

## Vision for the East Cowes Development

**This is the flagship project of the Cowes Waterfront initiative and is a visionary plan to regenerate the East Cowes town centre, by improving employment prospects and creating a superb new waterfront for residents and visitors alike. The project presents a unique opportunity to improve East Cowes, secure new investment and provide an enhanced gateway to the Island.**

**The Cowes Waterfront initiative is a collaboration of English Partnerships, the Isle of Wight Council and the Isle of Wight Economic Partnership and SEEDA. The East Cowes project is a major regeneration scheme which is being brought forward as part of this project.**

**It will create a vibrant community with a long-term sustainable future, a revitalised town centre and waterfront and increased employment opportunities within the marine, retail and leisure sectors.**

A resolution to grant outline planning consent which included the principles of the masterplan was approved in July 2006 and the outline consent was issued in October 2007.

Due to the size of this development, a phasing plan has been agreed which will span the next ten years. To accompany this, a design code is being produced which will ensure that each of the development phases will be consistent and the whole scheme shares common design.

Summary of the full regeneration project

- Major regeneration project for East Cowes
- Key riverside location on the River Medina
- 16 ha (40 acres) site
- Mixed-use development
- Town centre regeneration
- Marine business centre with waterfront frontage
- Approx 500+ new homes with 30% affordable housing
- Community facilities
- Quality public spaces
- Events space and berths
- New shops and restaurants
- Hotel
- Maritime Heritage Centre



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Figure 1: East Coves Masterplan

A Masterplan Design Code was produced for English Partnerships (EP) and SEEDA by Alan Baxter and Associates, (Sept 2007) which set out a number of distinct character areas for the regeneration project as a whole.



Figure 2: East Cowes Project Character Areas

- **The Town Centre Triangle:** Defined as the area bounded by Ferry Road, Castle Street and Well Road. This is the commercial and retail core, both existing and proposed.
- **York Avenue:** Buildings along York Avenue tend to be well set back behind large gardens.
- **The Marine Industry Quarter:** This will have a more utilitarian character than the town centre. Mixed use buildings will predominate along public routes and the waterfront to create active frontage.

- **The Waterfront:** The distinctive character of this area will partly be set by the new public realm and partly the architectural style of proposals.
- **Sylvan Avenue Area:** A distinctive residential area where a limited number of houses will be set amidst retained mature trees which are important for squirrels and bats. The majority of the woodland will be retained and enhanced as a habitat for wildlife.
- **Hilltown Area:** Predominantly residential in character. Buildings will step up the hillside.
- **Maresfield Road area:** This area is also residential, but does not relate as closely to the town centre and only in the upper parts of the site does it rise up and look out over the harbour. Developments in the lower part of this area will be focussed around the former Barracks Building.
- **The Esplanade Area:** This area has a special open seaside character, but is also important because it is a key part of the East Cowes Conservation Area.

### **Design Principles and standards for the Residential Development**

The first phase of the residential development will be to the east on the upper parts of the site, running down to the planned town square and foodstore and it is this first phase of the regeneration project to which this design statement applies.

Future statements may be produced to aid the design choices of other phases at a later stage.

The general principles of residential building design in the design code are:

- Buildings should be well integrated with topography, by incrementally stepping down slopes and exploiting views.
- Building facades should incorporate features, such as Bay windows, which add interest to views both along the street and from within dwellings
- Balconies and roof decks could be incorporated to add architectural interest, maximise views and provide alternative outside spaces for residents
- There should be a comprehensive approach to boundary treatments on residential streets
- Communal aerials should be used instead of individual satellite dishes and should be sited away from the street where possible.
- Buildings at the end of vistas should be designed to add interest to the view
- Planting is desirable but should be simple, robust and easily maintained.

The general principles for building materials in the design code are:

- The palette of materials chosen should be coherent, reflecting a simple design rationale.
- Materials should be robust and capable of withstanding the harsh weather conditions experienced in the marine environment.
- Future maintenance should be considered when selecting materials
- The materials chosen could reflect the distinctive East Cowes local vernacular.
- A range of materials could be used to articulate facades

In addition to these general principles the Council considers that there are other principles and standards which should be applied to the design of the residential element of the East Cowes Project. This in effect is a list for the developer of the compulsory requirements that the IW Council expect to be adhered to as part of any detailed planning application.

As a matter of course, the developer must have regard to the recommendations in the following documents:

- Secured By Design(1994)
- By Design(2000)
- The Urban Design Compendium (2000)
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (2001)
- PPS1 (2005)
- PPS3 (2006)
- Code for Sustainable Homes (2006)
- Manual for Streets, CLG (2007)
- Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards
- Lifetime Homes Standards (2007)

In addition the Council would expect any planning application to ensure that the design of the residential phase ensures:

*Sustainable Development:*

- That a Sustainable Drainage System be provided
- The new residential area must create a sustainable pattern of development and will aim to promote sustainable patterns of use and activity
- The whole development must demonstrate exemplary sustainable credentials and be a national exemplar of future forms of development
- The development must respond to the topography
- Open spaces must be provided and the development will be expected to provide an attractive public realm for pedestrians created through appropriate planting and paving, creating comfortable safe routes.
- Sustainable development must be considered as part of an integrated approach to the regeneration project as a whole.
- The development must be designed to provide an excellent “Eco-Homes” rating and provide standards to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, or the standard at the time.
- The development must demonstrate best practice and innovation in sustainable buildings and landscape, and have an educational role and engagement role with the existing new areas.
- The development must be designed, where possible, to minimise energy use and to create sunny, naturally well lit spaces through passive solar energy.
- The use of cost effective, lifetime costed, sustainable technology must be clearly investigated, evaluated and encouraged
- Measures such as effective heating controls, efficient and responsive water and space heating systems and energy efficient white goods must all be considered.

#### *Housing & Community needs:*

- Developers must ensure that a range of “affordable” and “low cost” housing is brought forward by this site. Developers should acquaint themselves with the definitions of affordable and low cost market housing for the Isle of Wight which are set out in the Island’s Housing Strategy for 2007-1012. They must ensure that all of the affordable housing delivered on this site complies with these definitions
- An affordable housing scheme which shall identify no less that 30% (split between 60% social rented and 40% shared ownership) of the total number of housing units as affordable
- The development must bring forward community facilities in the form of either contributions or land. If land is provided it should be located so as to provide facilities that will be:
  - Be close to the proposed bus route
  - Be designed so that late night activity does not lead to nuisance by local residents
- A wide range of housing types and tenures should be provided, consistent with the aim of creating an urban form of development with a strong and distinct sense of place.
- The mix and type of housing will be developed to contribute to meet the mix of housing as set out in the Isle of Wight Council’s Housing Strategy 2007-2012.

#### *Sustainable Transport :*

- The development must improve strategic pedestrian/ cycle linkages to the existing town centre
- Developers should achieve ease of movement around East Cowes by putting people before traffic, integrating land uses and transport.
- Developers must refer to and deliver solutions which comply with the Manual for Streets, Urban Compendium, and PPS3.
- The development must be designed to maximise accessibility by a range of non car modes of transport

#### *Other elements*

- A full development programme, showing the phasing and rate of delivery of the completed units incorporating the delivery of affordable and low cost market units
- In developing detailed proposals for this major development, developers will be required to undertake community consultation, as set out in the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement

The Council considers that by developing a proposal which complies with these design principles and standards, the proposals will be able to meet the challenge of establishing an urban form and a sense of place that will give the new development a distinct identity and character. It will ensure that as a key regeneration project for the Island, the development, as a whole, will be high quality and coherent, even though it will be built in phases over a number of years.