

Grand Harbour Local Plan

Approved Plan

April 2002

Area Policies

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Valletta Policies

1.00 Valletta

1.10 Introduction

- 1.11 The importance of Valletta, with a population of just under 7,200, extends far beyond its role as the capital city of Malta - the governmental, administrative and business hub of the Islands. It is perhaps more truly reflected in its designation as a World Heritage City. The reasons for this designation are not difficult to recognise and appreciate. The City presents a unique combination of planned layout and complementary urban form, which demonstrates a unity both of overall design and individual detailing, occupying a magnificent peninsula site.
- 1.12 The military origins of the City are evident in the choice of this site, in the extensive fortifications around the perimeter, and the rectilinear grid which was adopted. Disposition of key elements such as the Auberges and Magisterial Palace followed, with a building code ensuring regulated and orderly construction to a high standard.
- 1.13 The legacy of the planned city is clearly apparent today, features which make Valletta so appealing and at the same time result in problems of adaptation to meet modern needs. The future of the City is therefore dependent upon reconciling the conservation and maintenance of the historic fabric with the role which the City will be required to undertake. This dilemma is at the heart of the planning problem which Valletta faces.
- 1.14 The Local Plan supports and seeks the regeneration of the fabric of the city - buildings, streets, spaces and monuments - and the reinforcement of Valletta's functions as the capital, and as a residential, commercial and tourism centre. In the words of the Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, it should be encouraged to prosper as a 'mixed use capital city.' (Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, p 93).
- 1.15 These aspirations have however to be considered in the context of what has been referred to as the environmental capacity of the city, its capability to accept change without the destruction of the very characteristics which make the City a unique and pleasurable place. In terms of population numbers, there is clearly considerable scope for an increase without associated problems of density or overcrowding, even allowing for modern space standards. Between 1985 and 1994, the number of households is estimated to have fallen by some 14% (3906 to 3341), whilst the number of registered voters is estimated to have decreased by 20% (7740 to 6183). This is a significant and disturbing trend, as is the increasing imbalance of the population, with 35% over 60 in 1994 (Planning Directorate figures)
- 1.16 Traffic counts taken along the main entrance and exit points at Floriana between 1990 and 1999 show that peak and total flows fluctuate slowly, reaching a probable maximum peak flow level of 11,000 vehicles per three hour interval in 1993 and a minimum level of 7,000 vehicles per three hour interval in 1999. The 1999 levels are similar to those in 1990 and therefore still considered to be high. These figures indicate that although still high, traffic volumes have now started to take a downward trend. If this situation is seen in connection with the work initiated on the Connections project, related to the facilitation of access between Sliema, Valletta, and Cottonera; with that on the Park and Ride project at Floriana; with the introduction of local warden services in the Capital; and with the implementation of other policies in this Plan, then such a trend should continue to be observed in the future. Some 35,000 vehicles have a 'V' registration disc, allowing access, whilst within the city, over 2,700 parking spaces are available. Flows are also very tidal in nature, closely linked to normal working hours. Nevertheless, the contrast

between Valletta as a business centre - vibrant, dominant - and as a residential area is striking. The importance of improved public transport, to ease environmental conditions and reduce inefficient use of resources, is also sharply emphasised.

- 1.17 The concentration of pedestrian flows along certain streets, sometimes approaching the maximum 'comfort' levels, are a further indication of the physically limited extent of the shopping area, and of the close proximity of other main destinations for visitors. Whilst a 'compact' centre has a number of advantages, it is evident that many parts of Valletta have major, as yet untapped, potential for more intensive use. The development of other 'attractors' - using this term in the sense of nodes of intensive land use activity around the city drawing pedestrians - could help to spread betterment over a much wider area, and initiate property improvement.
- 1.18 Although Valletta is not well-endowed with open spaces, even of a formal nature, the presence of the sea, and the visual and physical relief which the shoreline affords, is of supreme importance in the life of the City. It is a critical factor in considering the capacity of the town to absorb further changes, and public access must not be reduced. Indeed, the opportunity to provide new open areas in respect of any redevelopment is also available, which should be required and secured as a community benefit.
- 1.19 The outcome of this analysis must be to suggest that significant scope for change is apparent, provided that the fundamental, positive characteristics of the City are maintained - the rectilinear street pattern, the restrained scale of building blocks, the relationship of building height to street width - and opportunities to improve the public realm are grasped.

1.20 Valletta and Office Development

- 1.21 Valletta clearly has a role as an office centre which is related to the city's function as the nation's capital. There is evidence that many private firms, particularly foreign companies seeking to establish themselves in Malta, or using Malta as a base for extending business connections in the Mediterranean area generally, consider a 'Valletta' address an absolute necessity.
- 1.22 On the other hand, the gradual displacement of residential uses which has been a feature of Valletta in recent years has had a detrimental effect on the vitality of the City, and part of that displacement can be attributed to the expansion of offices. The question of a reasonable 'balance' between the two uses again arises.
- 1.23 The Structure Plan is concerned at the problems unrestrained growth in the office sector in the Valletta/Floriana peninsula is likely to bring unless accompanied by improvements in access and the transport system as a whole. For this reason, policy COM2 effectively prohibits further office development until positive steps are taken in this regard.
- 1.24 The approach to office development needs clarification in the light of the potential friction with residential use. Both are considered necessary for the long term prosperity of the City - a true 'mixed use' basis for development. However, to resist the eventual extinguishment of residential uses, a restriction may have to be placed on some parts of Valletta as far as their use for offices is concerned. Control also needs to be exercised on the type of offices which locate in Valletta. It is essential that offices related to public administration and which must locate in Valletta be allowed to do so.

- 1.25 The development of offices can also bring about much needed rehabilitation of historic buildings and bring into use the long abandoned structures which until now have given a run-down and derelict appearance to parts of the city.

1.30 Transport Issues

- 1.31 The different roles played by Valletta make transport considerations very important. In anticipation of the GHLP, the Planning Authority had commissioned a study to investigate the existing transport situation of the peninsula and to come up with ideas and possible options for the future.
- 1.32 The recommendations mentioned in paragraph 1.16 are very valid and applicable to the consideration of a traffic solution to the problems of parking in Valletta and Floriana. If the wider context of the GHLP is also considered, then the problems are amplified further, resulting in the need for a consideration of a more regional aspect. On the other hand, the Structure Plan itself gives a certain amount of direction as to what form of future transport solutions we should be aiming at. The basic concept is the improvement of the public transport system to make it a real alternative to the private motor car.
- 1.33 The policies for Valletta, therefore are geared in this direction - promoting public transport, reserving space for residents' parking, restraining car space for non-residents, and giving greater priority to the pedestrian where this is needed.
- 1.34 The Plan will not be restrictive by dictating the implementation programme to be taken, but would rather leave this to the discretion of those agencies and authorities responsible for such work. The aim is to allow flexibility, and solutions such as the setting up of a parking agency can only be mentioned as possible alternatives to the solution. This implementation will however have to keep in mind the overall concepts of the Plan and its attitude towards transport.

Strategy

The main elements of the Local Plan strategy in respect of Valletta are therefore:

- to strengthen the role of the City as the national capital;
- to encourage economic regeneration; and
- to seek environmental improvement.

Approach

‘Maintaining and improving access to the City, but seeking to minimise growth in peak hour traffic flows’ places a clear emphasis on improvements in public transport. A frequent, fast, clean, convenient and safe ‘high volume’ system must be eventually considered, although this is outside the scope and timeframe of the Local Plan. In the short to medium term therefore, improvements in the bus service, linked to a properly regulated system of parking, must be promoted. Opportunities exist for the more efficient use of existing parking space, the introduction of ‘park and ride’, and limited ‘interceptor’ car parking provision on the fringe of the City. The introduction of ferry services, better links between the waterfront and the central area, and access improvements in association with redevelopment schemes are further possibilities. Indeed, improved accessibility and development are probably interdependent in this

context. Restriction of private car use in the City, and extension of pedestrianisation, is necessary.

‘Enlivening Valletta in the evening’ will depend on a range of various approaches, and, as is the case with many of the ideas put forward, these tend to be inter-related and serve to meet a number of objectives. The range of attractions available - whether historic, commercial or residential schemes - should be expanded, especially those which contribute to vitality without affecting peak traffic flows. This range of attractions should also be considered in terms of the pedestrian movements generated, and the possibilities of introducing ‘magnets’ - key visitor retail and leisure foci - which would stimulate pedestrian flows outside normal working hours, or in locations currently overlooked. Such an approach can be linked to urban design concepts such as the promotion of ‘landmarks’, squares, sitting-out areas, pedestrianisation schemes, and lighting and illumination schemes for dramatic effect. The incidence of ‘dead’ frontages - for example, the over-concentration of offices in a retail frontage, the effect of a whole street of shuttered shop windows - should be avoided. This problem would be helped in turn by measures which promote changes in opening hours.

‘Encouragement of residential use’ is fundamental. Steps to rehabilitate older houses, the use of vacant floors above business premises, residents’ parking schemes, better children’s play provision, and the limitation of office expansion into residential blocks would be of great assistance. Scope exists for the promotion of specialised housing - single person, student or aged person accommodation readily spring to mind, and could act as catalysts in a housing regeneration process. The designation of areas where housing redevelopment would be positively pursued would also be appropriate.

‘Strengthening Valletta’s role as a primary town centre’ requires attention. This will require improving the image and amenity of the existing primary retail frontage. It means acknowledging the need for, and seeking, better ‘management’ of the area. An important attribute of a successful town centre is the extent to which it caters for shopper comfort and convenience, and this requires attention to be given to the public realm, including aspects such as walking surfaces, information kiosks and display features, seating, shade, and ‘public art.’ An upgrading in the overall quality of the shopping experience is necessary, which means a concerted effort on improving the standards of shopfronts, advertisement signs, and facilities.

‘Optimising the tourism potential’ of the City is clearly vital to its continued prosperity. Attention must be given to the provision of additional tourist attractions including measures to conserve, re-use and open to the public historical buildings and artefacts, currently inaccessible. An example is Fort St. Elmo, and associated bastions, which are of major historical significance, and present a major opportunity for a tourism initiative, but which are largely inaccessible to the public. The same applies to many of the tunnels which underlie Valletta. The development of tourist ‘trails’ connecting places of interest, clearly marked and provided with information plaques, would be appropriate.

‘Improved facilities for pedestrians’ naturally follow on from much of the preceding discussion. Extension of pedestrianisation in association with the town centre boundary is a definite requirement, but measures need to be taken to ensure free movement by curtailing encroachment on to streets and footways by cafe tables and display of goods. The provision of well laid out and clear pedestrian routes is important in meeting most of the objectives outlined for Valletta. Indeed, urgent attention is required now in the layout and facilities for pedestrians at the very entrance to Valletta at City Gate.

‘Conservation and restoration of the positive features of Valletta’s townscape’ are critical measures which the Local Plan must support. The whole of Valletta is an Urban Conservation Area and includes many listed buildings. The recognition of Valletta as a World Heritage City imposes a special responsibility towards the maintenance, conservation and improvement of the townscape and the buildings and spaces which it comprises. This does not mean the exclusion of redevelopment proposals, but rather ensuring that, where appropriate, projects are undertaken with due regard for the prevailing discipline which the urban fabric imposes. Rehabilitation projects and restoration are supported, and greater involvement by the private sector is encouraged. Of prime importance is the re-location of the House of Parliament to enable the proper restoration of the Palace and the re-instatement of its historical integrity and also affording better office facilities for members of Parliament. General design guidance on historic centres and features has already been published by the Planning Authority; this will be supplemented as required, and with particular reference to individual projects.

‘Seeking appropriate community facilities’ is a necessary aspect of the Local Plan approach. Although the declining population of Valletta has meant that existing facilities might not be regarded as being under any particular pressure, it has to be remembered that Valletta has a national - even an international - role in this sphere. Access to available open space, and indeed an increase in public open space generally, is therefore a valid objective, as is the use of government buildings which become vacant, for social and educational purposes.

GV01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement Policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Valletta Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

Relevant policies:
GS02.

The Urban Development Boundary is an important tool in ensuring that sprawl, coalescence of settlements, loss of open space and thus loss of identity are avoided, and more efficient use and recycling of existing land for development are promoted. Positive consideration to projects outside this boundary should only be given if these have been identified in this Plan, or as stipulated in Structure Plan policies.

GV02

Residential Re/development

Housing re/development in Valletta will be encouraged. The Planning Authority will therefore look sympathetically on schemes involving structural alterations or change of use which include a substantial percentage of such residential units as part of the scheme. Although other policies in the Plan still apply, this policy seeks to promote positive measures to expand housing provision.

Redevelopment schemes having a major residential element will be encouraged in the following locations as shown on Figure 7:

- **Within the residential zone and Housing Improvement Action Area;**
- **Within Secondary Retail Frontage within the Town Centre boundary;**
- **In vacant upper floors within the Primary Retail Frontage of the town centre boundary;**

Such redevelopment schemes for housing involving also development of new offices located in the town centre (Primary and Secondary Retail Frontage) should;

- (i) Comply with criteria set out in Policy GV24;**
- (ii) The office component in the scheme should not exceed 60% of gross floor space;**
- (iii) Mitigate the existing negative impacts of an established use (e.g. from industrial use);**
- (iv) Separate access is provided for residential units/component.**

Such redevelopment schemes for housing involving also development of new offices located in the Residential Zone and Housing Improvement Action Areas should comply with Policy GV24 (D).

<p>Relevant policies: GS05,06, GV03,11,19,24,25,26,29 GF16</p>

Strategic policy for Valletta lays emphasis on the revitalisation of the city as a residential area as well as a centre of government and business.

This will have an important bearing on the attractiveness of Valletta as a housing location, as will measures to revitalise the City by encouraging more shopping, business and cultural uses. Although the town's location places obvious limits on any idea of expansion in the normal sense, there are several opportunities to utilise space more effectively within the fortified boundary. The Planning Authority will give top priority to the location of additional housing units and the upgrading of existing units within the residential zone and the housing improvement action areas.

The secondary retail frontage within the town centre boundary currently houses 'a variety of uses, ranging from neglected properties and low quality housing, to private offices'. These areas are undergoing a transition, usually losing their residential use and due to a number of factors. The Planning Authority will give increased emphasis by trying to attract residential uses in this area, especially if proposals originate from the responsible government authorities. Other acceptable uses include commercial, retail and entertainment, subject to other policies of this Plan. This approach also applies to upper floors within the primary retail frontage

It is intended to include, in the assistance to be made available, incentives to landlords and property owners to modernise and improve the upper floors of commercial buildings for residential use. The new approach could include the promotion of specialised accommodation (for example, educational), which, by its very nature, would not be expected to generate, nor indeed to require, a high car parking provision.

Another aspect of this issue is the expected vacancies which would result from the relocation of government offices, especially if the Public Office Enclave in Floriana is upgraded. Opportunities should be taken to provide specialised and other housing in these properties, given that private offices will not be permitted here. An example is the provision of housing for the elderly. With the ageing of the population, increased demand for aged persons' accommodation can also be expected, and town centre locations, with facilities on the doorstep, should be high on the list of possible sites.

GV03

Housing Improvement Action Area

The lower part of Valletta on the Marsamxett side is designated as a Housing Improvement Action Area. The Planning Authority will be available to assist and will encourage the Housing Authority in formulating fiscal and other schemes to encourage residents and owners to upgrade the properties in the area shown in the Inset Map. This policy does not

exclude residential redevelopment from taking place as long as the Planning Authority is satisfied that adequate efforts were made to save the original structures.

Relevant policies: <i>GS05,06,09, GV02.</i>	In consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the Housing Authority, it may be possible to give a Housing Improvement Action Area status to part of Valletta, where fiscal and other incentives would be available for the improvement and modernisation of property, in accordance with specified works.
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The incentives could include help in lift provision, tax rebates, or grants in the form of a percentage of the cost of eligible works, paid retrospectively on completion, inspection and certification by a competent, independent authority. Another possibility would be the availability of 'soft' loans for specified housing-related work. The measures could also include support for the purchase or use of adjacent unused properties in order to be able to attain modern standards of accommodation.

GV04

Road Hierarchy

The following main elements of the road hierarchy are adopted and are shown on the Transport Strategy Map.

Local Access Roads:

Triq L-Assedju L-Kbir; Triq Il-Mediterran; Triq San Bastjan; Triq Marsamxett; Triq Il-Papa Piu V; Triq L-Ordinanza (part); Triq L-Ifran; Triq San Pawl (part); Triq San Kristofru (part); Triq Lvant (part); Triq L-Archisqof (part).

Access Only Roads:

All others not mentioned above.

The hierarchy will be used as the basis for deciding road and junction improvements, including traffic management schemes.

Relevant policies: <i>GT01,04,06,09, GV05,08,09,10,11,12.</i>	The Structure Plan requires that Local Plans should 'put forward proposals for the improvement of conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and vehicle parking.' Defining the road network, particularly in view of possible redevelopment schemes, is a necessary prerequisite of this process. The above classification will give direction to traffic proposals and management schemes.
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GV05 Road Improvement Schemes And Traffic Management

Proposals for road improvement schemes and traffic management measures in and around the Urban Development Boundary of Valletta and including the waterfront zones will be expected to include improved pedestrian access, and the assisting of bus and bicycle movements.

Relevant policies:

*GN03,
GT01,04,05,06,
GT09,10,13,14,
GV04,06,08,09,10*

Whilst good accessibility to Valletta is paramount in ensuring the continued economic and social well-being of the City, it is evident that the unrestrained use of the private car cannot be tolerated, and measures to improve the bus service will assume a high priority in the short term.

Long term measures may include the introduction of innovative public transport systems, and alterations in travel patterns. In the City itself, reaching a final destination invariably involves a journey on foot. The Local Plan therefore requires that, when undertaking road improvement works or traffic management schemes in and around Valletta, the needs of the pedestrian should be considered first, and those of the bus service and cyclists before private cars.

GV06 Connections Between Central Valletta And The Waterfronts

Measures to improve the connections between the central part of Valletta and the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett waterfronts will be supported, and any development applications which if implemented would be likely to prejudice this objective will be refused. The latter also applies to sites which could be or are being used for the re-introduction or expansion of ferry services on the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Waterfronts especially as indicated on the General Proposals Map.

Every effort will be made to encourage the implementation of the Connections Project, which is a direct result of this policy, given that all the necessary measures are also taken to reduce any negative environmental impacts which such proposals may present.

Relevant policies:

*GN04, GH02,03,
GT10,12, GC03,04,
GP01,04, GV05,08,10.*

One factor which has consistently been mentioned as deterring the reintroduction, or increased use, of ferry services is the marked change in level that has to be negotiated between the landing points and the centre of Valletta. In the vicinity of Barriera Wharf, the situation has regressed in that the lift previously located here was removed many years ago.

The difficulties could be overcome by the introduction of a connecting, frequent mini-bus service, or preferably, by the reinstatement or introduction of fixed links such as a lift or escalators. The latter solution has been successfully adopted in similar situations in Europe, for example. The Planning Authority is anxious to see ferry services re-established as a quick and convenient route to Valletta and therefore will support measures to construct fixed links. To this end, any proposals requiring development permission likely to prevent or prejudice the introduction of fixed links at points convenient to the traditional ferry landing places will not be approved.

GV07

Redevelopment Of The Bus Terminus

The redevelopment of the bus terminus at City Gate to provide new public transport facilities is supported. Any redevelopment is however to include safe, continuous pedestrian only areas, preferably in the form of a piazza at existing ground level, and should be in line with the approved Master Plan and Heritage conservation surveys. Lay-over space for buses in front of the bastions will not be acceptable. As well as its suitability for bus operations, the success of any design will also be judged against the positive contribution the scheme should make to the environment of this part of Valletta. Any underlying remaining fortifications beneath the existing bus terminus should preferably be safeguarded and restored once these are excavated possibly integrated in a sensitive manner within the new scheme. Other major excavations adjacent to the bastions will not be permitted.

The existing situation whereby buses are mustered in Valletta should also be reviewed as part of this development.

Until this redevelopment takes place, any development permit applications which in the opinion of the Planning Authority will compromise this redevelopment will be refused. Those which do not, will be assessed in the context of the objectives of the Plan for Valletta and Floriana, and by normal development control criteria, taking into consideration the Urban Conservation Area and World Heritage City status.

Relevant policies:

*GN03,04,
GT05,06,07,08,09,14,
GV08,18,27,
GF05,16,
GM09,15.*

Eventual changes in the public transport system may affect the way in which the bus station operates, but it is evident that a terminus will be necessary in this location for the foreseeable future. Some proposals have already been submitted for the remodelling of the bus station. From a local planning viewpoint, no objection is raised to the siting of this facility, which is very convenient for Valletta.

However, the design adopted will be required to resolve a number of issues. The existing station mixes pedestrian and bus movements in a very unsatisfactory and potentially dangerous way, looks unsightly, and results in poor environmental conditions for what is the main approach to the ‘World Heritage City’ of Valletta. The revisions should:

- enable pedestrians to circulate at ground level in a well landscaped area free from traffic of any description;
- provide main drop off and pick-up points for passengers, and driver facilities, below ground level;
- ensure that buses do not ‘lay-over’ in the immediate vicinity of the bus station, or in any prominent position obscuring the bastions;
- allow for the eventual introduction of a rapid transit system probably utilising the former railway tunnel;
- encourage and be capable of integration with the eventual redevelopment of City Gate itself;
- facilitate pedestrian links to the Public Office Enclave area, and
- take account of the Sunday open air market by either making provision for it on site or else securing an acceptable alternative location.

GV08

Pedestrianisation Of Valletta

In conjunction with Valletta local council, an extensive area of pedestrianisation will be introduced in the centre of the capital. This will greatly improve safety, conform and amenity, for those that live, work, and shop in Valletta.

Streets will be pedestrianised, as shown on Figure 8, removing all traffic, except service and emergency vehicles. Surface treatments will be improved, landscaping will be introduced, and more attractive street furniture will be installed. Alternatively, streets will be designated as pedestrian priority. In this case vehicles will still be permitted access, but the street design and control will be changed to favour pedestrians.

In the pedestrianised area, activities, which encourage street life, like café seating areas and shop displays will be encouraged, but they must not obstruct pedestrian movements and essential service operations.

Relevant policies:

*GN04, GH06,
GT07, 09, 14,
GV04, 05, 06, 07, 09, 10,
GV19, 20, 21.*

The size, scale and historical attributes of Valletta, as well as the compact, level nature of the central area, make the City ideal for movement and exploration on foot. Currently, conditions for pedestrians are very variable.

Conditions for pedestrians in many parts of Valletta are currently poor, due to narrow pavements, haphazard parking, and conflicts with traffic. The environment is not pleasant, and certainly not consistent with a World Heritage Site.

The fairly recent pedestrianisation of Republic Street shows the benefits that can be achieved by the removal of traffic and the upgrading of the physical environment. However, this, and one or two other streets, is the exception rather than the rule. Only with the introduction of a comprehensive network of pedestrian streets will the character of the capital change to one that reflects its historical, cultural, and social importance.

Service vehicles will be permitted access to pedestrianised streets, but this may be limited to certain periods (to be determined by the local council) and access routes will be defined. The electric mini-buses to be used for the proposed P&R operations will also penetrate some of these streets.

In the designated pedestrian priority streets, general vehicular access will still be permitted, but conditions for pedestrians will be improved by:

- a) Widening and upgrading pavements.
- b) Introducing traffic calming
- c) Limiting or removing parking
- d) Providing safe crossing facilities
- e) Removing obstructions, like traffic sign poles.

Pedestrianisation will provide greater opportunities to increase street activity, and this will be encouraged, provided that signs, tables, displays etc do not obstruct the free movement of people and servicing.

GV09

Pedestrian Routes/Heritage Trails/Public Art

A comprehensive network of pedestrian routes and heritage trails will be developed in Valletta linking the shopping area, places of historical interest, viewpoints, and other facilities. These trails will be signposted, route marked, and will include interpretation panels giving information at appropriate points. Where appropriate, private organisations will be encouraged to assist in the provision of the latter in respect of premises which they occupy. The commissioning and siting of public works of art will take into account the heritage trail network, and may allow for the involvement of private organisations.

Relevant policies:

*GN04,
GH03,06,
GT09,
GC01,
GV04,05,08,10,
GV19,20,21,
GF12.*

As mentioned, Valletta is of a size, scale and intimacy well suited to movement on foot, and many parts of the City can only really be appreciated by the type of guided walking tour popular with visitors. There is no reason why individuals should not follow their own itineraries, which would be assisted by the introduction of specific heritage ‘trails’ with signposted directions, and ‘waymarks’ for guidance (for example, metal studs set into the pavement or walls).

It is also important to provide appropriately designed plaques identifying and explaining the nature and history of features along the route. In this way, a network of different trails could be developed, with visitors encouraged to explore lesser known parts of the City. It might, for example, be possible to restore the bridge connecting the Valletta Breakwater (given that the required safety precautions are taken), so that this feature would once again be made accessible to pedestrians, becoming a feature in a circular trail around the waterfront, or linked to the redevelopment of Fort St. Elmo. Another example includes the linking of the Siege Bell memorial to the Lower Barrakka gardens, which link used to exist before the opening of the existing, lower level road.

Generally, wide scope exists for the involvement of the private sector in sponsoring plaques and signposts, or undertaking minor works involved in restoring or presenting historic buildings and features. This is not to advocate rampant commercialism, but rather to emphasise that the maintenance and display of the historic heritage is a matter for all, and should not rely solely on government intervention.

It would also be appropriate to develop a ‘public art’ programme, the idea being to introduce or commission works of art for display in public, open air locations. These could include, for example, sculpture, murals or ‘mobiles,’ related to, and complementing, their immediate surroundings, and need not be on a monumental scale. The programme could provide additional opportunities for local artists and craftsmen, would lend itself to sponsorship, and could be a real tourist attraction, encouraging the development of small businesses in parts of the City hitherto unfrequented by tourists and casual visitors.

GV10

Pedestrian Movements, Castille Place

Reorganisation of traffic movement in Castille Place will be undertaken to enable easier pedestrian movement at this important entrance to the City; in particular, better facilities for pedestrians walking from/to Triq Girolamo Cassar will be introduced.

Relevant policies:

GN04,
GH06,
GT04,09,14,
GV04,05,06,08,09,28.

Castille Place, as well as being a main entrance to Valletta and the setting for the Auberge de Castille, the Office of the Prime Minister, is also a place of pedestrian/vehicular conflict. This problem detracts significantly from what should be a very pleasant area which is capable of being experienced at leisure on foot.

People walking up Triq Gerolamo Cassar, particularly the east side, find it very difficult and potentially dangerous to cross Castille place towards South Street, since the pavement ends abruptly and pedestrians are forced on to the carriageway. The presence of the Castille Hotel, other government offices and the former parcel sorting office, with the entrance to the Upper Barrakka nearby, all generate considerable pedestrian flows. The Lascaris War Rooms (entrance off Triq Gerolamo Cassar) are also being developed as a tourist attraction. Often, diplomatic vehicles park in and around Castille Place, which at the moment functions more as an (inadequate) traffic roundabout than as a dignified landscaped urban space acting as a gateway to the City.

The proper treatment and management of this space, taking into account pedestrian 'desire-lines' rather than simply accommodating traffic movements, needs urgent attention. Valletta Rehabilitation Project has already renovated the steps leading up to the Auberge de Castille, and the pavement in front of the main entrance is to be renovated, using more sympathetic and appropriate materials. The opportunity should be taken to widen the scope of this exercise to include all of Castille Place.

GV11**Residents' Parking**

A residents parking scheme will be introduced in conjunction with Valletta Local Council, initially in those residential areas subject to excessive parking demand. Such a scheme will designate parking spaces specifically for Valletta residents and will eventually be extended to include the whole of the zone, mostly residential. Spaces reserved for other uses will also be considered after taking into consideration the location, size, and importance of the particular use, the overall amount of available spaces, and the implementation of other policies in this Plan, as long as their amount and location do not prejudice the aim of this policy.

Relevant policies:

GS05,
GT10,
GV02,04,12.

In most parts of Valletta, parking space is at a premium and residents often find themselves displaced from their own areas by the influx of vehicles during the day. Improvement of the public transport system, and the deterrence of private parking outside limited car parks, will be linked to specific provision for residents - particularly important if the City is to flourish once again as a housing area.

In view of the Valletta Council's excellent local knowledge and contacts, it is considered that the Council should be involved in the regulatory function of a residents' parking scheme. A residents' parking scheme is probably best carefully evolved in relation to an area of heavy parking demand on an experimental basis in a selected area, and subsequently applied, modified as required, throughout the City.

GV12

Car Parking

No new public car parking provision will be allowed in Valletta with the exception of operational parking, which will be constructed in association with the Opera House redevelopment below Freedom Square and at Fort St. Elmo (as part of a wider redevelopment scheme). An underground car park will also be allowed beneath Palace Square. No parking will therefore be allowed in Palace and Freedom Squares once the underground parking is operational. This will allow for the proper landscaping of the square.

In conjunction with the operation of the Park-and-Ride Scheme from Crown Works Area, a programme for an increase in pedestrianised zones, as well for the widening of existing pavements will be commenced. In formulating a new parking strategy for Floriana and Valletta account also needs to be taken to the viability of a fully developed parking facility at the M.C.P. site in Floriana.

All remaining public parking spaces (on-street and off-street) will be restricted by means of time-controlled parking discs for non-residents, to discourage parking by long-term users. Other parking regimes will be considered in order to refine the parking system.

Relevant policies:
GT10,
GV04,11,26,27,28,29.

The strategic transport planning policy relating to the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, as set out in the Structure Plan (policies TRA4; RDS7; TEM10; PTR4; PTR10) can be interpreted as generally restrictive towards the encouragement of additional parking for private cars. This is linked to the need to provide efficient, pollution free alternative public transport, such as a circular electric vehicle transport system.

A number of car parks already exist, including the new M.C.P. multi-storey facility. It is not envisaged therefore that substantial further provision will be necessary, apart from the locations mentioned and, in one instance, in association with a redevelopment scheme. The proposed parking beneath St. George's Square is aimed at removing the cars which presently park in such a square, and such a car park can also form part of the Connections project which facilitates access in Valletta, as long as it does not attract additional vehicles to the City.

GV13

Urban Conservation Area

All of Valletta, including the waterfront zones, is designated as an Urban Conservation Area. Developments will only be approved if they respect this status and include it as an important consideration in their proposals.

Relevant policies:
GN05,
GH01,
GV14,15,16,17.

Encouraging good design is considered important whatever the context, but this issue assumes a major significance in the case of Valletta, already identified as a 'World Heritage City'. All development applications will therefore be expected to take this aspect into account. The question of what constitutes 'good design' is invariably subjective to some extent.

Less room for debate exists, however, when a firm and pleasing architectural context is already in place or where, often through local building practices unrelated to formal or academic design concepts, a strong vernacular tradition has developed which is visually pleasing.

Urban Conservation Areas are intended to indicate where this tradition is particularly strong and where context should influence building design. This does not mean following slavishly the architectural language of the area, but rather considering the design of the building in a wider context. The Planning Authority will need to be assured that such a contextual analysis is apparent in the design of any new development, and in the repair and restoration of existing buildings. In Valletta, of course, a strong precedent for building and design control already exists; the Valletta Commission, dating back to the Order of St. John in the 16th century, enacted a series of regulations covering key aspects of development, which have resulted in the form and layout of the City today.

Since Valletta was conceived as a whole, the Urban Conservation Area boundaries have been drawn accordingly and encompass the site of the City in its entirety.

GV14

Urban And Architectural Design

Valletta instills a unique sense of place. In order to maintain the positive characteristics of the City, all new re/development schemes will be expected to observe the following design requirements:

- **the discipline imposed by the existing street and building block grid should be maintained;**
- **the context of existing, adjacent building heights, and the relationship to the ‘skyline’ prospect of the City will strongly influence acceptance of the project. The ‘skyline’ view will however be paramount;**
- **massing, fenestration and ornamentation should respect the street and townscape context, based on a dynamic dialogue with the surrounding urban context;**
- **there will be a presumption against bridging of streets;**
- **in most instances, use of traditional materials will be required. This will apply without exception where a building follows an archetypal design approach. In the rare case where a ‘contemporary’ solution is accepted by the Authority, other materials may be introduced by agreement and as long as this does not result in a dissonant contrast with the surroundings;**
- **major development schemes should incorporate accessible spaces and enclosures for the benefit of the general public; and**
- **pedestrian access arrangements should have priority over vehicular.**

<p><i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GN05, GH01,</i> <i>GV13,16,17,19,20,21,</i> <i>GV22,26,27,28,29.</i></p>

It is not the intention of the Authority to inhibit good design, or to impose unreasonable conditions on development proposals. However, it is important to consider the context, and architectural design solutions should be sensitive to the unique historical significance of the City.

Persons or organisations wishing to undertake development projects in Valletta do so in the knowledge that the city is an Urban Conservation Area and a World Heritage City, derived partly from the unity of approach determined by the Knights. This places an obligation on the Authority, and on developers, to observe urban design and architectural ‘good manners’ in relation to the rest of the urban fabric when undertaking development or redevelopment schemes. The policy attempts to formulate the main considerations, whilst leaving some scope for an individual approach. Any new development should aim at consolidating and enhancing even further the City’s architectural heritage.

GV15

Building Heights

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible approach which will take account of the following criteria:

- the Urban Conservation Area status;
- the streetscape through a consideration of the buildings on the same facade and those on facades on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;
- the general massing of the building;
- the roofscape;
- the skyline when seen from outside the site area;
- the topographical features and consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);
- any other relevant planning consideration.

<p><i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GH01,</i> <i>GV13.</i></p>
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Due to the historic nature of Valletta, and the marked differences in storey heights between old and new buildings, it is considered a very difficult task to try and give a blanket height for the City. The approach adopted in this instance is to determine requests in changes in heights on an individual basis.

This assessment, however, has to consider all the relevant planning issues, including those mentioned in the policy, and other relevant planning guidance already issued by the Planning Authority. The stepped nature of the blocks between the waterfront and the central area will be maintained.

GV16

Advertisements

Advertisement design and display in the Urban Conservation Area will be strictly controlled, in accordance with the Planning Authority's adopted guidance - Policy and Design Guidance - Billboards and Signs (May 1994). Applications which do not meet the requirements of this policy will be refused.

In particular, illuminated box fascia signs, naked 'pencil' neon lights, lights of a flashing or intermittent type and internally illuminated projecting signs will not normally be permitted. In the vicinity of the Auberges, the bastions, all Grade 1 and Grade 2 Listed Buildings and within the main shopping area, special attention will be given to the quality and appearance of all advertising signs.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GV13,14,17.*

Advertising is an important component of the built environment and can have a major impact, sometimes negative, on the way in which an area is perceived. This is particularly the case in historic areas. Since, as indicated, the whole of Valletta has been declared an Urban Conservation Area, the display of advertisements needs to be examined in this context, and a rigorous approach adopted in order to ensure that historical and architectural features are not obscured by aggressive advertising displays. The Authority will wish to examine the appropriateness of existing advertising, where no permit has been granted, and to scrutinise carefully any advertisements which are proposed.

GV17

Shopfront Design

Particular attention will be given to the design of shopfronts in the main shopping area in line with approved guidance - Policy and Design Guidance - Shopfronts (May 1994). This scrutiny will also extend to other parts of Valletta, especially where the street scene is historical and largely unchanged. Where shopfronts have been altered without obtaining necessary development permission, they may be subject to challenge by the Authority, and reinstatement of the original design required.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GV13,14,16.*

Shopfront design is a critical factor in establishing the character of the City, and the unsympathetic introduction of modern, badly designed shopfronts, or the unnecessary removal of traditional features, can have a powerful detrimental impact.

It is therefore considered important to conserve traditional shopfronts, and where good reasons exist for change, introducing modern replacements which, by their design and materials, indicate a respect for context and tradition. In considering applications, the Authority will have regard to the design guidance which has been issued separately on shopfronts, and which is available from the Authority.

GV18

Underground Space

The Planning Authority will ensure that in granting permits involving works below street level, suitable survey and monitoring procedures are adopted so that no damage to possible historic underground spaces occurs. Existing spaces which have already been identified will be similarly protected.

The Museums Department, in collaboration with other interested organisations, is also encouraged to initiate a comprehensive survey in order to identify existing tunnels and other underground spaces in Valletta. Their restoration, linkage and appropriate reuse is also promoted.

Relevant policies:

*GH04,05,08,
GD11,
GV07.*

During the preparation of this Local Plan, it has been mentioned in various articles that an extensive network of tunnels exists below Valletta. Some of these tunnels, together with other underground spaces have already been identified and are being used for infrastructural services, and for touristic related projects.

Other spaces are illegally used, misused, or as yet unidentified. It is suspected, therefore, that many of these spaces are still undiscovered. When and if identified, their potential to become

a unique attraction would be enormous. The Museums Department, as the body responsible for such historic items, is therefore encouraged to initiate a process of identification of these spaces. Local help from other public, voluntary and private organisations, together with foreign help especially in relation to funding will be expected and appreciated.

On its part, in line with the provisions of General Development Order, No.2, 1997, the Planning Authority will also help in the conservation of identified and potential spaces by ensuring that proper surveys are carried out and works are monitored when these involve operations below street level. Special reference will be made to works below street level which include excavations and/or structural alterations.

GV19

Town Centre

The Planning Authority has designated a Primary Town Centre for Valletta as identified on the Valletta Inset Map (Figure 7). (Refer to General Policy GD06). The Primary and the Secondary Retail Frontages are also identified on Figure 7.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GD06,
GV02,08,09,14,24.*

The policy seeks to show the Authority's attitude to retail development in the city centre, and to reinforce the importance attached to this activity in the economic and social life of Valletta. It is considered that retailing is fundamental to the City when located at ground floor level and it should not become diluted by the introduction of other uses which could equally as well function in nearby locations.

This policy is aimed at directing non food shopping to the Town Centre, and ensuring that other uses are complementary to it. The policy attempts to retain and reinforce the primary shopping zone upon which the vitality and viability of Valletta as a Town Centre is so heavily dependent, whilst at the same time acknowledging that other land uses also have a legitimate place in the city centre. However, there is a danger that, without adequate scrutiny, the nature and character of the Town centre may be subtly changed, resulting from the cumulative effect of apparently minor decisions.

GV20

Street Markets

The present street market in Merchants Street will be supported, but upgraded in terms of both layout, and size and design of stalls.

Consideration will also be given to the establishment of additional sites for specialised street markets on selected days, to be regulated by Valletta Local Council and the Ministry for Economic Services / Police in consultation with the Valletta Rehabilitation Project and the Planning Authority. These should be sited within the Town Centre boundary.

Relevant policies:
GV08,09,14.

Street markets are important elements in towns, and the markets in Merchants' Street on weekdays, and outside the bastions on Sundays, provide an important service for residents and visitors. They are also very significant in attracting tourists, and giving an overall feeling of liveliness and bustle to the City.

The weekday market is considered to need more attention due to a number of reasons, mostly however its location in the historic capital city. Presently it gives the impression of disorganisation, looks very shabby in character, and the overall feeling can be described as negative. It is important, therefore, that stalls are properly upgraded and presented in an orderly manner. The part of the market using Old Theatre Street should be relocated in order to give back this street its character. Additional space is to be made available as shown in the Inset Map, including the square in front of the food market. The possibility of changing the hours of operation to include some evening hours should be considered.

Many towns and cities overseas have also developed specialised markets selling, for example, antiques, books, paintings and drawings, stamps, coins, and many other goods outside the normal range of most street markets. Such specialised markets frequently become internationally well-known, and are promoted in tourist literature. They can also provide an established yet inexpensive outlet for locally produced craft and artwork, and with careful siting, they can encourage visitors to explore less well-known parts of a city. In this way, they may also act as a trigger for the upgrading and redevelopment of property in 'fringe' areas.

Applying this line of reasoning to Valletta, several locations would be appropriate for the introduction of specialised markets. It is important to note that the development of any market should be properly regulated to avoid problems to residents, and any abuse by traders themselves, and it is proposed that the most apt bodies to deal with these issues are Valletta Local Council and the Ministry for Economic Services / Police, in association with the Valletta Rehabilitation Project and the Planning Authority.

GV21

Development Of Sitting-out Areas

The development of sitting-out areas will be encouraged in the pedestrian zones identified on Figure 8 which include the site beneath the House of Four Winds. Any approved sitting-out areas will however need to leave adequate space for pedestrian movement along pedestrian routes, and for the appreciation of monuments in the streets and squares of Valletta. Design of hard and soft landscaping, including chairs and tables to be used, will be expected to complement the historical characteristics of the area.

Relevant policies:
*GC01,
GV08,09,14.*

A key element of the Local Plan is to assist in the rehabilitation and expansion of Valletta as a focus of cultural, social and economic life, in keeping with the City's role as the national capital. To achieve a fundamental improvement will mean action on a wide range of matters, but one of the most important is what might be termed the general amenity of the Capital, especially with regard to the public realm - the condition of buildings, footpaths, roads, planting areas, advertising sites, and the standard and location of street furniture and incidental features.

Malta's climate supports and encourages a convivial 'outdoor' approach to living - one of the joys of the country for many tourists, and a feature taken for granted by residents. This ambience does however require that some attention is paid to sitting-out facilities for the

public, their detailed design, materials used (for example, exclusion of plastic chairs and tables) and that these should be sited in the most appropriate locations. This policy also sets out other features which the Planning Authority regards as important in this context, and to which it is expected attention will be paid whenever proposals for street works, embellishment schemes, traffic management projects and the upgrading of infrastructure take place in streets which are predominantly devoted to the needs of the pedestrian.

One of the most appropriate areas for such a facility is the site beneath the House of Four Winds. The area is designated as a total pedestrian zone, and offers spectacular views of the harbour.

GV22

Entertainment, Tourist And Recreational Facilities

Permission for entertainment, tourist and recreational facilities in Use Classes 3, 4, 6 and 9 of the Development Planning (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) will normally be acceptable within Valletta, subject to policy GV23 and Structure Plan policies BEN 1, 2 and 3. Discotheques, clubs, hot food take-aways and other similar types of use will only be considered if they are located in sites which will not cause annoyance to neighbouring residents. Where lacking, and in order to encourage better use of such recreational facilities, limited catering facilities will also be favourably considered in public gardens.

Relevant policies:

*GN04,
GC01,
GD10,11,
GV14.*

As already mentioned, major aims of the Local Plan in respect of Valletta are to optimise the tourism potential of the city, and to make the Capital a more lively and attractive place outside normal shopping and business hours. One method of doing this will be to encourage a wider variety of land uses to locate here.

This policy makes this point explicitly by indicating the classes of use which will normally be acceptable, providing there is no conflict with the relevant Structure Plan policies. Care will need to be exercised, however, to ensure that no uses develop which are likely to be disruptive to the residential function of the City, the expansion of which is also an objective of the Plan.

GV23

Tourist Accommodation

The Planning Authority will encourage the improvement in standards of existing tourist accommodation facilities and hotels.

Proposals for new tourism accommodation, or for the intensification or increase in the number of beds in existing hotels in Valletta will also be considered in line with the need to inject more all-day activity in the Capital. Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits, an important aspect of which will be the contribution that such proposals will be making in terms of regeneration and rehabilitation, and their complementarity to permitted activities and to other policies in this Plan.

Relevant policies:
GN04.

The existing number of hotels and guesthouses in Valletta is considered to be very close to the capacity of the area. This should be seen in the light of the objectives for the area and the general policy of trying to encourage and confirm Valletta as a residential area.

Oversupply of tourist accommodation projects may result in a further reduction of the residential component in the City. However, there is still room for improvement in standards of existing facilities. The Plan therefore tries to encourage existing hotels to improve their rating through improving their service and the facilities which they offer to tourists.

Proposals which increase the number of tourist beds in Valletta will also be considered. Their impact on the Capital City will however be thoroughly investigated, and it is expected that for such development to be permitted, it will have to complement the aims of rehabilitation and regeneration, especially if located in the lower parts of the City. Large properties might be more difficult to use as residential units and the conversion of some of these into tourist accommodation facilities could be a means of securing their upkeep and reuse, and of injecting much needed economic activity in these lower parts of Valletta.

GV24

Office Development in Valletta

Development of new office space within Valletta will only be permitted during the Plan period if such a proposal meets the specific requirements as described below for the different areas as defined in Figure 7 of this Plan:

(A) Within all four distinct areas of Valletta (Town centre, Waterfront, Residential and Housing Improvement Action Areas) as defined by this policy, provided:

- (i) the office space is intended to form part of a Ministry or Government Department; or**
- (ii) the proposed office involves the conservation, through adequate rehabilitation and reuse, of a historic building already scheduled under Grades 1 and 2 according to Structure Plan policy UCO7, or a building which merits to be so scheduled subject to the proviso in the latter case that the applicant consents to its scheduling; or**
- (iii) the proposed use is for a national office of a registered, non-profit, philanthropic organisation or where the proposed use is the administrative function of a national public organization or entity which can satisfactorily demonstrate that it is essential for it to be located in Valletta by reason of its function.**

(B) Within the Town Centre Area, the proposal meets the following criteria:

- (i) the proposed development results from the relocation of an established office use in Valletta, as long as:**
 - the original office use has a permitted development consent; and**
 - if being relocated from the residential area, a private legal agreement is entered into with the Planning Authority renouncing the current established use of the building or the part of a building from which the use is being relocated.**
- (ii) complies with conditions in Policy GV02 for office development within the Town Centre.**

(C) Within the Waterfront Area, policies GD09 and GP04 of this Plan shall apply;

(D) Within the Residential Areas and Housing Improvement Action Area, the proposal falls within one of the following categories:

- i) the proposed office would result in the utilization of an existing tenement having a floor space of not more than 50sqm, or**
- ii) where the proposed office is :**
 - Located in an apartment block of two or more residential units which are partly or fully vacant; and**
 - cumulatively the proposed office space does not exceed 50% of the floor space of the apartment block where the block consists of up to two units and 1/3 (one third) of the floor space of the apartment block where the block consists of more than two units; and**
 - preferably the office space is provided with a separate access from the residential units; and**
 - proof is provided that the unit being converted has been vacant;**

planning gain is provided, as applicable in the circumstances, in the form of:

- making the edifice structurally sound;**
- an unoccupied dwelling is made available for habitation, and**
- rendering the edifice accessible (preferably through the provision of a lift, even if it means the loss of some floor space for the provision of the lift shaft).**

Relevant policies:
*GD09, GV02,
GF15,
GM15*

Structure Plan policy COM 2 is very clear in controlling further private office development in Valletta and Floriana, and relates this control to an improved transport situation.

The Park & Ride Proposal and the Transport Strategy (including new parking regime for Valletta) will address the traffic access problem for Valletta, and given that both actions have been endorsed by Government this policy is providing relaxation on the previous controls of new office space in Valletta.

Residents still complain that they are unable to find parking places, commuters complain that no suitable parking facilities exist, and most importantly, improvements in public transport have not been sufficient to offer an alternative to the use of the private car. This situation is being addressed through a number of initiatives such as the Park & Ride Proposal for which an Action Plan aimed at facilitating its implementation has been approved, and the adoption by Government of a Transport Strategy.

Public transport improvements are also necessary to sustain public sector offices, which cause the same, if not worse, transport problems than private offices. With the increase in public sector offices envisaged in the Public Office Enclave in Floriana, in line with the general recommendations of policy COM 1, approval of further public sector office space in Valletta is therefore generally discouraged.

This policy, however, does provide for exceptions to this prohibition, which will aid in the achievement of other objectives in this Plan or in the Structure Plan. The first instance relates to the provisions in policy GD09, which permits offices related to port uses which need to be located in this area. The second exception concerns Ministries which, in accordance with Structure Plan strategy, need to be located in Valletta. Registered, philanthropic organisations serve a valuable social function, and may require a central location. Offices for these organisations are similarly considered as an appropriate exemption from the prohibition.

Office development can also be a vital source of investment necessary to upgrade and conserve historic buildings which otherwise would remain dilapidated.

Thirdly, permission for office development may also be granted in the Primary Town Centre and the Residential Zone and the Housing Improvement Action Area provided strict criteria are met. Office location in Valletta is contributing to the decline in the residential population, and so as to reduce further residential displacement, this policy protects the Residential Zone and the Housing Improvement Action Areas as identified in FIG 7 of this Plan by strictly controlling further new offices here.

GV25

Vacated Public Office Buildings

Unless required for other public purposes, buildings vacated through the relocation of public offices will be considered favourably for mixed use development. The following or similar uses will be positively considered: specialised housing such as single person, student, and old people's accommodation; and for other educational and/or cultural activities such as language schools and craft schools. Important historic buildings like the Auberges will be expected to be used to accommodate government Ministries in line with Structure Plan policy.

Additional parking provision will normally not be necessary, unless these can be accommodated, so as to encourage new investment into Valletta.

Relevant policies:
GV02.

Those buildings currently occupied by government departments and eventually to be vacated as other accommodation becomes available, will require very careful and restrained conversion to a high standard. Examples include the development of aged persons' accommodation.

The development of housing by conversion in these circumstances should be regarded as the chance to demonstrate the very high quality which can be achieved working to a well specified brief, and should serve as an example of what is quite possible in similar circumstances elsewhere on the Islands.

Besides housing, other uses could include those relating to education (including public library), tourism, and even medical activities or an appropriate combination. Parking provision will also be necessary. At this stage, these uses are given merely as ideas to illustrate the breadth of possibilities available. Normal development control assessment will still be required.

GV26

Sites For Redevelopment

Key sites are identified and indicated on the Valletta Inset Map. On these sites the Planning Authority encourages the initiation of redevelopment projects :

- **City Gate/Freedom Square area;**
- **The Opera House site;**
- **Fort St. Elmo;**
- **Evans Buildings.**

Relevant policies:
*GN01,03,04 GH01,
GT10, GD10,
GV02,12,14,27,28,29.*

These key sites represent areas of great potential and opportunity. They have significant development potential and their redevelopment could lead to a marked improvement in the urban fabric.

Any proposals which are put forward for individual parts of these areas will therefore be considered by the Planning Authority in the light of the wider development context as formulated in the Master Plan for the entrance to the City, as approved by the Planning Authority. The Master Plan comprises the area which includes the Opera House site, St. James Cavalier, Freedom Square, City Gate, the land front ditch, and the bus terminus area.

GV27

City Gate And Freedom Square

The Planning Authority will support the redesign of both City Gate and Freedom Square provided:

(a) Bus Terminus Site

- (i) The project includes a bus terminus below the existing level subject to detailed surveys which demonstrate that the remains of the historical fortifications and the ex-railway tunnel shall, where possible, be considered and integrated with the proposed development;**
- (ii) The use of the spaces within the bus terminus building shall be limited to uses which are ancillary to the operation and functioning of the terminus. These may include small kiosks, coffee shops, waiting rooms, ticket sales, information bureau, operational offices and public conveniences. The design of the building should not exceed the height of the original fortifications, and shall be determined by accurate studies which take into consideration the “line of fire” view from the upper levels of the City’s curtain walls over the finished level of the proposed building and onto the ex-glacis of the fortifications;**
- (iii) Vehicular access arrangements to and from the Bus Terminus will be determined following an accurate study into the operational requirements of the Bus Terminus, demand for public transport, and the possibility of reorganising schedules to reduce the need for buses stopping for long-periods of time in the Bus Terminus.**

(a) Freedom Square Development

- (i) The proposals for Freedom Square include an underground car-park (not exceeding 400 spaces), enclosure of plaza with a building fronting Republic Street, demolition of existing arcades to expose façade of St James Cavalier, the demolition and reconstruction of portico on left hand side of the entrance to Valletta;**
- (ii) The proposals for Freedom Square include cultural / entertainment / leisure orientated uses. Retail shall not exceed 20% of the total net commercial floorspace. No office development will be allowed.**
- (iii) The proposed development shall take the following into consideration – the preservation of the existing ex-railway station, bridge and platform, the possible future utilisation of the ex-railway station in the provision of a light rapid transit system to the outskirts of Valletta, and the possible future creation of a covered pedestrian link to the Bus Terminus building.**
- (iv) The public open place at ground floor level shall be designed in a manner, which is conducive to public enjoyment providing informal seating areas, which compliment the design of the large open staircases leading to the main entrance of St. James Cavalier.**

The developer shall be required to submit a Traffic Impact Assessment of the proposed project as per terms of reference established and issued by the Planning Authority.

Detailed restoration method statements shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority prior to the issuing of Full Development Permission for each phase of the development. The method statements shall include all contents listed in the Planning Authority's Policy and Design Guidance for Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas.

A detailed landscaping scheme for the open spaces should be submitted with the full development permit application. The materials, colours, and design of the scheme should take into consideration the historical context of the site and its former use as a defensive outpost. The layout of the public open spaces should be conducive to leading the visitor into the City and should allow pedestrians to enjoy full views onto the fortifications. Should the Tritons fountain be retained, this should be carefully dismantled for the duration of the construction period, and should be restored to its original form.

Relevant policies: <i>GN01,03,04,05, GH01, GT04,10,14, GV07,12,14,26,28.</i>	The present setting and design of both City Gate and Freedom Square do not give the message that one is about to enter or has entered an important site in the most important city in the Maltese Islands.
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This feeling is underlined by the discordant proportions of the existing large open space, improperly used as a car park, which does not take account of the axis presented by Republic Street. The architectural treatment of both the Gate and the Arcade is in dire need of improvement, and the square should, through building and/or landscaping between the square and Republic Street be reduced in size to respect more the human scale.

Besides these issues, the redesign of the spaces has to take into account the historical setting. This does not mean that projects of redesign have necessarily to be a copy of the baroque architecture of the past, but the Urban Conservation Area and World Heritage City status of Valletta must be respected. Any redesign also has to take into account the adjacent schemes which include the Opera House Site, the Arts Centre Project, and the Bus Terminus improvement, especially in terms of vehicular and pedestrian access, and parking.

The approved Master Plan for the entrance to Valletta addresses these aspects in a holistic manner through being part of an integrated design regarding the approach to the City. Parking will be removed from Freedom Square, and provision will be made underground in accordance with policy GV12, through alternative access arrangements.

GV28

Opera House Site

The Arts Centre at St. James Cavalier and the proper reuse of the Opera House Site accords with the strategy to improve Valletta's role as a cultural capital. The latter will include a multi-purpose theatre as part of a redevelopment project which predominantly includes a cultural use. Other limited commercial (except for non-related offices) and recreational uses, preferably with a cultural orientation, will also be permitted.

During the interim period until the Opera House Site project is implemented, the Planning Authority will encourage the use of the site for other cultural activities as long as these do not compromise the original objectives. It will also give more detailed guidance on what is expected on the site which will take account of the following criteria in its formulation:

- a Traffic Impact Statement;
- an evaluation of projects adjacent to or having an impact on the site;
- parking provision underneath Freedom Square; and

- the World Heritage City and Urban Conservation Area status.

Although it would be inappropriate to prescribe a specific architectural style, the new building on the Opera House Site should be treated as a strategic landmark within the entrance to Valletta. The architectural treatment would have to respond to the challenge of providing a contemporary statement befitting the twenty-first century, whilst respecting the historic legacy of Valletta as a former city of the Order of St. John.

Relevant policies: <i>GN01,03,04,05, GH01,GT10,14, GD10, GV10,12,14,26,27.</i>	The first phase of transforming St. James Cavalier into an Arts Centre is complete. The second phase is envisaged to comprise the development of the former Opera House site and Freedom Square.
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The project itself is considered to be one of the most important and government is encouraged to use it in order to give a clear message about the future role of Valletta as a cultural capital city. Due to its potential impact, however, it is important to ensure a co-ordinated approach to development, and proposals have to take account of other schemes in the vicinity of or having effect on the site. Therefore, other policies in this Plan which have a bearing on Valletta are relevant.

It is also important for the traffic impact of the project to be thoroughly assessed, and impacts on access anticipated. As the probability is that the centre's peak time would be in the evenings, this would help the overall aim of increasing activity in Valletta at the most desired times. There might also be an opportunity of having the car park underground, below Freedom Square. This would also cater for commuters when spaces are available in the mornings.

GV29

Fort St. Elmo and Evans Buildings

The Planning Authority will require the preparation and approval of a Development Brief for the two sites identified on Figure 7 (Fort St Elmo and Evans Buildings Site). The Brief will give detailed guidance on the appropriate land-uses, design, access, parking, servicing and planning gain in the form of restoration and public open space.

The Planning Authority will favourably consider any of the following uses or a mix of these uses: cultural, touristic and educational. Other uses such as offices (including software development) residential and retail (speciality shopping) will be assessed in relation to other policies in this plan. The brief must ensure that free public access to the outer parts of the Fort.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,03,04,05,
GH01,02,04,05,08,
GT10,14,
GD10,11,
GV02,12,14,26.*

The present state of this historic Fort means that extensive restoration works are needed to ensure proper conservation. It is important, therefore, that any proposals take account of the costs involved in restoration, and ways of securing the needed funds. It is foreseen that this project will take the form of a public/private partnership, as any one actor on his own will probably not bring the project to fruition. Given the Fort's important historical role from a European and international aspect, it can be justly argued that it is also the responsibility of international bodies like the UNESCO to contribute to its restoration.

The main use of the Fort will be related to tourism, culture and educational. The location, views, historical setting, and the proximity of complementary existing facilities all indicate the tremendous potential that exist for the reuse of the Fort as a touristic and cultural experience. Enshrined in this basic concept, however, should be a requirement for free and unhindered access to the outer parts of the Fort during normal public hours to enable appreciation by the general public. This does not mean free facilities, but simply emphasises the fact that this is a national monument and everyone should enjoy a right of access sufficient to confer an adequate understanding of the role of the Fort. Subject to safety considerations, it may also be possible to consider re-instatement of the St. Elmo bridge which formerly linked to the breakwater, enabling the latter to be reopened to the public.

There could also be the possibility to include a luxury, upmarket hotel at the current Evans Building.

Another idea which could be developed is the inclusion of a crafts centre, where visitors could be shown how old items used to be made. This should not take an industrial form, but would simply be a showcase to demonstrate activities.

The area could also include a War Experience which embraces the War Museum; together with some other related audio-visual display and/or actor type of guiding around the upper parts of the Fort. The project could also be linked by ferry to both Sliema and Cottonera, and could include a night time experience of the fortifications in the Grand Harbour.

The lower part of Fort St. Elmo is the most difficult part when it comes to identifying a use, which has to: preferably include an evening type of activity; be financially viable, inward looking, respects the historical aspect, complementary to the uses on the other parts of the Fort, and in accordance with other policies of this Plan. These parameters are all important and the problem is demonstrated by its present use and condition. This policy tries to be flexible towards the use of this part of the Fort by giving the parameters to be considered rather than specifying which use or combination of uses it should be.

As all the above suggested uses are attractors of traffic, a traffic impact statement is expected to be carried out to assess the proposals' impact on access and parking. The strategic location of Fort St. Elmo on a promontory midway between Tigne' Point and Fort Ricasoli, both of which are the subject of development proposals, also suggests the possibility of some novel way of linking these sites.

The overall aim of the project would therefore be the establishment of a magnet at the lower part of Valletta which would also serve as the stimulus to help in the latter's regeneration drive. This should also be linked to the proposals for the Evans Building site, indicated by the policy which is an integrated part of the development brief and can act as a supporting facility, including a hotel, for Fort St. Elmo and the Mediterranean Conference Centre.

GV30

Old University Building

The Planning Authority will consider proposals for development at the Old University building provided they are intended to enhance the viability of the structure for educational use and they respect the principles of good conservation in line with policy GV 14 of this Plan and any other relevant design and conservation guidelines.

This building has been in use for educational purposes for an extended period of time and the Planning Authority intends to protect this established use by prohibiting any change in its use from education. Its location within the residential area assists in the regeneration efforts since it is a low intensity use but still attracts visitors to the area and hence increases its vitality.

The need to retain the building in use as an educational establishment must be balanced with the importance of protecting the historical and architectural heritage of Valletta. The Planning Authority will ensure that any interventions on the fabric of the building are in conformity with the principles of good conservation and restoration practices.

Map 7

Map 8

Map 9

Floriana Policies

2.00 Floriana

2.10 Introduction

- 2.11 Floriana, with a current population of about 2600, occupies an extensive plateau between the bastions of the Floriana Lines and the outer defences of Valletta.
- 2.12 It has a good balance of open areas and gardens on the one hand, and a tightly knit community on the other, making it an attractive place. Floriana has developed a dual role as a convenient residential area and as an increasingly important office and administrative centre, to a point where, with a decreasing population, the balance between the two functions is causing alarm.

2.20 Floriana and Office Development

- 2.21 This tension is most clearly manifested in the increasing numbers of applications for change of use from residential to office space, and in some instances, the illegal use of dwellings for office purposes.
- 2.22 Although the Structure Plan generally allows the conversion of residential property to small office use in built-up areas, with certain safeguards, this is explicitly not the case in Valletta and Floriana, unless linked to improvements in transport, access, parking and pedestrian circulation (policy COM2).
- 2.23 Problems of excessive parking demand, a corollary of office growth which is not linked to transport requirements, is now becoming evident, as is the removal from the housing market of property in the anticipation of achieving a better return through office use. In the long term this process, if continued, has implications for the continued vitality of Floriana as a residential community.

2.30 The Public Office Enclave

- 2.31 The future upgrading and redevelopment of this area is, however, a different matter, since the project relates to a site currently occupied by government office buildings. Provision for the scheme is made under policy COM1 of the Structure Plan. The integration of this scheme with the rest of Floriana is clearly of prime importance, and is a factor which will determine the acceptability of the designs for the project.
- 2.32 Issues raised include the overall composition of the scheme in land use terms, and, related to this point, the actual extent of the site for redevelopment. The site currently under consideration excludes the 'Xaghra' sports ground.
- 2.33 Because of the complexity of the issues raised, the intention of government to release a detailed development brief for the project is strongly supported. Development will also raise a number of 'off-site' issues which should also be examined. These include the use to which buildings vacated by various departments will be put, and the implications for other parts of the Local Plan area, including Valletta.

2.40 Transportation Issues

- 2.41 Another major issue affecting Floriana is the impact of traffic. Although Floriana is itself a destination, much of the flow along St. Anne's Street and Sarria Street has Valletta as its origin or destination (sometimes coupled with lack of turn back opportunities). The effect is to promote a severance of the community, with reliance on unattractive subways, and an increase in unsatisfactory environmental conditions.
- 2.42 The disturbance caused by traffic is also paralleled by a similar disruption due to parked vehicles in the residential areas, or indeed in any space that happens to be available and into which a vehicle can be slotted. Many of those parking are employed in nearby offices, although on occasions, heavier delivery vehicles associated with garage industries or industrial concerns are parked, sometimes blocking the street or causing damage to pavements.

2.50 Other Issues

- 2.51 Although Floriana has a wealth of attractive open space, particularly on the periphery, and a number of historic buildings and features, these are comparatively little known and the accessibility of the bastions is poor.
- 2.52 As in the case of Valletta, connections to both Grand Harbour and the Marsamxett waterfronts from Floriana are difficult and involve a substantial change in level.
- 2.53 The Grand Harbour waterfront is an important commercial area with considerable scope for improvement and re-use of sites and buildings; much of the Marsamxett side is occupied by the A.F.M. depot, the new Excelsior Hotel currently under construction, and the ferry terminal at Sa Maison. Public access is consequently very restricted and uninviting.

Strategy

The main elements of the Local Plan in respect of Floriana are therefore:

- to maintain the residential role of the town;
- to keep and enhance the open space provision;
- to reduce the severance of the community because of traffic;
- to keep transport options open for both long and shorter term consideration; and
- to strengthen the town's commercial and touristic opportunities.

Approach

'Maintaining a balance of residential to commercial uses' is important to ensure that Floriana does not become simply an office employment area, with housing gradually being displaced. Detrimental consequences for the overall housing stock and development pressure elsewhere, reduction in local services, increased journey to work, loss of vitality and character of the town would all result if this process were to continue unchecked. This problem demands a multi-faceted response, and hence policies have been evolved concerning change of use, the encouragement of residential development, and parking.

‘Improving the environment, especially along the main traffic routes’ also relates to the ‘comfort factor’ or ‘liveability’ of Floriana as a residential area. St. Anne Street in particular suffers from high volumes of traffic during peak hours, resulting in severance of the community, difficulties for pedestrians and shoppers, and dirt and pollution along what is also the main shopping street. These problems are also present, although to a much lesser extent, elsewhere. Whilst long term improvements will depend upon changes in the transport system and more effective testing and control of vehicle emissions, there are several initiatives which can be taken in the short term and at a local level, especially in relation to a ‘face-lift’ for the frontages along St. Anne Street.

‘Increasing the tourism potential’ of Floriana is an appropriate target, as the area boasts several interesting features and is often overlooked by those en route to Valletta. Scope exists for tourist trails based on the bastions and the Argotti Gardens.

‘Safeguarding and improving access to public open space’ refers to the considerable areas of public gardens and open space, including the bastions themselves and parts of the waterfront, which are a significant asset of the area but which are not always easily accessed by the public and consequently not enjoyed to the fullest. What is being sought is not necessarily a quantitative, but rather a qualitative improvement in facilities to serve the general area.

‘Keeping the quiet ‘feel’ of Floriana away from St. Anne Street, and ensuring the overall character of the area is maintained’ is an objective closely associated with the appropriate role of Floriana which, it is suggested, is not simply that of a commercial centre, but must include a firm residential base. It is intended that many of the policies should interlink to ensure that this aspect is given prominence.

‘Increasing access to the shoreline and ensuring the bastions are presented and displayed more effectively’ have been briefly mentioned, but they are of great importance in increasing the attractiveness of the area for both residents and visitors.

‘Reservation of a site for a ‘Park and Ride’ Project relates to conclusions reached in the Valletta/Floriana Transport Study, and emphasises once again the critical relationship between land use, accessibility and the continued prosperity of the peninsula. This has been further described in the Crown Works Horn Works Action Plan.

‘An indication of requirements relating to large redevelopment projects and the successful integration with the rest of Floriana’ demands attention because of the scale and impact of the potential proposals. One site relates to the Crown Works near Blata l-Bajda. The latter is complex because several proposals and possible schemes could affect the site, not all of them complementary. Options therefore need to be considered.

‘Seeking a strengthened commercial role compatible with the other aims of the Plan’ recognises that Floriana remains very much a commercial as well as a residential area, and that this aspect has to be taken into account over a range of policies.

GF01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement Policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Floriana Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

Relevant policies:
GS02.

The Urban Development Boundary is an important tool in ensuring that sprawl, coalescence of settlements, loss of open space and thus loss of identity are avoided, and more efficient use and recycling of existing land for development are promoted. Positive consideration to projects outside this boundary should only be given if these have been identified in this Plan, or as stipulated in Structure Plan policies.

GF02

Residential Re/development

Housing re/development and improvement in Floriana will be encouraged, particularly the use of vacant upper floors. The Planning Authority will therefore look sympathetically on schemes involving structural alterations, change of use or complete redevelopment to provide residential accommodation, as long as it is satisfied that every effort has been made to save the original structures.

Relevant policies:
GS02,
GF03.

As in the case of Valletta, Floriana has lost population over recent years. Two important sources of pressure encouraging migration have been the increasing attractiveness of Floriana as an office centre, with lower costs than Valletta, and the lack of incentive to landlords to undertake refurbishment of residential buildings. Parking has also become more difficult for residents.

The reasoning behind this policy is to give support to the bringing forward of re/development schemes, and to encourage the reuse of vacant upper floors for residential purposes. The Planning Authority will look favourably on schemes (including financial incentives) designed to increase the residential base of the area, especially if they originate from the responsible government authorities.

GF03

Housing Improvement Action Area

The Balzunetta area of Floriana adjacent to the Xaghra is designated as a Housing Improvement Action Area. The Planning Authority will be available to assist and will encourage the appropriate Agency or Authority in formulating fiscal and other schemes to encourage residents and owners to upgrade the properties in the area shown in the Inset Map. This policy does not exclude residential redevelopment from taking place.

Non residential uses will also be permitted subject to the provisions of policy GS09.

Relevant policies:
*GS05, GS09,
GF02.*

In consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the Housing Authority, it may be possible to give a Housing Improvement Action Area status to part of Floriana, where fiscal and other incentives would be available for the improvement and modernisation of property, in accordance with specified works.

The incentives could include help in lift provision, tax rebates, or grants in the form of a percentage of the cost of eligible works, paid retrospectively on completion, inspection and certification by a competent, independent authority. Another possibility would be the availability of ‘soft’ loans for specified housing-related work. The measures could also include support for the purchase or use of adjacent unused properties in order to be able to attain modern standards of accommodation.

GF04

Road Hierarchy

The following main elements of the road hierarchy are adopted and are shown on the Transport Strategy Map.

Arterial Road:
Triq Nazzjonali (part)

Distributor Roads:
Triq Pinto (part); Triq Sant’ Anna; Triq Nazzjonali (part).

Local Access Roads:
Triq L-Assedju L-Kbir; Triq Gerolimo Cassar; It-Telgha tal-Krucifiss; Triq San Frangisk (part); Triq Vilhena (part); Vjal Nelson; Il-Foss ta’ Notre Dame; Triq Sa Maison; Triq Flagstone Wharf leading to Triq Sant’ Anna.

Access Only Roads:
All others not mentioned above.

The hierarchy will be used as the basis for deciding road and junction improvements, including traffic management schemes.

Relevant policies:
*GT01, 06, 09,
GF05, 06, 09.*

The Structure Plan requires that local plans should ‘put forward proposals for the improvement of conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and vehicle parking.’ Defining the road network, particularly in view of the redevelopment of the public office enclave, is a necessary prerequisite of this process. The above classification will give direction to traffic proposals and management schemes.

GF05

Junction Improvements

The junctions shown on Map 11 will be improved, and no development will be permitted which could inhibit their upgrading. These improvements are needed as part of the implementation of the Valletta/Floriana Transport strategy, particularly the Park and Ride proposals, and in association with the development of the Public Office Enclave. The improvements will be at grade, and will be designed to take account of the sensitivity of surrounding areas.

In order to ensure good access to the proposed ‘Park and Ride’ (P&R) site at Crown Works, and provide a direct link towards Valetta for the P&R buses, junction improvement along Triq Nazzjonali and Triq Sant’ Anna are required.

Relevant policies:

*GN03,
GT01,02,09,13,14,
GE02,
GV07,
GF04,06,09,16,
GM09.*

Studies have shown that the development of the Public Office Enclave and associated facilities will have a major impact on the road system and modifications and improvements will be necessary. The improvements listed above are taken from a more detailed consideration of the likely traffic impact of policies related to intensification of use and to transportation, and will be subject to further detailed proposals. In the meantime, it is important to ensure that no development is permitted which would preclude or inhibit the necessary improvements from being undertaken.

GF06

Traffic Management Measures

Traffic calming and other measures, including new traffic flows in some streets, will be introduced in those streets where the pedestrian needs are to be safeguarded and through traffic is to be discouraged, but where traffic flow is still essential. These include:

- Triq Il-Kappucini,
- Triq Sarria,
- Pjazza San Kalcidonju,
- Triq V. Dimech,
- Triq Il-Mall

Map 11 shows the general traffic management system proposed for Floriana.

Relevant policies:

*GT04,06,09,14,
GF04,05.*

Through traffic should be channelled onto suitable routes, and where this is not the case, traffic calming measures should be introduced. The main scope relates to the redevelopment of the site for the Public Office Enclave, and the changes which this will bring about. The principal problem areas are identified above; others may exist and these will be kept under review, particularly as redevelopment of the Public Office Enclave progresses.

GF07

Car Parking

In Floriana, a parking regime will be established in collaboration with the Local Council, the Traffic Control Board, and other national agencies as required.

A residents parking scheme will also be introduced. This scheme will eventually be extended to include the whole of the residential zone as indicated in the Inset Map.

The Planning Authority will only consider applications for further development at the site of the M.C.P. car park, provided it is aimed at increasing the parking spaces at the site and if it is fully satisfied that existing structures causing a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of this important open space are removed or modified to become more acceptable within their context. There may be scope to consider also the location of a compatible use which does not detract from the vitality of Valetta whilst retaining the primary use of the site as a car parking facility. The Planning Authority will impose all necessary conditions (including submission of a bond) it deems fit to ensure implementation of a scheme aimed at enhancing the environment of the area.

Relevant policies:

*GS05,
GT10.*

The problems associated with the expansion of office development in the Floriana area include an increased demand for car parking spaces, to the point where residents often find it difficult to park near their homes.

This situation is likely to deteriorate unless measures are introduced to assist residents, to restrain casual parking by visitors (as indicated in the Structure Plan) and to improve public transport. The introduction of residents' parking is a vital component in an integrated approach towards solving the overall transport and access problems of the peninsula.

Structures associated with the M.C.P. car park are currently causing a negative visual impact. In the event of an application for further intensification of the development. The Planning Authority will ensure that this situation is rectified before further permission for development is approved. It will also ensure guarantee that new additions will be an improvement on the existing situation.

GF08

Gozo Ferry Terminal, Sa Maison

Upgrading of the Gozo Ferry Terminal at Sa Maison to provide improved facilities, including a dedicated parking area off the main road for ferry traffic, will be sought.

Relevant policies:

*GT10,14,
GC04,
GF09,
GF14.*

The ferry terminal at Sa Maison is cramped and poorly organised. Heavy goods vehicles frequently park on the adjoining road. Busy summer schedules, which include a service to Sicily, result in traffic backing up on the distributor road junction and on to 'x-Xatt tal-Pieta'.

There is little likelihood of the development of an alternative ferry berth suitable for domestic services being available elsewhere, at least during the Plan period. It is therefore proposed that measures should be taken to improve and rationalise the existing facilities, which could include extension to the quay apron.

GF09

Improved Road Junction, Sa Maison

Improvements to the road junction at Sa Maison (Triq ix-Xatt tal-Pieta/Triq W. Bonnici) will be required, particularly in connection with any redevelopment of the Public Office Enclave site and the Gozo Ferry Terminal.

Relevant policies:

*GN03,
GT02,09,13,14,
GE02,
GC04,
GF04,05,08,14.*

The existing landscaped area at Sa Maison is located within the distributor road and serves as a roundabout. This discourages totally its use by pedestrians. The junction must be redesigned to facilitate pedestrian movement between the area, the waterfront and the wooded area nearby.

An area for boat storage and maintenance will be safeguarded, together with the provision of a small slipway. A new road alignment would therefore be needed. If the proposals for the redevelopment of nearby land at Floriana go ahead (including the site for the Public Office Enclave) then improvements to the road junction and Triq Sa' Maison will be necessary in any case. This work will have to take account of the operation of the ferry, and in particular, the requirement for heavy vehicle parking and manoeuvring.

GF10

UCA Design Approach

Floriana, including the waterfront zones, has been declared as an Urban Conservation Area. In accordance with approved design guidelines for such areas, unless otherwise specified in a development brief, the scale, massing, fenestration, relationship of solid to void, ornamentation and overall rhythm of frontage elevations should follow the discipline and pattern established by the existing street blocks. In most instances, the use of traditional materials will be required.

<p>Relevant policies: <i>GN05,</i> <i>GH01,</i> <i>GF11,12,18.</i></p>

All of Floriana is a declared Urban Conservation Area, acknowledging its importance in historical and townscape terms. Maintaining the historical and architectural character of Floriana is therefore an important consideration.

Particular care must be exercised in bringing forward development and design proposals. It is essential that the character imparted by the buildings and open spaces is maintained and enhanced.

Such an approach must however recognise that the place is a living and vibrant community, with changing needs. The policy does not therefore seek to deny residents' genuine aspirations, nor to prevent building improvements through good design. It does however require that development proposals pay attention to the architectural tradition which is alive - though under threat - in the area, without necessarily following slavishly every feature. Some scope for individual interpretation is therefore possible.

GF11

Building Heights

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible approach which will take account of the following criteria:

- the Urban Conservation Area status;
- the streetscape through a consideration of the buildings on the same facade and those on facades on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;
- the general massing of the building;
- the roofscape;
- the topographical features and consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);
- the skyline when seen from outside the site area;
- any other relevant planning consideration.

<p>Relevant policies: <i>GH01,</i> <i>GF10.</i></p>
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Due to the historic nature of Floriana, and the marked differences in storey heights between old and new buildings, it is considered a very difficult task to try and give a blanket height for the town. The approach adopted in this instance is to determine requests in changes in heights on an individual basis.

This assessment, however, has to consider all the relevant planning issues, including those mentioned in the policy, and other relevant planning guidance already issued by the Planning Authority. No development will be permitted which detracts from views of and from the UCA.

GF12

Heritage Trail

A Heritage Trail will be established, following mainly the lines of fortifications and other important buildings. No development will be permitted which would prejudice the establishment of this ‘Heritage Trail,’ particularly in respect of the Bastions and their immediate environs. Any existing underground tunnels will be identified and conserved. The introduction of pedestrian footbridges which avoid the problem of crossing busy roads ‘at grade,’ is strongly supported.

Relevant policies:

*GN04,05,
GH01,02,03,05,06,
GC01,
GD11,
GV09,GF10,16,20.*

Although Floriana is not generally regarded as being of particular tourism interest, it includes several attractive features worthy of wider exposure and presentation. Amongst these are the bastions and other fortifications, the associated gardens, and the magnificent views of both Grand and Marsamxett Harbours which can be obtained.

Like Valletta, Floriana also contains a number of underground tunnels and passageways, and their proper identification, rehabilitation and potential for reuse should be investigated. At the moment, other features are usually only seen in isolation, a series of disjointed sections, lacking continuity. A ‘Heritage Trail’ would enable the fortifications to be appreciated as a whole, and allow the development of a series of interlinked attractions.

In order to enable a ‘circular’ route to be achieved, and to avoid disruption of the trail because of changes in level and traffic, it is proposed that at least two pedestrian footbridges would be required in Floriana. The priority and most important is at Triq Nazzjonali in the vicinity of Pjazza Robert Sammut. This would follow the alignment of the Inner Bastions, and would enable their continuity to be appreciated. It would demand a structure of the highest design standard, effectively marking the entrance to Floriana proper. An international engineering/architectural competition might be one way of producing a wide range and high standard of solutions. Another footbridge could also be introduced between Harper Lane and King George V recreational area, crossing the busy Crucifix Hill.

GF13

Areas Of Open Space And Public Gardens

The critical importance of areas of open space and public gardens in and around Floriana is confirmed. No development which detracts from or jeopardises these areas will be permitted. A systematic rehabilitation, and tree planting scheme will be introduced, together with a management and maintenance programme.

Relevant policies:

*GC01,
GF14,17,20.*

Part of the character of Floriana, and of the overall approach to Valletta, derive from the areas of open space and gardens which are such important features both in the national and local context.

These need to be explicitly protected in policy terms, and their maintenance, upkeep and management given much greater prominence than hitherto, reflecting the role they play at a national level. In particular, maintenance facilities like reservoirs need to be provided. Trees used for planting should also be selected from species without destructive properties, given the locations as part of the bastions and the damage which the roots of certain species cause.

GF14

Jubilee Gardens Urban Park

Jubilee Gardens (the area bordered by Triq Indipendenza/Triq Sa Maison) will be the subject of an appropriate management scheme designed to ensure that the semi-natural

characteristics of this area are maintained. It will be developed into an urban park to cater for the Inner Harbour area, with parking and access being provided from the eastern part along Triq Sa Maison. Soft and hard landscaping works will be promoted. The series of underground galleries will be conserved.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,
GC01,07,
GF08,09,13,16,
GB12.*

A management plan is proposed for the substantial area known as Jubilee Gardens, emphasising the retention and enhancement of its 'semi-natural' characteristics as an area, and the cleaning, restoration and rehabilitation of the underground network of tunnels as part of the historical glaxis.

The zone will also include the ditch areas housing *ad hoc* buildings and structures (including nissen huts) occupied by Telemalta and the Police. This management plan needs to establish pedestrian links with the surrounding urban areas, together with provision of parking areas off Triq Sa Maison; make provision for hard landscaping and security, including lighting, decorative features, seating areas etc; and most importantly embark on a replanting programme, including diversification with other indigenous tree species.

GF15

Office Development In Floriana

Development of new office space in Floriana will only be permitted during the plan period if such a proposal meets the specific requirements as described below for the different areas as defined in Figure 10 of this plan:

- (A) Within all five distinct areas of Floriana (Waterfront, Residential Zone, Housing Improvement Action Areas, Public Office Enclave and the Tertiary Town Centre) as defined by this policy provided;
 - (i) The office space is intended to form part of a Ministry of Government Department; or
 - (ii) the proposed office involves the conservation, through adequate rehabilitation and reuse, of a historic building already scheduled under Grades 1 and 2 according to Structure Plan policy UCO7, or a building which merits to be so scheduled subject to the proviso in the latter case that the applicant consents to its scheduling; or
 - (iii) the proposed use is for a national office of a registered, non-profit, philanthropic organisation or where the proposed use is the administrative function of a national public organization or entity which can satisfactorily demonstrate that it is essential for it to be located in Floriana by reason of its function.
- (B) Within the Waterfront Area, policies GD09 and GP04 of this Plan shall apply;
- (C) Within the Residential Areas and Housing Improvement Area, the proposal falls within one of the following categories:

- i) the proposed office would result in the utilization of an existing tenement having a floor space of not more than 50sqm, or
- ii) where the proposed office is :
 - Located in an apartment block of two or more residential units which are partly or fully vacant; and
 - cumulatively the proposed office space does not exceed 50% of the floor space of the apartment block where the block consists of up to two units and 1/3 (one third) of the floorspace of the apartment block where the block consists of more than two units; and
 - preferably the office space is provided with a separate access from the residential units; and
 - proof is provided that the unit being converted has been vacant; and

planning gain is provided, as applicable in the circumstances, in the form of:

- making the edifice structurally sound;
- an unoccupied dwelling is made available for habitation, and
- rendering the edifice accessible (preferably through the provision of a lift, even if it means the loss of some floor space for the provision of the lift shaft).

(D) Within the Public Office Enclave Policy GF16 applies in relation to public offices.

(E) Within the Tertiary Town Centre:

- (i) the proposed development results from the relocation of an established office use in Floriana, as long as:
 - the original office use has a permitted development consent; and
 - if being relocated from the residential area, a private legal agreement is entered into with the Planning Authority renouncing the current established use of the building or the part of a building from which the use is being relocated.
- (ii) no additional office floorspaces will be permitted on upper floors (except for offices falling under (A) above).

Relevant policies:
*GP04, GD09, GV24,
GF16, GM15.*

Structure Plan policy COM 2 is very clear in controlling further private office development in Valletta and Floriana, and relates this control to an improved transport situation.

The Park & Ride Proposal and the Transport Strategy (including new parking regime for Valletta and Floriana) will address the traffic access problem for Floriana, and given that both actions have been endorsed by Government this policy is providing relaxation on the previous controls of new office space in Floriana.

Residents still complain that they are unable to find parking places, commuters complain that no suitable parking facilities exist, and most importantly, improvements in public transport have not been sufficient to offer an alternative to the use of the private car. This situation is being addressed through a number of initiatives such as the Park & Ride Proposal for which an Action Plan aimed at facilitating its implementation has been approved, and the adoption by Government of a Transport Strategy.

Public transport improvements are also necessary to sustain public sector offices, which cause the same, if not worse, transport problems than private offices. With the increase in public sector offices envisaged in the Public Office Enclave in Floriana, in line with the general

recommendations of policy COM 1, approval of further public sector office space in Floriana is therefore generally discouraged.

This policy, however, does provide for exceptions to this prohibition, which will aid in the achievement of other objectives in this Plan or in the Structure Plan. The first instance relates to the provisions in policy GD09, which permits offices related to port uses which need to be located in this area. The second exception concerns Ministries which, in accordance with Structure Plan strategy, need to be located in Floriana. Registered, philanthropic organisations serve a valuable social function, and may require a central location. Offices for these organisations are similarly considered as an appropriate exemption from the prohibition. Office development can also be a vital source of investment necessary to upgrade and conserve historic buildings which otherwise would remain dilapidated.

Thirdly, permission for office development may also be granted in the Primary Town Centre and the Residential Zone and the Housing Improvement Action Area provided strict criteria are met. Office location in Floriana is contributing to the decline in the residential population, and so as to reduce further residential displacement, this policy protects the Residential Zone and the Housing Improvement Action Areas as identified in Figure 10 of this Plan by strictly controlling further new offices here.

GF16

Public Office Enclave

The existing public office zone will be improved and upgraded. Where acceptable, public office floorspace will also be increased. A development brief will be prepared for the site identified in the Inset Map. This brief will be expected to give particular consideration to transportation and to visual aspects. The eventual scheme will be subject to a Traffic Impact Statement (TIS). The development brief will be approved by the Planning Authority and will also include the following requirements:

- (i) office accommodation for government departments interfacing with the public, together with other public sector offices as necessary;**
- (ii) safeguarding of the existing cemetery;**
- (iii) make proposals regarding the Public Library;**
- (iv) inclusion of public walkways with adequate linkages to Valletta and Floriana;**
- (v) restoration of the bastions and provision for the proposed Heritage Trail;**
- (vi) a landscaping and planting scheme;**
- (vii) enhancement in amenity, and improvement of public open space; and**
- (viii) on site parking in accordance with adopted standards.**

For the site of the Inland Revenue Block as identified in Figure 10, the Planning Authority may consider development prior to the formulation of the Development Brief for the Public Office Enclave as identified above, provided;

- (a) the use remains within the framework established by this policy in (i) above;**
- (b) a landscaping and planting scheme is submitted;**
- (c) enhancement in amenity and improvement of public open space is planned for;**
- (d) onsite parking is provided in accordance with adopted standard conditions for the increase in office floorspace on this site;**
- (e) the design of the building should take into account the heritage value of the site within an Urban Conservation Area and especially its relation to existing buildings on Triq V Dimech and adjacent open spaces; and**
- (f) the project includes proposals for the re-alignment of the local access road as shown on Figure 11.**

Relevant policies:

*GN01,03,04,
GT09,10,14, GD09,
GV02,07,
GF05,12,14,15.*

The area previously known as Beltissebh is already established as an area for public office use. However, it needs a substantial amount of improvement. Traffic circulation within the site is problematic, and there is no provision of any landscaping.

The streets surrounding the site are not pedestrian friendly and the lack of linkages with neighbouring areas isolates the site in a physical manner. Space is not always used effectively and there is scope for redevelopment.

The project as proposed above cannot be encompassed in a single local plan policy. A full development brief is therefore required which sets out more precisely what is being sought. To avoid any misunderstanding, and to emphasise those elements of the development which are regarded as essential, this policy also indicates the requirements which the development will be expected to meet. It stresses that the most important physical impacts of this project are those of transportation and visual amenity. Due to its location, this project will have effects on the present road network, hence the requirement for a TIS. The prominence, elevation, heritage and proximity to Valletta of the site also render it critical in visual terms, and this aspect must be studied in depth before any proposals are made.

The present site of the Public Library is certainly not the best of locations. The brief must safeguard the use and investigate opportunities elsewhere, preferably on a more accessible site in the Capital City.

It is recognised that for urban design considerations, reorganisation of public space is important. However, the brief has to ensure that there is increase in amenity through quality improvement in space accessible to the public.

Due to specific circumstances relating to the site of the Inland Revenue Block, which necessitate immediate consideration for development, an exception has been introduced which excludes this site from the requirement of a Development Brief. The policy ensures through the appropriate conditions indicated above that the immediate release of this site does not prejudice the preparation and implementation of the brief by requesting that the project remains within the overall framework set out for the brief. It is also a requirement that this project includes the transport infrastructure upgrading which will pave the way for the development of the whole Public Office Enclave site. The release of this site should not be interpreted as an abandonment of the principle of a holistic planning approach for the whole area.

GF17

Independence Arena

The open character of the former parade grounds at Independence Arena will be maintained, for social, recreational and historical reasons. No development which jeopardises this position will be approved, and no constructions will be allowed above the nearest road level on any point of the area shown in the Inset Map. Within these parameters, the area will however be subject to improvements in terms of the amount and quality of sports facilities provision.

Relevant policies:

*GC01,02,
GF13.*

The future development of this open area in Floriana has been the subject of much debate before and during the preparation of this Plan. This was the result of much uncertainty regarding whether this area would be physically developed as part of the proposed upgrading of the office enclave.

The Local Plan proposals aim at attaining both the improvements and increase in office space needed in the public office enclave, and the protection of this open space which is so

appreciated by the local community. In this way it reaches a balance between national requirements and local aspirations.

The policy therefore safeguards the open space characteristics of this area, and prohibits the erection of any constructions above street level. Better utilisation of the present spectator stand is however encouraged. This could be used to house outdoor sports activities at the same level of the football pitch, as long as the other provisions of this policy are observed.

GF18

Ex-Trade School Building, The Mall

The ex-trade school building at the far end of The Mall will be redeveloped into a prestige building, with its main use remaining for public administrative purposes. Use as the Local Council offices will be encouraged, and the design will be expected to include public passage between The Mall and Argotti Gardens, respect the relationship to other buildings, the Urban Conservation Area, and also the status of its users.

Relevant policies:

*GH01, GT09,
GD09, GF10.*

This building is very prominently located between The Mall and Argotti Gardens. Originally intended as an educational establishment, it is now used for administration purposes by the local council, together with other public offices.

Indications exist that this building is in need of structural improvements. This together with a number of other reasons suggest the need for total redevelopment. These reasons include the fact that it is not being used as originally intended; that its design does not respect the surrounding buildings and the UCA location; and also the need for the local council to have modern administrative accommodation which reflects the importance of local government.

GF19

Tertiary Town Centre

The Planning Authority has designated a Tertiary Town Centre for Floriana as identified on the Floriana Inset Map (Figure 10). (Refer to General Policy GD06).

Relevant policies:
GD06

The Strategy aims to reinforce the function of the designated centre for both food and non-food shopping. Within the Tertiary Town Centre the intention is to encourage the expansion and intensification of shopping facilities, resist the loss of shop units and floorspace, and resist any net loss of shop floorspace and frontage within redevelopment schemes. The Planning Authority will seek to promote the principle of pedestrianisation of St. Anne Street, subject to the necessary transportation assessments, to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

GF20

Crown Works/Horn Works Action Plan

An Action Plan has been prepared for the land between Triq Nazzjonali and Flagstone Wharf, encompassing the Crown Works and Horn Works areas as identified on the accompanying Inset Map. This site was identified for:

- i. A Park and Ride Project incorporating the Crown Works and Horn Works areas;**
- ii. A Carnival Centre Project located in the area behind Maltacom Corporation referred to as the ex-Belt il-Hazna area;**
- iii. A general upgrading of the Heritage Trail in the area including the promotion of a Heritage Trail;**
- iv. A site for an Enemalta Distribution Centre.**

Relevant policies:

*GN01,02,03,04,
GS10,
GH01,02,04,05,
GT07,09,10,14,
GC01,
GD10,11,
GF12,13.*

The total site area at Crown Works/Horn Works covers some 9.3ha (including some existing access roads). It is presently an under-utilised area of historical importance which could be upgraded. The site is strategically located on the main road system, and is highly visible from the Cottonera side of the Grand Harbour. For these reasons, the site is likely to appeal to a range of uses. Large scale retail development or retail warehousing would not however be considered appropriate, considering the heritage value of the area, nor would industrial uses inappropriately located on site.

The Valletta Transport Study had identified part of this area behind the bastion walls as an appropriate site for a 'Park and Ride' facility, and this conclusion is accepted by the Local Plan. It is therefore necessary to earmark land for this use, development of which is expected to occur in the shorter term. This facility could result in about 950 parking spaces.

Prior to the Valletta Transport Study, the site had also been proposed for the location of a Carnival Centre. The concept of a Carnival Exhibition Centre with underlying float workshops, as identified in the Valletta Rehabilitation Project 1993 report is still acceptable. However, the location is not acceptable for heritage conservation reasons. The Local Plan therefore stresses that such a project is located outside the fortifications of the Valletta/Floriana peninsula. Such a site has been identified at the ex-Belt il-Hazna area, as this site is more suited to the project, being more visible from the main roads.

Map 10

Map 11

Marsa Policies

3.00 Marsa

3.10 Introduction

- 3.11 Marsa has been traditionally associated with the development of the Grand Harbour as a port and as a manufacturing area, and its present role reflects these links.
- 3.12 Whilst the town retains a significant residential component and has a distinctive and attractive centre, it has experienced the highest percentage loss of population of any settlement over the last ten years, with a current population of just under 5300 inhabitants, compared to almost 10,000 in the sixties.
- 3.13 In part this has resulted from what is perceived as poor environmental conditions occasioned by the power station and other industrial operations occurring nearby.
- 3.14 The location of Marsa adjacent to the arterial road network and the presence of potential sites for development and improvement does however introduce substantial scope for beneficial change.

Strategy

There are four strands to the Local Plan strategy in respect of Marsa. These are:

- to achieve a general improvement in the environment,
- to amplify Structure Plan policies in respect of Marsa Park, related to the commercial development of this pivotal location,
- to improve the efficiency and appearance of the port area,
- to separate industrial activities from residential areas and thereby help to reverse the decline of the latter.

Approach

The approach adopted in the Local Plan is to seek the revitalisation of the old centre and residential areas of Marsa; to designate key ‘opportunity sites’ for development and improvement, including the area around the ‘Menqa;’ and to address issues of traffic, public transport and the ‘view from the road.’ In all of these matters, the basic theme of environmental improvement is evident.

GM01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement Policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Marsa Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

Relevant policies: <i>GS02,</i> <i>GM02.</i>	The Urban Development Boundary is an important tool in ensuring that sprawl, coalescence of settlements, loss of open space and thus loss of identity are avoided, and more efficient use and recycling of existing land for development are promoted. Positive consideration to projects outside this boundary should only be given if these have been identified in this Plan, or as stipulated in Structure Plan policies.
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GM02

Building Height Limitations

The building height limitation for Marsa is given in the Height Limitations Map. In general, the height limitation is of three floors throughout, but different height limits are also designated in particular areas as indicated. Where a five storey frontage height limitation is indicated, this will apply only at waterfront level.

Where opportunities of planning gain exist, the Planning Authority will consider increasing the height limitation of the block at Il-Moll ta' l-Injam indicated on Figure 13 to four floors with a three floor frontage on the residential part at the back on Triq Fra Diegu. Any proposed development fronting il-Moll ta' l-Injam and il-Moll tac-Cangatura (Flagstone Wharf) is to retain the existing facades and restore the same facades.

Relevant policies: <i>GM01.</i>	The type of building uses and the number of changes already taking place in Marsa justify the three floor designation. However, the principle of trying to maximise the efficient use of land has resulted in more relaxed limitations in particular parts. Usually these are the areas where redevelopment is expected to occur, but this is not a necessary condition for intensifying the use of these sites.
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The Planning Authority may also refuse applications which, although observing the height limitation, nevertheless create “bad neighbour” problems or detract from the amenity of the area, when the height and detailed design or use are considered together. Typical problems might be a loss of privacy to neighbouring dwellings, overlooking, or visual impact.

A block between Triq Fra Diegu and Il-Moll ta' l-Injam is also being earmarked as a possibility for implementing concepts of planning gain. An additional storey will be considered by the Planning Authority only if proposals within this block include guarantees for the financing and/or implementation of works which result in improvements in the locality in line with the objectives and policies of this Plan. An example in this case would be the upgrading of the waterfront area itself, but such planning gain may also be related to other areas, such as the removal of accretions fronting the bastions in other localities. The amount of contribution towards such improvements will be in proportion to the scale and magnitude of the proposed development.

GM03

Road Hierarchy

The road hierarchy, taking into account proposed changes in the network, is shown on the Transport Strategy Map. Priorities for upgrading and resurfacing will depend on the state of the existing road; otherwise, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme (see also general policy GT01).

Distributor Roads:

Triq Belt il-Hazna; Triq is-Salib tal-Marsa (part); Il-Moll tal-Hatab; Coal Wharf; Spencer Hill (part); Triq it-Tigrija; Triq it-Tromba; Triq Pinto.

Local Access Roads:

Triq is-Salib tal-Marsa (part); Triq il-Marsa; Triq Isouard; Triq Stiefnu Zerafa, Xatt il-Mollijiet (part); Triq il-Biccerija; Triq Troubridge; Triq Is-Sajjieda; Flagstone Wharf; Spencer Gardens Hill; It-Telgha tar-Rahal Gdid.

Access Only Roads:

All others not mentioned above.

<p>Relevant policies: <i>GT01,06,09, GM04,07,08.</i></p>	<p>The Structure Plan requires that local plans should ‘put forward proposals for the improvement of conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and vehicle parking.’ Defining the road network is a necessary part of that process, and will be used as the basis for new schemes and maintenance priorities.</p>
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GM04

Selected Traffic Calming Initiatives

In accordance with general policy GT04, traffic calming measures will be introduced where appropriate. Locations selected for priority consideration are Triq Isouard/Triq Stiefnu Zerafa in the area south of St. Joseph’s High Road; Triq is-Salib (both ends); and Triq il-Marsa.

<p>Relevant policies: <i>GT04,06,09,14, GM03,06,07.</i></p>	<p>Triq Isouard/Zerafa and Triq il-Marsa are interconnecting local routes, Triq Isouard/Zerafa forming a ‘spine’ through the area to the south of St. Joseph’s High Road. Whilst both are residential streets, they can become very busy during peak periods, often carrying traffic seeking to avoid other routes rather than needing to be in the area. The use of these streets as alternative through routes should be deterred.</p>
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Triq il-Salib tends to attract traffic related to commercial premises at its southern end. It also forms a central space in the town, being almost 20m wide in places, and traffic calming is appropriate for this reason. It is likely that, with the eventual redevelopment of ‘Marsa Park,’ traffic would in future attempt to access the development from this side unless steps were taken to deter this approach. Hence, calming is appropriate for general environmental and traffic reasons.

GM05

Pedestrian Links

A fundamental objective of the Local Plan in respect of the Marsa area is to reduce severance of the community caused by the presence of a principal arterial route carrying heavy volumes of traffic. The Planning Authority will therefore seek the construction of appropriate pedestrian footbridge or underpass links at points along Triq Nazzjonali/Dicembru Tlettax as follows, between:

- ‘Marsa Park’ and the Racetrack/Ta’ Ceppuna area;
- Triq il-Jum and Triq L-Ghabex;
- Triq Ix-Xemxija and Triq Il-Gerrejja;
- Triq Zerafa and Triq Il-Qaddiefa; and
- Triq Il-Pitkali and Triq Is-Salib.

These links will include provision for use by cyclists where appropriate, as part of a cycleway route system.

Connections will also be made to long distance ‘recreational’ footpaths, as indicated in the Structure Plan.

Relevant policies: <i>GN04, GT09,14, GM07,09,14,15,16.</i>	Part of the traditional Marsa residential area is divided from the centre of the village by the arterial road, as is the horse racing track and other facilities at Ta’ Ceppuna.
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An intention of the Plan is to seek to assist community development and to help existing services to be used efficiently. Here, this can only be achieved through better, safer and more direct physical links. It is intended to promote these by both direct Government and/or local council intervention, and by seeking to negotiate provision as part of any major development scheme.

GM06

Ta’ Ceppuna Access Road

Traffic control measures will be introduced to give priority to pedestrians and to discourage the use of Ta’ Ceppuna Access Road as a short cut for traffic between Triq Aldo Moro and Qormi.

Relevant policies: <i>GT04,09, GM04,11.</i>	The Ta’ Ceppuna Access Road is the entry point to a variety of sports and social facilities located at Ta’ Ceppuna, and is also a popular tree-lined lane for horse riders, joggers and others.
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The Local Plan supports the retention of these facilities in this location and moreover envisages the road as an important link in a long distance footpath extending to Wied il-Kbir and beyond. However, the road is sometimes used by drivers as a short cut, often causing a potentially dangerous situation. This policy is intended to eliminate traffic problems and to emphasise that the use of this route by pedestrians will be given priority.

GM07

Improvement Of Junction - Triq Nazzjonali/Triq Is-Salib

In accordance with policy GT02, the junction of Triq Nazzjonali and Triq Is-Salib will be improved to make access to Triq Nazzjonali safer from the direction of Flagstone Wharf.

Relevant policies: <i>GT01,02,09, GM03,04,05,09,10.</i>	This junction is located at a point on Triq Nazzjonali where traffic speeds are usually high, and immediately prior to a weaving zone for vehicles wishing to turn right to access the eastbound carriageway towards Valletta.
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The existing sliproad crosses two traffic routes in an impossible space with virtually no sightlines. Manoeuvring is made more hazardous by the insistence of some drivers to make illegal left turns on to Triq Nazzjonali from Triq Is-Salib. It is therefore important to remove this egress point from Triq Nazzjonali and thus to rationalise this junction. Measures to encourage the re-routing of buses would also be assisted by works here.

GM08

Albert Town - Traffic System

The traffic system for Albert Town is indicated on the Transport Strategy Map. The key features are:

- the closure of the junctions at Triq Il-Labour/Triq Pricep Bertu area;
- entry to and exit from Albert Town strictly through Xatt tal-Mollijiet or Triq Troubridge;
- introduction of traffic calming measures.

Relevant policies:
GM03,13,21.

As indicated above, Albert Town is designated for long term development as an industrial area. However, the Plan recognises that a community of residents exists and that conditions for them should be made as acceptable as possible.

A principal difficulty for the residents is traffic, and this policy seeks to remove through traffic in order to improve the environment and general safety. Egress on to Triq Il-Labour also presents a danger to motorists, besides contributing to significant congestion during peak hours.

GM09

Changes To Bus Routes

In order to promote improvements in public transport, and to facilitate better and safer access to both residents and commuters, the Planning Authority will support:

- the re-routing of public transport through the centre of Marsa;
- the eventual development of a public transport interchange at Marsa Park in accordance with policy COM 4 of the Structure Plan; and
- the introduction of special ‘race day’ minibus services from neighbouring areas to the horse racing track, and any necessary bus parking facilities.

Relevant policies:
*GT05,06, GV07,
GF05,
GM05,07,15,16,22.*

Currently, many bus routes serving the south and east of Malta follow Triq Nazzjonali but do not enter Marsa itself, with the result that residents are usually faced with either a long, indirect walk or a short, dangerous crossing of the arterial road in order to catch a bus or to get home.

This situation is exacerbated by the change in level between Triq Nazzjonali and most parts of Marsa. It is therefore considered appropriate to seek the re-routing of south and east bound buses through the centre of Marsa, which is quite possible to achieve, and in the longer term, to press for the establishment of a public transport interchange in this strategically significant area. Policy GM15 already indicates a suitable location for the latter.

GM10

Urban Conservation Area

The Urban Conservation Area is defined as shown on the Inset Map. References to Urban Conservation Areas in Structure Plan policies are applicable to this area. The Marsa Urban Conservation Area is based on Triq Zerafa, Triq San Tumas, Triq Balbi, Triq Is-Salib, Triq Simpson, Triq Is-Sajjieda, It-Telgha Tal-Gizwiti, and Triq Il-Kapuccini.

The Planning Authority will consider applications for development on an extended part of the green area next to the parish church, as shown on Figure 12, as long as the public open space indicated is created as part of the development. The public open space should not be less than 30% of the total site area, apart from the 6m side curtilage with the parish church. Any proposal should respect the UCA status of the site and the presence of the church itself.

Relevant policies:

GN05,
GH01,
GM07.

All Conservation Areas have seen the introduction of modern additions - buildings or detailing - insensitive to their context. Nevertheless, they have managed to retain most of their attractive qualities and major townscape elements. Designation is intended to prevent further erosion of these qualities and to influence and promote design solutions which draw their inspiration from the best traditions of the particular street or area.

The site next to the parish church is currently vacant as it has a 'Green Area' designation in the Temporary Provisions Schemes. This site is surrounded by residential development, with backyards overlooking it. It presents a negative aesthetic effect. This site has development potential which should not be inhibited by the Plan, and can be designed to improve the ambience of the area. Therefore the developable footprint of this vacant site has been increased as a possibility for implementing concepts of planning gain. This increased footprint will only be considered if proposals within the area include guarantees for the financing and/or implementation of works on the embellishment of the adjacent public open space. The total remaining public open space, apart from the side curtilage with the parish church should not be less than 30% of the total developable area.

GM11

Site Of Scientific Importance

An area of geological importance has been identified as indicated on the Inset Map. Any works proposed to be carried out on or in the vicinity of this area which require development permission must be assessed in relation to their effect upon the geological significance of the site. Dumping or significant excavation of material will not normally be acceptable.

Relevant policies:

GC01,02,06,
GE01,
GM06,12,14,15.

The 'Marsa Plain' is one of only two examples in the Maltese Islands of an extensive flood plain. It is of scientific significance in terms of hydrology, geomorphology and Quaternary palaeontology, and is classified as Level 2 under policy RCO 2 of the Structure Plan.

Whilst it is very unlikely that works on a major scale would be either contemplated or accepted, any development operations - which by definition include dumping and excavation of material - will be examined against the scientific importance of the site, as well as normal land use criteria.

GM12

Main Areas Of Open Space

The lands on either side of Triq Nazzjonali in the vicinity of the centre of Marsa (except for the aged persons' home site); at the eastern end of Triq il-Kapuccini; within the 'Marsa Park' Opportunity Area; and at Spencer Hill, as shown on the Marsa Inset Map, are designated as Areas of Open Space. Development of these areas for any purpose which is in conflict with their present use, that is for the enjoyment by the general public for outdoor recreation on a non-commercial basis, will not be permitted.

Relevant policies:

*GE02,
GM11,13,15,16.*

Population densities in the Grand Harbour area are high, and areas of open space available to the public for recreational purposes are limited. Although Ta' Ceppuna is close, and it is an intention of the Local Plan to make this area more accessible, space within the built up area for quiet leisure enjoyment is still limited.

The aim here is both to safeguard existing and potential areas of open space, and to designate new areas as appropriate. Once such areas have been identified and safeguarded, it will be important for the local council and for the Environment Department to co-operate in ensuring that the development and management of these areas is properly undertaken.

GM13

***Triq Aldo Moro/Triq il-Labour 'Corridor'
- Environmental Treatment***

As suggested in the Structure Plan, and in accordance with general policy GE02, improvement of the environmental corridor of Triq Aldo Moro/Triq il-Labour will be an important consideration in dealing with development applications in this location. Proposals will be expected to include appropriate landscaping and planting provision. Specific measures to be taken in association with any road improvement works include the provision of a service road and a planted strip parallel to the carriageway. In accordance with Structure Plan policy TEM 4, no parking will be allowed on the arterial road. Fruit and vegetable outlets will therefore be required to relocate away from the highway. Provision of recessed bus bays will be required, the location of which should be directly related to grade separated pedestrian crossings.

Relevant policies:

*GT01,13,
GE02,
GM08,12,15,21.*

Triq Aldo Moro is the principal link between the north and south of the Island, and the main route to the airport. It carries extremely high volumes of traffic. This road will be the subject of improvement over the coming years, to help traffic flow and make driving conditions safer.

Efforts will be made to reduce the impact of the road by planting and landscaping measures within its 'visual corridor,' particularly alongside the southbound carriageway. Control of fruit and vegetable outlets will be necessary, whose presence adjacent to the carriageway can give rise to unacceptable hazards. Opportunities to relocate outlets in well designed lay-bys on service or access roads may be possible. Recessed bus bays will be necessary, as the road will continue to form a major bus route, notwithstanding the diversion of any services through Marsa. The location of the bays should be well related to pedestrian routes, particularly major crossing points.

GM14

The Horse Racing Track Area

Measures to extend and improve the facilities for horse racing, equestrian sports and related activities in and around the present horse racing track will generally be supported, provided this is in the context of efforts to use the existing space efficiently and does not involve incremental, sporadic construction on what is a predominantly open area. Rationalisation of car parking would be expected. No objection would be raised to the 'dual use' of the car park, possibly in association with the relocation of the driving test centre from Floriana.

Horse racing related facilities (excluding Use Classes 12 to 16 of the Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) will generally be acceptable in the mixed use area immediately north of the stand, subject to Structure Plan policies BEN 1, 2 and 3.

Relevant policies:

*GT10,
GC01,
GM05,11.*

The horse racing track at Marsa is a very popular facility that draws large crowds on race days, and the potential exists to set up a centre for equestrian and similar pursuits. The main problems stem from car parking demand, and the demand for premises and facilities in the immediate vicinity for stables, riding schools and the like.

The local planning position is that concentration of equestrian facilities in the curtilage of the horse racing track makes sense, but that sporadic building development should be prohibited, as should the gradual incursion of equestrian uses into other areas, including sites on the other side of busy arterial roads and increasingly remote from the horse racing track itself. Another point which this policy specifically mentions and supports is the scope for the 'dual use' of car parks (which are largely deserted on most days). A suggestion is the possible use of the car park off Triq it-Tigrija as a replacement for the driving test centre at Floriana which may be affected by redevelopment proposals.

Facilities complementary to horse racing such as a riding school, polo pitch, paddocks, and stables will be acceptable in principle, but will require an outline application to indicate the disposition of these uses on the site, access and internal circulation, and the provision of car and coach parking. Other uses with a similar spectator appeal, for example greyhound racing, would also be considered appropriate in this location.

GM15

Marsa Park Development

In accordance with Structure Plan Policy COM 4, a Marsa Park Opportunity Area is identified on Inset Map, Figure 12. The Opportunity Area must include the following land uses as shown on the Development Strategy Map (Figure 15):

- a) Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) offices provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 60,000m²;
- b) Class 4 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) showrooms (display and sale of bulky goods) only provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 20,000m², and provided the goods do not fall within the following: pharmacy, butcher, grocer, bakery shop, stationery, ironmongery, giftware, toys, clothes, shoes, videos, hair and beauty items, haberdashery, confectionery, florist, electronics, spectacles);
- c) Class 11 and 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) light industry allocated for Small & Medium Enterprises, provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 16,000m²

- and Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) warehousing provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 10,000m²;
- d) a mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) dwellings aimed at addressing local needs provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 62,000m²;
 - e) supporting leisure and recreational amenities to the main uses (office, retail and residential) provided the floorspaces for these supporting amenities are proportionately reduced from the thresholds stipulated in (a), (b) and (d) above;
 - f) a public transport interchange facility, provided the site area is at least 8,800 m², as planning gain;
 - g) a landscaped recreational area for public use provided the site area is at least 7,500m², as planning gain, and
 - h) a peripheral landscaped zone (visual corridor) provided the site area is at least 13,500m², as planning gain.

The following criteria also apply:

1. The overall design of the development should reflect the importance of the main approach to Valletta, especially long distance views and the conurbation from the airport and the South of the Island. Consideration is to be given to the treatment of the visual corridor of the arterial road in terms of planting and landscaping.
2. The Planning Authority requires the adoption of the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) as defined in paragraph 1.7 of Development Control Policy and Design Guidelines 2000, for zones (a) to (d) indicated above, provided the criteria for the overall design mentioned in (1) above are respected.
3. The development should also include the redesign and improvement of the highway network in the proximity of the site.
4. The development should integrate with the town of Marsa and with the ‘Ta’ Ceppuna’ area through formal pedestrian links as shown on Development Strategy Map, Figure 15.
5. An outline development application for the whole of the Opportunity Area indicating the phasing of the project must be submitted to the Planning Authority. The basic infrastructure facilities, such as the upgrading of the highway network and the construction of car parks, must be taken in hand in a phased manner in accordance with guidance from a Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) and a Construction Management Plan approved by the Planning Authority.

Relevant policies:

*GN03,04,
GS05,06,07,10,
GT01,02,05,09,10,14,
GE02,06,
GC01,06,
GD06,07,09,10,
GV07,24,
GF15,
GM05,09,11,12,13.*

The area proposed as an ‘Opportunity Area’ is not used intensively and is partially affected by road proposals or by existing roads. It covers about 8.5ha. Incremental and sporadic development has resulted in an inefficient layout of the space which is available. The three ‘farms’ which operate in this area are currently surrounded by busy arterial roads. A number of garage workshops, storage buildings and yards exist; with about 12 houses on the northern edge of the site facing Triq it-Tigrija. A furniture showroom is located adjacent to Triq Aldo Moro. Several derelict areas are apparent.

The Structure Plan cites ‘Marsa Park’ as a general location for a ‘multi-use area in a woodland setting, outside the existing peripheral roads.’ This policy interprets more fully and adds detail to the Structure Plan proposal, aimed to positively enhance and upgrade the amenity of the area. The land use allocations are shown in diagrammatic form on the Marsa Park Development Strategy map.

Offices

The Structure Plan attempts to match numbers of households and jobs according to locality, in an effort to reduce travel demand and provide employment near where people are already living. It is envisaged that some 1000 - 1250 new office jobs should be available in the 'Marsa Park' area.

Approximately 60,000m² of floorspace are allocated for office use. It is expected that the office elements of the overall scheme will be grouped together on one part of the site, possibly in an internal courtyard type of arrangement. It is required that the offices, should be located on the western part of the site adjacent to the interchange, forming a peripheral barrier which visually protects the remainder of the area; and acts as a focal point. Vehicular access directly off the arterial road should be investigated.

Showroom Uses

About 20,000m² of floorspace are allocated for showrooms. As the site could attract entrepreneurs willing to invest in the larger type of retailing project, it is very important to prevent negative effects on existing Town Centres. Therefore, retail outlets (including those selling clothing, footwear and fashion goods) which could pose a threat to these established town centres will not be permitted.

Warehouse / Industry Site

About 16,000m² of floorspace have been allocated for SME industrial uses and 10,000m² floorspace for warehousing, , including a part which is currently occupied by a business concern. This area is on the eastern edge of the site and can be accessed from Triq it-Tomba, making it unnecessary for commercial traffic to enter the main part of the site. The proposal involves the utilisation of former highway land, no longer required as such because of the proposed change in alignment of Triq Dicembru Tlettax. The site is well located in terms of the arterial road network and the port, and is appropriate for these types of use.

Residential

A noticeable trend, which the Structure and Local Plan are both seeking to reverse, is the loss of residential population in the Grand Harbour area. Although heavy stress is laid upon improvement of existing dwellings, opportunities should also be considered for the construction of new residential accommodation within the defined Urban Development Boundary, to allow for loss of housing due to reduced densities, clearance of old property, and change of use.

About 62,000m² of floorspace are designated for residential use.. The residential use would be related to other proposals for the future of existing housing at Albert Town, as a long term relocation site for housing in that area, and to allow for general replacement of housing where clearance or improvement of property has caused the overall housing total to be reduced.

Since the Local Plan looks ahead for 10 years, it is clear that the long term future of Albert Town as a residential location is problematic. However, any serious proposals for eventual replacement of housing will be dependent on the availability of alternative sites in the general area of Marsa.

Transport Interchange

In view of the possible longer term reorganisation of bus services, and in accordance with Structure Plan Policy COM 4, an area of about 8,800m² has been reserved for a public transport interchange and the provision of ‘park and ride’ facilities, much of the parking to be underground. Pending its eventual use for this purpose, the site would be partially planted and retained for use as public open space.

Landscaping and Planting

The area boasts significant tree cover and the development will try to retain and augment these trees and shrubs. It is expected that the entire site will be the subject of a landscaping plan, the object being to provide shade and screening, and to help integrate the various components of the scheme. It should aim for a planting scheme which runs internally through the site, and which adds to the ‘visual corridor’ through which Triq Dicembru Tlettax is expected to follow. A planting strip of minimum width 15m will therefore be required along that edge of the site abutting the arterial road, and should contain large trees as well as appropriate ground covering shrubs. Landscaping works will also be related to the pedestrian route network running through the site.

An additional ‘buffer’ is proposed between the warehouse/industry area and the other commercial/residential allocation, comprising about 7,500m² of recreational area. This would be integrated into the formal pedestrian and landscaping network.

Pedestrian Links to Other Areas

To ensure that development of this area is well integrated with the town of Marsa and with the Ta’ Ceppuna area, it is proposed that formal pedestrian links are established with these locations, including, where necessary the provision of pedestrian bridges crossing Triq Dicembru Tlettax.

GM16

Site For Home For The Elderly

A site for a possible home for the elderly has been identified at Tas-Samra, on the Triq Zerafa frontage of the public garden, and is indicated on the Inset Map. Development for this purpose will require a pedestrian bridge link between this street and Triq Il-Qaddiefa, across Triq Dicembru 13.

<i>Relevant policies:</i>	According to the 1995 Census information, some 21% of the population of Marsa (5285 persons) is over 60, with about 15% over 65. The issue of accommodation for the elderly has arisen and this policy suggests a possible site for that purpose which is in Government ownership.
<i>GN01,04,</i>	
<i>GM05,09,12.</i>	

The site comprises an unbuilt frontage of Triq Zerafa, which forms part of a large ‘public garden’ of about 0.8ha sloping down towards Triq Dicembru 13. The location is well placed geographically between the centre of Marsa and Triq San Guzepp (Hamrun), but lacks a direct connection to Marsa over Triq Dicembru 13. As part of the general objective of reducing severance of the community, the Local Plan is proposing better linkages across arterial roads in the vicinity of Marsa/Marsa Park, Marsa/Hamrun and in other places. It is therefore expected that construction of a pedestrian bridge in association with this project would be given priority, so that an aged persons’ home would be convenient for communities on both sides of Triq Dicembru 13, and access to local facilities would be improved.

GM17

Il-Menqa

The Planning Authority will encourage development and environmental improvement in the area immediately surrounding il-Menqa, designated as an Opportunity Area and indicated on the Inset Map. Since il-Menqa lies within the Inner Harbour - the maritime commercial and industrial zone defined in General Policy GP02 of the Plan - development here is expected to be directly related or ancillary to the commercial use of the port. Proposals prejudicial to the continued role of the quay areas in the handling of commercial vessels will not be supported.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,03, GS07,10,
GE06, GP01,02,
GD03, GM18,22.*

The Menqa basin includes the Grand Harbour's main deep-water quay. Since the removal of the coal storage yard, about 1.3ha has become available adjacent to the quay. The effective area extends beyond this feature and encompasses a variety of buildings nearby, some of which are appropriate for redevelopment.

It is not the intention of this policy to specify in detail the nature or form of redevelopment in this area, beyond stressing the importance of il-Menqa as a working port area, the need to carry out environmental improvements, and maintenance of maximum public access to the waterfront. It is envisaged that redevelopment here will essentially be 'market led.' No objection in principle will be made to radical changes to or removal and replacement of existing buildings, providing such proposals are well justified and preferably, relate to an overall concept for the future of this area. A more appropriate townscape treatment of the quay apron at Il-Moll ta' l-Injam, the removal of residential units at Il-Moll tal-Braken, and the improvement of the area along Il-Moll tal-Pont are also being sought.

GM18

Transit Shed Area, Pinto Wharf

The area along Pinto Wharf, off Triq Pinto, will be retained for cargo handling and/or other port related uses, except for the ex-Gas Works area, in Marsa, on which an outline permit has already been approved as part of the Sea Passenger Terminal Project. No permission will be granted for change of use which would prejudice the carrying out of these functions.

Relevant policies:

*GS07,
GP01,02,04,
GM17.*

The area adjacent to Triq Pinto (Pinto Wharf) consists of some 4.5ha of flat land partially developed to provide transit sheds, Medigrain Ltd., grain handling silos and other storage and trailer parking facilities.

Although there is currently no suggestion that the site is being considered for alternative development, it is important that the area is safeguarded for port related use because of its good berthing capability and proximity to the major road network. The Planning Authority will therefore co-operate with the Maritime Authority in ensuring that in considering any future proposals for this area, its primacy for port-related use is maintained.

The site previously used by the Gas Works at Marsa has already been granted an outline permit as offices for the Malta Maritime Authority as part of the Sea Passenger Terminal Project. A surface car park near the transit shed was also approved as part of the outline permit for the Sea Passenger Terminal.

GM19

Zone Of Mixed Use

The area forming a broad arc from Triq is-Sebh towards Triq il-Kappucini and beyond, as indicated on the Marsa Inset Map, is defined as an area of ‘mixed use’ (excluding Use Classes 12 to 16 as defined in the Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended). However, no further permissions for workshops, storage or the construction or use of garages for commercial vehicles will be permitted unless the Authority is satisfied that access arrangements are adequate.

Relevant policies: <i>GS07,</i> <i>GM22.</i>	This area forms an arc of buildings and land on the south and eastern sides of Marsa, effectively separating the core of the village from heavy industry and major traffic flows. In a sense it acts as a buffer zone, and provides opportunities for the location of storage and small workshop uses.
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Whilst this is acceptable in terms of local planning policy, care needs to be taken to avoid problems of access and the generation of unacceptable traffic movements, particularly in relation to residential streets and the centre of Marsa. Traffic generation considerations will therefore be a major determinant in the consideration of any development applications.

GM20

Area For Light Industry

The land between Triq Belt il-Hazna and Il-Moll tal-Knisja, indicated on the Marsa Inset Map, is defined as an area principally for light industrial use (as defined in Class 11 of the Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended).

Relevant policies: <i>GS07,</i> <i>GP01.02.</i>	Most of the buildings in this area are already occupied by small enterprises which benefit from good access to the arterial road network and the concentration of complementary activities in the vicinity.
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Although the overall environment is in need of upgrading, the principle of this type of use in this location is acceptable, appropriate and necessary. Future improvement of the area should concentrate on parking and servicing arrangements, better provision and management of refuse and waste collection facilities with a view to encouraging recycling, and treatment of the road surface and floorscape of the ‘Newport’ quay apron. The immediate environs of the chapel would also benefit from simple improvement works.

GM21

Albert Town

Albert Town is designated as an Industrial Zone and development permission for new housing development will not be given. The Planning Authority will cooperate with the Housing Authority to find alternative accommodation for residents willing to relocate. Minor improvements to existing dwellings will however be permitted. It should be noted that the provisions of Structure Plan policies BEN 1, BEN 2, and BEN 3, relating to aspects of ‘good neighbourliness, will still apply, and industrial uses in Classes 13 to 16 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) will be excluded.

Relevant policies:

*GS07,
GM08.13.*

Albert Town is a predominantly industrial and commercial area which has a small resident population of about fifty eight households, located in a core of eight streets. Whilst a number of individual properties are well kept, the overall environment is poor in residential terms, lacking facilities and subject to the day to day problems of existing industrial activity.

Evidence suggests that the community is gradually diminishing, and there is little prospect of the development of facilities based on such a small settlement. Albert Town is unlikely to be attractive as a residential area except to those currently living there. This is not to deny the undoubted sense of community which is evident, nor the fact that many residents have strong ties here and would be very reluctant to move. Yet as a commercial and industrial area, its location, and the close proximity of a wide variety of undertakings, renders it of interest in general development terms.

The Local Plan therefore adopts a twofold approach to the area. The first is to accept that, in the medium term, measures must be taken to ensure that residents here are as inconvenienced as little as possible by the industrial activities going on around them. All industrial applications will therefore be scrutinised very carefully to mitigate any likely problems. The approach would also involve the introduction of techniques such as traffic management and simple environmental improvement schemes to improve matters.

The second approach relates to the longer term development of Albert Town, which will extend beyond the Plan period. This involves the conscious designation of the area for industrial and commercial purposes and a refusal to accept further residential related applications, except those essential for the well being and comfort of the existing residents. Related to this is the designation of part of the 'Marsa Park' Opportunity Area for residential use, thereby providing a possible alternative housing area in the vicinity of Albert Town but without the environmental disadvantages. The eventual progression of this proposal will depend on further discussion with key relevant government and parastatal organisations, and probably, the private sector.

GM22

Marsa Power Station

The Planning Authority will ensure that new uses adjacent to the Power Station do not jeopardise its future operation. This includes use of the shoreline and quays.

On its part, Enemalta is encouraged to take measures to improve the site and buildings of the Power Station, with particular reference to:

- **emission control;**
- **landscaping;**
- **overall tidying-up of the site including the removal of derelict or redundant equipment;**
- **dealing with the asbestos stored on site;**
- **providing a dedicated, controlled and secure parking area.**

Relevant policies:

*GS07,
GT10,
GP01,02,
GM09,17,19.*

Irrespective of the long term strategy for power generation, it is extremely unlikely that there will be any significant reduction in the need for the Marsa site for power generation during the Plan period. It is therefore considered important to mitigate as far as possible any prevailing undesirable environmental effects.

It is desirable that works carried out will conform to EU standards, e.g. in relation to the storage of emergency fuel stocks. The opportunity should be taken to look more widely at other initiatives, particularly in relation to the points mentioned above.

The opportunity should also be taken to rationalise the haphazard parking which occurs in the area, by the provision of a car park - either on site, or in the immediate vicinity of the power station.

GM23

Tertiary Town Centre

The Planning Authority has designated a Tertiary Town Centre for Marsa as identified on the Marsa Inset Map (Figure 12). (Refer to General Policy GD06).

Relevant Policies:

GD06

The strategy aims to reinforce the function of the designated centre for both food and non-food shopping. Within the Tertiary Town Centre the intention is to encourage the expansion and intensification of shopping facilities, resist the loss of shop units and floorspace, and resist any net loss of shop floorspace and frontage within redevelopment schemes.

Map 12

Map 13

Map 14

Map 15

Kordin Policies

4.00 Kordin

4.10 Introduction

- 4.11 Kordin refers here to the industrialised area immediately to the north east of Malta Shipbuilding, including the industrial estate, the waterfront at Ras Hanzir, the Grain Terminal, and parts of Malta Drydocks. The total area is some 93.7ha.
- 4.12 In physical terms, the greater part of the area consists of a plateau ending in a steep scarp overlooking the inner part of the Grand Harbour and French Creek. An abrupt change in level of about 38m occurs, with a cliff face forming the landward boundary of the narrow sliver of flat land which is the immediate littoral of the Harbour.
- 4.13 The whole area is used for industrial and related uses, with the coastal strip dedicated chiefly to the unloading of cargo or marine related engineering activities, as well as the Drydocks themselves.
- 4.14 Kordin Industrial Estate is the principal industrial zone in the Plan area, and is the subject of an improvement scheme by Malta Development Corporation. The estate covers just over 38ha.
- 4.15 Despite the apparently built up nature of the industrial area as a whole, some 13ha of land remain in an unused, derelict or abandoned condition. In addition, much of the area at the lower level along the waterfront is used inefficiently. Access is also poor in parts of the waterfront.
- 4.16 Although Kordin is overwhelmingly industrial in character, some historical military artefacts are evident, plus limited features of geomorphological interest.

Strategy

Three key elements are the basis for the policies adopted by the Local Plan in respect of Kordin. These are:

- the general upgrading of the industrial area as a whole;
- promotion and support for the more efficient use of the waterfront;
- better presentation of the area, to realise its potential as a positive element in the landscape of the Grand Harbour.

Approach

The Plan advocates and supports efforts by implementation agencies like MDC to undertake and secure the boundaries of industrial estates and sites, to control access and egress, allow the introduction of landscaping and planting schemes, and prevent the general abuse of the public domain.

The waterfront ‘strip’ is considered to be a valuable resource, and the Planning Authority will work with the Maritime Authority to ensure that this zone is used efficiently in the future, with port related industrial uses being given priority.

The bringing into use of hitherto derelict or despoilt land for industrial and other acceptable commercial purposes, thereby reducing the demand for new sites elsewhere, will also be supported.

GI01

Kordin Industrial Development Zone

As indicated on the Inset Map, Kordin is confirmed as a principal strategic and local industrial development zone. Priority will be given to the efficient use of the area for port related activities in accordance with policies GP01, GP02, and for general industrial use.

Overall zoning is therefore indicated as follows:

- A) Waterfront (Il-Moll ta' Shipwrights - Ras Hanzir)
 - general port related uses, warehousing, supporting facilities to the main use such as maintenance workshops, garages for cargo handling equipment and fuelling stations;
- B) Waterfront (Ras Hanzir - French Creek)
 - grain terminal and related cargo handling;
- C) Waterfront : (French Creek)
 - ship repairing;
- D) Kordin Industrial Estate (Parts of the Estate, as indicated on Figure 16, should be covered by an outline permit)
 - general industry with neighbour compatibility (Use Class 12, Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended);
- E) Other Areas
 - Small and Medium-sized Enterprise workshops; sports activities, (Policy GI03)

The Planning Authority will favourably consider applications for extensions, upgrading of established, operational, large scale land uses which are not in conformity with the general zoning of the Kordin Industrial Development Zone indicated above, provided:

- (i) the existing activity is not deemed to hinder the present or future efficient operation of the port;
- (ii) the extension to the existing activity will not render the existing use an obstacle to the present or future efficient operation of the port;
- (iii) the proposal does not in any way interfere with the efficient operation of the quays; and
- (iv) the Planning Authority is convinced that the relocation of the existing use is not feasible.

Relevant policies:

*GS07,
GE06,
GD03,04,
GI03,04,07,08,10.*

This policy ratifies the importance of the Kordin area in terms of industrial development, and sets out the overall zoning. It is appreciated that some uses are not exactly in line with the zoning shown in FIG 16. It is not the intention of the Plan to advocate or seek their removal. However, where any use becomes defunct, the redevelopment or expansion of any sites or buildings will be expected to be in accordance with the zoning policy as indicated here.

GI02

Building Heights

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible approach which will take account of the following criteria:

- **the streetscape through a consideration of the buildings on the same side and those on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;**
- **the general massing of the building;**
- **the topographical features and consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);**
- **the skyline when seen from outside the site area, especially from the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, and from Cospicua/Senglea;**
- **the views from the water level of the port;**
- **the particular requirements of the actual use;**
- **any other relevant planning consideration.**

Relevant policies:
GS07.

It is considered inappropriate to give a blanket height for all the area at Kordin. The approach adopted in this instance is to determine requests in changes in heights on an individual basis. This assessment, however, has to consider all the relevant planning issues, including those mentioned in the policy, and other relevant planning guidance already issued by the Planning Authority.

GI03

Small And Medium-sized Enterprise Workshops

An area of Kordin Industrial Estate and land fronting on to the peripheral access road is reserved for the development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) workshops. An outline permit is needed before individual development applications are considered.

Relevant policies:
GS07,
GD01,02,
GI01,
GB14.

An identified problem in Malta is the need for improved ways of assisting the germination and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the manufacturing and service industry spheres. Difficulties with the availability of venture capital and the lack of suitable premises have been cited.

Arising from both of these factors has been an increase in the number of complaints regarding the operation of businesses in residential streets, which are totally unsuited for activities of this kind.

The question of access to financial resources is beyond the remit of this Plan, but the provision of suitable sites is highly pertinent. Although the policy on industrial estates operated by M.D.C. has generally been to give priority to export-oriented undertakings, it is being increasingly recognised that particular measures to help small industries are necessary. In the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan, a specific site allocation for ‘Small Scale Industries’ was made at Hal Far Industrial Estate.

It is proposed that as in Ricasoli Estate, a similar allocation is made at Kordin Estate, in and adjacent to the area occupied by Nissen huts. This area could be developed on more than one level. It is important however, to study the effects that this development may have on the other areas of the port, and therefore inward views should be considered together with effects

on the skyline. Negative effects should be minimised through appropriate design considerations.

GI04 *The Waterfront (Shipwrights' Wharf - Ras Hanzir)*

The rationalisation and improvement of the quays and associated industrial development is encouraged. To assist in achieving these objectives, with the co-operation of the Maritime Authority, the following measures will be introduced:

- **some reclamation of the shoreline subject to the provisions of general policies including GP08;**
- **definition and demarcation of dedicated areas for specific cargo handling, like vehicle transshipment, temporary cement importation, general break cargoes etc.;**
- **definition and demarcation of a 'common user' quay apron. No long term storage of trailers, containers, machinery, scrap or other materials will be permitted in this area. Scrap processing and sorting in 'common user' areas is not acceptable;**
- **introduction of a secure boundary;**
- **upgrading of the access road to provide better access/egress from both Ras Hanzir and Shipwrights' Wharf areas.**

Relevant policies:

*GN01,
GS07,
GE06,
GP01,02,
GD03,
GI01.*

A recurrent theme throughout the Local Plan has been the importance attached to the upgrading and efficient use of the quays, wharves and limited land associated with these facilities around the Harbour. This policy seeks the improvement of an important sector of the waterfront by suggesting measures to secure a rationalisation in the way in which it is used.

The approach proposed involves tackling the question of harbour side industry and the quays themselves by:

- encouraging redevelopment, rationalisation and improvement of existing industrial and commercial areas alongside the quays. It is recommended that Government considers financial incentives as a catalyst for this process;
- having minor extensions to quay areas where appropriate (particularly the stretch between Coal Wharf and Ras Hanzir);
- the dedication of quay space to major long-term specialised cargo handling activities as certain areas of trade are very beneficial and imply long term commitment;
- demarcation of a 'common user' area which would be subject to proper management and within which non-temporary storage, processing and parking would not be allowed. A strong tendency exists for some firms to 'take over,' almost by default, public areas for their own operations. Such action makes it difficult to utilise quay space effectively;
- firm security measures, including a periphery fence, with the co-operation and agreement of firms operating in the area. There are certain situations where unrestricted public access is not appropriate, would make other reforms difficult to achieve, and where the proportion of the public affected is likely to be very low;
- improved access, especially for heavy vehicles, as the existing access road is poorly surfaced and narrow in places.

GI05

Road Hierarchy

Priorities for upgrading and resurfacing of highways will depend on the state of the existing roads, but otherwise, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme.

Local Access Roads:

Triq L-Isqof Buhagiar; Shipwrights' Wharf; Triq Il-Bacir Il-Gdid; It-Telgha tar- Rahal Gdid (part).

Access Only Roads:

All others not mentioned above.

Relevant policies:

GT01.09,
GI06.07.

The Structure Plan requires that Local Plans should 'put forward proposals for the improvement of conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and vehicle parking'. Defining the road network is a necessary part of that process, and will be used as the basis for new schemes and maintenance priorities.

GI06

Heavy Vehicle Route, Malta Drydocks - Shipbuilding

Shipwright's Wharf - Triq il-Bacir il-Gdid is designated for heavy vehicle movements between Malta Shipbuilding and the Drydocks. All road improvement works and maintenance on this route will therefore be carried out to a design and standard which will assist the manoeuvring of heavy vehicles and abnormal loads.

Relevant policies:

GT09,
GI05.07.

Close working between Malta Drydocks and Shipbuilding may give rise to the need to move heavy or abnormal loads between the two sites. Attempting to move such loads via Vjal Sir Paul Boffa/Triq Kordin is likely to be both inconvenient and to cause excessive congestion. An alternative route is therefore suggested which will probably require upgrading but is likely to be less disruptive to other traffic.

GI07

Industrial Park

An area adjacent to the Industrial Estate is being identified as an Industrial Park. This would incorporate a lorry/container park amongst desired uses for the area. The area should be subject to an Outline Permit which should ensure compatibility with the surrounding environment. The effects of any proposals on the nearby fortifications will also be considered.

Relevant policies: <i>GI01,05,06.</i>	Steps are already being taken to improve the Industrial Estate. The concentration of enterprises in this general area attracts significant commercial traffic, including the parking of trailers, lorries and containers on the highway. Proper provision for this type of parking - secure, and off the highway - should be made, to improve accessibility, safety, and the general effective functioning of the estate. The area should also accommodate relocated operations from other areas. The Authority will require that early attention is paid to the landscaping of and planting at the site.
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GI08

Restoration Of Derelict And Despoilt Land

In accordance with general policies GE06 and GD04, a programme of derelict land reclamation will be pursued at Kordin.

Relevant policies: <i>GN01, GE06, GD03,04, GI01.</i>	An essential strategy of the Local Plan is to seek both environmental improvement and the more efficient use of land. This philosophy is particularly relevant in the case of industrial areas, and it should be noted that the M.D.C.'s programme of improvement works in industrial areas, including Kordin, is strongly supported by the Planning Authority.
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There is a fundamental need, however, to instigate action on the basis of a carefully considered rolling programme of derelict land reclamation, to ensure that land is effectively recycled for beneficial use. Such a programme demands a national approach and cannot be considered simply as a local plan issue.

Particularly where reclamation is carried out on land which is already publicly owned, or is acquired by government, it is anticipated that reclamation would be linked directly with other aims of the Plan. For example, reclamation of sites to provide premises for small industrial enterprises (typically 'garage' industries and here referred to as Small and Medium-sized Enterprise workshops) would be used to relocate firms occupying premises in residential areas or 'temporary' buildings encroaching upon the fortifications.

GI09

Conservation Of The Corradino Lines

The remains of the former Corradino Lines, including the old powder magazine at Ras Hanzir, passing through the Kordin industrial area, are listed as being of architectural and historical significance. Encouragement will be given to the restoration of these Lines and to measures which enhance public appreciation of their features. Removal of constructions encroaching upon the Lines will be sought.

Relevant policies: <i>GN01, GH02,03,04,05, GIII.</i>	The Corradino Lines are part of the 19th Century defence works constructed by the British to fortify the 'Corradino Heights,' considered important in the general defence of the Grand Harbour and the Three Cities.
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Remaining sections of the ditch and wall are quite extensive, although frequently hidden by buildings and somewhat inaccessible. In other places, some of the fortifications have been removed or built upon. Although this feature is in an industrial area, it is part of the heritage of Malta and deserves protection no less than other artefacts in more imposing surroundings. This policy reaffirms the importance of the Lines and emphasises the determination of the Planning Authority to ensure that any development proposals have regard to their presence.

GI10

Sports Area

The area of land located between the Malta Drydocks and Kordin Industrial estate as identified in the Inset Map will be exclusively reserved for sports and recreation activities. Landscape considerations will be given importance in any design proposals, and each development application will be expected to include an afforestation programme. Every effort will be made not to prejudice the conservation and suitable reuse of the underground power station network below the area.

Another area located within the Industrial boundary and presently used for recreation/sports will be retained until such space is required for further industrial expansion. Such change of use must be tied with access to other sports facilities in the area for use by the workers of the Industrial Estate during the day.

Relevant policies:

GN01,
GT09,
GE06,
GC01,
GD10,
GI01.

Although sports activities are currently established at Kordin, there still remain substantial parts which are either undeveloped or in a disused or semi-derelict state. This policy is aimed at making more land available for sports related and other complementary uses, which, in the Grand Harbour Local Plan area are very much in short supply. It also sets the context for relocation of existing facilities in areas designated for other uses.

The policy also provides for the enablement of the possibility of the conservation and proper reuse of the old power station network located under this zone. This implies measures like safeguarding means of access and protection of the ventilation shafts until an appropriate use of the site is secured.

GI11

Footpaths

A route for pedestrians, based on public access footpaths and viewpoints, will be identified and safeguarded.

Relevant policies:

GT09,
GC01,06,
GI09.

The whole approach to the Grand Harbour has emphasised the importance of the area as a place of general interest to the public, and the opportunities which are available to make certain parts more accessible, particularly for pedestrians.

Kordin Heights give panoramic views across the Harbour, but connections to the waterfront are difficult. The Authority will seek to assist the development of a footpath system and will safeguard potential routes. Public sponsored developments will be expected to take public access requirements into account, and to make appropriate provision.

Map 16

Cospicua Policies

5.00 Cospicua

5.10 Introduction

- 5.11 With a population of almost 6000, Cospicua lies at the heart of the Local Plan area. It occupies a pivotal position in relation to Senglea and Vittoriosa, which together make up the ‘Three Cities,’ contained behind the encircling Cottonera Lines. In addition, Cospicua is also protected by the Margherita Lines, drawn tightly in a defensive arc around the town itself. The presence of bastions and fortifications is therefore an inescapable feature of the town, which spills down the slopes of the Harbour to cluster around Dockyard Creek.

Strategy

The strategy adopted by the Local Plan concentrates on four principal concerns. These relate to:

- improvement of environmental conditions generally and along the waterfront in particular;
- better access and transport facilities, and a reduction in traffic problems;
- redevelopment, revitalisation and increase in housing;
- encouraging economic regeneration mainly through tourism.

Approach

‘**Environmental improvement**’ is very important and the approach of the Local Plan is to concentrate on a limited number of major schemes in the initial phase, rather than dissipate efforts widely over numerous smaller proposals. If an impact can be made on these main schemes, then the success of a myriad of other proposals is more likely to be successful as expertise, momentum and public awareness evolve. It is also important that the various proposals are considered in an integrated manner, and beneficial relationships are exploited.

Main schemes identified are:

- removal of the industrial use of No.1 Dock; re-establishment of the town centre; increased public access; and the introduction of ‘mixed uses’ in a tourism context;
- upgrading measures to restore and allow wider appreciation of the bastions;
- identification, promotion and support for residential improvement and redevelopment;
- introduction of improved access and traffic management measures.

The Local Plan will therefore seek:

- a sustainable approach to tourism, especially the provision of small scale quality accommodation involving the conversion of derelict buildings or those needing improvement;
- the gradual development of attractions to avoid negative impacts;
- a co-ordinated approach relating to Cottonera as a whole;
- a general upgrading of infrastructure;
- better access and in particular, the introduction of ferry services;
- the enhancement of the waterfront;

- a willingness to consider Cottonera's role as that of an 'attraction' location based mainly, but not exclusively, on day tourism.

Tourism related proposals are therefore framed with the above considerations in mind.

'Improved traffic conditions', and in particular better facilities for the pedestrian, are seen as a natural concomitant of the tourism development and environmental enhancement strategy. The emphasis is on better traffic management within Cospicua, but it is reiterated that the question of overall access to Cottonera is of fundamental importance. Thus implementation of the South Harbour Link Road, to enable other traffic measures to be successfully adopted, must be given a high priority. Development of a Harbour ferry service, to relieve pressure on the road system and to cut journey times to Valletta, is also supported, in particular by policies safeguarding sites and access points which would enable a ferry service to be developed.

'Housing' in Cospicua needs to increase in standard and provision. In particular, the Planning Authority will adopt a sympathetic attitude towards schemes which seek to achieve, by good design and careful use of site development opportunities, a higher density solution than has hitherto been customary. Nevertheless, it is expected that due regard will be given to 'good neighbour' and historical/townscape constraints which may have to be invoked in certain situations.

In terms of job creation, it is expected that increases will be linked to changes in the perception of the area with the expansion of tourism, and in particular, proposals for an integrated approach to the development of the Dockyard Creek waterfront.

GB01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement Policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Cospicua Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

The open nature of the area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines, and on the fringe of the Local Plan beyond the Cottonera Lines, will be maintained subject to the details given below:

- **minor works essential to the continued occupation of existing legally established dwellings;**
- **the purposes of agriculture and tree planting (animal rearing units not permissible);**
- **the establishment of sport, recreational or leisure facilities appropriate to an area of open character;**
- **institutions or schools standing in large grounds as identified in the Plan;**
- **infrastructural requirements essential to the locality, which could not reasonably expect to locate in the urban area;**
- **other proposals as indicated in the Plan.**

Relevant policies: <i>GS02.</i>	The Urban Development Boundary is an important tool in ensuring that sprawl, coalescence of settlements, loss of open space and thus loss of identity are avoided, and more efficient use and recycling of existing land for development are promoted.
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Retention of the open and uncluttered nature of the area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines is considered essential. No further development will therefore be allowed in this area except as provided for by this policy. The need for a management plan is also identified under policy GB06 below.

GB02 Residential Improvement And Redevelopment

The Authority will support measures to improve and expand the stock of residential accommodation in Cospicua, for example by the declaration of Housing Improvement Action Areas in accordance with general policy GS06. The priority areas of concern are shown on the Inset Map.

Relevant policies: <i>GS05,06,09.</i>	Within Cospicua, there are several pockets of housing where improvement, or in some cases, demolition and redevelopment, are appropriate. The locations include the vicinity of Triq Il-Portinata ta' Felic; Triq il-Kuncizzjoni/Triq il-Madonna tal-Grazzja area; near St. Helen's Gate (Triq Hanover/Triq L-Irlandizi); around Triq L-Oratorju; and near the axis of Triq il-Konservatorju.
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Some schemes have already been undertaken to address the housing problems, but it is likely that further projects will be necessary. It is important that revitalisation and redevelopment of housing in Cospicua is given priority, to support the overall upgrading of the urban area and because, in future, the process of simply introducing dispersed blocks of housing in the comparatively open area between and adjoining the fortifications will not be available as an option.

GB03 Cospicua Transport Strategy

The Planning Authority will encourage the introduction of a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy for Cospicua as shown in the Transport Strategy Map. The main features will be based on the active discouragement of through traffic involving:

- the introduction of traffic calming measures at all entrances to the town; at Triq Santa Tereza and Misrah Gavino Gulia;
- the establishment of a traffic management scheme to regulate circulation within the town, including parking;
- the delineation of pedestrian priority areas;
- junction improvements (as set out in policy GB05 below).

To enable these measures to be effective, the construction of the South Harbour Link Road will be accorded a high priority in the roads programme (see also Structure Plan Policy RDS 4).

Other initiatives will include the encouragement of cross-harbour ferry services (where necessary by the safeguarding of possible landing sites), and the development of pedestrian routes.

Relevant policies:
GT06,08,09.
GB04,05.

Key objectives of the planning strategy for Cospicua include a general improvement in accessibility, and a reduction in traffic problems. Achievement of these objectives in full is dependent on the construction of the by-pass, but nevertheless several other initiatives can be adopted which will help to reduce problems. However, these should be considered as part of an integrated package of measures, rather than individual proposals simply introduced on an indiscriminate, ad hoc basis.

Proposals such as the introduction of ferry services, and some pedestrian priority areas, are also related to other initiatives which the Local Plan advocates, for example measures to expand tourism and, in particular, the upgrading of the waterfront. The proposals have therefore to be regarded in this much wider context, not simply as ‘traffic measures.’

GB04

Road Hierarchy

The road hierarchy for Cospicua is indicated on the Transport Strategy Map. Priorities for upgrading and resurfacing will depend on the state of the existing road; otherwise, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme (see also general policy GT01). The main elements are:

Distributor Roads:

Triq it-Tlett Ibliet; Triq il-Gublew tal-Fidda; Triq il-Kottonera; Triq San Gwann t’Ghuxa; Triq San Nikola

Local Access Roads:

Triq l-Immakulata; Triq il-Pellegrinagg; Triq San Pawl; Triq San Frangisk; Triq il-Gdida ; Triq it-8 ta’ Dicembru

Access Only Streets:

All others not mentioned above.

Relevant policies:
GT01,03,06,09.
GB03,05.

This policy follows directly from the overall approach as indicated in general policy GT01, which is concerned with the definition of a road hierarchy and hence improvement priorities.

In general, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme. However, it is recognised that the existing state of roads in the area varies widely, and that this local factor needs to be taken into account in the scheduling of improvement works.

GB05

Junction Improvements

The following junctions will be improved. Priority will be given to those improvements necessary in association with the construction of the proposed ‘South Harbour Link Road.’

South Harbour Link Road Junctions:

Polverista Gate (Triq Immakulata/Triq San Tumas); Vjal Cottoner; Zabbar Gate(Triq Cottonera/Triq Bormla/Triq Santa Duminku);

Others:

Triq San Frangisk/Triq San Pawl; Pjazza Gavinu Gulia (see also policies for the waterfront); Bieb Polverista.

Relevant policies:
*GT01,02,03,09,13,14,
GE02,
GB03,04.*

It is expected that the construction of the South Harbour Link Road will help to alleviate many of the 'internal' traffic problems of Cospicua (and incidentally, of Fgura too, although this is outside the Plan area) since the proportion of 'through' traffic should be considerably reduced in these locations.

For the Link Road to function effectively as a by-pass and as a strategic arterial route, it is essential that adequate connections to the principal settlements are available. Moreover, it is likely that some junctions may be relatively complex in engineering terms because of changes in level and proximity to the bastions. For these reasons, and because junction problems elsewhere are comparatively minor, priority will need to be given to the 'Link Road' junctions in considering major road construction projects in the area. In many other instances, simple rationalisation of junctions by road marking or the introduction of minor traffic management features would suffice.

GB06

Urban Conservation Area

In accordance with general policy GH01, an Urban Conservation Area has been designated, the boundaries including all of Cospicua. In addition to normal planning requirements, development applications will be expected to have regard to the characteristics which prevail in the Area and which help to define a sense of place. To address the particular problems of the area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines, it is recommended that a management plan for the area be prepared and implemented.

Relevant policies:
*GN05,
GH01,
GB07,08,09,10,11.*

Cospicua forms a substantial part of the Three Cities Urban Conservation Area, including one of the urban 'core' areas, and the Margherita and Cottonera Lines themselves. The boundary has been drawn outside the Cottonera Lines to protect the whole setting of the Three Cities, and thus includes a variety of locations of highly important architectural, historic and visual interest. It is critical that the approaches to and setting of the walled town can be appreciated and understood, and that once inside, its relationship to the other urban elements of Senglea and Vittoriosa are clear.

These requirements can only be achieved in a planning context where conservation of historic and architectural elements are accorded their proper significance, given due protection and are subject to a restoration and enhancement programme. Declaration of an Urban Conservation Area and incorporation into the Local Plan reflects these concerns.

The area between the bastion walls mentioned in the original designation report as having special problems requiring the preparation of a management plan, is also dealt with here and more generally, under policy GB01 above.

GB07

Design Requirements

In considering re/development proposals, the Authority will have regard to the following principles:

- the existing street and building block pattern should be maintained;
- the context of existing, adjacent building heights, and the relationship to the ‘skyline’ prospect of Cospicua will strongly influence acceptance of the project;
- massing, fenestration and ornamentation should respect the street and townscape context;
- in most instances, use of traditional materials will be required. This will apply without exception where a building follows an archetypal design approach. In the rare cases where a ‘contemporary’ solution is accepted by the Authority, other materials may be introduced by agreement;
- major development schemes should incorporate accessible spaces and enclosures for the benefit of the general public;
- pedestrian access arrangements should have priority over vehicular.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GB06,08,11.*

Once again, a basic question arises regarding the extent to which individual design preferences and aspirations should be constrained and limited. Whilst it is not the intention of the Authority to impose unreasonable restrictions on designers, protecting the historic and physical significance of Cospicua is a legitimate concern which needs to be acknowledged.

The basic considerations are therefore set out above in an effort to give guidance to developers and architects from the outset on the key factors which the Planning Authority will take into account in considering schemes for approval.

GB08

Height Limitations

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible attitude which will take account of the following criteria:

- the Urban Conservation Area status;
- the streetscape, through a consideration of the buildings on the same facade and those on the facades on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;
- the general massing of the building;
- the roofscape;
- the topographical features and where applicable, consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);
- the skyline when seen from outside the site area;
- any other relevant planning consideration.

Relevant policies:

*GH01,
GB06,07.*

The contrast between older and rebuilt parts of Cospicua, and the steeply sloping nature of much of the site, makes it very difficult to impose a blanket building height limitation for the town, notwithstanding the view that restraint and visual discipline are necessary.

The approach adopted in this instance is to determine requests for changes in height on an individual basis. Any assessment must, however, consider all the relevant planning issues,

including those mentioned in the policy, and any other relevant planning guidance issued by the Planning Authority.

GB09

Heritage Trail And Promenade Walk

The Authority will support the introduction of an historic tourist trail around and within the bastions to link points of tourism interest. Every effort will be made to make the trail accessible to the mobility restricted. A promenade walk will be introduced along the waterfront periphery of Cospicua, including improved links to the centre of the town and connections to the Historic Trail and places of interest.

Any development proposals in the areas served by the historic trail or the promenade walk and connections will be carefully assessed to ensure that continuity of the routes is not compromised. The Authority may require amendments to, or refuse, proposals which, by their impact, would affect the integrity of the route.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,04,05,
GH01,03,05,06,
GC01,06,
GP01,03,05
GD11,
GB06,10,11.*

One of the ways in which tourism and the general enjoyment of the area by the public can be promoted is to expand the network of pedestrian routes with the objective of linking places of tourism interest. It is also important to ensure that facilities are available which meet the needs of those whose mobility is restricted, including wheelchair users.

Two different types of main route are suggested. The historic trail, properly signposted and with information given on panels and plaques at various intervals, is intended to invite exploration and to be informative and educational. The promenade route, although also connecting some historic features, is primarily intended to be an easy walk, a route for strolling.

GB10

Bastions Improvement - Cottonera And Margherita Lines

In accordance with general policy GH03, the maintenance and rehabilitation of the bastions are accorded a high priority. The restoration of the entire length of the bastions is sought, but initially, priority will be given to those parts forming gateways to Cospicua as one of the Three Cities. A peripheral walk with interpretive features will also be laid out along the Cottonera Lines, with appropriate signposting.

Uses detracting from the bastions will be removed, and to assist this process, the Authority will where possible designate suitable alternative sites for the relocation of legally established businesses and uses.

Relevant policies:

*GH01,03,04,05,06,
GB06,09.*

The bastions are one of the most prominent and defining features of Cospicua, but they have been subject to a variety of illegal and/or inappropriate uses, sometimes resulting in the deterioration of the structure, or the degradation of the setting of the bastions. The Local Plan will seek to assist their rehabilitation, including their establishment as a tourist attraction.

Whilst the Authority itself cannot undertake the necessary works, the following action will be initiated:

- illegal development will be challenged;

- no permissions will be given in future for any development which would compromise the rehabilitation aims;
- assistance will be given in identifying an alternative relocation site for those legally established uses which are displaced.

GB11 Cottonera ‘Waterfront Revival Area’ - Cospicua Section

The entire waterfront of Dockyard Creek between Il-Ponta ta’ L-Isla and the promontory of Fort St. Angelo is designated as the ‘Cottonera Waterfront Revival Area’ where public access to the waterfront in the context of tourism development will be promoted.

The Planning Authority approved a development brief and several outline permits for the area. Definite proposals for Dock No.1 have not yet been approved. Any proposals for this area should be in line with the approved development brief for the Regeneration of the Cottonera Waterfront.

In Cospicua, improvement efforts will be focused on Dock No. 1, Ix-Xatt ta’ Bormla, Pjazza Gavinu Gulia, Triq Il-Pellegrinagg and Triq Santa Tereza. Relocation of industrial or other inappropriate uses occurring here will be sought. Increased public access to the waterfront, environmental improvement and the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and the promotion of tourism as central themes. In the meantime, any proposals requiring development permission, which conflict with the approved brief and outline permits, will be refused.

Relevant policies:

*GE06, GN01,03,04,05,
GT04,09,10,12,14,
GB06,07,09, GH01,02,
GL14, GC01,03,05,
GP01,03,05, GG17,18,
GD06,10,11, GK12.*

The waterfront is possibly the most important single asset available in the Three Cities, and needs to be treated in a co-ordinated, comprehensive and unified manner. In Cospicua, a major difficulty is the current use of No.1 Dock and its effect upon the surrounding area, compounded by the closing off of a large stretch of the quayside to the public.

The result is that industrial uses predominate in the very centre of Cospicua, at a point which in the past used to be the town centre, and where the juxtaposition of land and sea would otherwise create a very pleasant and convivial atmosphere, giving a much more favourable impression of the town.

The relocation of industrial uses, the conservation of No.1 Dock and its inclusion in a scheme for tourism development purposes and the provision of landscaped open space in the heart of Cospicua are objectives entirely consistent with the overall goals of the Plan in relation to Cospicua. However, in order to translate this strategy into action the site needs to be considered in the wider context of the whole waterfront.

The following elements are suggested in respect of the Dock and waterfront area at Cospicua:

- i. removal of the Dock permeable boundary wall;
- ii. area to be freely available to the public;
- iii. repaving and rehabilitation of the quayside, to include the part of the promenade linking Senglea and Vittoriosa;
- iv. introduction of seating and street furniture;
- v. use of buildings on west side of dock as craft and visitor/heritage centre (for example themed on Malta Drydocks);
- vi. possible introduction of historic vessel in the dock;
- vii. restaurant/cafe facilities;

- viii. dockside housing;
- ix. dockside guest house/small hotel;
- x. multi-storey parking off Triq Il-Monsinjur Panzavecchia;
- xi. limited commercial office space and specialised retailing;
- xii. traffic calming measures in Pjazza Gavinu Gulia and other streets near the Dock;
- xiii. scope for bank, baker's, local bar, bookshop, and other appropriate local services;
- xiv. pedestrian links to other areas;
- xv. dghajsa/ferry terminal with fast food cafeteria of a high standard;
- xvi. small boat moorings near the entrance to the Dock;
- xvii. boat clubhouse.

It is important to stress that these proposals will be required to conform to the urban design and conservation requirements also set out in the brief. In addition, the fiscal approach necessary to secure implementation is a key consideration which merits attention.

GB12

Urban Park

The area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines bounded by Triq L-Immakulata, the Margherita Ditch and the peripheral access road, and shown on the Cospicua Inset Map, is designated as an urban park, that is, land kept predominantly in its natural condition freely accessible for public enjoyment. In accordance with policy GB01, this area is defined as being outside the development zone, and therefore no development other than that appropriate to an urban park will be allowed.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,
GT09,
GE06,
GC01,07,
GF14.*

The proposed park is a prominent area of open space, partially wooded, on the fringe of Cospicua, and forming a distinctive and appropriate setting for the bastions. It is recognised that this area, as well as the waterfront, has great potential for recreational use by local people and that it is likely to be increasingly placed under pressure for other uses in the future. This policy therefore seeks formally to establish its use as a park, and with policy GB01, to prevent its use for other purposes.

GB13a

Site For Sports and Recreational Facilities

The area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines opposite De La Salle College and including Notre Dame Bastion, to the south of Triq Il-Kottonera, has been allocated for a regional sports centre. Additional recreational facilities will also be considered by the Planning Authority subject to other policy requirements. To ensure a high standard of development, and to reduce the possibility of over-development, the Authority will expect strong emphasis at the outset on appropriate advance landscaping and planting and wherever possible the retention of existing afforestation.

All proposals are to safeguard against any construction works which may result in negative impacts on the nearby fortifications.

Since this part forms an important sector of the harbour fortifications complex it was scheduled Grade 1, is an Area of High Landscape Value and is also in the tentative list as a world heritage site. Therefore the restoration of the site will follow parameters prescribed by UNESCO and as applied by Planning Authority guidance.

Relevant policies:

The whole of the Cottonera area demonstrates a lack of provision of sports

*GN01,03,04,
GT09,14,
GE06,
GC01.*

and formal recreation facilities. This deficiency has been identified at the national level. The planning response has been to assess those facilities which are available and safeguard them, and decide on the appropriate type and location of new facilities, avoiding duplication and assuming multiple use where this can be achieved satisfactorily. This area was identified as a proper site to accommodate a regional sports centre. The Planning Authority approved the development permit for such a facility.

Cottonera and Cospicua in particular, have been identified as a suitable location for an ‘upper tier’ level of provision, intended to serve a wider area than simply Cospicua itself. In this context, the development of the South Harbour Link Road will be critical in improving accessibility to a wider section of the population.

In a general manner, the site put forward is situated within the open, ‘transitional’ area between the bastions, the character of which the Local Plan seeks to retain. Provided that the range, scale, and type of facilities are according to Planning Guidance, it is considered that sports and recreational related development can be consistent with the generally open nature of the area. The Authority will hence require that early attention is given to the landscaping and planting of the site.

Regarding the sports and recreational facilities provision, extensive ‘commercialisation’ will not be permitted, and in order to keep land requirements to a minimum, and to reduce duplication, it is expected that a preliminary investigation will be carried out into the scope for dual use of existing facilities, and the avoidance of competing centres in a comparatively restricted local area.

GB13b

Verdala / San Klement Bastion Opportunity Area

The site from Verdala Gate to San Klement Bastion, between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines, is designated as a site for regional educational activities.

In order to ensure the proper redevelopment of this site for new educational projects and opportunities, and the upgrading of existing educational facilities, a comprehensive approach is to be adopted. Proposals for development have to respect the historical setting of the area including all aspects of heritage on site, especially the bastion walls and all other historical features. Prior to any development a thorough assessment of all the historical heritage is required.

Since the area is listed tentatively as a World Heritage Site, UNESCO guidelines and parameters will be respected so as development will limit any possibility of jeopardizing or compromising the area.

Any proposed development should give attention to skyline considerations. Any excavation works of certain parts of the site will require a proper investigation. This should include a geo-radar sounding survey;

- 1. to establish that no historical features will be damaged, and**
- 2. to ensure that no subterranean reservoirs, which possibly exist on site, are breached.**
- 3. ensure that the design of any proposed development respects also the Verdala complex which is part of the British colonial heritage.**

Relevant policies:
GN01,03,04,

This site is one of the many neglected sites in the area. It needs rehabilitation and upgrading, and this could be complimented by the introduction of

GT09,14,
GE06,
GC01.

and upgrading, and this could be complimented by the introduction of educational facilities which have a regional status and which could be accommodated in well landscaped development settings.

The opportunity exists on site to consider the upgrading of the Verdala Secondary School which is in a dire need of improved standards and facilities. Nearby there is also the Lorenzo Gafa` Secondary School, having plans for expansion but restricted by its site.

All of these instances point to the need for provision of a site that can cater for new educational facilities, and this site is hence available to accommodate such facilities. Once within the planning framework, it is then up to the Education Division to decide which and what type of school/s and facilities including sports facilities to locate here.

The site accommodates a junior lyceum which physically and from a planning point of view can be described as being far from what is expected nowadays of a modern school. The indications are therefore that this school needs substantial upgrading. The site also includes a neglected football pitch and athletics track, whilst at its very end on San Klement Bastion, there is a farm whose access is through the present school premises. It is suggested that this farm be relocated to a more appropriate site in future both for the efficient management of the site for education and for the conservation of the historical heritage. This site has only one entrance point which allows for improved security.

GB14 *Relocation Of Small And Medium-sized Enterprise Workshops*

Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) workshops causing problems in residential areas, and those which need to be relocated because of policy GB09, will be expected to move to appropriate alternative sites. These are identified at Kordin (Figure 16) and, on a smaller scale, at Ricasoli Industrial Estate (Figure 23).

Relevant policies:

GS07,
GD01,02,
GI03,
GK22,23.

Proposals to improve the general environment, and to restore the bastions can only be successful if the problems caused by illegal and ‘bad-neighbour’ uses are recognised and tackled in a realistic way. In practice, this means making available alternative sites, well controlled, managed and organised on a proper commercial basis. Other suitable areas have been identified.

Detailed proposals will be expected to follow normal development requirements, and any specific planning considerations relating to the particular site. Applicants must therefore realise that whilst no automatic ‘right’ to an alternative site exists, the Authority will endeavour to assist as far as possible businesses making a genuine effort to move to a suitable more appropriate location.

GB15 *Secondary Town Centre*

The Planning Authority has designated a Secondary Town Centre for Cospicua as identified on the Cospicua Inset Map (Figure 17). (Refer to General Policy GD06).

Any proposed development for Dock No. 1 should complement the uses envisaged for the Town Centre.

Relevant policies:

GD06,
GD08, GB11.

The scope is to strengthen the Town Centre of the locality and ensure that no initiative will hamper its vitality and viability. The Town Centre is

complementary to the Cottonera Waterfront Project.

Map 17

Map 18

Senglea Policies

6.00 Senglea

6.10 Introduction

- 6.11 Seen from Valletta, Senglea is one of the strongest elements making up the magnificent panorama of the Grand Harbour.
- 6.12 Senglea is beginning to see a resurgence of its attractiveness as a residential area, manifested in part by signs of the ‘gentrification’ of dwellings - the acquisition and improvement of older, low cost property by outsiders for their own occupation. This process is particularly apparent towards the tip of the town near St. Philip’s Church.
- 6.13 Like other parts of the Three Cities, Senglea suffers from its proximity to the Drydocks, particularly because of the effects of grit blasting. In the short term the remedy lies more in the realm of working practices and techniques than land use planning, although where possible, relevant policies will be emphasised.

Strategy

The overriding impression of Senglea, setting aside its magnificent site and historical background, is of a residential area. The Local Plan therefore takes this fact as the starting point in considering the strategy to be adopted towards the area. The main concerns are:

- retaining the quiet residential character of Senglea;
- improving the ‘public realm’;
- providing the opportunity for locally required facilities to be made available;
- encouraging the growth of tourism consistent with residential use.

The policies adopted will therefore be framed with reference to a basic strategy of increasing the attractiveness of Senglea as a residential area, to deter continued outward movement of population. The other principal consideration is the stimulation of tourism in a manner which does not compromise the positive elements of Senglea, nor introduce additional problems for residents.

In a sense, these are all aspects of the fundamental issue of environmental improvement, and emphasise once again the need for acceptance of an ‘interconnected’ policy approach.

Approach

‘Retaining the prevailing urban form and layout’ is considered important given the Plan’s emphasis on the role of Senglea as a residential area, the town’s outstanding location in relation to the rest of the Grand Harbour, and the synthesis of these elements in its unique townscape. This means using the established grid iron street pattern, and general disposition of the street blocks, as the basis of any rebuilding or redevelopment proposals. It does not in any way imply acceptance of the immediate post war building types, which make little attempt to integrate with and assimilate local traditions.

‘Traffic solutions’ are also important when adopting such an approach. The emphasis should be on traffic management and the promotion of alternative modes, particularly ferries, rather than attempting to accommodate entirely the needs of the motor vehicle.

‘A general improvement in the environment’ is important and closely allied to the maintenance of the established urban grid. This target should include the rehabilitation of the bastions and their restoration, as well as more attention to other public places - the waterfront, public gardens, squares, and other incidental open space.

‘Tourism development’ is another important issue as so far, tourism is very restricted, partly because of the general image of the area, and the lack of any specific attractions. Yet the potential is undoubtedly there, especially in relation to the Dockyard Creek waterfront, which, it has been suggested, should be considered in a comprehensive manner. Some very relevant environmental improvement work has already been undertaken with the restoration of the public gardens at Senglea Point.

‘Encouraging improvements to buildings’ and bringing into more beneficial use buildings little used or falling into decay. In relation to tourism, which the Local Plan envisages as providing a stimulus to the local economy, an important aim will be to ensure that any development remains subordinate to Senglea’s role as first and foremost a residential area. The geography of Senglea, its shape, changes in level, relationship to the sea, and main features of interest offer plenty of scope for a linked, yet contrasting, series of tourist attractions which would not interfere, and would be entirely compatible with, its residential character.

‘The waterfront area’ is very important in this regard. It is physically separated from the rest of the town and to which visitors are drawn. The north and east sides of the promontory along the waterfront are very accessible and provide the basis for a circular tour of the area. Even the west side, overlooking the Drydocks, is full of interest and should not be dismissed simply because of its industrial connotations.

‘A modest increase in dwellings’ is sought in terms of the Structure Plan. Because of Senglea’s physical constraints, the only practical way to achieve the housing objective is to look towards redevelopment possibilities based, as in Bormla, on increased densities linked to a correspondingly higher standard of design. Fortunately, it is likely that scope for this sort of approach will become increasingly apparent as the plan period unfolds.

‘Increases in employment’ are likely to follow from expansion of the tourist role of Senglea, particularly in association with the development of the waterfront. Visitor attractions such as il-Macina - perhaps accommodating a museum or visitor centre - restaurants and cafes, souvenir shopping, guest houses, limited hotel accommodation, and other ancillary facilities could be readily envisaged. Scope also exists for the development of craft workshops, and retailing associated with these, in a restrained and fitting manner.

GL01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement Policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Senglea Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

Relevant policies:
GS02.

The Urban Development Boundary is an important tool in ensuring that sprawl, coalescence of settlements, loss of open space and thus loss of identity are avoided, and more efficient use and recycling of existing land for development are promoted.

In Senglea, a key point is the need to keep the waterfronts and landward approach clear and uncluttered, so as to retain and reinforce the historic prospect of the town.

On the landward side of Senglea, the impact of the bastions can be readily appreciated because of the break in development between Bormla and Senglea, which helps to define the identity of the two settlements. This break must be retained, and the integrity of the bastions maintained.

GL02

Residential Improvement And Redevelopment

The Authority will support measures to improve and expand the stock of residential accommodation in Senglea by the rehabilitation of older dwellings, the conversion to housing of suitable buildings currently used for other purposes, and the redevelopment of post war infill sites. Changes in building heights will be considered as appropriate. The introduction of innovative forms of housing related to specific market requirements will be encouraged.

Relevant policies:
GS05,06.

The general strategy of attracting population back to the Inner Harbour Area has already been mentioned. To be effective, such a strategy must recognise and adapt to the increasing sophistication of the housing market, which is seeing the emergence of specific demand for more specialised housing provision.

This specific demand includes smaller housing units for single persons; ‘sheltered’ accommodation for the frail elderly; aged persons’ housing; student flats; and housing for smaller families, to name a few categories. Increasingly, catering for this demand is giving rise to innovative forms of development which are well suited to intense urban locations such as Senglea. Apart from their capability of utilising infill sites and adapting existing buildings, such developments can also help to bolster local services by the introduction of significant consumer spending.

As indicated previously, the overall impact of improvement and redevelopment works and the example they provide can have a major beneficial effect, and it is considered that this approach should be pursued in Senglea.

GL03

French Creek Waterfront

Along the French Creek waterfront, development will be limited to replacement of existing facilities. In the event of land becoming vacant here, activities related to uses requiring a waterfront location will be considered, provided that the distant prospect of Senglea and the amenity of neighbouring dwellings are not adversely affected.

Relevant policies:
GP01,03,05.

Should any land here become vacant and available due to rationalisation of Dockyard activities, the attitude of the Local Plan will be to give priority to commercial uses requiring a harbour frontage because of the nature of their port related business activities.

It should therefore not be assumed that because industrial uses have predominated in this area in the past, their continuation in the future will be acceptable, and no presumption in favour of industry should be inferred.

In addition, the Planning Authority will wish to be satisfied that no undesirable effects on the amenity of neighbouring houses are likely, and that the ‘distant prospect’ of Senglea - the contextual view of the town allowing an appreciation of its historic urban form - is not prejudiced.

Throughout the entire Senglea waterfront area, essential infrastructural requirements may be accommodated, provided that, in the case of any elements likely to be of an obtrusive nature, serious attempts have been made to find suitable alternative locations.

GL04

Senglea Transport Strategy

The Planning Authority, in consultation with Senglea Local Council and the Roads Department, will co-operate to introduce a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy for Senglea. The main features will be based on:

- **the maintenance and improvement of the circular peripheral route (Triq it-Tarzna, Triq ix-Xatt, Triq is-Sur);**
- **reorganisation of traffic flow where necessary and the introduction of regulated servicing and parking arrangements;**
- **the introduction of pedestrian and pedestrian priority areas, traffic calming features, and restrictions on non-residents’ parking;**
- **the introduction of a lift or escalators between Triq ix-Xatt and the upper level of the town;**
- **measures to encourage the introduction of a cross harbour ferry service;**
- **the introduction of a way marked tourist trail along the waterfront and fortifications;**
- **the co-ordination of transport initiatives and other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town as a residential area and as a place of tourism interest.**

Relevant policies:
*GT06,08,09,
GL05,06,07,08,09.*

The physically restricted nature of Senglea, coupled with its potential as a residential and tourist area, emphasise the importance of setting out a clear vision regarding transport and access requirements.

In future, the number of visitors is likely to increase substantially as tourism interest expands, and the potential of Dockyard Creek is realised. At the same time, free and unhindered access for residents must remain a priority. This policy is therefore included to indicate the general principles and rationale upon which future transport measures will be based, setting out the context for the development of individual proposals and schemes.

The adopted approach relies on regulation of access and parking, greater provision for the pedestrian, and the promotion of public transport, especially the development of a ferry service. As indicated in the introduction to the general policies for the Grand Harbour area, in the long term, consideration should be given to the development of a rapid transit system. However, such an approach is likely to be well outside the Plan period and thus in the

foreseeable future, the emphasis will need to be placed on the management of traffic, with equally strong attention focused on the development of a ferry service to complement other, wider improvements in public transport.

GL05

Road Hierarchy

The road hierarchy for Senglea is indicated on the Transport Strategy Map. Priorities for upgrading and resurfacing will depend on the state of the existing road; otherwise, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme. The main elements are:

Local Access Roads:

Triq it-Tarzna; Triq ix-Xatt (part); Triq il-Vitorja (part); Misrah Il-Papa Benedittu XV; Triq L-Arcisqof Mattei; Misrah Gorg Mitrovich; Triq Il-Monsinjur Panzavecchia; Triq Il-31 Ta' Marzu.

Access Only Streets:

All those not mentioned above.

<i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GT01,06,09,</i> <i>GL04.</i>
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This policy follows directly from the overall approach as indicated in general policy GT01, which is concerned with the definition of a road hierarchy and hence improvement priorities.

In general, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme. However it is recognised that the existing state of roads in the area varies widely, and that this local factor needs to be taken into account in the scheduling of improvement works.

GL06

Traffic Calming Measures And Embellishment Of Streets

Misrah il-Papa Benedittu, Misrah Francesco Zahra, and Misrah l-4 ta' Settembru will be given priority for improvement through floorscape treatment, the introduction of street furniture and planting to indicate that pedestrians have priority in these areas.

Misrah Gorg Mitrovich, Triq il-Habs il-Qadim, Triq l-Arcisqof Mattei and adjoining areas at the entrance to the town will be subject to an upgrading scheme through the use of sensitive surface treatment and street furniture. Part of Misrah Gorg Mitrovich could accommodate underground lock-up garages. A pedestrian link to the roof of Il-Macina should be safeguarded.

Embellishment of incidental open spaces at the north end of Triq Portu Salvu, Triq is-Sur, Triq San Mikiel, Triq il-Ponta and Triq is-Sirena will also be carried out with an emphasis on floorscape treatment and landscaping.

Traffic will be actively discouraged, especially along Triq il-Vitorja, by the introduction of traffic calming measures and parking restrictions for non residents' vehicles.

All upgrading proposals will where possible be expected to adopt 'access for all principles', as set out in the Authority's policy guidance document of 1995.

<i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GT04,09,13,14,</i>

These streets and squares help to define the character of Senglea and are well suited to improvement by the introduction of floorscape treatment and other

<i>GL04,07.</i>	suitied to improvement by the introduction of floorscape treatment and other features which fall under the responsibility of the local council, although the Authority will be prepared to give advice and technical assistance where possible.
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It is unlikely that the works could be carried out simultaneously, but it is useful to give an indication of their scope and extent so that an appropriate programme can be established. It follows from the above that any applications for development in these locations will be considered with reference to their effect, if any, on the upgrading proposals, as well as in relation to normal planning requirements.

Special attention should be given to the setting of the churches and other major heritage features. The Authority also sets great store by the introduction of ‘access for all’ measures, and any schemes will be expected to incorporate appropriate, relevant features.

GL07

Specific Pedestrianisation Measures

Part of Triq il-Ponta and Triq il-Portu Salvu will be designated as pedestrian priority areas. Accessibility to residents’ garages will be maintained.

<i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GN04,</i> <i>GT09,14,</i> <i>GL04,06,14,16,17.</i>	These narrow streets are located towards the tip of Senglea, and apart from residential access, there is no reason why they need to be kept as ordinary streets open to all traffic. Alternative routes are available, and this part of the town attracts many people on foot, going to the recently refurbished Il-Gardjola gardens. It is therefore appropriate to designate the two streets for pedestrian priority, encouraging the prevalence of a quiet atmosphere here. Residents will not of course be prevented from accessing their garages.
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GL08

Public Transport

The existing bus terminus is well located to serve most of the Senglea peninsula, but problems associated with restricted space are exacerbated by the size of the buses used and excessive layover times. Ideally, smaller midi buses should be used in this area, and buses should be scheduled to wait for shorter periods. Prior to the introduction of these more modern methods of operation, improvements will be limited to upgrading the standard of this public space and the facilities for bus passengers.

Development of a cross harbour/Vittoriosa ferry link is supported, with the main ferry berth being located on Triq ix-Xatt, subject to the detailed requirements of the Cottonera ‘Waterfront Revival Area’ Development Brief. The ferry berth must be located with reference to pedestrian connections with ‘upper’ Senglea.

Relevant policies: <i>GT05,06, GL04.</i>	The bus terminus is well located and there are no proposals to change the location, although the use of smaller, more suitable buses would be beneficial. Realistically, this will not occur until the bus industry is re-structured to provide more flexible, consumer oriented services. It is expected that treatment of the area will be undertaken and the facilities provided will be improved.
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Perhaps the most significant reduction in journey times to Valletta, Vittoriosa and other places around the Grand Harbour in the short term would be achieved by the re-introduction of ferry services, and the Local Plan strongly supports measures to assist this objective. Two important qualifications are necessary however. For a service to be successful, it would need to have exclusive use of a convenient quay, and better connections should be available to the ‘upper’ levels of Valletta and Senglea. The Local Plan therefore includes policies in relation to both of these requirements, although the precise location of any berthing at Senglea will be dependent upon the outcome of the development brief for Dockyard Creek.

GL09

Parking

A general policy of parking restraint will be pursued within Senglea, with on street parking where provided, reserved for residents only except along Triq it-Tarzna, Triq ix-Xatt and Triq is-Sur. Parking will only be allowed in specified zones, and will be minimised in the major town squares.

Provision of privately developed off street parking available to the general public in peripheral locations will be acceptable in principle, subject to satisfactory details.

Development of a multi storey car park for public use off Triq Mons. Panzaveccia, as part of the comprehensive proposals for Dockyard Creek, will be supported.

Relevant policies: <i>GL04.</i>	In many ways the problems faced by Senglea, and the opportunities available, are reminiscent of those of Mdina. In view of the physically restricted nature of the town and the likelihood of increased tourism interest, access and parking restraint will be necessary, giving priority to residents.
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However, in order to avoid suppressing tourism growth, provision will be required to cater for visitors, significant numbers of whom are still likely to arrive by car even if public transport is improved. This policy sets out the general approach to parking, and makes provision for the development of public car parking on the edge of Senglea, with particular reference to proposals for the redevelopment of the Dockyard Creek waterfront.

GL10

Urban Conservation Area

In accordance with general policy GH01, an Urban Conservation Area is designated covering all of Senglea (except the Dockyard area). In addition to normal planning requirements, development applications will be expected to have regard to the characteristics which prevail in the area and which help to define a sense of place.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GL11,12,13.*

Senglea has significant architectural, historic and visual interest. It is a former walled city whose boundary is tightly defined and constrained and whose urban fabric as a whole is of outstanding historical and cultural value.

The prominent visual setting of Senglea, within the landscape of peninsulas and creeks which dominates the south side of the Grand Harbour, complements that of Valletta. It is vital that the defining characteristics and setting of the town are maintained and enhanced, and the declaration of an Urban Conservation Area gives an added measure of protection.

GL11

Height Limitations

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible attitude which will take account of the following criteria:

- the Urban Conservation Area status;
- the streetscape, through a consideration of the buildings on the same facade and those on the facades on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;
- the general massing of the building;
- the roofscape;
- the skyline when seen from outside the site area;
- the overall visual impression of Senglea when viewed from a distance;
- the topographical features and consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);
- any other relevant planning consideration.

Relevant policies:

*GH01,
GL10,12.*

Significant changes in level across and along the Senglea promontory, areas of post war infilling, the emphasis in policy terms on attracting people back to the town, and the need to retain a visual discipline related to the historic nature of Senglea, make it difficult to impose a building height limitation.

The approach adopted here will be to determine requests for changes in height on an individual basis, having regard to the criteria mentioned above, and any other relevant planning guidance issued by the Planning Authority.

GL12

Design Requirements

In considering redevelopment proposals, the Authority will have regard to the following principles:

- the discipline imposed by the existing street and building block grid should be maintained;
- the form and detailing of buildings should be given a vertical emphasis;
- in accordance with policy GL11 above, the context of existing, adjacent building heights, and the relationship to the 'skyline' prospect of Senglea will strongly influence acceptance of the project. The 'skyline' view will however be paramount;
- massing, fenestration and ornamentation should respect the street and townscape context;
- in most instances, use of traditional materials will be required. This will apply without exception where a building follows an archetypal design approach. In the rare cases

where a ‘contemporary’ solution is accepted by the Authority, other materials may be introduced by agreement;

- major development schemes should incorporate accessible spaces and enclosures for the benefit of the general public;
- pedestrian access arrangements should have priority over vehicular.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GL10,11.*

Once again, a basic question arises regarding the extent to which individual design preferences and aspirations should be constrained and limited. Whilst it is not the intention of the Authority to impose unreasonable restrictions on designers, protecting the historic and physical significance of Senglea is a legitimate concern which needs to be acknowledged.

The basic considerations are therefore set out above in an effort to give guidance to developers and architects from the outset on the key factors which the Planning Authority will take into account in considering schemes for approval.

GL13

Bastions Improvement

In accordance with general policy GH03, the maintenance and restoration of the remnants of the fortifications are accorded a high priority. The restoration should initially concentrate on those sections most in public view, especially at the landward entrance to Senglea, including the reinstatement of the gap in the section from the main gate towards il-Macina. Uses detracting from the bastions will be removed. To assist this process, the Authority will help in the designation of suitable alternative sites for the relocation of legally established businesses and uses. A peripheral walk with interpretative features will also be designated along the bastions, with appropriate signposting and lighting.

Relevant policies:

*GH01,02,03,04,05,06,
GL10.*

Although some important elements of the bastions have been destroyed, considerable lengths remain intact, particularly at the entrance to Senglea, where they are at their most impressive. However, even here a notable gap exists, and elsewhere, inappropriate fencing has been added, and the keeping of livestock is prevalent.

The Local Plan will seek the rehabilitation of the bastions and their presentation as a tourist feature. The latter will be enhanced by the development of a peripheral tourist walk, Senglea being compact yet diverse enough to offer a series of changing panoramas and points of interest based on a circular route.

Whilst the Authority itself cannot undertake the necessary works, the following action will be initiated:

- i. illegal development will be challenged;
- ii. no permission will be given in future for any development which would compromise the rehabilitation aims;
- iii. assistance will be given in identifying an alternative relocation site for those legally established uses which are displaced.

GL14

Cottonera ‘Waterfront Revival Area’ - Senglea Section

The entire waterfront of Dockyard Creek between Il-Ponta ta’ L-Isla and the promontory of Fort St. Angelo is designated as the ‘Cottonera Waterfront Revival Area’ where public access to the waterfront in the context of tourism development will be promoted.

The Planning Authority approved a development brief and several outline permits for the area. Any proposals for this area should be in line with the approved development brief for the Regeneration of the Cottonera Waterfront and relative outline permits.

In Senglea, efforts will be focused on the improvement of the waterfront itself from il-Macina building to the tip of the peninsula.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,04,05, GH01,02,
GK12, GT09,10,12,14,
GG17,18, GC01,03,05,
GP01,05, GD10,11,
GB11, GL07,15,16.*

Generally, the Dockyard Creek waterfront at Senglea will be kept free of built development. The southern edge, facing Bormla, will also retain its open character, and the presentation of the bastions will be a material consideration in the resolution of any planning issues.

As indicated elsewhere in the Local Plan, the Dockyard Creek waterfront is potentially the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the Three Cities, and needs to be handled very carefully. It is significant both visually and in terms of its economic potential as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of the area.

The waterfront at Senglea has few problems of public access, but by the same token, few opportunities for built development. Apart from il-Macina, there are no outstanding historical buildings along the Senglea waterfront which can be put to public use. Nevertheless, the area has a feeling of ‘enclosed space’ which is very well suited to informal public use, gives a fine view across to Vittoriosa, and boasts a long promenade, partly tree-lined, which is well related to the water area of Dockyard Creek. These are important elements which need to be kept, and their appeal to the public enhanced.

Again, this section of the Creek needs to be considered in relation to a wider area.

The following elements are suggested for consideration in respect of the waterfront area of Senglea:

- i. rehabilitation and reuse of Il-Macina;
- ii. decorative floorscape treatment of the promenade;
- iii. introduction of better seating and lighting;
- iv. extension of formal tree planting and introduction of a garden;
- v. maintenance of peripheral traffic route, but with pedestrian priority sections;
- vi. clearly laid out parking, including small bus parking area;
- vii. a floating feature (with a use related to surrounding development);
- viii. dghajsa/ferry landing;
- ix. small boat moorings;
- x. winter onshore lay-up area for small boats;
- xi. scope for nearby guesthouse;
- xii. yacht club;
- xiii. cafeterias, restaurant;
- xiv. rehabilitation and opening of underground shelters as historic features.

It is important to stress that these proposals will be required to conform to the urban design and conservation requirements also set out in the brief. In addition, the fiscal approach necessary to secure implementation is a key consideration which merits attention.

GL15

Il-Macina

Il-Macina will be considered as part of the ‘Cottonera Waterfront Revival Area’. The restoration and reuse of Il-Macina will be encouraged. Consideration will be given to a suitable rehabilitation scheme which also includes redevelopment of the adjoining single storey garages. The removal of the modern building on the landward side of the fortifications will be required.

Any proposed use and development should be in line with the approved development brief for the Regeneration of the Cottonera Waterfront.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,
GH02,05,08,
GP01,
GD10,11,
GL14,17.*

Il-Macina, forming a part of the defence works of Senglea and until recently the headquarters of the Malta Labour Party, but more widely known from the location of the ‘sheerlegs’ crane, is a massive and prominent building occupying a prominent position at the southern end of Dockyard Creek.

It is in need of restoration and its main use as a tourist attraction which could include a museum, heritage centre, visitor centre, or similar use maybe explaining the history and development of Senglea would fit in well with the wider proposals relating to Dockyard Creek mentioned above. Other uses (like small scale offices) which increase the commercial viability of the project can also be included as long as these remain subsidiary to the main use as explained above.

Restoration would be assisted by the inclusion of the adjoining garages for redevelopment, to form a potentially larger complex with room for other complementary alternative uses. The more prominent, modern building on the landward side of the fortifications is an incongruous element in the urban scene and must be removed.

GL16

The Admiral’s House

The derelict site of the former Admiral’s House off Triq is-Sirena will be restored and used as a belvedere and to provide a pedestrian connection to the waterfront.

Relevant policies:

*GGN01,04,
GE06,
GC01,
GP01,
GD11,
GL07,14.*

The former Admiral’s House is a prominent site overlooking Dockyard Creek towards its seaward extremity. It is in need of upgrading, and should be available for public use to provide a vantage point from which to observe activities in Dockyard Creek, the site of a proposed yacht marina, and to provide a more direct connection to the latter from the northern end of the town.

GL17

Locations For Sports Facilities

The use of the former cinema in Triq D. Homedes for sports activities and indoor recreation is supported. This does not exclude other facilities from being developed in outdoor areas, subject to other considerations and provisions in this Plan and in the Structure Plan.

An Opportunity Area is indicated which includes the open areas adjoining the bastions in the vicinity of Misrah Gorg Mitrovich and Triq Mons. Panzaveccia at the entrance to the town as indicated in the Inset Map. Outdoor sports and recreation activities not requiring a building will be acceptable here, subject to the views of the Cottonera Rehabilitation Committee and the Heritage Advisory Committee, and the provisions of the Development Brief for Dockyard Creek.

Relevant policies:

*GS10,
GC01,
GL07,15.*

Space in Senglea is at a premium, yet in order to attract residents provision for more formal recreation should be made. Some of the demand may be catered for with the development of a 'regional' recreation complex at Cospicua. However, opportunities are available or have been developed within Senglea and these need to be safeguarded unless use of other more appropriate facilities is guaranteed.

GL18

Tertiary Town Centre

The Planning Authority has designated a Tertiary Town Centre for Senglea as identified on the Senglea Inset Map (Figure 19). (Refer to General Policy GD06).

Relevant Policies:

GD06

The strategy aims to reinforce the function of the designated centre for both food and non-food shopping. Within the Tertiary Town Centre the intention is to encourage the expansion and intensification of shopping facilities, resist the loss of shop units and floorspace, and resist any net loss of shop floorspace and frontage within redevelopment schemes.

Map 19

Map 20

Vittoriosa Policies

7.00 Vittoriosa

7.10 Introduction

- 7.11 Vittoriosa is the other principal peninsula on the south side of the Grand Harbour. It is a well defined settlement with extensive, intact fortifications to the landward side, and the impressive and partly restored Fort St. Angelo at the head of the peninsula, defending the outer reaches of the Grand Harbour. Like Senglea, it is a major element in the panorama formed by the interplay of land and water.
- 7.12 However, it is not just physical aspects which have to be considered. The gradual ‘leakage’ of population from Vittoriosa is symptomatic of a number of fundamental problems. Against a constant backdrop of emigration, community values are eroded and provision of the very facilities which are required is made more difficult. Accessibility to other areas remains a problem. The effects of nearby industry, the need for physical rejuvenation and the development of social problems combine to reinforce social prejudices regarding the area, and add to the difficulty of securing widespread improvement.

Strategy

Vittoriosa has the potential to re-establish itself as a thriving community at the heart of the Grand Harbour, and as elsewhere in the Three Cities, the key is the retention and upgrading of the residential character of the area, thereby attracting population back.

This will be more easily achieved if linked to the outstanding opportunities which are readily identifiable to reinforce and build upon the local heritage and to secure improvements to the public realm as a result.

By encouraging economic and physical regeneration, concentrating on those parts in need of attention but where the scope for success is greater, the overall attractiveness of the area will be enhanced and wider improvement is more likely to gather momentum in a self-sustaining way.

Approach

The different zones of the locality suggest the development of a variety of policies and proposals in an effort to deal with the issues relevant to each area, based generally on:

- conserving and restoring the positive features of the townscape;
- increasing tourism in a manner compatible with the area;
- improving the waterfront;
- providing community facilities;
- improving access to the area.

In other historic settlements abroad facing similar problems to Vittoriosa, it has been demonstrated that progress is often most readily achieved by the early rejuvenation of a key part of the area as a catalyst to stimulate ‘betterment’ in adjoining or nearby locations. In this context, rehabilitation of the waterfront area, in association with the improvement of individual buildings in the Collachio, are considered two key objectives

which should be pursued. An immediate and fundamental physical uplift, and a boosting of business confidence, should result.

It is therefore argued that the overall approach adopted should focus on:

- restoration measures to boost confidence and attract population;
- increased tourism;
- concentration on the waterfront and key sites initially;
- improvement of access.

Although outside the scope of the Plan, it may be that consideration should be given by Government to the declaration of a ‘Three Cities Development Zone’ where fiscal incentives for the improvement of property would be available, and initiatives would be concentrated. The precise boundaries of the area would be subject to further discussion and consultation, but would include those localities most in need of attention.

GG01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement Policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Vittoriosa Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

The southern edge of the town of Vittoriosa, facing Cospicua, will retain its open character, and the presentation of the bastions will be a material consideration in the resolution of any planning issues.

The open nature of the area between the Margherita and the Cottonera Lines will be maintained subject to the details given below:

- **minor works essential to the continued occupation of existing legally established dwellings;**
- **the purposes of agriculture and tree planting (animal rearing units not permissible);**
- **the establishment of sport, recreational or leisure facilities appropriate to an area of open character;**
- **infrastructural requirements essential to the locality, which could not reasonably expect to locate in the urban area;**
- **other proposals as indicated in the Local Plan.**

<i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GS02.</i>
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The Urban Development Boundary is an important tool in ensuring that sprawl, coalescence of settlements, loss of open space and thus loss of identity are avoided, and more efficient use and recycling of existing land for development are promoted.

Retention of the open and uncluttered nature of the area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines is considered essential. No further development will therefore be allowed in this area except as provided for by other specific policies in this Plan. A management plan will also be prepared under policy GG12 below.

GG02

Residential Improvement And Redevelopment

The Authority will support measures to improve and expand the stock of residential accommodation in Vittoriosa for example by the declaration of a Housing Improvement Action Area and by the rehabilitation of older dwellings, the conversion to housing of suitable buildings currently used for other purposes, and the redevelopment of post war infill sites. Redevelopment at higher densities will be acceptable. Changes in building heights will be considered where appropriate (see policy GG13 below). The introduction of innovative forms of housing related to specific market requirements will be encouraged.

Relevant policies:
GS05,06,09.

The Plan adopts as a general strategy the attraction of 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, which is seeing the emergence of specific demand for more specialised housing provision.

This specific demand includes smaller housing units for single persons; ‘sheltered accommodation’ for the frail elderly; aged persons’ housing; student flats; and housing for smaller families, to name a few categories. Increasingly, catering for this type of demand is giving rise to innovative forms of development which are well suited to intensely urban locations such as Vittoriosa. Apart from their capability of utilising sites and adapting existing buildings, such developments can also help to bolster local services by the introduction of significant consumer spending.

As indicated previously, the overall impact of improvement and redevelopment works and the example they provide can have a major beneficial effect, and it is considered that this approach should be pursued in Vittoriosa.

GG03

Vittoriosa Transport Strategy

The Planning Authority will encourage the introduction of a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy for Vittoriosa. The main features will be based on:

- i. the conversion of the historic core - the Collachio - into a pedestrian dominated area;**
- ii. discouraging extraneous traffic, and management and regulation of traffic into and within the town to achieve a better flow;**
- iii. the introduction of a way marked tourist trail around and within the bastions;**
- iv. upgrading of the waterfront and the encouragement of ferry services;**
- v. the introduction of a controlled parking regime;**
- vi. provision of ‘off street’ parking (at peripheral locations);**
- vii. the co-ordination of transport initiatives and other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town as a residential area and as a place of tourism interest.**

Relevant policies:
*GT03,06,08,09,
GG04,05,06,07,
GG08,09,10,11.*

As with other parts of the Three Cities, a principal aim in Vittoriosa is to improve accessibility and to seek a reduction in traffic problems. This aim is intimately related to efforts to revitalise Vittoriosa as a residential area, as a place of tourism interest, and as a potential international marina site.

If the tourism development potential of the area is realised, then the number of visitors will expand dramatically. However, a potential conflict exists here with the requirement to

increase the attractiveness of Vittoriosa for residents, and an integrated approach is therefore necessary to ensure that measures to deal with both issues are compatible.

The above policy therefore indicates the general principles and rationale upon which future transport measures will be based, setting the context for the introduction of more detailed schemes. Regulation of access and parking to favour local residents will be necessary, but with provision for the acceptance of some tourist traffic, and, in this context, significant improvements for pedestrians. The potential for the introduction of ferry services should also be exploited. The latter have obvious application to tourism, but the benefits would extend much further if regular and reasonably priced services could be introduced.

GG04

Road Hierarchy

The road hierarchy for Vittoriosa is indicated on the Transport Strategy Map. The main elements are:

Distributor Roads:

Triq San Dwardu, Triq il-Gublew tal-Fidda, and Triq il-Kottonera.

Local Access Roads:

Triq San Lawrenz (part), Triq Sant Antnin, Triq Santa Skolastika, Triq Boffa, Triq il-Mina l-Kbira, Triq il-Kardinal; Triq La Vallette, Triq il-Palazz l-Antik tal-Gvernatur; Misrah ir-Rebha, Triq it-8 ta' Dicembru; and Triq Desain.

Access Only Streets:

All those not mentioned above.

Relevant policies:

*GT01,06,09,
GG03,07.*

This policy follows directly from the overall approach as indicated in general policy GT01, which is concerned with the definition of a road hierarchy and hence improvement priorities.

In general, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its maintenance programme. However, it is recognised that the existing state of roads in the area varies widely, and that this local factor needs to be taken into account in the scheduling of improvement works.

GG05

Pedestrian Measures In The Historic Core

As indicated in policy GG03 above, the Collachio will become a pedestrian dominated area. A proper programme of improvements, including sensitive use of surface treatments and street furniture will be carried out to indicate pedestrian priority.

Vehicle accessibility will only be allowed to residents' garages, for maintenance, shop servicing and emergencies. Time restrictions for shop servicing will be implemented. It is recommended that a consultation exercise will be undertaken to establish the form of the scheme to be adopted.

The bridge leading from the historic core of Vittoriosa towards Kalkara (Gate of Auvergne) will be pedestrianised.

Relevant policies:

GN04,

The historic core of Vittoriosa is characterised by narrow, intricate alley ways, changes in level and limited space for the manoeuvring of vehicles. Some

*GT09,14,
GG03,06,07,09.*

changes in level, and limited space for the manoeuvring of vehicles. Some parts are very difficult to access at all by motor vehicles. The scale and layout of the area is adapted to movement on foot rather than by car.

In this context, regulation of access by vehicles is necessary, and preference will be given to the needs of residents and for essential services, and for the servicing of shops during specified periods only.

The bridge link across the bastions from Vittoriosa leading to Kalkara is too narrow to accommodate vehicles and will therefore be pedestrianised. This proposal also relates to measures restricting vehicles entering the Collachio.

GG06 Traffic Calming Measures And Embellishment Of Streets

Pedestrian priority areas and traffic calming measures will be introduced at the town's entrance (Triq Boffa; and near Freedom Monument). Pedestrian facilities and traffic calming measures along Triq San Dwardu (near the schools), Triq il-Gublew tal-Fidda, and Triq il-Kottonera will be introduced to create safe pedestrian accessibility.

Misrah ir-Rebha will be given priority for improvement. Parking will be restricted to a minimum and a bus stop for public buses will be provided if required.

Embellishment and improvement of Misrah ir-Rebha, and incidental open spaces including the west end of Triq il-Mandragg, Triq il-Foss, the south end of Triq il-Habs l-Antik, Triq il-Kunvent and Triq il-Kardinal Desain will also be encouraged.

Any works carried out must be sensitive to their setting and take into account the needs of the mobility restricted, particularly persons with pushchairs, and wheelchair users.

Any other measures should be in line with the approved development brief for the Regeneration of the Cottonera Waterfront.

Relevant policies:
*GT04,09,13,14,
GG03,05,07.*

Two aspects of the transport planning approach to Vittoriosa are to seek a reduction in the number of vehicles entering the town, and to give greater priority to pedestrians. This policy indicates the general measures which it is intended should be introduced, and gives more information on appropriate sites and areas which should be the subject of particular schemes.

The schemes will require development permission, but the Local Plan establishes the principle of this type of work. It is envisaged and assumed that the drawing up and execution of the schemes will be the responsibility of the local council, and where other street resurfacing works, and the provision of pedestrian facilities are intended, these should be undertaken in consultation and conjunction with the local council, although the Planning Authority will be prepared to give advice and assistance where possible.

GG07

Traffic Management

To achieve the strategic objectives set out in GG03, traffic management measures to be introduced, as indicated on Map22. The circulation system will seek to maintain easy access to residential properties and shops, whilst discouraging extraneous traffic.

Vehicular access to the waterfronts on both sides of the peninsula will be limited and controlled, and the design of these areas will give priority to the needs of the pedestrians.

Pedestrian priority streets will be designed in conformity with the principles set out in GV08.

Relevant policies:
GT04,06,09,
GE02,
GG03,04,05,06.

As an historic town with great tourism potential, and a residential area, Vittoriosa will be particularly prone to traffic problems unless careful management is introduced from the outset. This policy sets out the principles upon which the traffic management system will be based. The details will need to be agreed between the local council, the Planning Authority and the Traffic Control Board.

GG08

Public Transport

The Planning Authority will support improvements to the frequency and extent of bus services, particularly to take account of the additional activity that will be stimulated by the Cottonera development.

The upgrading of the existing bus terminus will be permitted, provided that services are scheduled to avoid an excessive accumulation of waiting buses.

The development of a ferry service from Xatt ir-Risq via Senglea to Valletta and vice versa will also be encouraged. Consequently, development proposals which could inhibit or prevent such a service will not be accepted.

Relevant policies:
GT05,06
GG03,09.

If bus services are to be attractive they need to operate at frequent intervals. The increase in tourism and other activity associated with the proposed Cottonera development provide the opportunity for the PTA to proactively improve the services provided in this area.

The improvement of the bus terminus would be beneficial, however, in order to avoid the dedication of excessive carriageway spaces to waiting buses, the Authority will expect the PTA to organize services in such a way as to avoid long layover periods.

Vittoriosa would become much more accessible with appropriate ferry services, not just from a tourism viewpoint but also in terms of commuter traffic to Valletta/Floriana, and links to other parts of the Three Cities. It is recognised, however, that other important works will need to be carried out both in Vittoriosa and Valletta to encourage the use of ferries.(e.g. the re-instatement of a lift at Valletta). Nevertheless, in anticipation of the establishment of such ferry services in the future, development along the waterfront which would prejudice or prevent their introduction will not be allowed. Any proposals for the development of a marina will be required to make provision for a possible ferry embarkation point.

GG09***Vertical Links To Triq Il-Mandragg***

Improved access between the waterfront at Kalkara Creek and the upper levels of Vittoriosa will be sought. This may be achieved by the introduction of a passenger lift, and stairway improvements. Therefore, any development proposals which prejudice such a connection, or reduce the effectiveness of existing links, will not be permitted.

Relevant policies:

*GH02,GT12,
GC03,05,06,
GP01,05,
GG03,05,08.*

The significant change in level between the centre of Vittoriosa and the waterfront, particularly on the Kalkara frontage, is potentially a major obstacle to the attractiveness of the area for the public, and a disincentive to improvements being carried out.

Triq il-Mandragg is linked to the Dockyard Creek frontage by a tunnel; the possibilities for a series of circular pedestrian routes, if a better connection can be achieved with the 'upper level,' are therefore good. Additionally, attracting more people to this part of Vittoriosa would assist in securing its upgrading and more beneficial use - at present there is little to invite the public to venture into this area, whilst potential clearly exists for improvement and perhaps some development (see policy GG18). Care needs to be taken, however, to respect the historical significance of the area, and proposals will be checked to assure that the hard, plain historic edge along Kalkara Creek is not compromised.

GG10***Parking***

In relation to the historic part of the town, within the bastions, a general policy of parking restraint will be followed, with preference being given to the needs of residents.

To meet the special needs of tourism, parking provision for tour buses will be made at Xatt ir-Risq.

Relevant policies:

*GT10,
GG03,11.*

Parking is a cause of concern to residents, and is a significant problem in relation to the historic core (the Collachio). It is intended that this area should become a pedestrian priority zone, and provision will need to be made to meet parking requirements catering for local residents only. Residents' needs will generally be given priority elsewhere, with the exception of those areas, which are close to main attractions and have spare capacity to provide general parking spaces.

The waterfront area, particularly near the Maritime Museum, already attracts tourist coaches, and it is expected that, with the further development and improvement of Vittoriosa, the requirement for coach parking is likely to increase. Provision should therefore be made at Xatt ir-Risq for coaches to be parked in a manner which does not obstruct the pedestrian route also proposed along the quayside.

GG11***Off Street Parking***

Off-street parking to cater for tourists, shoppers and visitors will be created by the construction of an underground car park at Misrah Santa Margerita.

Relevant policies:

*GT10,
GG03,10.*

A comprehensive parking policy, based on restricting provision in sensitive locations will only be effective if appropriate alternative car parking is available. A suitable site has been identified at the periphery of the Urban



Conservation Area. Opportunities will be considered as they arise, in co-operation with the local council.

GG12

Urban Conservation Area

In accordance with general policy GH01, all of the area of Vittoriosa is designated as an Urban Conservation Area. In addition to normal planning requirements, development applications will be expected to have regard to the characteristics which prevail in the Area and which help to define a sense of place. To address the particular problems of the area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines, a management plan will be prepared.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GG13,14,15,
GG16,17,18,21.*

Vittoriosa forms a substantial part of the Three Cities Urban Conservation Area, including one of the urban ‘core’ areas, and the Margherita and Cottonera Lines themselves. The boundary has been drawn outside the Cottonera Lines to protect the whole setting of the Three Cities, and thus includes a variety of locations of highly important architectural, historic and visual interest. It is critical that the approaches to and setting of the walled town can be appreciated and understood, and that once inside, its relationship to the other urban elements of Senglea and Cospicua are clear.

These requirements can only be achieved in a planning context where conservation of historic and architectural elements are accorded their proper significance, given due protection and are subject to a restoration and enhancement programme. Declaration of an Urban Conservation Area and incorporation into the Local Plan reflects these concerns.

The area between the walls, mentioned in the original designation report as having special problems and requiring the preparation of a management plan, is also dealt with here and more generally, under policy GG01 above.

GG13

Height Limitations

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible attitude which will take account of the following criteria:

- **the Urban Conservation Area status;**
- **the streetscape, through a consideration of the buildings on the same facade and those on the facades on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;**
- **the general massing of the building;**
- **the roofscape;**
- **the skyline when seen from outside the site area;**
- **the topographical features and consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);**
- **the need to bring up to standard of habitation, existing sub-standard dwellings (including the addition of bedrooms); and**
- **any other relevant planning consideration.**

Relevant policies:

*GH01,
GG12,14.*

The steeply sloping nature of parts of the site, and the contrast between the older and more modern parts of the town make the imposition of a blanket building height limitation inappropriate. However, retention of the existing skyline and other positive townscape features of Vittoriosa are so important

that some form of visual discipline is necessary.

This requirement is particularly appropriate in the case of restraint in building height. Thus, whilst no ‘formula’ is given, requests for changes in building heights, or the height of new buildings, will be considered on an individual basis having regard to the points mentioned above, and any other relevant planning guidance issued from time to time by the Planning Authority.

GG14

Design Requirements

In considering redevelopment proposals, the Authority will have regard to the following principles:

- the discipline imposed by the existing street and building block grid should be maintained, except where comprehensive redevelopment of the post war additions is proposed;
- the form and detailing of buildings should be given a vertical emphasis;
- in accordance with policy GG13 above, the context of existing, adjacent building heights, and the relationship to the ‘skyline’ prospect of Vittoriosa will strongly influence acceptance of the project. The ‘skyline’ view will however be paramount;
- massing, fenestration and ornamentation should respect the street and townscape context. Again, this would not necessarily be insisted upon in redevelopment of the post war additions;
- in most instances, use of traditional materials will be required. This will apply without exception where a building follows an archetypal design approach. In the rare cases where a ‘contemporary’ solution is accepted by the Authority, other materials may be introduced by agreement;
- major development schemes should incorporate accessible spaces and enclosures for the benefit of the general public;
- pedestrian access arrangements should have priority over vehicular.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GG12,13,15,17.*

Once again, a basic question arises regarding the extent to which individual design preferences and aspirations should be constrained and limited. Whilst it is not the intention of the Authority to impose unreasonable restrictions on designers, protecting the historic and physical significance of Vittoriosa is a legitimate concern which needs to be acknowledged.

The basic considerations are therefore set out above in an effort to give guidance to developers and architects from the outset on the key factors which the Planning Authority will take into account in considering schemes for approval.

GG15

Heritage Trail And Promenade Walk

The Authority will support the introduction of an historic tourist trail around and within the bastions to link points of tourism interest. Every effort will be made to make the trail accessible to the mobility restricted. A promenade walk will be introduced along the waterfront periphery of Vittoriosa, including improved links to the centre of the town and connections to the Historic Trail and places of interest.

Any development proposals in the areas served by the historic trail or the promenade walk and connections will be carefully assessed to ensure that continuity of the routes is not compromised. The Authority may require amendments to, or refuse, proposals which, by their impact, would affect the integrity of the route.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,04,05,
GH01,03,05,06,
GC01,03,06,
GP01,05, GD11,
GG12,14,16,17,18.*

One of the ways in which tourism and the general enjoyment of the area by the public can be promoted is to expand the network of pedestrian routes with the objective of linking places of tourism interest. It is also important to ensure that facilities are available which meet the needs of those whose mobility is restricted, including wheelchair users.

Two different types of main route are suggested. The historic trail, properly signposted and with information given on panels and plaques at various intervals, is intended to invite exploration and to be informative and educational. The promenade route, although also connecting some historic features, is primarily intended to be an easy walk, a route for strolling. Along the Kalkara Creek frontage, some sympathetic development may be possible.

GG16

Bastions Improvement - Cottonera And Margherita Lines

In accordance with general policy GH03, the maintenance and rehabilitation of the bastions are accorded a high priority. The restoration of the entire length of the bastions is sought, but initially, priority will be given to those parts forming gateways to Vittoriosa as one of the Three Cities. A peripheral walk with interpretative features will also be laid out along the Cottonera Lines, with appropriate signposting.

Uses detracting from the bastions will be removed, and to assist this process, the Authority will where possible designate suitable alternative sites for the relocation of legally established businesses and uses.

Relevant policies:

*GH01,03,04,05,06,
GG12,15.*

As in the case of Cospicua, the bastions are one of the defining elements of Vittoriosa, but in places have been subject to illegal or inappropriate uses which have sometimes resulted in the deterioration of the bastions themselves or in their setting.

This is a problem that needs to be tackled on a wide front, and the Local Plan will seek to assist in their rehabilitation and re-establishment as a tourist attraction. The Planning Authority cannot itself undertake works directly, but will initiate the following action:

- illegal development will be challenged;
- no permissions will be given in future for any development which would compromise the rehabilitation aims;
- assistance will be given in identifying an alternative relocation site for those legally established uses which are displaced.

GG17 Cottonera ‘Waterfront Revival Area’ - Vittoriosa Section

The entire waterfront of Dockyard Creek between Il-Ponta ta’ L-Isla and the promontory of Fort St. Angelo is designated as the ‘Cottonera Waterfront Revival Area’ where public access to the waterfront in the context of tourism development will be promoted.

The Planning Authority approved a development brief and several outline permits for the area. These include the restoration and conversion of considerable parts of Fort St Angelo. Any proposals for this area should be in line with the approved development brief for the Regeneration of the Cottonera Waterfront and relative permits.

In Vittoriosa, improvement, rehabilitation and redevelopment efforts will be concentrated on the Vittoriosa Waterfront, the beneficial use of the water area itself, and establishing strong links between the waterfront and the centre of the town.

The Cottonera Waterfront Development brief considers the Vittoriosa section in greater detail and was used to guide and promote development. Public access to the waterfront, the rehabilitation and beneficial use of historic buildings, the development of a yacht marina and specialised yachting facilities, and the linking of the waterfront to the centre of the town will be key themes.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,04,05,
GH01,02,
GT04,09,10,14,
GC01,03,05,
GP01,05,GD10,11,
GB11,GL14,
GG12,14,15,18,GK12.*

It is perhaps the Vittoriosa Waterfront of Dockyard Creek where the potential for rapid improvement and rehabilitation is most marked, but where great care needs to be taken to ensure that the historical buildings are properly restored and treated. Careful assessment will need to be given not only to the restoration of the individual structures, but also to ensuring that uses proposed are compatible with the dignity of the buildings themselves.

The Waterfront boasts a spacious quay, deep water, proximity to the centre of Vittoriosa, and is comparatively sheltered. It has views out towards Valletta, is close to the entrance to the Grand Harbour, and has a strong maritime tradition. Access by road is good, although as elsewhere in the Three Cities, strategic links need to be improved.

The main problems concern the extent of rehabilitation of buildings necessary, the requirement for better physical links between the quayside and the rest of the town, and a virtual complete absence of any hotels, guest houses, restaurants and good quality catering facilities in the general area. In a way, the latter could be used to advantage in the promotion of high quality tourist facilities based on the restoration of the existing stock of historical buildings. Removal of inappropriate structures and redevelopment where acceptable will be supported (e.g. the replacement of the ‘White Building’ by a hotel, whilst adopting good urban design practices).

As indicated under similar policies for other individual sections of Dockyard Creek, the approach adopted for this area must relate to the overall concept and ideas for the Creek as a whole.

GG18

Kalkara Creek Waterfront

The Kalkara Creek waterfront will be upgraded to provide improved public access and facilities. The predominantly open aspect of the shoreline along Kalkara Creek will be maintained. The main theme of the waterfront will be a series of public open spaces, linked by a promenade, incorporating gardens, children's play areas and shade structures. Some car parking will be provided. The removal of the existing stores building will be sought.

Improved access to the Dockyard Creek waterfront will be pursued.

The Planning Authority will encourage the relocation of the existing government Works Division and the redevelopment of that building for other purposes. This may include residential and/or leisure uses, as long as great care is taken in the design of the new building due to its very sensitive location. A way of incorporating the promenade through or next to this building will be sought.

A site at It-Toqba was permitted for residential development as part of the Cottonera Rehabilitation Project.

A development brief for the regeneration of the waterfront based on the proposals contained in this policy will be prepared.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,04,
GH01,
GT09,12,14,
GE06,
GC01,03,05,
GP01,05,
GD10,
GB11,
GL14,
GG12,15,17,GK12.*

The Kalkara Creek waterfront of Vittoriosa has the potential to fulfill an important role in the provision of gardens and public open space facilities for enjoyment by the general public. Currently, there is little to attract people to this area, despite its waterfront location, and access is somewhat difficult. It is therefore proposed to reinforce the connections with the Dockyard Creek frontage - which is to be the subject of an imaginative improvement scheme - and to provide vertical links to the centre of Vittoriosa. These measures should help to improve accessibility and make possible a circular walking route. In the context of the latter, the promenade proposed in policy GG15 will be an important feature.

Considerable scope exists to introduce features of interest, particularly around the theme of public gardens and play areas. Attention will need to be paid in the design of garden areas to the effects of exposure, because of the north easterly aspect of the waterfront. Shade structures will also be required. It is envisaged that limited parking will be made available. The two principal areas envisaged for public gardens are at the seaward and landward ends of the promontory respectively, the latter in the area between the bastion walls.

Three existing land uses merit further consideration. These are the government stores at the seaward end of the area; the stores building below the northern end of Triq Santa Skolastica; and the old oil store/marine refuelling depot at the southern end of It-Toqba. It is proposed that all of these uses should eventually be removed and relocated in more appropriate sites.

The site of the government stores towards the head of the promontory has potential for development for leisure or recreational purposes with the eventual removal of the stores. The type of uses which would be acceptable include a sea-life visitor centre/aquarium; an educational centre related to the role and history of the Grand Harbour; an indoor arena or exhibition area; a restaurant/cafe; or possibly, an operational centre for a public or private organisation which is prepared to devote space to a public exhibition/'experience' facility explaining its role.

The other stores building is expected to be removed completely.

The most southerly public gardens would be provided in the space between the bastions, and would relate to the restoration of the latter by the introduction of simple interpretative plaques and information points. It is envisaged that a pedestrian link to the Collachio would be provided. With respect to the oil store on the shoreline, whilst the building can remain, the use should not. Other storage uses related to small boat facilities are likely to be acceptable.

GG19

Valley At Tal-Hawli

The valley in the vicinity of Tal-Hawli, shown on the Inset Map, is designated as a Site of Scientific Importance (Level 2) and Structure Plan policies RCO 28 and RCO 29 apply. Development of any description which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, could prejudice the natural characteristics of the site will not be permitted.

Relevant policies: <i>GE01.</i>

This area is considered to be of geomorphological significance. It is also located in the transitional ‘open’ area identified and protected under policy GG01. Proposals will only be considered in the first instance if they comply with the requirements of this policy.

GG20

Fort St. Angelo

The Planning Authority will encourage and support the restoration and reuse of Fort St. Angelo and its establishment primarily as a cultural and touristic activities centre, in line with the approved outline permit. Any future proposals will be expected to complement the existing use of the upper parts of the Fort by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta of the Knights of St. John, and to seek the removal of unsightly accretions.

Structures around the base of Fort St. Angelo will be kept to a minimum and no development additional to the basic requirements of the Cottonera Waterfront Revival Area as set out in the outline permit and as required by the yacht marina will be allowed.

The area including cliffs and shoreline forming the south-western face of Fort St. Angelo, shown on the Inset Map, is designated as a Site of Scientific Importance (Level 2).

Relevant policies: <i>GN01, GH02,03,04,05,08, GD10,11.</i>
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Fort St. Angelo is considered to be for Cottonera what Fort St. Elmo is for Valletta. It is the most significant feature in Vittoriosa and every effort must be made to conserve it.

The Local Plan, in line with international trends, believes that the best way of conserving such a gem is through its appropriate reuse, based on both cultural and touristic aspects. This is considered to be complementary to the existing use of the upper parts of the Fort, and government is encouraged to find ways of increasing this type of activity by establishing a visitor/interpretation centre focusing on the history and present day activities of the Knights of Malta.

Such a project would be unique and should turn out to be economically feasible to the extent of attracting sufficient interest from the private sector to establish a public/private partnership. This initiative could involve live re-enactments (even by the guides themselves),

including cavalry displays; an arms display maybe through the relocation of the armoury from the Magisterial Palace in Valletta; audio-visual displays, interpretative facilities; visitor centre/armoury bookshop; cafeteria and sitting out spaces; and other similar activities which generate further revenue but which complement the use of the upper parts as the headquarters of the Knights themselves.

As regards the waterfronts, it is considered that physical structures should not be present and where unavoidable should be kept to a minimum in order to bring out further the impressiveness and magnificence of the bastion walls.

A small pocket of coastline on the Kalkara Creek also contains a number of interesting erosional features, including sea caves and cliffs. Although unlikely to be affected by any development proposals, it is important to ensure that its importance is recognised and that it receives adequate protection.

The other side, on French Creek, forms part of the Cottonera Waterfront Revival area and is included as part of the zone needing a development brief. There already exist a number of structures which seem to be inappropriately used, and it is not foreseen that further structures would be necessary to make provision for any yacht marina facilities. This policy would therefore further suggest that any unnecessary structures be removed, however, subject to the requirements of the development brief which will be prepared for the area.

GG21

Stores Building Near Porte de France

The Planning Authority will encourage the rehabilitation and re-use of the existing stores building beneath the Porte de France, and the existing use will be relocated. Public access to the ditch will be encouraged. Further extension to the stores which will detract from the nature of the historic ditch will not be allowed.

<i>Relevant policies:</i> <i>GG12.</i>
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The stores building beneath the Porte de France are hidden to some extent, and parts of it have historical significance. Rehabilitation and appropriate reuse are therefore encouraged, as long as the setting and context of the historic area are respected.

GG22 Relocation Of Small And Medium-sized Enterprise Workshops

Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) workshops causing problems in residential areas, (*the incompatible sectors will be identified as a result of the Structure Plan review process*), and those which need to be relocated because of policy GG16, will be expected to move to appropriate alternative sites (see general policy GD02). These are identified at Kordin and, on a smaller scale, at Ricasoli Industrial Estate.

Relevant policies: <i>GS07,</i> <i>GK22,23.</i>	Although problems caused by SMEs in Vittoriosa are considered to be quite limited, there are occasions where difficulties have arisen. Unless alternative sites are available, the prospects of improving matters by taking enforcement action is rendered more difficult. Alternative areas have therefore been identified, where the opportunity exists to adapt sites for SMEs on a well controlled and organised basis.
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Detailed proposals and applications will be expected to follow normal development control requirements, and any specific planning considerations relating to the particular site. Applicants must therefore realise that whilst no automatic ‘right’ to an alternative site exists, the Authority will endeavour to assist as far as possible businesses making a genuine effort to relocate to a suitable, more appropriate location.

GG23

Tertiary Town Centre

The Planning Authority has designated a Tertiary Town Centre for Vittoriosa as identified on the Vittoriosa Inset Map (Figure 21). (Refer to General Policy GD06).

Relevant Policies: <i>GD06</i>	The strategy aims to reinforce the function of the designated centre for both food and non-food shopping. Within the Tertiary Town Centre the intention is to encourage the expansion and intensification of shopping facilities, resist the loss of shop units and floorspace, and resist any net loss of shop floorspace and frontage within redevelopment schemes.
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Map 21

Map 22

Kalkara Policies

8.00 Kalkara

8.10 Introduction

- 8.11 Kalkara lies on the south-eastern side of the Grand Harbour, clustered along the eastern shore of Kalkara Creek. The setting of the village is arguably the most rural in the Plan area, with a significant stretch of open land, centred around Wied Rinella, stretching south towards Zabbar and Xghajra.
- 8.12 Kalkara is significant in the context of the Local Plan as being the only settlement which is continuing to attract population, due partly to the extent of the area included within the previous development scheme which remains unbuilt, and also because of its unspoilt, rural atmosphere and coastal location.
- 8.13 Adjacent to it is Ricasoli, which forms the extremity of the Plan area on the south-eastern side of the Grand Harbour, including over 2km of coastline outside the confines of the harbour itself.

Strategy

The strategy adopted by the Local Plan concentrates on four principal concerns. These relate to:

- strengthening the residential role of the town;
- assisting better management of the environment;
- maintaining the best features of the area, and attracting complementary development where appropriate;
- maximising the tourism and recreational potential of the Ricasoli area.

Approach

Kalkara has already established itself as an attractive residential location. A key element of the Local Plan strategy is therefore to introduce policies which strengthen the residential role of the town.

The long term expansion of Kalkara as a residential area will be promoted in a manner which takes into account environmental factors, and will involve a re-examination of some parts of the 'schemed' area, including indicating more precisely any design requirements based on site characteristics and possible changes in density.

A problem which has been noted is the lack of community facilities in relation to the growth of the village. Consideration will therefore be given as to what form of facilities are necessary and where they might be located.

Part of the reason for the town's growth is its location and character. It will be important to ensure that the positive attributes which are evident are maintained, and utilised to good effect to encourage better standards of development and conservation in the future. It has also been clearly shown elsewhere that an environment of high quality is vital in securing benefits in economic and social development.

The concept of maximising the tourism and recreational potential of the Ricasoli area is one which is adopted enthusiastically by the Local Plan, although it is recognised that other aspects are equally as important and may determine the extent to which this aim can be realised. One such aspect is the need to rehabilitate and safeguard the coastline and other natural and man made features of the area, particularly Fort Ricasoli. The overall rural character and setting must also be maintained, and this implies adequate safeguards in relation to positive features and a proactive approach towards remedying deficiencies.

The coast, Rinella Creek and Wied Rinella are sensitive natural features not only locally, but also in relation to the entire Plan area, and are increasingly under threat through abuse, pollution and pressure for development. Policies are necessary to ensure they remain unspoilt and properly protected in future.

With regard to tourism development, Fort Ricasoli has been identified as a key site yet is in dire need of fundamental restoration. With so many other calls on funding, it is doubtful if, realistically, anything other than minimal works could be undertaken unless linked to an appropriate tourism project which could assist in the necessary upgrading.

The Mediterranean Film Studios too are an important commercial component of the Ricasoli area, both in relation to their primary function as a film centre, and as a tourist attraction. The two roles are quite compatible, and would benefit from, and could themselves help to introduce, a positive change in the quality of the immediate environment. These initiatives are supported by the Local Plan, but need to be linked to a general improvement in the environment and in particular, of the shoreline. Maintenance of public access to and along the shore, from Xghajra towards Fort Ricasoli, is essential, but needs to be linked to proper access arrangements and measures to protect natural features and assist in their appreciation and interpretation by the public.

Kalkara is also somewhat isolated. There is a general issue of dealing with connections to the town at a strategic level, related partly but not exclusively to improvements in road access. The introduction of ferry services also needs to be considered. A clear definition of the road hierarchy is necessary, with the identification of appropriate locations for the introduction of traffic management features and provision for pedestrians.

The attraction of the area from an economic development standpoint should be greatly enhanced by the proposed South Harbour Link Road, the construction of which should be carefully co-ordinated with other developments.

Another important location is the hamlet of Santu Rokku which has developed into a pleasant residential area. The Local Plan must assist in ensuring that this atmosphere is maintained, over-development is avoided, and the hamlet retains its rural setting.

In view of the special character of Santu Rokku, and the gradual 'creeping urbanisation' which has occurred with the expansion of Zabbar, it is intended to delimit clearly the area of the village and to ensure that its current form is maintained.

Finally, the issue of industrial activities is an important one regarding Ricasoli. The Tank Cleaning Facility presents a difficult problem. In many ways it is out of place in relation to its immediate, historical surroundings and the otherwise unspoilt Rinella Creek. Yet in relation to its industrial function, it is located in the most appropriate location in view of the safety regulations pertaining within the Grand Harbour, and the need for a deep water berth reasonably close to the Drydocks. A considerable sum (over 2 million liri) has been spent in recent years upgrading the berth itself.

It is also undeniable that Ricasoli has a major role to play as a location for industry generally, with improvements to and more intensive use of the industrial estate being necessary. The attractiveness of Ricasoli Estate is moreover likely to increase when the South Harbour Link Road is in place, hence it is important to ensure that the investment which the estate represents is used effectively, but without compromising the environment of the surrounding area.

Scope exists to use space more intensively. Because of relocation policies in relation to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises introduced elsewhere in the Plan, and the nationally identified need to encourage this sector of the economy, provision is made for new internal sites and the limited expansion, in the form of a physical ‘rounding-off,’ of the estate specifically to accommodate this type of business.

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GK01

Urban Development Boundary

In accordance with General Settlement policy GS02, the Urban Development Boundary is shown on the Kalkara Inset Map. There will be a presumption against development outside this boundary, except where indicated through other policies in this Plan.

The open nature of the Ricasoli area will be maintained subject to the details given below:

- **minor works essential to the continued occupation of existing legally established dwellings;**
- **the purposes of agriculture or tree planting (intensive animal rearing units not permissible);**
- **the establishment of sport, recreational, leisure or tourist facilities appropriate to an area of open character in line with other policies in this Plan;**
- **infrastructural requirements which could not reasonably expect to locate in the urban area;**
- **other proposals as indicated in the Plan.**

Relevant policies: *GS02.* As indicated, Kalkara is popular as a residential area because of its rural ‘feel’ and its open waterfront along Kalkara Creek. It is important to retain and reinforce these attributes. Careful regulation of development, and the adoption of a clear settlement boundary will help to avoid loss of identity and the growth of urban sprawl, and will promote the more efficient use and recycling of urban land.

The overriding impression of the Ricasoli area is one of openness, space, and proximity to the sea, within which are set, well separated, particular land uses like the studios, the industrial estate, Fort Ricasoli and Santu Rokku. This open feel should be maintained, loss of open space prevented and urban sprawl avoided. The definition of a development boundary, enclosing the main elements of the built environment, is a means of maintaining the situation and avoiding excessive urban expansion. Under this policy, no development outside the development boundary will therefore be allowed except as provided for in the policy above.

GK02***Residential Improvement And Redevelopment***

The Authority will support measures to improve and expand the stock of residential accommodation in Kalkara by the rehabilitation of older dwellings, and the conversion to housing of suitable buildings currently used for other purposes. Redevelopment at higher densities will be acceptable. Changes in building heights will be considered where appropriate (see policy GK11). The introduction of innovative forms of housing related to specific market requirements will be encouraged.

<i>Relevant policies:</i> GS05.

The Plan adopts as a general strategy the attraction of population back to the Inner Harbour area, and related measures to bring this about, particularly the strengthening of local communities. To be effective, such a strategy must also recognise and adapt to the increasing sophistication of the housing market, which is seeing the emergence of specific demand for more specialised housing provision.

This specific demand includes smaller housing units for single persons; ‘sheltered accommodation’ for the frail elderly; aged persons’ housing; student flats; and housing for smaller families, to name a few categories. Increasingly, catering for this type of demand is giving rise to innovative forms of development which are well suited to urban locations, and to sites which, because of their particular physical characteristics, demand a more original approach. Kalkara, although an urban area, still has characteristics more associated with rural locations. The challenge of providing additional housing in such a location will be in reconciling both of these important facets.

Apart from their capability of utilising sites and adapting existing buildings, specialised housing types can also help to bolster local services by the introduction of significant consumer spending.

GK03***Residential Development In Wied Kalkara***

Development in Kalkara Valley will be permitted in conformity with Figure 23 and with the provisions of zoning, alignments, heights, setbacks, curtilages and roof profiles as detailed in Figures 23a, 23b and 23c.

The detailed design of the development, including the fenestration and materials, should be sympathetic to the setting of the site and to its location adjacent to an Urban Conservation Area. Attention is also to be given to back elevational treatment of this development.

The area which is presently zoned for ‘villas’ in the TPS is rezoned for clustered residential units. Planning conditions applicable to the site are indicated on Figure 23(b).

The Planning Authority will promote the upgrading of the infrastructure in the locality to mitigate the sewage and stormwater impacts generated by the proposed development. The Planning Authority will seek the collection of surface water into gulleys and draining in constructed conduits and the conservation of this water and its appropriate re-use.

Relevant policies:

GN02,
GS05,
GE01,
GK09,12,15.

The development scheme presently indicates the area of Kalkara Valley below the Bastion and a substantial area backing dwellings facing Triq il-Kapuccini for development. As such, this designation gives a level of commitment for development. At the same time the valley has been identified as a Site of Scientific Importance (SSI). This policy adopts an approach of safeguarding as much as possible of the SSI and details development on the rest of the area in such a way as to respect the existing commitments on the site, the sloping nature of the terrain, access and its context adjacent to an urban conservation area.

The proposed change in the development scheme boundary will only come into effect after the Structure Plan review. Until such process is adopted, any proposed development which would prejudice this review, will not be allowed.

The Planning Authority has commissioned a study on the sewage and stormwater impacts of the proposed development in Kalkara. This study concluded that the contribution from the development to the present sewage flow will naturally exacerbate the existing situation, but only by a very small amount. The gallery will be relieved by the construction of a new gallery after the proposed Kalkara valley development reaches completion.

The development scheme also gives adequate opportunities for stormwater management. Culverts should be laid down the stepped street from Misrah Arcisqof Gonzi to Triq il-Progress, and this should branch into the new side streets and extend towards the sea. A deviation of the existing surface flow in Triq Santa Liberata should be made to cut off the flow to Triq ix-Xatt and bring the run-off to disposal without a circuitous course.

The proposed scheme should provide for a culvert behind the buildings along Triq il-Kapuccini. This is meant to provide the flows from Triq Santa Liberata that run down the sides of the valley. It is advised to collect the water in culverts along the road side, and drain it to the stepped street from Misrah Arcisqof Gonzi to Triq il-Progress, than to expose these dwellings at the bottom of a valley to the servitude of storm flows along the backs of their properties.

The scheme should provide for some opportunity for building reservoirs in the turning circles, and also in the green area to be retained on the North side of the new street to be created between Triq il-Progress and Triq Marina. It is important for users of this stored water to be identified and managed, as otherwise the reservoirs fall into disuse, remaining full and fulfilling no flood buffering function. Other areas where reuse underground reservoirs can be built are in the projected green areas at the corner of Triq Santa Liberata with Salvatur bastion, and along Triq ix-Xatt.

The building of cisterns for domestic storage in the new developments should be actively enforced and the proprietors encouraged to maximise their use.

GK04

Santu Rokku Hamlet

The hamlet of Santu Rokku is included in the Rural Conservation Area. Development permits for industrial development will not be granted. Improvements to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that these are in scale with and retain the rural characteristics of the village. There will be a presumption against additional new development, which can

only be considered if it is provided for under Structure Plan policy RCO 2 and if it has a frontage on Triq Santu Rokku and Triq San Leonardu within the hamlet boundary.

Relevant policies: GGE03.	Santu Rokku hamlet is one of the few remaining, relatively unspoilt traditional agricultural communities in this part of Malta. It is important to retain the village's character, at the same time allowing residents to improve property.
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Such improvements are allowed providing this is done in a manner which does not compromise the overall objective. Infill development will be considered only if the overall objectives are not compromised. When new infill development is therefore considered, the applicant will have to satisfy current development control requirements applicable to farmhouses, including the need of ownership of agricultural land nearby, a condition that no future development will occur on this agricultural land, and any other condition which the Planning Authority may require in order to ensure the open character and rural conservation status of the agricultural land in question.

GK05

Kalkara Transport Strategy

The Planning Authority, will encourage the introduction of a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy for Kalkara. The main features will be based on:

- i. the definition of a road hierarchy;**
- ii. a comprehensive road and footpath upgrading scheme;**
- iii. the discouragement of through traffic;**
- iv. proposals for the quay area to include traffic and pedestrian management measures;**
- v. measures to improve public transport;**
- vi. improvements to and resurfacing of Triq Missjoni Taljana, Triq Santu Rokku, and the Triq Santu Rokku Access Road;**
- vii. the 'traffic calming' of Triq Santu Rokku, where it passes through Santu Rokku village;**
- viii. junction improvements at the sites indicated on Figure 25.**

Relevant policies: GT01,03,06,08,09, GE02, GK06,07.	Kalkara is effectively the 'terminus' of routes along the south side of the harbour, although occasional traffic to Fort Ricasoli and the Tank Cleaning Facility does pass through the town. The incidence of heavy vehicles has been much reduced however, following the relocation of the Customs' bonded stores to Hal Far.
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The problems which remain are therefore considered to be of a local nature and can be solved in that context, especially since access to the Ricasoli area, and to Kalkara generally, will be significantly improved with the eventual development of the South Harbour Link Road as advocated under general policy GT03. Local improvements will take on an additional significance with the continued growth of the town, and with the attraction of additional tourism to the area. More attention needs to be given to provision for safe pedestrian movement, especially along the waterfront, where scope for further improvements is evident.

Improved accessibility will be especially important in the Ricasoli area in order to accommodate, and indeed assist in promoting, the major projects like Fort Ricasoli which are intended for this area. In addition, the quiet and unhurried character of Santu Rokku should be maintained for the benefit of local residents.

Action is therefore required on a number of levels, including improvements to roads and junctions, traffic calming measures, and in accordance with the development brief to be considered for Fort Ricasoli, parking spaces for public and private transport. Consideration also needs to be given, in the case of Fort Ricasoli, to the 'view from the road' and measures like planting to soften the approach to the Fort and screen unsightly elements are essential.

Many of the junctions in the area have been "over designed", or have sub-standard elements. In time, it would be beneficial to improve these sites, to bring them to modern standards, thereby generally improving road safety.

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GK06

Road Hierarchy

The road hierarchy for Kalkara is indicated on the Transport Strategy Map. The main elements are:

Distributor Roads:

Triq il-Missjoni Taljana (part), Triq Santu Rokku Access Road, Triq Santu Rokku (part);

Local Access Roads:

Triq ix-Xatt, Triq Marina, Triq il-Missjoni Taljana (part), , Triq ir-Rinella, Triq il-Kapuccini (part), Triq Santa Liberata, Triq Santu Rokku (part, through Santu Rokku village);

Access Only Streets:

All others not mentioned above.

Relevant policies: GT01,06,09,
GK05. General policy GT01 sets out the approach adopted in the Local Plan towards road improvement priorities, based on the identification of a hierarchy of routes.

In normal circumstances, the higher the function of the road in the hierarchy, the more intensive and important its upgrading and maintenance programme. Nevertheless, allowance may have to be made at times for local circumstances, because the existing condition of roads can vary markedly without reference to their function or importance, and this local factor needs to be taken into account in the scheduling of improvement works.

GK07

Public Transport

Improvements to the services and frequency of public transport to Kalkara will be encouraged. Any road improvement or other development works may be required to incorporate modifications to ensure that services can operate efficiently and effectively.

Interchange between buses and ferries will be promoted, and the possibility of integrating the Kalkara services with those of Cospicua will be examined.

Relevant policies: GT05,06, GK05,12.	As a rapidly growing village, and one that is remote from the main population centres, Kalkara needs a good public transport system. The latter should not be regarded simply in terms of road transport, but should also embrace the use of ferries.
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The convenience of a ferry service will be directly related to the provision of a lift on the Valletta side, or the integration of bus and ferry services to provide good connections with the centre of Valletta - something which this Local Plan strongly advocates in the policies dealing with the Capital. This should be paralleled, in Kalkara, with connections to other parts of the Three Cities, to give an integrated service and easy interchange between bus and ferry.

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GK08

Public Footpath

A public footpath around the shoreline cutting across to Rinella Bay from Wied Ghammieg Cemetery and Fort Ricasoli will be laid out. The trail will be properly signposted, and where possible be accessible to the mobility restricted.

Relevant policies: GN04, GT09, GC01,06, GK12,13,15.	Mention is made under policy GK13 of proposals for the introduction of a waterfront park incorporating a walkway. This policy relates to the park concept which will be most effective if it is linked to a more extensive, long distance footpath network. The aim of the policy is to encourage the provision of such a network. It is important to stress that such proposals need to respect the environmental characteristics of the area.
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GK09

Urban Conservation Area

In accordance with general policy GH01, an Urban Conservation Area has been designated, the boundaries being indicated on the Inset Map. In addition to normal planning requirements, development applications will be expected to have regard to the characteristics which prevail in the Area and which help to define a sense of place.

Relevant policies: GN05, GH01, GK03,10,11.	Kalkara forms a key conservation area in the Grand Harbour, contiguous with the Three Cities Urban Conservation Area. The boundary has been drawn to include the old centre of Kalkara, the adjacent hillsides, and the promontory of Bighi, since the general setting here is paramount.
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Kalkara has a small but notable centre which originally developed as a fishing village. Adjacent to it is the very prominent and historically significant former Naval Hospital at Bighi, currently being restored. Kalkara Creek has immense visual importance in the Grand Harbour, being a key formative element in the landscape, particularly when viewed from Valletta and, at closer quarters, from Vittoriosa. It is therefore vitally necessary to ensure that some measure of protection is available to restrain insensitive development which might otherwise have a serious, detrimental impact. Declaration of an Urban Conservation Area and incorporation into the Local Plan reflects these concerns.

GK10

UCA Design Requirements

In considering redevelopment proposals, the Authority will have regard to the following principles:

- the form and detailing of buildings should be given a vertical emphasis;
- in accordance with policy GK11 below, the context of existing, adjacent building heights, and the relationship to the ‘skyline’ prospect of Kalkara will strongly influence acceptance of the project. The ‘skyline’ view will however be paramount;
- massing, fenestration and ornamentation should respect the street and townscape context;
- in most instances, use of traditional materials will be required;
- major development schemes should incorporate accessible spaces and enclosures for the benefit of the general public;
- pedestrian access arrangements should have priority over vehicular.

Relevant policies:

*GN05,
GH01,
GK09,11.*

Once again, a basic question arises regarding the extent to which individual design preferences and aspirations should be constrained and limited.

Whilst it is not the intention of the Authority to impose unreasonable restrictions on designers, protecting the historic and physical significance of Kalkara is a legitimate concern which needs to be acknowledged. The basic considerations are therefore set out above in an effort to give guidance to developers and architects from the outset on the key factors which the Planning Authority will take into account in considering schemes for approval.

GK11

Height Limitations

The building height limitations applicable for Kalkara are shown on the Kalkara Building Height Limitations Map.

The area fronting Bighi complex across Triq Marina may be redeveloped, (subject to other policies) up to a height not exceeding the existing roof top level of Bighi complex and in such a way as not to conflict with the visual silhouette from the Grand Harbour.

Relevant policies:

*GH01,
GK09,10.*

Part of the charm of Kalkara is the generally restrained nature of the building heights, and the way in which the waterfront has not as yet been subject to major development pressure of the kind which has been responsible for the destruction of so many other seafront areas.

Bearing these points in mind, it is critical to ensure that these positive elements are retained. Consideration has therefore been given to what building height regime should be adopted, and the result is indicated on the accompanying map.

The Planning Authority will adhere strictly to the proposals indicated on the map, and it is very unlikely that any circumstances will arise which would cause a fundamental reappraisal of this approach.

GK12

Kalkara Waterfront Opportunity Area

The waterfront from Ix-Xatt to and including the lower part of Triq Marina as shown on the Inset Map is designated as an area for improvement. The Planning Authority will support measures by the local council, and other relevant organisations, individuals or companies to undertake works or development proposals which contribute to the upgrading of this area in accordance with the planning objectives and guidelines indicated below. Development permission will therefore not be given for any project likely to prejudice these objectives.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,03,04,05,GH01,
GT04,09,10,12,14,
GC01,03,05,06,
GP01,05,
GB11,GL14,GG17,18,
GK03,07,08,13,14.*

The waterfront is one of the most important features of Kalkara. A feeling of enclosure and intimacy is present which is rare in Malta, but is a characteristic associated with other better known, picturesque locations throughout the Mediterranean. It is considered most important that this ambience, and unrestricted access by the general public, is maintained and improved upon.

Any proposals for the waterfront will therefore be required to incorporate the following points:

- consideration of limited reclamation to provide additional space;
- the development of a well designed promenade with appropriate street furniture, fixtures and planting;
- traffic management scheme aimed at easing traffic flow in the area, improving pedestrian connections towards the proposed promenade to the west and towards the church to the east respectively;
- floorscape treatment of Triq ix-Xatt/Marina to reflect ‘traffic calming’ principles and to indicate clearly ‘pedestrian priority’ requirements;
- access readily available to the mobility restricted;
- the valley location in respect of control of water runoff;
- the elimination of sewerage overflow;
- moorings for small boats;
- possible provision of space for winter lay up of boats;
- scope for a ferry terminal;
- car parking provision.

GK13

Rinella Recreational Area

The coastal area behind the scientifically important shoreline between Xghajra and Fort Ricasoli, as indicated on the Inset Map, is designated as the ‘Rinella Recreational Area’.

The shoreline is primarily intended for use by the public and the Planning Authority will support measures to upgrade the area, and to introduce a coastal footpath, seating, and interpretative information displays. Unauthorised access by vehicles to the shoreline will be prevented.

The other part inwards of the shoreline will be reserved for general recreational use, but safeguarding of its open character will be an important consideration in assessing development schemes. The upgrading of the Mediterranean Film Services area and the re-opening of the site for tourism related attractions will be encouraged. This also applies to the historical features in the area, including Fort St. Rokku, as long as these cultural and

historical aspects are safeguarded. The open character of the area northeast of the fort will be maintained.

Relevant policies:

GN04,
GE06,07,
GC01,03,06,
GD10,11,
GK08,12,15.

This area was identified in the Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum as forming part of the site for a major waterfront park, linked by a proposed country parkway to and through the Cottonera Lines. The area designated in the Local Plan is smaller, taking into account the presence of cultivated land, (which will remain) and the Mediterranean Film Studios.

It is important that any activity carried out here is environmentally sustainable, for example regarding the type of chemicals used to clean the film tank. The re-opening of the Mediterranean Film Studios complex should be encouraged. The Planning Authority will positively consider other development applications that could turn this recreational area into a feasible project, provided that it keeps its open character.

Nevertheless, a substantial strip, about 1.5km in length and up to 200m in width, has been included which should also be subject to a coastal zone management programme.

The shoreline area is not intended for the development of any type of organised recreation requiring special provision such as pitches or commercial facilities, but simply for the quiet enjoyment of the open air by the public. A footpath, occasional picnic seating and tables, with information panels giving details of features of interest, are envisaged as being all that will be necessary or desirable.

At the moment, the coastline is used as a rubbish dump, partly encouraged by the presence of a track accessible to motor vehicles. The whole zone needs to be cleared of debris, the access to motor vehicles blocked, and planting and other comparatively minor works undertaken which would result in a significant improvement. This route could form part of a trail which links the historic Forts and buildings around the coast in the area, currently being projected by the Xghajra local council. The Environmental Protection Department, The Planning Authority itself, and Xghajra local council have all been involved in discussions on aspects of this issue, and the Local Plan policy formalises the thrust of the action which has been proposed.

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GK14

Provision And Location Of Community Facilities

The Planning Authority will support the provision of community facilities, with priority in the consideration of proposals or the allocation of sites being given to:

- an aged persons' home;
- a bank; and
- a post office.

The preferred location for the bank and post office is in the centre of the village, that is, on the waterfront close to Misrah l-Archisqof Gonzi, on Triq ir-Rinella, or the lower part of Triq il-Kapuccini. Conversion or sympathetic redevelopment of property will be encouraged.

Accommodation for aged persons will be acceptable on any appropriate site preferably within the centre of the village or in the main housing area.

Relevant policies: The rapid growth of Kalkara has meant that appropriate services have not as yet 'caught up' with the needs of the increased population. This is particularly true in respect of the facilities mentioned above

GK12.

particularly true in respect of the facilities mentioned above.

Whilst the development of such services is to a large extent a commercial decision, the Planning Authority will give sympathetic consideration to the change of use or conversion of premises in the centre of the village to enable provision to be made.

Although a location in the centre is not so critical for aged persons' accommodation, it should nevertheless be reasonably close to other services, particularly local shops, and should avoid changes in level between the site and other well used facilities. These characteristics are of course difficult to achieve in Kalkara, and any location chosen is likely to require a compromise. Again, sympathetic consideration will be given by the Authority to new build, redevelopment or conversion of premises to provide the necessary accommodation.

GK15

Sites Of Scientific Importance

In accordance with general policy GE01, Sites of Scientific Importance will be protected and safeguarded from development.

On the coastal area, Sites of Scientific Importance include il-Kalanka tal-Patrijiet, the Wied Ghammieq cross fault, and the general coastline as indicated on the Inset Map.

Relevant policies:

*GE01,06,
GC03,
GK03,08,13,16.*

The bay of il-Kalanka tal-Patrijiet is of significant importance (level 2) in terms of geomorphology, stratigraphy, palaeontology and structural geology. It displays several features resulting from the effect of wave action on rocks of differential resistance, compounded by the presence of a fault system. It is already threatened by misuse related to the dumping of rubbish and some of the activities of the film studios are incompatible with maintenance of the site as a scientific resource.

The Wied Ghammieq Cross Fault is 'one of the few remaining cross faults which formed the Grand Harbour drainage system' (GHLP Geological Survey: Malta University Services 1995), and the site has significance in relation to structural geology, geomorphology and hydrology (level 4). Although the site is accessible to the public there is little evidence of abuse and frankly little possibility of its development for any purpose. Nevertheless, it is important that it is officially protected.

GK16

Wied Rinella

Wied Rinella is a Site of Scientific Importance/Site of Ecological Importance and will be safeguarded from development. Action will be taken to remove the scrapyards operating here, and to restore the site.

The beach and waterfront of Rinella Bay will also be included within the defined area, and can serve for the development of a public watersports facility through the reuse of existing buildings. Additional buildings will not be permitted.

Relevant policies:

*GK15, GN03,
GE01,05,06,07,
GC01,03,05.*

Although the Structure Plan does not include Wied ta' Rinella within a Rural Conservation Area, besides being ecologically important, the valley has been identified as a site of geomorphological importance (level 2).

Policy RCO 15 of the Structure Plan also includes a ‘general presumption against development in urban and other built up areas which are insensitive to the continued existence of identified features of scientific importance and significant elements of the country’s natural heritage present within the site.’ It is considered that Wied Rinella merits very careful protection since it is not only of scientific interest, but also constitutes an important landscape element within the Grand Harbour area.

The scrapyard is an intrusive element on the edge of the valley, and is highly visible. Its continued presence here is unacceptable and measures will be initiated to ensure its removal. The site of the yard will be required to be restored, and maybe used for public purposes such as open space or afforestation.

The lower area of the valley presently accommodates a number of structures used for social and sports activities. It has been indicated by the local council that the area is earmarked for a water sports centre. This idea is acceptable provided that no development is allowed additional to existing facilities, given the environmental and scientific significance of the site. Other considerations should include traffic impact, the effect on shipping routes, and the quality of the water in the creek.

GK17

Reuse Of Bighi Naval Hospital

The Planning Authority will support the reuse and rehabilitation of the old Naval Hospital at Bighi by an organisation/s of national and international standing, preferably involved in an educational, and/or research type of activity. This use could be supplemented by other complementary uses which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority are related to the main use.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,
GH04,
GT12.*

Bighi is one of the most impressive areas in the Grand Harbour and visually dominates the skyline on the port side. During the course of preparation of this Plan, indications had been given that this site would eventually serve as the administrative headquarters of the Malta Council for Science and Technology, including educational facilities and a permanent exhibition. As part of the plans for the site, the possibility of reuse of the lift connection to the waterfront area should be investigated.

A planning permission has already been issued for the use of part of the site as an educational facility specializing in restoration, amongst others. This policy seeks to ensure that any additional future uses remain within the framework of the plan.

The proposed use of the building is compatible with the general thrust of this Plan as it seeks an active use of such historic buildings.

GK18

Fort Ricasoli

The sympathetic development of Fort Ricasoli primarily for tourism and recreation purposes in accordance with the brief prepared by the Planning Authority, and subject to public consultation, will be promoted. A central theme will be the rehabilitation and restoration of the Fort. Prior to a scheme being agreed, any proposals requiring development permission which would, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, prejudice the proper planning and amenity of the area will be refused.

Relevant policies:

*GN01,
GH03,04,08,
GT14,
GE07.*

Fort Ricasoli is an important part of the built heritage of the Grand Harbour and a key element in its visual composition. The fort occupies a prime location at the harbour entrance opposite Valletta but it is in need of fundamental restoration and rehabilitation.

However, it also has considerable potential for development as a tourist attraction in the context of a full reinstatement of the buildings and defence works, allowing the history and significance of the site to be appreciated. This approach is well adapted to a basic objective of the Plan, increasing the attractiveness of the south side of the Grand Harbour as a destination for day tourism.

In order to make quite clear what the Authority will be seeking to achieve, and to lay down fundamental constraints and indicate where scope for innovation and imagination exists, a development brief for the fort has been prepared in association with the Ministry for Tourism. The brief is not limited to the site of the fort itself but also covers those matters and areas outside the boundary of the site which are essential to the proper development of the project. As well as tourism facilities, the fort has the potential to accommodate other uses which are compatible with its historic character and proposed tourism role. Limited residential accommodation, small scale office uses, and some retailing might be appropriate, depending upon the nature and scale of the overall scheme finally adopted. It has to be made quite clear, however, that such uses are subordinate to the main thrust of the project - rehabilitation of the fort and its enjoyment by the public.

The problem of the adjacent Tank Cleaning Installation needs to be considered, as this may well determine certain aspects of any scheme and has a major bearing on the layout and disposition of certain land uses. More precise information on the safety hazards presented by this installation is required and therefore the safety aspect is the subject of a separate policy.

GK19

Ricasoli Tank Cleaning Installation

The Planning Authority will support measures to reduce the impact of the Ricasoli Tank Cleaning Installation. In the long term, the removal and/or relocation of this installation will be pursued, and the Planning Authority will help implementation agencies to identify alternative sites.

In the meantime, in order to avoid prejudicing this aim, permission will not be given for any development operation requiring the Authority's consent which results in an intensification or expansion of use of the depot, with the exception of measures designed to improve safety and security.

Prior to any development occurring at Fort Ricasoli or elsewhere in the immediate vicinity of the installation which is aimed at attracting the general public in large numbers, a risk

assessment study carried out by an independent, competent organisation will be required. This must indicate possible risks and the measures necessary to reduce them, and comment upon the advisability of the project proceeding.

Relevant policies:
GS07,
GE06,07.

As has been indicated previously, the Tank Cleaning Installation is a necessary fixture at the entrance to the Grand Harbour. Although this location presents many difficulties for the rehabilitation and improvement of the surrounding area, it is accepted that, from the viewpoint of ship repair and harbour safety regulations, its location is currently the best that can be achieved.

In the short term therefore, any development proposals will have to take into account the presence and method of working of the installation, with safety being a key factor. The policy therefore requires the undertaking of a safety audit and report prior to development permission being granted for major projects nearby which could be expected to attract the general public in significant numbers. Looking to the future, serious consideration will need to be given to alternative arrangements for tank cleaning, and therefore the Planning Authority will discourage further, possible abortive, investment in the plant designed to intensify or expand its use.

Further investigation on the possibility of accommodating such a facility off-shore has to be carried out. Alternative on-shore locations outside the Grand Harbour have been examined but they too impose fundamental constraints. At present, there is no likelihood of any other suitable site becoming available, and any proposals for tourism or recreational uses in the Ricasoli area will, for the present, have to co-exist with the Tank Cleaning. Any feasible steps to reduce the impact of the cleaning operations will need to be taken, and the long term future of the facility - probably outside the time frame of this Plan - should be examined. National and international issues of economic development and trade are raised here which extend beyond the remit of the Plan, although strictly in terms of the latter, it is recommended that the eventual removal of the facility is sought.

GK20

Ricasoli Industrial Estate

The Planning Authority will support measures to ensure that Ricasoli Industrial Estate is utilised more intensively to avoid the need for further substantial expansion, for example by a reduction in the area utilised for roads and parking.

The MDC improvement programme for industrial estates generally, is also encouraged by the Authority. The need to upgrade the estate, especially its infrastructure, is a factor which will be given particular attention in considering any applications for development.

No provision for General (Heavy) Industry (Use Classes 13 to 16, as defined in the Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) is made on this Industrial Estate due to the nearness of Xghajra. Such industries will be expected to locate in other areas as provided for in other Local Plans and in the Structure Plan. MDC is encouraged to apply this policy to existing factories on the Industrial Estate.

Relevant policies: GN01, GS07, GE06, GD03,04, GK21,22,23,24.	Ricasoli Industrial Estate is an important resource in terms of space for industrial expansion, particularly as sites do not appear to be used intensively, and scope exists for increasing the density of development. The eventual opening of the South Harbour Link Road will further underline the estate's importance.
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It is evident the land comprising the estate is currently organised in an inefficient manner, particularly areas given over for highway purposes, parking and storage. It is therefore considered that the layout of the estate should be amended to enable additional land to be released within the boundaries of the estate.

Because of the emphasis given within the Plan to assisting small and medium- sized enterprises, and the likelihood of relocation sites being necessary, an area is specifically earmarked for the purpose.

It is also important to maintain an area of open land between the Industrial Estate and Xghajra, and therefore no further extensions to factories will be permitted which will reduce this gap, as shown in the Inset Map.

Screening of the estate through tree planting and other landscaping measures will be encouraged, especially in relation to views from Xghajra and from the sea.

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GK21

Industrial Estate Building Heights

In the consideration of applications which include changes to existing building heights, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible approach which will take account of the following criteria:

- the streetscape through a consideration of the buildings on the same side and those on the opposite side of the street/s concerned;
- the general massing of the building;
- the topographical features and, where applicable, consideration of the sloping nature (including buildings in the background);
- the skyline when seen from outside the site area, especially in relation to views from the water level;
- the particular requirements of the actual use;
- any other relevant planning consideration.

Relevant policies: GS07, GK20,22,23,24.	It is considered inappropriate to give a blanket height for all the area at Kordin. The approach adopted in this instance is to determine requests in changes in heights on an individual basis. This assessment, however, has to consider all the relevant planning issues, including those mentioned in the policy, and other relevant planning guidance already issued by the Planning Authority.
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GK22

Small And Medium-sized Enterprise Workshops

An area of Ricasoli Industrial Estate is earmarked for the short term development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) workshops. An outline permit is not essential but a full development permit application covering the whole area would be required.

Relevant policies:

*GS07, GD01, 02,
GB14, GG22,
GK20, 21, 23.*

An identified problem in Malta is the need for improved ways of assisting the germination and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the manufacturing and service industry spheres.

Difficulties with the availability of venture capital and the lack of suitable premises have been cited. Arising from both of these factors has been an increase in the number of complaints regarding the operation of businesses in residential streets, which are totally unsuited for activities of this kind.

The question of access to financial resources is beyond the remit of this Plan, but the provision of suitable sites is highly pertinent. Although the policy on industrial estates operated by M.D.C. has generally been to give priority to export-oriented undertakings, it is being increasingly recognised that particular measures to help small industries are necessary.

In the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan, a specific site allocation for 'Small Scale Industries' was made at Hal Far Industrial Estate. It is proposed that as in Kordin, a similar allocation is made at Ricasoli Estate.

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GK23

Reserve Site

A site in Ricasoli Industrial Estate is reserved for Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) workshops and/or General Industry with Neighbour Compatibility. An outline development permit application is required when eventual development is contemplated.

Relevant policies:

*GN03,
GS07,
GD01, 02, 03,
GB14,
GG22,
GK20, 21, 22.*

Indications show that more areas would be needed for SME development in the future. However, information from MDC shows that there is not the need to develop this site at this stage. Given this situation, a flexible strategy is adopted by the Plan, which whilst ensuring that this land is available for industrial development, leaves it up to the implementation agency to decide which type of the above indicated industries to provide.

A mix of both is also possible and topographic and economic criteria will probably be the main influence in making a choice. Other types of industries, including general industrial uses in classes 12 to 16 of the Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended will not be permitted.

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GK24

Public Utilities Provision

The general area of Wied Ghammieq is identified in the Structure Plan under policy PUT11 as the site for a sewage treatment plant. Possible locations were identified in the Sewerage Masterplan produced by the Drainage Department. Although all the locations identified will be safeguarded from further development until further studies, including an Environmental Impact Assessment, are carried out (with the exception of 'structural planting' on either side of the Triq Santu Rokku access road), the site most suited from a

local planning perspective is the one on the existing industrial estate as indicated in the Inset Map. Pending the results of the EIA, this will be the preferred site.

Relevant policies: GN02, GS07, GK20,21.	The general area of Kalkara/Ricasoli has a strategic significance in respect of the upgrading of the sewerage system because of the proximity of the main outfall on the coast at Wied Ghammieq.
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In the Sewerage Master Plan (prepared by COWIEconsult AS, March, 1992) ‘Wied Ghammieq’ is identified as the most appropriate location for treatment works required as part of an overall renewal and upgrading scheme, and a preferred site is indicated. Policy PUT11 of the Structure Plan also reinforces the general recommendation, but puts the onus on the Local Plan to identify and safeguard a suitable site.

It is clear that the sites on either side of the access road to Triq Santu Rokku have been chosen mainly on technical grounds and from a limited consideration of other factors. Any proposal of this nature will in any case need to be the subject of a full Environmental Impact Assessment. The policy in the Local Plan is therefore intended simply to safeguard these appropriate sites from other uses until a full evaluation of their suitability and acceptability can be undertaken. Although all sites are reserved, it is clear that from a local planning aspect, the best site would be the one of the existing pumping station, which has the advantage of being further away from residences, and presents less visual impact on the rural area.

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GK25

Neighbourhood Centre

The Planning Authority has designated a Neighbourhood Centre for Kalkara as identified on the Kalkara Inset Map (Figure 23). (Refer to General Policy GD07).

Relevant policies: GP07	Small neighbourhood centres will provide a mix of retail, social and community services for the surrounding residential area, reducing the need for long car journeys to meet routine shopping needs.
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Suitable short stay parking provision should be designated within or in the vicinity to the area.

Map 23

Map 23 (a)

Map 23(b)

Map 23 (c)

Map 24

Map 25

Map 26

Appendix A
Summary of Existing Situation

Appendix A – Summary of Existing Situation

A100 Valletta

A110 Introduction

- A111 The positive aspects of the city are its dramatic overall setting, its wealth of historical features and buildings, its imposing main axis, Republic Street, and the surprising and interesting views and vistas which are available almost at every turn. Frequent changes in level over short distances provide fascinating glimpses along narrow, intimate streets and occasionally across Marsamxett and Grand Harbours. The scale of central Valletta is entirely appropriate to movement on foot. In relation to nearby residential areas, a common observation is the closely-knit nature of the community, with a spirit developed through years of mutual self-help.
- A112 The commercial and business aspects of life in the city appear to co-exist happily with more solemn and weighty matters of state and administration, and there is always the feel that here is where decisions are made. During the day, the city is vibrant with throngs of shoppers, sightseers and business-people passing through City Gate and along Republic Street. The public gardens fringing the city on its southern flank provide superb views across the Grand Harbour, and a respite from the hustle and bustle of the street market in Merchant Street. The squares, open spaces and intriguing spaces of the bastions are essential characteristics of the city.
- A113 Despite these encouraging features, it is clear that Valletta is experiencing major difficulties, in relation both to its environment and its role in national and local terms. The small, compact, historic city brings into sharp focus many serious underlying deficiencies. These stem chiefly from the inability of such an urban form to assimilate or accommodate pressures of socio-economic change without inviting serious deterioration of the environment. A fundamental problem in this regard is the decay of the urban fabric - buildings, streets, squares and open spaces. The reasons for this are complex but might be ascribed to the ageing process, with the need, as time goes by, to undertake more substantial and far reaching maintenance and renovation - a requirement falling on a limited public purse. Additionally, a difficulty exists in adapting old buildings to meet modern requirements, which can sometimes only be solved by substantial (or inappropriate) conversion works. There are numerous examples of poor detailing, such as the use of modern materials like aluminium in an incongruous way entirely out of keeping with the age and design of the building. The introduction of modern shopfronts presents a particular problem and can easily devalue the entire facade of a building, as can unrestrained, badly-designed and executed signage.
- A114 In other instances, unsympathetic rebuilding or replacement on a more substantial scale has occurred, with little attention being paid to the use of appropriate materials, retaining a harmony of proportion, detailing and ornamentation with adjoining facades, and coupled with a disregard for the overall rhythm and articulation of the street or square.
- Occasions may occur when the introduction of a new building of contemporary design can be justified, but generally speaking, such opportunities are likely to be very limited and demand special care. Valletta derives its identity in large part from the guiding hand of the Knights who considered building requirements from an aesthetic as well as a practical standpoint, factors as applicable now as they were then.

- A115 Care and attention to design and detailing cannot stop at buildings alone. The passer-by is as conscious of the characteristics of the street and floorscape as much as individual buildings. A profusion of carelessly strung overhead cables; replacement on ‘natural’ paving stones by expanses of tarmac; poor quality street furniture, lamp standards, bollards, litter bins and the like are symptomatic of indifference towards an unparalleled historical heritage.
- A116 As well as changes to the exterior of buildings, other complications may arise from their change of use. Change of use can signify both competition for space and declining demand. It is a process which can operate even when little physical alteration is apparently involved and appearance is largely unaltered. However, the implications can be widespread and far-reaching. The displacement of residential uses by offices, or the use of upper floors for storage - which could equally well be carried out elsewhere - can easily diminish the interest or vibrancy of a street and ultimately have a sobering and deadening effect on city life.
- A117 This effect is quite apparent in Valletta, when shops and offices close for the day and the transitory population moves out. At night, Valletta’s streets are by and large deserted, and some sectors become positively forbidding, with little sign of life. The residential component of the city has been progressively reduced, in part by the expansion of office space, detracting from the liveliness of Valletta after offices close for the day. Few shops, bars, and places of entertainment remain open because the resident population has been reduced and consequently there is little to attract other casual visitors, save for specialised events at the Conference Centre, or the National theatre.
- A118 Significant parts of Valletta, away from the main commercial thoroughfares and immediately adjoining areas, are showing signs of marked deterioration. Constrained by the very site which is so attractive to the casual visitor, room for expansion and better living standards is limited and the city, along with other areas around the Grand Harbour, has experienced an inexorable and constant loss of population over the years. Limited demand for accommodation has reduced rent levels which, coupled with the rent laws, has meant that private property owners have been very reluctant to invest in rehabilitating property.
- The result is a depressing downward spiral of maintenance standards and quality of accommodation. Valletta as a residential area has undoubtedly declined markedly over many years and limited government rebuilding has not reversed this trend. An image of crowded, cramped and generally sub-standard housing remains.
- A119 The distribution of wealth-generating activities is also markedly limited with the main concentration of shopping and business uses being confined to certain streets at the western end of the city. This area attracts most of Valletta’s visitors and many never penetrate beyond Republic Square. Consequently, those sectors which are physically close also tend to benefit.

A120 Identity Areas

- A121 Although the site of Valletta has a main axis of only 900m, with a width of some 500m at its maximum, the city manages to encompass a range of contrasting townscapes within its walls. As a basis for local planning policies therefore, the problems and opportunities of Valletta can be considered with reference to five ‘identity areas’ each having its own distinctive characteristics, into which the city can be conveniently divided, viz:
- The Central Area;

- The Marsamxett Side;
- Lower Valletta;
- The Grand Harbour Side; and
- The Grand Harbour Waterfront.

These are indicated on the Identity Areas Map.

A130 The Central Area

- A131 Republic Street forms the principal thoroughfare establishing the character of this area. Also included are City Gate and its environs. Zachary Street and Merchants Street form parallel commercial streets to the south. The appearance and feel of Republic Street changes beyond Palace Square which effectively marks the eastern boundary of this area.
- A132 Although the Central Area is a hub of business and shopping, and also supports some residential use, its main approach via City Gate is drab and unprepossessing. The bus-station, whilst being very convenient for the centre, usually presents itself as a hazard for pedestrians and travellers by a combination of ‘random’ bus movements, and spillage of oil on the road surface, which pedestrians are forced to traverse. Positive elements are there -trees, space and the dramatic crossing of the Great Ditch present the opportunity to mark the entrance of the city in a significant way, an opportunity which has unfortunately been overlooked, if not ignored. City Gate itself is stark, dull and somewhat seedy in appearance, and the impact of what should be an exciting, inviting entrance to the city is consequently lost.
- A133 The bus station, its facilities and the pedestrian route from here to inside the walls are in need of basic rethinking, both from a safety viewpoint and that of emphasising the entrance to the city as a main feature, rather than a trivial afterthought. Priority also has to be given to the movement of pedestrians instead of buses.
- A134 Freedom Square has the potential to be an important component of the city, a place of interest, open air events, seating, relaxation - somewhere which would encourage the passer-by to linger. Unfortunately, several factors militate against this possibility. The surface treatment [asphalt] and use of the square as a car park offers no interest whatsoever to either the inhabitants of the city, or the casual visitor. The run-down appearance of the enclosing arcades do not provide a pleasing visual frame for the area, and the ruins of the Opera House allow the sense of enclosure to be lost along the eastern edge of the square.
- A135 Republic Street boasts a wide variety of cafes and shops, with upper storeys of buildings occupied by business or sometimes cultural uses. Pedestrian numbers are very high [up to 6000 per hour], with a constant stream of people making their way from City Gate. Although the street has been partly pedestrianised, the floorscape and general treatment does not reflect this and the overwhelming impression is of a street temporarily closed to vehicles rather than an outdoor space where the needs of the pedestrian have been wholeheartedly embraced and provision made accordingly. The footpath and kerbs remain in place, and during times when the street is crowded, can present a hazard to the unwary stroller. The tarmac surface does not drain freely, and puddles are in evidence after heavy rain.
- A136 Returning to the concept of ‘environmental capacity,’ it is suggested that the limit has almost been reached in terms of numbers of people using the street at peak times unless a corresponding investment is made in improving the floorscape.

A137 Although part of Merchant's Street is temporarily closed to traffic during the daily morning market, this does not apply westward of the intersection with St. John Street. Here, problems with cars parked on pavements, and general constriction of the street for the same reasons are very apparent.

A140 The Marsamxett Side

A141 The area to the north west of the city centre can conveniently be considered as those streets lying beyond Old Bakery Street towards Marsamxett Harbour. Even within this area, there are smaller sub-divisions having their own particular characteristics and uses, to some extent influenced by the changes in level which are to be found here. In many instances, these are steep enough to warrant the introduction of stairs.

A142 These marked level changes occur moving along the Peninsula towards Lower Valletta and Fort St. Elmo, and in the direction of Marsamxett Harbour. Generally speaking, commercial uses decrease away from the centre, to be supplanted by residential, educational, church and government buildings. A notable concentration of garages and workshops exist on Triq Marsamxett, which also acts as a peripheral ring road and is very important in collecting and distributing traffic around the Peninsula.

A143 Below Triq Marsamxett, along the shoreline, are several sporting clubs (including the waterpolo and bocci clubs) and the terminus of the Sliema - Valletta ferry. An access road, Ix-Xatt ta' Marsamxett, follows the shore and provides for vehicle circulation, eventually ending at St. George's Bastion. Access points are via Triq San Mark and the Jews' Sallyport at St. Charles Str.

A144 The shoreline is a very popular amenity for the people of Valletta, particularly during the summer months, providing an essential, informal, open recreation area. It should be noted, however, that in some places illegal development has occurred, which if not restrained and controlled, could lead to the degeneration of this area, to the detriment of residents and visitors.

A145 The northwest shoreline of the city provides perhaps the classic silhouette of Valletta, the much photographed view from the Sliema/Manoel Island/Ta'Xbiex side of Marsamxett. It is from the various angles available here that the site of city, its massive bastions and the sympathetic form of Valletta, culminating in the dome of the Carmelite church and the spire of St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral, can be most readily appreciated.

A146 Whilst the long distance view tends to minimise individual 'pockets' where redevelopment to provide better living conditions is necessary, these nevertheless exist, particularly in the vicinity of St. Charles and Bull Streets, and redevelopment will be encouraged where appropriate. Any redevelopment proposals must however take account of the long distance 'aspect' as well as more detailed site specific factors.

A150 Lower Valletta

- A151 The transition from the busy central area to Lower Valletta is very marked and corresponds with the abrupt change in level experienced north of St. Christopher Street, after this crosses Republic Street. The atmosphere is quite different - predominantly residential - and pedestrian flows much lighter, except in the vicinity of the Mediterranean Conference Centre.
- A152 A number of government buildings exist here, including the well-restored Conference Centre itself (formerly a hospital dating from the time of the Knights), the Evans Building, and Fort St. Elmo, currently occupied in part by the Police Academy.
- A153 Fort St. Elmo has a commanding position dominating the tip of the Peninsula, and includes a war museum, so it has significant visitor interest. A considerable part of the Fort nevertheless lies derelict or is occupied by unauthorised uses and squatters, and the actual building fabric of these parts of the Fort is deteriorating markedly.
- A154 Yet the areas around the Evans Building and Fort St. Elmo present perhaps two of the most important development opportunities in the Grand Harbour Plan area, entirely compatible with the need to conserve the historic heritage and to encourage the life of the city to flourish. Moreover, their position in relation to the 'ring' road, of the Triq Assedju l-Kbir/Triq Marsamxett/Pjazza Sant Iermu/Triq Mediterran makes the area very accessible without imposing undue strain on the road network, or causing problems elsewhere in Valletta.
- A155 Scope exists therefore for the restoration and development of the historic fabric to provide tourism based schemes, and, in the case of the Evans Building, to introduce a residential project which could assist in revitalising this part of Valletta, helping to address the underlying issue of improving the overall vitality of the city.

A160 The Grand Harbour Side

- A161 Again, the south side of Valletta, towards the Grand Harbour below Merchants' Street and inland from St. Dominic Street, is characterised by substantial changes in level, resulting in the frequent use of stairs. St. Paul's, St. Ursula and St. Barbara streets form three principal axes, whilst East Street utilises the abrupt change in height to form an exit to the harbourside at Victoria Gate
- A162 This part of Valletta has a quiet feel to it and is predominantly residential, although some interesting commercial uses, including the indoor market and old-established hotels, are located here. A significant feature of the area is the magnificent view across the Grand Harbour, with the Upper and Lower Barrakka Gardens forming viewpoints at either end of St. Barbara Street, which follows the line of the bastions. Many of those houses fronting the Harbour represent very desirable properties, whilst a smaller node of tourist oriented uses has developed in the vicinity of Battery Street, including a very popular open air cafe. The latter demonstrates the beneficial effect of appropriate uses in adding interest and confidence to parts of the city. The planning regime adopted should therefore be sympathetic to the introduction of a variety of uses - 'mixed uses' - in areas not necessarily subject to this type of development in the past.

A170 The Grand Harbour Waterfront

- A171 This zone comprises the narrow shore-level strip running from the base of Crucifix Hill to the Fish Market. It is physically entirely separate from the rest of Valletta because of the bastions which seem almost to overhang Triq Mediterran and its associated buildings. This separation extends also to the activities and uses which have developed along the waterfront.
- A172 The character of the area is clearly commercially based and derives emphatically from the development of the Grand Harbour as a port. Here are to be found the Customs House and associated offices; the headquarters of the Maritime Authority; the pilots' accommodation; the fish market, and the Sea Passenger Terminal.
- A173 Facilities associated with passenger traffic have been encouraged by the increase in passenger services, and these type of activities are likely to be boosted by the development proposals of the Maritime Authority. The proposals relate to the further development of the cruise liner trade, and the establishment of a wide range of ancillary facilities. This development approach has been considered in the context of the future of the Grand Harbour as a port, and it is considered acceptable and appropriate in that context. To obtain the maximum benefit from such a strategy, the physical connection between the quayside and Valletta proper will need to be re-established as a matter of urgency.

Map 27

A200 Floriana

A210 Introduction

- A211 As its name implies, Floriana as a settlement originated after the construction of the defensive works designed and undertaken by the Pope's military engineer, Pietro Paolo Floriani, which were completed about 1650. Interestingly, although these works were commissioned to reinforce the position of Valletta, it was always intended that the area behind the Floriana Lines would act as a place of refuge for the civil population living in the nearby countryside in times of war, and that the land enclosed could also be developed as a town.
- A212 The development of a civilian suburb did not however occur until the late 17th Century, under the direction of another military engineer, Count Valperga. Construction was prompted by overcrowding in Valletta, and the need to prevent any increase in the numbers of temporary buildings which were being erected across the site. Nevertheless, substantial areas remained unbuilt.
- A213 To this day, Floriana has retained extensive open space and gardens. The Granaries function as a venue of national importance for mass meetings and outdoor events. Institutional buildings have found it convenient to locate here because of the proximity to Valletta and the room for expansion. The presence of military barracks, parade grounds and storage areas in an expansive layout, and the monumental approach to Valletta along St. Anne Street, have all contributed to the feeling of openness.
- A214 Yet the residential area of Floriana provides a strong contrast. It consists of a rectilinear grid of streets, of smaller dimensions than Valletta, with building blocks rising to four or sometimes five storeys. St. Anne Street and the Mall, functioning as major traffic arteries providing access to Valletta, subdivide the residential area into three distinct enclaves, with most commercial activity situated along St. Anne Street. Floriana's boundaries include both the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett, whilst the open spaces of Argotti Gardens, Jubilee Grove and the Crown Works mark the transition to other parts of the Local Plan area. The immediate approaches to Valletta, most often associated with the Bus Terminus and the Phoenicia Hotel, have a similar open feel.

A220 Identity Areas

- A221 For the purpose of preparing local planning policies, Floriana can be sub-divided into five identity areas, each with their own range of characteristics, problems and opportunities. These are indicated on the Identity Areas Map and are:
- The 'Xaghra' and 'Balzunetta' Area;
 - The 'Fosos';
 - The 'Kapuccini' Area;
 - The Crown Works;
 - The Bastions and Jubilee Grove;
 - The Grand Harbour Waterfront.

A230 The Xaghra and Balzunetta Area

- A231 This zone includes the area of housing centred on Triq il-Konservatorju, as well as the playing pitches and the public offices. The residential area is a comparatively small enclave of housing comprising some 190 households, occupying six blocks of buildings between the Mall and the Police Headquarters. The blocks are traditional town houses of mainly four storeys, with typical features such as enclosed balconies.
- A232 The Xaghra, a series of playing pitches, a bocci club, spectator areas and a car park, occupy former military parade grounds and give an open, transitional feel to the eastern extremity of this area.
- A233 The British built Lintorn Barracks, which have a typical military layout and design, cover a large area and have of course been utilised as Government office accommodation for many years. The former barracks, and adjoining locations above the bastions which look out across Marsamxett, have been developed in an expansive manner, with many parts of the site underused, abandoned, or occupied by temporary buildings. Several administrative functions are already located in this part of Floriana, it is convenient for public transport, and already associated in the minds of the public with government departments. It is therefore appropriate for this type of activity and indeed offers scope for more ambitious proposals.
- A234 The residential area around Triq il-Konservatorju is pleasant and well-served by local shops and bars. However, a noticeable trend, and the cause of some annoyance to residents, has been the gradual infiltration of activities with industrial characteristics. If operated on a small scale, these can be quite compatible with nearby housing, but there comes a point - and this has undoubtedly been reached and probably surpassed in this instance - where a nuisance is caused and the activity is better redirected to a more appropriate location on an industrial estate.
- A235 As well as government administration, the offices of the Archbishop's Curia are also located in an imposing historic building on the fringe of the area.

A240 The Fosos

- A241 Lying on the highest part of Floriana, between The Mall and St. Anne Street, the Fosos zone includes the open space of the Fosos themselves (the Granaries); a quiet residential area nearby, with the historic St. Publius' church and the primary school; the entrance to the Argotti gardens, and nearest Valletta, several major institutional uses including the Catholic Institute, Mid-Med Bank and the American Embassy.
- A242 The Fosos has become established as an important 'arena' for large scale open air events held from time to time. It is one of the few areas capable of accommodating a substantial public gathering in comparative safety, and with limited disruption. It is envisaged that this occasional use will continue. Mall gardens south of the housing provide an important finger of open space and a pedestrian route linking to the Argotti Gardens to the southwest.
- A243 As in other parts of Floriana, the 'commercialisation' of residential property - use for office purposes - has been a noticeable phenomenon. Parking during the day has consequently become difficult for residents.

A250 The Kapuccini Area

- A251 Lying to the south of St. Anne Street, the ‘Kapuccini’ Area is the residential heart of Floriana. The land slopes generally to the east, with a marked change in level coinciding with the southern boundary, towards the Harbour. Triq Il-Kapuccini currently forms a central spine and traffic route, through the area.
- A252 The area is served by a number of local shops of various types including a local mini market, bars, and newsagent. Some services are also provided, e.g. a hairdresser, and some specialised trades are also noticeable, such as a gilder’s workshop.
- A253 Most of the dwellings take the form of privately owned flats of four/five storeys, comprising the actual street blocks, and dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A limited number of modern, post war Government flats have also been built near the Kapuccin Monastery itself, with recently constructed blocks on a lower level close to the bastions.
- A254 This part of Floriana generally has a lively feel to it, with an overriding residential character. Nevertheless, evidence of the infiltration of office uses is apparent, and concerns have been expressed about the detrimental cumulative effects of this process, involving loss of residential units and the exacerbation of parking problems.

A260 The Crown Works Area

- A261 ‘The Crown Works’ refers to the additional fortifications to the south west of Floriana, outside the original bastions. This significant zone, of some 11.25 ha, consists of the fortifications themselves, several intervening, level, asphalted open expanses, and a variety of Government or parastatal buildings functioning as offices, stores, workshops and testing and training establishments. Some private firms - for example, a garage, metal work premises and a transport depot - have also been established. Some of the buildings have a ‘temporary’ appearance, and many are of a military origin.
- A262 Nevertheless, the overall impression of this area is one of openness and underutilisation. The fortifications themselves, although evident, cannot be easily appreciated and no attempt has been made to identify or present these as part of a wider system, even though (for the most part) they are accessible to the public.
- A263 Although at certain times during the day parts of the area are very busy, because of the presence of the Driving Test Centre, the Enemalta Stores and the Planning Authority buildings, the activity is limited to a comparatively small area. Elsewhere, and at other times, the Crown Works area is virtually completely deserted.

A270 The Bastions and Jubilee Grove

- A271 This description is used here to refer to the north western limits of Floriana, comprising principally the Notre Dame Ravelin, the wooded area sloping markedly down to Sa Maison, and the bastions and waterfront on Marsamxett Harbour.
- A272 Built development is restricted to parts of the bastions themselves, and comprises mainly the premises of Government or parastatal organisations - usually offices or workshops. As is the case at the Crown Works, the buildings tend to be military in origin and

sometimes semi-permanent in character, often abutting the bastions. Again, most activity is associated with these organisations, and ceases abruptly at the end of the working day.

A273 ‘Jubilee Grove’ is a vital asset not only in terms of open space available to the public, but also because it performs an important visual function, critical to the setting of Floriana, and to the general approach to Valletta. It is one of the few well-wooded areas in the vicinity of the Harbours, and serves to mark the distinct break between Valletta/Floriana, and the rest of the conurbation.

A280 The Grand Harbour Waterfront

A281 This includes the area generally beneath the bastions on the Grand Harbour side. It contains quite a mix of uses ranging from commercial enterprises traditionally associated with the important cargo importation role of the port, housed in some very historical buildings, to the more recent passenger cruise liner terminal on the quay. It also accommodates an exit/entrance local access road to and from Valletta between the two.

A282 The recent increase in importance given globally to the cruise liner business, and the spin off effects that this has on the Maltese economy, make this part of Floriana important on a national scale. This operation, however, sometimes occurs simultaneously with other activities, including the use as a passenger ferry terminal. This causes disruption to both operations and to the transport system in the area.

Map 28

A300 Marsa

A310 Introduction

- A311 The word Marsa derives from an arabic term meaning ‘a port’. Its name therefore rightly describes its location at the innermost part of the Grand Harbour.
- A312 Throughout the years, the locality and especially the waterfront, has served as a very important area catering for the cargo and warehousing function of the Port. The centre of Marsa therefore developed very close to this waterfront area.
- A313 On the landward side, Marsa is situated at the end of a valley which is very susceptible to flooding in the rainy season. This location however makes it possible for all year round greenery to be maintained along its southern flank.
- A314 Although this greenery has been a consistent, established feature of the area, it does not have a local function. Rather, its significance is of a regional, strategic nature and the residents of Marsa have to share it with many others. On the other hand, the other parts of Marsa have also kept and intensified their industrial character. The danger exists that non-industrialised areas will gradually be taken over by industrial uses, pushing residents out of the area because of the reduction in amenity which industrial development often causes.

A320 Identity Areas

- A321 For the purpose of local plan preparation, the Marsa locality can be subdivided into different identity areas, each with their own range of characteristics, problems and opportunities. These are indicated on the Identity Areas Map and are:
- Area South of St. Joseph High Street;
 - Marsa Centre;
 - Ta’ Ceppuna Sports Area;
 - Albert Town Area.

A330 Area South of St Joseph High Street

- A331 This area lies to the southern side of the main street of Hamrun, and is bounded by the Triq Nazzjonali traffic artery on the east, and by the new regional road on the south side.
- A332 It is dominated by residential development built mostly before and after the war, and it centres on Isourd Street and Zerafa Street, both a continuation of each other, which form a spine through it. Further south are also located social housing blocks of flats.
- A333 Apart from the proximity of the main traffic arteries to the south, this area gives the impression of a quiet neighbourhood not affected by traffic. However, this is not the case in Isourd Street and Zerafa Street, and along Triq Il-Marsa, all being very busy roads. Zerafa/Isourd Street serves as a bypass to the main traffic artery when the latter is congested, whilst Triq Il-Marsa is the main connection between Marsa and Hamrun. These streets and their intersection present a dangerous barrier to pedestrians, limiting the integration of the area as a residential zone due to the amount of through traffic which is present.

- A334 The architectural quality of the residential buildings has deteriorated through the years. This is the result of the many conversions which have taken place, introducing insensitive concrete elements into the facades, and imposing aluminium doors and apertures upon the original design. Only a small part of Zerafa Street remains relatively intact and therefore worthy of Urban Conservation Area status.
- A335 This zone also contains a public garden of substantial size. However, the garden is badly located along Triq Nazzjonali, with very poor access both from Zerefa Street and from the central part of Marsa. Its use is therefore very limited. This is also reflected both in its appearance and contents, showing signs of poor management.
- A336 The zone is served by public transport which passes through Triq Nazzjonali. This means that users have to cross a major arterial road to access public transport, which is extremely dangerous both to bus and car users.
- A337 Finally, this zone as a whole has problems of identity. It is sandwiched between Marsa and Hamrun, and although very close to both, appears to be part of neither. It seems distinct from Hamrun because administratively it is actually part of Marsa, and from Marsa because it is physically separated by Triq Nazzjonali.
- A340 Marsa Centre**
- A341 This area includes the traditional square which is usually found in most towns and villages in Malta, together with the parish church. The centre is surrounded by Triq Nazzjonali/Triq Decembru Tlettax on the west, and by the Grand Harbour waterfront on the east.
- A342 The central zone is itself composed of two areas, namely the residential part on the western side of Triq Is-Salib, and the industrial part on the eastern side. To the south, what seems to be a semi-derelict area is present. This area includes two major traffic interchanges.
- A343 The residential area around the church and leading down to Il-Menqa still retains its character. However, it is very much affected by the proximity of industrial uses, especially the power station, which contributes to the generally drab feeling present in the area.
- A344 Use of public transport is again a problem here, since buses using Triq Nazzjonali serve the area creating a very dangerous situation, as people have to cross this busy arterial road to take a bus.
- A345 On the eastern side is a semi-industrialised area which due to its uses, gives a very negative feel to Marsa. This zone includes the two inlets of Il-Menqa and Marsa Creek, both of which are in a very rundown state and in great need of improvement.

A350 Ta' Ceppuna Sports Area

- A351 For the purposes of the local plan, this zone refers to the area south of Triq Dicembru Tlettax. It includes the Marsa Sports Club and environs, together with the racecourse and its adjacent residential area.
- A352 The residential area is mostly associated with the racecourse, and includes many stables, workshops and stores. Again, mainly due to its uses, the area appears to need upgrading. It is however very conveniently located adjacent to the racecourse itself.
- A353 On the other hand, the Marsa Sports Club area, the public athletics and football pitch, and the racecourse itself all contribute to the presence of a very important green part of the Island. This green part, described as a flood plain, is also an area of geomorphological importance. It is considered to be one of the assets not only of Marsa, but also of the inner harbour region due to its environmental, geomorphological, social and cultural aspects.

A360 Albert Town

- A361 The other part of Marsa which has a separate identity is referred to as Albert Town. It has the open space area to the west, but is otherwise surrounded by industrial activities on all its other sides.
- A362 Although officially it is not an industrial area itself, a closer look at the activities within reveals that a greater part of the area is devoted to industrial uses. Albert Town has very few residences, mostly on the southern part of Triq Il-Princep Bertu.
- A363 To the east, the area is totally dominated by the Malta Shipbuilding, which also claims the waterfront to the north.

Map 29

A400 Cospicua

A410 Introduction

- A411 If the fortifications summarise for many the whole character of the Three Cities, then in the same way equally as defining is the presence of Malta Drydocks, symbolised by No.1 Dock, with which the fortunes of the town have been closely linked. Many of the inhabitants worked there, or were employed by businesses having a close association with the docks. Although the focus of dry dock activity has now shifted to the main site at French Creek, the importance of this undertaking in local terms is still evident, and No1 Dock, the smallest and oldest of the docks, remains in use for certain types of repair. The virtual exclusion of public access to the waterfront, disquiet at the environmental effects of grit blasting, and changes worldwide in the ship repair market have however contributed in recent years to calls for the role of the dock to be reassessed.
- A412 Cospicua's association with the docks resulted in damage and loss of life during World War 2, and meant that some parts of the town were subject to rebuilding. The quality of replacement buildings was not high, however, and it was about this time that many sectors of the population began to leave, a process which has continued. Affinity for the area, and close personal ties, are more diluted amongst some of those who have moved in, whilst redevelopment for housing is a continuing reminder of the social and economic difficulties which have beset the town since the end of the war.
- A413 Despite the boom in tourism which Malta has experienced since the sixties, the incidence and distribution of tourism projects, and their multiplier effect, have not of course been uniform. Cospicua has attracted tourists in only very limited numbers although the scope for expansion, based on the waterfront, the bastions, and the street market, is evident. There may be other potential features of interest related to industrial archaeology and more recent military history. However, considerable work will be necessary before these assets can be exploited, a process which must embrace the need for an improvement in the general environment, as well as the promotion of individual schemes.
- A414 The Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum (p.28) gives guidance on the strategy for housing and employment growth to 2010. This timescale is beyond the Local Plan horizon, which looks forward 10 years, but it nevertheless has implications for proposals in the Plan. In view of the general strategy to attract population back to the Inner Harbour area, and thus the emphasis on rehabilitation, redevelopment and infill housing schemes, a target is set of 250 - 500 net additional dwellings.
- A415 Such a figure could, however, imply an additional 2.5 - 5.0ha of housing development land, not allowing for redevelopment at slightly higher densities or any 'windfall' sites which might become available, unless flatted development is pursued. For example, recent announcements have indicated that 79 units are already at the development stage, utilising the sites of derelict and abandoned buildings in a more effective way. This is a development philosophy which is strongly supported. The building form which is implied by higher density development must however be tempered by the historic and townscape significance of the area where building is proposed, so that excesses resulting from over development - sometimes wryly referred to elsewhere as town cramming rather than town planning - will be avoided.
- A416 In terms of job creation, the Structure Plan is also seeking an increase in the number of employment opportunities in Cospicua of between 100 and 250. In view of the very significant tourism potential of the area, it is considered that this target is achievable in

terms of new jobs created, although because of the contraction, rationalisation or relocation of other industries and businesses, this may not translate into a net increase on the scale indicated. However, there are strong planning reasons to support the locally induced processes which would result in such an adjustment - for example, the need to reduce problems caused by 'garage industries,' and the clearance of certain areas around the bastions.

A417 Because of the closely knit nature of the Three Cities/Cottonera area, it is also important to foster co-operation between the local councils in respect of the co-ordinated approach to facilities provision and, particularly, in the development of a tourism strategy. By working together in this way, it should be possible to reduce potentially wasteful duplication of resources and to develop a more focused, effective and complementary linkage of tourist attractions.

A418 It is clear from survey work carried out that residents recognise and view positively the benefits which tourism development can bring, particularly in respect of economic development, and especially as regards the creation of more jobs. The fact that the area has been relatively untouched by tourism can be considered in some ways as an advantage, since it enables tourism development to be carefully guided and directed in a progressive manner. It should also enable tourism projects to be introduced which are sustainable, not physically or socially disruptive, and which contribute to the urban regeneration of the area.

A419 Although the Local Plan can assist in setting a broad framework for tourism development, in particular indicating some of the principal complementary physical projects which can help expand tourism, it is recommended that a tourism development plan be prepared to look specifically at issues beyond the scope of this Local Plan document, such as identifying and targeting particular markets, information and training, scope for public and private partnerships, promotion, and so on.

A420 Identity Areas

A421 For the purposes of local plan preparation, the Cospicua locality can be subdivided into different identity areas, each with their own range of characteristics, problems and opportunities. These are indicated on the Identity Areas Map and are:

- Area around the Pjazza Gavinu Gulia;
- Area south of Pjazza Sta. Margherita.
- Area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines;

A430 Area around Pjazza Gavinu Gulia

A431 The centre, around Misrah Gavino Gulia, is dominated by the presence of Dock No.1. This area suffered heavy bombing during the Second World War and the quality of the replacement buildings was not high. Nevertheless, it has a bustling, lively feel which is sustained by the number of shops and cafes along Triq Sofia/Triq Santa Tereza, and around the square.

A432 Immediately to the south and west of the centre are the residential streets on either side of the main approach road to the town, Triq San Frangisk. Those streets on the north side of Triq San Frangisk represent a small enclave of houses immediately adjacent to the Drydocks, and are clearly affected by the work which goes on there. To the south of Triq San Frangisk, the houses are mostly set on the steep slopes running down to the town

centre, with some more modern additions just outside the Margherita Lines. Dwellings are principally a mixture of traditional town houses with small groups of post war flats. There are several pockets of sub-standard accommodation, some of which are currently being tackled.

A440 Area south of Pjazza Sta. Margherita

A441 Similar features to those described above are found in a narrow band of housing and institutional uses which runs in an arc from Triq il-Gdida northwards, bounded by the Margherita Lines and the traditional residential core of the town, consisting of several narrow streets, sometimes stepped and accessible only on foot. This area slopes steeply towards Dockyard Creek, and is characterised by traditional town houses providing accommodation at a comparatively high density.

A442 The area is bounded on the northernmost point by Triq il-Gublew tal-Fidda which leads to Triq il-Kottonera, separating the locality from that of Vittoriosa. This part overlooks the open area around Pjazza Sta. Margherita, which also accommodates the local council offices. It therefore seems to be establishing itself as the administrative part of the city, which, through the vicinity to the bus terminus makes it a very attractive location for such uses. The open space however does not relate to the human scale and therefore requires improvement in terms of landscaping provision and design, together with the need to make it more pedestrian friendly.

A450 Area between the Margherita and Cottonera Lines

A451 Outside the Margherita Lines, between the latter and the Cottonera Lines, is a generally open, well wooded area which includes some residential, institutional and agricultural uses. The presence nearby of the bastions and fortifications is perhaps the most impressive and dominating aspect of this zone, which is essentially transitional in nature.

A452 The western extremity includes a residential area known as Ta' San Gwann T'Ghuxa, deriving its name from the adjacent part of the fortifications. Since this zone is outside the Margherita Lines, it encompasses a feeling of detachment from the centre.

A453 Eastwards, two large tracts of land remain very open in character, are not developed, and even contain substantial tree coverage. However, much evidence of mismanagement exists here, rendering the areas useless in their present state. They represent a capricious waste and inefficient use of a scarce resource - land, and their potential and ability for improvement are considerable.

A454 To the general public, Triq San Gwann T'Ghuxa defines a limit, a deterrent to further access, sometimes not just physically but also psychologically. It encircles Cospicua on the inner part of the Cottonera lines, but then reroutes northwards to reach Triq il-Kottonera. This leaves a zone between it and the Cottonera Lines which is itself fortified and known as Verdala. Further north is an area of open land with substantial tree coverage, which again is very inefficiently used. Verdala, for its part, accommodates a junior lyceum whose physical setting can only be described as crude; with, at its tip, a farm unit with an access through the school! Again this situation leaves very much to be desired, and is in urgent need of improvement.

Map 30

A500 Senglea

A510 Introduction

- A511 Senglea is a compact, attractive town of about 3,500 inhabitants, packed on to a narrow promontory extending generally northwards into the central part of the Harbour, and forming the bays of French Creek and Dockyard Creek on its west and east sides respectively.
- A512 The promontory is about 800m long and varies in width from 60 to over 300m. It comprises two hills, each about 27m above sea level, at its landward and seaward extremities, separated by a ‘saddle’ some 12m high. Triq Vitorja forms a central axis, originating from the main gate to the town, with land sloping steeply on either side to the twin shorelines. Our Lady of Victories Parish Church and St. Philip’s Church are two ‘anchor’ features found at either end of this main axis.
- A513 At the time of the Knights the promontory on which Senglea stands was acknowledged to be of military significance and a walled town was constructed, laid out in a rectilinear grid, in about 1553. However, it was heavily bombarded during the Great Siege and some thirty years later had fallen into decay. Fitful attempts were made at repair and reconstruction, although the potential vulnerability of the site to attack from higher ground at Kordin meant it did not assume the importance of other developed sites elsewhere in the Grand Harbour.
- A514 Senglea suffered significant damage during the Second World War, due to its proximity to the Dockyard and to berthing areas. Many buildings were completely destroyed and the once extensive fortifications have been severely reduced. Post war reconstruction was undertaken, but it must be said that this was often of poor quality, with very little apparent appreciation of urban texture or the opportunities afforded by the site. The early post war buildings are clearly identifiable and their scale, crude detailing and sterile appearance are uncomfortable aspects of the townscape.
- A515 The major part of the town, between the western (Dockyard) side, and the waterfront overlooking Dockyard Creek, follows a rectilinear grid arrangement resulting from the post war reconstruction. The presence of the Dockyard, and the consequent inaccessibility of the shoreline to the public, is a notable feature of the western side of Senglea, whilst the eastern waterfront is accessible to the public, has a noticeable ‘open’ feel and is clearly a popular area for local people and for tourists who venture this far from more well publicised attractions.
- A516 The principal result of these defining site characteristics and subsequent development pattern is a town with a strong identity severely constrained by its physical setting, with virtually no possibility for expansion. Emphasis must of necessity be on the conservation, improvement, and where necessary redevelopment of the town in a manner sympathetic to its location and architectural and historical background.
- A517 In some ways, it is encouraging to see that the potential of the area is being recognised, and good standards of work are being demanded for redevelopment projects. Spontaneous improvement in this manner can have a widespread effect on surrounding areas, prompting others to emulate the restoration being undertaken. However, the disadvantage is the involuntary exclusion of local people because property prices are driven upwards by ‘external’ demand, accelerating the movement out of the young and

less affluent. The character and vitality of the area is sometimes irrevocably changed, and not always for the better.

A520 Identity Areas

A521 For the purpose of preparing local plan policies, Senglea can be subdivided into three areas, each with their own range of characteristics, problems and opportunities. These are indicated on the Identity Areas Map and are:

- The French Creek Area;
- The Dockyard Creek Area;
- The Central Area.

A530 The French Creek Area

A531 The feature that is most predominant in this part is, without any doubt, the presence of the dockyard boundary wall at the higher level and the cranes on the waterfront. These dominate the area and are visible from all the side streets, blocking further views of the port. These can be described as negative features, giving the area an industrialised character, which significantly reduces its attractiveness.

A532 As in the rest of Senglea, the area is mostly residential in character. Due to the general topography of the area, streets leading to and from the central area are generally made up of stairways, making access upwards very difficult due to the steepness of certain parts.

A533 Some of the streets are also very narrow. This, together with the presence of the dockyard wall on the eastern side, make vehicular access also relatively difficult.

A540 The Dockyard Creek Area

A541 As with the French Creek Area, this zone is also a waterfront zone. However, the major difference is the use of this waterfront which is predominantly recreational. The area is now dominated by open space, partly covered by trees, and with excellent views of Vittoriosa and Fort St. Angelo on the other side. It has great potential for uses consistent with its recreational role, which is very important to and highly valued by the residents of Senglea.

A542 The maritime aspect is also very evident through the presence of slipways and many small boats. The traditional maritime activity present here is also demonstrated by Il-Macina, the most significant building on the waterfront.

A543 Between the central area and the waterfront, the zone is again characterised by steep flights of steps which make both vehicular and pedestrian access very difficult. These areas are also used for residential purposes.

A544 At the very tip of the peninsula an awkwardly shaped football pitch is located immediately below the bastion walls. It is clear that this is a very inappropriate position to locate such a sports facility, both for the activity itself and also for the cultural and recreational aspects of the locality.

A545 The attractiveness of this area has also enticed a number of foreign residents to live here. These residences are often found along the seafront, enjoying extensive, panoramic views of the Grand Harbour.

A550 The Central Area

A551 This is the most important ‘administrative’ part of the city. On the main street which runs through Senglea are located the most important social functions like churches, band clubs, and local council offices. It also accommodates most of the local shops.

A552 This is traditionally the widest street which also includes a number of squares, and is the only one that can accommodate the existing buses which provide the public transport to the locality.

A553 At the very tip of the central area of Senglea are located the Gardjola gardens, recently upgraded, and a very attractive and important tourist destination. On the landward extreme, the main gate to Senglea is very imposing, and acts as a very fine introduction to any visitor, giving instantaneously the message of the historical past of the city.

Map 31

A600 Vittoriosa

A610 Introduction

- A611 It was at Vittoriosa where the Knights of the Order of St. John originally set up their headquarters in 1530, and constructed a number of auberges before they transferred to Valletta in 1571. Evidence of their occupation still remains in the Collachio, the traditional urban core with its maze-like layout of narrow streets and alleys.
- A612 In common with other towns around the Harbour, Vittoriosa suffered extensive damage during the war and a considerable part was rebuilt - unfortunately, from an urban design viewpoint, not in a manner sympathetic to the finer qualities of the original. The current population trend, as with the major part of the Local Plan area, shows a continued loss in residents, although from 3572 in 1985 to 3,011 in 1995, not as significant as in some other areas
- A613 The peninsula itself is about 950m long and shows a much greater variation in width than Senglea, ranging from 500m at its base, to about 100m near its extremity. The landform slopes principally north west from its highest point at St. James' Cavalier (about 35m above sea level), the gradient being quite marked and uniform apart from a sudden change along the flanks of Dockyard and Kalkara Creeks. The landform rises again towards Fort St. Angelo, a feature which gives a dramatic and powerful appearance to the peninsula.
- A614 Although the site of Fort St. Angelo was fortified in medieval times prior to the arrival of the Knights, Vittoriosa, as the original base of the Order, was the subject of defence works construction mainly between 1532 and 1560. The town thus managed to survive the Great Siege despite significant damage. Thereafter, efforts were concentrated on the development of Valletta, although Vittoriosa's defences were strengthened and renovated and the town continued to be an important urban centre in the Grand Harbour.

A620 Identity Areas

- A621 For the purposes of local plan preparation, Vittoriosa can be considered in terms of six main zones, each having its own characteristics, problems and opportunities. They are indicated on the Identity Areas Map and are:
- Fort St. Angelo Area
 - the Inner Urban Area
 - the former Collachio (Knights' headquarters)
 - the Dockyard Creek Waterfront
 - the Kalkara Creek Waterfront
 - the Bastions to Cottonera Lines Area

A630 Fort St. Angelo Area

- A631 Fort St Angelo is one of the most important historic fortified complexes on the island. The upper level is currently being restored and rehabilitated by the Order of St. John for its own use, whilst the lower part remains in a dilapidated condition.
- A632 Several incompatible structures, constructed in the 1970's and somewhat vandalised, are located in the vicinity of the Fort and detract from the visual surroundings.

A640 The Inner Urban Area

- A641 The part of the Inner Urban Area which overlooks Bighi consists mainly of dwellings and apartment blocks that were constructed during the post-war reconstruction period. They are generally of poor architectural and urban design quality and are of no significant urban design value. However, this area has a certain potential in the panoramic views it offers over Bighi and Kalkara Bay.
- A642 The area also includes the post-war reconstruction enclave which was totally rebuilt in the 1950's as part of the post war redevelopment programme, in accordance with proposals put forward by British consultants Harrison and Hubbard. The reconstruction is incompatible with Vittoriosa's traditional organic urban fabric to which it is completely unrelated. The social housing which was developed has not stood the test of time and now presents a very run-down appearance. The enclave has no historic or architectural value whatsoever and it is an area well qualified for comprehensive redevelopment or significant and far reaching physical upgrading.
- A643 Finally, there is also the central urban core of Vittoriosa, the physical and social centre of the town, based on the hub of Misrah ir-Rebha. This sector accommodates band clubs, political party clubs, churches and shops, and clearly functions as the focus of community life.

A650 The former Collachio

- A651 The former Collachio is the historic urban quarter of the Knights, where they re-established the Order in 1530, and built a number of auberges before transferring to Valletta in 1571. The area contains several important historic buildings such as the Auberge de France, the Auberge d'Angleterre and the Inquisitor's Palace.
- A652 A feature is the intricate layout of narrow streets and alleys, and unfortunately, the presence of several dwellings in need of maintenance and restoration. Vehicle accessibility is a major problem. Residents generally have limited resources and most are not in a position to upgrade their property without external financial assistance. This high density area has few public open spaces, to the detriment of residents, and poses a major challenge in urban redevelopment terms. Although historically significant and picturesque in its townscape, it is less appealing to residents in terms of 'liveability.'
- A653 The poor quality and high density of some residential areas are now regarded by many as unacceptable for modern family living, encouraging movement to other areas where better housing standards and access to open space are more easily achieved. Housing is left in need of renovation, but demand is such that only low rents are possible, insufficient to encourage upgrading, and attracting those seeking the cheapest accommodation.

A660 The Dockyard Creek Waterfront

- A661 This waterfront extends from Xatt ir-Risq/Il-Moll ta' San Lawrenz to Fort St. Angelo at the tip of the peninsula, a length of about 450m. The spacious quay is lined by a number of historic buildings and monuments. These include the Baroque Church of San Lawrenz, the ex-British Naval Bakery, the Carmelite Church, the residence of the Captain General of the Galleys (Scamp Palace), and the Carafa Stores.
- A662 The connection between Vittoriosa and naval matters has always been strong. As the base for the Knights' galleys, and later the centre of British naval facilities, the Vittoriosa waterfront along Dockyard Creek embodied in its fine buildings and quays the essence of naval power and authority. These buildings, in their magnificent location, remain as a solid reminder of Vittoriosa's maritime history and provide an unequalled opportunity to combine conservation aims with those of tourism development.
- A663 Some are in need of urgent attention, and there have been unsympathetic additions, as well as the construction of the so-called 'White Building,' on the site of the Prud' Homme Palace which was destroyed in the war. The White Building is totally out of keeping with its surroundings and is an ugly intrusion into the urban scene. The potential of the historic buildings, and of the waterfront generally, can be gauged by the successful use of the Naval Bakery as a maritime museum. Once restored and rehabilitated, the buildings will be a major asset in the rehabilitation of the waterfront, and in relation to Dockyard Creek generally. The scope of Dockyard Creek to accommodate a yacht marina has also been noted.

A670 The Kalkara Creek Waterfront

- A671 This represents an area which has great recreational potential, but which is under-utilised and in need of redesign to encourage increased use. It also accommodates some unsympathetic uses which again contribute to discouragement of use by the general public.
- A672 Given its waterfront location, the area boasts of good views towards the Kalkara and Valetta sides of the Grand Harbour. The difference in level in relation to the centre of Vittoriosa, however, and its inaccessibility from this location reduces its ability to act as another important waterfront space.

A680 The Bastions to Cottonera Lines Area

- A681 The landward fortifications present an impressive approach to the maritime city, and incorporate a number of fine 18th century baroque gateways like the Couvre Porte and the Advanced Gate. The military gates are in dire need of restoration. The various bastions, including those of St. James', St. John's and the Porte de France all have the potential to accommodate a variety of uses.
- A682 The open area in front of the walls, comprising the ditches themselves, roads, and landscaped spaces, should be a setting which enhances the fortifications, although some uses have occurred whose presence is detrimental to the appearance of the walls. Restoration, and removal of incompatible uses is therefore proposed.
- A683 Further south is the Tal-Hawli valley. Surveys carried out show this area as being an area of ecological importance, an important water catchment area, and a Site of Scientific

Importance with rating Level 2. Its importance also results from its valley status and as a major open space which helps to present greenery in an otherwise built up area. It therefore acts as a buffer, preventing the amalgamation of the three cities of Cospicua, Vittoriosa and Kalkara.

- A684 Just before the Cottonera Lines is another developed area which includes both De La Salle and St. Edward's Colleges, two important private schools with their own facilities and which have a regional catchment area. Sandwiched between these two are a number of suburban housing blocks, mostly of the terraced type. The level of maintenance of this area is quite satisfactory and it gives the impression of detachment from the main settlements.

Map 32

A700 Kalkara

A710 Introduction

- A711 Although one of the more recent settlements to have grown up around the harbour, Kalkara's village origins are clearly discernible in the older buildings forming the hub of Kalkara centred around the church of San Guzepp, and extending along Triq Marina and Ix-Xatt towards Bighi and Vittoriosa respectively.
- A712 Essentially, Kalkara is a quiet residential area with a spacious waterfront, and few industrial undertakings. The imposing buildings of the former Maritime Hospital at Bighi standing isolated at the edge of the village on a promontory commanding magnificent views across the Grand Harbour, and the parish church adjacent to the waterfront, are two notable features. Access however is generally poor, which tends to strengthen the remote feel of the area. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and unhurried.
- A713 Figures from the Preliminary Report of the Census of Population and Housing 1995, published in March 1996, indicate a population increase from 2,086 in 1985 to 2800 in 1995. The number of households has also shown an increase of 55% in the period 1985 to 1994. Interestingly, the number of persons over sixty has also shown a small, but nevertheless significant, increase of 2% over the same period, suggesting that Kalkara's growth is broadly based across all age groups.

A720 Identity Areas

- A721 For the purposes of local plan preparation, Kalkara can be considered in terms of nine main zones, each having its own characteristics, problems, and opportunities. They are indicated on the Identity Areas Map and are:
- The Historic Centre and Waterfront Area
 - The New Housing Zone
 - Wied Kalkara Area
 - Wied Rinella Area
 - Fort Ricasoli Area
 - The Rinella Coastal Area
 - The Shoreline
 - The Santu Rokku Hamlet
 - Ricasoli Industrial Estate

A730 The Historic Centre and Waterfront Area

- A731 The historic centre and waterfront is based on the area around the church and along the shoreline. It consists of traditional terraced houses, flats in a terraced form, corner shops and facilities associated with the original village nucleus, set in what was Wied Kalkara and spreading along the shore of Kalkara Creek with which the valley connects.

A740 The New Housing Zone

A741 An arc of newer houses and incidental open space runs north and east around the village overlooking the old centre, and spilling over onto the plateau above. A variety of house types are located here, including recent terraces and government flats near Bighi. It is in this general location that most recent new development has occurred, and where scope remains for further building.

A750 Wied Kalkara Area

A751 Flanking this zone to the south is the largely undeveloped side of Wied Kalkara, rising steeply in places towards the fortifications of the Cottonera Lines. Some housing development has occurred along the base and on the top of the slope, but the rest remains overgrown or in agricultural use.

A752 Parts of this area are of scientific interest and its prominence and greenery make it a significant feature in the landscape of the Grand Harbour generally, as well as providing a striking backdrop to the village.

A760 Wied Rinella Area

A761 The area beyond the village is mostly rural in character with a scattering of housing but some very significant features. In terms of landform and ecological interest, Wied Rinella forms a key element. Despite the presence of a large scrapyards, the valley, a remnant of the drowned river channel system of the Grand Harbour, is mostly undeveloped, although the original cultivation terracing is now almost totally destroyed and the rubble walls are derelict.

A762 The rural character of the valley is clearly under threat from pressures of urbanisation and ‘rural fringe’ type land use activities. The valley runs down to the sandy bay of Rinella Creek, popular with local people, and still managing to maintain a relatively unspoilt appearance notwithstanding the shipping vessel tank cleaning berth of the Malta Drydocks Tank Cleaning Installation nearby.

A770 Fort Ricasoli Area

A771 The promontory forming the seaward side of Rinella Creek is occupied almost entirely by Fort Ricasoli, apart from the berthing and storage tank facilities of the Tank Cleaning Installation, located on parts of the western and southern flanks of the fort. Fort Ricasoli enjoys a prominent position opposite Valetta at the entrance to the Grand Harbour, with excellent views across the water to Valetta, Floriana and the Three Cities. In turn, it is a major visual component of the Harbour.

A772 Fort Ricasoli dates back to 1670, and although many parts of the fort lie derelict, it is still basically intact, having had a chequered history of use since its release by the British in 1958. The site covers about 14ha, and is bounded mainly by coastal cliffs, much of which are considered to be of ecological significance. The landward side of the fort looks out over land occupied by the Tank Cleaning Installation tank farm (actually constructed within the fortifications); Wied Rinella, and the Mediterranean Film Studios site towards the coast.

A773 The location and remains of the fort represent an invaluable resource from the point of view of encouraging tourism, and a development brief has already been prepared to seek its rehabilitation and development as a tourist attraction. The main difficulty with this concept is the presence of the Tank Cleaning Installation, which occupies part of the Grand Harbour shoreline and is an intrusive element within the outer bastions of the fort. The installation is required to enable work to be carried out on vessels in a ‘gas free’ condition, and it is the only location within the Grand Harbour where this type of work can be undertaken without infringing current safety regulations. Its long term future is linked to that of the Drydocks, to changes in technology and methods of transporting certain types of cargo, and to the possible use of the fort for tourism.

A780 The Rinella Coastal Area

A781 The Mediterranean Film Studios and associated shoreline extend for about one kilometre, bounded on the west side by Triq Santu Rokku, the main approach road to Fort Ricasoli, with Ricasoli industrial estate forming a boundary to the south. The land slopes steadily to the rocky shoreline from the road, although not always visible from the latter, and consists mainly of small fields which give way to the Rinella Battery, the deep water tank and other fixtures of the studios, and the restored chapel of Santu Rokku. The major sewage outfall at Wied Ghammieq is also a feature of this area.

A790 The Shoreline

A791 The shoreline displays a number of interesting geological and geomorphological features, including the bay of Il-Kalanka tal-Patrijiet and the Wied Ghammieq Cross-Fault, which are protected sites. However, the area is littered with rubbish, general debris and a number of exposed pipes from the nearby tanks of the film studios. Since public access is available along the water’s edge, the uncared for appearance of the coastline simply invites further abuse.

A810 The Santu Rokku Hamlet

A811 South of Wied Rinella is the hamlet and fields of Santu Rokku, an isolated but compact group of dwellings set along a country lane, probably originating as a traditional agricultural community based on former arrangements for working the land. The hamlet has increased in size, with many buildings of recent origin, although some ‘infill’ plots remain. The hamlet now occupies the entire length of the ‘lane’ section of Triq Santu Rokku from the Naval Cemetery on Triq San Leonardo to the northern extremity of Ricasoli Industrial Estate.

A812 The fields in the vicinity are well tended but there is evidence that agricultural activity is under increasing pressure from the effects of nearby urbanisation, in particular the gradual spread of Zabbar (St. Peter’s area), and the proximity of Ricasoli Industrial Estate. Nevertheless, Santu Rokku has a certain quiet charm only likely to be disturbed by the tendency of vehicles to use the recently resurfaced lane to access the industrial estate.

A820 Ricasoli Industrial Estate

- A821 Ricasoli Industrial Estate completes the eastern extent of the Local Plan area. The estate covers some 14ha and is bounded by the film studios, Santu Rokku and Xghajra on the landward sides, with the coast to the east. A narrow strip of land separates the industrial estate from the shoreline, widening at one point where the remains of a small valley and associated field system run down towards the sea. The valley is an interesting feature but its location close to the estate is regarded as an invitation to dump material, and some of the small fields are falling into disuse. The coastal strip has been the subject of considerable abuse by way of illegal tipping of construction and other materials, as well as use of the narrow track by motor vehicles.
- A822 The appearance of the industrial estate has greatly improved with the resurfacing of the roads. However some units, particularly those which seem to be unoccupied, are in need of improvement. About 1.5ha are undeveloped and unused. Incidental open space around industrial units, and individual site boundaries often require attention. Landscaping and planting are largely absent. Public perception of the estate, and the interests of individual tenants, would be significantly assisted by the resurfacing of the main access road in the vicinity of the Mediterranean Film Studios.

Map 33

Appendix B

Implementation

Appendix B - Implementation

B100 Introduction

B110 Finalising a local plan and getting it approved by the Planning Authority (PA) and by Government is not the end of the process. It is rather the end of the first introductory phase. Much more work is needed after this stage is over, work which will entail much more collaboration between the various entities who have a say, directly or not, as public or private entities, in the realisation of the policies concerned.

B120 It is important to stress at the outset that it is very dangerous to select specific policies for implementation whilst discarding others. The Plan policies are interconnected, and such a process will lead to an imbalance in implementation, resulting in ineffectivity of those policies which are implemented and redundancy in those which are not. It is very much like wanting a product, having an assembly kit for the machine to eventually produce that product, but then, whilst in the process, some important bolts and nuts forming part of the machinery are left out. The result is that the whole machine will not work.

B200 Background

B210 Formulation of the Plan was not carried out only by the Planning Authority. The PA would not have produced the present Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP) on its own. It is true that the process involves essential survey work, carried out or commissioned by the PA, but it is also true that many of the policies are based, and directly resulted from information gathered from other parties. Of most significance in this respect are the local councils in the different localities concerned.

B220 It is also important to add the very significant contributions by national entities involved in the Local Plan area. Although ideally there would have been more involvement from certain organisations, the level of consultation carried out is considered to be satisfactory, and has helped to establish better relationships through a networking effect. This is important because a local plan should not be seen by such entities as something which hinders their operations. On the contrary, input in a local plan at the formulation stages will ensure that future projects are provided for and their implementation guaranteed conceptually through direct reference in the Plan. This will also improve the process resulting in the fruition of any project when the development process is eventually initiated. It will also improve co-ordination between the parties involved, especially if contacts are already established during the Plan formulation process.

B300 Legal Amendments

B310 It is also important to mention the recent amendments in the Development Planning Act which make it necessary for government to approve the Local Plan before it is formally adopted. This measure is important from two aspects. Firstly it ensures that the land use policies included in the Plan are in line with national needs and priorities as established by the government of the day. This renders the Plan more realistic, especially in designating priorities for implementation.

B320 However, it has a second aspect. When a local plan is approved, it will now have more importance as it has been approved not only by the PA, but also by government. In this sense, there is a commitment by government that ensures the agreement with the eventual

implementation of the provisions and policies in the Plan, and that government will work towards the effective realisation, directly or indirectly, of the totality of policy in a holistic manner. This is very important and it underlies the responsibility of each government department to positively contribute in the formulation of the Plan, as they will all now be responsible for implementing it.

B330 This amendment also means that stronger and more positive messages are sent across to both private and voluntary organisations. The former know which are the future development proposals which will eventually take place. This increases confidence in the locality from the private sector, which will be more willing to invest in the area and thus help economic growth. This, in turn implies more funds in the local economies, and in an indirect manner, improvement in the standard of living and at the social level generally.

B340 On the other hand, voluntary organisations, especially those related to the protection of the environment, now know that with government's approval of this Plan, there is more chance of increased protection to the environment. This will also result in improved quality both in proposals relating to the urban environment and to management proposals relating to the natural environment.

B400 Opportunities

B410 Local councils also seem to recognise the opportunity which this Plan provides, giving direction as to what should happen where in their localities, at the same time being flexible and robust enough to permit innovative, positive ideas which are in line with the aims of the Plan. The Plan can also serve as a vehicle for acquisition of much needed funds from central government in order to improve their locality.

B420 Hopefully, therefore, this Plan will not be just another one on the shelf. This Plan aims at improving the national significance of the area concerned, through economic improvements which will stimulate social well-being. This section does not aim at dictating what should happen where and when. Rather, it is intended to give direction on the way forward, and on how to best realise these policies given the current administrative structure and provisions.

B500 Coordination

B510 As already stated, it is to be stressed at the outset that implementation of this Plan is not only a function of the Planning Authority. On the contrary, most of the work to be done depends on many other actors and their initiatives to get the policies implemented. The PA will, where necessary be as supportive as possible, at times initiating action where this is lacking, but only involved at the preliminary stages of project realisation. The PA will therefore not be doing the implementation work, except to promote and where necessary co-ordinate the ideas which result from this Plan.

B520 It is also important to mention at this stage that the change necessary in the Grand Harbour area, and many of the policies in this Plan, can only be brought about through positive collaboration with and involvement of the private sector. Modern trends show that it is impossible for public agencies to bring about the improvements needed alone. Rather, public entities must use their knowledge, influence, and funds to act as catalysts for change, trying to increase the leverage ratio between public and private funds.

B530 This is the way forward, and government must be willing to bring about those changes, especially to existing outdated laws, which will guarantee the effective realisation of some of the policies in this Plan. Examples include the revision of rent laws, land assembly and acquisition provisions, and planning agreements and obligations. Most importantly, government has to create a forum which will bring about the implementation of this Local Plan. This latter point can only be brought about by devoting both resources, funding and legal clout to a new entity which can effectively prioritise and implement these policies in as holistic a manner as possible. This new entity, whose set up can encompass existing actors in the implementation process, should be executive in nature, should have the highest political backing in order to be in a position to coordinate the efforts of the various entities which essentially need to be involved in the implementation of this Plan.

B600 Multiple Ownership Of Land

B610 Some of the policies require the preparation of a development brief, or an outline permit for a large area. Multiple ownership of an area is a significant constraint upon plan implementation. If a planning brief is to follow strict planning principles in the allocation of land, an inequitable situation may result.

B620 Some landowners will be able to develop their land commercially whereas others will have a use assigned to the land which has little commercial value. This will result in intense pressure from landowners likely to lose out. The development brief may well end up a means of ensuring an equitable distribution of value of property rather than a genuine attempt at reaping maximum benefits to the community from the development of the land.

B630 In some cases, ensuring an equitable distribution of land values may be so difficult that the land will remain undeveloped to the detriment of the owners themselves and the community at large.

B640 A way needs to be found to ensure that an area is developed on sound planning principles and ensuring that none of the landowners lose out. The following method is being suggested for further investigation:

- i) An independent estate valuer assesses the current value of land of each of the owners;
- ii) A plan for the area is to be drawn up including all commercial and non-commercial uses based on requirements of the community in the area;
- iii) An independent estate valuer is called in once more to assess the value of the land as subdivided in the plan;
- iv) Plots/areas of land/properties are redistributed to landowners such that the ratio of current value of land held by one owner to the total land value of the site covered by the development brief remains the same after redistribution.

B650 An alternative is for a development company to be set up with the landowners being assigned a number of shares on the basis of value of land owned. The share owners will recover the value of their assets when the plan of the area is completed and the land sold or developed.

B660 Owners will be inclined to cooperate if the proposed land distribution is the only means for them to realise the value of their assets. The process may however, be blocked by one or more landowners who either contest the value assigned to their land or who are

unwilling to part with their particular plot. In extreme cases, government may have to use its powers of expropriation.

B670 Another alternative is for government to expropriate the land at full market value and recoup the costs by selling the different areas at market values.

B700 Prioritisation Of Policies

B710 Later in this Appendix is a section which lists various policies included in the Plan and subdivides them into four different categories, namely Short term, Medium term, Long term and Continuous Implementation. These terms, rather than referring as to when work on the particular policy or project is to be started, should be taken to mean as to when work should be finished. For example, it is therefore possible to start work now on a long term policy. Those policies which are intended to be used only for Development Control purposes are not included in this section.

B720 Those policies listed as short term, are either because they are relatively easier to achieve, or because they are very important for the locality concerned; those listed as medium term are usually more difficult to implement, require more negotiation between the implementation parties concerned, or because they are easy to achieve but do not have imminent priority; the long term policies usually have national significance, and require detailed analysis, research, coordination and usually are more costly to finance. Phasing would be expected in these policies. Continuous policies refer to those policies which cannot be initiated or finished, because of their very own nature. They usually require continuous assessment, control and monitoring.

B800 Monitoring And Revision

B810 Finally, as the Plan gets older, the need will be felt to revise it. This is not a result of any fault or defect of the Plan, but rather because as time goes by, the social, economic, and environmental contexts change, and the Plan would need to be updated. This is the nature of planning, and usually happens after a number of years after approval. It is essentially concerned with the rolling aspect of planning.

B820 It is therefore important that at some stage, a monitoring programme is initiated to eventually pave the way for the revision of the Plan. It is impractical at this point to say when the need for such monitoring action would be needed, or indeed when a revision of the Plan would be expected.

B830 The Plan horizon is a ten year period, that is, the policies are formulated to tackle issues likely to emerge within the next ten years. If change is rapid, this would essentially involve a revision of the Plan at an earlier date. If change is slow, then there would probably be little scope for revising the Plan, and revision would be expected at a later date. In all probability, therefore, the process of Plan revision would start within the latter part of the Plan horizon, i.e. after about five years have passed since approval of the document.

B900 Implementation List

B910 The following is a list of proactive policies which need to be implemented. It must be emphasised again that the Planning Authority can only be one of the actors in their

eventual implementation, and usually the initiative needs to be taken by other authorities. It is important to note that this list corresponds to the needs at the time of approval of the Plan. These implementation needs may therefore change as the Plan gets older, and may need to be revised accordingly.

B920 *Short Term Implementation* (finalised up to five years after Plan approval)

B921 General Policies -

- GN01 Government Estate Management
- GH02 Listed Buildings
- GT03 South Harbour Link Road
- GT04 Traffic Calming
- GT07 Park And Ride System To Serve Valletta
- GE05 Scrapyards
- GC05 Cottonera Waterfront
- GD02 Sites For Small And Medium-sized Enterprise Workshops
- GD13 Cottonera Tourism Approach

B922 Valletta Policies -

- GV03 Housing Improvement Action Area
- GV06 Connections Between Central Valletta And The Waterfronts
- GV08 Pedestrianisation Of Valletta
- GV10 Pedestrian Movements, Castille Place
- GV11 Residents' Parking
- GV18 Underground Space

B923 Floriana Policies -

- GF03 Housing Improvement Action Area
- GF06 Traffic Calming Measures
- GF07 Residents' Parking
- GF17 Xaghra Open Area
- GF18 Ex-Trade School Building, The Mall

B924 Marsa Policies -

- GM04 Selected Traffic Calming Initiatives
- GM06 Ta' Ceppuna Access Road
- GM07 Improvement Of Junction - Triq Nazzjonali/Triq Is-Salib
- GM08 Albert Town - Traffic System
- GM16 Site For Home For The Elderly
- GM17 Il-Menqa
- GM22 Marsa Power Station

B925 Kordin Policies -

- GI08 Restoration Of Derelict And Despoilt Land
- GI09 Conservation Of The Corradino Lines

B926 Cospicua Policies -

- GB03 Cospicua Transport Strategy
- GB13a Site For Sports & Recreational Facilities
- GB13b Verdala / San Klement Bastion Opportunity Area

B927 Senglea Policies -

- GL04 Senglea Transport Strategy
- GL06 Traffic Calming Measures And Embellishment Of Streets

- GL07 Specific Pedestrianisation Measures
- GL16 The Admiral’s House

- B928 Vittoriosa Policies -
 - GG03 Vittoriosa Transport Strategy
 - GG05 Pedestrian Measures In The Historic Core
 - GG06 Traffic Calming Measures And Embellishment Of Streets
 - GG07 Traffic Management
 - GG10 Parking

- B929 Kalkara Policies -
 - GK03 Residential Development In Wied Kalkara
 - GK05 Kalkara Transport Strategy
 - GK08 Public Footpath
 - GK12 Kalkara Waterfront Opportunity Area
 - GK14 Provision And Location Of Community Facilities

- B930 *Medium Term Implementation* (finalised six to ten years after approval)

- B931 General Policies -
 - GH06 Bastion Trails
 - GT01 Road Hierarchy
 - GT02 Junction Improvements
 - GT05 Road Improvements And Public Transport
 - GT06 Measures To Assist Public Transport
 - GT12 Ferry Landing Points
 - GE02 Environmental Improvements To Main Road Corridors
 - GE04 Afforestation
 - GE06 Derelict And Despoilt Land
 - GC04 Marsamxett Waterfront
 - GC06 Recreational Footpath System
 - GC07 Existing Afforestation Zones
 - GD04 Upgrading Of Existing Industrial Estates

- B932 Valletta Policies -
 - GV02 Residential Re/development
 - GV07 Redevelopment Of The Bus Terminus
 - GV09 Pedestrian Routes/Heritage Trails/Public Art
 - GV12 Car Parking
 - GV20 Street Markets
 - GV27 City Gate And Freedom Square
 - GV29 Fort St. Elmo

- B933 Floriana Policies -
 - GF05 Junction Improvements
 - GF08 Gozo Ferry Terminal, Sa Maison
 - GF09 Improved Road Junction, Sa Maison
 - GF12 Heritage Trail
 - GF13 Areas Of Open Space And Public Gardens
 - GF14 Jubilee Gardens Urban Park
 - GF16 Public Office Enclave
 - GF19 Commercial Improvement Action Area
 - GF20 Crown Works/Horn Works Site

- B934 Marsa Policies -
 GM05 Pedestrian Links
 GM09 Changes To Bus Routes
 GM15 Marsa Park Development
- B935 Kordin Policies -
 GI04 The Waterfront (Shipwrights' Wharf - Ras Hanzir)
 GI07 Lorry/Container Park
- B936 Cospicua Policies -
 GB05 Junction Improvements
 GB09 Historic Trail And Promenade Walk
 GB10 Bastions Improvement - Cottonera And Margherita Lines
 GB11 Cottonera 'Waterfront Revival Area' - Cospicua Section
 GB12 Urban Park
- B937 Senglea Policies -
 GL14 Cottonera 'Waterfront Revival Area' - Senglea Section
 GL15 Il-Macina
 GL17 Locations For Sports Facilities
- B938 Vittoriosa Policies -
 GG09 Vertical Links To Triq Il-Mandragg
 GG11 Off Street Parking
 GG15 Historic Trail And Promenade Walk
 GG16 Bastions Improvement - Cottonera And Margherita Lines
 GG17 Cottonera 'Waterfront Revival Area' - Vittoriosa Section
 GG18 Kalkara Creek Waterfront
 GG20 Fort St. Angelo
 GG21 Stores Building Near Porte de France
- B939 Kalkara Policies -
 GK13 Rinella Recreational Area
 GK17 Reuse Of Bighi Naval Hospital
- B940 *Long Term Implementation* (finalised more than ten years after approval)
- B941 General Policies -
 GT08 Long Term Public Transport Measures
 GE07 Ricasoli Tank Cleaning Installation
- B942 Valletta Policies -
 GV28 Opera House Site
- B943 Kalkara Policies -
 GK18 Fort Ricasoli
 GK19 Ricasoli Tank Cleaning Installation
- B950 *Continuous Implementation*
- B951 General Policies -
 GH03 Bastions Improvement And Reuse
 GH04 Monument Protection
 GH05 Restoration Of Monuments

GT09 Providing For Pedestrians And Cyclists
GC03 Recreational Use Of The Waterfront
GP06 Access