, the part of the SME Site at tal-Qares that fronts Triq in-Naggjar as indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map is designated by MEPA for the following land uses:**

- 4. Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Offices; and**
- 5. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Storage and Distribution.**

**Development in these industrial areas is subject to the following conditions:**

- i. Developments shall not exceed a building height of three floors plus semi-basement;**

- ii. **Compliance with any required mitigation measures that may be identified during the assessment process of particular planning applications; and**
- iii. **It is shown to the satisfaction of MEPA that no deleterious impacts will result from any development on neighbouring residential areas.**

**The zoning of the block fronting Triq il-Ballut, as indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map, is changed from Residential to the development of the following land uses:**

- a. **Business and Light Industry (Class 11 of the Use Classes Order, 1994) provided that such development will not cause any deleterious impact on nearby residential areas by virtue of noise, vibration, smells, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust, grit, traffic generation and parking congestion; and,**
- b. **Offices (Class 5 of the Use Classes Order, 1994).**

**Development permission for new residential development in this block will not be granted by MEPA.**

11.1.16 The TPS (1988) zoning of the established industrial areas at Tal-Qares is being retained however following specific criteria in order to ensure that no negative impacts arise from such uses. Although the zoning of the block fronting Triq il-Ballut was zoned for terrace houses in the TPS (1988), it has already been predominantly developed into workshops and industries. As such this area is not suitable for the development of new residential units and is being rezoned accordingly. Special attention will be given by MEPA to ensure that any new industrial activity in this block will not cause any deleterious impacts on nearby residential areas.

## **MO05**

## **Community Facilities at Santa Margerita**

**MEPA will allow the development of Social and Community Facilities on the sites designated at Triq l-Ghadajjar and at Triq il-Fortizza tal-Mosta, both as indicated on the Mosta Area Policy Map.**

**MEPA will ensure that the design of the development on the land designated at Triq l-Ghadajjar respects the architecture, local views and appearance of the Old Santa Margerita Chapel.**

**MEPA will ensure that efficient use of space is made as a result of the difference in levels that exist on the land designated at Triq il-Fortizza tal-Mosta. Consequently development on this site is to conform to the following criteria:**

- i. **The Community Facilities are to be constructed with their roof levels below the upper street level; and**
- ii. **A suitably designed and landscaped public open space is to be provided above the mentioned roof levels.**

11.1.17 As is the case with Santa Margerita in Mosta, the Structure Plan refers to the many housing areas, and especially the newer ones, which are deficient in the provision of local community facilities because they are located at a considerable distance away from town centres (para 9.19). A case in point is that through consultation with the Archdiocese of Malta it has been indicated that there is a particular need to develop a site for a small church and pastoral centre in order to serve the Santa Margerita residential area.

- 11.1.18 The designated site at Triq l-Ghadajjar currently consists of an extensive asphalted piece of land that is therefore not efficiently utilized. In order to cater for required Community facilities, this land is being rezoned accordingly. This site is located within very close proximity to the Old Santa Margerita Chapel. The proper architectural design of the new centre will ensure that it will be complementary to the appearance of the old chapel.
- 11.1.19 Further to the limited site at Triq l-Ghadajjar, an additional site for the development of Community facilities is being indicated at a vacant plot of land at Triq il-Fortizza tal-Mosta. This site is larger than that at Triq l-Ghadajjar, and is conveniently located in proximity and walking distance of the community at Santa Margerita. The appreciable land area and the difference in levels at this site is conducive to the planning of the community facilities below upper street level with a public garden on top, all designed together to form an interesting and integrated community project.

## MO06

## Reserved Sites for Education

**MEPA safeguards the sites as indicated on the Mosta Area Policy Map for the provision of a new secondary school at Ta' Zokrija, and for an extension to the existing Lily of the Valley School at Il-Hanqa. MEPA will therefore refuse any development proposal that either conflicts or prejudices the use of these sites for the development of required educational facilities.**

**MEPA will only grant permission for the development of the Ta' Zokrija secondary school if the required EIA and TIS indicate that development on this site is acceptable and any adverse impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated. If, as a result of these impact assessments, the principle of development of a school on this site is considered to be acceptable by MEPA, then the following additional conditions are also to be adhered to;**

- i. Any noise generating areas are to be shielded from the neighbouring residential areas;**
- ii. A suitable landscaped boundary at least 6 m wide is to be provided between the school and the residential area;**
- iii. Any improvement works to the traffic system as resulting from the TIS shall be fully implemented before any construction works start on site; and,**
- iv. An adequate level of car parking for staff and other facilities as well as a satisfactory coach/van drop off area will be provided within the site boundaries.**

**The developer of the extension to the existing Lily of the Valley school at Il-Hanqa is to provide a suitable pedestrian access point to the valley as a planning obligation.**

- 11.1.20 Most existing secondary schools in the central localities have to share their premises with a primary school, or carry their full load of students and lack several important facilities as requested by the National Minimum Curriculum. They are also very awkwardly sited in relation to their catchment area resulting in the excessive bussing of students. This implies that the required secondary school has to, by necessity, be provided through the construction of a new school building on a vacant site rather than through the extension or adaptation of existing secondary schools. Furthermore, the urban areas of Mosta, Naxxar and Attard have expanded substantially bringing about the need for further school provision in the outer areas. For all the above mentioned reasons a new secondary school is required for these

expanding residential areas to cater for approximately 540 students. The selected site at Ta' Zokrija is quite centrally located in relation to the student catchment area implying that travelling time for students is minimized. Furthermore the site is situated in proximity to public transport.

## **MO07**

## **Victoria Lines Heritage Trails**

**MEPA in conjunction with other relevant agencies, including the Mosta Local Council and the Malta Tourism Authority, will promote the upgrading of the public routes along the Victoria Lines to form a Heritage Trail, and will introduce a Valley Walkway Route along the Mosta valley system. These two routes will link at the outer boundary of Fort Mosta thus forming one formal major heritage and nature trail. The two routes are planned along key historical and natural attractions as identified in the Mosta Recreation Area Policy Map, and will be planned in conjunction with the District Level Recreational Area in accordance with Policy MO08.**

**Subject to the provisions of Policies CG26 and CG27, only the following developments will be considered by MEPA in the precincts of this formal major trail:-**

- i. Acceptable access improvements planned along the routes which, as far as possible, make use of existing and natural pathways and urban links;**
- ii. Tree planting schemes, informal open recreational areas and picnic areas only where appropriate; and,**
- iii. The District Level Recreational Area to be developed in line with Policy MO08.**

**These developments are to comply with the provisions of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to be formulated for the entire designated area in accordance with Policy CG 27 before any developments take place.**

11.1.21 Mosta has a rich heritage consisting of natural and historic attractions. These include the Mosta Dome, numerous chapels bordering the valley areas and other sites of archaeological, historical and natural interest. The Archaeological Survey has in fact recommended the Victoria Lines as being an ideal location for the establishment of a Heritage Trail. A valley walkway route is also planned to pass along the four valleys of Wied ta' L-Isperanza, Wied Gjananu, Wied is-Sir and Wied il-Ghasel. The designated sites for outdoor recreation and for the interpretation centre, as indicated in Policy MO08, are planned in conjunction with these major heritage and nature trails thereby creating an overall project attractive enough to entice both locals and tourists, and consequently making heritage upgrading feasible. The trail and valley walkway routes in all provide for approximately a 6-hour recreational walk. The whole route is about 5,000 m in length, with the Victoria Lines route being 1,800 m long and the valley walkway route being 3,200 m long. A number of urban links for shorter walks with the Mosta residential areas are also identified in the Mosta Recreation Area Policy Map.

11.1.22 Parts of the Victoria Lines route upgrading have already been implemented by the Mosta Local Council and access improvements are required to join this planned trail to the Valley Walkway Route around the outer walls of Fort Mosta. It has been noted from site surveys that certain areas are currently accessible with difficulty and only minor works, including steps and improved footpaths, are required to improve public access along the routes. All such minor works are to abide by the guidance and conditions set out in the EMP for the area.



- 11.1.23 Wherever possible the formation of cycle routes is also promoted along the Victoria Lines as such recreational activity would further enhance the attraction of the locality. Cycling is healthy, low-cost, non-polluting and very popular with tourists as it allows for physical exercise whilst enjoying the landscape, countryside or coast. It is also popular with children but very limited provision exists at present. MEPA will therefore positively support the introduction of a cycling circuit in conjunction with the proposed District Level Recreational Area.
- 11.1.24 Fort Mosta itself is presently inaccessible since it is an Armed Forces of Malta site. The local plan however recognises that the Fort is a major heritage site that is currently inappropriately utilised. The Plan therefore recommends that the Fort should eventually be used as a primary tourist and local attraction rather than a storage area as at present. In this respect, the route is only temporarily planned to follow pathways around the outer limits of the Fort, but should also eventually incorporate Fort Mosta itself once a more suitable alternative site presents itself for the current AFM storage facilities.

## **MO08**

## **District Level Recreational Area**

**The land at Tal-Qares and Misrah Ghonoq as indicated in the Mosta Area Policy Map and the Mosta Recreation Area Policy Map is designated by MEPA as a District Level Recreational Area. This area shall be planned comprehensively together with the Heritage Trail along the Victoria Lines as per Policy MO07 and in accordance with the provisions of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the area to be formulated in accordance with Policy CG27.**

**MEPA will only consider the following uses and developments within the designated district level recreational area; an informal outdoor recreational area, a suitably designed children play area, an outdoor sports area, picnic areas, cycling tracks, an interpretation centre and related ancillary facilities including a food and drink facility. Sports related facilities are to be located adjacent to the existing Crafts School and these are to have an area not exceeding 20% of the entire designated District Level Recreational Area. The interpretation centre and food and drink facility shall preferably be provided within existing buildings on site. MEPA will support the cooperation of private agencies with Government in the provision of the facilities indicated in this policy. MEPA will not permit the development of theme or fun parks in the District Level Recreational Area.**

**Any permitted uses and developments within the designated area are to conform to the following additional conditions:-**

- i. Development shall not cause any adverse visual or other impact on the character and setting of the area;**
- ii. Development shall not damage or otherwise adversely affect the cultural or natural heritage found within the designated area;**
- iii. In appropriate areas the regeneration or reintroduction of indigenous plants and animals and their habitats will be secured;**
- iv. An adequate safety buffer distance is to be maintained between the planned recreational uses within the designated area and the adjacent Armed Forces of Malta site as long as the current military use of the Fort persists;**

- v. **Adequate and safe access for visitors to the site shall be secured before the development becomes operative, and adequate vehicle parking that does not adversely affect the setting of the area shall be provided; and,**
  - vi. **Any buildings are to be designed sympathetically with the existing landscape and located at a suitable setback from the Victoria Lines and the Great Fault scheduled area. All built development is to have the least possible footprint and is not to exceed the height of 4.75 m (one floor).**
- 11.1.25 The need for the further provision of informal recreation and sports areas has been identified for the outer residential areas, including Mosta and Naxxar, since existing provision is low and demand is increasing. It is noted that whereas the recommended national standard of recreational space is of 2.4 sqm per person, the existing provision in Mosta is of 1.54 sqm per person and in Naxxar is of only 0.18 sqm per person. Therefore MEPA will fully support and encourage additional recreation and sports provision in proximity to the Victoria Lines given that this is an area which offers a suitable setting for such facilities, and since a large part of this land is in government ownership. Allowable sports and recreational facilities are to be limited to open-air facilities with landscaping so as to protect the existing setting of the area. Such facilities are intended to serve not only Mosta, but also surrounding localities.
- 11.1.26 The planned recreation and sports facilities will attract more visitors to the identified recreational walkway routes thereby making the area more popular. An interpretation centre, feature signage, picnic areas and recreational facilities including public seating are all required to allow the public to enjoy the heritage and natural assets of the area in a pleasant environment. A food and drink facility is also planned in the area as such a service is not available at present. Permitted public and tourist facilities however do not include theme or fun parks.
- 11.1.27 The area presently contains a number of under-utilised facilities including the I-Gharusa tal-Mosta Garden that is barely used by the general public at present, and Fort Mosta that is currently and inappropriately used by AFM as a storage area. The appropriate use and integration of these sites with the Heritage Trail and recreational area will contribute significantly to the upgrading of the area.
- 11.1.28 In addition to the existing Crafts School, new built development will only be considered if this is considered by MEPA to be absolutely essential and provided that it is of a small scale. MEPA will not consider proposals that in its opinion result in irreversible interventions within sensitive locations.

## **MO09**

## **Traffic Management Alterations**

**Following the completion of the Mosta Ring Road, MEPA will support the introduction of revised traffic management arrangements in and around the centre of Mosta. The main revision relates to making Triq il-Kungress Ewkaristiku one-way in a north-westerly direction, however, other changes to one-way streets will be required.**

**As part of the changes, junction improvements/alterations will be required at:**

- i. **Triq il-Kostituzjoni/Triq il-Kbira/Triq il-Kungress Ewkaristiku;**
- ii. **Triq il-Kungress Ewkaristiku /Vjal l-Indipendenza; and,**
- iii. **Vjal l-Indipendenza/Triq il-Kbira.**

**Additionally, the eastern section of Triq il-Kbira should be upgraded to improve safety, particularly for pedestrians. Major changes will be required to the routing of bus services as a consequence of these traffic management alterations.**

**To ensure that the Mosta Ring Road effectively acts as the distributor road for the eastern part of Mosta, traffic management measures will be implemented in Triq il-Htajriet and Triq Santa Margerita.**

- 11.1.29 The main objective of the proposed alterations is to make Mosta more attractive to car-borne shoppers, based on the perceptions of local retailers. It is questionable if this measure, in isolation, will achieve the desired goal. However, provided the new Ring Road is available to cater for traffic leaving the centre, the package of measures will beneficially help reduce traffic flows in Triq il-Kbira (southwest of the Dome) and along Vjal l-Indipendenza in line with Policy MO10.
- 11.1.30 Changes are required to the junctions listed to reflect the revised pattern of traffic movements and to safeguard road safety. In the centre of Mosta particular attention needs to be paid to the provision of good pedestrian crossing facilities for the many visitors and shoppers.
- 11.1.31 The revised traffic management arrangements are likely to increase eastbound traffic flows along Triq il-Kbira, consequently measures will be necessary to ensure that safe and satisfactory conditions exist along this street.
- 11.1.32 As part of the proposed revisions, the PTA would wish a contra-flow bus lane to be provided in Triq il-Kungress Ewkaristiku. This would be consistent with Structure Plan Policy TEM7, but it can only be achieved if 60 on-street parking spaces are removed. This specific issue therefore needs careful consideration.
- 11.1.33 The Mosta Ring Road is intended to act as a by-pass and distributor road around the eastern periphery of Mosta. There is, however, a risk that the role of the Mosta Rong Road is undermined by an equally or more attractive route along Triq il-Htajriet and Triq Santa Margerita. Traffic management measures will safeguard against such a problem.

## **MO10**

## **Vjal l-Indipendenza Enhancement**

**MEPA will support comprehensive works to reduce severance, improve road safety, and generally improve the environment along the whole length of Vjal l-Indipendenza.**

**The works should include reducing the width of the carriageway, traffic calming measures, provision of loading/unloading bays for transport vehicles, tree planting and other landscaping to form a boulevard, and other improvements to create small squares particularly next to San Silvestru Chapel as indicated in Policy MO02.**

**It is proposed that the scheme alignment be modified to delete the formation of a crossroads at the junction of Vjal l-Indipendenza and Triq il-Kbira so as to prevent the creation of an unofficial by-pass around the south side of Mosta.**

**The scheme alignment for the section of Vjal l-Indipendenza, west of San Silvestru Chapel will also be modified to ensure that the road is not over wide and to facilitate the satisfactory development of the strip of land along the south side of the road. As**

**indicated in Planning Control Map MOA3 the proposed junction between Triq G.M. Camilleri and Triq il-Kbira is deleted, as visibility would be substandard.**

- 11.1.34 Policy CG38 proposes the downgrading of Vjal l-Indipendenza to a local access road to reflect changes in the road network. This provides a great opportunity to tackle existing problems, for example severance and excessive speed, and also bring about a major improvement in visual amenity. Many of the problems are caused by the road being straight and excessively wide. This characteristic must be changed if real improvements are to be achieved. Tree planting to create a boulevard will not only be visually pleasing, but will help produce the required transformation.
- 11.1.35 The scheme alignment envisages the extension of Independence Avenue, the widening of the bridge at Ta' L-Isperanza, and the construction of a new road off the Targa Gap Roundabout, all of which would create an unofficial by-pass around the western side of Mosta. This would run contrary to the proposals to downgrade the importance of Independence Avenue and to upgrade its environment, and also undermine the current investment in the Mosta Ring Road. Consequently, it is proposed that these elements of the scheme be modified to prevent the unintended creation of a by-pass. A pedestrian link from Triq il-Kbira would however be created to improve the accessibility of the new development in Tal-Wata.
- 11.1.36 At the western end of Vjal l-Indipendenza a strip of land is still to be developed. To ensure that the final road alignment is not over wide the scheme alignment will be modified accordingly. This will also produce more plot depth and thereby facilitate a better layout. The proposed junction at Triq G. M. Camilleri and Triq il-Kbira will be deleted because it will not be possible to achieve satisfactory visibility without affecting land outside development zone (ODZ).

## **MO11**

## **CPPS Car Parks**

**MEPA will encourage the Local Council to create additional on-street parking spaces in Triq Nicolo Isouard and Triq il-Wied and manage the use of these spaces for the benefit of the primary town centre. Funds collected as part of the Mosta CPPS can be used to undertake the necessary works.**

**MEPA will give due consideration to possible sites for the construction of a CPPS public car park(s) to serve the town centre. A minimum of 50 publicly available parking spaces should be provided, together with entry signing and control. The developers of the CPPS car parks will be required, as part of their development, to fund the introduction of on-street parking controls to ensure the effective and efficient management and regulation of all parking in the locality. The implementation of these on-street parking controls will be undertaken by the Local Council and not the developer(s) of CPPS car park(s).**

**MEPA would consider the development of an additional floor (above building height limitation as indicated in Mosta Building Height Limitations Maps) for public car park projects only if the Authority considers this as being necessary to help cross-subsidise the scheme.**

- 11.1.37 When the Mosta CPPS was introduced in 1998, it was planned that a 300 space underground car park would be constructed behind Mosta Dome. However, due to concerns about its proximity to the church and ownership constraints, this proposal is no longer being pursued.

- 11.1.38 Despite an active search as part of the preparation of the local plan, no suitable alternative site has been identified. Furthermore, in the 3 years that the scheme has been operational, only a small amount of money has been collected. Consequently, little progress can be made on the construction of underground parking spaces. At present it would be more realistic to use the available money to create and manage extra on-street parking close to the town centre. This would make a modest contribution to improving the current parking situation.
- 11.1.39 In order to encourage the provision of additional public parking, suitable redevelopment schemes within, or close (100 m) to the town centre, which include an element of public parking, preferably short stay, will be favourably considered. A flexible approach will be adopted towards the Mosta CPPS, with a view to achieving an increase in public off-street parking spaces at the earliest opportunity. Available CPPS monies could be used to help fund the public parking element of such projects.
- 11.1.40 A minimum of 50 spaces is required to ensure that the public car park operates efficiently and effectively. The provision of electronic signing to indicate the availability of spaces, plus access controls, will help avoid congestion and prevent abortive searching for spaces.
- 11.1.41 The existing CPPS is based on individual developers paying about half the likely cost (per space) of the eventual car park. Whilst part of this funding gap can possibly be met from parking charges, it is likely that in order to make the projects economically viable some element of profitable development must also be permitted. To this end MEPA will therefore consider the development of an additional floor above building height limitation for proposals on public car park sites only if the Authority considers this as being necessary to help cross-subsidise the scheme. This flexible approach is being adopted with a view to achieving an increase in public off-street parking spaces at the earliest opportunity.

## **MO12**

## **Controlled Parking Zone**

**MEPA will encourage and support the Malta Transport Authority and Local Council to introduce a CPZ at the earliest opportunity in the area generally indicated on the Mosta Transport Policy Map. The prime purpose of the CPZ should be to ensure that on-street and public off-street parking is controlled and managed to support retail and commercial activities, to achieve the general policy objectives in line with Policy CG36, and to safeguard the convenience of residents.**

**The construction of a CPPS car park may require the extension of the CPZ boundary to ensure that motorists use the car park rather than parking on-street in unsuitable locations in the surrounding area.**

**The CPZ should provide convenient places for the setting down and picking up of tourists from coaches. However, there is no necessity for coach parking to be provided in the central area, given that parking space is at a premium.**

- 11.1.42 Where parking demand is high, control and management is necessary to make best use of available spaces. In Mosta town centre this means introducing short-stay restrictions to provide convenient facilities for shoppers and other short-term visitors, together with residents parking provision, to ensure the parking does not

overspill into nearby residential streets. Commuter parking will have the lowest priority, and wherever possible greater use of public transport should be encouraged.

- 11.1.43 A comprehensive approach to parking is required, and therefore to ensure that any CPPS car park is effectively used the CPZ boundary may need to be extended when such a car park is opened. This will particularly be the case if parking charges are introduced to help cover the cost of the project because some motorists will seek to avoid such charges thereby causing problems in nearby areas.
- 11.1.44 Mosta Dome attracts a considerable number of tourist coaches and therefore convenient facilities are needed to allow visitors to alight from and board coaches. There is however no reason for the coaches to park in the centre whilst the tours take place. Convenient on-street parking is available for coach parking at little distance from the centre, for example along Triq id-Difisa Civili where the District Level Recreational Area and Victoria Lines Heritage Trail are planned and where such parking would not constitute a disamenity to existing residences.

## **MO13**

### **Road Closures in Tal-Qares Area**

**MEPA will encourage the Local Council and the Malta Transport Authority to introduce a series of road closures to physically separate the industrial area of Tal-Qares from the adjacent predominately residential area as indicated on the Mosta Transport Policy Map.**

- 11.1.45 The close proximity of these areas and the pattern of the road network means that industrial traffic often passes through the residential area. This is both undesirable and unnecessary. The physical separation of the two areas by short road closures would ensure that all industrial traffic uses Triq il-Fortizza, gaining direct access of the main road network at the Mosta Fort Roundabout.
- 11.1.46 The residential area would become a quieter, safer, and self-contained zone, accessible from Triq il-Kostituzzjoni. The closures should contain tree planting to introduce some element of screening.
- 11.1.47 The detailed designs of the road closures will need to pay particular attention to the requirement for turning facilities where cul de sacs are created. To this end, some modification to road alignments may be needed, together with traffic management measures.

## **MO14**

### **Valletta Road/Pantar Road Junction Improvement**

**MEPA will encourage the ADT to install traffic signals at the junction of Triq il-Belt Valletta/Triq Pantar in order to allow the right turn from the side road to be undertaken safely and efficiently.**

**The optimum design for such a junction improvement involves the use of some third party land on the southwest corner of the junction. MEPA will therefore not permit any development of this land that would prejudice the junction improvement.**

- 11.1.48 At present traffic can only turn left into and left out of Triq Pantar from the westbound carriageway of Triq il-Belt Valletta. This means that traffic from Attard

travelling along Triq Pantar in the general direction of Naxxar has to proceed via the roundabout at the western end of Triq il-Belt Valletta. This is a diversion of about 1km. Traffic from the local industrial premises wishing to go eastwards along the arterial road also experiences this detour.

- 11.1.49 In order to improve movements along the south-north axis it would be beneficial to undertake an improvement at this junction. The only way the right turn out of Triq Pantar could be safely achieved is by installing traffic signals. To obtain the most efficient and effective operation of a signal controlled junction it will be necessary for the ADT to acquire a small strip of third party land, so that a short left turn lane can be constructed. No development will be allowed on this land so as to safeguard this element of the scheme.
- 11.1.50 To ensure satisfactory conditions along the arterial road, the right turn from the eastbound carriageway of Triq il-Belt Valletta will not be permitted. Motorists wishing to travel in this direction can do so by 'U' turning at the nearby Vjal il-Labour roundabout. Therefore, in practice, this continued prohibition will not be problematic. This scheme is intended to improve localized south-north movements. However it is not meant to stimulate a wider use of Triq Pantar as a through route. By controlling the green times at the traffic signals, the ADT can, if necessary, constrain the use of this route.





## 12. NAXXAR AREA POLICIES

### 12.1 Introduction

Area: 7.7 sq. kms.

Population: 10,781 (1998)

- 12.1.1 The Naxxar Local Council has the largest land area in the Local Plan and includes the settlements of Maghtab and Bahar ic-Caghaq. It is also the only locality with coastal access from Ghallis to Bahar ic-Caghaq. Naxxar is bound to the west by Mosta and to the east by Gharghur and constitutes an important outer settlement whose urban area has grown over the last decades to the extent that it has joined up with Mosta. Clusters of residential and commercial developments have inappropriately located outside development zone.
- 12.1.2 The rate of urban expansion of Naxxar had accelerated in the 1970's and 1980's due to the development of large villa and new terraced house areas. The newer residential areas require the provision of local services through the designation of local centres, and a new primary school is required to service these areas. The population of Naxxar has increased by 4,320 persons between 1985 and 1998. In comparison this is more than twice the population of Gharghur. The most significant increase has resulted in the child population from 1,562 in 1985 to 2,543 in 1995. The number of economically active people has increased from 4,244 in 1985 to 6,353 in 1995. There was a slight fall in the proportion of elderly persons however with 7.8% of the population being over 65 in 1985 and 7.2% in 1998, a fall of 0.6%.
- 12.1.3 A number of national facilities have been established in Naxxar over time. These include the Trade Fair that draws large amounts of visitors generating traffic and parking problems, and the Maghtab Landfill that was the largest landfill in the Maltese Islands and has resulted in substantial environmental problems. Agricultural production and efficiency is being impeded by problems of pollution at Maghtab.
- 12.1.4 Apart from the coastal area and Maghtab, Naxxar is highly built-up and it is imperative that the remaining rural and coastal land is protected from development. The Local Plan therefore follows a strategy of containment for Naxxar especially in the coastal area, which remains the only undeveloped pristine coastal area between the highly developed Qawra/Bugibba area and Pembroke/St. Julians. A significant section of the coast road passes through this area. To increase its use and safety, this road is being improved through the EU TEN-T programme. It is proposed that this road be upgraded by undertaking on-line improvements rather than construct a totally new road which would have to pass over the Maghtab landfill site.
- 12.1.5 The construction of Birguma By-pass has been implemented. The by-pass scheme should include complementary measures to effectively downgrade Triq San Pawl. Some improvements have been undertaken to improve conditions in the centre of Naxxar, however it is still affected from relatively high volumes of through traffic.

## Summary of Issues

- Clusters of residential and commercial developments inappropriately located outside development zone
- Need to identify the town centre, whilst safeguarding buildings of architectural and historical character
- Proliferation of commercial uses within residential areas
- Lack of local services in the newer residential areas
- The planned redevelopment of the Trade Fair Site presents an opportunity for improvement
- Potential to develop a heritage trail along the Victoria Lines and pedestrian/cycling improvements along the coast
- Need to protect the coast from development and to control development at Bahar-ic-Caghaq
- Safety improvements to the coast road are needed
- Traffic calming and environmental improvements are required within the urban core.
- Commercial development fronting Triq il-Mosta has unsafe direct access onto the arterial road

## Area Policies

### NA01

### Rezoning of White Areas

**The two tracts of land situated at Triq Santa Marija and at Il-Gwejdja that were zoned in the Temporary Provision Schemes (1988) as white areas are designated for residential development. The land at Il-Gwejdja is also to cater for the provision of required sports facilities. These designated areas are indicated in the Naxxar Area Policy Map.**

**MEPA requires that the road layout in these designated areas and in the area covered by Policy NA02 is planned in a comprehensive manner. Consequently, MEPA will only consider development planning applications in the designated areas following the approval by the same Authority of satisfactory comprehensive road schemes that cover the entire extent of these designated areas together with the land area covered by Policy NA02. Following such approval, MEPA may permit development in these designated areas to be constructed in phases.**

**The developer of any residential development within the designated areas is to make a financial contribution to MEPA, as a planning obligation, for the creation, improvement and maintenance etc. of the landscaped public open space and children play area marked A on the Naxxar Area Policy Map. This planning obligation follows the requirements set out in Policy 12.4 of the DC2005, and is in accordance with the relevant provisions of Legal Notice LN 28 of 2002. The creation, improvement and maintenance etc. of the landscaped public open space and children play area will be undertaken by the Naxxar Local Council.**

12.1.6 The area of land being designated at Triq Santa Marija measures approximately 22,000 sqm. and currently consists of enclosed agricultural land. In order to secure an efficient use of land, the Local Plan considers the area to be suitable for the development of housing units. This residential development and the required street layout are to be planned in a sensitive manner that respects the adjacent UCA of Naxxar. In order to allow for a suitable road scheme, and so as to protect the character and environmental quality of the UCA, vehicular access will only be

allowed from Triq Santa Marija. Wherever possible, the street layout is also to provide for suitable pedestrian links to the urban core area and the Secondary Town Centre.

12.1.7 The white area at Il-Gwejdja lies within a predominantly residential area and is located adjacent to the Malta Trade Fair grounds. The area of land being designated presently consists of open fields, a football pitch and a parking area. In order to retain the amenity of the surrounding residential areas and existing urban character, the site is to be planned and developed into housing units together with suitably located sports facilities that would replace the existing football pitch as required. This also ensures that existing undeveloped land located within scheme is efficiently utilized for housing development.

12.1.8 These major residential developments at Il-Gwejdja and Triq Santa Marija will create further demands for recreational space in the locality, thereby requiring that such an amenity be catered for within walking distance. The already designated green area at Site A meets such a requirement. Therefore in line with DC2005, instead of obliging the developers of these major sites to provide open spaces on-site, MEPA will require them to finance the comprehensive upgrading of Site A. The funds derived from this planning obligation will be collected by MEPA and forwarded to the Local Council for implementation works.

## **NA02**

## **Malta Trade Fair Site**

**In the event that the existing Malta Trade Fair activity ceases operating on this site, either through closure or relocation of this land use elsewhere, MEPA will not permit the continued use of this site as a Trade Fair but will allow the entire site to be redeveloped for the following land uses:**

- 1. High quality residential development;**
- 2. A Local Centre in the westernmost part of the site;**
- 3. The retention and upgrading of the axial central walkway route as designated in the Naxxar Area Policy Map; and**
- 4. An underground car park to serve the new residential developments.**

**MEPA requires that the road layout in this designated area and in the areas covered by Policy NA01 is planned in a comprehensive manner. Consequently MEPA will only consider full development planning applications in the designated area following the approval by the same Authority of satisfactory comprehensive road schemes that cover the entire extent of this designated area together with the land areas covered by Policy NA01. Furthermore, the comprehensive plan for the area designated by this Policy is also to follow the planning policy guidelines as set out in Appendix C. Following the approval by MEPA of these comprehensive road schemes and of the comprehensive plan as stated above, the Authority may permit development in the designated area to be constructed in phases.**

**It is proposed that the scheme alignments in the vicinity of Triq San Pawl and Triq il-Markiz Scicluna be modified to allow the construction of a roundabout and a direct link road to serve the Trade Fair site as indicated on the Naxxar Area Policy Map.**

12.1.9 In the event that the Trade Fair ceases to operate from this site, the Local Plan considers the area to be suitable for the development of housing units and ancillary facilities as indicated in the Policy and in Appendix C since this would secure an

efficient use of land. MEPA will ensure that all new residential areas shall be planned comprehensively with particular attention given to massing, layout and design that respect the character of the UCA and provide links towards the UCA and the Naxxar Centre. The linear axial view towards Palazzo Parisio and Naxxar Centre is to be retained in this re-development project.

- 12.1.10 Access to the Trade Fair site is currently poor. To overcome this problem it is proposed that a three-arm roundabout be constructed in Triq San Pawl to increase junction capacity, and that a new link road be constructed between this new junction and the Trade Fair site to remove traffic from other residential streets. The existing scheme alignments would be modified to facilitate the proper design of both the roundabout and link road. New side roads would be provided to connect the link road with existing and schemed streets.

### **NA03**

### **Reserved Site for Education**

**MEPA will safeguard the designated site adjacent to the existing schools at Il-Ghatba for the provision of educational facilities. This site is indicated in the Naxxar Area Policy Map. MEPA will refuse any development proposal that either conflicts with or prejudices the provision of such educational facilities.**

- 12.1.11 The designated undeveloped site will allow for the provision of further educational facilities in line with the Education Authorities' requirements.

### **NA04**

### **Protection of the Natural Coastal Area**

**MEPA will not permit urban development along the open coastal area of Naxxar, between Ghallis and Bahar ic-Caghaq, as designated in the Naxxar Coastal Policy Map. All efforts will be made in order to retain or reinstate these designated areas in their natural state.**

MEPA will however consider minor development including essential coastal pedestrian/cycle access improvements along a planned Coastal Walkway Route in line with Policy CG26 subject to and following the submission of a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the area in accordance with Policy CG27. **MEPA will also consider the feasibility of allocating a managed caravan site within the search area as indicatively shown on Map NAM 3.**

**Developments allowed by this Policy will be subject to the following criteria that:**

- a. They will not cause a negative impact on any protected environmentally sensitive areas identified on the Naxxar Coastal and Rural Environmental Constraints Map and in accordance with the provisions of Policy CG22;**
- b. Any developments, including any minor works, will be assessed against all environmental considerations identified in the relevant EMP for the area;**
- c. They will not visually dominate or disrupt the natural coastal setting and landscape because of layout, design, style and materials used, and they will not introduce any extraneous forms, materials, textures or colours. In this respect, the introduction of cemented passages/areas on the natural rocky coast is not permitted;**
- d. They will not adversely affect sites of coastal archaeological/historical importance;**

- e. **All parking areas will have suitable safe access/egress facilities so as to eliminate inappropriate parking and safety hazards on the arterial coast road; and,**
- f. **They are subject to the approval of other related agencies wherever necessary.**

12.1.12 The coastal area of Naxxar is of high ecological, scientific and scenic importance and is identified in the Coastal Strategy Paper as a predominantly undeveloped and natural rural coastline. It is also an interesting landscape that offers a typical visual perspective of the Mediterranean coast. The main aim of the policy is to conserve and safeguard the natural and cultural value of the protected coastal areas. The tourism sector is increasingly acknowledging the benefits of retaining and protecting the natural coastline, which portrays the beauty of the Mediterranean coastal setting and landscape in its original state as a tourist product in its own right. In this case, this part of the coast is of strategic importance since it is the only remaining open coastal gap between the heavily urbanised areas of Pembroke and Qawra. An open coastline also allows for informal leisure activities, including enjoyment of the maritime landscape. Therefore only minimal development related to public access improvements, a possible caravan site and landscaping works will be allowed in this coastal stretch, excluding any form of urban development.

12.1.13 The policy follows the Coastal Strategy Paper of the Structure Plan review which seeks to address national issues relating to the coast, including the need to control the degradation of terrestrial and marine habitats from intrusive developments, and the competition for space by other uses which have established themselves over time, including the existing caravan site at Bahar ic-Caghaq that lacks essential management. In line with these strategic objectives, the local plan aims to concentrate additional recreational developments in the already popular recreational area of Bahar ic-Caghaq whilst conserving the pristine coastal area as an important strategic buffer zone between existing developed areas. In addition Ghallis Rocks are protected as sites of specific scientific importance (Structure Plan Policy RCO34). The scheduled area of ecological importance at l-Ghadira s-Safra constitutes a Natura 2000 Special Area of Conservation Site of International Importance. Another scheduled area includes the Saline Marshland limits of Qalet Marku .

## **NA05**

### **Improvements at Bahar ic-Caghaq**

**MEPA will support further recreational development proposals and access improvements in the Bahar ic-Caghaq area in accordance with the designations indicated in the Bahar ic-Caghaq Area Policy Map and the provisions listed below:**

- i. **In the area designated for recreational activities, only outdoor recreational activities will be permitted in accordance with Class 9 (d) (Use Classes Order, 1994). Attention will be given to the proper layout, design and appearance of these uses with particular emphasis on the heavy landscaping of the entire designated area. A landscaped buffer zone is to be provided between this designated area and the residential area to the south. Provision is also to be made for an emergency access passing along this landscaped buffer zone and linking the existing caravan site to the coast road to the satisfaction of MEPA and the ADT;**
- ii. **In the designated boat storage area, only uses covered by Class 19 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) will be permitted. This development is permitted provided that buildings are not to exceed the height of 1 floor. MEPA supports the general upgrading of this area through adequate landscaping improvements;**

- iii. **Along part of the foreshore reserved for marine sports coastal access improvements, only development proposals limited to such uses including jetties, slipways, quays, hard standings and moorings will be permitted. All maritime related access developments are subject to prior approval by the Malta Maritime Authority, and may require an Environmental Impact Assessment depending on the nature and scale of the development proposed;**
- iv. **At Triq ir-Ridott a new parking area with peripheral soft landscaping and with suitable and safe pedestrian links to the coast is to be provided as indicated on the Bahar ic-Caghaq Area Policy Map; and,**
- v. **The provision of general landscaping, including public paved walkways and hard and soft landscaping, will be supported by MEPA. Landscaping works are not permitted within the protected coastal area in accordance with Policy NA04.**

12.1.14 The coastal area at Bahar ic-Caghaq is a popular recreational area with the local public and tourists. The Local Plan strategy is to focus further maritime related recreational development at the coastal area of Bahar ic-Caghaq as shown on the Bahar ic-Caghaq Area Policy Map. The rest of the coast is to be conserved in its natural state in line with Policy NA04. However, the recreational area of Bahar ic-Caghaq is to be further developed and upgraded with suitable and compatible developments.

12.1.15 In order to satisfactorily protect the residential amenity of the Bahar ic-Caghaq settlement, recreational and maritime sports areas as well as other permitted facilities are zoned separately from the residential areas.

12.1.16 The early development into residences of the existing derelict building at Triq ir-Ridott is encouraged by MEPA in line with the above mentioned objective to protect and keep separate the residential component of Bahar ic-Caghaq from other activities.

12.1.17 The existing caravan site at Bahar ic-Caghaq lacks site management and basic elements of caravan site planning covering layout, safety, health requirements and landscaping needs. Proper management initiatives are therefore required. So as to effectively screen caravans from public view, landscaping and design criteria are a fundamental requirement for any upgrading of this area. Access to the designated site should be well planned so as to allow for the safe movement of cars, pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

## **NA06**

## **Coast Road Improvement**

**It is proposed that the improvement of the Coast Road, between Bahar ic-Caghaq and Salina Bay, as indicated on the Naxxar Coast Transport Policy Map, should take the form of an on-line improvement rather than the construction of a new road as indicated in the current Structure Plan.**

**The improvements should improve safety conditions along the entire length of arterial road in line with the EU TEN-T upgrading plans thereby increasing its effectiveness for motorists travelling between the northwest of the island and the North Harbours/Grand Harbour areas.**

**To complement this improvement, traffic management measures should be introduced along the section of the Coast Road, between Bahar ic-Caghaq and High Ridge. These shall include:**

- i. Introducing a climbing lane on the uphill section of this road;**
- ii. Constructing pavements at least on one side of the road;**
- iii. Minimising or preventing where possible the turning movements in and out of side roads;**
- iv. Constructing bus lay-bys on the downhill section of road; and,**
- v. Improving the Triq ir-Ramla (Maghtab), Bahar ic-Caghaq, Triq San Gwann I-Evangelista and Triq il-Madliena junctions.**

12.1.18 Improvements to the Coast Road are needed, but it is more realistic and feasible for these to take the form of improvements to the existing alignment, rather than the construction of a new 2 km long road. Bend improvements, and the provision of safer overtaking opportunities will improve road safety and reduce journey times.

12.1.19 A new road would be costly and environmentally intrusive, and fraught with technical difficulties as it would have to cross the landraise site. The road improvement should ensure that any car parking provision is physically separated from the main carriageway to improve safety, and prohibited elsewhere. It is recommended that this changed approach is reflected in the Structure Plan Review.

12.1.20 It is also necessary that conditions along the section of the Coast road, southeast of Qalet Marku Bay are improved following the EU TEN-T upgrading plans. The identified measures will, in combination, improve road safety and the free flow of traffic.

12.1.21 The width of the uphill section is such that overtaking will take place despite the existence of double white lines. The lining should be revised to recognize this need by providing an uphill climbing lane. To limit conflicts with traffic turning at side road junctions along the length of road, traffic movements should be simplified and, where possible, restricted.

12.1.22 At Bahar ic-Caghaq the junction should be improved by introducing channelisation and by formalizing the parking layout. At the Triq San Gwann I-Evangelista junction the channelisation should be improved by providing more space for right and 'U' turning traffic. The Triq il-Madliena junction would best be improved in concert with upgrading the access to the White Rocks redevelopment. A roundabout is likely to be the most appropriate design solution.

## **NA07**

## **Birguma by-pass**

**In tandem with the completion of the Birguma by-pass MEPA will support the implementation of the following measures:**

- i. A satisfactory junction is provided at Triq il-Gharghur;**
- ii. Effective measures are introduced to downgrade Triq San Pawl to a local access road. This should include environmental improvements around the San Pawl tat-Targa Chapel and at the local centre. MEPA will encourage the Local Council to widen the pavement along the frontage of the local centre and introduce parking controls for short-stay parking; and,**
- iii. The roundabout at the northern end of the by-pass is improved.**

- 12.1.23 If the full benefits of the Birguma by-pass are to be realized then effective, comprehensive measures need to be introduced simultaneously to physically downgrade Triq San Pawl. In conjunction with the local centre planned at Triq San Pawl, parking and pedestrian improvements are required to allow for a safer pedestrian environment and also for increased control over parking in this commercial area. Some improvements are also required at specific junctions.

## **NA08 Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements**

**MEPA will support the extension of traffic calming and related measures throughout the village core as indicated on the Naxxar Transport Policy Map and the further enhancement of the pedestrian priority zone to place more emphasis on the needs of pedestrians.**

- 12.1.24 Works have been undertaken by the Naxxar Local Council around the parish church to produce a safer and more pleasant environment. This initiative is commended, although if the area is to effectively be a pedestrian priority zone less space should be dedicated to the movement and parking of vehicles. The remainder of the village core would also benefit from the introduction of traffic calming and other measures to enhance safety and amenity.
- 12.1.25 The proposal to provide a bus terminal at Gharghur in line with Policy GR06 would remove the need for buses to layover at the top of Triq il-Labour, thereby providing the opportunity to create another attractive public space in the centre of Naxxar.

## **NA09 Triq il-Mosta Rear Service Road**

**MEPA recommends the construction of a new service road for Triq il-Mosta at the rear of the Triq il-Mosta Area of Containment. MEPA will only grant permission for the development of new buildings within the designated Area of Containment at Triq il-Mosta provided that such development will utilise the planned rear service road for all their transport requirements, including exit and access to establishments. Therefore the planned service road is to be implemented before any new buildings are allowed within the designated Area of Containment. Government will encourage and support owners of existing establishments at Triq il-Mosta to carry out alterations in order to change the establishments' existing exits and accesses from Triq il-Mosta to the planned service road for safety reasons.**

- 12.1.26 The planned rear service road which is to be investigated by the ADT is primarily intended to reduce conflicting traffic movements in Triq il-Mosta and to increase safety along this arterial route. It would be beneficial to reduce the level of frontage activity along this busy arterial road, and the construction of a rear service road would help to achieve this aim. Access to the service road would be gained from Triq il-Labour at the roundabout that will be constructed as part of the Mosta Ring Road. The design of this new junction safeguards this proposal. The precise alignments of this service road are to be determined following a comprehensive transport and planning assessment of the area.



## 13. QORMI AREA POLICIES

### 13.1 Introduction

Area: 5 sq kms  
Population: 18,190 (1998)

- 13.1.1 Qormi is one of Malta's largest settlements. Most of the schemed areas have been built and therefore urban expansion has been very limited in recent years. The population has remained relatively stable between 1985 and 1998. The child population has decreased from 4,884 in 1985 to 4,140 in 1995, whilst the elderly population aged 65 and over in the locality increased from 6.1% to 8.9% over the same period. The economically active population on the other hand decreased slightly from 12,204 in 1985 to 11,929 in 1995.
- 13.1.2 The residential areas of Qormi are bound to the north, east and south by industrial development. The sporadic development that has occurred to the west in the direction of Zebbug is undermining the strategic open gap that exists between these two towns. To the west of Qormi one also finds a significant number of livestock farms in the Tal-Hlas area that need to be controlled and properly managed.
- 13.1.3 The Mriehel By-pass is an important arterial road, but its safety and efficiency is undermined by parking problems, near Triq il-Mithna, and by problems at some junctions along this stretch of road. These issues need to be resolved to ensure the satisfactory functioning of the main road network. In normal circumstances, Qormi suffers little from through traffic, however better traffic management and control could improve the circulation of local traffic around the north and east of the town.
- 13.1.4 The environmental quality of the residential areas of Qormi is not only undermined by the industrial belt surrounding such residential areas, but also by the proliferation of inappropriate uses within these areas. This proliferation, particularly that of warehouses, has occurred due the strong traditional links that Qormi has with the port area. This activity needs to be directed to suitable locations in order to safeguard the residential areas.
- 13.1.5 Qormi contains a number of mixed use areas particularly to the north of Triq il-Belt Valletta. It is extremely difficult to separate the industrial/commercial uses from the existing residences in these areas as this would imply mass relocations which are not feasible. The industrial area of Tal-Handaq is a privately owned industrial area situated to the south of Qormi. It is practically fully developed, but requires upgrading and extension.
- 13.1.6 Qormi experiences flooding problems as a substantial part of the settlement is located within low grounds and is close to the lowest flood plain level at Marsa. In this respect, development within flood risk areas needs to be strictly controlled to ensure safety. Comprehensive flooding defence measures are also required to ameliorate the situation.

## Summary of Issues

- Residential and commercial developments located outside development zone
- Need to define the town centre and showroom areas in order to prevent the proliferation of commercial uses within residential areas
- Need to safeguard sites for community facilities and recreational areas
- Need for new educational and sports facilities
- Industrial and widespread warehousing activities threatening the amenity of adjoining residential areas
- Extensions required at Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate
- Flooding defence measures and controls needed
- Safety and efficiency of the Mriehel By-pass undermined by parking congestion and unsatisfactory junction layouts
- The traffic conditions along Triq il-Mithna need improvement.

## Area Policies

### Q001

### Community Facilities

The site at Pjazza Narbona as indicated in the Qormi Area Policy Map is reserved for the development of community facilities. This development will be subject to the following conditions;-

- i. It shall cause the least possible disruption to existing mature and protected trees on site by ensuring that a minimum amount of land is occupied by the development;
- ii. The height of the building shall not exceed 4 floors; and,
- iii. All nearby dwellings are guaranteed a reasonable standard of privacy by strictly following the provisions of the DC2005.

MEPA will also allow the development of a community centre at Misrah Federico Maempel as indicated in the Qormi Area Policy Map provided that this conforms to the following conditions:

- a. The development is to be planned comprehensively. However the community centre may be constructed in parts or in phases as approved by MEPA;
- b. A minimum amount of land is occupied by the development;
- c. The community centre is to be constructed with its roof level not higher than 8 courses above the lower street level;
- d. A suitably designed and landscaped public open space is to be provided above the mentioned roof level; and,
- e. The project is to cause the least possible disruption to existing mature and protected trees.

The site that is zoned for community facilities at Triq il-Kbira in the Temporary Provisions Scheme (1988) is rezoned to residential use.

- 13.1.7 Community facilities in Qormi are limited or inappropriately located. These include the local council and social services offices that are presently located in old premises with inadequate internal layouts. In order to facilitate the relocation of these community facilities to more appropriate sites and to cater for additional

required facilities, such as a public hall, two sites have been reserved for this purpose. The site at Pjazza Narbona has been chosen due to its suitable location in a community core area that includes the existing church, school and public square. The other site at Pjazza Federico Maempel is also suitably located next to the public open space and school. Both these sites are in public ownership. The community centre at Pjazza Federico Maempel is to be planned comprehensively so that MEPA can ensure that the design of this centre will be compatible with the layout and design of the public garden.

- 13.1.8 The site at Triq il-Kbira that was zoned in the TPS for community facilities is being rezoned for residential use since it is not as suitably located for community facility provision as the two sites being designated by this policy.

## QO02

## L-Ghadira Site

The land at L-Ghadira as indicated on the Qormi Area Policy Map is designated for the following land uses:

- i. **65% of the total designated site area is being reserved for the construction of a Secondary Government School together with ancillary landscaped open spaces that may serve for the future expansion of the school. The school building is to be separated from the arterial road to the north by means of a continuous 6m belt of dense tree planting;**
- ii. **A public car park occupying a land area equivalent to 10% of the total designated site area and planned in accordance with the provisions of Policy QO09; and,**
- iii. **A sports and recreational area which is to include a 5-a-side football pitch, a children's play area, a multi-purpose sports area and on-site parking provision. This sports and recreational area is to occupy a land area equivalent to 25% of the total designated site area, and is to be used jointly by the school and the public. This area is to be planned as an open buffer between the proposed Government School and the existing small cemetery to the south of the site.**

The land in question shall be planned comprehensively, but the project may be developed in phases. In addition, safe pedestrian crossings across Triq il-Belt Valletta are to be secured before the school and recreational/sports areas become operative so as to link this project to the rest of Qormi.

Access to the proposed public car park will be permitted off the west facing slip road provided it complies with the necessary design standards. The scheme alignment will therefore need to be amended accordingly. Vehicular accesses to the school and the sports areas shall be from Triq il-Belt Valletta.

- 13.1.9 The area of land being designated measures approximately 26,000 sqm and is being used for agricultural purposes. It was zoned in the TPS (1988) for housing and industry. In accordance with the provisions of Structure Plan Policy SET7, the Local Plan considers that the area is required for the development of a secondary school. This has been confirmed through consultation with the Foundation for Tomorrow Schools who stated that the Qormi Boy's Secondary school is presently housed in a cramped primary school site within the village centre. The site being proposed at L-Ghadira would serve to accommodate required school relocations.

- 13.1.10 The L-Ghadira site is large enough to be able to accommodate other necessary uses including sports/recreation provision and a public car park. The car park is planned

to accommodate about 70 parking spaces intended to exclusively serve the commercial activities located along Triq is-Sebh where parking restrictions will be required in future in line with the provisions of Policy QO09.

- 13.1.11 Existing sports provision in Qormi is presently situated at l-Ghadira and at l-Istabal. Population densities in Qormi are high and sports provision within this locality is limited. Therefore this site presents an opportunity to provide further sports facilities adjacent to the existing football pitch to serve both the school and the general public. The Qormi Local Council has also expressed the need for securing additional sports facilities on this site.
- 13.1.12 In order to ensure that all the required uses will be accommodated within this designated site, and that the design and layout of development and landscaped areas will be of a high standard, a comprehensive development application for the entire area will be required.

### **QO03**

### **Rezoning to Industry**

**The area fronting Triq il-Belt Valletta as indicated in the Qormi Area Policy Map is rezoned from terrace houses to the development of industry (Classes 11 and 12 of the Use Classes Order, 1994). Development permission for new residential development in this area will not be granted.**

**The area of land fronting Triq il-Belt Valletta that is zoned as a green area in the TPS (1988) is being designated for the development of industry (Classes 11 and 12 of the Use Classes Order, 1994).**

- 13.1.13 Although the existing block was zoned for terrace houses in the TPS (1988), it has already been predominantly developed into workshops and industries. As such this area is not suitable for the development of new residential units and is being rezoned accordingly.
- 13.1.14 The green area that was zoned in the TPS (1988) cannot function as a public recreational area due to its location surrounded by an industrial zone and since it is evidently cut off from the residential areas of Qormi by major traffic routes. Consequently this site is being rezoned to allow for an efficient use of this space.

### **QO04**

### **Mixed Use Areas**

**The areas as indicated in the Qormi Area Policy Map are designated as Mixed Use Areas. Within these Mixed Use Areas, MEPA will consider the development of the following land uses:**

- i. Class 1, Use Classes Order (1994) dwelling units on upper floors only.**
- ii. Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) small shops provided that:**
  - The small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 sqm, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 sqm;**
  - They comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and**
  - They comply with any relevant section of the DC2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).**

- iii. **Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) showrooms provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).**
- iv. **Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) supermarkets provided that they comply with the provisions of Policy CG17.**
- v. **Class 5, Use Classes Order (1994) offices.**
- vi. **Class 11, Use Classes Order (1994) business and light industry provided that:**
  - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products);**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);**
  - **The activity employs less than 5 people; and**
  - **The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.**

**Examples of acceptable uses considered by MEPA include tailor, cobbler, lace making and computer and electronic repair. Moreover, examples of unacceptable uses include carpentry, panel beating, mechanic, mechanical plant servicing, spray painting and bakery.**

**Proposals to convert from existing Class 12, Use Classes Order (1994) general industry to Class 11, Use Classes Order (1994) business and light industry within designated Mixed Use Areas shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.**

- 13.1.15 The areas being designated by this policy are presently built-up areas that contain a number of different and often incompatible land uses including garages, warehouses, shops, maisonettes and small industries. These mixed use areas are generally located between existing residential and industrial zones.
- 13.1.16 It is noted that strict zoning measures together with the separation or relocation of conflicting uses would be difficult, costly and unfeasible to accomplish in practice. In the circumstances, the strategy being adopted by the plan consists in the creation of a mixed use commercial/residential neighbour compatible buffer area between existing industrial areas and designated residential areas. The policy also ensures that within the designated Mixed Use Areas themselves, the only land uses being permitted by MEPA are those that are compatible with each other.

## **QO05**

## **I-Istabal Green Area**

**The area indicated on the Qormi Area Policy Map at L-Istabal is being designated by MEPA for the development of a soft landscaped area with underlying warehouses. This development will be considered by MEPA provided that it conforms to all the following conditions:**

- i. **the development is to be planned and developed comprehensively;**
- ii. **not more than one level of warehousing is to be constructed below the landscaped area;**

- iii. **the roof level of the warehousing shall be low enough so as not to intrude onto the views of the Marsa Sports Grounds as seen from Triq Hal-Qormi;**
- iv. **a landscaped area is to be provided above the roof level of the warehouses mentioned in (iii) above;**
- v. **the old building having a frontage on Triq Hal Qormi as indicated in the Qormi Policy Map and situated within the designated area is to be retained;**
- vi. **the development is to conform with the provisions of Policy CG30 regarding water runoff management and flooding; and,**
- vii. **MEPA is satisfied that vehicular access to the new warehousing is safe and adequate. No direct access to the warehouses will be permitted from Triq Hal-Qormi.**

13.1.17 The land in question is surrounded by industrial development on three sides with the fourth (southern) side being presently used as a parking area. The adjacent areas are zoned as areas of mixed use in the Grand Harbour Local Plan. The designated site is appropriate for the development of one level of warehousing since it is located within Scheme next to Qormi, and since it offers a suitable alternative location for the relocation of existing warehousing premises from within the residential areas of Qormi. The designated site is also adjacent to the main road network. Taking all these factors into consideration, this site is considered suitable for the development of a limited number of warehouses subject to a number of conditions.

13.1.18 Following concerns by the Qormi Local Council for the retention of open views to the Marsa Sports Grounds, the warehousing development is subject to the implementation of a large landscaped area at roof level that is to be provided by the developer as a planning obligation. The development of this land is also subject to the retention and integration of the old building on site and the full protection of the open views from Triq Hal-Qormi.

## **QO06**

## **Warehousing within Residential Areas**

**In accordance with Policy CG07, the development of new warehouse premises, whether by means of new construction or through change of use, will not be allowed within Residential Areas as designated in the Qormi Area Policy Map even where there are a number of existing warehouse units in the vicinity of the site in question. In addition, MEPA will not permit any extensions to existing warehouse premises located within designated Residential Areas.**

**MEPA will only allow the development of warehouses within areas designated for warehousing use by other policies in this Local Plan, and will support the relocation of existing warehouses from the Qormi Residential Areas to sites designated for warehouse development. To this end, and subject to other relevant policies, MEPA will generally favour the conversion and change of use of existing warehouse premises currently located within existing Qormi Residential Areas to dwellings, private car garages, offices or shops, and MEPA will be flexible in its consideration of floorspace restrictions as stipulated in Policy CG07.**

13.1.19 The development of warehouses within residential areas causes a number of negative impacts including:

- i. Traffic generation in residential streets and the obstruction to the free flow of traffic especially during loading/unloading of goods;

- ii. An increasing parking problem as on-street parking is drastically reduced due to parked large heavy vehicles and warehouse frontages;
  - iii. Conflict between handling of goods in and out of the warehouses and pedestrian flow, especially if fork lifters are used. The reversing of large vehicles from the street into warehouses also proves hazardous for pedestrian safety;
  - iv. The possibility of fire hazards to overlying residences when combustible goods are stored within the warehouses; and,
  - v. Unattractive and bland street frontages due to the presence of garage doors that are high and wide and the long stay parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas.
- 13.1.20 Although in a number of residential areas in Qormi there has been a high demand for warehousing in the past, additional warehouses in residential areas would exacerbate unacceptable impacts as described above. The juxtaposition of residential and warehousing uses in Qormi has arisen because of the absence of planned provision of warehousing sites and the relative ease of securing conversions of urban garages into makeshift warehouses.
- 13.1.21 In order to secure an improvement to the amenity and environmental quality of residential areas which have been compromised through the development of a number of warehouses, the Authority will permit the conversion of such warehouses to more compatible land uses, and will discourage the further intensification and extension of existing warehouses.

## **QO07**

## **Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate**

**In addition to satisfying the requirements of Policies CG05 and CG16, MEPA will only consider applications for development on sites located within the designated Areas of Containment at Tal-Handaq, as indicated in Map QOM1, after planning obligations have been entered into by the respective developers that secure the general improvement of the relevant sites.**

**MEPA will also encourage the upgrading of the Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate including the Areas of Containment as designated in Map QOM1 by the introduction of estate management programmes directed towards rationalizing and controlling access and parking, provision of utility infrastructure and road upgrading, peripheral landscaping schemes, provision of a waste collection system and the provision of ancillary facilities and amenities.**

**No development will be permitted by MEPA within the minimum 40 metre no development safety zone identified on the Area Policy Map until suitable and sufficient measures are undertaken by Enemalta Corporation to remove any health hazard resulting from the 33kv electricity supply line. In this regard MEPA instigates the Enemalta Corporation to re-route this electricity supply line so as to permanently remove the existing health hazard.**

- 13.1.22 The Areas of Containment identified at Tal-Handaq measure approximately 137,000 sqm. These sites consist of an area of disused quarries, predominantly dry and abandoned agricultural land parcels bordering the existing industrial area and a small number of derelict buildings. In addition, the sites being proposed do not include any sites of environmental importance as designated in the Qormi Environmental Constraints Map.

13.1.23 These Areas of Containment are designated for the following reasons:

- i. Tal-Handaq is strategically located next to the Grand Harbour Port area and is therefore ideal for warehousing in particular;
- ii. The Estate is centrally located and is well served by the existing arterial road network;
- iii. The schemed industrial area is completely developed and any further development has to take place outside its present boundaries;
- iv. The Areas of Containment are located away from Qormi itself, and therefore any proposed new industrial development will not exacerbate pollution problems within the residential areas of Qormi; and,
- v. These extensions will provide alternative sites that will enable the relocation of inappropriately located warehousing/industrial activities.

13.1.24 It is evident that the environmental quality of Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate needs to be continuously improved. Improvements enhance the operational efficiency of the Estate and its appearance. Specific initiatives are required through private owner cooperation to coordinate and manage improvement programmes with the relevant agencies. The upgrading of development sites will also be sought through the imposition of planning obligations. In particular, planting schemes along the boundary of the industrial estate could provide a major contribution to improving the visual environment, and in minimizing the impact of the Estate on its surrounding areas.

## **QO08**

## **Qormi Industrial Areas**

**The SME Sites at L-Istabal, Tal-Bajjad and Tad-Dwieli as indicated in the Qormi Area Policy Map are designated by MEPA for the following land uses:**

- 1. Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Business and Light Industry;**
- 2. Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994), General Industry; and**
- 3. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Storage and Distribution.**

**Development in these industrial areas is subject to the following conditions:**

- i. Developments shall not exceed a building height of three floors plus semi-basement;**
- ii. Compliance with any required mitigation measures that may be identified during the assessment process of particular planning applications; and,**
- iii. It is shown to the satisfaction of MEPA that no deleterious impacts will result from any development.**

13.1.25 The TPS (1988) zoning of the established industrial areas at L-Istabal, Tal-Bajjad and Tad-Dwieli is being retained however following specific criteria in order to ensure that no negative impacts arise from such uses.

## **QO09**

## **Improvements to Mriehel By-pass**

**In order to improve safety and the free flow of traffic along this arterial road, MEPA will support and encourage the ADT and other bodies to undertake works and measures to control parking, remove safety hazards and regulate movements along the Mriehel By-pass. These will include:**



- i. **The prohibition of the right turn from the Mriehel Industrial Estate access road and/or the installation of traffic signals. Any improvement of this junction should also seek to provide safe pedestrian crossing facilities for those living north of the by-pass preferably by means of the provision of an underpass;**
- ii. **Prohibiting all parking on the arterial road between Triq il-Mithna and Triq il-Kanun, with the exception of legitimate loading and unloading;**
- iii. **The construction of a public car park in the southern section of the road referred to in (ii) above in line with Policy QO02 and shown on the Qormi Transport Policy Map. A safe pedestrian crossing leading from this car park to the other side of Triq is-Sebh is to be fully implemented as soon as possible; and,**
- iv. **Restricting or preventing movements at side road junctions.**

**No development will be approved that prejudices the achievement of the above improvements. Furthermore, major developments that would materially affect conditions at the above locations will be expected to contribute towards the cost of the above measures.**

**MEPA will modify the scheme alignment to the east of Triq il-Mithna grade separated junction to ensure that no new junctions are formed on the arterial road. In addition, MEPA will take concerted action to close illegal openings and access points that have been created along the arterial road.**

- 13.1.26 Major traffic flows should be concentrated on the main road network. To ensure that this takes place safely and efficiently it will increasingly be necessary to manage and control the use of such roads.
- 13.1.27 The right turn out of the Mriehel Industrial Estate side road onto the high speed section of the dual carriageway of the by-pass is very hazardous, and as the industrial estate develops and main road flows increase this will increasingly become even more hazardous. This situation could be improved by physically preventing the right turn or by installing traffic signals. Some residents from the isolated estate to the north of the by-pass tend to cross the road at this point to gain access to Qormi. It would be very beneficial if their needs could be addressed as part of any improvement.
- 13.1.28 Parking, sometime double parking, along the arterial road causes road safety problems and interrupts the free flow of traffic close to the Triq Regionali interchange. The premises fronting this road need on-street loading and unloading, but general parking must be banned in order to significantly improve conditions. In order to provide alternative parking, it is proposed that a public car park will be provided on the south side of the road. This would provide about 70 spaces as part of the development of land at L-Ghadira in line with Policy QO02. As part of the car park project, safe crossing points at Triq is-Sebh are to be provided.
- 13.1.29 It is normal practice to limit, as far as possible, the number of side roads and access points along arterial roads. Unfortunately such design principles have not always been followed. However, if the main road network is to safely cater for increased flows in the future, the number of points of access should be reduced or simplified. Locations where this appears feasible and desirable are indicated on the Qormi Transport Policy Map. For the same reason it is appropriate to modify the existing scheme alignment to ensure that no new junctions are created on the arterial road.

- 13.1.30 Along the length of the by-pass road safety is undermined by the illegal formation of access points. MEPA, with the assistance of other bodies, will take the necessary action to ensure that these are closed.

## **QO10**

### **Improvements along Triq il-Mithna**

**To reflect the upgrading of Triq il-Mithna to a distributor road and to improve parking along this road, MEPA will encourage a scheme that:**

- i. Provides adequate pavements;**
- ii. Defines the main road;**
- iii. Improves the junction with Triq il-Kanun;**
- iv. Regulates the layout of parking; and,**
- v. Introduces landscaping and other environmental improvements.**

- 13.1.31 As part of Policy CG38 it is proposed that Triq il-Mithna be upgraded to a distributor road to reflect its appropriate importance in the road hierarchy (refer to Road Hierarchy Map). Currently the conditions along this road are poor in many respects and improvements are required. These will not only reinforce the revised status of this road, but also produce a much needed enhancement of this prominent area.

## **QO11**

### **Pedestrian Crossing Facilities at Triq l-Imdina**

**MEPA will support the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities to assist safe movement between Ta' Ghar Ram and the main area of Qormi. Similarly, MEPA will support the provision of a pedestrian crossing in the section of Triq l-Imdina, east of the Triq Hal-Luqa roundabout, to assist residents who live in this area to walk to the centre of Qormi.**

- 13.1.32 The Ta' Ghar Ram area is separated from the main part of Qormi by Triq l-Imdina, a fairly busy dual carriageway road. It would be very beneficial if facilities were installed to aid pedestrians. In the circumstances, the installation of pelican crossing is likely to be the most effective way of achieving this goal. Residents living on the south side of Triq l-Imdina have to cross both Triq l-Imdina and Triq Manwel Dimech to get to and from the centre of Qormi. Staggered pelican crossings have recently been installed in the latter, but no facilities exist in Triq l-Imdina to assist safe movement. An additional crossing appears to be justified.

## **QO12**

### **Traffic Calming Measures**

**MEPA will support the introduction of a comprehensive package of traffic calming and related measures to improve safety and circulation around the northern and western boundaries of the main settlement as indicated on the Qormi Transport Policy Map.**

- 13.1.33 The purpose of these measures is to improve safety along these local access roads and to improve local circulation and access whilst discouraging possible through traffic. The design of the measures should be consistent with a 35 kph design speed and should include, where possible, environmental improvements and the rationalization of parking.

## QO13

## Environmental and Safety Improvements

Within the Qormi Urban Conservation Area, and particularly the main shopping streets, MEPA will support and encourage measures that:

- i. Improve road safety;
- ii. Create safer and more comfortable conditions for pedestrians;
- iii. Encourage greater levels of walking and cycling; and,
- iv. Enhance environmental conditions.

**Triq ir-Rebha and Triq San Bastjan are important local access roads with a fairly high concentration of retail premises. Any improvement schemes along this route should be designed to strike an appropriate balance between the needs of pedestrians, parking and traffic movement. Safety improvements are also required for the Triq Hal Qormi/Triq il-Belt Valletta junction.**

- 13.1.34 Qormi has an extensive UCA and it would be beneficial to protect and enhance it so as to improve safety and general conditions for those living in the area. This will help ensure that movements take place around the periphery of Qormi and hopefully encourage residents to undertake local journeys on foot, or even cycle.
- 13.1.35 Triq ir-Rebha and Triq San Bastjan are close to the southern boundary of the UCA and a noticeable number of shops are located along them. Consequently, they are the focus for much activity. It is of paramount importance that the needs of pedestrians are properly considered. Good crossing points are needed, and where possible pavement widths should be increased. Good traffic circulation and adequate parking are clearly needed, but they should not be achieved at the expense of providing better conditions for pedestrians.
- 13.1.36 The Triq Hal Qormi/Triq il-Belt Valletta junction currently has poor visibility and the left turn into the side road is very tight. These deficiencies need to be rectified and pavements also need to be provided along Triq Hal Qormi.

## QO14

## Controlled Parking Zones

**MEPA will encourage and support the ADT and the Local Councils to introduce CPZs in and around the Qormi secondary town centre and the industrial/commercial area centred on Triq il-Mithna/Triq il-Kanun. The prime purpose of the town centre CPZ should be to ensure that parking is controlled and managed to support retail and commercial activity, whilst the main aim of the latter zone is to secure the rationalization of parking and safeguarding the convenience of nearby residents.**

- 13.1.37 Where parking demand is high, control and management is necessary to make best use of available spaces. In the town centre this means introducing short-stay restrictions to provide convenient facilities for shoppers and other short-term visitors, whilst safeguarding the needs of residents.
- 13.1.38 In the Triq il-Mithna/Triq il-Kanun area parking is haphazard and also creates problems for residents. It therefore needs to be regulated better, with protection introduced for residents.

- 13.1.39 The precise boundaries of the zones will be determined after detailed studies, however the areas in question are broadly indicated on the Qormi Transport Policy Map. Ideally, the latter zone should include some streets within Santa Venera.

## 14. STA VENERA AREA POLICIES

### 14.1 Introduction

Area: 0.8 sq. kms.

Population: 7,144 (1998)

- 14.1.1 Sta. Venera is predominantly a residential area with few remaining public open spaces apart from the Romeo Romano and Casa Leone Gardens. The locality has coalesced completely with B'Kara, Hamrun, Msida and Qormi and is undergoing a process of commercialization in certain areas including along Triq il-Kbira and Triq Salvu Psaila. In addition, industrial development has taken place in the southern part of the locality facing Qormi. These create problems of mixed use and bad neighbour impacts on adjacent housing.
- 14.1.2 Land is limited in Sta. Venera and few opportunity sites are available to provide solutions to the problems being faced. There are a considerable number of sub-standard dwellings in the eastern part of the settlement together with a general lack of parking facilities in these areas. Sta. Venera also lacks a defined local centre and needs a central location for the provision of community and retail facilities.
- 14.1.3 The above mentioned problems have led to a fall in population between 1985 and 1998 of about 683 persons from 7,827 to 7,144 respectively. The child population has decreased from 1,927 in 1985 to 1,261 in 1995, whereas the economically active population has decreased from 5,195 in 1985 to 4,145 in 1995. There is also an increasing elderly population from 8.4% to 11.7% of the population aged over 65 between 1985 and 1995. These signals show that Sta. Venera is quickly following the urban characteristics experienced already by Hamrun.
- 14.1.4 The locality includes a number of important large institutions namely St. Philips Hospital, the Apap Institute, Vincenzo Bugeja Conservatory, Casa Leone, and Umberto Calosso school. The latter is a site with the potential for redevelopment.
- 14.1.5 Sta. Venera also acts as an important through route for the arterial road traffic with the Sta. Venera tunnels taking the bulk of north/south traffic. Heavy traffic also passes west/east through Triq Salvu Psaila and Triq il-Kbira from Birkirkara and Hamrun. The Sta. Venera tunnels have improved the strategic road network, however venue related noise and air pollution are evident in this area and the overall quality of life here is under pressure. The main transport problems in Sta Venera are associated with the movement of traffic along Triq San Guzepp and Triq Braille. Both need to be tackled by traffic calming and other measures intended to discourage through traffic and give higher priority to vulnerable road users.

#### Summary of Issues

- Need to define a central area within Sta. Venera for community and retail facilities
- Residential areas threatened by the proliferation of commercial and industrial uses
- Problems of out-migration, substandard dwellings, poor environmental quality and lack of parking facilities in older residential areas
- Need to protect existing public recreational spaces

- Need to improve the environment and safety conditions along Triq San Guzepp and Triq Braille.

## Area Policies

### SV01

### Mixed Use Areas

The areas as indicated in the Sta. Venera Area Policy Map are designated as Mixed Use Areas. Within these Mixed Use Areas, MEPA will consider the development of the following land uses:

- i. Class 1, Use Classes Order (1994) dwelling units on upper floors only.
- ii. Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) small shops provided that:
  - The small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 sqm, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 sqm;
  - They comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and
  - They comply with any relevant section of the DC2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).
- iii. Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) showrooms provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).
- iv. Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) supermarkets provided that they comply with the provisions of Policy CG17.
- v. Class 5, Use Classes Order (1994) offices.
- vi. Class 11, Use Classes Order (1994) business and light industry provided that:
  - The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products);
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);
  - The activity employs less than 5 people; and
  - The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.

Examples of acceptable uses considered by MEPA include tailor, cobbler, lace making and computer and electronic repair. Moreover, examples of unacceptable uses include carpentry, panel beating, mechanic, mechanical plant servicing, spray painting and bakery.

Proposals to convert from existing Class 12, Use Classes Order (1994) general industry to Class 11, Use Classes Order (1994) business and light industry within designated Mixed Use Areas shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.

- 14.1.6 The areas being designated by this policy are presently built-up areas that contain a number of different and often incompatible land uses including garages,

warehouses, shops, maisonettes and small industries. These mixed use areas are generally located between existing residential and industrial zones.

- 14.1.7 It is noted that strict zoning measures together with the separation or relocation of conflicting uses would be difficult, costly and unfeasible to accomplish in practice. In the circumstances, the strategy being adopted by the plan consists in the creation of a mixed use commercial/residential neighbour compatible buffer area between existing industrial areas and designated residential areas. The policy also ensures that within the designated Mixed Use Areas themselves, the only land uses being permitted by MEPA are those that are compatible with each other.

## **SV02 Umberto Calosso Development Brief Site**

**MEPA will formulate a Development Brief for the Umberto Calosso site including the school site as designated on Map SVM1 should the existing school use terminate. The Brief is to provide detailed guidance on land uses, density, layouts, building heights, conservation of important buildings, open space provision and other urban design measures.**

**The Brief will be used to guide and promote development in accordance with policies contained in the Local Plan and the Structure Plan. In the meantime, any proposals requiring development permission that would, in the opinion of MEPA, prejudice the above principles of this Development Brief will be refused.**

- 14.1.8 The Umberto Calosso Site consists of an early nineteenth century listed historical building and an internal marshalling area with industrial sheds. The main building including the five-floor tower, the existing right wing and the main arched gateway are listed as a Grade 1 building. The internal area of this old industrial brewery is a tradable area and therefore may be redeveloped. However the listed building is to be conserved and the adaptive re-use of the building is to include the reconstruction of the left wing that was destroyed by fire, similar to the existing right wing.
- 14.1.9 Should the existing school at Umberto Calosso be relocated to a more suitable site, the vacated building would present an important opportunity for redevelopment on a site that is ideally located for Community Facilities and other required uses along a main transport and strategic bus route and within walking distance from the main residential areas of Sta. Venera.

## **SV03 Protection of Public Recreational Spaces**

**MEPA will support efforts by the Sta. Venera Local Council to upgrade the Romeo Romano Gardens and its adjacent open spaces. Pedestrian access to these Gardens directly from Triq il-Kbira needs to be improved and promoted.**

**The public open space at Il-Palazz l-Ahmar that was zoned in the Temporary Provisions Schemes (1988) as a white area is designated and protected as a landscaped public recreational area.**

**A landscaped public open space is also designated in the area abutting Triq il-Kanun and Triq il-Haddied as indicated in the Sta. Venera Area Policy Map. MEPA will support the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities to assist safe movement between the residential areas of Sta. Venera and this recreational space.**

- 14.1.10 The protection of existing open, landscaped, public recreational spaces is supported by MEPA as recreational space provision is low within this urban area since it is practically totally developed. Public access to the Romeo Romano Gardens is currently possible only from Triq Braille and from a small entrance behind Casa Leone from Triq il-Kbira. MEPA will therefore promote an improved access to these gardens.

## **SV04**

## **Il-Palazz L-Ahmar Site**

**MEPA rezones the area of land at Il-Palazz L-Ahmar, previously zoned as part white area and part industrial area in the Temporary Provision Scheme (1988), to a Residential Institution (Class 2 (a) of the Use Classes Order 1994). The development or extension of this Residential Institution shall be subject to the prior approval of the Department of Health, the Department for the Welfare of the Elderly and the National Commission for Disabled Persons.**

**Part of the site is to be planned as an adequately sized landscaped open space with tree planting to act as a buffer between the Residential Institution and the industrial areas to the south.**

- 14.1.11 This site is located between the Il-Palazz L-Ahmar Housing Estate and the industrial areas of Mriehel and Qormi at Triq l-Industrija. This rezoning will create a buffer landscaped space and will allow for an extension to the existing old people's home. The landscaped garden is also required as an important facility for the old peoples' home.

## **SV05**

## **Santa Venera Industrial Area**

**The SME Site at Triq l-Industrija as indicated in the Santa Venera Area Policy Map is designated by MEPA for the following land uses:**

- 1. Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Business and Light Industry;**
- 2. Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994), General Industry; and**
- 3. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994), Storage and Distribution.**

**Development in this industrial area is subject to the following conditions:**

- i. Developments shall not exceed a building height of three floors plus semi-basement;**
- ii. Compliance with any required mitigation measures that may be identified during the assessment process of particular planning applications; and,**
- iii. It is shown to the satisfaction of MEPA that no deleterious impacts will result from any development.**

- 14.1.12 The TPS (1988) zoning of the established industrial areas is being retained however following specific criteria in order to ensure that no negative impacts arise from such uses.



## **SV06**

## **Ta' Santa Venera Site**

**The area of land at Ta' Santa Venera that is currently zoned for social and community facilities in the Temporary Provision Scheme (1988) is being rezoned for residential use. This area is indicated on the Sta. Venera Area Policy Map.**

- 14.1.13 As indicated in the supporting text of Policy SV02, the Umberto Calosso school building is ideally located for the development of community facilities and is the preferred location for the Local Council Offices. This is in contrast to the site at Ta' Santa Venera that was safeguarded for this purpose in the TPS (1988). In this respect the land at Ta' Santa Venera is being rezoned to residential use and is not being safeguarded any further for community facilities.

## **SV07**

## **Sta. Venera Tunnels**

**MEPA will only permit development or redevelopment in the area over the existing Sta. Venera Tunnels as indicated in the Sta. Venera Area Policy Map provided that MEPA and the ADT are fully satisfied that any such development/redevelopment will not negatively affect in any way the structural stability or function of the existing tunnels. Furthermore, no basements or semi-basements are to be excavated within the area indicated on the Sta. Venera Area Policy Map.**

**MEPA will encourage investigations into the possible and effective use of the volumetric space between the northern tunnel exit/entrance and the overlying upper street level as indicated on the Sta. Venera Area Policy Map. The resulting roofed area will increase the connectivity between the separated parts of Sta. Venera settlement, and it would create an additional open, landscaped space.**

- 14.1.14 Prior to the construction of the Sta. Venera Tunnels in the mid-1990s, this area was originally designated as a 'No Permits Area' in the TPS (1988). As the whole area covered by this zoning is already developed, and a number of developments or redevelopments may be required in the future in this location, MEPA and the ADT will ensure that such developments/redevelopments will not cause a detrimental effect to the structure and function of the Tunnels. Following consultation with ADT, no basements are to be excavated above the tunnels as indicated in the Area Policy Map so as to safeguard the structural stability of the tunnels.
- 14.1.15 The existing gap created through the extensive rock cutting that was required to construct the Sta. Venera Tunnels has separated Sta. Venera into two urban areas. An increase in connectivity in the settlement is possible by structurally bridging the gap over the space of the tunnel exit corridor. MEPA will therefore favourably consider investigations by relevant agencies to examine the feasibility of providing increased connections and additional open, landscaped space through such a project.

## **SV08**

## **Improvements along Triq San Guzepp**

**MEPA will permit measures to improve the environment and safety along the Triq San Guzepp corridor as indicated on the Sta. Venera Transport Area Policy Map. These should aim to:**

- i. **Improve conditions for pedestrians;**
- ii. **Aid the movement of buses;**
- iii. **Discourage through traffic; and,**
- iv. **Enable the embellishment of important public spaces.**

14.1.16 There is a tendency for some motorists to use this local road as a through route rather than using the parallel arterial road. It is appropriate to discourage such movements and aid the passage of buses particularly as this route forms part of a strategic bus corridor. A considerable number of shops and community facilities are situated along this road, and therefore pedestrian safety is paramount and every opportunity should be taken to improve the environment in this densely populated area.

## **SV09**

### **Semi-Pedestrianisation of Braille Street**

**MEPA will promote the semi-pedestrianisation of Triq Braille in the area indicated on the Sta. Venera Transport Policy Map so as to improve safety and amenity in the vicinity of the popular Romeo Romano Garden.**

**Additionally, MEPA will support the introduction of traffic calming and embellishment measures along Triq Misrah il-Barrieri to upgrade conditions along the same local access route.**

14.1.17 Triq Braille is a local access road that carries significant eastbound flows towards Msida/Pieta. Some traffic calming features have been installed in the vicinity of Romeo Romano Gardens, but conditions for the many pedestrians who use the garden and church are still poor. More extensive works that reduce vehicular speed, whilst still permitting local access, would be very beneficial.

14.1.18 The improvement works could also be extended to cover Pjazza Santa Venera, thereby upgrading the environment in the vicinity of the church and college. To achieve worthwhile improvements in this area would require some reduction in the amount of parking provided.

14.1.19 Triq Misrah il-Barrieri is the extension of Triq Braille and is the focus of local activity (e.g. shops). Therefore wider benefits could be achieved if this was also traffic calmed.

## **SV10**

### **Triq Salvu Psaila Roundabout Improvement**

**MEPA will safeguard land for the possible future improvement of this junction, as indicated on the Sta. Venera Transport Policy Map, by not permitting development on adjacent areas of land that would prejudice measures to increase capacity.**

14.1.20 This junction is of strategic importance and already suffers traffic congestion on some arms at peak periods. It is therefore appropriate to safeguard possible improvements that would increase junction capacity. There are a number of physical constraints, particularly the positioning of the over-bridges and the sub-standard design of the slip roads. However, the opportunity exists to increase the entry capacity of three arms and to construct a dedicated left turn slip road from the Triq Regionali North exit slip road to Triq il-Kappillan Mifsud.

- 14.1.21 To achieve improvements in the north-east quadrant of the junction will require some modification of the existing scheme alignment. This land is within Msida, and is therefore covered by the North Harbours Local Plan. It should be noted that the anticipated improvements would improve conditions at the roundabout, but they would not overcome the congestion on the south facing entry slip road caused by the very poor merging layout.

## **SV11**

## **Upgrading of Triq il-Kanun**

**In order to compliment the proposed upgrading of Triq il-Mithna in line with Policy QO10, MEPA will encourage a similar upgrading of the road along the section of Triq il-Kanun located between Triq il-Mithna and the Fleur De Lys roundabout.**

- 14.1.22 Further to the upgrading of Triq il-Mithna to a distributor road, the upgrading of Triq il-Kanun is also required. Currently the conditions along this road are poor in so many respects and improvements are required. These will not only reinforce the revised status of this road, but also produce a much needed enhancement of this prominent area.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Archaeological Features**



<b>ATTARD</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
41	Silo Pit	Bronze Age	Class E - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
42	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
54	Water Cistern	Roman	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
59	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
62	Silo Pit	Bronze Age	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
64	Catacomb	Early Christian	Class E - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
67	Tomb	Punico	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
<b>BALZAN</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
52	Archaeological Deposit	Pleistocene	Class E
<b>BIRKIRKARA</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
17	Tomb	Roman	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
36	Tomb	Punico	Class E
39	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
44	Tomb	Punico	Class E
51	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
55	Archaeological Deposit	Pleistocene	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
58	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
61	Tomb	Roman	Class E - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
63	Tomb	Punico	Class E
69	Archaeological Deposit	Neolithic	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
<b>GHARGHUR</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
45	Building Remains	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
<b>HAMRUN</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
15	Tomb	Roman	Class E
22	Tomb	Roman	Class E
38	Tomb	Punico	Class E
47	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
49	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
56	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone

		<b>IKLIN</b>	
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
16	Megalithic Remains	Prehistoric	Class B - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
33	Silo Pit	Punico	Class E
65	Building Remains	Roman	Class E
66	Building Remains	Pleistocene	Class A - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
		<b>MOSTA</b>	
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
2	Catacomb	Bronze Age	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
3	Silo Pit	Unknown	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
4	Cart-Ruts	Bronze Age	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
5	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B
6	Tomb	Unknown	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
7	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
8	Ancient Quarry	Unknown	Class B
9	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B
10	Tomb	Punico	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
11	Tomb	Punico	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
12	Cart-Ruts	Punico	Class E
13	Catacomb	Early Christian	Class A - Approx 140m Buffer Zone
14	Building Remains	Punico	Class B
18	Dolmen	Bronze Age	Class A - Approx 100m Buffer Zone
19	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B
24	Megalithic Remains	Unknown	Class E
34	Tomb	Punico	Class B - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
35	Catacomb	Early Christian	Class B
37	Tomb	Prehistoric	Class E
48	Tomb	Punico	Class E
50	Tomb	Punico	Class E
70	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B
75	Tomb	Punico	Class B - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
76	Building Remains	Prehistoric	Class E
77	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B
78	Ancient Quarry	Unknown	Class B
79	Tomb	Unknown	Class B
		<b>NAXXAR</b>	
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
1	Cart-Ruts	Unknown	Class B - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
20	Ancient Quarry	Unknown	Class B
21	Ancient Quarry	Unknown	Class B



25	Dolmen	Bronze Age	Class A
26	Megalithic Remains	Temple Period	Class B - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
27	Dolmen	Unknown	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
43	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
57	Tomb	Phoenician	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
71	Tomb	Unknown	Class B
72	Tomb	Unknown	Class B
73	Tomb	Unknown	Class B
		<b>QORMI</b>	
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
23	Water Cistern	Roman	Class B - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
29	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
31	Tomb	Phoenician	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
32	Tomb	Punico	Class E
40	Tomb	Late Roman	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
46	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 20m Buffer Zone
53	Tomb	Punico	Class E
68	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
74	Tomb	Punico	Class E
		<b>SANTA VENERA</b>	
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
28	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
30	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone
60	Tomb	Punico	Class E - Approx 50m Buffer Zone



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Implementation**



## **Introduction**

1. A development plan is a means to an end. This implies that the policies within the Plan need to be implemented within the Local Plan timeframe for such policies to succeed in achieving their objective. The purpose of the Local Plan is to provide suitable policies covering development that is required and to influence decisions about development proposals received during the Plan period. Both cases can contribute towards the achievement of the strategic, long term objectives outlined in the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, once implemented. Delivery of the Local Plan's objectives requires a dynamic approach to planning through energetic use of planning mechanisms including development encouragement, control, guidance and co-ordination. These approaches require the Local Plan to be regarded not simply as a set of rules to be applied restrictively, but as a co-ordinating and enabling tool to consider development issues in a wider context.
2. The format of policies indicates the means for their implementation. Policies in this Plan offer incentive, control and guidance. Control ensures that developers do not follow developments that create environmental damage or developments that are unsustainable. Guidance helps people to plan the use of their land confidently and directs MEPA to interpret the public interest consistently.

## **Means of Implementation**

### **Stimulating Development**

3. The Local Plan has identified a number of development opportunities and made land allocations for a range of uses (housing, industry, retail, education, community facilities, transport) that should stimulate growth, create employment and increase investment (Refer to Appendix B.1). The Local Plan also allocates land for recreation and environmental enhancement (sports, public open spaces) that should improve the quality of life in the area. The former set of policies are primarily aimed at the private sector or specific public agencies, while the latter will most likely require the intervention of the public sector or public/private sector partnerships. Although the Local Plan can facilitate these developments, the decision to carry them forward and implement them rests with the funding agency or the private sector. The implementation of a number of these policies requires further planning input from MEPA itself through the formulation of Development Briefs/Action Plans or Environmental Management Plans (Refer to Appendix B.2).

### **Controlling Development**

4. The most effective tool at MEPA's disposal to directly influence development is its powers of development control as established through the Development Planning Act (2001). The Authority also gives regard to any other material consideration and representations. This is the plan-led system of development control. Therefore, where an approved development plan contains relevant policies, an application for development shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Local Plan provides the framework for rational and consistent development control in decision making appertaining to the central localities of Malta. Development control decisions must focus on the wider objectives set out by the Plan, rather than focus solely on site specific considerations. The success of the Plan will also be measured by what has been conserved, protected or improved.

5. The implementation of the bulk of the policies in the Plan, whether they are aimed at stimulating, controlling or guiding development, is largely incremental and the utility of the Plan is heavily dependant on the ability of the Authority to use, and follow, its policies in the day to day development control decisions. Policies need to be systematically implemented through appropriate development control processes, including the enforcement and appeals mechanisms. A monitoring system needs to be put into place to note the on-going effectiveness of the policies in influencing development decisions and identify deficiencies in policy and major deviations from the Plan objectives over time.

### **Co-ordinating Development**

6. Another key function of the Local Plan is to bring a number of public agencies to work together towards common objectives. MEPA's wider remit under the Development Planning Act (2001) and the Environment Protection Act (2001) has often placed the Authority on the forefront of various projects. Still MEPA cannot implement these projects without the input and support of other agencies and key players. In some cases it could assist these agencies to implement proposals for which they are the motivators, by contributing technical expertise and resources. Appendix B.3 lists the policies in the Local Plan that specifically require input from other organisations for their implementation and identifies the core public agencies involved. A co-ordinated approach is still necessary for the implementation of other policies in the Plan even when the policy itself does not specifically mention a particular agency.

### **Resources**

7. For any plan to be implemented effectively, adequate resources need to be allocated. A key element in the implementation of the Plan is thus financial resources. MEPA has very limited financial resources to carry out, or contribute directly towards, development projects. However, the proactive approach to planning promoted by this Plan encourages it to tap into other sources of funding to enable projects to materialise during the Local Plan timeframe.
8. Important sources of funding are the EU programmes, such as LIFE, INTERREG III, Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds that can be accessed to part finance a number of development proposals (Refer to Appendix B.2) identified in this Plan. The Environment and Rural Development are given considerable importance by the European Commission (EC) in the allocation of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds and opportunities for funding of the environmental enhancement schemes identified in this Plan (Refer to Appendix B.4) should also be investigated as an integral part of spatial policy. Obtaining EU funds can be quite complex, demanding technical expertise and co-ordination, not only locally but internationally, as most projects are planned trans-nationally between EU member states, especially INTERREG III programmes.
9. MEPA has also used its powers of development control to collect funds aimed at specific projects. The Commuted Parking Payment Scheme (CPPS) is an example of funding obtained by MEPA for specific projects and this fund should be accessed to implement the proposals in this Plan for public car parks in strategic locations and also park and ride schemes. Future reviews of the Structure Plan could also permit the utilization of this money to finance or part/finance parking and traffic management schemes including resident parking zones, short stay parking schemes etc. in conjunction with other stakeholders.

10. MEPA demands public benefits from Development Projects through this Plan. These involve Planning Obligations that refer to specific works, or extraneous benefits or payments being imposed by the Authority on a developer in connection with a grant of development permission. This procedure has been legally established in the Development Planning Act (2001) and is legally enforced by Legal Notice L.N. 28 of 2002. These planning obligations are covered by legal contracts between the developers and MEPA. The planning gain concept is used in the Local Plan, and referred to in specific policies (Refer to Appendix B.5) as a means of implementing public facilities, children play areas, infrastructure works, road improvements, tree planting and environmental embellishment schemes. These policies clearly indicate when MEPA should impose a planning obligation and for which purpose. The methods to ensure implementation, and in some cases the amount of funds dedicated for such extraneous benefits, remain the subject of negotiations on the individual merits of each case between MEPA and developers. It must be borne in mind however that the opportunity for planning obligations will only arise when developers seek to carry out development projects of substantial scale.

## B.1 Policies Stimulating Development

Locality	Pol. Ref.	Description
Local Plan area	CG06	Building Height Limitations (Specific Area Relaxation e.g. Primary Town Centres, Schools etc.)
	CG12	Town Centres
	CG13	Local Centres
	CG14	Commercial Areas
	CG15	Industrial Areas
	CG16	Comprehensive Development Areas
	CG33	Quarry Reuse
	CG35	Park and Ride
	Attard	AT01
AT02		Attard Industrial Estate
AT04		Urban Spaces at Ta' Fgieni
AT04		Rezoning at Triq il-Qarsajja
AT05		Rezoning at Triq it-Tahhan
AT05		Santa Katarina Site
Balzan	BZ01	Site for Civic Centre
	BZ02	Rezoning of Land at Triq Birbal
Birkirkara	BK02	Sites for Old People's Homes
	BK04	Mriehel Industrial Area
	BK06	Commuted Parking Payment Scheme (CPPS)
Hamrun	HA02	Multi-Gas Site Redevelopment
	HA03	Tar-Rabbat Educational Area
	HA04	Blata l-Bajda Commercial Area
Iklin	IK01	Local Centre
	IK03	Site Reserved for Education
	CG05	Area of Containment at Tal-Balal
Lija	LJ01	University Residence Site Development Brief
	LJ03	Tal-Mirakli Residential Development
Mosta	MO02	Blata L-Gholja Local Centre
	CG05	Is-Saghjtar Development Brief
	CG05	Tal-Qares Area of Containment
	MO06	Reserved Sites for Education
	MO08	District Level Recreational Area
Naxxar	MO11	CPPS Car Parks
	CG05	Triq il-Mosta Area of Containment
	NA01	Rezoning of White Areas
	NA02	Malta Trade Fair Site
Qormi	NA03	Reserved Site for Education
	QO01	Community Facilities
	QO02	L-Ghadira Site
	QO04	Mixed Use Areas
Sta. Venera	QO07	Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate
	SV01	Mixed Use Areas
	SV02	Santa Venera Community Centre
	SV07	Sta. Venera Tunnels



## B.2 Policies requiring further planning input

MEPA Action	Description	Policy Ref.
Further Planning Input	Classification of Streets in Urban Conservation Areas	CG09
	Comprehensive Development Areas	CG16
	Protection of SACs, SSIs, AEIs and AHLs	CG22
	Protection of Sites of Archaeological Importance	CG23
	Protection of Areas of Agricultural Value (AAVs)	CG24
	Environment Management Plans	CG27
	Catchment Management Plans (CMPs)	CG30
Development Briefs	Ta' Sghajtar Development Brief	MO03
	University Residence Site Development Brief	LJ01
Environmental Management Plans	Victoria Lines Heritage Trails	CG26, MO07
	District Level Recreational Area	MO08
	Promotion of Heritage Trails and Walkway Routes (Coastal Route)	CG26, NA04

## B.3 Policies requiring input from other agencies

Department of Agriculture/Related Private/Public Agencies		
Agriculture	Protection of Areas of Agricultural Value (AAVs)	CG24
	Environmental Management Plans	CG27
	Quarry Reuse	CG33
Landscape and Protection	Soft Landscaping Schemes	CG11
	Public Recreation and Sports Areas	CG18
	Protection of Strategic Open Gaps	CG25
	Environmental Management Plans	CG27
	Afforestation Project at Triq il-Mosta	LJ07
Recreation	Villa Francia	LJ02
	District Level Recreational Area	MO08
Department of Estates Management/Joint Office		
Government Land	Promotion of Major Heritage Sites and Trails	CG26
	Environmental Management Plans	CG27
	Catchment Management Plans (CMPs)	CG30
	Victoria Lines Heritage Trail and Valley Walkway Route	MO07
	Protection of Old Railway Track	AT03
Use of Government Land	Site for Civic Centre	BZ01
	B'Kara Civic Centre	BK01
	Reuse of Tal-Ferha Estate	GR03
	Villa Francia	LJ02

	Tar-Rabbat Educational Area Triq Id-Duka Ta' Edinburgh Car Park and Public Landscaped Space Site Reserved for Education Reserved Sites for Education at Ta' Zokrija and Tal-Hanqa Reserved Site for Education Improvements at Bahar ic-Caghaq L-Ghadira Site, Qormi Community Facilities	HA03 HA06  IK03 MO06  NA03 NA05 QO02 SV02
New Roads and Realignments	Attard By-pass B'Kara By-pass Road Widening Major Improvement to Lija Roundabout and Naxxar Road Public Access Improvement Triq Santa Katarina/il-Mithna Alignment Changes Coast Road Improvement Birguma By-pass Triq il-Mosta Rear Service Road Improved Access to Trade Fair Ground Sta Venera Tunnels	AT10 BK11 GR04  LJ06 LJ07 LJ08  NA06 NA07 NA09 NA02  SV07
<b>Department of Health/Primary Health Care</b>		
Health Institutions	Mount Carmel Hospital	AT07
Public Health Management	Caravan Site	NA05
<b>Police</b>		
Flooding	Catchment Management Plans (CMPs)	CG30
Transport	Strategic Bus Corridors Controlled Car Parking Traffic Calming and Road Safety  Road Closures, Tal-Qares Area Junction Improvement and Accident Remedial Measures	CG34 CG36 CG37, AT11, BZ04, BK09, HA09, IK04, LJ05, MO10, NA08, QO12, SV08, SV09  MO13 CG39
<b>Awtorita dwar it-Trasport</b>		
General Transport	Strategic Bus Corridors Park and Ride Controlled Car Parking Traffic Calming and Road Safety Road Hierarchy Junction Improvements and Accident Remedial Measures Cycle Routes	CG34 CG35 CG36 CG37 CG38 CG39  CG40
Area Transport Attard	Attard By-pass Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements Lorry Movements, Triq il-Gradilja	AT10  AT11 AT12

Area Transport Balzan	Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements	BZ04
Area Transport Birkirkara	Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) Triq in-Naxxar to Triq il-Wied Traffic Management Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements Triq L-Imdina Corridor Birkirkara By-pass	BK07 BK08  BK09  BK10 BK11
Area Transport Gharghur	Road Widening Enhancement of Village Centre and Semi-Pedestrianisation Bus Terminus	GR04 GR05  GR06
Area Transport Hamrun	Triq Id-Duka Ta' Edinburgh Car Park and Public Landscaped Space Improvements along St. Joseph's High Road Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and CPPS Car Parks	HA06  HA07  HA08
Area Transport Iklin	Traffic Calming Measures	IK04
Area Transport Lija	Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements Major Improvement to Lija Roundabout and Naxxar Road Pedestrian Access Improvement and Afforestation Project, Triq il-Mosta Triq Santa Katarina and Triq il-Mithna Alignment Changes	LJ05  LJ06 LJ07  LJ08
Area Transport Mosta	Mosta Centre: Traffic Management Alternatives Vjal L-Indipendenza: Safety and Environmental Enhancement Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) Road Closures: Tal-Qares Area Valletta Road/Pantar Road Junction Improvement	MO09  MO10  MO12 MO13 MO14
Area Transport Naxxar	Triq il-Mosta Rear Service Road Improved Access to Trade Fair Coast Road Improvement Birguma By-pass Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements	NA09 NA02 NA06 NA07  NA08
Area Transport Qormi	Improvements to Mriehel By-pass Improvements along Triq il-Mithna Pedestrian Crossing Facilities: Triq l-Imdina Traffic Calming: Triq il-Wied and Triq il-Helsien Environmental and Safety Improvements to Roads	QO09 QO10 QO11  QO12  QO13
Area Transport Sta. Venera	Sta. Venera Tunnels Improvements along Triq	SV07

	San Guzepp Semi-Pedestrianisation: Braille Street	SV08 SV09
	Roundabout Improvement Triq Salvu Psaila/Triq Regjonali	SV10
	Upgrading of Triq il-Kanun	SV11
<b>EneMalta Corporation</b>		
General Development	New Land Recommended to be included within Scheme	CG02
	Category 1 Rural Settlements Areas of Containment	CG03 CG05
	Category 2 Rural Settlements Industrial Areas	CG04 CG15
	Comprehensive Development Areas	CG16
Major Local Development Sites	Attard Industrial Estate	AT02
	Site for Civic Centre	BZ01
	Rezoning of White Area at Triq Birbal	BZ02
	Mriehel Industrial Area	BK04
	Tar-Rabbat Educational Area	HA03
	Site Reserved for Education	IK03
	Area of Containment at Tal-Balal University Residence Site	CG05
	Development Brief	LJ01
	Tal-Mirakli Residential Development	LJ03
	Is-Saghjtar Development Brief	MO03
	Tal-Qares Area of Containment	CG05
	Tad-Daqqaq Area of Containment	CG05
	Reserved Site for Education at Ta' Zokrija	MO06
	District Level Recreational Area Area of Containment along	MO08
	Triq il-Mosta	NA09
	Rezoning of White Areas	NA01
	Malta Trade Fair Site	NA02
	Reserved Site for Education	NA03
	L-Ghadira Site	QO02
	Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate	QO07
<b>Foundation for Tomorrow Schools/Education Authorities</b>		
	Tar-Rabbat Educational Area	HA03
	Site Reserved for Education	IK03
	Reserved Site for Education at Ta' Zokrija and Il-Hanqa	MO06
	Reserved Site for Education	NA03
	L-Ghadira Site, Qormi	QO02
	Community Facilities	SV02
<b>Heritage Malta/Superintendence of Cultural Heritage/Victoria Lines Action Committee</b>		
	Promotion of Major Heritage Trails Areas and Sites of Archaeological Value (AAVs)	CG26 CG23

	Environmental Management Plans Protection of Old Railway Track Victoria Lines Heritage Trail	CG27 AT03 MO07
<b>Malta Maritime Authority</b>		
	Protection of Natural Coastal Area Improvements at Bahar ic-Caghaq	NA04 NA05
<b>Housing Authority</b>		
	Residential Areas	CG07
<b>Malta Resources Authority</b>		
	Ground and Surface Water Resources Protection Catchment Management Plans (CMPS) and Flood Risk Areas Quarry Buffer Areas Quarry Reuse Water Run-Off at Triq Dun Gwann Theuma, Misrah Kola Afforestation Project at Triq il-Mosta	CG29 CG30 CG32 CG33 AT09 LJ07
<b>Malta Tourism Authority</b>		
Tourism and Recreation	Promotion of Major Heritage Trails Areas and Sites of Archaeological Value (AAVs) Environmental Management Plans Protection of Old Railway Track Tourist Establishment Site Villa Francia Gardens Victoria Lines Heritage Trail and Valley Walkway Route District Level Recreational Area Protection of the Natural Coastal Area Improvements at Bahar ic-Caghaq	CG26 CG23 CG27 AT03 AT08 LJ03 MO07 MO08 NA04 NA05
<b>National Parks Development and Management Committee</b>		
	District Level Recreational Area	MO08
<b>Water Services Corporation</b>		
General Development	New Land Recommended to be included within Scheme Category 1 Rural Settlements Areas of Containment Category 2 Rural Settlements Industrial Areas Comprehensive Development Areas Ground and Surface Water Resources Protection Catchment Management Plans (CMPS) and Flood Risk Areas Quarry Reuse	CG02 CG03 CG05 CG04 CG15 CG16 CG29 CG30 CG33
Major Local Development Sites	Attard Industrial Estate Site for Civic Centre Rezoning of White Area at Triq Birbal Mriehel Industrial Area Tar-Rabbat Educational Area	AT02 BZ01 BZ02 BK04 HA03

	Site Reserved for Education Area of Containment at Tal-Balal University Residence Site Development Brief Tal-Mirakli Residential Development Afforestation Project at Triq il-Mosta Is-Saghjar Development Brief Tal-Qares Area of Containment Tad-Daqqaq Area of Containment Tas-Sriedek Area of Containment Reserved Site for Education at Ta' Zokrija District Level Recreational Area Area of Containment at Triq il-Mosta Rezoning of White Areas Malta Trade Fair Site Reserved Site for Education L-Ghadira Site Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate	IK03 CG05  LJ01 LJ03 LJ07 MO03 CG05 CG05 CG05 MO06  NA08 NA09 NA01 NA02 NA03 QO02 QO07
<b>Waste Serve Ltd</b>		
	Mriehel Industrial Estate Civic Amenity Site	BK04
<b>Various Local Councils</b>		
Attard LC	All Attard Area Policies	AT01-AT12
Balzan LC	All Balzan Area Policies	BZ01-BZ04
Birkirkara LC	All Birkirkara Area Policies	BK01-BK11
Gharghur LC	All Gharghur Area Policies	GR01-GR06
Hamrun LC	All Hamrun Area Policies	HA01-HA09
Iklin LC	All Iklin Area Policies	IK01-IK04
Lija LC	All Lija Area Policies	LJ01-LJ08
Mosta LC	All Mosta Area Policies	MO01-MO14
Naxxar LC	All Naxxar Area Policies	NA01-NA08
Qormi LC	All Qormi Area Policies	QO01-QO14
Sta. Venera LC	All Sta. Venera Area Policies	SV01-SV11
<b>Malta Industrial Parks/Malta Enterprise</b>		
	Industrial Areas Comprehensive Development Areas Attard Industrial Estate Mriehel Industrial Estate	CG15 CG16  AT02 BK04
<b>Works Division/Drainage Section</b>		
General Development	New Land Recommended to be included within Scheme Category 1 Rural Settlements Areas of Containment Category 2 Rural Settlements Industrial Areas Comprehensive Development Areas Ground and Surface Water Resources Protection Catchment Management Plans (CMPS) and Flood Risk Areas	CG02  CG03 CG05 CG04 CG15 CG16  CG29 CG30

	Quarry Reuse	CG33
Major Local Development Sites	Attard Industrial Estate Mriehel Industrial Area Tar-Rabbat Educational Area Site Reserved for Education Area of Containment at Tal-Balal University Residence Site Development Brief Tal-Mirakli Residential Development Afforestation Project at Triq il-Mosta Is-Saghjtar Development Brief Tal-Qares Area of Containment Reserved Site for Education at Ta' Zokrija District Level Recreational Area Triq Il-Mosta Area of Containment Rezoning of White Areas Malta Trade Fair Site Reserved Site for Education L-Ghadira Site Tal-Handaq Industrial Estate	AT02 BK04 HA03 IK03 CG05  LJ01 LJ03 LJ07 MO03 CG05 MO06  MO08 NA09 NA01 NA02 NA03 QO02 QO07
<b>Welfare of the Elderly</b>		
	Local Centres/Community Facilities  Old People's Homes	AT01, BZ01, BK01, GR02, IK01, MO02, MO03, QO01, SV02, AT06, BK02, SV06
<b>AFM</b>		
	Promotion of Major Heritage Trails Victoria Lines Heritage Trail and Valley Walkway Route District Level Recreational Area	CG26 MO07  MO08
<b>Archdiocese of Malta</b>		
	Santa Katarina White Area Rezoning of White Area at Triq Birbal Community Facilities Local Centre Community Facilities at Santa Margherita	AT05 BZ02  GR02 IK01 MO05

## B.4 Policies eligible for EU Funding

Policy	EU Programme	Programme's Objective
General – Networking and sharing of ideas on local planning - Most areas relevant with various economic, environmental and social projects possible.	Interreg III General	To strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by promoting crossboundary, transnational and interregional co-operation.
Landscape Conservation Management Measures CG22, CG27, NA04. Environmental Management Plans CG27 Management Plan for Heritage Trails and District Level Recreational Area CG26, MO07, MO08. Catchment Management Plans CG30.	Interreg III Specific Projects	To strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by promoting crossboundary, transnational and interregional co-operations
Enhancement of the external environment of town and local centres. CG12, CG13.	ERDF European Regional Development Fund (Structural Funds)	To strengthen the economic and social cohesion between the Member States and to reduce regional imbalances
Improvements to existing agricultural land and buildings CG24. Schemes to assist farmers to implement the planning of trees and landscape rehabilitation CG25, CG27, CG28.	EAGGF European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (Structural Funds)	To support the CAP and improve the agricultural sector and rural development
Upgrading the Strategic Road Network CG34, CG37, CG38 Junction Improvements CG39	Cohesion Funds (Structural Funds)	To support large projects in the transport and environment areas
Implementation of Landscape Conservation Management Measures CG22, CG23, CG25, CG27. Implementation of Environmental Management Plans CG27 Management of Valleys CG22, CG29. Implementation of Environmental Education Centre Improvement of Strategic Open Gaps and Valleys CG22, CG25, CG29.	LIFE Nature and LIFE Environment	To preserve nature by helping to implement the Directives relating to Birds and Habitats and to contribute to the development of innovative techniques and methods by co-financing demonstration projects aimed at : (1) the integration of environmental considerations into land use development and planning, including in urban and coastal areas; (2) the promotion of the sustainable management of groundwater and surface water; (3) the minimisation of environmental impact of economic activities; (4) the prevention, recycling and sound management of waste streams; (5) the reduction of the environmental impact of products.



### C.5 Policies requiring Planning Obligation

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Policy Ref.</b>	<b>Description of Planning Gain</b>
Major Projects and Development Brief Areas	CG16, CG20, LJ01, LJ03, MO03, NA01, NA02, NA06, QO02.	Major Projects and Development Brief Areas are required to provide a Planning Obligation for the benefit of the Community as per Policy.
CPPS Car Parks and Park and Ride Area	CG35, CG36, BK06, BK07, HA06, HA08, MO11, MO12.	Controlled Car Parking, Car Parks and Semi-Pedestrianisation, Resident Parking Zones (RPZs).



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Malta Trade Fair Site Planning Criteria**



## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report contains the planning and design criteria for the future redevelopment of the Malta Trade Fair Grounds, the confines of which are indicated in the Naxxar Area Policy Map.
- 1.2 The need for these criteria emerged from the submission by the developer of an Outline Planning Application PA: 73/04 for the redevelopment of the Malta Trade Fair into a residential, commercial and mixed development. However, Policy NA11 of the Public Consultation Draft CMLP (2002) did not address the option of the possible relocation of the Trade Fair to a different location. In this respect, the following additional planning criteria have become necessary.
- 1.3 The report follows the objective whereby, in the event that the Trade Fair is relocated to a different site, any redevelopment of the site at il-Gwejdja is to achieve a very high quality residential neighbourhood, with its distinctive character and identity, and which supports the formation of a new community.
- 1.4 From a more detailed analysis of the site characteristics and the relevant current planning framework, the following planning and design criteria are to be followed in any planning application relating to new residential development within the site outlined in purple in the Naxxar Area Policy Map.

## **2 Comprehensive Planning**

- 2.1 MEPA will favorably consider the redevelopment of the site into a residential neighbourhood through the submission and approval of a comprehensive development application for the entire site. MEPA will only consider phased development on this site provided that the urban design concepts followed in this report are all achieved. The evaluation criteria, especially the criterion on Utilities and Infrastructure Services, are to be fully complied with in the comprehensive plan.

## **3 Layout**

- 3.1 The general layout of the site is to follow a concept of increased openness, high permeability and convenient public pedestrian access throughout the site. To this affect, development is to have a maximum site coverage of 50%, where the area of land over which the site coverage is to be calculated is as indicated in the Naxxar Area Policy Map. The remaining 50% of the site coverage shall consist of all the open landscaped spaces located within the site consisting of the historical axial route running through the site, all pedestrian access routes within the site and all the landscaped spaces located between the planned buildings.
- 3.2 The proposed layout is to emphasize the creation of a network of public pedestrian routes. To the contrary, there is to be the least possible number of vehicular accesses/routes traversing the site. Therefore the layout on site should particularly provide for travel by foot, cycle and access for all, with minimal intrusion of vehicular routes on grade since this would ensure an attractive, safe and quiet residential environment with a distinctive sense of place. For the same reason, car parking facilities within the site are generally to be located totally underground with

convenient and regular links to the residential units above. Vehicular routes traversing the historical axial route will be prohibited.

- 3.3 Only pedestrian accesses will be allowed from the site to the UCA to the south in order to prevent the creation of new vehicular 'through' routes passing through the village core. Continuity and permeability with the existing street pattern in the UCA will be a general requirement of any development proposal, and in this regard the proposed routes in the project are to satisfactorily connect to the narrow streets in the UCA creating interesting serial vision.
- 3.4 The internal route layout of the project and the layout of the blocks are to be designed so as to capitalize on the identified important local and long distance views. This would allow for the continued appreciation of these views, whilst providing a sense of orientation in this new housing area. Such a route layout would probably necessitate a project layout consisting of small housing blocks particularly in the southern part of the site. These design measures are needed to protect and promote:
  1. the long distance view of Fort Mosta and surrounding panoramic view as seen from the belvedere at the western end of the axial route;
  2. the long distance view of Mdina as seen from the belvedere and street layout;
  3. the local views of the two windmills to the south; and,
  4. the local views of the Naxxar parish church and Palazzo Parisio gardens.
- 3.5 Of particular importance is the retention in any redevelopment proposal of all the historical features. These features include:
  - a. the historic pathway, axial route and belvedere that traverses the site and its bordering trees;
  - b. the retention of all important mature and protected trees as directed by the Resources Management Unit of MEPA;
  - c. the old dwelling (farmhouse) located to the eastern end of the site;
  - d. the old building and its internal reservoir and wells located adjacent to the entrance to Palazzo Parisio gardens.
- 3.6 The historical pathway shall not be traversed by any vehicular routes, and will directly link the gardens of Palazzo Parisio with the Public Open Space marked A on the Naxxar Area Policy Map. The belvedere is to be directly connected to the Public Open Space marked A by means of linked terraces and steps. The historic pathway and belvedere is to be properly restored, maintained and landscaped as detailed below.
- 3.7 It is necessary for the layout to protect and capitalize on the beautiful local views of the parish church, Palazzo Parisio gardens in the foreground, the existing windmill located directly adjacent to the site in question, and the low-key village core area. Furthermore, a local centre forming a publicly accessible plaza and located adjacent to the Public Open Space marked A is to be developed. The plaza is to form the formal entry point for pedestrians to the historic axial route and other related facilities. Therefore part of the local centre will underlie the new 'stepped down' link route to be constructed by the developer connecting the belvedere to the open space A at ground floor level. This new link is also to allow for direct pedestrian access from Triq Santa Marija, through the local centre to Triq Gwiedja.

## **4 Density and Mix of Uses**

4.1 The following mix of uses shall form part of the proposal and shall be provided within the site outlined in purple in the Naxxar Area Policy Map:

- a. Residential Development: The residential development within the site shall abide to the following criteria:
  - the total developable residential floorspace for the entire site shall not exceed 116,250 sqm;
  - a mix of Use Class 1 (dwellings) consisting of an appropriate mix of 1 bedroomed (min. 60 sq. m), 2 bedroomed (min. 100 sq. m) and 3 bedroomed (min. 150 sq. m), high quality, residential units only will be permitted. 1 bedroomed units however are to constitute not more than 20% of the total number of residential units, 2 bedroomed units around 30% and 3 bedroomed units around 50%.
- b. Underground communal car parks to accommodate a minimum of one parking space per dwelling in the project. Provision is also to be made for one small surface car parking area to serve the proposed new local centre accommodating about 25 cars.
- c. The developers are obliged to maintain the belvedere, the historical walkway axial route and the existing football pitch in a very good state of repair.
- d. An indoor sports/recreational facility located adjacent to the existing football pitch and covering a land area of at least 3,000 sqm. This facility, which can be operated on a commercial basis, may include a gymnasium, swimming pool area, multi-purpose sports hall, an indoor restaurant/cafeteria and indoor sports courts.
- e. The local centre, as described in the layout section, is to include land uses as permitted by MEPA in accordance with Policy CG13.

The developers are required to provide all the above listed uses, and will be subject to all the stipulated planning obligations.

## **5 Scale and Appearance**

- 5.1 A contextual and innovative architectural design concept for the project is required. Therefore the design is to ensure that the development will be attractive, that the various parts of the project are visually compatible with each other and with the urban fabric surrounding the site, and that local and strategic views of important and landmark buildings indicated in the Map are safeguarded. The design concept shall maximize the potential of the site and its settings, and the submission should be supported by three-dimensional representations including perspectives, a model, preferably a virtual representation of various “walk throughs” through the project, and a written statement setting out the overall design concept and objectives for the development.
- 5.2 The overall massing of the project shall not create over-sized monolithic or high building blocks, but shall consist of small built volumes with inter-connected well-landscaped terraces and passageways that will, in time, soften the mass of the blocks. The project should therefore aim to break down the building blocks into manageable volumes. This can be achieved through: (a) the pedestrian network planned through

the site allowing for high permeability, (b) the provision of inter-connected open landscaped recreational spaces, and (c) the reduction of the bulk of the built forms by further controlling building heights in the vicinity of the Urban Conservation Area.

- 5.3 The overall height limitation of the buildings within the site is of four floors above the level of any proposed route (vehicular/pedestrian/shared surfaces). If, in order to protect important views and vistas into and out of the Naxxar UCA, the height of the buildings located next to the UCA is reduced, MEPA will consider the development of buildings on five floors in the north-western part of the site only if this is required in order to retain a total developable residential floorspace of 116,250 sqm. A penthouse level shall be permitted above roof level of these buildings provided that this will not impinge on important views and vistas into and out of the Naxxar UCA.
- 5.4 The Buildings Height Limitation for the local centre is of one floor, and the roofs of all local centre facilities are to be appropriately designed as roof gardens in order to enhance the setting and panoramic view from the belvedere. No structures above the mentioned roof levels will be permitted by MEPA.
- 5.5 The southern part of the site that is adjacent to the existing UCA of Naxxar is considered to be a constraint area where the proposed layout, design, scale, appearance and massing of the project are to be sensitive and compatible to the UCA characteristics. To this effect, firstly at least a three meter continuous open buffer mainly consisting of private enclosed gardens is to be designed and implemented along the entire length of the boundary of the site adjoining the UCA boundary of Naxxar. Secondly, the scale and appearance of the built development in the constraint area are to ensure the protection of the urban fabric of the UCA through further control on building heights, architectural design and the appropriate massing of building.
- 5.6 It is of paramount importance that the protection of important views and vistas into and out of the Naxxar UCA are retained and enhanced. This is to be achieved through the appropriate layout and alignment of the pedestrian footpaths, the control on building heights, and the sensitive location, layout and massing of buildings. Of particular importance are views of the two windmills in Triq Santa Lucija, the Palazzo Parisio and its gardens, views of the Parish Church, and the long distance views of Mdina and Fort Mosta.

## **6 Landscaping**

- 6.1 Development on this site will be required to incorporate an adequate landscaped buffer between the proposed redevelopments and the Urban Conservation Area of Naxxar to the south and east of the site, and between the proposed redevelopments and the residential block to the north of the site. The existing trees within the site, including specifically the olive trees along the historic pathway, are to be retained and new tree planting is to be undertaken in order to create a complete and continuous line of trees along the full length of the axial historic pathway. The location and species of new trees are to be to the satisfaction of MEPA and in line with the MEPA Guidelines on 'Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands (2002)'. As a requirement the developer is to retain an undeveloped and landscaped corridor along the indicated axial historic pathway of a minimum width of 16 metres, together with the repair and retention of the historical axial route itself. Landscape schemes for the project are to indicate details of the hard and soft landscaped areas and public play spaces, a planting schedule and a maintenance program.



## **7 Utilities and Services**

- 7.1 Detailed designs of the necessary infrastructure including vehicular routes, emergency vehicular routes, pedestrian/cycle walkways and paths, electricity, water, drainage (sewerage and storm-water including reservoirs), telecommunications and street lighting have to be submitted for the whole site through a single development application, and will be approved following consultation with the relevant utility providers including the ADT. Development on site may be phased. No development permission for each phase of the development will be issued prior to the comprehensive planning, approval and implementation of all the utilities and works required up to formation levels for that phase. Details of a waste management scheme (skip area and common collection point/s) should also be included. The site is to provide an adequately sized water reservoir/s for full site irrigation purposes.
- 7.2 For each phase of the development, no compliance certificate for building development will be issued prior to the completion, to the satisfaction of MEPA, of all the works for the utilities and the public roads (vehicular, pedestrian, shared surfaces) up to formation levels of that phase.

## **8 Transport**

- 8.1 The Trade Fair redevelopment proposal is to incorporate, following the formulation of a satisfactory Traffic Impact Statement (TIS), the re-design of the road network as indicated on the Naxxar Transport Map allowing for a better access to and exit from the site. The redesigned road network is to be provided as a planning obligation by the developer as part of the redevelopment of the Trade Fair Grounds Site. This planning obligation is to be implemented prior to the development becoming operative. A development of this scale will require a comprehensive traffic impact statement (TIS) that will consider the impact of the development and identify all necessary improvement and remedial measures. Prior to the preparation of the TIS it is evident that the following works/measures will be required as a minimum:
- a) Improvement of the St. Paul's Street/M. Scicluna Street Junction in the form of a roundabout.
  - b) Improvement of the San Publju Street/Jean De La Valette Street Junction to upgrade its layout and safety.
  - c) Upgrading and additional traffic calming along the two links between the site and Naxxar Town Centre, namely Pjazza Celsi, and the southern section of M. Scicluna Street, and the eastern section of St. Lucy Street.
- 8.2 As previously indicated, the core of the development should be fully pedestrianised. To complement this, the roads within the development should be designed to the standards and principles set out in the Essex Design Guide. In addition, it is a requirement that a common pedestrian and underground vehicular access right of way be provided in order to secure free access at all times to all parts of the site owned by different parties. The indicated common pedestrian and underground vehicular access is to be planned and implemented on site before any development takes place within the designated area.



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Glossary**



## Glossary

In preparing the Local Plan, an attempt has been made throughout to make it interesting, informative and easy to read. Written justifications and the policies themselves have been simply worded in order that the intentions are as clear, unambiguous and easily understood as possible. It is inevitable, however, that some unfamiliar words or phrases have been used. The following glossary gives a quick reference guide to assist in understanding of the Plan.

**Ancillary Use:** A planning term which describes a use that is subsidiary, but related, to the main use.

**Appeal:** If an application for development permission has been refused, or MEPA has imposed conditions, the applicant may appeal to the Planning Appeals Board.

**Approved Local Plan:** Once the local plan has been through all the preparation stages, it is approved by MEPA, then forwarded to Government for Ministerial endorsement. After this stage, changes can only be made by formal review of the Plan.

**Aquifer:** All underground water bearing strata capable of yielding water on a practical basis, and includes ground water reservoirs, ground water catchment areas, the waters in geological rock formations, including fissures and fractures, and the structures containing deep fossil waters.

**Biodiversity:** The range of plant and animal species present in an area.

**Buffer Areas:** These consist of protection zones where development is not permitted or strictly controlled. These buffer areas ensure appropriate protection to environmentally sensitive areas or create safe distances between residential and other incompatible uses (eg : quarry areas etc) .

**Caravan:** Any structure designed or adapted for temporary human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer), and any motor vehicle so designed.

**Change of Use:** A different or new use of a building or land for which permission may be required from MEPA.

**Close Proximity:** Close proximity is calculated on the basis of a walking distance of 250m.

**Coastal Zone:** The coastal zone extends seaward and landward of the coastline. Its limits are determined by the geographical extent of coastal natural processes and human activities related to the coast.

**Commutated Parking Payment Scheme (CPPS):** CPPS raises funds to subsidise public parking provision by collecting money from developers who, in specific circumstances, are not required to make the usual provision to accommodate their parking requirements. The scheme is currently operational in B’Kara, Hamrun and Mosta. Within these areas, the scheme applies where there is a change of use to a more intensive category in terms of parking requirements. Qualifying projects may be on sites where parking provision is physically very awkward, within Urban Conservation Areas or in potential areas for pedestrianisation. Small shops and bars catering for a local clientele and developments with a parking requirement of 3 spaces or less are generally exempt from the scheme. When MEPA determines that the CPPS is applicable, a fee of Lm900 per missing space is charged. This is intended to be equivalent to the average cost of supplying an off-street parking space.

**Comparison Goods:** Clothing, footwear, furniture, household textiles, electrical goods, hardware, chemists goods, jewellery recreational and other miscellaneous goods.

**Comprehensive Development Area (CDAs):** A site in several ownerships requiring comprehensive development.

**Conservation:** Positive measures for the management of existing resources or assets to ensure their protection and enhancement.

**Convenience Goods:** Food, alcoholic drink, beverages, tobacco, newspapers and magazines and household cleaning materials.

**Degraded Despoilt Land:** Land so damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment.

**Density:** The term usually refers to the number of new dwellings per hectare, but not exclusively.

**Derelict Land:** Land so damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment. It may include worked-out or abandoned mineral excavations and land made derelict from natural causes.

**Development:** The carrying out of building, engineering, mining, or other operations for construction, demolition or alterations in, on, over or under any land or sea, or the making of any material change of use of land or building.

**Development Permission:** New buildings, major alterations and enlargement of existing buildings and many changes of use of buildings and land require development permission. Permission is sought from MEPA. An application for development permission may be approved, or approved subject to certain conditions, or refused.

**Dwellings:** Self contained buildings or parts of buildings which usually accommodate a single household. This may include terraced houses, maisonettes, bungalows, villas, converted farm buildings or flats.

**Enforcement:** The process by which MEPA can take steps to remedy a breach of planning control, usually development which has been carried out without or not in accordance with development permission under planning or sanitary legislation.

**Environment:** Surroundings, both natural and man made.

**Environmental Assessment (EA):** Information about the likely environmental effects of certain major projects which is assessed and taken into account in determining applications. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required if a particular development is likely to have a significant environmental effect by virtue of its nature, size or location.

**Environmentally Sustainable Development:** The Brundtland Commission (1987) defined environmentally sustainable development as “development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their needs and aspirations.”

**Formal Open Space:** An area of land which is laid out for sport and children’s play. This can include playing pitches and playgrounds.

**Garrigue:** Ecological communities characterised and dominated by rock pools and low woody shrubs.

**Gross Lettable Floorspace:** The gross lettable floorspace refers to the whole floor area within the premises and on all its floors. The gross lettable floorspace includes circulation (excluding stairs) and stores and excludes staircases, toilets, internal shafts, yards and other unroofed areas unless they are used as an integral part of the development (eg. open air restaurant)

**Housing Estate:** Dwellings owned by Government, and rented or sold to occupants at subsidised rates.

**Informal Open Space:** An undeveloped area of land which can be used for informal recreational activities.

**Informal Recreation:** Leisure activities which are not undertaken on a formal organised basis and are generally carried out by individuals or small groups on an intermittent basis with a minimal requirement for supporting facilities.

**Infrastructure:** Roads, drainage and other apparatus and structures which provide essential services to development.

**Inner Harbour:** Approximately the 1985 Inner Harbour Census Region comprising the 1985 Census Localities of Cospicua, Floriana, Kalkara, Marsa, Msida, Paola, Santa Lucia, Senglea and Sliema.

**Inner Residential Areas:** Inner Residential Areas refers to the CMLP Local Council Areas of Hamrun, Qormi and Sta. Venera.

**Landscaping:** A general term used for the means by which, where appropriate, development is made to fit visually into its surroundings by control of siting and layout and use of trees, shrubs or grass (soft landscaping) and/or fences, walls or paving (hard landscaping).

**Local Centre:** Local centres are locations that accommodate local retail services in new and expanding housing areas. These areas should provide coherent groupings of appropriate facilities, with shared parking and service delivery provision where possible; pedestrian access routes and planned public transport provision.

**Outer Residential Areas:** Refer to the CMLP Local Council Areas of Mosta, Naxxar, Attard and Gharghur.

**Outline Development Permission:** Planning permission which establishes that the broad principles of development are acceptable although the details are still to be agreed. Outline development permission is valid for three years from the date of the decision unless otherwise stated.

**Pedestrianisation:** Reserving a road solely for use by pedestrians. Some very limited exceptions may be permitted, for example, emergency vehicles and service vehicles to premises without rear access. Normally, the physical character of a pedestrianised street will be changed completely.

**Planning Obligation:** A planning obligation is a requirement made upon the developer to provide a specific land use and/or to provide for the upgrading of a specific land area to the

benefit of the local community. This usually pertains to an obligation that produces a reasonable and required improvement in the area e.g. landscaping, tree planting, child play areas or land for community required facilities including schools, hospitals and others. Planning Obligations are regulated by Legal Notice 28 of 2002.

**Semi-Pedestrianisation:** Changing the design of a road to create a safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians, for example wider pavements and traffic calming features. Whilst pedestrians will have greater priority in such street, general traffic is still permitted to pass.

**Plan Period:** The period during which the policies in the Local Plan are expected to apply, which in the case of this Local Plan is a two year period from its date of endorsement.

**Planning Conditions:** Development permission for development may be conditional on other works or undertakings being carried out by the developer, may restrict or modify the development, or require the submission of further details.

**Policy Map:** The map (or series of maps at different scales) which identifies the precise sites and areas affected by the proposals and policies in the Local Plan.

**Preservation:** Protection from change, guarding against loss of worthwhile assets, including restoration.

**Public Participation:** The involvement of the public in the process of making plans and planning decisions.

**Representations:** Written comments made within the relevant period to MEPA, by any person or body of persons likely to be affected by a policy or proposal of the Local Plan. Representations can support or oppose policies and proposals.

**Residential Area:** Urban area where the predominant use is residential.

**Selective Bus Detection:** This involves the use of equipment at traffic signal-controlled junction, to identify buses and then provide them with priority, so as to reduce delays and journey times.

**Showroom:** Premises primarily used to display goods for sale where little direct (over the counter) retail sale is intended. Showrooms normally have a gross floor area of at least 150 square metres and display a specialist range of bulky, non-food goods, such as: white goods; furniture; motor vehicles; household items, hardware and bathroom fittings.

**Signage:** Any word, letter, model, sign, placard, notice, device wholly or in part for the purposes of advertisement, announcement or direction, including any boarding or similar structure used or adopted for use for the display of advertisements.

**Site of Scientific Importance (SSI):** Statutory designated sites where features of nature conservation importance are at their best and/or most concentrated. They include geological interest as well as flora and fauna. SSIs are scheduled in accordance with the Development Planning Act (1992).

**Structure Plan:** Strategic Planning Policy is set out in the Structure Plan. The Structure Plan does not identify specific sites for development nor the precise boundaries of areas to be protected. One of the important tasks of the Local Plan is to apply this strategy at the local level.



**Town Centre:** A primary town centre has a regional or sub-regional function for non-food shopping. The proposed primary town centres are Birkirkara, Hamrun and Mosta. A secondary town centre is a significant non-food shopping centre serving local residents, or residents of closely neighbouring villages, and used by at least 2,500 people for non-food shopping. The secondary town centres are Qormi and Naxxar..

**Tourism:** The short term movement of people away from their normal place of residence or works in pursuit of leisure, recreation and culture.

**Tourist Attraction:** The use of land or buildings which is primarily economically dependent on paying day visitors.

**Traffic Calming:** Measures which reduce the adverse effects of vehicular traffic in order to improve road safety and the living environment. This approach seeks to adapt the volume, speed and behaviour of traffic, to that which is sympathetic to non traffic activities.

**Traffic Management:** The promotion of a more effective movement of traffic within a given street system by rearranging the flows, controlling the intersections and regulating the time and place for parking by means of traffic orders. Traffic management can also give priority to different forms of transport, such as buses, or to pedestrians.

**Tree Preservation Order:** An order made and confirmed by MEPA to protect trees from lopping, topping or felling without prior written consent.

**Urban Conservation Areas:** Scheduled areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Use Classes Order:** The Development Planning (Use Classes) Order (1994) sets out a classification of land uses so that compatible uses are grouped together in a class. Permission is normally required to change from one class to another but not within a class, although conditions on permissions may restrict or prohibit such changes of use without a specific development permission.

**Utilities:** Water supply, sewerage disposal, land drainage, gas and electricity supply, waste disposal and telecommunications.

**Written Statement:** A document which forms part of a statutory development plan and sets out MEPA's policies or proposals. It is normally accompanied by a Proposals Map.

**Widien:** (Singular Wied) Dry valleys, only carrying water during the rainy season.