

Luqa

# **Partial Local Plan Reviews**

**Partial Review of the  
2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the  
2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011,  
and a Review of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for  
Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017; and of the  
provisions of PC51/16**

**Approved**



**August 2020**

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## APPENDICES

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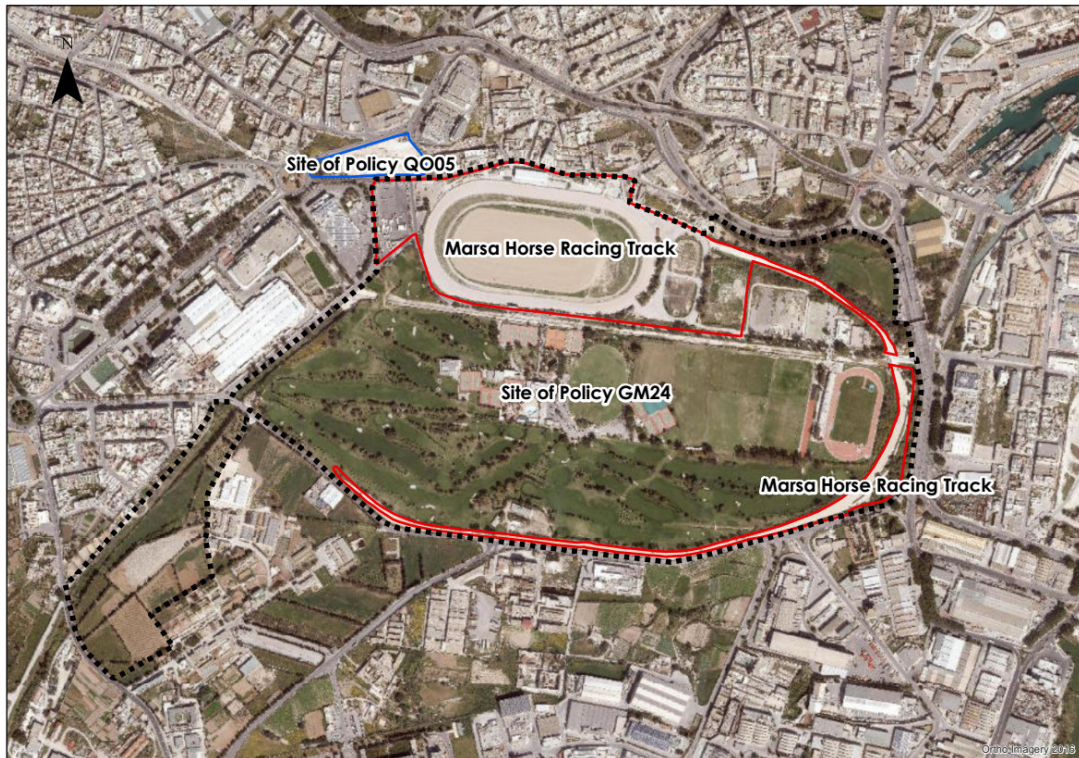
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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Partial Review relates to the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017. The proposed revisions take forward Government's request to amend the Grand Harbour Local Plan policy GM24 and the Central Malta Local Plan policy QO05 and the provisions of PC 15/09 and PC 51/16. This area is being referred to in this exercise as the Marsa Sports Complex site and subsequently, Figure A of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa), as per Figure 1 below, will be amended.
- 1.2 The Local Plans Revision is required to address the requirement for additional policy provisions relating to land-use, site coverage and build heights in the area of the Marsa Sports Complex. The upgrading of the facilities is a priority and will necessitate new amenities related to the different sports which can be practiced on the site. This will serve to provide a sports hub within the Principal Urban Area which is accessible, attractive and of a high standard, in line with Government Objectives and the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED).
- 1.3 The objectives of the Review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011 are:

Government is requesting the Authority to carry out a partial local plan review of the Grand Harbour Local Plan policy GM24 with the following objectives:

- a) To remove the need for a development brief for the whole area;
- b) To designate a range of sub-zones within the area covered by policy GM24 provided that the site indicated as the Marsa Horse Racing Track, shown in Figure 1 below, is designated as a unique and separate sub-zone for the development of the Horse Racing Track and supporting uses;
- c) To formulate a unique and separate development framework for the sub-zone of the Horse Racing Track and the other sub-zones;
- d) To carry out a re-apportionment of the total built footprint and the gross developable floorspace (GDF) established by policy GM24 as approved in 2011 between the new sub-zones, provided that the built footprint of 60,000 sqm and the GDF of 114,000 sq m is not increased;
- e) To revise or delete any other provision of policy GM24 which is deemed to prejudice the objectives set out under a) to d) above.



**Figure 1** Map published with the Government Objectives for the Local Plan Review

- 1.4 The objectives of the Review of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017 are:

The Central Malta Local Plan provisions for Qormi as detailed out in policy QO05 and in PC 15/09 and PC 51/16 in relation to the site indicated in Figure 1 above need to be reviewed with the following objective:

- f) To amend the provisions of policy QO05 and planning control applications 15 of 2009 and 51 of 2016 related to the maximum allowable height of buildings and delete the condition that the roof of the building below the level of Triq Hal Qormi (arterial road) should be allocated for soft landscaping to enable the increase of the allowable building heights to 11.4 m above the upper road level.

- 1.5 The Objectives were published on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and representations from the public were invited until the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The first stage consultation generated a total of 4 submissions, 2 of which were late, which were taken into account in the drafting of the revised policies. The issues mentioned in the submissions referred to:
- a) Request to zone site within the northernmost area of the Local Plan Review site between Triq Aldo Moro and Triq Dicembru Tlettax for retail, office and supporting leisure and catering uses over 10 floors;
  - b) Any works for extension to the Golf Course proposed within the site of scientific importance are to be assessed in relation to adverse impacts on the geological significance of the site and the watercourse and its semi-natural banks are safeguarded;
  - c) Objection to further intensification of the site of Policy QO05 known as I-Istabal, due to the projected increase in noise pollution, air pollution and vehicular traffic;
- 1.6 The draft revised Grand Harbour Local Plan policy GM24 and the Central Malta Local Plan policy QO05 together with the conditions of PC15/09 and PC51/16, are included in the following paragraphs. All amended maps are also attached with this report, the contents of which shall replace those in the maps quoted above. All other parts of the Grand Harbour Local Plan, the Central Malta Local Plan and the relevant planning control permissions are to remain unchanged by this 2020 Revision.
- 1.7 The draft revisions were published on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and representations from the public were invited till the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2020. The Environment and Development Planning Committee discussed this Local Plan Review on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and voted in favour of the provisions therein.
- 1.8 The second stage consultation generated a total of 11 submissions, which were taken into account in the drafting of the revised policies. The issues arising from Phase 2 Public Consultation were:
- a) General considerations
    - a. The process of Partial Local Plan Reviews is leading to the lack of a holistic approach to planning; and Social Impact Assessments should be required for such projects, which together with other impact assessments, should be carried out before the approval of the development, as opposed to once the provisions of the policy form established commitments
  - b) Environmental considerations

- a. Consideration of the issue of climate change within the policy is required, through the policy provision for zero-energy buildings and the mandatory incorporation of green measures and green infrastructure
- c) Site of the Marsa Sports Ground
- a. Site specific concerns are the allocation of separate footprint and GDF as well as access to the site for the area north of the racetrack marked in Map B; and in relation to the area reserved for the bus terminus marked in Map A;
  - b. Sports related concerns are the loss of the pitch to play rugby during any redevelopment on the same pitch; and the right to develop a high-performance training centre at the Matthew Micallef St John Athletic Stadium
  - c. Though parking is excluded from the GDF, the policy states that all uses are required to have adequate provision, resulting in potential extra land take up for parking; in addition to the traffic and visual impact of the proposed policy, especially with regard to ancillary uses and higher landmark buildings;
  - d. The policy is to unequivocally state that no residential uses are allowed on the site; and the inclusion of touristic accommodation is not justified, whereby the Height Limitation Adjustment Policy for Hotels should not apply;
  - e. Adequate policy provision for heritage is lacking, such heritage including British period structures, the chapel and the canal;
  - f. Interventions on protected trees in the area should be carried out in line with the Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations, 2018 (S.L. 549.123) and mention is to be made of designation of the watercourse as a Valley Protection Zone (Policy SMCO 07).
- d) Site of PC51/2016
- a. Concern related to the layout of the Centre Parc building as approved, to allow for the compensation of the area above and below the 11.4m above Triq Hal Qormi;
  - b. The increase in developable gross floor space over Center Parc is unjustified, with further negative impacts being the loss of the rooftop green area and the resulting increase in traffic and related congestion; for which the rate of planning gain is inadequate.



## 2.0 The SPED Policy Framework

- 2.1 **Thematic Objective 2** and **Thematic Objective 5** of the SPED mention the requirement for social, community and recreational facilities to be located within the Urban Area and specifically mention the Marsa Sports Centre as an area which needs to be safeguarded for recreational facilities (TO5.2). In addition, the Objective promotes the upgrading of existing facilities to increase both the provision and the quality of such facilities in prime locations. The Marsa Sports Complex site is at the centre of the Principal Urban Area and can be easily accessed from numerous localities. This makes it a good example of how the rehabilitation of the area for upgraded sports facilities can subsequently promote participation in a variety of sports.
- 2.2 Marsa is mentioned in **Thematic Objective 3** as a locality with potentially vulnerable communities. The regeneration of the Marsa Sports Complex site can enable the provision of new employment within a short distance of the residential area of Marsa. The site is also well provided for in term of public transport, though it may benefit from better pedestrian links in line with **Thematic Objective 11**.
- 2.3 The specific targeting of sub-zones within the Urban Area that are in a state of abandonment, dereliction or poor quality is mentioned in **Urban Objective 3**, which states that appropriate uses, building heights and development densities are to be assigned to such sites in order to prompt their regeneration. This must be carried out in tandem with the protection of the existing green open spaces; an objective that is reached through the designation of sport-related uses that require tracts of un-built land that serve as much-needed open spaces within the urban conurbation around the Grand Harbour.
- 2.4 Any development on within the site is encouraged to be energy-efficient in line with **Urban Objective 4**. To the end, the policy mentions the use of photovoltaic panels atop flat roofs, the use of sustainable urban drainage systems towards the increased conservation of rainwater, and the use of urban greening measures such as vertical green walls.

### **3.0 Existing Policy Framework**

This partial local plan review relates to two sites; the Marsa Sports Complex and an adjacent site located in an area known as L-Istabal in Qormi.

#### **3.1 Marsa Sports Complex**

Policy GM24 was introduced in 2011 as part of a partial review to the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP). This partial review included revisions to other GHLP policies as well as revisions the South Malta Local Plan 2006 (SMLP) as it included a stretch of land located in Luqa.

Policy GM24 identified the boundary of the Marsa Sports Complex and required the preparation of an environment and development brief for the whole area. The policy set out a land use framework which included a number of sports uses and club houses as well as retail outlets, administrative offices, food and drink, leisure and assembly, a hotel and childcare facilities. The policy had proposed the extension of the Marsa golf course onto a site in Luqa opposite the existing golf course.

The policy had allocated a total built footprint (roofed over areas) not exceeding 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> and a development density not exceeding 114,000m<sup>2</sup> in gross developable floorspace (GDF). The policy also included provisions related transport issues, primarily the requirement of parking provision, urban design amongst which the requirement that no built structure should be higher than 20m above mean sea level. Other guidance given by the policy related to environmental sustainability, planning gain and utilities.

#### **3.2 Area within L-Istabal, Qormi**

Policy QO05 of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan (refer to Figure 3) guided the development of the site known as tal-Istabal. The policy required the comprehensive development of the site as a landscaped area with underlying warehousing. Only one level of warehousing was permitted below the landscaped area. Additionally, the policy required that an old building located within the site be retained.

PC 15 of 2009 changed the zoning of the area from warehousing to a retirement complex and sports and recreational facilities, and parking area. This PC had assigned a gross floor area not exceeding 10,800 m<sup>2</sup> and a building height varying between one and three floors all located below the level of Triq Hal-Qormi. The old building on site was zoned for social and community facilities, and the provision for a landscaped roof was made.

Subsequently, PC 51 of 2016 changed the zoning of the area again to commercial, sports and recreational facilities and car parking, while retaining the same building heights and provision of a landscaped roof as in PC15 of 2009, with part of the site designated as public open space.

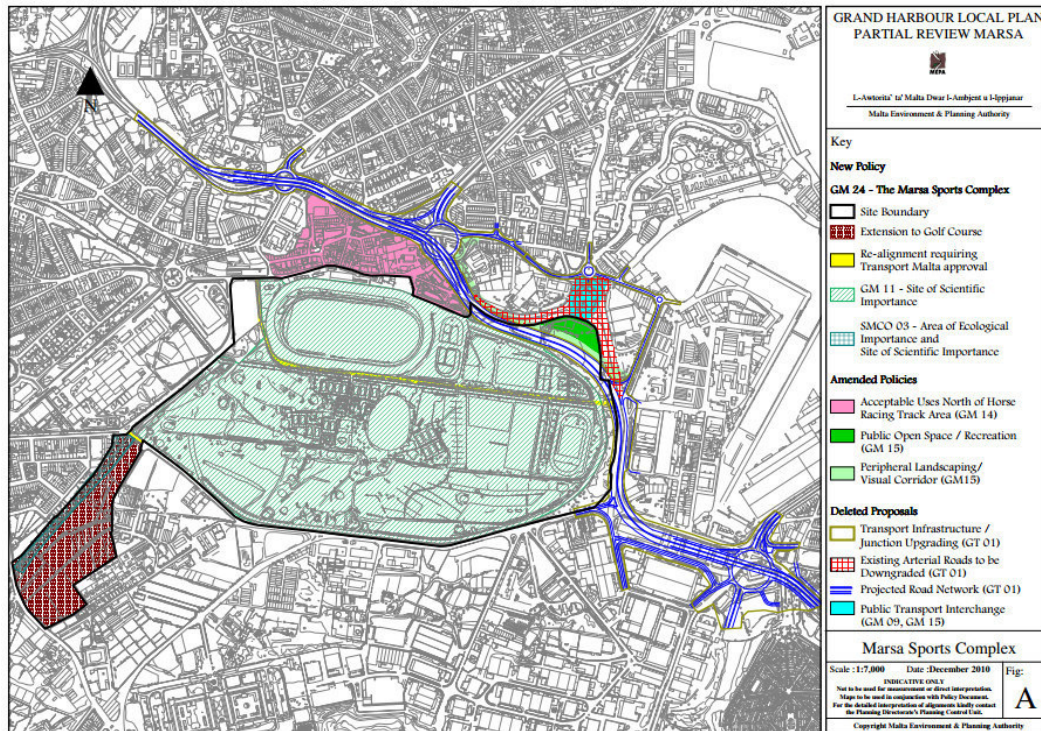


Figure 2 Figure A of the Grand Harbour Partial Review 2011 (Marsa)

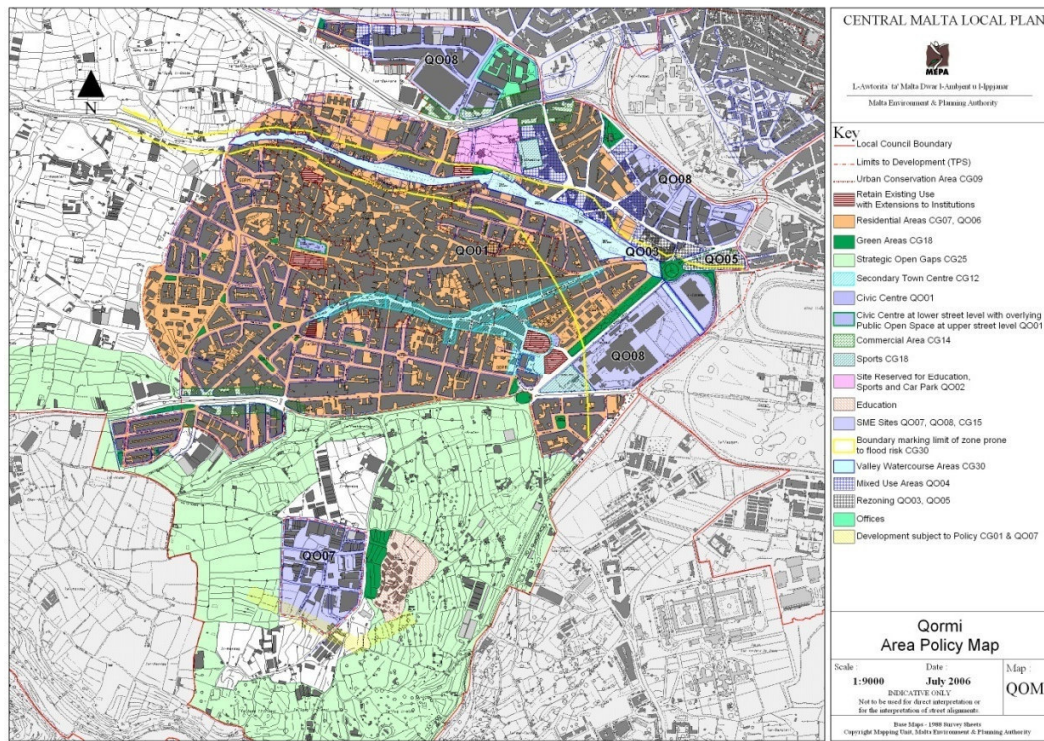


Figure 3 QOM1 from the Central Malta Local Plan 2006

## **4.0 Amendments to Policy GM24**

**GM24**

**The Marsa Sports Complex**

The area of land shown on Map A is designated as the Marsa Sports Complex to enable the provision of the necessary facilities to ensure the highest standards of equestrian and international sports and enable competition in the international scenario of sporting events.

The provisions of Grand Harbour Local Plan general policy GM11 (as amended in 2011) related to the Site of Scientific Importance shall remain applicable.

### ***j) Land uses***

The Planning Authority may favourably consider development applications on the separate sub-zones - Zones A, B, C and D - as indicated on Map A provided that the Marsa Sports Complex site shall have a total built footprint (roofed over areas) which does not exceed 60,000sqm and a development density which does not exceed 114,000sqm in gross developable floorspace (GDF).

For the purpose of this policy, the gross developable floor area (GDF) is the total area which is internal and roofed over, including wall thickness (or in the case of party walls measured up to half the width of such walls) and also includes internal, completely enclosed, unroofed spaces. Service areas and parking areas are excluded from the GDF.

Each zone is subject to the Land Use Framework in Table 1 to guide the distribution of land uses between the primary uses and their ancillary facilities, and the secondary uses. This is both in terms of site coverage (footprint) and floorspace to achieve the objective of the designation of the site as a sports complex with a predominantly open space character. Ancillary uses to the primary/sports uses must operate in conjunction with the primary use, while secondary uses can operate independently but take up a smaller proportion of footprint. A variation not exceeding 5% in the allocated footprint and GDF within each zone may be considered provided that total footprint, GDF and the stipulated building heights within each zone are not exceeded and the urban design provisions in this policy are not compromised. When considering the application of the 5% variation policy, the Authority shall ensure that the GDF of the sports and ancillary uses combined shall remain higher than the GDF for the secondary uses.

**Table 1** Footprint and GDF for Primary, Ancillary and Secondary Uses

<b>Site Area – Total 704,672 m<sup>2</sup></b>				
<b>Zone</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Site Area/m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>109,587</b>	<b>179,828</b>	<b>358,609</b>	<b>56,648</b>
<b>Total Built Footprint/m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>32,600</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>4,400</b>
<b>Sports Uses/m<sup>2</sup></b>	55%	55%	50%	50%
<b>Ancillary Uses/m<sup>2</sup></b>	45%	30%	50%	50%
<b>Secondary Uses/m<sup>2</sup></b>	Not permitted	15%	Not permitted	Not permitted
<b>Total GDF/m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>61,600</b>	<b>43,200</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>5,700</b>
<b>Sports Uses/m<sup>2</sup></b>	65%	25%	60%	40%
<b>Ancillary Uses/m<sup>2</sup></b>	35%	25%	40%	60%
<b>Secondary Uses/m<sup>2</sup></b>	Not permitted	50%	Not permitted	Not permitted

The agglomeration of the built (roofed over) areas of the required facilities for each sub-zone is encouraged to achieve building clusters and so, to benefit from operational management advantages.

## **Zone A**

The land uses within this zone may include any of the following primary facilities:

- Facilities for gymnastics, weightlifting, squash, athletics, football, handball, softball, rugby and both indoor and outdoor archery;
- Indoor pool; and
- High performance training centre with a multipurpose stadium.

Ancillary Uses to the sports activities within this zone may include:

- Spectator stands;
- Class 3A and 3B tourism accommodation;
- Class 4A offices;
- Article 4B clubhouses; and
- Class 4C and 4D food and drink outlets.

Any buildings within this zone shall have an overall building height not exceeding 20m above mean sea level, with the highest buildings within the zone being located at the periphery of the zone, in the vicinity of Triq Aldo Moro. Short distance and strategic views are to be respected and the visual amenity of the zone enhanced through the design of buildings of high architectural quality.

## **Zone B**

The land uses within this zone may include the following primary facilities:

- International standard facilities for horse racing (trotter and flat) and equestrian sports (polo, show jumping, dressage), training areas and stables

Ancillary uses within this zone may include:

- Grandstand;
- Article 4B clubhouses;
- Class 3C assembly and leisure;
- Class 4C and 4D food and drink outlets; and
- Betting shops.

An area in Zone B shown in Map A as “Corner Building” is designated for commercial facilities to accommodate secondary uses, which shall only include:

- Class 2C (a) childcare facilities;
- Class 4A offices; and
- Class 4B retail outlets.

In addition, an area in Zone B as shown in Map A, constituting a footprint of 9,000m<sup>2</sup> over and above the allocated built footprint and GDF in Table 1 for this sub-zone, is designated as a multi-storey car park and bus depot. The ground floor level is to retain a minimum of 3,000m<sup>2</sup> for the use as a bus depot. The use of the roof level for photovoltaic panel installation is encouraged. Vertical green wall screening across the facades, with the appropriate maintenance agreements in place is required.

### Zone C

The land uses within this zone may include the following primary facilities:

- Golf facilities; and
- Golf academy.

Ancillary uses to golfing activities within this zone may include:

- Article 4B clubhouses;
- Class 4A offices; and
- Class 4C and 4D food and drink outlets.

The provisions of South Malta Local Plan general policy SMCO 03 related to the Area of Ecological Importance and Site of Scientific Importance shall remain applicable.

### Zone D

The land uses within this zone may include the following primary facilities:

- Facilities for tennis, squash and cricket.

Ancillary uses to the sports activities within this zone may include:

- Article 4B clubhouses;
- Class 4A offices; and
- Class 4C and 4D food and drink outlets.

## ***ii) Transportation***

An area to the north-east as shown in Map A is to be reserved for road network upgrading as part of the project to improve traffic flow along Triq Aldo Moro. No development which would prejudice the road network upgrading will be permitted in this area.

In consideration of the various users of the site for each of the zones, safe and well-designed access routes supporting sustainable modes of transport such as cycle routes and pedestrian pathways are to be incorporated into any development scheme. Subsequent development applications should take into account approved development permits within the policy area to ensure connectivity with existing/approved cycle routes and pedestrian pathways. Circulation routes for horses are also to be considered in order to ensure the well-being of the users of the site. In addition, any proposal to sever the existing Ta' Ceppuna link road or Marsa Road needs to ensure that third party access rights are safeguarded

Each of the zones shall be supported by adequate car parking for all users, including visitors, athletes and employees. Lorry and horse trailer parking facilities are to be provided in Zone B as supporting facilities to the Marsa Horse Racing Track. Where this policy intensifies any site within each zone, this is to be supported by studies which show the projected number of car parking spaces required and the measures taken to support the increase in demand. The provision of park and ride facilities is encouraged.

## ***iii) Urban Design***

The design of the scheme (site layout, arrangement of buildings and uses, their relationship to their surroundings, building volumes, massing and heights, hard and soft landscaping, architectural design, colour and materials) respects the open character of the area, minimizes visual impacts on short distance and strategic views and the skyline and provides a pleasant overall experience to visitors and athletes through quality architectural and landscape design.

No built structure shall be higher than 20m above mean sea level. A higher landmark building may only be favourably considered if the Planning Authority is convinced of its essential contribution to the overall design strategy, that it relates well to existing and planned taller buildings in the area and that it will enhance the image of the site and its surroundings.

## ***iv) Environmental Sustainability***



The scheme adopts environmental sustainability features such as conservation of energy and water, renewable energy generation and reduction of waste, and minimizes impacts on hydrology, ecology (particularly the ecologically sensitive areas), biodiversity (especially mature trees) and cultural heritage (especially buildings of architectural merit, archaeological remains and the landscape)

***v) Planning Gain***

The linear park designated along the water course is to extend northwards along the curved route of the current road and is to connect to Triq it-Tigrija along the northern boundary of the site, as shown in Map A. This route is to be safeguarded for transport use so as not to inhibit the development of a continuous public transport route through the site.

An area to the north of Zone A as shown in Map A, constituting a footprint of 6,000m<sup>2</sup> is designated as a public picnic area and is to include urban furniture conducive to the enjoyment of the area as such. The area between the southern periphery of Zone A and the perimeter road is to be designated as a green buffer.

A planning gain contribution of €25/m<sup>2</sup> of commercial uses 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D as defined in the Use Classes Order, is to be made towards the Development Planning Fund solely for the development of the abovementioned linear park and picnic area.

***vi) Utilities***

The storm water channel running through the site and its links to the channels outside the site is an important utility without which flooding will adversely affect the site. Greening of the area along the channel is encouraged, to create a linear park with appropriate leisure facilities along its length. Any development is to ensure that the channel is not negatively affected, but that it remains operational at all times. The manner in which the channel is to be protected is to be detailed in a Works Method Statement for any development which may have a potential impact.

Development on the south-westernmost part of the site must not prejudice the 200m and 300m groundwater safeguard buffer zone.

***vii) Green Infrastructure***

**The nature of the site allows for a strong element of green infrastructure to be incorporated into any upgrading of existing facilities or redevelopment thereof. All four zones within the site include environmentally sustainable measures that can contribute to the green infrastructure of the area in an innovative manner.**

**Existing ecological corridors and mature habitats are to be protected and efforts made to restore degraded habitats where possible. Being a bird sanctuary, any existing and new landscaping is to protect the habitat without inhibiting migratory patterns.**

The site of the Marsa Sports Ground is within the Principal Urban Area and is surrounded by the Grand Harbour conurbation. The area to the north of the site is predominantly commercial in nature while the area to the south is predominantly industrial. This area thus constitutes an employment hub for the Maltese Islands, notwithstanding a significant residential population supported by the high-density nature of this urban area. The un-built character of the Marsa Sports Ground alludes to the site's former nature as the delta for Wied il-Kbir and plays an important role as a green lung for the conurbation. A water channel running across the site from West to East diverts the water from the valley towards the entrance of the Grand Harbour.

These characteristics guided the criteria set for Policy GM24 by aiming for an optimal density for the site, encouraging the upgrading of sports facilities in such a central locality while retaining a high degree of openness. The concept for the entire area is to focus on sports facilities as the primary use and supporting facilities, including some commercialisation, as secondary and/or ancillary uses. "Secondary Uses" refers to those land uses which can operate independently of the primary uses but must occupy a reduced footprint than the primary use. "Ancillary uses" form an integral part of the primary use and cannot operate independently from it and also occupy a reduced footprint and GDF than the primary use.

To this end, the 60,000sqm footprint, which would result in an overall site coverage of around 8%, allows for a degree of development required to attract the creation of better facilities for existing sports and the location of new sports to the area. This agglomeration of sports facilities has the potential to increase the capacity of the site for its use by athletes from different disciplines. It will also provide for secondary and ancillary facilities to be enjoyed by other visitors to the area. The GDF of 114,000sqm is considered suitable to achieve these objectives without undue intensification of the site. The built footprint is measured along the external perimeter of the structure for all roofed over areas (including internal courtyards). The gross developable floor space (GDF) is also measured along the external perimeter of the structure at every level (including internal courtyards).

Zones A, B, C and D have been designated to better allocate the different sports uses present and proposed for the site. The linear park is envisaged to become the green spine in the site and shall include the upgrading of the infrastructure of the water

channel. The space is to be used for suitable informal leisure facilities and a shared road supporting public transport and sustainable transport routes, linking all four zones within the site. A picnic area is to be located to the north of Zone A and is to be used both by the users of the sports facilities as well as others. The linear park and the picnic area may be funded through monetary contributions from the approved developments.

Zone B is to support the Marsa Horse Racing facilities and an amount of commercial development such as office, retail and food and drink facilities may be considered provided they remain as secondary to the primary sports use. The existing bus depot is to be incorporated into an area of multi-storey car parking which will cater for the projected increase in visitors to the site resulting from its intensification. Any taller buildings are to be located along the perimeter of the site facing the Marsa Park site. Zone C remains reserved for golf facilities pertaining to the Royal Malta Golf Club, including the extended golf course and an international standard golf academy with ancillary clubhouses and food and drink facilities. Zone D is defined by the site of the Marsa Sports Club and its facilities, including the historic Clubhouse and facilities for cricket, tennis and squash amongst others.

The nature of the site allows for the area to function as an element of green infrastructure in the dense urban conurbation which it is a part of. Any development is therefore to contribute to such initiatives and should incorporate environmentally sustainable measures both in the design of any built structures as well as in the design of the open spaces. Sustainable transportation and attractive walking routes are to be incorporated in order for the site to function as a safe connection for cyclists and pedestrians between Qormi and the Grand Harbour. This connection can then be extended by other similar routes through the Harbour cities, providing for much needed links in this high-density area.

## **5.0 Amendments to PC51/2016**

Conditions 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 10 of PC51/2016 are superseded by the following conditions:

- A.** The part of the site that is designated for development as indicated in Plan A the development of the following land uses will be considered:
- Class 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D – Commercial
  - Class 3C - Sports and Recreation Facilities
  - Car Parking Provision
- B.** The designated public open space as identified in Plan A shall be made accessible to the public. Continuing protection and maintenance of such spaces will be secured by development control conditions. The public open space to be satisfactorily landscaped as per relevant guidelines.
- C.** The developer shall at his own expense construct, implement and maintain the public open space indicated on Plan A. Alternatively, the developer may financially contribute Euro 210,000 over and above any other rates established by LN 356/10 as amended by LN163/16 for implementation of the public open spaces indicated on Plan A . These monies shall be administered by the Urban Improvement Fund and shall be allocated for the implementation of the public open space indicated on Plan A.
- D.** A planning contribution of EUR25/sqm of additional GDF shall be imposed and used to fund projects within the locality.
- E.** Development should not exceed a building height of 11.4m (inclusive of 1m parapet wall) above the upper road level at Triq Hal Qormi as indicated in Plan A. The profile of development on site is not to extend beyond the development profile as indicated on section on Plan A. The section shall only be used for the interpretation of the building heights and setbacks. The section does not prejudice the road alignment. The form and treatment of the elevations of the development should provide both detailed and large-scale visual interest and shall enhance the streetscape and the surrounding environment through high quality design.
- F.** The built footprint for the levels above Triq Hal Qormi shall follow Plan A. The part of the site with no further development is to be soft-landscaped and shall pertain to the area around the reconstructed farmhouse, as

**shown in Plan A. This plan supersedes PC51/16/48B.**

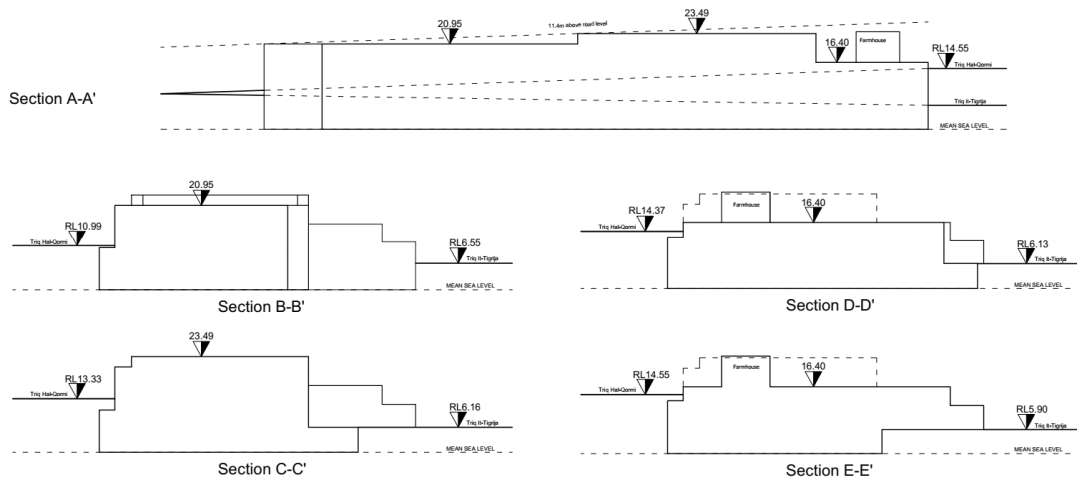
- G. No direct vehicular or pedestrian access on Triq Hal Qormi (arterial road) shall be permitted to the building; and adequate pedestrian access is to be permitted to the soft-landscaped area to be situated on the upper levels of the existing development.**

**All other conditions in the PC are to remain unchanged.**

This policy has allowed for a number of open spaces within the site. A public open space is situated towards the junction of Triq Hal Qormi and Triq it-Tigrija, to be constructed with all the necessary safety features required for its enjoyment by the public and in view of its location in the vicinity of traffic junction. Further along Triq it-Tigrija, towards the entrance to the commercial centre, a pedestrianised space allows for ease of access to the centre. This too is to be adequately maintained, especially with regards to the safety features installed to protect pedestrians from traffic.

The roof of the building upon which no extension is allowed, is to be designed as a predominantly soft-landscaped area. This is to feature urban furniture which will allow for the enjoyment of the space by visitors of all ages and abilities to the centre during opening hours. It is to have adequate surveillance by the location of active frontages along its length and is to provide a well-designed and well-maintained setting to the reconstructed farmhouse within it. Pedestrian access is to be allowed from within the commercial centre and all measures must be taken to protect users of the space from traffic along Triq Hal Qormi and that moving towards Triq it-Tigrija.

The increase in building height up to 11.4m above the highest level of Triq Hal Qormi shall result in the building profile shown in Plan A and reproduced in Figure 4 hereunder for ease of reference. An additional two floors are therefore to be allowed in the area along Section B-B' and another two floors above the level of the current building are to be allowed in the area along Section C-C'. The topmost floor of the latter part is to be setback from Triq Hal Qormi, though development is otherwise to follow the footprint of the current building. As shown on Plan A, any additional development is to stop short of the reconstructed farmhouse while allowing for a suitable buffer, achieving a site coverage of around 55% of any additional development. The design of the facades fronting the soft-landscaped area is to take into consideration the requirement for active frontages onto this open space as well as the views of the extension when approaching the site from Triq Hal Qormi.



**Figure 4** Sections pertaining to the site of Policy QO05

Such design considerations also apply to the entire stepped frontage along Triq Hal Qormi, whereby the building is to be stepped in line with the profile of the street and no blank walls are to result from the additional development over that existing. In addition, the extension is not to exceed the height of the reconstructed farmhouse along its boundary with the soft-landscaped space. The extension is to be relative in design with the existing development and is to form a cohesive whole once completed. This applies not only to design considerations, but also to access to, from and through the building as well as to its servicing and maintenance. The use of greenery to achieve innovative and high-quality design which simultaneously enhances the massing of the building within this visually prominent site is encouraged.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Planning Directorate does not recommend that SEA Screening is carried out since SEA pre-screening has shown that the Partial Local Plan Review is not increasing the amount of allowable development on the site of Policy GM24 but has re-apportioned the footprint and GDF which was previously allowed but not yet constructed. The policy safeguards the Nature Reserve, and proposed uses are in line with the open space character of the site while allowing for the rehabilitation of the spaces related to sports uses and the Marsa Horse Racing Track. The only increase in allowable development is located on the site of Policy QO05, which is already committed through approved development.
- 6.2 Following the public consultation, on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 the Executive Council approved the 2020 Partial Review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and a Review of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017; and of the provisions of PC51/16 included in this report is approved without any changes and referred it to the Minister for his endorsement.
- 6.3 The Minister approved the partial review on the 7th August 2020.

## **Appendix A**

### **Grand Harbour Local Plan, Central Malta Local Plan and South Malta Local Plan (Revisions 2020)**

**Public Submissions on Objectives**



<b>Submission Reference</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Submission</b>	<b>PA Response</b>
GHSM 01	Dr Edwin Mintoff	<p>We refer to the request for representations related to the proposed objectives to review the GM24 policies. I write on behalf of my clients J &amp; M Property Limited who are the owners of property indicated in DRG 001.</p> <p>We agree with the objectives of the Local Plan review and we are in agreement with the removal of the need for a development brief for the whole area.</p> <p>We strongly believe that if the sub-zones include more than one owner, the policy should include the mechanism to derive the allowable development, in terms of footprint and GDF, to allow the different owners to develop the site individually.</p> <p>We are proposing that the sub-zone which will include the client's area is zoned for Retail and Offices land uses with supporting leisure and catering amenities, with a height designation of 10 floors.</p> <p>Vide. Plan attached to submission</p>	<p>In view of the current situation whereby each zone pertains to a single individual entity, the requirement for separate allocations of allowable footprint and GDF within each zone does not arise.</p> <p>The area referred to in the submission has been reserved for road network upgrading following consultation with Transport Malta and Infrastructure Malta.</p>
GHSM 02	ERA	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>ERA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed objectives for the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and to review the Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi (2006), as amended in 2013 and 2017.</p>	

		<p>These comments are provided without prejudice to ERA's review and comments on the emerging draft Local Plan revision and eventually at project stage when more detailed environmental assessment will be required. Depending on their nature, scale and context, proposed projects may also require different types of environmental assessments, including Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) or other screenings, as may be relevant.</p> <p>The Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) is putting forward its recommendations with respect to the Partial Review Objectives, as follows.</p> <p><b>Main environmental issues</b></p> <p><b>Site of Policy GM24 – Marsa Horse Racing Track and Marsa Sports Grounds</b></p> <p>The site of Policy GM24 includes the Marsa Horse Racing Track and the Marsa Sports complex, part of which is designated as a Site of Scientific Importance, governed by policy GM11. Additionally, there is an area currently designated as a Public Open Space/Recreation at the north-east side as well as an area of Agricultural land and Remnant Valley at the south-west side (Map LU8). The latter is currently designated for an Extension to the Golf Course. It is recommended that the revised policy ensures that any works proposed within the site of scientific importance is assessed in relation to adverse impacts on the geological significance of the site. The Public Open Space/Recreation area should be retained as such. ERA has no objection to the Extension of the Golf Course, as long as the watercourse and its semi-natural banks are safeguarded. The openness of the whole area should be retained as much as possible, in</p>	<p>The provisions of GM11 with respect to the SSI are to be retained. Policy GM24 is not increasing the allowable footprint and GDF, and thus, the open space character is also to be retained.</p>
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		<p>view of the intensity of development in the immediate area. Any existing trees within the Public Open Space/Recreation is now protected through the Tree and Woodland Protection Regulations, 2018. Any proposals affecting such trees should follow the same regulations.</p> <p>ERA also has no objection to the removal of the current environment and development brief requirement (GM 24) as long as the whole area remains holistically planned through the individual sub-zones and their current frameworks, and provided further that such frameworks retain the existing environmental considerations currently included in GM 24, as per Appendix A.</p> <p>ERA recommends that the proposed re-apportionment of the total built footprint retain not only the limits on the built footprint of 60,000 sqm and the Gross Development Floorspace of 114,000 sqm, but also the existing objectives in GM 24. This would contribute towards the conservation of the predominantly open space character of the area to act as an important green lung in the highly urbanised immediate vicinity (see Appendix B).</p> <p>It is also recommended that specific areas are designated for tree planting and green infrastructure to compensate for the extensive uprooting of trees carried out in the area during infrastructural works.</p> <p>ERA highly recommends that current provisions included in GM 24, and as specified in Appendix A, are retained in the new policy.</p> <p><b>Site of Policy QO05 – Area known as L-Istabal</b></p> <p>The site of Policy QO05 lies at the periphery of a highly urbanised conurbation of Malta and opposite to the relatively low-lying Marsa sports grounds. The review proposes to increase the allowable height of buildings</p>	<p>The policy supports the holistic planning of the area.</p> <p>The allowable footprint and GDF have not been increased.</p> <p>The designated linear park, green buffer and picnic area offer opportunities for greening.</p> <p>The site of policy QO05 is in the midst of an existing SME site and commercial area which has benefited from road</p>
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	<p>up to 11.4m above the upper road level as compared to the existing policy where heights are mostly limited by the height of the upper road level. The new policy also proposes to eliminate the soft landscaped area on the roof of the building, which has already been approved as part of the development project (PA05491/16).</p> <p>Strategically, ERA has serious concerns regarding the proposed increase of the allowable building heights and the removal of the soft landscaping on the roof. Further intensification of development in this area, which is already subject to significant traffic flows and related congestion, could result in a substantial increase in vehicular traffic flows in the immediate and surrounding areas, thereby increasing risks of environmental impacts associated with further road congestion. These include air pollution and pressures for further take up of undeveloped land to extend, upgrade or construct new infrastructure, such as roads and car parks.</p> <p>Thereby, any approved landscaping and adjacent green areas should be retained, and not prejudiced by future proposals.</p> <p><b>Other Important Environmental Considerations</b></p> <p>Any amendments to these policies should ensure that any proposed development does not generate excessive additional traffic flows, considering that there are already high levels of air pollutants emanating from the current traffic flows.</p> <p>From a noise perspective, any review should ensure that development does not generate an increase in noise levels from the current levels. The intensification of new developments such as commercial, retirement complexes, sports and recreational facilities through the amendments of the local plans, will increase the traffic flows during peak hours. Therefore,</p>	<p>network upgrading works. In addition, an area on the roof of the existing building has been allocated for soft landscaping.</p>
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		<p>an increase in noise levels in already high activity areas will be experienced unless mitigated for.</p> <p><b>Other considerations relevant to both sites</b></p> <p>One of the proposed objectives aims for the elimination of requirement for a development brief for the area. In such case, the new policy should address the following aspects:</p> <p>Roads/pavements should incorporate facilities whereby all services and ancillary infrastructure (including water, electricity, sewerage, runoff management and telecommunications) are located underground without overhead wiring, poles, above-ground pipework, etc.</p> <p>It should be ensured that the drainage systems, (including sewerage) and other related infrastructure, in the area of influence, is adequate to serve the additional demand of any proposed development, to prevent risks of sewer overflows, particularly during/after heavy rainfall. This is particularly important since the site is located in an area prone to heavy flooding.</p> <p>Unmitigated urban runoff (e.g. from roads, car parks and other hard surfacing) should be contained within the committed site and should not be discharged directly onto any surrounding lands or watercourse. The use of sustainable urban drainage systems is recommended in order to collect and treat local surface water and attenuate water runoff, including permeable surfaces for soft and hard landscaping to enable absorption and collection of the water runoff from the hard impermeable surfaces created by the development.</p>	<p>These considerations, though pertinent, are beyond the remit of the policy and will be taken into consideration at design stage.</p>
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		<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>ERA looks forward to contributing further on this Partial review of the GHLP, SMP and CMLP, and remains available for any clarification, or further consultations via: <a href="mailto:national.affairs.era@era.org.mt">national.affairs.era@era.org.mt</a></p> <p><b>Appendix A</b></p> <p><b>Development Density</b></p> <p>The total built footprint (roofed over areas) does not exceed 60,000sqm;</p> <p>The development density does not exceed 114,000sqm in gross developable floorspace (GDF);</p> <p><b>Urban Design</b></p> <p>The design of the scheme (site layout, arrangement of buildings and uses, their relationship to their surroundings, building volumes, massing and heights, hard and soft landscaping, architectural design, colour and materials) respects the open character of the area, minimizes visual impacts on short distance and strategic views and the skyline and provides a pleasant overall experience to visitors and athletes through quality architectural and landscape design;</p> <p><b>Environmental Sustainability</b></p> <p>The scheme adopts environmental sustainability features such as conservation of water and minimizes impacts on hydrology, ecology</p>	
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		<p>(particularly the ecologically sensitive areas), biodiversity (especially mature trees) and cultural heritage (especially the landscape);</p> <p><b>Planning Gain</b></p> <p>An easily accessible public picnic area of not less than 7,000sqm and other public open spaces, possibly in the form of a linear park, are included in the scheme;</p> <p><b>Utilities</b></p> <p>A utilities plan which does not adversely affect the national storm water channel running through the site or its links to the channels outside the site is provided.</p> <p><b>Appendix B</b></p> <p><b>(i) The Land Use Framework</b></p> <p>It is essential that the distribution of land uses between primary and ancillary facilities, both in terms of site coverage and floorspace, achieves the objective of the designation of the site as a sports complex with a predominantly open space character.</p>	
	<p>Kunsill Lokali Hal Qormi</p> <p><b>LATE SUBMISSION</b></p>	<p>Il-Kunsill Lokali fal Qormi jinsab iddizappuntat bi kbir ghal fatt li l-Awtorita' tieghek qed tipproponi tibdil fil-Pjan Lokali Centrali ghal Hal Qormi sabiex is-sit ezistenti fi Triq Hal Qormi k/m Trig it-Tigrija Hal Qormi, jinghata l-permess u l-bini joghla bi 11-il metru.</p>	

		<p>Dan kollu sar minn wara dahar il-poplu Qormi, fejn il-Kunsill Lokali gie nformat minn gurnalist nhar il-Hamis 28 ta' Marzu, lejlet l-ghelug tal-konsultazzjoni pubblika. Kwistjoni bhal din kellha tigi mressqa mill-Awtorita' tieghek b'mod immedjat ghall-attenzjoni tal- Kunsill, meta l-Awtorita' kienet diga' nformatata bil-pozizzjoni tal-Kunsill permezz ta' korrisondenza pprezentata nhar il-21 t' Ottubru 2016.</p> <p>Il-Kunsill Lokali Hal Qormi jibqa' jzomm mad-decizjoni ipprezentata mill-Kunsill, permezz ta' korrisondenza bit-titlu 'Proposed Development Address: Site at (fields), Triq Hal Qormi c/w Trig it-Tigrija, Qormi Malta PC 51/16: Amendments to PC 15/09.</p> <p>Il-Kunsill Lokali mhux se jaccetta li ma jsirx Landscaping area, kif imwieghed, sabiex jinbena torri ta' 11-il metru, li jirrovina l-estetika tal-entratura tal-Belt Pinto u jkompli jnaqqar 'l ffit pulmun li hawn fil-lokalita' . Donnu mhux bizzejjed li l-lokalita' taghna hija mdawwra bi 3 zoni ndustrijali u traffiku ma jaqta' qatt.</p> <p>Ghaldaqstant il-Kunsill jesigi li l-Awtorita' tieghek ma tippermettix dan it-tibdil fil-Pjan Lokali.</p> <p>Vide. Attachment re. Representation to PA5491/16</p>	
	<p>Kunsill Lokali Hal Qormi</p> <p><b>WITHDRAWAL OF LATE SUBMISSION</b></p>	<p>Ghandi ninfurmak li l-Kunsill Lokali, elett demokratikament, fl-ahhar elezzjoni linzammet nhar il-25 ta' Mejju, qiegħed jirrevedi l-pozizzjoni tieghu rigward ir-revizzjoni tal-Pjan Lokali ta' l-2016, ghac-Centru ta' Malta, għal Hal Qormi kif emendat fl-2013 u fl-2017.</p> <p>Waqt is-seduta tal-Kunsill Lokali li nzammet nhar it-Tnejn, 2 ta' Settembru 2019 fis-6.30 ta' filghaxija, gie deciz, li l-Kunsill Lokali ta' Hal Qormi jinnota li m'ghandu ebda oggezzjoni għall-emendi tal-pjan QO05 relatat mal-</p>	



		<p>applikazzjoni PC 15/09 u PC 51/16 relatat mal-gholi massimu tal-bini biex ikun accettat biex jizdied ghal massimu ta' 11.4metri fuq il-livell tat-triq arterjali.</p>	
	<p>Din I-Art Helwa</p> <p><b>LATE SUBMISSION</b></p>	<p>Din I-Art Helwa would like to express concern regarding the review of the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Marsa) and 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa).</p> <p>Din I-Art Helwa questions why these objectives have been published for consultation without providing the rationale behind them. The Planning Authority has not provided adequate information for detailed comments to be made.</p> <p>It is not explained why the need for a development brief for the whole area will be removed.</p> <p>Neither is it indicated what type of sub-zones are being considered for this area besides the horse-racing track, or what building heights are proposed in the sub-zones.</p> <p>The objectives mention the re-apportionment of the total built footprint and the gross developable floorspace between the new sub-zones but no details are provided on this, or on what is intended to be achieved by this. Din I-Art Helwa requests clarification on these points, and that a further opportunity to comment on these objectives is provided once the information is made available.</p> <p>Din I-Art Helwa emphasises that a holistic master plan for the entire Marsa inner harbour area should be proposed, rather than piecemeal planning reacting to development proposals.</p>	

## **Appendix B**

**Public Submissions on Phase 2**

Submission Reference	Respondent	Submission	PA Response
GHSM2 0001	Pete Debono	You do realise Marsa is our only rugby pitch in Malta, right? Where are you going to propose we play our League and Cup matches whilst this proposal is being developed?	The concern is noted; though such arrangements pertaining to the implementation of the policy within Zone A are to be discussed with the operator of the site.
GHSM2 0002	Michael Briguglio	<p>With reference to the above, I am hereby appealing to the Planning Authority to employ a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) process. In this regard, please refer to my correspondence dated 31 May 2019 to the PA regarding SIAs. To date, I have not been informed of any policy update in this regard. A copy of my correspondence can be obtained from this link: <a href="https://mikes-beat.blogspot.com/2019/05/feedback-re-social-impact-assessment.html">https://mikes-beat.blogspot.com/2019/05/feedback-re-social-impact-assessment.html</a> Feedback re Social Impact Assessment public consultation to Planning Authority, SIA Procedures Consultation - <a href="mailto:sia@pa.org.mt">sia@pa.org.mt</a></p> <p>I am pleased that my proposal to mainstream social impact assessments in PA procedures is being taken up.</p> <p>A social impact assessment reviews the social effects of development and social change, both intended and not. The International Association for Impact Assessment defines an SIA as the process of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions and any social change processes invoked by those interventions. Such changes may range from natural disasters to population growth and from policy interventions to singular development projects. Consequently, SIAs investigate the effects on people's everyday lives in terms of culture, politics, community, health,</p>	The requirement for an SIA will be considered; though there is currently no established procedure pertaining to Social Impact Assessments within the remit of the Planning Authority.

well-being, aspirations, needs, rights and responsibilities, to name a few. They provide data for policymaking, which is based on evidence. Social impacts under assessment should include all those things relevant to people's everyday life. This may include one's culture, community, political context, environment, health, well-being, personal and property rights as well as fears and aspirations. Social impact assessments can help verify the consequences and impacts of development proposals in relation to the communities involved. Hence, a basic starting point for such assessments should be the compilation of a community profile. A social impact assessment that does not understand the society in question is practically worthless.

This can help bring about genuine processes of engagement between communities, developers and authorities as well as identify and implement mitigation measures and compensation mechanisms. As things stand in Malta, various developers do quite the opposite, often causing huge inconvenience to residents and leaving a mess behind in surrounding infrastructure. Various methods, both quantitative and qualitative could be used within social impact assessments. The former refers to generalisable data especially through numbers, while the latter produce in-depth data on matters. Research methods in SIAs may therefore include surveys of concerned populations who are asked questions on their perceptions of the change in question. Ethnographic methods may involve a deeper look into everyday practices of people, while elite interviews may verify the advice, concerns and interpretations of persons who are experts or who have experience in the respective field under analysis. Methods may also involve the analysis of discourse on the subject in question, for example by looking at what is being pronounced in the public sphere, whether by the public, civil society, political actors, the media and the like.

SIAs should involve the participation of different stakeholders, ideally through mixed research methods. Some other factors which should be included in social impact assessments include the consideration of reasonable alternatives to development proposals as well as comparative analysis of similar development proposals and related good or bad practices.

Analytic indicators should be provided and the entire process should be

subject to peer review by independent experts in the field. Social impact assessments should not be one-off exercises which are rubber-stamped by authorities without any sense of critical engagement. To the contrary, they should be ongoing processes which engage with various stakeholders and which report back so as to ensure effective policy processes. They should also use complementary research methods so as to ensure reliable and valid data.

Recommendations and mitigation measures could therefore be in place, and these would be based on social-scientific evidence. It is also important that SIAs are peer-reviewed. This means that if a study is being carried out by a team of social scientists, this should be scrutinised by other independent social scientists. This could help identify shortcomings, conflicts and possible improvements to the same SIA.

As things stand, there are no national guidelines on the need for SIAs in Malta. The conducting of such studies on development projects is at the discretion of the Planning Authority. When exceptionally carried out, they are one-off studies on major development projects. This effectively means that smaller-scale development projects with bigger cumulative impacts are not subjected to SIAs. Such ongoing processes should also take account of changes in the social context in question, such as cumulative impacts of other developments. For example, a social impact assessment that focuses on one development but ignores another development in the region is not realistic. If one looks at other policy interventions, SIAs are practically absent. Just to name a few: the dynamics of agriculture, the cost of living, social cohesion and integration, urbanisation, the commercialisation of public land.

Indeed, there are so many areas where SIAs could be introduced in Malta: government consultation on new legislation, proposals in the national budget, the adoption of EU directives, parliamentary committees and local councils are just some areas. For example, the latter could carry out SIAs to establish community profiles, cultural commonalities and differences, social needs, demographics, impacts of development and so forth. The University of Malta and other educational institutions are currently producing graduates in different social sciences who are equipped to carry out SIAs and who are sensible to the need for evidence-based policymaking.

GHSM2 0003	Mr. Jon Camilleri	Inhoss li l-kwistjoni tal-bdil tal-klima hu relevanti, fost affarijiet ohra fil-kuntest generali.	Climate change is a matter which is being considered and mitigated for through measures for environmental sustainability.
GHSM2 0004	Dr. Edwin Mintoff	<p>I write on behalf of my clients J &amp; M Property Limited who are the owners of property indicated in DRG 001, regarding “Partial Review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and a Review of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017; and of the provisions of PC51/16”.</p> <p>On the right side of the area zoned as a picnic area, there is an alley which is currently giving access to the site. This alley needs to be retained until an alternative access is formed.</p> <p>In the PA response table, page 22:</p> <p><i>In view of the current situation whereby each zone pertains to a single individual entity, the requirement for separate allocations of allowable footprint and GDF within each zone does not arise.</i></p> <p>The clients own the land identified in the Siteplan, part of which is Zone A and the rest zoned as an ‘Area Reserved for Road Network Upgrade’.</p> <p>Whilst Zone A is entitled to a share of the 32,600sqm of built footprint and 61,600sqm of built floorspace, it is unclear the proportion of share which can be applied for on the client’s property if they are to submit a separate development application. It is being requested that this proportion is identified to allow the different land owners to develop their sites individually.</p>	The zoning of the site as a picnic area does not prejudice a public right of way.

<p>GHSM2 0005</p>	<p>Dr Ing Charles Yousif</p>	<p>Feedback on Environmental Sustainable and Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability</p> <p>The scheme adopts environmental sustainability features such as conservation of energy and water, renewable energy generation and reduction of waste, and minimizes impacts on hydrology, ecology (particularly the ecologically sensitive areas), biodiversity (especially mature trees) and cultural heritage (especially buildings of architectural merit, archaeological remains and the landscape).</p> <p>The nature of the site allows for a strong element of green infrastructure to be incorporated into any upgrading of existing facilities or redevelopment thereof. All four zones within the site have the potential to include environmentally sustainable measures that can contribute to the green infrastructure of the area in an innovative manner. Existing ecological corridors and mature habitats are to be protected and efforts made to restore degraded habitats where possible. Being a bird sanctuary, any existing and new landscaping is to protect the habitat without inhibiting migratory patterns.</p> <p>Feedback: In line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive EPBD/2010/31 and (EU) 2018/844 as well as the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU)2018/2002 It becomes imperative for such local plan to refer directly to these requirements, whereby all new and renovated buildings will have to be near zero-energy buildings. This is mandatory and requires guaranteed investment. The text as appearing in the partial review is weak. It gives the impression that such measures regarding environmental sustainability and green infrastructure are only voluntary.</p>	<p>Environmentally sustainable and green infrastructure measures will be proposed and assessed following the submission for applications for development permission, so as to ensure that such measures are tailored to the specificities of each site.</p>
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<p>GHSM2 0006</p>	<p>Perit Charles Buhagiar</p>	<p>I am writing to you on behalf of my clients Messers Centre Parc Holding Ltd. who have developed the Centre Parc complex on the site currently regulated by PC51/16. This development was carried out as per development permit PA 5491/16 dated 5th November 2018. Thus the revision of PC 51/16 has to take into consideration what has already been approved in our current valid permit. It has also got to take into consideration the layout of the building as approved.</p> <p>The approved drawings are in conflict with what is being proposed as follows:- 5.0 Amendments to PC51/2016</p> <p>(G) States that no direct vehicular or pedestrian access in Triq Hal Qormi shall be permitted. This is in direct conflict with our permit since in our permit there is a service road with access from Triq Hal Qormi which has been approved. A service road implies vehicular access. Indeed as can be seen from the approved plans (attached) there are approved access points from Qormi Road. Thus we would like to request that the direct access as already approved is retained but no further access is to be permitted.</p> <p>(E) Development should not exceed a building height of 11.4m above the upper road level at Triq Hal Qormi as indicated in Plan A. Please note that this profile does not take into account the massing of the approved existing building which has been stepped differently from that shown on Plan A. In some areas the 11.4m would be exceeded whilst in some other areas the building height of 11.4m would not be reached and thus there is a compensation in terms of volume (see attached section).</p> <p>(A) The part of the site that is designated for development is indicated in plan A. Again this does not take into account the approved plans of our development. If we had to follow the profile one of our escalators overlooking Triq Tigrija and which we require to give access to the proposed upper floors would finish up located in the landscape area. On the other hand there are areas as shown in our revised block plan (attached) that in spite of being indicated as zoned for development will in fact not be</p>	<p>The changes to the scheme take into consideration the development already approved on the site. Any rights acquired through the development permission are not being prejudiced. The designation of the developable boundary takes into consideration the setting of the vernacular farmhouse the rebuilding of which remains subject to a condition set out in the development permission issued on the site.</p>
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		<p>developed. Thus we would like to request rather than delineating the proposed development boundaries you propose an area in square meters which can be developed. In this way we can built part of the area which is shown as remaining open whilst we compensate for this by not building on an area which can be developed. In this manner the area of the overall development footprint will remain the same.</p> <p>We would therefore kindly request that you take our comments into consideration during the revision of PC 51/2016.</p>	
GHSM2 0007	Dr. Laura Calleja	<p>Subject: Partial Review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and a Review of 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017; and of the provisions of PC51/16</p> <p>I write on behalf of Malta Public Transport Services (Operations) Limited (the 'Company') with regards to the subject in caption. The company, whilst making reference to its representations submitted to the Planning Authority on 3 December 2019 and 16 January 2020 (a copy of which is being attached for easier reference) against PA8809/2019, holds firm to its position there outlined with regards to the Marsa Park and Ride area from which it operates and over which it holds a right of use.</p>	The policy allows for a bus depot and allocates 3000sqm for such use; the re-design of which is to be considered as development application stage.

<p>GHSM2 0008</p>	<p>Mr. Stefano Miceli obo ERA</p>	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>The Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on phase 2 of the draft partial review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa), the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan (Qormi), as amended in 2013 and 2017. Amendments to the provisions of PC51/16 are also noted.</p> <p>The comments provided below are being provided further to the comments provided by ERA during Phase 1, which are being reiterated. These comments are provided without prejudice to ERA's review and comments on any eventual development projects that may emerge from the revised Local Plan policies, when more detailed environmental assessment will be required. Depending on their nature, scale and context, proposed projects may also require different types of environmental assessments or other related screenings, including Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) or other screenings, as may be relevant.</p> <p>2. Main environmental issues</p> <p>Site of Policy GM24 – Marsa Horse Racing Track and Marsa Sports Ground The revised policy proposes the extension of the Marsa golf course onto a site in Luqa opposite the existing golf course. This area, indicated as Zone C in Map A, is an Area of Ecological Importance (AEI) and Site of Scientific Importance (SSI). ERA agrees with the current provision in the proposed policy revision, which states that 'the provisions of South Malta Local Plan general policy SMCO 03 related to the Area of Ecological Importance and Site of Scientific Importance shall remain applicable'. It is recommended that any works proposed within this site should have regard to the environmental significance of the scheduled AEI/SSI and its immediate surroundings. Any interventions on protected trees in the area should be carried out in line with the Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations, 2018 (S.L. 549.123), while any landscaping plans should be environmentally compatible to the area with suitable species.</p>	<p>Green infrastructure measures will be proposed and assessed following the submission for applications for development permission, so as to ensure that such measures are tailored to the specificities of each site.</p> <p>Carparking provision is essential for the efficient functioning of this national sports complex. The design and location of any open carparks needs to be carried out sensitively within the context of policy provisions for urban design.</p> <p>The increase in GDF on the Center Parc site resulted from a government objective to increase the height of buildings in this area to 11.4m above the level of Triq Hal Qormi.</p>
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Moreover, ERA also notes that this area, located towards the west of the Marsa Sports Ground and accessed from Triq Ffal Luqa, is also designated as a Valley Protection Zone, with subsequent protection in Policy SMCO 07. The revised policy should ensure that the function of the watercourse as an important water catchment area, and its semi-natural banks, are not adversely affected by development.

ERA positively notes that the total built footprint of 60, 000 sqm and the Gross Developable Floorspace of 114,000 sqm has not been increased. However, the revised policy mentions that 'service areas and parking areas are excluded from the GDF', and that 'each of the zones shall be supported by adequate car parking for all users'. It must be ensured that such requirements should not result in excessive take-up of undeveloped land and open spaces within the site. Instead, access to/from the proposed multi-storey car park should be facilitated to ease access to and from the other zones (Zone A, C and D) within the same site.

An area to the north-east is being reserved for road network upgrading, as shown on Map A. It is suggested that all future development should be contained within the existing boundary of the Marsa Sports Complex Site. Such development includes the entire width and extent of roads, junction improvements, service roads, access, pavements, car parking areas/spaces, footpaths, landscaping and vehicle manoeuvring areas.

ERA welcomes the various provisions included in the revised policy GM24, related to urban design, environmental sustainability and green infrastructure. ERA also agrees with the proposed green buffer which is to run along the southern periphery of Zone A and the perimeter road, as well as the proposed linear park which runs along the water channel from West to East of the Marsa Sports Ground. Whilst these environmental considerations are important, as they would contribute to the conservation of the predominantly open space character of the area, the provisions for green space should be effective and commensurate with the scale, height and configuration of any proposed development at this site. For instance, it is noted that the Green Buffer is barely visible on Map A and quite limited compared to the whole area. It is therefore suggested to explore appropriate

ways to expand the green buffer and generally incorporating more green/natural features. Furthermore, it is suggested that tangible recommendations are made in the same policy, as regards the introduction of green infrastructure elements.

The layout, planning and design of well-designed access routes supporting sustainable modes of transport (such as cycle routes and pedestrian pathways) should not commit further undeveloped land. ERA recommends that cycling routes and cycling infrastructure should be factored into the advance planning of the site, such that environmental impacts and practical difficulties that are often associated with the retrofitting of such facilities are pre-empted at source. This approach would enable the use of publicly-available cycling facilities (e.g. bicycle racks) in urban areas.

The retention of the provisions of the Grand Harbour Local Plan general policy GM11 related to the Site of Scientific Importance is commendable. In this respect, ERA recommends that any projects and related assessments in the area keep such scientific matters into consideration.

Site of Policy QO05 – Area known as L-Istabal

The revised Local Plan policy for the site QO05 is increasing the allowable building height for the area up to 11.4m above the upper road level. There are concerns that additional densification of development and land-uses at this site would result in adverse environmental impacts. Although it is acknowledged that congestion due to road network upgrading works has been alleviated, further intensification of the development in the area will result in a substantial increase in traffic flows leading to further road congestion and increasing risks of environmental impacts, such as air pollution and pressures for further take-up of undeveloped land to extend, upgrade or construct new infrastructure, such as roads and car parking facilities. Therefore, any proposed additional densification of development at this site would require re-evaluation of the environmental impacts resulting from the project.

ERA welcomes the re-introduction for a soft landscaped area on the roof of the existing building for site policy QO05, which has already been approved as part of the development project (PA 05491/16).

### 3. Other Recommendations

- Roads/pavements should incorporate facilities whereby all services and ancillary infrastructure (including water, electricity, sewerage, runoff management and telecommunications) are located underground without overhead wiring, poles, above-ground pipework, etc.

- It should be ensured that the drainage systems, (including sewerage) and other related infrastructure, in the area of influence, is adequate to serve the additional demand of any proposed development, to prevent risks of sewer overflows, particularly during/after heavy rainfall. This is particularly important since the site is located in an area prone to flooding.

- Unmitigated urban runoff (e.g. from car parks, yards, etc.) should not be discharged directly/unmitigated onto any surroundings lands, including fields and valleys. The use of sustainable urban drainage systems is recommended in order to collect and treat local surface water, attenuate water runoff and mitigate risks of localised flooding.

### 4. Conclusion

ERA looks forward towards additional consultations, and remains available for any clarification, or further consultations via: [era.policy@era.org.mt](mailto:era.policy@era.org.mt)

<p>GHSM2 0009</p>	<p>Mr. Anthony Ellul</p>	<p>Malta Chamber of Planners comments re the Marsa Sports Complex (Phase 2) public consultation</p> <p>The Chamber wishes once again to insist that the process that has been adopted over these last years to amend local plans through partial reviews is not conducive to a holistic approach to planning. Such exercises look at the specific site without addressing the wider picture and hence be more aware and conscious of the impacts the proposed changes to policies will be having.</p> <p>The Chamber is in agreement that the existing equestrian sports facilities need upgrading and the introduction of new sports facilities in the area is seen positively. Nonetheless, these seem to be proposed to justify the introduction of other uses which cumulatively will result in various negative impacts on the area primarily in terms of visual impact and traffic related issues.</p> <p>The removal of the preparation of a Development Brief as a requirement is already a first step to easing the development process for the developer and weaken the planning process since a development brief would have given consideration to the wider implications of the proposed development.</p> <p>With regards to the uses being proposed particularly the ancillary and secondary uses these mainly relate to retail, office and food and drink outlets. It does not seem that any study has been done to determine whether the amount of proposed space for these uses is actually necessary. Should all these facilities be developed the traffic generated into the area will be substantial. What studies have been carried out to determine the likely impacts and identify problem areas with regard to the road infrastructure which would need upgrading?</p> <p>No residential uses are to be permitted. This is to be stated since we have got used to the tendency to change uses as one goes along.</p> <p>The impact of a 20 m high building in the area is to be assessed. The area is characterised by low lying buildings so this will certainly result in a significant impact on the area. Nonetheless the policy is allowing an increased building height if a landmark building is proposed. Once again this is allowing the possibility to increase heights under the justification of a landmark building which is something very subjective. This should be</p>	<p>The Partial Local Plan Review is based on the Government Objectives for the site and has been drafted with due consideration for the visual impact of higher buildings, these restricted to the periphery of the site and to the safeguarding of heritage assets.</p> <p>The policy requires that the bus depot is retained and the designated linear park is to incorporate a continuous public transport route through the site.</p> <p>The allowable uses are clear, and preclude any residential floorspace on the site.</p> <p>The rate of planning gain allocated is consistent with that for similar policies.</p>
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		<p>removed.</p> <p>The paragraph re environmental sustainability leaves much to be desired. It is as though sustainability relates only to energy and water conservation, waste reduction and greening of some areas. Sustainable development goes well beyond just these matters. It would consider traffic generation, the social impacts on the area and the general improvement of the quality of life in the area. Such matters have been given minimal consideration. Planning parameters should encourage a design that provides for adequate alternative transport systems. The construction of a multi storey car park already is an indication of a level of traffic generation to the area and hence the need to improve the surrounding road infrastructure.</p> <p>The 210,000 euro is rather low to have a proper public open space which should relate to the size of the development proposed. We are not talking of a small piazza, but a well sized public open space to be enjoyed by the high number of visitors to the area. The area will attract people interested in sports, workers at the offices as well as shoppers. All these users will congregate in this area.</p> <p>Finally, a number of heritage resources are present in the vicinity which may need conservation initiatives - British period structures and the remains of a chapel and the sanitary canal passing through the golf course (zone C) which are of significance on their own merits. There are also a couple of bridges spanning the sanitary canal which are also of particular significance.</p>	
GHSM2 0010	Perit Tara Cassar	<p>The following response is being submitted on behalf of Din I-Art Helwa.</p> <p>Public Consultation on proposed amendments to Grand Harbour, South Malta and Central Malta concerning Marsa Sports Complex</p> <p>1.0 Issues related to proposed two additional floors over Centerparc Through the proposed review of the Grand Harbour, South Malta and Central Malta concerning Marsa Sports Complex, the permissible developable gross floor space over the site in Qormi known as Centerparc will increase through the addition of two floors being proposed as part of this amendment.</p>	<p>The increase in GDF on the Center Parc site resulted from a government objective to increase the height of buildings in this area to 11.4m above the level of Triq Hal Qormi. The extension will not cover the site entirely, with the remaining space being allocated for soft landscaping.</p>

	<p>1.1 Unjustified increase in developable gross floor space over Centerparc The need for such an arbitrary increase in the developable gross floor space as is being proposed through this amendment, is being questioned. On what basis is this amendment that will solely favour the proprietors of this site, being justified? It is also being questioned why such a substantial increase in potential development over a privately owned site, is being initiated by a government authority.</p> <p>1.2 Detrimental Visual Impact, Lack of Openness, Lack of Access to Greenery The proposed two additional floors will severely alter the sloping, low-lying nature of this urban area, enclosing the surrounding streets and effectively contributing to a heavier and denser built volume. The removal of the permit condition relating to a new green area over the Centerparc roof, that was a pertinent aspect of the original approval of the development meant to mitigate the visual impact of Centerparc, is also being strongly objected to. The inclusion of this much needed green area was meant to ensure that the development of the land now taken over by Centerparc, would not lead to the total urbanization of the area. The sloping low-level nature of the development was furthermore meant to ensure that the surrounding area was not visually blocked from Triq Hal-Qormi through the development, guaranteeing that a certain amount of openness was retained. All this will be lost through the proposed amendments. On what basis is this visual degradation and loss of greenery and openness, being justified?</p> <p>1.3 Lack of Traffic Considerations Were any studies carried out to assess whether the existing infrastructure within the site's environs can sustain such an increase in demand? It is already evident that the development of PAVI, LIDL, various other retail and catering outlets and the Centreparc project itself, have led to a substantial increase in traffic in and around the area, that has not improved despite various recent attempts to upgrade the road network.</p>	<p>The policy does not preclude any studies that might result to be required during project stage. Since the increase in height may be interpreted in several ways, the actual impact of the development can be assessed once an application for development permission is in hand.</p> <p>The tourist accommodation can only be developed as ancillary to sports uses, as clearly defined in the policy. The applicability of any other policy guidelines must be done within the urban design framework of this policy.</p>
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How will the additional traffic generated through this proposed intensification of development impact the area?

1.4 STUDIES NECESSARY TO ASSESS AND DETERMINE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SUCH AN AMENDMENT MUST BE CARRIED OUT PRIOR TO THE AMENDMENT'S APPROVAL.

Assessing the impact of the potential development after the developable gross floor space has been approved, and enabled to be deemed an established 'commitment', will be useless.

1.5 Inclusion as part of the Marsa Sports Complex review

The proposed inclusion of two additional floors over Centerparc as part of the amendments to the (unrelated) Marsa Sports Complex, as opposed to it being put forward through a standalone review, is also being questioned. Such an arbitrary amendment cannot be deemed to form part of any 'comprehensive planning' when the Authority has failed to provide any evidence-based justification for what is being put forward.

2.0 Inclusion of touristic accommodation not justified, can lead to incompatible development

2.1 The inclusion of touristic accommodation within the Marsa Sports Complex grounds as a permissible use, can lead to the development of hotels that serve guests with no interest in the site's sporting facilities, given that the proposed land-use does not include any restrictions or conditions to prevent such abuse from occurring. It is critical that such a permissible use is tied to appropriate conditions and restrictions to ensure that the site retains its primary aim which is to serve the sports community.

2.2 Furthermore, the Height Limitation Adjustment Policy for Hotels shall not be applicable to this site, since a limit on developable gross floor space has already been set. This should be stated and made clear within the policy document itself to ensure that the site is not allowed to transform into a high-rise tourist village. We trust that the above will be duly considered by the PA and reflect in the final outcome of this proposed amendment.

GHSM2 0011	Mr. Anthony A Chircop	<p>I am writing with reference to the Public Consultation re the Marsa Sports Complex Phase 2 and would like to draw your attention to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In Map B published on your website showing the area known as the Marsa Sports Complex The Matthew Micallef St. John Athletic Stadium is being erroneously shown as a 'Football Ground'</li> <li>2. Please note that the Matthew Micallef Athletic Stadium was passed on under a long term contract (49 years) of lease, and which was approved by Parliament in December 2009</li> <li>3. The contract of lease was registered as a Temporary Emphetuses by Ins: 15332/2009 dated the 6th October 2009 - Vol 1: 1463/2009 dated the 6th October 2009</li> <li>4. I would also like to refer you to the second paragraph of clause 16 of the same contract of lease which clearly states "L-Ghaqda ghandha d-dritt illi tkompli tizviluppa l-facilitajiet imsemmija bhala "high performance training centre" kif specifikat mill International Association of Athletics Federation" Should you require a copy of this contract do let me know.</li> </ol>	<p>In Map B, published with the Phase 1 public consultation, the annotation 'Football Ground' is text linked to the basemap and does not reflect the policy at hand. The policy mentions that the development of a high-performance training centre on any site in Zone A is allowable and can be developed in addition to other primary and ancillary facilities.</p>
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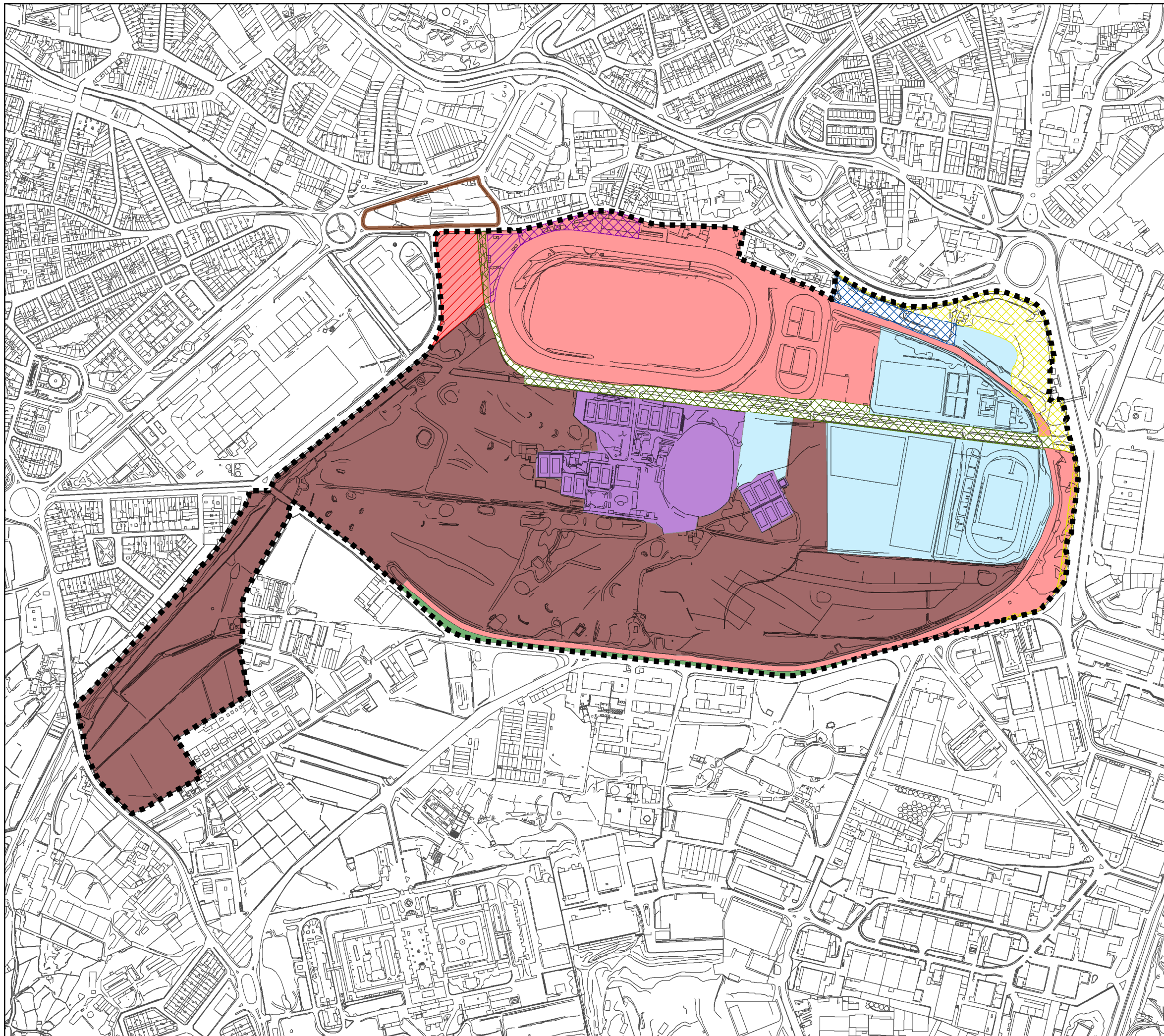
**Appendix C**  
**Maps and Plans**

GRAND HARBOUR LOCAL PLAN  
 SOUTH MALTA LOCAL PLAN  
 CENTRAL MALTA LOCAL PLAN



**Legend**

-  Site of PC51/2016
-  Marsa Sports Complex Site
-  Corner Building - Commercial Facilities
-  Curve Building and Grand Stand
-  Picnic Area
-  Car Park and Bus Depot
-  Linear Park
-  Area Reserved for Road Network Upgrade
-  Green Buffer
-  Zone A
-  Zone B
-  Zone C
-  Zone D

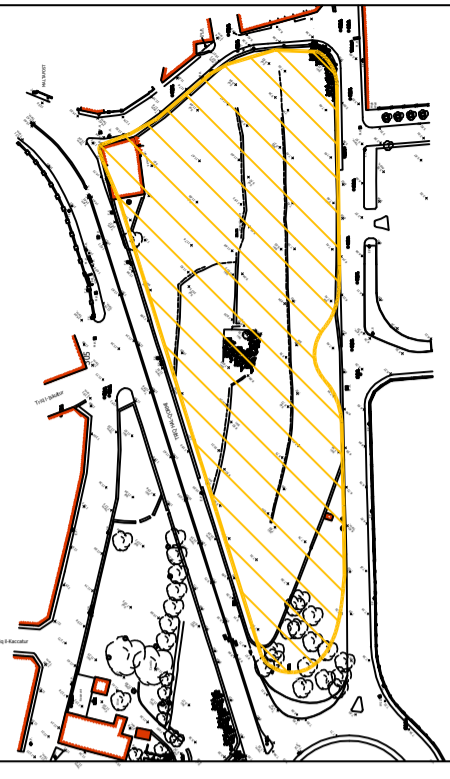
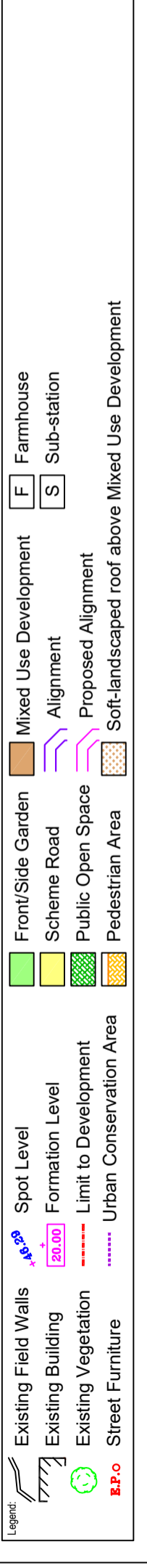
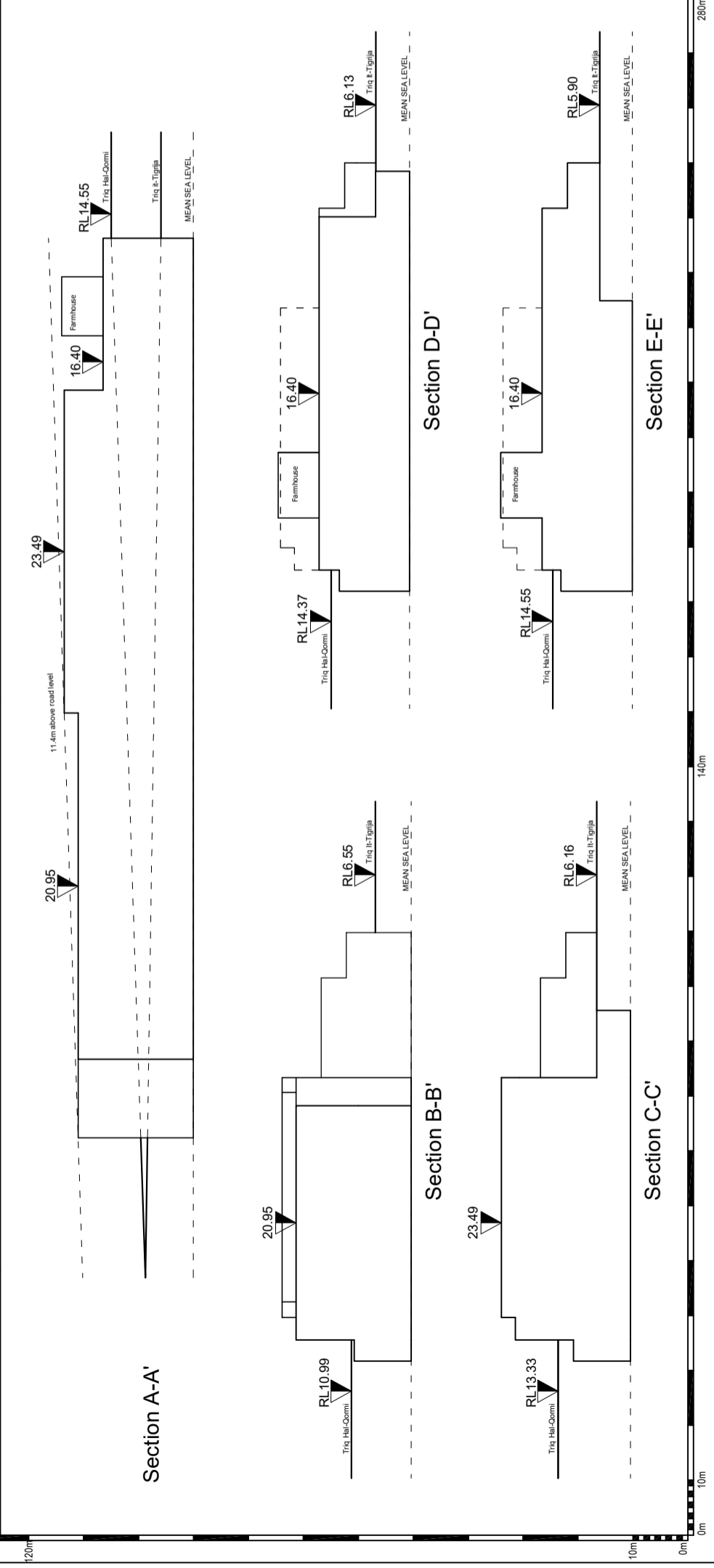
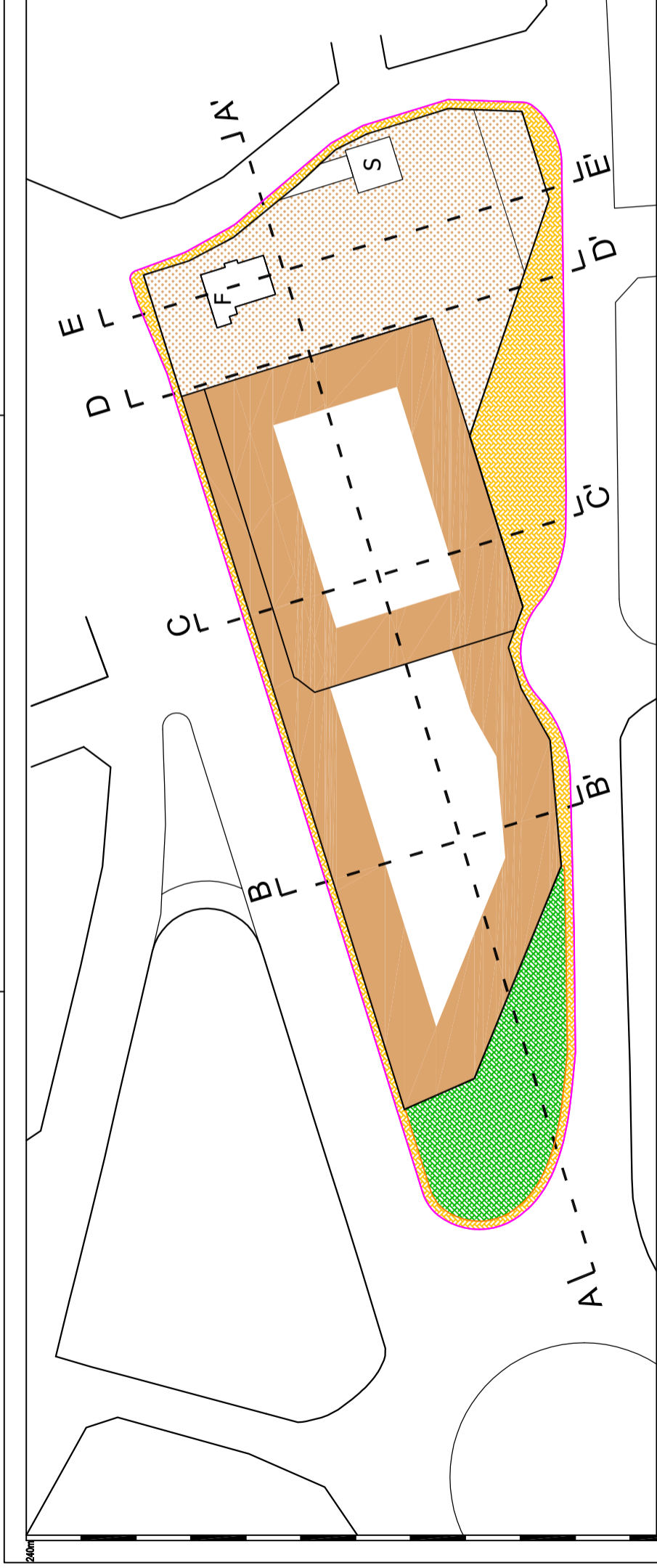


Marsa Sports Ground  
 Revision 2019  
 Policy Map

Scale: 1:6,000 Date: August 2020

INDICATIVE ONLY  
 Not to be used for measurement or direct interpretation. Maps to be used in conjunction with Policy Document.

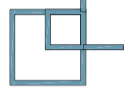
Map  
 A



S.S. No.: 5370

Scale: 1:2500

PLANNING AUTHORITY



# Partial Local Plan Review

Locality:

## Qormi

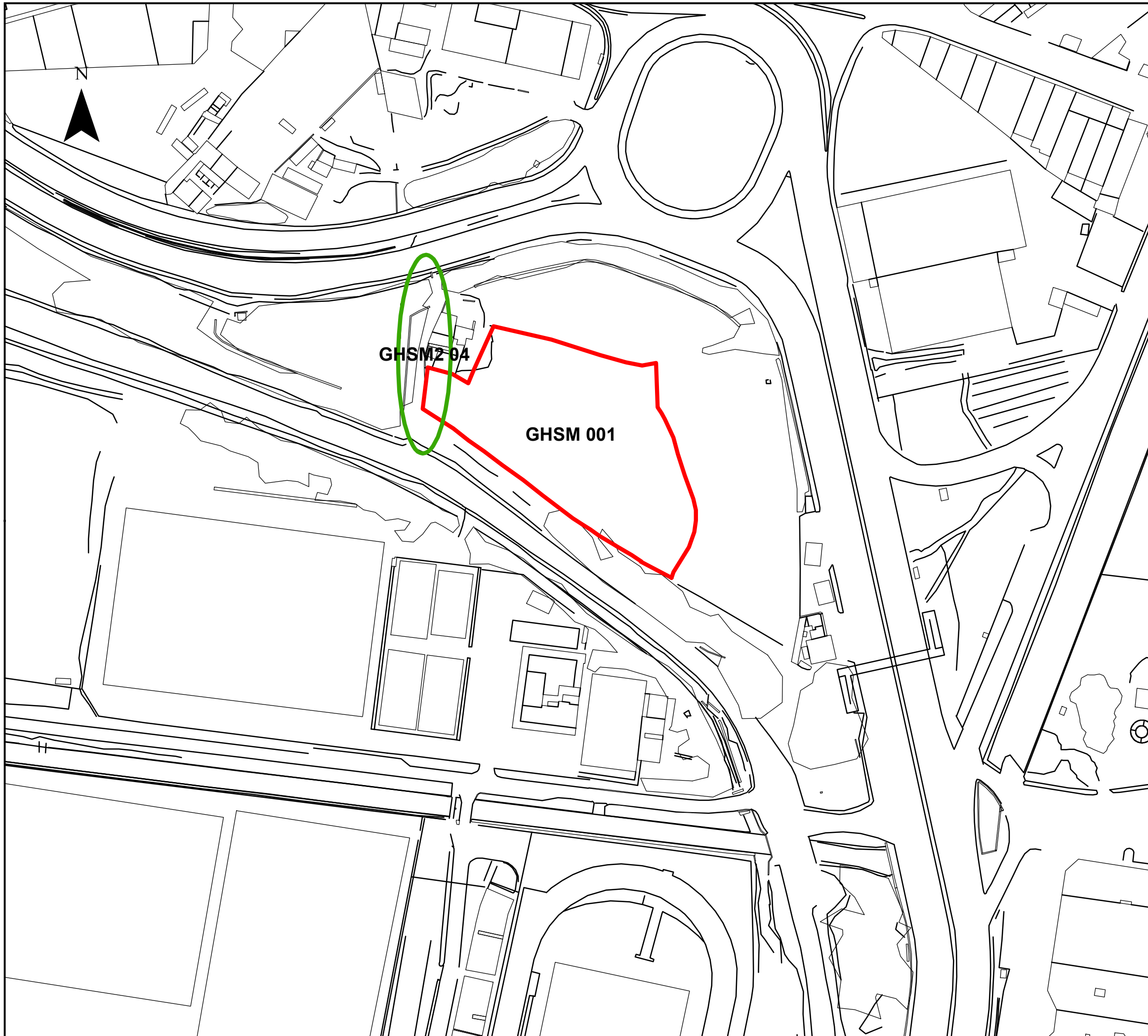
Plan Reference Number:

## Plan A



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Grid System:	U.T.M.	Min. Coordinates:	5328570874
Scale Factor:	0.999632	Level datum:	M.S.L.
Survey Completion Date:		Plan Completion Date:	10/05/2020
Survey Checked By:	M. Azzopardi (LSU)	Plan Checked By:	I. Fava
Endorsed by Executive Council:		Date:	
Chairman Executive Council:		Executive Council Secretary:	
Endorsed by Minister:		Date:	

Disclaimer:

The information on this plan has been carefully checked for accuracy at the time of survey. However the Planning Authority cannot assume responsibility for any changes occurring after the date of the survey and cannot be held liable for damages resulting from interpretation or misuse of the information on this plan.



**Legend:**

-  1st stage public consultation submission
-  2nd stage public consultation submission

Site Specific Submissions  
1st and 2nd Stages  
Public Consultation

Scale: 1:1,500 Date: August 2020

Map:

INDICATIVE ONLY  
Not to be used for measurement or direct interpretation. Maps to be used in conjunction with Policy Document.

**B**

**Responsible Authority:**

**Planning Authority**

**Title of the plan:**

Partial Review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011, and a Review of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan for Qormi, as amended in 2013 and 2017; and of the provisions of PC51/16.

**Brief summary of the plan:**  
(including the area or location to which the plan related)

**The site of the Partial Local Plan Review**

The site of Policy GM24 is an open space featuring a race-horse track, a golf course and other sports activities. The Marsa Sports Club is located at the centre of the site, with several courts for different sports and a historic clubhouse which is however not scheduled. Other buildings used for sports-related activities are located towards the periphery of the site, close to several other open-air pitches. The site of Policy QO05 is at the north-westernmost aspect of the site and features a commercial complex rising to the level of Triq Hal Qormi. This site is within the Principal Urban Area (PUA) and is therefore within a dense urban environment and an area which experiences high levels of traffic.

**Policy background of the site of GM24**

Policy GM24 was introduced in 2011 as part of a partial review to the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP). The policy identified the boundary of the Marsa Sports Complex and required the preparation of an environment and development brief for the whole area. The policy set out a land use framework which included several sports uses and club houses as well as retail outlets, administrative offices, food and drink, leisure and assembly, a hotel and childcare facilities. The policy had proposed the extension of the Marsa Golf Course onto a site in Luqa opposite the existing golf course.

The policy had allocated a total built footprint (roofed over areas) not exceeding 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> and a development density not exceeding 114,000m<sup>2</sup> in gross developable floorspace (GDF). The policy also included provisions related transport issues, primarily the requirement of parking provision, urban design amongst which the requirement that no built structure should be higher than 20m above mean sea level, other than where a landmark building is proposed. Other guidance given by the policy related to environmental sustainability, planning gain and utilities.

**Policy background of the site of QO05**

Policy QO05 of the 2006 Central Malta Local Plan required the comprehensive development of the site as a landscaped area with underlying warehousing. Additionally, the policy required that an old building located within the site be retained. PC 15 of 2009 changed the zoning of the area from warehousing to a retirement complex and sports and recreational facilities, and parking area. This PC had assigned a gross floor area not exceeding 10,800 m<sup>2</sup> and a building height varying between one and three floors all located below the level of Triq Hal-Qormi. The old building on site was zoned for social and community facilities, and the provision for a landscaped roof was made.

Subsequently, PC 51 of 2016 changed the zoning of the area again to commercial, sports and recreational facilities and car parking, while retaining the same building heights and provision of a landscaped roof as in PC15 of 2009, with part of the site designated as public open space.

#### **Objectives of the current review**

The objectives of the Review of the 2002 Grand Harbour Local Plan (Marsa) and the 2006 South Malta Local Plan (Luqa) as amended in 2011 are as follows.

Government is requesting the Authority to carry out a partial local plan review of the Grand Harbour Local Plan Policy GM24 with the following objectives:

- a) To remove the need for a development brief for the whole area;
- b) To designate a range of sub-zones within the area covered by policy GM24 provided that the site indicated as the Marsa Horse Racing Track, shown in Figure 1 below, is designated as a unique and separate sub-zone for the development of the Horse Racing Track and supporting uses;
- c) To formulate a unique and separate development framework for the sub-zone of the Horse Racing Track and the other sub-zones;
- d) To carry out a re-apportionment of the total built footprint and the gross developable floorspace (GDF) established by policy GM24 as approved in 2011 between the new sub-zones, provided that the built footprint of 60,000 sqm and the GDF of 114,000 sqm is not increased;
- e) To revise or delete any other provision of policy GM24 which is deemed to prejudice the objectives set out under a) to d) above.

The Central Malta Local Plan provisions for Qormi as detailed out in policy QO05 and in PC 15/09 and PC 51/16 in relation to the site need to be reviewed with the following objective:

- f) To amend the provisions of policy QO05 and planning control applications 15 of 2009 and 51 of 2016 related to the maximum allowable height of buildings and delete the condition that the roof of the building below the level of Triq Hal Qormi (arterial road) should be allocated for soft landscaping to enable the increase of the allowable building heights to 11.4 m above the upper road level.

#### **Submissions from public consultation**

The issues mentioned in the submissions referred to:

- a) Request to zone site within the northernmost area of the Local Plan Review site between Triq Aldo Moro and Triq Dicembru Tlettax for retail, office and supporting leisure and catering uses over 10 floors;
- b) Any works for extension to the Golf Course proposed within the site of scientific importance are to be assessed in relation to adverse impacts on the geological significance of the site and the watercourse and its semi-natural banks are safeguarded;
- c) Objection to further intensification of the site of Policy QO05 known as I-Istabal, due to the projected increase in noise pollution, air pollution and vehicular traffic;



- d) Local Council objection to the proposed increase in building height on the site of policy QO05, PC 15/09 and PC 51/16; which was however subsequently withdrawn;
- e) A holistic master plan for the entire Marsa inner harbour area should be proposed.

**Brief summary of why it has been determined that the plan is likely to have a range of effects:**

Many of the identified vulnerabilities were in the medium range and related to the character of much of the site as a green space within or between urban areas, the designation of the area of the golf course as a Nature Reserve declared under the local Environment Protection Act, 2016, and the fact that the site has the potential to be used for recreation. Issues relating to biodiversity, air, soils, human health, landscape and natural assets fall within this category, though the impact is generally negligible. No significant changes or development will take place in the green space or the Nature Reserve, with any development taking place on existing or committed sites. The increase in GDF for the site of Policy QO05 may contribute to the local air quality due to the potential increase in traffic within the immediate context of the site though the agglomeration of commercial uses will aid in reducing vehicular trips overall. The policy however specifies that a green wall is required for the parking block within the site of Policy GM24 and a soft landscaped roof is required as part of the revised Policy QO05.

The vulnerability related to the policy review on cultural heritage and water was determined to be negligible, in the case of the former since there are no scheduled buildings on the site. In relation to water infrastructure, the water channel passing through the site is man-made and was created as part of the flood-relief infrastructure for the area. The policy allows for the development of a linear park along the length of the water channel, while safeguarding its function. While there are 300m and 200m groundwater protection zone buffers which overlap with the southernmost extremities of the golf course, no impact is expected within these buffers. The intensification site of policy QO05 will not have any further effect on groundwater since the site is already built. In relation to climate factors, any development on the site of QO05 is not considered to contribute to any heat island effect that there may be in the vicinity, while there is no proposed increase in GDF on the site of GM24. The site of Policy GM24 is outside the PUA and furthermore, no increase in currently allowable footprint and GDF is being proposed.

### **Conclusions**

The Partial Local Plan Review is not increasing the amount of allowable development on the site of Policy GM24 but has re-apportioned the footprint and GDF which was previously allowed but not yet constructed. The policy safeguards the Nature Reserve, and proposed uses are in line with the open space character of the site while allowing for the rehabilitation of the spaces related to sports uses and the Marsa Horse Racing Track. The only increase in allowable development is located on the site of Policy QO05, which is already committed through approved development.

In view of the relatively minor impacts which may result from the proposed policy review, it is recommended that no further detailed screening for SEA is required.

<b>Contact details:</b>	Joseph Scalpello
<b>Date of opinion:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Revisions to the  
Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Marsa)  
South Malta Local Plan of 2006 (Luqa)**

**Approved Document**

**March 2011**

## **Table of Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Proposed Revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002
- 3.0 Proposed Revisions to the South Malta Local Plan of 2006
- 4.0 SEA Requirements
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Decision

## **Maps**

Figure A. Policy Map

Figure B. Site-Specific Proposals

## **Appendix A**

Public submissions on Revisions with MEPA Responses

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MALTA ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING AUTHORITY

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**ISBN 978-99957-26-12-6**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report describes the partial review of the Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP) approved in 2002 and the South Malta Local Plan (SMLP) approved in 2006 which is necessary to take into account Government's plans to consolidate and rationalize sports facilities in the Maltese Islands, with particular focus on the Marsa Sports Centre and the Horse Racing track and their environs.

1.2 The objectives of the review are:

- To extend and upgrade the horseracing track to accommodate international flat and trotter races with additional international standard equestrian facilities such as show jumping and dressage. Investment in supporting parking facilities and improved public access are also contemplated;
- To upgrade all the existing sports facilities (including polo, rugby, football, baseball, softball etc.) and add new facilities such as indoor archery and the identification of a new pitch for cricket;
- To extend the golf course towards the site currently occupied by the Government farm at Ghammieri in order to promote the international dimension of this sport whilst rendering it more accessible to a wider spectrum of Maltese society;
- To consider limited, high quality commercial and tourism development which integrates with the site context in order to sustain the economic viability of the sports facilities. This development should not compromise the predominantly open space character of the Marsa Sports Complex, should be of high quality and should integrate with the existing environment rather than dominate it;
- To facilitate access in general. To give particular attention to vehicular circulation and parking plans for the area in consultation with ADT with some emphasis on the stretch of road WA19 to EA21 part of the TEN-T network. In such cases, third party interests should not be prejudiced;
- To improve public access and informal recreational areas, especially in areas which are currently underutilised. The new facilities could include bicycle, walking and jogging lanes;
- The development surrounding the Marsa Sports Complex, as shown in the annexed MAP A, should be of high quality. It is not excluded that the evolution of the project might take into consideration land immediately contiguous to the boundary of the site as indicated in MAP A (as published with the objectives).

These objectives were published on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and representations were invited from the public until the 24<sup>th</sup> of November. This first stage consultation generated a total of 17 submissions which were taken into account in the drafting of the revised policies.

1.3 The revisions were published for consultation on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2010 and a period of six weeks, up to the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, was allowed for the submission of representations from the public. Four submissions were received by the closing date of this second stage consultation and a summary with MEPA responses is included as an appendix with this report. The specific sites relevant to the public submissions are shown on Figure B. Only minor amendments to the wording of revised policy GM15 have been carried out following this second consultation.

1.4 The proposed revisions affect the following policies in the 2002 GHLP:

- (i) GT 01 – Road Hierarchy
- (ii) GT 02 – Junction Improvements
- (iii) GM 06 – Ta' Ceppuna Access Road
- (iv) GM 09 – Changes to Bus Routes
- (v) GM 11 – Site of Scientific Importance
- (vi) GM 12 – Main Areas of Open Space
- (vii) GM 14 – The Horse Racing Track Area
- (viii) GM 15 – Marsa Park Development Area

the following maps in the GHLP:

- (i) Figure 06 – General Proposals Map
- (i) Figure 12 – Marsa Inset Map
- (ii) Figure 14 – Marsa Transport Strategy
- (iii) Figure 15 – Marsa Park Development Strategy

and the following maps in the SMLP:

- (i) LU2 – Luqa (Hal-Farrug\Ghammieri) Policy Map
- (ii) LU 8 – Luqa East Environmental Constraints Map

A new policy GM24 to guide the development of the Marsa Sports Complex has been added. The draft new/revised policies are included in the following paragraphs and are highlighted in bold text followed by the supporting justification. A policy map (Figure A) is also attached with this report, the contents of which shall replace those in the maps quoted above. All other parts of the 2002 GHLP and its 2007 revisions (text and maps) and the 2006 SMLP (text and maps) are proposed to remain unchanged.

## 2.0 Proposed Revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002.

2.1 Revisions to policy GT01 were necessary as the priorities for the improvement of the arterial road network is not MEPA remit and should not be controlled by the Local Plan.

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### *GT01*

### *Road Hierarchy*

A hierarchy of roads is indicated on the General Proposals Map and the Transport Diagrams for specific areas. The classification of roads follows the system given in the Structure Plan (Structure Plan Policies RDS1 and RDS2).

The hierarchy will be used to define roads in order of their importance for traffic circulation; as a guide for road investment (new construction, maintenance, upgrading); traffic management (including road marking), and the consideration of development applications. The arterial roads will form the strategic highway network. The main elements will be:

#### Arterial Roads

Triq Dicembru 13, Triq Aldo Moro, Triq Il-Labour, Vjal Sir Paul Boffa, Triq Kordin, Vjal It-28 Ta' April, South Harbour Link Road (Proposed), Vjal Kottoner.

#### District Distributor Roads

See area policies

***Relevant policies:***

*GT02,03,  
GV04,05,GF04,05,  
GM03,07,13,G105,  
GB04,05, GL05,  
GG04, GK05, 06.*

The Structure Plan emphasises the need to introduce a hierarchical road system to channel traffic onto appropriate roads, thereby controlling the impact of traffic elsewhere. Such a system is also important to assist in prioritising road construction, repairs and traffic management, and in the assessment of development applications.

The arterial road system is intended to carry most longer distance and heavy traffic, providing links between various parts of the Island. Street parking and direct frontage access will be kept to a minimum, and a high priority will be given to road improvement and traffic management measures to assist traffic flows.

The district distributors are important routes connecting the major residential and employment districts of the Plan area to each other, and to the arterial routes. Heavy commercial traffic will be allowed on most of these roads, but will not be encouraged where satisfactory alternative routes exist on the arterial routes. Street parking and direct frontage access will be strictly regulated.

2.2 Policy GT02 (and the General Proposals Map) needs to be revised to bring it in line with the revisions made to general policy GT01 and remove reference to the junctions on the South Harbour Link Road.

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### *GT02*

### *Junction Improvements*

The main traffic circulation system includes major junctions of national importance as part of the arterial road network. The MEPA will encourage the respective implementation authorities to upgrade existing junctions which are not coping with the volume of traffic using them. These are indicated in the Inset maps as appropriate. Development permission will not be granted for

**development which might adversely affect these sites in order to safeguard junction redesign requirements. This also applies to other sites earmarked for future transport infrastructural projects.**

Policy GT01 emphasises the need to have a good road system in the Local Plan area, especially where these have national significance. This policy complements the latter by indicating those areas which need to be safeguarded so that junction improvement can take place.

It has to be emphasized here that although the need to improve the traffic circulatory system is stressed, this has to be seen within the overall strategy as laid out in the Structure Plan to improve public transport. These policies do not replace the overall policies and it must be underlined that road improvements have to take place in parallel with improvements in the public transport service. Solving one aspect alone will not result in solving the overall transport problem. An integrated approach is vital.

2.3 The revisions to policy GM06 were necessary to bring it in line with the provisions of the new policy GM24 for the Marsa Sports Complex which envisages the potential to close this road to through traffic, hence partly addressing the circulation issues and the conflicting demands on transport by different users of the regenerated sports complex.

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### **GM06**

### ***Ta' Ceppuna Access Road***

**As part of the development of the Marsa Sports Complex proposed under policy GM24, MEPA will favourably consider the downgrading of Ta' Ceppuna Access Road as a vehicular access to the sports facilities only with no through traffic allowed between Triq Aldo Moro and Qormi.**

***Relevant policies:***  
*GT04,09,  
GM04, 11.*

The Ta' Ceppuna Access Road is the entry point to a variety of sports and social facilities located at Ta' Ceppuna, and is also a popular tree-lined lane for horse riders, joggers and others.

The Local Plan supports the retention of these facilities in this location and moreover envisages the road as an important link in a long distance footpath extending to Wied il-Kbir and beyond. However, the road is sometimes used by drivers as a short cut, often causing a potentially dangerous situation. This policy is intended to eliminate traffic problems.

2.4 Revisions to policy GM09 were necessary to allow consideration of other alternative locations for the siting of the public transport interchange in line with the transportation plans of Transport Malta.

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### **GM09**

### ***Changes To Bus Routes***

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

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

***Relevant policies:***  
*GT05,06, GV07,*

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



GF05,  
GM05, 07, 15, 16, 22.

to get home.

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

- 2.5 The revisions to policy GM11 were necessary to take into account the provisions of the new policy GM24 for the Marsa Sports Complex which envisages major upgrading of the sports facilities and supporting amenities. However, the environmental value of the site is still acknowledged and any development must be carefully assessed for its impacts on the hydrology, geomorphology and Quaternary paleontology of the site.

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## **GM11**

## ***Site Of Scientific Importance***

**An area of geological importance has been identified as indicated on the Inset Map. Any works proposed to be carried out on or in the vicinity of this area which require development permission must be assessed in relation to their effect upon the geological significance of the site.**

***Relevant policies:***  
GC01, 02, 06,  
GE01,  
GM06, 12, 14, 15.

The 'Marsa Plain' is one of only two examples in the Maltese Islands of an extensive flood plain. It is of scientific significance in terms of hydrology, geomorphology and Quaternary paleontology, and is classified as Level 2 under policy RCO 2 of the Structure Plan. Any development applications will be examined against the scientific importance of the site.

- 2.6 The revisions to policy GM12 were necessary to take into account the provisions of the new policy GM24 for the Marsa Sports Complex which envisages a re-designed alignment of Triq Dicembru 13. An area of land within the Marsa Park Development site and zoned for recreation in the 2002 GHLP, will be designated as part of the Marsa Sports Complex by this Review.

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## **GM12**

## ***Main Areas Of Open Space***

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

***Relevant policies:***  
GE02,  
GM11, 13, 15, 16.

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

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

- 2.7 The revisions to policy GM14 were necessary to take into account the provisions of the new policy GM24 for the Marsa Sports Complex which enlarges the site for sports facilities and supporting amenities. An area currently falling within the boundary of GM14 will be designated as part of the Marsa Sports Complex by this Review. The provisions on horse racing facilities as acceptable land uses north of the racing track are still deemed as relevant to guide the development of this area, especially as it is already established for these types of uses. However, it should be ensured that other uses, especially residential, are compatible with the primary designation of the area.

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**GM14*****Acceptable uses north of the Horse Racing Track Area***

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

This policy relates to the area of land north of the existing grand stand of the racing track, bounded by the Tad-Dwieli stretch of the Marsa-Hamrun by-pass and Triq Dicembru 13, forming part of a wider zone of mixed use. The area already accommodates horse racing related facilities such as stables, maintenance and repair of racing equipment, betting shops and some general retail outlets. This policy supports this primary use and prohibits industrial uses, in principle. Other uses can be considered within the overall objective of mixed use zone predominantly for horse racing related activities.

- 2.8 The revisions to policy GM15 were necessary to take into account the site boundary of the new policy GM24 for the Marsa Sports Complex which envisages major upgrading of the sports facilities and supporting amenities and the re-designed alignment of Triq Dicembru 13 by Transport Malta. Specific land allocations for recreation, peripheral landscaping and a public transport interchange will be removed from policy GM15 by this Review, although the policy requirement for a determinate amount of space for recreation and peripheral landscaping will be retained.

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**GM15*****Marsa Park Development***

**In accordance with Structure Plan Policy COM 4, a Marsa Park Opportunity Area is identified on Inset Map, Figure 12. The Opportunity Area must include the following land uses:**

- a) **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) offices provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 60,000m<sup>2</sup>;**
- b) **Class 4 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) showrooms (display and sale of bulky goods) only provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 20,000m<sup>2</sup>, and provided the goods do not fall within the following: pharmacy, butcher, grocer, bakery shop, stationery, ironmongery, giftware, toys, clothes, shoes, videos, hair and beauty items, haberdashery, confectionery, florist, electronics, spectacles);**
- c) **Class 11 and 12 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) light industry allocated for Small & Medium Enterprises, provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 16,000m<sup>2</sup> and Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) warehousing provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 10,000m<sup>2</sup>;**
- d) **a mix of Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994 as amended) dwellings aimed at addressing local needs provided the maximum floorspace does not exceed 62,000m<sup>2</sup>;**

- e) supporting leisure and recreational amenities to the main uses (office, retail and residential) provided the floorspaces for these supporting amenities are proportionately reduced from the thresholds stipulated in (a), (b) and (d) above;
- f) a landscaped recreational area for public use of not less than 7% of the site area;
- h) a peripheral landscaped zone (visual corridor) of not less than 13% of the site area as planning gain.

The following criteria also apply:

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

<p><b>Relevant policies:</b>  GN03,04,  GS05,06,07,10,  GT01,02,05,09,10,14,  GE02,06,  GC01,06,  GD06,07,09,10,  GV07,24,  GF15,  GM05, 09,11,12,13.</p>
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The area proposed as an ‘Opportunity Area’ is not used intensively and is partially affected by road proposals or by existing roads. Incremental and sporadic development has resulted in an inefficient layout of the space which is available. The three ‘farms’ which operate in this area are currently surrounded by busy arterial roads. A number of garage workshops, storage buildings and yards exist; with about 12 houses on the northern edge of the site facing Triq it-Tigrija. A furniture showroom is located adjacent to Triq Aldo Moro. Several derelict areas are apparent.

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

**Offices**

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

Approximately 60,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace are allocated for office use. It is expected that the office elements of the overall scheme will be grouped together on one part of the site, possibly in an internal courtyard type of arrangement. It is required that the offices, should be located on the western part of the site adjacent to the interchange, forming a peripheral barrier which visually protects the remainder of the area; and acts as a focal point. Vehicular access directly off the arterial road should be investigated.

**Showroom Uses**

About 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace are allocated for showrooms. As the site could attract entrepreneurs willing to invest in the larger type of retailing project, it is very important to prevent negative effects on

existing Town Centres. Therefore, retail outlets (including those selling clothing, footwear and fashion goods) which could pose a threat to these established town centres will not be permitted.

### ***Warehouse / Industry Site***

About 16,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace have been allocated for SME industrial uses and 10,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace for warehousing, including a part which is currently occupied by a business concern. This area is on the eastern edge of the site and can be accessed from Triq it-Tomba, making it unnecessary for commercial traffic to enter the main part of the site. The proposal involves the utilisation of former highway land, no longer required as such because of the proposed change in alignment of Triq Dicembru Tlettax. The site is well located in terms of the arterial road network and the port, and is appropriate for these types of use.

### ***Residential***

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

About 62,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace are designated for residential use. The residential use would be related to other proposals for the future of existing housing at Albert Town, as a long term relocation site for housing in that area, and to allow for general replacement of housing where clearance or improvement of property has caused the overall housing total to be reduced.

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

### ***Landscaping and Planting***

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

### ***Pedestrian Links to Other Areas***

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

- 2.9 This new policy (GM24) was required to take forward the broad objectives of the Partial Review of the Grand Harbour and South Malta Local Plans to extend and upgrade the horseracing track; to upgrade all the existing sports facilities and add new facilities; and to consider limited, high quality commercial and tourism development which integrates with the site context in order to sustain the economic viability of the sports facilities.

The area of land shown on Figure A (Marsa Inset Map (Figure 12) in the Grand Harbour Local Plan and Maps LU2 and LU8 in the South Malta Local Plan) is designated as the Marsa Sports Complex to enable the provision of the necessary facilities to ensure the highest standards of equestrian and international sports and enable competition in the international scenario of sporting events.

MEPA may favourably consider development applications on the site shown on Figure A following the approval of an environment and development brief for the whole area prepared within the context of this policy. The Brief should include provisions on:

*(i) The Land Use Framework*

The land uses may include the following primary facilities, amongst other equestrian and sports uses:

- international standard facilities for horse racing (trotter and flat) and equestrian sports (polo, show jumping, dressage) with training areas and stables,
- golf and a golf academy,
- sports facilities for football, handball, softball, tennis, rugby, and cricket with associated permanent and/or temporary spectator stands;
- an indoor archery complex;
- an indoor pool;
- a high performance training centre;
- cycling and jogging tracks

and may include other supporting facilities such as clubhouses, Class 4 retail outlets, Class 5 administrative offices, Class 6 food and drink outlets, Class 9c leisure and assembly (or similar gaming and betting uses), a hotel and child care facilities.

It is essential that the distribution of land uses between primary and ancillary facilities, both in terms of site coverage and floorspace, achieves the objective of the designation of the site as a sports complex with a predominantly open space character.

*(ii) Development Density*

- the total built footprint (roofed over areas) does not exceed 60,000sqm;
- the development density does not exceed 114,000sqm in gross developable floorspace (GDF);
- the total gross developable floor space may be increased by an additional 10% over the limits set above provided that the development achieves higher design and sustainability standards than required by this policy and other local and international standards normally adopted for such schemes to the satisfaction of MEPA and other relevant regulatory agencies. The additional floor space may be used for any of the primary or ancillary uses as defined by (i) above;

*(iii) Transportation*

- the plan provides adequate and safe access to, and within, the site for private vehicles, public transport, pedestrians and person with disability to the satisfaction of MEPA, Transport Malta and the National Commission for Persons with Disability, taking into account the need to separate circulation routes for horses and other users. Alterations to public roads within the site to accommodate the development need to be approved by Transport Malta and designed as part of this scheme. Any proposal to sever the existing Ta' Ceppuna link road or Marsa Road needs to ensure that third party access rights are safeguarded;
- car parking facilities for visitors, athletes and employees with the possibility for dual use for a park and ride scheme are provided. The number of car parking spaces needs to take into account the overall car parking provision in the area, especially public car parks and/or park and ride and provision of public transport facilities;
- the plan provides adequate lorry and horse trailer parking facilities;

*(iv) Urban Design*

- the design of the scheme (site layout, arrangement of buildings and uses, their relationship to their surroundings, building volumes, massing and heights, hard and soft landscaping, architectural design, colour and materials) respects the open character of the area, minimizes visual impacts on short distance and strategic views and the skyline and provides a pleasant overall experience to visitors and athletes through quality architectural and landscape design. Preferably, no built structure should be higher than 20m above mean sea level. A higher landmark building may only be favourably considered if MEPA is convinced of its essential contribution to the overall design strategy, that it relates well to existing and planned taller buildings in the area and that it will enhance the image of the site and its surroundings;

*(v) Environmental Sustainability*

- the scheme adopts environmental sustainability features such as conservation of energy and water, renewable energy generation and reduction of waste, and minimizes impacts on hydrology, ecology (particularly the ecologically sensitive areas), biodiversity (especially mature trees) and cultural heritage (especially buildings of architectural merit, archaeological remains and the landscape);

*(vi) Planning Gain*

- an easily accessible public picnic area of not less than 7,000sqm and other public open spaces, possibly in the form of a linear park, are included in the scheme;

*(vii) Utilities*

- a utilities plan which does not adversely affect the national storm water channel running through the site or its links to the channels outside the site is provided.

The site, with an area of around 75.5 ha, currently accommodates, in its northern portion an equestrian racing track with spectator facilities, polo and horse riding, owned by the Government and run by a number of equestrian clubs, and is predominantly open with few built structures. The horse racing track at Marsa is a very popular facility that draws large crowds on race days. A public car park is located at the western perimeter and an area of agricultural land on the east. The area also includes hard surface open courts used for basketball, netball and volleyball. The southern portion of the site, separated from the northern side by Ta' Ceppuna Road and a water channel, is also predominantly open but with a stronger "green" feel. It currently accommodates an 18-hole golf course and outdoor sports facilities such as tennis, cricket, and other facilities such as billiards, swimming pool and a fitness centre, managed by the Marsa Sports and Country Club, an Athletics Stadium run by the Malta Amateur Athletic Association and multipurpose pitches and courts predominantly used for football, rugby, baseball and softball and archery managed by the *Kunsill Malti għall-Isport*. The southwestern portion of land beyond Triq il-Marsa is predominantly agricultural land forming part of the *Ghammieri* experimental farm. A hydrology/sanitary canal runs along Ta' Ceppuna Road and continues towards the sea through Marsa and links to the wider storm water run-off channels from Qormi, Siggiewi and Zebbug. This canal and watercourses also have historical and ecological value. Archaeological remains have also been found within the golf course area.

Access to the site is from Triq Aldo Moro, an arterial road, on the east, from a road leading onto Triq Dicembru 13 on the north and from Triq l-Iljun on the west. The latter road is also used for kerb side trailer parking. Ta' Ceppuna Road traverses the site and links Triq Aldo Moro to Qormi and also serves as the main access to other sports facilities. Triq il-Marsa and Triq L-Iljun follow the southern and western perimeters of the site.

The site is surrounded by a mix of uses with a rather poor external environment including industrial, commercial and stables to the north, the predominantly industrial and commercial area of Albert Town to the east, the Marsa Industrial Estate and the Ghammieri experimental farm to the south, and another industrial zone, including a shopping mall and the vacant Lowenbrau factory to the west. A residential neighbourhood faces the proposed extension to the golf course.

Although the landscaping belt helps to provide some visual buffer to Triq Dicembru 13 and Triq Aldo Moro along the eastern perimeter of the site, noise disturbance from the considerable volumes of traffic can be a cause for concern. The need for improved equestrian facilities, a golf academy, a high performance training centre, improvement of facilities for cricket, accommodation for visiting sportsmen, segregation between equestrian and golf, access and car parking, sewage overflows and general maintenance are other issues which need to be addressed. As the site lies within a major flood plain, impacts on hydrology and storm water and sewerage management should be a major consideration in any development proposal.

MEPA and the *Kunsill Malti ghall-Isport* recognize the potential to create a holistic sports complex offering facilities of international standard for equestrian and similar pursuits, golf, archery, rugby, cricket and other sports together with other amenities for athletes which can become a major visitor attraction for locals and foreigners alike. The policy provides the development parameters, such as a diverse range of land uses, site coverage and development density, and design criteria, such as building heights, which MEPA will adopt to prepare or evaluate a development brief for the site. It also identifies those features of the site which due to their environmental value, need to be conserved. MEPA will strive for excellence and high quality design and protect those features of the site which give it its character – namely its openness, low density and park setting.

With a total site area of 75.5ha, the built footprint of 60,000sqm would result in an overall site coverage of around 8%. The built footprint is measured along the external perimeter of the structure for all roofed over areas (including internal courtyards). The gross developable floor space (GDF) is also measured along the external perimeter of the structure at every level (including internal courtyards).

The built footprint (60,000sqm) and development density figures (114,000sqm GDF) were derived after considering the objectives of greatly improving the standard of the sports and equestrian facilities, widening the range of supporting uses and safeguarding the environmental qualities of the site. Although the subdivision of the built footprint and GDF by land use has not been included in the policy to allow more flexibility to the developer in the allocation of floor spaces, the proposed land use framework should prioritise sports uses in respect of the main thrust of this policy. It is also expected that the bulk of the floorspace for ancillary uses will be allocated for the Grand Stand of the revamped racing track and a high quality hotel. The scale of other ancillary uses should also be well integrated within the holistic land use framework and fully justified by the developer.

### **3.0 Proposed Revisions to the South Malta Local Plan of 2006.**

- 3.1 Revisions to the South Malta Local Plan (2006) maps LU2 and LU8 were necessary due to the designations in the plan on the land allocated for the extension of the golf course by this Review. Map LU2 designates this site as part of the Ghammieri Experimental farm and Map LU8 designates the site as an agricultural area subject to policy SMAG01. These designations need to be removed as they would prejudice the objective of the Review to extend the golf course towards the site currently occupied by the Government farm at Ghammieri.
  
- 3.2 Other designations include a valley protection zone subject to policy SMCO07, an Area of Ecological Importance subject to policy SMCO03 and part of the Aquifer Protection Zone subject to policy SMCO08. This group of policies in the SMLP is, mostly, general in nature and applicable to all the SMLP area, and thus there was no need to revise their wording. Although the protective designations of a valley protection zone and an aquifer protection zone will not appear in the revised plan, provisions in the new policy (GM24) for the site seek to ensure that the issues related to water management are fully taken into account by any future development proposal.



## **4.0 SEA Requirements**

- 4.1 In line with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations, 2005 (L.N. 418 of 2005), an SEA is to be carried out on plans and programmes (as defined by the same regulations) which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Regulation 3 (1) requires proponents of a plan or programme to notify the Competent Authority of the intention to prepare such plan or programme before adoption. Notification of this Review of the GHLP (2002) and the SMLP (2006) to the SEA Audit Team as the Competent Authority was submitted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2010.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Planning Directorate recommends to the MEPA Board the revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Marsa) and to the South Malta Local Plan of 2006 (Luqa) indicated in this report which should then be forwarded to the Prime Minister for his final endorsement.

## **6.0 Decision**

- 6.1 During its meeting in public of the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, the MEPA Board endorsed the revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan (2002) (Marsa) and to the South Malta Local Plan (2006) (Luqa) indicated in this report.

**Appendix A**

**Grand Harbour Local Plan 2002**  
**South Malta Local Plan 2006**  
**(Revisions 2011)**

**Public Submissions on  
Revisions**

**January 2011**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>	<b>MEPA Response</b>
GHMR-01	Clayton Abdilla	1/11/2010	Mr Abdilla enquired whether the review of the SMLP could be extended to other parts of the plan area.	The objectives of the Review were to facilitate the upgrading of sports and equestrian facilities by designating an area of land as the Marsa Sports Complex. The implementation of these objectives necessitated revisions to other policies as site allocations had to be amended to accommodate different land uses. It was not the intention of this Review to consider wider development and planning issues within the SMLP area.
GHMR-02	Perit Edward Bencini obo Mr David Camenzuli of J & M Property Ltd	7/12/2010	<p>The company is the owner of a plot of land of 6,342sqm (site plan submitted) which the proposed revisions will dismember into four useless parts taken up for the construction of the new highway, a landscape corridor, a public open space and a narrow strip within the Marsa Sports Ground.</p> <p>Perit Bencini attached a road design prepared by Transport Malta which would leave 4,980sqm of land undisturbed which can be allocated as part of the Marsa Sports Complex. The remaining 1,362sqm would need to be expropriated with related compensation costs.</p> <p>Perit Bencini commented that the road design</p>	<p>The review to the GHLP policies GT01 and GT02 and Figures 6, 12, 14 and 15 imply that the road alignments shown on these maps have now been removed as it has been deemed that detailed road alignments should not form part of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The site owned by J &amp; M Property Ltd is now wholly within the boundary of the Marsa Sports Complex and is not directly affected by any road proposals in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The specific use of this site will be determined through the formulation of the Environment and Development Brief, possibly by the eventual developer of the site.</p>

			by Transport Malta provides the optimal traffic solution for Triq Aldo Moro and reduces compensation costs.	
GHMR-03	Perit Ruben Vassallo obo Mr Nazzareno Vassallo	9/12/2010	<p>Mr Nazzareno Vassallo represents the CaterGroup owner of the site of the x-Lowenbrau factory in Marsa (site plan submitted) which has an area of 19,000sqm and is contiguous to the land identified for the Marsa Sports Complex in the proposed revisions to the GHLP and the SMLP.</p> <p>Perit Vassallo referred to the objectives of the Review which stated that additional land to the site shown in the public notice for the review could be considered. Therefore, Perit Vassallo is requesting the inclusion of the site of the x-Lowenbrau Factory in the area covered by the review to spearhead changes to the current policy framework for the site.</p> <p>The CMLP policies QO08 and CG15 allocate the site for Class 11 Light Industrial uses, Class 12 General Industrial uses and Class 17 Storage and Distribution. Perit Vassallo is requesting the addition of hotel, banqueting halls and offices as acceptable uses for the site. The use of the FAR mechanism is also requested to support a gateway mixed use scheme complimentary to the development on the Marsa Sports Ground, the Pavi</p>	<p>The published objectives of the Review of the GHLP/SMLP seek to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the extension and upgrading of the horseracing track</li> <li>(ii) the upgrading of sports facilities</li> <li>(iii) the extension of the golf course</li> <li>(iv) limited commercial and tourism development to sustain the economic viability of the sports facilities.</li> </ul> <p>The main policy tool to achieve these objectives was the designation of an area of land as the Marsa Sports Complex. The objective of considering the extension of the site boundary needs to be read within this context.</p> <p>For more land to be considered the extension must firstly serve to achieve the four objectives quoted above and secondly it should be evident that these same objectives cannot be achieved in a sustainable manner on the site designated by the Local Plan.</p> <p>The proposed uses are not aimed at widening the range of sports facilities on the site but to</p>

			<p>supermarket and other land in the vicinity.</p> <p>Concept drawings showing a 20 storey business centre, retail areas, supermarket, a function hall and a catering centre with storage were also submitted.</p>	<p>increase the potential for industrial and commercial development without any obvious link to the sports complex itself.</p> <p>The scale of the proposed uses cannot be considered as "limited" or aimed at sustaining the economic viability of the sports facilities.</p>
GHMR-04	Perit Stephen Farrugia obo Mr Carmelo Cassar	Undated letter acknowledged from Chairman's Office on 312/2010	<p>Mr Cassar is the owner of a plot of land known as "Tal-Istabal" in Qormi measuring approximately 9,600sqm (site plan submitted) and is contiguous to the land identified for the Marsa Sports Complex in the proposed revisions to the GHLP and the SMLP.</p> <p>Perit Farrugia referred to the objectives of the Review which stated that additional land to the site shown in the public notice for the review could be considered. Therefore, Perit Farrugia is requesting the inclusion of the site in the area covered by the review to spearhead changes to the current policy framework for the site.</p> <p>The CMLP policy QO05 allocated the site as a green space with underlying warehouses with conditions to secure open views of the Marsa Sports Ground. Perit Farrugia feels that the site is strategically located in relation to the Sports Complex and can function as a gateway development which retains the thrust</p>	<p>The published objectives of the Review of the GHLP/SMLP seek to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the extension and upgrading of the horseracing track</li> <li>(ii) the upgrading of sports facilities</li> <li>(iii) the extension of the golf course</li> <li>(iv) limited commercial and tourism development to sustain the economic viability of the sports facilities.</li> </ul> <p>The main policy tool to achieve these objectives was the designation of an area of land as the Marsa Sports Complex. The objective of considering the extension of the site boundary needs to be read within this context.</p> <p>For more land to be considered the extension must firstly serve to achieve the four objectives quoted above and secondly it should be evident that these same objectives cannot be achieved in a sustainable manner</p>

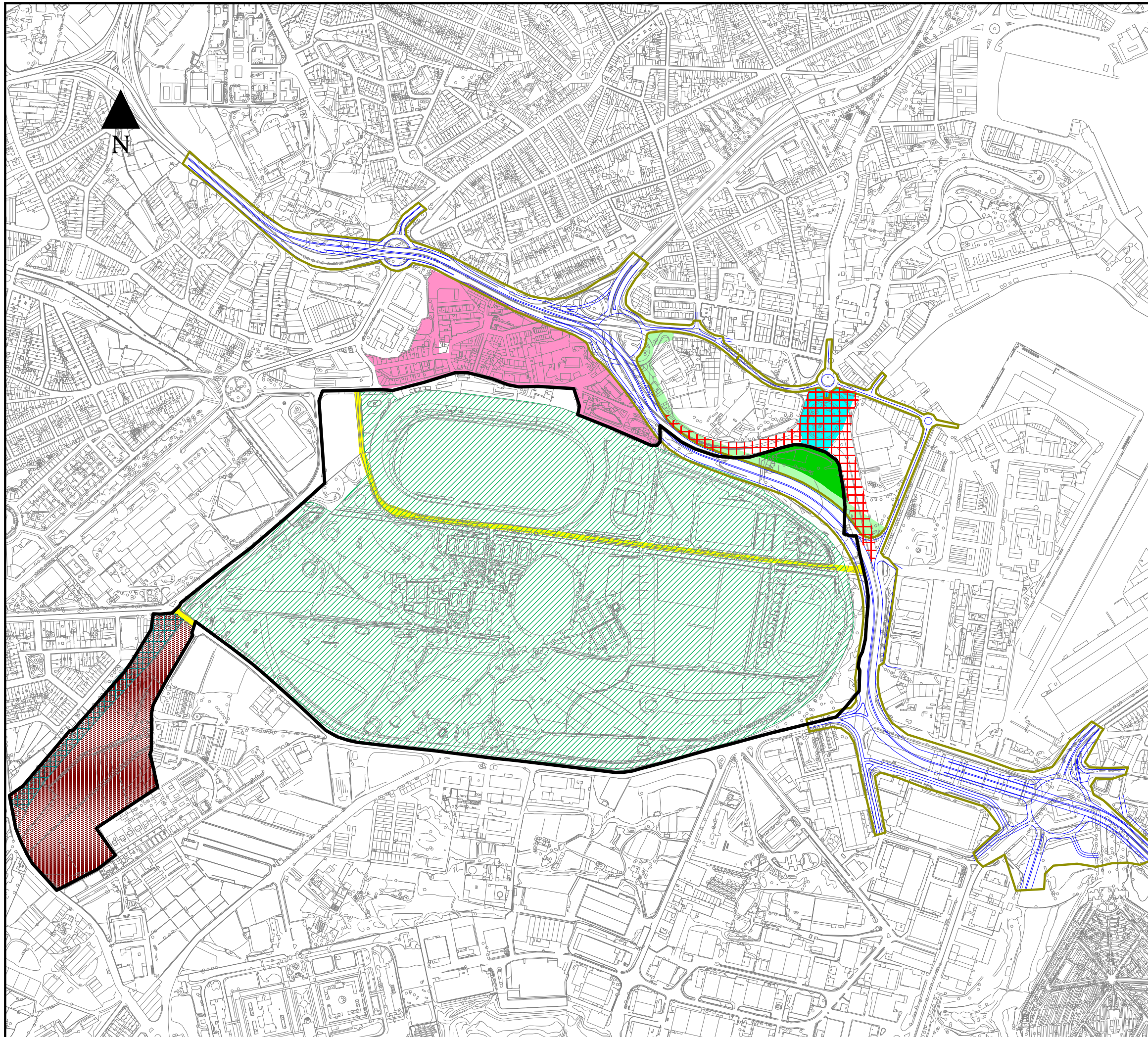
			<p>of policy QO05 of having an open space at the level of Triq Hal Qormi with the possibility of belvederes to capitalise on the view onto the Marsa Sports Ground, retention of the old building and prohibition of direct access from Triq Hal Qormi. The use of the FAR mechanism is requested to create the gateway urban design for the site.</p> <p>Concept drawings showing two mixed use towers of 17 and 14 floors with another mixed use block of 4 floors were also submitted.</p>	<p>on the site designated by the Local Plan.</p> <p>The proposed uses are not aimed at widening the range of sports facilities on the site but to increase the potential for industrial and commercial development without any obvious link to the sports complex itself.</p> <p>The scale of the proposed uses cannot be considered as "limited" or aimed at sustaining the economic viability of the sports facilities.</p>
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**GRAND HARBOUR LOCAL PLAN  
PARTIAL REVIEW MARSA**



L-Awtorita` ta' Malta Dwar l-Ambjent u l-Ippjanar  
Malta Environment & Planning Authority



**Key**

**New Policy**

**GM 24 - The Marsa Sports Complex**

- Site Boundary
- Extension to Golf Course
- Re-alignment requiring Transport Malta approval
- GM 11 - Site of Scientific Importance
- SMCO 03 - Area of Ecological Importance and Site of Scientific Importance

**Amended Policies**

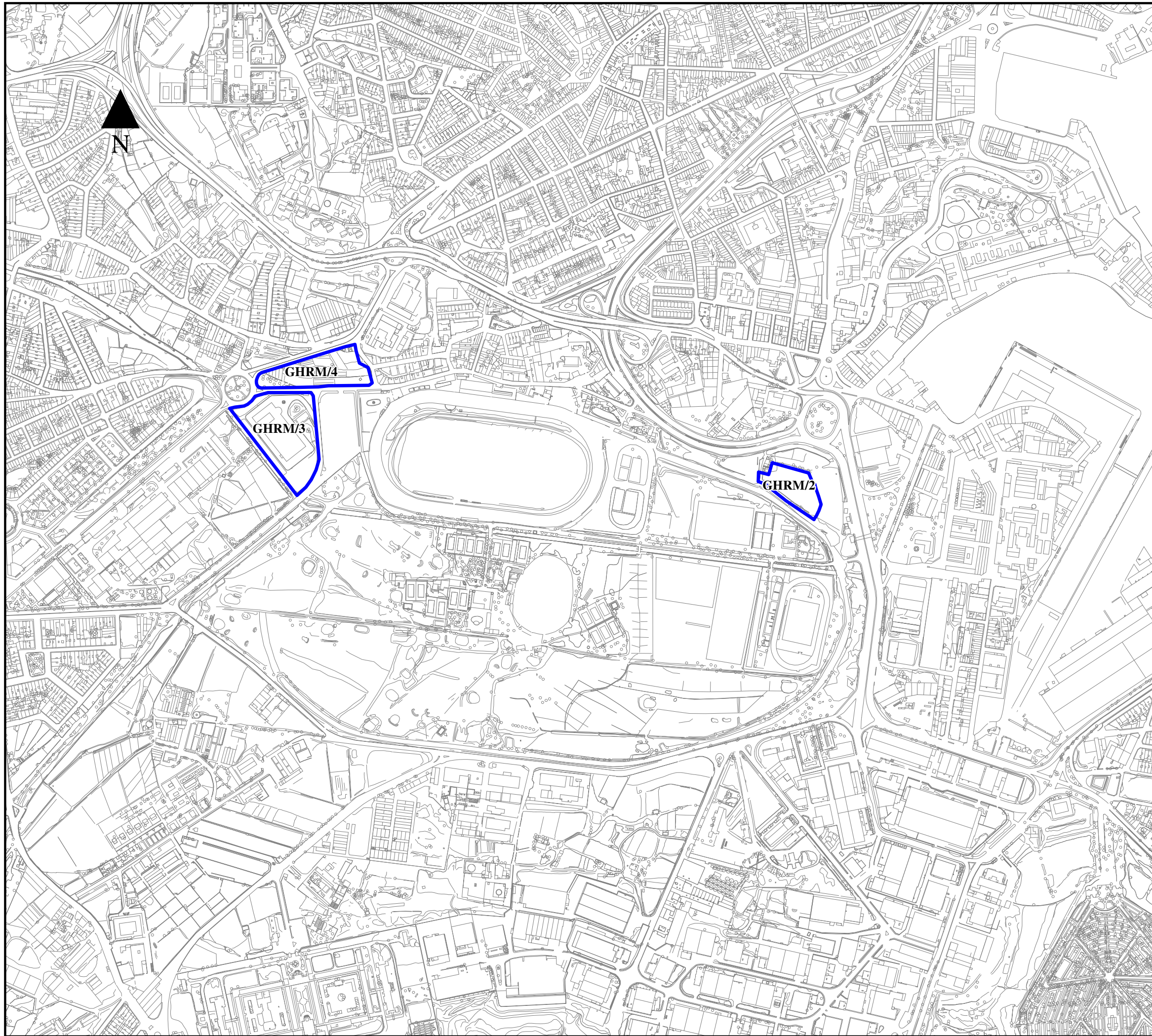
- Acceptable Uses North of Horse Racing Track Area (GM 14)
- Public Open Space / Recreation (GM 15)
- Peripheral Landscaping/ Visual Corridor (GM15)

**Deleted Proposals**

- Transport Infrastructure / Junction Upgrading (GT 01)
- Existing Arterial Roads to be Downgraded (GT 01)
- Projected Road Network (GT 01)
- Public Transport Interchange (GM 09, GM 15)

**Marsa Sports Complex**

Scale : 1:7,000    Date : December 2010    Fig: **A**  
INDICATIVE ONLY  
Not to be used for measurement or direct interpretation.  
Maps to be used in conjunction with Policy Document.  
For the detailed interpretation of alignments kindly contact the Planning Directorate's Planning Control Unit.



GRAND HARBOUR LOCAL PLAN  
PARTIAL REVIEW MARSXA



L-Awtorita` ta' Malta Dwar l-Ambjent u l-Ippjanar  
Malta Environment & Planning Authority

Key



Site Specific Proposals

Site Specific Proposals

Scale : 1:7,000    Date : January 2011  
INDICATIVE ONLY  
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For the detailed interpretation of alignments kindly contact  
the Planning Directorate's Planning Control Unit.

Fig:  
**B**