THE BAY AREA PLACE PLAN

NOVEMBER 2023

Final Report

The Bay Area Place Plan has been produced by Feria Urbanism working with Støriie and The Place Bureau

www.feria-urbanism.com

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Bay Area Place Plan is the result of an action-based research project. The plan seeks to influence policy and delivery in the Bay Area of the Isle of Wight.

The plan aims to be a catalyst for change in internal community perceptions as well as external perceptions. The process of plan preparation has sought to establish an understanding of the lived experiences of different communities in the area. Through this understanding of the links between the socio-economic and cultural components of different communities in the area, this report offers on holistic Bay-wide solutions alongside more precise, site-based interventions.

Place-shaping through a place plan is a strategic and holistic way of identifying and matching different community needs, resources, and aspirations with that of the host organisations, in this case Sandown Town Council, Lake Parish Council, Shanklin Town Council and Isle of Wight Council.

Taking forward to ideas and recommendations in this report will be the joint responsibility of the local government agencies listed above, but at all times engaging with the community that live and work in the Bay Area in the most appropriate and effective ways.

This engagement has already begun through the highly effective and successful Three Day Think Space that occurred in July 2023. This event provided the Evidence Base for this report.

Looking south, the Bay Area as viewed from Culver Down

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Bay Area Place Plan is a report that brings together a variety of topics into a single, coherent document that sets out a vision and a sense of direction for the communities of Sandown, Shanklin and Lake. It is not an economic development strategy, nor is it an urban design framework. It is not a tourism strategy, nor is it a community action plan. However, elements from all of these types of report have found their way into the Bay Area Place Plan to provide it with the holistic and overarching approaches required if the plan is to drive change in the ways expected of it.

Looking north, the Bay Area as viewed from the headland near Luccombe village

The report comprises three distinct sections that support one another and provide the necessary level of strategic guidance and local detail. These are:

The Principles & Values (pages 31 — 39)

These principles and values apply Bay-wide and serve as a critical framework that will guide the project planning and decision-making process going forwards. This section helps define the overarching goals, priorities, and the "how" when it comes to acting on the recommendations for urban regeneration and other initiatives in the Bay Area.

The Spatial Strategy (pages 40 — 54)

This section presents a diagram that imagines the physical spaces, the infrastructure, and land use patterns in the study area. The diagram captures the strengths and characteristics of the area and indicates where urban design interventions can make improvements to the area. It also shows where site-based investments (from the public, private or third sectors) could take place. This diagram serves as "where" part of this report, helping identify locations for strategic resource allocation and development initiatives while considering opportunities and challenges in an overall spatial context.

The Themes & Topics (pages 57 — 82)

This section provides a greater level of detail for specific topics that have emerged from the research phase of the project undertaken through the Three Day Think Space. The components of each of these provide the "what" element of the Bay Area Place Plan, setting out a range of potential actions and interventions. However, it needs to be stressed that this section is not an action plan but a range of recommended projects that begin to create links between this report and subsequent, more detailed, and action-based plans.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE BAY AREA PLACE PLAN

Creating a comprehensive Place Plan for the Bay Area offers a multitude of interconnected benefits, each contributing to the overarching goal of revitalising and sustaining this important part of the island. The key aims and objectives of this plan are as follows:

- ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT – One of the key advantages lies in the engagement and empowerment of the community. Involving local residents, businesses, and stakeholders in the planning process fosters a sense of ownership, ensuring that the plan aligns with their aspirations and values. This collaborative approach not only builds trust but also empowers the community to actively participate in shaping its future. This process began in July 2023 with the successful Three Day Think Space and this report recommends a continuation of this approach to community engagement – hands-on, collaborative, task-based and with the outcomes carefully recorded.

- STRATEGIC THINKING – The strategic vision embedded in this report will become a cornerstone for future successes. Place plans provide a clear and cohesive vision for the regeneration of the area, outlining long-term goals and priorities. The clarity offered allows for efficient resource allocation, enabling the four local authorities and private sector investors to work toward shared objectives. Furthermore, this place plans emphasises sustainable development practices, ensuring that regeneration efforts consider environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

- ECONOMIC GROWTH – This is another significant benefit of creating a holistic plan. Coastal regeneration can stimulate economic growth through various channels. Tourism, for example, often experiences a boost as a result of well-planned regeneration efforts. Increased tourism activity leads to higher revenue for local businesses, creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs and job seekers alike. Additionally, these developments can have a positive impact on property values, benefiting property owners and increasing revenues that can be reinvested into the community.

- INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT – It is expected that improvements to public utilities, such as roads, streets, transport links, and coastal defences will emerge from the Bay Area Place Plan. Such upgrades enhance connectivity and accessibility, making the area more attractive for residents and visitors alike. Simultaneously, place plans frequently prioritise the preservation of natural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural heritage. By maintaining the area's identity and character, these plans ensure that the area remains an attractive and distinctive destination. This is true for the Bay Area Place Plan, that puts the environment at the heart of the spatial strategy aspect of the report.

- QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS & VISITORS – This place plan includes the creation of or investment in public spaces, parks, promenades, and recreational amenities, promoting physical and mental well-being while fostering social interaction. These initiatives should incorporate climate-resilient design principles to protect against coastal erosion, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events. Such measures ensure that the coastal zone remains a safe and habitable place even in the face of climate change.

- SECURING FUNDS – One of the main reasons for the preparation of the Bay Area Place Plan is to help secure funding for future. More on this particular objective can be found on pages 10 – 11.

Through this well-defined place plan, the Bay Area will become more attractive to private investors, fostering public-private partnerships for current and future development projects. It can also unlock access to public funds. This financial support can accelerate the realisation of regeneration goals.

Additionally, this particular place plan seeks to ensure that the coastal area is not only economically vibrant but socially inclusive. By creating spaces for community gatherings and fostering a sense of belonging among residents, social cohesion is strengthened.

A PLAN TO SUPPORT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

One of the primary reasons for the preparation of the Bay Area Place Plan is to help secure funding for projects – at a variety of scales – in several important ways. It will serve as a strategic funding document by providing a clear vision, engaging the community, aligning with broader goals, offering data and analysis, mitigating risks, and packaging projects in an attractive way. This will enhance the credibility of project proposals and increase the likelihood of securing financial support from various sources. Table 1 sets out how this plan can help secure project funding.

CLEAR VISION & PRIORITISATION	The Bay Area Place Plan provides a clear vision for the development of a specific area on the Isle of Wight. It can help the partnerships between local government, businesses and other stakeholders identify priorities and articulate how various projects align with those priorities. This clarity makes it easier to convince funding agencies and stakeholders of the importance of these projects.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	The Bay Area Place Plan has involved extensive community engagement and consultation. By giving local residents and businesses have a say in the planning process and support the proposed projects, it can build political and public consensus, making it more likely that funding agencies will see the projects as worthy investments.
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING	The Bay Area Place Plans encompass various aspects of development, such as access, mobility, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental sustainability. This comprehensive approach demonstrates that the identified projects are well-thought-out and address multiple needs, increasing their appeal to funding agencies.

ALIGNMENT WITH ISLAND-WIDE GOALS	The Bay Area Place Plan aligns with broader island-wide (and national) goals and strategies. When local projects fit within a larger framework, they are more likely to receive funding from higher-level government agencies or private investors who are interested in achieving those broader goals.
DATA & ANALYSIS	The Bay Area Place Plan has used data and analysis to support the need for specific projects. This includes demographic trends, economic forecasts, and community engagement results. Having such data to back up project proposals can make them more compelling to funding agencies.
RISK MITIGATION	The Bay Area Place Plan, as a holistic document, demonstrates that risk factors have been considered and have strategies can be put place to mitigate them. This can make funding agencies more comfortable with providing financial support.
PROJECT PACKAGING	The Bay Area Place Plan can package multiple smaller projects into a more attractive bundle. This can make it easier to secure funding because it allows for economies of scale and a more comprehensive approach to addressing community needs.
GRANT APPLICATIONS	Many funding opportunities require grant applications, and the Bay Area Place Plan can serve as valuable reference document when preparing future applications. It provides the necessary background information and demonstrate a strategic approach has been taken towards project development.
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	The Bay Area Place Plan will help attract private sector partners interested in investing in the development of sites across Shanklin, Lake and Sandown. The partnership of local government agencies can use the plan to demonstrate the market potential and the long-term viability of projects, which can attract private investment.
POLITICAL SUPPORT	The broad support of local elected officials and policymakers for the Bay Area Place Plan can help in lobbying for funding at regional or national level. Politicians more often than not play a crucial role in securing funding for local projects.

Table 1 – How this plan can support access to funding opportunities

Plan 1 – The Bay Area with the main settlements identified

HISTORY, GROWTH & ECONOMY

The Bay is an area which encompasses the three main settlements of Sandown, Lake and Shanklin, along the south eastern bay on the Isle of Wight. It is home to 22,500 residents and welcomes half a million visitors every year. The Bay Area offers 8 kilometres of unbroken beach, one of the longest stretches of sand in the country. The three settlements are connected not only by the unifying stretch of sandy beach and the cliff path but by bus links and a railway, which extends on to Ryde and connects with the mainland, making it one of the best-connected locations on the Island, and among the easiest to visit and explore without a car.

The majority of growth of the Sandown and Shanklin settlements was made during the Victorian era, and it became a popular tourist destination as people were able to travel further due to advancements in the transport industry. The area has much to celebrate and a rich history which celebrates royal visits, a castle lost to the sea, defensive forts, shipwrecks, dinosaurs, and Charles Darwin. There is a local appetite and need for creativity and some excellent initiatives in place such as the long-standing carnivals which run throughout the summer, local events, and volunteer groups.

The Bay area has been a thriving tourist destination in the past, but like many similar seaside locations has suffered from changing trends in the travel industry that made them successful to begin with. The offer of the once bustling hotels which are responsible for much of the economy in the area is now greatly reduced, and in some cases leaving sizable voids in high profile areas along the bay. There is a recognised need for improvements to be made in the appearance and security of several derelict buildings in the area. The hotel and hospitality industry remains an important sector to the area, along with retail, education, and healthcare.

Shanklin and Sandown share similar characteristics and challenges. Both are seaside resort towns with populations that fluctuates seasonally due to tourism. Their economies are heavily reliant on tourism, and face challenges during the off-season. Seasonal employment opportunities are common in the tourism sector, but year-round employment can be limited. Meanwhile, Lake has a more stable population compared to the tourist-oriented Sandown and Shanklin. Lake's economy is more diverse, with a mix of residential and local businesses and offers more consistent year-round employment opportunities due to its residential nature

THREE TOWNS, ONE BAY

Sandown, Shanklin, and Lake are three distinct settlements, each with its own unique characteristics. Each of these towns contributes to the diverse experiences of the Bay Area. The Bay Area settlements are nestled in a hilly landscape and exhibit a harmonious relationship between the human activity and the surrounding natural topography.

This kind of placement is influenced by factors such as topography, climate, accessibility, and historical development. In a sense, this comfortable relationship between the human (anthropomorphic) and the natural (biosphere) is representative of the UNESCO designation. That the Bay Area already knows how to create the balance needed as it has lived this way for many years now.

The Bay Area Place Plan seeks to celebrate and enhance the settlements distinctiveness while also revealing a shared identity that can be embraced by the wider Bay Area. This shared identity is necessary to underpin an overall strategy that can be used for future funding applications and to coordinate projects. Projects that can help establish a shared identity are addressed by the Spatial Strategy diagram.

Below, the three settlements are described and ideas to maintain positive points of difference are offered.

- SANDOWN — Known as a classic seaside town, Sandown is located at the heart of Sandown Bay and is famous for its golden sandy beaches. It offers a variety of attractions including the award-winning Wildheart Animal Sanctuary, Sandham Gardens with dinosaur golf and go-karts, and Dinosaur Isle, an interactive museum that celebrates the Isle of Wight's status as one of the world's top dinosaur sites. Sandown Pier is another highlight, offering adventure golf, bowling, a snake slide, amusements, and bars and cafés.

- LAKE — A large village located between Sandown and Shanklin, Lake is situated above the cliffs on Sandown Bay and has its own beach called Welcome Beach. Lake has two public parks and is well-connected for public transport, with three bus routes and its own Island Line rail station.

- SHANKLIN — A resort town located on Sandown Bay. Known for its sandy beach, its Old Village, and a wooded ravine called Shanklin Chine. The town has a rich history with connections to famous figures like John Keats and Charles Darwin. Shanklin also offers a variety of shopping options on Regent Street and High Street, which together comprise the largest retail area in the south of the Isle of Wight.

How to Maintain & Celebrate Differences

While there is a need for an overarching Bay Area identity, this report acknowledges the need to preserve and enhance the individual identities of the three settlements, located adjacent to one another. These individual identities can be preserved through several effective and celebratory ways:

- CULTURAL PRACTICES – Identifying the unique traditions, festivals, and customs that can be celebrated, helping to distinguish the three settlements from one another.

- HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE – Each settlement has its own historical events or figures that are of significance, helping to shape its identity and set it apart from its neighbours. Protecting and maintaining historical sites and monuments and educating visitors about the history of each settlement will be part of this differentiation.

- GEOGRAPHIC & ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES – The physical landscape, and styles of buildings and structures of each place can also contribute to a distinct identity. For example, the thatched cottages and the picturesque qualities of Shanklin contrast with the neon lights of Sandown Pier.

- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION – Involving the community in decision-making processes ensures that any interventions are in line with the wishes of the community and helps to preserve the unique way of life in each place. Educating both residents and visitors about the unique aspects of each settlement. This could be done through schools, information centres, or community events.

THE PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

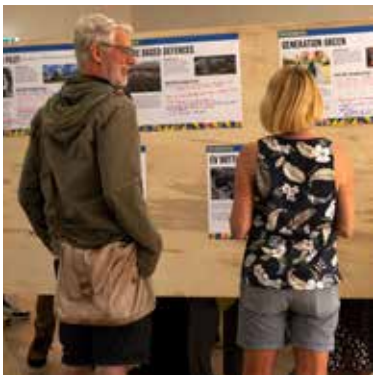
The Bay Area Place Plan is the result of an engagement process that had a focus on involving many of those who would be of critical importance on implementing any transition approach advocated in the study report. Central to this process was a Three Day Think Space held over three consecutive days in July 2023. It is estimated that 250+ people were engaged over the three days. This includes repeat visits. The Project Team are grateful to everyone for their inputs to the Think Space process.

The Think Space was designed in such a way to allow a wide variety of people, with different backgrounds and interests to get involved. There was significant involvement from school children, business owners, interest groups, community organisation, local government, residents, locals, visitors, volunteers, and everybody with a passion for the Bay Area. The Project Team has analysed and assessed to everything that was written, drawn, and suggested over the three days to inform the contents of this recommendations report.

The Project Team proposed the Three Day Think Space as an effective engagement technique as previous experience has shown that a balance of structured and scheduled daytime sessions, following by “open door” evening session provides the right balance between focused work with invited stakeholders and transparency for the wider public. A range of techniques were employed during the three days:

- Large scale audience presentations
- Small working groups and facilitated break-out spaces
- Site visits and delegations
- Scenario planning
- Use of artificial intelligence image generation
- Practical hands-on building tasks
- Worksheets and questionnaire surveys
- Gallery of wall art and mapping results

Each technique was used at a different point in the process to generate maximum results. The final output of the Three Day Think Space was a 126 page slide-show, as presented on the final evening of the three days. An annotated version of the slide-show was issued in the weeks after the Think Space and can be considered to be the Bay Area Place Plan interim report, and forms a key part of the Evidence Base for this final report.



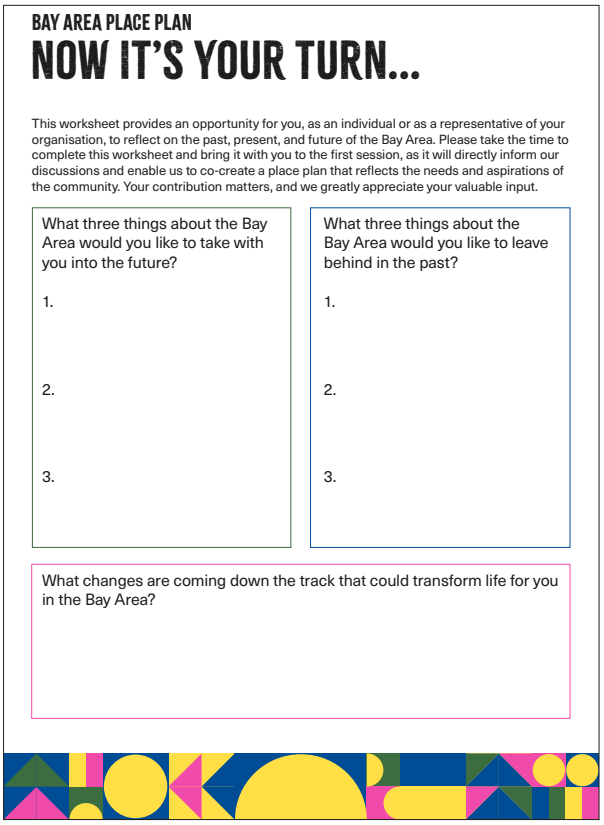
Selection of photographs from the Three Day Think Space

OCEAN KAYAK
OCEAN KAYAK

THE EVIDENCE BASE

Think Space began with a simple survey, shared with individuals or representatives of the organisations taking part, asking them to reflect on the past, present, and future of the Bay Area. Across the three days, a postcard exercise was run, asking participants to share a memory from the past and then to imagine a positive future, in the years ahead, and then send a postcard back in time to the present day.

The results from both exercises are set out here. Together with other outputs from the Three Day Think Space, they form the Evidence Base for the Bay Area Place Plan.



BAY AREA PLACE PLAN

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

This worksheet provides an opportunity for you, as an individual or as a representative of your organisation, to reflect on the past, present, and future of the Bay Area. Please take the time to complete this worksheet and bring it with you to the first session, as it will directly inform our discussions and enable us to co-create a place plan that reflects the needs and aspirations of the community. Your contribution matters, and we greatly appreciate your valuable input.

What three things about the Bay Area would you like to take with you into the future?

1.

2.

3.

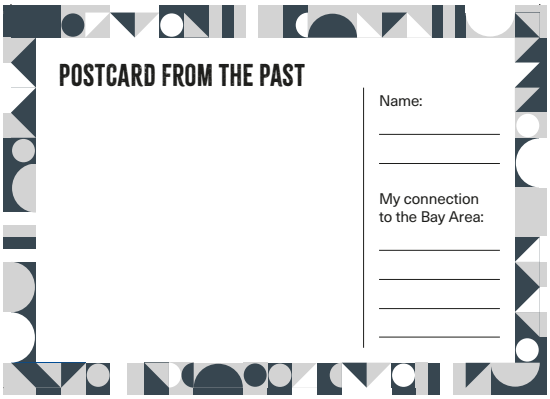
What three things about the Bay Area would you like to leave behind in the past?

1.

2.

3.

What changes are coming down the track that could transform life for you in the Bay Area?



POSTCARD FROM THE PAST

Name:

My connection to the Bay Area:

POSTCARD TO THE FUTURE

Name:

My connection to the Bay Area:

Copies of the survey and postcards past and future exercise

Q: WHAT ASPECTS OF THE BAY AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE BEHIND IN THE PAST?

Top Results

- 24% Eyesore, Derelict, Empty, Unused Buildings
- 13% Disconnect between the Councils and the Public
- 9% Negativity & Apathy
- 7% Sad, Empty, Tired High Street
- 7% Poor Visitor Facilities & Public Amenities

Other Responses, in no particular order

- Poor Parking and Transport Links
- Too Much Focus on Tourism
- Low Education
- Deprivation, Poverty and Homeless Support
- High Costs
- Difficult Planning & Building Process
- Council Disconnect
- Not Enough Housing
- Lack of Character, Bland, Uninspiring Streets
- Too Many Cars
- Lack of Business Association
- Threat to Natural Habitats
- Low Wage Economy
- Weak Police Presence
- Lack of Community Collaboration
- Lack of Opportunities for Young People
- Business Diversity
- Lack of Care and Maintenance

Q: WHAT ASPECTS OF THE BAY AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE WITH YOU INTO THE FUTURE?

Top Results

- 16% Natural Beauty, Biodiversity & Biosphere Status
- 9% History, Heritage & Culture
- 7% Arts, Performance & Music
- 7% Tourism
- 7% Community

Other Responses, in no particular order

- Dinosaurs
- Family Destination
- Beach, Beach Lifestyle
- Pier
- Blue Flag Beaches
- Engaging and Fun Events
- Victorian Buildings
- Volunteers
- High Streets
- Wellbeing
- Maintenance
- Safety
- Transport
- Seafront Businesses
- Public Spaces
- Natural Sciences
- Engaging Young People
- Medical Centre
- Water Sports

Q: WHAT CHANGES ARE COMING DOWN THE TRACK THAT COULD TRANSFORM LIFE FOR YOU IN THE BAY AREA?

Top Results

- All at 6% Climate Change; Arts Recognition & Funding; Leisure & Sports; Community Collaboration; and Improved Transport Connections
- All at 5% Pedestrianisation & Cycle Lanes; Redesign & Add Character to Place; Maintenance & Amenities; and Focus on Young People & Families
- All at 4% Activate & Develop Public Spaces; Diversify Attractions & Activities; Repurposing Empty Buildings & Spaces; More Green Spaces; Education; and Tourist Attractions

Other Responses, in no particular order

- Natural Science Research
- Cosmopolitan Outlook
- More Focus on Local Needs & Housing
- Biosphere Status
- Fairer Prices
- Technology
- Changing Planning and Building Restrictions
- Eco-Tourism
- Global Connections
- New Approaches to Work and Leisure, the Staycation
- Better Healthcare Provisions
- Job Opportunities
- Local Island Businesses
- Reframing Social Wellbeing
- Retirement & Ageing
- Police Presence
- Leisure & Sports
- Migration from UK

	From the Past (quotes and extracts)	From the Future (quotes and extracts)	Themes
1	Happy, outdoor activities, brought up my family and children in the area.	In the future the Bay Area provides a higher level environment based education, eco-tourism, wildlife trails, local businesses, and the circular economy.	• Young people • Family needs
2	We rented a Beryl scooter and when from Sandown to Shanklin. The Bay was truly stunning. We rented paddleboards and went to Foppings for ice cream.	Look how far Sandown has come! Just got back from the Bay Fringe, what talent Sandown had. We've seen comedy, theatre from professionals, as well as students. We've eaten a glut of local food and drink some incredible new brews from Boojum. Walking around Sandown today, truly made us appreciate the beauty of the town, and how incredible the people that live in it are. Booking at the Kings for more local food!	• Natural beauty • Local food
3	We had such an amazing night at Zaintes – music was amazing... went for a dip afterwards, had to hitch home though!	Great day, had a really yummy lunch at the pier looking over the bay, afternoon at Browns exploring the biosphere, a bit of golf and film night at Dinosaur Isle. Tomorrow is the art fair at Ferncliff Gardens and a visit to Boojum and Snark.	• Nightlife • Long opening hours • Local businesses • Food • Natural beauty

	From the Past (quotes and extracts)	From the Future (quotes and extracts)	Themes
4	Life moves forward and so must Sandown. Small local shops give way to supermarkets and police stations, post offices, banks will disappear, and the AI age will arrive – however one thing that will not change is this beautiful Sandown Bay.	Please keep this beautiful town... with its friendly community, as unchanged as possible. In the years to come, there will be vast changes to the mainland – and places to unwind, enjoy nature will become fewer. Long live Sandown!	• Preserving the town and natural beauty of the Bay • Changes to high street and mainland • Technological developments threaten high street and job security
5	Had a fantastic day at the beach swimming today ended the day boating on canoe lake, followed by ice cream.	Bay is awesome, the dinosaur theme park sensational. So much to see and do. Best theme park in the country. Will come again year after year!	• Memorable days out • Diverse and engaging variety of outdoor activities
6	Lovely here, beach great, been swimming in the seas plus the outdoor swimming pool. There's a dear little town along the front the zoo, I've fed the animals there coach trip to the Needles and Alum Bay... climbed down the cliff!	Loads of local shops, fab food. Good local music Beach fab, best part of Sandown. Also Wildheart Sanctuary doing from strength the strength No derelict buildings anymore thank goodness!	• Diverse outdoor activities • Improved urban environment • The beach
7	Glad I was here, plan to be back. Like travelling back in time!	Lots of good things happening here. So different from my last visit Cool place to be, so beautiful!	• Memorable and distinctive • Unique place and experiences
8	Great to have well maintained public realm. Fond memories of a busy and varied high street.	I want to live and work here! Vibrant, interesting, and friendly. I want friends and family to share this amazing place.	• Pride in place • Vibrant and varied high street and attractions

	From the Past (quotes and extracts)	From the Future (quotes and extracts)	Themes
9	Great fun cycling down the beach, then went to the Boating Lake and watched model boats. Ice cream and picnic on the beach.	Great week cycling on e-bike. The cross country trail and coastal path are amazing. Went to the nature reserve at Yaverland. Then swam in fantastic sea pool and visited brilliant dino museum.	• Active travel • Beach • Engaging outdoor activities • Family days out
10	Doughnuts on the pier, then Dotto train to Yaverland. Boating lake for a pedalo Going for BBQ at Yaverland after golf at Browns.	Walked bio-art trail to Shanklin. Turmeric latte and smoothie bowl. Lunch in Sandown at café on esplanade, could see across the bay. The high street is buzzing now. Lovely to see so much art, greenery, and community together. Read a book in Lewis Carroll square with latte from Sundial before walking 'wild' Sandown to dinosaur beach. All on the Instagram feed!	• Outside activities • Food and café culture • Quality public spaces • Active travel • Transport connections
11	Circus class and training and school trips.	Young generation engagement with circus. Safer swimming. Better waste management.	• Festival and circus • Young people
12	Rode the Dotto train from the zoo to the Pier. Ice cream while waiting for steamer ship "Waverly" to pick us up to go home.	Walked art trail around Sandown. Lunch at seafood restaurant overlooking Bay, great food great vibe. Train from Sandown station to Waterloo.	• Local food overlooking the seafront • Transport connections

	From the Past (quotes and extracts)	From the Future (quotes and extracts)	Themes
13	Moved from mainland to the Bay. The beginning of career as a creative practitioner.	It is 2030 at epicentre of emerging interdisciplinary approach to environmental problems. Steam movement permeated into Bay life, education, training, research, and work.	• The Bay as an area to live and work
14	Had an amazing night at Bogeys, it was at capacity and town was buzzing.	Amazing time at the Bay Fringe Festival, so much on across the area we couldn't see it all.	• Entertainment and attractions • Art and cultural festivals • Atmosphere
15	Love the social and biodiverse rich area. The beach and gardens. Nice to be near shops, library, healthcare, leisure centre.	Would be lovely to see investment into enhancing the Sandown – Lake – Shanklin restaurant and cliff gardens. A safe sea pool for year round cold water swimming. More family and intergenerational activities.	• Investment into enhancing and developing important areas and services for locals • Family and intergenerational activities
16	Lots of fun at Browns for many year!	Return Browns to its former glory!	Preserve and develop Browns as an important place and attraction
17	Didn't live in Sandown but remember visiting and enjoying the beach and pier.	Lovely to see regeneration in Sandown e.g. some hotels and properties regenerated and thriving and a thriving community-based centre that includes resident strengths and interests, it could also have an impact on holiday season.	• Developing local resident's sense of community • Family holidays • Spaces for children and visitors

	From the Past (quotes and extracts)	From the Future (quotes and extracts)	Themes
18	Remember having easy access to three bus routes from St Helens to Newport. Plenty of well-kept public toilets. Lovely piers we were able to go on.	Hope for better bus routes from St. Helens to Newport. Need better public toilets.	• Need to develop and improves transport connections • Upkeep of public amenities
19	Memories of childhood holidays. Maybe will live here one day!	Eco-tourism offering Weather is warm, vineyards provide refreshment. Picking oranges on the willow walk.	• Childhood holidays • Sustainable, nature, green community spaces and gardens, fresh food • Climate change
20	People promenading and visiting pier, slot machines!	Water stations, environmental improvements, no cars, palm trees, growing fresh veg. Green buildings (roof/ walls). Exercise options.	• Pedestrianised and fewer cars • More people-focussed spaces • Spaces for communities, that are sustainable
21	Lovely day with family, swimming, picnicking, French cricket at Yaverland.	Walked coastal path to Luscombe, got bike taxi, bird and wildlife watching at Yaverland eco-haven, beautiful wildflowers.	• Outdoor public spaces • Nature, family, and diverse activities
22	Stop negativity, stay positive for the future IOW is like stepping into the past, it is what people love, the canvas is perfect for the future.	Extend Sandown airport, more affordable commercial flights. Sandown pier Large ferry, tourist taxi. Fishing trips. Town tourists hop-on hop-off train.	• Develop tourist attractions and travel connectivity • Preserve heritage and attraction of IOW as a unique destination

	From the Past (quotes and extracts)	From the Future (quotes and extracts)	Themes
23	Shanklin beach is glorious golden sand, completely litter free. Deck chairs reasonably priced, lunch on the terrace outside at pub on the esplanade. Going to hire a pedalo this afternoon. This evening is the illuminated carnival, going for 100 years. Tomorrow we are going to see a show at the theatre, dinner at Pendletons.	Took great grandchildren to beach in Sandown, watched beach football in Yaverland, went to the salt water swimming pool, sitting in sun building sandcastles. Tomorrow we're going to dinosaur theme park, kids really looking forward to it.	• Beach activities • Family days out • Public spaces • Outdoor and water activities • Diverse attractions
24	Not enough made of island history.	(nothing from the future)	• Connect people to island heritage and history
25	Private investors control too much property.	Patrol officer for the beach and town.	• Ownership and security
26	Lively high street, busy tourist accommodation. Sun always shone. Beach cricket. Feeling the impact of out of town shopping. Wonderful beach and sea. Great cliffs walk over Sandown and Shanklin. Public spaces cared and looked after.	Local transport to provide easy access to towns and beaches. Revitalise, refurbish local buildings and hotels, beach side furniture Enhancing green spaces and cliff walk, good signage, artwork, youth activities.	• Nature and walking trails • Council maintenance of public spaces • Revitalise and refresh street furniture and buildings • Enliven high street
27	Beach and water is clear, people are very friendly. Community seems to be a big thing.	Green spaces and community feel.	• Growing a sense of an island community • Green spaces • Beach maintenance

Table 2 – Results of the postcards from the past, postcards from the future exercise

WHAT PEOPLE SAID DURING THE THREE DAY THINK SPACE – SOME KEY QUOTES

“The Isle of Wight is like stepping back into the past. It is what people love, so the canvas is perfect for the future improvements.”

“The beach here in Shanklin is glorious golden sand, completely litter free.”

“The one thing that must not change is the beautiful Sandown Bay.”

“I want to live and work here! It’s vibrant, interesting, and friendly. I want my friends and family to visit and share in this amazing place.”

“In the future, I want a high street that is buzzing and its lovely to see so much art, greenery and community coming together.”

“Knowledge of place and shaping of place are linked, those that live and work here can contribute good idea.”

“There’s a growing sense of “joining the dots” – that the solutions aren’t of an individual business level. Instead, it’s about seeing connections, seeing how different businesses can complement each other.”

“The beach (needs to be) recognised as pivotal to the surrounding local economy.”

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

This section helps define the overarching goals, the priorities, and the "how" when it comes to taking decisions that lead to actions. These five principles and values apply Bay-wide and will serve as a critical framework to guide the project planning and decision-making process going forwards.

1. START SMALL & SNOWBALL

Think Little & Often to Encourage Innovation & Manage Risk

Recall that very first question asked in the Think Space – what's the budget? A series of small steps can lead to big change over time. Little-and-often is a more sustainable approach to long-term transformation and a great way to start shifting mindsets, building confidence and trust. In an era of increasing uncertainty, especially around funding sources, starting small by piloting programmes and place interventions is also a sensible way to manage risk and budget.

It also allows communities to try out innovative ideas and build positive momentum. It is for this reason the Bay Area Place Plan advocates three scale of project and the first of these (e.g. Scale 01 Inexpensive and Community-Led Quick Wins) is specifically described to all the "start small and snowball" idea to take effect.

Set A Clear Trajectory For Change

However small the start, it is essential to chart a clear path and programme for any pilots and prototypes, so that everyone involved is clear what this first step might be leading to next. This is why the Bay Area plan has both second and third tier projects, that can be identified as the target for where the "snowball" might be heading next.

It is also important to manage expectations so that the wider public are clear that these are early trials with bigger ambitions underway. It is OK to test, fail and try again in this context, and see it as a collective learning experience.

Establish Themed Working Groups to Ignite Passion in People

It is also best to centre these pilot projects around a set of priority themes that different groups might get behind. Establish working groups with a small starter budget around these to ask:

- What is our ultimate ambition for the next five years?
- What's the smallest and simplest way we can start?
- How will we evaluate the success of these small steps as a group?
- Who or what else do we need to make this happen?

2. GET CONNECTED

Connect Ideas

Identify a series of online and in-person spaces to "match-make" good ideas with locations, to help get them off the ground. This could be as simple as a social media presence that is actively managed by the parish and town councils, acting as a suggestion box. Or a more managed competition programme that invites in people locally and from elsewhere to respond to key challenges on the island and creates new partnerships. Or working with existing spaces that support education and start-ups, create networking evenings or business start-up programmes that pair people with different skill sets locally. In a sense, this continues the work of the Three Day Think Space to create a culture of generating ideas across the Bay Area.

Create a Unified Destination Brand

Pride of place can make a huge difference in supporting a unified vision for a place, as well as attracting visitors from afar. To tie together the places and spaces, consider creating a unified destination brand that could influence the look and feel of wayfinding, as well as merchandise and souvenirs for sale, and a strong online presence.

Link Spaces & Places Through Wayfinding

The Bay Area is stronger together. Its strength as a destination comes in the complete and varied offer as “one bay” and that gives it a critical mass of attractions as well as enabling enough room for each town to express its own identity.

One effective way to apply the unified Bay Area brand would be as part of a unified and unique system of wayfinding and interpretation across the three towns, centred around the seafront and the clifftop. See the Spatial Plan section for further ideas on this.

This could encourage walking and exploration as well as revealing hidden local stories. It could be supported by a simple pocket map of all three areas and be expanded to a mural programme across all three towns. All it takes is some paint, talent, and a good story.

3. EMBRACE PEOPLE POWER

Think Green Tape, Not Red Tape

The UK planning system is often slow and can be seen as being full of red tape. Local authorities are often under huge pressures financially and in terms of staffing. A system like Bologna’s “Office of Civic Imagination” encourages local people to ask for help by submitting an idea and asking for support to help navigate council protocol.

In Bologna, this serves as an urban policy innovation lab to research, communicate, and co-design urban transformations. The office helps oversee six “district labs” and these are hubs of collaboration and innovation where city officials and residents work together to tackle challenges facing the city. These labs accompany citizens’ project proposals (called collaboration pacts), and also facilitate the participatory budgeting process in the city. These efforts have led to a significant increase in citizen engagement resulting in more than 480 collaboration pacts being implemented, and more than 14,000 people voted in the first year of participatory budgeting.

If this idea were to be pursued for the Bay Area, then – in terms of scale – there may need to be a single "Office of Civic Imagination" for the whole island and then a series of district labs, one of which is the Bay Area and other labs for other parts of the island.

Act As Hosts, Build Ability & Give People Agency

Consider how the local government teams can act as generous hosts and facilitators but encourage local residents to take control of the project. This comes down to creating a clear thematic programme of pilots – see "start small and snowball" – that people want to get behind and enough initial funding to get a project underway, and act as proof of concept.

Build a programme that encourages participation and gives agency among local people, with low-risk projects that first build trust among groups. It helps if the space for this is visible and easy to access as a way to show that change is happening. For example, taking over empty high street shops. This could have a focus on skills building with young people, or capacity exchange between young and old across shared passions like gardening. It might need a dedicated part-time Community Champion to build these skills and encourage confidence in people.

4. YOUNG HEARTS RUN FREE

Work With Intergenerational Wisdom

An ageing population is an experienced population. Work with the life experience of the third age residents who bring wisdom, enthusiasm, and free time. Match those talents to skills gaps appearing among young people, where there is a revival of interest in traditional skills from gardening and growing, to a trend for repair and reuse. This exchange and positivity keeps the youthful spirit of seaside towns alive and full of energy.

Play Off & Protect Natural Assets

Coastal living can keep people healthier when it is easy and enjoyable to spend time in the great outdoors. Wherever possible, embrace these natural assets as catalysts for change, from the revival in wild swimming to new walking routes highlighted through better way finding.

Bring these ideas into the ways of working as a delivery team – from walking workshops or big beach brainstorms, to make sure the natural assets are front and centre to all involved.

Start a programme to raise awareness of what the UNESCO Biosphere is and how people can benefit from it day to day as well as being globally recognised. The Bay Area's beautiful nature is the foundation of the place and something to be proud of.

Perform & Stay Playful

Coastal living, especially in beach towns, is innately playful and all about good-time hedonism. Even when places fall on tough times, it is easy enough to remember a heyday of theatres, nightclubs, and performing arts and foster these talents among locals. Glimmers of this are seen everywhere, from the events and performances at Shanklin Theatre to a morning aerobics workout set to Kylie Minogue music by Sandown Pier.

It is easy for place-based projects to lose this sparkle and get bogged down in planning language. So find ways to keep that playful spirit alive. Embrace the weird and wacky that makes the British seaside so much fun. Consider this attitude of celebration as a way to tackle serious challenges with a positive face.

5. WORK AT THREE PROJECT SCALES

The range of Bay Area regeneration projects can be categorised into three levels based on their scale, cost, and impact. Here are examples of each:

Scale 01 / Inexpensive and Community-Led Quick Wins

These will be small-scale projects that can be implemented quickly and inexpensively, often with the involvement of the local community. Examples include:

- COMMUNITY GARDENS – Transforming vacant space into community gardens not only beautifies the area but also provides a space for residents to grow their own food and interact with each other.

- STREET ART – Encouraging local artists to create murals or installations can brighten up public spaces and showcase local talent. Painting the steps that link Sandown High Street to the seafront was identified during the Three Day Think Space as a good example of such a project.

- CLEAN-UP DRIVES – Organising community clean-up drives that can improve the cleanliness and appearance of the area.

Scale 02 / More Expensive Projects

These projects will require more funding and planning but can have a significant impact on urban regeneration. Examples include:

- INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS – This could include improving the four kilometre revetment and promenade for more effective use by wheeled users, including adding the stencilled artwork to the groundscape. This is explained further in the Spatial Strategy section.

- BUILDING RENOVATIONS – Renovating (or at least making good) some of the derelict existing buildings, especially those with historical or architectural significance, can preserve the area's character while improving its appearance and functionality. Treat some of these in Sandown as a canvas for bold and colourful street art.

- Public Space Development – Creating or improving parks, squares, or other public spaces can enhance the quality of life for residents and attract visitors. This may include the introduction of bespoke street furniture on the cliff-tops, as explored by the students during the Think Space.

Scale 03 / Flagship Projects Requiring External Funding

These are large-scale projects that can significantly transform the urban condition and economy and often require significant investment and external funding. Examples include:

- MAJOR PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENTS – This could include the construction of new residential, commercial, or mixed-use developments and the bringing back to life of complex derelict heritage assets.

- CULTURAL OR SPORTS FACILITIES – The building of new museums, theatres or other facilities that can attract tourists and boost the local economy. The discussions over the future of the Yaverland site and the various competing ideas for how to develop this (e.g. tilted more towards a fun-filled theme park or more towards exhibition, research, and a museum) would fall into this category as would the proposal for a new performing arts centre in Shanklin. However, care is needed to here to ensure a robust business case can be made to justify the proposals for new venues and that these do not shift investment that would otherwise go into renovating derelict or empty premises or maximising the value to be found in existing venues.

- WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT – In the Bay Area, redeveloping the waterfront (as part of necessary coastal defence works) can create attractive public spaces, stimulate economic activity, and improve environmental sustainability.

Each level of project will be plays a crucial role in the Bay Area's regeneration, contributing to improved physical conditions, stronger communities, and enhanced economic prospects. As a rough guide at this stage, there are likely to be:

- SCALE 01 – Approx 15-20 projects of this type, across the whole Bay Area, with the precise nature of each project determine through a future Think Space or an Office of Civic Imagination

- SCALE 02 – Approx 2-3 projects of this type in each of the three settlements

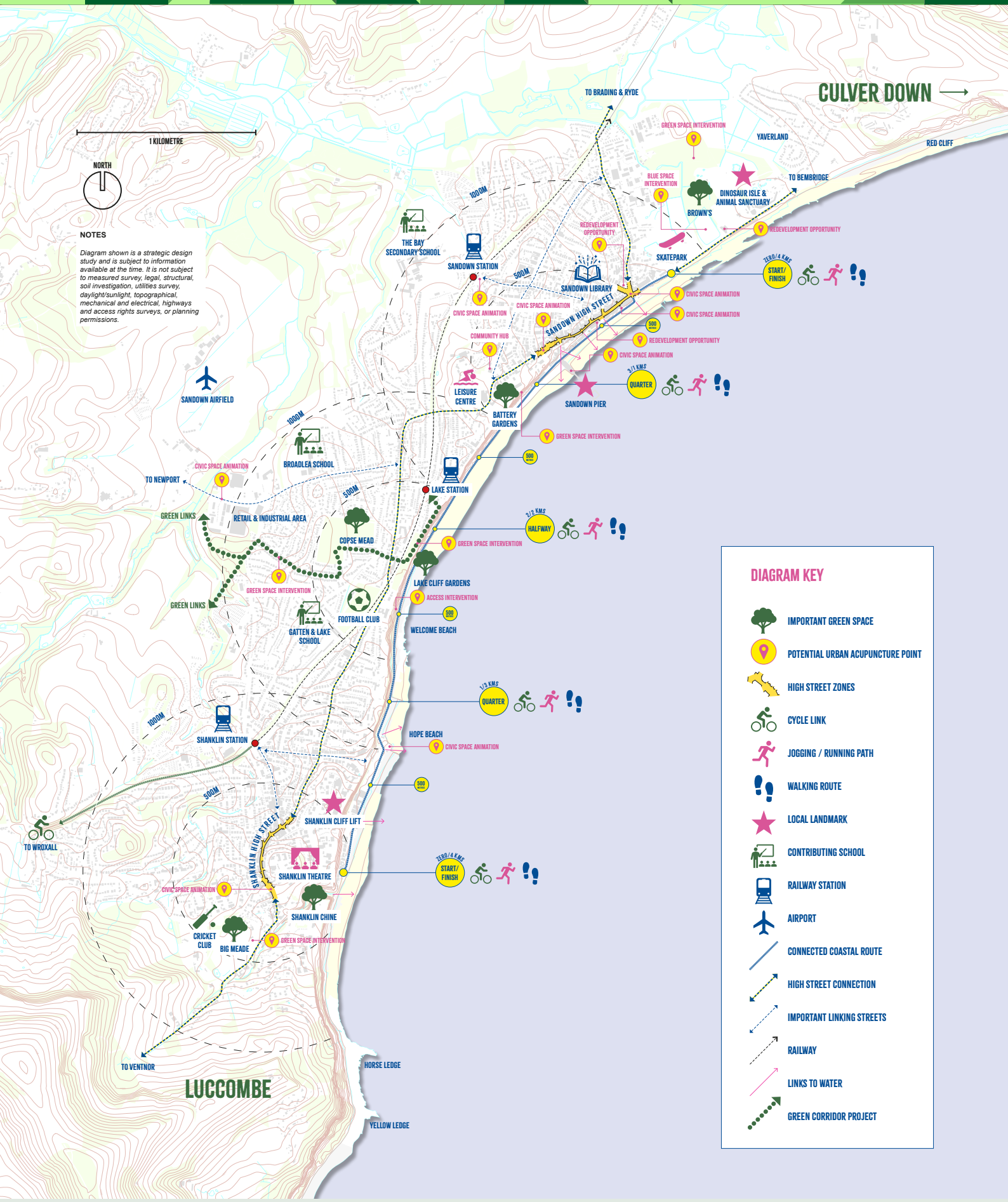
- SCALE 03 – No more than 3 across the whole Bay Area

These numbers are a guide only and it is for the Sandown Town Council, Lake Parish Council, Shanklin Town Council, and Isle of Wight Council – working collaboratively with the local community – to review and monitor the appropriate level of activity at any given time, based on time and resources.

Existing "pipeline" projects – e.g. projects that are already being talked about or discussed – can be rebadged as Bay Area Place Plan projects to give a head start in populating this list. For example, major tourism or research investment at Yaverland could be a Scale 03 project, as could a new performing arts venue in Shanklin. Meanwhile, business-led initiatives that revolve around pop-up events, high street animations and promotions can become Scale 01 projects.

Adding a Bay Area brand logo/identity to the poster, publicity or other materials associated with all scales of projects gives them a sense of being an "official" Bay Area project and will add credibility and recognition to the Bay Area Place Plan.

-KAKAPO-



Plan 2 – The Spatial Strategy Diagram for the Bay Area Place Plan. Please see separate drawing file to allow examination of the details in this drawing.

SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Bay Area Strategy Diagram describes some of the main urban and rural components of the Bay Area and shows how they connect and relate to one another. It also indicates the potential locations of a series of urban design interventions that can help strengthen the collective identity of the Bay Area. These interventions can help form the basis of a future action plan for the Bay Area.

1. URBAN ACUPUNCTURE

Urban acupuncture is an urban design tactic that uses precise, targeted interventions to promote urban regeneration at a local level. It supports the idea that interventions in public space do not need to be ample and expensive to have a transformative impact. This ties in neatly with the "start small and snowball" principle advocated for the Bay Area.
Urban acupuncture represents an adaptable framework for renewal, where highly focused and targeted initiatives help regenerate neglected spaces, incrementally deploy urban strategies, or consolidate the social infrastructure of the wider area.

Drawing from the metaphor of the Chinese traditional medical practice, urban acupuncture refers to the improvement of social and urban issues through precise interventions and consolidate urban planning strategies. The concept was first coined by Spanish architect Manuel de Solà. Urban acupuncture projects have a high degree of reversibility, allowing for corrective measures and improvements. They target neglected, underused areas that deteriorate a town or city's image and liveability.

Depending on budget and scale, urban regeneration projects can be performed from the top down by the public sector, or from the bottom up by the community or the private sector, and can use various programmes, scopes, and techniques. However, some of the most successful recent urban acupuncture projects have been based on a collaborative approach, bringing together the public, private and community sectors.

It is this collaborative approach that the Bay Area can benefit from most of all – an approach that is led by the coalition of Sandown Town Council, Lake Parish Council, Shanklin Town Council, and Isle of Wight Council but at all times engaging in the most appropriate and effective ways with the community that live and work in the Bay Area.

This report suggests 18 locations for urban acupuncture interventions, but community-led asset mapping (see Appendix 01) may reveal more or shift the ones suggested here to different locations.

Not all urban acupuncture projects will necessarily be Scale 01 projects (Inexpensive and Community-Led Quick Wins) although many of the projects identified for the 18 locations are, as shown on the Strategy Diagram. It is the precise and targeted nature of the interventions that makes this concept work effectively.

2. CONNECTIVITY

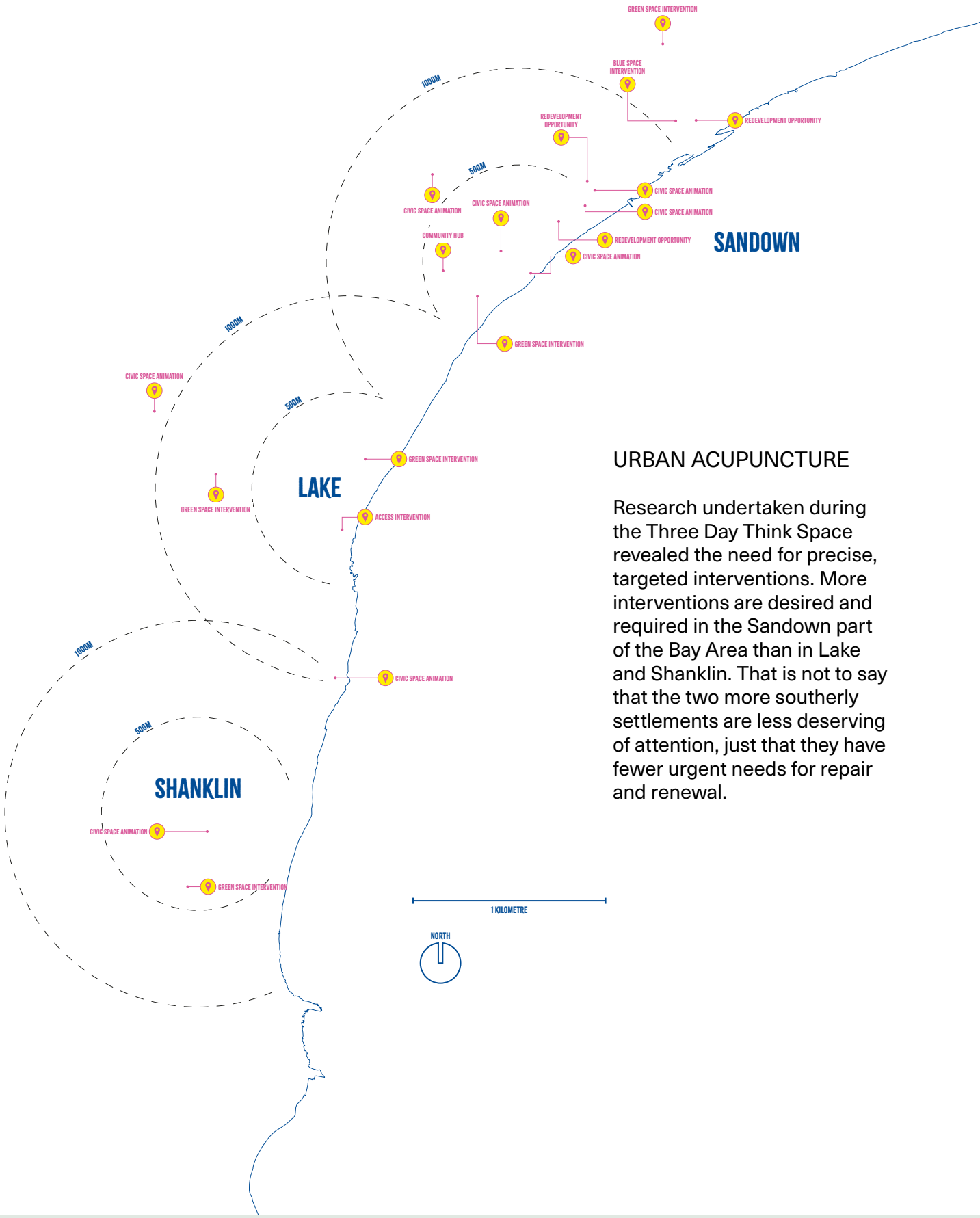
Strong, obvious, and clear physical connections between the three settlements of Sandown, Lake and Shanklin for bicycles, scooters, and wheelchair users is the second component of the Spatial Strategy. These can be achieved in two distinct ways:

- THE INLAND ROUTE – Providing safe, connected, and convenient inland routes to make existing routes welcoming and convenient to wheeled users, and add new links where required

- THE COASTAL ROUTE – Infrastructure improvements to make the revetment, promenade, and seafront route welcoming and convenient to wheeled users

The Inland Route

Safe cycling and walking links inland (away from the coastal strip) are essential components of a sustainable movement network. These links are characterised by several key qualities that enhance their effectiveness and appeal.



URBAN ACUPUNCTURE

Research undertaken during the Three Day Think Space revealed the need for precise, targeted interventions. More interventions are desired and required in the Sandown part of the Bay Area than in Lake and Shanklin. That is not to say that the two more southerly settlements are less deserving of attention, just that they have fewer urgent needs for repair and renewal.

Plan 3 – The 18 suggested urban acupuncture points across the Bay Area

Routes need to be clearly marked and well-maintained routes, separate from vehicular traffic whenever possible. These paths need to be free from obstacles and hazards, ensuring that pedestrians and cyclists can move without fear of collisions. Adequate lighting and clear signage further contribute to safety, making these links usable day and night. Accessibility is another vital aspect of safe cycling and walking links. They should be easily accessible to individuals of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities. Ramps, kerbs, and wide pathways should accommodate wheelchair users.

Inland links should prioritise connectivity and convenience. They need to seamlessly integrate with existing networks, providing cyclists and pedestrians with efficient routes to their destinations across the three settlements. Well-designed safe crossings at busy junctions that prioritise the safety of vulnerable road users are essential components of a well-planned network. This connectivity encourages more people to choose walking and cycling as viable options, reducing traffic congestion, and promoting healthier lifestyles.

Landscape and aesthetics also play a role in the appeal of safe cycling and walking links. Thoughtful landscaping and greenery can make these pathways more pleasant and inviting. Benches, rest areas, and public art installations enhance the overall experience, making the journey as enjoyable as the destination.

Maintenance is crucial to the longevity and usability. Regular upkeep, such as repaving surfaces, repairing damaged signage, and clearing debris, ensures that they remain safe and functional over time.

Community involvement and engagement in the maintenance process can foster a sense of ownership and pride among local residents. It is understood that the preparation of the Bay Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is now underway, and this document will cover all of these aspects. The LCWIP will also address investment in the coastal strip as part of a wider network.

The Coastal Route

The promotion of a flat coastal cycle route linking the three towns can offer numerous benefits:

- STRENGTHEN IDENTITIES – There is an opportunity to include artwork along the route that celebrates the Bay Area and the three individual towns. These interventions will be witnessed and appreciated by locals and visitors alike. The route can strengthen the sense of community by physically linking the towns and encouraging interactions among their residents.

- CELEBRATE TIME & DISTANCE – The inclusion of distance markers (in minutes) or time markers (in kilometres) on the ground through the application of simple stencilled paintwork can provide a visual and psychological connection between the settlements. Unlike the necessarily more complex inland rote, the coastal strip can become a smooth, continuous arc, a thread that connects.

- PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – Cycling and walking are both great forms of exercise and a flat, coastal route that is accessible to people of all abilities will encourage more people to engage in physical activity. Regular cycling can lead to improved physical health, including cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength and flexibility, joint mobility, and decreased stress levels.
- SCENIC BEAUTY – The coastal route offers stunning views of the sandstone cliffs, and the open sea making the cycling experience more enjoyable.

- TOURISM BOOST – Such a cycle route can attract tourists, boosting local businesses in the towns it links. Information boards along the route could carry info about local wildlife, conservation efforts, and historical points of interest.

3. CONSISTENCY & COORDINATION

To further strengthen the overall Bay Area identity, the streets, squares, and public spaces (such as the Coastal Route) need to achieve a consistency of quality and appearance.

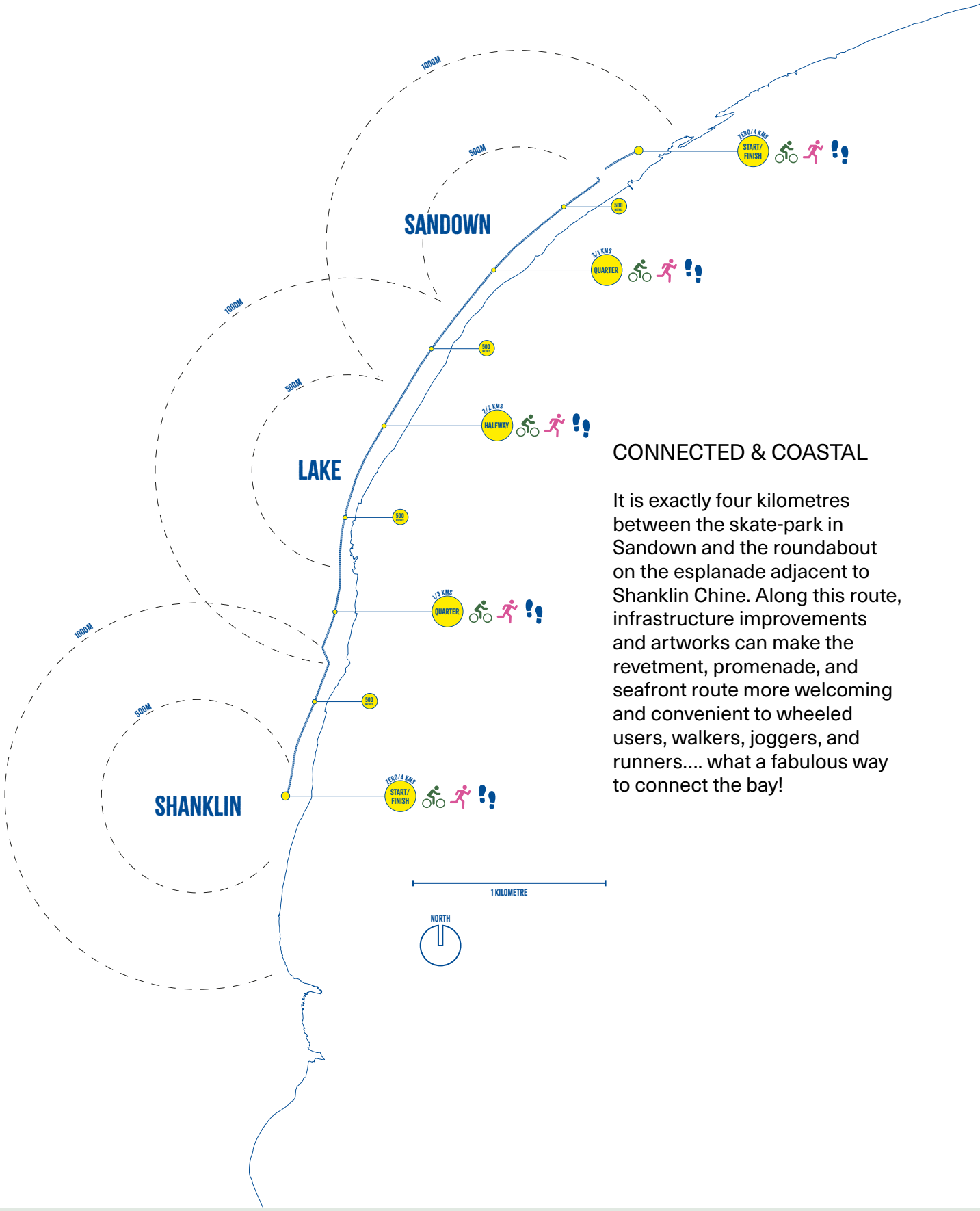
This is essential for creating aesthetically pleasing and functional urban environments. Below are a series of opportunities to deliver consistency and coordination as the Bay Area establishes an overarching identity.

- PUBLIC REALM & URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES – The implementation of public realm and urban design guidelines that establish a clear vision and design principles for streets, spaces, and squares is the principal mechanism. These guidelines should outline desired materials, colours, and landscaping details. It is noted that the Isle of Wight Council already has such guidance in place, but consideration should be given to locally responsive and community-led design codes for the Bay Area.

- LAND USE CLUSTERING – The suggested clustering of land use activities that describe the preferred use and design of buildings and public spaces will help animate and enliven the public realm. For example, Sandown could be identified as the place for more unusual, quirky "sub-culture" while Shanklin is home to more traditional culture. These ideas around clustering can also help ensure that physical developments (such as renovation and reuse) adhere to a consistent design language for the Bay Area. For more on this place differentiation, see Table 4 on page 72.

- ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER – Linked to the land use clustering, could be an identification of a specific architectural character or style that reflects the local culture and history of the Bay Area. Encouraging new developments to incorporate elements of this character into their designs will further add to the consistency of experience.

- MATERIALS & COLOUR PALETTE – Can a consistent Bay Area palette of building materials and colours, appropriate for the area, be established? Maybe these are drawn from nature, the geology and ecology of the area. Such a palette can help create a harmonious visual identity and prevent jarring contrasts.



CONNECTED & COASTAL

It is exactly four kilometres between the skate-park in Sandown and the roundabout on the esplanade adjacent to Shanklin Chine. Along this route, infrastructure improvements and artworks can make the revetment, promenade, and seafront route more welcoming and convenient to wheeled users, walkers, joggers, and runners.... what a fabulous way to connect the bay!

Plan 4 – The four kilometre connected coastal route

- STREET FURNITURE & LIGHTING – A standardisation in the design and placement of street furniture, such as benches, streetlights, and trash bins can add to consistency. Remove unnecessary street clutter and replace broken or out-of-date objects with ones that offer uniformity can enhance the overall appearance of the public realm. This approach will allow bespoke, unusual street furniture – of the type envisaged by young people during the Think Space – to become celebrated features of the public realm.

- LANDSCAPE & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – Plan and maintain green spaces, trees, and landscape in a consistent manner. The various parks, gardens, and green public spaces across the Bay Area offer the opportunity for a common theme to be introduced in information boards, gates, and welcome features. The use of native plants and landscape design guidelines can contribute to a cohesive appearance.

- ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE – The consistent use of pedestrian-friendly designs that prioritise accessibility and safety is encouraged. Wider pavements, at-grade crossings, and (where appropriate) pedestrian-first zones can help achieve a uniform and pleasant walking experience.

- SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING – Implement a consistent visual language and standardised signage and wayfinding systems across the Bay Area to help visitors navigate the area easily and contribute to the overall coordinated aesthetic. See also the GET CONNECTED section on page 32.

- PUBLIC ART IN PLACEMAKING – Incorporating public art and placemaking initiatives that enhance the visual appeal of public spaces promote a sense of identity. These elements should align with the established design principles. The opportunity for stencilled distance and time markers on the coastal strip is part of both this public art principle and the previous signage and wayfinding principle.

- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – Involve the local community and stakeholders in the design and planning process. Gathering input from residents and businesses can help ensure that the design choices align with community preferences. The Think Space was a successful start in this process, and it should be kept alive through future events using the same approach.

- MAINTENANCE & ENFORCEMENT – Ensure regular maintenance of streets, spaces, and public squares to preserve their appearance. Enforce design and maintenance standards consistently to prevent deterioration.

- ADAPTIVE REUSE & HISTORIC PRESERVATION – Promote adaptive reuse of historic buildings, such as the empty hotels, preserving their architectural integrity while repurposing them for contemporary uses. This is critical to a consistent approach to the regeneration of the wider Bay Area.

- DESIGN REVIEW – Future Think Space events may be able to adopt the role of a design review panel and be responsible for evaluating and approving new developments and interventions to ensure they meet established design guidelines.

4. URBAN INTENSITY YET A RELAXED ISLAND WAY OF LIFE

Combining an intense urban way of life with a relaxed island way of life might seem like an unusual juxtaposition, but it is a lifestyle choice that some people find appealing. If the Bay Area is to attract incomers and to dissuade young people from leaving, then a blend of this sort should be pursued. This blended idea of "intensity yet relaxed" emerged from the Three Day Think Space.

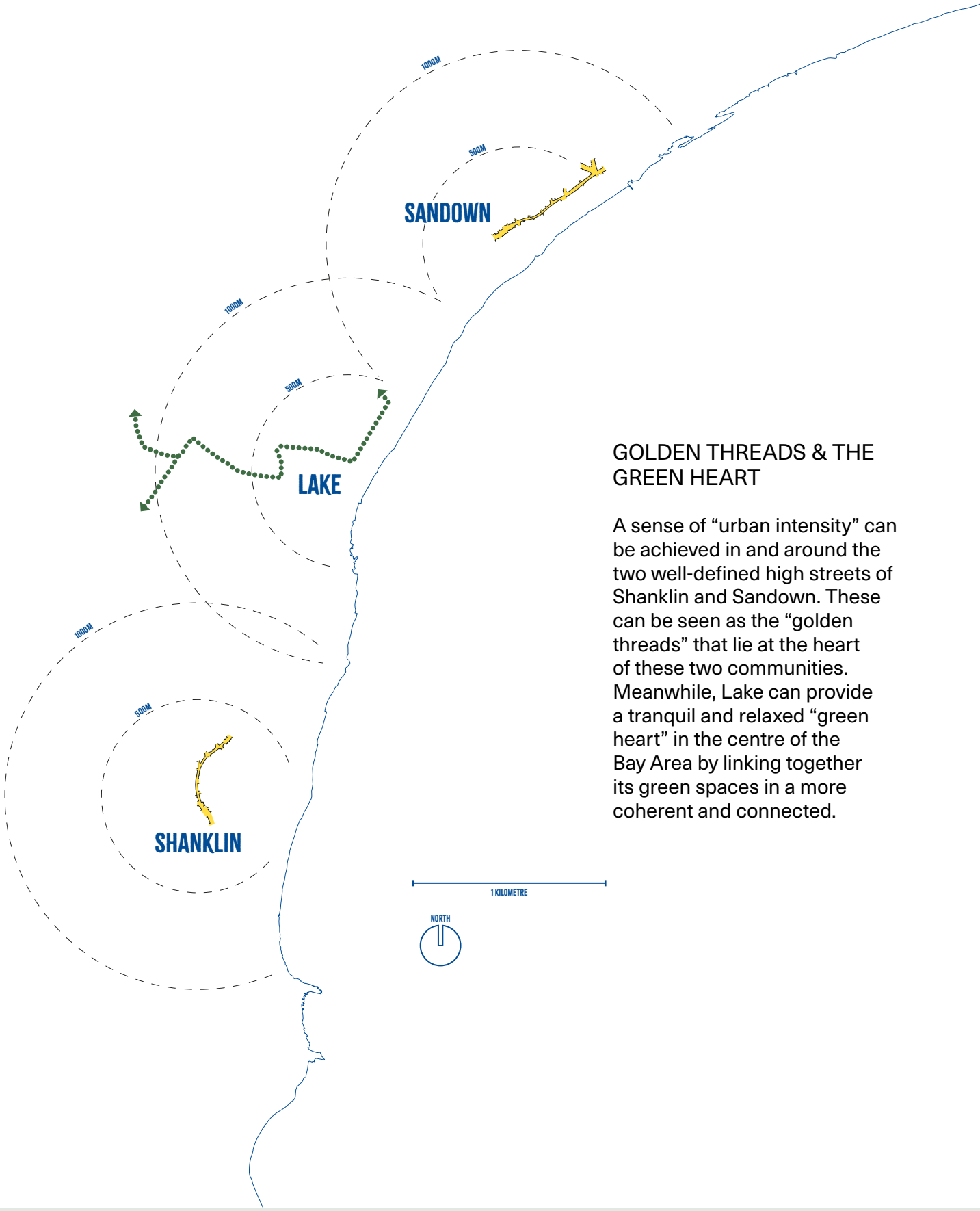
This blend allows individuals to enjoy the best of both worlds by alternating between the fast-paced, vibrant energy of urban living and the laid-back, tranquil vibe of an island getaway. Here is how this fusion could be achieved:

- DUAL EXPERIENCES – Intensify and invest in Sandown and Shanklin high streets and town centres as more intensive clusters of land uses. Contrast this against the secluded and tranquil parts of the Bay Area that offer a retreat for relaxation and rejuvenation.

- REMOTE WORK – With the rise of remote work, more people can maintain jobs more typically found on the mainland while living on the island. This allows them to continue their "urban careers" while enjoying the slower pace and natural beauty of an island environment. As long as they have a reliable internet connection, they can work from virtually anywhere. However, the loneliness of constant work from home can be offset by managed co-working spaces and other communal spaces that can offer variety and community connections.

- ISLAND-BASED BUSINESSES – Some people choose to start businesses on the island, such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, or boutique shops, which cater to both locals and tourists. This allows them to be actively involved in the island community while deriving income from their ventures.

- CULTURAL EXCHANGE – Embracing both urban and island cultures can be enriching. Individuals who live and work in the Bay Area can actively participate in events, cultural and community activities, networking, island traditions, and local festivals but bring with them experiences from larger settlements, often on the mainland.



GOLDEN THREADS & THE GREEN HEART

A sense of "urban intensity" can be achieved in and around the two well-defined high streets of Shanklin and Sandown. These can be seen as the "golden threads" that lie at the heart of these two communities. Meanwhile, Lake can provide a tranquil and relaxed "green heart" in the centre of the Bay Area by linking together its green spaces in a more coherent and connected.

Plan 5 – The golden threads and the green heart

- MINDFUL LIVING – An island environment often encourages a more mindful and eco-friendly way of life. This can influence individuals to adopt a more sustainable and balanced lifestyle. For example, they might become more conscious of their carbon footprint or incorporate island-inspired wellness practices into their daily routines.

The decision to combine these two lifestyles often comes from personal values and priorities. Some people prioritise career advancement and cultural experiences in larger settlements but also value the peace, simplicity, and natural beauty that island life offers. The challenge for the Bay Area is to attempt to combine these two lived experiences within its natural and built assets.

5. THE ISLE OF WIGHT UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The platform for the entire Spatial Strategy is built upon the ground beneath our feet – the geology – and the landscape, seascape, ecology, and biodiversity. Washing across the whole of the Bay Area is UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, a designation that recognises this unique combination of factors. This is a critical and valuable designation and underpins the entire strategy.

The Isle of Wight was awarded this status in June 2019. This recognition was given in part due to the island's significant efforts in environmental innovation and community engagement. The designation of UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve aims to support the following eight outcomes:

1. Conservation of Biodiversity
2. Sustainable Development
3. Research and Education
4. Tourism and Recreation
5. Cultural Heritage Preservation
6. International Recognition
7. Collaboration and Partnerships
8. Long-term Sustainability

From this list, it can be seen how economic regeneration is a distinct opportunity offered by the designation. However, there is a need for a programme that can raise awareness amongst the residents and visitors of the Bay Area about what the UNESCO Biosphere is and how people and businesses can benefit from it in their daily activities.

The Isle of Wight UNESCO Biosphere Reserve spans almost 1000 km^2, with 60% of it being marine. It has a core zone and a buffer zone and includes most of The Solent, the strait that separates the island from the mainland. The coastal environment, estuaries, reefs, kelp forests, and shark nurseries are integral parts of the reserve. Over 50% of the island is protected as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (although the Bay Area lies just outside this designation) marking it out as one of the most spectacular landscapes in the UK with diverse, rich habitats for wildlife. To fulfil the criteria for Biosphere Reserve status, people must live in the area. This living landscape where people and nature coexist in harmony is what makes the Biosphere Reserve status truly special and more useful than other similar destinations in terms of regeneration initiatives.

The Isle of Wight is home to approximately 140,000 inhabitants, with 22,500 of the total living in the Bay Area. The island is already developing eco-tourism and is working with mainland universities and other institutions to foster environmental innovation and attract new investment. The designation as a Biosphere Reserve signifies the commitment of the local communities, local government, and local conservation organisations to protect and sustainably manage the island's natural and cultural resources.

Research published in June 2020 by the UK National Commission for UNESCO, shows that UNESCO projects can help build a greener, more equal and more peaceful world, while also creating financial value. UNESCO projects in the UK generate an estimated £151 million of financial benefit to local communities each year and help bring them together to protect and conserve some of the most important places across the country.

If the Bay Area is to diversify its economy and pursue eco-tourism in a more assertive way, then the UNESCO Biosphere designation can significantly contribute to this shift in several ways.

- PROMOTION – The UNESCO designation raises awareness about the importance of the island's natural assets, unique biodiversity, and natural resources. This promotional aspect of the designation can attract tourists who are interested in sustainable travel and nature-based experiences.

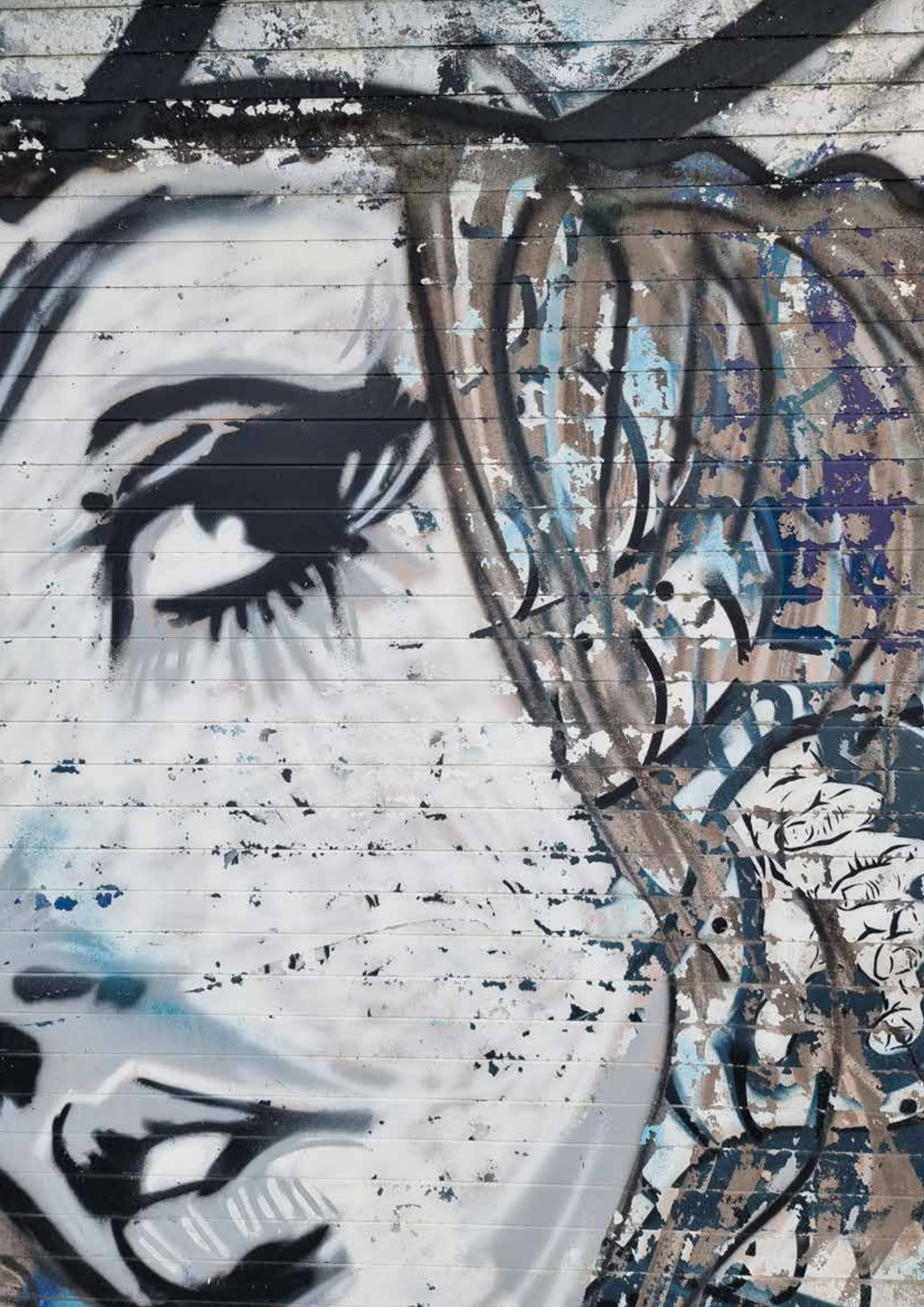
- REPUTATION – Being recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve enhances the island's reputation as a destination that values and preserves its natural and cultural heritage. The example of the Jurassic Coast in Dorset (also a UNESCO designation) has shown the uplift and boost such as designation can have on recognition and visitor numbers.

- EDUCATION – The designation provides opportunities for educational tourism, and this in turn links to how the Bay Area Place Plan can continue to engage with young voices. Visitors and local people can learn more about the island's unique ecosystem and conservation efforts.

- ECONOMY – Increased tourism can boost the local economy by providing income for local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, tour operators, and local artisans. The food and accommodation offer can be overtly linked to the UNESCO designation.

- CONSERVATION – The increased tourism revenue can (through various mechanisms) be reinvested into further conservation efforts, creating a positive cycle of sustainability.

- COMMUNITIES – The designation encourages local communities to get involved in sustainable practices, which can lead to the development of eco-friendly products and services that cater to tourists.



THEMES & TOPICS

This section provides a greater level of detail for specific topics that have emerged from the research phase of the project undertaken through the Three Day Think Space. In a sense, it is the “what” aspect of the Bay Area Place Plan.

It takes the form of a narrative flow, starting with business development and economic sustainability, which then links to the cultural offer of the Bay Area – and how that culture can find a strengthened identity through distinct geographical locations – and how the streets and spaces of the urban area can help showcase that cultural offer. Finally, the role of young people in being key players in the delivery of a brighter future for the Bay Area is addressed.

Historical Perspective on Tourism & Economic Evolution

The Isle of Wight’s history as a tourist destination has been long-standing, and intimately connected with Victorian splendour; the island as a whole became the jewel in British tourism during this era in respect to the island’s climate and landscapes which drew visitors seeking respite. Queen Victoria then established Osborne House, solidifying its reputation. Grand hotels, seaside promenades, and gardens flourished, alongside tourism focused industry bolstering the local economy further.

This was retained right through to the 20th century where it transformed into a cultural haven with events like the Isle of Wight Festival headlined by era-defining bands of the time, attracting hundreds of thousands to the island. This was galvanised by smaller festivals and local carnivals in the area throughout the last century. However, solely relying on tourism for economic sustainability for the Bay Area will fall short eventually.

Looking Ahead: Imperative of Economic Diversification

The Project Team recognises that tourism will continue to serve as the primary pillar of the economy in the foreseeable future, at least throughout the duration of the Bay Area Place Plan. However, over reliance hampers future prosperity. Rapid technological shifts, sustainability concerns, climate change, and changing consumer preferences dictate diversification.

Today, the Bay Area stands at a crossroads, blending past legacy with future aspirations. Honouring heritage while embracing modern challenges through conservation, collaboration and connectivity paves the way for a resilient and vibrant economy.

Collaboration + Connectivity = Sustainability

For the local economy to thrive, it must adopt a sustainable model that takes into account social, environmental, and economic factors. The key to achieving this sustainability is through enhanced connectivity and collaboration.

Collaboration among businesses on specific projects, coupled with a more interconnected business community facilitated by a formal organisation promoting regular communication and networking, establishes a mutually beneficial relationship. Businesses flourish through sharing knowledge and working together, while the organisational framework gains from the vitality and diversity of participating businesses and sectors.

In essence, to ensure lasting prosperity, the local economy must consistently embrace a sustainability model that incorporates three critical elements: social, economic, and cultural considerations, with a focus on continuous collaboration and connectivity as essential actions.

Natural Asset Conservation & Eco-Tourism

During the public engagement period, it was encouraging to see how many businesses were keen to talk about the maintenance and conservation of the natural landscape across the Bay Area.

Many business owners, especially those who run concessions along the seafront were keen to note that the beach and the sea defences are pivotal to the local economy. Furthermore, the hidden gems of Lake i.e. the numerous pockets of green space should be utilised more by the local community and visitors alike:

- Large park areas for mini festivals and artisanal markets e.g. Shanklin Theatre or the Big Mead
- Small spaces for play and meet-ups e.g. Lake Cliff Gardens
- Green spaces for education and rejuvenation e.g. Copse Mead

The long term economic sustainability of the area lands directly with promoting and maintaining its natural assets, encouraging the local community to enjoy and take pride in their place and for visitors to want to come to the area, enjoy their experience and stay longer; business owners were also keen to note that environmental protection matters as it influences their ability to recruit staff and attract new and returning customers. Many small businesses along the seafront made mention of the fact that their repeat tourists have noticed a steady decline over the years. The tourists are still willing to visit as "... the travel is convenient, and they rely on happy childhood memories of the area" but are sad to see the area being left in such disrepair.

As previously noted, local residents and visitors to the Bay Area during the Victorian era intentionally came to the area to revel in its natural beauty and rejuvenating qualities; as the Bay Area explores new avenues, it should also prioritise the preservation of its historical and natural attributes, ensuring their enduring ability to sustain the region in the long run.

As already noted in the Spatial Strategy, the Isle of Wight UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status, designated in 2019, holds the potential to serve as a robust economic catalyst for the business community, which in itself can be likened to a microcosm of the larger ecosystem. To fully harness this potential, there is a pressing need for an educational and public relations campaign that fosters a deep understanding of its biosphere status and instils pride among both locals and business owners regarding their integral role in and connection to the biosphere reserve's preservation and prosperity.

In the upcoming chapter, we will delve deeper into the concept of a new era of eco-tourism, exploring the potential for a reconnection with valuable assets. This eco-tourism approach will serve as a focal point for various elements, including arts, culture, festivals, and more, as we contemplate the prospect of a sustainable and enriching future.

Collaboration Is Key For Sustainable Growth

Over the public engagement period, the business community noted that "... there's a growing sense of 'joining the dots' and that the solutions aren't at an individual business level but rather about seeing connections and how different businesses can complement each other."

Collaboration serves as a vital catalyst for propelling the growth of small businesses and invigorating the local economy. It refers to the cooperative efforts and partnerships established with the shared goal of enhancing economic prosperity in a locality. It involves working together, sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise, and jointly implementing strategies and initiatives to stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities, and foster community development.

From a small business perspective, the benefit of collaboration is trifold:

1. Ongoing peer-to-peer support and sharing insights on consumer behaviours
2. New packages, products and offers can be developed together, which can lead to growth for both parties.
3. Each party involved can tap into each other's customer base which can lead to exposure to new audiences leading to further growth.

Collaboration usually occurs with other businesses who have a similar customer base, such as a water sports equipment rental shop offering experience packages that incorporate breakfast or lunch deals with a beach front cafe nearby. This beach front cafe might even work with a local farmer to provide produce for their seasonal, sustainably sourced menu. A vital aspect is sharing news of the collaboration directly with the consumer which ensures they truly experience the authenticity of the area and will likely share this with others on returning home to friends and family, establishing the destination location "brand" of the Bay Area.

However, exciting developments can also occur when businesses collaborate with others that sit outside of their sector and usually attract a different clientele. The emergence of arts festivals over the last decade along UK seaside towns have been a prime example of how cross-sector collaboration can positively impact the local economy.

The internationally recognised biennale arts festival B-Side, based on Portland, Dorset and the annual Margate NOW festival provide contemporary art installations and interventions across site-specific locations around their seaside locations. These festivals not only attract diverse audiences to the area, but also breathe new life into disused or abandoned spaces for the duration of the festival. This increased footfall benefits the local economy, but it also aims to extend the season for most local businesses as the festivals are intentionally delivered on shoulder-seasons throughout the year in order to support the local economy in new ways.

Numerous smaller festivals specialising in one art form can also make a significant impact in rural areas. According to a report commissioned by Wimborne Minster's business improvement district (BID) the 2017 Wimborne Minster Folk Festival boosted the local economy of the town (just 15,500 inhabitants) by an estimated £1.02m. Those who attended the event – around 20,000 – spent, at a conservative estimate, £50 each. The report was also quick to point out how local businesses and arts organisations would benefit from partnerships created during the event, laying foundations for longer-term relationships.

The Bay Area's thriving local creative scene offers a unique opportunity to enhance its appeal through contemporary cultural and arts festivals that attract internationally recognised artists and creatives as well as touring exhibitions.

These festivals should aim to not only benefit the existing creative ecosystem but also enrich the local area. The goal is to create an enduring and enriching experience rather than a transient "circus" that comes and goes, appealing to a diverse range of niche markets, including those focused on ecology, conservation, arts, culture, heritage, and health and wellbeing.

Activity	Supported by Councils	Supported by Businesses
Offering the use of empty shop spaces and disused or abandoned spaces on a temporary basis	●	●
Being open to collaboration in offering package deals and specifically tailored products or services for the niche markets		●
Pooling resources for advertising spend with the festivals		●
Being a named partner or supporter in arts grant applications	●	●
Supporting the festivals and each other across their own marketing channels	●	●
Inviting national touring exhibitions and festivals to the area	●	●

Table 3 – How local councils and independent businesses can support the emergence and continuation of festivals and similar interventions.

Embracing Diverse Operational Schedules

Some businesses in the Bay Area opt for a 6-month work cycle to accommodate the busy summer periods then choose to relax or travel for the remaining months of the year, while others may seek to extend their seasons. Regardless of the chosen approach, both avenues present opportunities to bolster the local economy throughout the year.

By fostering partnerships, engaging with the community, and innovating offerings, businesses can create a ripple effect that supports local job creation, encourages sustainable practices, and stimulates tourism even during off-peak months. Whether it's a tranquil winter retreat or a vibrant summer hotspot, strategic initiatives can ensure that businesses contribute meaningfully to the community's economic vitality year-round. Some further examples of how augmenting temporary seasonal cycles can support the local economy:

- DIVERSIFY REVENUE STREAMS – Additional revenue streams that complement the core business. This might involve renting out space for private events, offering consulting services, or selling related products.

- EVENTS & WORKSHOPS – Hosting events, workshops, or classes that cater to locals and visitors alike. These could include cooking classes, art workshops, fitness sessions, or educational seminars. These activities can help attract a more diverse customer base throughout the year.

- CATER TO LOCALS – While tourists may drive business during the summer, locals are the consistent audience. There is room to develop loyalty programs, discounts, or special offers for residents and friends of family who might live off the island to encourage repeat business.

- OFFER OFF-SEASON SPECIALS – Create special offers or discounts during the off-season to attract customers. This could include off-peak rates, limited-time promotions, or bundled deals.

- EXPAND ONLINE SALES – If applicable, consider selling products or services online that can be enjoyed year-round. This could include locally crafted merchandise, gift items, or unique experiences.

- CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT – Using the quieter months to focus on improving business operations, training staff, and enhancing customer service. This will set the stage for a successful busy season and help attract repeat customers.

In summary, collaboration can occur on a micro-level where two independents can work together towards a common goal, however broader collaboration across the business community as a whole can really strengthen long-term gain amongst many sub-sectors at once; this can offer a brilliant opportunity to publicise a thriving, entrepreneurial spirit on the island encouraging those living on the island to embark on their own business set up or even move to the area and follow suit.

Connectivity As The Bedrock For Growth

People to People Connectivity = A formal structure or organisation can be formed that provides regular communication and networking between businesses.

As seen during the public engagement period at the business focused event, as well as at the Three Day Think Space and even in individual discussions with some local business owners on site, it is clear that there is a strong sense of community spirit amongst the business owners within each area. This is a potent asset that the Bay Area must acknowledge and support. There is an eagerness for change and a need for a shift in attitudes towards more solution driven approaches. This energy should be utilised more effectively to support the businesses individually and collectively.

One way to capture this collective voice for positive change, is the formation of a business association, which is an organised group of businesses within a specific industry, sector, or geographic area that come together to advance common interests, collaborate on initiatives, and promote the growth and well-being of their members.

This can be supported by the three councils in offering space for meetings and covering nominal administrative costs, but for the majority the association is run as a voluntary collective consisting of champions within the business community representing each area i.e. Sandown, Lake and Shanklin and/or per sector such as Food and Drink, Arts, Heritage and Culture, Health and Wellbeing, Environment and Conservation.

It may be that the council can provide more support through their own remit or via the Isle of Wight & Hampshire Council, but it is important to note that a "Bay Area Business Association," is created and run by the business owners themselves to allow for greater autonomy and opportunities to action initiatives without the need for council permissions and oversight.

The aim of the association is to provide members with networking and collaboration opportunities, advocacy power to inform and shift policies in the local area, access to information in regard to market research, industry insights and even educational support for its members to improve their businesses. Other benefits include cost saving opportunities where they may share equipment or pool resources for advertising spend, as well as increasing their business's visibility through association events, publications, and promotional activities, leading to increased brand recognition.

A business association also provides credibility and trustworthiness to a business, reassuring customers, and partners of its commitment to industry standards.

It would be expected that the members would meet quarterly to discuss certain issues or initiatives they wish to bring forward collectively and create an online forum (either a Facebook group or a WhatsApp Community for example) where they can discuss smaller issues or ask for advice from each other in the interim periods. They can also connect and collaborate with local community and volunteering groups acting in a symbiotic way where each group can benefit each other's goals. For example, volunteer groups can support local business activity by providing skills, volunteers, or resources and in turn the local businesses can raise awareness, crowd-sourcing and donations for the volunteer or community group via their customer base.

The business association should also be made aware of any initiatives set out by the local council and Central Government, such as the High Street Task Force, and have the opportunity to contribute and raise concerns or offer feedback and solutions as a collective.

Creating a strong feedback loop between the local business community and the councils is crucial. The business owners in the Bay Area are genuinely invested in both their community and their business's future. Therefore, it's vital for them to feel acknowledged and listened to by the local councils. Their ideas should be taken into account and turned into practical solutions for the area whenever feasible. Without this connection, the business community could become disheartened, leading to a decline in morale.

People to Place Connectivity

People to Place Connectivity is a pivotal factor in supporting the growth of small businesses along the high street and concession businesses along the seafront. This connectivity encompasses a blend of modern and traditional infrastructure, both of which offer substantial benefits to the local economy.

5G Accessibility – The implementation of 5G networks presents an exciting opportunity for businesses. By providing faster and more reliable internet connectivity, 5G enhances the online presence of businesses, making it easier for customers to discover and interact with them through digital channels. For small businesses situated on the high street, this translates into heightened visibility and greater ease of attracting customers online. Furthermore, the speed and reliability of 5G empower businesses to engage in e-commerce, facilitate smooth transactions, and conduct robust online marketing efforts. These advantages are particularly pertinent to concession businesses along the seafront, as they can reach a wider audience and offer an improved online shopping experience, potentially leading to increased sales and customer loyalty.

Reintroduction of Banks and Post Offices – The reintroduction of banks and post offices in these areas represents a substantial support system for small businesses. Banks offer essential financial services, including loans, business accounts, and financial guidance, facilitating access to vital capital for growth while promoting financial stability. Post offices,

on the other hand, provide a range of services such as parcel delivery and postal services. These services are especially critical for concession businesses along the seafront that rely on efficient shipping and receiving of goods. Moreover, the presence of these institutions within the community can drive foot traffic to the high street, benefiting all local businesses.

To illustrate the successful application of People to Place Connectivity in improving the local economy, the 5G Rural Dorset initiative stands as an exemplary case study. This groundbreaking project seeks to explore how next-generation connectivity can enhance the quality of life and prosperity of residents in rural communities, including the sensitive environment of Dorset's UNESCO-designated world heritage coastline. By examining the positive impact of 5G in such a unique and historically significant setting, it becomes evident how improved connectivity can benefit various facets of the local economy while preserving the region's cultural and natural heritage.

In conclusion, People to Place Connectivity, encompassing both 5G accessibility and the reintroduction of banks and post offices, serves as a cornerstone for the growth and sustainability of small businesses along the high street and concession businesses along the seafront. This comprehensive approach fosters economic development, encourages digital transformation, and enhances the overall business landscape, with initiatives like 5G Rural Dorset serving as inspirational models for success.

The Bay Area business community in all three areas showcased great ideas to benefit the Bay Area on a long term basis and some of these ideas can be brought to fruition by their own initiative. Some examples of changes that could transform the Bay Area, as suggested during the public consultation include:

- Meeting the demands of an older demographic by providing more healthcare services and lifestyle offers for residents and tourists alike.
- Creating more varied transport options to improve accessibility within and between the towns across the Bay Area.
- Encouraging greater business diversity by transforming empty shops and spaces into pop up businesses and productive spaces.
- Consider longer open hours (past 8pm) to create more nightlife and a cafe culture, especially in Sandown.

- Encourage more arts, fairs, festivals to extend the tourist season and attract a more diverse audience to the area.
- Improving the planning process and lowering building restrictions to make change faster and smoother.
- Developing green infrastructure and green spaces, especially in Lake.
- Improve access to public amenities, e.g. beach toilets and showers.
- Improve beach maintenance, sand combing and sea defences.
- Improve traditional business infrastructure (such as banks, cash points and post office) as well as more contemporary business infrastructure such as broadband connectivity, online trading, and marketing training.

Pride of Place: Celebrating Natural Assets & Transforming Spaces

One of the consistent messages from the business community during the public consultation period was the issue of derelict buildings and empty shop spaces. The visual impact of empty shops and hotels affects the morale of the local residents, not to mention the lack of attraction for visitors, which in turn affects the viability of established businesses located nearby.

Encouragingly, part of the UK Government's Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, would give councils the power to hold a rent auction of a town centre shop had been empty for more than a year; this could positively affect the empty shop spaces and derelict hotels which are especially prevalent in Sandown.

However, temporary interventions can be explored in the interim, such as incorporating creative endeavours into the disused spaces including, but not limited to art installations, pop-up exhibitions and shops, or themed showcases that can convert desolate shopfronts into captivating narratives throughout the year. The resulting transformation fosters a sense of renewed energy, rekindling community pride, igniting new footfall to the hyperlocal areas and instilling a collective optimism that extends to local businesses. This ripple effect uplifts the morale of residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs alike, fortifying the interconnected web of economic sustainability.

Repurposing Existing Spaces

“Get it right for the locals, and the visitors will surely come” says Jan Gehl, celebrated Danish urban designer and architect. This quote emphasises the importance of creating environments and leisure activities that cater to the needs and interests of the local communities first and foremost. Recent studies have shown there is a drive for reimagining the depleted high streets across the UK by focusing on multifunctional use of spaces as opposed to just a reliance on retail spaces only.

The high streets across all three areas in the Bay Area, possess the potential to transition beyond mere retail-centricity and embrace a multifunctional ethos, thereby revitalising the local landscape. By repurposing vacant spaces into dynamic studios, workshops, co-working hubs, and even residential spaces, both short- and long-term visitors as well as local residents can be pivotal agents of activation.

Residents could nurture their creative impulses within artist studios, fostering a vibrant cultural tapestry, while workshops would provide an avenue for skill-sharing and community engagement, nurturing local talent. Co-working spaces, on the other hand, would cater to the evolving work dynamics of the modern era, offering flexible environments that foster collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship. This multifaceted transformation would cultivate an enriched sense of place, breathing fresh life into the high streets.

Not only would it attract a diverse array of visitors seeking unique experiences, but it would also fuel economic growth by nurturing local businesses, boosting footfall, and establishing the Bay Area as a dynamic hub for creativity and commerce.

Making Use Of Space: Building A Culture, Not An Attraction

The Bay Area can draw inspiration from successful examples across the UK where existing spaces have been creatively repurposed for cultural development, negating the need for grand, new cultural centres. For instance, in Leeds, “The Tetley” breathes life into an old brewery, functioning as an art gallery and creative workspace. Bristol’s “Tobacco Factory Theatres” transformed a tobacco manufacturing facility into a thriving cultural hub, featuring a theatre and artist workspaces. “Wapping Wharf” in Bristol rejuvenated a once-derelict area, now bustling with independent shops, restaurants, and community events.

The “BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art” in Gateshead repurposed a flour mill, and “The Custard Factory” in Birmingham creatively reimagined a custard factory, both now thriving as vibrant cultural and creative spaces. These examples emphasise that cultural development has evolved, emphasising repurposing existing spaces to foster community engagement, attract visitors, and celebrate local identity and culture.

This approach does not preclude brand new, purpose- built attractions for the Bay Area but care is needed to ensure a robust business case can be made to justify the proposals for new venues and that these do not shift investment that would otherwise go into renovating derelict or empty premises or maximising the value to be found in existing venues.

Embracing Place-Branding & New Tourism Habits

Consumer behaviours are leaning towards a more ‘value for money’ approach in recent years due to inflation and the cost of living crisis, with buyers preferring to save up and spend on luxury items or items considered to be an investment piece. Equally, consumers are tending towards more planet-conscious buying, favouring eco-friendly products or those that are locally sourced. Not only that, most local produce and artisanry are becoming increasingly attractive to tourists who are seeking authentic and memorable experiences of the area.

These trends set the Bay Area in a perfect position to lean into its current offer as seen in the cafés, shops, and entertainment spaces, especially in Sandown and Shanklin presently. However, there is room to expand on this further to establish the Bay Area as a “destination location” for tourists. This can be achieved in a variety of ways and some Bay Area-wide examples might include:

A niche market opportunity could be created by celebrating the natural assets of the Bay Area by providing specific tours and educational talks and workshop retreats for nature lovers and conservationists as seen in Guernsey with Puffin spotting tours or rock climbing communities on the island of Portland, Dorset. Some longer term visitor opportunities might include artist residencies or scientific and archaeological research. This can also tie into the educational and/or public relations campaign to celebrate the Bay Area’s UNESCO biosphere status.

Providing “Instagrammable” opportunities for visitors who want to share their experiences of the Bay Area on their social media platforms which can raise the profile of the Bay Area to wider audiences across the UK and even the globe. These opportunities might include engaging large scale public art and murals, quirky experiential cafés and venues that provide aesthetically pleasing or insightful knowledge of the area in an entertaining way or highlighting spaces and routes along the Bay Area that allows visitors to create their own engaging content online such as short films or time lapse plein air paintings. However, it is also necessary to retain each council’s own identity within the Bay Area brand.

Celebrating Each Area’s Unique Niche, Creating The Bay Area Brand
The Bay Area of the Isle of Wight possesses significant potential for cultural preservation and enhancement. Recognising and safeguarding the region’s local culture is vital for upholding a distinct identity, nurturing heritage, and fostering community unity. Below are key areas where tangible steps can be taken to promote cultural retention and improvement.

Sandown, Shanklin, and Lake each harbour distinctive cultural identities that enrich the broader Bay Area. By highlighting the unique attributes of these localities, cohesive Bay Area brand can be forged. Emphasise the natural landscapes, host diverse festivals, nurture creative communities, stage theatre performances, and showcase contemporary arts in each area.

Be it promoting arts and innovation in Sandown, preserving historical heritage in Shanklin, or cherishing the serene green heart of Lake, every niche contributes to the multifaceted charm of The Bay Area.

To unify these distinct identities, the community can initiate branding campaigns, host joint cultural events, and encourage collaborative projects that underscore the collective spirit of The Bay Area. This branding effort enriches the area’s cultural tapestry, strengthens its appeal to a wide array of audiences, and fosters a sense of shared identity and pride among residents and visitors alike.

Sandown	Lake	Shanklin
Edgy, Street Art, Sub-Culture Hub	The Green Heart for Locals	Traditional Culture & "Theatre & Thatch"
• Sandown's edgy and street art scene can draw visitors who appreciate contemporary art and urban culture. • To attract locals, events like street art workshops can encourage participation in artistic activities. • Collaboration with local artists and businesses can create unique souvenirs and products, promoting local entrepreneurship. • In addition to street art, Sandown can position itself as a family-friendly destination by hosting beach front activities such as sandcastle competitions, family picnics, water sports lessons and outdoor film screenings. • Local entrepreneurs can seize opportunities in health and wellbeing by offering yoga classes on the beach, cold water swimming collectives, fitness boot camps, or seaside meditation sessions. • Encourage the growth of an independent high street by supporting local shops and boutiques, hosting regular artisan markets to showcase unique products from local artisans.	• Lake, as the green heart of the Bay Area, offers serene natural spaces that appeal to locals seeking relaxation and outdoor activities. • Organising community clean-up events and eco-friendly initiatives and educational programmes that can involve residents in preserving the environment. • Encourage visitors to explore Lake's green spaces by providing guided nature walks or picnicking spots. • Encourage the development of a traditional high street by using the spaces around Merrie Farm to host markets to showcase unique Lake products.	• Shanklin's focus on traditional culture can attract visitors interested in history and heritage. • Collaborate with local artisans to offer workshops on traditional crafts and cultural experiences. • Invite local schools to participate in cultural events to foster a sense of pride and connection to their heritage. • Maintain and expand the programming offer at the Shanklin Theatre inviting national and international companies and performers. • As with Sandown, local entrepreneurs can offer health and wellbeing and/or family-friendly beach front activities

Table 4 – How different activities can find the 'right home' in each of the three settlements

Lake	Shanklin & Sandown
"Green Spaces as Cultural Hangouts"	"Water Sports, Health & Wellbeing"
• Lake's lush green spaces should be nurtured as cultural hubs. Develop these areas as community gathering spots, hosting a diverse range of events such as open-air concerts, art exhibitions, carnivals, theatre performances, contemporary arts festivals, and local fairs. • By integrating nature and arts, Lake can become a sanctuary where residents and visitors connect with both the creative and natural world.	• The coastal settings of Sandown and Shanklin offer a unique opportunity to promote water sports and holistic wellbeing. Establish water-based activities like kayaking, paddleboarding, and sailing, catering to tourists seeking adventure. • Simultaneously, encourage yoga sessions by the sea, wellness retreats, and beach front meditation sessions, attracting wellness enthusiasts and promoting a healthy lifestyle among locals.

Table 5 – Further details on how to differentiate between settlements while also creating a cohesive Bay Area identity

Action	Outcomes
ATTRACTING OVERSEAS VISITORS	Attracting international visitors involves creating culturally immersive experiences. Develop cultural exchange programmes, language classes, and festivals that celebrate the Bay Area's unique heritage. By embracing global perspectives, the region can enrich its own culture and foster connections with the world.
LEARNING AS LEISURE	Position learning as a leisure activity by organising engaging workshops, lectures, and cultural classes. These educational experiences can explore the Bay Area's history, traditions, crafts, contemporary arts, and theatre performances, making learning enjoyable for both residents seeking personal enrichment and curious tourists eager to delve into the local culture.
CULTURE AL FRESCO	Establishing dedicated outdoor spaces in Sandown, Shanklin, and Lake as dynamic cultural hubs. These spaces can host a wide array of events, including art installations, street markets, live music performances, theatrical productions, contemporary arts festivals, and vibrant carnivals. The goal is to transform public spaces into lively, artistic showcases that captivate residents and attract visitors.
PROMOTING NATURAL ASSETS FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY	Capitalise on the region's natural assets, such as its abundant seafood and locally sourced produce, to boost the culinary scene. Encourage local restaurants to incorporate these ingredients into their menus, creating a distinct and tantalising food culture. This not only supports local businesses but also offers residents and tourists a taste of the Bay Area's unique flavours.
TRAVEL INSPIRATIONS	Elevate the Bay Area's visual appeal and shareability to inspire travel. Invest in captivating signage, immersive street art installations, and a carefully curated calendar of events. Make the region Instagram-friendly, turning it into a destination where visitors can easily capture and share their experiences on social media.
FOSTERING ARTS & CULTURAL COHESION	Strengthen the Bay Area's cultural tapestry by fostering arts-related initiatives that promote cohesion. Support contemporary arts festivals, theatre performances, art exhibitions, and public art installations that reflect the region's identity. Encourage collaboration among local artists, theatres, and cultural organisations to enhance the area's artistic vibrancy, raise its cultural profile, and secure funding for arts-related programmes. By continuing to weave the arts into the community fabric, the Bay Area can become a dynamic cultural hub appealing to both residents and visitors.

Table 6 – Actions that can more firmly link the cultural offer to economic activity. These were the main ideas that emerged from the "Horizon Scanning" activity undertaken during the Three Day Think Space.

Encourage Cross-Visitation

By strategically connecting the unique identities of each place and offering incentives for cross-visitation, you can foster a sense of unity and community throughout the Bay Area, benefiting both locals and visitors alike.

- Create a Bay Area pass or discount system that incentivises tourists (and even residents) to explore all three areas.
- Host events that span across the locations, such as art festivals in Sandown's streets, followed by eco-friendly activities in Lake, and cultural performances in Shanklin's historic venues.
- Develop well-marked trails or paths that connect the areas, making it easy for both locals and tourists to explore the entire Bay Area as referenced in Spatial Diagram.
- Ensure public transport is varied, frequent and affordable.

Animate Your Streets & Spaces

The streets and spaces of the Bay Area can be animated in a variety of ways, often through cultural activity. Through these actions, the streets and spaces of the Bay Area become more than just thoroughfares or empty plots; they become places of community engagement, cultural expression, and social interaction.

- STREET ART – Murals, graffiti, and sculptures can transform public spaces into open-air galleries that showcase local talent and express the community's identity. The vacant and derelict buildings in Sandown provide an ideal canvas.
- FESTIVALS & PARADES – Streets can be used to host cultural festivals, parades, and carnivals. These events can celebrate local traditions, holidays, or historical events.
- STREET PERFORMANCES – Musicians, dancers, mimes, and other performers can bring culture to the streets, providing entertainment and showcasing local talent.

- MARKETS – Street markets can host a variety of vendors selling local crafts, food, and other goods. These markets can reflect the local culture and economy.

- HISTORICAL LANDMARKS – Streets that contain historical buildings or landmarks can provide a glimpse into the area's past.

- CAFÉS & RESTAURANTS – Local eateries can showcase regional cuisine, contributing to the cultural experience.

- COMMUNITY GARDENS – Spaces can be transformed into community gardens which not only beautify the area but also serve as a gathering spot for locals.

- PUBLIC SPACES – Parks, squares, and other public spaces can be used for community gatherings, recreational activities, or even outdoor exhibitions.

- CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS – Streets that are home to museums, theatres, or art galleries naturally host culture by providing spaces for people to engage with art, history, and other cultural activities.

Access Not Mobility

To give the streets and spaces of the Bay Area the best chance of effectively hosting culture-led animation, it is important to think in terms of "access not mobility". In urban design, this refers to a shift in focus from simply moving people from one place to another (mobility), to ensuring that people can easily reach the places, services, and resources they need (access). This in turn starts to shift the primary purpose of a street away from being a thoroughfares to become a place of community engagement, cultural expression, and social interaction.

In traditional urban planning, the emphasis has often been on mobility – that is improving infrastructure such as roads and public transport to increase the speed and ease of travel. However, this approach can sometimes lead to sprawling cities with long travel distances, and it may not adequately serve those who do not have access to private vehicles or good public transport.

On the other hand, an “access not mobility” approach prioritises making destinations closer and more easily reachable, rather than just focusing on moving people more quickly. This can involve strategies such as mixed-use development (combining residential, commercial, and other uses in close proximity), improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and enhancing public transport.

For example, instead of building a new road, develop local amenities or services so that people do not need to travel as far in the first place. Or it might involve improving pedestrian pathways and cycle lanes to make it easier for people to reach their destinations without a car. See the section on connectivity and the coastal strip. This approach recognises that good access contributes to a higher quality of life by reducing the need for long commutes, encouraging physical activity, fostering a sense of community, and making cities more sustainable.

Exploring Other Economic Avenues Alongside Tourism

The Bay Area’s dependence on tourism as its primary economic driver presents several challenges and underscores the need to diversify its economy. Troubled Waters, a report published by the think-tank Onward in September 2023 highlights three underlying factors behind coastal deprivation: the decline of traditional industries such as fishing and shipbuilding, the seasonality of local economies, and the older populations in these areas; the Bay Area is not immune to these factors.

While tourism remains valuable in the Bay Area, expanding into other sectors can offer resilience and opportunities for both residents and newcomers. Here are some reasons for diversification and examples of sectors to explore:

- ECONOMIC RESILIENCE – Relying solely on tourism makes the economy vulnerable to fluctuations, such as seasonal variations, economic downturns, or unexpected crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Diversifying into other sectors can help mitigate these risks – see the sections that follow on education and entrepreneurship and manufacturing.

- LOCAL EMPLOYMENT – A diversified economy can provide more stable employment opportunities for local residents, reducing dependence on low-paying seasonal jobs often associated with tourism.

- QUALITY OF LIFE – A broader economy can enhance the overall quality of life for residents by providing access to a variety of services, educational opportunities, and career paths.

- POPULATION RETENTION – Offering diverse industries and educational opportunities can help retain local talent and attract new residents, thus bolstering the community's growth.

Education & Entrepreneurship

Building on the foundation of education, the Bay Area can establish educational institutions or collaborate with existing ones to attract students, faculty, and budding entrepreneurs. The goal is to enrich the region's intellectual capital and stimulate innovation and growth.

For example, the introduction of a technical school specialising in sustainability or marine sciences can provide valuable learning opportunities for aspiring professionals. In addition, start-up programs for budding entrepreneurs, mentoring and guidance for existing small business owners, and the implementation of paid internships across all existing and emerging sectors within the business community can foster a culture of entrepreneurship and skills development. This multifaceted approach not only strengthens the educational landscape but also empowers individuals to contribute actively to the local economy while enhancing their own career prospects.

Manufacturing

Encouraging small-scale manufacturing, such as artisanal products, specialised equipment, or even niche food production, can create jobs and contribute to the local economy. The manufacturing sector on the island predominantly centres around the Medina Valley, extending from Cowes to Newport, benefiting from the consolidation of businesses in this region. This strategic clustering, along with supportive planning policies, creates an opportunity for young individuals from the Bay Area to explore careers in manufacturing with only a short commute as an alternative to tourism or relocating from the island.

Youth Engagement for a Brighter Future

Harnessing the imaginations of young people was a powerful aspect of the Three Day Think Space. The Project Team worked with several schools over the three days and were impressed and inspired by the ideas and imagination of young people in the Bay Area.

The young people encountered during the Think Space shared the same anxieties and distress about derelict buildings and wasted spaces that the adult community had. They were also acutely aware that funding is not limitless, and that prioritisation will be necessary to fix the problems. In this regard, young voices are not unrealistic and therefore unhelpful in achieving shared goals but an essential part of a community-wide effort to bring about change.

Therefore, moving forwards, continuing to harness the imaginations of young people as a means of shaping a brighter future for the Bay Area will be crucial. Continued engagement with young minds that are often brimming with creativity, innovation, and offer fresh perspectives can help revitalise and reinvigorate Shanklin, Lake and Sandown.

Use Spaces & Platforms That Engage Young People

To do this, it is essential to create spaces and platforms where young people feel encouraged and empowered to share their ideas and visions. During the Think Space, the Project Team worked in the classroom with the generous support of the school staff, but other avenues for young voices to be heard should also be established. These avenues should be inclusive and supportive, fostering an environment where ideas can flourish without fear of judgement.

Programmes that encourage creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills need to be integrated into a variety of youth activities. Encouraging interdisciplinary learning and exposure to various fields, such as technology, arts, and sustainable development, can broaden young people's horizons and inspire innovative thinking.

Collaboration is key. Young people can work alongside the local authorities, community organisations, and businesses to co-create solutions and initiatives that address the town's challenges and work with on its opportunities. By involving young residents in decision-making processes, a more holistic and diverse range of ideas and perspectives can emerge.

Four key recommendations for the continued engagement of young people in the aims and objectives of the Bay Area Place Plan are as follows:

- TECHNOLOGY – Digital platforms can be leveraged to connect young people and amplify their ideas. Online forums, artificial intelligence image generation (as used during the Think Space), social media, and digital collaboration tools can facilitate idea sharing and collaboration among young residents, regardless of their physical location in the Bay Area. While Sandown, Shanklin and Lake are all in proximity, the promotion of a Bay wide tech platform for young people, through the use of online tags could be a way forward.

- CULTURE – Artistic expression can also be harnessed to create a brighter future for the three towns. Encouraging young artists, musicians, writers, and performers from across the Bay Area to showcase their talents through events and exhibitions can not only enrich the Bay's cultural landscape but also attract visitors and stimulate economic growth.

- ENVIRONMENT – Stewardship over aspects of the Bay Area environment is another area where young imaginations can shine. This is a particularly important element in a place with a UNESCO Biosphere designation. Encouraging youth involvement in sustainability projects, such as coastal clean-ups, conservation efforts, or green initiatives, can instil a sense of responsibility for (and inheritance of) the area's natural environment and contribute to its long-term well-being.

- CELEBRATION – The recognition of young achievements is essential. The Bay Area should acknowledge and reward the contributions and innovations of young residents through awards or other public recognition. These awards or recognitions can not only motivate young people but also sends a message that their imaginations and efforts are valued and essential to the area's future.

There is much to gained by tapping into the imaginations of young people. Harnessing the creativity and energy of youth can shape a more prosperous future. Meanwhile, young people, will feel a deeper connection to the Bay Area community, and be inspired to contribute their talents and ideas. Fostering a greater sense of belonging will be a key component of the efforts to retain young people in the island.

Retaining Young People in the Bay Area

To address the challenge of retaining young people in the Bay Area and preventing their migration to the larger settlements or the mainland, a multifaceted approach that addresses both the push factors pushing them away and the pull factors attracting them to bigger centres is essential.

First and foremost, small coastal towns must focus on creating economic opportunities. This involves supporting local businesses and fostering entrepreneurship. By providing resources and incentives for the establishment and growth of small enterprises, the three towns can create jobs and career prospects for young people. Additionally, diversifying the local economy beyond traditional sectors, such as tourism, can lead to more stable and varied employment opportunities.

Education and skill development play a crucial role in retaining young talent. Investment in quality education and training programs, including vocational and technical education is critical. Partnering with local colleges and universities (possibly on the mainland) to offer relevant courses can help young people acquire the skills needed for employment in emerging industries.

Furthermore, mentorship programs connecting young individuals with experienced professionals can provide valuable guidance and networking opportunities. Affordable and attractive housing options are vital for retaining young residents. Small towns should develop housing policies that encourage the construction of affordable housing units, including rental properties and shared housing arrangements. Attractive urban planning and urban design can also enhance the overall appeal of the town, making it a desirable place to live.

To foster a sense of community and belonging, the three towns should invest in recreational and cultural amenities. Developing parks, sports facilities, community centres, and cultural spaces can provide young people with outlets for social interaction and personal growth. Additionally, supporting local arts and cultural initiatives can create a vibrant and engaging environment. Digital connectivity is essential in the modern age. Ensuring reliable and high-speed internet access throughout the town is critical for attracting and retaining young residents. It enables remote work opportunities, access to online education, and the ability to stay connected with friends and family.

Engagement and participation in local decision-making processes are crucial. The Bay Area should encourage young people to get involved in local governance, planning committees, and community organisations. Their input can shape policies and initiatives that reflect their needs and aspirations.

Finally, the three settlements should celebrate and promote their unique identity and culture. Emphasising the distinctiveness of life in Shanklin, Lake and Sandown, preserving cultural traditions, and organising events and festivals can instil a sense of pride and attachment among young residents.

Change

APPENDIX 01
COMMUNITY-LED ASSET MAPPING

To fully realise the Bay Area Spatial Plan, more needs to be understood about the assets available on the ground in the Bay Area. Therefore, an asset mapping exercise is recommended.

This should be a participatory process that helps the community identify and leverage its existing strengths, resources, and assets. This process will become a valuable tool for community development, as it empowers residents to take charge of their community's well-being and development. The outcome will be a schedule of the useful, the vital, the important, the out-of-date, the not-fit-for purpose and the opportunities for change and investment.

The critical aspect is giving local people the power to run this process – see the EMBRACE PEOPLE POWER section – and give them agency. Here is a step-by-step guide to conducting a community-led asset mapping exercise:

Stage A / Preparation & Planning

- Define the purpose – Clearly articulate the goals and objectives of the asset mapping process. What do you hope to achieve, and what issues or opportunities are you addressing?
- Assemble a team – Form a diverse team that includes community members, local organisations (inc. the three town and parish councils), local business leaders, and any relevant stakeholders. Ensure representation from different demographic groups.
- Identify resources – Secure the necessary resources, such as funding, materials, and technical assistance, to support the asset mapping process.

Stage B / Engage the Community

- Conduct outreach – Use various methods (e.g., community meetings, social media, flyers) to inform residents about the asset mapping initiative and invite their participation.
- Build trust – Establish trust within the community by being transparent about the purpose of the project and demonstrating a commitment to respecting the community's insights and needs.

Stage C / Training & Capacity Building

- Provide training – Offer training sessions or workshops to equip community members with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate effectively in asset mapping.
- Define assets – Help participants understand what constitutes an asset. Assets can include physical resources (e.g. parks, buildings, institutions), social resources (e.g. community organisations, local knowledge, key individuals such as youth leaders), and human resources (e.g. skills, talents, ideas).

Stage D / Asset Identification

- Conduct community workshops or meetings – Facilitate discussions and activities that encourage community members to identify and list their assets. Encourage brainstorming and creativity.
- Create asset inventories – Compile the information gathered during community workshops into a comprehensive list or map of assets. Use a variety of formats, including digital maps, databases, or visual representations.

Stage E / Asset Assessment

- Evaluate assets – Work with the community to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each asset. Consider factors like accessibility, condition, and sustainability.
- Prioritise assets – Collaboratively prioritise assets based on their potential to address community needs and achieve project goals.

Stage F / Asset Mobilisation & Networking

- Develop action plans – Engage the community in the development of action plans that leverage their assets to address specific challenges or opportunities.
- Facilitate connections – Encourage networking and collaboration among community members, organisations, and agencies to maximise the impact of assets.

Stage G / Documentation & Sharing

- Document the process – Maintain records of the asset mapping process, including maps, lists, reports, and feedback from community members.
- Share findings – Disseminate the results of the asset mapping process with the broader community, stakeholders, and decision-makers to promote transparency and garner support.

Stage H / Sustainability & Continuous Improvement

- Ensure sustainability – Support the community in implementing their action plans and sustaining their assets over the long term.
- Review and adapt – Periodically revisit and update the asset map to reflect changes in the community and assess progress toward goals. Adjust strategies as needed.

Stage I / Celebrate Success

- Celebrate achievements – Recognize and celebrate the successes and positive changes that result from the community-led asset mapping process. This reinforces community pride and motivation.

Stage J / Feedback & Evaluation

- Seek feedback – Gather feedback from participants and stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the asset mapping process and identify areas for improvement.

Undertaken in this way, community-led asset mapping is an ongoing and iterative process that empowers communities to harness their strengths and resources for positive change. It fosters a sense of ownership and collective action, ultimately contributing to the well-being and resilience of the community.

Each of the settlements of Shanklin, Lake and Sandown should use a Community-Led Asset Mapping exercise to determine the required level of self-sufficiency and decide how investment can be best directed to the individual settlements of the Bay Area as a whole.

APPENDIX 02
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Bay Area Place Plan should be designed to measure the success and progress of the revitalisation efforts in specific areas. These KPIs can help assess the economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the regeneration project.

There follows a list of draft KPIs for the Bay Area Place Plan. These KPIs should be carefully selected and adapted for use for regular monitoring of the Bay Area Place Plan to ensure that it is achieving its goals and making a positive impact on the community and the environment.

Adjustments to the plan can be made based on the data collected from these adapted indicators to optimise the plan's impact.

Economic

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the region
- Increase in property values and real estate market activity
- Job creation and reduction in unemployment rates
- Growth in tourism-related revenue and visitation
- Business start-ups and expansion within the area
- Increase in local business diversity and income levels

Social

- Improvement in residents' overall quality of life
- Reduction in crime rates and enhanced safety perception
- Increased community engagement and volunteerism
- Access to affordable housing and reduced homelessness
- Improvement in educational attainment and literacy rates
- Enhanced healthcare facilities and services

Environmental

- Reduction in pollution levels (air, water, and soil)
- Increase in green spaces and recreational areas
- Improvement in waste management and recycling rates
- Conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity.
- Adoption of sustainable transportation options
- Reduction in carbon emissions and energy consumption

Cultural

- Preservation of cultural heritage and historic sites
- Increased cultural events, festivals, and art installations
- Promotion of local arts and crafts industries
- Improvement in cultural diversity and inclusivity
- Growth in cultural tourism and related businesses
- Participation in cultural programs and activities

Infrastructure

- Upgrades and maintenance of transportation infrastructure (e.g. roads, bridges, stations)
- Expansion and modernisation of utilities (e.g. water, sewage, electricity)
- Development of recreational and public spaces (e.g. parks, beaches, footpaths)
- Access to high-speed internet and digital infrastructure
- Enhancement of public transportation options
- Adequate healthcare and educational facilities

Tourism

- Increase in the number of visitors and overnight stays
- Growth in the hospitality sector (hotels, restaurants, entertainment)
- Improvement in visitor satisfaction and feedback
- Development of unique tourism attractions and experiences
- Expansion of cruise ship or yacht tourism (if applicable)
- Increase in revenue generated from tourism-related activities

Community Engagement

- Participation in public meetings and consultations
- Engagement through digital platforms and social media
- Volunteer and community group participation rates
- Feedback on resident surveys and satisfaction levels
- Attendance at public events and town hall meetings
- Incorporation of community input into the regeneration plan

Financial

- Budget adherence and cost control for the regeneration project
- Attraction of public and private sector investments
- Return on investment (ROI) for the local government and investors
- Revenue generation from fees, permits, and taxes
- Reduction in public subsidies over time
- Long-term financial sustainability of the regeneration efforts

Accessibility & Mobility

- Reduction in traffic congestion and commute times
- Increase in walkability and cycling infrastructure
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Efficient public transportation network
- Connectivity to neighbouring regions and cities
- Integration of smart city technologies for mobility

Resilience & Climate Adaptation

- Preparedness for sea-level rise and extreme weather events
- Implementation of coastal protection measures
- Adoption of sustainable building practices
- Reduction in vulnerability to climate change impacts
- Resilience in the face of natural disasters

APPENDIX 03
DATA SHEETS FROM THE THINK SPACE

BAY AREA PLACE PLAN

ENVIRONMENT

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The Isle of Wight is part of the Cretaceous coast, with rocks from the Cretaceous period (which spanned around 145 to 66 million years ago) holding an incredible diversity of dinosaur and other fossils.

In 2019 UNESCO awarded the Isle of Wight biosphere reserve status. It is one of seven in the UK. This promotes conservation, as well as providing a remit for education about sustainable management of biodiversity.

The Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1963. It is managed by the Isle of Wight AONB Partnership, who are based in Sandown.

The area is home to one of the longest sandy beaches in the UK

The Bay Area is home to one of the UKs best collections of fossils at The Dinosaur Isle Museum

How does the unique geology and biodiversity of the Bay Area make this place unique?

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Like many coastal areas around the world, the Bay Area is coming to terms with its future in the context of global warming and sea level rise. Residents are concerned about the impact of these issues on homes, businesses, and public amenities like beaches and cliff paths.

Some of the area's open spaces have been assessed as low quality and there is a lack of provision for allotments and community gardens.

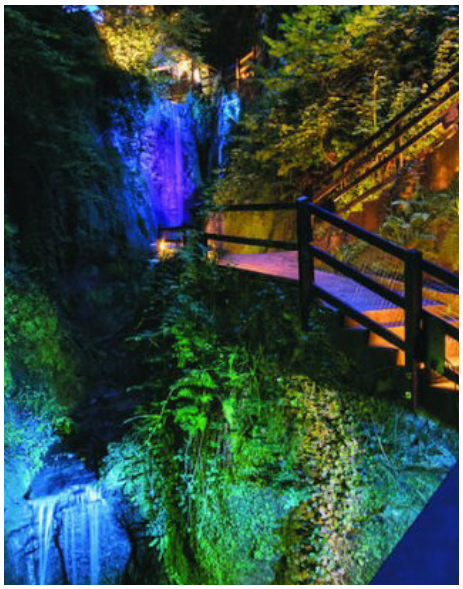
The issue of coastal erosion has been illustrated by a recent cliff fall at Small Hope Beach, Shanklin

Much of the seafront and open spaces in the area is land in public ownership

Do you feel that our relationship with nature will provide challenges or solutions in the future?

BAY AREA PLACE PLAN
CULTURE

WHERE WE'VE BEEN



The Isle of Wight is known for its connections to literature and art, as a place that inspires creative and scientific works, including by visitors who spent time in the Bay Area. Famous visitors include Charles Darwin — who began writing The Origin of Species here in 1858 — Lewis Carroll, Jane Austen, John Keats and JMW Turner.

The area is home to the island's oldest tourist attraction, Shanklin Chine, an ancient gorge much admired by literary and royal visitors.

The Bay Area is home to listed buildings and infrastructure, like forts, churches, and the Shanklin Cliff Lift

Sandown has held a carnival since 1899 and it is still going strong today

What contributions have our famous visitors made to the culture and identity of The Bay Area?

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Shanklin Theatre opened in 1879 and still operates a full programme of shows, dramas, and school workshops.

Other organisations are also working to inspire a creative coastal revival, such as Boojum & Snark based on Sandown High Street. They operate as a microbrewery, gallery and co-working space and are motivated by reconnecting to the area's past and cultivating pride in the area.

Sandown is home to the National Poo Museum, a micro-museum which aims to break down the taboo surrounding poo

The Isle of Wight was the last area of English paganism until 686CE when Cædwalla of Wessex conquered the island

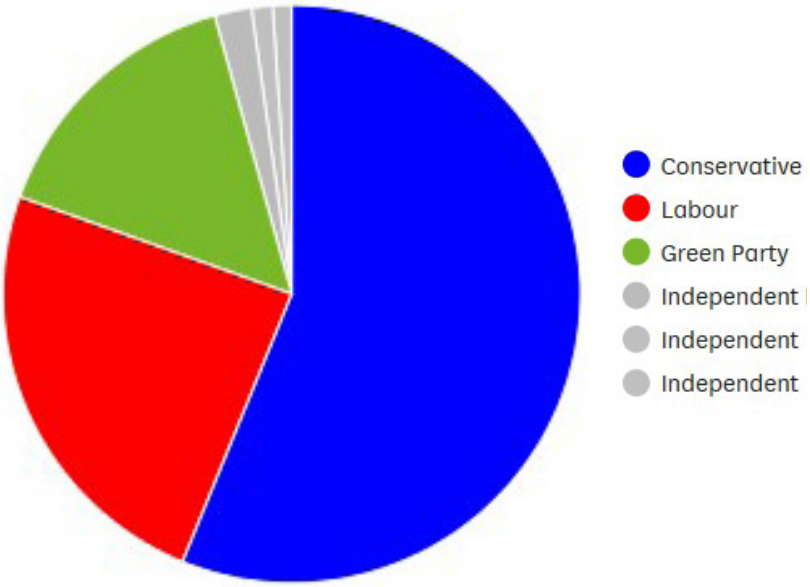
Which Bay Area cultural facilities do you visit on a regular basis?

BAY AREA PLACE PLAN
SOCIETY

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The Isle of Wight is sparsely populated compared to the UK national average and the population has been growing at a small rate, only by 1.6% between 2011 and 2021.

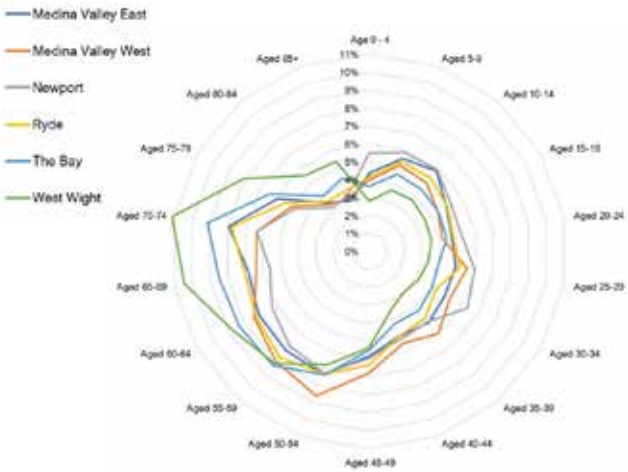
The Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight since 2001 has come from the Conservative Party, with current MP Bob Seeley in post since 2017, with 56.2% of the vote in the 2019 General Election.



Home ownership is very high in the Isle of Wight, higher than UK average

In the Bay area, home ownership is 70% and 38% of these are detached dwellings

Is our slow population growth a good thing, or a bad thing?



WHERE WE ARE NOW

The Isle of Wight has a higher proportion of older population than the national average. The average (median) age on the Isle of Wight rose from 46 to 51 years of age between the last two Censuses.

The Bay area also has a higher proportion of older people than the Isle of Wight average: 41% of the population is above the age of 60 and 32% over 65.

There are many active community organisations and projects in the area

Some organisations started during the Covid-19 pandemic and continued after, whilst others have a longer history

How will this ageing population affect you in the years to come?

BAY AREA PLACE PLAN

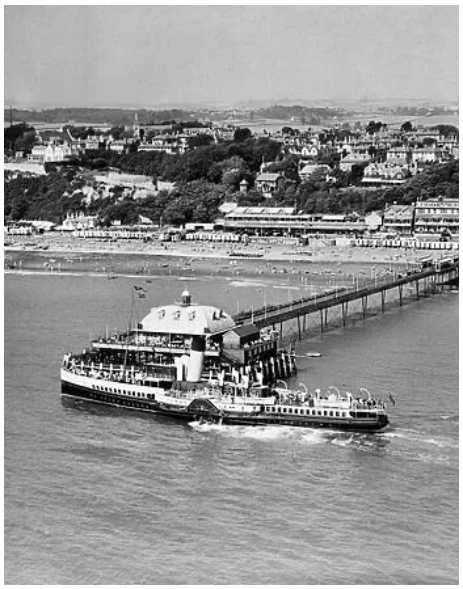
ECONOMY

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The Bay Area grew as a tourist destination in the 19th century and 20th century, following the arrival of the Ryde Pier Head to Ventnor railway line in 1864.

Visitors were attracted by the Bay Areas long stretches of sandy beaches and sandstone cliffs, the most dramatic of which can be found in Shanklin and Lake.

The Isle of Wight played a role in building Britain's biggest space rockets during the 1950s and 1960s, a story told in the Wight Aviation Museum just outside Lake.



Residents may remember coal-powered gas works and the gas holders which remained until the 1970s

Shanklin Pier was built in 1890, rebuilt after WWI and demolished in 1993 after storm damage

What are your memories of living and working in the Bay Area?

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The Isle of Wight is generally more affluent than the rest of the UK, but the Bay Area has pockets of deprivation. The Bay Area receives half a million visitors a year, but along with many UK coastal areas, it has seen a decline in visitor numbers. The Ocean Hotel and The Grand Hotel in Sandown have become highly visible symbols of this decline.

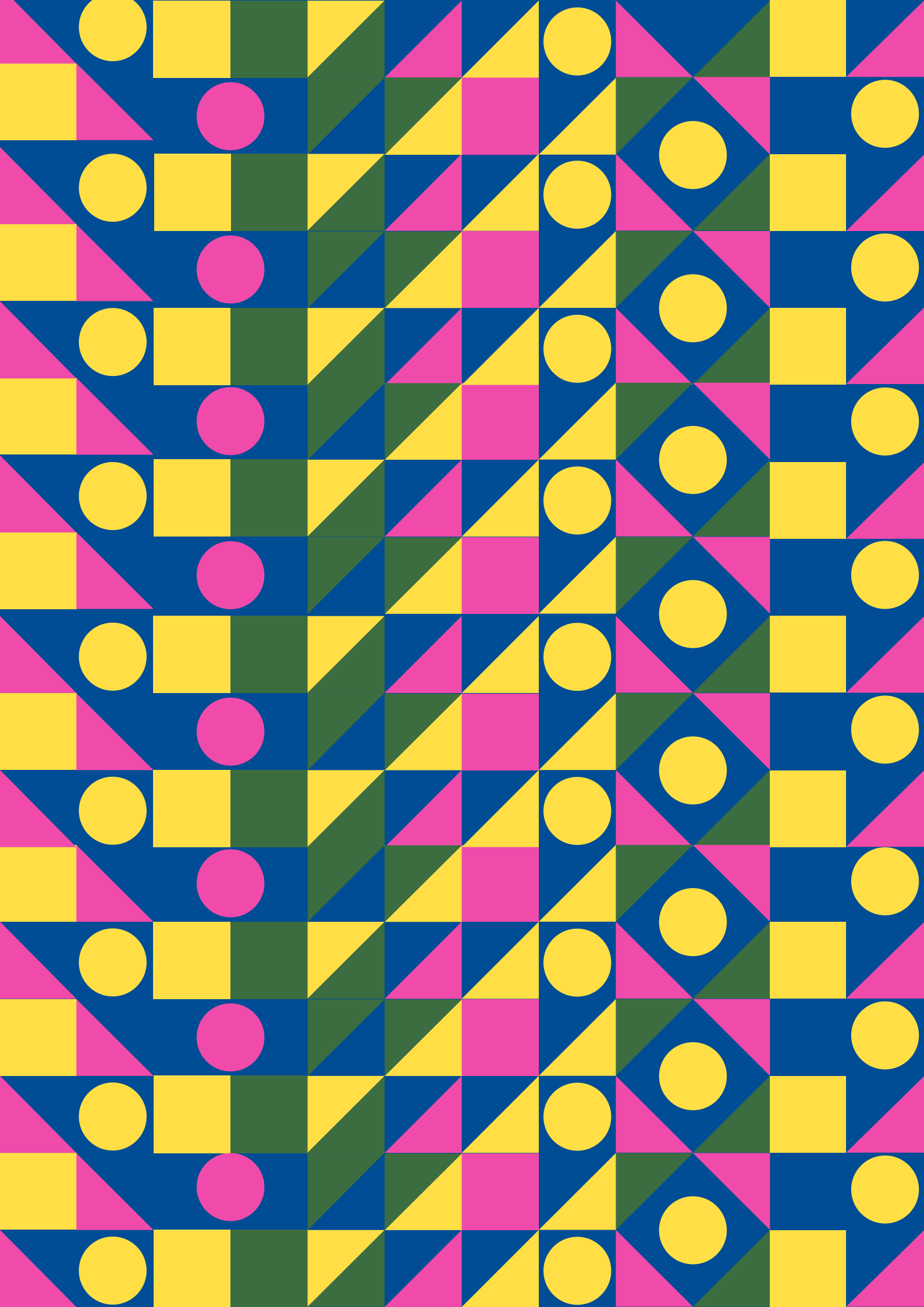
13% of the areas which make up Sandown are in the top 20% most deprived areas in the UK

Employment in healthcare is increasing to address demand from an ageing population

Do you feel optimistic about the future economic prospects of the area, or are you concerned?

The Bay Area Place Plan has been produced by Feria Urbanism working with Støriie and The Place Bureau

www.feria-urbanism.com

November 2023

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