

SOUTH MALTA LOCAL PLAN

Approved Plan

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Plan and Its Format

- 1.1.1 A Local Plan deals mainly with land-use planning and development issues, and indicates where development can take place, what type and the criteria against which development proposals will be assessed by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). Its main function is to guide development by seeking a sustainable balance between economic and social needs of the public (e.g homes, shops, employment, transport, recreation and community facility requirements) and the need to protect and improve the existing urban and natural environment and to meet future demand in a sustainable manner. This is a complex task as requirements are diverse and very often conflicting and the various individual interests have to be balanced against the needs and interests of the general public.
- 1.1.2 The Development Planning Act requires MEPA to prepare Local Plans for the whole of the Maltese Islands. The South Malta Local Plan (SMLP) is one of 7 plans, and includes 18 localities covering a total area of about 63.1 km² or approximately 20% of the entire Maltese Islands. The Plan area comprises the localities of Fgura, Ghaxaq, Gudja, Kirkop, Luqa, M'Scala, Mqabba, Paola, Qrendi, Safi, Sta. Lucia, Siggiewi, Tarxien, Xghajra, Zabbar, Zebbug, Zejtun and Zurrieq as well as the Marsa and Hal Far Industrial Estates.
- 1.1.3 The Local Plan provides the framework for development within the plan area for up to 10 years, following its adoption by Government. The primary thrust of this Plan is to afford protection and secure enhancement of all the assets the area contains, to achieve a more sustainable quality of life and efficient use of land for all sectors. The SMLP area borders most of the other Local Plans (North West, Grand Harbour, Central and Marsaxlokk Bay) and this Plan pays due regard to the relevant proposals from these Plans in coming up with proposals in the Plan area. In addition this Plan ensures that its policies and proposals are generally compatible with the relevant plans of the adjoining areas to ensure an overall consistent and comprehensive approach.
- 1.1.4 The underlying factual basis and the issues the Plan generally addresses are contained in the Report of Survey (February 2002). This contains background information on the plan area and its individual localities. The Local Plan consists of maps and 'inset' maps supported by written policy statements. The written statement comprises two sections. **Section One** is the main policy document containing general policies that affect the whole plan area or large parts of it and sets out the guiding planning principles for each topic, say settlements, social and community facilities, tourism, conservation, etc. which are then taken forward in the Area Policies in Section Two. General policies deal with issues not covered by the Structure Plan (or any other policy documents approved by MEPA) in sufficient detail for the purpose of the Local Plan. **Section Two** deals with different parts of the South Malta Local Plan area. The Area Policies reflect, as far as possible, the immediate spheres of influence of the settlements, or urban development areas and include detailed site specific policies. Occasions may arise where due to special circumstances of a particular site, an area policy may depart from certain aspects of the policy framework established by the topic-based general policies. Throughout the plan, the policies are highlighted in **bold** type. The rest of the text explains the justification for the policy.

1.2 The Legal Background and Context of the Plan

- 1.2.1 The Development Planning Act, 1992, establishes a MEPA and provides that where a Structure Plan has been prepared under the Building Permits (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1988, the Authority shall adopt such a Structure Plan as if prepared under the provisions of the new Act. The Structure Plan came into force on 29 July 1992. The subsequent amendments to the 1992 Act permit the partial review of the Structure Plan by Parliamentary Resolution, provided such a review shall not adversely affect rights acquired by any person prior to the effective date of such review (Clause 18 (3)). The Structure Plan establishes an overall strategic framework for land use planning and related development, over a twenty year period. To deal with area planning on a detailed basis, and to respond to local issues, the Structure Plan makes provision for the preparation of Local Plans. Article 27(2) of the Development Planning Act 2001 requires the Authority to seek final approval of a Local Plan from the Minister responsible for Development Planning and the Plan shall stay in force for a minimum period of two years following such approval, unless a review is necessitated by a review of the Structure Plan, as required by Article 28(1) of the same Act. Changing circumstances may well require adjustments to the Plan after the minimum period of two years following final approval by the Minister, and such review of the Plan will be undertaken within the legal provisions of the Development Planning Act.
- 1.2.2 Over the past years, several Subsidiary Plans/Briefs, Planning Policies and Guidance Notes/Circulars have been prepared/issued by the MEPA. These also play an important part in establishing approved planning policies against which decisions can be made, and are therefore taken into full account in the Local Plan.
- 1.2.3 Development proposals will be affected by several Structure Plan and Local Plan policies, each dealing with a different aspect of planning. The Structure Plan and the Local Plan need to be read together in evaluating a proposal. Where several policies apply to a development proposal, they must all be complied with if a proposal is to be accepted.

1.3 Functions of the Local Plan

- 1.3.1 The functions of the South Malta Local Plan include:-
1. To apply and evaluate the strategy, principles, policies and standards of the Structure Plan on a local scale;
 2. To provide area and site specific, detailed guidance for development control by proposing allocations for particular land uses, defining areas in which particular development control policies will apply, safeguarding areas for specific future land uses and stating standards and other criteria to which development must conform;
 3. To designate any specific areas within the Local Plan boundaries that outline conceptual proposals that will be developed further through more detailed Planning Briefs and to provide a basis for promoting and co-ordinating public and private development opportunities;
 4. To put forward proposals for the improvement of conditions relating to the quality of the living environment particularly transport related proposals for the improvement of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and parking;
 5. To bring local and detailed planning issues before the public, and to offer solutions to these issues by means of public consultations.
 6. To highlight all areas that require protection from development for social and

environmental and other planning reasons.

- 1.3.2 In view of the above, Local Plan policies should generally conform to the provisions of the Structure Plan. However, the particular circumstances and specific issues of the local plan area occasionally necessitate policies to address these issues which materially depart from the existing Structure Plan. Where such policies are proposed in the Local Plan it is indicated that these are to be given due consideration during the next Structure Plan review.

1.4 General Description of the South Malta Local Plan Area

- 1.4.1 The plan area stretches from the west to the east side of the Island. The 18 localities comprising the plan area are shown on Map 2. However, parts of Siggiewi, Zebbug, Qrendi and Zurrieq also form part of the North West Local Plan and part of Paola (Kordin area) as well as Marsa (excluding the industrial estate) are within the Grand Harbour Local Plan. The plan area had a population of about 110,000 in the 1995 census and this increased to 113,291 in 2000. The average population density for the plan area is 1795 persons per km².
- 1.4.2 70% of the plan area is characterized by non-urban areas i.e. land which is outside the Development Zone boundary. Ghaxaq, Gudja, Kirkop, Marsascala, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Siggiewi, Xghajra, Zabbar, Zebbug, Zejtun and Zurrieq have a high percentage of non-urban areas whilst Fgura, Luqa, Paola, Sta. Lucia and Tarxien are more urban in character. The rural character of the area is an important feature which warrants a careful approach to development, particularly since specific infrastructure (Sant' Antnin Plant) and quarrying operations have created adverse impacts on the rural environment.
- 1.4.3 There is a general feeling amongst the population within the plan area that this area has not attracted the level (or type) of investment which has been attracted by other parts of the mainland. Although in recent years private sector investment has occurred in the plan area, e.g. a shopping centre in Fgura, a cinema complex in Marsascala, yet this certainly did not match the interest other localities have received in this regard. However, the high population density, as well as construction related activity and industrial operations, create significant noise and air pollution apart from parking related problems.
- 1.4.4 These trends have been confirmed by the Regional Socio-Economic Development Plan for the South published in February 1998 which also identified a number of serious social problems concerning specific localities in the plan area (e.g. Zabbar and Xghajra). These include unsettled families, separated couples, drug abuse, unemployment, single parent families. The plan area accounted for 34% of the unemployment recorded in June 2000. In planning terms, these concerns stem particularly from a neglect of the area and the low quality of life associated with such an environment and forms of development allowed in the area. Scrapyards, animal farms, quarries, industrial estates all combine to place pressure on the quality of the environment of the residents.
- 1.4.5 Localities have developed specific functions or roles. Thus Marsascala has become the touristic and entertainment/leisure locality of the South as well as the summer resort for a number of residents. Paola and Fgura have become important shopping centres. The plan area has the highest retail floorspace per person at 0.46 m². 6% of total showroom floorspace is in Zebbug. Paola is designated as a Primary Town Centre whilst Fgura, Qormi, Zurrieq, Zabbar and Zejtun as Secondary Town Centres and Ghaxaq, Siggiewi, Luqa, Kirkop and Safi as Tertiary Town Centres in the Retail Topic Paper.

- 1.4.6 Most localities (e.g. Qrendi, Safi, Ghaxaq, Gudja, Kirkop, Tarxien, Sta. Lucia) retain a predominant residential character. The proximity to tourist attractions like Il-Maqluba and Hagar Qim and Mnajdra temples and the Blue Grotto enhance the potential of localities like Qrendi and Zurrieq to develop their tourism potential. A number of other important heritage attractions are also located in the plan area (e.g. Hypogeum in Paola and Tarxien Temples).
- 1.4.7 Mqabba and Siggiewi are 'littered' with quarries and construction related businesses. Although such activities are necessary, nonetheless they scar the area's rural landscape whilst creating other significant adverse impacts on the surrounding environment and nearby residents e.g. noise and air pollution as well as destruction of habitats. The Malta International Airport cuts across the length of the plan area from Luqa to Birzebbuga whilst other areas of national importance in the plan area include the main industrial estates of Bulebel and Marsa.
- 1.4.8 Important areas of conservation value in the South Malta Local Plan area include the saline marshland at Il-Maghluq, Marsascala, which is the only example of this type of habitat in the Local Plan area. This is one of the few remaining saline marshlands supporting many halophilic species. The area towards Tal-Munxar, St. Thomas Bay has many Pleistocene deposits and supports an endemic subterranean cricket. The following areas also have features of particular ecological interest – the coastal slopes of the Xghajra – Zonqor region, the valleys that drain into Marsascala Bay and into Marsaxlokk Bay and those that form the Wied il-Kbir complex.

1.5 Summary of Overall General Strategy

- 1.5.1 The overall strategy for the South Malta Local Plan area is to improve the quality of the environment for the population living within this region and to ensure that sufficient provision of land has been made to meet demands not only with regard to housing and employment but also to accommodate facilities including social and community and recreational facilities. The strategy seeks to make efficient use of the land designated for development by the Temporary Provisions Schemes, 1988, through various policies including a policy of containment of existing settlements.
- 1.5.2 The Plan aims to secure an improvement to the quality of the environment of urban areas through various measures including ensuring the provision of appropriate sites, outside residential areas, for the relocation of obnoxious activities, introduction of traffic management schemes in all localities, facilitating the provision of support facilities like social and community facilities, etc.
- 1.5.3 With regard to the rural and coastal environment the strategy seeks to facilitate the rehabilitation of degraded rural landscapes and the protection and safeguarding of the limited coastal stretch for the provision of recreational facilities.

GENERAL POLICIES

2. Settlements

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The settlements in the plan area have been characterised by a growing urban sprawl which risks obliterating some of the green gaps that still exist between some of the urban settlements. The general characteristics of the settlements range from well developed towns like Paola, Fgura and Tarxien to village settlements like Safi, Gudja, Qrendi and Kirkop. A number of major infrastructural developments generate different types of pressures on the plan area. These developments include, for example, the sewage treatment and solid waste recycling plant at Marsascala and the Malta International Airport in Luqa. In addition to these, the localities of Mqabba and Siggiewi have a high concentration of quarries, some of which are in the proximity of the urban settlements.
- 2.1.2 A vacant land condition study carried out in 2002 estimates that land currently left vacant within the TPS boundaries in the plan area is of around 1.7 km². It is considered that this amount of land is adequate to meet demand for housing over the plan period. Zurrieq and Marsascala have the highest share of vacant land at 11% and 10% respectively.
- 2.1.3 The plan area includes the rural settlements of Bir-id-Deheb, Misrah Strejnu, Torri Mamo and Bubaqra amongst others. Incremental urban development has not spared some of the typical rural settlements, for example Bubaqra at Zurrieq and Bir-id-Deheb in Zejtun, giving them more of an urban character, despite being rural settlements..
- 2.1.4 The Local Plan has identified the rural settlements on the basis of their physical size and development pattern. Rural settlements are defined as consisting of at least 10 dwellings and having a compact or clearly identifiable form, being either a cluster of buildings or a linear pattern fronting onto an existing local access road.
- 2.1.5 In spite of the Structure Plan blanket prohibition of urban development outside existing and committed built-up areas, development permissions for new dwellings outside the development zone are still being issued. The Structure Plan Review Topic Paper on Housing revealed that between the years 1994 – 2000, some 495 dwelling units, outside the development zone, were granted permission, with 211 of these in the plan area, implying that the rural settlements are under constant pressure for further development.

2.2 Strategic Background

- 2.2.1 The Structure Plan's main strategy with regard to new urban development is to channel development into the existing built-up areas primarily through the rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing buildings (SET 1) and the prevention of development of undeveloped land outside the development boundaries (SET 11 and RCO 2).
- 2.2.2 With regard to Rural Settlements, the Structure Plan adopts a restrictive approach to developments in the countryside. Policy SET 11 and para 7.6 specify those categories of non-urban development which will be permitted outside existing and committed built-up areas. The Structure Plan provides that only farmhouses and other genuine agricultural buildings, reservoirs, picnic areas toilets and car parks, control buildings and wall/fences at archaeological and ecological sites are considered acceptable inclusions in the non-urban scene.

2.3 Strategy

2.3.1 The strategy for urban settlements in the SMLP is:

1. to contain urban development within the Limits to Development boundaries and make efficient use of existing undeveloped land within such boundaries;
2. to rationalise anomalies to the Limits to Development boundaries;
3. to retain building heights in general but allow for changes where residential densities are low and where such changes will not impact negatively on the urban fabric of the settlement.

2.3.2 The strategy for rural settlements is:

1. to protect their identity by preventing as far as possible their coalescence with urban settlements (e.g. Zejtun, Zabbar, M'Scala).
2. to ensure that essential features of historic settlements are safeguarded and measures adopted to promote their rehabilitation and conservation so as to enhance the character and amenity of these settlements.
3. to provide the framework which enables derelict and abandoned buildings within rural settlements being brought into effective use through the identification of appropriate uses;
4. allow for modest and controlled development within rural settlements.

Policies

SMSE 01

Limits to Development Boundaries

The Local Plan has reviewed the Limits to Development Boundaries and is proposing a number of sites to be excluded from the development zone, as listed in Table 1 below and in the respective policy maps.

Inclusions to the boundaries are to be considered at the next Structure Plan Review and are indicated on the relevant maps in Appendix B – Recommended Changes to Limits to Development Boundary attached with the Maps' Volume. These are not to be considered as part of this Plan.

A development boundary for the locality of Hal Farrug (Luqa) has been established.

2.4.1 The analysis from the Vacant Land Condition Survey and the Urban Capacity Study indicates that there is still sufficient land available within the Temporary Provisions Scheme boundaries to accommodate future demand, particularly for housing. The Housing Topic Paper estimates that for the period 2000 – 2010 housing requirements in the plan area would be in the region of 5,212 new dwelling units. The same study estimates that available land within TPS as well as the new residential units that would be made available as a result of conversions, windfall, redevelopment, scheme rationalisation, etc. would create a residential capacity for 23,398 units. One also has to consider the permanently vacant homes (4,786 units at the 1995 Census) which have the potential to increase future housing supply.

2.4.2 Allowing minor changes to rationalise the scheme boundary is sometimes necessary to avoid

anomalies and ensure a general consistency in dealing with the issue of scheme boundaries across all local plans. The incremental approach to development outside the designated boundaries during the last two decades has led to problems of urban sprawl, particularly on the urban fringes and the Local Plan seeks to contain such sprawl through the formulation of appropriate policies which discourage such growth in the plan area.

- 2.4.3 Some areas, zoned as green areas are also being proposed to be excluded from the scheme boundary particularly because of their agricultural function or to protect and the coastal stretches of Xghajra and Marsascala. The boundaries have been drawn with the intention of minimizing the amount of new land which will become available for housing. The changes to the boundaries are recommendations for the Structure Plan review as required by Structure Plan policy SET 8. In proposing revisions to the scheme boundaries, MEPA has taken into account the submissions made by the public in the light of the criteria set out in this policy.

SMSE 02

Development in the absence of specific policies

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

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

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

- 2.4.4 The Local Plan has attempted to indicate a complete range of acceptable land uses and development control criteria in the Plan area. However there may be exceptions where certain planning applications cannot be directly assessed in relation to Local Plan policies. To give guidance on how to assess such planning applications therefore, unless otherwise specified, it can be assumed that proposals which are compatible with the TPS (1988), with the DC2005, and all the relevant policy and design guidance and the Structure Plan will be acceptable. MEPA may also have regard to pre-1988 schemes where these give guidance (particularly on building alignments) and to other material considerations relevant to the site and to the type and form of development proposed.

SMSE 03

Building Heights

Applications for development involving the construction of buildings within the urban settlements and proposed urban extensions, should comply with the building height limitations indicated in the relevant Building Heights Maps. MEPA will not favourably consider applications for development, which infringe the established building heights.

Within all Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs), as proposed in this Plan, building heights will

generally be retained at 2 floors without semi-basement, unless otherwise indicated in the respective Building Heights Maps. In specific cases, building heights will be limited to 1 floor, if this is necessary to maintain the character of such areas, as indicated in the relevant Building Heights Maps or as may be proposed following the Street Classification exercise.

Within those street frontages in UCAs where the predominant building height of buildings along the same frontage is more than 2 floors, only an additional floor may be permitted to the adjacent buildings having 2 floors.

Changes to building height limitations are proposed in Marsascala and in areas outside the UCA and Design Priority areas where building heights are three floors with semi-basement, unless otherwise indicated in the respective Building Heights maps.

MEPA will also consider an additional floor to a school building where it is not possible for this facility to expand laterally provided that:

- a) the building is not scheduled or of historic/architectural importance, and
- b) the additional floor will not create a negative visual impact.

MEPA will consider allowing additional floors, up to a maximum of three floors, on Government buildings located Outside Development Zone, provided that the proposed development will not create an adverse visual impact on the immediate surrounding area, as well as the wider surrounding area (1 km radius).

In line with the tall buildings policy, MEPA will consider the medium rise buildings ONLY in the localities of Marsascala, Fgura and the area designated as a Mixed Use Area in Paola (Policy Map PA 1 and PA 2). Tall buildings may be considered in the MIA Master Plan Area and Air Malta Master Plan Area Site B, in line with policies SMLU 07 and SMLU 08 respectively, subject to clearance from DCA.

2.4.5 Most of the localities in the plan area retain the urban qualities of the traditional villages and towns and these are features that are to be protected and conserved. Thus to retain the townscape features building heights in general will not be changed from the current limitations. Limited changes in building heights are being proposed. The height relaxation policy has resulted in creating a streetscape with differing heights, particularly through the allowance of semi-basements, thus breaking the harmony and character of particular streets. In other cases building heights have been blatantly infringed and this has been taken into consideration when proposing amendments to current building heights, provided that such changes would not result in any adverse impact. In view of the penthouse allowed over the third floor, as specified in para 2.1 of the Policy and Design Guidance DC 2005, building heights outside the UCA boundary have been generally increased to three floors and semi-basement. Most villages retain a traditional urban skyline and this is being protected. The building heights in Marsascala have also been reviewed recognizing the tourism role of this locality, particularly for domestic tourism and to reflect developments that have been approved in the area. Building height changes, not exceeding one floor, will be permitted in specific cases where it is not possible for schools to expand horizontally due to site limitations. The tall/medium rise buildings policy identifies specific localities where these can be considered and this policy is designating such areas/sites.

MEPA will encourage the provision of additional public urban open spaces (e.g. communal open space and children's play area) within urban areas through major urban developments (as defined in Appendix A) where the developer will be required to provide such facilities on site as part of the proposed development. Where planning constraints preclude this approach, the developer will be required to make up for an equivalent provision elsewhere in the locality as will be indicated by MEPA.

At sites zoned as public urban open spaces, as indicated in the relevant Policy Maps, MEPA encourages the development or upgrading, as may be the case, of these sites for public recreational facilities in the form of children play areas or landscaped seating areas for use by the general public. Only at specific sites, as indicated in the respective Area Policies, underground development may be considered in such areas, provided that at ground level the site is developed into a public urban open space. The open nature of these sites is to be retained. Within green areas only low key environmental improvements (e.g. upgrading of roundabouts or traffic islands, landscaping or seating area) will be allowed. Where green areas are private gardens or part of private gardens no development of any part of the site is permitted.

In those cases where buildings are present on sites designated as public urban open spaces or green areas, MEPA will consider the upgrading and improvement of such buildings, particularly, for uses compatible with the recreational provision of such sites, unless otherwise indicated in this Plan, provided that there is no increase in the built up footprint and the overall height is retained, unless otherwise indicated in the relevant Building Heights Maps. Demolition of such buildings will only be considered provided that following an assessment of the building by MEPA it is ascertained that it has no cultural or heritage value. In case of demolition the new development will have to give regard to the treatment of side and back elevations to avoid creating blank party walls.

MEPA will also encourage the provision of underground reservoirs within such sites primarily when these are located within flood prone areas.

MEPA will also encourage the upgrading and embellishment of squares (pjazzas) through the provision of seating facilities, landscaping, pedestrianisation and traffic calming measures, particularly within the Urban Conservation Areas, to facilitate movement and improve facilities for pedestrians. Other soft areas, landscaped areas and open spaces within residential estates, particularly Government Housing Estates, are to be retained and no development will be permitted in such areas, except where this involves the improvement and upgrading of these areas.

2.4.6 The urban settlements in the plan area are generally highly urbanized with very little pockets left for public open space (e.g. gardens, piazzas and playgrounds). Approximately 5% of the urban zone in the plan area is taken up by open spaces. This highly urbanized character of certain localities (e.g. Fgura, Tarxien) decreases the quality of the urban environment of these areas and reduces the quality of living for the residents.

2.4.7 The Local Plan strategy is to generally retain the existing level of public urban open space provision and to enhance the level of such provision in appropriate cases for use by the general public. It includes the provision of informal open spaces having seating provision, playing fields, picnic areas and public gardens. The green areas as indicated in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, have no specific definition. The Scottish Executive Research Unit has defined amenity green spaces as areas which provide visual amenity or separates different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual and safety reasons. In housing areas amenity green spaces are the main setting for informal children's play areas. Green areas, in this Local Plan, comprise those

sites zoned as such within the Temporary Provisions Schemes, 1988, and are either still not available for public use or are simply traffic islands/roundabouts. Some of these are relatively large sites whose retention and improvement for public use is important to enhance the amenity of the urban area whilst providing potential for recreational facilities in the form of children's play area or public gardens. To encourage the development of sites which are identified as public urban open spaces but not yet amenable for public use, the possibility of underground development will be considered along the criteria stipulated in the relevant area policies.

SMSE 05

Classification of ODZ Settlements

The following sites located Outside the Limits to Development boundary in close proximity to the main urban area but separated by an undeveloped gap of local significance are to be designated as Category 1 Rural Settlements and to which policy SMSE 06 will apply:

Category 1:	Triq il-Kunsill ta' L-Ewropa	Luqa	Map LU 1, RS 1
	Triq id-Dahla ta' San Tumas	Marsascala	Map MS 2, RS 1
	Triq Valletta	Mqabba	Map MA 1, RS 1
	Triq San Mattew	Qrendi	Map QR 1, RS 1
	Triq Dun Manwel Zammit	Siggiewi	Map SI 1, RS 2
	Triq Has-Sajjed (Tal-Plier)	Zabbar	Map ZA 1, RS 2
	Triq San Guzepp (Ta' Ciantar)	Zabbar	Map ZA 1, RS 2
	Triq Gianni Cilia (Wied Qirda)	Zebbug	Map ZG 2, RS 2
	Triq Salvu Pulis (Tal-Hawlija)	Zabbar	Map ZA 1, ZA 2, RS 3
	Triq il-Labour	Zejtun	Map ZN 1, RS 3
	Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq	Ghaxaq	Map GH 1, RS 3
	Triq il-Kappucini	Zabbar	Map ZA 1, RS 3

The following are designated as Category 2 Large Rural Settlements within a wider rural area which should be conserved, consolidated and rehabilitated while protecting their rural character and to which policy SMSE 07 will apply:-

Category 2:	Triq ta' Telleritu	Ghaxaq	RS 4
	Triq il-Pluvieri (Tat-Tajjara)	Gudja	RS 4
	Triq San Nikola (Il-Hofra)	Qrendi	RS 5
	Blata l-Bajda	Xghajra	RS 5
	Sqaq San Lawrenz	Xghajra	RS 5
	L-Imwieghel	Zabbar	RS 5
	Trejjet San Frangisk	Zabbar	RS 6
	Hal Tmiem	Zejtun	RS 6

The following are designated as Category 3 Small Rural Settlements within a wider rural area which should be conserved and rehabilitated and their rural character protected and to which policy SMSE 08 will apply:-

Category 3:	Tad-Dawl	Marsascala	RS 7
	Tal-Krawla	Marsascala	RS 7
	Torri Mamo	Marsascala	RS 7
	Tax-Xantin	Mqabba	RS 7
	Has-Sajd	Zabbar	RS 8
	Il-Bakkari	Zurrieq	RS 8

If conflicts arise between policies SMSE 6, 7 and 8 and other policy guidance notes in relation to development outside urban areas prepared outside the Local Plan process, the policies in the Local Plan should take precedence.

- 2.4.8 Rural settlements can be very different from one another. The pattern of the development can vary from rows of terraced houses to a cluster of traditional farm houses. Spaces/gaps between buildings vary greatly, thus affecting the density and the perceived visual compactness of the settlement. Some rural settlements have substantial visual impact on the surrounding countryside because of the location, size and nature of development – others are visually well-integrated with the surrounding countryside, for instance, by tree cover purposely planted along their edges.
- 2.4.9 These different characteristics need to be acknowledged in any policy intended to guide their conservation, rehabilitation and consolidation. These clusters of buildings have emerged for various reasons ranging from their exclusion from the TPS when these were being drawn up in 1988 even though they were located close to a main urban area, to a number of planning decisions which permitted their establishment and growth, to their existence as an inhabited area for a long period of time.
- 2.4.10 The following set of criteria was developed to determine the character of each settlement:
- i. the number and compactness of residential units/clusters;
 - ii. the land area of the settlement, including all land between the buildings on the extreme built edges of the cluster but excluding gap sites wider than 14.0m;
 - iii. the density expressed in dwellings per hectare (obtained by dividing the number of inhabited residential units by the settlement area), however a minimum of 8 units was required to qualify as a rural settlement;
 - iv. the distance in metres between the extreme built edges of the cluster;
 - v. the design of the buildings – predominantly modern or predominantly traditional;
 - vi. the land-use patterns;
 - vii. form of the settlement in relation to the Limits to Development Boundary;
- 2.4.11 Criteria (i) and (ii) gave an indication of the scale of the settlement and the figure obtained for the density could then be compared with other density figures for small villages in Malta and Gozo. Criterion (iv) was indicative of the settlement pattern i.e. whether the settlement was compact or dispersed or linear. Criterion (v) indicated whether the built cluster was of recent origins or had been an established built up area for a considerable time and its conservation was more important. The land-uses and activities in a settlement are a major contributor to its character and are also indicative of the type of new uses, which could be permitted. The form of the settlement, particularly those in proximity to the urban settlement, in relation to the Limits to Development Boundary is considered important to ensure that designations do not create additional pressures for development on adjacent land.
- 2.4.12 The application of these criteria resulted, generally, in the emergence of three groups –
- i. large, high density (generally more than 19 dwellings per hectare), modern residential clusters with few abandoned buildings in close proximity to the main urban area (within 100m);
 - ii. large, high density (more than 19 dwellings per hectare), predominantly modern, linear/dispersed residential clusters with few abandoned buildings but distant from the main urban areas;
 - iii. small, low density (less than 19 dwellings per hectare), predominantly traditional, with a

mix of compact and dispersed residential clusters with substantial amounts of abandoned buildings and distant from the main urban areas.

- 2.4.13 Group (i) was classified as Category 1 Rural Settlements , group (ii) was classified as Category 2 Rural Settlements and termed “Large Rural Settlements”, while group (iii) was classified as Category 3 Rural Settlements and termed “Small Rural Settlements”.

SMSE 06

Category 1 Settlements ODZ

In sites designated as Category 1 Rural Settlements in Policy SMSE 05, as identified in the relevant Policy Maps and Inset RS 1 – RS 5, which are in close proximity to the main urban area but separated by an undeveloped gap of local significance, due attention must be given to the design of new buildings within the established boundary, especially those along the edge of the boundary of the settlement, to ensure that there are no adverse impacts, especially through the creation of new party walls. A side garden of at least 3 metres, with an elevation fronting upon it, will be required for sites on the boundary’s edge. Priority will be given to the rehabilitation of buildings of historical or architectural interest within these rural settlements. Land uses which fall within those identified by Policy SMHO 02 for Residential Areas will be permitted within this group of Category 1 settlements

Building heights within Category 1 Rural Settlements will be limited to two floors with basement and the built plot depth is not to exceed 25 m.

New end of terrace developments closing off blank party walls are to provide a side garden of not less than 3 metres.

No development in the form of extending the built up footprint of the existing building or a completely new development will be permitted in the back gardens forming part of buildings falling within the Category 1 Rural Settlements.

These designations are to be considered at the next Structure Plan Review.

- 2.4.14 A number of building permits issued in the past have resulted in the creation of settlements outside the Limits to Development boundary. The Rural Stratgy Topic Paper, approved by MEPA Board in 2003, identified rural settlements within 100 metres of the Limits to Development.
- 2.4.15 The boundary around Category 1 Rural Settlements also seeks to contain any further expansion of such settlements and no development will be allowed in the undeveloped land that exists between such sites and the Limits to Development boundary. However, their urban nature necessitates that they be treated as such and through the designation of a boundary to define the extent of such sites further building that would encroach on rural land will be checked whilst allowing the development of infill plots as well as the redevelopment of existing properties for residential use. This policy seeks to contain any further growth but also to provide for the possibility of a degree of enhancement. The development boundaries have been formulated to provide space for mitigating the impact resulting from blank party walls. The use of appropriate materials and landscaping in the construction of these “rounding off” residential units will enhance the appearance of the clusters and therefore reduce their visual impact on the countryside.

In the areas classified as Category 2 Large Rural Settlements by Policy SMSE 05, as identified in Inset RS 6 – RS 7, rehabilitation, development and re-development for the following land uses will be permitted:

Dwelling units (new units on uncommitted land, redevelopment of existing buildings, extensions to existing buildings for residential use, and rehabilitation of existing buildings for residential use) provided the units satisfy all the following conditions:

- i. do not create a building with more than 150m² footprint measured externally at ground floor including any internal courtyards;
- ii. have not less than 120m² and not more than 200m² total floorspace measured externally;
- iii. have an independent access from any other residential unit and its own car access;
- iv. do not create a building which is higher than two floors above road level at any point along the street frontage provided that it would not have a detrimental affect on the character of the settlement and the surrounding rural landscape;
- v. structures at roof level do not have a floorspace of more than 20m² measured externally, do not exceed an overall height of 12 courses (3.4 metres) measured externally from the lowest roof level, and are located to minimise their visual impact;
- vi. have a high quality design aimed at retaining and enhancing the existing character of the settlement and which demonstrates that due attention has been given to the impact of the new building on the rural character of the settlement and which complies with any eventual Settlement Design Statement prepared by MEPA;
- vii. parking provision is to be provided on site for not more than two car-spaces.

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

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

For the purpose of this policy an existing building includes only any building with an external footprint of not less than 50 m² which is covered by a valid development permission or else has been existing prior to 1968 and can be identified in the MEPA 1967 aerial photographs. An existing building does not include greenhouses, agricultural buildings which are essential for the operation of an agricultural holding, abandoned and dilapidated structures which are isolated from the main settlement.

For the purposes of this policy uncommitted land includes only:

1. infill sites with a street frontage of not more than 14 m which abut blank party walls one storey high, or more, on both sides;
2. corner sites defined by two public roads with a site area of not more than 300 m² which abut blank party walls one storey high, or more, on both sides;
3. sites which have a road frontage of not more than 10 m which abut blank party walls one storey high, or more, on one side and which form the end of a terrace of at least 3

dwelling provided a strip of land of at least 3 m in width adjacent to the side elevation of the new dwelling is landscaped. No structures will be permitted below this 3 m strip.

No development in the form of extending the built up footprint of the existing building or a completely new development will be permitted in the back gardens forming part of buildings falling within the Category 2 Rural Settlements.

Boundary walls of gardens, yards, swimming pool areas and any other open space surrounding an adjacent land-use cannot be considered as a party wall in relation to this policy. Sites, including gardens, which contain mature trees, which contribute to the character of the settlement, do not constitute uncommitted land even if they fall within the definition stated above. For the purposes of this policy an existing building does not include greenhouses, agricultural buildings which are essential for the operation of an agricultural holding, abandoned and dilapidated structures which are isolated from the main settlement and any building with an external footprint of less than 40 m².

- B. Farmhouses for livestock farmers, arable farmers and other growers provided the criteria stated under “(A)” above are complied with.
- C. Agricultural buildings for livestock farming and for arable farming provided they comply with the criteria set out in *Policy & Design Guidance on Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (2005)* and do not create adverse impacts on the surrounding residences. The rural settlement is to be considered as an inhabited area for the purposes of the *Policy & Design Guidance on Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (2005)*.
 - i. Retail outlets provided that the shops
 - ii. are located at ground floor level only of an existing building or of a proposed new building on uncommitted land as defined by this policy;
 - iii. sell convenience goods only; and
 - iv. do not have a floor area of more than 50m².
 - v. Farm Retail Outlets provided they comply with the criteria set out in *Policy & Design Guidance on Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (2005)*.

Proposals for rural tourist accommodation will be considered favourably provided they involve the conversion of (i) individual, existing vacant buildings of architectural or historic merit or (ii) a traditional group of buildings whose form and design represent a feature worthy of conservation.

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

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

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

These designations are to be considered at the next Structure Plan Review.

- 2.4.16 This policy seeks to reach a balance by allowing the consolidation of these settlements through sustainable rural development and protecting their rural character by preventing development, which may adversely affect those intrinsic features of the settlement (historical buildings, considerable gap sites between buildings, landscaping), and their setting.
- 2.4.17 The acceptable land uses in these settlements are aimed at insuring the genuine needs of agriculture are met, the remnants of agricultural activity are retained and allowing for rural diversification. These settlements can also absorb some development, which might be necessary for diversification of the rural economy but could have an adverse impact if located in the open countryside, such as new tourist accommodation.
- 2.4.18 Restrictions on site planning, footprints, building heights, and car-parking provision are being introduced to ensure that all new development will not create unacceptable environmental impacts. Settlement Design Statements will be prepared by MEPA for these settlements and these Design Statements would describe the distinctive character of the settlement and its immediate surrounding countryside; show how the character of the settlement can be identified by its landscape setting, its shape and the nature of the buildings themselves; and draw up design principles based on the particular distinctive character of the designated settlement. Most importantly it would identify the specific locations where opportunities exist for new development to take place and investigate the need for settlement boundaries around these settlements, and make recommendations where appropriate. Strict criteria for the identification of “existing buildings” and “uncommitted land” are also identified by the policy to ensure that the minimum amount of fresh land is taken up by development, following confirmation by the Structure Plan Review, in line with the overall strategy of consolidation and conservation. The elimination of blank party walls, leading to the visual enhancement of the settlement, was the main objective of this definition.

SMSE 08 Small Rural Settlements – (Category 3 Settlements ODZ)

In the areas classified as Category 3 Rural Settlements by policy SMSE 05, as identified in Inset RS 8 – RS 9, only rehabilitation and re-development for the land-uses identified in policy SMSE 07 (A) to (E) and tourist accommodation will be permitted, provided the criteria stipulated in policy SMSE 07 for each land-use are complied with.

New development, which takes up fresh land, notwithstanding the location of the site in relation to existing buildings, will not be permitted. The definition of uncommitted land, which is available for development in Category 2 Large Rural Settlements, is not applicable to Category 3 Small Rural Settlements.

- 2.4.19 The third category of settlements are □ppropriately by low densities and can only be considered as small clusters of buildings. This is their most significant feature and this policy seeks to protect it by seriously curtailing the taking up of fresh land for buildings or the creation of new dwelling units, which increase densities and activity in the settlement. Thus restrictions on site planning, floor spaces, building heights, and car-parking provision are being introduced to ensure that all new development for residential purposes will not create unacceptable environmental impacts. The thrust of new development in these settlements should be towards rehabilitation and regeneration of the existing stock of buildings.

MEPA in conjunction with the Urban and Rural Landscaping Unit of the Agriculture Department and Local Councils will encourage a programme of enhancement and landscaping within the urban settlements, particularly through the provision, as appropriate, of seating facilities, pedestrian facilities and the planting of appropriate species of trees and shrubs, as recommended by MEPA's 'Guidance on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands', February 2002 and as amended:

- i. In squares, traffic junctions, public urban open spaces and sports/recreational areas;**
- ii. Along main transport corridors and main pedestrian routes;**
- iii. In town centres and housing estates;**
- iv. To screen visually unattractive areas and particularly those in industrial areas;**
- v. Along the edge of settlements and particularly where strategic open gaps are proposed along the urban fringe.**

The removal of protected trees will not be allowed.

MEPA may impose planning obligations on major developments in order to implement such landscaping works.

2.4.20 Most localities in the plan area are densely built and therefore the provision of greenery is important to improve the amenity of the area creating pleasing urban landscapes as well as providing shading in public areas and enhancing the amenity of specific building clusters (e.g. housing estates). The promotion of public and private initiatives for soft landscaping needs to be encouraged through suitable programmes during the Local Plan period. Removal of protected trees will not be allowed.

3. Transport

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 There are major concentrations of employment within and close to the South Malta Local Plan area, and these include the Bulebel, Kordin, Marsa and Hal Far industrial estates, the Malta Freeport and Malta International Airport. This, together with high population concentrations, particularly in the Inner Harbour Area, result in high traffic flows along various key routes. Consequently, congestion is common at a number of junctions, for example the Addolorata traffic signals, and Kordin roundabout, and levels of through traffic are high, for example, along Zabbar Road/Hompesch Road and through Paola Square. Marsascala also attracts high levels of recreational traffic during the summer weekends.
- 3.1.2 Car ownership in the South Malta Local Plan area is slightly higher than the national average. 42% of the residents in the SMLP area own at least one car as against the national average of 40%. Paola, Fgura and Tarxien enjoy good levels of public transport accessibility and close proximity to some of the main areas of employment. However, there are towns and villages which are modestly served by public transport, with some villages being served by a single bus route e.g. Mqabba, Qrendi and Gudja. On the other hand one must keep in mind that should more buses be employed to increase services this would come at an additional cost to Government.
- 3.1.3 The concentration of quarries in the area results in a high generation of traffic by lorries, trucks and other vehicles transporting construction material. These cause noise, pollution and other disturbances.
- 3.1.4 In many areas, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users enjoy poor comfort and safety, as a consequence of inadequate facilities (e.g. very narrow footways), and the lack of measures to slow traffic and discourage through movements.
- 3.1.5 Finally, car parking is another problem being faced by most of the localities in the SMLP area. Important shopping centres at Paola and the secondary centres at Fgura, Zurrieq, Zabbar and Zejtun are all dependent on on-street parking, often situated along busy arterial and distributor roads and in the residential areas.

3.2 Strategic Background

- 3.2.1 The Structure Plan identified a wide range of measures necessary to improve public transport, including rationalisation of ownership and regulation (PTR1), purchase of new buses (PTR2), improved cleanliness and maintenance (PTR11), modern ticketing (PTR6), and better waiting facilities and information (PTR9). Progress has been made with regard to the introduction of bus ticketing machines, the operation of 130 new low floor buses, improved bus shelters, etc. However, bus services tend to be perceived as not being a convenient means of transport to those who have access to a car and generally unpopular with those that have no alternative means of transport. There is still, however, more to be achieved with regard to the operation of such services to encourage increased patronage.
- 3.2.2 The Structure Plan (RDS4) identifies as a high priority the upgrading of parts of the arterial and

distributor network in the South East sector. The supporting Key Diagram shows three major projects:

- i. The South Harbours Link Road.
 - ii. The improvement of the arterial road (Route 1) around the north side of the Airport, and towards Birzebbugia.
 - iii. A new road link at Luqa from Garibaldi Road / Council of Europe Road roundabout to the Airport
- 3.2.3 The South Harbours Link Road aims to improve the accessibility to the Three Cities and the Kalkara/Ricasoli Industrial Estate area in order to aid the re-generation of these areas. It would also act as a by-pass for Fgura, thereby potentially alleviating the existing environmental problems along Zabbar Road / Hompesch Road.
- 3.2.4 The upgrading of Hal Far Road from the Airport towards Hal Far and Birzebbugia has commenced and when completed will improve movements, particularly by industrial traffic, along this strategically important route.
- 3.2.5 The construction of the new link road at Luqa is associated with the development of a major business park, south of Council of Europe Road. This project is no longer being pursued. The road is only needed to provide access to this site, and as such is not otherwise required.
- 3.2.6 Policy RDS2 states that land needed for new and improved road links, and major junction improvements will be safeguarded, with compensation being paid where land acquisition is necessary, and remedial works being undertaken to ameliorate environmental impact (RDS6).
- 3.2.7 Local Plans are identified as the vehicle for extending pedestrian priority and access only restrictions in UCA's, shopping areas, and other areas suffering the environmental impact of traffic (RDS7; TEM9 & UCO14). A public attitude survey conducted throughout the country in 1999, indicated significant support for more pedestrianised areas in town centres and village cores.
- 3.2.8 Policy PTR3 sets out the need for demand studies to consider the viability of a possible circular bus route, one of which affects the South, namely: Zejtun – Zabbar – Cospicua – Paola. The Valletta – St. Thomas Bay route was modified and is now serving Tarxien and Paola as well as Zejtun. An increase in such services would come at a cost.
- 3.2.9 The Commuted Parking Payments Scheme (CPPS), which was adopted by the MEPA in 1994, currently applies to various parts of mainland Malta. Under the scheme a payment is accepted in lieu of providing parking for a development when it is either physically impossible or environmentally undesirable to comply with Structure Plan standards (TRA4). Currently none of the commercial centres within the local plan area are covered by the CPPS, although a scheme for Marsascala will be introduced when a suitable car park site has been identified as well as a scheme for Paola.
- 3.2.10 Policy AVN1 established that a primary development area for aircraft maintenance and other airport related facilities would be situated to the south west of the main runway, near Kirkop.
- 3.2.11 Policy ANV2 states that a comprehensive, long term, land use plan for the Airport will be produced. In February 2000, Malta International Airport plc published a report (“Occupancy of Land, Buildings and Shelters at Luqa Airport”) which identified lands, within and / adjacent to the airport, needed in the future for aviation-related activities.

3.3 Strategy

- 3.3.1 The transport strategy aims to ensure that vehicle traffic flows within the plan area do not produce serious environmental, economic, and social problems, encourage and facilitate the increased use of public transport, introduction of bus priority measures, manage car parking requirements, improve traffic flow at key junctions and promote actions to ease pedestrian flows, particularly in the town centres.

Policies

SMTR 01

Strategic Bus Corridors

MEPA, in conjunction with the Malta Transport Authority, Government and Local Councils, will seek the implementation of comprehensive measures to increase the convenience and attractiveness of bus services along two major bus corridors (see Map 9), namely:

- i. **Fgura/Zabbar Corridor – (Hompesch Road – Zabbar Road – Triq il-Mina ta’ Hompesch – Triq il-Labour)**
- ii. **Paola/Tarxien Corridor – (Tal Barrani Road – Triq il-Palma – Tarxien (centre) – Triq Paola – Triq Hal-Tarxien – Vjal Sir Paul Boffa – It-Telgha ta’ Rahal Gdid - Triq il-Belt Valletta – Paola (centre) – Triq Bormla – Ghajn Dwieli Street).**

Such measures may include:

- a) **The introduction of bus priority measures, as may be applicable;**
- b) **The improvement of facilities for passengers, for example bus shelters, timetables, and eventually real-time information;**
- c) **Improvements to make services more comfortable, frequent, and reliable;**
- d) **High residential and/or employment densities within Primary Town Centres and other sites within the corridors, with designs that facilitate good access for bus passengers;**
- e) **Where possible, a greater concentration of bus routes along these corridors; and,**
- f) **Restrained numbers of parking places, particularly for commuters.**

Developers of major sites located close to these corridors, or within these localities, will also be required to contribute to the introduction of such measures or other measures that may be necessary to improve traffic management within these areas.

- 3.4.1 The two corridors identified are the Primary bus routes in the plan area. There are a number of serious deficiencies in the provision of bus services across Malta, for example, the poor state of most of the bus fleet, and the absence of marketing (e.g. attractive season tickets and proper timetables), although there have been some recent improvements in this regard. These are outside the scope of land use planning, nevertheless there are significant and valuable measures that can be promoted within the local plan that can stimulate greater use of buses.

- 3.4.2 In addition to road-based schemes, such as bus priorities, which improve journey times and reliability, and facilities, which increase passenger convenience (shelters and timetables), land use policies can promote greater bus usage. By allowing higher than normal development

densities, by providing good accessibility to bus users, and by restraining parking provision at appropriate sites within these corridors, greater levels of public transport patronage can be encouraged.

- 3.4.3 Higher density developments with lower levels of car parking provision will only be considered where all material planning considerations are met, for example retail and office uses will primarily be permitted in town centres.

SMTR 02

Controlled Car Parking

In town centres, major employment zones, and similar areas (e.g. entertainment areas, tourist zones) of high parking demand, MEPA will encourage and support initiatives by the Malta Transport Authority and Local Councils for the introduction of controlled car parking measures to ensure that available on-street and off-street parking is used most efficiently and effectively.

In areas close to the strategic bus corridors specified in SMTR 01 where public transport provision is good, the number of parking spaces will be controlled in order to restrain commuter parking.

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

Parking areas within UCAs will be retained and MEPA encourages measures and initiatives by appropriate authorities, particularly local councils, for their improvement and where possible the provision of additional parking spaces.

- 3.4.4 The control of car parking is an essential element of transport strategy. It is required not only to achieve broad objectives, like the greater use of public transport and better environmental conditions, but also to make more effective use of available resources and permit specific improvements, like bus lanes, cycle-ways, pedestrian facilities and environmental enhancements.

- 3.4.5 Parking in town centres and similar areas (e.g. entertainment and tourist zones) is often difficult because commuters as well as shop owners and staff occupy the prime spaces for much of the day. This is inefficient and undermines the attractiveness of these areas. Short stay controls, which overcome such problems, can be introduced in a number of ways, both with and without payment. These include, limited-waiting regulations, parking discs, vouchers, and “pay and display”. In some areas, residential streets will need to be protected from existing extraneous parking, or future over-spill parking, by the introduction of Residents’ Parking Zones (RPZ’s). By safeguarding spaces for residents and their visitors the quality of life in these areas could be improved.

- 3.4.6 Where public transport services are frequent, the above measures should be used to restrain commuter parking, so as to increase bus usage, thereby reducing congestion and improving environmental amenity in UCA’s and other sensitive areas. This should apply to development parking and, if necessary and possible, to on-street parking. This approach will also be applied to new developments situated close to the main bus corridors. High densities and/or low parking standards may be applied in such cases in order to achieve more sustainable development.

- 3.4.7 The Local Plan includes a number of area policies relating to controlled parking zones (CPZs)

and the respective policy maps indicate the areas likely to be covered by these zones. The precise boundary of the zones will be determined after detailed studies by the relevant authorities.

- 3.4.8 The issue of maximum parking standards for most land uses is to be examined as part of the work related to the Structure Plan Review. These should be related to public transport availability, levels of traffic congestion, existing levels of available parking. In environmentally sensitive locations, like UCA's, parking provision will also be influenced by the impact extra parking would have on the character of the area.

SMTR 03

Traffic Calming and Road Safety

Working with the local councils and the Malta Transport Authority, MEPA will seek the implementation of traffic calming and other traffic management measures to improve road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users, and discourage inappropriate through traffic, notably in residential areas, UCAs and areas with high pedestrian activity.

Within such zones, where appropriate and suitable, pedestrianisation and pedestrian friendly measures will be encouraged, including widening of pavements, as well as the introduction of environmental improvements (e.g. landscaping, seating facilities).

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

- 3.4.9 Through traffic should be concentrated on the main road network (arterial and distributor roads) and therefore it is appropriate to use traffic management measures to prevent or discourage the use of other unsuitable routes. Traffic calming measures, if well designed and comprehensively introduced on local and access roads can significantly improve road safety and create good conditions for walking and cycling.
- 3.4.10 The layout and design of roads within new developments and schemed areas should create a safe and attractive environment. The general alignment of roads within scheme is already established, however the carriageway widths and junction designs should restrain vehicle speeds, and footway widths should be adequate. Where appropriate, specific measures to improve access and segregate movements by pedestrians and cyclists should be provided.
- 3.4.11 The local plan includes a number of area policies for specific areas relating to traffic calming, traffic management, and environmental improvements (embellishments) mainly in and around UCA's. These policies broadly define the objectives for individual traffic calming schemes and the policy maps indicate the main areas for treatment. The local plan doesn't seek to prescribe the details of such schemes, as this will be for local councils to determine, within the established framework.

SMTR 04

Junction Improvements and Accident Remedial Measures

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

The Transport Policy Maps and the relevant Policy Maps indicate such junctions and identify other locations where road improvements will be required either to improve general conditions, or as a consequence of future development. No development permits will be issued which might adversely affect the satisfactory improvement of these sites.

Where major developments will produce a material adverse impact at junctions, in terms of safety and/or congestion, the MEPA will require the developer to undertake improvements or mitigating measures.

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

- 3.4.12 There is a need to have a good road system in the local plan area, especially where routes have a wider strategic importance. Junction improvements, and in some cases new road links, are necessary to improve the efficiency of the road network, however, the primary purposes of any improvements must be consistent with overall transport policy, and therefore they should result in benefits for public transport and vulnerable road users. Highway improvements will only be justifiable where they form part of the sustainable, integrated transport strategy. It is not appropriate or feasible for schemes to be designed on a basis of “predict and provide”. Such an approach, which seeks to satisfy the demands of traffic growth, will not tackle underlying problems, in fact, it is likely to stimulate further growth.
- 3.4.13 As Government does not publish a medium/long term programme of transport related expenditure it is not possible to determine when in the 10-year local plan period, the recommended improvements are likely to be undertaken. In terms of achieving the local plan transport objectives, it is recommended that highest priority should be given to implementing improvements along the Strategic Bus Corridors, as these are intended to help reverse the decline in public transport patronage.
- 3.4.14 In the case of road improvements required to mitigate the impact of a development, it will not be sufficient to simply increase highway capacity. Improvements should also aim to increase the use of public transport and other sustainable modes.
- 3.4.15 The number of road accidents is a particular cause of concern. In addition to the paramount need to improve the general standard of driving, significant benefits would stem from in-depth accident investigation and a programme of accident remedial measures. Realistically, this will not effectively be instituted until specialist staff are trained and a modern accident recording and analysis system is available.

4. Housing

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Most of the localities within the plan area have a predominant residential function and therefore the provision of housing and the protection and enhancement of the residential amenity within the plan area is important. Housing densities are above the national average in the Local Plan area. Fgura has the highest (125 persons per ha) in relation to the national average of 65 persons per ha. The 1995 Census suggests that there are approximately 4000 permanently vacant properties in the plan area which represents some 12.1 % of the total vacant housing stock.
- 4.1.2 The Housing Topic Study of the emerging Structure Plan review states that almost 800 ha were available for Housing in the 1988 Temporary Provision Schemes in the whole of the Maltese Islands. By 2000 an area of 456.78¹ ha were still available for housing development with 130.50 ha of these being in the Local Plan area. The residential capacity of undeveloped land and other schemes in the Plan area as estimated in the Housing Topic Study is given in the Table below. The figures below are a conservative estimate and do not include the 1750 units (3500 units by 2020) estimated in the Urban Capacity Study² which could potentially be developed.

Table 1 – Number of potential residential units

Type of development potential	No. of units – 2020
Vacant land	19740
Redevelopment	840
Windfall	800
Scheme rationalisation	200
Development in the countryside	80
Units lost through conversions	220
TOTAL	21440

Source: Housing Topic Study, MEPA

- 4.1.3 Housing requirement figures are largely based on past demographic trends. The estimates given in the Housing Topic Study indicate that by 2020 approximately 10,420 dwellings will be required in the Plan area. Therefore, supply is sufficient to meet future demand in this regard, at least prior to the next review of this plan as required by Clause 28 (1) of the Development Planning Act, 1992. The current supply exceeds potential estimated demand by a considerable margin. The analysis is also conservative in that it does not include vacant dwellings and any relaxation of building heights proposed in the area policies of this Local Plan. Therefore, as there is an adequate supply of land for residential development no significant release of land for residential purposes is being proposed.
- 4.1.4 The residential amenity and quality of life of residents has been adversely affected by the introduction of incompatible uses particularly small scale industries and warehousing (e.g. Hal Farrug, Tarxien), the development of quarries and related activities (Mqabba, Qrendi, Siggiewi), and scrapyards (e.g. Fgura). The growth of residential areas around existing farms has now

¹ Housing Topic Study, Table 4.16, MEPA, 2002

² The estimates in the Urban Capacity Study include new dwelling units that can be potentially developed over buildings which are below the height limitation allowed and on land within the TPS but has no zoning (e.g. internal spaces).

created a situation where the farms are adversely affecting these residences (e.g. Tarxien). On the other hand the improvement of existing housing estates with regard to recreational facilities and further embellishment of such areas needs to be given more attention.

- 4.1.5 Social housing is directed towards the needs of those households that are unable to purchase property on the market and usually provided in the form of Government built housing on a rental basis. The Housing Department waiting list (2002) for the plan area identifies 658 applicant households. In the past, in some cases, the provision of social housing has encouraged the segregation of groups that cannot afford to buy their own properties. It would therefore be preferable if the SMLP dispersed the locations for rental accommodation rather than simply utilise land which happens to be in government ownership. However, this may be difficult, considering the limited land available.

4.2 Strategic Background

- 4.2.1 Planning policies can encourage an improved urban environment but such policies alone will not encourage the re-occupation of vacant buildings in the village cores. Thus fiscal incentives are encouraged to subsidise rehabilitation and renewal (SET 3 and SET 4). New government built housing shall be optimally located within existing or designated areas. Uses which are to result in bad neighbourliness are not to be allowed within residential areas (BEN 1)

4.3 Strategy

- 4.3.1 The strategy for Housing in the Local Plan area is:
1. to protect the residential function by allowing appropriate uses within residential areas;
 2. to enhance the amenity of residential areas through the improvement of the existing and the provision of additional open spaces;
 3. to safeguard vacant land primarily for housing development, including social housing and related uses, particularly community facilities.

4.4 Policies

SMHO 01 Residential Amenity Improvement Action Areas

The Local Plan designates Residential Amenity Improvement Action Areas (RAIAA) within the following urban settlements, as indicated in the relevant Policy Maps;

Fgura, Paola, Siggiewi, Tarxien, Zabbar and Zejtun

Within the RAIAAs, the MEPA will give importance to:

- i. The rehabilitation of older and, particularly, vacant dwellings;**
- ii. the conversion into housing of suitable buildings currently used for other purposes;**
- iii. the retention of any private gardens which enhance the amenity of such areas, even though these may have a frontage on a road;**
- iv. the introduction of traffic management and pedestrian friendly schemes and measures; and**
- v. the provision of landscaped areas and public urban open spaces, where appropriate.**

The MEPA will accept proposals for the redevelopment of properties, which have no architectural or historic value, within the RAIAs provided that:-

- a) a better standard of residential accommodation is provided;
- b) the proposed development does not impact negatively on the residential amenity of the area and respects in terms of design, building heights and massing the character of adjacent buildings and streetscape;
- c) the proposal will NOT increase the stock of residential accommodation;
- d) evidence is produced by the developer that efforts were made to save the original structure; and
- e) innovative forms of housing design and layout are adopted as a means of creating more acceptable residential layouts.

Permitted uses within such areas should be guided by policy SMHO 02 for residential areas.

MEPA may encourage Government or the appropriate agency to introduce incentives and other schemes that encourage residents and owners to upgrade their properties within the RAIAs.

MEPA will also encourage initiatives by the Local Councils with regard to the improvement of the environmental quality of these areas in terms of pedestrianisation measures, embellishment and any other similar improvements.

4.4.1 Specific housing areas within settlements are in need of upgrading to improve the quality of the environment within these residential areas and provide a pleasant setting to live in. The designation of Residential Amenity Improvement Action Areas identifies such areas where opportunities exist for public sector intervention, investment and assistance (e.g. special grants, soft loans schemes, tax rebates) with the aim of introducing improvements with regard to traffic management, embellishment schemes, recreational areas as well as rehabilitation schemes. Some of these areas include the traditional parts of certain towns and villages as well as housing estates. This policy is designed to draw attention to these areas and, subject to acceptance by Government, seek a range of fiscal as well as planning measures to ensure that their improvement is put in hand. Measures could include: tax rebates or exemption on specified repair works; direct grants for certain repairs; ‘soft loans’ for adaptation or improvement works. In addition to such measures Local Councils are encouraged to develop initiatives towards the improvement of such areas.

SMHO 02

Residential Areas and Residential Priority Areas

The Local Plan designates Residential Areas (RAs) and/or Residential Priority Areas (RPAs) as shown on the relevant Policy Maps.

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

- i. A mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) terraced residential development as detailed in the DC 2005, Part 3, and in accordance with the specific zoning conditions indicated in the same guidance, unless otherwise stated by a policy in this Local Plan;
- ii. Class 2 (Use Classes Order, 1994) residential institutions, provided that:
 - they are of a small scale and do not create adverse impacts on the residential amenity of the area;

- Class 2 (a) institutions are located in close proximity to a town or local centre; and,
 - Class 2 (b) nursing homes and clinics are easily accessible from the arterial and distributor road network.
- iii. Class 3 (Use Classes Order, 1994) hostels provided that these uses are in accordance with all other relevant Local Plan policies.
- iv. Class 4 (Use Classes Order, 1994) small shops provided that:
- the small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 m² each, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 m² each;
 - they comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and
 - they comply with any relevant section of the DC2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).
- v. Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy SMCM 07.
- vi. Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices provided that:
- the floorspace does not exceed 75 m²;
 - they do not unacceptably exacerbate parking problems in a residential street that already has an acute under provision of parking spaces for residents; and,
 - they comply with any relevant section of the DC 2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).
- vii. Classes 7 and 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994) non-residential institutions, swimming bath or pool, skating rink, health club, sauna, sports hall, other indoor or outdoor land based sports or recreation uses not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, and interpretation centres, provided the facility:
- is of a small scale and does not create adverse impacts on the residential amenity of the area;
 - is located on land already occupied by buildings and will replace these buildings provided they are not worthy of retention due to their historic/architectural merit and/or their contribution to the character of the area, unless land is specifically allocated for the facility by this Local Plan; and,
 - the immediate surroundings of the site are already of a mixed use character.
- viii. Class 8 (Use Classes Order, 1994) educational facilities, provided that access and the character of the area are taken into account and are deemed adequate by MEPA to allow the safe and neighbour compatible use of such facilities.
- ix. Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry provided that:
- The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 m² (including storage of materials and/or finished products);
 - The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;
 - The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. Hammers, mallets etc);
 - The activity employs less than 5 people; and
 - The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.

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

Proposals to convert from existing Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994) general industry to Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994) business and light industry within designated Residential Areas shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA if all the

conditions listed above are adhered to, and provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use (general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.

- x. **Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles as per para. 6.15 of DC 2005.**

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

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

- i. **A mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) terrace houses, maisonettes and flats on sites zoned in the relative Area Policy Maps for these specific forms of residential development. This development is to be in accordance with the relevant conditions as detailed in the DC2005, Part 3, unless otherwise stated by a policy in this Local Plan.**
- ii. **A mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) detached and semi-detached dwellings on sites zoned in the relative Area Policy Maps for these specific forms of residential development. This development is to be in accordance with the relevant conditions as detailed in the DC 2005, Part 3, unless otherwise stated by a policy in this Local Plan.**
- iii. **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices provided that all the provisions in point vi above with regard to Residential Areas are adhered to.**

In the Residential Areas of Kirkop, including Residential Priority Areas and Xghajra no dwelling unit will be permitted having a net floor area less than 120 m². However, where proposals will result in the creation of more than two units on the same footprint, smaller units may be permitted provided that the difference between the built footprint and the 120 m² is left as open space in addition to the statutory side cartilage or back/front garden as the case may be. The additional open space shall be secured by a planning obligation.

4.4.2 This policy seeks to safeguard the residential amenity within the localities in the plan area, whilst offering an opportunity for specific developments which would enhance and complement the residential use without creating adverse impacts. The range of activities at ground floor level tends to be a mix of uses and includes shops and offices, mostly of a local scale and serving local needs. The policy specifically excludes land-uses that are deemed to be incompatible with Residential Areas due to their nature and scale of activity, such as bad neighbour industrial uses. In this regard, acceptable light industrial uses in residential areas shall only include very low impact industrial activities such as electronic repair, servicing and maintenance as well as handcrafts that do not inherently require the use of electrical machinery, especially those related to textiles. Activities which require the extensive use of manual percussive tools (eg. Hammers, mallets etc) are not deemed compatible with residential areas..

4.4.3 Residential Priority Areas (RPAs) refer to specific residential areas which are characterised by distinct building types (e.g. villa and bungalow development) or a quality urban area which is distinct from the rest of the urban area within the locality particularly with respect to building design (semi-detached/detached dwellings), lower densities (villa areas) or clusters of buildings exhibiting special characteristics. These specific characteristics enhance the residential function of these areas and this policy seeks to protect this quality aspect by not permitting uses which may significantly affect the residential nature of such areas.

In those sites designated for social housing/community facilities, within the Limits to Development boundary, as indicated on the relevant Policy Maps, MEPA will encourage mixed use development in such sites which would include the provision of social and community facilities (e.g. day care centre, Local Council offices) as well as the provision of public urban open spaces in line with policy SMSE 04 as may be required in the locality as well as some local retail provision in line with policy SMHO 02.

The MEPA will also consider relaxing development conditions through the permitting of an additional floor for those developments that will provide community facilities at ground floor level.

4.4.4 Specific sites have been designated for social housing and community facilities. This policy seeks to safeguard such sites currently within the limits to development boundary for possible use for social housing purposes and community facilities. These sites are generally Joint Office owned and in fact a number of applications have been submitted at Outline Stage by the Housing Authority for such purpose. Notwithstanding the social desirability of dispersed locations for housing, the limited choice of sites available poses a constraint in this regard. The policy also encourages private sector developments to allocate to the Housing Authority one unit per ten units constructed to provide an opportunity for the spread of government housing units in various localities. This will be done in consultation with the Housing Authority. This policy aims to extend the residential function of such sites to make them more 'livable' areas with a range of facilities that complement the residential provision.

5. Commerce and Industry

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Industrial and commercial activity are probably the main economic activities in the plan area, apart from quarrying, considering that tourism and fisheries are limited. The plan area contains two important and major industrial estates – Bulebel Industrial Estate and Marsa Industrial Estate as well as the Hal Farrug l/o Luqa Industrial Estate and the innumerable small garage industries which have sprouted in most of the localities, some of which within residential areas. The expansion of industrial activity in the vicinity of residential areas has created problems in terms of traffic generation, parking, noise and air pollution. Another important activity which is generating demand for appropriate sites is warehousing and open air storage for construction vehicles, heavy vehicles and buses/coaches. There are currently 53 enforcement notices related to the parking of heavy machinery and vehicles, trailers and boat storage facilities with 17 of these being in the plan area. Other forms of industrial activity scrapyards, batching plants, building contractors' yards and quarries. The latter are dealt with in a separate chapter.
- 5.1.2 The Retail Topic Study designates Paola as a Primary Town centre, Fgura, Zabbar, Zejtun and Zurrieq as Secondary Town Centres, and Ghaxaq, Siggiewi, Luqa and Safi as Tertiary Town Centres. Neighbourhood centres are being designated as part of the Local Plan preparation.
- 5.1.3 The retail floorspace in the plan area compares quite well with other Local Plan areas and accounts for 20.9% of the total retail space on the Island, and a floorspace per capita of 0.46 m². There are a number of street markets which mainly cater for local needs (e.g. Paola, Siggiewi, Zurrieq, Zejtun). An application by the Malta International Airport which envisaged to include 22,000 m² of retail space has been approved in July 1997. However, due to the recent negotiations on the privatisation of the Malta International Airport, this project has not yet materialised. The Retail Topic Study forecasts that in the plan area additional sales area required by 2010 would total 1439 m² for convenience goods and 8723 m² for comparison goods. Zebbug alone accounts for 6% of the total floorspace taken up by showrooms on the Island.
- 5.1.4 Micro-enterprises (i.e. enterprises employing less than 10 employees) make a significant contribution to the economic growth of the Maltese Islands. The Draft Micro-enterprises Study which has been commissioned by IPSE in collaboration with the MDC and MEPA, identifies that 28.8% (991) of micro-enterprises are located in the SMLP area. The main localities in this regard are Fgura (103), Paola (134), Zabbar (130) and Zejtun (130). In the plan area other industries operate in the various sectors e.g. furniture and fibre glass factories in Gudja, and various small garage industries, particularly in Ghaxaq, Zebbug, Tarxien, Gudja and Fgura.
- 5.1.6 The development of offices in the plan area has been very limited. Between 1993 – 2000, 69 applications specifically for offices were received and 50 of them were granted. Nonetheless, a number of important organizations have their headquarters in this area e.g. Air Malta, Malta International Airport, Civil Aviation, Civil Protection Department and Water Services Corporation.

5.2 Strategic Background

- 5.2.1 The Structure Plan proposes a Business Park at Luqa Airport on the Marsa side of the new passenger terminal (COM 3 and COM 6). The uses allocated to this area are –major offices,

superstore based shopping, a business hotel with conference facilities and other compatible commercial uses. However, the thrust of the Retail Planning Guidelines (RPG) is to preclude major provision of retail developments outside town centres with the exception of retail parks and supermarkets which undermines the proposals referred to above, in the Structure Plan.

- 5.2.2 Advice contained in the RPG seek to promote the role of town centres through encouraging and channelling investment and focusing on measures to secure an improvement through the introduction of traffic calming measures and pedestrianisation, rationalized service delivery and customer parking provision, access for the disabled and townscape design. Some of these measures have already been implemented particularly in the locality of Fgura through the upgrading of Zabbar road and traffic management measures in Luqa, Marsascala, Zejtun and Tarxien. On the other hand, the implementation of such measures is awaited in the other localities.
- 5.2.3 To maximise industrial land high density industrial development is encouraged through building upwards thereby economising on the use of land (IND 4). Existing service industry activities which create unacceptable environmental impact to surrounding areas or adjacent uses are to be directed to □ppropriately identified SME sites and disused quarries (IND 7 and IND 9). Few applications have been approved for industrial workshops within quarries. Warehousing facilities are to be provided through the conversion and rehabilitation of existing warehouse premises (IND 11) and through development in industrial estates (IND 12). A few developments received planning consent to include warehouses next to or as part of residential units, particularly in Zebbug. IND 13 does not permit the development of showrooms exceeding 500 m² in customer floorspace and retail warehouses on sites other than those in or adjacent to storage warehouse areas.

5.3 Strategy

- 5.3.1 The strategy with regard to Commerce and Industry seeks to:
- reinforce the role of the town centres as identified in the Retail Planning Guidelines;
 - identify Neighbourhood Centres where required to provide an opportunity for the development of local shops;
 - direct open storage facilities and parking of heavy vehicles and construction plant to industrial areas and appropriate quarries and derelict sites;
 - contain existing industrial estates as well as other industrial and commercial operations.

5.4 Policies

SMCM 01

Town Centres

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

Primary: *Paola*

Secondary: *Fgura, Zabbar, Zurrieq, Zejtun*

The boundaries of the town centres are indicated on the relevant Policy Maps. The acceptable land uses within (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the these designated town centres are as follows;

- i. Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) dwelling units on upper floors only. Proposals for residential development at ground level will only be considered by MEPA provided that the proposed development scheme includes one dwelling unit only. Conversions from existing commercial uses at ground floor level to new residential units will not be permitted by MEPA.
- ii. Class 2 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) residential institutions on upper floors only.
- iii. Class 3 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) hostels and hotels provided that these uses are in accordance with all other relevant Local Plan policies.
- iv. Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994,) or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) retail uses including supermarkets, shopping malls and speciality shopping, but excluding showrooms, provided they comply with the provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003) and as amended.
- v. Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy SMCM 07.
- vi. Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) offices.
- vii. Class 6 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Food and Drink, including hot food take-away. However take-aways are not to be allowed above ground level.
- viii. Class 7 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) non-residential institutions including interpretation centres. However public halls are to have a floor area that does not exceed 150 m².
- ix. Class 8 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) educational facilities.
- x. Class 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) assembly and leisure.
- xi. Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) business and light industry provided that:
 - The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 m² (including storage of materials and/or finished products);
 - The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;
 - The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. Hammers, mallets etc);
 - The activity employs less than 5 people; and
 - The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.

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

Proposals to convert from existing Class 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) general industry to Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), as amended) business and light industry within designated Residential Areas Town Centres shall only be considered acceptable by MEPA if all the conditions listed above are adhered to, and provided that it can be proven that the Class 12 Use

(general industry) operation is a permitted one and the Class 11 Use (business and light industry) operation is actually more neighbourhood compatible than the Class 12 Use operation it intends to replace.

- xii. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994), as amended) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 m².
- xiii. Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles.
- xiv. Band club, and social club.
- xv. Cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public, provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 m².
- xvi. Conference Centre.
- xvii. Indoor shooting range provided that all the conditions of the Guidance on Shooting Ranges are fully adhered to.
- xviii. Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.

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

5.4.1 The town centre is the focus for a range of commercial and community activities, resulting in a mix of, often interdependent, land uses, which provide a focus for identity, social interaction and business opportunities. It includes a combination of natural features: historic buildings, cultural, civic and governmental buildings, as well as public open spaces. This physical form and mix of functions, which have evolved over a considerable period of time, makes a town centre different from a shopping centre and provides much of its character which can be further enhanced by introducing appropriate new uses into historic buildings. It also has a high level of accessibility to employment, services, and facilities for all the community. Shopping provision is a key component of town centres, and makes a major contribution to their vitality and viability. It is important therefore that they retain retailing as a core function.

5.4.2 Although retailing is a dominant activity in a town centre the attraction of each centre for the location of other businesses and social and community facilities were taken into account in identifying the range and mix of uses indicated in the (i) to (vii) and (a) to (c) above, acceptable within town centres. The vitality and viability of town centres depends on a varied mix of uses and activities, which encourage people to visit the centre whilst ensuring that they remain an attractive place to live in. Restrictions to floorspace have been applied to those parts of the town centres which fall within the Urban Conservation Areas (UCA), particularly since intensification of specific uses may deter the quality of the UCA.

SMCM 02

Local Centres

MEPA designates local centres within the following areas in the local plan area, as indicated in the relevant Policy Maps :

Fgura, Ghaxaq, Mqabba, Qrendi, Zebbug, Gudja, Kirkop, Xghajra, Safi, Sta. Lucija, Kirkop, Luqa (Hal Farrug), Siggiewi, Luqa, Marsascala, Tarxien and Zabbar

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

- i. **Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) dwelling units on upper floors only. Proposals for residential development at ground level will only be considered by MEPA provided that the proposed development scheme includes one dwelling unit only. Conversions from existing Commercial Uses at ground Floor level to new Residential units will not be permitted by MEPA.**
- ii. **Class 2 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) residential accommodation and care to people in need of care on upper floors only.**
- iii. **Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) retail uses including speciality shopping but excluding showrooms, provided:**
 - **that the gross floor area does not exceed 250 m²; and**
 - **that supermarkets comply with all the provisions of the General Policy SMCM 07; and**
 - **they comply with the provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003) and as amended.**
- iv. **Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy SMCM 07.**
- v. **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 100 sqm.**
- vi. **Class 6 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Food and Drink including hot food take-away. However take-aways are not to be allowed above ground level.**
- vii. **Class 7 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) non-residential institutions including interpretation centres. However public halls are to have a floor area that does not exceed 150 m².**
- viii. **Class 8 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) educational facilities provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 m².**
- ix. **Class 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) assembly and leisure provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 m².**
- x. **Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) business and light industry provided that:**
 - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 m² (including storage of materials and/or finished products);**
 - **The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;**
 - **The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);**
 - **The activity employs less than 5 people; and**
 - **The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.**

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

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

- xi. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 m².
- xii. Taxi Business of for the hire of motor vehicles.
- xiii. Band club and social club.
- xiv. Cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public, provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 50 m².
- xv. Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.

5.4.3 Local Centres have a concentration of convenience shopping facilities serving the surrounding residential area. A local centre is identified as a cluster of shops primarily selling convenience goods or providing retail services (e.g. hairdresser, dry cleaners, video hire), together with other social and community services for the immediate locality. It is also easily accessible on foot from surrounding residential areas, and located close to the geographical centre of the locality that it serves. Access and servicing arrangements together with goods storage should not adversely impact neighbouring residents, businesses, or other users.

SMCM 03

Location of SMEs (Micro-enterprise Parks)

The SME's (Micro enterprises) Site Selection Exercise identified sites, as indicated in the relevant Policy Maps, as SMEs (Micro-enterprise Parks). The designation and subsequent development of these sites into SMEs (Micro-Enterprise Parks), would be subject to the conditions, mitigation measures and provisions attached to such sites, as specified in the approved SME's (Micro enterprises) Site Selection Exercise of 2004.

5.4.4 Micro-enterprises refer to businesses which employ ten employees or less and have a floorspace not exceeding 200 m². These are important for the economy since in total they generate a substantial number of jobs. The Micro-enterprise study identifies a total of 3,446 units in Malta and Gozo with 991 units located in the plan area. A number of these units are located within residential areas, and some of these have not turned out to be good neighbours. Although with improved operations and mitigation measures some of the impacts may be significantly reduced, nonetheless the Local Plan provides for the need to relocate some of these businesses into the designated Micro-enterprise Parks. Micro-enterprise Parks have been identified in strategic locations, as part of the SME (Micro-Enterprises) Site Selection Exercise, since it is not always possible to have such Parks in each locality. Sites selected through this process are however subject to a number of conditions and to enter into a contract with Government. In addition to these sites, the Local Plan has also given consideration to existing areas which have been granted development permits and have been operating as small enterprise units.

SMCM 04 Sites for the provision of Parking/Open Storage of heavy vehicles and plant machinery

Proposals for the Parking of and Open Storage for heavy construction vehicles and plant machinery will generally be directed towards designated industrial areas in line with Structure Plan Policy IND 12 on warehousing and to quarry areas. However, MEPA will also consider proposals for such uses within the Plan area provided the proposed sites satisfy the locational criteria as identified in Section 7 of the approved Policy Guidance on Areas for Open Storage (February 2005). MEPA will also comprehensively review such operations in order to confirm any existing and identify additional sites which merit designation as Parking/Open Storage sites.

Proposals in this respect will be subject to the following conditions:

- i. a development application for the comprehensive development of the site is submitted to MEPA, unless site is already fully covered by a development permit;
- ii. the use within these sites is restricted ONLY to the storage of heavy vehicles, plant machinery and boats and their maintenance and no change of use for other types of development or activities will be permitted should the activity cease to function;
- iii. Should the activity cease to operate, or be relocated to an alternative site, the existing site shall be restored back to agricultural land and any boundary walls removed and replaced by traditional field walls;
- iv. Visual and other mitigation measures, particularly relating to any impact on the skyline, as required by the Policy Guidance on Areas for Open Storage and identified during the assessment process of particular planning applications, shall be imposed;
- v. Adequate bank guarantees will be required as a condition of planning permission especially in relation to archaeological field evaluation works and visual mitigation measures ; and
- vi. MEPA may request the applicant to provide some planning gain/contribution in the form of reasonable financial or other material contributions for a specific project aimed towards environmental enhancement of specific areas.

In considering such sites due regard will be given to MEPA's aerial photography archive.

- 5.4.5 The lack of appropriate guidance with regard to the provision of facilities for parking and storage facilities for heavy machinery and vehicles related to the construction industry, hard standing facilities, public buses and coaches as well as trailers, has resulted in a number of these facilities operating from within residential areas, to the detriment of the residential amenity of the area (e.g. Zejtun). It is estimated that about 30% of companies that require such storage facilities operate in the plan area.
- 5.4.6 Since 1996, 47 applications have been made to MEPA for these types of facilities. To date 22 have been approved whilst 16 have been refused at various stages of the planning process, 6 are still pending a decision and 5 have been withdrawn. From an analysis of the enforcement database it has been discerned that there are at least 30 enforcement notices relating to such facilities (open air storage of vehicles) and most of these are located in Ghaxaq, Mqabba, Siggiewi, Zebug and Zejtun. This policy aims to provide specific criteria to assist in any site selection exercise for such facilities or in considering proposals for such development.
- 5.4.7 The development should be designed/built and managed as a single facility with landscaping around the perimeter of the site to ensure compatibility with its surroundings and reducing visual intrusion of the facilities within the site. There should also be landscaping within the site

itself. The development will have floorspace dedicated to ancillary offices and support services facilities.

SMCM 05

Areas of Containment (Industrial and Commercial)

MEPA designates the following Areas of Containment within which permitted development will be carried out strictly within the designated boundaries as indicated in the relevant Inset Maps.

Tal-Bandieri, Triq il-Belt Valletta	Luqa	Map AC 1
Triq l-Industrija	Kirkop	Map AC 1
Triq Valletta	Mqabba	Map AC 1
Triq Valletta	Zurrieq	Map AC 1
Mdina Road	Zebbug	Map AC 2
Triq Hal Farrug	Siggiewi	Map AC 2
Triq is-Siggiewi	Qrendi	Map AC 3
Mdina Road (Ta' Srina)	Zebbug	Map AC 3
Triq il-Mina ta' Hompesch	Zabbar	Map AC 3
Notabile Road	Zebbug	Map AC 3
Triq ic-Cimiterju	Ghaxaq	Map AC 4
Tal-Barrani Road	Ghaxaq	Map AC 4
Triq Tal-Barrani	Zejtun/Ghaxaq	Map AC 4
Triq Birzebbuga	Ghaxaq	Map AC 4
Triq San Leonardo	Zabbar	Map AC 5

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

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

1. The use of the proposed development will be similar to any use already existing and permitted within the Area of Containment. However, if the proposed use is not considered to be desirable, then MEPA will consider a more acceptable alternative use;
2. Compliance with any required mitigation measures that may be identified during the assessment process of the proposed development;
3. In cases of redevelopment or new development in sites fronting arterial roads or approaches to settlements a buffer of at least 8 metres from the road alignment is to be provided.
3. It is demonstrated to the satisfaction of MEPA that no deleterious impacts will result from the proposed development on existing uses in the vicinity of the site; and
4. Particular attention will be given to the design of the proposed development so as to ensure that no adverse visual impacts are created.

- 5.4.8 Various industrial/commercial operations, having the required development permits, have sprouted in the countryside mainly in the form of batching plants and warehousing and other industrial activity as well as showrooms. Whilst the general strategy is to direct such activity to appropriate areas, nonetheless, these areas have been granted development permits in the past that cover the use of the site for industrial and commercial related activity. Nonetheless, during subsequent years additional works have been carried out on site which might not be covered by a permit and are subject to enforcement action or development application which are still being processed. It would not be ideal for the local plan to designate such areas, however, the designation of boundaries for committed areas/uses are to be determined after a careful review of each site.

SMCM 06

Commercial Areas and Retail Parks

MEPA will permit the development of commercial land uses within the designated Commercial Areas and Retail Parks as indicated in the relevant Area Policy Maps. The following is a list of acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the designated Commercial Areas and Retail Parks.

- i. **Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) dwelling units on upper floors.**
- ii. **Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) small shops only provided that:**
 - **The small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 m² each, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 m² each;**
 - **They comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003) or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions; and**
 - **They comply with any relevant section of the DC 2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.)**
- iii. **Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) supermarkets, provided that they comply with all the relevant provisions of the relevant General Policy SMCM 07.**
- iv. **Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions), showrooms provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003) and as amended.**
- v. **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) offices on upper floors only.**
- vi. **Class 6 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions). Sale of hot and cold food and drink for consumption on or off the premises.**
- vii. **Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) business and light industry provided that:**
 - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 m² (including storage of materials and/or finished products);**
 - **The activity conducted within the premises does not use heavy duty and/or noisy electrical/mechanical (including pneumatic) equipment, and equipment which requires a 3 phase electricity supply;**

- The activity conducted within the premises does not entail extensive and/or prolonged use of percussion hand tools (eg. hammers, mallets etc);
- The activity employs less than 5 people; and
- The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.

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

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

- viii. Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 m².
- ix. Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles.
- x. The sale or display of motor vehicles.
- xi. The sale of fuel for motor vehicles.
- xii. The cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public.

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

5.4.9 Showrooms are defined as premises primarily used to display goods for sale where little direct (over the counter) retail sale is intended. Showrooms normally display a specialist range of bulky, non-food goods, such as: white goods; furniture; motor vehicles; household items, hardware and bathroom fittings. There are various showrooms selling white goods, motor vehicles, and electrical and household goods in localities like Paola, Zabbar, Luqa, Zebbug and this type of retailing is expanding rapidly. In fact showrooms are rapidly developing along certain arterial routes in the plan area, and these can create an undesirable form of urbanisation if not strictly controlled. Consequently, so as to minimise the negative effects of showroom and other commercial uses whilst ensuring that the plan's objectives towards sustainable transport patterns is not compromised, the plan designates specific and limited commercial areas and retail parks in various localities. Office development on the upper floors of showrooms is considered to be a compatible use and is therefore normally permitted by MEPA.

SMCM 07

Supermarkets

Large supermarkets (greater than 500 m²) should preferably be located within or on the edge of town centres, provided that higher standards of parking provision and on-site

loading/unloading facilities are fully catered for to the satisfaction of MEPA. Where it is not possible to bring forward sites which are in or on the edge of a town centre because of the site size requirements of large supermarkets, residential amenity, environmental constraints in Urban Conservation Areas, or because the road network does not have the capacity to cater for the additional traffic and service vehicles, then sites within the designated locations listed in the following order of sequence will be considered for the development of large supermarkets:

- i. Local Centres;
- ii. Commercial Areas;
- iii. Mixed Use Areas;
- iv. Tourism Areas; and
- v. Entertainment Priority Areas.

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

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

SMCM 08

Industrial Areas

MEPA designates Industrial Areas within the following settlements as indicated in the relative Area Policy Maps:

Type of Industrial Estate	Locality	Area Policy Map	Relevant Area Policies
MIP Industrial Park	Zejtun - Bulebel	ZN 3	SMZN 02
	Marsa	MR 1	SMMR 01
	Kirkop	KI 1	SMKI 03
	Luqa	LU 2	SMLU 10
	Birzebbuga - Hal Far	HF 1	SMHF 01
SME Sites	Ghaxaq	GH 1	SMCM 03
	Zabbar	ZA 1	SMCM 03

Subject to the provisions of the relative Area Policies, the following is a list of acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the designated Industrial Areas.

- i. **Class 6 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Sale of food for consumption on or off the premises.**
- ii. **Class 8 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) kindergartens, crèches, day nurseries or day centres provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of the approved Policy document entitled “Child Day Care Facilities” or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions.**
- iii. **Classes 11 to 16 (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Industrial uses. However the scale of the operation will determine whether the development may be located within a designated SME site or whether it is to be located within a designated MIP Industrial Park. In addition the proposed industrial development may be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).**
- iv. **Classes 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Storage and Distribution.**
- v. **Classes 19 (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Boatyards.**
- vi. **Classes 20 (Use Classes Order, 1994, or the relevant reference in subsequently amended versions) Aquaculture to be located within designated MIP Industrial Park only.**
- vii. **Taxi Business of for the hire of motor vehicles to be located within designated SME sites only.**
- viii. **Aqualung Filler to be located within designated SME sites only.**
- ix. **Scrap Yard or a Yard for the breaking of Motor Vehicles to be located within designated SME sites only.**
- x. **The manufacturing, processing, keeping or storing of a dangerous substance provided that it is considered to be acceptable and safe to locate the operation within the Industrial Area.**
- xi. **The cleaning of clothes.**
- xii. **Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy SMCM 07. However Supermarkets are not allowed within designated MIP Industrial Parks.**
- xiii. **The manufacturing or processing of concrete products. However the scale of the operation will determine whether the development may be located within a designated SME site or whether it is to be located within a designated MIP Industrial Park.**
- xiv. **Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.**

5.4.11 Certain neighbour compatible small scale business uses can usually operate in residential areas without causing a nuisance. Expansion is however usually difficult as there may be create problems to neighbours because of the scale of activities carried out. Where the industrial use has intensified and serious problems are being created for neighbouring uses the provision for relocation becomes necessary. This policy distinguishes between Industrial Estates and other sites designated for industrial development. In accordance with Structure Plan policies, storage and distribution facilities can be accommodated within designated industrial areas. Other compatible and supporting facilities that are allowed within industrial areas include child day care centres for those children whose parents work within the Industrial estate, boatyards, fishfarms, scrapyards and other uses as specified in this policy.

6. Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Although Agriculture is still the largest single land use in the Maltese Islands (35%) and a major contributor to the rural landscapes, yet together with Fisheries it contributes only 2.8% (NSO 2002) to the Gross Domestic Product. However, it is important to appreciate that the contribution which agriculture makes in creating the environmental character and quality of the rural landscape, which in turn affects tourism, is out of all proportion to its small contribution to the GNP.
- 6.1.2 The National Statistics Office carried out a census of agricultural land in 2000 and provisionally established that the total agricultural area in the Maltese Islands totalled 10,783 hectares. Malta and the plan area account for 83.4% and 30% of the total agricultural land, respectively. 10% of the agricultural land in the plan area constitutes irrigated land with the majority located in Zabbar.
- 6.1.3 Agricultural production faces several constraints including loss of agricultural land due to the construction of buildings and associated hard surfaces arising from the growth of the urban areas, the lack of water resources and the decrease in full time farmers as well as quarrying activity. Agricultural land has decreased in the Maltese Islands from 15,200 ha in 1971 to 10,738 ha according to provisional figures released in 2001. In the plan area 13.3 hectares of agricultural land is affected by quarry development (Rural Topic Paper, MEPA, 2003). Although published statistics for employment in Agriculture are not available for the individual localities, these statistics indicate that full-time and part-time employment in the South East of the Island, which includes most localities in the plan area, is 168 and 2990, respectively. These employment levels constitute 17.2% and 28.6% of total employment in these categories, respectively.
- 6.1.4 Livestock farms, particularly those in residential areas create problems with regard to odours and other inconveniences, now that residential development has grown around these farms. Other problems result from improper storage and disposal of animal waste. Waste water is allowed to run off into adjoining land, or may seep down to the aquifer, polluting the watercourse, land and fresh water supplies. In 2000 there were 174 pig farms and 260 cattle farms on the Maltese Islands. In 2002, 73 pig farms and 114 cattle farms were located in the plan area. Between 1994 and 2000, 14 animal farms were approved in the plan area totaling 3.6 hectares or 45% of total land approved for animal farms. As part of the diversification, there are increasing demands particularly extending the coverage of vineyards onto agricultural land along with demands to accommodate other uses.
- 6.1.5 With regard to fishing, the lack of adequate berthing facilities for fishing boats is a major problem to full time and part-time fishermen. In June 2001 there were 634 employed in the Fisheries sector throughout the Maltese Islands. The all weather harbour of Marsaxlokk located to the south east of the plan area is the main berthing facility on the island providing an all year round protection. However, this is now overcrowded. Hard standing facilities are also limited. Furthermore, an increasing number of berths are being taken over by yachts and leisure craft. The plan area has a very limited coastline and the full time fishing industry is very limited. However, part-time inshore fishing is very popular and additional berthing space and stores are required. This is particularly so in Marsascala Bay which is very overcrowded.

- 6.1.6 No aquaculture projects have been set up in the plan area. Possibly because of the vicinity to the sewage outfall. However, projects have been set up in the nearby localities of M'xlokk and Birzebbuga (an off shore production unit at Munxar Point). Once the sewage outfall issue has been resolved the coastal stretch between Xghajra and Marsascala might face pressure for such developments. The negative impacts from such farms resulting particularly from the discharge of waste feeds could adversely affect the local recreation and tourism activity in the plan area e.g. diving.

6.2 Strategic Background

- 6.2.1 The Structure Plan encourages improvements in agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture and soil conservation. Buildings and structures essential to the needs of agriculture may be permitted in the countryside, subject to strict criteria that they blend with the rural landscape (AHF 5). Conversion of existing farmhouses for rural recreation will also be permitted. Encouragement will be given to the relocation of livestock units which are unsuitable and are the cause of bad neighbourliness in urban areas (AHF 9). The Structure Plan proposes an agricultural products depot for exports and imports at Luqa Airport (AHF 11).
- 6.2.2 Specific policies encourage the development of marine based aquaculture units to make the best use of sea resources, and land-based units to be restricted to industrial estates or disused quarries (AHF 15, AHF 16).
- 6.2.3 The Regional Socio-Economic Development Plan for the South of Malta addressed aspects of agriculture and made recommendations for their implementation. Amongst the recommendations made is the need to capitalise on the potential offered by rural tourism and the maintenance of Afforestation sites in order to protect arable land, screening of buildings and a source of hardy fruit growing. The Plan recommended the relocation of animal farms from within residential areas. The plan noted the increased equine interests for sport and leisure and the opportunities to develop the setting up of riding stables along countryside paths and parkways which may be used to offer specific identified rides. The Policy and Design Guidance on Agriculture, Agro-tourism and Stables provides policy reference in this regard.

6.3 Strategy

- 6.3.1 The strategy for Agriculture and Fisheries in the plan area is:
- to prevent the depletion of existing and encourage reinstatement of degraded and disturbed agricultural land (e.g. increasing irrigation facilities);
 - to encourage appropriate development and reuse of agricultural buildings to ensure that agricultural activity and farms remain viable and therefore sustainable;
 - encourage relocation of animal farms from within urban settlements;
 - contain the expansion of aquaculture developments.

6.4 Policies

SMAG 01

Protection of Agricultural Land

MEPA will continue to protect agricultural land from all types of inappropriate development. Within Agricultural Areas, as indicated on the relevant Environmental Constraints Maps, only buildings, structures and uses essential to the needs of agriculture will be permitted and then only if it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of MEPA that they will not adversely affect water supplies, soil and landscape, and accord with all other policies within this Local Plan. Applications for development permission for agricultural related developments which will result in the subdivision of land holdings, will not be permitted.

This will also apply to other land being cultivated for agricultural use and which in the opinion of MEPA (after consultation with the Department of Agriculture) has a realistic potential to be upgraded and sustainably improve its productivity. (This policy will not apply to such land where it is designated for other purposes in the Local Plan).

Improvements to existing agricultural land and buildings aimed at increased productivity will be favourably considered by MEPA providing they are well designed, efficient and contribute to rather than detract from the quality of the local and surrounding environment.

6.4.1 The agricultural land indicated in the relevant Environmental Constraints Maps is based on information supplied by the Department of Agriculture and reflect the importance of soil quality and access to irrigation water, but not only, for successful farming in the plan area. It is estimated that agricultural land constitutes approximately 67% of all non urban land in the plan area. Limited development related to the continuation of the agricultural activity will be permitted.

SMAG 02

Animal Breeding Farms within urban settlements

Existing Animal Breeding Farms within urban settlements which are causing an adverse impact on the residential amenity of the area, particularly as a result of odour emissions, will be requested to undertake a rehabilitation and upgrading programme according to a timetable to be devised by MEPA in consultation with the Department of Agriculture. No expansion of such farms will be permitted.

The MEPA will encourage the relocation of Animal Breeding Farms within urban settlements as well as the development of new Animal Breeding Farms, towards sites that lie within the Intensive Agricultural Zones as indicated on the respective Policy Maps (where applicable), and in compliance with Supplementary Planning Guidance *Policy & Design Guidance on Agriculture, Farm Diversification and Stables (Draft 2004)* published by the MEPA. The location and nature of the development within these areas shall also be subject to conditions imposed by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Veterinary Services. Proposals to extend the relocated farms will not be permitted unless MEPA has obtained approval from the relevant authorities and are satisfied that the proposals incorporate measures to mitigate impact on the environment.

6.4.2 A number of farms, particularly animal husbandry and breeding farms are located within urban settlements and, despite being there before, are now causing inconveniences to adjacent residents. Whilst favouring relocation to appropriate areas which have been identified and designated as Intensive Agriculture Zones, MEPA recognizes that this may not always be

possible. However, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, MEPA proposes to seek improvements and upgrading of the operation of existing farms in order to secure a reduction of the level of nuisance being created by such operations. Intensive Agriculture Zones lend themselves to visual mitigation because they are totally (or significantly) surrounded by built development, or lie on areas whose visual footprint is relatively restricted and where animal breeding has been the predominant use.

SMAG 03

Management Plans for Intensive Agricultural Zones

MEPA will permit agricultural activity including animal breeding farms within areas identified as Intensive Agricultural Zones. MEPA encourages the preparation of a series of Management Plans for the identified Intensive Agricultural Zones. In the preparation of such plans the current situation is to be assessed to ensure that agricultural operations in the area are not impacting negatively on the surrounding area and to introduce appropriate measures to reduce any adverse impacts. The Plans should assess the cumulative impact of animal farms in the area to ensure a sustainable level of agricultural activity.

6.4.3 A number of areas have seen the concentration of animal farms with the resulting negative impacts associated with such development in terms of waste management, water pollution, land contamination, envisaged upgrading of farms, impact on the landscape, impact of farms on nearby rural settlements/urban settlements and the environment in general and areas that have become degraded due to the concentration of farms. Such concentrations are found particularly in Zabbar and Qrendi. MEPA encourages the relevant authorities to prepare management plans or action plans for such areas to ensure that the activity grows in a sustainable manner and ensure that existing problems are mitigated for the benefit of the nearby urban settlements part. At present, the EIA process does not cover the cumulative effect of concentration of farms in particular areas. After having examined the issues within the Intensive Agricultural Zones, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process could be used in order to examine the suitability of having more farms permitted within these zones together with their likely environmental and social impacts. Obviously, mitigation measures, permit conditions and planning obligations should feature as key tools to mitigate/eliminate the cumulative effect of these designated areas and improve the surrounding environment.

SMAG 04

Production units for marine cages

Any aquaculture development proposals in the plan area are to comply with and conform to the provisions set out in the National Aquaculture Policy.

6.4.4 The accessible coastline of the plan area is important for tourism and recreation purposes. Locating additional fish farm units in the area may result in a cumulative detrimental effect on water quality and the marine environment in general, and thus be in conflict with the existing coastal uses. The National Aquaculture Policy will guide any future development in this regard.

7. Social and Community Facilities

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The provision of social and community facilities (Education, Health and Care for the Elderly and Disabled) within the plan area is a particularly important issue in view of the high residential densities in most localities and the ever increasing senior population. In 1995 the over 61 accounted for 12.5% of the total population in the plan area. It is estimated that this will increase to over 20% by 2010. Social and community facilities add an important dimension to the social development of a society and forges closer relationships and understanding between the residents.
- 7.1.2 Health facilities in the plan area include the Health Centre at Paola with the Health Centres at Floriana and Qormi servicing some localities within the plan area. However, the current distribution of health centres serve better the large urbanized areas within the Outer Harbour area (e.g. Paola, Tarxien, Zabbar) than the towns and villages south of the airport (e.g. Mqabba, Kirkop, Siggiewi, Zurrieq). For example the localities of Zurrieq, Safi, Luqa, Mqabba, Qrendi and Kirkop are served by the Floriana Health Centre. The Department of Primary Health Care have indicated that they are considering a new Health Centre and would preferably consider an area between Zejtun and Ghaxaq. In addition there exist Government District Dispensaries (*bereg*) in all localities within the plan area with the exception of Paola, Marsascala and Xghajra. These provide basic medical and nursing services at the local level. In addition to these facilities a private hospital is located in Zabbar and two private clinics, one in Paola and the second in Zebbug.
- 7.1.3 The Plan area is generally considered to be well served by a reasonable distribution of primary and secondary schools. However, some of the public schools have either exceeded their student capacity or are located on sites where children's educational and recreational facilities cannot be adequately catered for. The Zebbug Secondary school has structural problems and is being considered for demolition. A new school is currently under construction at Kirkop.
- 7.1.4 The elderly residential home of St. Vincent de Paule, Luqa, has a national catchment. In addition there is the Zejtun home for the elderly. The likely growth of the elderly population in the plan area and in specific localities like, Zejtun, Zabbar, Siggiewi and Luqa will create a demand for facilities for the elderly. An additional church home for the elderly is located in Zebbug.
- 7.1.5 The issue of disability is also of concern as evidence indicates that the plan area contains (28%) the highest concentration of people nationally with activity limitations. This has led to a growing demand for increased integration of the services to serve the needs of the disabled.
- 7.1.6 Church and state cemeteries in the plan area account for 39% and 25%, respectively, of the total cemeteries. The Addolorata cemetery at Paola caters for a national catchment. The Social Facilities and Community Care Topic Paper identifies the plan area as having 20,650 graves in 2001 or 78% of total graves on the island. In certain localities (e.g. Zabbar, Zebbug and Zejtun) residences have been developed in close proximity to existing cemeteries infringing the legal distance of 183 metres that should be retained between a cemetery and a residential area (Article 132 of the Code of Police Laws).

7.2 Strategic Background

- 7.2.1 Policy SOC 10 recommends safeguarding sites for Education facilities and Policies SOC 13 and SOC 14 encourage efficient use of existing premises. With regard to Health Policy SOC 8 seeks the provision of health centres at sites which are centrally located and served by public transport access and has potential for expansion.
- 7.2.2 Policy SOC 18 entrusts the Local Plans with the identification of new sites and buildings suitable for conversion to accommodate day care centres, sheltered homes and other required facilities whilst Policy SOC 12 requires the identification of a site for a new central library in Luqa. Policy SOC 25 states that provision will be made for an adequate range of community facilities in new housing areas.
- 7.2.3 Moreover, evidence from the Social Facilities and Community Care Topic Paper, (MEPA 2003), indicates that there is a need to increase both the range and amount of all forms of socio-communal facilities. This finding is also supported by local councils' concerns on the provision of these facilities.

7.3 Strategy

- 7.3.1 The strategy with regard to Social and Community Facilities is:
- to encourage the optimal use of educational facilities through upgrading of and extensions to existing facilities (e.g. reserving adjacent sites or relaxing height limitations, wherever possible);
 - to facilitate the 'Ageing in Place' concept by the provision of adequate services within the localities and improved accessibility to these services;
 - to provide opportunities for the provision of a mix of social and community facilities (e.g. parish halls, pastoral centres, day centres) within and in proximity of town centres;
 - to provide for additional and upgrading of Health facilities.

7.4 Policies

SMSO 01

Health Facilities

MEPA will favourably consider proposals for the relocation of the Paola Health Centre to Pace Grasso site as part of the comprehensive development of this site as indicated in Policy SMPA 08.

MEPA will also encourage the provision of health related facilities, particularly District Dispensaries, within the Town Centres as indicated in the relevant policy maps.

MEPA will also consider proposals for a new Health Centre in the vicinity of Zejtun/Ghaxaq, provided that the location of such new facilities should adhere to the following criteria:

- i. the site is located within the Limits to Development boundary and in a central location (preferably Town Centre) and is conveniently accessible by public transport;**
- ii. the scale and operational requirements of the facility will not create any significant**

- negative impacts on the surrounding area;**
- iii. suitable access for all is provided into and within the site; and,**
- iv. any specific infrastructure or servicing requirements can be met.**

7.4.1 The population growth in the plan area and the distribution amongst the various settlements has generated a need for Health Centre services in closer proximity to the residential areas. Residents of Zurrieq and Qrendi make use of the Floriana Health Centre whilst residents of Marsascala have to go to the Paola Health Centre. This creates major inconvenience to residents apart from the increased travel to reach these Health Centres. MEPA encourages the provision of such facilities to adequately service these localities in appropriately selected sites. Discussions with the Department of Primary Health Care indicated that they have been considering a second Health Centre in the plan area to serve the areas which include Zabbar, Marsascala, Gudja, Ghaxaq and Fgura.

SMSO 02

Extension to Existing Cemeteries

Applications for the extension of existing cemeteries will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that all of the following factors are satisfied:

- i. the existing cemetery facilities cannot accommodate more burials within the existing plots;**
- ii. the option to utilise the land more intensively has been fully considered;**
- iii. proposed expansion does not encroach within the minimum distance permitted by Public Health Authorities;**
- iv. the extension does not encroach into a scheduled area or an area which qualifies for such scheduling.**

In all such cases, the proposal would need to be accompanied by a landscaping plan which includes landscaping along the exterior perimeter of the cemetery as well as within its interior..

7.4.2 There are about 13 church and 3 state cemeteries (including 2 private cemeteries) within the South Local Plan area. In general, cemeteries tend to be located outside development zone (e.g. as in Siggiewi, Mqabba, Kirkop, Zurrieq and Luqa) although certain localities have cemeteries surrounded by development inside TPS boundaries (e.g. Zebbug and Zabbar). The Social Facilities and Community Care Topic Paper indicates that theoretically there are enough burial places to satisfy the projected deaths for the next 20 years and therefore for the next 10 years which is the plan period. However, a number of factors exist which reduce this potential supply particularly that the general public is keen to possess private graves in their home town (e.g. In 2001 there were 156 applications for private graves in Zebbug and 1876 at Addolorata) The same topic paper also suggests that certain localities with large densities still might need new cemeteries to accommodate their needs. Although as emerges from the Topic Paper it is difficult to conclude whether the existing supply is available to meet demand, it is felt that a policy is needed to guide any future development in this regard.

SMSO 03

Education Facilities

The Local Plan identifies and safeguards land for new schools, and extensions to existing schools, where such a facility is required and which is adequate for the provision of a range of educational and sports facilities, provides good access and does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the

amenity of neighbouring property.

In those cases where new schools are required to replace existing schools, sites outside the Limits to Development may be considered subject to the site satisfying ALL the following conditions:

- i. the site is located along the perimeter of the Limits to Development boundary;**
- ii. the site is not located on a scheduled, designated or protected area including Areas of Ecological Importance, Sites of Scientific Importance, Areas or Sites of Archaeological Importance, Areas of High Landscape Value and Nature Reserves or constitutes high quality agricultural land;**
- iii. The siting has no significant adverse impact on adjacent protected areas, ground water vulnerability, or nearby settlements;**
- iv. Site is easily accessed from an arterial road and entrance to and exit out of the site does not cause a traffic flow hazard;**
- v. The development of the site would not result in the coalescence of urban settlements.**

7.4.3 The Local Plan recognises the distinction that sites for state schools are better located within a settlement in order to serve local students. Private schools which serve a wider catchment area, may be more appropriately located at or close to the periphery of a settlement.

7.4.4 In addition, specific sites adjoining specific schools are protected for possible future expansion, not only for educational purposes, but possibly for community use. The opportunity exists in some locations for dual use of school facilities by the public. This arrangement provides for a more economic use of land and also enables schools to generate additional funds for improving facilities.

SMSO 04

Community Facilities

Proposals for the development, extension of, and the change of use into community facilities will be encouraged within the urban settlements provided the proposal is well related to the local need and does not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area. Specific sites, as indicated in the relevant Policy Maps, have been designated for such uses, whilst MEPA also encourages the provision of such facilities as part of major developments as indicated in specific Area Policies.

In the eventuality that buildings currently occupied by schools become vacant, MEPA will favourably consider the conversion of such buildings, even their total redevelopment in cases where the building is not of historical, cultural or architectural value/interest, for the provision of community facilities.

7.4.5 MEPA will support the Local Councils and appropriate government agencies in the provision of community facilities, such as clinics, day care centres, child minding facilities, residential homes, pastoral facilities, cultural centres including drama, dance, music and art classes, libraries and village halls, particularly in the main settlements and larger villages. Community facilities can enhance the identity of a settlement and promote a greater sense of belonging. The Local Plan, as far as practical, encourages and safeguards both the retention and improvement of existing facilities, and has identified possible sites in areas which already function to some degree as the focus of the community life of a settlement or village. The Local Plan also encourages the provision of such facilities as part of major developments on specific sites as indicated in the relevant Area Policies.

8. Urban and Rural Conservation

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Most of the towns and villages in the plan area retain characteristics of the traditional village morphology particularly the winding narrow streets, the one and two storey traditional town houses, garden enclaves and walls, and the church piazza as the focal point of the village. These characteristics are particularly evident in the localities of Safi, Siggiewi, Zurrieq, Kirkop, Ghaxaq and Qrendi. These elements are often under threat by new development particularly as a result of redevelopment of traditional properties or by new development along the fringe of the various localities which transform the skyline of these towns and villages and impair strategic views.
- 8.1.2 The South Malta Local Plan area comprises a substantial extent of non-urban land. 66% of the entire plan area consists of rural areas. Agriculture is the main land use with mineral extraction activities and other obnoxious industries concentrated in particular areas e.g. Tal-Hlas (Zebbug), Wid Qirda (Siggiewi) as well as quarrying in Mqabba and Kirkop. The natural (e.g. valleys, cliffs, etc) and historical-cultural resources (e.g. Torri Mamo, Batterija tal-Grazzja) present give the Plan area a particular character both in terms of conservation value as well as potential for public enjoyment, particularly with respect to landscape. In addition to the above other activities which are degrading the quality of the rural landscape include hunting and trapping, proliferation of boathouses (St. Thomas Bay), garage workshops and horse training tracks (in Siggiewi and Zebbug), buildings alien to the rural context, scrapyards and micro industry.
- 8.1.3 The pressure to develop new land ODZ has now eased through the implementation of the Structure Plan policies. 5 planning applications for residential schemes ODZ had been submitted between 1994 – 2000, in the plan area, with a total footprint of 11,560 m² of which 2,212 m² was approved (Rural Strategy Topic Study). These were mainly HOSs (e.g. in Sta. Lucia and Zebbug). With regard to new dwelling units for the same period a total of 56 applications or 43% of applications received were approved creating 82 new dwelling units. Santa Lucia and Zebbug were the localities in the plan area with a significant amount of dwellings approved ODZ with 18 and 13 units respectively. 70 applications were approved with regard to industrial and commercial developments ODZ (Rural Strategy Topic Paper).
- 8.1.4 The ecological survey conducted in the Plan area identifies relatively small but concentrated areas of ecological and scientific value, particularly within valley systems and along the coast. Development has encroached on a number of sensitive areas, particularly in valley systems where quarrying activity and illegal dumping have scarred the landscape (e.g. Wied il-Kbir, Wied Moqbol). In addition to these illegal developments and animal farms have and are contributing to the scarring of valley systems (e.g. Wied il-Baqqiegħa and Wied Qirda). The geological and hydrological surveys for the plan area indicate a significant presence of valley systems in the plan area, which merits protection especially with regard to water resource management. Illegal dumping is another major problem in the plan area and the main areas under threat are the same valley systems and coastal areas. The valleys surrounding Siggiewi, Zebbug and Qormi have been under pressure from indiscriminate dumping of construction waste and other forms of tipping.

8.2 Strategic Background

- 8.2.1 The Structure Plan requires Local Plans to define the precise boundaries of the UCAs (UCO 2) as well as important views from UCAs and views of the traditional urban skyline (UCO 10). Other guidance on developments within UCAs is contained within Policy and Design Guidance 'Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas' issued by the MEPA in July 1995 as well as the Policy and Design Guidance 2005 (April 2005).
- 8.2.2 It is the purpose of Local Plans to identify Areas of Ecological Importance and Sites of Scientific Importance and Areas of High Landscape Value (Policies RCO 3, RCO 10 and RCO 12) and Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance (ARC 1 and ARC 2). The Local Plan area has pockets of afforested areas that are considered worthy of protection through the Tree Preservation Orders (Policies RCO 30 and 33). Policy MCO 1 proposes the area between St.Thomas Bay and Delimara Point as a Marine Conservation Area (MCA), which seeks to safeguard specific uses as well as the natural and cultural resources located there.

8.3 Strategy

- 8.3.1 The strategy with regard to urban and rural conservation is:
- to identify the boundaries of the Urban Conservation Areas and encourage the channelling of appropriate development through rehabilitation and environmental upgrading of these areas;
 - to identify, protect, rehabilitate and encourage the management of Areas of Ecological Importance and Sites of Scientific Importance;
 - to ensure the conservation and protection of ecological, geological and hydrological resources and promote the enhancement and management of these features, with particular attention to the valley systems, the coast and afforested pockets.

8.4 Policies

SMCO 01 Urban Conservation Areas and Design Priority Areas

MEPA designates Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs) in the following localities as indicated in the respective Policy Maps: Gudja, Ghaxaq, Kirkop, Luqa, Mqabba, Marsasala, Qrendi, Safi, Siggiewi, Xghajra, Zabbar, Zebbug, Zejtun and Zurrieq. Within these localities, MEPA will promote the rehabilitation of vernacular buildings and features that will enhance the character and appearance of the UCAs to secure their conservation.

MEPA also designates Design Priority areas at Triq il-Madonna tal-Hniena in Zejtun and Triq Bubaqra in Zurrieq. In areas immediately contiguous to such UCAs, and particularly in those areas designated as Design Priority Areas in the relevant policy maps, MEPA will ensure that development proposals respect the existing street alignment of the adjacent UCA and adjacent frontages. Although these areas lie outside the UCA, the design, colours, materials, and textures employed on the facades of buildings, should introduce and reflect architectural elements which are found in the adjacent UCA. Within such areas building heights will be three floors, but no semi-basement will be permitted, as indicated in the relevant Building Heights Maps. Development

proposals within UCAs and Design Priority areas are to be referred to the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC), as deemed necessary.

MEPA will also ensure the statutory protection of buildings of historical, cultural and architectural value within or outside the designated UCA boundary.

MEPA will ensure that no development, within the confines of the Local Council boundaries of the localities comprising this Plan, is permitted that will compromise important views within the UCAs as indicated in the relevant Environmental Constraints Maps.

Apart from the above, to respect the roofline and aspects of street character in identified areas outside UCAs and Design Priority Areas, Building Heights within such areas are indicated as three floors. No semi-basements would be allowed in these areas.

8.4.1 Within the plan area an UCA has been designated and approved by MEPA for Paola and Tarxien. The plan proposes to afford the same protection to the other localities in order to ensure that the physical attributes and the quality of the living environment in these areas are maintained and enhanced. The plan area encompasses examples of urban characteristics which reflect urban development through the ages, especially in the old cores. The traditional Maltese village structure is still very much present in areas like Safi, Ghaxaq, Gudja, Luqa, Tarxien and Zejtun. The fabric should be conserved in its entirety and interventions allowed should be sensitive. Any development within the UCAs will be guided by the Policy and Design Guidance 'Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas' (July 1995). Design Priority Areas refer to areas adjacent and contiguous to the UCA boundary. These areas generally include the approach roads into the UCA, which, whilst not meriting inclusion in the UCA still present some characteristics and features found within adjacent UCAs. Although these areas are not part of the UCA, these are transition zones between the UCA boundary and the newly developed areas and it is therefore important that due regard is given to the design of development proposals made particularly in terms of building styles, proportions and streetscape features (wooden balconies, windows, etc.). The policy, in line with Structure Plan Policy UCO 10, also identifies a number of important views which need to be protected from any form of development that may jeopardise such views. These include views to landmark buildings e.g. churches or where the UCA boundary aligns or is close to the Limits to Development boundary e.g. Mqabba, Ghaxaq, Zurrieq.

SMCO 02

Classification of Streets in Urban Conservation Areas

Following the approval of this plan MEPA shall carry out and complete a rigorous character appraisal of all the streets in UCAs in the Local Plan area taking into account the overall quality of the architecture, streetscapes and open spaces within the various sub-areas. The hierarchy shall be as follows:

Category A: There shall be a strong presumption against any changes to the facades of (including changes in apertures) the built fabric and ancillary open spaces, street alignment and the addition of accretions in these areas. Structural interventions should be limited to the replacement of deteriorated components (which shall be carried out in materials and structures identical to the original) and the removal of incompatible accretions from the facades. No additional floors or significant structures will be allowed over the existing Category A properties.

Category B plus (B+): There shall be a presumption against any changes to the facades of the built fabric, street alignment and the addition of accretions in these areas. Structural interventions shall be limited to repair, upkeep and minor compatible interventions unless these are envisaged to restore the original façade. Additional floors over the existing Category B plus properties may be considered by MEPA provided that the design of the additional floors is of exceptionally high standard, that they do not detract from the architectural homogeneity of the existing vernacular building, and that such extension reflects the scale, floor heights, proportions, fenestration, architectural characteristics, materials, colours, textures and detailing of the existing building. In certain circumstances, sensitive signage, decorative and illumination fixtures may be considered, provided that these are deemed by MEPA to be compatible with the overall street context.

Category B: Minor alterations to the facades (e.g. changes to apertures), over and above those allowable in Grade B+ may be allowed, provided that traditional proportions, fenestration, architectural characteristics, materials, colours, detailing and textures are used. Complete replacement of facades is not allowed. Additional floors over the existing Category B properties may be considered by MEPA provided that the design of the additional floors does not detract from the architectural homogeneity of the existing vernacular building, and that such extension reflects the scale, floor heights, proportions, fenestration, architectural characteristics, materials, colours, textures and detailing of the existing building.

Category C: Significant alterations or even demolition of the façades, and/or the construction of additional floors may be allowed provided that the replacement building respects the surrounding context in terms of scale, floor heights, proportions, fenestration, materials, colours, and textures.

In all cases, if a building or feature is listed under the provisions of Structure Plan Policy UCO 7 and this listing has more onerous restrictions than those of the above-mentioned Street Categorization, then the more restrictive provisions shall prevail.

In all cases should a building or group of buildings which are incongruous* in character with the rest of the Categorization of a streetscape be proposed for total re-development, the replacement of such buildings which emulates the character indicated by the rest of the streetscapes shall be sought by MEPA. Massing, design, overall height, alignment of the façade as well as choice of materials, colours and detailing shall play a determinant role on whether the request for development permission for such replacement buildings is acceded to or otherwise.

In the case of vacant sites within a designated UCA and which is as yet un-built and not otherwise protected, or designated for another use, a new building may be allowed. The design of the façade, scale, massing, floor to ceiling height, the number of floors and the finishes used in the new building should reflect the predominant streetscape character.

**incongruous refers to a building or group of buildings whose architecture and/or design elements clearly stand out as not belonging to the same era (e.g. new buildings built after the 1960's) and/or being clearly so ill-designed that a well designed compatible replacement building would constitute a rehabilitation of the streetscape. Vernacular and/or traditional buildings shall not be considered to constitute incongruous buildings.*

In the interim period, development proposals within designated UCAs indicated in the relevant Policy Maps will be required to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the UCAs and shall comply with the Policy and Design Guidance: DC within Urban Conservation Areas (1995), as amended from time to time, unless specific policies in this Local Plan indicate otherwise, and the relevant policies in the Structure Plan.

- 8.4.2 UCAs consist of important historic, architectural and townscape elements which are fundamental to their character and which must be conserved. To this end MEPA considers it a priority to conduct a comprehensive exercise whereby UCA boundaries will be reviewed, and all the streets within the UCAs are classified according to their conservation importance. This identification process would enable MEPA to identify those urban areas that are extremely important to the heritage of the locality and therefore highly sensitive to interventions, and other parts that can absorb some development without undue negative impacts. In this respect the process will seek to reverse the trend in declining urban areas that are experiencing problems of out-migration, an ageing population, vacant and substandard housing, overcrowding and poor environmental conditions, such as in the case of Hamrun, by actively promoting sustainable regeneration projects. Once this classification is approved and adopted, all development planning applications within UCAs will be determined taking into full account the provisions of this classification and the associated policy framework. The classification exercise should be completed within a year from the approval of the plan.
- 8.4.3 Designation of UCAs is only the first step towards the conservation and upgrading of these important urban areas. UCAs need to be holistically managed in order to achieve a space that enhances the quality of life and attracts activity, amenity and vitality into the area. An integrated heritage management approach is therefore essential to ensure the protection of the important elements of a UCA, whilst allowing for sufficient intervention to attract compatible activities to the area, to identify measures aimed at mitigating existing negative visual impacts, and to actively enhance the character and appearance of UCAs. Planning on its own is not sufficient to achieve the desired results. Education, economic instruments, and legal instruments also play an important role in the conservation and rehabilitation of UCAs.

SMCO 03

Protection of AEIs and SSIs

The following areas, as indicated in the relevant Environmental Constraints Maps, are recommended to be proposed for scheduling, as Areas of Ecological Importance (AEIs) and Sites of Scientific Importance (SSIs), in accordance with Section 46 of the Development Planning Act, 1992:

Areas of Ecological Importance/Sites of Scientific Importance

- i. **Wied Xkora, Wied Musa, Wied Sillani, Wied ta' Kandja valley system (Siggiewi)**
- ii. **Wied Hesri, Wied Tal-Baqquiegha valley system (Siggiewi/Zebbug)**
- iii. **Wied il-Kbir (Luqa)**
- iv. **Wied Has-Saptan (Ghaxaq)**
- v. **Wied il-Qoton (Ghaxaq/Zurrieq)**
- vi. **Head of Wied Dalam (Ghaxaq)**
- vii. **Wied il-Kbir (Zurrieq)**
- viii. **Wied il-Ghajn (Marsascala)**
- ix. **Wied ta' Hal Saflieni (Luqa)**
- x. **Wied Ta' Mazza (Zabbar/Zejtun)**
- xi. **Wied iz-Ziju (Zejtun)**
- xii. **Wied ta' San Martin (Zebbug)**
- xiii. **Wied Incita (Zebbug)**
- xiv. **Ta' Wied is-Sewda (Zebbug)**
- xv. **Reservoir at Tal-Ghazz l/o Kirkop**
- xvi. **Maritime garigue communities along the coast from Tan-Nisa to Blata l-Bajda (Xghajra)**

- xvii. Coastal cliffs at Ghassa tal-Munxar (Marsascala)
- xviii. Rocky coast from Xifer ic-Cerna to Il-Ponta tal-Mignuna (Marsascala)
- xix. L-Ilsien to Ghar ix-Xama (Marsascala)
- xx. Coastal stretch between Xghajra, Zabbar and Zonqor Point (Marsascala)
- xxi. In-Nwadar (Zabbar)
- xxii. Ix-Xghara tal-Garda (Ghaxaq)
- xxiii. Ta' Haxum (Ghaxaq)
- xxiv. Reservoir at Tal-Ghazz (Kirkop)
- xxv. Beach and hinterland areas of Il-Bajja ta' San Tumas (Marsascala)
- xxvi. Quarry at Tal-Giebja (Kirkop)

In these protected areas/sites there will be a general presumption against development that would create negative impacts on these areas/ sites and the MEPA will endeavour to safeguard and protect AEIs and SSIs listed within this Local Plan.

8.4.4 AEIs and SSIs are scheduled areas/sites that require protection from development because of their ecological and scientific value in that they contain special habitats that merit protection. Such protected areas/sites include also Garrigue and Maquis designations containing indigenous and archaeophytic species which contribute to the typical Mediterranean setting and are of considerable ecological value.

8.4.5 These sites have been identified in the Survey of Ecological Resources for the South Malta Local Plan area (August 2000) because of their importance as valley systems both in terms of ecological habitats as well as landscape characteristics. These listed areas/sites also include buffer zones to further regulate developments near and adjacent to AEIs and SSIs. Any development proposed in such areas/sites is to adhere to the criteria as established for each level of scheduling as specified in the Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum (December 1990).

SMCO 04

Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance

Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance are listed as Class A, B, C, D and E as indicated on the Sites of Archaeological Importance Map 4, the respective Policy Maps or Environmental Constraints Maps and in Appendix D. The MEPA will endeavour to safeguard and protect all archaeological features listed within this Local Plan in accordance with Section 46 of the Development Planning Act, 1992.

No development will be allowed which is likely to adversely affect archaeological areas and sites listed as Class A and B or their natural settings. Every effort must be made to preserve these sites in their original state. On Class C, D and E sites, prior to any development occurring, the developer must enter into a planning obligation that secures proper investigation and documentation of these sites, following a monitored programme of archaeological excavation and recording by a competent archaeologist. Development may be allowed on these types of sites subject to modifications as required and as directed by MEPA in consultation with the Museums Department or relevant Government agency, based on an assessment of the archaeological significance of the findings.

In considering applications for development permission, MEPA in collaboration with the Museum's Department or relevant Government agency will identify and advise on the level of protection appropriate to the specific area or site in question and it will reserve the right to re-classify areas and sites listed as Class E following further investigations.

Furthermore, the following buffer zones for Archaeological protection classes A-E are established as follows:

- i. a minimum of 100m for Class A archaeological features in which no development is allowed;**
 - ii. a minimum of 50m for Class B-E features.**
- 8.4.6 The SMLP area contains about 170 areas/sites of archaeological importance as identified in the Archaeological Survey Report for the plan area. This policy aims to afford the appropriate protection to these sites from potential development pressures. Where development is likely to have an effect on the site of archaeological interest, the developer will be required to finance the necessary work programme of investigation. The primary objective will always be the preservation in situ of the archaeological remains. However, if after negotiations there still remains no overriding case for preservation, development will only be permitted after alternative layouts have been fully examined which endeavour to avoid the site/monument. Before a permit is issued agreement must be reached to cover provision for detailed ground and structural surveys excavation in advance of development and on the carrying out of a monitoring programme as the development proceeds.
- 8.4.7 In the classification of Archaeological Classes, Class E sites are sites known to have existed and referred to in written documents, prints, maps, paintings and photographs but are at present no longer visible.

SMCO 05

Promote and safeguard public access along the coast

MEPA will safeguard public access and encourage initiatives to rehabilitate the coastal stretch, in accordance with the characteristics of the areas, between Xghajra and Marsascala, along St. Thomas Bay and the coastal cliffs from il-Borg ta' Fulija to ta' Melha to Ghar Hasan as indicated in the relevant Policy Maps. Development that prohibits or restricts public use of the coast will not be permitted.

- 8.4.8 The primary objective is to safeguard and promote the coast as a public open space. Most of the low-lying coastline to the northeast (between Xghajra and Marsascala) will have a larger attraction potential for bathing once measures for sewage treatment are in place. Access to the southern coast (Zurrieq) is somewhat prohibited due to the presence of the hardstone quarry. Any restoration schemes considered for this quarry will have to ensure that public access is restored. The rehabilitation of the coastal stretch from illegal dumping is another immediate task necessary to restore this pristine coastline.
- 8.4.9 Due to the limited bathing areas in the plan area, it is important that the few areas available are retained for such use. Any developments along the coast which propose a reduction in the public use of the coast and jeopardise the sensitivity of such areas will not be allowed.

SMCO 06

Areas of High Landscape Value

MEPA designates the areas identified on the respective Policy Maps as Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) as per Section 46 of the Development Planning Act, 1992 and Structure Plan policy RCO 3. There shall be a strong presumption against the creation of new built structures (including cultivation and animal husbandry related structures) in AHLVs. The guidance provided in the

Explanatory Memorandum to the Structure Plan clauses 15.34 to 15.40 shall also apply. MEPA will ensure that any developments falling within such areas will not result in the creation of light pollution.

MEPA will favour proposals for compatible and sensitive positive interventions and activities (particularly informal recreational activities in the form of walking or cycling footpaths as well as educational initiatives) intended to upgrade and rehabilitate Areas of High Landscape Value. In sites which have been degraded by development activities, a rehabilitation and monitoring program needs to be established by the developer and agreed with MEPA to ensure that the proposed interventions are in line with other policies related to conservation as well as protection and management of the natural and cultural resources. The priority areas in this respect are:

- i. **Wied tal-Baqquiegha (Zebbug) and Wied Hesri (Siggiewi);**
- ii. **the slopes flanking Wied Ta' Kandja (Siggiewi);**
- iii. **Wied Qirda (Zebbug/Siggiewi);**
- iv. **Ghar Hanzir and Wied Sillani (Siggiewi);**
- v. **Wied il-Kbir (Siggiewi/Luqa);**
- vi. **Wied ta' Has Saptan (Ghaxaq);**
- vii. **Wied Ta' Hal Saffieni (Luqa) ;**
- viii. **Wied il-Qoton (Ghaxaq);**
- ix. **the rocky steppe at Ta' Haxum (Ghaxaq);**
- x. **the promontory of Ghassa tal-Munxar (Marsascala);**
- xi. **the afforested sites along Is-Swar Tal-Kottonera (Zabbar, Fgura); and**
- xii. **between Zonqor Point (Marsascala) and Blata l-Bajda (Xghajra).**

8.4.10 The rural and coastal landscapes in the plan area have a number of characteristic features which depict cultural and natural attributes that impart a traditional identity and render these areas highly attractive to locals and visitors. Unfortunately, some of these areas are plagued by littering, insensitive interventions and dereliction. These areas are essential as local recreational venues for the local populations as well as distinctive local open space lungs which help to impart a feeling of remoteness from the urban atmosphere which is so prevalent in the south of Malta. This policy also encourages interventions that promote the enhancement of the positive qualities of these areas and the removal of unsightly features in order to restore the attractive qualities of these areas. The list in this policy is not exhaustive but identifies priority sites which need to be afforded further protection to ensure that any negative activities in these areas do not expand and where possible reduced. Within such areas any permitted development or activity needs to ensure that no pollution from lighting sources occurs.

SMCO 07

Valleys

Valley Protection Zones and valley watercourses are indicated on the Environmental Constraints Maps for the relevant localities. In line with the provisions of Policy RCO 29, there will be a presumption against any development within these areas that will adversely affect the function of the valley as an important water catchment area.

The MEPA in collaboration with relevant authorities and agencies will formulate rehabilitation and management plans to guide the reinstatement of valleys which have been degraded as a result of illegal dumping or specific development activities, particularly quarrying. Priority will be given to the valleys listed in policy SMCO 09 and particularly to the Wied Xkora (Siggiewi) area as indicated in the Siggiewi Policy Map SG 1.

- 8.4.11 The plan area is endowed with a number of valleys which adorn the landscape of this area. Unfortunately due to lack of management and adequate protection status most of these areas have been degraded as a result of illegal dumping. Other areas have been extensively degraded as a result of quarrying activity. This policy is aimed to identify these valley areas which merit protection and a careful approach to development whilst indicating specific areas which require the formulation of management plans to guide the rehabilitation and management of such areas. The reinstatement of these valley systems is important to ensure that they function as watercourses and in the process replenish the groundwater.

SMCO 08

Groundwater Resources Protection and Water Quality

Development will only be permitted in accordance with the Level of Protection Zones as set out below:

Well Head Protection

No development or activity shall be permitted within 10 metres of borehole rooms or the discharge point of springs. New borehole rooms (approved by Water Services Corporation) shall be constructed in natural materials with raised working platforms to ensure that no surface water run-off can enter the water discharge point.

Inner Protection Zone

Development will only be permitted within 500 metres of public boreholes, underground gallery systems of springs and pumping stations, or dry valleys and dolines that contribute to the natural recharge of aquifers that are tapped for drinking water purposes (Inner Protection Zone) subject to the following criteria:-

- i. prior approval of the Water Services Corporation and the Water Directorate of the Malta Resource Authority;**
- ii. the development can be connected to the public sewer system. Cess pools or septic tanks will be prohibited;**
- iii. provision for the collection of run-off water from all new roads, particularly in the immediate vicinity of water discharge points;**
- iv. the provision of adequate collection areas for waste material;**
- v. the preservation of a sufficient rock layer above the ground water table, and**
- vi. the submission of a satisfactory Environmental Planning Statement.**

The following development or activity will not be permitted within the Inner Protection Zone:-

- a) live stock breeding or rearing;**
- b) proposed new or extensions to existing mineral workings;**
- c) industrial uses; and**
- d) landfill (except where this consists of an engineered landfill for inert waste only) or waste collection centres, refuse dumps, scrapyards, petrol stations, fuel installations and communal cesspools.**

Water Protection Zone

Development permitted within the Water Protection Zone, as indicated on Map 5, subject to the following criteria:-

1. the connection to a public sewer system or sealed cesspool. Septic tanks will be prohibited;
 2. where the development involves or includes a road, adequate provision shall be made for the collection and storage of run-off water, particularly in the immediate vicinity of water discharge points;
 3. the provision of adequate collection areas for waste material;
 4. the preservation of a sufficient rock layer above the ground water table;
 5. industrial development will not be permitted in the vicinity of public boreholes, underground gallery systems of springs and pumping dolines which contribute to the natural recharge of aquifers which are tapped for drinking water purposes;
 6. the prohibition of disposal of harmful effluents into the sewer system;
 7. at agricultural establishments, the provision of a proper collection system, adequate storage, containment of manure and animal slurry;
 8. livestock breeding and rearing will not be permitted in doline areas or in quarries; and
 9. the provision of storage facilities for inorganic fertilisers on farming and agriculture developments.
- 8.4.12 Well Head Protection – In this area, no activities should be permitted, which are not related to water abstraction itself. The well head should be totally enclosed in order that access to the head of each source is protected, and no surface run off can enter these rooms. Extra measures such as culverts may be required where roads are passing next to water discharge points. With regard to private wells and springs, a minimum level of protection should be offered by a surrounding wall around each water point.
- 8.4.13 Inner Protection Zone - A second level of protection to the Well Head is the Inner Protection Zone which is applied to an area of land of 500 metres in radius around public bore holes, gallery systems of springs and pumping station. Development within the inner protection zone is necessarily restrictive in order to protect threats to water resources. This can best be controlled through the specific requirement for an environmental impact assessment, which includes the impact on the fresh water resources.
- 8.4.14 Aquifer Protection Zone - A third level of protection (Aquifer Protection Zone) is required to cover all public water extraction points. It is important to consider the special degree of vulnerability of the aquifer systems in the local plan area due to the dense sequence of faults in the northern part of the island.

SMCO 09

Environment Management Plans

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

- i. **Wied Xkora/Wied Musa (Siggiewi)**
- ii. **Wied Ta' Kandja (Siggiewi)**
- iii. **Wied Sillani (Luqa)**
- iv. **Wied Incita (Zebbug)**
- v. **Wied is-Sewda (Zebbug)**
- vi. **Wied Moqbol (Zurrieq)**

These plans will examine in detail and include recommendations for action with regard to planning and management requirements for the areas afore mentioned. These management plans are to include a statement for any habitat engineering work required following an objective of minor intervention. All habitat engineering and site promotion works will be under the supervision of qualified persons to the satisfaction of MEPA and other relevant agencies.

The EMPs will be required to:

- a) **resolve existing conflicts between land users in the rural areas through conflict resolution mechanisms and mediation processes;**
- b) **produce very detailed management plans with site specific proposals for the proposed rehabilitation of abandoned and degraded environmentally sensitive areas, habitats and landscapes whilst defining allowable uses;**
- c) **initiate implementation of rural rehabilitation processes through site specific agreements with involved key players reached following consultation;**
- d) **examine the provision of incentives for the relocation to appropriate urban or industrial areas of structures and activities which are identified to be incompatible with the rural environment;**
- e) **introduce where appropriate informal recreational activities in the countryside; and**
- f) **promote the educational use of environmental areas.**

MEPA reserves the right to require other EMPs, apart from those identified in the above mentioned priority list, if it deems it necessary, with regard to other areas.

8.4.15 A number of areas/sites which may require environmental management plans include Wied Xkora/Wied Musa (Siggiewi), Wied il-Kbir and Wied Sillani (Luqa) and other valleys and areas as may be identified by MEPA. Wied Xkora/Wied Musa area has been severely scarred with quarrying activity. MEPA, following recommendations made in the Environmental Resource Surveys supports the introduction of a supervision warden service in the future for the monitoring of the environmentally sensitive areas and the use of existing resources related to natural or cultural heritage for education.

8.4.16 Experience has shown that within the rural environment, although sites of importance are designated for their environmental importance, implementation of management plans is either a long term process or in many cases never takes off. In this respect, EMPs are required to be prepared by MEPA similar in format to Action Plans/Development Briefs for urban areas. These EMPs would serve as a management and implementation tool for future rural rehabilitation. It is also encouraged to seek funding for such plans from those who have exploited such areas and caused their degradation. This would promote the polluter pays principle.

SMCO 10

Protection of Strategic Open Space Gaps

Urban Development will not be permitted in all Strategic Open Space Gaps and particularly those between the following settlements: Ghaxaq and Gudja; Fgura and Zabbar; Ghaxaq and Zejtun; Safi and Zurrieq; as illustrated on the respective Policy Maps.

MEPA will exercise strict control on development within these gap sites and may refuse any uses outside the development zone if they lead to urban sprawl. Where suitable informal recreational areas will be encouraged within such areas in the form of play areas/picnic areas.

No further expansion and intensification of existing permitted development will be allowed and only change of use within the same use classes, or to other use classes which result in a significant reduction in adverse impacts from the existing operations, will be allowed.

The boundaries of the strategic open space gaps as indicated on the relevant Area Policy maps are subject to change by the Rationalisation of Development Boundaries exercise.

8.4.17 The urban area comprises approximately 15 km² representing 33% of the total plan area. In comparison with other local plan areas, most settlements in the SMLP area have above average residential densities. In this respect the strategic open gaps are priority areas requiring substantial protection. These locations are visually important being the first step outside urban areas offering a brief respite from the monotone visuals of heavily urbanized landscapes. It is important that settlements retain their distinctive identity with countryside around them. However, in various cases development has been permitted within such areas. This policy aims to contain such permitted development and discourage any expansion or further intensification that may compromise the quality of this strategic open space.

8.4.18 With regard to the settlement pattern of the plan area, strategic open gaps are protected for the following purposes:

- i. to check unrestricted urban sprawl and coalescence;
- ii. to safeguard the countryside from urban encroachments;
- iii. to preserve the setting, townscape identity and character of towns and villages and prevent them from merging into one another.

9. Recreation and Tourism

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Recreation and tourism are important activities in the plan area. Whilst the recreational activity is concentrated primarily in the areas of Marsascala and the rural areas around Gudja, Ghaxaq, Siggiewi, Zurrieq and Qrendi, the tourist areas are mainly centred (including the main accommodation establishments) in the Marsascala area. Marsascala is also very important for domestic tourism activity. The resident population in Marsascala and Xghajra increase substantially during the summer months.
- 9.1.2 Recreation concerns a wide range of activities from informal recreation (e.g. walking, picnicking, cycling, etc) to other formal recreation activities (e.g. sports, entertainment, visiting heritage sites, etc). The ratio of sports facilities per inhabitant in m² in the SMLP area stands at 1.9 m² and is the lowest when compared to other Local Plan areas. Most of the sports facilities are located within the public schools, however, the use of such facilities is not generally available to the local residents and the general public. The Leisure and Recreation Topic Paper amplifies this point and suggests that the extent of such facilities (59,000 m²) is enormous and currently public access to such facilities is not facilitated. The new regional sports facilities in Cottonera and the one proposed at Ta' Karwija, Kirkop will adequately meet demand for specific sports in the plan area, however localities like Marsascala and Zurrieq do not have a local football pitch, which considering the importance of this sport is a facility each locality should have available. In Marsascala a five aside pitch has been approved at Zonqor Point.
- 9.1.3 Research shows that there is a high level of participation in informal recreation activity amongst the residents in the SMLP area particularly with regard to walking, swimming, BBQs, etc. The Community Tourism and Recreation Survey undertaken by the MEPA in 1997 reports that 57.4% of the respondents living in the plan area are not satisfied with the existing recreation facilities. The Public Attitude Survey carried out by MEPA in 1999 states that in Ghaxaq, Fgura and Marsascala, 96%, 91% and 94% of respondents, respectively, agreed that there is a need for open air recreational facilities in their locality. Sports grounds need improvements and more recreational open areas are required particularly public gardens, countryside paths, piazzas and playing fields, particularly within specific localities like Fgura and Marsascala. Cultural facilities in the form of theatres are lacking apart from facilities in parish halls and schools.
- 9.1.4 With regard to tourism the plan area attracts more domestic tourism activity than international tourism. It has the potential to capitalise on its strengths in view of its abundance of natural and cultural attractions which exist in the various towns and villages. Tourist accommodation is located primarily in Marsascala with just over 1000 beds, with 652 beds located in the Jerma Palace hotel. Xghajra also experiences a huge influx of domestic tourists for the summer period. With regard to domestic tourism, accommodation includes second homes, renting of apartments and the use of boathouses in St. Thomas Bay, Marsascala.

9.2 Strategic Background

- 9.2.1 The current Structure Plan identifies Marsascala as one of the main tourist areas for the development of tourism accommodation (TOU 4). Tourism development is also encouraged

within Urban Conservation Areas in the form of conversion, extension and refurbishment of existing buildings and facilities (TOU 9). Policy TOU 15 encourages the preparation of a comprehensive policy for the coastal zone.

9.2.2 Policy REC 4 requires Local Plans to identify sites for district level recreation centres. Policy REC 5 designates an area north of Marsascala for the provision of international standard sports facilities. This has now been superseded with the Government's decision to locate three sports complexes in Cottonera, Kirkop and St. Paul's Bay. The Cottonera one is more likely to serve the needs of residents, particularly, in Fgura, Zabbar and Marsascala. Policy REC 6 recommends the relocation of the Pembroke Firing range to a site below Fort St. Leonard, north of Marsascala, but at a meeting with the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) it was ascertained that the Pembroke site will not be relinquished since the site has the ideal characteristics for the type of shooting practice undertaken at Pembroke.

9.2.3 Policy REC 9 states that all unsightly structures on coastlines or adjacent areas, without building permits, will have to be removed, whilst low cost holiday home villages or other similar development will not be permitted along the coast (REC 10). REC 12 requires that owners of illegal structures on Government land should remove such structures and restore the site.

9.3 Strategy

9.3.1 The strategy for tourism and recreation is:

- to direct further tourism development within the tourist zone of Marsascala and within UCAs and in rural areas through the rehabilitation of vacant buildings;
- to encourage the provision of camping and caravan facilities;
- to encourage the upgrading and multi-use of existing sports and recreational facilities;
- to encourage the provision of walking routes, cycling routes and heritage trails.

9.4 Policies

SMTO 01

New Tourism Accommodation developments

New tourism accommodation development will ONLY be considered within designated Entertainment Priority Areas and areas designated as Resort Zones and in the form of conversion, extension and refurbishment of existing vacant buildings and facilities within the Urban Conservation Areas of all localities, in line with Structure Plan Policy TOU 9, unless otherwise stated in any other policy within this plan as well as the sensitive conversion of vacant rural buildings, in line with Structure Plan Policy AHF 5 and RCO 2, provided the following criteria are met:

- i. The prior approval of the Malta Tourism Authority is obtained;**
- ii. The scale of the development proposed is consistent with the character of the area and does not create significant adverse impacts on the local amenity;**
- iii. High quality design in terms of height, volume, bulk, materials and finishes, and landscaping, is achieved as well as the use of sustainable energy saving and water conservation concepts;**
- iv. The development shall not cause a detrimental impact on the local community as a**

- v. **Where appropriate, development proposals within the urban settlements are to comply with established standards for access and off street parking provision, coach parking facilities and alighting points;**
- vi. **Tourist accommodation development in UCAs should not exceed 25 beds, however, MEPA may consider proposals that exceed this limit by no more than 5 beds provided that the resulting development would not create any negative impacts on the UCA and are to conform with the ‘Development control within UCAs Design Guidance’ (1995), as amended; and,**
- vii. **With regard to tourism development in rural areas the proposal involves the conversion of vacant listed buildings requiring restoration and rehabilitation or existing vacant buildings of architectural or historic merit, with architectural features and/or a degree of antiquity which warrants their retention; or which comprise part of a traditional group of buildings whose form and design represent a feature worthy of retention. No extensions to the existing buildings will be permitted and the building must not be located within an Area of Ecological Importance or Site of Scientific Importance or within an Intensive Agricultural Area.**

9.4.1 The policy encourages additional tourist accommodation within designated Entertainment Priority Areas (e.g. Marsascalea) to ensure that such development does not spread into the residential areas. It also offers scope for innovative and appropriate development within the UCAs and rural areas, identifying specific criteria to ensure that the development allowed is in harmony with the surrounding area and will not result in significant adverse impacts. Tourism accommodation developments are subject to prior approval by MTA.

SMTO 02

Development of visitor attractions

The MEPA will give favourable consideration to the development of visitor attractions within the settlement boundaries and rural areas which would enhance the visitor experience of the individual localities and their heritage resources, in all localities, subject to the following criteria;

- i. **The prior approval of the Malta Tourism Authority is obtained;**
- ii. **High design quality in terms of height, volume, bulk, materials and finishes, and landscaping, is achieved**
- iii. **The scale and quality of design of the development proposed is consistent with the character of the area and does not create significant adverse impacts on the local amenity as a result of over development;**
- iv. **The existing infrastructure is not adversely affected by the proposed project, and can meet the demands of the project without significant intervention;**
- v. **The proposed development would not exacerbate existing problems of traffic congestion, potential street/highway danger and vehicular and pedestrian conflict and appropriate off street parking is provided;**
- vi. **Access to the foreshore, public pathways and enjoyment of the countryside and scenic views are not restricted or limited by the proposed development;**
- vii. **For the reuse of scheduled buildings and structures of architectural or historical interest policies in this Plan, existing policies and guidelines related to developments in Urban Conservation Areas and on scheduled buildings also apply;**
- viii. **Developments in rural areas must ONLY make use of vacant and/or derelict buildings unless the development proposed is recommended in a management plan which has been approved by MEPA;**
- ix. **The development shall not cause a detrimental impact on the local community as a result of unacceptable levels of increased traffic, noise and bad neighbourliness; and,**

- x. **The proposal complies with established standards for access and off street parking provision, coach parking facilities and alighting points.**
- 9.4.2 The towns and villages in the plan area offer an authentic heritage experience of local village traditional architecture and morphology to both foreign and local visitors. These aspects should be enhanced to upgrade and diversify the tourist product of the islands. However, proposals should respect the character of these localities without creating significant negative pressures or adverse amenity impacts that would degrade the socio-environmental quality of these localities. The rural environment also offers a potential to improve visitor facilities at specific attraction areas, provided these complement and are in harmony with the heritage value and environmental sensitivity of the site. Such facilities may include visitor/interpretation centres and other interpretation provisions and visitor facilities.

SMTO 03

Camping and Touring Caravan sites

MEPA will consider proposals for the provision of camping and touring caravan facilities along the eastern coastal stretch of the Local Plan area at Zonqor Point (Marsascala) and in the St. Thomas Bay area (Marsascala), subject to the following criteria:

- i. **Applications comply with Guidelines for designated Camping Sites as approved by the MEPA and the Guidelines for caravan sites upgrading in Malta, copies of which are included in Appendices C1 and C2;**
 - ii. **The site is not located on a scheduled, designated or protected area including Areas of Ecological Importance, Sites of Scientific Importance, Areas or Sites of Archaeological Importance, Areas of High Landscape Value and Nature Reserves;**
 - iii. **The location, scale and layout is consistent with protecting the landscape character of the area;**
 - iv. **The siting has no significant adverse impact on adjacent protected areas, ground water vulnerability, or nearby settlements and will result in an overall improvement of the surrounding environment;**
 - v. **Access to the site does not cause a traffic hazard and adequate off-road parking can be provided;**
 - vi. **No buildings/structures other than toilets and communal facilities will be permitted to be erected. Details on water supply, washing and toilet facilities, drainage and sewage disposal arrangements, refuse disposal and fire prevention will be provided as part of the development application;**
 - vii. **No static permanently stationed caravans will be permitted;**
 - viii. **The use of concrete paving and walling, canopies, and fixed tables and benches is not permitted;**
 - ix. **The development proposed will in no way restrict coastal public access to any part of the coastal area;**
 - x. **No change of use from recreational to residential or other built use will be allowed and should the development be discontinued the site should be reinstated to its natural state; and,**
 - xi. **A landscaping scheme is to be submitted and approved with any permit application, which shall be implemented in its entirety within the first planting season and thereafter maintained.**
- 9.4.3 The Structure Plan does not identify any areas for camping and touring caravan facilities in the plan area. There is, however, a growing demand for such facilities in the plan area but no official facilities to cater for this demand are available. The Tourism and Recreation Community Survey undertaken by the MEPA in 1997 indicates that 4.6 % of the population in the plan area

own a tent or caravan and this percentage is likely to increase in future once official sites are available. On the other hand abusive camping/caravanning activity creates adverse impacts on the environment and landscape unless appropriate sites are identified, properly planned, designed and managed. Care is needed in the choice of location in order to avoid an adverse impact on the environment.

SMRE 01 Provision and Retention of Recreational and Sports facilities

The MEPA will encourage the development of new and the improvement and upgrading, as well as extension, of existing recreational/sports facilities within the urban settlements, provided this will not create any significant adverse impacts to the locality, as well as the multi use of existing facilities whilst ensuring their retention. Any redevelopment proposals should include adequate landscaping measures.

The provision of appropriately located picnic areas in the countryside is encouraged provided that it is ensured that the facilities provided will not create negative impacts on the surrounding environment and can be properly managed.

The MEPA will not allow any development that results in the loss of existing urban and rural public recreational/sports facilities including existing or designated public gardens and amenity open spaces unless otherwise stated in other policies in this plan.

Proposals for new or extensions to and upgrading of existing sports facilities in the rural areas should adhere to the following criteria:

- i. a study has to be undertaken to justify the need for the new facility or the upgrading/extension of the existing facility (this study shall be based on demographic projections and realistic assumptions which demonstrate the requirement for additional facilities);**
- ii. the proposed development will not result in the loss of good quality agricultural land;**
- iii. the proposed development is not located on a scheduled, designated, protected or garrigue area or land which qualifies to be scheduled and with regard to a new facility is the result of a thorough site selection exercise;**
- iv. any proposed structures are to be limited to a building height of one floor, unless it can be demonstrated that an additional floor is necessary and will not result in an adverse visual impact;**
- v. the site proposed requires substantial environmental improvement;**
- vi. the location, scale and layout is consistent with protecting the landscape character of the area;**
- vii. the development will not create significant adverse impacts on adjacent protected areas, ground water vulnerability, or nearby settlements and their communities;**
- viii. access to the site does not cause a traffic hazard and adequate off-road parking can be provided within the curtilage of the site, where possible;**
- ix. no change of use from recreational to residential will be allowed and should the development be discontinued the site should be reinstated to its natural state in line with rural conservation area policies;**
- x. a landscaping scheme is to be submitted and approved with any permit application, which shall be implemented in its entirety within the first planning season and thereafter maintained; and,**
- xi. development of major impact sports are to be directed towards appropriate disused**

quarries and areas requiring substantial environment improvements.

- 9.4.4 This policy aims to protect existing recreational/sports facilities and encourage the provision of additional facilities through new developments or upgrading of existing facilities. Due to the scarcity of land the duplication of facilities is not considered appropriate and therefore the multi use and improvement of existing facilities is encouraged and the relevant authorities are to put into place appropriate mechanisms to encourage such initiatives.
- 9.4.5 Sports facilities proposed ODZ will need to be carefully examined and a site selection exercise will have to be undertaken by the developer which would include the shortlisting of sites amenable for the development being proposed whilst adhering to the conditions identified in this policy. The use of disused quarry sites encouraging the rehabilitation of such areas and a complete upgrading of the site should be considered. The Plan recognises that some sports facilities, by their nature, are not acceptable within urban areas (e.g. shooting ranges, motor sports) and would have to be located outside the development zone boundary.

SMRE 02 Walking & Cycle routes and heritage trails in urban and rural areas

The MEPA will encourage Local Councils, NGOs as well as other public and private agencies to promote the development of and the maintenance of walking and cycle routes and heritage trails in all urban settlements and in the following rural areas, although this list is not exhaustive:

- i. Tas-Silg, Il-Munxar, Il-Bidni and Latnija (Marsascala)**
- ii. Ix-Xaghra, Bur Maghlab, Ta Haxum, Wied Saptan and Tal-Garda (Ghaxaq)**
- iii. Wied Xkora, Wied Musa, Wied Hesri, Wied Qirda, Wied il-Kbir and Hax-Xluq (Siggiewi)**
- iv. Tal-Gawhar, Il-Qortin, Ta' Taht it-Torri, In-Nadur, Wied Babu and Iz-Ziju (Zurrieq)**
- v. Coastal stretch between Xghajra, Zabbar and Marsascala**
- vi. Wied Garnaw (Sta. Lucija) and Gudja**
- vii. Hal Millieri and Ta' L-Isqof (Mqabba)**
- viii. Lawrenti, San Blas, Tal-Plieri, Gircanti towards Buskett and Rabat (Siggiewi)**

Where appropriate walking routes and heritage trails will incorporate tree planting schemes and picnic areas as well as the provision of appropriate interpretive facilities. A management programme that clearly indicates responsibilities and accountabilities, phasing of projects, implementation and maintenance programmes are to be submitted with any proposals or development applications.

- 9.4.6 The provision of well planned and managed walking routes and heritage trails with ancillary interpretive facilities encourages increased awareness of the urban and rural heritage and thus encourages their protection. The MEPA will offer agencies, particularly local councils, any assistance in planning and setting up such routes and trails. Local Councils and other agencies are encouraged to plan and manage such initiatives within all urban settlements which would highlight the various heritage resources present in all localities comprising the plan area.

10. Minerals Extraction and Waste Management

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 The Local Plan area is characterised by large complexes of soft stone quarries and a few hardstone quarries. There are four hardstone quarries and 51 softstone quarries in the plan area. It is not envisaged that new quarries will open during the plan period but the optimal use of the existing ones will be encouraged together with the gradual restoration programme for after use. Mineral extraction exerts significant pressure on the surrounding environment, in terms of noise, dust emissions and degradation of the surrounding environment. The restoration of disused quarries is important to reduce the visual impacts created on the landscape by such developments and to make appropriate use of the site once mineral extraction activity has been exhausted. Current examples of restoration practice relate mainly to softstone quarries, some of which have been converted into agricultural land and orchards, using inert waste to raise the quarry floor. Restoration of hardstone quarries has been negligible.
- 10.1.2 Illegal dumping proliferates in the plan area, especially in a number of valleys including Wied il-Kbir, Wied Hanzir, Wied Qirda, Wied il-Baqqajja and Wied il-Hesri, and scrapyards (e.g. Bir id-Deheb and Wied Zembaq) are present in the vicinity of residential units. The Sant'Antnin sewage and solid waste treatment plant is an important national facility located in Marsascala. It is very likely that this facility will be upgraded. Currently it is used for the treatment of waste water and the recycling of solid waste. The plan area is already burdened with some obnoxious infrastructural facilities within and in areas adjacent to its boundaries and therefore should not be burdened with new landfills for waste disposal or scrapyards. As part of the strategy to reduce illegal dumping Waste Serv and MEPA have been collaborating with regard to identifying Civic Amenity Sites. It has been indicated that two may be required in the plan area.

10.2 Strategic Background

- 10.2.1 Structure Plan Policy MIN 1 safeguards mineral resources from development to prevent their sterilization. Non mineral development will not normally be permitted in areas of known or suspected mineral reserves. There will be a presumption against mineral extraction in or near areas of acknowledged interest for ecology, archaeology, and in areas of high quality agricultural land. The scheduling over the last years has ensured that sensitive areas have been safeguarded from the expansion of quarries.
- 10.2.2 Policy MIN 6 encourages the full use of the existing site and merging of adjacent sites rather than new mineral extraction sites. Very few new quarries have been allowed to expand in the plan area and the majority of site developments have been quarry extensions. Policy MIN 12 concerns the submission of working methods, landscaping and reclamation proposals with any application for mineral extraction. Policy MIN 13 encourages the re-use of quarried areas with priority being given to uses which are difficult to locate elsewhere because of their visual or other undesirable impacts. The main thrust of the Minerals Subject Study is to use to the full existing mineral resources and there is a presumption against the granting of new quarries until the review of the Plan. The MSP requires operators of existing sites, in submitting applications to extend quarries, to provide comprehensive proposals for restoration for both the existing and the extension area.

10.3 Strategy

10.3.1 The strategy for Minerals and Waste Management is:

- to encourage the gradual restoration of disused quarries primarily back to agricultural use and identify acceptable afteruses following restoration; and,
- to identify strategically located Civic Amenity sites for the disposal of solid waste

10.4 Policies

SMMW 01 Quarrying and Buffer areas between Quarrying sites, Protected Areas and Residential Areas

In line with policies DC 10 – DC 20 in the Minerals Subject Study, MEPA will not allow the further extension of quarrying activity within the 100 metre buffer zone from residential areas, particularly Siggiewi, Qrendi and Mqabba, as shown on Policy Maps SI 1, QR 1 and MA 1, around the airport perimeter, as well as into scheduled areas or areas meriting scheduling or other protected areas, as indicated in the relevant Environmental Constraints Maps. Those sections of disused quarries falling within these buffer zones will be restored and rehabilitated back to agricultural use or as appropriate. The rehabilitation and restoration of disused quarries falling outside these buffer zones will be directed by Policy SMIA 09, the respective Area Policies, where applicable, and policies in the Minerals Subject Plan (2002) particularly policies RES 9, RES 10, RES 11 and RES 12. Quarrying operations will be regulated by the *Code of Practice for Quarry Working and Restoration* (Annex 3 of the Supplementary Guidance of the Minerals Subject Plan 2003)

10.4.1 Quarrying activity has extended in close proximity to residential areas causing significant inconvenience in terms of dust and noise pollution. This is evident particularly in Mqabba. Thus a 100 metre buffer zone from residential areas is recommended to ensure a sufficient safeguard. The vicinity of quarrying activity to the airport also creates problems particularly through dust emissions which affect the flight path. Here too a 100 metre buffer zone around the perimeter of the airport is recommended. Should any quarrying operations within these buffer zones stop such areas are to be restored back to agriculture. The minerals Subject Plan approved by MEPA in 2002 is the main guidance with regard to quarrying activity. The restoration and potential development of disused quarries outside the buffer zones will be directed by the the policies in the Subject Plan and in this Plan. The policy also seeks to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive areas from such developments.

SMMW 02

Civic Amenity Sites

MEPA, in conjunction with the relevant government agencies, will encourage Local Councils within the Local Plan area to identify land for Civic Amenity Sites at appropriate strategic locations, subject to the following criteria:-

- i. the site is situated on degraded land and preferably land zoned for industrial use;
- ii. site is at least 300 metres from a residential settlement;
- iii. the site has adequately positioned and designed pedestrian and vehicular access to accommodate the anticipated level of movements it will generate;
- iv. provides access and suitably hard-surfaced and drained off-road parking and turning

- v. space for vehicles using or servicing the site;
- v. the site is not within an area which has been scheduled or which qualifies for scheduling or has the potential to be designated as an Area of Ecological Importance, Site of Scientific Importance, Area or Site of Archaeological Importance, Area of High Landscape Value, Special Area of Conservation and Nature Reserve or within a Valley Protection Zone or an Area of High Agricultural Value;
- vi. the site is located, designed and operated having due regard to the need to minimise its impact on the amenities of residential areas, protected areas, areas used for quiet recreational uses or similar sensitive locations, particularly with regard to potential problems of noise, pollution and visual intrusion;
- vii. a landscaping scheme shall be submitted and approved with any permit application, which shall be implemented in its entirety within the first planting season and thereafter maintained; and
- viii. the submission and approval of a satisfactory Environmental Impact Assessment.

Additionally, in accordance with the Waste Management Subject Plan, Local Councils will identify locations for small drop off centres known as “bring-in sites”. Preferred locations would be:

- a) sites along the periphery of urban settlements;
- b) sites within or in the vicinity of public urban open spaces, including car parks or public gardens, provided that these will not create adverse impacts to residences in the vicinity;
- c) sites which do not create traffic hazards;
- d) within industrial areas or areas zoned for industrial use.

Where a site is not managed and problems associated with smell, vermin and litter cause complaint, measures will be taken to close the site and revoke its licence, unless the necessary management procedures are put in place and effectively implemented.

10.4.2 In order to accord with the strategy of this plan of reducing tipping in the countryside, a number of strategically located Civic Amenity Sites are required. These sites would provide skips for the disposal of outsize household objects. However, sites need to be well managed in order to prevent vandalism occurring and sites taking on a very untidy appearance. These sites need to be provided where outsized household objects can be collected and separated, recyclable waste sorted into specific skips, and hazardous waste safely stored for disposal elsewhere. Civic Amenity Sites should be of a scale, which is not visually intrusive. Sites should be fenced, with controlled access, netted to restrict litter blow, landscaped with screening and designed to make optimum use of space with room for numerous skips and turning room adequate for collection and return.

10.4.3 The Waste Management Subject Plan supports the promotion of small drop off centres known as "bring centres" by Local Councils which will help not only to reduce the amount of waste requiring final disposal but will also help raise peoples awareness to waste management issues. By providing such sites, recycling will be made more financially viable and will reduce the amount of waste which has to be landfilled. The advantages of this type of scheme are that they collect a relatively pure waste product, which can be sent for recycling with little or no treatment. MEPA will encourage local councils and/or private operators to manage sites by providing assistance and guidance on siting and training required for managing sites. Councils could financially benefit from this arrangement by sharing in profits gained from selling of materials for recycling. MEPA in conjunction with Wasteserve have recently carried out a series of site visits in order to discuss the issue of land allocation for Civic Amenity Sites, and various suggestions were put forward particularly a site in Kirkop (Il-Bur ta' Dingli).

11. Public Utilities

11.1 Introduction

- 11.1.1 The plan area includes a concentration of industrial installations and other commercial establishments which all place demands on an adequate provision of public utilities. The term Public Utilities covers Electricity, Water Resources and Telecommunications.
- 11.1.2 The Report of Survey identified the need for the siting of new substations and distribution centres, as well as the upgrading of the existing electricity network, existing Distribution Centres, a new underground tunnel linking and reinforcing the existing electricity grid between Marsa and Delimara Power Stations.
- 11.1.3 The Plan also needs to address the issue of reuse and recycling of surface water runoff. It has been indicated by a number of Local Councils (e.g. Tarxien and Zurrieq) that flooding occurs in specific areas of the locality. This implies improving water catchment management through the siting of water storage facilities such as reservoirs and retention basins. All localities in the plan area are supplied by the Lapsi Reverse Osmosis Plant which feeds a number of water retention sites namely Qrendi, Ghaxaq and Schinas (Luqa) reservoirs.
- 11.1.4 Discussions with Maltacom indicate that during the plan period no major changes are envisaged in the telecommunications sector which would require significant new land take up. Any expansion envisaged is minor and could be accommodated within the residential areas.
- 11.1.5 The following Military/Security facilities are located in the plan area - Armed Forces of Malta offices and barracks at Luqa (adjacent to the old airport terminal), Tar-Robba (l/o Kirkop), Ta' B'Xejn (Hal Far l/o Zurrieq) and property managed by the Malta Police Force at Ta' Kandja (l/o Siggiewi).

11.2 Strategic Background

- 11.2.1 Structure Plan Policies PUT 3 and PUT 8 encourage efficient recycling and reuse of water whilst policy PUT 7 encourages the development of water storage and retention basins in order to reduce water losses and collection of water runoff.
- 11.2.2 With regard to Sewerage, Structure Plan Policies PUT 10 and PUT 12 provide guidance for the establishment of new sewage treatment plants.

11.3 Strategy

- 11.3.1 The strategy with regard to public utilities is:
- To encourage the provision of facilities to store storm water run off and alleviate flooding problems.
 - To encourage upgrading of existing electrical supply facilities and channel new facilities to areas within the Limits to Development as far as possible.

11.4 Policies

SMPU 01 Water runoff Management and Identification of Flood Prone Areas

MEPA will cooperate with and support proposals and measures for sustainable drainage systems by entities responsible for the provision of infrastructural services to control surface water run-off, as close to its origin as possible, in the Local Plan Area and particularly in the following Flood Prone Areas, as indicated on the respective Policy Maps, and surrounding areas, particularly with regard to improvements in storm water runoff management, including measures aimed to secure control, management and more efficient collection of surface water run-off:

- i. The upper and lower parts of Triq Wied il-Ghajj (Zabbar/Marsascala);
- ii. Triq it-Tempesta, Triq Fulija and Triq Warda (Qrendi);
- iii. Parts of Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija and environs and part of Triq il-Madonna tal-Gilju (Mqabba);
- iv. Triq is-Sur (Fgura);
- v. Triq Dun Karm Psajla and part of Triq l-Innu Malti (Zebbug);
- vi. Junction intersection between Triq Lapsi and Triq Mons. M. Azzopardi (Siggiewi);
- vii. Triq il-Lampuka and Triq Sir Paul Boffa (Paola);
- viii. Triq Valletta (Zurrieq);
- ix. Triq T. Zahra (Zejtun); and
- x. Triq Karlu Maretta and Triq Anglu Mangion (Tarxien).

In assessing developments within such areas MEPA will consult with the relevant entities. MEPA will also require that proposals for development or redevelopment within flood prone areas are carefully assessed with regard to their impact on increasing flooding and where major developments are concerned (as specified in Appendix A), MEPA may require a detailed Flood Risk Assessment Report to be prepared in accordance with the Terms of Reference prepared by MEPA and undertaken by a competent person approved by MEPA. The Assessment Report is to be carried out at the expense of developers and would be expected to highlight the detailed impact of the proposed development on these flood prone areas and support possible mitigation measures to overcome the problems emanating from the development. In the event that the Assessment Report concludes to the satisfaction of MEPA that development could be permitted, development will be allowed subject to any related conditions, restrictions and flood mitigation, including flood defence, measures, that may be required.

11.4.1 Flooding occurs in a number of streets within the settlements of the plan area e.g Tarxien, Zurrieq, Qrendi. This natural condition occurs because of the particular topographic setup of the settlement pattern and that additional development has been allowed without the provision of supporting storm water management measures in these areas. In the plan area, a general and preliminary study on flooding, particularly in rural areas, has been carried out as part of the Hydrological and Geological Resources Environmental Survey. Sites prone to flooding primarily within the urban settlements have been indicated by the respective Local Councils. The policy seeks to ensure that any proposed development within the flood prone areas is backed up by appropriate studies and the findings of such studies are given due attention in the process of determining such proposals. With regard to major developments it may be necessary to request the developer to commission a Flood Risk Assessment Report to ascertain the such impacts.

11.4.2 A wide range of sustainable drainage options is available, as indicated below:

- i. preventive measures -- eg rain-water recycling, good-practice design and maintenance;

- ii. filter strips and swales vegetated landscape features with smooth surfaces and a gentle downhill gradient to drain water evenly off impermeable surfaces, mimicking natural drainage patterns;
- iii. filter drains and permeable and porous pavements permeable surfaces to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material placed below ground to store water prior to discharge;
- iv. infiltration devices -- below-ground or surface structures to drain water directly into the ground (soakaways, infiltration trenches, swales with infiltration and infiltration basins), which may be used at source or the run-off may be conveyed to the infiltration area in a pipe or swale; and
- v. basins and ponds structures designed to hold water when it rains; basins are free from water in dry weather, ponds contain water at all times and are designed to hold more when it rains; examples include detention basins, balancing/attenuation ponds and, flood storage reservoirs.

12. Inter Area Policies

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 This Section includes policies that are applicable to specific localities within the SMLP. They are different from General Policies in that they are not applicable to all localities and do not deal specifically with one particular area and therefore, does not form part of the Area Policies. In this respect the need has arisen for the formulation of Inter-Area Policies to be grouped within this Chapter.

12.2 Transport

SMIA 01

Deletion of South Harbours Link Road

It is recommended that the Structure Plan Review should delete proposals for the section of the South Harbours Link Road, between Ghajn Dwieli and Labour Road, Zabbar.

12.1.1 The Structure Plan (policies RDS1 and RDS4) proposes the construction of a new arterial road to improve the accessibility of the Three Cities and nearby areas. The Grand Harbour Local Plan (refer to policy GT01) again highlighted the need for this road, and indicated the general alignment for the road (refer to Figure 6). However, virtually all of the road would be within the area covered by the SMLP, and therefore the impact of this road has been considered in more depth during the preparation of this Plan.

12.2.2 The proposed arterial road would have to pass through Wied Blandun, which is a scheduled valley area. Apart from its aesthetic and ecological value, the valley is of geo-environmental significance and is the only natural open space in this densely populated area.

12.2.3 Furthermore, the road would have to pass very close to, and possibly under, the fortifications of the Three Cities. It would seriously detract from the setting of this Grade 1 scheduled site, which is on the tentative list of World Heritage Sites. Construction works could also potentially damage the stability of the bastions and ancillary works.

SMIA 02

Highway Improvements for the South Harbours Area

In accordance with Structure Plan policies RDS1 and RDS4, and in light of SMIA 01, MEPA will permit and encourage the Malta Transport Authority to construct various new road links and undertake related highway and traffic management measures as indicated on Map 10. These will include the following.

- i. Comprehensive and high quality traffic calming and embellishment along Vjal it-28 Ta' April (Paola) / Triq Haz-Zabbar (Fgura) / Triq Hompesch (Fgura), and Triq il-Kunsill ta' L-Ewropa (Zabbar).**

- ii. The realignment of existing roads to effectively connect the western end of Triq Bieb Is-Sultan (Zabbar) to Triq Tal-Labour (Zabbar).
- iii. Comprehensive up-grading of Route 26 from Triq Tal Barrani to the Hompesch Arch roundabout.
- iv. The construction of a new single carriageway link road (referred to as the Zabbar - Bulebel Link Road) and necessary junctions between Triq San Anard (Tarxien) and Triq Villabate (Zabbar) partly using existing schemed roads.
- v. Improvement of Triq Tal-Barrani at the Tarxien traffic signals to increase junction capacity.
- vi. Improvement of the Kordin Roundabout and the upgrading of Triq Ghajn Dwieli. In addition appropriate vehicular control measures need to be taken in Triq L-Isqof Buhagiar to direct trailer or heavy vehicles traffic exiting from Kordin to make use of the road between MCAST and the Kordin Industrial estate.
- vii. Traffic management measures to discourage the use of Polverista Gate by traffic leaving the Three Cities (also see policy SMFG 01)

All new major highway works will take into account the following requirements and objectives:

- i. Land affected by construction, but not forming part of the road links should be restored.
- ii. Avoid affecting old rural structures that merit retention.
- iii. Stone from any dismantled rubble walls should be re-used for the maintenance of other rubble walls in the area.
- iv. Any mitigating measures arising from the EIA and TPS will be implemented.
- v. All legal requirements relating to rubble walls and protected trees shall be complied with.
- vi. Lighting provision along rural roads should be so designed as not to create light pollution
- vii. Design should take into account storm water runoff measures and in the case of rural roads allow for the passage of wildlife.
- viii. Any landscaping along such roads should make use of appropriate vegetation/trees as specified the Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands (2002).

Buildings, structures, features and/or sites of historical, architectural, cultural and/or archaeological significance should not be adversely affected by the proposed development, unless the Authority is satisfied that adequate mitigation measures are adopted to minimise or cancel such adverse effects.

Any enclosed rural spaces created by the new roads are to be safeguarded from any development and designated as Strategic Open Gaps subject to policy SMCO 10.

No development or redevelopment, along this route, as indicated in Map 10, will be permitted if it would compromise any element of this highway strategy.

In addition to the above, MEPA, together with the Malta Transport Authority, will study a suitable route to connect the Ricasoli Industrial Estate to the Hompesch Arch roundabout, as much as

possible utilising existing roads. The connection needs to be designed properly so as to minimise the land take of agricultural land, but also to reduce the visual impact that this may have on the Cottonera Lines bastions.

- 12.2.4 If the South Harbours Link Road is not constructed, an alternative strategy is required to remove 'through' traffic from Fgura, particularly Triq Haz-Zabbar / Triq Hompesch, and to improve access into the Three Cities. A wide range of measures and improvements will be required over a large area. It will be necessary to discourage and restrain the use of routes through Fgura, whilst providing attractive and convenient alternatives.
- 12.2.5 The restraint element of the package would include extensive traffic calming and embellishment along Triq Haz Zabbar / Triq Hompesch and surrounding streets (see SMFG 01). To divert traffic away from the centre of Fgura, the existing route (No. 26) through Bulebel will need to be upgraded in terms of both its condition and traffic management arrangements. To encourage traffic from Marsascala and the southern part of Zabbar, to naturally transfer to route No 26, the Tarxien – Bulebel - Zabbar Link Road would be constructed. This will be a single carriageway distributor road with a design speed of 50 kph.
- 12.2.6 To accommodate the additional traffic flows at the Tarxien traffic signals this junction will require improvements. Policy SMIA 03 details other improvements along the Triq Tal Barrani corridor. This strategy is also intended to reduce traffic flows in the centre of Zabbar. This will be achieved both by the construction of the Tarxien – Bulebel - Zabbar Link Road and by the creation of a local relief route in the northern part of Zabbar. The latter would be formed by existing schemed roads (Triq Alessio Erardi and Triq Bieb is-Sultan) and minor improvement of the road network near the Zabbar Gate.
- 12.2.7 Particular care will be required when designing the sections of road that are ODZ and pass through pleasant open countryside, to ensure that the roads blend as best as possible into the landscape and adverse environmental impacts are minimized and mitigated. Road design should take into account stormwater runoff measures as well as allow in rural areas for the passage of wildlife. Removing traffic from the centre of Fgura will reduce traffic flows at the Kordin Roundabout. This, together with improvement of the junction layout will improve movements to and from the Three Cities. The condition of Triq Ghajn Dwieli also needs to be improved to increase the attractiveness of this route in and out of the Cottonera. Three Cities traffic should be encouraged to use Ghajn Dwieli and to a lesser degree the Zabbar Gate, and be discouraged from using the Polverista Gate, so as to minimize movements through Fgura. In view of the proposed developments at Ricasoli Industrial Estate, MEPA together with the relevant authorities will study a potential route linking Zabbar with Kalkara.

SMIA 03

Improvements along Tal-Barrani Arterial Corridor

In order to improve road safety and the free flow of traffic, MEPA will support and encourage the Malta Transport Authority and other bodies to undertake works and measures to regulate and improve movements along this arterial corridor, as indicated on the Paola Transport Policy Map PA 5 and Tarxien Policy Map TA 1.

These will include:

- i. Improvement of the Palma Street and Vjal Santa Lucija (Paola) junction.**
- ii. Improving the layout of parts of the Tarxien roundabout, and closure of the Santa Lucia entry arm.**

- iii. **Increasing the capacity and efficiency of the linked traffic signals at Tarxien and the construction of a single lane flyover and widening of Triq Tal Barrani as specified in policy SMIA 02.**
- iv. **Improving the layout and rationalising movements at the Zejtun Street junction (Bir Id-Deheb).**
- v. **The provision of landscaping along this arterial road in line with the Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands (2002).**

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

MEPA will take the necessary action to close all illegal openings and access points along this corridor.

12.2.8 Major traffic flows should be concentrated on the main road network. To ensure that this takes place safely and efficiently it will be increasingly necessary to manage and control the use of arterial corridors, like Tal-Barrani Road.

12.2.9 The right turn movements into and out of the Palma Street junction from Vjal Santa Lucija are particularly hazardous and therefore it would be appropriate to improve road safety at this junction through appropriate measures to be determined by the Traffic Management Directorate of the Malta Transport Authority. The scheme should include prohibition of the right turn into Palma Street. As few vehicles undertake this turn, this ban will not be problematic.

12.2.10 Parts of the Tarxien roundabout operate near to capacity at peak periods, and only relatively small improvements are possible within the existing boundaries of the junction. Nevertheless, works to increase the flare on the Tal-Barrani Road South arm and the exit geometry on the Tal-Barrani Road North arm would be worthwhile. Additionally, the safety and capacity of the junction could be improved by closing the entry from Santa Lucia. To provide an alternative exit from the housing estate, the junction of Triq Hal Luqa / Dawret It-Torri would be improved.

12.2.11 The traffic signals on Triq Tal-Barrani operate relatively well, however, capacity could be increased if longer left turn lanes are constructed and more flexible/efficient signal timing is introduced. Such modest improvements would help accommodate any traffic growth along the corridor. Along the length of this corridor there are a number of unauthorized openings and access points, which prejudice road safety. The MEPA, with the assistance of other bodies, will take the necessary action to ensure that these are closed.

12.2.12 The Zejtun junction at Bir Id-Deheb suffers some congestion at peak times, mainly due the confusion caused by traffic turning to and from the side roads. It is feasible and desirable to ban various turns and 'divert' them to the Ghaxaq Bypass Roundabout. This will simplify movements, and improve the flow along the arterial road. Only a relatively small number of vehicles will be diverted, but the resultant improvement should be marked. Guide islands will be constructed to enforce the banned movements, and to provide a 'ghost island' for traffic turning right into Triq Ghadam.

SMIA 04

Creation of Boulevards

MEPA will support efforts by the Malta Transport Authority to convert a number of excessively wide roads, particularly the ones listed below and shown on the respective Policy Maps, into

attractive tree lined boulevards:

- i. **Vjal Kottoner, Fgura.**
- ii. **Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq, Ghaxaq.**
- iii. **Dawret Il-Gudja, Gudja.**
- iv. **Triq Vjal It-Torri, Gudja.**
- v. **Triq Bir Miftuh, Gudja.**
- vi. **Triq Il-Lewziet / Triq Iz-Zebbiegh, Kirkop.**
- vii. **Triq Il-Konvoj Ta' Santa Marija, Mqabba.**
- viii. **Triq It-Telgha Ta' Rahal Gdid / Triq Il-Belt Valletta, Paola.**
- ix. **Triq It-Tempesta, Qrendi.**
- x. **Triq Mons. Mikiel Azzopardi, Siggiewi.**
- xi. **Triq Tal-Labour, Zabbar.**
- xii. **Vjal Il-Helsien, Zebbug.**
- xiii. **Triq Il-President Anton Buttigieg, Zejtun.**
- xiv. **Triq Is-Suq / Triq A. S. Zammit, Zejtun.**
- xv. **Vjal Il-Blue Grotto, Zurrieq.**

The necessary works will include reducing the width of carriageways, the provision or widening of pavements, construction of parking bays and bus laybys, extensive tree planting and other forms of landscaping, in line with the Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands (2002).

Where the roads are designated as local access roads, then traffic calming measures may also be appropriate.

12.2.13 A number of village and town bypasses and relief roads have been built excessively wide, and without such basic needs as pavements. This has resulted in excessive traffic speed, hazards for pedestrians, and where development has subsequently taken place outside the bypass, in severance of communities. Many of these roads are visually monotonous and generally unattractive. There is a particular concentration of such roads in the plan area, and this policy aims to achieve improvements in these areas. The measures proposed in the above policy if implemented should not only improve road safety but also general traffic conditions. Extensive tree planting, along these roads will create attractive boulevards, thereby greatly improving visual amenity along these important thoroughfares.

12.2.14 If such schemes are undertaken as part of road reconstruction or general maintenance works, then the real cost of the improvements will be reduced. In fact, reducing the area of carriageway and using space more effectively will achieve savings in construction and future maintenance costs. Some of the roads in question are designated as local access roads (refer to Map 9) and therefore it may be appropriate in these cases for traffic calming measures to be included as part of the improvement scheme. The proposed road hierarchy classifies roads i, iv, v, viii, xi, xii, xiii, and xiv as local access or access only roads.

SMIA 05

Safe Routes to Schools

There is a particularly high concentration of schools in Paola and Tarxien. MEPA will therefore encourage the Malta Transport Authority, the local councils, the Ministry for Education and the schools, to pursue a programme of establishing safe routes to schools in order to encourage the use of sustainable means of travel for the journey to and from school.

MEPA will also seek that major projects within these localities, and others as may be the case, contribute to the implementation of such measures.

- 12.2.15 A significant number of schools are situated in Paola and Tarxien. The former has 11 schools of all types, accommodating some 4,200 students, whilst the latter has 6 schools, serving 1,500 students. Whilst many of the children will use public transport, the “school run” by parents contributes significantly to the problems of vehicular congestion, particularly, morning peak hours.
- 12.2.16 Initiatives to create safe routes to schools can help encourage more sustainable ways for children to travel to school, and assist those that already walk, cycle, or use buses (of all kinds). Such schemes, which often arise out of the preparation of School Travel Plans (STPs), are tailored to meet the individual needs of schools, following a study of travel patterns. These can be prepared by the ADT in collaboration with MEPA.
- 12.2.17 The preparation of STPs relating to both pupils and teachers can raise environmental awareness at an early age. They can help promote more healthy and independent life styles in young people.
- 12.2.18 Journeys to schools, and conditions around them, can be made safer by a wide range of traffic management measures, including better crossing facilities, wider pavements around schools and on the main approach routes, better control of parking, and general traffic calming. Although policy makes a specific reference to the Paola/Tarxien area, this policy may be applied to other areas where such problems may be identified, and major projects will be asked to contribute to a fund which would assist in the implementation of such initiatives.

SMIA 06

Lorry Route Network

MEPA will support and promote the introduction of a lorry route network, as shown on the Map 9 in order to:

- i. Ensure that quarry related traffic uses the most suitable routes;**
- ii. Minimize the impact on country lanes and neighbouring towns and villages;**
- iii. Limit damage to the road network (e.g. road subsidence).**

To ensure that the network is effective, traffic management measures and regulations will be required. This could include lorry prohibitions and possibly width restrictions to ensure that unsuitable routes are not used. In addition the following measures need to be implemented:

- a) Introduction of a one way gyratory system at Siggiewi and the completion of the schemed road at Triq Patri Guze’ Delia.**
- b) A new access road to the north of Mqabba (Map 9 and Map MA 1).**
- c) The complete upgrading of parts of Triq ta’ Hal-Farrug and Triq tas-Sejba (Map 9, Map MA 1 and Map SI 2).**

MEPA will require all development applications for new industrial development within quarries, new quarries or extensions of existing ones, and landfilling to appropriately contribute towards the cost of introducing and maintaining the lorry route network.

MEPA will encourage the Malta Transport Authority to undertake and give priority to the required road construction and maintenance along the lorry route network, provided that works are designed and constructed in a manner sympathetic to the surrounding areas.

12.2.19 The plan area contains most of Malta's soft stone quarries and a few hard stone quarries. Some of these soft stone quarries house industrial processes and others are increasingly being used for the dumping of inert waste. Such activities attract lorry movements that can be intense. The passage of lorries often leads to the rapid deterioration of roads and damages third party property, such as houses and rubble walls, and also causes a severe reduction in the amenity of residential areas.

12.2.20 The primary objective of this policy is to seek to minimise the impact caused by quarry related traffic, keeping it away, where possible, from villages and built up areas and by having heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) use the lorry route network at all times. Measures and regulations will be needed to effectively enforce use of the proposed network. By definition arterial and distributor roads are expected to cater for lorry movements, and therefore, based on the proposed road hierarchy, these roads form the backbone of the network. This policy therefore aims to direct such traffic along such roads. The remainder of the proposed lorry route network consists of the access routes to and from the quarry areas (i.e. the links between the quarries and the arterial and distributor roads). This policy does not advocate major new road construction given the environmental damage and costs associated with such schemes. However, there are particular instances, where improvements and other measures are needed to ensure that routes are suitable and adequate for the level of quarry related traffic.

SMIA 07

Area Reserved For Airport Taxiway Route

MEPA safeguards land, as indicated in the Luqa Airport Environs Policy Map LU 4, for the future provision of a taxi-way as required by the Malta International Airport. However, MEPA will expect any future application for a taxiway to be supported by relevant studies (including an analysis of options for its siting, development feasibility and an EIA of the proposals) and proposals for amelioration of any adverse effects emanating from its provision.

There is a presumption that no form of development will be permitted in the areas indicated, that will prejudice the planning and development of the taxi-way.

Regarding airport operations MEPA will encourage any measures to reduce the negative impacts emanating from the airport (e.g. noise pollution) as well as increasing the safety of airport operations.

12.2.21 The Malta International Airport has indicated that the airport cannot function properly without a proper taxi-way, particularly during peak periods when because of the lack of this taxi-way delays are very frequent. The lack of the taxi-way requires that aircraft drive along the runway prior to taking off thus no aircraft can land during this time since the runway is occupied. The same difficulty arises when aircraft land. The provision of a taxi-way will increase the capacity of the runway to accommodate additional aircraft movements. Two potential areas have been indicated following discussions with MIA and these areas are being reserved. However, any future proposals for a taxi-way will require carrying out the necessary studies, including a cost/benefit analysis, to identify the various options possible and an assessment of these options to determine the best option both from a functional and operational aspect as well as from an environmental and planning perspective.

SMIA 08

A Transport Strategy for Fgura, Paola and Tarxien area

MEPA will support and collaborate with the Malta Transport Authority, the relevant local councils and any relevant agencies, in preparing a Transport strategy for the areas of Fgura, Paola and Tarxien. This strategy should address amongst others, the following priority issues:

- i. a reduction in through traffic within such localities;**
- ii. the improvement of strategic junctions;**
- iii. introduction of traffic calming measures and controlled parking schemes;**
- iv. facilitate pedestrian movement and safety within and between these localities;**
- v. management of vehicular movements within and between these localities;**
- vi. encourage the use of alternative means of transport (e.g. cycling) within and between these localities;**
- vii. reduction of negative environmental impacts resulting from vehicular movement.**

12.2.22 The localities of Fgura, Paola and Tarxien have developed in such a way that there is no well defined boundary separating them and the localities simply merge into one another. This creates various traffic problems particularly since residents within these localities drive through one or more of these three localities to get to their place of residence. On the other hand these localities also receive through traffic going primarily towards Cottonera, Zabbar and Luqa. A Transport Strategy is important in that it seeks to address this important issue within these localities to achieve a better organisation of vehicular movements and ensure improved and safe pedestrian movement whilst reducing the negative environmental impacts for the local residents. It is therefore important that the transport strategy is carried out holistically for this region within the SMLP.

SMIA 09

Sites for bus termini

In identifying suitable sites for the location of bus termini, MEPA will give regard to the following locational criteria:

- i. Site should preferably be located within the Urban Settlement, however, where this is not possible appropriate sites outside the Urban Settlement may be considered provided that such sites are located along the urban fringe, constitute derelict or degraded land and will not adversely affect scheduled or designated areas;**
- ii. Site should be in a location which is within close walking distance from within most of the urban settlement;**
- iii. Site should be adequate to allow the development of limited structures (e.g. ticketing booth, toilets) ancillary to the bus terminus.**

12.2.23 Due to the increase in the importance of various localities, and hence the increase in the use and frequency of public transport services, the need arose for the identification of appropriate sites for the location of bus termini or their relocation. Some of these localities include Qrendi, Marsascala and Zurrieq. However, there may be other localities which during the plan period may need to identify more appropriate sites. The plan does not identify such sites but through this policy seeks to provide a basis to assist in the identification of potential sites and the selection of the most appropriate in consultation with the relevant authorities.

12.3 Urban Environment

SMIA 10 Protection of Private Gardens and Open Space Enclaves in UCAs

In the private gardens and open space enclaves ,as indicated on the relevant Policy Maps, MEPA will not consider any new development or redevelopment proposals that create independent residential/non-residential units, including garages for the parking of vehicles.

In the identified private gardens and open space enclaves, development proposals will be considered if they:

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

In addition, the development proposals listed above will be considered provided that ALL the following conditions are abided to:

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

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

Within those private gardens, indicated in the relevant Policy Maps as Private Gardens Meriting Protection, which either form part of buildings of cultural, historical or architectural value or which merit scheduling, and which have been zoned for terraced house development in the Temporary Provision Schemes 1988, MEPA will consider development proposals ONLY after an assessment of the garden is carried out to the satisfaction of MEPA, to determine the importance and value of the garden and its features and whether development may be permitted. Should some level of development be permitted MEPA will prepare development planning and design

parameters to guide the development of the site in question, primarily in terms of site coverage, massing, landscaping, building heights, building design elements, etc.

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

- 12.3.1 Open spaces, both private and public, perform essential functions of separating land uses in high density areas, protects amenity by supporting trees and vegetation, define the form of the urban settlement, and are an important element in local architecture and traditional urban character. Conservation policies in the 1990 Structure Plan and the 1995 supplementary planning guidelines on UCAs provide the current policy framework for controlling development in such spaces. As part of the Local Plan process, concern, based on experience in implementing the Structure Plan policies, was raised on the adequacy of the supplementary guidelines, to protect private open spaces in UCAs.
- 12.3.2 A detailed review of the guidelines in relation to private open space in UCAs revealed that through its generic statements, the policy document created loopholes, which have given rise to development opportunities in open spaces, which were not intended by the Structure Plan and would harm the UCAs themselves. The distinction in the guidelines between the core and the periphery of UCAs is confusing and the criteria for assessing development have shortcomings which needed to be addressed.
- 12.3.3 This policy prohibits any new development proposals in open space enclaves which will create new residential units, or any other type of new uses, as these will increase densities in UCAs, which will in turn have a direct negative impact on their character, especially due to additional traffic generation and parking requirements. The policy then identifies those development proposals, which can be accepted because they will not seriously harm the value of the enclaves with the condition that certain constraints are applied. The conditions ensure that, while not hindering the enjoyment of private property or undermining the objective of revitalising deteriorating urban cores, physical development will not prejudice the intrinsic features and character of the open space.
- 12.3.4 This policy reflects an analysis, from maps and aerial photographs, of the internal private open spaces (those enclosed by existing buildings) in the UCAs in the Plan area. This analysis was generally based on the following guiding principles, developed to select those open spaces worthy of more protection. The open spaces identified for protection needed to:
- i. on average, be more than 30m wide at the shortest distance from one side of the enclave to the other; and/or
 - ii. have substantial tree cover; and/or
 - iii. have a substantial number of dwelling units overlooking the enclave; and/or
 - iv. have an unfragmented configuration.

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

- 12.3.5 In drawing up the boundaries of the enclaves indicated on the relevant Policy Maps, a flexible approach was taken to the 30m dimension if it resulted that a specific enclave achieved a considerably high conservation value when considering the other three criteria. Where an enclave was not completely surrounded by buildings and had a gap site with a frontage along an existing street, the inclusion of this gap site within the enclave was decided on an assessment of whether development of the specific site would significantly affect the overall value of enclave.
- 12.3.6 The villages and towns indicated in the policy still retain relatively large private gardens and open spaces which are characteristic of a number of town houses and small palaces within these localities. This protective policy is fundamental to conserve these features which no longer exist in other localities. The development of these strategic spaces would lessen the quality of the amenity of the traditional urban morphology within the Urban Conservation Areas. A number of these private gardens which are now being proposed to be included in the proposed UCA boundary have been zoned for terraced house development in the 1988 TPS. This policy seeks to protect such gardens and will only consider their development following a careful assessment of the heritage and architectural value of the garden and its features.
- 12.3.7 These sites also provide a visual differentiation between older residential areas and the newer modern development characterizing the periphery of localities. Development has taken place in some of these areas to the extent that future conservation efforts are determined by the existing commitments currently without any specific zoning. The trust of this policy is to protect such enclaves and private gardens, whilst allowing for limited development, particularly where this would result in the better utilization of an otherwise vacant property.

12.4 Minerals and Quarrying

SMIA 11 Softstone Quarries in Mqabba, Siggiewi, Qrendi and Kirkop

MEPA will favourably consider the rehabilitation of quarries in Mqabba, Siggiewi and Kirkop as identified on the respective Policy Maps MA 1, SI 1 and KI 1, once these become in disuse. A detailed rehabilitation scheme, in accordance with the Minerals Subject Plan, for the entire site is to be submitted, provided all the conditions of the current permit for the site are satisfied. The submission is to include:

- i. an Environmental Impact Assessment, addressing also issues relating to oil contamination from machinery/vehicles, to the satisfaction of MEPA and a feasibility study which includes a planning, financial and market appraisal of the proposed after use, where this is not to reinstate site back to agricultural use;**
- ii. the intended after-use, subject to prior clearance from all the relevant airport authorities, where applicable, in line with land uses proposed in this policy ensuring that the proposed use does not deter the amenity of or is in conflict with adjacent land uses;**
- iii. the sequence and phasing of restoration including the demolition and removal from the site of all buildings, structures and plant machinery;**
- iv. the final levels of the restored land;**
- v. a landscaping scheme to the satisfaction of MEPA, including appropriate mitigation measures**

- vi. a timetable for the completion of all works to restore the site

The following after-uses are to be actively considered by an eventual reclamation strategy in the following order of priority:

- a) for all the sites: in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, site is to be reverted back to agriculture purposes, including orchards, vineyards and greenhouses. Where suitable provision of reservoirs will be encouraged;
- b) for sites situated less than 250m from a designated residential area or the Malta International Airport boundary: local-scale formal and informal recreational facilities, including local sports facilities (e.g playing pitches, abseiling) provided that depending on the facility being proposed and the land required, a percentage of the site is to be restored back to agricultural use. Sports structures are not to exceed 1 floor above the street level and ancillary facilities, preferably, are to be located below ground level. It is recommended that development proposals include the construction of an underground reservoir for maintenance and irrigation purposes;
- c) for sites at least 250m away from a designated residential area and from the Malta International Airport boundary: sports facilities as indicated in (b) above including major impact sports (e.g. off-roading), uses falling under Use Classes Order 1994 (as amended) Class 12 and Class 17, subject to the relocation of inappropriate or inadequately mitigated Class 17 development. Depending on the development proposed a percentage of the site is to be restored back to agriculture. The roof level of any buildings, including any ancillary or common facilities, is not to exceed the existing street level.

In accordance with the Minerals Subject Plan Policy RES 9, MEPA will prepare a reclamation strategy for the existing quarries within Mqabba as identified on the Mqabba Area Policy Map MA 1.

The MEPA, in consultation with relevant authorities, will also prepare Action Plans for the areas known as Wied Xkora and Ta' Wied Costa, as indicated on the Siggiewi (Rural) Policy Map SI 2. These Action Plans will primarily address the following issues:

- 1. restoration and afteruse of the quarries;
- 2. management measures for the area;
- 3. protection of the ecological habitats and other environmental resources;
- 4. development design guidelines; and,
- 5. traffic management issues.

Disused quarries or quarries currently in operation and which become disused during the plan period will be assessed on the basis of the requirements of this policy, unless otherwise stated in the Area Policies. MEPA will not consider any development which will compromise the smooth-running of the airport operations.

12.4.1 In line with the local plan's strategy to divert inappropriate or inadequately mitigated uses from residential areas, such as warehousing or open storage, this policy aims to promote the use of disused quarries to relocate Class 17 uses to appropriate areas. Thus, rather than taking up new fresh land outside the development zone, this policy, subject to the other policies of this plan and the recommendations of the Minerals Subject Plan, actively considers the use of disused quarries for such purposes. In order to encourage businesses to relocate to such sites, it is necessary to encourage Government to act as a mediator between land owner/s and business

concerns wishing to relocate and promote incentives such as long term leases, option to purchase, free rent for initial periods and grants or loans to assist in the new construction and relocation to new premises. It must be stressed that relocation will not be achievable solely through planning legislation, but also by effective estate management.

- 12.4.2 The Structure Plan recognises the strong demand for appropriate premises for such uses and advocates the designation of sites, in addition to those already allocated in the Temporary Provision Schemes (IND6).
- 12.4.3 A total of 24 and 21 disused quarries are found within Mqabba and Siggiewi Local Council areas, respectively. Appendix E presents critical data regarding each of these disused quarries together with a preliminary suggested general use as well as the 21 operational quarries in Mqabba
- 12.4.4 The cluster of operational and disused quarries at Wied Xkora, Siggiewi, is second largest in the Maltese Islands, in terms of land area, after those found at Mqabba. The extent of this complex of quarries necessitates a holistic approach to the restoration and reuse of the quarries. In this sense an Action Plan is being recommended for the area. A significant area occupied by Wied Xkora qualifies for scheduling in terms of ecology, scientific features, hydrology, scenery, geology and agriculture since it forms part of a large valley system of tributary valleys draining downstream in Wied il-Kbir.
- 12.4.5 The local plan has thus identified a number of existing quarries in Mqabba and Siggiew where an area-based approach to reclamation would be the most appropriate strategy. This approach is inline with the Minerals Subject Plan. Reclamation strategies will need to have regard to the following considerations:
- i. Land ownership and leasing arrangements for the site area;
 - ii. The provisions of existing Police Licences and development permits;
 - iii. Any emerging or adopted development plan policies;
 - iv. The extent of remaining reserves within the sites;
 - v. The land use constraints applicable to these areas;
 - vi. Provide the framework to accommodate proposals which help secure the maintenance and enhancement of the open countryside, landscape and ecological features of the area;
 - vii. Access, traffic and other amenity considerations.

12.5 Recreation

SMIA 12

District Park along the Cottonera Lines

MEPA designates the area in Fgura and Zabbar bounded by Wied Blandun and the Cottonera Lines, as indicated on the Fgura and Zabbar Policy Maps FG 1, ZA 1 and ZA 2 for the setting up of a District Park which would primarily cater for informal recreational activities which would include children play areas, picnic areas and seating facilities as well as jogging trails, cycling tracks and similar low key sports facilities, and expansion of existing facilities, if appropriate, provided that such development does not in any way compromise the historic and architectural character of the Cottonera fortifications and Wied Blandun.

An Environmental Management Plan, incorporating details of a landscaping scheme and mechanisms to be used for the monitoring of the Plan, in line with the provisions in SMCO 09, is to be submitted for the entire area specifying the facilities to be provided as well as an interpretive

plan to enhance the awareness towards conserving and understanding the Cottonera fortifications and Wied Blandun. A pedestrian path is to be provided along the entire length of the fortifications.

Any development proposed, shall:

- i. make use of existing derelict buildings;**
- ii. not encroach upon or adversely affect protected areas or sites of archaeological, ecological, scientific and historic importance, and appropriate mitigation measures as required by the MEPA and other relevant agencies will have to be implemented; and,**
- iii. not exceed the height of 4.75 m (one floor)**

MEPA will support and encourage cooperation and liaison between Government departments, Zabbar and Fgura Local Councils and private agencies, including NGOs, interested in the implementation of this project.

12.5.1 This is the main green lung between Fgura, Zabbar and the Cottonera lines and through improvements will provide a much needed semi-natural recreational space to compensate for the lack of recreational space within the locality of Fgura. This should also enhance the protection of the fortifications. The existing sports facilities need upgrading (to include dressing rooms and proper parking facilities), particularly the one in Fgura. The District Park would provide increased recreational space to residents of Fgura, Zabbar and the Three Cities. Fgura currently has only about 5000 m² of space for informal recreation (playing grounds, seating areas) giving a density of 0.1 m² of recreational space within urban areas per resident. Zabbar too has a low recreational provision per person (only 0.4 m²). The average for the whole SMLP area is 2.1 m².

12.5.2 For the purposes of this policy The District Park will extend from Wied Blandun (which is scheduled a Level 4 AEI and Level 1 SSI) towards the afforested land, popularly known as “Il-Foss”, in front of is-Sur ta’ San Klement (limits of the Fgura) up to the agricultural land facing Triq Santa Liberata (on the opposite side of Capuchins convent). The existing afforested area presently consists of olive groves and other trees covering an area of around 80,000 sq.m. and is divided into three areas namely, Tal-Hawlija Public garden, Notre Dame Walkways and St.Clement Picnic Area.

12.5.3 The establishment of a District Park (approximate size 290,000 m²) would also secure a permanent strategic settlement gap between Cottonera fortifications and Zabbar and Fgura without the need to modify the development boundary to attain this objective. Besides, the lack of a District Park in the South, which would have a similar function as Ta’ Qali in the Central/North part of the Island has long been felt particularly in this region characterized by high-density settlements of Fgura, Tarxien and Zabbar all of which act as suburbs to the heavily industrialized Cottonera area.

SMIA 13

National parks

This local plan designates the area known as L-Ghassa tal-Munxar (Marsascala) and the coastal stretch between Il-Ponta taz-Zonqor (Marsascala) and Blata l-Bajda (Xghajra), as indicated in Policy Maps MS1, MS2, XA1 and ZA1, as National Parks primarily for informal recreation (e.g. walking, cycling) and the appreciation of the ecological, geological, archaeological as well as cultural-historical features of these areas. Within these parks priority will be given to the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural and cultural-historical heritage. Positive provision will also be made for recreational uses consistent with this objective. Limited commercial development related to the needs of the visitors will be considered as will be identified by the Management Plan to be prepared for each of the areas and which would include the following:

- a. A land-use survey of the areas;**
- b. Identification of permitted uses;**
- c. Visitor management facilities, including interpretation provisions;**
- d. Any environmental improvements required**

12.5.4 These two stretches of coast are important ecological, geological and cultural areas due to the variety of features and elements present in these areas ranging from salt pans to fortifications to a number of important ecological habitats. This policy seeks to maximize the recreational use of the site whilst protecting and providing for the appreciation of the rich heritage of these areas. The Management Plan for each area is important since it will provide the basis for the setting up of the national parks and identifies the permitted activities and developments. A number of features require immediate attention e.g. Ducluseaux Battery

AREA POLICIES

13. Fgura Area Policies

13.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 873,190 m²

Rural Area: 269,520 m²

Population as per 1995 census: 11042

Population 2005 Census: 11276

- 13.1.1 Fgura was mostly established in the sixties and has been expanding since. Fgura is flanked by the Cottonera Lines and Wied Blandun as well as the localities of Paola, Zabbar, and Tarxien. Population growth between 1985 and 1995 increased by 34%. MEPA's forecasts suggest that the population of this locality is likely to increase by 3% between 2002 and 2010. Data at MEPA indicates around 40,000 m² of vacant land is available for development which will adequately such demand. The population density currently stands at around 10,000 persons per km², one of the highest in the plan area. Any major further increases in the population will compound the pressures in this locality.
- 13.1.2 Until the late 50s and early 60s, Fgura was nothing more than fields, however, the lack of available land for development in the areas of Paola and Zabbar as well as the area's proximity to the Grand Harbour and the Drydocks, contributed to the development of this area into a new town. The urban development of Fgura is different from that in most of the other localities in the plan area since it did not develop along the traditional village urban morphology around a main square or around a church, but was the result of the expansion of the surrounding villages. Thus although Fgura is a recent locality it can be said that it is made up of the peripheries of the main surrounding towns - Paola, Zabbar and Tarxien.
- 13.1.3 Unfortunately, the development of this locality has not given adequate attention to the provision of facilities to complement the residential development in terms of public urban open spaces, children's playgrounds, adequate sports facilities and social and community facilities (e.g. day care centre). At 0.1 m² recreational space per resident Fgura has the lowest ratio of all localities. Residents therefore seek recreation facilities in other localities. Existing public urban open spaces need to be retained and new ones identified.
- 13.1.4 Pollution, resulting primarily from traffic (mainly through traffic) along Zabbar Road is a perennial problem. Studies carried out by both the Local Council and Government confirm that Fgura is one of seven localities which do not measure up to the air quality standards of the European Union because of high airborne lead content. Zabbar Road and Hompesch Road have split Fgura in two, thus negatively affecting the urban integration of the locality. A survey carried out by the Fgura Local Council in November 2000 which researched social aspects within this locality identified that more than 61% of the residents were ready to move out of this locality primarily because of pollution related problems. Fgura retains a strong residential character, even though commercial and entertainment developments have increased in the area. Fgura has been identified as a Secondary Town Centre in the Retail Topic Study.

13.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- Traffic management measures
- Provision of additional public urban open spaces
- Upgrading of sports facilities

13.3 Strategy

- 13.3.1 The strategy for Fgura envisages reinforcing its residential role through the provision of social and community facilities and improving the environmental quality of the locality, primarily by discouraging through traffic from the area and improving open space provision.

13.4 Area Policies

SMFG 01

Traffic Calming

In conformity with policies SMIA 02 and SMIA 08, MEPA in collaboration with the Traffic Management Directorate (Malta Transport Authority) will encourage and support schemes to introduce traffic calming measures in residential streets throughout Fgura, and particularly the introduction of comprehensive traffic calming/environmental improvements along the whole length of Zabbar Road/Hompesch Road. These schemes should be designed to a standard that will enhance the streetscape, improve road safety, and discourage “through” traffic from using inappropriate routes, whilst greatly improving conditions in these roads, which are the focus for commercial and communal activity. The works should improve conditions for public transport, and effectively discourage usage by all, except motorists requiring local access.

- 13.4.1 Fgura is a densely urbanised area, and consequently traffic conditions in many streets are poor. A number of side streets are used as rat runs, by motorists seeking to avoid congestion along Zabbar Road / Hompesch Road which attracts a volume of 1500 vph at peak periods. Excessive speeds are not uncommon and generally road safety conditions need improving. Traffic calming measures over a wide area, particularly Zabbar Road/Hompesch Road, are necessary to address these problems and bring about real improvements through traffic calming measures (wider pavements) that will reduce traffic speeds, whilst improving operating conditions for bus services and creating a pleasant safe environment for pedestrians and residents in terms of decreasing air pollution emanating from car emissions. This policy should be addressed in conjunction with the Transport Strategy referred to in policy SMIA 08 and the Highway Improvements for the South Harbours Area referred to in policy SMIA 02.

SMFG 02

Removal of scrapyards at Triq id-Dejma

MEPA will encourage the removal of the licensed scrapyards in Triq id-Dejma as indicated in Fgura Policy Map FG 1. Development of this site will include recreational facilities in the form of public urban open spaces, social and community facilities as well as residential and commercial/retail development. Development proposals will include the provision of a road linking Triq id-Dejma

and Triq in-Nigem. MEPA would consider proposals for development following the submission of a Project Description Statement based on parameters which are to be provided to the developer by MEPA.

On submission and approval by MEPA of the Project Description Statement developer will submit an Outline Development Application. As part of the Outline Development Application for this site the developer is to submit a report outlining the actions to be taken to decontaminate the site. This is to be approved by MEPA.

During the development of the site should any archaeological remains be found in the area these are to be reported immediately to MEPA.

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for residential use as specified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

13.4.2 The scrapyard (19360 m²) close to the residential area is a nuisance and an eyesore. Its removal would significantly improve the area. Despite the area being outside the development zone some incentive to encourage the removal of the operation is considered appropriate. The main uses have been indicated as being residential, commercial and retail use, together with the provision of underground parking facilities, with sufficient public urban open space which would include sports and recreational facilities which are severely lacking in this locality. MEPA will provide the developer with Terms of Reference for the preparation of a Project Description Statement which once approved will direct the submission of designs as part of the Outline Development Application. Provision also has to be made for the introduction of a road linking Triq id-Dejma with Triq in-Nigem. The area is significantly degraded and through such development the site will be significantly enhanced.

SMFG 03

Rezoning of site at Triq Mater Boni Consigli

The site in Triq Mater Boni Consigli, as indicated in the Fgura Policy Map FG 1 and Inset Map FG A1, which was zoned as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is being rezoned for residential development in line with Policy SMHO 02. Since this is an end plot a side curtilage is to be provided. MEPA may request an appropriate planning gain from the developer in consultation with the Fgura Local Council.

13.4.3 This plot is the end plot of a row of residential buildings and the development of this plot will abut a blank party wall. The provision of a side curtilage will provide a more pleasing edge to this residential area and avoid having a blank party wall negatively affecting the visual amenity of the area.

SMFG 04

Improvement and Expansion of sports facilities

In line with policy SMRE 01, the MEPA will consider proposals to improve the existing sports facilities at the existing football pitch in Triq A.M. Valperga and provide additional sports facilities, as indicated in the Fgura Policy Map FG 1, in line with the following conditions:

- i. The football pitch is to be detached from the bastion wall and a public passage of not less than 3 metres is to be allowed between the shifted football pitch and the bastion

- walls;
- ii. The redevelopment of existing ancillary facilities (e.g. dressing rooms) provided that any extension proposed is limited to no more than 25% of the current built up footprint and buildings are to be kept to one storey. Provision of underground facilities would also be considered;
- iii. The perimeter of the site should be adequately landscaped in line with the *Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands, 2002*.
- iv. Adequate parking is to be provided on site provided that this is located on derelict land and does not take up any additional agricultural land

13.4.4 The existing football pitch is located at the foot of the St. John Bastion along the Cottonera lines. This diminishes the appreciation of the fortifications, whilst it does not respect the historical context of the bastion walls. This policy encourages the shifting of the football pitch away from the bastion wall allowing public access between the bastion and the pitch as well as the improvement of existing facilities with limited extension. The improvement of such facilities in Fgura are considered important since recreational facilities in this locality are rather scarce. Through appropriate landscaping any adverse visual impacts would be mitigated.

SMFG 05

Mixed development at Dahlet in–Nicca l-Antika

MEPA will consider proposals for the development of the site at Triq Dahlet in-Nicca l-Antika, as indicated in the Fgura Policy Map FG 1, for residential development in line with policy SMHO 02, subject to the following conditions:

- i. A master plan for the comprehensive development of the area to include various development options which take account of the scheduled farmhouse and its possible incorporation in the overall project scheme;
- ii. Acceptable uses for the farmhouse are Class 1 (dwellings), Class 4 (shops), Class 5 (offices) and Class 6 food and drink) of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended;
- iii. Dahlet in-Nicca is to be retained and accessible to the public;
- iv. The building height for new development is to be retained at 3 floors and semi-basement and adequate underground parking is to be provided on site;
- v. MEPA will favourably consider applying the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) subject to the parameters set out in policy 2.10 of the Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2005, should the farmhouse be retained and provided that this would not result in the creation of blank party walls, subject to the building height not exceeding 6 floors (excluding penthouse) and development includes the creation of a public urban open space; and,
- vi. A buffer of at least 3 metres, which would include a pedestrian pathway and an element of landscaping, is to be allowed between the farmhouse, if this is retained, and any proposed development. Provisions for landscaping are to be in line with the *Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands, 2002*.

- 13.4.5 The entire site, measuring approximately 2380 m², currently consists of a scheduled Grade 3 farmhouse (GN 722/95) and degraded land. This policy provides for the submission of development options, possibly retaining the farmhouse and incorporated in the overall development designs for the site. Considering the lack of open spaces in Fgura, MEPA will consider the application of the FAR. Dahlet in-Nicca is to be retained for public access. Designs are to ensure that farmhouse building can be adequately appreciated and that is why a buffer is to be allowed between this building and any development proposals.

14. Ghaxaq Area Policies

14.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 532,719 m²
Rural Area: 3,079,281 m²
Population as per 1995 census: 4,126
Population Census 2005: 4,388

- 14.1.1 Ghaxaq is a quiet and compact village with some of its historic buildings dating back to 300 years. Most of these houses are found in the alleys behind the parish church. The village core still retains interesting and attractive aspects of the traditional village urban morphology with narrow winding streets. The skyline of this locality has not been adversely affected by new development and the church still dominates. Between 1995 and 2002 population grew by 7%. It is not envisaged that this locality would experience a significant growth in its population during the plan period.
- 14.1.2 Ghaxaq primarily has a residential function although a number of small garage industries are operating within the residential areas. In addition, various commercial and industrial activities have sprouted along its outskirts in the form of batching plants, lime kilns and warehousing facilities. Such facilities need to be contained and improved, particularly since most are located along the approaches to the village.
- 14.1.3 Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq separates the village in two with the latter functioning as a by-pass for traffic coming from the South and going towards Gudja and the airport. This road poses various dangers. Ghaxaq still retains a number of urban green spaces which enhances the recreational amenity of the locality. Sports facilities are lacking and the existing ones need improvement. Within scheme there still exist a number of vacant plots awaiting development (around 51,000 m²).
- 14.1.4 Servicing of retail establishments in Santa Maria Street leads to traffic through the village core impacting negatively on the amenity of this area. The Local Council stated that the proximity to the airport results in substantial noise pollution. Discussions with Enemalta indicated the possibility of expanding its facilities at Has-Saptan as part of the relocation of facilities from Birzebbuga. This is a sensitive area since it is part of the Wied Saptan valley and therefore any expansion must be done with caution.
- 14.1.5 Ghaxaq is surrounded primarily by agricultural fields although the urban growth in the last decades has resulted in the coalescence of Ghaxaq with the nearby localities of Gudja and Zejtun. In fact Triq Guzeppi Vella separates Ghaxaq from Gudja and Triq Tal-Barrani separates this locality from Zejtun.
- 14.1.6 Two church schools indicated that they were looking for a site in the South to relocate from their current areas since these were no longer adequate to meet today's educational requirements. The schools also indicated that they would like to relocate to the South since this area is not well served by private church schools, particularly with regard to Secondary schools, as indicated in the Social Facilities and Community Care Topic Paper. A site selection exercise carried out by the two schools identified a site in Ghaxaq, known as Tal-Wilga, as being the most acceptable. The MEPA also arrived at this conclusion.

14.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Improve existing sports, recreational and community facilities**
- **Traffic calming measures in Triq Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq**
- **Contain industrial development ODZ**
- **Reserve site for construction of two Church schools**
- **Expansion of Has-Saptan facility**

14.3 Strategy

14.3.1 The overall strategy for Ghaxaq is to retain and improve the traditional character of the locality and the quality of the urban environment whilst seeking to secure the consolidation and containment of industrial operations outside the Limits to Development boundary and the rehabilitation of degraded rural areas for recreational use.

14.4 Area Policies

SMGH 01 Sports and Community Facilities and Rezoning of Green Area at Triq il-Barbazzal

The site in Triq il-Barbazzal in the vicinity of the Ghaxaq parish church, as indicated on the Ghaxaq Policy Map GH 1 and Inset Map GH A4, which has been designated as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, and is currently partly occupied by the parish hall, is being designated for the provision and improvement of sports and community facilities subject to the following conditions:

- i. the proposed development is to retain the football pitch and upgrade this facility;**
- ii. appropriate landscaping along the perimeter of the site and the upgrading of the adjacent public urban open space for the provision of seating facilities;**
- iii. underground facilities (shower and changing rooms, facilities ancillary to pastoral purposes) which do not affect the current level of the football pitch will be considered;**
- iv. the height of the proposed buildings should not exceed two floors.**

A site within the same road, opposite the above mentioned site, as indicated in the Inset Map GH A4, is being rezoned from a green area to social and community facilities for the development of facilities related to the functions of the parish (e.g. pastoral centre and ancillary facilities). Buildings on this site should not exceed two floors.

The whole development should be carried out in a holistic manner.

14.4.1 This area (about 3200 m²), in proximity of the church and the centre of Ghaxaq, is currently a football pitch and is designated as a green area in the Temporary Provisions Scheme, 1988. Although the football pitch facility is to be retained and rationalized, expansion of the parish

facilities adjacent to this green area is being encouraged provided that the football pitch facility and surrounding area is embellished and improved as a public urban open space. Provision of social and community facilities below ground level will be considered provided this will not affect the existing level of the football pitch. The expansion of the existing parish hall is encouraged and the site (approximately 600 m²) opposite the football pitch, despite being zoned as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988 is considered as not adequate to be developed into a public open area since the configuration of the site with the surrounding buildings restricts the recreational potential of this site. This site is just behind the parish office and the provision of related social and community facilities e.g. the provision of an elderly day care centre on this site would be considered favourably. The upgrading of a public urban open space (about 400 m²) adjacent to the football pitch will make up for the take up of the site. It is important that the development of these sites is carried out in a holistic manner.

SMGH 02

Rezoning of Green area in Triq il-Barbazzal

Part of the site zoned as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is being rezoned for residential development, as indicated in the Inset Map GH A3, in line with policy SMHO 02. Developers will be required to upgrade the remaining section of the green area into a public seating area.

14.4.2 The site measures approximately 760 m². The site has been zoned as a green area in the TPS, 1988, but was zoned for terraced development before 1988. Site was subject to a development permit (PB 4257/80) granted in 1984 and although building had commenced on site this was never completed. Permit had expired and the area zoned as a green area. The change in zoning is not considered to effect negatively the amenity in this area and through this policy the remaining green area will be upgraded to provide a landscaped seating area. The location of the green area limits its use as a recreational area, but although part of the green area is being rezoned, the openness of area will still be retained.

SMGH 03

Recreational sites at Ta' Haxum and Has Saptan

MEPA will support plans to upgrade the areas at Ta' Haxum and Has Saptan, as indicated in the Ghaxaq Policy Map GH 1, for informal recreation subject to the following conditions:

- i. the olive grove as well as the natural characteristics of these two sites are to be retained and protected;**
- ii. no built structures will be allowed except for the provision of seating facilities and children's play equipment in appropriate areas;**
- iii. facilities encouraging cycling and walking are to be provided;**
- iv. measures to restrict car parking in the vicinity of these recreational areas are to be introduced;**
- v. No lighting should be installed in the Has-Saptan site;**
- vi. picnic areas and facilities should be adequately sited;**
- vii. introduction of interpretive provision to enhance the visitors' knowledge about the environmental significance of the site.**

14.4.3 Rural recreational areas within Ghaxaq are lacking and the extensive rural area around this locality favours the consideration of such provision with the aim of protecting and enhancing the experience of such rural areas. Two sites at Ta' Haxum and Has-Saptan (measuring

approximately 23,200 m² and 70,400 m² respectively) have been identified for the provision of informal recreation. These sites both include an olive grove. Work on the cleaning of the Ta' Haxum site has commenced. The Ghaxaq Local Council is keen to see these sites utilized for informal recreation for locals, particularly, and other visitors from nearby towns and villages. Additional facilities like picnic areas, children's play areas, seating as well as interpretation provisions are also encouraged. The natural characteristics of the sites are to be retained and facilities provided are to be well integrated within the olive grove without requiring the removal of these trees. The Has- Saptan site requires special attention since this is a Bird Sanctuary and an important site for bird species.

SMGH 04

Improving pedestrian safety along Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq

MEPA will encourage measures by the Malta Transport Authority to improve pedestrian safety along Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq to ease the crossing of this road by pedestrian, particularly along the stretch between Triq il-Hareb and Triq Tal-Millieri, as indicated in the Ghaxaq Policy Map GH 1.

- 14.4.4 Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq divides the locality of Ghaxaq and crossing this road by pedestrians for social, recreation or shopping reasons is a risk due to the high speed with which vehicles drive along this road. This policy identifies this issue and promotes initiatives to render crossing this road safer than it is, particularly along the stretch between the two built up sections of Hal-Ghaxaq.
- 14.4.5 A careful study of this area should precede the introduction of any measures to ensure that these are appropriate and suitable for the area in question.

SMGH 05

Rezoning of area at Tal-Qattus

MEPA zones the area at Tal-Qattus, as indicated on the Ghaxaq Policy Map GH 1, previously zoned as a white area and part green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, for residential purposes, in line with Policy SMHO 02 and subject to the following conditions:

- i. a service road along the north section of the site, along Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq, is to be provided as indicated in Inset Map GH A4;**
- ii. Trejget ir-Rummien is to be retained as a pedestrianised road;**
- iii. MEPA would encourage a range of different sized dwellings;**
- iv. The site or parts of the site should not be developed as individual plots but development proposals are to provide for the comprehensive development of the site or parts of the site;**
- v. Adequate parking is to be provided on site;**
- vi. Sites which in 1988 TPS were partly zoned as green areas, as indicated on Inset Map GH A 4, are to provide an element of open space, possibly fronting Trejget ir-Rummien, in relation to the size of the site being developed but not less than 10% of the site being developed, excluding the service road; and,**
- vii. the height limitation for this site will be three floors and a semi-basement and a front garden is to be provided along Triq il-Bwar.**

Since the site is under multi-ownership, should the development of the site or parts of the site be made in phases, MEPA will seek to achieve a harmonious, holistic and aggregate design in the development of the site.

- 14.4.6 This is a relatively large site (approximately 8000 m²) which is currently partly occupied by a farm. The area is a white area and partly a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988. There is an opportunity to have a comprehensive development of this area and the policy seeks to provide a framework for the development of the site or individual parts of the site in phases but ensuring a final development of the entire site which results in harmonious and holistic development. The green area as designated in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, restricts appropriate recreational provision since it is a green strip along part of the perimeter of the site. The policy seeks to direct the design of the various developments on this site to create a functional open space enhancing the quality of the development of the site.
- 14.4.7 Therefore the whole design of the area would ensure the provision of adequate and useable open space. In view of the difficulties for the comprehensive development of the entire site, yet the policy still seeks to ensure that the final overall development will result in a harmonious and holistic design and layout.

SMGH 06 Land safeguarded for the development of Educational Facilities

The site along Triq Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq and Triq il-Hareb, as indicated in the Ghaxaq Policy Map GH 1, is being safeguarded for the development of educational facilities in the form of two schools and related sports, recreational and other community facilities. This development will be subject to the following conditions:

- i. a suitable green buffer zone is to be included between the proposed schools and Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq and Triq il-Hareb;
- ii. classrooms to be located furthest distance possible away from the roads adjacent to the site;
- iii. buildings preferably should be located along the Dawret Hal-Ghaxaq section of the site with the possibility of creating a public urban open space along the upper section of the site at Triq il-Hareb;
- iv. adequate level of car parking for staff and other facilities will be provided within the site, including areas for the pick up and drop off of students;
- v. common facilities e.g. parking, recreational areas will be shared;
- vi. recreational, sports and community facilities are to be made available to local residents after school hours;
- vii. areas of high agricultural value are to be retained;
- viii. a landscaping plan is to be submitted indicating such provision both within the precincts as well as along the perimeter of the schools;
- ix. building heights should not exceed two floors and the provision of underground facilities will be encouraged.

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for educational facilities as specified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

- 14.4.8 The two schools which are seeking relocation are St. Albert's college which is currently located in Valletta and the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of 'Christ the King' school in Marsa (Teresa Nuzzo school). Both schools lack appropriate facilities for the growing school population and the location of such schools within the plan area will fill a gap considering that non-state primary and secondary schools are limited in the plan area (three primary schools at Gudja, Tarxien and Paola). Following a site selection exercise in which a number of sites including

those within the urban areas were evaluated, this site in Ghaxaq still emerged as the preferred site in terms of planning issues and merited further consideration, even though ODZ.

- 14.4.9 Since no suitable land is available within scheme boundaries, an ODZ site is being indicated for further assessment as a possible location for the proposed schools. An EIA and a TIS are to be carried out and prior to such studies an assessment of the agricultural potential and quality of this area needs to be carried out proposing measures to minimise the potential impact of the development on the agricultural land. The policy also includes conditions to ensure that the proposed development does not impinge negatively on the nearby residential area, whilst providing multi-use facilities for the enjoyment of the local residents and others within the plan area.

SMGH 07

Has-Saptan Fuel Storage Facility

This Local Plan confirms the committed use of the Has-Saptan Fuel Storage Facility site for the storage of fuel. No further intensification or expansion of existing uses will be permitted on this site. MEPA will, however, favourably consider the relocation of such facilities to a more appropriate location in future. Should this occur a plan is to be submitted by the operator of this facility indicating details of the dismantling operations as well as of the rehabilitation and re-use of the site for informal recreation, provided safety can be assured.

- 14.4.10 The Has-Saptan Facility in Ghaxaq (located in the north eastern flank of Luqa airport runway) is considered to be one of the largest underground fuel storage facilities in the Maltese Islands. This facility was extensively used by British forces during World War Two and is presently operated by Enemalta. Due to the environmental sensitiveness of the surrounding area, being part of the Has-Saptan valley as well as a prominent recreational area and a Bird Sanctuary, the intensification and expansion of existing facilities are not permitted. The policy also provides a general guideline should this facility cease to operate in future and encourages the preparation of a plan which would address the rehabilitation of the entire site, primarily for recreational use.

15. Gudja Area Policies

15.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 370,000 m²
Rural Area: 1,880,000 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 2,882
Population Census 2005: 2,901

- 15.1.1 The quiet village of Gudja, formerly known as Bir Miftuh, is one of the oldest villages in the Maltese Islands. The population of Gudja has increased by only 20 persons between 1995 and 2005. It is noted that the rate of population growth has been in gradual decline in recent years with a higher percentage of the population now expected to be moving into old age during the plan period..
- 15.1.2 The village now includes new neighbourhoods, the most important of which is Ta' Xlejli HOS. The latter is physically separated from the locality by an uncompleted and very wide bypass.
- 15.1.3 Gudja is essentially a village of medieval origins characterised by a number of old buildings arranged along winding streets which have largely survived the various pressures for change. The village proper has developed mainly along Triq il-Kbira and Triq Raymond Caruana with the parish church (built between 1656 and 1709) acting as a landmark focal point. Interesting historic landmarks (e.g. St. Catherine and Our Lady of Loreto chapels) dot the rural areas surrounding this village which managed to retain the rural architectural style and features so common before the effects of urban sprawl began to be felt in various areas. Over the years, modern development at the periphery, has resulted in the village's coalescence with nearby Ghaxaq, particularly along Triq Hal Ghaxaq. The housing estates are not properly integrated with Gudja in view of Triq Hal-Ghaxaq and Vjal it-Torri and require the provision of ancillary facilities, particularly social and community facilities, retail and sports facilities to sustain the residential community. The lack of appropriate traffic calming measures along Vjal it-Torri and the current state of the junctions along Dawret il-Gudja are a hazard to pedestrians. The proximity of this locality to the airport results in significant noise pollution. Gudja still has a number of vacant plots (around 40,000 m²) within scheme as well as green open spaces such as the spacious Raymond Caruana public garden.
- 15.1.4 Commercial workshops and showrooms are now established outside the development zone along Triq Hal-Tarxien (area known as Ta' l-Imsaqqa).

15.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- Need to control the movement of vehicular traffic along Vjal it-Torri and within the village core
- Need to contain the development of small scale industry ODZ

15.3 Strategy

- 15.3.1 The strategy is to enhance the residential function of Gudja by protecting its residential amenity and providing for appropriate social/community and recreational facilities and traffic management measures and encouraging the conservation of its cultural, historical and architectural assets.

15.4 Area Policies

SMGU 01 Traffic Management Within the Urban Conservation Area

MEPA will support initiatives by the Malta Transport Authority and Gudja Local Council with regard to the introduction of appropriate traffic calming measures (including enhanced landscaping, establishment of pedestrian-priority or pedestrian-only landscaping) particularly along streets within the Gudja UCA, to reduce the speed and usage of these primarily residential streets by through traffic as specified in SMTR 03.

- 15.4.1 The Gudja UCA together with its streets and alleys characterize the picturesque identity of this small, yet historical, morphologically, and visually rich village.
- 15.4.2 Currently, only a number of alleys have been recently pedestrianized. It is the intention of this policy to encourage the partial or full pedestrianization of most parts of the village core. Gudja has the potential of having a circular peripheral circular route if opened in line with provisions contained in other Area Policies for this locality. Thus, conservation of the village core also depends upon the completion of Vjal it-Torri (southern part) and a link between this route and Triq Hal-Resqun which defines the western edge of this settlement.
- 15.4.3 This policy may also be applicable to a short stretch of Triq San Mark which includes an old scheduled farmhouse. Presently, this street has a local access function and two-way traffic flow which can be directed towards Triq San Pawl or Triq Hal-Resqun.

SMGU 02

Upgrading of Vjal It-Torri

MEPA encourages the upgrading of Vjal it-Torri, as indicated in the Gudja Policy Map GU 1, as a local access road, which would require the implementation of the following measures:

- i. Re-design of street width to reflect its future role and function as an alternative route to Triq R.Carwana;**
 - ii. Additional soft landscaping measures in order to integrate the newer area at Ta'Xlejli with the older parts of this village;**
 - iii. Introduce further traffic calming measures along entire stretch of Vjal it-Torri in order to minimize over-speeding and discourage heavy vehicles from using this route; and**
 - iv. Provision of additional street furniture in order to increase the informal recreational potential of this route.**
- 15.4.4 Vjal it-Torri 'bypasses' the eastern section of this unique small village located in the geographic centre of the Plan area. Notwithstanding this, it is envisaged that upgrading of this street would

provide an opportunity whereby the peripheral HOS area at Ta'Xlejli would be physically integrated with the rest of Gudja in a way that other objectives expressed in policies SMGU 03 and SMGU 04 would not be compromised. These measures will also ensure a safer environment for students attending the school located in the vicinity of this area.

SMGU 03 Mixed Use Area at Triq Hal Tarxien (Ta' L-Imsaqqa)

The MEPA designates the area along Triq Hal Tarxien (Ta' L-Imsaqqa), as indicated in the Gudja Policy Map GU 1, as an Area of Mixed Uses. In this area MEPA will favourably consider development proposals (new development, extensions and changes of use) provided that:

- i. Any new development, redevelopment or extensions to existing developments are not to extend beyond the boundary of the site;**
- ii. Building heights should not exceed two floors (max 10.5 metres) whilst a basement is permitted;**
- iii. Acceptable land uses will be those falling primarily under Class 11, Class 12 and Class 17 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended, as well as showrooms (only fronting Triq Hal Tarxien) and ancillary offices;**
- iv. Appropriate parking facilities are provided;**
- v. No retail or residential uses will be allowed whilst uses falling under Class 6 (a) of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended, will be allowed, provided these do not exceed three in number and are not restaurants or bars; and,**
- vi. Where possible MEPA will seek, through the development process to encourage developers to provide landscaping around their site or contribute to such a provision.**

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for industrial related uses as specified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

15.4.5 The area measuring approximately 21,610 m², has been committed through approved developments primarily for industrial and warehousing uses. However, in addition to such uses other uses have been granted permits in the area, particularly showroom development. Showroom development will be considered along the stretch fronting Triq Hal Tarxien. A limited amount of food and drink outlets will be allowed to service the industrial units in this area. Any new developments or redevelopments should provide adequate parking as well as be requested to provide some element of landscaping. The site needs substantial upgrading to ameliorate the working environment of this area and through the development control process there is an opportunity to encourage such upgrading.

SMGU 04 Residential Priority Area at Triq Dun Pietru Farrugia

The following parameters will guide development proposals within the Residential Priority Area as indicated in Map GU1:

- i. no internal development will be permitted;**
- ii. development of semi-detached/detached villas will conform to the provisions contained in policy 3.5 of the Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2005;**
- iii. the site coverage as specified in Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2005 is adhered to;**

- iv. **building heights for this area will be two floors and semi-basement, as specified in the Gudja Building Heights Map GU 2;**
- v. **MEPA will encourage the introduction of sidewalks/kerbs complemented by a strip of landscaping of a minimum of 1.5 metres along residential streets 10 metres wide.**

15.4.6 The parameters in this policy are being specified to ensure that any development in this area retains the quality of the villa area for which the area has been designated. In specific cases this quality has been compromised by permitted development. The policy cautions against proposals constituting over development and the introduction of appropriate landscaping to complement the villa development and improve the environmental streetscape of the area.

16. Kirkop Area Policies

16.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 273,159 m²
Rural Area: 867,641 m²
Population as per 1995 census: 1,957
Population Census 2005: 2,183

- 16.1.1 Kirkop is located just behind the Malta International Airport with the main access to this locality being through the tunnel beneath the main runway. Kirkop is an important employment destination area since companies like ST Microelectronics and Multi Gas are located in this locality. The growth of Kirkop resulted through the development of a number of properties along the cross-roads that linked neighbouring villages such as Mqabba, Luqa, Zurrieq and Qrendi. Kirkop is a small village which has retained its unique characteristics with most of the buildings being 2 storeys high. However, recent developments along the periphery, particularly Government Housing projects with buildings consisting of three and four floors have changed the character of this locality.
- 16.1.2 The population in Kirkop has grown from 1559 in 1985 to 2183 in 2005. However, recent figures show a slow population increase and this is likely to stabilize towards the end of the plan period. Kirkop has a residential density in persons per ha of 78, slightly above the national average, whilst the residential density in units per ha stands at 25. Around 16% of the urban area is available for development. This is one of the highest in the plan area.
- 16.1.3 Kirkop village has a number of interesting archaeological remains dating from the punic times, particularly tombs, a menhir and Christian catacombs. These merit protection and upgrading to bring them to the attention of the public thus creating greater awareness towards the local cultural heritage.
- 16.1.4 The industrial and quarrying activity as well as the traffic generated through these operations impinge negatively on the quality of the environment of the locality. The Kirkop Industrial area needs to be defined and its visual amenity improved to reduce any impacts on the nearby community. A number of quarries in the vicinity have come in disuse and these need to be rehabilitated. Other impacts emanate from airport related activity and operations in terms of noise pollution.
- 16.1.5 The village of Kirkop does not have any adequate facilities where residents can meet as a group or organize social functions. The Local Council is also seeking a site for a new premises in the form of a Civic centre to discharge their functions as well as housing other social and community facilities. In addition the recreational provision needs to increase since Kirkop is limited in the provision of public urban open spaces. The Leisure and Recreation Topic Paper indicates a provision of 0.2 m² of urban recreational space per person, well below the average for the Local Plan area (2.1m²). A number of housing estates have been developed but no provision was made to increase the level of recreational facilities.

16.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Introduction of traffic management measures to enhance residential amenity**
- **Provision of appropriate public urban open spaces, recreational and sports facilities**
- **Contain the spread of Industrial activities**
- **Rehabilitation and restoration of quarries**

16.3 Strategy

16.3.1 The strategy for Kirkop envisages the enhancement of its residential function and the containment of industrial activity. The provision of recreational and community facilities will be given priority.

16.4 Area Policies

SMKI 01 Traffic Calming and Environmental Improvements.

MEPA will support measures by the Malta Transport Authority and the Kirkop Local Council for further embellishment schemes in and around the Kirkop UCA to improve traffic and environmental conditions. The design of the schemes should enhance the townscape, provide informal recreation space, reduce the impact of parking, and improve pedestrian safety and comfort. The introduction of measures to enhance pedestrian activity in front of the parish church will be encouraged. Measures to reduce traffic speeds and improve conditions for pedestrians (e.g. widening of pavements) would be encouraged particularly in St. Benedict's Street, including the improvement of the Triq L-Imdina / Triq San Anard junction.

16.4.1 Some environmental works have already been undertaken in the UCA, and the quality of the design and materials has been good. Further works, particularly in the vicinity of the parish church would be very worthwhile. Achieving an appropriate balance between parking needs and creating extra pedestrian space can be difficult, however, in this case, the proposal (schemed alignment for Triq Iz-Zerniq) to construct a new square nearby allows some parking to be shifted to this new area.

16.4.2 In order to improve road safety in the vicinity of the existing primary school, and to produce a safe route for students who will be attending the new secondary school at Karwija, it is proposed that traffic calming measures should be introduced along St. Benedict's Street. This should include works to reduce the size of the Triq L-Imdina/Triq San Anard junction including semi-pedestrianisation, thereby making it both safer and more attractive.

SMKI 02 Urban open space at Misrah iz-Zerniq

The site at Misrah iz-Zerniq, as indicated on Kirkop Policy Map KI 1 and Inset Map KI A2, which is partly identified as unopened streets in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is being zoned

as a public urban open space. The public urban open space may accommodate the provision of seating facilities, landscaping and the possibility of a children's play area. The development of kiosks and catering facilities will not be allowed. Road access around the perimeter of the site is to be retained, as indicated in the Inset Map KI A2. In line with policy SMSE 04, appropriate underground development may be considered in this site provided that this will not impact negatively on the public urban open space and the surrounding residences. Leisure related uses as well as underground parking may be considered.

16.4.3 Public recreational spaces are almost non-existent in Kirkop. A site which was designated as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, was developed for housing. The site in Misrah iz-Zerniq, measuring approximately 1843 m², is strategically located in the vicinity of the church and this space can be put to more efficient use as a public urban open space. This space is utilized during the local feast when the land fire works are mounted at this site and therefore lends itself for the development of the proposed use without hindering the current traffic flow through the area. Road access around the site is to be retained due to the existing and future residences.

SMKI 03

Kirkop Industrial Area

The area along Triq l-Industrija as indicated on the Kirkop Policy Map KI 1 is designated as an industrial area. No further expansion of industrial developments will be allowed outside this area, however, further industrial expansion within the boundary will be encouraged, provided this does not result in the creation of significant adverse impacts on the nearby population. MEPA will encourage the introduction of mitigation measures to reduce any potential negative impacts (noise and other emissions, visual impacts) that may result from the operations of these industries on the nearby residential community. MEPA will also encourage any proposals to landscape the site and improve the visual amenity of this industrial area.

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for industrial related uses as specified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

16.4.4 The area is currently occupied by industrial developments particularly the ST Microelectronics and the newly built Multigas installation. Most of this site falls within the responsibility of Malta Industrial Parks (MIP). Within the boundary there exists the potential for redevelopment to create additional industrial facilities provided these do not create any further impacts/hazards to the nearby population in terms of noise and air pollution. The zone is to be contained and embellished and any impacts from these developments on the residential community are to be mitigated. Any development applications concerning this area should take account of the introduction of specific measures to mitigate adverse impacts particularly provision of parking areas and landscaping.

SMKI 04

Recreational area at Triq il-Belt Valletta

MEPA will support proposals for the improvement of a site at Triq il-Belt Valletta, designated as an AEI in policy SMC0 03, as indicated on the Kirkop Policy Map KI 1, into a recreational area subject to the following conditions:

- i. the provision of seating facilities and a children's play area as well as the inclusion of

- a water feature;**
- ii. the site shall not be turned into a formal public garden but the natural characteristics of the site shall be enhanced although some soft landscaping of the site and any safety measures should be included as part of the proposal; and,**
- iii. the development should include the introduction of a footway between the site and the urban settlement, along Triq il-Belt Valletta.**

16.4.5 The site, which measures approximately 6,700 m², is a disused quarry which has been filled with water to provide a 'lake' like feature. The site is designated as being of ecological importance. The area should provide for informal recreation and picnic areas for locals as well as others visiting the locality. The site offers the potential to capitalize on this water feature as it will offer a different recreational facility to what is available in the urban part of the village. However, appropriate safety measures should be introduced prior to its opening as a public facility.

16.4.6 Policy RES 10 of the Minerals Subject Plan with regard to restoration of disused quarries in urban or urban fringe areas encourages the development of such sites to agriculture or informal recreation/tourist facilities. The informal recreation aspect of the site should be enhanced to compensate for the lack of adequate recreational facilities within the urban area of Kirkop.

SMKI 05

Quarries at Tas-Sienja, Tal-Bolla and Bonu z-Zghir

In line with Policy RES 11, in the Minerals Subject Plan, once mineral operations have been exhausted, MEPA will consider the development of local sports facilities (e.g. playing pitches, gym) and informal recreational facilities (e.g. seating facilities and picnic areas) at these quarries, as indicated in the Kirkop Policy map KI 1, subject to the following conditions:

- i. 75% of the site is restored to agricultural land or afforested;**
- ii. any buildings and parking areas should not take up more than 10% of the site;**
- iii. any retail/catering operations should be ancillary to the sports facilities;**
- iv. built structures should not exceed one floor in height and underground development will be considered;**
- v. shared facilities (e.g. parking) will be encouraged; and**
- vi. a variety of sports and recreational facilities should be provided.**

Any proposed development would have to include a restoration plan of the quarry.

16.4.7 These three quarries are located in a rural area but in close proximity to the Kirkop residential area. One quarry is still in operation whilst the other two are currently disused. The continuation and extension of such works will add to the current impacts, particularly noise and dust generation. Once such quarries become inoperative, restoration is important and the policy provides an indication of the uses which would be acceptable when submitting a restoration plan for these quarries. The lack of adequate sports and recreational facilities (only 0.2 m² per person) in Kirkop makes it necessary to grab every opportunity to create such spaces. Consultation with the Kirkop Local Council should be considered when planning such facilities to provide facilities which are in demand by the local population. This policy aims to achieve a level of restoration whilst allowing for the development of the much needed recreational facilities.

17. Luqa Area Policies

17.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 480,000 m²
Rural Area: 6,250,000 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 6,150
Population Census 2005: 6028

- 17.1.1 Luqa is bounded to the north by the Marsa Industrial Estate, to the east by Paola, Santa Lucija, Gudja and Ghaxaq; to the south by Safi, Kirkop and Mqabba; and to the west by Siggiewi and Qormi. The population of Luqa has decreased by around 122 persons between 1995 and 2005.
- 17.1.2 Luqa, along with the nearby airport area and the expanding sub-locality of Hal-Farrug, constitutes the major inland area of the Local Plan. The locality still retains a traditional historical core characterized by an organic street pattern with the 17th century parish church dominating the main square of this core. This urbanized village has very limited urban green open spaces perhaps due to the settlement's shape which is organized in concentric circular streets away from the parish church piazza.
- 17.1.3 The village's proximity to the airport results in a situation whereby the locality experiences a substantially-high amount of 'through' traffic coming from localities south of the airport to proceed towards central and northern parts of mainland Malta. The airport has also generated pressures for the development of commercial entities which are concentrated along the western fringes of this settlement, at Triq San Tumas, and these developments are compromising the residential identity of this locality.
- 17.1.4 Evidence from a recent survey of Vacant Land completed in 2002 for Luqa indicates that slightly more than 48,300m² of land (or 10% of the total land area within scheme boundaries) remains undeveloped.
- 17.1.5 The countryside area of Luqa has a very varied landscape. The long stretches of fields to the east of the village (i.e. facing Santa Lucija and Gudja) present a marked contrast to other ODZ areas taken up by the elongated airport runways, the passenger terminal building, MIA office blocks and other related administrative buildings and spaces. Development restrictions in this area are likely to be re-enforced given the need to identify a Public Safety Zone around the airport's perimeter and a new taxi-route proposed as part of the airport's future requirements. The Malta International Airport (MIA) area has been identified for commercial and recreational development. An Outline Development permit was issued in 1997 (PA 5681/96). A decision by the MEPA Board (then the Planning Authority) in 1997 designated the MIA site as a Primary Development Area in Luqa in lieu of the area that had been designated under Structure Plan Policy SET 10.
- 17.1.6 The rapidly expanding Hal-Farrug area with its residential, commercial and industrial sections forms the 'rural' area northwest of the village. Hal-Farrug, originally a medieval village, which had a church that was demolished to make way for parts of the airport as it was deemed a hazard to aircraft, has now grown substantially in recent years. It is characterized by residential apartment blocks overlooking Wied Qirda and Wied il-Kbir, originally constructed by the British in order to house airport officers and their families. Architecturally, these apartment blocks contrast sharply with rows of residences constructed along Triq Hal-Qormi as part of the

Home Ownership Scheme. This residential area lack adequate sports, social and community facilities to support the increasing population. Hal-Farrug is also associated with a large number of micro-enterprises which occupy ODZ land adjacent to the above-mentioned residential zones and larger commercial establishments further down the road to Qormi which have substantial storage land servicing them. The SME area has expanded and needs to be contained avoid that this results in further adverse impacts to the nearby residential area.

- 17.1.7 A number of important Government agencies and services are located at Luqa (e.g. St.Vincent De Paule Elderly Residence, Water Services Corporation, The Government Experimental Farm at Ghammieri, College of Agriculture).

17.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Provision of community and sports facilities, particularly at Hal Farrug.**
- **Facilitating the expansion and consolidation of airport related operations.**
- **Deletion of Primary Development Area identified in Structure Plan Policy SET 10**
- **Contain industrial development.**

17.3 Strategy

- 17.3.1 The strategy seeks to enhance the role of Luqa (including Hal Farrug) in terms of employment-generating activities whilst safeguarding its residential identity from nearby urban areas. The strategy also seeks to promote the identity of this area through the provision of sports, leisure and recreational facilities and protect the rural areas around Luqa from development pressures.
- 17.3.2 The strategy seeks to facilitate the expansion of the Malta International Airport to enable it to operate as a Regional hub and consolidate various directly airport related functions within the footprint of the area under MIAs control.

17.4 Area Policies

SMLU 01 Rezoning of site at Triq il-Gdida and Triq Mikelang Sapiano

MEPA rezones the road situated between Triq il-Gdida and Triq Mikelang Sapiano, as indicated in the Luqa Policy Map LU 1 and Inset Map LU A1, to residential development as part of the comprehensive development of the entire site. Development is to include recreational facilities in addition to the residential development provided the proposal clearly demonstrates that:

- i. It does not lead to bad neighbour impacts including unacceptable noise and light pollution;**
- ii. 5% of the site is to be landscaped, in line with provisions in the Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands, 2002;**
- iii. 70% of the site is to be developed for residential development;**

- iv. **25% of the site will be designated for recreational facilities including sports facilities as appropriate;**
 - v. **A water reservoir of suitable size for full site irrigation purposes will be provided on site;**
 - vi. **The height limitation for this site will be three floors; and**
 - vii. **The development will include a suitable children's play area.**
- 17.4.1 Following consultation with the Local Council, and as stated in the Report of Survey and the Recreation Topic Paper, urban population density in Luqa is high. In contrast, provision of recreational facilities has not matched up this demographic growth with the locality experiencing under-provision even when compared to other localities within the SMLP area. Although the Leisure and Recreation Topic Study indicates that Luqa has an urban recreational provision of 2.4 m² per person, which is above the average figure for the plan area, most of this provision is in Hal-Farrug, although in the form of wooded areas, which is quite distant from the main settlement of Luqa.
- 17.4.2 This site, which is still undeveloped and owned by the Joint Office, measures approximately 4000 m². This proposal effectively encourages the introduction of additional sports and recreational facilities in order to reduce this deficiency. In fact, Luqa residents usually have to cross the busy Vjal L-Avjazzjoni and Triq San Tumas in order to utilise the sport grounds administered by the Armed Forces near the old airport terminal. The frequent use of such facilities depends on prior permission sought by the Local Council, on behalf of residents, with AFM. This policy seeks to provide for the much needed recreational facilities in conjunction with the residential development. A schemed street which cuts the site is considered unnecessary and therefore the area will now be allocated for recreational/sports facilities. The development conditions adequately make up for the land taken up for sports facilities.

SMLU 02

Deletion Of Primary Development Area

It is recommended that the Structure Plan Review should delete proposals for a "Primary Development Area" at Luqa (SET10) containing a business park and superstore (COM3), together with the new road intended to serve the site.

- 17.4.3 The 1990 Structure Plan identifies an area in the vicinity of the Airport as suitable for major development, accommodating a Business park, including major offices, superstore-based shopping, a business hotel with conference facilities and other compatible commercial uses (COM 3) located between Triq Il-Kunsill Ta' L-Ewropa and Vjal L-Avjazzjoni, outside the urban development boundary.
- 17.4.4 Notwithstanding this, the construction of a superstore at such a site would be contrary to the policy contained in the Retail Topic Paper, which was approved by the Planning Authority (now MEPA) in May 2001. The provision of such a facility would also be contrary to the Retail Planning Guidelines approved by MEPA Board in May 2003. Emerging employment policy also indicates that offices and similar uses should be situated in existing town centres, consequently a business park would no longer be appropriate at this site.
- 17.4.5 The Structure Plan Key Diagram indicates the construction of a new road from the Triq Il-Kunsill Ta' L-Ewropa / Triq G. Garibaldi roundabout to Vjal L-Avjazzjoni. As this road is only required to serve the primary development area, it should also be deleted as part of the Structure Plan Review process. A MEPA Board decision in 1997 designated the Malta International Airport site as the Primary Development Area in lieu of the area indicated in Structure Plan

SMLU 03

Mixed Development at Triq Tal-Vitorja, Hal Farrug

MEPA encourages the comprehensive development of an undeveloped site at Triq il-Vitorja, Hal Farrug, as indicated in the Luqa (Hal Farrug) Policy Map LU 2, primarily for residential development subject to the following conditions:

- i. At least 10% of the site is to be developed into a public urban open space in line with SMSE 05;**
- ii. Other permitted uses include a mix of small-scale retail development (local shops) in line with the requirements for retail development as specified in SMHO 02 as well as social and community facilities (e.g. day care centre);**
- iii. Adequate parking facilities to be provided as required by the entire proposed development;**
- iv. The building height of this site should not exceed 4 floors and semi-basement**
- v. A landscaped buffer of not less than 3 metres is to be provided along the northern edge of the site.**

17.4.6 The rapidly growing residential community at Hal-Farrug now totals at least 451 persons over 18 years (2001 Electoral Register data) thus creating a demand for rationalization of existing derelict land into recreational, retail and socio-community facilities. The retail function of Hal Farrug is still very limited and relies heavily on the relative location of this settlement between the central conurbation and outlying villages in the south. The retail function in Hal Farrug is largely limited to showrooms (for the display of furniture items, and for home improvement products) with very few (if any) convenience shops for local residents and workers.

17.4.7 The site (total area: 12,270m²), which with the designation of the Hal-Farrug scheme is now within the Limits to Development boundary, is currently degraded land and is situated on sloping ground and commands good views of Wied il-Kbir and Qormi. The strategic significance of this area is further highlighted in that it lies adjacent to a site which houses a Pastoral Centre and is indicated for the future provision of religious facilities including a church and related facilities. Hence, through this policy MEPA will ensure that the increase in the resident population is adequately supported with a provision of social and community as well as recreational facilities. The public open space will also act as a buffer between the residential quarters and the industrial zone.

SMLU 04

New Church and Related Facilities at Hal Farrug

The site at Triq ir-Russett l-Abjad, as indicated in Luqa (Hal Farrug) Policy Map LU 2, is proposed for the construction of a new church serving the sub-parish district of Hal Farrug. Any proposal shall include provision for underground parking, open spaces for social gatherings and other ancillary offices and uses determined by Church Authorities, in accordance with community needs. The building height should not exceed three floors, however an extra floor relaxation may be allowed subject to the submission of a quality design.

17.4.8 Considering the growth in the Hal Farrug Community in view of the recent and potential future expansion of the residential community, a site (approximately 1900 m²) is being designated for the development of a church as a replacement for the existing chapel to serve this expected increase in the population of Hal Farrug. In this regard, the Structure Plan (para.9.19) refers to

the need to provide local community facilities in new housing areas. Currently, the designated site is partly occupied by a one-storey chapel encircled by an asphalted piece of land which is informally utilised for parking.

SMLU 05

Mixed Development at Hal Farrug

MEPA encourages the relocation of the open storage facility along Triq Hal-Farrug, as indicated in the Luqa (Hal Farrug) Policy Map LU 2, to more appropriate sites and designates this site for comprehensive/mixed development which would include a mix of residential, commercial and leisure-related facilities. Landscaping of the site edge will be required for better treatment of the interface between the recommended uses and their immediate surroundings. Parameters to guide the development of this site will be given by MEPA.

17.4.9 The site (19,000 m²) is currently occupied by a container depot, having a development permit dating back to 1989. Hal Farrug has now grown into a full blown settlement and is still to grow in view of the Housing Authority's projects in the area. The container depot operation is incompatible within a residential area and therefore this policy aims to give a zoning to the site should the facility be relocated or cease operation in the future. The site offers potential for a mix of uses which include residential development as well as some commercial and leisure related facilities. Parameters to guide the submission of development proposals will be formulated by MEPA in the eventuality that the site is considered for development in future.

SMLU 06

Local Park and Sports Facilities at Hal Farrug

MEPA reserves the two sites along Triq Hal-Farrug, as indicated in Luqa (Hal Farrug) Policy Map LU 2, for a Local Park which would include sports facilities, subject to the following conditions:

- i. The natural setting of this site is to be retained and only the provision of seating facilities, picnic areas, public footpaths/jogging and cycling track and children's play facilities will be allowed;**
- ii. Sports facilities in the form of playing pitches are to be provided on the lower site adjacent to the current container depot;**
- iii. Further intensification of this afforested area, by means of low vegetation cover in accordance with the Guidelines for Trees and Shrubs, is to be encouraged;**
- iv. The development of an underground reservoir will be allowed;**
- v. No kiosks will be permitted.**

This designation may entail a clearer delineation of the edges of this Park by means of entry/exit gates and appropriate fencing of the site.

17.4.10 This policy seeks to retain the open and semi-natural character of the area through the designation of a local park as defined in the Leisure and Recreation Topic Study. Residential development in the vicinity is characterised by multi-storey flatted Government blocks which include a number of residences each having minimal private open space within their respective properties. On a broader context, public recreational space in the highly urbanized South is also limited and MEPA therefore supports further increases in recreational space and facilities. This site will also serve the main locality of Luqa where such provision is also lacking. Minimal interventions are allowed primarily to facilitate public use of the site. The two sites cover an area of 8,943 sq.m. and 4,350 sq.m., respectively. These sites screen the housing estate from

SMLU 07

Malta International Airport Master Plan Area

For the area designated as the Malta International Airport Master Plan Area, as indicated in the Luqa Airport and Environs Policy Map LU 3, a Master Plan is to be submitted to MEPA by the Malta International Airport indicating the various developments and uses proposed for this area which may include facilities relating to the airport operations, retail and commercial facilities, entertainment facilities, parking, as well as an element of tourist accommodation.

17.4.11 The Malta International Airport have in the past submitted its plans to develop this area (155,000 m²) for commercial, retail and leisure related uses as well as facilities related to the airport operations namely, flight catering facilities, etc. An outline application was submitted in 1996 (PA5861/96) which was subsequently approved in 1997. Since then MIA has been privatised, however, there is still an interest to make the best possible use of this site. Therefore, a Master Plan is to be prepared for the area indicating the various uses and developments proposed for subsequent discussion with MEPA.

SMLU 08

Air Malta Development Brief Areas

Any development proposals in the Air Malta Sites, as indicated in the Luqa Policy Maps LU 1 and LU 4, which are currently occupied by Air Malta operations, will be subject to the submission of a Development Brief for the areas, to be approved by MEPA. Acceptable uses to be considered within these areas will be commercial/retail, food and drink, sports facilities, as well as tourist accommodation, and the provision of adequate public urban open spaces, whilst not excluding aviation related facilities.

17.4.12 These two sites are currently occupied by Air Malta related operations. Although both sites are actually located ODZ yet they have been committed by a level of development. One site measures approximately 18,000 m², and is located between the old airport terminal and Triq San Tumas. This area is currently a parking area with a number of landscaped areas and includes an area used as a football pitch. Site B measures approximately 68,000 m², and houses the Air Malta offices as well as a substantial amount of open space and landscaped areas. The policy gives a general direction of acceptable uses, however a Development Brief is to be submitted. Adequate public urban open space should be provided.

SMLU 09

Luqa Industrial Estate

MEPA would only permit additional industrial units along the northern edge of the Luqa Industrial Estate, as designated in the Luqa Policy Map LU2, once an adequate landscaped buffer zone is provided along this edge of the estate, particularly along Triq il-Bughadam Griz and Triq l-Egret Isfar. Industrial uses along this section of the estate should be of a type that do not create any significant adverse impacts to the nearby residences in terms of emissions, vibrations and noise.

17.4.13 This section of the estate is closest to the residential area and to safeguard the quality of the residential amenity an appropriate buffer zone is to be erected to screen the industrial development from the residential part of Hal Farrug. The type of industrial uses to be allowed

along this section of the estate should not be of the obnoxious type that would negatively affect the nearby residences.

SMLU 10 Carnival Float and Scenography Production Park and Agro-Industry

MEPA designates the site along Triq Hal-Luqa, as indicated in Luqa Policy Map (Hal Farrug/Ghammieri) LU 2 for the development of a Carnival Float and Scenography Production Park and Agro-Industry along guidelines approved by MEPA.

17.4.14 This area currently occupied by agricultural operations as well as storage facilities for WSC is being designated for the relocation of the carnival workshops which are spread in various localities particularly in Valletta and Floriana. MEPA prepared and approved specific guidelines for the development of this site part of which will also be dedicated to agro-industry operations.

18. Marsascala Area Policies

18.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 1,332,483 m²
Rural Area: 4,043,707 m²
Population as per 1995 census: 4,770
Population Census 2005: 9,298

- 18.1.1 The town of Marsascala has grown very rapidly over the last three decades. The growth of this town was planned since the early 60s as a result of the designation of the schemes and development of this locality grew steadily during the 70s and 80s and very sharply in the 90s, particularly as people set up residence in this locality. In addition to this Marsascala was also a summer resort for residents living in localities in the South of the Island, particularly Fgura, Zabbar and Zejtun. Between 1985 and 1995 the population increased from 1936 to 4770. The population density during this ten-year period increased from 344 to 887 persons per km². By 2005 the population almost doubled to reach 9298 and it is likely that the population increases to over 11,000 during the plan period, considering the properties that are in construction stage and the amount of vacant land available for development within the Limits to Development boundary (166,322 m² – Technical Report about the condition of vacant land within urban areas prepared by MEPA in 2002).
- 18.1.2 The increase in population, normally, brings about an increased demand for the provision of adequate public urban open space and sports facilities (e.g. playing pitches) as well as social/community and educational facilities. Although some facilities in this regard have been provided during recent years, the expected increase in population necessitates safeguarding land for such provision. Most of the community facilities, e.g. church and school, are located in the vicinity of the village core and away from the ‘newly established’ residential areas at In-Nadur. One pressing factor relates to the existing primary school which needs to extend its capacity. In the replanning exercise aimed to zone white areas within the TPS, 1988, which was carried out in 1992, few areas were designated for community facilities considering the increase in population envisaged.
- 18.1.3 The urban morphology of Marsascala has generally grown along the coast and the promontory between Marsascala Bay and St. Thomas Bay. The urban open spaces in Marsascala are concentrated along the promenade. Such spaces are non-existent within the residential areas. The built environment of Marsascala consists of a range of building forms - villas, terraced houses, maisonettes and apartments. It is important to protect the residential quality of all residential areas particularly the villa and bungalow areas.
- 18.1.4 The boathouse development at St. Thomas Bay (approximately 140 – 150 units) used as summer residences needs to be better planned and managed to embellish the area, contain further sprawl and protect the coast. The rural area of Marsascala is predominantly agricultural interspersed with areas of ecological (e.g. Il-Maghluq and il-Munxar) and archaeological importance (e.g. salt pans). The coast of Marsascala is the main coastal stretch in the whole plan area. Most of this coastal stretch is designated as an area of ecological importance and is also used for recreational purposes. Marsascala Bay offers the right coastal morphology for a potential yacht marina. Marsascala is the main tourist locality in the plan area in terms of tourist accommodation, as well as catering outlets. The main entertainment facilities e.g. cinemas and

discos are located in this town. Nonetheless, there are still residential pockets which have not been safeguarded from commercial related, particularly tourism and entertainment, development e.g along Triq id-Dugh, Triq Tal-Buttar and Triq il-Mahsel.

- 18.1.5 In various areas of this locality height limitations have been infringed particularly by the addition of a penthouse above the third floor. Currently there are around 29 pending enforcement cases on this issue. Another issue relates to front gardens, particularly those fronting catering establishments, where most of these were built without the required permit

18.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Height limitation infringements**
- **Provision of urban open space, sports and community facilities**
- **Management of Boat house area at St. Thomas Bay**
- **Definition of the Marsascala tourist zone**
- **Regularise front gardens in entertainment areas**

18.3 Strategy

- 18.3.1 The strategy for Marsascala is to retain this locality as the main tourism and entertainment locality, but ensuring that this role does not adversely affect the residential amenity of the locality. The strategy also seeks to safeguard the amenity of residential areas through restricting growth and proliferation of tourism and entertainment facilities in specific defined zones and to provide adequate provision of social/community and recreational facilities to support the growing population of this area.

18.4 Area Policies

SMMS 01

Tourist Area and Entertainment Priority Area

In line with Structure Plan Policy TOU 4, the urban settlement of Marsascala is designated as a tourist area. The following land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) will ONLY be permitted within all frontages located within the designated Entertainment Priority Area as defined in the Marsascala Policy Maps MS 1 and MS 2, unless otherwise stated in another policy in this plan:

- i. Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994) dwelling units.**
- ii. Class 3 (Use Classes Order, 1994) hostels and hotels, including other tourist accommodation, provided that these uses are in accordance with all other relevant Local Plan policies.**
- iii. Class 4 (Use Classes Order, 1994) small shops provided that:**
 - a. the small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 m² each, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 m² each;**

- b. they comply with all the provisions of paragraphs. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and
- c. they comply with all the relevant sections of the DC2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.),
- iv. Supermarkets provided that they comply with all the provisions of Policy SMCM 07.
- v. Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 100 m².
- vi. Class 6 (Use Classes Order, 1994) food and drink, including hot food take-aways. However the sale of food and drink for consumption on or off the premises is to be at ground floor level only.
- vii. Class 7 (Use Classes Order, 1994) non-residential institutions including interpretation centres.
- viii. Class 8 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) small-scale educational facilities only.
- ix. Class 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994) assembly and leisure, including clubs, dance halls and discos provided these do not cause nuisance to neighbours particularly safeguarded through restrictions on opening hours and proper noise abatement measures;.
- x. Class 10 (b) (Use Classes Order, 1994) marine leisure – diving, sailing or windsurfing school or other marine based sports or recreation.
- xi. Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles.
- xii. Amusement Arcade or centre, or a funfair.
- xiii. Band club, social club, dance hall, wedding hall and discotheque.
- xiv. Cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public, provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 50 m².
- xv. Cinema.
- xvi. Bakery and Confectionery with provision for outside catering.

Development proposals within such zone must make a positive contribution towards the upgrading of the tourism product through innovative approaches to urban design – site layouts, mix of uses, landscaping, building heights and mass, design of facades - that respect the character of the locality and ensure that all necessary infrastructure is in place to accommodate the needs of and the activity generated by the proposed developments.

Within such zones MEPA will support schemes from public and private agencies which enhance the external environment and the public realm. It will also seek planning gain from major developments to assist in the implementation of this objective and will seek to participate in initiatives for the proper comprehensive management of tourism zones.

18.4.1 The designation of the tourist area and entertainment priority area in Marsascala recognizes the importance of this locality for both domestic and international tourism and it also reflects the approach advocated in Structure Plan policy TOU 4. This designation encourages the development of tourism infrastructure and related entertainment facilities (tourist accommodation, restaurants, attractions) and ensures that the amenity in other areas, are safeguarded from such developments particularly by not permitting tourism development within the residential areas but directing such development to the appropriate zone. This policy will also ensure that developments allowed complement the tourism product for this area and ensure an overall integration of development of facilities to enhance the quality of the area

18.4.2 The main role of Marsascala as a focus for entertainment uses is recognized by the Local Plan. Proposals for hotels, bars, restaurants and a wider range of entertainments uses will therefore be encouraged within this area. The provision of retail and office facilities in the areas delineated as Entertainment Priority Areas is to be limited to small scale developments only in line with the stance of directing the development of larger scale commercial facilities to Town and Local Centres. The designation of such zones has taken into consideration the concentration of leisure

(tourism and entertainment) facilities in the locality. Discotheques will be considered acceptable provided that such developments will not create negative impacts on the nearby residential areas, since these tend to attract significant users to the locality, besides generating traffic and noise. A number of catering establishments have been using their front garden as extensions to the establishment. Through this policy these are considered acceptable provided they fall within the entertainment area.

SMMS 02 Development at site between Triq il-Bahhara and Triq is-Salini

The site between Triq il-Bahhara and Triq is-Salini, as indicated in the Marsascala Policy Maps MS 1 and MS 2 and Inset Map MS A7, zoned as a green area, in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is being designated as a public urban open space in line with policy SMSE 05. However, MEPA will consider development of this site subject to adherence to all of the following conditions:

- i. the ground level of the site (taken from the upper level at Triq il-Bahhara) should be improved as a public urban open space;**
- ii. development should be located beneath the public urban open space;**
- iii. permitted development may include tourism accommodation, residential development and commercial facilities;**
- iv. the development on this site must not be carried out piecemeal but as one overall development; and,**
- v. access between Triq il-Bahhara and Triq Nigel Dennis will be provided through the green area.**

18.4.3 The Etvan hotel is currently making use of an area designated as a green area as a deck area for the hotel. The hotel has also expanded its facilities along the stretch of a schemed road, adjacent to the green area, which is indicated in the TPS, 1988, to connect the hotel facilities to the green area. The green area (approximately 2,300 m²) is to be transformed into a public urban open space. Any development, which may include tourism, residential or commercial development is to be located below ground level. Retention of this open space in this area of Marsascala is important since such open spaces are lacking.

SMMS 03 Sports facilities at the Ex-National Waterpolo pitch site

The site currently occupied by the ex-National Waterpolo pitch, as illustrated in the Marsascala Policy Map MS 1 is designated for the provision of sports facilities. Any proposed development/redevelopment on this site should adhere to the following conditions:

- i. the height limitation should not exceed three floors and semi-basement;**
- ii. 70% of the site area should be built up and would include sports facilities (e.g. gym, swimming pool, fitness centre, squash court, etc.) as well as ancillary retail facilities not to exceed 500 m² in total. Limited accommodation facilities will be considered, provided this will be ancillary to the operation of this facility. Underground facilities will be encouraged;**
- iii. 15% of the site to be designated as a public urban open space;**
- iv. the existing level of parking provision should be provided for and any additional parking requirements resulting from the proposed development should be provided underground. Car parking provision would need to be made within the curtilage of the site in line with MEPA's requirements. 10% of the site area is to be retained for**

- on site car parking at ground level;
- v. appropriate attention should be given to the design of the new development/redevelopment to minimize the visual impact of the proposed building;
- vi. MEPA would encourage the retention of the swimming pool and its improvement or redevelopment of a new pool;
- vii. proposals should also include a landscaping plan around the site. Landscaping is to cover 5% of the site.

18.4.4 The site occupied by the ex-National Waterpolo pitch (approximately 10,000 m²), currently used as a swimming pool facility during summer, is underutilized and there is potential for expansion of sports facilities and the upgrading of the existing facilities, possibly through the redevelopment of the site, particularly since sports facilities are lacking in Marsascala. The current site is underutilized just as a swimming pool and has potential to develop a multi use sports complex which would serve the local population and nearby localities. The footprint of the existing building covers a site area of 4000 m². The additional facilities would increase the built up footprint to 7000 m². The current level of parking provision should still be provided, partly through the provision parking both at underground and ground level, particularly for coaches. Any additional parking requirements resulting from the proposed additional facilities is to be provided. Adequate public urban open space will be provided for better use of this area. The development will also have to consider submitting a landscaping plan.

SMMS 04

Yacht marina site

MEPA would consider proposals for the development of a yacht marina in the Marsascala Bay area, as indicated in the Marsascala Policy Map MS 1, subject to the following conditions:

- i. the scale and form and suitability of the proposed use is confirmed by the appropriate studies which will have to include an underwater archaeological survey;
- ii. the financial feasibility of the project proposal is confirmed;
- iii. an Environmental Impact Assessment will have to be carried out by the developer.

Within this area maritime-related shore based facilities will be considered acceptable, provided they complement the development of the yacht marina and will not result in adverse impacts of the nearby residences.

MEPA will also consider allowing residential and commercial development as part of the redevelopment of the ex-National Swimming Pool pitch site, as indicated in policy SMMS 03, provided:

- i. the redevelopment of this site is part of a master plan for the development of the yacht marina in Marsascala Bay;
- ii. residential and commercial development should take up between 50% - 60% of the entire site area, whilst 20% - 30% of the entire site area is to be developed for sports and recreational facilities. Underground facilities will be encouraged;
- iii. Not less than 10% of the site area should be retained as a public urban open space;
- iv. An additional fourth floor may be allowed subject to the submission of a quality design that would not create adverse visual impacts within this area of Marsascala; and,
- v. Conditions iv, v, vi and vii in policy SMMS 03 will still apply.

18.4.5 Marsascala Bay has the coastal characteristics that lends itself to the development of a marina,

despite being indicated as an unlikely site in the Yachting Subject Study. However, the main reasons given were related to the exposure of this area to winds and seas from the east and severe reflective wave problems during onshore winds. However, no detailed studies had been carried out to determine the extent of such observations and whether they can be mitigated. The consultants had stated that it may not be attractive to international yachters. However, local demand is increasing and new berths being sought. In 1995 there were around 1119 berths available in the Maltese Islands, but none of these were in the plan area or its vicinity. Currently there are around 1500 berths available in Malta and Gozo. The plan area lacks such facilities despite the increasing boating activity in Marsascala and nearby Marsaxlokk. Recent years have seen an increase in the ownership of boats by locals placing a demand for berthing/mooring facilities. Detailed studies are needed to ensure the overall feasibility of the project and identify the main problems for a marina in this area and it should also suggest any mitigation measures which may need to be implemented to avoid any significant environmental impacts, that may be identified by the studies. The policy also provides for the integration of the ex-National Swimming Pool site should this site be available as part of the yacht marina development, providing guidance on the level of potential development that may be allowed, primarily to counter the significant infrastructural costs that a yacht marina would entail (e.g. the construction of a breakwater).

SMMS 05

Deletion of Proposed Coast Road

It is proposed that the schemed coastal road linking Zonqor Point, Marsascala and Xghajra, as indicated in the Temporary Provisions Scheme, 1988, be deleted.

18.4.6 The TPS shows the southern section of a new road adjacent to the coast, extending north-westwards from the development boundary at Zonqor Point, Marsacala towards Xghajra. There is no strategic need for such a road, and since it is ODZ it is not required for development. This coastal stretch is indicated as an Area of Ecological Importance and therefore the construction of the road would adversely affect this area whilst encouraging further pressures for development ODZ.

SMMS 06

Pedestrian Link to Zonqor Estate

MEPA will permit works that improve conditions for people walking between the Zonqor Housing Estate and the centre of Marsascala. Specifically, this would include the upgrading of the footpath that links Triq Hurds Bank with Triq Ta' Monita, as indicated in the Marsacala Policy Map MS 1, and the provision and improvement of pavements along Triq F. Bianco. This link should take into account persons with special needs.

MEPA will also encourage the upgrading of the green area at Triq Dun Frans Bianco between the school and the church into a seating area with landscaping. MEPA may also consider the development of underground facilities within this site provided that these are in harmony with the adjacent uses, namely the church and the school.

18.4.7 The Zonqor Housing Estate is relatively isolated, and it is not particularly easy or attractive to walk between this area and Marsascala where local facilities exist. There is an existing track, which has partially been concreted, but this would benefit from upgrading, including better surfacing, lighting, and measures to prevent vehicular use.

- 18.4.8 This pedestrian route involves the use of Triq F. Bianco, but this has either no pavement or only a narrow one. This deficiency needs to be addressed, particularly as the road also serves the parish church and the primary school. The green area (1600 m²) adjacent to the church should be upgraded into a proper seating area with landscaping for public use. This will improve the amenity of this area. Appropriate facilities could be developed underground provided that these are not in conflict with the educational and religious uses around this site.

SMMS 07

Wied Il-Ghajn Road Alignment Changes

In order to protect the rural environment and the character of the UCA, modifications will be made to the scheme alignments, as shown on the Marsascala Policy Map MS 1 and in the Inset Map MS A3. The design of development in this area will have to ensure that no vehicular access will be allowed from Triq l-Iskal, Sqaq il-Harruba and Triq il-Qrempuc.

- 18.4.9 Because of the steepness of the valley side, sections of Sqaq Il-Harruba and Triq Il-Qrempuc will be constructed as pedestrian routes (staircases) only.
- 18.4.10 In order to safeguard the character of, and amenity within, the UCA, Triq F. Grech will only be extended as far as Triq L-Iskal, and also no vehicular access will be permitted from this street to the squares and alleys within the UCA.

SMMS 08

St. Thomas Bay Coastal Recreation Area Action Plan

MEPA will prepare an Action Plan for the St. Thomas Bay Coastal Recreation Area, as indicated on the Marsascala Policy Map MS 2. This area is designated primarily for coastal recreation and related facilities (e.g. beachrooms). In the interim period prior to the finalisation and approval of the Action Plan, no extensions to existing beachrooms or additional beachrooms will be permitted and change of use from holiday accommodation to permanent residential or commercial use will not be permitted.

The Action Plan for the St. Thomas Bay Coastal Recreation Area will provide guidelines with regard to the improvement of the area and existing beachrooms, designate appropriate sites for the provision of common facilities (e.g. car parking, children's play area), designate sites for camping and caravanning, recommend improvements of the promenade along the St. Thomas Bay coastal stretch, and identify measures to encourage a co-ordinated action to improve the management of the area and encourage landscaping to minimize the potential negative impacts. The Plan will also identify time frames for implementation, monitoring, maintenance and upgrading programmes.

- 18.4.11 A number of beachrooms have been constructed around St. Thomas Bay. The Local Plan recognizes that such facilities have developed in the area, unfortunately in a haphazard manner.
- 18.4.12 The site covered by this policy has a site area of about 70,000 m². It is estimated that there are approximately over 140 beachrooms. This policy seeks to contain the further expansion of such developments and advocates the preparation of an Action Plan to guide any development in and management of the area. The plan will recommend measures for the provision of additional facilities in appropriate areas and to improve the overall amenity of the area whilst ensuring that the coastal resources are protected and not degraded.

SMMS 09

Site at Wied Sant' Antnin for informal recreation

A site in Wied Sant Antnin as indicated on the Marsascala Policy Map MS 1 is being safeguarded for informal recreation activity subject to the following criteria;

- i. the area is to be cleared of the dumped rubble material;**
- ii. the design should maintain and improve the natural characteristics of the area and hard landscaping should be limited;**
- iii. buildings should be limited to the provision of toilet facilities/shower rooms, and building heights should not exceed 1 floor (4.75 metres);**
- iv. the nature of facilities to be provided would include seating, picnic areas, children's play areas and related informal facilities, as well as a football pitch provided this is appropriately located within the site;**
- v. An afforested buffer, not less than 10% of the site, is to be provided between the adjacent waste management facility and the recreational area;**
- vi. the provision of a parking area within the curtilage of the site which could also be used as a boat trailer parking area;**
- vii. access for disabled must be provided;**
- viii. a pedestrian footpath is to be provided to link the recreational area with the residential area.**

Before the submission of a development application, a Project Description Statement should be submitted which would give a detailed description of the project based on the above criteria.

18.4.13 This site is currently degraded and is used for illegal dumping and bird trapping activity and would therefore provide an opportunity for improvement and rehabilitation to encourage informal recreation activity where locals can go on a picnic, similar to the Kennedy Grove area. The site area is approximately 52,000 m². It is important that the natural characteristics of the area be retained and this informal area should not be turned into a formal garden. The openness of the site is to be retained. Therefore, buildings and any hard landscaping interventions are to be minimal. The clearing of the area from the dumped rubble should allow the restoration of the area to its natural features. Parking facilities would be provided in the degraded quarry area with any proposed buildings sited in this area. This parking area can also serve a dual use as a boat trailer parking area since this would be required mainly during the summer months. This recreational area would also serve locals coming from Zabbar and Zejtun as well as from other areas. A football pitch is necessary since such a facility is non-existent in Marsascala.

SMMS 10

Site reserved for extension of school facilities

The site abutting the Marsascala primary school, as indicated in the Marsascala Policy Map MS 1, is being reserved for the future expansion of the school facilities provided that the height of any proposed new building on this extension should not exceed two storeys.

18.4.14 The ever increasing school population in Marsascala and the projected future increase in the population of this locality has and will place significant demands on school space. The current building has serious limitations in this regard, particularly due to the limited classrooms available to accommodate the increasing primary school population. An application has been approved for the construction of additional classrooms and facilities (PA 2960/01) to partly solve this problem, transforming existing spaces within the precincts of the school (e.g. yard and

terrace) into classrooms. The extension has been discussed with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools and it was indicated that this is sufficient to accommodate the kindergarten facilities. Due to the proximity of the Zonqor battery a height of two floors is to be retained.

SMMS 11

Traffic Management

MEPA will collaborate and support the Malta Transport Authority and the Marsascala Local Council in the preparation of a comprehensive Traffic Management Study for Marsascala to manage better traffic flows into and out of as well as within Marsascala. Such measures would address issues relating to pedestrianisation possibilities as well as pedestrian safety issues (particularly along Triq il-Qaliet, to effectively reduce speeds and improve road safety along this main spine road and next to the school area), .The study will also consider the introduction of the CPPS, primarily within the entertainment priority areas and local centre in Marsascala.

18.4.15 The locality of Marsascala has grown not only in terms of the number of residents but also the number of visitors coming into this area, primarily for recreation purposes. This has led to a considerable amount of traffic that at certain times creates congestion at critical bottlenecks. This policy proposes that a comprehensive study of traffic issues in this area is carried out keeping in view the commercial, recreational and residential functions of this locality. In particular, triq il-Qaliet acts as the local distributor road for a large part of M'Scala. Whilst it is primarily residential in character, a number of retail and entertainment uses are located along it and consequently it is the focus for noticeable traffic movement and pedestrian activity. The road's width and alignment encourage excessive speed. A speed limit of 40 kph has been introduced, but speed surveys indicate that the prevailing 85th percentile speed is 57 kph. The only realistic way to influence motorists' behaviour is to introduce traffic calming features at frequent intervals and measures to change the appearance of the road. Secondly, pedestrian or semi-pedestrian measures may be introduced in specific areas. The introduction of the CPPS in such a commercial and leisure area needs to be given serious consideration.

SMMS 12

Sant'Antnin Waste Management Facility

This local plan confirms the committed use of the Sant' Antnin site for waste management facilities and MEPA will favourably consider proposals which will improve the operations of the plant and mitigate any resulting environmental impacts.

18.4.16 The Sant'Antnin site at Marsascala has been in operation for a significant number of years. In the seventies a significant proportion of the site, which extends well beyond the current boundary, was used as a waste tip. This activity took place mostly on a pre-excavated hardstone quarry site. A site due SW of the Sant' Antnin plant is still used for hardstone extraction. In the eighties the liquid waste water treatment came into operation. In the nineties the solid waste processing facility came on line. The plant was erected a few metres from a major thoroughfare and a few hundred meters away from residences. Given the proximity of the two land-uses, it is imperative to examine in detail the proximity factor, to identify the main issues and challenges that may be addressed taking into account the synergy that may result from the two operations. Measures will be taken to upgrade the existing facilities with a view to promote an environmentally sound operation which has negligible effects on the environment and nearby road and residences.

SMMS 13

Zonqor Battery & St. Thomas Tower

MEPA encourages the use of Zonqor Battery and St. Thomas Tower as a cultural heritage attraction. Ancillary visitor facilities including a catering operation may be permitted.

18.4.17 Both sites are important heritage resources in Marsascala and underutilized. The potential of developing these sites as a cultural attraction will further promote this locality for a different form of tourism experience than that found in other tourist localities in the north of the island. A possible way forward is to devolve these properties to the Marsascala Local Council or an NGO for the implementation of a project in line with this policy.

SMMS 14 Development of sites between Triq il-Qrempuc and Triq l-Iskal

MEPA designates the two sites between Triq il-Qrempuc and Triq l-Iskal, as indicated in the Marsacala Policy Maps MS 1 and MS 2 and Inset Map MS A10, for residential development provided that 25 % of the entire site area of both sites is to be turned into a public urban open space. Underground development on both sites will be considered and no blank party walls are to be created . Building heights for these sites is three floors and semi-basement.

18.4.18 These two sites measuring approximately 1249 m² and 1303 m², are white areas within the 1988 TPS and have no specific zoning. These sites form part of a larger area which was expropriated by Lands in the 70s and developed for housing, however, these two sites remained undeveloped. Plans from the Housing Department indicate that the site at the edge was to be transformed into a green area whilst the infill site was partly to be developed for shops and the remainder to be kept as an open space. A request was received stating that the sites are now in private ownership and development applications have also been submitted on these two sites. This policy aims to give direction regarding the development of these sites.

SMMS 15

Development Brief for Jerma Palace Hotel site

Any development proposals on the Jerma Palace Hotel site will be subject to the submission of a Development Brief to be drawn up following Terms of Reference provided by MEPA. Whilst the development of the site should focus primarily on the provision of tourist accommodation, MEPA will consider other development options which would include residential and commercial development, provided these are part of a comprehensive development of the area and should include sufficient public urban open space whilst retaining access to the foreshore.

18.4.19 The site currently occupied by the Jerma Palace Hotel site should be mainly used for tourist accommodation in view of the strategic location of the site for such purposes. However, a comprehensive development of the site, including residential and commercial uses, may be considered provided this forms part of a Development Brief for the area. MEPA will provide Terms of Reference which will include planning parameters e.g. site coverage, building heights, to guide the submission of development options. The Brief should consider providing for public urban open spaces as well as retain public access to the foreshore.

19. Mqabba Area Policies

19.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 400,000 m²
Rural Area: 2,200,000 m²
Population as per Census 1995: 2,613
Population Census 2005: 3,021

- 19.1.1 Mqabba is one of the smallest local councils in the plan area with a population of just over 3,000. In the last 5 years the population growth of the area has been modest (about 200 persons) and this is also reflected by its rate of growth, 1.54%, compared to other areas like Marsascula with 2.36% rate of population growth.
- 19.1.2 In the post war period the locality experienced a rapid population growth associated with new housing constructed to the south of the older village core area and along Triq il-Konvoj ta' St. Marija. As a consequence of this growth, the few community facilities and local services that exist are limited to the centre of Mqabba, leaving new residential areas in the periphery with no local-scale commercial and social facilities. The recent residential development has also taken up vacant housing land which previously served as reservoir for rainwater, resulting in acute flooding problems in areas close to the Mqabba bypass - Triq il-Konvoj ta' St. Marija. The locality, on the other hand, has a significant number of vacant plots that are still available for construction, as well as vacant buildings, mostly old dwellings in the village core. This is a phenomenon occurring in other localities in the periphery of the plan area.
- 19.1.3 Mqabba retains the traditional village form with the parish church at the centre of the village. The village has various other historic landmarks like *Torri Vincenti*, other churches and public buildings. In fact, the urban area of Mqabba takes up only 15% of the whole local council area. The extensive rural area makes the Mqabba urban area easy to identify from nearby localities. Within Mqabba's urban area there are very few open spaces to complement the locality's richness in historical and traditional village features.
- 19.1.4 The rural gap between Mqabba and Qrendi is currently subject to intense pressures for development, particularly for the establishment of industrial plants. The northern edge of Qrendi is a few hundred metres away from the southern section of Mqabba and it is considered to be an important strategic gap separating Mqabba and Qrendi, since the development of this gap will result in the coalescence of these two settlements.
- 19.1.5 The rural area around Mqabba is characterized by the disposition of quarries and related activity, especially on the north-western side of the settlement very close to the old village core causing adverse impacts to residential areas. It has attracted for example, high levels of traffic movement. Quarrying is also the prime cause of destruction of flora and fauna and loss of high-grade agricultural land and it also tends to attract illegal disposal of industrial chemicals in the disused quarries which has an adverse effect on the water table. In the vicinity of the airport and Mqabba, quarries are almost touching one another with some residences in between. The local plan area has a total of 51 softstone quarries, 34 of these quarries or 67% of them are found within Mqabba. Notwithstanding the large percentage of quarries present in Mqabba and the adverse impacts such quarries bring with them, there still is significant pressure to extend existing quarries or to have new ones in the remaining rural areas of Mqabba.

19.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- Quarrying operations generate adverse impacts on the quality of the urban and rural environment
- Coalescence of the Mqabba and Qrendi settlements
- Development pressure to build outside the development zone, particularly industrial plants
- Flooding problems in areas close to the Mqabba bypass

19.3 Strategy

19.3.1 The overall strategy is to maintain and enhance the environmental quality of Mqabba as a residential area. In furtherance of this strategy, the Plan proposes to encourage the provision of local services, whilst the *ad hoc* location of *new* large/medium scale uses, detrimental to the amenity of the area, will not be permitted in Mqabba. The plan also seeks to retain the distinct identity of Mqabba through the prevention of the coalescence of this locality with Qrendi.

19.4 Area Policies

SMMA 01 Mqabba Bypass/Valletta Road Junction Improvement

MEPA will permit the Malta Transport Authority to implement appropriate measures to improve the Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija and Triq Valletta junction, so as to improve the safety and operation of this junction as indicated in the Mqabba Policy Map MA 1. Traffic management and pedestrian safety measures should also be extended along Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija between Triq Karmenu Grima and Triq Qrendi.

19.4.1 The existing layout of this junction is substandard in a number of respects, and its design does not reflect the pattern of movements and status of the approach roads. Measures to improve this junction, possibly by the construction of a roundabout, are encouraged to address these deficiencies and reinforce the desirability of routing "through" traffic, particularly lorries, along the bypass. As part of the improvement it will be necessary to ensure that good levels of street lighting exist to ensure the conspicuity of the junction. Pedestrian safety measures are also necessary along the lower section of Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija to ease pedestrian movement between the two residential areas of Mqabba alongside this road.

SMMA 02 Mixed Development at Quarry at Tal-Hagra

In accordance with the Minerals Subject Plan (MSP) Policy RES 4, MEPA will favourably consider the development of a disused softstone quarry, as indicated in the Mqabba Policy Map MA 1, subject to the provisions listed below provided that:

- the quarry permit is forfeited and ceases to be valid; and,**
- any permit conditions relating to any development on site are adhered to.**

Once the above conditions are met development proposals on this site will adhere to the following provisions:

- a) A restoration plan, to be approved by MEPA, is to be submitted for the entire quarried area, in accordance with procedures as set out in the Minerals Subject Plan, MEPA, in line with MSP Policy RES10;
- b) The entire site is to be developed in a comprehensive manner, with the first phase relating to the implementation of the restoration plan.
- c) Development proposals are to ensure that not less than 95% of the entire area is restored back to agricultural use (the northern part of the quarry);
- d) not more than 5% of the whole quarry area for residential development on 3 floors with basement (without penthouse) and including private open space (corner at *Triq il-Gilju* and *Triq tas-Sejba*);
- e) An additional 5% may be allowed for residential development provided that not less than 20% of the whole quarry area is designated for the provision of a public informal recreational area, constructed at the developer's expense
- f) the siting, main frontages and any access points of both the residential and recreational component should preferably be from *Triq il-Gilju* only;
- g) site should be developed in a comprehensive manner giving particular attention to the design of the development to ensure that it reflects traditional rural settlements' characteristics;
- h) a landscaping scheme to the satisfaction of MEPA is to be provided, primarily along the perimeter of the site fronting a road and between the residential development and the recreational provision;and
- i) No industrial development will be permitted

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for residential use as specified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

19.4.2 This quarry is located along the western urban fringe of Mqabba and has a total site area of approximately 27,520 m², creating disused quarry land which is a valuable resource. In view of its location, it is important that steps are taken to secure its early rehabilitation. To initiate this process the policy seeks initially the deposit of inert construction and demolition wastes to secure the quarry's rehabilitation, in line with the Minerals Subject Plan.

19.4.3 For this reason restoration to agricultural land through the raising of quarry floors is an ideal after-use for the major part of this site. Moreover, this quarry, being outside development scheme, is potentially suitable for informal recreation uses, such as parks and gardens. To ensure the success of this scheme and the rehabilitation of the quarry residential development will be allowed. The compatibility with surrounding land uses was an important consideration in determining the acceptability of alternative uses. As a result of urban expansion, many quarries, such as this one, are now in close proximity to residential areas and uses that would adversely affect the amenity of residents will not be permitted. The main objectives of the scheme are also to define a clear edge to the Mqabba urban area and limit road access routes into the eventual developable area and avoid any routes along the northern boundary of the residential component and/or routes that may add pressure for future development will not be accepted.

The MEPA encourages the construction of a water reservoir at Triq Ganni Darmanin and storm water runoff management measures in Triq Xandru Farrugia, Triq Gianni Darmanin, Triq Mons. Alfons Caruana, Triq George Martin, Triq il-Franka, Triq il-Hajt tal-Matla, Triq in-Nazzarenu, Triq Filippu Venuti and Triq Dun Anglu Mallia, as indicated in the Mqabba Policy Map MA 1.

- 19.4.4 This area is prone to flooding and following a survey of the area carried out by the Land Survey Unit of MEPA, to determine the road levels in the area, it was concluded that a reservoir would be necessary to receive storm water runoff which will accumulate at this point, once the roads have been formed, and which would otherwise flood the adjoining fields.

20. Paola Area Policies

20.1 Area Description

Urban Area³: 1,025,435 m²

Rural Area: 742,565 m²

Population as per 1995 Census: 9400

Population Census 2005: 8,856

- 20.1.1 Paola is predominantly a residential town. It is served by two arterial roads which link central to southern Malta and these situated on its periphery of such a town. Smaller towns and villages such as Tarxien and St. Lucija are located in close proximity to Paola.
- 20.1.2 Paola has an ageing and declining population, but no home for the elderly or a day centre where senior citizens can socialise. Between 1985 and 1995 the over 60 age group increased by 11.5%. The population growth of Paola has been relatively stable between 1957 and 1985 with only a 2.4% increase over this period. However between 1985 and 1995 the total population registered a decrease of 20% and a further 6% between 1995 and 2005.
- 20.1.3 The locality is characterised by a densely built environment (around 97.5% of the area within scheme has already been developed) and flooding in specific areas. The high residential density is reflected by the fact that measured in terms of both the number of residents (92) and the residential units per hectare (37), these represent a significantly higher density than the corresponding averages observed nationally (refer to South Malta Local Plan Report of Survey Volume 1, Table 4.1). Nevertheless, the locality's urban conservation area is well preserved with uniform streetscapes and traditional features.
- 20.1.4 Paola has also grown to be an important primary retail centre. Most of the retail activity is situated around the main square, next to the parish church, although the nearby Triq il-Foss gets particularly congested whenever there is the open air street market. The locality however suffers from traffic congestion ("through traffic" to neighbouring localities and other traffic generated specifically by Paola) and parking (including the absence of a public car park) problems that are degrading the overall quality of life around the main square.
- 20.1.5 Paola also enjoys a number of sports facilities, urban open spaces and public gardens to meet the needs of the local population. The MEPA's "Leisure and Recreation" Topic Paper indicates that the average recreational space per person within Paola's urban areas is 5.1m² (ie. more than double the national average of 2.4 m²), although such spaces are underutilised and not equitably distributed within the locality. Areas like Ghaddafi Gardens and the Pace Grasso site merit redevelopment/upgrading, whilst planning solutions are also needed for other vacant areas like the market site and the vacant site behind the Mosque.
- 20.1.6 The national burial site, Addolorata Cemetery, is also located within Paola's confines. A good portion of Paola's rural area is to be found in the surrounds of such a burial site.

³ this figures excludes the area around Corradino Industrial Estate (itself within Paola Local Council's boundary) that falls within the Grand Harbours Local Plan.

20.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- Upgrading of Ghaddafi Gardens
- Extension of Addolorata Cemetery
- Traffic management improvements linked to the redevelopment and semi-pedestrianisation of Paola square
- Relocation of the flea market from Triq il-Foss
- Redevelopment of the existing street market site
- Redevelopment of the Pace Grasso site
- Need for a residential home for the elderly and a day centre
- Protecting residential quarters in the historical core.
- Mitigating flooding problems around Triq il-Lampuka and part of Triq Sir Paul Boffa

20.3 Strategy

- 20.3.1 The strategy for this locality is to reverse Paola's population decrease over the past decades through the provision of a planning framework which encourages residents to stay within its environs on securing an improvement to the quality of its environment and an effective utilisation of its remaining land and vacant buildings.

20.4 Area Policies

SMPA 01 Environmental Upgrading of and Development at Paola Square

In order to significantly improve the amenity and attractiveness of the town centre, MEPA will permit the development of Paola Square and adjacent area, as indicated in the Paola Policy Maps PA 1 and PA 2, provided that:

- i. all existing public urban open spaces above ground level are retained. MEPA will insist on the upgrading and extension of such spaces into a garden setting through adequate embellishments that include soft and hard landscaping. Particular emphasis should be placed on the integration of the three public urban open areas, in front of the Church, opposite the Health Clinic and the main square.**
- ii. the entire public open space is free from any built structures, apart from a small kiosk, above ground level.**
- iii. the design allows for the passage of route buses, besides permitting the servicing of shops and other premises (at specified times, if necessary) and consider the possibility of pedestrianisation or semi pedestrianisation and any changes with regard to traffic movements and traffic management measures (one-way streets, traffic calming, and**

- junction improvements, particularly at the intersection of Triq il-Belt Valletta with Triq Bormla as indicated in the Paola Transport Policy Map PA 4) that will be required around the town centre area.**
- iv. a reservoir is constructed underground.**
 - v. toilet facilities are provided at basement/semi-basement level, to displace those in Triq il-Belt Valletta that are recommended for demolition (refer also to Policy SMPA 04).**
 - vi. allow not more than 3800m² (equivalent to *circa* 50% of the total footprint area covered by Policy SMPA 01) of underground space for retail uses, including the provision of a food court.**
 - vii. a Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) for the development proposed is to be carried out and submitted by the developer to the satisfaction of MEPA, and that any resulting measures are implemented.**
 - viii. only uses falling under Classes 4 and 6 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended will be permitted. All other land uses acceptable within primary town centres, as identified in Policy SMCM 01, will not be allowed.**

20.4.1 Paola Square, the hub of urban community activity, is a congested area due to a variety of land uses and activities that include retail, housing, religious activity, traffic generation, and the regional Health Centre (that also serves neighbouring localities). Potentially the area could be very pleasant and attractive, but currently the volume of traffic that passes through it prevents this possibility. At peak times around 1,000 vph pass through the Square. About half of this traffic is very localized, accentuating even further the need to undertake complementary traffic management measures on parallel streets to cater for the displaced traffic. The possibility of pedestrianisation or semi-pedestrianisation of this area would ensure to better manage traffic flows into the area, reduce traffic congestion and pollution whilst improving the amenity of this main node in Paola.

20.4.2 A considerable number of route buses pass through Paola Square, and it is vitally important that good public transport accessibility to the town centre is maintained. Consequently, the pedestrianisation scheme should continue to allow the movement of route buses in both directions. Good design will ensure that the presence of buses does not compromise the aim of improving public urban open spaces and the overall environment for pedestrians.

20.4.3 The area fronting the clinic is also a prominent public space in the town centre, but currently it is dominated and spoilt by car parking. The relocation of the Health Clinic to the Pace Grasso site (as part of the proposed redevelopment referred to in Policy SMPA 08) is appropriate since the existing clinic at Paola Square has its logistical constraints and would be best vacated for other land uses. The introduction of a CPZ and the construction of a CPPS car park (see Policies SMPA 02 and 08) will moreover allow valuable embellishments (hard and soft landscaping) to be undertaken around this part of Paola Square.

20.4.4 In order to improve the scheme's feasibility and increase the variety of facilities within the town centre, the MEPA will also consider the provision of retail outlets underground which would include a mix of shops and a food court. A MEPA Survey shows that there were 31 new shops and 21 vacant shops within Paola's town centre in the period 2000-2003. The utilization of part of this proposed underground space as a food court will be encouraged since Paola currently lacks the provision of quality catering outlets.

SMPA 02

Area zoned for warehousing at Triq Il-Bacir

The site being included within the Limits to Development Boundary at Triq il-Bacir in line with policy SMSE 01, as indicated in the Paola Policy Map PA 1 and Inset Map PA B1, is being designated for warehousing and storage as per Class 17 of the Use Classes Order 1994, as amended, subject to the following conditions:

- i. No industrial or retail development will be permitted;
- ii. a setback of not less than 3 metres is to be allowed between the development on this site and the back gardens of the residences along Triq Ghajn Dwieli and Triq l-Isqof Buhagiar;
- iii. development would have to include measures to reduce any impact on the adjoining residential areas, through the minimization of openings (doors, windows) on the boundary with the residential development and proper noise reduction in line with section 14.2 of the Policy and Design Guidance 2002, as amended;
- iv. Offices ancillary to the warehousing and storage will be permitted;
- v. Height limitation should not exceed three floors with semi-basement (i.e 14 metres maximum from the highest finished pavement level) ;
- vi. Adequate parking is to be provided on site.

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for warehousing as specified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

20.4.5 This site measuring approximately 5,600 m² is located within a predominantly industrial area of Paola. The adjacent development along Triq il-Bacir, has been committed to warehousing and storage and considering that the frontage of this site is along this road further intensification of warehousing is considered acceptable on site. However, buildings are to be setback at least three metres from the boundary of the residential area.

SMPA 03

Addolorata Junction

To increase the short-term capacity of this strategically important junction, MEPA will permit the construction of an additional lane on the Vjal Santa Lucija approach to the traffic signals including the installation of modern control equipment at this junction.

MEPA will also encourage the Malta Transport Authority and/or local council to implement measures aimed at facilitating bus priority at peak periods on the Vjal Sir Paul Boffa approach to the traffic lights within this junction.

20.4.6 The Addolorata junction is very strategically located, effectively linking the South to most other parts of the island. Some 6000 vehicles pass through this junction at peak times, and congestion is commonplace. A long term, major junction improvement is safeguarded by policies in the Grand Harbour Local Plan, however, in the short term improvements can be achieved by constructing a fourth lane (which would entail the taking up of new land) on the Vjal Santa Lucija approach and by installing modern signal control equipment.

20.4.7 This will not only improve the efficiency of the signals by making them demand responsive, but it will allow the installation of linked signals at the Palma Street junction (refer to Policy SMTR 05). Moreover, Vjal Sir Paul Boffa is part of the strategic bus corridor network, and a

considerable number of buses use this road. In order to reduce delays at times of congestion, MEPA will encourage the relevant authorities to investigate the possibility of introducing bus priority measures.

SMPA 04

Relocation Of Flea Market

MEPA will encourage the relocation of Paola's flea market to Paola Square once this square has been upgraded as indicated in policy SMPA 01. In the interim, a site adjacent to the Corradino Correctional Facility, as indicated on the Paola Policy Map PA 1, is designated to relocate the flea market temporarily. In order to facilitate pedestrian access to the flea market and the upgrading of the overall environment within this site, existing toilet facilities at Triq il-Belt Valletta will be demolished and this entire site will be free of any permanent structures. The entire area is to be pedestrianised.

Redevelopment of the existing flea market site between Triq il-Foss and Triq l-Arkata for recreational (public urban open space), social and community use (Classes 7 and 8 of the Use Classes Order) will be encouraged, provided that the height of the replacement buildings do not exceed the height of the existing buildings, and the area at street level is utilised entirely as a landscaped open space with a limited number of parking bays.

20.4.8 Paola's flea market currently generates a number of adverse social and environmental impacts. The site between Triq il-Foss and Triq l-Arkata (1030 m²) is negatively impinging on the neighbourhood's quality of life in view of the proximity of residential units and the regular vending activity by hawkers (about three times a week), which is resulting in a shabby (noise, dirt and odours) environment.

20.4.9 This policy therefore encourages the relocation of such facilities to a more appropriate site (1300 m²) to the east of Corradino's Correctional Facilities, whilst seeking to upgrade the environment around the existing flea market site. Access to the new site currently from Ghaddafi Gardens or Sqaq Sant`Antin in Triq Bormla is much better than that at the current site. Clear access from Paola's main square is thus of paramount importance for the viability of the flea market. The existing toilet facilities at Triq il-Belt Valletta are to be demolished and such facilities be integrated into the Paola Square redevelopment (refer also to Policy SMPA 01). The demolition of toilet facilities will also improve access to the extensive Ghaddafi Gardens from Paola Square, which is the hub of social activity (refer also to Policy SMPA 07). The flea market can better operate at this new site and therefore relieve the residential area around the current site from the inconveniences caused by the market. The new site would be less of an inconvenience in this regard.

20.4.10 No additional permanent structures will be allowed on this site as a security measure due to the proximity of the Corradino Correctional Facilities. The area should moreover be fully pedestrianised, except for loading and unloading where and when appropriate. Use of the area by the local scouts group, which has its premises on site, will however be retained.

20.4.11 The site at Triq il-Foss will be redeveloped primarily as a public urban open space, whilst any re-development of existing structures should retain the same height as existing.

SMPA 05

Site at Triq Brittanja for Recreational and Social and Community facilities

MEPA will allow the redevelopment of the site at Triq Brittanja corner with Triq is-Sultan, as indicated in the Paola Policy Maps PA 1 and PA 2, for recreational (public urban open space), social and community facilities (Classes 7 and 8 of the Use Classes Order). The MEPA will expect the developer to allocate not less than 30% of the site as a playing field area for use by the local community.

20.4.12 The site at Triq Brittanja corner with Triq is-Sultan measures 625 m² and is owned by Lands Department and is currently an abandoned building. It is being proposed for recreational, social and community facilities, being Government owned. Such amenities are important since open spaces and community facilities (such as a library, day care centre and/or kindergarten) are generally lacking in this densely built western part of Paola.

20.4.13 The area is dominated by varying street levels and currently accommodates a vacant, derelict building that was previously used as a kindergarten, besides a small playing field/playground in need of upgrading at the southern end of the site. Any redevelopment should allocate not less than the existing footprint area of the playing field (ie. 30% of the site) for such a use.

SMPA 06

Leisure Area at Triq Kordin

MEPA zones the site off Triq Kordin, as indicated in the Paola Policy Map PA 1, for the provision of sports (open air facilities e.g. playing pitches) and recreation related facilities provided that:

- i. a minimum of 40% of the site is dedicated to recreational facilities in the form of a public urban open space.**
- ii. built structures are to be kept to the minimum required to accommodate changing rooms and toilet facilities. Building height limited to one floor.**
- iii. a buffer of not less than 4 metres between the proposed development and the surrounding established land uses such as housing is to be provided.**
- iv. adequate landscaping in line with the provisions stated in MEPA's 'Guidance on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting and Landscaping in the Maltese Islands', February 2002 and as amended.**
- v. Proposals are to include appropriate vehicular/pedestrian access into and around the site.**

20.4.14 The opportunity exists to develop the vacant Government owned site behind the Mosque measuring 4700 m² for leisure facilities namely sports and recreational facilities. Such land uses are particularly appropriate since the site is well shielded from the arterial road network, and complements existing social/community, recreational facilities (the Mosque on the northern front, Ghaddafi Gardens, albeit not directly contiguous, on the west, the Rehabilitation Centre on the south) and residential development on the east. A permit for the construction of a bocci dome on site was issued in 1998. This in a way supports the designation of this site for leisure facilities.

20.4.15 Both Paola and Fgura are important landmarks within the plan area in view of their strategic importance as retail centres and the fact that they account for circa 19% of the plan area's population. Despite the proximity of the Kordin sports facilities which are more of a national catchment, these facilities will serve the local community of these areas.

20.4.16 Appropriate recreational spaces are much needed in both Paola and Fgura. The former's public

urban open spaces are hardly frequented by the local community due to the poor qualitative provision, relative inaccessibility and locational constraints. The MEPA's Leisure and Recreation Topic Paper moreover indicates that Fgura's average recreational space per person within urban areas is minimal at 0.1m², as opposed to the national average of 2.4m².

20.4.17 The entire site is currently a white area within the development boundaries and is accessed through a passageway contiguous to the Islamic Centre's boundary wall. Design proposals are to consider improvements regarding access in and out of the site.

SMPA 07

Upgrading of Ghaddafi Gardens

MEPA will support proposals for the embellishment and upgrading of Ghaddafi Gardens, as indicated in the Paola Policy Map PA 1, provided that:

- i. the soft landscaped areas and open spaces are retained.**
- ii. additional hard landscaped, formal and informal recreational facilities are included.**
- iii. a picnic area and a playing field for children is provided alongside the western perimeter of the Gardens.**
- iv. ancillary facilities such as toilets and changing rooms are accommodated, preferably, underground.**
- v. no commercial facilities are allowed on site, apart from a kiosk with some tables and chairs close to the Gardens' western flank.**
- vi. pedestrian accessibility into the gardens on the northern and southern flanks is improved.**
- vii. the service road running adjacent to the Corradino Correctional Facilities' northern boundary wall is retained and it is supported by appropriate embellishment to complement the overall garden setting.**

20.4.18 Ghaddafi Gardens, occupying an extensive site of 36,500 m², are currently heavily underutilised by the general public. This policy therefore seeks to facilitate accessibility and the overall upgrading of the site, so as to increase the level of usage of these Gardens. The Gardens are currently dominated by a series of passageways in strategic locations and extensive soft landscaped areas with mature trees that are inaccessible to the general public. One of the main purposes of this policy is to facilitate increased access throughout the gardens but ensuring that the open character of the gardens is safeguarded. Embellishment initiatives (hard and soft landscaping) around the passageways will be supported.

20.4.19 A crucial aspect that needs to be tackled is accessibility. The Gardens are currently accessed from two points, namely the main service and pedestrian entrance just off it-Telgha ta` Rahal Gdid and a small pedestrian entrance at Sqaq Sant`Antnin off Triq Bormla. Both entrances have their limitations, the former being an unattractive entrance due to the steep change in levels and the latter being concealed and out of sight. An upgrading of the Gardens should seek to improve accessibility especially on the southern and northern flanks. The demolition of the existing toilets in Triq il-Belt Valletta (refer also to Policy SMPA 04) will allow pedestrian access to the Gardens from the hub of the town centre.

20.4.20 Pedestrian access from Triq Kordin needs to be improved. An additional entrance point would facilitate access for local inhabitants residing close to the Ghajn Dwieli junction, whilst enhanced visibility of the gardens from the arterial road network (through the lowering of the boundary wall) may instigate more people (even non-Paola residents) to make use of such a public facility.

20.4.21 The above initiatives should also be complemented by the provision of pockets of picnic areas

and play facilities for children, in order to improve the attractiveness of the Gardens for family-type informal recreational activity. A kiosk and multi-purpose sports facilities such as a 5-a-side football pitch and/or basketball/volleyball/tennis court can also be considered. The location of such facilities should not deter the open character and overall garden context. The westernmost area facing the housing estate near the Vjal Sir Paul Boffa/Triq Kordin junction is especially appropriate for these uses.

SMPA 08

Redevelopment of the Pace Grasso Site

MEPA will consider proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Pace Grasso site, as indicated in the Paola Policy Map PA 1, provided that the development is guided by the following criteria:

- i. The existing full-sized football pitch, landscaped environment, bocci pitch and club house should be reinstated as part of the redevelopment.**
- ii. social and community facilities are provided on site.**
- iii. Housing and offices are acceptable provided that the carrying capacity of the site is not exceeded and that appropriate densities are safeguarded. A mix of commercial land uses (such as a restaurant, supermarket, local convenience shops and/or large showrooms) is also appropriate provided that their scale reflects the character and constraints of the site and its context. A Retail Impact Study is to be carried out by the developer.**
- iv. parking facilities, consistent with general Policy SMTR 02, are provided to cater for the proposed development. In addition, around 350 spaces will need to be provided by the developer for the public parking provision (excluding provision for the residential units). Surplus provision to provide extra off-street parking as part of the proposed CPPS scheme is also warranted.**
- v. a Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) study is to be carried out by the developer, and approved by MEPA.**
- vi. Developer must upgrade the public urban open space between Triq Guze d'Amato and Triq il-Knisja, as indicated in the Paola Policy Map PA 1, as a form of planning gain.**
- vii. the developer funds and carries out junction improvements at Zabbar Road / Triq is-Sorijiet and Zabbar Road / Schreiber Street as well as any other traffic related improvements that are identified as part of the Traffic Impact Study..**

20.4.22 The Pace Grasso site (19,390 m²), which is Government owned, currently consists of a garden, bocci pitch, club house and a full sized football pitch. The high walls that surround the site generate considerable adverse visual impacts. The use of the football ground for competitive matches has over the years waned, although the site is nowadays also used by schoolchildren in view of restricted playing pitches within the nearby schools' grounds.

20.4.23 The site is underutilised and the existing amenities will be extensively improved as a result of the comprehensive development and would provide for added facilities to be enjoyed by the local community. The dominant land use in this comprehensive redevelopment should be sports and recreational facilities and the reinstatement of the full-sized football pitch and improved access for usage by schoolchildren. The overall development should also integrate other displaced facilities (bocci pitch and club house, landscaped environment), whilst provide for the provision of indoor sports facilities (e.g. gymnasium or squash courts).

20.4.24 MEPA will also consider the development of other facilities to ensure the overall feasibility of the project. Small scale local convenience retail outlets, large showrooms, a restaurant, supermarket,

offices and housing are amongst the acceptable land uses for this site. The Pace Grasso site offers the opportunity to provide for additional parking over and above those needed to serve the proposed development.

20.4.25 It should also be mentioned that the Fgura/Zabbar/Marsascala group of bus services use Zabbar Road and, therefore, pass close to the site. The TIS will also have to consider the implications of the pedestrianisation of Paola Square (SMPA 01). Moreover, high quality traffic calming measures (SMPA 02 and SMPA 03) should also be considered since such a development will inevitably increase flows in an established residential area.

20.4.26 Paola currently lacks the provision of an old people's home, sheltered housing or even a day centre, and indeed this development could accommodate some/all of these land uses to complement the residential component on site and in surrounding streets. The possibility of relocating Paola's Health Clinic from Paola Square to this site (SMPA 01) should also be given consideration so as to provide a more modern facility easily reachable by both the general public and users of the other social and community facilities to be provided on site.

SMPA 09 Mixed Use Area off Vjal Sir Paul Boffa and at Triq l-Ibjar

The area zoned for industry, in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, off Vjal Sir Paul Boffa and at Triq l-Ibjar, as indicated in the Paola Policy Maps PA 1 and PA 2, is being designated as a Mixed Use Area subject to the following conditions:

- i. permitted uses are those falling under Use Class 1 (Dwellings), Class 4 (Retail), Class 5 (Financial, Professional and Other Offices), Class 17 (Storage), as well as showrooms and a supermarket;**
- ii. any development on this site is subject to consultation with the ADT;**
- iii. residential development should be directed towards the section of the area along Triq l-Ibjar; and,**
- iv. parking provision should be provided on site as part of the development proposal.**

20.4.27 This area, measuring approximately 6800 m², is a prime site at the edge of Paola mostly facing the main arterial roads of Vjal Sir Paul Boffa and Vjal Sta. Lucija. The area is currently occupied by a retail outlet, an industrial block, warehouses, a residence and an undeveloped site. The industrial zoning is not compatible with the existing character of this area which has become more of a commercial area with a number of showrooms and similar developments being granted both on site and in the vicinity. Although this policy allows for the development of commercial related uses, these are compatible with the residential uses in the area. To allow this transition between the commercial uses and the residences in the area residential development is encouraged along Triq L-Ibjar. A number of developments have been granted on this site and these include a supermarket, residential development and a retail outlet. Considering the plans to upgrade the junction in the vicinity of this area any development would require consultation with ADT.

SMPA 10

District Park

MEPA designates the area surrounding the Addolorata Cemetery, as indicated in Paola Policy Map PA 1 and PA 2, as a District Park for informal recreation, subject to the preparation of a plan for the area. This plan will identify the provision of facilities related to walking, cycling and

jogging as well as appropriately located picnic facilities. In addition to such facilities MEPA will consider proposals for afforestation as well as the provision of a catering facility in an appropriate location.

20.4.28 Paola is a highly urbanised locality with a limited rural setting. The area encompassing the Addolorata cemetery is the only rural part of Paola. This area consists of fields, some of which are cultivated, as well as a number of scattered farms. The District park would be reached by three localities – Paola, Sta. Lucija and Luqa. The policy identifies the preparation of a plan for the area which would outline the facilities to be provided as well as the improvement of this area to encourage informal recreation activities. The aim of this park would be to attract residents from the nearby settlements and should therefore not generate high levels of traffic but rather encourage people to come on foot. Regarding parking facilities the provision at the Addolorata cemetery is considered sufficient and therefore no specific parking facilities would be required.

21. Qrendi Area Policies

21.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 420,000 m²
Rural Area: 1,200,000 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 2,344
Population Census 2005: 2525

- 21.1.1 The area of Qrendi is bordered by Mqabba from the north, by Zurrieq from the east and by Siggiewi from the west. Qrendi's population has increased by only 181 persons between 1995 and 2005. Qrendi's population is not expected to increase substantially during the plan period.
- 21.1.2 The village core has an organic development pattern with the presence of a number of smaller squares at strategic points which has contributed to retain its historic charm and identity. A number of towers and historic residences and religious buildings are found in Qrendi (e.g. Windmill Tower, St.Catherine tat-Torba, Our Lady of Graces, St.Matthew, and Tas-Salvatur chapels and Bali Guarena Palace).The outer parts of Qrendi have witnessed more recent development, particularly along Triq it-Tempesta. Qrendi is well contained with a number of green open spaces and a good number of historic landmarks including some very interesting scheduled property with large private gardens.
- 21.1.3 Comparison retail shopping is usually made from Zurrieq since such facilities are lacking in Qrendi. Residents also go to Zurrieq with regard to other services e.g. social security, health and other government-related services. The parish priest has indicated the need of developing a pastoral centre to serve the local community. It has been indicated that currently there are hardly any facilities catering for the Qrendi youths.
- 21.1.4 The bus terminus is currently located at Triq R Buhagiar. The Local Council is in the process of introducing a number of measures to restrict heavy traffic movement within the village core and the retention of the bus terminus in the village core will compromise these measures. Thus a site needs to be identified for its relocation. This relocation will also result in better use of the main piazza in front of the parish church.
- 21.1.5 Although not significant as in nearby Mqabba, softstone quarrying activity, which is mainly confined along Triq is-Siggiewi, is nevertheless endangering the aquifer and reducing high quality agricultural land. Pressure to extend their existing footprint will conflict with a nearby cluster of livestock farming activities.

21.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Relocation of public transport terminus.**
- **Provision of community facilities (e.g. pastoral centre).**
- **Upgrade green areas, protect private gardens and encourage pedestrianisation within historic centre.**
- **The need to manage mineral extraction activity, within Tal-Warda/ Misrah is-Sinjura**

quarries, in a sustainable manner

21.3 Strategy

21.3.1 The overall strategy is to maintain and enhance Qrendi as a village and protect its residential amenity, whilst restricting the encroachment of quarries, and impacts related to such an activity, close to this locality, seeking the diversion of quarry-related traffic away from village centre.

21.4 Area Policies

SMQR 01

New Pastoral Centre

MEPA re-zones part of the site shown on Qrendi Policy Map QR 1 and Inset Map QR A2, currently designated as green area in the 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes, 1988, for the development of social and community facilities related to a new Pastoral Centre, as long as the following conditions are adhered to:

- i. existing sports ground is retained at street level and is shifted to the south section of the site (adjacent to Triq G. Muscat);
- ii. built facilities above ground level, which may include, amongst other, a community hall, a small chapel, administrative rooms, and ancillary facilities to the Pastoral Centre, are to occupy no more than 25% of the site and should be located along the northern section of the site at Triq iz-Zurrieq;
- iii. building heights should not exceed two floors; and,
- iv. adequate embellishment of its new perimeter will include hard landscaping and a small seating area.

MEPA may consider relaxing car parking requirements, provided it is satisfied that the proposed development is primarily aimed for the local community.

The existing Qrendi Scouts Group building, shall be incorporated within the proposed development on this site.

21.4.1 The site (approximately 5,600 m²) covered by this policy is currently designated as a 'green' area in the 1988 TPS and is administered by the Church Authorities with two projected streets that are still unopened. Currently the area, is occupied by a football ground with no related facilities and a one-storey building used by the Scouts at the northern section of the site.

21.4.2 Whilst the green area, in general will be retained, the site is being rationalized to include a provision of social and community facilities in line with provisions outlined in policies SMSE 05, SMSO 01 and SMRE 01. The proposed facilities are primarily intended for local use and therefore parking requirements may be relaxed. In view of the improvement and upgrading of the site, only 25% of the site has been indicated for development whilst underground facilities will be encouraged.

SMQR 02 Rezoning of site between Triq Massabielle & Triq N Communet

The site between Triq Massabielle and Triq N. Communet designated for terraced house development in the TPS, 1988, is being rezoned as a public urban open space, as indicated in Qrendi Policy Map QR 1 and Inset Map QR A2.

21.4.3 This site, measuring approximately 500 m², has already been converted into a children's playing field. This policy simply is changing the previous zoning to conform with the current use of this area.

SMQR 03 New Scheme layout along Triq Sant' Anna

MEPA will prepare a revised scheme, including planing parameters, for the area along Triq Sant' Anna, as indicated in the Qrendi Policy Map QR 1 to ensure an appropriate transition between the alley and the new development and to ensure that the character of this alley in Triq Sant' Anna and its buildings is retained.

21.4.4 This part of Qrendi is a continuation of the traditional urban streetscape along Triq Sant' Anna. New development in the area, although as yet limited, shows that the character of this quaint stretch can be threatened. This policy will seek to identify a new scheme for this area to ensure a harmonius transition between the old urban fabric and the new development. .

22. Safi Area Policies

22.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 310,000 m²
Rural Area: 1,970,000 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 1,731
Population Census 2005: 1,948

- 22.1.1 Safi is bordered by Kirkop and the airport runway to the north and by Zurrieq from the south and southeast. It is situated in the middle of a group of small villages clustered around the southern perimeter of the international airport. The village is characterized by a number of residences with a varied traditional architectural form and historical value. With a population of just over 1,900, Safi's population increased by 12% between 1995 and 2005. It is not envisaged that Safi experiences a high increase in its population during the Plan period.
- 22.1.2 Evidence from a study analyzing the existing vacant land carried out by MEPA reveals that about 70,000 m² of land is available for development. One of these sites at Ta' L-Amparell is rather large although it is constrained by the possibility of containing some archaeological remains. Infill plots or sites are mostly located to the north west along Triq in-Nassaba c/w Triq S.Cauchi and to the north east of the village in the area known as Ta' L-Amparell. Within the village core there are few green open spaces although the locality is still largely surrounded by large expanses of agricultural land in view of its location near the southern section of the airport's runway.
- 22.1.3 Considering the local population being mainly in the upper age brackets appropriate facilities to cater for their needs are lacking. Rural Safi is small and is characterized by highly productive agricultural fields and old agricultural buildings that constitute the remnants of a medieval hamlet known as Misrah Hlantun, and the presence of Roman tower in Ta' Gawhar area.
- 22.1.4 The peripheral roads at Safi have not yet been constructed and this results in considerable traffic, particularly traffic towards Zurrieq, passing through the centre of Safi.

22.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Traffic calming measures particularly with the UCA of Safi.**
- **Provision of community facilities, e.g. Residential Home.**
- **Mixed development at ta' L-Amparell**

22.3 Strategy

- 22.3.1 The overall strategy is to maintain and enhance the environmental quality of Safi as a rural residential area. The key elements of the strategy include the conservation of cultural, historical and architectural assets in this locality and the diversion of 'through' traffic away from the village centre.

22.4 Area Policies

SMSA 01 Vehicular Movements, Triq San Pawl/ Cemetery Area

In accordance with policy SMTR 05, MEPA will encourage the Malta Transport Authority to implement measures to improve the intersection/junction, at the entrance to Triq San Pawl and close to the parish cemetery site, as indicated in the Safi Policy Map SA 1, particularly by reducing its excessive size thereby generally improving road safety and directing non-local traffic flows to Triq il-Kuccard.

This improvement will also have to consider upgrading works at the entrance to Triq il-Kuccard.

22.4.1 There is scope to discourage non-local traffic from utilizing the irregularly widened Triq San Pawl, Triq San Guzepp and other routes within Safi's historic centre in favour of peripheral residential roads flanking this small locality. The improvement of the junction at the entrance to triq San Pawl should assist in re-directing traffic to Triq il-Kuccard. In this regard, semi-pedestrianisation initiatives and utilization of the parish centre for social and recreational functions can be effectively encouraged.

SMSA 02 Development of site at Ta' Amparell

In accordance with policies SMHO 02 and SMCM 03, MEPA designates the undeveloped land at Ta'Amparell, as indicated in the Safi Policy Map SA 1 and Inset Map SA A2, zoned for Housing (Section 6 Act X, 1988) in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, for the development of residential, retail and recreational facilities subject to the following conditions:

- i. Developers are to submit a master plan layout indicating how the area is to be developed within 12 months from the approval of this plan;**
- ii. MEPA would encourage a range of different sized dwellings**
- iii. Site to be developed for residential purposes, although the introduction of community and retail facilities is encouraged ;**
- iv. Triq il-Palma across the entire site is to be retained;**
- v. Adequate parking is to be provided on site;**
- vi. the height limitation for this site will be three floors and a semi-basement, although a fourth floor may be considered if developer provides adequate public urban open space of not less than 15% of the site area being developed;**
- vii. All buildings fronting a road are to have a front garden.**

In accordance with Structure Plan policy ARC 3, the MEPA will require the developer to undertake adequate studies to identify any existing archaeological remains on site before any development of the site is permitted. The permitted development will then reflect the conclusions of these studies.

Since the site is under multi-ownership, should the developers not submit the master plan layout, MEPA will establish the parameters for the development of the site.

MEPA also encourages the design and implementation of the junction improvement at Triq Ta'Gawhar, Triq Stefano Erardi, Triq l-Ajzar and Triq Qerd in-Nahal, as indicated in the Safi Policy Map. The improvement must also consider the provision of a small public urban open space

which is to include seating facilities and some landscaping.

- 22.4.2 The site under review is mostly agricultural fields with an area of land of approximately 23,980 sq.m. located to the north east of the village's centre and overlooking pristine rural land. It is perhaps one of the largest sites still undeveloped within planning scheme boundaries of Safi. The site has been earmarked for Housing development by the Housing Authority as per Section 6 of Act X of 1988.
- 22.4.3 A substantial section of land is covered by a 100m buffer zone encircling a small hypogea known as *Ghar is-Semplici* (degree of protection: E).
- 22.4.4 Due to the large size of the site, it is important that this site is developed holistically to maximize its potential and also gain some community and recreational facilities, considering that the development will increase the residential provision of the area. However, due to the site not being in single ownership, the policy provides for the preparation of a master plan for the area which is to identify the building zones and any internal roads. Considering the possible existence of an archaeological site MEPA would require that adequate studies be carried out prior to any development being permitted. Concurrently, proactive urban design initiatives with regards to the proposed residential, recreational and retail development are being encouraged within the framework of a high-quality landscaping plan that gives regard to particular physical characteristics of the area covered by this policy. The development will also have to consider the design and improvement of the junction at Triq Ta' Gawhar, Triq Stiefnu Erardi, Triq Qerd in-Nahal and Triq l-Ajzar.

SMSA 03 Traffic management scheme at Triq Ta'Gawhar/ Triq S. Erardi Junction

MEPA encourages a traffic management scheme aimed to re-design Triq Ta'Gawhar/Triq S.Erardi junction, as indicated in the Safi Policy Map SA 1, primarily to reduce the width of the existing road, amend building alignment where necessary and reflect the junction improvement requirements proposed as part of policy SMSA 02. These improvements will include reducing the width of the carriageway in favour of pedestrian safety, traffic calming measures and landscaping, including a small public urban open space.

- 22.4.5 This planned road within scheme is far too wide considering its location within a new residential area forming the south eastern section of this small village. Through traffic from nearby Zurrieq can already utilize the recently opened new street off Triq iz-Zurrieq which diverts incoming traffic to Triq il-Kuccard. Thus it is envisaged that this policy provides a great opportunity related to stemming of potential excessive speeds generated by the opening up of remaining stretch of Triq S.Erardi.
- 22.4.6 Eventually, the issue of traffic coming from/ to Zurrieq can be resolved through the opening up of the remaining stretch of Triq in-Nassaba and supported by the transport management provisions outlined in policy SMSA 01.

SMSA 04 Rezoning in Triq Salvu Cauchi

The site in Triq Salvu Cauchi, as indicated in Safi Policy Map SA 1 and Inset Map SA A1, zoned for terraced housing, including a road, in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is being zoned

as a green area

- 22.4.7 Actually the site consists of two sites, measuring approximately 1430 m² and 480 m². The former site in the previous zoning included a road which takes up approximately a third of the site. This has been zoned as a private enclave since it consists of back gardens forming part of the residences within the UCA along Triq San Pawl. The second site has been designated as a green area in order to protect the adjacent chapel and its context.

SMSA 05

Rezoning of green area in Triq il-Biedja

The site in Triq il-Biedja, as indicated in Safi Policy Map SA 1 and Inset Map SA A2, zoned as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is being zoned for residential development. MEPA will request a planning contribution from the developer of this site which would go to the upgrading of an existing public urban open space or the creation of a new one

- 22.4.8 The site, measuring approximately 350 m², and was formerly zoned as a green area in the 1988 TPS. Considering the smallness of the site to provide a proper public urban the site is being rezoned for residential use subject that developer submits a planning contribution to provide a new public urban open space or upgrade an existing site.

23. Sta. Lucija Area Policies

23.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 299,650 m²
Rural Area: 422,750 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 3605
Population 2002: 3802

- 23.1.1 St Lucija is the first town since Valletta that has been planned and developed from scratch. The decision to develop a new town was taken in the mid-fifties due to the proximity of St Lucija to the dockyard area, one of the major employment centres in the Maltese Islands. St Lucija originally accommodated those families willing to move a few miles away from the congested harbour area around Cottonera.
- 23.1.2 The older part of the town merits conservation in its entirety, in view of the homogeneity of design of buildings, building heights, open areas and streetscapes which add to the character of this area and are considered to be of particular significance. Most residences within the town are also adorned with trees, shrubs and plants in view of the innovative policy in the planning years to include front gardens in many of St Lucija's residences.
- 23.1.3 The locality is shielded from the arterial (Triq Bir id-Deheb) and distributor ((Triq Hal-Luqa) roads along its periphery by public open spaces on the eastern and northern flanks respectively, whilst Wied Garnaw and the Girls' Junior Lyceum are landmarks on the southern and western sides respectively. Sports facilities consist mainly of an 11-a-side football ground and a bocci pitch located in proximity of the arterial road network. The locality is also generously provided with open spaces such as the one located at Dawret it-Torri around the local Church, which houses recreational uses such as a playing field, town square and a garden environment.
- 23.1.4 The distribution of open spaces enables easy access for residents to the centrally located facilities that include small pockets of retail outlets and minor social/community facilities. The Chinese Garden, jogging track (just off the arterial road network which connects southern Malta to the central part of the Island) and the rural area surrounding the lower lying, picturesque Wied Garnaw are also popular for recreational purposes and country walks (respectively) by local residents and others from nearby towns and villages.
- 23.1.5 St Lucija's population increased by 12.5% over the ten year period 1985-1995, passing from 3202 to 3605. The rate of increase has however decreased considerably in recent years, with the population reaching 3802 by 2002, representing a 5% increase over seven years. One of the major contributing factors to the slow growth in population is considered to be a general lack of available land within scheme, with many of the remaining open spaces either committed or targeted for recreational and leisure uses. A large site opposite Triq l-Istefanotis, which has partly been developed and partly still undeveloped, is still considered as outside the Limits to Development boundary in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, despite this site being caught between two areas within the development boundary of Sta. Lucija.
- 23.1.6 The protection of St. Lucija's archaeological remains, the consolidation of the town's neighbourhood centre (in view of the several retail pockets around St. Lucija) and traffic management initiatives (road junction improvements and traffic calming measures to discourage the use of residential roads by drivers seeking to bypass the arterial road network) are other

issues which need to be addressed.

23.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Protection of public open spaces and formal recreational spaces**
- **Safeguarding existing agricultural land uses at Wied Garnaw**
- **Upgrading of facilities around Dawret it-Torri**
- **Traffic management initiatives**
- **Protection and improvement of presentation of archaeological remains**
- **Development of land opposite Triq l-Istefanotis**

23.3 Strategy

23.3.1 The strategy seeks to improve the overall environment of this locality through the protection and upgrading of the strategic open spaces, the existing formal/informal recreational facilities and the containment of housing development within the identified areas. Introduction of traffic management initiatives and affording protection to certain specific sites also comprise key elements of this strategy.

23.4 Area Policies

SMSL 01

Opportunity area opposite Triq l-Istefanotis

In line with the provisions of SMSE 01, the undeveloped site between Triq L-Istefanotis and Triq Katerina Vitale, as indicated in the Sta. Lucija Policy Map SL 1 and Inset Map SL B1, is being recommended for residential development subject to the following conditions:

- i. the site is developed in a comprehensive manner in line with the requirements of Policy SMSL 06;**
- ii. the design of the development allows for the provision of a minimum of 20 % of the site area for recreational space for public use;**
- iii. a minimum front garden of 1.5 metres is provided along the entire perimeter of the site. The developer will also be encouraged to submit a design that allows for varying frontages.**
- iv. building height is three floors plus basement;**
- v. the development of this site incorporates the embellishment as a public open space of the stretch of land (which is partly owned by Lands Department) on the northern end linking Triq L-Istefanotis to Triq Katerina Vitale. The embellishment should be entirely funded and implemented by the developer as part of the comprehensive development, and should incorporate a pedestrian footpath linking the above mentioned streets. No vehicular access is to be allowed across this site.**

Development of this site will only be formalized after the Structure Plan Review in line with Policy SET 8.

- 23.4.1 The Temporary Provision Schemes of 1988 designate the above-mentioned areas as outside the development boundaries, notwithstanding the fact that they are now engulfed by land which is within scheme on the eastern and western flanks.
- 23.4.2 The site indicated for development measures approximately 2500 m². It is felt that the additional development of residential units with front gardens would be appropriate in this area, to complement the coherent streetscape in its surrounds. Residential compatible uses are allowed as well as the provision of additional recreational areas.
- 23.4.3 Pedestrianisation on the northern end of the site linking Triq L-Istefanotis to Triq Katerina Vitale is deemed necessary since road visibility in the splay leading on to Triq Katerina Vitale is poor.

SMSL 02 Improvement of Triq Hal Luqa / Dawret it-Torri Junction

MEPA will permit appropriate measures by the Malta Transport Authority for the improvement of the Triq Hal Luqa / Dawret it-Torri junction, as indicated in the Santa Lucija Policy Map SL 1, and the closure of the existing access to the Tarxien roundabout (Triq Tal Barrani). The widening of the northern section of Dawret it-Torri in order to allow two-way traffic is also recommended.

- 23.4.4 The aim of this policy is to improve the safety and operation of the arterial road junction through the closure of the existing access to the Tarxien roundabout from Santa Lucija. Widening Dawret it-Torri and installing traffic lights at Triq Hal Luqa would permit an alternative route out of the estate.

SMSL 03 Public Urban Open Space along Triq Hal Luqa & Triq Bir-id-Deheb

MEPA will support the protection of the open stretch of land shielding residences from the Hal-Luqa and Bir-id-Deheb arterial roads, as indicated in the Santa Lucija Policy Map SL 1. An extension of the Chinese Garden as a formal landscaped area will also be considered, provided that:

- i. a minimum of 85% of the site is dedicated to public open spaces that are to include a public garden, landscaped areas, formal and informal recreational facilities that are compatible with the themed garden;**
 - ii. the built-up area of the extension does not occupy more than 15% of the site. Only low lying one storey buildings will be allowed, in accordance with Classes 6 and 7 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended.**
 - iii. a reservoir is constructed underground.**
- 23.4.5 The residential units of Santa Lucija are strategically segregated from the busy arterial roads Triq Bir-id-Deheb and Triq Hal-Luqa by the existing open stretch of land, which spreads across the northern flank of the locality from west to east. Part of the site contiguous to Triq Hal Luqa is occupied by the Chinese Garden, whilst a popular recreational amenity in the form of a jogging track is located alongside Triq Bir-id-Deheb. The central and westernmost parts are as yet undeveloped. This policy seeks to protect such an open space due to its important role as a buffer area whilst allowing for an extension of the existing Chinese Garden on its eastern and western flanks.

SMSL 04

Protection of Archaeological Remains at Triq il-Lellux

In consultation with the relevant authorities, MEPA will support initiatives to protect the abandoned archaeological remains at Triq Il-Lellux, as shown on the Sta. Lucija Policy Map SL 1. A small scale on-site visitor interpretation centre will also be considered, provided that this can be accommodated without creating any damage to the site.

23.4.6 Although most of the town centre is built up, Santa Lucija can still boast of important archaeological remains that should be protected. The remains at Triq il-Lellux formed part of a Temple-period hypogeum that was discovered in 1972. They merit protection, yet could also be developed into an interesting historical feature in an otherwise predominantly residential area.

23.4.7 This policy seeks to protect such a site from insensitive development whilst allowing interventions that ameliorate the educational experience. Under the supervision of the relevant authorities, the MEPA will support initiatives such as the cleaning of weeds and materials around the archaeological remains, the introduction of appropriate interpretation panels and the development of a small, light structured visitor centre

SMSL 05

Redevelopment Opportunity around Dawret it-Torri

MEPA zones the site located between Triq Ines Soler and Dawret it-Torri, as indicated in the Santa Lucija Policy Map SL 1, for recreational, social and community facilities, provided that:

- i. the existing public open spaces making up 75% of the site should be retained and improved to include a public garden, landscaped areas, formal and informal recreational and sports facilities (in particular a children`s playing field);**
- ii. the footprint area currently occupied by the police station, that is 5% of the site, is retained for such a land use;**
- iii. building height should not exceed three floors and a 3 course basement;**
- iv. 20% of the site is reserved for social and community facilities that include a civic centre, new premises for the local council and a day care centre;**
- v. a reservoir is constructed underground; and,**
- vi. the design allows for the exploitation of the changing street levels. Developers are encouraged to take advantage of such changes in levels for the provision of buildings in order to retain the open character of the site.**

The MEPA will consider a phased development of the site, provided that this will not compromise the development of the public open spaces as required by this policy.

23.4.8 The opportunity exists to redevelop parts of this important open area around Dawret it-Torri. This open space (4450 m²) is an important node, being a strategic link between the western and eastern flanks of the town, and can be upgraded to accommodate additional facilities for the general public. Currently the site is underutilized and consists of a police station and a children`s playground.

23.4.9 The redevelopment should aim to increase provision of social and community facilities whilst retaining the site`s open character that serves as a strategic link between St Lucija`s two

residential flanks. Moreover, initiatives should seek to complement the established land uses just outside this opportunity area, namely housing, retail, religious, recreational and social and community facilities.

23.4.10 A phased development of this site in line with the requirements of the policy will be accepted, provided that this does not compromise the public urban space provision as directed by the policy.

SMSL 06

Acceptable Land Uses in Residential Areas

Further to Policy SMHO 02, only development falling within Class 1 (dwelling units), Class 2 (residential institutions), Class 5b (offices), Class 7 (non-residential institutions), Class 8a (educational facilities) and Class 9d (assembly and leisure), of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended, will normally be permitted in St Lucija's Residential Areas as identified in the Santa Lucija Policy Map SL 1. The provisions of the Local Shops Policy will not apply.

23.4.11 The Santa Lucija Policy Map amongst others delineates St Lucija's Residential Areas, Residential Priority Areas and Neighbourhood Centres. Further to Policy SMHO 02, retail, offices for financial and similar services, and light industry uses (Classes 4, 5a and c, and 11) are being excluded from the list of permissible land uses in Santa Lucija's Residential Areas, in order to safeguard the locality's unique characteristics, setting and conservation.

23.4.12 Following consultation with the local council, it is felt that the existing retail outlets located within the designated neighbourhood centre suffice to meet the day to day needs of the local community. Thus residential areas retain their character without accommodating additional uses that might adversely impinge on the existing residential function. Likewise, offices for financial and similar services, and light industrial uses are also being omitted to protect the residential amenity and to discourage additional traffic from outside the locality.

SMSL 07

Mixed Use Area at Triq Hal-Tarxien

MEPA designates the site at Triq Hal-Tarxien, as indicated on the Santa Lucija Policy Map SL 1, as an Mixed Use Area. In this area MEPA will favourably consider development (new development, extensions and changes of use) provided that:

- i. Any new development, redevelopment or extensions to existing developments are not to extend or expand beyond the boundary of the site;**
- ii. Redevelopment is encouraged provided the new development proposed retains the height of existing building whilst any new developments on vacant sites should not exceed a height of one floor as relating to the area;**
- iii. Acceptable land uses will be those falling under Class 11 and Class 17 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended, as well as showrooms, a supermarket and administrative offices as ancillary facilities to the main use;**
- iv. No further expansion of the existing wedding halls or new similar uses in addition to the existing permitted development is to be allowed;**
- v. No retail or residential uses will be allowed;**

- vi. **Where possible, MEPA will seek, through the development process, to encourage developers to provide landscaping around their site or contribute to such provision;**

As the land is currently located Outside Development Zone, the designation of this area for the uses identified above shall be subject to the Structure Plan Review Process in accordance with Policy SET 8.

23.4.13 The area which measures approximately 20,000m², includes a supermarket, 2 wedding halls, a printing-press, and a series of one/two storey industrial workshops. Access to the area is off the arterial road Tal-Barrani on the way to Gudja. This area has gone through significant transformations. A number of small industrial garages were present since the eighties and before. However, during the nineties the mix of uses in the area have change as a result of the introduction of wedding halls, a supermarket and a printing press. These commercial related uses together with the existing small scale industrial activity have created an area of mixed uses some of which may be in conflict with each other, particularly since industrial uses do not relate positively with most other uses.

23.4.14 This policy seeks to contain existing development on site and does not allow any expansion outside the designated boundary. It recognises the uses that have been approved through development applications and seeks to encourage a more managed activity in the area whilst seeking to upgrade the visual amenity of the area through embellishment, which would require the participation of existing users, as well as through redevelopment of existing buildings to provide better designed facilities that meet current and future needs. Although commercial uses will be allowed, the main use for the area should relate primarily to industrial activity and warehousing. Expansion of the wedding halls and related activity is considered to be in conflict with the main uses in the area, and considering the parking problems that exist, particularly during wedding parties, the expansion of such activities will exacerbate the problems. Building heights are to be kept to one floor, although most of the one floor consists of 25 courses and not the normal one floor which is characteristic of residential areas. Residential and retail uses in this area are considered as non compatible uses, the former for obvious reasons since the existing activity will cause bad neighbourliness to any residential development, whilst the latter will encourage additional traffic to the area.

SMSL 08

Redevelopment of football pitch area

MEPA would consider proposals for the upgrading of the football pitch area designated for sports facilities in Santa Lucija Policy Map SL 1 as well as the provision of underground development primarily for sports and leisure related facilities. Proposals may include retail and catering uses, provided that these are ancillary to the leisure facilities. The reinstatement of the football pitch should retain its existing level and no structures/buildings will be allowed above ground except for facilities related to the football pitch in the form of changing rooms and a spectators' stand.

23.4.15 This policy seeks to make better use of the area currently occupied by the football pitch. The site offers an opportunity for underground development related to the provision of leisure facilities. These facilities will serve a wider catchment area which includes primarily the localities of Paola, Tarxien, Luqa, Gudja and Ghaxaq. Every opportunity to increase the recreation provision in the South should be taken considering the low provision per capita.

24. Siggiewi Area Policies

24.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 940,000 m²
Rural Area: 5,330,000 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 7,097
Population Census 2005: 7,903

- 24.1.1 The area of Siggiewi, for the purposes of this local plan, includes the village proper and the countryside north and east of this settlement. The village lies on a ridge bounded to the north by the steeply-sloped Hesri valley, to the east by Wied ix-Xkora, including a conspicuous network of active soft-stone (globigerina limestone) quarries, and to the west by the gentle slopes preceding the Laferla ridge (popularly known as *is-Salib tal-Gholja*) and Ta'Zuta/Girgenti area.
- 24.1.2 The predominantly young to middle-aged population of Siggiewi has increased by 11% between 1995 and 2005. This significant population growth may be attributed largely to a continuous gentrification process (i.e. individuals with high-income earnings taking up residence in the historic core of the village) and movement of a number of families largely coming from Zebbug, other nearby localities and Cottonera families populating the newer housing estate at Tal-Hesri. Siggiewi is considered a high growth area in terms of population.
- 24.1.3 Siggiewi still retains its traditional village identity with a prevailing residential character consisting of a good number of large townhouses and their private gardens within the historic core area, and uninterrupted rows of terraced houses neatly arranged along wide schemed streets. The retention of these private gardens is important in conserving the character of Siggiewi. The retail area is situated primarily around the 17th century parish church and St.Nicholas 'piazza'. Most of the remaining vacant plots are located within streets south of the parish piazza in the area known as Ta' Blat il-Qamar. Siggiewi is very much short of urban green open spaces considering its physical size, although the main piazza in front of the church is a popular meeting place.
- 24.1.4 In the rural part of Siggiewi the main concern has been the proliferation of quarrying activity and construction related operations which has scarred the rural landscape and valleys (e.g. Wied Xkora-Wied Hanzir-Wied Sillani system and Wied Ta'Kandja). The rehabilitation of this landscape once quarrying activities cease is important. The possible reuse of restored quarries for specific uses compatible with the surrounding area and to satisfy specific demands also needs to be identified

24.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Provision of community facilities at tal-Hesri/Blat il-Qamar**
- **Protection of large private gardens/open space enclaves within UCAs**
- **Restoration and rehabilitation of disused quarries**
- **Provision of a multi-purpose Community Services Centre.**

- **Upgrading of sports facilities at Tal-Hesri**
- **Introduction of traffic management measures**

24.3 Strategy

- 24.3.1 The overall strategy for Siggiewi is to further enhance the unique identity of this village through encouraging the provision of an appropriate range of social and community facilities commensurate with the anticipated increase in population. Within the urban area existing public open spaces will be retained, and where possible, upgraded.
- 24.3.2 The strategy also envisages protection of rural fringe areas like Wied Hesri, Wied Xkora and other valleys with their tributaries particularly to rehabilitate such areas and protect them from further development to avoid the problems of increased storm water run off and likely adverse impacts on the high landscape value of the countryside surrounding this locality.

24.4 Area Policies

SMSI 01

Comprehensive Traffic Management

MEPA shall, as outlined in SMTR 04 and in consultation with the Traffic Management Directorate (Malta Transport Authority) and Siggiewi Local Council, encourage proposals aimed to improve traffic flows in and out of this village. Any detailed plans should support the following objectives:

- Discourage commercial/ industrial traffic, originating from quarried sites, from using Siggiewi Town Centre by diverting this traffic towards Triq Mons. M. Azzopardi through re-design of Lapsi/ Providenza street junction;**
- Encourage completion of link roads skirting the existing planning scheme, i.e. Triq Patri G.Delia and Triq Dun M. Zammit; and**
- Support future pedestrianization initiatives within the urban conservation area (including pedestrian only and pedestrian-priority zones) thus reinforcing further the already important identity of this locality in terms of the national tourism product and streetscape character.**

In the remainder of the Urban Conservation Area, MEPA will support the introduction of traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds and generally improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

- 24.4.1 Siggiewi has a relatively large UCA. Traffic calming measures would certainly ensure and encouraging a greater number to 'walk and cycle' activity by residents when these undertake short trips related to retail, recreation and entertainment activities. Traffic management strategy in Siggiewi should be focused on a re-direction of through traffic (particularly heavy commercial/industrial vehicles) to the periphery.
- 24.4.2 This policy supports the rationalization of existing on-street parking spaces in St.Nicholas Square, traffic calming measures in streets approaching this and other squares in this peripheral locality and re-design of existing road widths in order to make them safer for pedestrians.

SMSI 02 Multi-Purpose Community Facility and Social Housing at Triq Dr. N. Zammit

In accordance with Structure Plan policies SOC 23 and SOC 25, a site situated along Dr.N.Zammit c/w Mdina Street, as indicated on Siggiewi Policy Map SI 1, is being designated for social housing and social and community facilities which would include a mix of the following facilities:

- i. facilities for the elderly, including sheltered housing as well as day care centres and/or child care facilities; and,**
- ii. social housing.**

A satisfactory internal road scheme facilitating the implementation of the above-mentioned mix of facilities (including adequate space for off-street parking and internal landscaped areas should be clearly indicated within this site.

The height limitation will be three floors and semi-basement .

24.4.3 The above-mentioned area measuring 4,026 m² is currently entirely under Joint Office administration. It consists of a terraced slope overlooking the central sections of Wied il-Hesri with Zebbug at the foreground. It is surrounded by residential development and faces onto a public open space in Triq Dr. N. Zammit. Current zoning is for terraced houses with a two floor height limitation (with basement) along Triq Dun M.Zammit and three floors (with basement) along Triq Dr. N. Zammit.

24.4.4 The size of this site allows a more efficient use of the site to include both residential, in the form of social housing, as well as social and community facilities which are lacking in this area. Thus a mix of the two is important. Detailed re-design of existing schemed block may incorporate residential development flanking existing blank party walls and adequate landscaping strip acting as a buffer between proposed development and back yards of existing dwellings facing Triq l-Imdina and Triq Dun M.Zammit in order to retain residential privacy.

24.4.5 In view of the uses designated for this site, development schemes should introduce well designed open spaces within the site to increase the amenity of this area as well as provide recreational areas.

SMSI 03 Upgrading Of Tal-Hesri Sports Facilities

In accordance with Structure Plan policies REC 1 and REC 4, MEPA will encourage an upgrading of existing facilities at the Tal-Hesri area, as illustrated in Siggiewi Policy Map SI 1.

Proposals for upgrading may include a rehabilitation of the existing basketball court and the provision of new tennis courts. Conversion of the existing one-storey changing rooms, currently serving the existing football pitch, will support the revamped sports complex.

All development recommended for the purposes of this policy is to conform to the following conditions:

- i. Existing perimeter sections of this site will be satisfactorily landscaped;**
- ii. Proposed project has to include a water reservoir of suitable size for full site**

- irrigation purposes;
- iii. Any lighting provision should avoid creating light pollution, particularly with regard to the spill of light outside the boundaries of the site;
- iv. The site will have a safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access; and
- v. The site needs to cater for adequate parking provision within its curtilage.

The existing building serving as changing rooms and administrative office will have to be re-developed, preferably at a semi-basement level in order to minimize its visual intrusion over large distances. It is envisaged that such building would cater for administrative offices, toilets/changing/shower rooms and a bar. The built up footprint should not exceed 15% of the total site area and the proposed design should blend with the surrounding rural context.

24.4.6 The area under review reserved for this sports site covers some 20,330 m² is mostly located outside development zone. It is surrounded to the west from recent development in Binja Hesri Neighbourhood, and a farm and to the east by agricultural land sloping downwards to Hesri Valley.

24.4.7 There is a dynamic relationship between the changing population characteristics, desirability to live in a particular area and provision of sports pitches and facilities. Demand in Siggiewi is likely to continue mainly in view of the fact that the site is continuously used for local as well as national tournaments (e.g. league fixtures by M.A.F.A., pre-season friendlies and a number of summer tournaments organized by Siggiewi FC or M.F.A.). For this reason, the above-mentioned policy seeks to fulfill Structure Plan policy REC 4 which underlines, amongst other, that, *“in preparing Local Plans the Planning Authority will seek to identify sites for district level recreation centres where a range of facilities can be accumulated and managed effectively...”*.

24.4.8 On the other hand, caution should be exercised when any proposal is considered due to the particular location of the site. Infact, this local plan is proposing the area surrounding this site as an Area of High Landscape Value (refer to policy SMCO 04) as it overlooks Hesri Valley with Mdina and Rabat at the foreground. Fringe landscaping above-mentioned reinforces this important condition.

SMSI 04

Rezoning at Triq il-Muza

The stretch of road between Triq il-Muza and Triq Nicolo' Baldacchino, is being removed and rezoned for residential development, as indicated in the Siggiewi Policy Map SI 1 and Inset Map SI B3. Development of this stretch would have to include the development of the adjacent public urban open space for public use. This would entail the provision of seating facilities in a landscaped area. Underground development beneath the public urban open space will also be permitted.

24.4.9 The road which links Triq il-Muza with Triq Nicolo' Baldacchino is considered unnecessary since there is already a road which links these two roads. This development will also permit the provision of a public urban open space adjacent to the site and which is needed in this area, thus improving the residential amenity. The public urban open space would be in the form of a landscaped seated area..

SMSI 05

Rezoning of Green Area at Triq Mons. Mikiel Azzopardi

MEPA recommends that the site at Triq Mons. Mikiel Azzopardi, as shown in the Siggiewi Policy Map SI 1 and Inset Map SI A1, is partly re-zoned from a green area to residential development and partly retained as a public urban open space. The residential development will be subject to the following criteria:

- i. the developer will be required to upgrade at his expense the adjacent public urban open space in line with SMSE 05 and to maintain the site for at least five years;**
- ii. No underground development will be permitted in the public urban open space;**
- iii. building heights shall not exceed three floors plus semi-basement;**
- iv. the public urban open space will be landscaped in accordance to provisions contained in the Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands (2002).**

24.4.10 The site (2100 m²) which is totally zoned as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is currently characterised by a private garden on a slightly sloping ground with a section being utilized for parking of commercial vehicles and other machinery. The designation of this site as a green area is rather odd considering that unlike most other green areas this site abuts adjacent buildings and seems to be more of an infill site between buildings. This policy whilst considering the development of part of the site (950 m²) is ensuring that the improvement of the retained green space (600 m²) is enjoyed by the local community within this area which lacks useable public urban open spaces.

SMSI 06

Urban Open Space at Misrah il-Vittmi tal-Gwerra

MEPA will encourage and support the introduction of an innovative design scheme to upgrade, re-organise and embellish Misrah il-Vittmi tal-Gwerra, as shown on the Siggiewi Policy Map SI 1, subject to adhering to the following conditions:

- i. At least 25% of the site to be allocated for soft and hard landscaping measures, and a seating area, in accordance with the Guidelines on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Planting & Landscaping in the Maltese Islands, 2002;**
- ii. The provision of a parking area; and**
- iii. The design should retain access between Misrah San Nikola and Triq Mons. M. Azzopardi.**

24.4.11 Misrah il-Vittmi tal-Gwerra, also known as il-Qajjed (1,571m²) was up to the late 1950s mostly occupied by a large farmhouse surrounded by a network of alleys and large private gardens and connected to the main parish square through the narrow Triq il-Qajjed. Today, the site occupied by the farmhouse made way to a sterile tarmaced open space and Triq Ta' Saura thus connecting the area with Triq Mons. M. Azzopardi (Siggiewi bypass). The informal open space is seldom used except for haphazard parking along its fringes. During the annual feast of St. Nicholas this area is transformed into an 'extension' of the main festa activity being held in Pjazza San Nikola (due to the large presence of mobile commercial kiosks and catering facilities) all the way down to parts of the above-mentioned bypass. This square needs re-organisation to improve the visual amenity of this open space and to facilitate its use for informal recreation as well as to ensure an appropriate entrance from the bypass into the Siggiewi Urban Conservation Area. Modern requirements make it next to impossible to re-erect a replica of the old building, however, there

25. Tarxien Area Policies

25.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 877,177 m²

Rural Area: none

Population as per 1995 census: 7412

Population Census 2005: 7,608

- 25.1.1 Tarxien is the only locality in the plan area which is totally within the development zone boundary. It is a locality without any rural areas even though on the South side it is bordered by the rural areas of Paola and Sta Lucija. The population density is also high at 8612 persons per km².
- 25.1.2 Tarxien still retains its traditional village characteristics with dwellings and buildings grouped around the parish church, even though the village core extends well beyond the parish church area towards Paola. New development has grown around this extended core.
- 25.1.3 Tarxien contains one of the most important archaeological sites on the Islands, the Tarxien Neolithic Temples. These are also one of the most visited attractions by tourists. There are a number of scheduled buildings within Tarxien including the parish church, the school in Triq l-Iskola and a number of dwellings along various streets and alleys.
- 25.1.4 Tarxien is mainly a residential area, however, retail development particularly within the Urban Conservation Area of Tarxien generates significant traffic within the historical core of the locality. Tarxien has an average urban recreational space of 1.5 m² per person (Leisure & Recreation Topic paper) which is one of the lowest in the plan area. The lack of opportunities for open space recreation in Tarxien necessitates the protection of existing and the creation of additional public open spaces. Apart from one large piece of land at the area known as Il-Qalgha, which is zoned for residential and community facilities in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, most of Tarxien is already built up. It is therefore important to ensure that any development on such large sites includes a provision for recreational facilities. The locality also lacks appropriate social and community facilities in the form of a day care centre for the elderly
- 25.1.5 The proximity of the Bulebel Industrial Estate poses a particular problem for the residents of Tarxien as both commuters visiting the estate and workers tend to occupy the limited available on street parking spaces which accentuates the parking problem in this locality.
- 25.1.6 The football ground in Tarxien needs substantial upgrading and there is the possibility of providing additional sports facilities adjacent to the Sta Maria Goretti School.
- 25.1.7 Some streets are prone to flooding due to the gradient of certain streets and no provision for collecting rain water and measures to direct storm water runoff are in place. This is the case in Triq Karlu Maretta and Triq Anglu Mangion.

25.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- Traffic management measures
- Provision of public open spaces, children play areas and sports facilities
- Provision of social and community facilities
- Measures to address flooding

25.3 Strategy

25.3.1 The strategy for Tarxien is to protect the traditional characteristics of this town and enhance the quality of the urban environment, both in the Urban Conservation Area and the wider residential area. Particular attention is to be given to secure a reduction in through traffic in the UCA through the designation of pedestrian priority areas which should reduce the movement of through traffic.

25.4 Area Policies

SMTA 01 Provision of Sports facilities on site between Triq Cikku Saliba and Triq Kelinu Cachia

In line with Structure Plan policies SOC 13 and SOC 14, MEPA will favourably consider the provision of outdoor sports facilities (e.g. running track, playing pitches) as part of the existing Santa Maria Goretti school in the area between Triq Cikku Saliba and Triq Kelinu Cachia, as indicated on the Tarxien Policy Map TA 1, subject to the following conditions:

- i. Adequate parking provision is provided;
- ii. The multiple use of such facilities is encouraged;
- iii. Buildings, which would include shower and changing rooms, toilets, ancillary office and other facilities ancillary to the sports facilities, are to be two storeys high and built up area should not exceed 10% of the site area; and
- iv. A landscaping plan should be submitted to be approved by MEPA which would include a 6m green buffer between the residential properties fronting Triq Spiru Spiteri and the sports facility.

Vehicular access from the school to Triq Bir Id-Deheb should be closed as part of any future development within the precincts of the school.

25.4.1 This site (5500 m²) is adjacent to the Santa Maria Goretti school, which currently houses a kindergarten and both a Primary and Secondary school, and has been designated in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, for the future expansion of school related facilities including sports facilities. The sports facilities (e.g. running track, playing pitches) are lacking in this school and considering that it also houses the Kelinu Cachia and Dun Karm Sant Primary schools the provision of such facilities is becoming crucial. The existing yard is currently used for such sports as volleyball, basketball, netball and softball, but the space is limited. Indoor

sport facilities include a badminton court and a gymnasium. The existing recreational space includes 839m² for the Primary A school, 898m² for the Primary B school and 1681m². Considering the high student population and the lack of recreation facilities, better use can be made of the current derelict site. The multiple use of facilities, outside school hours is encouraged and this can serve residents of Luqa, Ghaxaq, Gudja, Sta. Lucia, Paola and Fgura. Although some buildings would be needed to house facilities e.g. office, gym, etc., the openness of the site must be retained. Adequate parking facilities are to be provided. For safety reasons vehicular access from and to the arterial Triq Bir id-Deheb will be closed off.

SMTA 02

Rezoning of White Area in Il-Qalgha

The land designated in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988 as a white area zoned for community facilities, in Il-Qalgha, as indicated in the Tarxien Policy Map TA 1, is zoned by the MEPA for the following land uses:

- i. 65% of the site area is to be developed primarily for residential purposes (providing a range of different sized units), including internal roads and adequate landscaping, and is to include a mix of retail and commercial facilities (Class 4, Class 5 and Class 6 of the Use Classes Order 1994, as amended) as well as social and community facilities in accordance with Class 8 (a) of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended (e.g. kindergarten, youth and day care centre);**
- ii. 35% of the site area reserved for the provision of recreational open space in the form of an urban park and would include seating areas, playing pitches and a children's play area but exclude any internal roads required by the development.**

The development will have to provide adequate parking provision to accommodate the development proposed.

The height of the buildings will not exceed three floors and semi-basement.

MEPA encourages the comprehensive development of this entire site, however, development applications may be submitted on parts of the site in phases, provided that these sites are not less than 3000 m² and that the conditions specified in i – ii above are adhered to. Should this be the case, MEPA will seek to achieve a harmonious, holistic and aggregate design in the development of the site. The development of the site or part of the site as individual plots is not encouraged, however, if this may be the case then MEPA will require the submission of an appropriate planning contribution to make up for the forfeited recreational space. This will go into a fund for the provision of additional recreational areas or for the upgrading of existing ones in consultation with the Tarxien Local Council.

MEPA may also consider applying the FAR on this site provided that the entire site is developed in a comprehensive manner.

25.4.2 This is a large undeveloped site at Il-Qalgha in Tarxien under the ownership of the Joint Office. The site covers an area of approximate 28,000 m². According to the Temporary provision Schemes, 1988, this site is a white area designated for community facilities. Considering the built up nature of Tarxien, the provision of adequate recreational areas is important and 35% of the site is reserved for such provision, seeking to create an urban park within a highly populated area. Although this site is almost at the periphery of Tarxien, nonetheless it is still accessible to most residents and therefore the provision of social and community facilities are encouraged. The policy encourages a mix of different sized dwellings to meet the needs of

different sized households. A minimum of 350 dwellings can be accommodated. Considering the size of the site, its development in a holistic manner is encouraged, and in such a case the application of the FAR would be considered acceptable. However, the policy also allows for the development of parts of the site in phases, provided that the site area is at least 3000 m². This should allow a comprehensive approach to development of the site as against the development of the site as individual plots.

SMTA 03 Social and Community facilities at Triq l-Alfier de Medran

MEPA designates an undeveloped site at Triq l-Alfier de Medran, as indicated in the Tarxien Policy Map TA 1, for the development of social and community facilities, particularly a youth and elderly centre as well as the Local Council offices.

Considering that this will be a local facility MEPA may consider waiving off any parking requirements subject to its satisfaction that the proposed development will not attract substantial traffic

25.4.3 This site is owned by the Joint Office and considering the proximity to the centre of Tarxien it is accessible from most of the areas within this locality. The site is also close to the main recreational facilities in the area, particularly the football ground and the facility would be used by both the elderly during the mornings and the youngsters during the evenings. The design of the building should be given importance since this site is located within the UCA boundary and is adjacent two scheduled buildings, a Grade 1 and a Grade 2. Since the facility would attract primarily local residents and since the on street parking provision in this area does not seem to be heavily used, the MEPA would consider waiving off the parking requirements. However, this will depend on the proposed development.

SMTA 04 Traffic Management and Environmental Improvements

MEPA will support measures by the Malta Transport Authority and the Local Council for the introduction of traffic management and environmental improvement measures in and around the center of Tarxien. These measures may include:

- i. prohibiting through traffic from the central square;**
- ii. safeguarding the movement of buses;**
- iii. pedestrianising alleys in the heart of the UCA;**
- iv. widening pavements where possible;**
- v. undertaking general enhancements.**

The narrowing of Triq Ta' Sardinja should also be considered.

25.4.4 There generally appears to be a noticeable amount of through traffic in the center of Tarxien. This is generally undesirable, and with some alteration to the traffic management scheme, unnecessary even for most local movements. The center of Tarxien is part of a strategically important bus corridor and, therefore, measures designed to prevent through traffic must maintain good bus accessibility. This could be achieved by having bus gates (short sections of bus only streets) at key locations.

25.4.5 A number of alleys converge on Republic Square and High Street, some of which have been

pedestrianised and up-graded. Further similar works will be beneficial. In other parts of the UCA, pavement widening and general enhancements would be very worthwhile. High street is a particular case in point. The excessive width of Triq Ta' Sardinja (between 16 m and 18 m) is unnecessary since this would likely result in speeding along this stretch thus affecting pedestrian safety.

SMTA 05

Rezoning at Triq iz-Zejtun

A site fronting Triq iz-Zejtun and Triq il-Kbira, zoned for villa development, as indicated in Tarxien Policy Map TA 1 and Inset Map TA A2, is being zoned as a private garden/open space enclave subject to policy SMIA 10.

25.4.6 The greater part of this site is a garden which forms part of the scheduled Grade 1 building along Triq iz-Zurrieq. The other part is also a garden pertaining to an adjacent town house along Triq il-Kbira. The villa zoning given in the 1988 TPS compromises the setting of these buildings should the site be developed. This policy designates the site as an open space enclave which whilst protecting the garden allows limited development ancillary to the residential use of the adjacent properties. The property in Triq il-Kbira, although not scheduled forms part of a row of properties along this same street which have been scheduled. The gardens forming part of these buildings is an important characteristic of properties in this part of Tarxien.

26. Xghajra Area Policies

26.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 240,311 m²
Rural Area: 725,254 m²
Population as per 1995 census: 685
Population Census 2005: 1.234

- 26.1.1 The small seaside village of Xghajra, which was once a part of Zabbar, has grown primarily as a summer resort area, but has increasingly developed a resident population. Between 1995 and 2005 the population increased by 80%. The topography is of a hilly or valley type, with the highest point lying in Triq San Leonardu. Although a relatively quiet locality, during the summer months the population of Xghajra almost triples with the influx of people from other localities, particularly from Zejtun, Zabbar and Cottonera. During this period traffic problems in terms of congestion and parking increase.
- 26.1.2 Access to Xghajra is currently through Zabbar, through Triq Orlando Zabbar towards Triq il-Fortizza tal-Grazzja. The Local Council has indicated that due to the high influx of domestic tourists during summer the road network is not able to adequately cope with the traffic generated. This sole access into Xghajra creates problems particularly when works are being carried out along this road. The Council has an outline approval for the development of recreational facilities in the vicinity of the football pitch and is discussing with Government improvements to the promenade.
- 26.1.3 The small population of Xghajra (and the vicinity of Zabbar) has acted as a deterrent in the development of local retail services e.g. food stores, stationeries, etc. Thus locals have to travel to nearby Zabbar for such shopping. However, the population is likely to increase in future considering that a number of developments have been given the green light thus creating additional residential units. This increase may also impact negatively on the infrastructure of the area.
- 26.1.4 Another problem which is affecting Xghajra, and which has been repeatedly stated by the Local Council, is the disposal of sewage from the operation of a large pig farm along Triq San Anard as well as impacts resulting from the nearby Ricasoli Industrial Estate in terms of emissions and air pollution. The introduction of the Wied Ghammieq sewage treatment plant is expected to increase the recreational potential of this locality, attracting additional visitors to Xghajra. Currently the locality is adversely affected by the sewage outfall making the bathing water unfit for swimming. An area off Xghajra has also been identified as a potential site for land reclamation in the Land reclamation Study report carried out on behalf of MEPA..

26.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Lack of local retail outlets**
- **Traffic management measures**
- **Upgrading of recreational areas and heritage resources**

26.3 Strategy

- 26.3.1 The two pronged strategy for Xghajra includes an enhancement of the residential amenity of the area and the reinforcement of the domestic tourism role which the area fulfills in the plan area as a whole. It is equally important that industrial related operations as well as animal breeding farms which are adversely affecting the locality improve their operations to minimize their impacts on the locality's resident population.

26.4 Area Policies

SMXA 01 Improved Pedestrian Access to Xghajra Primary School

MEPA will support measures by the Malta Transport Authority and the Xghajra Local Council to improve pedestrian access to the Xghajra Primary School, as indicated in the Xghajra policy Map XA 1. These measures may include:

- i. Providing a pavement along the narrow road, off Triq l-Iskola, leading to the school, or introducing traffic calming measures so as to convert this access into a shared surface, with pedestrians having priority.**
- ii. Widening the pavement along the east side of Triq l-Iskola.**
- iii. Providing solid guide islands at the Triq Il-Fortizza Tal-Grazzja roundabout, so that pedestrians can cross in the road in more safety in this locality.**

MEPA will also permit the construction of a new footpath from Triq il-Fortizza tal-Grazzja to the school to provide a more direct pedestrian link the the school and Fort.

- 26.4.1 Conditions for parents walking their children to the primary school are currently poor. It would therefore be very beneficial if the identified measures were undertaken to both improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians. Hopefully, in some cases, this may encourage some parents to walk when otherwise they may choose to transport their children the short distance to school by car.

SMXA 02 Promenade Improvements at Dawret ix-Xatt

MEPA will permit works to create an attractive promenade along Dawret Ix-Xatt, as indicated on the Xghajra Policy Map XA 1, provided that the proposed development does not adversely affect the coastal area which is proposed to be designated as an Area of Ecological Importance/Site of Scientific Importance in Policy SMCO 03. Such works will include the formation of parking bays, preferably on the landward side, pedestrian crossing points, comprehensive high quality traffic calming features to keep speeds consistently low, and extensive landscaping as well as a green area.

- 26.4.2 The attraction of the Xghajra coastline makes it an important recreational area for both villagers and those living in nearby towns and villages. The opportunity exists to improve the existing promenade to complement and protect the natural attractions along the coast. Its design should maximise the space given over to pedestrians, and create a safe and attractive environment. The promenade needs some extensive improvements along specific sections due to the erosion by marine action. The design of the improvements is to respect the natural coastline which is

27. Zabbar Area Policies

27.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 1,460,000 m²
Rural Area: 3,900,000 m²
Population as per 1995 Census: 14,138
Population 2005: 14,694

- 27.1.1 Zabbar is bound to the north by Kalkara and Xghajra, to the west by Fgura and Cottonera fortifications (enclosing the localities of Vittoriosa and Cospicua), to the east by Marsascala and to the south by Zejtun. This town, along with Paola and Fgura, was originally created as a result of the out-migration of people previously living in localities within the Cottonera region. Zabbar has the largest population of all localities within the Plan area. Zabbar is one of the main population growth areas in the plan area, and past trends, as well as the amount of vacant land (approximately 150,000 m²) available for development subject that the area has the potential to accommodate further growth in population during the plan period.
- 27.1.2 The western part of this town, composed essentially of Il-Biccieni and Tal-Bajjada (also known as Il-Misrah) areas, is characterized by high dwelling density and comprises a series of winding streets that define the village core. The eastern half is mostly suburban with relatively more recent developments mostly in the form of terraced housing and modern maisonettes and apartments.
- 27.1.3 Zabbar has two other distinct residential neighbourhoods namely Bulebel iz-Zghir, which is characterized by Government housing estates/ multi-storey apartment blocks and rows of terraced house units that were constructed out of various Home Ownership Schemes (HOS), and the area referred to as St.Peter's. The latter neighbourhood is focused around Sant'Andrija church and the very wide Triq Alessio Erardi (originally constructed as part of a north Zabbar bypass route). Both neighbourhoods are still devoid of basic social centres or clubs. The existing Primary Educational facilities are not adequate to meet the increased demand and new requirements being implemented by the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools (FTS), although FTS have not identified this as an immediate priority.
- 27.1.4 Commercial activity generally centres around Sanctuary and Convent Streets although the old part of Tal-Bajjada area as well as parts of Bulebel iz-Zghir (also known as The Estate) have their distinctive concentration of retail units. The open air market in Misrah is-Sliem creates problems particularly of parking and the encroachment of retail activity into residential streets. Public transport should also take account of the newly developed areas and a new strategic location should be identified.
- 27.1.5 A number of public open spaces are available within the village core yet the new residential areas lack such spaces. Zabbar suffers also from traffic congestion and pollution since it is situated along the route that connects the expanding settlements of Xghajra and the coastal resort of Wied il-Ghajj with the heavily populated Paola-Fgura-Tarxien conurbation. This situation results in deterioration of environmental quality environment for residents, shoppers and other users.
- 27.1.6 Zabbar's countryside is mainly located to the east and is characterized by a number of urban extensions, i.e. rows of residential buildings outside the development zone (e.g. Ta'Nahla) and rural settlements such as il-Bidni/ Has-Sajd. San Anard Fort, sitting on the highest point of this

locality, is also a noticeable landmark and is currently used as an animal farm. An appropriate re-use for this fort needs to be established.

- 27.1.7 A large undeveloped area within scheme at Santa Domenica is considered as an Area of Agricultural Value, being irrigated agricultural land, as indicated by the Agricultural Department and therefore merits protection. On the other hand development on a site zoned for residential development in Sqaq Berqi may compromise the proposed Zabbar UCA.

27.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Need to upgrade and broaden range of community facilities, public urban open spaces, sports facilities and children play areas.**
- **Relocation of existing outdoor street market in Misrah is-Sliem.**
- **Identify new location for bus terminus in view of expanding settlement area to the east and north of existing urban area.**
- **Identify an underground car park supporting retail activities within the designated Town Centre.**
- **Establish pedestrian and pedestrian priority areas/streets within the proposed Urban Conservation Area.**
- **Re-use of existing Primary schools**
- **Protecting land of agricultural value at Santa Domenica**
- **Protect the UCA amenity from Triq tal-Labour**

27.3 Strategy

- 27.3.1 The overall strategy for Zabbar is to contain urban expansion within the current TPS boundary and secure an enhancement of the quality of the residential areas through adequate provision of recreational areas and sports facilities and through better management of traffic flows through Zabbar. The strategy also seeks to direct retail, commercial and industrial developments into appropriate areas thus enhancing the residential amenity.

27.4 Area Policies

SMZA 01

Mediatrix Square

In order to significantly improve the amenity and multi-functional role of Mediatrix Square, as indicated in the Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2, MEPA shall encourage proposals by the relevant authorities to secure improvements to this historic square, particularly the entrance to/exit from Mediatrix Square to Vjal il-Labour, which takes account of the following objectives:

- i. **Discourage traffic movements through this area and excess parking through the implementation of traffic calming measures;**
- ii. **Introduce adequate infrastructural measures to reduce flooding problems; and**
- iii. **Promote pedestrian related improvements around this square and improve the public urban open space amenity with adequate seating facilities and landscaping.**

27.4.1 Upgrading of this piazza adjacent to Zabbar's parish church is being supported in order to organize better parking facilities and make this historic/ cultural open space more amenable for pedestrian use.

27.4.2 The recent embellishment of this square has partially improved the overall situation along the above-mentioned context. Nonetheless, a reduction in traffic movement through the site, assisted by changes to the design of the site forming the entrance to/ exit from Mediatrix square to Vjal tal-Labour, is being sought. These improvements may indeed enable *effective* implementation of the broader transport management provisions contained in other area policies for Zabbar seeking to reduce 'through' traffic from Convent and Sanctuary streets. Such improvements will, however, require the diversion of traffic through other schemed roads which still have to be opened e.g. Triq Alessio Erardi

SMZA 02

Public Urban Open Space at Triq l-Ghakrux

MEPA designates a site between Triq Dun Salvu Sciberras and Triq l-Ghakrux, zoned as a green area in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, and shown in Zabbar Policy Map ZA 1, as a public urban open space.

MEPA will also consider appropriate development underground, provided the upper level is transformed into a public urban open space.

27.4.3 The site measuring approximately 4,600 m², is located in the vicinity of a fast developing residential area known as St.Peter's neighbourhood. The development of this site as a public urban open space will provide a much needed amenity in a relatively new residential area which still lacks such provision. This combination of facilities is likely to complement the proposed Neighbourhood Centre in Triq A.Erardi. The site is in private ownership and therefore underground development is permitted provided the upper level is turned into a public urban open space.

SMZA 03

Rezoning of land at Santa Domenica

MEPA is rezoning undeveloped land at Santa Domenica, as shown in the Zabbar Policy Map ZA 1 and Inset Map ZA A1, from residential to a green area to be retained for agricultural use. Only development related to the current agricultural use of this site will be permitted subject to compliance with the Supplementary Planning Guidance "Farmhouses and Agricultural Building (Revised 2003)" published by the MEPA (as amended from time to time).

27.4.4 This area is currently high quality irrigated agricultural land, as indicated in an assessment made by the Agriculture Department. To protect the agricultural activity and value of this area this policy rezones the land from residential to a green area. The land is owned by the Joint Office. In addition the livelihood of the farmer depends on the retention of this land for agricultural use. The site measures approximately 14,000 m². Zabbar still has a total of about 150,000 m² of

vacant land most of which is designated for residential development.

SMZA 04 Re-use of existing schools for Social and Community facilities

MEPA would favourably consider the re-use of the existing primary schools in Triq id-Dukkar and Triq il-Lunzjata, as shown on the Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2, for the provision of social and community facilities, should the existing primary schools be relocated from their current sites.

The relocation of the existing Primary schools will be subject to the submission of a site selection exercise, prepared by the relevant authorities to justify the selection of the proposed site, to be considered by MEPA.

27.4.5 The provision of social and community facilities are lacking in Zabbar considering the high population growth, a high percentage senior population and a high ratio of disabled per 1000 inhabitants. The sites currently occupied by the state primary schools are close to the town centre and therefore strategically located for such provision. The existing schools are not adequate for today's educational needs in line with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools' standards and it is likely that the schools will be relocated during the plan period. A site selection exercise will have to be undertaken in this respect. This policy gives direction as to the form of development that should be encouraged should the sites become vacant. Social and community facilities may include a Government District Health Centre, Day/Night care centre for the elderly, local council offices.

SMZA 05

Relocation Of Outdoor Market

MEPA supports the relocation of the outdoor market from Misrah is-Sliem and Misrah San Gakbu to Triq il-Kunsill ta' L-Ewropa, next to the area known as Il-Foss, as indicated in the Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2. The relocation would require the introduction of appropriate pedestrian-friendly initiatives aimed to link this area with Zabbar. Appropriate parking provision is to be provided along this site to service both the outdoor market users as well as the use of the District Park as proposed in policy SMZA 07.

27.4.6 This policy envisages the integration of recreational, sports and social facilities in the vicinity of the fortifications in view of the proposed Regional Park. The existing use of the wide dual carriageway will no longer be necessary given the emerging South Harbour Highway Strategy which envisages closure of this route for traffic and transfer of the latter to Vjal tal-Labour.

27.4.7 The existing market (consisting of approximately 30-40 stalls) currently utilizes the fringes of a recently embellished stretch of land in Misrah is-Sliem. The outdoor market operations at the current site result in haphazard parking as well as the proliferation of some retailer stands (with their associated vans) along the Main Street and parts of Triq Bajjada and in Misrah San Gakbu resulting in closure of these routes to traffic during Friday and Saturday morning hours and conflicting with nearby hospital-bound traffic. The new site avoids these problems since it is not located within the centre of Zabbar but close enough to Zabbar to be accessible to residents. Evidently, this situation creates a chaotic atmosphere which is not acceptable in a Town Centre. The relocation has the support of the Zabbar Local Council.

SMZA 06

Rehabilitation of Fort St. Leonard

In line with Structure Plan Policies UCO 5, UCO 11 and TOU 11 the MEPA will encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of Fort St. Leonard, as indicated in the Zabbar Policy Map ZA 1, for tourism purposes provided the scale and type of uses proposed respect the heritage value and characteristics of the fort and do not result in adverse impacts to the building.

27.4.8 This 19th century jewel-shaped fort is in a poor state of repair. The current use of this site as a pig farm represents a very inefficient use of a potentially valuable resource. The plan seeks the rehabilitation of this historic asset through its use for tourism related facilities. Likely uses include a visitor centre/ museum, a “field study” educational centre and craft/ souvenir shops or could be developed for rural tourism accommodation. The potential for such uses, and the form of private sector involvement will need to be carefully considered.

SMZA 07

Public Open Space at Tal-Hofra, St. Nicholas Square

MEPA will support the Zabbar Local Council to develop the site at St. Nicholas Square, as shown on Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2, into a public urban open space to include a public garden/ playing field/ seating area.

No other development, except for the construction of an underground reservoir will be permitted. .

MEPA will also encourage the rehabilitation of the existing dilapidated two-storey farmhouse located at the north western section of site under review for the provision of facilities ancillary to the recreational use of the public urban open space

27.4.9 The site, which covers an area of about 2,262 m², is currently zoned as a ‘green area’ in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988. This policy will establish the area as the new focal point of interest for the new residential areas northeast of Triq Wied il-Ghajj and Triq ix-Xghajra. Currently the site is in a degraded state and the upgrading of this site into a public urban open space will enhance the amenity of this area in the vicinity of the proposed Zabbar UCA boundary. The proposed underground water reservoir will relieve Triq ix-Xghajra from occasional storm water flooding and consequently assist in the maintenance of the soft landscaping section within this public garden. The restoration, rehabilitation and conversion of the existing dilapidated two-storey building for recreational use ancillary to the public urban open space, will also upgrade and protect a historical landmark in the area.

SMZA 08

Mixed development at Ta’ Dun Lanza

MEPA recommends that the zoning of the undeveloped site situated between the village core, Triq ic-Cimiterju and Triq Ta’ Lanza, as indicated in Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2, is changed from residential and community facilities to residential and recreation facilities and is designated as a UCA Quality area. Development of this site should be carried out in a comprehensive manner.

Within this site the development will comply with the following conditions:

- i. Development is in line with the requirements in respect of the Internal Residential Development policy as stated in the Policy and Design Guidance DC 2005;**
- ii. A pedestrian-landscaped strip of at least 6m forming a buffer area will be established**

- between the new development and the proposed boundary of the UCA particularly where this includes back garden walls or buildings. This buffer would extend along the entire stretch of old buildings adjacent and including the chapel of St.Mary and incorporates a pedestrian access linking Sqaq Numru 1 to the older section of Triq ic-Cimiterju.
- iii. At least 25% of the site, excluding the pedestrian-landscaped strip, is to be developed for recreational facilities which would include a playing pitch and a public garden together with a children's play area. Appropriate landscaping will also be provided;
 - iv. The building height should not exceed two floors;
 - v. An appropriate level of parking facilities in relation to the development proposed will be provided at basement level; and,
 - vi. The slight widening of Sqaq Numru 1 along part of this site only.

Their design should integrate with the overall characteristics defining the UCA as well as give due consideration to the presence of the above-mentioned chapel and the scheduled building at Triq ic-Cimiterju.

In case of multiple ownership of land in this area, the implementation procedures as set out in Appendix B are recommended to be followed.

27.4.10 The site, measuring some 6,960 m², has been left as a white area for residential and community facilities following a replanning exercise completed in 1994. It is very close to Misrah San Gakbu (currently designated as part of Zabbar's secondary town centre) and is currently agricultural fields fringing an 'exposed' village core edge. Considering that the Plan proposes other areas for social and community facilities it is more appropriate to designate this area for residential and recreational facilities, including sports facilities, since these are lacking in this part of Zabbar. Proposed uses and development will contribute to additional provision of recreational facilities for this populated locality whilst ensuring that residential development, particularly internal development, protects local views to the UCA. The provision of the pedestrianised area will provide access along the site into the UCA at Triq ic-Cimiterju whilst the slight widening of Sqaq Numru 1 will ease car movement along this stretch.

SMZA 09

Rezoning of Land at Ta' Dun Lanza

MEPA recommends that the undeveloped site situated between Triq ic-Cimiterju, Triq l-Ghadira and Triq Ta'Lanza, as indicated in Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2, is rezoned from residential to residential and community/educational facilities subject to the compliance with the following uses and conditions:

- i. The developer must include a kindergarten, in line with the requirement of the FTS;
- ii. Site is to be allocated for residential development in accordance with Policy SMHO 02;
- iii. Adequate basement parking facilities to be provided within the perimeter of the site; and
- iv. At least 5% of the site is to be reserved as a public urban open space area (seating/soft landscaping).

Any proposed buildings included within the above-mentioned uses should not exceed three floors at street level. The Floor Area Ratio will not be applicable to this site.

27.4.11 The site under review measures some 3,357 m² and consists of agricultural land. It is in Joint Office ownership and was designated for residential development following a replanning exercise completed in 1994. It is surrounded by land zoned for residential development most of which is in the process of becoming built-up. It thus makes sense to incorporate community/educational facilities, particularly

the relocation of the kindergarten currently housed in the existing Zabbar Primary school A to alleviate some of the space constraints of this school.

SMZA 10 Development Guidelines for land adjacent to Sqaq Berqi

MEPA recommends that any development on the site bordered by Sqaq Berqi and Triq tal-Labour, as shown on the Zabbar Policy Maps ZA 1 and ZA 2 and Inset Map ZA A5, forming part of the Zabbar UCA and zoned for residential development, be guided by the following conditions:

- i. building heights will be limited to two floors without basement, as indicated in the Zabbar Building Heights Maps ZA 3 and ZA 4;**
- ii. retention of the farmhouse, as indicated in Inset Map ZA A5;**
- iii. the link between Triq G. Bonavia and Vjal il-Labour is removed;**
- iv. on-site parking is to be provided;**
- v. the development will incorporate adequate provision for storm water management supported by roof-top water discharge measures that would be channelled towards Sqaq Berqi; and**
- vi. any other relevant provisions contained in the Supplementary Guidance on Development Control in Urban Conservation Areas and Policy and Design Guidance DC 2005.**

27.4.12 Implementation of these measures is seen as the best way forward to protect this site from over-development (including unacceptable traffic volumes and traffic flow problems) which could compromise local views towards the UCA acting as a backdrop to this site. The policy aims to direct any development proposals on this site giving guidance which would assist the design of the development in protecting views of most of Zabbar's skyline, the older parts of the area known as il-Biccieni and vistas of the parish church area visible from the wide promenade-sized kerb at Triq il-Labour. Furthermore, development should ensure adequate mitigation measures for potential flooding of the area because of the sloping grounds in this area and also additional storm water generated by the same site when additional development takes place.

28. Zebbug Area Policies

28.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 1,500,000 m²

Rural Area: 3,100,000 m²

Population as per Census 1995: 10,398

Population Census 2005: 11,290

- 28.1.1 The local council of Zebbug encompasses an area of 8.66km². Only approximately 5.9km² of this area lies within the plan area. Furthermore, only 18% of the whole local council area, that is 1.5km², makes up the urban area of Zebbug. Since 1995 the Zebbug population experienced a modest increase and a similar increase is expected during the plan period. The forecasts do not reflect any dramatic changes to the composition of the structure of the population with the total number of population of post retirement age increasing slowly and a modest decline in the youngest age groups.
- 28.1.2 Zebbug is a traditional village in the heart of Malta with a number of historic interests. The village has new buildings at its periphery but these have not altered the traditional character of the village. The old village of Zebbug was made up of the amalgamation of three smaller villages of *Hal-Dwien*, *Hal-Muxi* and *Hal-Mula*. Since then new Government housing estates were built in the *Hal-Mula*, *Tal-Gandlora* and *Tal-Grazzja* areas which has led to an expansion of Zebbug's urban territory.
- 28.1.3 Although Zebbug is mainly residential, with the highest percentage of vacant premises recorded (12.4%), commercial establishments have grown at its periphery and a high concentration of industrial workshops have found foothold in or close to residential areas. The amenity of residential streets is also being undermined through the establishment of commercial and other employment uses. The Hal Mula area particularly which started with the *casa-bottega* type of industrial activity has now grown to a scale that residential amenity in this area is affected by the industrial activity since those living in the upper floor residences are not necessarily the same persons working at groundfloor level.
- 28.1.4 Zebbug has an extensive rural area that is subject to intense development pressures especially on the fringe of the urban area. Rows of terraced houses and expansion of industrial/commercial uses have been permitted outside development zone and in some cases such developments have even encroached into environmentally sensitive valleys. Expansion of industrial/commercial development has occurred in spite of industrial land schemed in the TPS'88 which still remains vacant.
- 28.1.5 The urban area is characterized with wide and straight streets in the newer parts and very narrow and unwinding streets in the older parts which together make up the large village core. A constant influx of traffic into the historic areas where there is a concentration of retail and commercial establishments results in particular problems of congestion especially during business and servicing hours. The volume of traffic entering the historic centre therefore needs to be managed to maintain and enhance the general amenity of the area.
- 28.1.6 Zebbug also has an extensive tract of private industrial land which adds up to 10.8ha. Currently 7.8ha (72%) is developed with 1ha of land (9%) having been developed prior to 1988. The rest of the land i.e. 3ha (28%) is currently undeveloped. Apart from industrial workshops and

residential uses, one can also find showrooms, wedding halls, offices and warehousing. The main problems of the area are mainly attributed to incompatibility of the mixed used concept e.g. having glazier and a mechanic with a residence in the middle, and need for the area to cater for mixed vehicular traffic arising from these sources.

28.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Inappropriate industrial development in or close to residential areas**
- **Need for a comprehensive replanning of private industrial land**
- **Containment of residential and industrial/commercial uses outside development zone**

28.3 Planning Strategy

28.3.1 The overall strategy is to maintain and enhance Zebbug as a residential area. The plan seeks to achieve this through encouraging the provision of local retail and other services in the neighbourhood centre and other specific sites and discouraging the ad hoc location of large new traffic generating uses in the heart of Zebbug. The local plan, through its general policies, will direct such uses to primary and secondary town centres. Outside the urban areas, the rural fringe, which includes the valleys and tributaries and areas outside development zone, will be protected from further development.

28.4 Area Policies

SMZG 01

Hal Mula Mixed Use Area

The Hal-Mula area, designated for industrial uses in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, is designated as a Mixed Use Area, as indicated in the Zebbug Policy Map ZG 2 and MEPA will encourage the provision of the following uses in this area:

- i. **Within Areas A the following will be permitted development:**
 - a) **Industrial uses falling under Class 11 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended, business and light industry, provided that;**
 - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 100 m² (including storage of materials and/or finished products);**
 - **The development is to ensure that any industrial uses would not result in noise and dust emissions outside the premises or activity relating to the industrial use overspilling on-street and measures are to be taken to avoid negative impacts onto the adjacent residential areas and the residential uses on the upper floors; and,**
 - **The activity conducted within the premises does not inherently entail the generation of combustion, chemical or particulate by products.**

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

painting and bakery and additional or expansion of existing such uses will not be permitted.

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

- b) Residential uses, only in the upper floors, falling under Class 1 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended;
 - c) Retail shops falling under Class 4 of the Use Classes Order (1994) small shops provided that:
 - The small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50 sqm, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75 sqm; and,
 - They comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).
 - d) Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) showrooms provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of MEPA's Interim Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).
 - e) Class 4, Use Classes Order (1994) supermarkets provided that they comply with the provisions of Policy SMCM 07.
 - f) Taxi Business or for hire of motor vehicles;
 - g) Offices (Class 5 of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended); and,
 - h) Class 9, Assembly and Leisure.
- ii. Within Area B uses falling under Class 4, Retail shops including showrooms and supermarkets, provided that they comply with the provisions of Policy SMCM 07, Class 5, Offices, Class 6, Food and Drink, Class 9, Assembly and Leisure, industrial uses falling within Class 11 and warehousing with ancillary offices falling within Class 17, of the Use Classes Order, 1994, as amended. Additional residential uses will only be allowed in this Area provided these are on the upper floors and form part of the industrial operation at groundfloor.

MEPA will encourage local initiatives to provide for landscaping both within and around the perimeter of the area to minimise the visual impact of the operations.

Within Areas A and B permit conditions are to be subject to operating conditions as specified in the Second and Third Schedules of the Trading Licences (Amendment) Regulations, 2006, particularly with regard to noise and dust emissions as well as operating times. Within these areas no additional panel beaters, mechanics and spray painters will be allowed.

Within Area A, the intensification and expansion of the existing industrial uses will only be permitted, provided that existing negative impacts are mitigated and it is ascertained that this would not create additional negative impacts to the residential amenity in terms of noise and air pollution as well as traffic generation.

Building heights within these areas is 3 floors and semi-basement (14 metres) . No penthouses will be allowed.

- 28.4.1 The area is a tract of land situated just off Mdina Road on the outskirts of Siggiewi and Zebbug. It comprises a total area of approximately 12.6ha, of which 10.8ha were zoned for industrial development, in the 1988 TPS, with the rest, 1.8ha consisting of roads and open spaces. Access is from a number of side streets off Triq l-Imdina and from the main road leading to Siggiewi.
- 28.4.2 The area is in private ownership and fragmented by multiple ownership. Some residences in this area appear to belong to the same people using the garage industries. This was in line with the *casa-bottega* concept that was envisaged for the area. This concept resulted due to the previous development control guidance, DC1/88, which stated, “On sites zoned for industrial use, the ground floor should consist of warehouses or workshops. The erection of dwellings at first floor may be allowed provided they are internally connected to underlying workshops or warehouses.” The aim behind this concept was to meet the demand for housing and the demand of space for workshops/garage industries concurrently. It was envisaged that the introduction of residential use would help avoid the potential degradation of this type of area. Expansion of industrial activity is, however, to be controlled to maintain the residential amenity of the area. Nonetheless, it seems that now a number of industrial operations in the area operate independently of the residences above them since the latter have been sold off to new owners in various cases. This policy, recognises the *casa-bottega* concept, however, a number of activities have been permitted which have diminished the residential amenity of this area resulting in noise and traffic generation. This policy seeks to allow appropriate industrial uses which would not be so negative on the residential amenity of this area.
- 28.4.3 Within this area in Triq Dun Luret Callus warehousing and industrial uses have proliferated together with residential uses. Although these uses are (eg. Panel beaters, sprayers, mechanics, wood turners, etc.) generally small scale in nature, they have significantly disrupted the residential amenity of this street. Despite the *casa-bottega* concept that has been adopted for this area, however, Triq Dun Luret Callus still retains a significant residential component and serves as the only road separating the industrial area from the residential area. This policy identifies two distinct areas. In Areas A which contain most of the residential units, the policy seeks to maintain industrial uses and introduce other uses which are compatible with the residential use, whilst in Areas B where residential development is very low, the industrial use, as well as other uses will be encouraged, provided that any negative impacts can be mitigated. In these areas additional residential development is restricted to dwellings to be occupied by the operators of the industrial uses at ground floor.

SMZG 02

Zoning of Hal-Dwien Area as a Green Area

MEPA zones the Hal-Dwien area, as indicated in the Zebbug Policy Map ZG 1 and indicated as a white area within the Zebbug village core in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988, primarily as a green area and for residential development only along the frontage on Triq Dun Karm Psaila, up to a depth of 25 metres. Within the green area no development is to be allowed apart from minor improvements that would enhance the recreational and conservation aspects of this area whilst protecting the open nature of the site as well as any necessary flooding reduction measures. Any impermeable surfaces such as pathways or pavements are to be kept to a minimum and these should not affect or obstruct in any way the flow of water into the watercourse.

- 28.4.4 The site is approximately 23,500 sqm and is one of the few remaining open spaces within the UCA of Zebbug. The value/significance of this green valley within an urban area is that the area is an unbuilt green area which is part and parcel of the historic settlement fabric of Haz-Zebbug. The historic fabric is not only made up of the built areas, but also of open areas (squares), private gardens, and in this rare case open agricultural fields forming part of a tributary to a valley. This

area is part of a tributary to Wied tal-Baqquiegha which forms part of the extensive Wied Qirda/Wied il-Kbir valley system. Given that the valley in question feeds water into Wied tal-Baqquiegha, the hydrodynamic regime of the larger valley system, especially that of Wied tal-Baqquiegha, might be affected if the site is developed.

- 28.4.5 Floodwater problems are experienced with intensity at Hal-Dwien area, especially in Triq Dun Karm Psaila. Surface water runoff problems within this residential area has intensified through the development and surfacing of once permeable spaces. The flooding issue needs to be managed in an integrative manner and solutions to this issue need to be found. Measures need to be taken to mitigate against flooding in flood prone risk areas including controlling, managing and collecting more efficiently surface water.
- 28.4.6 Any recreational provision should be informal facilities in the form of a park making use of existing pathways along the site and a small scale children's playing facility which integrates into the setting. It should not be turned into a formal garden with hard landscaping. The only residential development allowed is on sites with a frontage along Triq Dun Karm Psaila. It is important to retain views across the site from the old chapel in Triq il-Madonna.

SMZG 03

Rezoning of site at Triq Hal Mula

The site at Triq Hal Mula, as indicated on the Zebbug Policy Map ZG 1 and Inset Map ZG A2, currently zoned for community facilities, a public open space and a white area in the Temporary Provision Schemes 1988, is being rezoned for residential development in line with the provisions in SMHO 02 and community facilities, subject to the following provisions:

- i. Community facilities may include health, education as well as elderly and youth related facilities. MEPA will allow the provision of an additional floor subject to the development of a public urban open space on this site;**
- ii. Within the sites designated for residential development, MEPA will request a planning contribution from the developers of these sites for the upgrading of an existing public urban open space or the provision of a new one, unless such an open space is provided on site.**

Development on the above three sites will be subject to the following conditions:

- a. Building height is three floors and semi-basement;**
- b. Where development is sited immediately adjacent to the Urban Conservation Area a buffer, of not less than 6 metres is to be provided, as indicated in the Inset Map ZG A2;**
- c. A pedestrian link is to be provided through the site providing access to Sqaq No. 3.**
- d. MEPA encourages that the individual areas making up the entire site are developed in a comprehensive manner rather than on a plot by plot basis and will consider favourably proposals in this regard particularly where development proposed would ideally serve as a transition from the old part of Zebbug to the new part.**

- 28.4.7 The entire site measures approximately 1.7 hectares. Currently, approximately 6,700 m² of the land is zoned for community facilities, whilst the remaining 9,600 m² is a white area. The public open space covers an area of approximately 3,500 m². To retain the amenity of the residential area and village core character, development of the site should be predominantly residential. This

site is not, however, well located for major commercial intensification. Major traffic generating uses on this site cannot be well served by the arterial road network and would contradict the local plan's land use strategy to reduce congestion and improve residential environments in the Zebbug urban conservation area.

28.4.8 In line with the Structure Plan and the local plan's overall land use strategy, MEPA seeks to safeguard this site for residential development as well as to secure community facilities which are currently lacking for residents of Zebbug and nearby localities. In addition to guidance set through this policy, MEPA will pursue the provisions of general policies on housing (SMHO 02) which offer guidance, particularly, on acceptable uses within residential areas. The provision of recreational facilities will increase the residential amenity of this area.

SMZG 04

Redevelopment of Infetti Football Ground

MEPA will favourably consider proposals for the redevelopment of the site currently occupied by the Infetti football pitch subject to the following conditions:

- i. underground development will be considered in the form of parking facilities as well as additional sports facilities which may include a gym, as well as other indoor sports facilities;**
- ii. the football pitch is to be reinstated at its current level;**
- iii. development at the level of the football pitch will be limited to an appropriately located spectators' stand as well as changing room facilities and toilets.**
- iv. A catering facility would be considered as long as this is ancillary to the whole project and located underground.**

28.4.9 The existing football ground has the potential for redevelopment for the addition of sports facilities. The football pitch is elevated and there is the possibility of providing underground development in the form of parking facilities as well as sports facilities. The football pitch will be reinstated to its existing level, thus this policy encourages the use of the underground space.

29. Zejtun Area Policies

29.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 1,300,000 m²

Rural Area: 3,100,000 m²

Population as per Census 1995: 11,379

Population Census 2005: 11,425

- 29.1.1 Zejtun is one of the smallest of the major inland areas of the local plan. In 2005, it had a population of 11,425. The Government Housing development (e.g. Gebel San Martin) during the 1980s has resulted in significant increases to the Zejtun population. It is not anticipated that the population would increase significantly during the plan period.
- 29.1.2 Zejtun is another typical example of the traditional Maltese village even though in recent years it has grown with more modern development around its periphery. Up to 35% of Zejtun is urban (including industrial estate), with the residential parts of Zejtun having 30 - 41 units per hectare, and considered as densely built. Zejtun has few vacant plots, in comparison to other localities in the plan area. Notwithstanding this, it is more likely that properties may become vacant, as is currently happening today thus offering redevelopment opportunities. Other opportunities for large-scale housing development exist on the outskirts of Zejtun since a number of urban farms within scheme still exist. The village core of Zejtun and specific buildings still retain a number of large private gardens which enhance the residential amenity of this locality. Some of these are threatened by development.
- 29.1.4 The urban area of Zejtun now includes new commercial uses which have opened along existing narrow roads found in the older parts of Zejtun giving rise to vehicular problems affecting the area. Commercial land uses such as shops, offices, banks and take-aways have located throughout Zejtun's main roads from Triq il-Madonna Tal-Bon Kunsill, to Triq il-Kbira through to Triq Santa Katerina, up to Triq San Girgor. This area is now defined in the local plan as a 'Secondary Town Centre' due to the range of shops, services and employment. Pressures for on street parking and the impact of heavy traffic results in a poor quality for residents, shoppers and workers in the town centre area. The local plan prioritises investment and employment in town centres through general policy SMCM01. The planning policies for Zejtun seek to reinforce this approach. The Bulebel Industrial Estate within Zejtun is also an important employment generation area. However, about one fourth of the Estate's designated industrial land is still undeveloped, and in the event of the vacant land being developed, this would take up good quality agricultural land and encroach on Wied iz-Zring.
- 29.1.5 Zejtun is surrounded by the rural areas of Zabbar, Marsascale, Marsaxlokk and Ghaxaq. A clear and distinct rural gap exists between Zejtun and the aforementioned localities, with the exception of Ghaxaq, where the urban areas of the two localities meet at Bir id-Deheb. Further development intensification, especially commercial, has been permitted along Triq Tal-Barrani, committing this important strategic gap between Zejtun and Ghaxaq. It is important, however, to ensure that the identity of Zejtun is retained through restricting further growth in this strategic gap and prevent the coalescence of these two settlements.

29.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **High levels of through traffic having negative effects on quality of the environment**
- **Coalescence of the Zejtun and Ghaxaq settlements.**
- **Redefinition of the Bulebel Industrial Estate Boundary**
- **Protection of large private gardens.**

29.3 Planning Strategy

29.3.1 The overall strategy is to maintain and enhance Zejtun as a residential area and contain new housing within the existing limits of development. Further extension of the urban area into the environmentally sensitive and rural areas will not be permitted. The plan envisages the establishment of larger commercial/employment uses (including retailing) in defined town centres and industrial uses (including ‘garage industries’) at existing and new locations as identified by this plan.

29.4 Area Policies

SMZN 01

Northern Relief Road

MEPA will permit the construction of a Northern Relief Road, between Triq il-Falkunier and Triq Bormla/Triq Haz-Zabbar. This new road should not exceed 6.0m in width, excluding pavements, and the alignment and design should be consistent with a maximum design speed of 50 kph. Where ever possible, existing features, such as rubble walls and native trees, should be retained, to minimize any damage caused to the pleasant, environmentally sensitive landscape in this area. The exact route will only be determined after a careful study of the area to be undertaken jointly by MEPA and the Malta Transport Authority, with the co-operation of any relevant agencies/authorities.

The construction of this road must be accompanied by extensive traffic calming measures in the centre of Zejtun and the northern part of the UCA.

No development will be permitted along this road, as the whole stretch of the road lies outside the limits of development.

29.4.1 In recent years considerable development has taken place on the south and east side of Zejtun, however the absence of a “missing link” on the north side of the town has meant that some of the related local traffic has to pass through the sensitive UCA, rather than skirting around it. Whilst the levels of traffic in question are relatively modest, it would still be beneficial to provide a convenient route, which allows motorists to bypass the UCA.

29.4.2 Being a sensitive area in Zejtun, the exact route will be identified following a proper study of the area and the function of this new road. Nevertheless, it is vital that the design of the new road is sympathetic to the rural surroundings and minimizes environmental damage. Particular attention will need to be paid to boundary walls, and landscaping may be required to mitigate the visual impact of the road. A pavement, with a minimum width of 1.35m, will be required at least on one side of the road.

29.4.3 If the road is to be fully effective in reducing flows through the UCA, then the scheme must include the introduction of comprehensive traffic calming measures in the central and northern parts of the UCA. It is important that the provision of this road does not stimulate development pressures. Consequently, no development, except related to existing agricultural uses, will be permitted along the length of this road. This project will require an EIA

SMZN 02

Redefinition of Bulebel Industrial Area Boundary

The land identified on the Bulebel Industrial Policy Map ZN 3, which was designated as part of the Industrial Estate in the 1988 Temporary Provision Schemes, is recommended for further study to determine the agricultural value of the area before any additional industrial development can be permitted. The land designated for industrial use is identified on the same policy map.

MEPA would require the provision of an adequate landscaped buffer, not less than 6 metres, around the perimeter of the estate, particularly along sites which are in proximity of residential areas and in those cases where a redevelopment of the site is being considered.

29.4.4 On the basis of an initial agricultural assessment carried out by the Department of Agriculture, the designated industrial land has been identified as being land of high-grade agricultural value. The land is also within the valley system of Wied iz-Zring. The amount of land in question is close to 157,000 m². The landscaped buffer zone is required to screen the industrial estate from the nearby residences and to reduce any negative impacts created as well as improve the general appearance of the industrial estate.

SMZN 03 Rezoning of site at Misrah l-Indipendenza and Public Urban Open Space in Triq A. Cachia Zammit

The site at Misrah l-Indipendenza, indicated on the Zejtun Policy Maps ZN 1 and ZN 2 and Inset Map ZN A5, which was zoned as a shopping center in the TPS, 1988, is being rezoned into a green area whilst the site between Triq A. Cachia Zammit and Triq is-Suq is being designated as a public urban open space and are subject to the following conditions:

- i. No underground development will be permitted in the green area at Misrah l-Indipendenza;**
- ii. Underground development which may include an underground car park, social and community facilities (e.g community hall), a commercial centre or sports facilities will be permitted in the public urban open space between Triq A. Cachia Zammit and Triq is-Suq, provided that at ground level recreational facilities be developed in line with the requirements of policy SMSE 04.**
- iii. Development of a small catering facility will be allowed in the site designated as a public urban open space.**
- iv. Design of development is to ensure that sufficient open space is retained to accommodate the local street market.**

29.4.5 These two sites measure a total of 4100 m². The site at Misrah l-Indipendenza had been zoned for a shopping center in the 1988 TPS. The development of a shopping center at this site would create severe impacts, resulting from high traffic generation as well as adversely affecting the visual amenity of the area considering that it borders the Zejtun proposed UCA. The open space of this site should therefore be retained and designated as a green area. Underground development

is not permitted due to the limited size of this site (900 m²). On the other hand the site on the opposite side of the road, whilst retaining its open space character has potential for underground development. This policy allows for various development options/uses and the mix will depend on a proper feasibility of the development proposed. These two sites are used by the Zejtun open air street market and therefore any redesign of these open spaces should allow for the retention of this activity. However, the improvement of recreational facilities at ground level on the public urban open space site is encouraged.

SMZN 04

Hardstone quarry at Wied iz-Ziju

MEPA encourages the rehabilitation of the Wied iz-Ziju hardstone quarry back to agriculture once the quarry and the batching plant cease to operate, however, proposals for the use of the site for open storage in line with the Policy Guidance Areas for Open Storage (2005) and policy SMCM 04 in this plan will be considered provided that this does not exceed 15% of the entire site area. No further extensions to this quarry will be allowed within the Wied iz-Ziju valley

29.4.6 The Wied iz-Ziju hardstone quarry is located within the Wied iz-Ziju valley and is surrounded by cultivated fields and abandoned arable land. The site, measuring about 27,000 m² is about 300 metres away from the Hal Tmiem hamlet in Zejtun and just 1.5 km from Marsascala Bay. The site also contains a licensed batching plant for the manufacture of concrete. The policy encourages the restoration of the quarry back to agriculture as part of the rehabilitation of Wied iz-Ziju valley, however, allows for the possible use of part of the site for open storage in lieu of the licensed batching plant.

SMZN 05

Rezoning of Green area at Triq Salvu Cacciattolo

Part of the site at Triq Salvu Cacciattolo, as indicated in Zejtun Policy Maps ZN 1 and ZN 2 as well as Inset Map ZN A9, zoned as a green area in the 1988 TPS is being rezoned for community facilities.

29.4.7 This site is currently a derelict area next to a public urban open space. The rezoning of this part of the site provides a continuation of the building line along Triq Salvu Cacciattolo and will not affect the general recreational amenity of the area since the rezoning will only take up a small percentage of the entire green area. The zoning for community facilities is complementary to the adjacent recreational use and may take the form of child care centre or day centre or similar facilities.

SMZN 06

Comprehensive Development area at Triq Vendome

MEPA encourages the comprehensive development of a site at Triq Vendome, as indicated in the Zejtun Policy Maps ZN 1 and ZN 2 and Inset Map ZN A10, for residential development, in line with policy SMHO 02, provided that an internal pedestrian passage across the site linking the alley at Triq San Pawl and a public urban open space are provided within the site. Building heights for this area will be 2 floors.

29.4.8 The size of the site offers an opportunity for the comprehensive development of this site to make efficient use of the site. The introduction of a pedestrian access across the site will improve access to this area whilst allowing an efficient use of the site. The establishment of the public urban open

space should provide a much needed amenity in this area of Zejtun and retain the openness of the area thus enhancing the environmental quality of this part of Zejtun.

30. Zurrieq Area Policies

30.1 Area Description

Urban Area: 1,279,750 m²

Rural Area⁴: 5,679,250 m²

Population as per 1995 Census: 8684

Population Census 2005: 9816

- 30.1.1 Zurrieq, the southernmost town in the Plan area, has a rich historical context that deserves protection. Casal Zurrieq, as it was known around the 11th Century, prospered in size and population during the Middle Ages, whilst the Knights of the Order of St John continued to embellish the area with towers, palaces, defence systems, and fortified houses. The best represented epoch is the medieval period, although the village is also adorned with a number of pre-baroque churches, rows of bronze age cairns at Wied Moqbol, Roman Towers at Ta` Gawhar and Tal-Baqqari, a Punic Tower which most probably was part of a larger structure, and the Knights` unique architectural style, amongst others. Il-Mithna tax-Xarolla is another impressive site.
- 30.1.2 The population of Zurrieq has increased considerably over the last 30 years with a slower annual growth rate during the last decade. Between 1995 and 2005 population increased by 13%.
- 30.1.3 The main function of Zurrieq is residential. Bubaqra, Nigret, Tal-Bebbox and Xarolla are four important housing areas comprising this settlement. The development boundary of Zurrieq is well defined except on the eastern side where Zurrieq is segregated from Safi by a relatively small yet extremely important strategic gap. Various vacant plots within scheme (it is calculated that around 11% of land within scheme was still vacant in 2002) allow for the projected slow growth in population.
- 30.1.4 Alongside the residential component, Zurrieq also enjoys a number of urban open spaces, public gardens and sports facilities that contribute to the overall urban fabric by complementing the attractive open countryside and valleys on the outskirts of the locality. The village has over the years broadly retained its distinct character although the need to safeguard the existing buffer between Zurrieq and Safi arises, so as to contain urban sprawl. It has an interesting village core and a secondary retail town centre around the village church which aptly serves the needs of the local population and those of nearby villages like Safi and Qrendi.
- 30.1.5 Notwithstanding the potentially rich tourist/recreational offer due to the wealth of historical remains and rural scenic beauty, tourist activity to Zurrieq is in principle limited to Wied iz-Zurrieq, which is outside the boundary of Zurrieq Local Council and of this Local Plan. As regards social and community facilities, Zurrieq has a modern day centre but lacks a pastoral centre in the Nigret area and a home for the elderly.
- 30.1.6 Narrow, winding roads characterise Zurrieq`s urban conservation area and give rise to the need for transportation management initiatives, to include an improved public transport circulation

⁴ this figure excludes the area within the local council boundary that is included in the North West and Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plans.

route around the village. Junction at Blue Grotto Avenue needs improvement to facilitate such circulation. The problems of flooding especially around Triq il-Belt (the main distributor road leading into the village) and the impacts of quarrying activity at Wied Moqbol are other issues which need to be addressed.

30.2 Summary of Planning Issues

- **Enhance recreational provision through sports facilities**
- **Need for a social and community facilities at Nigret**
- **Mitigating flooding problems around Triq il-Belt**
- **Containing quarrying activity at Wied Moqbol.**
- **Junction improvement at Blue Grotto Avenue**

30.3 Strategy

30.3.1 The principal thrust of the strategy is to enhance the residential amenity of the locality through the protection and upgrading of urban open spaces and by controlling industrial and commercial activity, whilst promoting tourism and recreation. Traffic management initiatives and the provision of community services are also considered to be ancillary elements of this strategy.

30.4 Area Policies

SMZU 01

Rezoning of Area at Nigret

MEPA zones the area at Nigret, as indicated in the Zurrieq Policy Map ZU 1 and Inset Map ZU A3, for recreational/sports facilities, social/community facilities, residential and commercial facilities provided that development on sites B and C or part of these sites, as indicated in Inset Map ZU A3, is carried out in observance of all of the following conditions:

- 30% of the site is dedicated to recreational/sports facilities, of which 75% would be public open space whilst the rest being private. Facilities should include a public garden or a playing field or the provision of other recreational/sports facilities (e.g. 5-a-side football pitch, tennis court, gym);**
- Between 10 - 15% of the site is reserved for social and community facilities such as an elderly home or sheltered housing, a day care centre or a pastoral centre and so forth;**
- Between 55 - 60% is allocated for residential development and local convenience shops, including any internal roads and any parking provision required by the development;**
- a study is carried out, to the MEPA's satisfaction, to establish the exact location, state and importance of any possible onsite archaeological remains. In the eventuality of the existence of such remains, the developer should seek to integrate, where possible, such remains within the overall scheme as part of the public open spaces;**
- the building height for this site is three floors and semi-basement (including penthouse);**
- water catchment facilities are constructed underground. These should have a**

minimum capacity of 0.5 m³ for each square metre of site area.

Site A, as indicated in Inset Map ZU A3, is rezoned for residential development, provided that 15% of the site is developed as a public open space.

Site D, as indicated in Inset Map ZU A3, is rezoned for a mix of residential and social/community facilities, with the latter facilities not to be less than 20% of the site area. The provision of open landscaped spaces within the site is encouraged.

In addition to the above, where relevant, development on this site or parts of the site should ensure the provision of the following;

- a) A connection linking the planned cul-de-sac at Triq il-Passju to the currently unfinished Triq Fra Gammari Zammit.
- b) The creation of an appropriate buffer, in line with policy 1.8 of the Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2005 between the boundary wall (of the Convent and other dwellings) on the western flank and any proposed built structures. Nonetheless, the setback should not be less than 3 metres. Soft and hard landscaping (like benches and plants) will be encouraged within this buffer;
- c) Underground parking provision will be considered favourably
- d) Footpaths linking this buffer zone with the public open spaces are to be provided.

MEPA will consult with the Zurrieq Local Council regarding development of this site of part of the site particularly with regard to establishing the type of recreational/sports and social/community facilities required.

Since the area is not in single ownership, MEPA will consider separate development applications for a phased development of the site or parts of the site, provided that:

1. Each development planning application covers a site area of more than 5000 m²
2. Site or parts of the site should not be developed as individual plots, and;
3. The parameters established in points (i) to (vi) are adhered to as well as conditions 1 to 3.

In its assessment of the separate applications MEPA will seek to ensure that the final scheme for the area would still result in a comprehensive development scheme, particularly through site planning of public open spaces, recreational facilities and social/community facilities.

The foregoing notwithstanding, MEPA would encourage the comprehensive planning of the whole site. In order to encourage this approach, MEPA will favourably consider increasing the percentage of site area for residential development to 70%, whilst reducing the site areas for recreational and social/community facilities to 25% and 5% respectively.

Compliance certificates for each phase of the development will only be given once the entire phase of the development as approved has been completed

30.4.1 The site (33,000 m²) was designated for community and educational facilities as well as a green area as part of a re-planning exercise approved in 1992. The site is bounded by residential

development on all four sides, with access from Triq Fra Gammari Zammit on the north eastern flank, Triq Zurki on the south eastern side, Triq Santa Marija on the south western side and a planned cul-de-sac from Vjal l-Indipendenza on the northern side.

- 30.4.2 This policy aims to optimize the use of this extensive piece of land in terms of its residential development potential, considering that scheme boundaries are not being extended, whilst retaining certain important uses which are important to complement the residential development of this site particularly the social/community facilities and the public open spaces and recreational facilities. These latter uses are important considering that residential development of this site would result in the provision of over 400 residential units. Considering the size of the site, MEPA would welcome a holistic approach to the development of the site. Nonetheless, considering the multiple ownership of this site, the policy allows for the partial development of parts of the site but still ensures that through the assessment of individual applications MEPA would achieve a unified scheme for this entire site. The zoning for educational facilities is not required since a Government decision was taken to build a regional secondary school at Kirkop.
- 30.4.3 The buffer area along the perimeter of the boundary wall safeguards the UCA boundary ensuring that the wall's visual integrity is protected. It is also important to provide pedestrian links across the site, particularly through the public open spaces.
- 30.4.4 The holistic development of this site is encouraged since it allows the developers and their architects the possibility of being creative in their design, within the above-identified parameters. The policy also allows for additional residential development should a comprehensive approach be taken for the development of the entire site.

SMZU 02

Hardstone Quarries at Wied Moqbol

Hardstone quarrying operations shall continue within the approved quarry boundaries at Wied Moqbol, as indicated in the Zurrieq Policy Map ZU 2. No extensions to these quarries will be permitted which will encroach onto the areas identified as Areas of Ecological Importance and Areas of Archaeological Importance, in the Zurrieq Policy Map ZU 2.

No further extension of this quarry should be allowed and in line with Policy RES 12, once mineral operations in specific parts of the quarry have been exhausted, MEPA will require restoration of these sites ONLY to one of the following uses:

- i. Agriculture, through inert waste infill;**
- ii. Nature conservation.**

Other considerations attached to development permits for construction industry related activities (within the quarries) shall include bank guarantees to secure implementation of dust generation attenuation measures to prevent the spread of dust from the quarries and quarry related traffic, onto surrounding areas.

- 30.4.5 This policy emphasises the need to restore parts of the Wied Moqbol quarry whilst allowing for its extension. During the local plan period, MEPA envisages that minerals extraction works in the licensed area occupied by this quarry will be completed, thus creating disused quarry land which is a valuable resource.
- 30.4.6 The quarry's rehabilitation, in line with the Minerals Subject Plan, is a sustainable approach which is actively promoted by the MEPA. Agriculture is the preferable option, to reintegrate the

SMZU 05

Rezoning of site at Triq il-Bronja

The site along Triq il-Bronja, as indicated in the Zurrieq Policy Map ZU 1 and Inset Map ZU A1, is being rezoned from terraced house development to a green area.

30.4.13 The site measuring approximately 170 m² is in close proximity to the Xarolla Windmill which is scheduled Grade 1. The development of this site considering its location will jeopardize the urban context of the windmill and is likely to impact negatively on the adjacent archaeological area. The configuration of the site is such to constrain any development of this site and its designation as a green area would improve the environmental quality of this part of Zurrieq.

SMZU 06

Development of site along Blue Grotto Avenue

The site along Blue Grotto Avenue, as indicated in the Zurrieq Policy Map ZU 1, currently zoned for community facilities and a public open space is being proposed for the comprehensive development of the site for community and recreational facilities as well as residential development subject to the following conditions:

- i. 25% of the site will be taken up by residential development;**
- ii. 40% of the site will be taken up by recreational development in the form of a public urban open space to include children's play facilities or a public garden;**
- iii. 30% of the site allocated for community facilities in line with policy SMSO 04;**
- iv. 5% of the site is to be allocated for landscaping with a landscaping buffer to be provided between Vjal il-Blue Grotto and the site;**
- v. No direct road access is to be provided onto Vjal il-Blue Grotto, but a service road can be provided along the length of the site.**
- vi. building heights should not exceed 3 floors with basement for residential and community facilities;**

30.4.14 The site measuring approximately 9,700 m² is currently zoned for community facilities and a public open space. The comprehensive development of this site with the inclusion of residential facilities is considered to make a better use of the area. Considering that community facilities are to be provided in other areas of Zurrieq, the introduction of a residential element on site should assist in making the overall project an attractive development opportunity. Currently an application on the public urban open space has been filed to convert the area into a recreational area (PA 7493/03).

SMZU 07

Junction improvement at Vjal l-Indipendenza

MEPA will consider proposals for the improvement of access from Vjal l-Indipendenza towards Triq Wied Babu, as indicated in the Zurrieq Policy Map ZU 1. Should proposals require the demolition of existing properties this will only be considered after an evaluation of the architectural/historic value of such properties.

30.4.15 The opening of this access is important since at the moment it creates a traffic hazard and the current situation does not permit access towards Triq Wied Babu to public transport buses. On the other hand creating this access necessitates the demolition of a couple of town houses situated right in the centre between Vjal l-Indipendenza and Triq Wied Babu.

31. Marsa Industrial Estate Policies

31.1 Area Description

31.1.1 The Marsa Industrial Estate is one of the most important industrial estates on the Island and is also one of the earliest to be developed way back in the 60s and 70s.

No. of units, class floorspace and employment for the Marsa Industrial Estate

Estate	Marsa
No. of units	108
Total floor space in m ²	784379
Overall estate area in m ²	779000
Class 1	11
Class 2	12
Class 3	9
Class 4	14
Class 5	13
Class 6	5
Class 7	14
Class 8	16
Class 9	2
Class 10	12
Employment	2613

Class 1 - Manufacturing of food, beverages and tobacco

Class 2 - Manufacturing of furniture and fixtures

Class 3 - Manufacture of paper products, printing, publishing and related services

Class 4 - Manufacture of non-metallic and metal products

Class 5 - Manufacture of machinery and equipment

Class 6 - manufacturing of electronics equipment

Class 7 - Manufacturing of textiles, footwear and clothing

Class 8 - Manufacturing of leather, rubber and plastic goods

Class 9 - Manufacturing of chemical products

Class 10 - Other including vacant units

31.1.2 The Marsa Industrial Estate is also one of the main employment generating areas and therefore attracts substantial traffic and other related activity. The area needs substantial upgrading and improvement of the visual aspects of this industrial estate. The current boundary of the estate includes a site which is considered as good quality irrigated agricultural land.

31.2 Summary of planning issues

- **Rationalisation of Estate Boundary and upgrading**
- **Junction Improvement**

31.3 Strategy

31.3.1 The strategy is to consolidate the Marsa Industrial Estate and to provide for potential future expansion whilst protecting good quality agricultural land and encouraging the upgrading of the entire industrial estate.

31.4 Area Policies

SMMR 01

Boundary Limits of Marsa Industrial Estate

The Limits of the Marsa Industrial Estate boundary are defined by the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988. Amendment to the boundary is being recommended as indicated in the Marsa Industrial Estate Policy Map MR 1, to exclude an area which is considered of very good quality irrigated agricultural land.

The changes to the Limits to Development boundary of this area will only be formalized after the Structure Plan Review in line with SET 8.

Within this boundary the MEPA will only permit industrial and industrial related uses, including warehousing and storage.

In order to increase floorspace for industrial purposes and the efficient use of land, an additional storey above groundfloor level will be permitted where appropriate, however buildings should not exceed three floors (12 metres). The vertical height and bulk of buildings should have no adverse visual impact and measures to introduce landscaping within the site and other site management measures will be encouraged, particularly along Triq G. Garibaldi and along Triq il-Marsa.

The MEPA will seek to identify additional land for industrial use to make up for the land being proposed for exclusion. In the event of its failure to compensate for this land and Malta Industrial Park's new emerging requirements, MEPA will consider the gradual reinstatement of this land for industrial development on the basis of individual applications subject to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment which would include a cost/benefit analysis.

31.4.1 The site being excluded covers a land area of approximately 61,700 m² and is considered as being good quality irrigated agricultural land. An application (PA 7505/94) was submitted in 1994 for the construction of a new factory for the General Soft Drinks Ltd. This application was recommended for refusal but then withdrawn by the applicant. The expropriation process for part of the site has been terminated in February 1997 by Government Notice No. 119. The MEPA will seek, together with the relevant authorities, to provide for such a shortfall in other designated areas, not necessarily within this Plan. However, should this not be possible in the short term, expansion of the existing estate, due to emerging economic factors, onto the site being excluded may be considered provided an EIA is carried out to determine the impacts relating to the proposed expansion. A cost/benefit analysis should also form part of the EIA.

31.4.2 Additional industrial floorspace can be provided for existing industries by allowing an additional floor above the ground floor level, where appropriate, provided that the two floors are not exceeded.

SMMR 02

Junction Improvement

MEPA will encourage the improvement of the junction at the exit of the Industrial Estate toward Triq Aldo Moro, as indicated in the Marsa Industrial Estate Policy Map MR 1, through the installation of traffic signals close to Schembri Batteries, so as to improve road safety conditions, particularly side road traffic and improve traffic flows in the area.

31.4.3 Traffic coming from the direction of Luqa down Triq Garibaldi towards Marsa has to join the main part of the Marsa gyratory system at a hazardous junction. Whilst the Gran Harbour Local Plan indicates major junction improvements in this area, these are likely to be long term. A short-term improvement could be achieved by the installation of traffic signals, however, these will have to be linked to the existing upstream traffic signals to ensure the efficient and safe coordination of traffic flows.

32. Hal Far Industrial Estate Policies

32.1 Area Description

- 32.1.1 Hal Far is the **primary industrial estate** in Malta and the largest of the Malta Industrial Parks (MIP) managed Estates, occupying some 128 hectares of land. Hal Far industrial estate has potential for further industrial growth within the existing industrial boundary. Most of the Estate is still vacant and undeveloped. Hal Far was a former military airfield during the Second World War. It has been developed since the 1970s in an incremental and piecemeal manner. The primary established use is industrial, but the Hal Far area has also served a secondary recreational function accommodating some recreation/sports activities, including the national quarter mile track.
- 32.1.2 Industrial location has been problematic in the past, due to the ‘perceived remoteness’ and poor access to the Hal Far area. A relatively small labour force in this catchment area and the lack of public transport, have also delayed Estate development. However, this characteristic has changed considerably over time due to Hal Far’s strategic location between the Malta Freeport (Malta’s main transshipment and container handling terminal) in the Port of Marsaxlokk and Malta’s International Airport at Luqa. The recent location at this Estate of two major export oriented foreign companies has also led to a positive momentum in the Estate’s growth. Eventually the required critical mass necessary to make the upgrading of the Estate feasible and successful is being reached.
- 32.1.3 Although there has been a predominance of heavy industries locating at Hal Far in the past, this has slowed down and the strategy has been to increase the location of general and light industrial activities in this Estate including an emphasis on pharmaceutical companies, thereby upgrading its use. Hal Far remains the predominant site for export oriented, larger sized manufacturing factories and thus the Estate contributes significantly towards the growth of the economy.
- 32.1.4 The policies for Hal Far are thus being revised to better express the dynamic changes that have occurred since the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan was approved in 1995 and to take into account the new requirements which have arisen due to a fast changing industrial sector. It is observed as essential to effective land-use planning that plans are kept abreast of changes. This revision to the Local Plan aims to improve upon the previous policies and serve future industrial planning more efficiently. The area also offers the opportunity for the provision of other facilities which are directed towards industrial areas primarily a civic amenity site, without compromising the use and operation of the industrial estate. The main recommendation has been to revise Hal Far within the greater comprehensive context of the South Malta Local Plan. A number of minor changes to the industrial development boundary are also recommended subject to the Structure Plan Review to update the Plan boundary and also to allow for an efficient industrial function.

32.2 Summary of planning issues

- **Rationalisation of the industrial estate boundary and estate upgrading**
- **Provision of established areas for public recreation/sports activities**
- **Need to reserve site for a Civic Amenity facility and other government administrative functions**

- **Improving the efficiency of transport network and its use**
- **Protection of the surrounding sensitive environment**

32.3 Strategy

32.3.1 The main strategic objectives of the Plan for Hal Far are as follows:

- Upgrading and promotion of Hal Far as the major industrial development area in Malta, whilst minimising its effects on neighbouring zones and the surrounding environment;
- Establishing and protecting the recreational/sports area potential through separate zoning;
- Maintaining the operation of industry compatible government administrative functions;
- Improving the transport network and organising proper access points to and circulation within the Estate; and
- Protecting the environment in the vicinity of the Estate including the scheduled NATURA 2000 coastal zone area and valleys to the north/south and retaining an effective buffer from the rural residential settlements to the west/east of the Estate.

32.4 Area Policies

SMHF01

Industrial Development Boundary

The Industrial Development Boundary for the Hal Far Industrial Estate is being amended and delineated as defined in the Hal Far Policy Map HF 1. Priority will be given to the efficient use of this industrial land for industrial uses only, as designated on the Hal Far Policy Map. MEPA will encourage the improvement and upgrading of Hal Far Industrial Estate. Industrial land uses in Hal Far are to ensure neighbourhood compatibility between individual industrial land uses. Any industrial activity likely to cause problems to the nearby residential areas and environment, as well as neighbouring units, by reason of noise, smell, vibration or emissions, transport related impacts or because of the nature of the process carried out, will not be permitted by MEPA, unless effective steps can be taken to control, minimise and mitigate against any such adverse effects of the industrial activity. Appropriate conditions will be imposed by MEPA on any development permissions and environmental considerations will be accorded a high priority including the need for an EIA and TIS, if required by MEPA.

MEPA will not permit any further expansion of the industrial activity outside the defined industrial boundaries as indicated in this Plan and within the bordering Rural Areas, Areas of Ecological Importance (AEIs) and Sites of Scientific Importance (SSIs) and the Rural Settlement Areas. Industrial development beyond the designated Industrial Development Boundary will be refused, unless otherwise indicated in the Plan.

A landscaped buffer zone of not less than 6 metres is to be provided along the southern section of the estate which is adjacent to or abuts the protected Natura 2000, as indicated on Map HF 1. The impact of developments along this area including the visual impact from the seaward side will be accorded high importance in the determination of development applications and industrial

development will be required to include this landscaped setback involving substantial tree planting on the seaward side. A Building Height Limitation not exceeding 3 floors (12 metres) with a setback of 4.25 metres from the seaward side is required by MEPA in this area. MEPA may consider relaxing or restricting height limitations in such an area, in line with the provisions of policy 14.3 of the Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2005, or as amended, taking account of the industrial streetscape, the general massing of buildings, 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 the seaward side, the particular requirements of the actual use and any other relevant planning considerations.

MEPA will work with and support the relevant authorities and agencies, including the Malta Industrial Parks (MIP), to take effective measures to reduce any adverse impacts that the industrial activity has on the environmentally sensitive areas surrounding the Industrial Estate through its general upgrading.

MEPA will also ensure that the existing protected archaeological site and green area adjacent to Wied Znuber is safeguarded. In the event that any other archaeological finds are made in the Southern most area of the estate abutting Wied Znuber and the abovementioned green area, MEPA will reserve the right to include any required monitoring, conditions, restrictions and mitigation measures as necessary in conjunction with other relevant government agencies and bodies.

MEPA also encourages the promotion of a landscaped pedestrian walkway around the outer side of the Estate to the South as defined on the Policy Map. No vehicular access will be allowed along this path.

The changes to the Limits to Development boundary of this area will only be formalized after the Structure Plan Review in line with SET 8.

32.4.1 The current policy framework for Hal Far was approved by MEPA through the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan (1995) and revised and updated through a replanning exercise (Hal Far Report of Survey, Planning Authority, October 1998 and Hal Far Replanning Exercise, 2000). Hal Far is still not fully developed and a substantial amount of land is vacant. Malta Industrial Parks is required to use existing vacant space within the Estate, prior to any consideration of new areas. Given this situation, an increase in use density is desired in order to efficiently use available land and to build a critical mass in the Estate. Higher density is strategically proposed through the 'Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands' (1990) and the Industry Subject Study as part of the Structure Plan Review. This approach is sustainable as already committed and designated industrial land is used, rather than new land. There is a definite policy stance against proposals that are not sustainable or that are likely to conflict with other industrial uses or with the general environment of the area. MEPA will support Malta Industrial Parks in its upgrading exercise of Hal Far Industrial Estate.

32.4.2 The usefulness of the land designated in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan (1995), as a Reserved Site to the East of the Estate, in the longer term, between Hal Far and the Malta Freeport Area has been questioned by the then MDC. Since the use of this designated, reserved land is doubtful, within the Local Plan timeframe, and it is not clear how far such land will actually be required, this proposal has been reassessed by MEPA and the areas in question be released. Expansion of the industrial estate northwards and southwards is not permitted, except where defined by this Plan, as it will negatively affect the environment. The fertile agricultural lands surrounding the Estate and forming part of a greater Rural Area; the Areas of Environmental and Scientific Importance including the protected Natura 2000 site and coastal zone

area/scheduled cliffs to the south; the valley systems of Wied Znuber and Wied tal-Klima to the south and north respectively and the existing rural settlements including the Benghisa settlement are all protected areas where no industrial development is permitted by MEPA

32.4.3 It is considered inappropriate to give a blanket height for all the area at Hal Far. The flexible approach being 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 MEPA including the Planning and Design Guidance DC 2005. The policy to increase building densities will be considered positively in factory height proposals after careful consideration of the development criteria mentioned above.

SMHF 02

Transport and Access Improvements

The arterial road leading to Hal Far, as indicated on the Hal Far Policy Map HF 1, will be upgraded, realigned and well maintained being a transport link of utmost strategic importance linking the Estate to the Airport and the Freeport.

The main internal road network for Hal Far is identified and indicated on the Hal Far Policy Map. Where new or amended road layouts are proposed, a Planning Control application will need to be submitted to MEPA.

Hal Far will be served by two main access points, namely:

- i. the redesigned North Access point, near the recreational area including the development of an improved new junction to the north of the planned recreational area; and**
- ii. the East Access point.**

No access point is planned in the South and the existing South entrance point is required to be closed off in future by Malta Industrial Parks for safety, security and environmental reasons. Access through this entry point will only be retained strictly for emergency purposes.

Public Transport provision needs to be introduced in Hal Far once the critical mass of employees and visitors is reached as this service is not available at present.

32.4.4 The improvement of the transport network for the Hal Far area is important for the continued efficient functioning of the industrial area. The arterial road needs to be upgraded and realigned. Road improvement works have recently been initiated and are in progress but the construction of a new junction at the north is still pending and required.

32.4.5 Where new road building or realignment is necessary, within the industrial estate, detailed plans will need to be prepared as part of the development planning application and approved by Planning Control through a PC Application, since the indicated network concentrates on the main road network only. Minor deviations will hence be considered if approved by MEPA and ADT. It must be emphasised that any present roads that are still in a good state need to be utilized, rather than create new road infrastructure.

32.4.6 The industrial estate will have two main access points. The existing access point to the north will need to be partially changed due to the need for consolidation and separation of the recreational

and general parking areas. A access point further to the East will need to be upgraded. The current access point on the Southern side of the Estate, will be closed off, but access retained strictly for emergency purposes, to heavy vehicle traffic in the area for two reasons;

- i. firstly to lead to a better managed, safe and secure Estate with just two main gate ways in future and allowing MIP to control access into and out of the Estate with greater ease;
- ii. secondly to stop the flow of heavy vehicle traffic from passing through the Benghisa Rural Settlement and also into the Ghar Hasan area which is a tourist site and protected as an area of scientific importance for its caves.

In this context, the existing access point from the Ghar Hasan area is planned to be closed off in future. Heavy industrial vehicles are to utilise the existing arterial road network to the north and the planned access points.

32.4.7 The introduction and provision of public transport and bus shelters is required. With the development of more factory sites the number of potential public transport users will increase, providing enough demand to make the introduction of a direct bus service to the Estate feasible.

SMHF 03

Government Administrative Entities

In assessing applications for development within areas designated as Government Administrative Entities, as indicated in the Hal Far Policy Map HF 1, industry compatibility considerations will be given high priority in determining whether new government projects should be approved or not.

Should such land uses, present on the southern side of the arterial road and adjacent to the present Estate boundary, cease to be operational in future, MEPA will give priority to the change of use from the present uses to industry.

32.4.8 These areas presently include various uses. including the Civil Protection Department, the Centre for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs, a sports activity site, ETC lecture rooms and other mixed uses. Should such uses cease to operate in future, MEPA will support a change of use of these areas to industry thereby becoming an integral part of the Estate managed by MIP.

SMHF 04

Hal Far Public Recreation and Sports Areas

A site at Hal Far, as identified on the Hal Far Policy Map HF 1, is designated exclusively as an open, green landscaped area for public recreational use. This landscaped green site is to include walkways providing seating and suitable garden furniture, and will also include large, open tree and grass areas for informal public recreation. Peripheral landscaping and boundary treatment must also be provided along the boundary of the site, ensuring a car free environment for safety purposes. Afforestation projects are therefore promoted by MEPA in this area in conjunction with relevant agencies.

The junction, arterial road and north entrance point to the Estate are required to be redesigned so that the flow of industrial traffic is kept separate from the recreational element for safety purposes.

Safety measures are to be implemented in the Sports Area, including an emergency exit to be provided at the far end of this area, as indicated in the Hal Far Policy Map HF 1.

32.4.9 Hal Far has long been used formally and informally as a popular recreational and sports area. However, this activity has taken place in an ad hoc manner and often within and in conflict with the industrial area. A separate zoning strategy, formalizing the land uses is planned. With the development of the remaining vacant industrial spaces within the Estate, the demand for recreational and sports space will increase. It is therefore in the interest of all users of the area to plan for such demand separately from the industrial environment. These sites will also provide a green buffer zone between the Estate function and the rural hinterland.

32.4.10 Hal Far has also accommodated a number of sports activities throughout the years. These have now become established in the area, including the quarter mile track. Large open derelict areas are still to date being used informally for sports activities other than those that are established and designated on the Policy Map. Such land use, apart from the officially recognised sports uses, has only been permitted temporarily by the then MDC until such land areas are developed as industrial land and hence such informal sports use is set to terminate on site once the need to develop these sites arises. In this respect, MEPA, in conjunction with MIP, will not permit any new sports uses on prime industrial land. Sports activities are zoned together, adjacent to the recreational area, and outside the industrial zone for practical and safety purposes and car parking areas are also planned to allow for parking outside the industrial boundary.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Criteria for Identifying Major Projects

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING MAJOR PROJECTS:

Application Types:

- (1) Residential projects with **more than 30 residential units**;
- (2) Hotel/tourist accommodation projects with **more than 60 beds**;
- (3) Commercial projects with **more than 750m² floorspace**;
- (4) Sports/entertainment projects with **seating capacity of more than 200**;
- (5) Hospital/clinic projects with **more than 50 beds**;
- (6) Schools (new and extension to) with **more than 10 classrooms and/or more than 300 children**;
- (7) Industrial/warehousing projects located within an approved industrial estate and with **more than 750m² floorspace**;
- (8) Industrial/warehousing projects NOT located within an approved industrial estate and with **more than 500m² floorspace**;
- (9) Projects for **waste disposal/sewage treatment/recycling plants**;
- (10) Projects which involve **modification of the arterial road network** (including maintenance and embellishment within the highway boundary);

General:

- (11) Projects which require a **site larger than 0.5 hectares**;
- (12) Any project **requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment** (either and Environmental Impact Statement or an Environmental Planning Statement);
- (13) Any project with provision for **more than 50 car parking spaces**;
- (14) Projects which will have substantial impact on the area in which they are located, i.e. operational impacts, visual impacts, etc., (this will normally be restricted to projects proposed to be located in a sensitive area such as an Area of High Landscape Value, Area of Ecological Interest, etc.,).

APPENDIX B - Guidelines for caravan sites upgrading in Malta

Guidelines for Caravan Sites Upgrading In Malta

Introduction

- F.1 The purpose of these guidelines is to explain what the development of a caravan site in Malta involves, site search criteria, model standards, and a brief guidance note relating to maintenance and operation.
- F.2 The guide is intended primarily for developers, operators, their architects, governmental and non-governmental agencies and interested individuals.
- F.3 It also provides a detailed basis for development control and applications for development permission will be evaluated on the criteria set out in this document.

Definition

Caravan

- F.4 Any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer and any motor vehicle so designed.
- F.5 “Tourers” are those caravans seen on the road being towed by cars. Depending on size and layout, tourers can sleep up to six people because the furniture and fittings in their living and dining areas convert into sleeping accommodation. Facilities that are generally built in or fitted on most models include the furniture, a cooker, fridge, shower with hot and cold water, central heating, toilet and electric light. Power is provided by batteries and transportable gas bottles.”
- F.6 “Motor Caravans incorporate the living accommodation of a caravan on a motor vehicle base and are therefore designed specifically for touring. All motor caravans come fitted with furniture and cooking facilities and all but the smallest have toilets, showers, fridges and heaters. Power is provided by batteries and bottled gas and many vehicles provide for mains electricity hook-up when on the caravan park. There are also two more types of motor caravan - the van conversion and the coach built”.

Strategic Planning Context

- F.7 Caravanning is a recreational activity which is related to the countryside and coastal areas. Structure Plan policies concerning rural and coastal conservation are therefore of particular relevance.
- F.8 Policy RCO 1 designates Rural Conservation Areas and allows for the designation of sub-areas

on the basis of the agricultural, ecological, scientific and archaeological value. Policy RCO 2 prohibits any form of urban development in Rural Conservation Areas but allows “facilities essential to agricultural, ecological, or scenic development” subject to other Structure Plan policies. RCO 5 prohibits the provision of new or extended infrastructure unless all possible measures to mitigate the visual impact are taken. This is of particular relevance to centralised facilities such as water, drainage, electricity and telephone which are to be provided within caravan sites. (Refer to Explanatory Memorandum Para. 15.34 - 15.41 with respect to AEI’s).

- F.9 An important policy is RCO 4 which states that no development of any structure or any activity which in the view of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority would adversely affect scenic value will be permitted.
- F.10 Policy REC 9 prohibits all structures in coastal areas other than tents, windbreaks, and shading devices, used by day visitors. All such temporary structures to be demounted and removed by midnight.
- F.11 The Structure Plan emphasises the need for better regulation of long stay caravanning and camping sites. Policy REC 11 designates sites for overnight accommodations of mobile caravans. Each site to have management and maintenance teams. Regulations are to be introduced to avoid permanent occupancy of any pitch. Permanent residential caravan sites will not be permitted. Policy REC 2 encourages private initiatives for recreation provision in view of limited financial resources likely to be available from government.
- F.12 Policy CZM 2 states that public access around the coastline will be secured. This will include taking shorelines into public ownership.
- F.13 Several other Structure Plan policies provide guidance and, depending on the circumstances of the location of the proposed caravan site, will need to be referred to when an application for a caravan site is submitted. Approved or emerging Local and Action Plans will also need to be referred to as the case may be.

Site Search Criteria

- F.14 The following are criteria which will be considered by MEPA when an application for development permission is submitted:-
 - a. The site is not located on a scheduled, designated, or protected area including the following:-
 - Areas of Ecological Importance
 - Sites of Scientific Importance
 - Areas or Sites of Archaeological Importance
 - Areas of Agricultural Value
 - Areas of High Landscape Value
 - Nature Reserve
 - Area designated as Public Access Zone
 - Areas specifically designated for protection in a Local Plan or Action Plan.
 - i. The proposed site has adequate accessibility to the local highway network including provision for fire and emergency vehicles;

- ii. The site is reasonably level with pitch slopes not exceeding 1 in 30;
 - iii. The site is so located that it would not adversely affect scenic such as skyline; visually dominate or disrupt its surroundings because of its mass and location or adversely effect existing trees and shrubs;
 - iv. MEPA in consultation with the appropriate government agencies, is satisfied that adequate infrastructure is available or can be provided to the site, Schemes for water supply, sewage and refuse disposal shall be submitted and approved with any application; and
 - v. The site can be adequately landscaped in order to minimise any adverse visual impacts on the local environment.
- F.15 It is suggested that a caravan site may be appropriately located a short distance inland from the foreshore but not on a designated public access area; adjacent to a national country park or country parkway; or adjacent to an existing recreational area. Given that the major landscape impact of caravans derives from their shape and colour, it is important that proposed locations have some existing trees which would help to mitigate any adverse impact on the local amenity.
- F.16 Developers are strongly advised to consult with MEPA and the Health Division prior to the submission of an application.

Legal Framework, Procedures and Control of Development

Development Permission

- F.17 The provision of a Caravan Site will require a development planning permission in accordance with the Development Planning Act, 1992 and subsequent amendments.
- F.18 Any development permission will be subject to an occupancy condition limiting use of the site to an agreed period, (usually of not more than 9 months and individual pitches of not more than 3 months) and a change of use from temporary holiday accommodation to permanent residential use or commercial use, will not be permitted.
- F.19 Applications for development permission or caravan sites will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria set out in this document.

Site Licence

- F.20 In addition to obtaining a development permission to construct a caravan site from MEPA, a Site Licence must be obtained from the Health Department. A Site Licence may only be granted after a development permission is obtained, but not before. In applying for a licence the site operator will be required to submit together with the development permit, a management plan dealing with issues such as staffing, opening times, security provision, service, fire regulations, refuse disposal.
- F.21 Before issuing the licence the Health Department in conjunction with MEPA will ensure that the

proposed site meets all the requirements set out in these guidelines. The agency may also attach additional conditions if it so wishes.

- F.22 It is important that MEPA and Health Department co-ordinate their works to ensure that the objectives for which caravan sites are designated continue to be met.
- F.23 Once a planning permission is granted, MEPA will be responsible to ensure that no further physical structures are built within the site and that the specific uses are in accordance with the permission. The Health Department will be responsible for issuing the license, will ensure that the caravan site, once operating, is suitably managed and maintained and that all conditions attached to its licence are adhered to.
- F.24 The Health Department reserves the right to withdraw the licence issued to an operator relating to the caravan site if conditions of the licence are not adhered to.
- F.25 If the development permit is withdrawn, the site operator may be required to remove all permanent and temporary structures from the site and restore the site to its original state. If the caravan site is on government land, the Lands Department may wish to terminate the lease and retain all structures on the site and lease the site to another operator.
- F.26 A bank guarantee of at least Lm2000, but not exceeding Lm5000 is to be made by the caravan site operator. The beneficiary is to be MEPA in order that the funds can be used to restore the site should the relevant permit/licence be withdrawn and the caravan site cease to operate.

Temporary Sites

- F.27 Temporary Caravan Sites will not be permitted. MEPA will use its enforcement powers to remove such development and ensure the restoration of the area.

Site Fragmentation

- F.28 The fragmentation of a site by the owner or lease selling or sub leasing one or more plots will not be permitted and a legal agreement between the owner/operator and MEPA will be required. This is to ensure that the whole of the site is available for use by touring caravans. In such cases the site licence will be revoked.

Model Standards

- F.29 Model standards specify conditions as to the layout and the provision of facilities, services and equipment for sites.
- F.30 The Health Department may, in granting a Site Licence, apply additional conditions to the specific site.

Fire Precautions

- F.31 The Health Department shall consult the Civil Protection Department as to the extent to which any specific standards relating to fire precautions are appropriate in relation to each site. Fire points should be established so that no caravan or site building is more than 30m from a fire point.

Density and Space between caravans

- F.32 The minimum spacing distance between adjacent caravans shall be not less than 6m. If awnings are used, the distance between any part of the awning and an adjoining caravan should not be less than 3m, and should not be adjacent to another awning. The density should be consistent with health and safety standards, and also amenity requirements. The gross density should not exceed 40 caravans to the hectare, calculated on the basis of the useable area (i.e. excluding roads, communal services and recreational areas rather than the total site area).

Roads

- F.33 Access roads should be of a minimum width of 4m and designed to provide adequate access for fire appliances. The layout of roads shall ensure that no caravan standing is more than 50m from an access road. A one-way circulatory road system, avoiding straight lengths and sharp bends is desirable, with access to pitching areas on both sides. The entrance to the site shall be adjacent to the reception area and under the control of the site warden.
- F.34 Access roads should be suitably surfaced and hard standings such as honey combed concrete blocks provided for each caravan.

Footpath Network

- F.35 A simple easily maintained footpath system should connect pitch location, parking areas, reception office, toilet facilities and recreational areas.

Reception Office

- F.36 A site reception office, including toilet facilities, storage compound, and caravan pitch for the warden's caravan should be provided. Perishable food may be sold from the reception office, but the predominant use must remain that of reception rather than retail. Adequate parking for caravans to be provided for arrival and departures.
- F.37 An accessible telephone together with a site notice of the address of the site should be available for calling the emergency services.

Storage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas

- F.38 Storage of gas should comply with the appropriate statutory gas regulations.

Electrical Installations

- F.39 Electric hook-ups are to be provided to all pitches with supply cables to be placed at least 500mm below ground level and individual connection points to be no further than 20m from the caravan intake. No overground supplies will be permitted.

Drinking water

- F.40 An adequate supply of drinking water should be provided. Each pitch should be no further than 50m from a water tap. At each tap there should be a soakaway/gully.

Drainage, sanitation and washing facilities

- F.41 Provision shall be made for foul drainage, either by connection to a public sewer or by discharge to septic tank or cess pool approved by the Water Services Corporation. Disposal points should also be provided for the contents of chemical closets, with an adequate supply of water for cleaning containers.
- F.42 Toilet blocks to be centrally located to minimise walking distance. Facilities to be based on scaled provision of 1 WC and 1 urinal for males, 2 WCs for women, and 2 washing basins for each sex per 15 pitches. Showers to be provided on the basis of 1 shower for each sex per 20 pitches.
- F.43 Toilet blocks should also provide laundry and dish-washing. A baby/toddler wash room is also desirable, together with facilities for the disabled and wheelchair users.

Refuse disposal

- F.44 Refuse is to be stored in plastic bags in a refuse skip or container, located in a separate fenced or walled compound near the site entrance.

Parking

- F.45 One car only to be parked between adjoining caravans provided that the door to the caravan is not obstructed. Additional space to be provided for visitor parking equivalent to 1 space for every 5 pitches. Visitor parking areas to be sited in convenient locations distributed throughout the site in order to avoid casual parking on site access roads.

Recreation Space

- F.46 At least 10% of the total designated area is to be dedicated to recreation use. The area to be located so as not to cause disturbance to the occupants of nearby pitches. An area for barbecues shall be carefully located in order to avoid inconvenience to other site residents and shall include provision of fire points. A children's' play area should also be provided but only in a sheltered area away from car park access roads.

Site Lighting

- F.47 Lighting is required for general security, safety and orientation at night-time. Requirements will vary with regard to the character of the site. Normally lighting will be required at reception, toilet blocks and service points. Low-level downlighters and high-level fittings should be used but floodlighting will be prohibited. The lighting layout and light fittings to be such as to minimise light pollution.

Landscaping

- F.48 Landscaping including tree and shrub planting around the caravan pitches is fundamental for a caravan site to succeed. Trees provide seclusion and privacy and give a greater sense of closeness to nature. In the summer, they provide areas of welcome shade whereas in the shoulder months they act as wind breakers. On planning grounds, trees are required to screen caravans, parked areas and any structures/buildings provided within the site.
- F.49 Mature trees greatly enhance the visual aspect of the countryside, and all sites will be required to have a minimum tree coverage of 20% of the total designated site area. Site boundary walling to be constructed in traditional rubble walling and should not exceed 1.2 m in height.

Management Considerations

- F.50 The success or failure of the caravan site as well as the impact it may have on the local amenity will very much depend on the management of the site. In accordance with Policy NA17 the caravan site operator will be required to submit a management plan with the application for a site licence. The plan is to deal with all matters relating to the efficient running of the site including staffing, facilities, services, operating times, security measures and refuse collection. A site licence will include a number of conditions relating to management which the operator will be required to adhere to.
- F.51 The following is a list of management issues which the camp operator will need to consider carefully before submitting a management plan. It is by no means exhaustive.
- i. The site operator will be required to keep the site clean and free from the dumping of rubbish. Toilets and facilities are to be kept clean and in good working order. Any damages should be rectified to discourage further damage.
 - ii. The operator should take all necessary measures to ensure that areas surrounding the designated camp site are not affected by litter or dumping resulting from the operation of the site.
 - iii. It is suggested that the site operator provides plastic bags for use by visitors. These sacks are to be secure against scavenging birds or other animals. Similarly bins should be of the strongest plastic type with lids that can be closed secured. It is essential that a frequent garbage collection service is provided.
 - iv. The fire fighting equipment shall be maintained in workable order and be available for regular inspection by the fire authority.
 - v. The site may be operated for a maximum of nine months each year, during which time any member of the public will be able to park a caravan on the site and use the facilities against payment of the relevant fee. The three month closure period will enable the vegetation to

regenerate itself and ensures that the natural ambience of the area is maintained. The months when the site will not operate shall be specified in the site licence.

- vi. Landscaping within the designated site areas are to be retained and maintained throughout the operation of the caravan site and any trees or shrubs that die or become severely diseased shall be replaced with an equivalent number of the same types of species.

References

1. Guidelines for Designated Camping Sites - Planning Authority September 1997
2. What is a Caravan - National Caravan Council, U.K.
3. Background Notes - Developing a touring caravan site - Caravan Club Ltd., UK.
4. Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 - Model Standards, Circular 14/89 Department of the Environment, U.K.

APPENDIX C - Archaeological Features

REF. NO.	FEATURE	DEGREE OF PROTECTION	PERIOD SUMMARY
1		E	MASS OF BONES WITHOUT GRAVES UNDER TRIQ HAZ-ZABBAR
2		E	100M BUFER ZONE
3	Ancient Building	B	REMAINS OF ANCIENT BUILDING
4	Deposits	E	PREHISTORIC POTTERY AND FLINT AND OBSIDIAN IMPLEMENTS
5	Building	A	FOUNDATIONS OF ROMAN BUILDING IN GROUNDS OF LYCEUM
6	Building	B	COLUMN SHAFT
7	Building	A	Punic Structure
8	Building Remains	B	Decorative stone head garden architecture
9	Catacomb	E	SMALL CATACOMB ON ROUNDABOUT AT CROSSROAD BETWEEN LUQA-GUDJA-AIRPORT TUNNEL
10	Catacomb	B	SMALL HYPOGEUM AT ID-DAWWARA
11	Catacomb	E	SMALL CATACOMB CUT IN HILL AT TARXIEN
12	Catacomb	E	SMALL CATACOMB ON PREMISES IN ROCK STREET NOS
13	Catacomb	E	TWO SMALL HYPOGEA NEAR EAST BOUNDARY WALL OF HOSPITAL
14	Catacomb	E	SMALL CATACOMB
15	Catacomb	E	GROUP OF FOUR HYPOGEA NOW COVERED BY HOUSING AROUND TRIQ IL-BEREBIES
16	Catacomb	E	HYPOGEA
17	Catacomb	E	HYPOGEA
18	Catacomb	E	HYPOGEA
19	Catacomb	E	HYPOGEA
20	Catacomb	E	CATACOMB
21	Catacomb	E	SMALL CATACOMB - EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD
22	Catacomb	E	SMALL CATACOMB UNDER HOUSE IN SAMMAT STREET
23	Catacombs	B	Catacombs
24	Catacombs	B	Paleo-Christian Catacombs
25	Catacombs	B	Catacombs
26	Catacombs	B	Palaeo-Christian Catacombs
27	Catacombs	B	Palaeo-Christian Catacombs
28	Catacombs	A	Catacombs
29	Catacombs	B	Catacombs
30	Catacombs	E	EARLY CHRISTIAN HYPOGEA
31	Catacombs	E	EARLY CHRISTIAN HYPOGEA
32	Chapel	A	CHAPEL OF THE ANNUNCIATIO
33	Chapel	A	Site consists of foundation walls remains of a small medieval chapel. Some upright rectangular slabs of stone still exist. It is difficult to say if the slabs are of the same period as the chapel. There is also a well and a pair of cart-ruts.
34	Church Remains	B	Church Remains
35	Cistern	B	Roman Water Cistern
36	Cistern	E	PUNICO-ROMAN
37	Cistern	E	PUNICO-ROMAN CISTERN
38	Depression	E	DEPRESSION
39	Dolmen	B	Dolmen

REF. NO.	FEATURE	DEGREE OF PROTECTION	SUMMARY
40	Dolmen	B	Dolmen
41	Dolmen	B	Dolmen
42	Dolmen	B	BRONZE AGE
43	Dolmen	B	THE DOLMEN WAS BUILT INTO A WALL WHICH ENCLOSED A FIELD ON HIGH GROUND TO THE WEST OF ID-DAWWARA
44	Dolmen	A	DOLMEN ON EDGE OF QUARRY
45	Dolmen	A	THE CAPSTONE ,C.2.60 x 1.75 M AND C. 0.30M THICK, IS SUPPORTED ON THREE SIDES BY BLOCKS AND SLABS OF VARIOUS SIZE
46	Dolmen	B	A DOLMEN ON TOP OF RUBBLE HEAP IN FIELDS NEAR MISRAH HLANTUN
47	Dolmenic Niche	E	
48	F	A	A MEGALITHIC TEMPLE COMPLEX BETWEEN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
49	Hpyogea	E	SMALL HYPOGEA AT GHAR TAS-SEMPlici
50	Hypogeum	A	Hypogeum
51	Hypogeum	A	Neolithic Hypogeum
52	Lithic Remains	B	Megalithic alignment
53	Lithic Remains	A	Ashlar courses
54	Lithic Remains	A	Roman brick and ashlar blocks
55	Lithic Remains	B	Roman Masonry
56	Lithic Remains	B	Roman Masonry
57	Lithic Remains	B	Megalithic Remains
58	Lithic Remains	A	Megalithic circular arrangements
59	Lithic Remains	A	Megalithic circular arrangements
60	Lithic Remains	A	Roman shards
61	Lithic Remains	A	Roman tiles
62	Lithic Remains	B	Alleged remains of Punic-Roman wall uncovered during building of bungalow
63	Lithic Remains	B	Punic Roman block converted into a trough
64	Megalith Remain	E	Accorind to J.D. Evans's account (1971), the site showed evidence of being a prehistoric settlement. Prehistoric pottery was also identified.
65	Megalith Remains	E	
66	Megalith Remains	E	MEGALITH REMAINS
67	Megalith Remains	B	MEGALITH REMAINS
68	Megalith Remains	B	SET OF MEGALITHS ON FRONT OF BIR MIFTUH CHURCH IN A FIELD EXACTLY OPPOSITE THE ENTRANCE OF CHURCH.
69	Megalith Remains	B	MEGALITHIC REMAINS
70	Megalithic Remains	E	PREHISTORIC (TEMPLE PERIOD AND BRONZE AGE)
71	Megalithic Remains	A	A FEW METRES TO THE SOUTHEAST OF THE DOLMEN IN THE SAME LOCALITY (SM_47) THERE ARE 2 GROUPS OF MEGALITHIC REMAINS, DISTANT 1.5M FROM EACH OTHER.
72	Megalithic Remains	A	A FEW METRES TO THE SOUTHEAST OF THE DOLMEN IN THE SAME LOCALITY (SM_47) THERE ARE 2 GROUPS OF MEGALITHIC REMAINS, DISTANT 1.5M FROM EACH OTHER.
73	Megaliths	B	Megaliths
74	Megaliths	B	Megaliths
75	Megaliths	B	Megaliths
76	Megaliths	B	TWO GROUPS OF MEGALITHS ON EITHER SIDE OF TRIQ GHALL-HLANTUN IN THE TA' GAWHAR AREA, NEAR THE RUINS OF THE CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY

REF. NO.	FEATURE	DEGREE OF PROTECTION	SUMMARY
77	Megaliths		A NUMBER OF MEGALITHS ARE INCORPORATED IN TWO PRALLE, EXTREAMLY WELL BUILT WALLS HALF WAY UP A DISTINCT HILL BETWEEN SANTA LUCIJA AND GUDJA.
78	Megaliths		A NUMBER OF MEGALITHS ARE INCORPORATED IN TWO PRALLE, EXTREAMLY WELL BUILT WALLS HALF WAY UP A DISTINCT HILL BETWEEN SANTA LUCIJA AND GUDJA.
79	Megaliths	B	A NUMBER OF GLOBIGERINA LIMESTONE MEGALITHS PARTLY COVERED BY A RUBBLE FIELD WALL
80	Megaliths	B	MEGALITHS REMAINS
81	Megaliths	B	"STONE CIRCLE" OF MEGALITHS IN FIELD SOUTH OF ANTON BUTTIGIEG STREET, ZEJTUN
82	Megaliths	E	The site still existed when visited by George Said in August 1990. None of the remains were met with on 23rd September 1991, when revisited by G. Said
83	Megaliths Remains	B	THE REMAINS WHICH LAYED IN A FIELD (IT-TUMBATA) WERE SURROUNDED BY HUGE MEGALITHIC SLABS
84	Menhir	B	Menhir
85	Menhir	B	A SINGLE UPRIGHT STONE INCORPORATED IN FIELD WALL. IT IS ONE OF ONLY 4 SUCH MENHIRS STILL IN EXISTENCE
86	Menhir	E	TEMPLE PERIOD - MEGALITH REMAINS
87	Menhir	B	THE MENHIR CONSISTED OF AN IRREGULAR SLAB OF GLOBIGERINA WITH UNDRESSED SURFACES
88	Menhir		MENHIR
89	Menhir	B	An upright megalith, about 3m in height. Very irregular in shape. Partly restores, and no trace of vandalism.
90	Natural Cave	E	PREHISTORIC - REMPLE PERIOD
91	Natural Fissure in Rock	E	THE NATURAL FISSURE IS OF PALEONTOLOGICAL INTEREST
92	Pits	B	Bronze age pits
93	Pleistocene & Ancient	B	BONES AND POTTERY
94	Remains	A	TRAPETUM
95	Remains		GATEWAY
96	Remains		PASSAGE
97	Remains		CHURCH AND CEMETRY
98	Remains		CEMETERY
99	Remains		ANCIENT ROAD
100	Remains		CHURCH OFSAINT NICHOLAS
101	Remains		CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
102	Remains		50M BUFER ZONE FOR REMAINS
103	Remains	A	REMAINS OF ANCIENT VILLA
104	Rock-Cut Tomb	E	THE TOMB CONSISTED OF A RECTANGULAR SHAFT WITH STEPS AND A CHAMBER IN THE SHAPE OF A SEGMENT OF A CIRCLE.
105	Rock-Cut Tomb	E	ONE ROCK-CUT TOMB ON GHAJN DWIELI ROAD
106	Rock-Cut Tomb	E	THE TOMB CONSISTED OF A SHAFT AND OVAL CHAMBER
107	Round Tower	A	THIS IS PERHAPS THE BEST PRESERVED OF A NUMBER OF ANCIENT ROUND TOWERS BUILT OF VERY LARGE ASHLAR BLOCKS
108	San Antnin Church	B	San Antnin Church
109	Silo	A	BOTTLE-SHAPED SILO PIT
110	Silo	A	BOTTLE-SHAPED SILO PIT
111	Silo	A	BOTTLE-SHAPED SILO PIT

REF. NO.	FEATURE	DEGREE OF PROTECTION	SUMMARY
112	Silo	A	BOTTLE-SHAPED SILO PIT
113	Silo	E	FIVE SILO-PITS OF PUNICO ROMAN PERIOD
114	Silo	E	SILO-PIT IN THE GROUNDS OF THE INSTITUTE
115	Silo	A	BOTTLE-SHAPED SILO PIT
116	Silo Pit		SILO PIT
117	Silo Pit	E	BOTTLE SHAPED SILO PIT
118	Silo Pit	B	Silo-pit
119	Temples	A	Tarxien Temples
120	Tomb	B	Punic-Roman Tombs
121	Tomb	B	Punic-Roman Tombs
122	Tomb	B	Tomb
123	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
124	Tomb	B	CATACOMB
125	Tomb	E	ROCK CUT TOMB
126	Tomb	E	DISCOVERED IN 1910 WHILE CUTTING A SEWER TUNNEL BETWEEN ZEJTUN AND ZABBAR. REMAINS OF AT LEAST FIVE SKELETONS AND BROKEN POTTERY WERE FOUND. ARCHAEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA
127	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
128	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
129	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB. THE TOMB WAS DISCOVERED WHILE CUTTING A TRENCH FOR DRAINAGE WORKS IN THE NARROW SAN CLEMENTE STREET
130	Tomb	A	ROCK CUT TOMB IN ST.CATHERINE STREET. UNIQUE FOR ITS SCULPTURAL DECORATION
131	Tomb	E	ROCK CUT TOMB WHICH CONSISTED OF A SHAFT AND RECTANGULAR CHAMBER
132	Tomb	E	A ROCK CUT TOMB CONSISTING OF A SHAFT AND A CHAMBER
133	Tomb	E	THE TOMB CONSISTED OF A CIRCULAR CHAMBER; SHAFT UNEXPLORED
134	Tomb	E	THE TOMB CONSISTED OF A RECTANGULAR CHAMBER, PROBABLY WITH SHAFT
135	Tomb	B	ROCK-CUT TOMB
136	Tomb	B	THE TOMB CONSISTED OF A RECTANGULAR SHAFT AND TWO RECTANGULAR CHAMBERS
137	Tomb	B	THE TOMB CONSISTED OF A RECTANGULAR SHAFT AND TWO RECTANGULAR CHAMBERS
138	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB INSIDE CEMETERY
139	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
140	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB IN FIELDS MARKED AS "TAL-MILLIERI"
141	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
142	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
143	Tomb	E	FOUR ROCK-CUT TOMBS UNDER AIRPORT
144	Tomb	E	ONE ROCK-CUT TOMBS UNDER AIRPORT
145	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB AT THE BACK OF THE GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL
146	Tomb	E	RECTANGULAR SHAFT AND TWO CHAMBERS
147	Tomb	E	THREE ROCK-CUT TOMBS
148	Tomb	E	SQUARE SHAFT AND CHAMBER
149	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
150	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUR TOMB AND CATACOMB UNDER AIRPORT

REF. NO.	FEATURE	DEGREE OF PROTECTION	SUMMARY
151	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
152	Tomb	E	TWO ROCK-CUT TOMBS
153	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
154	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
155	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
156	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
157	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
158	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
159	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
160	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
161	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
162	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
163	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
164	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT
165	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
166	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
167	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
168	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
169	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
170	Tomb	E	ROCK-CUT TOMB
171	Tomb		Punic Tomb
172	Tombs	B	Rock-cut tombs
173	Tombs	B	Tombs
174	Tombs	E	TWO ROCK-CUT TOMBS IN STREET
175	Tombs	E	TWO ROCK-CUT TOMBS IN STREET
176	Tombs	E	SEVERAL ROCK-CUT TOMBS UNDER GOVERNMENT SCHOOL
177	Tombs	E	ROCK-CUT TOMBS ON HILL OF THE ADDOLORATA CEMETERY
178	Tombs	E	THREE ROCK-CUT TOMBS IN AREA CALLED "TAL-BORG"
179	Tombs	E	TWO ROCK-CUT TOMBS
180	Tombs	E	TWO ROCK-CUT TOMBS
181	Tombs	E	SIX ROCK-CUT TOMBS IN TRIQ HAZ-ZABBAR
182	Tombs	E	SIX ROCK CUT TOMBS UNDER GHAJN DWIELI ROAD
183	Tower		Tower
184	Tower	A	Tower
185	Tower	A	Remains of a circular tower, probably used for deffensive purposes. Max diameter of 13m. The stones are typically Punico-Roman. It lies in a private property.
186	Villa	E	EXTENSIVE REMAINS OF A ROMAN VILLA IN AREA KNOWN AS TAD-DAWL
187	Water Cistern	B	BELL-SHAPED WATER CISTERN

APPENDIX D – Quarries in Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi and Siggiewi

Quarries in Kirkop

Quarry	Area (m2)	Status	Suggested General Use or current use
SM 39	17165.69	Operational	Proposed restoration back to agriculture
SM 41	27492.01	Operational	Proposed restoration back to agriculture
SM 45	2433.02	Disused	Exhausted and proposed restoration
SM 51	17164.03	Operational	Operational and proposed restoration
SM 72	18622.19	Disused	Restored

Quarries in Mqabba

Quarry	Area (m2)	Status	Suggested General Use
SM7	5,896	Disused	Exhausted and proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 18	26,377.55	Operational	Operational
SM 19, 31A	58,728	Operational	Operational and proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 21	27,330	Disused	Restored already
SM22	4,022	Disused	Restored already
SM 23	30,190	Operational	Enforcement, illegal warehousing
SM 26	28580	Operational	Enforcement illegal warehousing and stone crusher
SM 27	33,205	Operational	Proposed restoration back to agriculture
SM 28	19,163	Operational	Enforcement illegal warehousing
SM29	16,550	Disused	Sanction plant and offices
SM 30	22,423	Operational	Operational and proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 32	43,294	Operational	Operational and proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 34	19,038	Operational	Operational
SM 38	14,383	Operational	Exhausted. Proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 44	2855.37	Disused	Exhausted. Proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 46	4,940	Operational	Operational.
SM 48	10153.98	Disused	Exhausted. Enforcement re. Villa w/o permit.

SM 49	13,997	Operational	Operational. Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA1 SM50	12,698	Disused	Restored. Court case
SM52	24,998	Disused	See Policy SMMA06, Appeal.
SM53	7,364	Disused	Exhausted. Proposed restoration to agriculture
SM54	11,459	Disused	Operational.
SM 59	38,606	Operational	Being restored.
SM61	17,960	Disused	Operational.
SM 62	16,470	Operational	Partly exhausted. Restored to agriculture.
SM 66	7,293	Operational	Operational. Proposed restoration to agriculture
SM68	24,964	Disused	Exhausted. Illegal dumping
SM69	13,840	Disused	Operational. Proposed restoration to agriculture
SM 74	3,442	Operational	Operational.
SM 76	5381.22	Operational	Restored.
SM 78	5,339	Operational	Operational.
SM 79	1708.81	Operational	Operational.
SM 83	10,380	Operational	Operational. Concrete Plant.
DQA2	41,710	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA4	11,750	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA5	7,449	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA6	2,047	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA7	10,520	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA20	18,310	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA21	2,774	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA 23	59,450	Operational	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA 24	4,333	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA 25	3,531	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA 27	17,270	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA28	16,390	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA30	4,224	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture
DQA31	6,344	Disused	Proposed restoration to agriculture

Quarries in Qrendi

Quarry	Area (m2)	Status	Suggested General Use
SM 55	6,575	Operational	EIA
DQA32 SM56	10,691	Disused	Restored.
DQA29 SM58	45,629	Disused	Partly restored.

Quarries in Siggiewi

Quarry	Area (m2)	Status	Suggested General Use
SM 1	12847.57	Disused	Operational
SM 2	15174.21	Disused	Exhausted. Proposed back to agriculture.
SM 3	12105.6	Operational	Partly exhausted.
SM 4	61050	Illegal	Court case
SM 8	24343.81	Operational	Back to agriculture
SM 11	4356		Restored back to agriculture
SM 71	23365.21	Disused	Exhausted.
SM 77	6633.71	Disused	Exhausted
SM 80	5194	Disused	Exhausted
SM 81	8010.35	Operational	
SM 82	7756	Operational	
DQA 15	3,584		More mineral extraction
DQA 16	1,586		Reclaimed to Agriculture
DQA 18	11,690		Warehousing/ storage
DQA 19	10,130		Warehousing/ Open storage
DQA 22	8,985		Reclaimed Agriculture
DQA 23	59,450		Reclaimed to agriculture
DQA 35	10,330		Inert Waste
DQA 36	375.5		Reclaimed to Agriculture
DQA 37	1,172		Converted into Orchard
DQA 38	20,950		Inert Waste/ more mineral extraction
DQA 39	21,350		Inert Waste
DQA 40A	12,820		Inert Waste/Reclaimed to agriculture
DQA 40B			Limestone Heritage Museum
DQA 41A	29,630		Industrial/ Open storage
DQA 41B			Additional mineral extraction
DQA 42	17,650		Still partly active
DQA 43	3,539		Habitat treatment
DQA 44	12,390		VRT testing station/ inert waste
DQA 45	3,314		Open storage
DQA 54	N/A		Habitat treatment

APPENDIX E - Glossary

Glossary

In preparing the Local Plan, an attempt has been made throughout to make it interesting, informative and easy to read. Written justifications and the policies themselves have been simply worded in order that the intentions are as clear, unambiguous and easily understood as possible. It is inevitable, however, that some unfamiliar words or phrases have been used. The following glossary gives a quick reference guide to assist in understanding of the Plan.

Ancillary Use: A planning term which describes a use that is subsidiary, but related, to the main use.

Appeal: If an application for development permission has been refused, or MEPA has imposed conditions, the applicant may appeal to the Planning Appeals Board.

Approved Local Plan: Once the local plan has been through all the preparation stages, it is approved by MEPA then forwarded to Government for final approval. After this stage, changes can only be made by formal alteration or replacement.

Aquifer: All underground water bearing strata capable of yielding water on a practical basis, and includes ground water reservoirs, ground water catchment areas, the waters in geological rock formations, including fissures and fractures, and the structures containing deep fossil waters.

Biodiversity: The range of plant and animal species present in an area.

Buffer Areas: These consist of protection zones where development is not permitted or strictly controlled. These buffer areas ensure appropriate protection to environmentally sensitive areas or create safe distances between residential and other incompatible uses (eg : quarry areas, farms etc) .

Caravan: Any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer), and any motor vehicle so designed. This definition is also applicable to mobile homes.

Change of Use: A different or new use of a building or land for which permission may be required from MEPA.

Close Proximity: Close proximity is calculated on the basis of a walking distance of 250m.

Coastal Zone: The coastal zone extends seaward and landward of the coastline. Its limits are determined by the geographical extent of coastal natural processes and human activities related to the coast.

Commuted Parking Payment Scheme (CPPS): CPPS raises money to subsidise public parking provision by collecting money from developers who, in specific circumstances, are not required to make the usual provision to accommodate their parking requirements. The scheme is currently operational in Valletta, Floriana, Sliema and St. Julians (including Paceville). Within these areas, the scheme applies where there is a change of use to a more intensive category in terms of parking requirements. Qualifying projects may be on sites where parking provision is physically very awkward, within urban Conservation Areas or in potential areas for pedestrianisation. Small shops and bars catering for a local clientele and

developments with a parking requirement of 3 spaces or less are generally exempt from the scheme. When MEPA determines that the CPPS is applicable, a fee of Lm900 per missing space is charged. This is intended to be equivalent to the average cost of supplying an off-street parking space.

Comparison Goods: Clothing, footwear, furniture, household textiles, electrical goods, hardware, chemists goods, jewellery recreational and other miscellaneous goods.

Comprehensive Development Area (CDAs): A site in several ownerships requiring comprehensive development.

Conservation: Positive measures for the management of existing resources or assets to ensure their protection and enhancement.

Convenience Goods: Food, alcoholic drink, beverages, tobacco, newspapers and magazines and household cleaning materials.

Degraded Despoilt Land: Land so damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment.

Density: The term usually refers to the number of new dwellings per hectare, but not exclusively.

Derelict Land: Land so damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment. It may include worked-out or abandoned mineral excavations and land made derelict from natural causes.

Development: The carrying out of building, engineering, mining, or other operations for construction, demolition or alterations in, on, over or under any land or sea, or the making of any material change of use of land or building.

Development Permission: New buildings, major alterations and enlargement of existing buildings and many changes of use of buildings and land require development permission. Permission is sought from MEPA. An application for development permission may be approved, or approved subject to certain conditions, or refused.

Dwellings: Self contained buildings or parts of buildings which usually accommodate a single household. This may include terraced houses, maisonettes, villas, converted farm buildings or flats.

Enforcement: The process by which MEPA can take steps to remedy a breach of planning control, usually development which has been carried out without or not in accordance with development permission under planning or sanitary legislation.

Environment: Surroundings, both natural and man made.

Environmental Assessment (EA): Information about the likely environmental effects of certain major projects which is assessed and taken into account in determining applications. An E.A. is required if a particular development is likely to have a significant environmental effect by virtue of its nature, size or location.

Environmentally sustainable development: The Brundtland Commission (1987) defined environmentally sustainable development as “development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their needs and aspirations.”

Formal Open Space: An area of land which is laid out for sport and children’s play. This can include playing pitches and playgrounds.

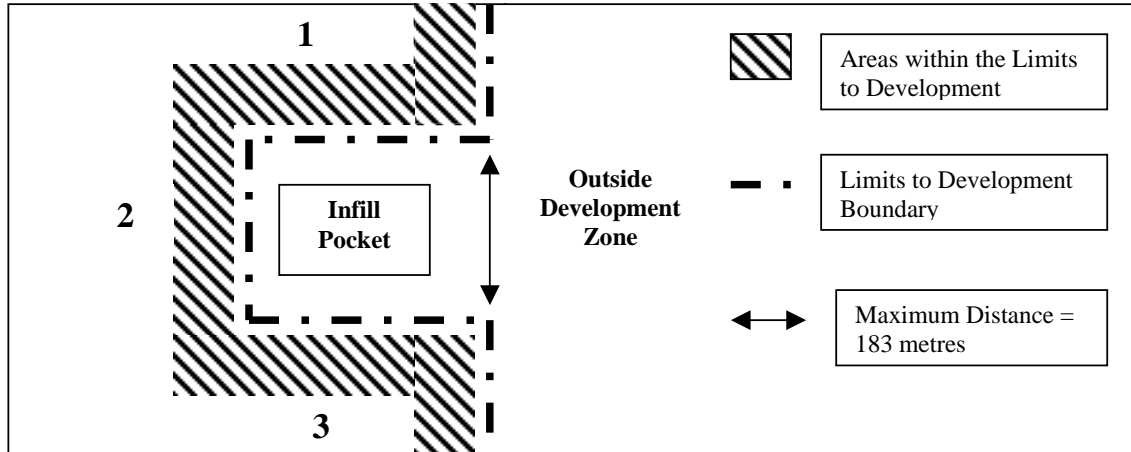
Garrigue: Ecological communities characterised and dominated by low woody shrubs.

Gross Lettable Floorspace: The gross lettable floorspace refers to the whole floor area within the premises and on all its floors. The gross lettable floorspace includes circulation (excluding stairs) and stores and excludes staircases, toilets, internal shafts, yards and other unroofed areas unless they are used as an integral part of the development (eg. open air restaurant)

Housing Estate: Dwellings owned by Government, and rented or sold to occupants at subsidised rates.

Inert Waste: Waste which in respect to a specific management process, does not undergo physical, chemical or biological changes that cause it to a pollutant.

Infill Pocket: An infill pocket within urban edges is taken as a land area bordered on at least three sides by areas included within Limits to Development. The whole infill pocket by its very nature is required to be positioned inwards from the outermost points of the existing Scheme Boundary. The maximum dimension of the side of the infill pocket which is not bordered by an existing schemed area is taken as 183m in accordance with Policy SMSE 01. This measurement is based on the legal definition of a ‘building site’ in the Land Acquisition Ordinance, 1935. All considerations for infill development within such defined infill pockets are subject to all the criteria listed in Policy SMSE 01 and confirmation in the Structure Plan review. No infill pocket is considered for development, in cases of scheme ‘rounding off’ or the rationalisation of scheme boundaries, if it undermines any of the objectives and/or policies of this Local Plan and of the Structure Plan. Infill Pockets are also considered on the basis of a number of factors as indicated in Policy SMSE 01 and in the respective Area Policies.



Informal Open Space: An undeveloped area of land which can be used for informal recreational activities.

Informal Recreation: Leisure activities which are not undertaken on a formal organised basis and are generally carried out by individuals or small groups on an intermittent basis with a minimal requirement for supporting facilities.

Infrastructure: Roads, drainage and other apparatus and structures which provide essential services to

development.

Inner Harbour: Approximately the 1985 Inner Harbour Census Region comprising the 1985 Census Localities of Cospicua, Floriana, Kalkara, Marsa, Msida, Paola, Santa Lucia, Senglea and Sliema.

Landscaping: A general term used for the means by which, where appropriate, development is made to fit visually into its surroundings by control of siting and layout and use of trees, shrubs or grass (soft landscaping) and/or fences, walls or paving (hard landscaping).

Neighbourhood Centre: Neighbourhood centres are locations to be designated in local plans to accommodate a planned approach to the local retail services in new and expanding housing areas. These areas should provide coherent groupings of appropriate facilities, with shared parking and service delivery provision where possible; pedestrian access routes and planned public transport provision.

Outline Development Permission: Planning permission which establishes that the broad principles of development are acceptable although the details are still to be agreed. Outline development permission is valid for three years from the date of the decision unless otherwise stated.

Pedestrianisation: Reserving a road solely for use by pedestrians. Some very limited exceptions may be permitted, for example, emergency vehicles and service vehicles to premises without rear access. Normally, the physical character of a pedestrianised street will be changed completely.

Planning Obligation: A planning obligation is a requirement made upon the developer to provide a specific land use and/or to provide for the upgrading of a specific land area to the benefit of the local community. This usually pertains to an obligation that produces a reasonable and required improvement in the area e.g. landscaping, tree planting, child play areas or land for community required facilities including schools, hospitals and others.

Semi-Pedestrianisation: Changing the design of a road to create a safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians, for example wider pavements and frequent traffic calming features. Whilst pedestrians will have greater priority in such street, general traffic is still permitted to pass.

Plan Period: The period during which the policies in the Local Plan are expected to apply, which in the case of this Local Plan is a ten year period from its date of approval.

Planning Conditions: Development permission for development may be conditional on other works or undertakings being carried out by the developer, may restrict or modify the development, or require the submission of further details.

Policy Map: The map (or series of maps at different scales) which identifies the precise sites and areas affected by the proposals and policies in the Local Plan.

Preservation: Protection from change, guarding against loss of worthwhile assets, including restoration.

Primary/Secondary Shopping Street: The commercial heart of a main town centre. Normally, at least 75% of the properties should have a ground floor commercial use to qualify as a primary shopping street. However, the street must also be trading successfully and attracting strong pedestrian flows. Secondary shopping streets are streets also forming part of the town centre but which contain a number of social community facilities e.g. church, local council, pastoral centre etc., these include only local shops and so differ from primary shopping streets.

Primary Town Centre: Town Centre with a regional or sub-regional function for non-food shopping.

The proposed primary town centre is Paola.

Public Participation: The involvement of the public in the process of making plans and planning decisions.

Random Rubble Walls: Low walls built in random rubble *sejjieh* are a distinctive feature of Malta's countryside. The term relates only to walls built in stone which is not machine finished, and which gives the effect of having used stone picked up from adjacent fields. Generally no cement is used, but other than stone no other material is used.

Representations: Written comments made within the relevant period to MEPA, by any person or body of persons likely to be affected by a policy or proposal of the Local Plan. Representations can support or oppose policies and proposals.

Residential Area: Urban area where the predominant use is residential.

Secondary Town Centre: A significant non-food shopping centre serving local residents, or residents of closely neighbouring villages, and used by at least 2,500 people for non-food shopping. The secondary town centres are Fgura, Zejtun, Zurrieq and Zabbar.

Selective Bus Detection: This involves the use of equipment at traffic signal-controlled junction, to identify buses and then provide them with priority, so as to reduce delays and journey times.

Showroom: Premises primarily used to display goods for sale where little direct (over the counter) retail sale is intended. Showrooms normally have a gross floor area of at least 150 square metres and display a specialist range of bulky, non-food goods, such as: white goods; furniture; motor vehicles; household items, hardware and bathroom fittings.

Signage: Any word, letter, model, sign, placard, notice, device wholly or in part for the purposes of advertisement, announcement or direction, including any boarding or similar structure used or adopted for use for the display of advertisements.

Site of Scientific Importance (SSI): Statutory designated sites where features of nature conservation importance are at their best and/or most concentrated. They include geological interest as well as flora and fauna. SSIs are scheduled in accordance with the Development Planning Act 1992.

Structure Plan: Strategic Planning Policy is set out in the Structure Plan. The Structure Plan does not identify specific sites for development nor the precise boundaries of areas to be protected. One of the important tasks of the Local Plan is to apply that strategy at the local level.

Tertiary Town Centre: A significant non-food shopping centre, but serving a smaller number of people than a secondary town centre. The proposed tertiary town centres are Ghaxaq, Siggiewi, Luqa, Kirkop and Safi.

Town Centres: These include Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Town.

Tourism: The short term movement of people away from their normal place of residence or works in pursuit of leisure, recreation and culture and involving a stay of more than 24 hours.

Tourist Attraction: The use of land or buildings which is primarily economically dependent on paying day visitors.

Traffic Calming: Measures which reduce the adverse effects of vehicular traffic in order to improve road safety and the living environment. This approach seeks to adapt the volume, speed and behaviour of traffic, to that which is sympathetic to non traffic activities.

Traffic Management: The promotion of a more effective movement of traffic within a given street system by rearranging the flows, controlling the intersections and regulating the time and place for parking by means of traffic orders. Traffic management can also give priority to different forms of transport, such as buses, or to pedestrians.

Tree Preservation Order: An order made and confirmed by MEPA to protect trees from lopping, topping or felling without prior written consent.

Urban Conservation Areas: Scheduled areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Use Classes Order: The Development Planning (Use Classes) Order 1994 and as amended sets out a classification of land uses so that compatible uses are grouped together in a class. Permission is normally required to change from one class to another but not within a class, although conditions on permissions may restrict or prohibit such changes of use without a specific development permission.

Utilities: Water supply, sewerage disposal, land drainage, gas and electricity supply, waste disposal and telecommunications.

Written Statement: A document which forms part of a statutory development plan and sets out MEPA's policies or proposals. It is normally accompanied by a Proposals Map.

Widien: (Singular Wied) Dry valleys, only carrying water during the rainy season.

