

Structure Plan Review
Monitoring Report 1990-95



Volume II: Monitoring Data
Planning Authority, March 1997

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Structure Plan

1.1.1 The Structure Plan is a strategic long term plan for the Maltese Islands covering the twenty year period to 2010. Although it is concerned with all aspects of social, economic, and physical structure, its basic concern is with land: what should be developed, where, when and how. It is essentially a coordinating plan which seeks to accommodate, manage and integrate the development requirements of all Government departments and agencies, the private sector and the community as a whole.

1.1.2 The purpose of the Plan is to :

- provide a strategic direction and context to guide both Government and the private sector in matters concerning Malta's development over the next twenty years;
- provide policies which will be applied in determining development permit applications submitted by both the public and private sectors;
- provide a strategic context for the preparation of Local Plans, Subject Plans, Action Plans, and Development Briefs, together with guidance on priorities for further studies as part of the new planning process; and
- identify and promote opportunities for development; and
- harness private sector resources to enable appropriate development.

1.1.3 The Plan is distinguished by the following characteristics :

- It does not attempt an in depth analysis of all sectors of Maltese life; this is essentially the job of the various Ministers and other public agencies. Instead, the objective of the Plan is to examine each sector in sufficient detail to ensure that individual sectoral policies are as compatible as possible with those of other sectors. In this sense, it is basically a coordinating plan.
- As well as being strategic in an analytical sense, it is strategic in a physical sense. It covers the whole territory of the Maltese Islands and, for the most part, is expressed in terms of areas, localities and districts rather than sites. It provides the context for the subsequent more detailed plans.
- It is not a plan for the total restructuring of the Islands' fabric and way of life. Such a plan does not exist and probably should not. The Islands are what they are and the broad disposition of homes and workplaces will remain largely unchanged within the Structure Plan period. Planning has been defined as cooperation with the inevitable: a Structure Plan seldom seeks to reverse trends, but rather to divert them where this seems to be beneficial.
- It is essentially an enabling plan. The inclusion of some forecast or proposal does not mean that it will happen, particularly if applicable to the private sector. Rather the Plan says 'If and when this particular demand arises, this is where and how it should be accommodated'.
- It is not a static instrument. Changes in the various sectors of activity with which it deals will be monitored and amendments to the Plan will be made, when this seems appropriate.

1.1.4 The components of the Structure Plan are :

- **The Written Statement** - this sets out the background to the Plan, summarises the principal problems and issues to be confronted, describes the recommended planning strategy and how it was evolved, lists specific policies aimed at the realisation of the strategy, identifies priorities and considers the resources required for implementation.
- **The Key Diagram** - this accompanies the Written Statement and shows the physical locations where particular policies will be applied.
- **The Explanatory Memorandum** - this supports the Written Statement and Key Diagram. It describes various analyses and forecasts leading to the formulation of the strategy and generally provides more detailed evidence and justification for the policies put forward in the Written Statement. It also includes guidelines to be adopted in Local Plans and other work.

1.1.5 Responsibility for reviewing the Structure Plan, preparing detailed plans, and coordinating their implementation, has been given by Parliament to the Planning Authority. Some aspects of the Structure Plan are implemented directly by the Planning Authority, but many other activities of the Authority reflect the coordinating role of the Plan. To secure realisation of the Plan, the Planning Authority needs to work with a wide range of agencies and interests through interdepartmental committees and working groups, seeking to integrate the powers and expertise of individual agencies.

1.1.6 The Plan's agenda is radical and challenging. Historically, Malta has a very poor record in relation to strategic planning, the control of development and the enforcement of land-use controls. The planning system has, in the past, been viewed with deep public cynicism. There has been a sense of isolation from the planning process; planning decisions took place behind closed doors. There has also been a widespread belief that what appeared on the ground had little to do with the content of plans and much more to do with an individual's ability to pressurise the right people in Government. Flouting of planning regulations was blatant, widespread and frequently ignored. Effective implementation of the Structure Plan requires a profound change in perceptions, attitudes and behaviour which cannot be achieved overnight.

1.2 Structure Plan Goals

1.2.1 The Structure Plan has three major goals;

- To encourage the further social and economic development of the Maltese Islands and to ensure, as far as possible, that sufficient land and support infrastructure are available to accommodate it.*
- To use land and buildings efficiently and consequently to channel development activity into existing and committed urban areas, particularly through a rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing fabric and infrastructure thus constraining further inroads into undeveloped land and generally resulting in higher density development than at present.*
- To radically improve the quality of all aspects of the environment of both urban and rural areas¹.*

¹Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, Draft Final Written Statement, December 1990, p7.

1.2.2 This document is structured around these three goals, using the following shorthand:

- i. Accommodating development;
- ii. Constraining urban growth; and
- iii. Upgrading the environment.

1.2.3 This Volume reviews progress against each of these goals in detail and identifies areas where Structure Plan policy may require modification in order to improve the Planning Authority's management of the development process.

Accommodating Development

1.2.4 The Structure Plan includes forecasts of the growth of population, households and jobs over the 20 year plan period to 2010. It also provides forecasts for the other sectors of development which derive from these. From these projections, the likely growth of all sectors of the economy and of the demand for services has been estimated. This is documented in the supporting Technical Reports to the Structure Plan for: housing; social and community facilities; offices, shops and industry; tourism and recreation; roads and transport; and public utilities. The forms and standards of provision of new development are established at a gross level, enabling estimates to be made of the approximate amount of land required and of the necessary site characteristics for each use. These estimates, in turn, are used in the designation of zones and areas for development.

1.2.5 The new areas for development are termed *Primary Development Areas*. For non-industrial uses, four major new areas are included:

- i. Pembroke is for mixed development of residential, recreational, business and shopping uses;
- ii. Manoel Island is for an international yachting centre and ancillary/related facilities for tourist and recreational uses;
- iii. Luqa Airport is for a new business park; and
- iv. Marsa Park is for commercial offices and shopping.

There are also two areas designated for industry, with an emphasis on manufacturing: San Gwann and Birzebbugia/Hal Far.

1.2.6 Inevitably, some development demand or opportunity will arise which has not been foreseen. If and when this occurs the Structure Plan's strategic policies should offer guidance on how such exceptions should be covered.

Constraining Urban Growth

1.2.7 The Structure Plan envisaged a range of positive measures to maximise development and redevelopment within existing built-up areas, together with a blanket presumption against any further urbanisation outside existing and planned built-up areas. It is hoped, through such policies, to revitalise and rehabilitate existing built-up areas rather than develop virgin land. Government spending on new housing is to be redirected towards existing built-up areas.

1.2.8 Substantial public sector investment in the upgrading of infrastructure and publicly owned buildings is envisaged in the Structure Plan, together with grants and loans for the refurbishment of privately owned property and the conversion of large housing units to two or more smaller dwellings. Rent control legislation is to be revised, to stimulate the private rented sector.

Upgrading the Environment

1.2.9 In existing built-up areas, a series of Urban Conservation Areas is designated in the Structure Plan. Within these, the Plan sets out policies for: the retention and enhancement of all buildings, structures, and spaces of architectural or historical interest; the redevelopment to Conservation Area standards of alien buildings which despoil the area; the rationalisation of traffic movement and parking; the undergrounding of all cables; and the improvement of both townscape and landscape.

1.2.10 In new urban areas, development control policies and design guidelines aim to ensure that there is adequate provision of community facilities such as schools, clinics, local shops and public open space, with proper attention to the quality of development. The aim is improve on the substandard, ragged, and unfinished ambiance which characterises many newly developed schemes.

1.2.11 In the countryside, the Plan designates a series of Rural Conservation Areas within which agricultural, ecological, archaeological and landscape interests are protected and enhanced. However, such interests are often in conflict with each other in terms of competing for land or in terms of management techniques; the Structure Plan contains guidelines aimed at resolving such conflicts.

1.3 Report Structure

1.3.1 Volume I of the *Monitoring Report 1990-95* (Final Report) presents a concise summary of the findings and conclusions of the work, but does not include all the relevant supporting material. This document (Volume II: Monitoring Data) should be consulted for a more detailed presentation of results. Both volumes are structured around the three goals of the Structure Plan. This volume comprises amplified versions of the following sections from Volume I (Final Report):

- section 2 (Accommodating Development);
- section 3 (Constraining Urban Growth);
- section 4 (Upgrading the Environment); and
- section 5 (Framework for Implementation).

1.3.2 The overall aim of the Monitoring Report is to review progress against each Structure Plan goal and identify areas where policy may require modification, in order to improve the Planning Authority's management of the development process. Volume I includes additional sections providing: a *Summary of Issues for Review* (6) and details of the *Future Monitoring Programme* (7).

2. Accommodating Development

The first goal of the Structure Plan is to encourage the further social and economic development of the Maltese Islands and to ensure, as far as possible, that sufficient land and support infrastructure are available to accommodate it (3.5).

2.0.1 The Structure Plan includes a wide range of policies designed to channel, encourage and coordinate social and economic development. These include:

- **initiatives to encourage social and economic development.** These include measures to: improve public sector planning; establish appropriate standards for public sector provision; encourage private and voluntary sector involvement in development projects; designate land for future development requirements; promote specific key developments; and prepare development briefs and management schemes, where appropriate.
- **provisions to ensure that land and infrastructure can accommodate the required growth.** The intentions here are to: improve coordination of infrastructure planning and maintenance, particularly by the preparation of 20 year development plans for each utility within the context of the Structure Plan; establish improved infrastructure standards; upgrade the road network; enhance public transport; and implement a national system of irrigation water supply.
- **measures to improve the management of financial and land resources.** These include proposals to: encourage a more commercial approach to Government's estate management; capture private sector contributions to infrastructural work, in appropriate cases; and intervene to assemble appropriate development parcels, where necessary, to achieve effective urban regeneration.

2.0.2 This section reviews progress in these areas. The review begins with a general overview of the economic context within which social and economic growth, capital investment and development have taken place over the period 1990-95. Sectoral reviews are then presented for: housing; social and community facilities; commerce and industry; agriculture, horticulture and fisheries; minerals; tourism and recreation; transport; and public utilities. These relate directly to the policies in chapters 8-14 and chapter 16 of the Structure Plan.

2.1 Economic Trends, 1990-95

2.1.1 A review of financial resources underpinning investment in social and economic growth has been undertaken for the period 1990-95. This has included monitoring of: national economic trends; government infrastructural investment; government revenue and expenditure; capital injections from the EU and other international sources; and the availability of development finance from both public and private sectors. Commentary on recent labour market trends is also included in this section.

Economic Growth

2.1.2 Malta has seen strong and consistent economic growth since 1990, despite widespread recession throughout Europe during the period. Annual real growth in Malta's GDP has ranged from 4.5% to 6.3% between 1990 and 1995, following rates of 8.4% and 8.25% respectively in 1988 and 1989. A real growth rate of around 6.7% is anticipated for 1995, of which an estimated 2% is due to the surfacing of informal activity associated with the introduction of

VAT². Most European countries emerged from recession in 1992-93 and are currently logging growth rates of around 3% per annum, with recent Mediterranean examples including Italy (4.0%), Spain (3.2%) and Greece (1.5%).

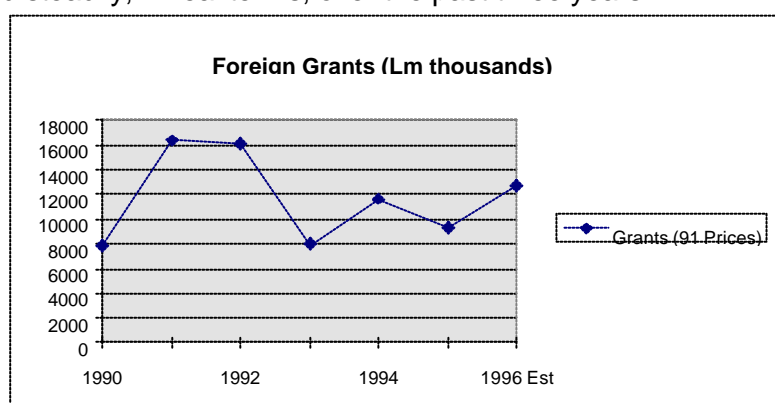
Financial Resources

The Structure Plan suggests that Government-generated financial resources are likely to experience a modest increase, in real terms, up to 2010. This growth in Government cash would be linked to reduced public sector employment, foreign loans and grants and increased tax receipts, as well as realization of landholdings (17.3, p114).

Government Revenue and Expenditure

2.1.3 Government revenue increased from Lm338m to Lm429m over the period 1990-94, at current prices. This represents an increase in real terms of 12% over the period. The increase is largely accounted for by consistent growth in receipts from both Income Tax and National Insurance (real increases of 35% and 26% respectively, 1990-94). This, in turn, was due to the combination of an increase in the number of gainfully employed, growth in salaries and wages and increased effectiveness in tax collection.

2.1.4 Non-tax revenues, such as Central Bank profits and repayments of loans, have remained relatively static over the period since 1990. Foreign grants, mainly in connection with the third and fourth Financial Protocols with Italy, are expected to yield Lm15 million in 1996. This compares with an estimated Lm10.7 million in 1995. The level of foreign grants peaked during 1991 and 1992. Following a sharp decline in 1993, the level of grants has increased steadily, in real terms, over the past three years.



2.1.5 Further growth in Government revenue is anticipated, despite reduced rates of direct taxation in 1996 and the moratorium on prosecutions for non-payment in 1995/96. Tax revenues in the first quarter of 1996 show that there was an increase of 3.6%³ compared to the same quarter in 1995. 54% of the total Lm68.3 million consisted of direct taxation, amounting to Lm36.9 million⁴. This represents an increase of 14.4% over the first quarter of 1995. VAT receipts for 1995 of Lm80 million have more than compensated for declining Customs and Excise revenues and the removal of a number of indirect levies and taxes.

² Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review, December 1995, p1.

³ Central Bank of Malta, Quarterly Review, June 1996, pg. 28-29

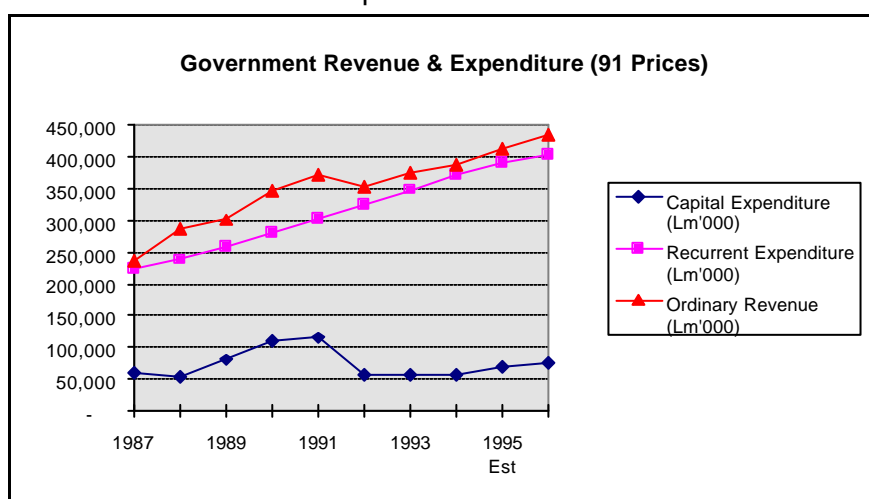
⁴ Social Security contributions by Government on behalf of the public sector employees and the State grant to national insurance are excluded.

2.1.6 Growth in Government revenues has been absorbed by increased recurrent expenditure. Contrary to Structure Plan expectations, total public sector employment has increased by 8.3% over the period 1990-94. A large proportion of recurrent expenditure also relates to Government's social and welfare priorities, particularly retirement pensions and other contributory benefits. Government is burdened by a growing welfare gap⁵, likely to cost Lm123 million in 1996 (up from Lm114 million in 1995). This is a long-term problem which will be exacerbated by demographic trends throughout the Structure Plan period.

Government Capital Expenditure

2.1.7 Government's capital expenditure constitutes a substantial injection of resources for future social and economic growth. However, capital investment has not kept pace with the overall growth rate in Government's financial resources. In real terms, capital spending has returned to the level of the late 1980's, following exceptionally high levels of investment during the construction of the Delimara power station and the Malta International Airport (1989-91). Total Government investment in infrastructure projects fell from Lm44m in 1990 to Lm14m in 1994 (at current prices).

2.1.8 Government's infrastructural investment is likely to grow in the near future, with approved estimates of Lm20 million in 1995 and Lm25 million for 1996. The major infrastructural item in 1995 was the development of the sewerage system, (amounting to Lm7,740,000), in particular the laying of new mains in Marsascala, St. Paul's Bay, St. Julians, St. Andrews and Victoria, Gozo. The main items planned for 1996 are Lm7 million for the further extension and improvement of the sewerage system and Lm6 million earmarked for the improvement of roads and related construction works. Major *Social* components of capital expenditure in the pipeline include: Lm7 million (at current prices) in 1995 for San Raffaele Hospital, to be followed by a further Lm8 million (estimated) in 1996; Lm2.3 million for St. Luke's Hospital upgrading; Lm120,000 for Sir Paul Boffa Hospital; and Lm300,000 for Mt. Carmel Hospital. Capital expenditure by public authorities and corporations is not included in these figures. In 1995⁶, Lm6.4 million was allocated to the Housing Authority, Lm3.3 million to Malta Maritime Authority, Lm15.6 million to Telemalta Corporation, Lm22.8 million to Enemalta Corporation and Lm8.4 million to Water Services Corporation.



Since 1992, capital expenditure by Public Authorities and Corporations is excluded.

⁵ The difference between social security expenditure and contributions.

⁶ Estimates 1996, Ministry of Finance, 1995.

Foreign Loans

2.1.9 Foreign loans represented a major, but highly volatile, component in Government's capital investment programme over the period 1990-95. Foreign loans totaled Lm13.8 million in 1990, with the largest components from Italy (Lm7.5 million), the EU (Lm5 million) and Saudi Arabia (Lm1.2 million). Foreign lending was reduced to Lm9 million in 1991, then subsided to very low levels during 1992 (Lm0.9 million) and 1993 (Lm2.9 million). Higher levels of borrowing were resumed in 1994 (Lm11.3 million). Foreign loans contracted for 1996 amount to Lm6 million. This includes a Lm3.5 million loan from the Council of Europe for the construction of the new hospital and a Lm1.7 million loan under the third Financial Protocol with the EU for the sewerage project.

2.1.10 Following the positive international credit rating awarded to Malta in 1994, access to international development finance has improved. International ratings are awarded to countries showing credit-worthiness over a period of time. Malta was assigned its first credit rating in March 1994. Ratings were awarded by *Moody's* (A2 rating) and *Standard and Poor* (A rating) following independent economic studies. This factor was instrumental in the Freeport's acquisition of a US\$205 million loan on the international markets to undertake the completion of Terminal Two. Malta's improved taxation regime, a low level of Government debt, low unemployment and strong net external creditor situation were cited as factors in the further upgrading of Malta's credit rating by *Standard and Poor* in May 1996 (Now double 'A plus', out of a maximum triple A). *Standard and Poor* identified the main outstanding constraints on Malta's credit-worthiness as:

- weak political consensus on the reduction of Government expenditure; and
- the public sector's still significant role in the economy.

2.1.11 Another source of income for Malta is through the Italo-Maltese Financial Protocols. In March 28, 1994, Malta and Italy signed the fourth Financial Protocol. Under the terms of the Protocol the Italian Government is bound to provide Lit 250 billion in financial assistance to the Maltese Government for the period 1995-2000. Of this amount, Lit 130 billion are to be used to purchase goods and primary products of Italian origin as balance of payments assistance. The remaining Lit 120 billion are to be used for the financing of programmes and projects of economic, technical and social development and cultural assistance as identified by mutual agreements between the two Governments. The two Governments also undertook to promote and support the investment of Italian capital in Malta, mainly in the export-oriented productive sectors, with special regard to employment opportunities⁷.

EU Support

2.1.12 Throughout the 1980's and 90's there has been a gradual escalation in financial support from the European Investment Bank (EIB). In total over 65.5 million ECU has been advanced by the EIB over the past 17 years. These funds were provided under three EU-Malta Financial Protocols to support projects in: water supply and waste water treatment; industry; tourism; telecommunications; and transport.

2.1.13 Key projects which have been partially financed by the EIB include the Malta International Airport (2nd Protocol), the Solid Waste Recycling Plant (2nd Protocol) and the implementation of the Sewerage Master Plan (3rd Protocol).

⁷ Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review, June 1996 P.62.

2.1.14 In addition, some ECU 10.5 million has been drawn from EU budgetary funds, of which ECU 8 million was classified as loans on special occasions and 2.4 million as risk capital operations.

2.1.15 A new EU-Malta financial protocol for the period up to 31 October 1998 was signed in June 1995. This foresees a total finance package of ECU 45 million, including: ECU 30 million in EIB loans; ECU 13 million in grant aid; and ECU 2 million on risk capital resources from budgetary resources. Some ECU 15 million are targeted for works concerning the environment. This concerns the construction of waste water treatment plants in the north of Malta and in Gozo and follows on from the ECU 7 million already financed by the EIB for this purpose in 1993.

2.1.16 The content of the EIB Financial Protocols is summarised below:

EIB Funds (ECU millions:- 1 ECU = Lm 0.46)	Loans	Grant Aid	Soft Loans	Risk Capital Funds	Total
1st Financial Protocol (1978-83)	16.0	5.0	5.0	0	26.0
2nd Financial Protocol (1986-88)	16.0	10.5	3.0	0	29.5
3rd Financial Protocol (1989-93)	23.0	12.5	0	2.5	38.0
4th Financial Protocol (1995-98)	30.0	13.0	0	2.0	45.0

2.1.17 Malta currently has access to a number of EU funding programmes in addition to these financial protocols. These include a number of Mediterranean programmes such as: Med Media (Media networks between Mediterranean Non Member countries and Union Countries); Med Campus (collaboration involving campuses in the north and south Mediterranean); Med Urbs (networks between Local Authorities in the EC and those of Mediterranean Non Member Countries); and Med Invest (cooperation between Community and Mediterranean SME's).

2.1.18 Other relevant programmes include: LIFE (Financial Instrument for the Environment); ECIP (European Community Investment Partners); Socrates and Leonardo (education and training programmes).

2.1.19 Malta has also recently been allocated 2 million ECU for use under the Fourth Framework research programme which includes the following programmes:

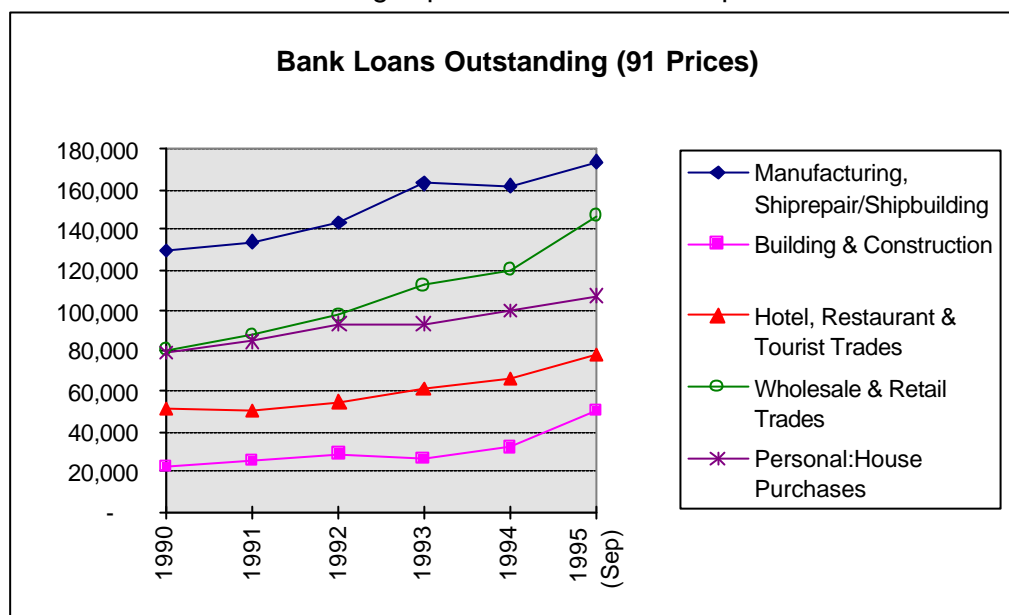
- CRAFT (Cooperative Research Action for Technology);
- TEDIS (Trade Electronic Data Interchange System);
- COST (European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research);
- ACTS (Advanced Communication Technologies and Services);
- BRITE (Technological Development in the Field of Industrial and Materials Technologies);
- MAST (Research and Development in Marine Science and Technology); and
- EUROPARTENARIAT (to facilitate cooperation between SME's the EU and less developed regions).

2.1.20 The view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment is that, whilst the Government is seeking the closest possible relationship with the EU that is compatible with Malta's particular social, economic and geo-political circumstances, the nation is not currently in a position to absorb the impact of full Union membership.

Private Sector Investment

The Structure Plan suggests that, whilst private sector development funds will tend to increase through economic growth and rent reform, an influx of foreign capital may also be needed to sustain anticipated growth levels (17.4, p114).

2.1.21 Consistent economic growth over the period 1990-95 has encouraged strong growth in private sector investment throughout the study period. Total local lending increased from Lm556m to Lm1,082m between 1990 and 1995 (current prices), supporting real increases in the availability of credit to all sectors. The development industry, and house-building in particular, has benefited from this continuing expansion of available capital.



2.1.22 Outstanding bank loans for house purchase have increased from Lm77.3m in 1990 to Lm123.5m in September 1995; an increase of over 60% over five years⁸. Loans for other building and construction work increased from Lm22.3m to Lm57.2m over the same period (current prices).

2.1.23 Lohombus Bank Ltd. issued an offer for 10 year Bonds in April 1996 amounting to Lm30 million. The purpose of such Bonds is to fund the house loan activities of the Bank and to improve the Bank's funding profile. Lohombus Bank reports that, as of September 1995, loans to customers made under interest subsidy schemes included: Lm13.5m loaned to the Housing Authority; Lm40.8m loaned to the Department of Social Housing; Lm31.6m marked as other house loans; and a further Lm4.7m marked as other loans⁹.

⁸ Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review, December 1995, p.106.

⁹ Prospectus, Lohombus Bank Limited, 11 April 1996, p.9.

Infrastructure Contributions by Private Developers

The Structure Plan also envisages a range of payment mechanisms to ensure that developers contribute, where appropriate, towards the costs of required infrastructure investment related to their proposal. The mechanisms advocated in the Structure Plan include infrastructure charges, impact payments, commuted payments and a land hoarding tax (17.8, p117).

2.1.24 The Planning Authority collects infrastructure charges on behalf of the Government, prior to the processing of development permit applications. Funds collected in this way average Lm1.5m per year (Lm1.32 million in 1992/93, Lm1.73 million in 1993/94 and Lm1.52 million in 1994/95). Following the deduction of a handling charge, these funds are passed to Works Division. These infrastructure charges are additional to the *Development Permit Fee* collected by the Planning Authority to cover the administrative cost of processing applications. Development Permit fees collected by the Planning Authority were Lm1.2 million in 1992/93, Lm1.3 million in 1993/94 and Lm1.5 million in 1994/95.

2.1.25 As required by the Structure Plan, additional impact payments are collected where major projects are likely to place a significant additional loading on off-site infrastructure. This approach has been implemented on a number of major projects, with contributions of up to Lm200,000 per project.

2.1.26 The Planning Authority introduced a *Commuted Parking Payments* scheme in 1994. These payments are charged to the developer where it is considered feasible and appropriate to provide public parking facilities, off-site, to compensate for a permitted reduction in the usual level of on-site provision for an individual development. These funds are pooled and will be made available to the relevant Local Council for the development of new public car parking facilities, as appropriate opportunities arise. Funds collected under this scheme totaled Lm9,900 in 1994 and Lm98,100 in 1995.

2.1.27 The Structure Plan proposes a landhoarding tax on undeveloped, derelict or abandoned sites which are ripe for development and on derelict buildings and building shells (17.8). No concrete progress has yet been made in implementing this proposal, although the subject was discussed at the National Housing and Land Markets Seminar held by the Planning Authority in September 1995.

2.1.28 The Seminar participants agreed that landhoarding could increase property values and an option to avoid this was through the application of the tax on land that is most suitable for development. It was felt that care should be taken seeing the tax as a revenue measure, since it has a specific social and environmental objective. Comments from the speakers included the following:

- a land hoarding tax should only be recommended on property left unfinished or left intentionally vacant;
- such a tax would make property investment less attractive; and
- the effect of land hoarding on prices needs to be studied.

It was generally agreed that consideration and study is needed on the impact of the proposed land hoarding tax¹⁰.

¹⁰ The Land and Housing Markets in Malta, September 1995.

Labour Market Trends

The Structure Plan anticipates an influx of foreign labour before the year 2000 to deal with skill shortages (17.5, p115).

2.1.29 Continued economic growth depends on the nurturing of a skilled and effective labour force, in addition to strong capital investment. The Structure Plan envisaged a net increase in the labour force in Malta, resulting from an influx of foreign labour, as economic growth continues. This expectation has been validated; there has been a strong increase in the labour force over the period 1990-95, as well as a marked increase in the level of net in-migration:

INDICATOR	1990 Sep	1991 Sep	1992 Dec	1993 Dec	1994 Dec	1995 Sep
Labour Supply	132,584	134,698	137,157	138,434	139,485	145,731
Gainfully Occupied	127,159	129,830	131,609	132,259	133,900	140,780
Total Private Sector	71,389	73,939	75,437	76,829	78,691	86,037
Total Public (Inc. Temp.)	55,196	55,891	56,172	55,430	55,209	54,743
Registered Unemployed	5,425	4,868	5,548	6,175	5,585	4,951
Self-Employed	15,994	16,995	16,751	16,280	15,985	16,407
Private Sector Share	56.1%	57.0%	57.3%	58.1%	58.8%	61.1%
Public Sector Share	37.1%	36.7%	40.0%	38.4%	38.1%	34.9%
Temp Empl Share	6.8%	6.3%	3.7%	3.5%	3.1%	4.0%
Total Public Share	43.9%	43.0%	42.7%	41.9%	41.2%	38.9%

Source: Economic Survey January - September 1995

2.1.30 The labour force increased by 10% over the period 1990-95, reaching a total of 145,731 in September 1995. Unemployment has remained consistently low, at around 5,000, averaging 3.9% per annum over the period 1990-95. Over this period, the proportion of females in the workforce has gradually increased from 25% to 27%. The female participation rate is likely to continue to increase, in line with trends elsewhere in Europe. In addition to this factor, consistent growth in the labour force has been made possible through increased immigration, particularly by former emigrants. Natural population growth alone will not satisfy a continuing requirement for a growing labour force; the population of working age is likely to stabilise around the year 2000, then decline after 2005.

2.1.31 A number of ongoing training and re-training programmes are being organized by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), whilst various new programmes providing basic and vocational training were also introduced.

Summary of Economic Trends

2.1.32 The main points from the above discussion of economic trends for the period 1990-95 can be summarised as follows:

- There has been strong and consistent economic growth within Malta during the monitoring period, when compared against other countries in the region.
- Government income has increased, mainly due to an increase in the number of people gainfully employed and growth in salaries and wages.
- Capital investment rates have not kept pace with the overall growth rate in Government financial resources, although future capital investment is likely to increase.
- Malta's favourable increase in credit-worthiness is helping in the acquisition of loans for investment.

- Consistent economic growth has encouraged expansion in the private sector throughout the study period.
- Infrastructure contributions and development permit fees charged to private developers through the Planning Authority's systems have increased through the period.
- Malta has witnessed a strong increase in its workforce over the period under review as well as a marked increase in net-migration.

2.2 Housing

2.2.1 The housing sector affects the entire population and has proved to be an important generator of economic activity in recent years. The future of the housing sector needs to be carefully analysed and planned, to ensure that need is satisfied in a sustainable way. This, in turn, requires a proper understanding of population growth and other patterns of demographic change, since these factors will determine future housing needs. Housing supply must be determined by an analysis of past performance, as reflected in land availability and property prices. It is also important to understand current legislation affecting the housing sector, trends in social housing provision and the inter-relationships with the tourist accommodation sector. These topics are examined in some detail in this section in order to provide the background for an analysis of the main issues affecting the housing sector (see Volume I: Final Report, section 2.2).

Housing Requirements to 2010

Population Growth

The Structure Plan includes forecasts of the growth of population, households, and jobs over the 20 year plan period (3.6). The Plan anticipated an increase in the total population living in private households of 11% from 355,000 in 1990 to 394,000 in 2010.

2.2.2 Population growth is currently running ahead of Structure Plan expectations. Updated forecasts suggest a population of 399,000 living in private households in 2010. This acceleration in population growth is due to a combination of increased rates of immigration and a reduced mortality rate in many of the older age groups.

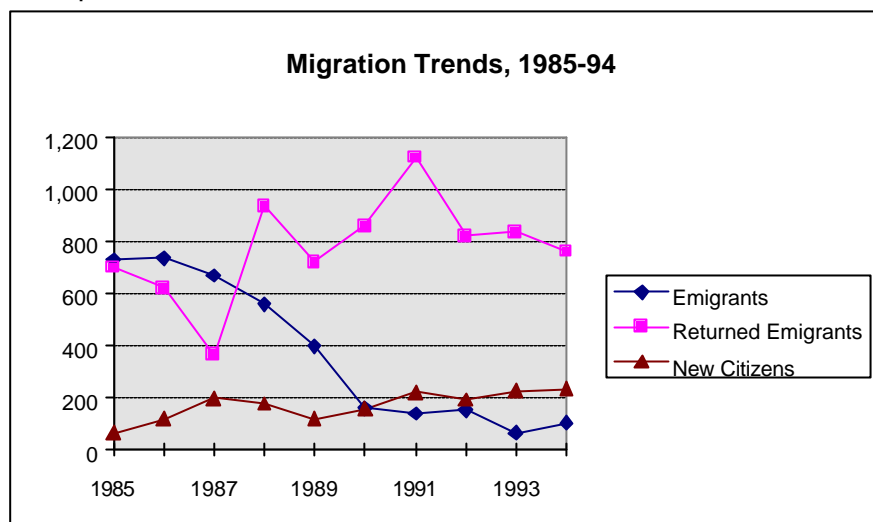
Migration

2.2.3 The Structure Plan team estimated that immigration would remain at a low level, broadly similar to the emigration rate. In fact, there was an upsurge in immigration over the period 1990-1994, with a net annual average of nearly 930 persons arriving in Malta¹¹:

Net migration 1990-1994	average of 930 persons per year
Emigration	average of 124 persons per year
Peak In-Migration -1991	1124 return migrants 222 registered/naturalised
Average Annual In-Migration	880 return migrants 200 registered/naturalised

¹¹ Central Office of Statistics.

2.2.4 Recent data suggests that the rate of return migration may have now passed its peak:



2.2.5 Future migration trends are uncertain. Labour mobility in Europe is generally low, with net migration gains generally experienced by the most affluent countries. A continuation of Malta's virtually full employment would prove a powerful attraction for European countries with surplus labour.

2.2.6 The Planning Authority's demographic projection model assumes that the current high level of net in-migration will continue in the short-term, tapering to zero over a five year period (see 2.2.9). Beyond 2000, nil net migration is assumed. This is a neutral assumption, reflecting the real uncertainty regarding future migration trends.

The Elderly

2.2.7 Current projections suggest more rapid growth in the number of elderly persons than was expected in the Structure Plan. This is due to a decline in mortality rates and a relatively high age profile amongst returned migrants.

2.2.8 The present study indicates that the 60+ population will reach 80,338 in 2010, an increase of 51% over the period 1990-2010. The *Old-Old* (defined as those aged 75years or more) are likely to experience an even more rapid increase of 55% between 1990 and 2010, reaching a total of 23,457.

Elderly Persons (60+ yrs) - Key Figures

1990 Elderly (60+)	53,256	15% of Total Population
2010 Elderly (60+)	80,338	20% of Total Population
1990-2010 increase (60+)	27,082	51% increase in 60+ persons
1990 Elderly (75+)	15,088	4% of Total Population
2010 Elderly (75+)	23,457	6% of Total Population
1990-2010 increase (75+)	8,369	56% increase in 75+ persons

Stabilisation of Natural Growth

2.2.9 The Maltese population aged less than 15 years is expected to decrease by 5% in the period to 2010 (from 82,437 in 1990 to 78,424 in 2010). This is likely to imply a continuing long-term decrease in the natural growth rate of the Maltese population, as the size of the population in the reproductive age groups declines.

Population Projection Method

2.2.10 The results presented in this section are based on the Planning Authority's national demographic projection model. This model uses 5-year age cohorts, segregated by sex, applying the latest available fertility, mortality, and migration rates from official statistics. Key assumptions are summarised below:

Change Parameters	Scenario Assumptions
Proportion living in private households	1985 Census data held constant throughout
Death Rate	1993 Age Specific Mortality Rate held constant
Fertility Rate	1993 Age Specific Fertility Rate held constant
Net Migration	Tapers to zero over 5-year period
Foreign Residents	1990 Structure Plan figures held constant
Marital Status / Headship Rate	1985 age & sex specific rates held constant

2.2.11 Many of these assumptions can be updated once 1995 Census data becomes available. Any population projection must be treated with caution. Migration, in particular, is volatile and will be closely monitored, with regular adjustments to the forecasts where appropriate.

New Household Formation

The Structure Plan estimated that by the year 2010, an additional 22,000 new households would be formed (8.1).

2.2.12 Structure Plan expectations for the number of new households are also likely to be comfortably exceeded. Reworked estimates show that, by 2010, an estimated 29,000 additional households will need housing units. This figure includes potential migrants as well as foreign residents living in Malta.

Household Data - Key Figures	
Households 1990	111,572
Households 2010	140,871
Total Increase 1990-2010	+26%
HH head in the 15-59 age group	+23%
HH head in the 60+ age group	+53%

Household Projection Method

2.2.13 Population projections were converted to household projections using headship rates for each age-sex group from the 1985 Census. The headship rate is the probability that a person of a particular age and sex will head a household. Substantial cultural and lifestyle shifts have occurred since 1985; marriage is tending to occur later, and more single persons are forming households. Once 1995 Census data is made available, these effects can be incorporated into the projections.

2.2.14 The Planning Authority's model automatically takes account of the effects of an aging population, leading to an increase in the number of single person households. The original Structure Plan analysis separated out single and multiple-person households, as outlined in the 1985 Census, and made independent assumptions regarding the growth of single person households.

Demand for New Housing Units

Allowing for the loss of a proportion of housing stock without replacement, a requirement for additional second homes and tourist-related demand, the Structure Plan estimates a requirement for almost 60,000 additional housing units over the period 1990-2010 (8.2).

2.2.15 The Structure Plan's estimated requirement for almost 60,000 new dwellings is based on a number of factors, as described in Technical Report 1.2¹²:

New Dwellings	Reason
29,560	New Maltese households formed, 1985-2010
14,400	Housing 'deficit'; left vacant following reallocation of households to achieve a theoretical fit between household size and dwelling size
6,270	Replacements for dwellings which will be demolished without replacement, 1985-2010 (5% of the 1985 stock)
5,390	Additional second homes and holiday homes required by 2010
3,150	Additional dwellings for those households sharing a dwelling in 1985
490	Loss of half of the special dwellings (shacks, caves, etc.) in the 1985 Census
59,260	TOTAL new dwellings required, under the 'realistic standard assumption'

2.2.16 There are two serious weaknesses in this method;

- The Structure Plan takes the figure of 59,260 as an indication of demand over the period 1990-2010, whereas it represents the 25 year period from 1985. This caused an over-statement of demand by some 8,000 units for the period 1990-2010.
- The massive 14,400 housing 'deficit' is based on a theoretical 'housing re-allocation hypothesis'¹³. This hypothesis assumes that an arbitrary number of dwellings will remain unused due to mismatch between the dwelling stock and the household size distribution.

2.2.17 The 'housing re-allocation hypothesis' requires a little more explanation. The hypothesis begins with the reasonable premise that many households are living in a dwelling which is either too large or too small for their current needs. However, the argument continues to suggest that a substantial number of additional dwellings will be required in order to achieve a satisfactory fit between the dwelling stock and the household size distribution. The corollary of this hypothesis is that many of the existing dwelling units will be discarded and left vacant, rather than being modified by the current occupants or exchanged through the normal process of the housing market.

2.2.18 In order to apply housing re-allocation hypothesis, the Structure Plan team made a series of assumptions suggesting that there are some 21,700 size-substandard dwellings and 5,160 size-overstandard dwellings. The standard used was not an international one, but an arbitrary 'realistic standard assumption', loosely based on the Structure Plan's Housing Stock Survey. A further arbitrary assumption was made, suggesting that some 12,460 households would re-allocate to appropriately sized dwellings through operation of the housing market, leaving a deficit of 14,400 units which are to be treated as additional housing demand ($21,700 + 5,160 - 12,460 = 14,400$).

2.2.19 It should be emphasised that the 'housing re-allocation hypothesis' is not currently a standard methodology for the assessment of housing need.

¹² Structure Plan Technical Report 1.2: *Report of Survey: Settlement Patterns and Built Environment*, February 1991.

¹³ Structure Plan Technical Report 1.2: *Report of Survey: Settlement Patterns and Built Environment*, February 1991, p32-45.

The hypothesis stretches the available data beyond tolerable limits, requiring a series of questionable assumptions. It also ignores important characteristics of the Maltese housing market. There is a relatively low tendency to move during the family life-cycle; historically, the preference has been to establish a large family home as soon as possible and to modify and extend the property, in situ, as required. Property is, in most cases, seen as too valuable an asset to simply discard. The hypothesis also takes little account of the declining average household size. The Planning Authority believes that the large housing 'deficit' resulting from the housing re-allocation hypothesis should be discounted as an element of demand as it represents an unjustified addition to the already large stock of vacant dwellings, violating a central Structure Plan goal.

2.2.20 The Structure Plan team themselves produced competing estimates, in Technical Report 1.1¹⁴, based on a more straight-forward and robust set of assumptions:

New Dwellings	Reason
23,120	New Maltese households formed + foreign households, 1990-2010
5,190-12,005	Additional second homes and holiday homes required by 2010
Up to 3,580	Additional vacant dwellings 'required' under the high demand scenario. The low demand scenario assumes a reduction in the number of vacant dwellings (of 3,970)
24,340-38,700	TOTAL new dwellings required, low and high scenarios

2.2.21 This report presents a new series of Planning Authority housing demand estimates, working within a similar framework to that used in the Structure Plan Technical Report 1.1. The reworked estimate of housing demand for the period 1990-2010, incorporating the projected acceleration in population growth, suggests a requirement for 34,670 units; towards the upper range of demand as forecast in Technical Report 1.1:

New Dwellings	Reason
28,395	New Maltese households formed, 1990-2010 (excluding the proportion sharing a dwelling)
5,580	Additional second homes and holiday homes required by 2010. These are mostly second homes, since very few additional tourist units are being licensed
690	Balance of additional vacant dwellings 'required', after an allowance for additional 'slack', to permit the smooth functioning of the enlarged housing market, and a modest reduction in the number of other vacant units
34,670	TOTAL new dwellings required, central scenario

2.2.22 These are the Planning Authority's preferred estimates of housing demand, subject to annual monitoring and updating as additional data becomes available from the 1995 Census and other sources.

¹⁴ Structure Plan Technical Report 1.1: *Report of Survey: Population, Households and Dwelling Projections*, Feb 1991, p38.

Housing Supply Projections

The Structure Plan assumed that housing would be spread throughout the existing urban areas, the Temporary Provisions Schemes and Primary Development Areas. Assuming a medium density and allowing for a balanced provision of detached, terraced and flatted accommodation, the Structure Plan anticipates development of around 50,000 units in the Temporary Provisions Schemes, 8,000 in existing urban areas and 2,000 in primary development areas, particularly Pembroke (8.3).

2.2.23 The dwelling capacity of the Temporary Provision Schemes is now estimated at 60,810 units, rather than the 50,000 estimated by the Structure Plan team. The revised figure includes the Replanning Areas, within the boundaries of the Temporary Provision Schemes, which were largely allocated as additional housing plots. Current estimates of capacity are based on the following *central* density assumptions:

- Semi-Detached/Villa Plots developed to provide 1 dwelling unit each; and
- 50% of Terraced Plots developed to provide one dwelling unit; the remainder provide an average of two units per plot.

2.2.24 The number of plots available within the Temporary Provision Schemes has been estimated from aerial photography, using standard plot dimensions. The density assumptions are a conservative interpretation of planning application statistics over the period 1993-95, which indicate that a majority of terraced housing plots are now being developed to provide maisonettes or flats:

Property Type	1993	%	1994	%	1995	%
Apartments	1192	40	1742	42	2146	47
Maisonettes	651	22	1219	30	1114	24
Terraced Houses	1016	34	1014	25	1160	25
Semi-Detached/Detached	109	4	142	3	195	4

2.2.25 The revised housing supply estimates also include a conservative allowance for *windfall provision* of 750 dwelling units per year, (based on available data of the last two years), providing a potential provision of 12,750 dwelling units over the period 1993-2010.

Windfall provision includes:

- net gains in dwelling units where existing properties are replaced or extended;
- new dwelling units outside the limits of development;
- projects approved on white land, within the development zone; and
- residential components in mixed use developments.

In 1994 and 1995, an average of at least 885 dwelling units per year were approved which fall within the definition of windfall provision. This is a substantial underestimate, since some 300 applications for this period which have as yet not been mapped into the Planning Authority's GIS could not be included in the analysis.

2.2.26 There are almost 2,060 additional dwelling units in the pipeline in development briefs and other major projects: Manoel Island/Tigne' Point (854 units); Fort Chambray, Gozo (236 units); Pembroke (650 units); and the Hilton Development (256 units + 60 service apartments intended for foreign residents). This excludes the proposed development brief for a 6.4 hectare site at Il-Girghien, Birzebbugia, which will include a significant residential provision (Policy MB18 in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan).

Dwelling Supply 1990-2010	Comment
54,810	Dwelling unit capacity of the Temporary Provision Schemes, less an allowance of 6,000 for units built during the period 1988-89
12,750	Windfall provision; additional dwelling units built within existing urban areas or on land not zoned for housing purposes
2,060	Dwelling units in the pipeline in development briefs and other major projects
(-7,400)	Structure Plan team estimate of dwellings likely to be scrapped without replacement: this includes dwellings on excessively small sites, dwellings affected by infrastructure developments and dwellings in areas which are now considered unsuitable for residential accommodation
62,220	TOTAL additional dwellings, central scenario

Comparison of Housing Supply and Housing Demand

2.2.27 Under conservative assumptions, the projected housing supply will comfortably accommodate demand up to the year 2010 and beyond. Without any additional land designations for housing, some 62,220 additional dwelling units can be accommodated, whereas additional demand over the Structure Plan period is unlikely to exceed 34,700 dwelling units. Given the continuing long-term decline in Malta's natural population growth rate, the large and expanding stock of vacant dwellings, and the growing tendency to build at higher densities, current land allocations for housing are likely to suffice for the next thirty years, at least.

2.2.28 The Planning Authority has undertaken a number of sensitivity tests associated with the preferred housing demand and supply projections. A range of alternative scenarios were developed. The high demand scenario estimates a need for 40,880 units over the period 1990-2010, whilst the low density supply scenario provides for 38,570 additional units. This effectively allows for substantial growth in the number of vacant dwellings and holiday homes, in combination with a reduced level of windfall provision (to 500 units per year) and a total reversion to low density development within Scheme (of 1 dwelling unit per terraced house plot). Even under this extremely unlikely combination of circumstances, there is an adequate supply of residential land for the next 13-14 years.

Housing Development, 1988-1995

The development and redevelopment of residential uses in existing built-up areas is encouraged in policy HOU1. Provision of housing within the Temporary Provision Schemes, in accordance with the relevant Local Plans, is proposed in policy HOU4. The retention of housing numbers within Urban Conservation Areas is advocated in policy HOU2.

Rate of Development within the Temporary Provision Schemes

2.2.29 The Planning Authority have developed a Land Availability Database to monitor and analyse the take-up of land within the Temporary Provision Schemes. Aerial photography from 1993/94 was used to identify plots which have been developed since 1988.

2.2.30 Information from planning application records for the period 1993-95 was used to develop a set of assumptions regarding the number of dwelling units per developed plot:

Low density	1 dwelling unit per semi-detached plot
	1 dwelling unit per terraced plot
Central density	1 dwelling unit per semi-detached plot
	1.5 dwelling units per terraced plot
High density	2 dwelling units per semi-detached plot
	1 dwelling unit per storey per terraced plot

2.2.31 Take-up of land within the Temporary Provision Schemes has been rapid. By early 1994, some 12,410 plots had been developed, representing 18,190 dwelling units at central density assumptions. There were an estimated 29,040 vacant plots in 1994 which, using the same assumptions, are capable of accommodating an estimated 42,620 dwelling units. On average, around 3,030 dwelling units per year have been constructed within the Temporary Provision Schemes since their creation in 1988.

2.2.32 The total number of dwelling units approved has been increasing rapidly since 1993:

Dwelling Units Approved	
1993	2,990
1994	4,130
1995	4,660

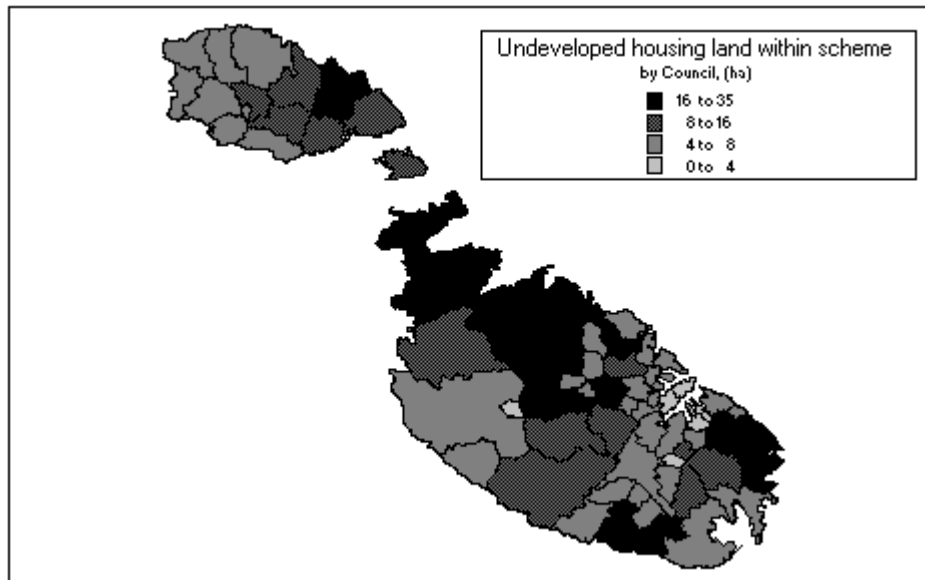
The evidence suggests an accelerating rate of residential development, with a net increase in dwelling units each year of at least 3,000, likely to rise to over 4,000 in 1995/96, after allowing for a certain proportion of stock replacement. This depicts a highly over-heated housing market, given that underlying demand can justify no more than 1,730¹⁵ additional dwelling units per year. The net result can only be an increase in the number of vacant dwellings.

2.2.33 In early 1994, a total of 552 ha of land designated for housing within the Temporary Provision Schemes remained vacant. An estimated 10% of vacant land within the Temporary Provision Schemes is already partially committed for development, with 8% covered by permits and 2% covered by applications pending decision.

Distribution of Housing Development

2.2.34 A large part of the vacant land available for development lies in the north and central regions of the Islands (St. Paul's Bay and Mellieha Councils); further rapid housing development is probable in these rural areas of high landscape quality. In addition, a considerable amount of land remains in Swieqi, which is already absorbing large amounts of growth in the North Harbours Local Plan area. In the south of Malta, most remaining land lies in Marsascala and Zurrieq. Most of the remaining housing land in Gozo lies in the south east of the island.

¹⁵ 34670 units needed over a twenty-year span = 1733 units per year.

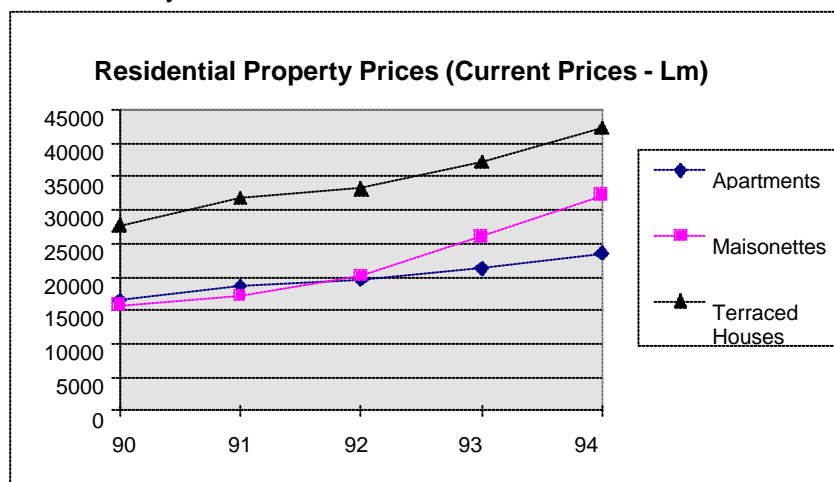


Residential Property Prices, 1990-1994

The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient land is available and that other policies are directed to ensuring an adequate dwelling supply by size, quality, and location, so that shortages in supply do not contribute unnecessarily to price increases (Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 8.6).

2.2.35 Monitoring of residential property prices has been possible through a survey of achieved sale prices conducted by the Association of Estate Agents, at the request of the Planning Authority, for the period 1990-94. Around 50 transactions per year are available for terraced houses, and a similar number for maisonettes. Around 160 transactions per year are available for apartments. There is inadequate data from this source on other property types. The survey areas reflect the locations in which estate agents are most active and may not reflect trends in other regions. The areas covered by the survey include St. Julians, St. Andrews, Attard, Balzan, Bugibba, Qawra and Marsascala.

2.2.36 The available data suggests that residential property prices have increased consistently over the period 1990-94. Terraced houses and apartments have each increased in price by around 10% per year, on average, at current prices. Maisonettes have achieved more rapid increases of around 20% per year. Maisonette prices have effectively been repositioned; whilst they were priced similarly to flats at the beginning of the period, they are now placed mid-way between flats and terraced houses.



2.2.37 Whilst this data confirms the general perception of strong price increases in the housing market, it is at variance with the recently published figures relying on advertised prices, suggesting annual increases of over 50% for flats and 30% for terraced houses in 1994¹⁶.

2.2.38 The demand for housing is made up of a great many factors related to dwelling size, quality, location, price, demographic pressures and purchasing power. There is no simple relationship between the supply of land and property prices. Dwelling prices are continuing to increase, despite the current plentiful supply of land allocated for residential development and the large stock of vacant dwelling units. Land banking is not currently causing an artificial shortage, since over 4,000 new housing units are being approved for development each year (see 2.2.32).

2.2.39 Price rises can be stimulated by factors other than a shortage in supply; it is a characteristic of a successful economy, and confidence in that economy, that increased purchasing power will increase dwelling prices. Consistent dwelling price increases over the period 1990-94 are likely to have been fueled by a range of factors including:

- confidence in continuing growth in property prices;
- real economic growth, stimulating purchasing power;
- wider availability of credit for house purchases, combined with controlled interest rates;
- continuing inflationary pressures, maintaining the investment attractiveness of real assets; and
- slow growth in alternative investment opportunities.

In short, price rises are primarily being fueled by the attractiveness of land and property for investment purposes, rather than genuine demand linked to demographic trends or land shortages.

Pembroke

Pembroke is defined as one of the Structure Plan's Principal Development Areas. The area is to be developed for a range of uses including private and sheltered housing and ancillary social and community facilities (HOU5). A Local Plan is to be prepared for the area as soon as possible (HOU6).

2.2.40 The *Pembroke Action Plan* was drafted in 1995 as a response to Structure Plan policies **HOU5** and **HOU6**. The draft Pembroke Action Plan was approved by the Planning Authority for public consultation purposes in June 1995. The initial consultation phase was concluded by November 1995 and a public exhibition was held in January 1996. The amended Action Plan was presented to the Local Plans Sub-Committee of the Planning Authority in March 1996 and, following further minor alterations, was presented to relevant members of Parliament and the newly inaugurated Local Council in April 1996. Final amendments to the Action Plan are now in progress, prior to its formal consideration by the Planning Authority (scheduled for early June 1996).

2.2.41 The extended consultation process has resulted in a wide range of amendments to the draft Pembroke Action Plan, although the overall level of provision of new housing units (650 dwellings) has changed little. There is extensive provision for community and recreational uses, although the planned retail function of the area has been downgraded to provide a district shopping centre serving local residents only. A detailed framework for implementation has been included in the Action Plan. The Ministry for the

¹⁶ *Aspects of the Housing Market in Malta 1980-94*, Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review, December 1995.

Environment will be formally responsible for project management through the Director General, Works Division.

Rent Legislation

The phased establishment of an equitable rental market is proposed, to stimulate the private market for rented housing. This is to be coupled with financial assistance for home purchase and for those who cannot afford higher rentals (HOU7).

2.2.42 An Act was passed to amend the Renewal of Rents Law on December 7th 1995 (Act XXXI of 1995). As from June 1st, 1995, this frees all *new* rents and leases of legal controls and tenant protection; henceforth, they will be subject only to conditions in the relevant contracts. Older rents and leases will continue to receive the full control and tenancy protection as provided by earlier Housing Acts. These Acts fix rents at pre-World War II levels, plus 15% for every fifteen years. They also stipulate that rents can only be raised in very restricted circumstances and under stringent conditions, subject to approval by the Rent Regulation Board.

2.2.43 A small number of adverts for property to let to local residents have appeared in the press. To judge from these adverts, it appears that rents have increased significantly in recent years. Whilst advertised rentals vary widely according to the type and location of property, it is unusual to see figures below Lm100 per annum. In contrast, the 1985 Census found that 85% of rental stock was available at less than Lm100 per annum.

2.2.44 Some increase in the number of advertised rental properties has been noted. However, the increase has been slow and rents remain relatively high. Some reluctance to rent out property may be anticipated, due to fears that the law may be removed under a future administration. It is still too early to evaluate the full effect of this law on the property and rental market.

Social Housing

A new approach to social housing is foreseen in the Structure Plan, progressively phasing out the provision by Government of new social housing units. The aim is to gradually restrict support to genuinely needy households and to blend social households with all others in the private sector. Provision of low-cost housing by the private and voluntary sectors for rent, as well as subsidized sheltered housing, is encouraged (HOU8, HOU9, 8.6-8.8). Meanwhile, any new Government housing is to be located within existing or committed built-up areas (HOU9).

2.2.45 Government has retained an involvement in the direct construction of social housing. Altogether, a total of 1,755 social housing units have been constructed over the period 1990-95. A further 1,031 subsidised plots have been provided. This indicates continuing provision of Government social housing on a substantial scale:

Government Housing Provision, 1990-95	Units/Plots
HOS Plots	1031
Cluster houses, maisonettes and flats sold at subsidised prices	825
Redeveloped and rehabilitated units	461
Flats for subsidised lease	298
New Government units sold at market prices	131
Housing for the elderly (rehabilitated)	36
Flats for people with special needs	4

Issue of Plots

2.2.46 The last batch of HOS building plots was issued on July 30th, 1993. In total, 1031 plots were allocated by Government during the period 1990-93. This represents some 6% of the total allocation of subsidised plots since the first HOS issue in 1979. These plots are to be built into terraced houses, with the help of subsidised loans. HOS plots benefit from subsidised ground rents which are to be redeemed within 15 years of plot allocation. Once the ground rents have been redeemed, these plots are effectively merged into the private sector.

Flats for Subsidised Rent

2.2.47 Almost 300 Government flats for subsidised rent were built during the period 1990-95. These flats are leased to low-income households. Except for San Gwann, Santa Lucia and Mtarfa, all the flats provided have been in old urban areas where population totals are, generally speaking, declining. More recently, low-cost flats are being built in newer housing estates such as Wied Hesri in Siggiewi, Psaila Street in Birkirkara and tas-Saghjtar in Msida.

2.2.48 The market for Government flats has been saturated for a number of years, as was shown in San Gwann, Kalkara, Santa Venera, Pieta and Bugibba. In all these localities, Government flats have remained vacant and unallocated for long periods of time, despite the availability of subsidies. *Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Projects* have been producing flats in older housing areas which, again, have proved unpopular.

Low-Cost Units for Sale

2.2.49 Government has produced 825 low-cost residential units which it sold at subsidised prices, together with subsidised loans. Allocation was subject to a means test. Some 450 additional Government units are under construction. Around 460 units were recycled from old dwellings in Urban Conservation Areas and around 130 new residential units were built by Government for sale at market prices during the review period.

Private and Voluntary Sector

2.2.50 Neither the private sector nor the Church have produced any low-cost accommodation in recent years.

Special Needs Housing and Associated Establishments

The Structure Plan envisaged that voluntary organisations would be encouraged to establish housing associations specifically catering to the needs of the elderly and the disabled (SOC19)

2.2.51 In total, 32 special needs residential units have been opened over the period 1990-95. Another four are known to be in the pipeline. Chelsea House (Birkirkara), opened by the Richmond Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry for Social Services, has already obtained three units for homeless, single persons.

2.2.52 There are 36 Houses for The Elderly in Malta and Gozo. Of these, eleven opened within the period under review. Government opened homes in Msida, Gzira and Zejtun and is proposing additional homes in Cospicua, Zejtun and Mtarfa. At Ghajnsielem, an Old People's Home is being opened in a joint effort between Government and MAS. The latter is an attempt to establish a housing association.

2.2.53 The Local Councils are also becoming active in providing facilities for the elderly, in partnership with the Secretariat for the Care of the Elderly. A day centre for the elderly has been opened at Dingli and old people's homes are proposed at Qormi and Sliema.

Church Homes

2.2.54 The Church has 17 homes for the elderly, although only one was opened since 1990 (Dar il-Kleru in Birkirkara).

Private Sector

2.2.55 Five old people's homes have been opened by the private sector between 1990 and 1996. One of them, at Gzira, was converted from a tourist accommodation complex (opened in 1995).

Conversion of Tourist Accommodation

Conversion of lower standard tourist accommodation into residential units is encouraged (HOU10). This is to include the purchase of property by the private and voluntary sectors for conversion and subsequent sale or rent as sheltered accommodation and for use by subsidised rent tenants.

2.2.56 This is a difficult policy to monitor, since conversion of self-catering tourist accommodation for permanent residential use may not require structural changes and therefore need not come to the attention of the Planning Authority. However, it should be noted that there has been a reduction of almost 1,000 licensed beds within the self-catering sector over the period 1989-96; a proportion of these may well be in use as permanent accommodation (see 2.7.4). It should also be noted that conversion of unlicensed tourist accommodation units into permanent residential accommodation would be unlikely to come to the attention of the authorities.

2.2.57 During the period 1993-1995, no projects were approved by the Planning Authority for the conversion of tourist accommodation into housing units. In fact, the evidence from the larger conversion projects requiring development permits suggests that the reverse is more likely to occur; a project was approved for the development of a holiday complex to replace an unfinished apartment block in the Qawra area. Also, some lower category tourist flats have been converted into hotel accommodation. On the other hand, at least one tourist accommodation complex has been successfully converted into an old people's home (see 2.2.55).

2.2.58 Whilst it is difficult to generalise, there is a fear that much of the lower standard holiday accommodation would be unsuitable for permanent accommodation without significant refurbishment. There is, in any case, such over-supply of new build residential accommodation that large scale conversion of existing tourist units to residential use appears unlikely at this stage.

2.3 Social and Community Facilities

2.3.1 The Structure Plan develops land-use and infrastructure planning policies for a number of key social services: health; education; care of the elderly; and provision for the disabled. This section reviews progress in these areas over the period 1993-95, together with progress in the provision of facilities such as libraries and venues for cultural activities.

2.3.2 With a growing and rapidly aging population, improved provision of social and community facilities is becoming particularly urgent. Both standards of provision and expected levels of service are increasing. There is also a growing emphasis on private sector provision for many social and community services. Malta needs to keep in touch with improvements within the social and community sphere by planning for the future. Already, the Maltese islands have benefited through improvements such as the opening of

new homes for the elderly, day-care centres and the refurbishment project at St. Luke's Hospital.

Health

2.3.3 The Structure Plan highlights the need for expansion and modernization in the health sector in order to meet the growing needs of the population on a national and community basis. St. Luke's hospital currently serves around 1,000 patients annually and is now being refurbished. However, physical space within the St. Luke's Hospital site is limited. At the same time, there is an increasing emphasis on the decentralisation of health services, linked to the establishment of specialized medical centres. Initiatives from the private sector are being encouraged in a bid to improve choice, decrease pressure on the public sector and establish Malta as a regional health centre for both local and foreign patients.

Health Planning

The Structure Plan makes provision for the preparation of a 20 year development plan by the Department of Health (SOC1).

2.3.4 The Department of Health issued a draft Health Development Plan in December 1995. A final version is due to be published shortly. Entitled *Health Vision 2000*, this is intended to provide a blueprint for the Island's health policy over the next decade. Targets are identified relating to the main areas of concern for 2000 and 2005. The document emphasises the need for a multi-sector approach towards combating the island's main health problems, which are identified as: diabetes; obesity; coronary artery disease; traffic accidents; cancer; and mental illness. Planning issues raised in the document include the proposed decentralization of medical services from St. Luke's into specialised hospitals and various health centres.

Hospitals

The Structure Plan identifies a need to upgrade and extend facilities at St. Luke's and other hospitals (9.2, SOC5). It also identifies a need for new hospitals, both public (9.4, SOC4) and private (9.6, SOC6, SOC9). The quality of road access to existing and new hospitals will be improved (9.4, SOC4). Land adjacent to existing hospitals is to be reserved for expansion (9.2, SOC2). The Planning Authority is to assist in the designation of sites for new hospitals; it is acknowledged that these sites may need to be located outside the boundaries of existing urban areas (9.6). An Environmental Impact Assessment will be required for all new hospital proposals (SOC7).

2.3.5 Refurbishment of St. Luke's hospital is currently being undertaken. This project is due to be fully completed within the next three years. The aim is to renovate St. Luke's in line with European standards and to reduce the number of beds from 934 to 600. To achieve this, a reallocation of medical services has to be undertaken and the new San Raffaele Hospital will make this possible. Road access to St. Luke's remains a serious problem, adversely affecting the ambulance service and other patient transport.

2.3.6 The refurbishment objectives for St. Luke's are:

- restructuring of medical departments within the hospital;
- upgrading of mechanical services, including air-conditioning;
- redesigning the hospital layout;
- refurbishing staff and public areas;
- upgrading parking and access;
- upgrading medical facilities;
- reorganising the ambulance service; and

- improving electricity and liquid oxygen supplies.

2.3.7 The level of capital investment in the St. Luke's refurbishment project has been approximately Lm1 million per year throughout the period 1993-95¹⁷.

2.3.8 In accordance with **SOC4** and **SOC6**, three new hospitals have been approved. One private hospital, St. Philip's is already operating whilst Capua Palace Hospital is due to open in July 1996 and San Raffaele is still under construction:

New Hospitals	Floorspace (sq.m.)	Beds
San Raffaele	93,426	450
St. Philip's	6,461	75
Capua Palace	14,956	80

2.3.9 Capua Palace Hospital will eventually provide general facilities, besides providing obstetric and gynaecological facilities. St. Philip's is already operating as a general hospital and provides obstetric and gynaecological services, besides having a sports injury clinic. Neither of these hospitals provides casualty or emergency services, thus reducing traffic and noise impacts on the surrounding areas.

2.3.10 San Raffaele Hospital, currently under construction, will provide a range of medical facilities, some of which are currently within St. Luke's Hospital. The following services will be transferred from St. Luke's: gynaecology; paediatrics; maternity; cardiothoracic; general and medical library. The following facilities will also become available at San Raffaele: mortuary with autopsy facilities; medical library with research facilities; and day hospital facilities. It will also provide medical post-graduate training in conjunction with the University of Malta. The level of capital investment in San Raffaele has been: Lm 1.5 million in 1993; Lm 4.0 million in 1994; and Lm 7.1 million in 1995. Expenditure of Lm 12.2 million is projected for 1996.

2.3.11 The approved sites for St. Philip's and San Raffaele are both, technically, outside the designated areas for development. Nevertheless, both sites have been justified as exceptions under Structure Plan policy **SET12**. Both hospitals are well located with relation to their catchment areas and share good access onto major arterial routes. Currently, the San Raffaele access roads are under construction, in conjunction with major road improvements at the Tal-Qroqq intersection.

2.3.12 Land next to hospitals is to be safeguarded for future provision. **SOC2** of the Structure Plan states that provision will be made for this in the Local Plans. In the case of the private hospitals, no expansion is intended or provided for. There is provision within the existing site for the expansion of San Raffaele Hospital to 600 beds.

Health Centres

Land adjacent to existing or proposed health centres will be reserved for expansion and utilised for medical facilities and other community uses (9.3, SOC3). Health centres need to be located and designed with due regard to the characteristics of the catchment area, public transport access, potential for expansion, mobility access and other planning criteria (9.7, SOC8).

2.3.13 The Department of Health is planning new health centres at Kirkop/Zurrieq and Bulebel/Zejtun, as well as refurbishment of the Bormla health centre. The Kirkop/Zurrieq centre is planned for the next five years whilst the Bulebel/Zejtun centre for the coming ten-year period. Both centres

¹⁷ Malta's Hospitals for the 2000s, Department of Health.

will upgrade health facilities for the south of Malta, although no sites have yet been allocated.

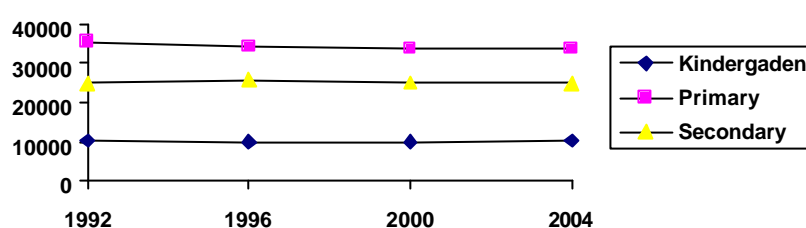
2.3.14 Systematic safeguarding of land adjacent to existing health centres, wherever the opportunity exists, has not yet been achieved. At present, applications for development on land adjacent to existing health centres are reviewed on an ad-hoc basis.

Education

Primary and Secondary Education

2.3.15 The population aged 0-14 years is expected to decline gradually through the remainder of the Structure Plan period. In 1990, there were 82,440 children within this age range. By the year 2010, it is expected that this figure will be around 78,420. This represents an overall decline of 5%.

School Projected Population till 2004



2.3.16 Despite this projected decline in the school-age population, a high level of public sector investment is planned for the education sector. The Education Department has developed a plan covering the building of new schools and the extension of existing facilities, to be incorporated into the Ministry's business plan for the next five years. The Education Minister recently suggested that a dramatic increase is needed in funding for the building of new schools and the rehabilitation of buildings which were never intended to be used as schools¹⁸. Over the monitoring period, however, there has been a slight reduction in the Education Department's capital spending, counterbalanced by rapidly increasing recurrent expenditure:

	Recurrent Expenditure	Capital Expenditure
'90	23,974,000	2,850,000
'95	35,544,000	2,150,000

2.3.17 Meanwhile, private education is also expanding; this includes both commercial and non-profit organisations. School population trends between 1986 and 1992 indicate a gradual increase in the private school population coupled with a gradual decrease in the State school population:

Year	State	Non-Profit	Profit
1986	25,503	9,056	947
1988	25,292	9,168	1,207
1990	25,035	9,171	1,637
1992	24,199	9,684	1,642

2.3.18 Although the Education Department is currently projecting a stable private school population until 2004, a continuing steady increase in the private sector now appears likely. There are a number of reasons for this:

- there are more private primary schools than secondary schools. In 1992/93, there were over 11,300 private students at primary level, compared to 7,530 at secondary level. Even if the demand for private

¹⁸ The Times, May 22nd 1996.

education at primary level stabilizes, the demand at secondary level is likely to continue to increase.

- demand, as reflected in development permit applications for the construction and extension of new private schools, remains strong. Recent approvals include the San Anton/San Andrea schools for the Parent's Foundation for Education at Imselliet and St. Martin's College at Swatar, Msida. Private school expansion projects include: new premises for St. Michael's School, enabling expansion to offer secondary education; expanded primary facilities for Anthony Lawrence Bartolo School; and new premises for Devonshire House School.
- social factors such as increased economic wealth and social mobility may lead to continuing growth in the demand for private education.

New and Expanded Schools

The Structure Plan emphasises the need to improve standards of provision, whilst making the best possible use of existing premises (9.12, SOC13, SOC14, SOC15). New schools, including private schools, are to be located on appropriate sites, where demographic projections suggest that such a facility will be required. The Planning Authority will cooperate with the Ministry of Education to safeguard sites for school expansions and new facilities within the Temporary Provision Schemes (9.10, SOC10). Particular consideration will be given to the siting of special schools (SOC16).

2.3.19 The Planning Authority issued a policy document for private schools in 1994, approved by Government, which established guidelines and procedures for the consideration of private school development applications.

2.3.20 A number of new schools have opened during the monitoring period. The Parents Foundation for Education were granted approval for development of a second school at Imselliet, adjacent to their existing school. New state pre-school facilities were opened at Ta' Paris, Pembroke and Zejtun. A new junior lyceum for girls is currently being built in Santa Lucija.

2.3.21 The Education Department also has plans for new boy's secondary schools in Zurrieq and Attard and for a new girl's secondary school in the south of Malta. A new primary school has been earmarked for Mosta, along with extensions for primary schools and kindergartens in St. Paul's Bay, Mgarr and Naxxar. A decision is also pending on whether to extend the Birzebbugia primary school or build a separate kindergarten centre.

2.3.22 In accordance with policy **SOC13** the following schools were refurbished during the monitoring period:

School	Refurbishment Projects (m²)
Victoria, Technical Institute	1056
Mosta, Primary School	1517
Paola, Liceo Vassallo	2100
Kirkop, Primary School	7930
Marsascala Primary School	1213
Mosta, Secondary School	2960

2.3.23 A number of secondary schools, housed in buildings which were never intended for this purpose, have been identified as requiring extensive rehabilitation. These include the Sir Adrian Dingli, Tal-Handaq, Mtarfa and Bighi schools. There are also a number of refurbishment projects in the pipeline:

School	Expenditure (Lm)
Sandhurst, Junior Lyceum	1.5 million
Hamrun, Junior Lyceum	2.0 million

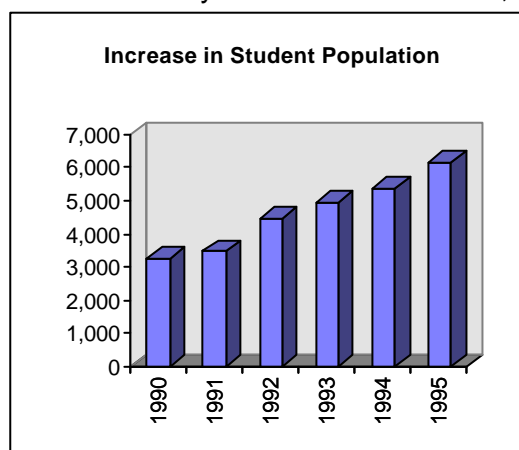
2.3.24 The Structure Plan seeks to safeguard land next to schools (**SOC10**). The Education Department confirms the need for this and reinforces the fact that no land next to schools is to be released for residential purposes. Unfortunately, the possibility remains that such land will be taken up for residential purposes before the land can be bought. This indicates that any application for development next to a school needs to be reviewed and discussed with the Education Department.

Tertiary and Vocational Education

2.3.25 Tertiary and vocational education is largely public sector. Since 1987, there has been rapid growth in student numbers. The University has extended its facilities to accommodate this mushrooming of the student population. This continued growth is the result of the following measures:

- the virtual abolition of the *numerus clausus*¹⁹ system;
- increase in availability of under-graduate, post-graduate, day and evening courses;
- recognition of mature students; and
- improved stipend conditions, particularly through removing the requirement for student workers to work for half of each academic year. Students may now attend University for the full academic year, whilst still receiving the stipend, then work in a temporary Government post during the summer months.

2.3.26 In 1990, 3,242 students were following a University course. By 1995, the student population had virtually doubled to a total of 6,168 students:



2.3.27 This growth in the student population was coupled with an increase in the University's recurrent expenditure, particularly related to staff expansion and increases in student stipends:

	Recurrent	Capital	Stipends	Global
'90	2,600,000	2,000,000	1,924,000	6,524,000
'95	5,800,000	1,750,000	3,700,000	11,250,000

¹⁹ The *numerus clausus* system imposed a rigid ceiling on the number of degree students, with access based on a combination of school grades and the type of sixth form attended.

2.3.28 The rate of capital investment in the University, whilst remaining substantial, declined over the period 1990-95. New University facilities over this period included: the building of an extension to the library; improved facilities for the Faculty of Architecture; a new lecture complex; new laboratories; the Biology Department; a leisure centre; the Centre for Communication Technology; improved access arrangements; and alterations to the canteen.

2.3.29 Improved admission and stipend conditions at the University have also strengthened demand for post-secondary and vocational education. Sixth form education was, until recently, provided by the state and other private institutions. As of October 1995, the University expanded its educational facilities in post-secondary education through the Junior College. The Junior College is housed within the Government ex-sixth form building at Msida. This building was refurbished and upgraded in order to accommodate it.

Safeguarding of Land for University Expansion

Land adjacent to the University is to be reserved in order to provide for services which cannot be located elsewhere (9.10, SOC11).

2.3.30 Some land adjacent to the University has been reserved by the San Raffaele Hospital development. This land will be taken up for medical use, post-graduate medical education and for research facilities. Currently there is limited physical space for the University to expand its educational facilities. A Master Plan has been drafted and discussed by the University authorities for the further physical development of the campus. From a total site area of approximately 20 ha some 4.6 ha lies in a valley, soon to be scheduled, which is not available for development. Around 23% of the remaining land is still available for development, subject to the granting of development permission.

New Vocational/Technical College in Valletta

The Structure Plan identifies a requirement for a new vocational/training college, particularly covering the fields of technology and management. The Ministry of Education, together with the Planning Authority, is to determine the feasibility of establishing such an institution in Valletta (9.10, SOC12).

2.3.31 The Junior College, which also forms part of the University, provides post-secondary education for those students intending to pursue a University career. The Junior College is located within the building which housed the Government Sixth Form. The Government Sixth Form has been moved to Paola and caters for students who wish to pursue post-secondary education, but do not necessarily wish to attend University.

Care of the Elderly and Disabled

2.3.32 Current projections suggest more rapid growth in the number of elderly persons than was expected in the Structure Plan (See 2.2.7). The present study indicates that the 60+ population will increase by 51% over the period 1990-2010, whilst the *Old-Old* (75+ years) are likely to experience an even more rapid increase of 55%:

	60+	75+
1990	53,256	19,192
2010	80,338	23,457

Facilities for the Elderly and Disabled

The Structure Plan proposes that the Planning Authority cooperate with the Secretariat for the Care of the Elderly and the voluntary sector to identify sites and buildings suitable for conversion to accommodate day care centres, sheltered homes and other facilities (9.14, SOC18). Full support will also be given to initiatives to provide an appropriate range of housing for the elderly and disabled (9.14, SOC20).

2.3.33 As yet there is no formal document setting out plans for the care of the elderly, although some planning exists for this sector. The main thrust in the care of the elderly, and the elderly disabled, has been to decentralize care to community homes. This is being accomplished through the building of community homes for the elderly and the establishment of community-based daycare centres. Private sector initiatives are also being encouraged. The intention is to provide a better choice in care whilst relieving pressure on the public sector. New facilities have been provided as follows:

Day-Care Centres	Dingli, Zejtun, Hamrun
Government Retirement Homes	Floriana, Mosta, Gzira, Msida, Zejtun
Private Retirement Homes	Casa Arkati, Mosta

2.3.34 The establishment of community-based retirement homes and day-care centres is intended to improve the quality of life by ensuring that the elderly:

- are not isolated from familiar surroundings, whilst enjoying the full benefits of elderly care; and
- are able to partake in community life. More often than not the elderly resident remains close to other family members and to friends.

2.3.35 A number of additional initiatives to improve the provision of retirement homes are currently in the pipeline. The Department for the Care of the Elderly has received approval for a retirement home at Luqa. In addition, Conservatorio San Giuseppe at Bormla is being renovated and is to be utilised as a retirement home. A private retirement home in Rabat has also been granted development approval.

2.3.36 The Planning Authority document *Access for All* sets out standards for the mobility-impaired regarding access. New facilities for the elderly need to conform with such standards.

2.3.37 Four new homes for the elderly are planned for development over the period to 2001. Designated locations include Cospicua, Mtarfa, Mellieha and Birkirkara. Also, the Department for Social and Family Affairs is currently holding discussions with the Housing Authority in relation to future daycare centres. The intention is to locate these at ground-floor level within established housing communities. A similar project for Gozo is currently being investigated. The issue of special needs housing, in general, is dealt with in section 2.2.50.

2.3.38 Initiatives are also in the pipeline to improve facilities for the disabled. The voluntary sector has played a key role in this respect. The *Eden Foundation* is a non-profit making organization, working to support families with mentally or physically disabled children. The foundation provides a wide range of services including the training for carers/facilitators and special needs education. The Eden Foundation has set-up a training centre for children with cerebral palsy at Bulebel Industrial Estate. In addition, a centre for the disabled is being set-up at Hal-Far by *Centru Handikappati*, another voluntary organization. The Malta Hospice Movement are in the process of setting up a daycare centre in Balzan.

Community Facilities

Provision of community facilities

The Structure Plan provides encouragement for the provision of a wide range of community facilities, both in existing housing areas and in new areas (SOC23, SOC25).

2.3.39 A range of community facilities were approved within established housing areas over the period 1993-95. These included cemeteries, pastoral centres, additions to churches, community centres and landscaping of public areas. Examples of new community facilities which have recently been developed or approved include:

Public	Private
Civic Centres at Birkirkara & Mosta	Cinemas at St. Julians
Community Centre at Zabbar	Sports Complex at Birkirkara
Sports Centres at Msida & Hamrun	MUSEUM doctrine centre at Zurrieq
New Town Centre at Mtarfa	
Public Gardens at Attard, Isla, Ghajnsielem and Birkirkara.	

2.3.40 Modern multiplex cinema facilities are a recent arrival in the Maltese Islands and have proven to be highly popular. A modern cinema complex has been developed in Paceville. Whilst they are clearly commercial entities, such developments perform an important function in contributing to the vitality of recreational and town centres.

2.3.41 The scope for introducing social and community facilities into established and developing housing areas on a planned basis, as envisaged by the Structure Plan, is quite limited. Most schemed areas are already largely committed as residential land, and community facilities can often only be provided on an ad-hoc basis, in response to individual development permit applications. The 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes included 26 Replanning Areas (see Section 4.8). Most of these have since been replanned with little allocation for social and community facilities. A rare opportunity for a more planned, participatory approach to community development arose at Pembroke. Contrary to previous trends, the Pembroke Action Plan provides for the development of social and community facilities at an early stage in the planned growth of a residential area. The Pembroke Action Plan will be formally considered in July 1996.

New libraries

The Structure Plan seeks improved provision of library facilities, with proposals for a new central library, as well as for district libraries in Qormi, Rabat and Luqa (SOC21, SOC22).

2.3.34 The public library at Belt-is-Sebh is being extended in order to provide improved library facilities. This development is incorporated into the draft development brief for the Government Administration Centre in Floriana.

2.4 Commerce and Industry

Offices

Modernising the Office Sector

The Structure Plan seeks to address the lack of modern office facilities throughout the Maltese Islands, in both the public and private sector. Particular attention is drawn to the need for improved office standards to attract the international and offshore financial community and to stimulate the development of a commercial office market²⁰. A new Government Administration Centre is to be developed outside Valletta (COM1), as well as private sector office developments at Pembroke, Luqa Airport and Marsa Park (COM2, COM4).

2.4.1 The office sector has developed rapidly since 1993, with a growing number of projects receiving approval:

Offices	93	94	95
Projects Approved	20	40	46
Floorspace Approved	16,515	36,591	29,058

2.4.2 The restructuring and modernisation process has begun; larger office developments approved since 1993 include a new complex at Pinto Wharf, the Malta Financial Services Centre on the Mriehel by-pass, a large office/showroom development at Mriehel, an office complex in Qormi and the new Mosta Civic Centre.

2.4.3 In addition, there are several major allocations for modern office accommodation in the pipeline:

- In accordance with policy **COM1**, a development brief was completed in September 1995 for the proposed *Government Administration Centre*, based on the existing Government office complex in Floriana. The brief makes provision for approximately 140,000 square metres of development floorspace, incorporating 80,000 square metres of Government offices, 35,000 square metres of private sector offices and a range of commercial uses (including a substantial extension to the commercial/retail area of Floriana). Over 2,000 parking spaces are provided for in the current brief.
- The proposed *Pembroke Business Park* allocates up to 7ha for low density office and business uses (not including industrial uses). This accords with policy **HOU5** (and **COM3**).
- In accordance with policy **COM4**, the *Manoel Island Development Brief* allows for up to 30,000 square metres of office floorspace, although current proposals suggest that the final level of provision will be lower than this (16,000 square metres). The Brief's intention is that this should include customs and maritime offices, small-scale professional offices, conference facilities and an offshore/financial services centre.
- The *Hilton redevelopment project* includes 7,500 square metres of new offices.
- The draft *Grand Harbour Local Plan* encourages the accommodation of additional maritime offices within passenger and port areas. A *Port Trade Centre* is proposed, incorporating a 'one-stop' cargo/customs/pilotage service.

2.4.4 No action has yet been taken on the Structure Plan proposals for additional office provision at Marsa Park (**COM4**) and Luqa Airport (**COM3**). The Marsa Park proposal is being actively investigated as part of the work for

²⁰ Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 1990, 10.16-10.19.

the Grand Harbour Local Plan. Informally, interest has already been expressed in office development close to the Malta International Airport, although not on the site originally envisaged for the Luqa Airport Business Park.

Office Development through Conversion and Infill

The Structure Plan makes provision for office development on infill sites (10.5). Conversion of existing residential and other uses in built-up areas to small office use is encouraged, as a contribution to the provision of additional office floorspace (COM5). However, the Structure Plan seeks to constrain growth in private sector office provision within Valletta/Floriana, until suitable transport access, vehicle parking and pedestrian circulation have been secured to accommodate employment growth in the capital (COM2, 10.3). This is an interim position; it is seen as important that the Valletta transport problem is satisfactorily solved, so that the capital city can also function as an efficient office centre for both public and private sector offices²¹.

2.4.5 Over the period 1993-95, no more than 7% of additional office floorspace has been provided through changes of use (5,760 square metres). A further 25% (21,300 square metres), has been provided as extensions to existing office facilities, or through demolition and replacement of existing offices or mixed-use premises.

2.4.6 There has been a substantial amount of office development approved in Valletta/Floriana over the period 1993-95 (approx. 12,400 square metres), of which 10% is in the private sector. The largest private sector approval is for an 1,155 square metres office/stores conversion (from tenements) in West Street, Valletta. Government office projects in Valletta/Floriana include Pinto Wharf (4,800 square metres), the Planning Authority refurbishment (6,370 square metres), additions to the Malta Mint (890 square metres), offices for the Audit Department (890 square metres) and smaller upgrading projects for Contracts Department and the Inland Revenue.

2.4.7 A thorough review of office policy for Valletta/Floriana will be completed during 1996 as part of the *Grand Harbour Local Plan* and the *Commerce & Industry Subject Study*.

Shopping

Modernising the Retail Sector

In the retail sector, the Structure Plan provides for rapid modernisation through the development of large indoor shopping complexes. Sites for new superstores, with customer floorspace in excess of 2,500 square metres, are allocated at Luqa Airport Business Park and Pembroke (COM3, COM6). A shopping mall of unspecified size is proposed for Marsa (COM4). Part of Xewkija industrial estate is designated for retail showrooms (IND3). The development of larger showrooms and warehouses (over 500 sq. m) is restricted to sites in or adjacent to storage warehouse areas (IND13).

2.4.8 The Structure Plan's vision of retail modernisation through the development of very large indoor complexes is not currently being pursued. Whilst the draft *Pembroke Action Plan* includes some shopping provision, the Structure Plan proposal for a regional centre to serve the central and northern built-up areas of Malta is not included. The proposed *Luqa Airport Business*

²¹ *Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum*, 1990, 10.17.

Park is unlikely to materialise; there is no certainty at this stage that the associated difficulties of land assembly could be resolved. Marsa is not being actively pursued for retail use at this stage.

2.4.9 Whilst the Structure Plan's strategy for major new shopping centres has not been pursued, the pace of retail development has been rapid:

Shopping	93	94	95
Projects Approved	68	71	73
Floorspace approved	21,433	30,642	20,477

2.4.10 The overall scale of development is large; equivalent to at least four European-style superstores per year. However, new shopping projects in Malta generally remain small-scale, with an average gross floorspace of 340 square metres. The geographical pattern of provision for these new facilities is highly dispersed.

2.4.11 Whilst large retail showrooms form an expanding section of the retail scene in Malta, retail warehouses on the European model have not yet become established. The locations for new showrooms have not been restricted to those indicated in policies **IND3** and **IND13**.

2.4.12 Rapid growth in shopping floorspace over the period 1993-95 has been matched by growth in retail employment; the retail sector now accounts for over 10% of all employees, with 16% growth since 1988. In the short-term, growth in this sector is likely to continue; retail expenditure is growing rapidly (32% growth in real terms over the period 1988-94).

2.4.13 The reluctance to implement the Structure Plan's retail development strategy harmonises with a broad shift in European thinking on retail development since the late 1980's. There is a growing consensus regarding retail planning policy amongst most European countries. The linking theme is: *... to give more support to town centres and slow down the out-of-town development process*²². This change of emphasis is linked to evolving European policy which seeks to foster urban containment and the 'compact city', in line with recent thinking on sustainable development policy.

2.4.14 Allocations for further retail provision are limited. Manoel Island is likely to provide up to 25,000 square metres of retail floorspace, including planned provision at Tigne' Point. In addition to general shopping facilities, this is likely to include craft studios/workshops, a waterfront fish/food market, and festival/specialist shopping. Other retail schemes in the pipeline are predominantly small-scale:

- local shopping provision is planned at Pembroke, on sites totaling up to 1ha. Shopping provision may also be included in the grade 1 listed Fort Pembroke, although the designation is very general and includes community uses;
- some specialised provision is likely to be incorporated in the Grand Harbour Local Plan harbour areas; and
- a potential shopping areas is likely to be designated in Qawra in the draft North West Local Plan.

2.4.15 There is a clear need to reconsider the Structure Plan's retail development strategy. Whilst growth in the retail sector is rapid, the spatial pattern of development and choice of retail formats largely falls outside the current Structure Plan framework for retail development.

2.4.16 Given the current rate of growth, and the limited retail development pipeline, some additional allocations for retail development may be required.

²² *The European Retail Digest*, Templeton College Oxford, 1994, p3.

This issue will be addressed in detail as part of the *Commerce and Industry Subject Study*.

Upgrading Shopping Centres

Local Plans are to include upgrading proposals for existing centres, particularly through: improved control over shopfronts and adverts; traffic calming and pedestrianisation measures; and detailed consideration of parking provision and access and design requirements (COM7). More generally, favourable consideration is to be given to retail/residential conversions (COM8).

2.4.17 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* includes proposals to strengthen existing shopping centres. For Birzebbugia, a main shopping street is defined, changes of use to consolidate retail uses in this area are encouraged and environmental improvements such as pavement widening, traffic calming, better organisation of parking and appropriate street furniture are proposed. Losses of retail uses in the defined shopping centre will be resisted (MB14 and MB15); this runs counter to policy **COM8** in the Structure Plan, but is a standard tool in policy packages to protect established centres. Proposals are also included for pedestrian priority in a village piazza area in Marsaxlokk (MM10) and for improved management of the market along Marsaxlokk seafront (MM12).

2.4.18 The draft *Grand Harbour Local Plan* aims to strengthen the retail hierarchy through careful control of out-of-town retail development (GHB7), in combination with measures to enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres. Proposals for additional shopping provision within established centres are likely to be encouraged (GHB6).

2.4.19 The draft *North West Local Plan* includes proposals for:

- parking provision to service central St. Paul's Bay (NS3);
- improved parking control and partial pedestrianisation in St. Paul's Bay (NS5, NS6) and Qawra (NS29); and
- a civic and commercial centre in central Qawra (NS24, NS28).

Manufacturing Industry

Land Allocations for Manufacturing Industry

The Structure Plan anticipates a requirement for additional land for industrial development. Allocations for manufacturing industry are included, through extension of the existing industrial estates at San Gwann and Hal Far (IND1). At Mriehel, the service industry designation is changed to manufacturing (IND2). New industrial estates are also proposed for Xewkija and/or Ghajnsielem in Gozo (IND3).

2.4.20 Growth in the industrial sector has accelerated since 1993:

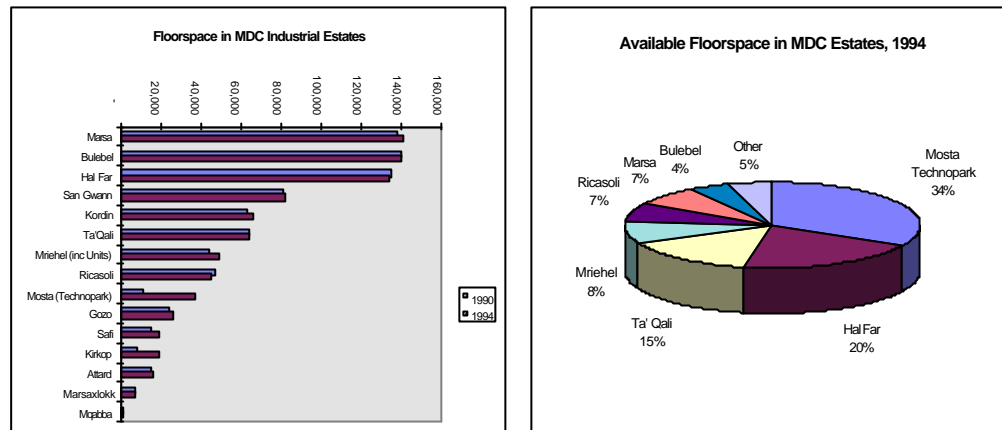
Industry	93	94	95
Projects Approved	13	24	29
Floorspace Approved	22,698	39,688	65,757

2.4.21 The larger industrial projects approved include: pre-cast concrete plant and a new factory at Zebbug; silo bins at Kordin; the extended MOBC tank farm; factory extensions and the new Government Printing Press at Marsa; a large factory extension in Qormi; and a large factory extension at Xewkija. The average floorspace of approved industrial projects is large, at 1,940 square metres.

Industrial Estates

2.4.22 In line with rapid overall growth in the industrial sector, there has been consistent growth in the level of industrial floorspace within MDC estates over

the period 1990-94. There was a total of 848,830 square metres of industrial floorspace in MDC estates in 1994, compared with 794,350 square metres in 1990; a net increase of around 54,480 square metres (7%). The most significant growth has taken place at Mosta Technopark.

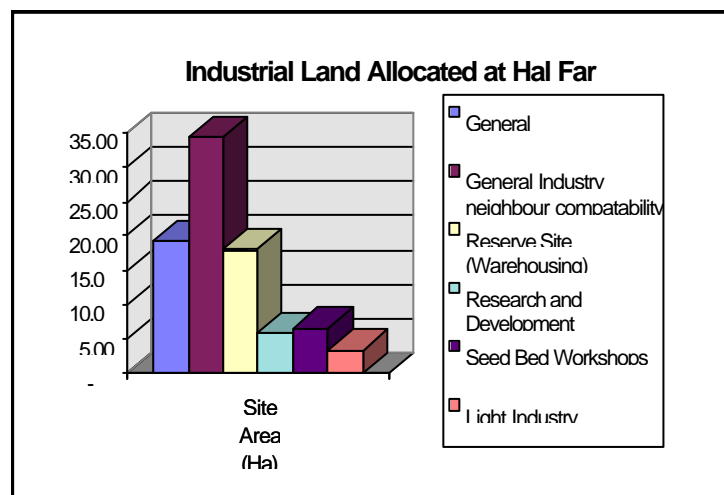


2.4.23 In 1994, there was a total of 31 vacant units comprising 48,022 square metres of available floorspace within MDC estates; this represents 6% of total floorspace. There is a concentration of available space at Mosta Technopark, allocated for light engineering and electronic engineering. However, recent updates from MDC suggest that there is now little remaining capacity at the Technopark; excluding premises already earmarked or allocated, there are now just three vacant units totaling 4,740 square metres.

2.4.24 There have been limited extensions to industrial estates over the monitoring period. Not all the Structure Plan proposals for extensions have yet been followed through:

- a north-westerly extension at San Gwann (**IND1**): MDC have utilised vacant land in this area, to increase the capacity of this estate;
- an eastern extension to Hal Far (**IND1**): this has not occurred. However, MDC and the Planning Authority have undertaken a full review of allocations at Hal Far as part of the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan; and
- proposals for Mriehel and Gozo (**IND2** and **IND3**) are still outstanding.

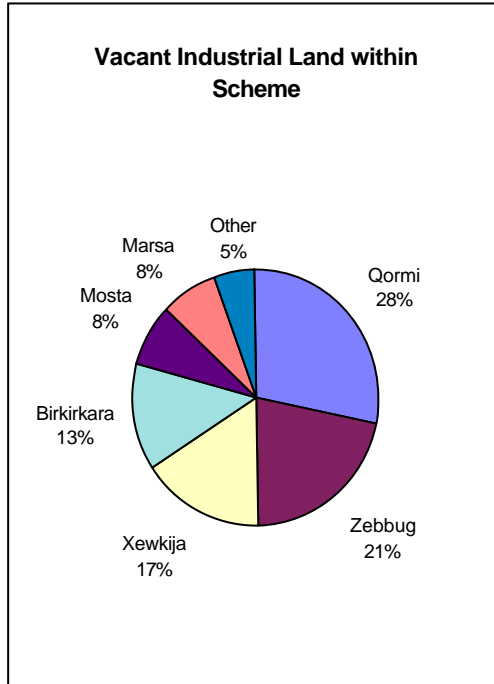
2.4.25 Most of the available undeveloped industrial land within MDC estates is at Hal Far. Some 88ha is available here. Infill sites are available elsewhere, particularly at Marsa, San Gwann and Bulebel; a number of these sites have already been earmarked for specific uses. In addition, recent experience at Marsa has demonstrated that some industrial land allocations may be called into question, where established agricultural uses are affected. Overall, the availability of industrial land on MDC estates is limited, with the exception of planned provision at Hal Far.



The Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan confirms Hal Far as a strategic and local industrial development zone (MH01); a total of 88 hectares of designated industrial land is available for development here.

2.4.26 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* also includes a number of measures to improve the quality of development on industrial estates. As proposed in **IND1**, Hal Far is zoned into distinct areas to minimise incompatibility between adjacent uses. Phased development, with attention to layout, access, design and landscaping, is to be achieved through the approval of outline development permits prior to the release of any individual sites.

Other Industrial Land



2.4.27 The distribution and take-up of industrial land designated in the Temporary Provision Schemes has been estimated from aerial photography (dated early 1994). Some 28ha of allocated industrial land within Scheme remains vacant, from a total of 40ha; this represents 69% of allocated industrial land within Scheme.

In addition to allocations of vacant land for industrial use, there is known potential for improved utilisation of existing industrial land. In the Grand Harbour area, for example, new industrial uses could be accommodated on an estimated 21ha of under-used industrial land, out of a total 131ha.

Requirement for Industrial Land

2.4.28 The general conclusion is that there is no immediate, absolute shortage of allocated industrial land at a national scale. However, current rates of floorspace growth are high and the continuing availability of industrial land requires close monitoring. MDC feel that existing allocations are inadequate, leaving little flexibility for the relaxation of current land allocation policies. There is also a concern that there may not be an appropriate mix and distribution of sites on offer, with an excessive concentration of available industrial land in a single location (Hal Far). Judging from current requests to MDC, the preferred estates are San Gwann, Marsa, Bulebel and Kordin. There is an additional concern regarding the degree of 'fit' between MDC criteria and current patterns of demand; currently, there are unsatisfied requests for smaller units, in the range 500-1000 square metres. The *Commerce and Industry Subject Study* will be addressing these issues in further detail.

Development of Ports

The Structure Plan suggests that no new industrial uses are to be permitted in the vicinity of Grand Harbour, pending completion of a Subject Plan dealing with potential for relocation to the Marsaxlokk Bay area (IND5). The Structure Plan also proposes that facilities for the oil and gas industry are to be established in the Marsaxlokk Bay area, in conjunction with wider studies of long-term requirements for all industrial activities related to deep water port uses (IND14-15).

2.4.29 The relevant Local Plans have substantially revised Structure Plan policies relating to the location of heavy industrial facilities and deep water port uses.

2.4.30 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* analysed the potential for further industrial development in the Marsaxlokk Bay area and concluded that an environmental threshold has been reached beyond which significant industrial development will not be acceptable. The Local Plan concludes that there is limited scope to relocate heavy port uses to the Marsaxlokk area, due to the limited area of suitable shoreline, although some expansion is still considered possible on the Delimara Power Station site and in the Freeport area²³.

2.4.31 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* does not implement the Structure Plan's proposal (**IND14**) to provide for expanded activity linked to oil and gas exploration, production and distribution in other parts of the Mediterranean. However, as proposed in **IND15**, the Local Plan proposes the relocation, away from urban areas, of a number of existing oil and gas facilities providing for local consumption: the St. Lucien Oil Co. Depot (ML05); Enemalta's 31st March Depot (MB02); and the LPG plant (MQ02). Expansion of these facilities will not be permitted. Relocation possibilities include the Fort Benghisa area, or suitable sites outside the Local Plan area. The Plan recommends the use of the Freeport Terminal for the discharge of oil and gas cargoes to any relocated facilities within the Local Plan area.

2.4.32 The draft *Grand Harbour Local Plan* aims to revitalise the Grand Harbour area, partly through further industrial development, although expansion of such uses will be related firmly to the concept of environmental capacity. The draft Local Plan seeks to reinforce the port function of the Grand Harbour. Local industry is identified as a priority, in order to complement provision elsewhere for export-oriented industry. Continuation of the existing ship-repair and ship-building uses within the Grand Harbour is anticipated. Although no further industrial land allocations are likely, there are draft proposals to improve the usage of available land:

- a programme of derelict land reclamation is proposed (GHE9);
- an *Inner Harbour Commercial and Industrial Area* is planned, where further industrial and commercial development would be acceptable, giving preference to maritime related uses; and
- *Industrial Improvement Areas* are proposed for Kordin/Ras Hanzir, Albertown and Il-Menqa.

²³ *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan*, 1995, p41.

Small-Scale Service Industry (Garage Industry)

The Structure Plan recognises the strong demand for appropriate premises for small service industry uses and advocates the designation of sites, in addition to those already allocated in the Temporary Provision Schemes (IND6). Use of abandoned quarries is proposed for industrial sites which are inappropriate in urban locations (IND9).

2.4.33 The distribution and take-up of industrial land within schemed areas is discussed in paragraph 2.4.27. Of the 40ha allocated in 1988, over 30% has already been developed.

2.4.34 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* designates a site in Birzebugga, off Triq il-Girghien, for the development of buildings suitable for garage industry (MB22). Preparation of a development brief is proposed for this area. Provision is made at Hal Far for meeting the needs of larger and expanding garage industries (MH06).

2.4.35 The draft *North West Local Plan* also includes some designations for garage industry in former quarries at Mgarr and Mellieha, in accordance with policy IND9. The draft *Grand Harbour Local Plan* is also likely to incorporate appropriate sites for small-scale/garage industry.

Warehousing

Warehousing on Industrial Estates

The Structure Plan advocates provision for the development of new warehousing on industrial estates, where it can be shown that development or redevelopment in traditional areas is impracticable (IND12). Rehabilitation of existing warehouse premises is also encouraged, in appropriate cases (IND11).

2.4.36 In line with other commercial and industrial sectors, warehousing project approvals have increased over the period 1993-95:

Warehousing	93	94	95
Projects Approved	34	44	53
Floorspace Approved	22,104	30,352	27,314

These figures include some large individual warehousing/storage projects, particularly the Freeport extension and a very large plant yard in Zebbug.

2.4.37 Under current policy, MDC only allocates land on their industrial estates for manufacturing uses. MDC criteria are currently being re-evaluated; future allocations are likely to embrace a wider range of industrial operations, enabling greater access for firms serving local markets. A more flexible approach to warehousing operators may become possible, in future. However, the limited availability of land and floorspace on MDC estates restricts the capacity to apply more relaxed allocation criteria in the short-term.

2.4.38 Some government-controlled storage operations have been introduced on marginal sites close to MDC estates. For example, large bonded stores have been developed for the Customs Department at Hal Far, beyond the boundary of the MDC estate. At Ta' Qali, a number of service industry uses (potato distribution centre, planned medical stores and Electoral Office stores) have been introduced in a former textile factory (21,000 square metres), previously under MDC control.

2.4.39 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* goes some way towards encouraging the provision of additional warehousing capacity on existing industrial estates. The Plan includes an extensive reserve provision for warehousing on an 18ha

site at Hal Far (Policy MH03). However, this site is to be held in reserve until additional recreational areas have been secured within Hal Far and a strategic warehousing study has been completed. Also, part of the site (28,000 square metres) has already been allocated for the storage of containers.

Development of the Distribution Sector

2.4.40 The lack of clear provision for the warehousing sector is recognised as an issue by the Planning Authority. Requirements of the distribution industry will be evaluated in depth as part of the *Commerce and Industry Subject Study*, to be completed during 1997. This Study will include an evaluation of the requirement for the reserve designation at Hal Far.

2.4.41 Food stockpile depots are promoted within warehousing areas (**IND12**). Although there has been little positive action in this area, the draft Ta' Qali Action Plan provides for the continuation of the Potato Distribution Centre within former factory units, with improved access arrangements, in line with this policy.

2.5 Agriculture, Horticulture and Fisheries

2.5.1 As the sector which takes up the largest amount of land, agriculture occupies a key position in the Structure Plan's land-use strategy. It is a key economic production centre, with a role in the nation's long-term security. Subject to appropriate environmental management, the agricultural industry can also function as a protector of the countryside and natural heritage of the Islands.

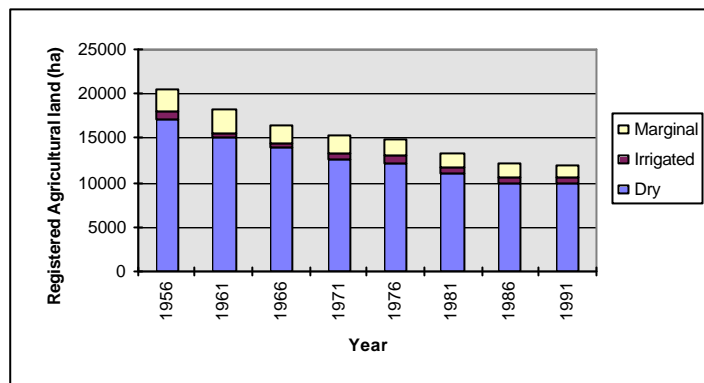
2.5.2 The decline in agricultural activity noted in the Structure Plan has slowed down during the review period. At the same time, the sector is undergoing considerable intensification characterised by the introduction of greenhouses, husbandry units and new crops. Much of this investment is, however, undertaken by individual farmers without any strategic direction. To some extent this lack of a clear strategy is understandable. Also, long-term sectoral planning is impossible without accurate monitoring information; the last agricultural census was published in 1983.

Encouragement to Agriculture, Horticulture and Fisheries

The Plan seeks to encourage major improvements in Agriculture, Horticulture and Fisheries, in order to assist the agricultural economy, to improve production quality, to ensure food security and to protect the countryside for future generations (AHF1). It discourages further subdivisions of agricultural holdings (AHF6).

2.5.3 There has been a major decline in registered agricultural land during the last half-century, related to the abandonment of agricultural land holdings and the loss of land to building development. In the 35 years between 1956 and 1991²⁴, 8,530 ha was lost, representing slightly less than half of the Islands' agricultural land:

²⁴ Data since 1991 is not available



Source: Meli 1993

2.5.4 The rate of decline has now decelerated. Over the whole period (1956-91), an average of 240 hectares per year was lost. During the 5 year period 1986-1991, the loss of registered land slowed to an average of 17 hectares per year.

2.5.5 Most of the land lost from cultivation was categorised as either marginal or dry. Irrigated land only decreased by 11%, compared with the overall loss of 42%. The relatively stable figure for irrigated land is due to a combination of protective legislation, increased irrigation through the Sant' Antnin Sewage Treatment Plant (SASTP), and the increased adoption of modern irrigation techniques²⁵.

2.5.6 Concomitant with the decline in registered land are the social changes affecting the farming way of life. Increasingly, farming is becoming a part-time job. The number of full-time farmers decreased by 80% between 1956 and 1991, to only 1,470. The problem of fragmentation of land holdings has worsened steadily since the 1950s; despite losing 42% of all agricultural land, the number of holdings remained stable. There were 12,960 holdings in 1991, compared with 12,640 in 1956²⁶. The diminishing size of farm holdings has left farmers with three options: become a part-time farmer; increase prices; or form a cooperative agreement with other farmers to reduce overheads. Most have opted to go part-time.

2.5.7 Agriculture and Fisheries' GDP contribution has fallen from 4.4% to 2.9% over the ten-year period between 1986 and 1996. Production has increased in the husbandry, dairy and aquaculture sectors, whilst declining for tomato and potato crops:

Description	1990	1996
Sectoral Contribution to GDP (%)		
Agriculture and Fisheries	3.5	2.9
Industry	30.6	27.4
Services	65.9	69.7
Agricultural production, selected produce (Million Tonnes)		
Beef	1,617	1,750
Pork	7,420	9,000
Chicken	3,600	6,800
Milk	34,800	40,000
Potatoes	22,000	18,000
Tomatoes	19,000	16,000
Fisheries (Million Tonnes)		
Local Catch	727	1000
Aquaculture	marginal	1,500

Source: Compiled from official sources. Figures for 1996 are estimates.

²⁵ Meli, 1993.

²⁶ Central Office of Statistics, Census of Agriculture, 1956-1983 (1986 unpublished and 1991 provisional)

2.5.8 Government capital investment in Agriculture has totaled Lm2.4 million over the last 3 years. However, the annual level of investment has not increased, in real terms, during the review period:

Details of Expenditure	1993	1994	1995	Total
	Actual (Lm)	Actual (Lm)	Approved estimate (Lm)	(Lm)
Marketing Facilities		120,094	60,000	180,094
Veterinary services		146,804	200,000	346,804
Research and Development Centre		74,994	245,000	319,994
Pomology		51,561	40,000	91,561
Fisheries and aquaculture		147,068	60,000	207,068
Assistance to farmers and fishermen		79,990	55,000	134,990
Development of land and water resources		29,243	30,000	59,243
Extension and Improvement of arable land	100,761			100,761
Tree planting and public gardens	157,172			157,172
Development of micro-propagation centre and fruit nurseries	72,760			72,760
Improvements and extension to Pitkali markets	24,392			24,392
Improvements to Civil Abbatoir	90,332			90,332
Animal Disease eradication scheme	74,193			74,193
Improvements to government farms including laboratories	36,786			36,786
Farm access roads	28,516			28,516
Improvement to fishing facilities	25,161			25,161
Restructuring of Fish Market	39,610			39,610
Development of aquaculture	101,459			101,459
Poultry station (Abattoir)	24			24
Total	751,166	649,754	690,000	2,090,920
Expenditure for Gozo	60,728	96,813	140,000	297,541
Grand Total	811,894	746,567	830,000	2,388,461

Source: Estimates, 1995, 1996

2.5.9 The Department provides a range of services to fishermen that have become essential to the industry, including: cold storage; maintenance of ports; upkeep and development of the fish market; and financial aid to purchase large vessels. In addition, the Government is developing a *Fish Intervention Scheme* which seeks to ensure a fair and adequate price to fishermen.

2.5.10 A 1993 FAO report on the agricultural sector in Malta recommends policy interventions in four major fields: intensification of production; development of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors; an updated agricultural policy regime and effective institutional supports. Among the items highlighted in the FAO report is the need for marketing innovations, such as the packing and grading stations mentioned in Structure Plan policies **AHF8**, **AHF9**, **AHF10**.

Other measures to encourage agriculture

2.5.11 The Structure Plan includes a range of initiatives taken by government to encourage sectoral development (**AHF13**). Government-led development projects to improve the agricultural market, such as packing and grading stations, are discussed in the next section (2.5.17-2.5.19).

2.5.12 Other measures have included: the introduction of a national irrigation water supply; land availability measures to encourage larger farms; and provisions for the improvement of rural roads.

Irrigation water supply

Develop a national system of irrigation water supply (AHF2).

2.5.13 **AHF2** and **PUT8** refer to the provision of a national system of irrigation water supply, based on the use of treated sewage effluent (TSE), the management of storm water and the aquifer recharge from surface water runoff. This supply is to be used both for landscaping and agricultural irrigation. The project is under discussion between the Department of Agriculture and the Water Services Corporation. The latter is currently preparing a *Water Master Plan* which will deal with the issue of irrigation water supply.

2.5.14 Sant' Antnin Sewage Treatment Plant, situated at Wied il-Ghajn, currently treats 10% of total sewage output. An area of south-east Malta is being irrigated using TSE from this plant. Some 20% of the plant's output of second-class water goes to industrial users. The quality of the effluent is improving as potable water quality improves. Demand has proved irregular, with large decreases during the winter months.

Land availability measures

The Structure Plan provides for land to be made available on long leases to secure investment in agriculture, including organic farming. It encourages the introduction of measures to encourage the formation of larger farms (AHF13).

2.5.15 As yet, there has been little progress on land availability measures to promote efficiency in the sector. Almost all government-owned agricultural land is rented out, and there are no special provisions for organic farming.

Rural roads

Measures to promote efficiency in the agricultural and fisheries sector will include: establishing access rights for agricultural vehicles; and improving roads and tracks in the countryside, without causing visual intrusion (AHF13).

2.5.16 The Agriculture Department is currently operating an incentive scheme for improving rural access, in accordance with **AHF13**. The Department funds the repair of rural roads, whilst the cement is laid by the farmers concerned. Work is supervised by the Local Councils.

Agriculture and Fisheries Development Projects

Government

2.5.17 The agricultural and fisheries sector is heavily in need of further investment at all levels. The Structure Plan provides for development which should enhance the functioning of the sector.

Developments in Agriculture and Horticulture

The Structure Plan promotes the development of packing and grading stations, import/export stations at the Harbours and Luqa, and quarantine stations at suitable entry points to the Islands (AHF10, AHF11, AHF12).

2.5.18 Malta's principal packing and grading station is at Ta' Qali. Work begun on this station in 1994. It now requires further development, particularly in terms of refrigeration and access, as provided for under **AHF10**. Part of this station is used as an import/export depot. This area must be expanded if it is to cater for all Malta's export produce, in accordance with **AHF11**. The draft *Ta' Qali Action Plan* makes provision for the future expansion of the Ta' Qali central distribution centre for agricultural and horticultural produce.

2.5.19 A site in Marsa, currently in use as a plant quarantine station, is under consideration for conversion into an import/export depot. The livestock quarantine station at Marsa is still in use. However, it urgently needs development, as outlined in **AHF12**. An additional site at the Malta International Airport is under discussion. The Department is also planning to set up a resource centre for extension services which will facilitate education and modernisation in the sector.

Developments in the Fisheries sector

The Structure Plan provides for a small fisheries centre in the north and a deep sea port at Marsaxlokk (AHF14). The Plan also calls for the identification of appropriate coastal sites for boat storage (AHF13).

2.5.20 The proposed small fisheries centre in the north of Malta (**AHF13**) has not yet been set up, due to a lack of funding. However, the Fisheries Department is investigating three alternative sites at Ghadira, Mistra Bay and St. Paul's Bay (Il-Veccja). There are also plans to extend the quay at St. Paul's Bay.

2.5.21 The Department is investigating options for increasing berthing facilities at Marsaxlokk. A slipway improvement proposal has been submitted for this area. The Department aims to improve the facilities at the fish market, bringing it into line with European standards.

2.5.22 The deep sea fisheries centre in Marsaxlokk (**AHF14**) is planned, but has not yet been set up due to lack of funding. At this stage, it is not clear whether a deep sea port to service the trawling industry in Malta is required. The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* does not make provision for this project. Discussions between the local fishing community and the Fisheries Department are under way regarding the provision of more berths in the Marsaxlokk area.

Private sector

Development essential to the needs of agriculture

The Structure Plan permits development in the countryside which is essential to the needs of agriculture (AHF5). Such development must blend into the landscape. A number of conditions are attached to AHF5 to protect the rural environment: where feasible, least good agricultural land will be used; locations must be acceptable in terms of noise, smell and effluent; greenhouses will be promoted but will be hidden from longer distance views; farm gate retail will be accommodated; and the sensitive conversion of disused rural buildings will be permitted (AHF5).

2.5.23 Structure Plan policies **AHF1** and **AHF5** are vital to the enabling role of the Planning Authority in this sector. The number of permits approved for agricultural development may be taken as a surrogate for the number of completed development projects in the sector.

Agricultural permits over the review period have increased from 43 applications in 1993 to 124 applications in 1995:

YEAR	1993	1994	1995	TOTAL
Aquaculture - Hatcheries	0	0	1	1
Aquaculture - Sea-based farms	1	0	1	2
Extensions	9	8	10	27
Greenhouses	3	11	10	24
Husbandry - Cattle	1	1	4	6
Husbandry - Chickens	3	1	0	4
Husbandry - Other poultry	2	0	6	8
Husbandry - Pig Farm	2	3	4	9
Husbandry - Rabbits	2	0	3	5
Husbandry - Stables	3	2	6	11
Minor works	1	2	8	11
New Farm Building	4	3	6	13
New Farm Store	10	21	32	63
Processing plants	0	0	2	2
Pump rooms	0	4	2	6
Rebuilding of existing units	1	3	10	14
Reservoirs	1	15	19	35
TOTAL	43	74	124	241

Source: DCIS

2.5.24 Almost one quarter of these applications are for new agricultural stores (63), while 35 of them are for reservoirs. These categories have grown very rapidly, perhaps reflecting an increased awareness in the farming community of the need to apply for a permit for such development.

2.5.25 The Structure Plan aims to provide for buildings and structures in the countryside which are essential to the needs of agriculture, whilst ensuring that the rural environment is protected (AHF5). Resolution of this potential conflict is becoming more difficult; the modern farmer's 'agricultural need' is likely to encompass developments such as greenhouses and livestock farms, yet such uses can have substantial impact on the landscape and on levels of environmental pollution.

2.5.26 In terms of agricultural buildings, the sector has been responsible for 63 agricultural stores, 42 husbandry units, 27 extensions to existing buildings, 14 redevelopments of old units, 11 minor changes to dwellings and fields, 6 pump rooms and 2 processing plants between 1993 and 1995. These figures do not include farmhouses and other new dwellings in the countryside, which are discussed elsewhere (sections 3.1 and 4.3).

Greenhouses

The Structure Plan provides for the development of greenhouses and similar protected cropping structures but states that they will be hidden from longer distance views (AHF5).

2.5.27 Current trends in agriculture are towards greater productivity, mostly achieved through intensification and product diversification. The review period (1993-95) has seen growth in the annual number of greenhouse permits²⁷ from three to ten.

2.5.28 The visual and environmental impact of greenhouses is a source of concern and a set of guidelines on greenhouse development was in progress during 1995. Applicants already require clearance from the Agriculture

²⁷ An application often refers to a number of greenhouses

Department and the proposed development must not be liable to contaminate a water catchment area.

Livestock units

The Structure Plan encourages development essential to the needs of agriculture but stipulates that locations must be acceptable in terms of noise, smell and effluent (AHF5).

2.5.29 There has been a consistent demand for the creation of new livestock units over the period 1993-95; 42 permits were approved over the period. The environmental impact of such units is a source of concern. Development in the livestock sector has not always taken full account of the potential hazards of livestock farming to the environment²⁸. The effect of untreated runoff from livestock units, for example, must be taken into account. The Water Services Corporation is not accepting applications for greenhouses or livestock units in areas where groundwater may become contaminated.

2.5.30 The Planning Authority requires an environmental assessment for larger livestock units. It is vital, therefore, that applications for such projects contain detailed descriptions of operation. In practice, applicants frequently fail to submit full details of the proposed venture.

Aquaculture

The Structure Plan encourages marine-based aquaculture, ensuring suitable safeguards in permit conditions (AHF15). Large land-based units are to be limited to industrial estates and former quarries whilst smaller units must conform with AHF5 (AHF16).

2.5.31 The Planning Authority approved Policy and Design Guidance on *Fishfarming* in 1994. These guidelines set out the ways in which fishfarming should develop over the next 10 years, to the benefit of the Maltese economy and environment. It is estimated that production should reach between 5000 and 7000 tonnes per annum, coming almost entirely from sea-based units. These units would be supported by one or two land-based hatcheries. The policy guidelines set ceilings on aquaculture development, both in terms of the industry as a whole and in terms of the extent of individual sites. This guidance is currently being updated.

2.5.32 Aquaculture production rose from 3 tonnes in 1990 to some 1500 tonnes for export in 1995²⁹. The Planning Authority has granted permission for three sea-based fish farms over the period 1993-1995: at Munxar, Hofra z-Zghira and Comino Channel. Environmental Impact Assessments were undertaken in each case and environmental monitoring conditions imposed. A permit for a hatchery in Qala, Gozo has also been granted. Aquaculture units are also proposed at Xemxija and Salina.

2.5.33 The other existing fishfarms predate the Planning Authority and operate either under a Malta Development Corporation permit or under the jurisdiction of the National Aquaculture Centre. Since most of the farms export their products to the EU, they are regularly checked by the Department of Agriculture for conformity with standards.

Pending Applications for Agricultural Development Projects

2.5.34 At the end of 1995, over 300 applications were pending with the Planning Authority for the agricultural sector: 197 from 1995; 75 from 1994; and 31 from 1993 (these figures include files subject to appeal). This represents more than half the agricultural applications ever received by the

²⁸ Meli, 1993

²⁹ Estimates, 1994, 1995

Planning Authority. It is clear that agricultural applications are often taking longer to process than other forms of development. In the light of the Structure Plan's strong policies to promote agricultural development, this is a cause for concern. Reasons for the abnormal delay include:

- the need to consult at least three government departments;
- poor quality submissions from applicants, in many cases;
- the need for environmental assessment for some large applications;
- the need for a site visit in most cases;
- uncertainty over appropriate policy (e.g. for greenhouses); and
- the need to apply complex vetting criteria to minimise abuse.

2.5.35 Agricultural need is the single most frequent justification for projects approved outside the development zone; careful checking of the applicant's proposals is therefore essential. Even so, the Planning Authority recognises that a faster turnaround of agricultural applications must be achieved, as a matter of priority.

2.5.36 The trend towards increasing investment in the agricultural sector clearly remains strong. From 1995, there are pending applications for: 28 greenhouse applications; 52 new farm stores; and 37 reservoirs.

2.6 Minerals

2.6.1 The Structure Plan provides a framework for the continued working of important mineral deposits and for the exploitation of future deposits in an environmentally friendly way. This general objective covers three principal concerns:

- Mineral resources of sufficiently high quality must be made available to meet the Islands' reasonable needs, ensuring that the quarries are worked to the full and that future reserves are not sterilised by development;
- Conflict with other uses, interests and general amenity must be minimised; and
- Worked out land must be satisfactorily restored in a way which allows beneficial afteruse.

2.6.2 Within this framework, the Structure Plan presents a twofold strategy for the minerals industry:

- i. unexploited minerals deposits will be protected from development; and
- ii. controls governing the siting, means of operation and restoration of mineral workings will be extended.

2.6.3 This section reviews progress over the period 1993-95 in accommodating and planning for the winning of minerals. The application of strengthened environmental controls over the minerals industry is reviewed in greater depth in section 4.3.

Planning for the Minerals Sector

The Planning Authority will establish a Minerals Board which will provide information on:

- the potential demand for minerals resources, having regard to regional and national utilisation and possible exports;
- the quantity, quality and distribution of exploitable mineral deposits; and,
- the ability of existing quarries to provide stone, aggregates and marble as required;

The Minerals Board will also make recommendations to the Planning Authority on industry standards. (MIN3)

2.6.4 The role of the Minerals Board is primarily to coordinate planning recommendations to the Planning Authority on new minerals applications or renewals of existing permits and to propose measures relevant to the protection of mineral resources. Within this remit, the Minerals Boards is to formulate recommendations on appropriate environmental standards for the industry.

2.6.5 The Minerals Boards has been effective in setting out guidelines for the application processing. This is particularly true in view of the highly technical nature of the majority of applications for minerals processing and development in quarries. The Minerals Board has also established a code of practice for use in the Minerals sector (see section 4.3).

2.6.6 The 1992 Development Planning Act, together with the Structure Plan, aims to strengthen environmental controls over the industry. Under the Structure Plan's interim policies for the minerals sector, existing quarries are required to make an application to the Planning Authority in accordance with the Development Planning Act of 1992 and with Structure Plan policies **MIN8, MIN9, MIN10** and **MIN11**. The new development control system for the minerals industry offers a number of potential improvements:

- Planning Authority permits are site and area specific (previously, licenses were tied to an owner);
- applications for quarrying and development in quarries are now being considered in the light of Structure Plan policy;
- an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for quarry developments; and
- provision is made for landscaping and restoration of disused quarry sites, to be tied to bank guarantees.

2.6.7 Quarry operators previously worked under a police license system which was tied to the owner. Due to a lack of effective control, this allowed operators to mine land not specifically covered under their licenses.

2.6.8 The Planning Authority's Minerals and Waste Planning Team (within the Environment Management Unit) is seeking to improve dialogue with the minerals industry on issues related to Structure Plan implementation and potential improvements in the sector.

2.6.9 The Enforcement Unit has developed a specialised environmental enforcement team with expertise in the minerals area. Site inspections are now being performed by enforcement officers on quarries so that permit conditions may be enforced. In addition, as urban development moves closer to quarried areas, both surrounding neighbourhoods and the Local Councils are proactive in monitoring quarry operations. However, the Planning Authority hopes to improve on the current situation through increased trust and improved relations with quarry owners, where possible, rather than through an intensification of enforcement action.

Minerals Production

Softstone

2.6.10 At present the softstone industry is mainly located in central and eastern Malta. A small number of quarries are also located in Gozo in the San Lawrenz, Kercem and Gharb districts. There are 81 licensed softstone quarries in Malta and Gozo, with an overall surface area of about 80 ha. The softstone quarry industry is operated by a work force in the region of 500, of which a good proportion is made up of part timers and family members of the quarry owner.

2.6.11 Figures available through the Central Office of Statistics provide indicative quantities for production and stocks of marketed products, based on feedback from questionnaires forwarded to quarry owners. The data collected is not representative of the majority of softstone quarries in Malta and Gozo (26 owners reported, compared to 81 licensed softstone quarries). A closer estimate of annual softstone production is likely to be in the region of 860,000 m³ rather than the 276,750m³ reported by Central Office of Statistics. There is an urgent need for reliable production statistics.

2.6.12 Marketing of softstone products is at present facing strong competition from concrete and steel substitutes in the construction industry. As a result, the use of softstone in the building industry has declined since 1991. This reduction in demand for softstone has contributed to substantial increases in inert waste derived from softstone quarries; it is estimated that at least 50% of lesser quality quarried material is discarded. Both environmentally and economically, this is clearly unsatisfactory.

2.6.13 In view of this situation, the softstone industry is facing a dilemma: whilst raising the cost of softstone products may help to protect the resource against sterilization, this approach must be reconciled with the need to maintain competitive prices.

Hardstone

2.6.14 The hardstone industry is mainly located to the west of Malta, adjacent to cliff faces, as well as within north and central Malta, in land depressions associated with fault planes and structural highs. There are 27 licensed hardstone quarries in Malta and Gozo with an overall surface area of about 130 ha. The hardstone quarry industry is operated by a work force of around 300, inclusive of quarry owners and their family members.

2.6.15 The estimated annual production of hardstone products (aggregate, spalls, marble products, etc.) is in the region of 1,400,000 m³. Unlike the softstone industry, the extent of inert waste that results from hardstone quarrying and processing is relatively low (15%-25% of gross production). The hardstone industry has, since the mid-1960s, been steadily stepping up its production to cope with demand for concrete products.

2.6.16 The hardstone industry has been steadily stepping up production since the mid-1960s. This has been associated, in particular, with increased demand for concrete products. These are now replacing the use of traditional softstone products to such an extent that the continued operation of existing softstone quarries is in question.

2.6.17 Feasibility studies have been undertaken by members of the industry (and discussed in a University thesis) to investigate the possibility of importation of hardstone products from abroad. The studies estimate that concrete products involving use of imported hardstone would carry production costs two to three times higher than those produced with local hardstone materials.

2.6.18 Should present trends in the industry be allowed to persist, demand for progressively increasing quantities of hardstone products will necessitate the operation of an increasing number of hardstone quarry sites. Such a situation, without careful environmental management, may lead to premature depletion of limited hardstone reserves, disruption of related habitats and ecosystems and deterioration of rural landscape quality. The implementation of restoration and landscaping bonds is, particularly important in the case of hardstone quarries, given that such sites normally lie outside the development boundary and are frequently in areas of natural beauty.

Developing a Minerals Strategy

The Planning Authority will undertake a strategic evaluation of stone, aggregate and marble resources in the Islands, assessing the distribution, quantity and quality of the resources, including the existing licensed reserves and operating quarries (MIN2). Proven and potentially workable mineral resources will be safeguarded from development which would lead to their sterilisation (MIN1). The Planning Authority will seek to provide for the release of land for minerals extraction in order to maintain a reserve of 20 years' extraction, over the islands as a whole (MIN4). The Maltese Islands need to be effectively self sufficient in Minerals Resources, except specialised products such as cement (section 12.8). The Planning Authority will prepare a Minerals Subject Plan (MIN7).

2.6.19 Long term planning considerations for the minerals industry must be based on reliable data relating to individual quarries. Relevant information should be collected directly from the operators through regular consultation combined with periodic surveys.

2.6.15 The Mineral Resources Assessment was commissioned from Wardell Armstrong, an international minerals and environmental consultancy, in January 1994. The scope of the exercise was:

- to provide a rational basis for reconciling the needs of the Maltese construction industry for natural resources with other competing land uses and environmental interests;
- to undertake a systematic survey and strategic evaluation of stone, aggregate and marble resources on the Islands;
- to provide a comprehensive source of information on the quantity and quality of limestone deposits and a rational and factual background against which planning decisions can be made;
- to base the Assessment on the published geological map of the Maltese Islands;
- to sieve out areas to be excluded from the survey;
- to drill exploratory boreholes to facilitate the establishment and evaluation of target areas and provide a library of core for future study;
- to establish a resource classification system which is compatible with international conventions; and
- to provide a data source on which to base the Minerals Subject Plan.

2.6.16 This very extensive study, budgeted at Lm140,000, was delivered to the Planning Authority in May 1996 and is now being evaluated by the Minerals and Waste Planning Team.

2.6.17 The survey identifies 26 search areas for future extraction based on data from 33 boreholes sunk over Malta and Gozo between July and November 1994. Here, mineral extraction is considered, at this stage, to be potentially viable, although environmental considerations have not yet been

incorporated into the assessment; a number of search areas are known to be in environmentally sensitive areas.

2.6.18 The Assessment estimates the available reserves in the 26 search areas as 428 million tonnes of softstone and 447 million tonnes of hardstone. Given estimates of current extraction rates, these represent reserves of 260 years for softstone and 123 years for hardstone. Whilst there is no danger of stone reserves running out in the Structure Plan period, a policy of restraint is advisable. The relevant calculations are summarised below:

Calculation of softstone reserves

Softstone reserves : 428 million tonnes (MRA)

Softstone production per annum = 0.9 million m³ per annum

Density of softstone = 1.8 tonnes per m³

Total tonnage extracted per annum is currently 1.8 x 0.9 million tonnes, representing 1.62 million tonnes per annum.

At the current rate of extraction, softstone resources are thus 428 million tonnes at 1.62 tonnes per annum; enough for around 260 years.

Calculation of Hardstone reserves

Aggregate reserves: 447 million tonnes

Hardstone production per annum = 1.4 million m³ per annum

Density of hardstone = 2.6 tonnes per m³

Total tonnage extracted per annum is currently 1.4 x 2.6 million tonnes or 3.64 million tonnes per annum

At the current rate of extraction, hardstone resources are thus 447 million tonnes at 3.64 tonnes per annum; enough for around 120 years.

2.6.19 Terms of reference for the Minerals Subject Plan are currently being prepared. The Minerals Subject Plan will forecast land release requirements for mineral extraction, providing a 20-year reserve bank as stipulated in **MIN4**. It will also propose measures to rationalise supply in accordance with **MIN3** and **MIN4**. Strategies to utilise mineral resources more effectively might include: promoting the more efficient use of quarried material; and measures to encourage product recycling.

Development Control in the Minerals Sector

Permits Issued

Applications for the continued workings of areas covered by an existing permit and the merging of adjacent workings will normally be given preference over the development of new mineral workings, conditional on satisfactory environmental safeguards and reclamation proposals (MIN6, MIN17).

2.6.20 During the period 1993/95, 40 Planning applications were received by the Planning Authority's Minerals and Waste Planning Team. Some 25% of these applications were for outline development permission. These were 6 applications for new quarries and 11 applications for quarry extensions. The remainder were for development within quarries, including changes of use. By the end of 1995, just three of the estimated 108 quarries in Malta and Gozo had received Planning Authority approval. In these cases, the issue of permits was withheld pending agreement on the required restoration bonds.

2.6.21 Full details of the received applications are as follows:

Application Type	Applications received		Location	Refused		Approved	
	Hard	Soft		H	S	H	S
New Quarries	3	3	Gharb(G), Zurrieq, Mqabba, Dingli, Naxxar	1			
Quarry Extensions	6	5	Siggiewi, I/o Mgarr (M), Nadur(G), San Lawrenz(G), Qrendi, Naxxar	2		*3	
Development in quarries	5	13	Siggiewi, Mqabba, Qrendi, Naxxar, St. Andrews, Gharghur, San Gwann, Burmarrad, Dingli	1		3	
Change of use	3	2	I/O Qrendi, Mellieha, Nadur(G), Mosta			4	

*pending restoration bonds

2.6.22 Depending on the nature of the individual applications (change of use, extensions, development, etc.) the area covered by each application varies between the minimum required to install an item of plant or machinery (crushers, conveyor belts, hoppers, etc.) and applications for larger, more extensive forms of development (batching plants, warehousing, quarry extensions, etc.).

2.6.23 The earlier permits for minerals developments, although subject to consultation with the relevant public and non-governmental organisations, tend to be less demanding with respect to the need for an environmental assessment. However, most of these permissions did require landscaping schemes and assessments of the technical characteristics of the rock material. They also made explicit reference to the need for restoration bonds. The more recent permits are more thorough in the fulfillment of Structure Plan requirements.

2.6.24 Within the context of falling demand, the Minerals Board is not considering applications for new softstone minerals workings favourably. In the case of hardstone, a restrictive stance is justified in view of the more limited stocks of the resource and the severe environmental impacts of its extraction. This is based on **MIN4**, **MIN5** and **MIN6**, which seek to avoid over-exploitation of the resource and aim to reduce conflicts with other rural land uses. There is a presumption in **MIN4** against new quarry permits and in favour of extensions (**MIN6**).

2.6.25 The role of the Planning Authority in matters regarding the quarrying industry has so far been one of guidance, direction and enforcement. Although results have been achieved in a number of areas affecting the minerals industry, these have been sporadic. The Planning Authority is seen, by some operators, as an obstacle to increased profitability. The process of dialogue with the industry is still in its initial stages. The individualistic attitude of many quarry owners, coupled with trends in the minerals industry, have not facilitated the process of change. Nevertheless, further change must be based on mutual dialogue rather than on an authoritarian implementation of the planning process.

Restoration and afteruse

Proposals for mineral extraction will not be determined until proposals for methods of working, landscaping and reclamation have been prepared. Progressive landscaping and reclamation will be preferred. The Planning Authority will require a bank bond to ensure that permit conditions are adhered to, and wherever practical impose conditions requiring the phased extraction and reclamation of a site (MIN12). Developments which reuse quarried areas will be given favourable consideration, subject to satisfactory environmental impacts including the protection of ground water. Priority will be given to other uses which are difficult to locate elsewhere because of their visual or other undesirable impacts (MIN13).

2.6.26 The Planning Authority is currently negotiating a system of landscaping and restoration bonds with members of the quarrying industry. Such bonds are required to ensure that restoration and landscaping conditions are implemented.

2.6.27 The bonds scheme has proved highly contentious. Negotiations with representatives of the quarrying industry, under the mediation of the Minister for the Environment, have been under way since 1991. Negotiations have been tied to government reforms in the hardstone and softstone extraction industry. The Planning Authority and industry representatives have agreed that, pending a study on the implementation of bonds, short term permits will be issued without an immediate requirement for bonds. This study is expected to be complete before the end of 1996. An Action Plan, agreed between industry representatives and Government, will review concessions that can be made to the industry to improve viability whilst seeking a mutually acceptable solution to the implementation of restoration and landscaping requirements.

Positive action to restore disused quarries

The Planning Authority will establish an inventory of disused quarries, including data on potential afteruse and sources of inert fill material (MIN14). The Planning Authority will prepare a programme for the restoration of disused quarries, allocating priorities and identifying resources and initiatives from the public and private sectors. The Planning Authority will initiate and promote the acquisition, reclamation and afteruse of existing worked out quarries by Government (MIN15).

2.6.28 The Minerals and Waste Planning Team is compiling a register of quarries, which is now 85% complete. Quarry boundaries are being captured in the Planning Authority's GIS and details of depth, landform, adjacent land use and potential afteruse are being compiled. This list includes disused mineral workings and will form the basis of the required inventory of disused quarries. The major difficulty encountered has been the gathering of information on the relatively older disused quarries which have been reclaimed for agriculture.

2.6.29 The Planning Authority has not yet prepared a programme for the restoration of disused quarries, although through the bonds system, this should be achieved for currently operational quarries. Measures are not yet in place for the restoration of disused quarries and Government has not yet purchased any worked out quarries.

2.6.30 There is some private sector interest in the use of former quarry sites. The Planning Authority received 23 applications for development or change of use within quarries over the period 1993-95. So far, seven of these applications have been granted. The majority of re-use has been for

warehousing. In all cases, the development proposals have been subject to stringent environmental controls.

2.7 Tourism and Recreation

2.7.1 The Structure Plan recognises that tourism is a major factor in the economic well being of the country and that there is a requirement for continued development of the industry. However, it also notes that the tourism industry has been a major factor in the environmental degradation of the Islands and is beginning to destroy the very features which attract visitors in the first place. The Structure Plan seeks to address this dilemma by:

- encouraging appropriate forms of tourism development;
- concentrating development and refurbishment activity within existing built-up areas; and
- taking additional steps to manage the environmental impact of the industry.

Broadly, the aim is to upgrade the tourism product in order to encourage higher spending tourists, rather than to stimulate a major increase in tourist numbers (13.1-13.2).

2.7.2 The Plan identifies a significant overlap between international and domestic tourism. Overseas visitors to Malta are dealt with under tourism, whilst Maltese residents holidaying locally are dealt with under recreation.

Tourist Accommodation

2.7.3 The Structure Plan's tourism policies largely relate to tourist accommodation. The overall strategy is to concentrate new accommodation within existing built-up areas, wherever possible through the conversion of suitable properties and the development of infill sites, or within the Temporary Provision Schemes and primary development areas. Favoured areas for further development are the established tourist locations in the north and south of mainland Malta and the inner harbour area (13.4).

Meeting Tourism Accommodation Demands

The main Structure Plan objectives for the tourism sector are to contain development within already committed areas, to encourage the upgrading of existing properties and to attract a higher spending tourist rather than seek a major increase in tourist numbers. Taking into account the tourist arrivals forecast in the Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan, it was estimated that, by the end of the Plan period, some 4,000 net additional tourist beds would be required (13.5).

2.7.4 Growth in the tourism industry has exceeded expectations. The Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan³⁰, on which the Structure Plan estimates are based, estimated that annual tourist arrivals would reach the one million figure by 1994; this figure was exceeded in 1992. This acceleration in growth has encouraged the further development of tourist beds.

2.7.5 The Structure Plan's estimated requirement for an additional 4000 beds by 2010 has already been exceeded. There was a net increase of 4,780 beds in serviced accommodation³¹ between 1989 and 1996³². This was partially counter-balanced by a fall of almost 1,000 beds in the self-catering

³⁰ Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan, 1989

³¹ Including both hotels and tourist complexes

³² Source = HCEB

sector, from 9,025 beds in 1989 to 8,040 beds in 1996. This excludes the substantial number of beds in unlicensed self-catering apartments.

2.7.6 The following table provides a classification of HCEB data indicating beds provided within new hotel accommodation over the period 1990-95. These projects are classified by date of completion:

Beds in <i>new</i> establishments approved by HCEB	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	TOTAL
5-star hotel						520	520
4-star hotel	380	306	202		490		1378
3-star hotel	80	88					168
2-star hotel	54						54
1st class complex			72				72
3rd class complex				168			168
1st class aparthotel	96	279					375
1st class guesthouse		44		21	54		119
2nd class guesthouse		40					40
3rd class guesthouse		57		15			72
Hostels	10						10
TOTAL	620	814	274	204	544	520	2976

2.7.7 The following are gross HCEB figures indicating the level of refurbishment and extension activity within serviced tourist accommodation over the period 1990-95:

Beds in <i>refurbished/extended</i> establishments approved by HCEB	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	TOTAL
5-star hotel	4	2	120	81			207
4-star hotel	59	188	209	181	252	4	893
3-star hotel	127	303	284	215	142	83	1154
2-star hotel	8	12	46	62	138	50	316
1-star hotel	2			30			32
1st class tourist village		260					260
1st class complex		572	450				1022
2nd class complex	36					2	38
3rd class complex			89		6		95
1st class aparthotel		62	98	48		120	328
2nd class aparthotel	4					36	40
3rd class aparthotel	34	102		111		62	309
4th class aparthotel	20						20
1st class guesthouse	59	11	4				74
2nd class guesthouse	31						31
3rd class guesthouse	17	9			18	3	47
TOTAL	401	1521	1300	728	556	360	4866

2.7.8 The above figures classify new and refurbished accommodation which has already come on stream. In addition to this, the Planning Authority approved a further 4,857 beds over the period 1993-95. Bedspaces in projects approved by the Planning Authority between 1993 and 1995 include both new projects and extensions/refurbishments:

Approved Tourist Accommodation Projects	1993	1994	1995
New projects	4	1	4
Extensions/ refurbishments	7	13	10
Beds approved	1,008	1,630	2,219
Floorspace approved (sq. m)	15,808	18,941	410,235

2.7.9 Projects which involve the rebuilding of existing establishments are considered as extension/refurbishment projects, since these replace existing establishments. Such projects, approved over the period 1993-95, include the Dragonara, the Coastline and Capua Court. New projects approved over this period include the Corinthia San Gorg, the Bay Point hotel and the Fort Chambray project. The Excelsior redevelopment project was originally approved by the PAPB, prior to 1993, although the Planning Authority renewed

the permit in 1994. All these four and five star hotel projects collectively have and will increase the quality bed stock dramatically and are clear evidence of developing high quality tourism accommodation facilities, in accordance with the Structure Plan, within the monitoring period.

2.7.10 A topic paper presenting *Guidelines for the Preparation of a Policy on and the Planning and Assessment of Tourist Accommodation Projects* has been prepared. This document examines these issues in further detail and proposes a direction on which to base future policies.

Locating Tourism Accommodation Developments

The aim of the Structure Plan is to limit the sprawl of tourism development outside committed built up areas. The strategy is to locate further tourist accommodation within existing built up areas, by extension and conversion of suitable buildings and the development of infill sites, or in areas to be developed; namely the Temporary Provision Schemes and the primary development areas. Policy TOU4 identifies the following localities for further tourism development: Sliema; Mellieha; St. Paul's Bay/Bugibba; St. Julians/Paceville; Marsascala; Marsaxlokk and Birzebbugia; and Marsalforn, Xlendi and Mgarr in Gozo. The Structure Plan also identifies a number of additional areas as having potential for tourist accommodation development:

1. Manoel Island/Tigne' Point (TOU6, TOU7);
2. Fort Chambray in Gozo (TOU6);
3. Vittoriosa, Senglea, Cospicua, Kalkara and Ricasoli (TOU6);
4. Valletta/Floriana (TOU6);
5. Ta' Cenc, Gozo (TOU10); and
6. Luqa Airport, for a business hotel (COM3).

The Planning Authority will also give favourable consideration to the development of tourist accommodation to replace the shanty and illegal development between Vendome Battery and White Tower on the Marfa peninsula (TOU5).

2.7.11 Most of the tourism projects approved between 1993 and 1995 are located within the tourism areas designated in **TOU4**:

Locality	1993	1994	1995
<i>TOU4 locations</i>			
Sliema	1	3	2
Mellieha	1	2	2
St. Paul's Bay	5	3	3
St. Julians	1	3	5
Marsascala	1	1	
Xlendi		1	
Mgarr (Ghajnsielem)			2
<i>Other locations</i>			
Naxxar (Salina)	1		
Gzira	1		
Floriana		1	

2.7.12 Policy **TOU5** allocates the Marfa area for the development of tourist accommodation to replace illegal structures. This issue will be addressed in the *North West Local Plan*. Due to the high level of provision for new tourist accommodation elsewhere, the draft North West Local Plan is now considering the potential of this area for camping and caravans rather than for permanent tourist accommodation.

2.7.13 In accordance with policy **TOU6**, Development Briefs were prepared in 1992 for tourism accommodation and other facilities at: Manoel Island/Tigne' Point (up to 500 beds) and Fort Chambray (300 beds).

2.7.14 The preparation of both briefs was an intensive planning exercise involving extensive consultations with Government departments and parastatals. The brief for Fort Chambray was completely instrumental in formulating outline and full development permit applications which were subsequently approved during the monitoring period. The scheme provides for a hotel, an exhibition centre and full visitor access throughout the fort; it also provides extensive restoration of the fort buildings and fortifications and provides more than adequate visitor car parking. The Manoel Island/Tigne' Point brief was used in carrying out an extensive selection process for a chosen consortium to develop more detailed proposals. This project is a mixed development scheme which seeks to provide facilities for tourists and local residents in a high quality scheme. The tourist facilities include the possibility of two hotels (up to a total of 500 beds), full pedestrian visitor access, shops, sports centre, marina, apartments and car parking.

2.7.15 The draft Fort Ricasoli Development Brief, currently under preparation, is also likely to incorporate some tourist accommodation.

2.7.16 Whilst the development of tourist accommodation has in most cases been limited to built up areas within the Temporary Provision Schemes, as outlined in policy **TOU4**, various extensions have been approved in areas outside the development zone:

	1993	1994	1995
Projects within Schemes	9	11	12
Total site area (in hectares)	0.36	0.83	16.98
Projects outside Schemes	2	3	2
Total site area (in hectares)	2.74	0.04	6.79

2.7.17 Projects approved outside the development zone are mainly extensions or refurbishments to existing developments. These include the Seabank hotel, Mellieha Bay hotel, the Coastline hotel, the Excelsior Hotel and the Paradise Bay hotel. Whilst all these projects involve the refurbishment of existing developments, some include a substantial increase in beds. The Excelsior, for example, will increase in size from 376 beds to 850 beds, whilst the Coastline increased its bed supply by 222 beds.

2.7.18 In terms of new tourism accommodation, projects approved outside the development zone over the period 1993-95 have been the Solemar Hotel in Mellieha and the renewal of the permit for the San Lawrenz Hotel in Gozo.

Tourism Accommodation Development in UCAs

The Structure Plan seeks to encourage higher spending tourists to visit the Islands (para 13.2). In this respect, the potential of Urban Conservation Areas is recognised in attracting those tourists seeking a high quality urban environment (para. 13.8). Such developments would be encouraged in the form of projects involving the conversion, extension and refurbishment of existing buildings and facilities, as long as such development does not infringe policies UCO6, UCO7 and UCO8 (TOU9).

2.7.19 Policy **TOU9** also encourages the conversion of existing buildings in Urban Conservation Areas which are not currently used for tourism purposes, particularly to ensure that vacant buildings can be rehabilitated.

2.7.20 The permit renewal for the redevelopment of the Excelsior hotel³³, within the Floriana Urban Conservation Area is a poor example of redevelopment within an urban conservation area. The approved development infringes policy **UCO8**, which states that the replacement buildings in Urban Conservation Areas should be sympathetic with adjoining buildings in terms of building line, height, silhouette, fenestration and materials.

2.7.21 The refurbishment of the Capua Court Hotel, within the Sliema Urban Conservation Area boundary, was approved in 1995. This project is more sympathetic to the surrounding environment in its design and will integrate well with the buildings in the area.

Development Briefs for tourism projects

The Structure Plan identifies the need to produce a number of Development Briefs for specific localities listed under policy TOU6; Manoel Island/Marsamxett Harbour, Sliema waterfront, Tigne' Fort/Dragutt Point, Vittoriosa, Senglea, Cospicua and Ricasoli, Valletta/Floriana and Fort Chambray.

2.7.22 In addition to the Development Briefs discussed in 2.7.14, briefs were prepared for the Sliema/Chalet area and for the White Rocks Development Project. The Marsaxlokk Bay local plan also states that development briefs will be prepared for the area around Ghar Dalam and Borg in-Nadur (*MB25*) and for the area between Triq il-Ghirghien and Triq il-Gurgier (*MB18*).

Subject Studies for Golf Courses, Yachting and Diving

The Structure Plan identifies the need to produce a number of Subject studies for particular topic areas namely Golf Courses (TOU12), Yachting (TOU13) and Diving (TOU14).

2.7.23 A subject plan on golf, as required by policy **TOU12**, has been commissioned by the Planning Authority in collaboration with the Department of Tourism. A first stage report has been submitted, which is still in draft form. Consultation on the report amongst Planning Authority officials, the Tourism Department and the Water Services Corporation is now complete.

2.7.24 Policy **TOU13** states that a yachting subject study is to be prepared. This study has been commissioned in collaboration with the Malta Maritime Authority. The first stage report has been accepted. The second stage report has now been submitted and is nearing completion.

2.7.25 No subject plan on diving has yet been carried out, in accordance with policy **TOU14**. However, terms of reference for a tourism and recreation subject study have been prepared and will include examination of this topic area.

Coastal Management Plan

The coast is an important element for both the Maltese tourism product and local recreational activities. TOU15 identifies the need to define a comprehensive policy for the coastal zone.

2.7.26 This aspect is being addressed in the Coastal Zone Management Plan, to be prepared by the Planning Authority. This matter is covered in more detail in section 4.5 of this report.

³³ 5475/93, approved on April 6th 1994

Heritage and The Countryside

Identifying Heritage Trails, Country Parkways and Footpaths

The identification of heritage trails and country parkways is stressed in the Structure Plan as a means to enhance the heritage product (both historical and natural) of the Maltese Islands for recreational and tourism purposes (TOU11, REC13 and REC14).

2.7.27 The Planning Authority, together with the Local Councils, are currently identifying heritage trails to link nodes of both historical and ecological interest as stated in policies **TOU11** and **REC13**. This section identifies such trails, country parkways and footpaths.

2.7.28 A number of projects were approved in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan:

Trails & parkways in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan

Bir id-Deheb/Marsaxlokk/Tas-Silg/Delimara/Marsaxlokk/St. Lucjan Peninsula/Borg in-Nadur/ Seafront of Birzebbugia/ Triq Hal Far/ Triq Ghar Hasan (MT03)
Hal Far/Delimara and Birzebbugia/Gudja (MA03)
Delimara (MD02)
Fort St. Lucjan to Il-Ponta tal-Qrajten (ML02)
Wied il-Qoton (MB19)
Wied Zembaq (MB20)

2.7.29 Others will be included in the draft local plans which are in progress, including:

Trails & parkways in the draft North West and Grand Harbour Local Plans

Victoria to Dwejra Lines (**REC13**)
Ta' Qali to Chadwick Lakes (**REC13**)
Fomm ir-Rih Bay to Ta' Zuta (**REC13**)
Buskett to Sta. Venera
Zurrieq to Ghar Lapsi
Wied Musa
Wied Ghomor
Valletta waterfront to Floriana
Cottonera Bastions
Cottonera waterfront

2.7.30 These walking trails identified for Gozo are recommended in a report prepared for the Gozo Ministry in April 1995:

Trails & parkways identified for Gozo

Mgarr to Marsalforn
Marsalforn to Xlendi
Xlendi to Mgarr
Comino
Victoria/Munxar/Tal-Bardan/Is-Sanap/Xlendi Bay/Tar-Riefnu/Ta' Klula/ Kercem/Victoria.
Victoria/Sta. Lucija/Dwejra Point/St. Pietru/Gharb/San Niklaw/Qasam San Gorg/Victoria.
Ta' Ghammar/Ghammar/North Coast/Tac-Cawla/San Katald/Gharb
Victoria/Ghasri/Zebbug/Xwieni Bay/Ta' Nikol/Ghasri/Victoria
Victoria/Ghajj Sellum/Is-Srug/Qbajjar/Marsalforn Bay/Xaghra/Ggantija/Victoria
Victoria/It-Tafla/Ramla Bay/San Blas Bay/Nadur/Ta' Hilda/Victoria
Mgarr/Il-Qasam/Qala/Nadur/Mgarr
Xewkija/Mgarr ix-Xini/Ghajnsielem/Xewkija

2.7.31 Additional routes identified by local councils include:

Trails & parkways identified by local councils

Wied Ghammieq, Xghajra Local Council
Xghajra, Xghajra and Zabbar Local Councils
Wied Ta' Zagi, Siggiewi Local Council

Management Schemes

The Structure Plan urges Government to prepare and implement management schemes for publicly owned open spaces and water areas (REC3).

2.7.32 The only ongoing management schemes that have been partly implemented are those for the Nature Reserves at Ghadira and Simar (l/o St. Paul's Bay). However, these were prepared by the Malta Ornithological Society, a non-governmental organisation.

2.7.33 Planned government and Planning Authority management schemes are identified below:

Areas for which management schemes will be prepared

Ta' Cenc (**TOU10**)
Qawra/Dwejra, Gozo (**RCO37**)
Hagar Qim (**ARC4**)
Ggantija (**ARC4**)
Delimara National Park (*MD01*)
Hal-Far - Delimara (*MA03*)
Il-Mara (*MV05*)

Areas for which management schemes will be proposed in draft local plans

Ghajn Tuffieha
Buskett
Gnejna Bay
Ramla l-Hamra
Il-Magħluq
Ta' Qali
Wied Ghollieqa

Recreation

2.7.34 Recreational activity includes all sporting activities, both land and sea based, as well as a range of informal leisure activities such as country walks, picnics, and other entertainment. The Structure Plan emphasises the need to provide adequate recreational facilities in a coordinated manner, reconciling the various competing interests, with the participation of both private and public sectors (13.7).

Provision of Recreational facilities

The Structure Plan encourages private sector investment in the provision of recreation facilities (REC2).

2.7.35 A number of private and public financed recreational projects have been approved by the Planning Authority. Development activity has been particularly strong in the sporting sector:

	1993	1994	1995
Entertainment	3	3	
<i>Total site area in hectares</i>	<i>0.21</i>	<i>13.37</i>	
Sports	4	2	7
<i>Total site area in hectares</i>	<i>4.81</i>	<i>0.49</i>	<i>1.33</i>
Community		1	7
<i>Total site area in hectares</i>		<i>0.50</i>	<i>2.14</i>
Temporary facilities		3	8
Private Sector funded projects	6	6	13
Public Sector funded projects	1	1	8

Entertainment projects included cinemas, leisure complexes and an open air theatre. Such facilities are located in St. Julians and Marsascula. The sports

facilities include: a shooting club; sports complexes; a football club; a tennis court; and a squash court.

2.7.36 The provision of community facilities has gained importance with the setting up of local councils. Seven projects, mainly public garden improvements and the upgrading of children's playground facilities, were approved in 1995. This category also includes an underground visitor centre as part of the Hagar Qim/Mnajdra Archaeological Park project. A number of temporary recreation facilities have also been approved, namely: bumper car facilities; trampolines; luna parks; and circuses. Whilst these were generally located in the main summer resort localities - such as St. Paul's Bay, Marsalforn and Birzebbugia - one such facility, approved in 1995, was located in Valletta.

2.7.37 As envisaged by the Structure Plan, growth in leisure provision has been funded by both public and private sector organisations. Entertainment facilities are generally financed by the private sector. The sport-related projects, including the development of facilities at Tal-Qroqq, have generally been financed from public funds, either by government departments or through the local councils.

Meeting Recreational Needs

Recommended standards of provision will be established (REC1). Under policies REC1 and REC4, areas to be safeguarded for recreational purposes will be identified in the local plans.

2.7.38 The following areas have been identified in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan for the provision of recreation facilities:

A National Park at Delimara (*MD01*);
Sites designated for leisure and recreation purposes at Hal-Far (*MH02*), Ghar Hasan (*MV02*), St. George's Bay (*MB10 & MP04*), Ix-Xatt ta' San Gorg (*MQ01*), Il-Kavallerizza (*MM07*), Marsaxlokk Seafront (*MM12*), Triq il-Labour (*MM16*) and Il-Ghirien area (*MB18*);
Camping site at Il-Mara (*MV05*);
Potential marina development at St. George's Bay (*MB13*); and
Rehabilitation of Forts Tas-Silg and Delimara for tourism purposes or other tourism compatible uses (*MD03*).

2.7.39 Other areas are identified in the draft North West, Grand Harbour and North Harbours Local Plans for the provision and improvement of recreational facilities. The provision of camping sites is a key element of recreational provision in the draft North West Local Plan. The Ta' Qali Action Plan will stress the need to protect the recreational role of this area, as specified in the Structure Plan under **REC7**.

Marsamxett waterfront

The Structure Plan also identifies the Marsamxett waterfront for tourism and recreation related facilities (TOU7 and TOU8).

2.7.40 The further development of recreational provision along the Marsamxett waterfront is being considered as part of the Grand Harbour and North Harbours Local Plans, as well as in connection with the Manoel Island/Tigne' project. The south-west side of Marsamxett has also been included in the development brief for the proposed Government Administration Centre at Floriana.

Sports

Providing Sports facilities

The Structure Plan stressed the need to provide international standard sports facilities, partly because of the forthcoming Small Nations Games in Malta in 1993. Ta' Qali, Marsa Park, Pembroke, Marsascala and Victoria (Gozo) are identified for the provision of international standard sports facilities (REC5, REC7). Sports facilities at district level will also be identified in the local plans.

2.7.41 The Structure Plan's locational strategy is not reflected in the new sports facilities approved over the period 1993-1995. A major Sports Centre, funded by Government, was approved at Tal-Qroqq, Msida, adjacent to the National Swimming pool. Nonetheless, the location conforms with the Structure Plan's broader objective of locating sports facilities within the boundaries of existing and new built-up areas (13.19).

2.7.42 A number of district level sports facilities have also been approved. These include: sports complexes in Birkirkara, Marsascala and Rabat (Gozo); a sports ground in Hamrun; a shooting club in Qormi; and other minor facilities in Gharb, Gharghur and Ghajnsielem.

2.7.43 The draft Pembroke Action Plan does not designate the area for any major international standard sports facilities, as proposed in **REC5**, but does make extensive provision for the continued development of a wide range of sporting and recreational activities in the area.

2.7.44 The Ta' Qali area is expected to accommodate further recreational and sports facilities, particularly those with a national catchment area, as specified in policy **REC7**. A draft Action Plan for this area is approaching completion and will be incorporated into the draft North West Local Plan. The overall aim is to promote and optimise opportunities for sport and recreation, in a coordinated manner, in cooperation with the range of public and private agencies involved. The open space recreational characteristics of Ta' Qali will be maintained, wherever possible, whilst adopting a policy that would try to optimise the site for further recreational development (13.21).

Major Impact Sports

The Structure Plan proposes that a limited number of tracks and training facilities be provided for Major Impact Sports such as vehicle racing, in very carefully chosen locations. Full environmental impact assessments will be required (REC8).

2.7.45 Major impact sports, as discussed in the Structure Plan, include off-road vehicle racing and motorcycle scrambling. However, major impact sports could include a wider range of activities affecting the landscape and ecology, or causing high noise levels (e.g. clay pigeon shooting).

2.7.46 The draft *North West Local Plan* addresses the major impact sports issue in some detail, since the area is pressured with such activities. Areas are designated for the location or re-location of such sports. The Tourism and Recreation Subject Study will also examine the requirements and impacts of such activities.

2.7.47 Despite policy **REC8**, the Planning Authority's guidance note on Environmental Impact Assessment makes no reference to major impact sports. The relevant section refers to developments which may attract 2,500 vehicles per day, or which cover an area of over 10 ha; under this definition, most major impact sports are excluded.

Coastal Areas

Camping sites in coastal areas

The Structure Plan designates sites at White Rocks and Marfa for overnight accommodation in the form of caravans and tents (REC11).

2.7.48 The White Rocks camping and caravan site is now being implemented, whilst policies for the Marfa area are being drawn up in the draft *North West Local Plan*. Additional camping sites have been identified at Ta' Qali, Ghajn Tuffieha and Fort Campbell in this draft Plan.

2.8

Transport

2.8.1 The Structure Plan presents a general transport strategy with five main elements (14.1):

- improved coordination of land use and transport;
- improvement of roads and the development of a road hierarchy;
- effective management of the road system and the traffic using it;
- improvement of public transport; and
- legal and educational measures to improve road transport.

This section reviews progress in these areas over the period 1993-95.

Coordination of Transport Planning

The Structure Plan calls for the establishment of a Transport Coordinating Committee, responsible for the integration of land-use and transport planning, roads planning and design, public transport and traffic regulations (TRA1).

2.8.2 Despite considerable effort, the Transport Coordinating Committee (TCC) has not yet been established. There is continuing discussion regarding the Ministry towards whom this committee should report. The Planning Authority have suggested that the TCC should be responsible to a committee of Ministers responsible for the Environment, Transport and the Police.

Development and Maintenance of a Hierarchical Network of Roads

The Structure Plan (RDS1-RDS11) aims to ensure that the existing road network is gradually upgraded to form a hierarchy of improved roads comprising:

1. Arterial roads;
2. Distributor roads;
3. Local access roads; and
4. Access only and pedestrian streets.

The Plan lists new links and major improvements required on the arterial network, as well as a program for junction improvements. The policies regarding upgrading projects are classified as; High (0-5 years), Medium (5-10 years) or Low (10-20 years) priority (RDS 4). The projects outlined in the High Priority section, due for completion by 1997 include:

- Marsa to Msida link (Tal-Qroqq to Aldo Moro Road);
- Regional Road to Sliema and Gzira links;
- Regional Road to St. Andrews upgrade (Entrance to Paceville, Swieqi, Pembroke, and St. George's Bay); and
- South East Sector upgrading of arterial and distributor networks.

2.8.3 The following high priority projects have been undertaken:

- The Marsa-Msida link road was partly completed in 1991, through the construction of the Santa Venera Tunnels. A new road link from the main road connecting Msida from Marsa to the south and Mriehel to the north has also been completed. A tunnel was constructed below the Santa Venera section and an overpass constructed at the St. Philip's Hospital roundabout. Work is underway to construct the Tal-Qroqq section; this overlaps with medium priority projects. The Marsa to Msida link should include a new junction. However, more work needs to be carried out to the completion of the link to make it more effective. This work includes the realignment of the bridge across Valley Road in Msida, the upgrading of the Cross Roads junction in Marsa and other upgrading works to two junctions in between.
- In Pembroke, a tunnel is being planned with a realignment of the arterial road. St. Andrews Road will thus be downgraded into a local access road.
- Various projects have been carried out in the south east sector. These include: works in the Marsa area; redirection of traffic near the Addolorata Cemetery; and a pedestrian crossing over the 13 December Road.

2.8.4 The timing of some projects does not reflect their Structure Plan priority, for example: the Mriehel by-pass (medium priority) was constructed in 1991 and the Ministry for Gozo is currently seeking approval for the Victoria Bypass (also medium priority). At the same time, a proportion of the high priority road network improvement programme is awaiting implementation. Network improvements are, in some locations, being implemented on a piecemeal basis.

2.8.5 Other capital projects which have been initiated or completed by the Roads Department³⁴ during the period under review include:

Approach Road to New Air Terminal
Birkirkara By-Pass/San Gwann Industrial Estate Link
Extension of Blata L-Bajda Underpass
Birkirkara Valley Road Bridge
Marsa/Qormi Flood Relief Project
Qormi/Balzan/Attard/Mosta service and rainwater drainage gallery
Msida Bridge improvements and Hamrun Bypass Project
Road extensions at Cirkewwa Ferry Terminal/Protection of roads at Cirkewwa
Sliema Road/Regional Road Junction
Embellishment works at St. Julians Bay
Improvements at Ghadira Bay
Msida Flood Relief Scheme
St. Paul's Bay/Qawra/Bugibba traffic scheme

Source: *Estimates 1990-1995*

Also, a number of road widening schemes, pedestrian bridges and underpasses have been implemented.

2.8.6 A number of additional road improvement projects are in the pipeline:

- flyover at the Old Gas Tank area, San Gwann (outline application);
- Birkirkara-San Gwann link road (outline application); and
- Regional Road/Paceville junction improvements, linked to the Hilton and Dragonara developments (completed in 1996).

³⁴ *Estimates 1990-1995*

Land required for new links

Land required for new and improved links and junctions on the arterial and distributor networks will be safeguarded from development (RDS2).

2.8.7 There are a number of problems in the implementation of this policy. Additional land-use studies are required to establish the feasibility of the policy in specific cases. On occasion, the Planning Directorate has failed to sustain refusals of development permission on safeguarded land; the Development Control Commission and Appeals Boards have sometimes proved reluctant to support such recommendations where no detailed plans for road improvements have been prepared.

Design and construction of new and improved roads

The Structure Plan calls for agreed standards for road design and construction which are consistent with appropriate best practice in Europe (RDS3).

2.8.8 A set of standards for road construction has been drafted by the Management Systems Unit, as outlined in **RDS3**; these are not always adhered to. The Roads Department remains ill-equipped to reach established minimum standards for roads design, although the UK Transport Research Laboratory is sometimes consulted.

Compensation and remedial measures

The Structure Plan proposes payment of compensation to property owners affected by road network improvements and calls for remedial measures where property suffers from associated noise, visual intrusion, severance, and atmospheric pollution (RDS6).

2.8.9 The Land Acquisition Act made compensation available to property owners, even before the Structure Plan was approved. The implementation of remedial measures is more problematic. The Planning Authority and Roads Department are currently pre-occupied with more basic issues of highway design.

Development on the Arterial Road Network

The Structure Plan aims to prevent the development of new accesses directly onto the arterial road network. Parallel service roads are to be established where necessary and practical (RDS5). In addition, parking on the arterial and distributor networks is to be strictly controlled (TEM4).

2.8.10 These policies are not currently proving effective. New developments have been permitted which jeopardize the effectiveness of the arterial road network. A number of large buildings, such as warehouses, commercial premises and other major developments have been allowed direct access onto the main thoroughfares, especially in Gozo, where arterial roads do not have service roads. The Mriehel by-pass is another location where this policy has failed. As regards **TEM4**, parking for loading and unloading of heavy goods is a common sight, as well as double and triple parking on arterial roads.

Infrastructure Contributions by Private Developers

The Structure Plan introduced the requirement for developers to fund the necessary remedial highway works to accommodate approved projects (TRA3).

2.8.11 Appropriate impact payments are collected from developers where major projects are likely to place a significant additional loading on off-site infrastructure. The payments relate to required works on the surrounding road network in order to accommodate the approved project. This approach has been adopted with: the San Raffaele Hospital, where the road network was to be upgraded at the developer's expense before construction began; and at Fort Chambray, the Hilton redevelopment project and the Dragonara extension, where road re-alignment and re-structuring is envisaged. In these cases, the developers are legally bound to contribute towards the cost of upgrading an arterial road junction. So far, contributions of up to Lm200,000 per project have been secured.

Road Maintenance

2.8.12 The advent of local councils created an opportunity to separate responsibilities for road maintenance and upgrading. Local roads now fall under the jurisdiction of the local councils, whereas arterial and distributor roads still fall under central government jurisdiction. Government spending on roads is now concentrated on the upgrading of major arteries (**RDS8**) whilst local councils are being provided with funds to improve on the other types of roads. This policy is to be implemented by the Roads Department and the Local Councils.

2.8.13 Other relevant policies have achieved few results, to date. These include: improvements to footway maintenance (**RDS9**), and the establishment of common service ducts (**RDS10**).

Traffic and Environmental Management

2.8.14 Much of the road network in Malta operates inefficiently, with badly laid out junctions, unclear priority rules, traffic lanes obstructed by parked vehicles, and pedestrians frequently at risk. Public transport is also affected by these problems. The Structure Plan identifies a need for improved management of the road network, to complement road construction and improvement projects. An appropriate balance is required between the needs of traffic, pedestrians and the environment (**14.10**). Several initiatives have been introduced in this area, especially since the advent of local councils. The following sections will highlight particular areas of activity.

Pedestrian Priority and Traffic Calming Projects

The Structure Plan provides for the introduction of traffic calming measures and limited access/pedestrianized streets, as well as pedestrian priority and access only restrictions in Urban Conservation Areas, shopping areas, and other areas suffering from the environmental impact of traffic (TEM9, RDS7, 14.8).

2.8.15 There have been a number of major initiatives to introduce pedestrian priority and traffic calming schemes, in addition to the established limited access areas in Mdina and Valletta. There has been less progress in the implementation of footway improvement schemes.

Pedestrian Priority

2.8.16 A number of pedestrian priority areas are now planned:

- The Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan proposes a pedestrian priority area at the Piazza in front of the Parish Church and the lower part of Triq iz-Zejtun (up to Triq San Guzepp) on Sundays (*MM10*).
- The draft Grand Harbour Local Plan includes a pedestrian priority area in Valletta.

- Other pedestrian priority areas are being considered for: parts of the Three Cities; the Sliema waterfront; the Strand from Manoel Island to St. Julians; and the main road of San Gwann.

2.8.17 The Local Councils of Zebbug, Siggiewi, Mellieha, Hamrun, Naxxar and Mosta have also taken initiatives to develop small-scale pedestrianisation zones, with the cooperation of the Planning Authority. In the case of Zebbug, Siggiewi and Mellieha, pedestrianization plans have been positively received.

2.8.18 Local Councils are beginning to identify areas which need improved pedestrian facilities. These requests are presented to the Traffic Control Board for consideration. For example, over 80 requests for zebra crossings were submitted to the Board in the 18 months up to February 1996. The Planning Authority has been involved in the organization of these requests, mainly through the provision of expert advice and presenting maps of the areas.

Traffic Calming Schemes

The design of traffic management measures will conform to agreed standards for road design and construction (TEM1).

2.8.19 The Planning Authority published traffic calming guidelines in April 1995. Feedback from local councils has shown that these guidelines are broadly acceptable, but it is nevertheless difficult to change the prevailing, car-oriented approach. The Mosta Local Council's experiment in Constitution Street has shown that the measures taken help in reducing speed. However, the public reaction to the project was quite negative; the scheme was seen as dangerous. This appears to be largely a problem of perception; recent data demonstrates a significant reduction in accidents.

2.8.20 The local plans have also proposed the introduction of traffic calming measures in several localities:

- The Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan identifies schemes for Pretty Bay Road in Birzebbugia and Xatt is-Sajjieda in Marsaxlokk;
- The draft Grand Harbour Local Plan gives priority to future studies for pedestrianization and will include specific proposals for Valletta; and
- The draft North West Local Plan has outlined several areas for traffic calming schemes.

Congestion at Junctions

At junctions where congestion occurs now or is expected to occur in the future, layouts will be reviewed, clear priorities will be established, and traffic signals or other junction improvements will be introduced (TEM2).

2.8.21 A number of Local Councils are identifying problematic junctions and conducting their own surveys to gauge congestion. The Traffic Control Board approves appropriate works although, in some instances, a development permit would also be required. The Planning Authority provides expert advice to the Local Councils to assist in the formulation of junction improvement plans.

Footways & Crossing Facilities

In conjunction with TEM9 and RDS7, the Structure Plan outlined the need for the improvement of footways and their maintenance (RDS9). It also stated that designs will be adopted for the provision of different types of pedestrian crossings and that appropriate types will be provided (TEM5).

2.8.22 Local councils are now responsible for the maintenance of footways. A number of councils have opted to change most of the surfaces of their

footways, and replace them by interlocking tiles. Whilst this is generally welcome, not all work is being carried out according to good specifications. The width of footways has traditionally been 1.2m, although some councils are widening them to at least 1.5m on the advice of the Planning Authority, to cater for pushchair and wheelchair users.

2.8.23 No standard design has been adopted for bridges, subways, zebra-crossings or pelican crossings (**TEM5**). Each is taken on its own merits. The introduction of pelican crossings has been adopted enthusiastically by many local councils, although the investigation of need is sometimes inadequate.

2.8.24 Design standards for subways needs to be improved, both to take account of the gradients of ramps for the disabled and to offer through-visibility on entry, so improving security and user-friendliness.

2.8.25 The provision of footways is still inadequate on many urban highways, even where road maintenance projects have provided an opportunity to improve provision.

Accident locations

Accident locations will be identified and accident remedial measures will be developed and implemented (TEM6).

2.8.26 Accident statistics are still deficient. Police reports are still maintained manually. No department has full responsibility for implementing this policy. The association representing car insurance companies has prepared a list of accident spots, based on the number of claims by the member companies.

Parking Provision

The Structure Plan calls for comprehensive studies of parking supply and demand and proposes a parking policy embodying a proper mix of on and off street, public and private parking space (TEM3).

2.8.27 A major transport study has been undertaken for Valletta/Floriana by UK transport planning consultants. The study includes consideration of the multi-storey MCP car park in Floriana, which is intended to absorb a major part of the Valletta's parking requirement. Other proposals are;

- the extension of the Valletta permit scheme (V disk);
- modifications to on-street waiting and loading restrictions;
- metered on-street parking, with charges geared to those of the public off-street facilities;
- provision of new public off-street parking;
- a park and ride system (as proposed in **PTR10**) to shuttle passengers from a large car park in Blata l-Bajda to the Valletta City Gate area via the old railway tunnel in Floriana; and
- additional private off-street parking to accompany the proposed Government office complex in Floriana. Draft proposals incorporate over 2000 spaces within the site of the proposed Government Administration Centre.

2.8.28 The findings of this transport study are being evaluated by the Planning Authority and, where appropriate will be incorporated into the draft Grand Harbour Local Plan.

2.8.29 The draft North West Local Plan provides for a three-storey car park in St. Paul's Bay.

2.8.30 Little progress has been made in improving the enforcement of parking regulations, although this is a vital element in an effective traffic management strategy. Parking restrictions are rarely enforced. The main deterrent is the parking ticket, yet fines frequently remain uncollected. More effective methods

such as wheel clamping, towing and other extra measures have not been implemented.

Parking Standards

The Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum establishes interim parking standards for new developments, to be applied in the context of the Structure Plan's broader vehicle parking principles (TRA4).

2.8.31 Policy **TRA4** has emerged as one of the more controversial policies in the Structure Plan. The Explanatory Memorandum indicates parking standards to be applied for various development types. Three levels of provision are given (high, medium or low), but clear guidance is lacking on the criteria to be used in defining the appropriate level of provision. In practice, the low standard is applied for most new developments. However, this allows for two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit. It has become common practice to apply half of this standard in many areas, on the basis that visitor parking can be accommodated on-street.

2.8.32 The Structure Plan parking standards have been applied selectively. The average provision of parking spaces for projects approved over the 1993-1995 period was below the Structure Plan's Low standard.

2.8.33 A comparison was made between average provision (per project) and the required level of provision to meet the interim parking standards³⁵.

	1993	1994	1995
Average Provision (spaces) in approved applications	7	7	8
Low SP Standard (spaces)	10	12	13
Medium SP Standard (spaces)	18	21	22
High SP Standard (spaces)	31	35	37

Some 59% of permits had less parking spaces than the recommended Low standard and 71% fell below the Medium standard.

2.8.34 Many architects are not adhering to recognized design standards in their layout of parking areas. Some layouts received over the monitoring period have allowed as little as two to three square metres per car space; the Structure Plan's medium standard for the gross area of public car parks is 35m² per space, inclusive of required circulation space.

2.8.35 There is a growing awareness that 'accommodating' parking standards may be inappropriate in many urban situations. Restricted parking provision can prove a vital element in an integrated transport strategy seeking to reduce growth in car-borne travel. The Planning Authority is currently reviewing parking standards for local-level facilities in residential areas. They are also planning to review the interim parking standards in the Explanatory Memorandum in the light of recent experience of their implementation.

Speed Limits

Speed limits will be reviewed, rationalized, and clearly signed (TEM8).

2.8.36 Nothing has been done concerning this policy. Speed limits remain the responsibility of the police and the Traffic Control Board.

³⁵ Structure Plan - Explanatory Memorandum, December 1990, p144.

Commuted Parking Payments

The Structure Plan introduced the concept of commuted payments to provide off-site facilities which would normally be provided on site. This approach is intended to achieve public provision of shared facilities where on-site provision is considered inappropriate; for example, within urban conservation areas (17.8, p117).

2.8.37 The *Commuted Parking Payment Scheme* was launched in 1994. The Planning Authority charges developers at a rate of Lm900 per space, in appropriate cases, as a contribution towards the cost of providing public parking spaces. In 1995, Lm98,100 was collected under the scheme. These funds will be made available to the relevant local council for the development of new parking facilities, as appropriate opportunities arise.

2.8.38 The scheme has proved to be unpopular amongst developers, despite the fact that the alternative to contributing to shared provision would often have been a refusal of development permission. The planning merits of the scheme have also been debated. The scheme has been applied to a wider range of situations than was envisaged in the Structure Plan. In some cases, developments approved within the scheme are contributing to localised parking and congestion problems.

Public Transport

2.8.39 The Structure Plan outlines a number of approaches to the improvement of public transport. The Plan envisages that public transport will continue to be provided primarily by bus and minibus, but anticipates that there is likely to be a role for new ferry services around Valletta. The Plan also calls for further evaluation of the case for light rail or tram rapid transit systems (14.16).

Bus Industry Regulation and Ownership

The Public Transport Authority (PTA) and operators will draw up plans to rationalize the ownership and regulation of the bus industry, so that the whole operation is run on commercial and competitive lines in a way which generates sufficient revenue to renew assets (buses) (PTR1).

2.8.40 Although a comprehensive agreement has now been achieved between the Public Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association, the need to rationalize ownership of the industry is not mentioned. This is a vital omission; the Structure Plan strategy for public transport depends on this change.

Purchase Of New Buses

The PTA will ensure that new buses purchased are appropriate to the urban and rural operations required of all buses, to the special climatic conditions of Malta, to the higher quality of urban environment being sought, to the narrow and congested streets on which they will have to operate. New buses should be easily accessible to the old, young, and infirm, including wheelchair users (PTR2).

2.8.41 The agreement between the Public Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association includes a programme to replace the bus fleet within five years. The specification of the new buses, as developed by the Public Transport Authority, does make provision for easier access for the elderly and disabled. However, vehicle specifications are not necessarily tailored to Malta's narrow and congested streets.

Strategic Review of Bus Routes

The PTA will set in motion demand studies to redesign services, frequencies, and fares to eliminate overloading, minimize interchange, and provide for some of the passenger movements which are not at present directly served. New links are to be considered (PTR3).

2.8.42 A Market Survey Analysis Project was carried out by the Public Transport Authority in 1993. New areas with poor access to public transport were identified, as well as areas where overloading frequently occurs. New routes, although not the routes mentioned in the Structure Plan, were introduced with some success. These include San Giljan-Bugibba, Rabat-Sliema-Bugibba and Sliema-Bugibba-Marsaxlokk.

2.8.43 Naxxar Local Council has introduced an innovative internal service. The Public Transport Association passed a specific sum to the Council for a free internal service. The SBS (Association) holds a right of first refusal.

2.8.44 The Public Transport Authority is currently working with the Planning Authority on a new transport model which should help identify the need for other bus routes.

High Speed Public Transport System

A detailed study will be undertaken into a high speed public transport system to serve the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, including crossings of Marsamxett Harbour and Grand Harbour. Possibilities to be considered include bus ferries, fixed track systems, and underground/underharbour sections. The study will also consider funding options, the phased upgrading and augmentation of an initial system, and integration of the system into the overall road and bus network (PTR4).

2.8.45 This study has not yet been undertaken; the issue was not covered in depth in the Valletta and Floriana Transport Study. The need for progress in this area is urgent. The first Grand Harbour Local Plan will have to be completed without a prior decision on the mass transit issue. The longer this study is delayed, the greater the risk that options dependent on specific key sites will be jeopardized.

Bus Priority Lanes

Bus priority lanes and other priority measures will be introduced at all locations where they are feasible, and where the time and cost savings to the bus operators and passengers exceed the equivalent delays to other road traffic (TEM7).

2.8.46 A bus priority lane was introduced in Floriana, between Porte de Bombes and the bus terminus in Valletta. The Public Transport Authority suggest that the lane has improved journey times and increased safety for passengers alighting the bus. However, the enforcement of the use of the bus lanes leaves much to be desired.

2.8.47 Another bus priority lane was introduced in the Msida area, opposite the Marina. However, only a small part of the road was designated and the Public Transport Authority have stated that the potential for this lane is being examined further.

Fare Collection and Ticketing Systems

The Structure Plan urges a review of fare collection and ticketing systems, in order to speed up boarding times and increase revenues (PTR6).

2.8.48 The agreement reached between the Public Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association plans to introduce improved ticketing systems. Although the fare structure has been reviewed, block ticketing systems have not yet been introduced.

Provision of Transport Interchanges

The Structure Plan proposes transport interchanges between different modes of transport:- car, bus, mini bus, taxi, passenger ferry, vehicle ferry, aircraft, rapid transit system, foot (PTR5). It also proposes a new, smaller scale, more efficient, and less environmentally intrusive bus terminus to serve Valletta (PTR7).

2.8.49 Very little has been done in respect of policy PTR5.

2.8.50 The Valletta and Floriana Transport Study evaluated requirements for a new bus terminus in Valletta in depth. Potential sites studied include the Sa Maison Road area, Crown Hornworks (Floriana), Great Ditch, and St. John's and St. James Counterguards. Remodeling of the Valletta Bus Terminus (PTR7) is now being actively pursued. However, this is a highly complex project which interacts with other development projects in the pipeline, particularly the Government Administration Centre.

2.8.51 There is a pending development permit application for a new bus terminus. This application proposes an underground bus station in the location of the existing bus terminus and an open-air bus terminus further away from City Gate. The visual aspect of the proposal is being carefully assessed. The Heritage Advisory Committee has expressed concern over interference with the fortifications and the old railway tunnel and these points are being examined by the Planning Authority.

Public transport provision for new developments

All major new developments will be laid out in a way which enables them to be easily and effectively served by bus without undue obstructions to access or operations (PTR8).

2.8.52 This policy has been applied by the Planning Authority in the preparation of a number of Development Briefs, including the Manoel Island and Tigne' Point Development Brief and the Fort Chambray Development Brief. Housing projects at Mtarfa and the San Raffaele Hospital were also planned with specific reference to public transport access.

Bus stops and shelters

Waiting conditions and shelters at bus stops will be improved, with easily understandable and reliable passenger information. The bus shelters and publicity will be designed to enhance the general image and use of public transport (PTR9).

2.8.53 A number of new bus shelters have been introduced, particularly in the Sliema Ferry area, using durable plastic material and accompanying adverts. Some of these are open to the elements and need further improvement. Information boards have been set up in several areas, such as: Floriana, Sliema, Blata l-Bajda and Mosta. However, effective maintenance is sometimes lacking. Other improvements include notices with timepieces on them, as well as landscaping in particular cases. Further planned

improvements by the Public Transport Authority include bus shelters which exhibit timetables and other travel information.

Bus Depots and Workshops

Subject to the outcome of the review of ownership structure and the purchase policy adopted for bus replacement, the PTA will establish an appropriate number of bus depots and workshops providing adequate parking, cleaning, maintenance, and overhaul facilities so that the quality of the fleet can be improved and maintained (PTR11).

2.8.54 No progress has been made in this area. Buses are still parked overnight in private garages, or very often in the street. Maintenance is generally carried out by the drivers at the bus termini or at home.

Special Bus Types

Bus operators will be encouraged to experiment with special types of services for tourists, such as open top buses and road trains (PTR12).

2.8.55 There has been progress in this area, although it has been resisted by the Public Transport Association. A few specialist vintage buses are now in operation. An agreement was reached between the Public Transport Authority and the Unscheduled Bus Service, which liberalized the number of private buses that can be allowed on the island. Through this agreement, a number of large air-conditioned buses were imported. Although these are adequate for the Maltese climate, they are very large and cannot easily access Malta's characteristic narrow roads.

Taxi Services

The PTA will review the fare structure, operation, and regulation of taxi services (PTR13).

2.8.56 The Public Transport Authority is currently examining all aspects of taxi operation, though very little has yet been implemented.

Car Sharing Scheme

The extension and rationalization of non scheduled modes of public transport, such as minibuses and other forms of communal transport, will be sought. The Planning Authority will, through the appropriate agencies, seek to establish an islands-wide car sharing scheme (PTR14) .

2.8.57 Non-scheduled mini-bus transport is already an established feature. A number of large firms have introduced private bus or mini-bus systems. The Planning Authority is urging the Malta Development Corporation to analyze the traveling needs of employees on their industrial estates, in order to organize specialized transport for them. Mini-bus trips are also used for schools and tourist excursions. The Public Transport Authority states that 13 million bus trips were made by this type of transport over the last five years, mainly taking people to work or children to school.

2.8.58 Organized car sharing schemes are practically non-existent, although agreements do exist between small groups of employees.

Legal and educational measures

The Structure Plan includes a number of suggested legal and educational measures to reduce road accidents (LEM1-LEM6).

2.8.59 There has been a continuous increase in the number of accidents throughout the monitoring period, even after allowing for the increase in the number of registered vehicles³⁶:

Year	Registered Vehicles	% Annual Vehicle Increase	Accidents	Accident Rate per 1000 Vehicles*
1990	182,254	-	7,948	43.6
1991	194,912	5.93%	9,344	47.9
1992	206,469	4.42%	10,349	50.1
1993	215,597	5.00%	10,322	47.9
1994	226,379	3.34% first 6 mnths	12,353	54.6

Highway Code

The Highway Code will be revised and reissued making explicit matters such as lane discipline, overtaking and priority rules at roundabouts (LEM1).

2.8.60 There has been a revision to the Highway Code, but alterations have been very limited. Lane discipline and overtaking are still major problems.

2.8.61 Mandatory seat belt use has been introduced for cars manufactured after 1990. This regulation is to be extended to all cars by the beginning of 1997. As in other areas, enforcement is weak.

Drinking and Driving Laws

The introduction and enforcement of tougher drink/driving laws will be pursued (LEM2).

2.8.62 Breathalyzer equipment is currently being reviewed. Several media stations transmit educational promotions against drinking and driving. A drinking/driving law is now anticipated.

Traffic Wardens

A specialist team of traffic police or wardens will be formed, capable of dealing swiftly and effectively with accidents and responsible for the smooth flow of traffic. There will be greater enforcement generally of traffic laws and regulations, including those dealing with vehicle parking (LEM3).

2.8.63 As yet, no specialist team has been set up. As from April 1996, local councils have been empowered to employ their own wardens who, amongst other duties, can act as traffic wardens.

Use of Media

Greater use will be made of the media for the presentation of a series of short commercials explaining priority rules at roundabouts, parking controls, and other aspects of good driver behavior (LEM4).

2.8.64 This theme has been adopted, both on radio and TV. Animation and graphic art has been used extensively to get the message across, often with a humorous note. Promotions of the "Xummiemu", "Zowee" and other cartoons are believed to have been more effective than the "Ieqaf u Ahseb" series. The Department of Health has plans of using the "Zowee" character on the streets to inform commuters of laws and regulations.

³⁶ Insurance Quarterly, September 1995, p41

Driving Tests

A more rigorous driving test will be introduced and periodic retesting considered (LEM5).

2.8.65 Nothing has yet been done regarding this policy. Tighter regulations governing the recruitment and training of driving instructors are required; there are currently no qualified instructors in operation. The Traffic Control Board is stressing the need for appropriate qualification tests and courses. The Association of Insurance Companies have called for a tougher driving test. In Malta, each candidate has a 70% chance of passing the test, compared to 45% in the UK³⁷.

Road Worthiness

A certificate of road worthiness will be required for all cars of more than three years of age. The certificate will be issued annually after a road worthiness test at the expense of the vehicle owner (LEM6).

2.8.66 This has not yet been done. The process was to be initialized in early 1993 but has been postponed repeatedly.

Inter Island Sea Transport

Ferry services between Gozo and the Inner Harbour will be made more frequent, with the introduction of fast services. Studies will be undertaken into the advantages and disadvantages of allowing competitive ferry services between mainland Malta and Gozo (IIT1).

2.8.67 A study of inter-island transport was undertaken for the Ministry of Gozo in 1994. The findings are still under consideration by the Public Transport Authority. There was a recent abortive attempt to provide a competitive service by a private company. The ships were sold off to the Gozo Channel Co. Ltd. and are currently in operation.

Ferry Terminal Facilities

Suitable ferry terminal facilities for passengers and freight will be provided in the Inner Harbour area (IIT2).

2.8.68 This policy is currently being implemented by the Malta Maritime Authority, who coordinate the use of the quays. Pinto Wharf has been upgraded and extended. The Sea Terminal was also upgraded and is used both by passenger ferries, local catamaran services and other scheduled services such as the Libyan ferry ships.

Bus services to ferry terminals

Bus services to ferry terminals will be reviewed to provide direct bus services from more parts of mainland Malta and Gozo. Express bus services between the inner Harbour and Cirkewwa may be appropriate, if they do not compromise the viability of the increased ferry services from the Inner Harbour (IIT3).

2.8.69 Little has been done to implement this policy.

³⁷ *Insurance Quarterly*, September 1995, p36

Ferry Terminal Facilities

Ferry terminal facilities providing bad weather alternatives to Cirkewwa will be fully established. Ghadira (Mellieha Bay) is a suitable nearby location (IIT4).

2.8.70 The second Cirkewwa quay has been improved to cater for crossings in most conditions. The Malta Maritime Authority is currently studying the feasibility of having a third quay and an extended breakwater, which would render Cirkewwa safe for all weather.

Inner Harbour Terminal Facilities

Suitable ferry terminal facilities for passengers and freight will be provided in the inner harbour area (IIT2).

2.8.71 The improvements to quays in the Inner Harbour Area are largely related to the provision of services for international traffic. Little has yet been done to improve facilities for inter-island transport from the inner harbour area. Currently, there is no firm proposal to upgrade or relocate the Sa Maison ferry terminal.

Aviation

Master Plan

The Department of Civil Aviation will produce a comprehensive plan illustrating the proposed use of land sufficient for all forecast needs in the long term, including consideration of Luqa Airport as a transit (hub) airport for international flights and other commercial and leisure aviation (AVN2).

2.8.72 Growth in air traffic to Malta International Airport has exceeded the expectations of the Structure Plan over the monitoring period. In 1995, there were a total of 29,054 commercial aircraft movements, compared with 17,970 for 1988. Associated with this traffic growth, there were 2,541,230 passenger movements in 1995 compared with 1,671,759 in 1988.

2.8.73 Associated with this pattern of growth, a number of major developments have occurred in the aviation sector over the period 1990-95. These include:

- i. opening of the new international air terminal;
- ii. an associated increase in Air Malta's fleet;
- iii. installation of an instrument landing system on runway 14;
- iv. expansion of Enemalta's bulk fuel installations; and
- v. the introduction of a helicopter service between Malta and Gozo.

2.8.74 The Department of Civil Aviation has also drawn up a Master Plan for the near and long term requirements of Luqa Airport.

Public Safety Zone

The Department of Civil Aviation will establish:

1. **Public Safety Zones for both ends of airport runways;**
2. **A general safeguarding zone including absolute building height restrictions aimed at preventing development outside the airport boundary which could be hazardous to airport and aircraft operations;**
3. **A map illustrating forecast noise contours in order that the Planning Authority can evolve policies for the control of development within affected areas; and**
4. **Aircraft flight paths which minimise noise nuisance (AVN3).**

2.8.75 The Department of Civil Aviation has not produced a chart showing absolute building heights restrictions. However, it vets all development applications in those areas likely to affect aeronautical facilities.

2.8.76 The Department has not yet had the opportunity to produce a chart illustrating forecast noise contours.

Malta/Gozo Air Service

The Structure Plan calls for a study to evaluate the case for a domestic air service between Malta and Gozo, perhaps using amphibious aircraft (AVN4).

2.8.77 The Gozo air service has been developed since the Structure Plan was drafted. There have been significant increases in helicopter traffic through the monitoring period, as well as recent improvements to the Gozo terminal and associated passenger service. However, the proposed study to evaluate the case for a domestic air service has not yet happened.

2.8.78 The Planning Authority received an application by the Armed Forces of Malta for the construction of an airstrip at Ta' Lambert, Ghajnsielem, but this was subsequently withdrawn.

2.9 Public Utilities

Services Planning

2.9.1 The Structure Plan provides the various supply agencies with a common, comprehensive and long-term context within which to plan and operate. The Plan's intention is for utility agencies to produce 20 year development plans, within this comprehensive framework, and to operate within a formal working group structure to coordinate their activities (16.1).

Coordination of services planning

Formation of an interdepartmental working group is proposed, to implement the production of 20 year development plans for each of the public utility providers within the context of the Structure Plan. These Plans should: develop programmes for undergrounding services networks; ensure safeguards for protected areas; and plan for disasters and contingencies (PUT1, PUT2, PUT4, PUT9, PUT22, PUT24, PUT27).

2.9.2 The Inter-Departmental Working Group has not yet been established. The original intention was that the IDPC (Inter-Departmental Planning Committee) would be a driving force in achieving implementation, but this has not yet occurred.

2.9.3 Although effective coordination has proved difficult to achieve, the public utilities have initiated individual studies and planning exercises. Enemalta completed an energy plan to the year 2010 in 1994, having established a planning unit. A Sewage Master Plan for Malta and Gozo (1992) and a Solid Waste Management Strategy (1993) have also been completed. The Water Services Corporation is working on a Master Plan and has invested in consultancy, research and information technology projects. The Malta Telecommunications Master Plan was outlined by the International Telecommunications Union in March 1988 and implementation is now at an advanced stage.

Resource management and conservation

A major strategy of public utilities planning will be the efficient management and conservation of resources (PUT3).

2.9.4 Planning for the increased use of renewable energy options remains at a preliminary stage. During the monitoring period, the emphasis has been on the development of reliable energy supplies from conventional sources. However, Enemalta's Draft Energy Plan does make reference to the potential contribution of solar energy and biomass energy generation, in general terms.

2.9.5 Possible renewable energy sources under consideration for the Maltese Islands include turbines and windfarms, active solar systems, and a waste to energy plant. At the MCST's third biennial conference, *An Energy Plan for the Year 2000*³⁸, the Planning Authority stated that:

- the Planning Authority will support renewable energy initiatives, in principle, through their development plan policies;
- land-use policies for renewable energy are being formulated; and
- a design guide for the siting of solar panels is in the planning stages.

Information systems for utilities planning

The Structure Plan notes that the present system of recording network alignments on survey sheets is both time consuming and inaccurate. The policy is for all service providers using land based maps to integrate into the recently developed Geographic Information System (GIS) (PUT6).

2.9.6 A Planning Authority project is under way to plot reserved sites for utility developments onto the corporate GIS. A national data capture programme is in progress and is complete for southern Malta. This project will lead to an analysis of outstanding land-take requirements.

2.9.7 Effective coordination of utilities planning and maintenance is impossible without accurate and up-to-date information systems. Internationally, the implementation of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has transformed utilities planning in many countries. A number of projects are now in progress in Malta, within individual utilities, to improve current systems. Drainage Department and Water Services Corporation already have a GIS under development, whilst all other utilities are actively considering the introduction of similar systems.

Capital investment in infrastructure, 1990-1995

2.9.8 Investment in infrastructure has fluctuated over the period 1990-1995. Investment ran at very high levels during the first years of the decade, mainly due to the new power station at Delimara and the laying of the 132 kV distribution system. During the same period, the Pembroke RO plant was commissioned. Capital investment was reduced during 1992-1994, but approved estimates for 1995 indicate an increase in investment in infrastructural projects. This is largely due to the planned extension of Delimara Power Station and major sewerage works:

Lm*	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Sewers	1,097,884	1,337,355	1,743,875	2,136,866	1,927,390	7,740,000
Water	6,973,733	6,183,543	4,499,992	5,187,964	8,553,186	8,375,000
Energy	25,092,283	23,989,077	15,461,000	12,610,000	6,528,000	22,761,000
Total	33,163,900	31,509,975	21,704,867	19,934,830	17,008,576	38,876,000

Source: Estimates 1990-1996³⁹ - *At current prices

³⁸ Presentation at An Energy Plan for the Year 2000, Third Biennial Conference, Malta Council for Science and Technology, 4-5 June 1996

³⁹ Estimates 1990, Ministry of Finance, 1990 - 1996

Water

The Structure Plan estimates that, although some replacement of facilities may be required, no major land areas would be needed for new potable water supplies before the year 2010 (16.2). The Plan's emphasis is on limiting the visual impact of new facilities such as reservoirs (PUT7) and conservation of potable water resources through the efficient use and reuse of water, employing measures such as: controlled aquifer recharge from surface water runoff; use of treated sewage effluent (TSE) for appropriate industrial, irrigation, and other uses; and management of road stormwater runoff (PUT8).

2.9.9 Development of additional water supply infrastructure is in progress. In 1994, the Pembroke RO plant was upgraded and a new RO plant in the south of Malta is being planned. Policies **PUT7** and **PUT8** have received some emphasis in Development Briefs. The Manoel Island Development Brief, for example, states that all utility requirements on site must be underground and connections to the public networks are to be the responsibility of the developer. The proposals in the Brief should provide for self-sufficiency in stormwater runoff, reverse osmosis plant, sub-stations and related networks.

2.9.10 The Water Services Corporation have completed a number of major projects over the period 1993-1995. Upgrading of the distribution network has been the major priority. Projects which have been commenced include:

1993	Trunk mains; 14km Small diameter mains; 25km Beaches protection scheme
1994	Qrendi Phase II pipeline; Trunk main; 33km; Small diameter mains; 33km Upgrading of Pembroke R.O. facilities
1995	New pipelines; 72km Drilling of seawells.

2.9.11 A further 50km of trunk and distribution mains is planned for 1996. Other planned projects include: second class water distribution systems; purchase of equipment, including booster systems and tools; and acquisition of land for the new reservoir in Xwieki.

2.9.12 The start of construction works at the new RO plant is also programmed for 1996. However, the location has not yet been finalised. The Water Services Corporation are currently proposing a site near Ras iz-Zonqor. A second option at is-Swali (near Xghajra) was discarded on environmental grounds. The Environment Secretariat's desire to combine power generation with this plant is being contested by both the applicant, the local council and the Planning Authority.

Sewerage

The Structure Plan envisages major improvements to the sewerage network, requiring heavy capital investment (16.6).

2.9.13 A contract to prepare the *Sewerage Master Plan for Malta and Gozo* was awarded to Danish Firm COWIconsult in 1991 and completed in 1992. Implementation of this Plan began during 1995 and future projects will fall within the Plan's framework. A major objective is to meet European standards for waste disposal working along the lines of the Barcelona Convention. The target is that all sewage must receive secondary treatment by the year 2000.

Development of sewage treatment infrastructure

The Structure Plan envisaged a need for three new sewage treatment and re-use plants. The relevant Local Plans are to designate appropriate sites at Anchor Bay, Wied Ghammieq near Ricasoli and Mgarr ix-Xini in Gozo. The relevant Local Plans will also identify sites for new sewerage installations at Wied il-Kbir near Qormi and Bahar ic-Caghaq Bay. Local Plans for areas to be developed may have to include additional sewage installation sites (16.5, PUT11, PUT12). Proposals for sewage treatment and disposal will be the subject of environmental impact analyses (PUT10).

2.9.14 Work remains at the planning stages for the systematic upgrading of sewage treatment facilities, as outlined in the Structure Plan. A process of site selection has commenced. An application has been approved for a new sewage outfall at Mgarr ix-Xini and an Environmental Impact Assessment is being prepared for a treatment plant in this location. Local Plans for the specified areas have not yet been completed in draft form.

2.9.15 Drainage Department have also applied to connect Xemxija to Ic-Cumnija in Mellieha through a system of 8km of underground galleries (see 4.3.64). Upgrading of the Sant' Antnin waste recycling plant has remained a highly topical issue and has been the subject of study by Dutch consultants. Costed options are now being evaluated.

2.9.16 Activity in the sewerage sector is summarised below:

1993	Extensions of sewer system in San Gwann, Victoria Gardens, Bidnija and Salina Completion of Kennedy Grove Pumping Station Improvements to Sant' Antnin plant Works on sea outfall at Cumnija and Ras il-Hobz (re-1994,1995).
1994	Plans for works on new pumping station in Marsascala and Nadur First phase of new transmission mains from St. Paul's Bay to Ras il-Hobz
1995	Plans for the completion of sewer mains in the galleries at Birzebugia Proposals for the transmission tunnel from St. Paul's Bay to ic-Cumnija Plans to expand the Sant' Antnin Treatment Plant and construct new plants at Ic-Cumnija and Ras il-Hobz Works on a new sewage outfall proposed at Ras il-Hobz Studies planned regarding new treatment and reuse plants in the area North of Mgarr ix-Xini in Gozo and at Wied Ghammieq near Ricasoli

Solid Waste

The Structure Plan expressed concern that generation and disposal of waste methods were outdated and enforcement ineffective. Illegal dumping is a national pastime. A complete change of policies, procedures, and attitudes is required (16.7). The waste generation aspects of all new developments are to be carefully evaluated (PUT13, PUT14). Development of strategically located centres for: refuse deposit; transfer and treatment plant; controlled landfill and the management of hazardous waste are proposed (PUT15, PUT16, PUT17, PUT18, PUT19). The Plan calls for the preparation of a Waste Management Subject Plan, as a matter of priority (PUT20). The ultimate disposal of municipal, commercial and industrial/inert waste will normally be by controlled landfill (PUT17). Government will actively investigate the most appropriate facilities for the treatment and safe disposal of hazardous wastes (PUT18).

2.9.17 Limited progress has been made in this area, despite the Structure Plan's sense of urgency. No significant progress has yet been made in the

preparation of a Waste Management Subject Plan. However, strategic planning and site selection work have begun. The *Waste Management Strategy* was completed in 1993.

2.9.18 A Waste Management Committee was set up during the monitoring period, including: the Environment Department, Water Services Corporation, the Planning Authority, and the Malta Maritime Authority. Sub-committees have been established to:

- identify quarry sites for inert waste; and
- consider long-term waste disposal options, such as marine dumping, reclamation, beach replenishment and other relevant issues.

Incineration is also under discussion.

2.9.19 Landfills currently exist at Maghtab, Wied Fulija, and Xaghra (Gozo). Fly ash from the Power Station is currently being dumped at Benghisa. A site selection process is in progress to select a suitable location for a managed landfill, in accordance with **PUT17**.

2.9.20 The Malta Freeport Terminal requires two million tonnes of inert waste for land reclamation, providing some short-term relief to the problem of waste disposal. The intention is to dump all inert waste at this site, on a temporary basis.

2.9.21 Some hazardous waste is being incinerated at St. Luke's Hospital. However, reception facilities for other toxic waste in accordance with **PUT18**, have not been provided.

2.9.22 A solid waste transfer station has been proposed at Il-Qortin ta' Ghajn Damma in Marsalforn; this is currently a reception area for the disposal of domestic waste. An Environmental Impact Assessment was prepared in 1995. The site itself is regarded as appropriate, since the area has already been disturbed by the present landfill. The facility is expected to have an initial capacity of 40 tonnes per day, rising to 63 tonnes per day in 2025.

2.9.23 Some initiatives have been taken by the local councils to establish controlled centres for refuse disposal. However, achieving adequate control over the dumped material has proved difficult.

2.9.24 The Sant' Antnin recycling plant remains a subject of controversy, due to the persistent odour problems associated with the development. Danish consultants appointed to recommend a solution have recently submitted a second report to government, proposing the construction of a tunnel composting system inside the plant at a cost of Lm3.7 million. Relocation of the plant, at a potential cost of Lm4.5 million, may also be considered.

2.9.25 The Environment Department initiated a campaign for waste separation at source in early 1995. However, this initiative has not yet taken off. Separate containers to facilitate waste recycling have not yet been provided.

Electricity

The Structure Plan underlines the need for the a 20-year development plan for electricity generation and distribution. A need for expanded generating capacity was anticipated, but the future of the Marsa plant was unknown at the time the Plan was prepared. Studies on the siting of the new 132 kV distribution line from Delimara Power Station, via Marsa, are proposed. The Plan also calls for the installation of underground electricity distribution systems (PUT21, PUT22, PUT23).

2.9.26 Enemalta have made considerable progress in the establishment of an effective planning function. The Engineering Planning Department was established in 1994. The department's main task has been the preparation of

an energy plan (1994-2010), in line with **PUT22**. Present data suggests an average 10% annual increase in demand for electricity, although deceleration in this growth rate is anticipated⁴⁰:

Period	1994-1995	1996-1999	2000-2003	2004-2007	after 2008
Increase %	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%

The Draft Energy Plan outlines the need for replacement plant at Marsa Power Station. Estimated peak demand for the year 2009 is projected at around 600MW, compared to an expected generating capacity of over 700MW.

2.9.27 The planned 132kV underground cable from Delimara to Marsa South Distribution Centre was commissioned in 1993 and has now been laid, using underground trenches (16.9). The Marsa Distribution centre has also been extended. The second phase of the 132kV network, to Mosta Distribution Centre, will largely be in a tunnel, with a small section to be laid in trenches. By 2005, three additional distribution centres are planned; work has already started in Mosta. Smaller distribution centres are also planned for Comino, San Raffaele hospital and the south.

2.9.28 Projects in progress during 1994/1995 included phase IIA at Delimara Power Station, a wide range of additional ancillary works at Delimara and the preparation of rock-soil surveys for phase IIB. Provision is made in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan for further public utilities development on land immediately to the south of Delimara Power Station (MD05). An application has been received for further development at Delimara; additional information regarding measures to mitigate emissions is now awaited.

2.9.29 Additional projects planned for the near future include: a fuel unloading station and additional fuel tank at Delimara; upgraded distribution facilities at Birzebbugia, Corradino and Ras Hanzir; and various district offices, substations and stores⁴¹.

Telecommunications

As with other utility organizations, the Structure Plan required Telemalta to prepare a 20 year development plan to meet new telecommunications requirements relating to all suppliers and uses (PUT24).

2.9.30 The recent development of the telecommunications sector in Malta can be hailed as a major achievement. Telemalta are working to the recommendations of the *Malta Telecommunications Master Plan* as outlined by the International Telecommunications Union in March 1988.

2.9.31 Progress has included: full digitization of the switching and transmission network, ahead of most other European countries; introduction of a paging system; an increase in satellite circuits; laying of an optic fibre network; and installation works in connection with an optic fibre submarine cable between Malta and Sicily. Telemalta is rapidly expanding the telephone network and envisages the connection of 12,000 new lines and transfers.

New Communication Services

The Structure Plan envisaged (16.12) that in the future households will have more telecommunications equipment including phone, videophone, access to selected databases such as travel, hobbies, and catalogue shopping, access to video information, central automatic control of equipment such as airconditioning and lights, satellite communications,

⁴⁰ Draft Energy Plan, 1993

⁴¹ Annual Report and Financial Statements, Enemalta Corporation, 1995

and cable TV. The need was envisaged for a study of how future houses should be networked and how this might influence building practice.

2.9.32 Several of the developments in communications envisaged in the Structure Plan are beginning to make an impact within the Maltese Islands. Cable TV is now established in many localities and the growth of satellite TV installations continues. The Internet and other associated services became available locally in late 1995; the number of service providers and users is growing consistently. Telemalta have successfully managed continued growth in the provision of services associated with the advent of E-Mail, the Internet, and a range of on-line services. The laying of the Malta-Sicily fibre-optic cable has helped in providing the capacity for these new services; a continued increase in the number of users and the demands of their applications can be anticipated.

Underground telecommunications cabling

The Structure Plan stipulates that all new telecommunications systems should be underground. A programme of progressive undergrounding is proposed for existing overhead cables and apparatus in built-up areas (PUT25).

2.9.33 At present, most cabling works are still carried out overground. The problem has been compounded by the local cable TV company, who frequently use the same cable supports as Telemalta. However, the Valletta Rehabilitation Project are conducting initial studies to evaluate approaches to the undergrounding of cables in the capital.

Posts

The Structure Plan advocates strategic planning and modernisation of postal services, taking account of the increasing threat from improved telecommunications (PUT27). A suitable location is to be identified for a new central mailroom/sorting office; this should not be on the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, for traffic reasons (PUT28).

2.9.34 The Public Company *Posta Ltd.* was set up in November 1994, taking over the effective management of operations in October 1995. This is, potentially, a first step towards the modernisation of postal services in Malta. *Posta Ltd.*, has identified a site at Valletta Road, Qormi for the new central mail room. An application for this project was submitted in December 1995.

3. Constraining Urban Growth

The second goal of the Structure Plan promotes the efficient use of land and buildings by channeling development into existing and committed urban areas (3.5).

3.0.1 The Structure Plan includes a range of policies aimed at conserving undeveloped land and revitalising existing built-up areas. These policies include:

- **measures to resist further development of virgin land.** The safeguarding of undeveloped areas is catered for through a number of policies which restrict new urban development to existing built-up areas and areas committed for development in the Temporary Provision Schemes or the Structure Plan's Primary Development Areas.
- **initiatives to revitalise existing built-up areas.** Structure Plan strategies to encourage development within the urban areas include: phasing out Government subsidies for new housing in undeveloped areas in the form of low cost land plots and loans; redirecting Government housing subsidy into urban areas, offering grants and low-cost loans for the refurbishment of private property; and substantial public sector investment in the upgrading of urban infrastructure and public buildings. To make more efficient use of existing infrastructure, by reducing the volume of home/workplace travel, particular encouragement is given to residential development in the Inner Harbour area.
- **provisions to promote the efficient use of land and buildings.** The Structure Plan identifies a severe lack of activity in the private rented sector, leading to gross imbalances of 'housing fit'. Phasing out of rent control legislation is proposed to bring more vacant property into use and to foster realistic pricing of residential space in the rented sector. Conversion of large dwellings into two or more smaller dwellings is also proposed.

3.0.2 This section reviews progress in these areas by analysing patterns of development within existing and committed urban areas. The review begins with an analysis of rates of development within existing settlements. Rates of development within existing built-up areas are then compared with development patterns in the Temporary Provision Schemes. This is followed by a detailed appraisal of projects permitted outside the designated areas for development over the period 1993-95 (3.1).

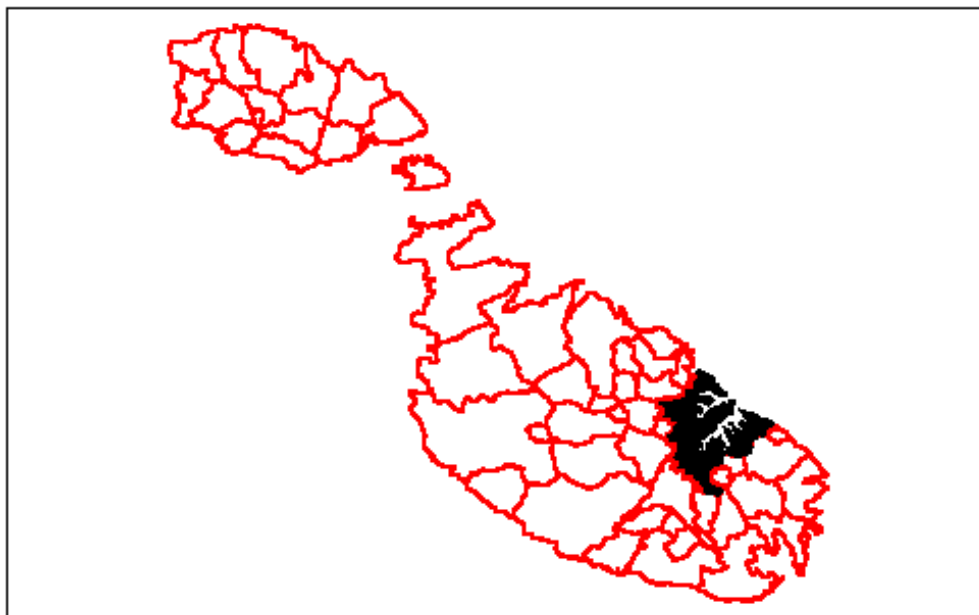
3.0.3 Progress in initiatives to revitalise existing urban areas, including rehabilitation initiatives within Urban Conservation Areas, are discussed in section 3.2.

3.0.4 The chapter concludes with a section dealing with the recycling of previously-developed land and the conversion of buildings into and out of residential use (3.3).

3.1 Channeling Development into Urban Areas

3.1.1 The Structure Plan aims to encourage development within existing urban areas. This has a dual function; to maintain and enhance the environment of the urban fabric and to steer development away from undeveloped land. The Plan places special emphasis on revitalising the Inner Harbour area, which has been steadily losing population as households move

to newer areas in search of acceptable housing⁴². Since most jobs are situated within the Inner Harbour area, this decentralisation of population tends to increase distances between homes and jobs and thereby exacerbates traffic congestion and pollution. The Inner Harbour area boundary is indicated below:



New Development within Urban Areas

The Structure Plan encourages development, including rehabilitation and redevelopment, within existing built-up areas (SET1, 6.2).

3.1.2 This section analyses development trends within built-up areas over the period 1993-95. For the purposes of this analysis, urban areas are defined as existing built-up areas in 1988, excluding any areas zoned for housing in the Temporary Provision Schemes. The 'existing urban areas' therefore include 'infill' sites, within urban areas, which were not zoned for housing development in 1988.

3.1.3 Development within urban areas can occur on previously utilised land or on virgin land. New development on previously utilised land may involve the demolition and re-erection of an existing building, but additions to an existing building also fall within this category. Demolition and re-erection is an example of land recycling, whereas additions serve to make more intensive use of urban land. In both cases, the Structure Plan objective of making efficient use of land and buildings is satisfied.

3.1.4 Development within the existing urban area can also be situated on land which was previously vacant⁴³. Such development is also consistent with the broad objective of channeling development into existing urban areas, although construction is taking place on virgin land.

3.1.5 The analysis in this section is based on a series of analyses using the Planning Authority's Geographic Information System (GIS). Application records representing dwelling approvals for the period 1993-95 were linked to

⁴² Inner Harbour Area Councils are: Birgu, Bormla, Floriana, Gzira, Hamrun, Isla, Kalkara, Marsa, Msida, Paola, Pieta, Santa Lucia, Sliema, Ta' Xbiex and Valletta. The Inner Harbour region as described in this section includes the same areas as mentioned in the Preliminary Report, Census 1995, Central Office of Statistics, March 1996.

⁴³ Vacant land is defined as land which was undeveloped when the national 1:2500 base map series was created in 1988.

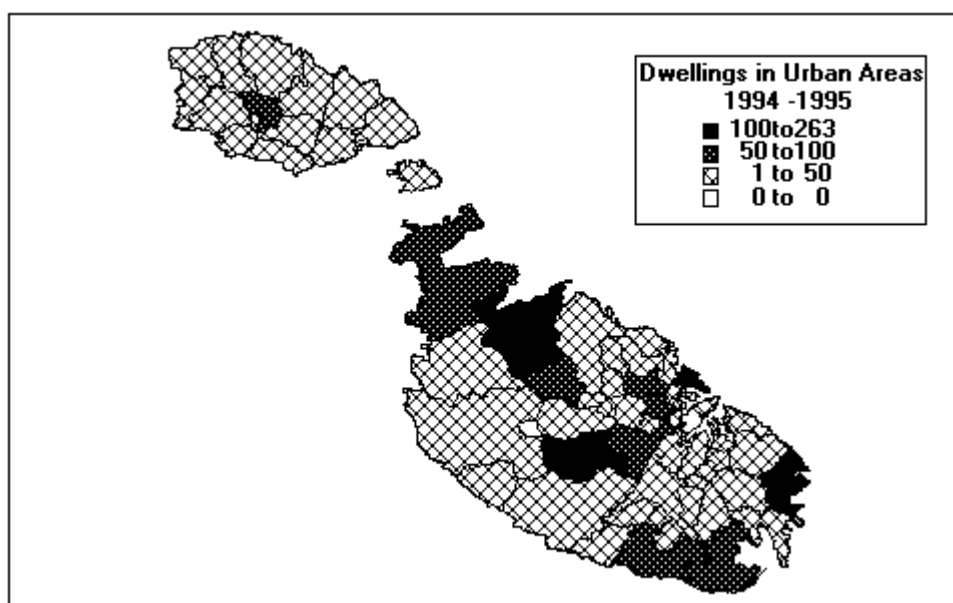
digital land parcel boundaries, wherever possible⁴⁴. This produced a computerised map layer showing dwelling approvals. Spatial analysis techniques were then used to compare dwelling approvals with a second digital map layer identifying the zoning under the Temporary Provision Schemes. In this way, dwellings were classified as:

- i. within Scheme, on land zoned for housing;
- ii. within urban areas, but not on land zoned for housing; or
- iii. outside the development zone.

New Dwellings within Urban Areas

3.1.6 During the period 1993 to 1995, 11,770 dwelling units were granted development permission. Mapped land parcels are available in the Planning Authority's GIS for around 5,800 of these new dwelling units; the analysis in this section is based on these mapped units.

3.1.7 Some 35% of approved dwelling units are located within existing urban areas, but not on land zoned for housing in the Temporary Provision Schemes. This suggests that many more new dwellings are being created within existing urban areas⁴⁵ than was anticipated in the Structure Plan. The Plan estimated that, of the 60,000 dwellings required by the year 2010 (2.2), just 8,000 (13%) would be provided within existing urban areas. The following map illustrates the distribution of dwellings approved within existing urban areas, by local council area:



3.1.8 The development of new dwellings within existing urban areas is occurring in most settlements throughout Malta and Gozo. Particularly high levels of activity were noted within the existing urban areas of St. Paul's Bay, Sliema, Zebbug and Marsascala. Four councils, Mdina, Floriana, Isla and Birgu, saw little or no development of new dwelling units within their urban areas.

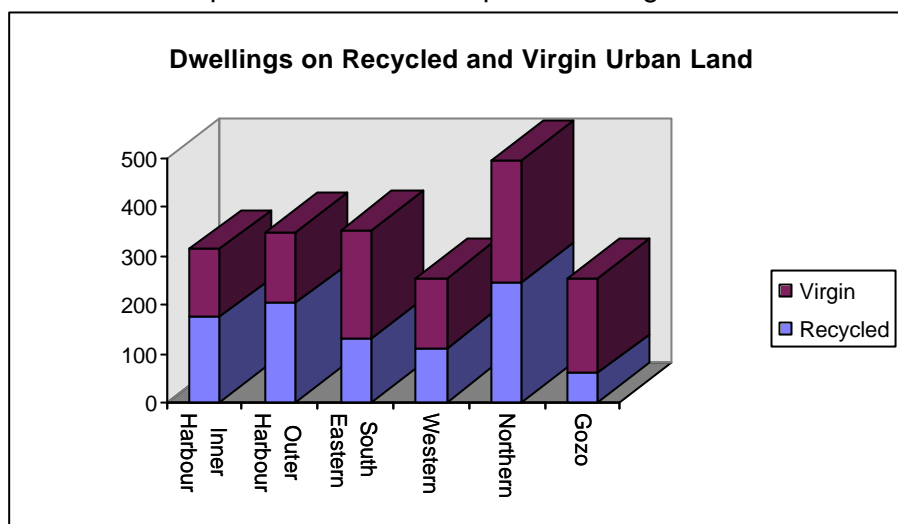
3.1.9 As noted earlier, dwellings within existing built-up areas can be situated either on previously utilised land or on virgin urban land. Almost half of the new urban dwellings are located on previously developed (recycled) land:

⁴⁴ All applications received in 1994 and 1995 have been plotted into the Geographic Information System. These account for around two-thirds of dwellings approved over the period 1993-95.

⁴⁵ As defined in 3.1.2 - 3.1.4.

Dwelling units approved within existing urban areas, 1993-95	Dwelling Units	%
Dwellings on previously built land	945	46
Dwellings on virgin urban land	1108	54
	2053	100

3.1.10 In most regions, the relative take-up rates for recycled urban land and virgin urban land are comparable. However, the south eastern region and Gozo both reveal a preference for development on virgin urban land:



New Dwellings in the Inner Harbour Area

The Structure Plan noted that the Inner Harbour area has steadily lost population as households have moved out to newer areas in search of acceptable housing. To counteract this trend, the Structure Plan encourages residential development in the Inner Harbour area. The aim is to reduce levels of car-borne commuting between the Outer and Inner Harbour areas (SET2, 6.2).

3.1.11 Despite the Structure Plan's intention, the Inner Harbour area has continued to lose population; between 1985 and 1995, the Inner Harbour lost 14% of its population⁴⁶:

Area	1985	1995	% Change	New dwellings in existing urban areas 94-95	New dwellings in Schemes 94-95
Inner Harbour	101963	87997	-13.7	313	78
Outer Harbour	98610	112262	+13.8	354	834
South Eastern	42475	50556	+19.0	352	762
Western	44580	51787	+16.2	255	469
Northern	32108	44660	+39.1	496	937
Gozo	25682	29073	+11.0	255	344

3.1.12 Recent levels of dwelling construction bear little relation to overall population trends at regional level. The number of dwellings approved on urban land within the Inner Harbour area is broadly consistent with rates of development in other regions, despite the population decline. This implies a growing surplus of dwellings within the Inner Harbour region, combined with a steady rate of new development. This apparent paradox is partly explained by the fact that the Inner Harbour region is diverse; whilst large, traditional areas are continuing to lose population (e.g. Valletta and Floriana), more fashionable areas remain popular residential locations (e.g. Sliema, Msida). Sliema and

⁴⁶ Source: Central Office of Statistics, Preliminary Report: Census of Population and Housing, March 1996.

Msida account for 102 and 61 new dwellings, respectively; these two localities alone account for more than half of the new urban dwellings identified within the Inner Harbour region.

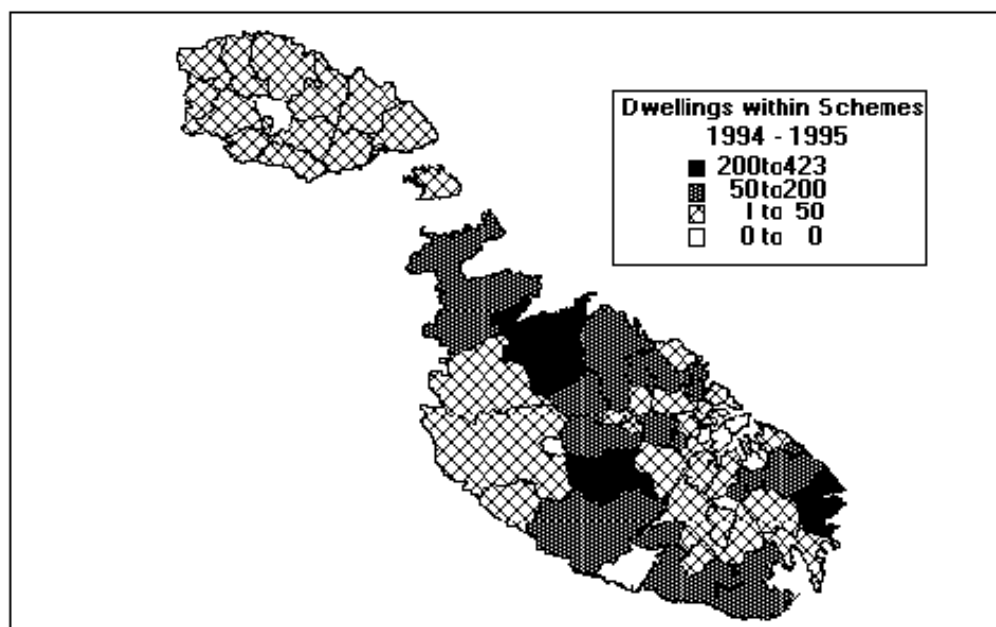
Development within the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1988-94

3.1.13 The Structure Plan concluded that by the year 2010 an additional 60,000 dwelling units would be required, of which around 50,000 are to be provided within the Temporary Provisions Schemes. These figures significantly overstate the demand for new dwellings over the Structure Plan period (See 2.2.16). Nevertheless, the Plan's intention of accommodating the majority of new development within the Temporary Provision Schemes remains valid. This section reviews development trends within the Schemes over the period 1988-94. The data sources used are the 1988 1:2500 base map series, aerial photography taken in 1994 and dwelling application records for the period 1994-95.

New Dwellings within Schemes

The Structure Plan confirmed the location of the Temporary Provision Schemes and identifies these areas as the primary location for new housing development (6.6, SET8). However, the Plan urges the review of the Scheme layouts, to improve provision for social and community facilities (6.7, SET7, SET9). The Plan envisages that over 80% of housing requirements to the year 2010 will be accommodated within the Temporary Provision Schemes (8.3).

3.1.14 In 1988, 798 hectares of land were available for housing development within the Temporary Provision Schemes. By early 1994, 245 hectares (31%) of this land had been developed. Recent permit approvals suggest that dwelling activity is particularly intense in the north, centre and south east of Malta:



3.1.15 Regional differences in the level of dwelling development within the Temporary Provision Schemes are largely explained by the distribution of land allocated in 1988:

	Vacant 1988 (ha)	Developed 1994 (ha)	Developed 1994 (%)
Inner Harbour	22	6	29
Outer Harbour	212	74	35
South Eastern	159	46	29
Western	96	34	36
Northern	182	57	31
Gozo	127	28	22
Total	798	245	

3.1.16 The proportion of Schemed land developed over the period 1988-94 is broadly comparable in all regions, falling within the range 22-36%. The extremes of this range are represented by the western region (highest proportion of land developed) and Gozo (lowest proportion of land developed).

3.1.17 This highly dispersed pattern of development frustrating the Structure Plan's goal of concentrating new residential development in areas close to the major employment centres. The Inner Harbour region, which hosts some 57% of all jobs in Malta, is receiving a small proportion of new housing development. Whilst there is substantial dwelling activity in some of the existing urban areas within the region, such as Sliema and Msida, there is very little Schemed land available; just 22 hectares out of a national total of 798 hectares. The Inner Harbour region received just 2% of all dwellings approved within Scheme over the period 1988-94.

3.1.18 Contrary to the Structure Plan's intention, patterns of housing growth and population movement are increasing levels of commuting and the length of the average journey to work. The distribution of jobs and homes between regions remains seriously out of balance:

	Employed (%) ⁴⁷	Population Living (%) ⁴⁸
Inner Harbour	57	23
Outer Harbour	21	30
South Eastern	8	13
Western	4	14
Northern	7	12
Gozo and Comino	4	8

More than half of the gainfully employed work within the Inner Harbour Area, whilst only 23% of the population live there. Unfortunately, since a small proportion of available housing land is located within the Inner Harbour region, the decentralisation of population to outer regions is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

⁴⁷ Source: Employment and Workplace Database, Strategic Planning Unit.

⁴⁸ Source: Central Office of Statistics, Preliminary Report: Census of Population and Housing, March 1996.

Development in Non Urban Areas

The Structure Plan prohibits any form of urbanisation outside existing built-up areas, the Temporary Provisions Schemes and the designated Primary Development Areas (6.9). Permitted forms of non-urban development are restricted to: farmhouses and other genuine agricultural buildings; reservoirs; picnic areas with toilets and car parks; and buildings, walls and fences associated with archaeological and ecological sites (SET11, 7.6). However, the Structure Plan does acknowledge that there may be a need to make exceptions. In such cases the applicant must provide reasons why, from a planning point of view, the proposed use cannot be located within areas designated for development. A full Environmental Impact Assessment will be required in such cases (SET12).

3.1.19 The need to restrict development to designated areas is one of the best-understood and most widely-accepted policies within the Structure Plan. Nevertheless, some breaches of policy have occurred. To clarify their policy stance on development in non-urban areas, the Planning Authority approved a DC Guidance Note in January 1995⁴⁹. This note emphasizes that existing and committed built-up areas do not include:

- land outside the limits of development which contains sporadic development;
- sites where a previous development has fallen into disuse; or
- sites outside the limits of development with an expired development permit.

3.1.20 This section reviews the integrity of Structure Plan policy to restrict the development of non-urban areas. The locations of approved non-residential projects, mixed developments and larger residential schemes were analysed using the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database (covering the period 1993-95). In total, 190 approvals have been identified in non-urban areas from this source. This figure includes 61 agricultural projects. Smaller residential projects were identified from the Dwellings Database, containing planning decisions on applications for additional dwelling units⁵⁰.

New Dwellings in Non Urban Areas

3.1.21 From the Dwellings Database, it is estimated that some 4.5% of dwellings approved in 1994 were outside designated areas for development, representing around 185 new dwelling units. In 1995, the proportion fell to 3.3% of residential approvals, representing around 155 new dwelling units. These figures are estimated totals, based on applications received after January 1st 1994. Earlier residential applications have not been plotted into the Planning Authority's GIS, so could not be incorporated into the spatial analysis required to identify whether the application falls within the development zone.

3.1.22 Whilst a small minority of individual dwelling units are approved outside the development zone, it is clear that policy breaches are occurring. The numbers approved exceed those which can be justified under the strict criteria defining necessary dwellings for full-time farmers⁵¹.

⁴⁹ Developments Outside Built-Up Areas, PLP20, January 1995.

⁵⁰ Applications of up to 2 dwelling units are included in the Dwellings Database, rather than the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database.

⁵¹ See Planning Authority's Policy and Design Guidance on Farmhouses and Agricultural Buildings.

3.1.23 Within the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, 29 dwelling applications were identified in non-urban areas, with a total floorspace of 34,725 square metres. Seven of these are approvals for farmhouses, in most cases providing an additional dwelling unit within the curtilage of an existing farmhouse. The remaining projects include:

- the Fort Chambray development, which includes 236 new residential units;
- a 1993 Housing Authority project which, although well-related to existing development, falls beyond the Scheme boundary in Santa Venera;
- four borderline applications, spanning the boundary of the development zone; and
- two applications which were permitted as infill development within existing rural settlements.

3.1.24 The remaining larger applications for new dwelling developments (8 cases) appear to be clear breaches of policy; in a number of cases, the approvals were influenced by the fact that previous permit decisions on the same site, including decisions by the former PAPB, were favourable. In fact, this is not a valid reason for over-turning the Structure Plan's strong stance against urbanisation of the countryside. There is also some evidence that the 'infill' argument is too readily accepted. To accord with the Structure Plan, infill developments must be justified as exceptions under SET12 or as agricultural dwellings for full-time farmers; applicants for infill developments are rarely required to satisfy this test.

3.1.25 Excluding Fort Chambray, but including the results for small residential applications, it appears that an average of 150-200 new dwelling units per year are approved outside the development zone.

Commercial and Industrial Approvals in Non-Urban Areas

3.1.26 Excluding projects related to agricultural production, the following commercial and industrial applications were approved in non-urban areas over the period 1993-95:

	Projects Approved	Floorspace in m²
Industrial	22	55,120
Warehousing	14	12,890
Retail	14	7,330
Offices	12	5,185

Industry

3.1.27 There is clearly a problem in the industrial sector. The quantity of industrial floorspace approved outside the designated areas for development exceeds the floorspace completed on MDC industrial estates over the same timespan.

3.1.28 Six of the approved industrial projects are in areas of a predominantly industrial character, which nevertheless fall outside the development boundary. This includes some development permitted around the fringes of established industrial estates (e.g. at Hal Far and Mosta). The major concentrations of recent industrial development outside the development zone are at Tal Handaq (limits of Qormi) and Triq l'Imdina, Zebbug.

3.1.29 Three of the remaining industrial project approvals fall within the Structure Plan's definition of obnoxious industry (**10.16**); a fireworks factory and two concrete batching plants. The Structure Plan recognises that these industries have special locational requirements and recommends allocation of specific sites, perhaps within abandoned quarries (**IND9**), and evaluation of incentives to secure relocation (**IND10**).

3.1.30 Of the remaining three industrial projects, two appear to be clear breaches of policy permitting workshop activities in the countryside. The final approval is for works at the Mediterranean Film Studios.

Warehousing

3.1.31 Comparable problems exist in the warehousing sector. Of the fourteen projects approved, five are at Triq l'Imdina, Zebbug. The remaining approvals for new storage space include: three projects within existing, established industrial/warehousing operations; development at an existing service station; and small-scale development within an existing small settlement. The four additional, non-agricultural storage projects in rural areas are very difficult to explain in terms of existing policy.

Retail

3.1.32 The fourteen retail approvals outside designated areas for development include: four petrol filling stations or car wash facilities; five showrooms; and two restaurants. As in the industrial and warehousing sectors, there is a concentration on Triq l'Imdina, Zebbug (3 projects). Some projects are in developed areas outside the development zone (e.g. beside an arterial route in Santa Venera, along the developed coastal strip at Mellieha, amongst ribbon development in Safi). Other retail approvals, including a relatively large showroom, are clearly within the open countryside.

Offices

3.1.33 Although twelve office projects were identified outside designated areas for development, the office component is generally ancillary to another use. The identified projects include office provision at: Mriehel dump; Mgarr yacht marina; Mellieha Holiday Centre; the San Lucien Oil Co., Birzebugga; the Malta Film Studios; and a number of other established industrial and commercial uses. Approvals for completely new, freestanding office provision located outside designated areas for development are apparently very rare.

Summary

3.1.34 It is clear that substantial policy breaches have occurred in the industrial, commercial and retail sectors. The issue has already been acknowledged by senior development control staff; there are a number of areas, outside the development zone, which are predominantly industrial in character, where previous decision-making has established a precedent for further approvals which has become very hard to resist. The issue has been compounded by limited availability of land for industrial development within the development boundaries and existing industrial estates (See 2.4.28). In order to avoid progressive undermining of the credibility of the development boundaries, it is vital that planning policies are updated, as a matter of urgency, to take account of the growth of these informal industrial and commercial areas. These issues will be addressed through the Commerce and Industry Study, which is currently in progress.

Tourism Projects Approved in Non-Urban Areas

3.1.35 The development of tourist accommodation has in most cases been limited to built up areas within the Temporary Provision Schemes, as outlined in policy **TOU4**. However, various extensions have been approved in areas outside the development zone.

3.1.36 Projects approved outside the development zone are mainly extensions or refurbishments to existing developments. These include the Seabank hotel, Mellieha Bay hotel, the Coastline hotel and the Paradise Bay hotel. Exceptions are the new Solemar Hotel in Mellieha (outside the designated areas for development) and the renewal for the San Lawrenz Hotel in Gozo. The Fort Chambray project was approved in accordance with policy **TOU6** in the Structure Plan, which designates the area as having potential for tourism accommodation and other tourism facilities.

Social and Community Facilities Approved in Non-Urban Areas

3.1.37 Seventeen projects for social and community facilities were approved outside designated areas for development:

	Projects Approved
Schools	6
Hospitals	2
Cemeteries	3
Homes for the Elderly	2
Museums	2
Other	2

3.1.38 Of the six school projects, only San Anton school at l'Imselliet provided a completely new facility (although a school already occupied the site). The remainder provide additional classrooms or other facilities within the existing curtilage.

3.1.39 The need for a new school, adjacent to the existing school at l'Imselliet, was identified and justified under Structure Plan policy **SET12** and approved by the Planning Authority. An extensive site search revealed no sites large enough to accommodate the school requirements within Scheme. The adjacent site was selected in order to minimise impact in the countryside and the acceptability of the scheme was wholly dependent on the fact of the existing school site. Stringent environmental conditions were imposed on the permit and have so far been fully complied with by the applicant.

3.1.40 Other social and community approvals include: three extensions to cemeteries; the San Raffaele and St. Philip's Hospitals (see below); two extensions to homes for the elderly; and two museums, each linked to a specific historic location (Ghar Dalam and Ta' Qali airfield).

3.1.41 The need for the San Raffaele and St. Philip's Hospitals was established in overall Health Plan documents and justified in terms of policy **SET12** (including the provision of an Environmental Impact Statement). Outline and full development permit applications were submitted and approved by the Planning Authority in both cases.

3.1.42 Approvals for social and community facilities which are harder to justify, outside designated areas for development, include a religious centre at Kerzem and a club house linked to existing tennis courts at Zejtun.

Utility Projects Approved in Non-Urban Areas

3.1.43 Eight utility projects were approved in non-urban areas over the period 1993-95. These include road works, sub-stations, sewage pumps and other similar facilities.

3.2 Rehabilitation and Renewal

3.2.1 The Structure Plan includes a number of strategies to encourage development within the urban areas. These include: phasing out Government subsidies for new housing in undeveloped areas in the form of low cost land plots and loans; redirecting Government housing subsidy into urban areas, offering grants and low-cost loans for the refurbishment of private property; and substantial public sector investment in the upgrading of urban infrastructure and public buildings (**3.8**). This section reviews progress in these areas. This discussion complements the review of rehabilitation initiatives relating to urban conservation in section 4.1.

Rehabilitation Initiatives

The Structure Plan proposes re-direction of housing subsidy to encourage development within existing urban areas and the rehabilitation of existing properties. New areas for subsidised land plots, outside existing and committed built-up areas, will not be allowed. Home ownership subsidies for rehabilitation and renewal will be introduced, together with grants and loans for the rehabilitation of privately-owned homes (SET3, SET4). The Plan also urges review of rental legislation, to increase incentives for building rehabilitation (SET5). There are also a number of policies related to the rehabilitation of urban structures of conservation value; these centre on the establishment of a Land Tribunal and Heritage Trust (UCO12, 15.14; UCO17, 15.19).

3.2.2 There has been some progress in the liberalisation of the housing sector, as reported in section 2.2. The issue of subsidised plots ceased in July 1993 (See 2.2.46). Rental legislation was amended in December 1995, but this has so far had little impact on the number and types of property available to let; the amended laws only apply to new contracts (See 2.2.42-2.2.44).

3.2.3 A limited number of grants are available for the rehabilitation of housing. The Department for Social Accommodation provides rent subsidies. In addition, this Department gives grants of up to Lm800 to those who want to refurbish an old house and to disabled persons, including the aged, who want to improve residential access arrangements (e.g. through provision of a stair-lift). The Housing Authority also provide subsidies for tenants of government or private housing who would like to purchase their home.

3.2.4 Progress regarding the Land Tribunal and Heritage Trust has been minimal. This topic is discussed in detail in section 4.1.

3.2.5 In summary, whilst there have been some limited initiatives to encourage rehabilitation and renewal during the monitoring period, the effects have yet to be felt on a large scale.

Development within Urban Conservation Areas

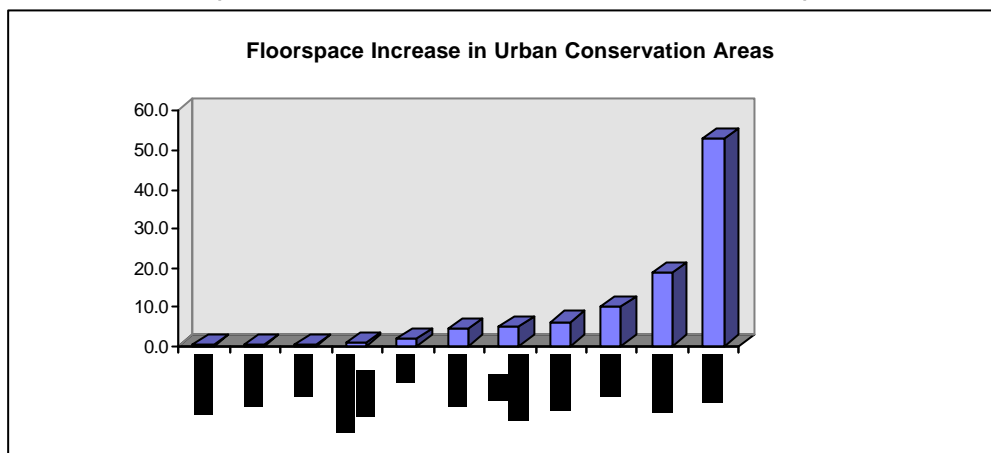
In addition to the general objective of urban rehabilitation, the Structure Plan is committed to the enhancement of urban conservation areas (UCO12). The Plan encourages rehabilitation and suitable conversions within Urban Conservation Areas, particularly: residential development (HOU2, HOU7); upgrading of shopping centres (COM7); and the sensitive introduction of tourist uses (TOU9).

3.2.6 The general approach to rehabilitation within Urban Conservation Areas is discussed in detail in section 4.1. This section reviews a specific aspect of this issue; the extent to which new development within the existing built-up areas is leading to investment in rehabilitation and redevelopment initiatives within the Urban Conservation Areas.

3.2.7 This analysis is based on an overlay of the land parcels from the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database with the Urban Conservation Area boundaries, using the Planning Authority's Geographic Information System. The results are not comprehensive, since many village core areas have not yet been formally defined as Urban Conservation Areas; since final boundaries have not yet been determined for these areas, they are omitted from this analysis.

3.2.8 Available evidence suggests that a small proportion of new urban development is taking place within Urban Conservation Areas. Over the

period 1993 to 1995, just 5% of all floorspace in the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database was created within the Urban Conservation Areas. Sliema Urban Conservation Area is the exception to the general rule, since there was intensive development within its boundaries; over half of the recorded development within Urban Conservation Areas took place in Sliema:



3.2.9 A wide range of project types have been identified within Urban Conservation Areas:

Development Type	Floorspace (sq. m.)
Dwellings	22,930
Social & Community	17,650
Offices	16,020
Tourist	14,950
Parking	13,230
Retail	2,340
Recreational	1,530
Warehousing	1,420

3.2.10 In addition to new and refurbished dwellings, developments have included: social and community facilities; offices; a new hotel; and parking facilities. The new tourism floorspace is related specifically to the Capua Court Hotel Project in Sliema. Most of the floorspace increase for social and community facilities is explained by just two projects, the Capua Palace Hospital Project in Sliema (10,560 square metres) and a private home for the elderly in Rabat (6,980 sq.m). Large office developments within Urban Conservation Areas include the Planning Authority offices in Floriana (6,370 square metres) and a Public Administration block at Pinto Wharf, Floriana (4,800 square metres) (See also section 4.1.24).

3.2.11 Successful rehabilitation and redevelopment projects within Urban Conservation Areas, to date, have largely been concentrated within Sliema and Floriana. Sliema has an exceptional ability to attract significant private sector investment for a wide range of development types, whilst public sector investment in Floriana has been linked to the provision of government offices. Achievement of the broader rehabilitation objectives of the Structure Plan is likely to require a number of additional incentives and initiatives in order to stimulate both public and private sector investment within a wider cross-section of Urban Conservation Areas.

Rehabilitation of Rural Buildings

Within Rural Conservation Areas, the Structure Plan allows for the rehabilitation and suitable change of use of existing rural buildings, providing that the overall aim of improving the rural environment is satisfied (RC02, 15.28).

3.2.12 In total, 60 approvals for conversion of rural buildings were registered between 1993 and 1995. These projects were scattered over Malta and Gozo, and across most localities, with no one locality being predominant. These figures are largely related to conversions of farmhouses and rural buildings. Most of these applications dealt with additions and alterations to provide for farm extensions.

3.3 Using Land and Buildings Efficiently

3.3.1 The Structure Plan incorporates a number of strategies to encourage the more efficient use of land and buildings. These include: the phasing out of rent control legislation to bring more vacant residential property into use; encouraging development on previously used (recycled) land; and the conversion of large dwellings into two or more smaller dwellings.

3.3.2 Changes in rent control legislation are discussed elsewhere (See paragraphs 3.2.2 and 2.2.42 - 2.2.44).

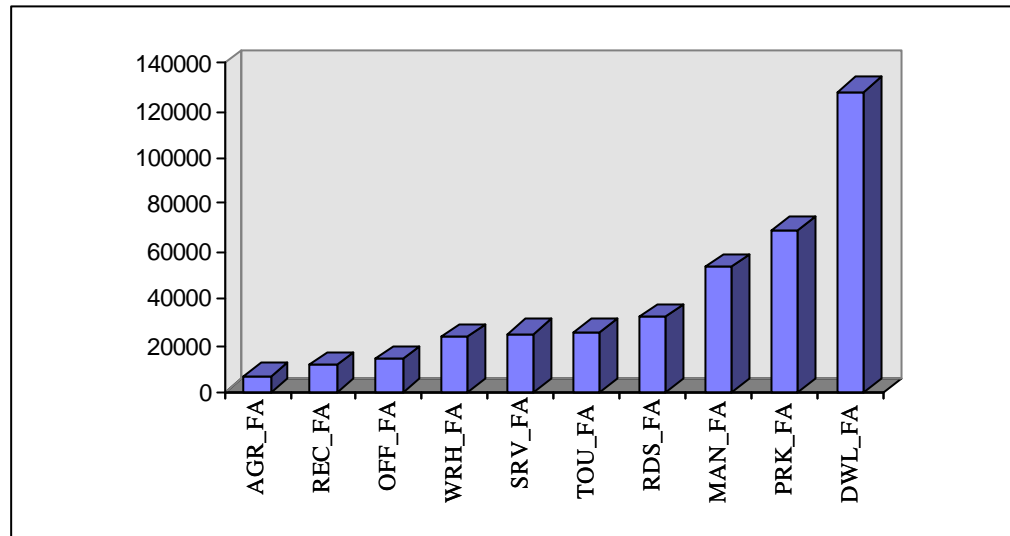
Development on recycled land

3.3.3 Development within urban areas can occur on previously utilised land or on virgin land. New development on previously utilised land may involve the demolition and re-erection of an existing building, but additions to an existing building also fall within this category. Demolition and re-erection is an example of land recycling, whereas additions serve to make more intensive use of urban land. In both cases, the Structure Plan objective of making efficient use of land and buildings is satisfied.

3.3.4 As noted in paragraph 3.1.9, a significant proportion of new dwellings are either built on recycled land, or form extensions to existing buildings. Almost half of the new urban dwellings are located on previously developed land. This figure excludes new dwellings built on land zoned for housing within the Temporary Provision Schemes. It also excludes residential components within larger projects containing three or more dwelling units.

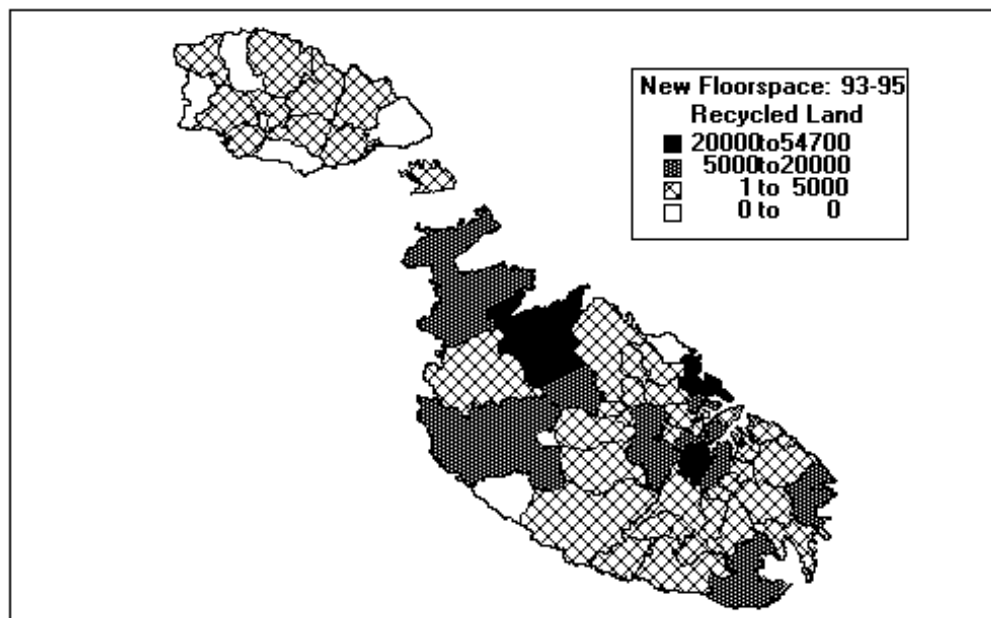
3.3.5 Information on larger projects (including mixed use and residential schemes comprising three or more dwelling units) is available from the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database. Spatial analysis of this database reveals that, for these larger projects, almost a quarter (23%) of new floorspace approved over the period 1993-95 is located on previously developed urban land.

3.3.6 Within these larger projects, dwelling floorspace is the single largest development type, accounting for almost one third of approved floorspace:



3.3.7 Other significant categories are parking floorspace, which is often complementary to residential schemes (18%) and manufacturing (14%). The proportional mix of development types on recycled land is broadly in keeping with the overall mix of development types. Examples of larger projects utilising recycled land include: additions to the Mosta Civic Centre; the demolition and re-erection of Capua Court Hotel in Sliema; the Capua Palace Hospital; development of a retirement home in Luqa; and the Planning Authority Offices in St. Francis Ravelin.

3.3.8 Whilst redevelopment and extension projects are widely distributed across the Maltese Islands, there are particular concentrations in the northern and central regions:



Conversion of Buildings

3.3.9 The Structure Plan also encourages conversion projects. Almost 180 conversions were approved over the period 1993-95. As a proportion of all development occurring over the period, this is tiny. Most of the approved conversions are creating retail outlets from dwelling units:

Before Conversion	After Conversion	Approvals
Dwelling	Retail	109
Dwelling	Dwelling	15
Dwelling	Offices	14
Dwelling	Parking	14
Dwelling	Community Services	10
Dwelling	Parking	5
Retail	Dwelling	5
Parking	Dwelling	3
Agricultural	Dwelling	2
Dwelling	Manufacturing	1

Only fifteen projects involved the conversion of large dwelling units into smaller maisonettes/flats.

3.3.10 Currently, the main financial incentive for conversion projects relates to the provision of commercial units in established centres. In the residential market, the preference is for purpose-built units. Currently, conversion activity is leading to a small net loss of dwelling units.

4. Upgrading the Environment

The third and final goal of the Structure Plan is to radically improve the quality of all aspects of the environment of both urban and rural areas (3.5).

4.0.1 The Structure Plan introduces a comprehensive set of policies, covering all land and coastal waters in the Islands, aiming to achieve the general upgrading of all aspects of the environment. The major policy directions are:

- ***the designation of Urban Conservation Areas.*** Here, policies are established for the retention and enhancement of all buildings, structures and spaces of architectural or historical interest. There is to be redevelopment, to Conservation Area standards, of alien buildings which despoil the area. Traffic and parking are to be rationalised and controlled, introducing pedestrian priority measures where appropriate. Cables are to be relocated underground and the quality of townscape and landscape improved wherever possible (3.10).
- ***strict development control and design guidelines for new urban areas.*** The Plan aims to ensure that new areas do not repeat the mistakes of previous developments in terms of: inadequate provision of community facilities; poor quality infrastructure provision; abandonment of construction rubble and other refuse; and insensitivity to the surrounding townscape and landscape (3.12).
- ***halting the spread of urban development into the countryside.*** Along with prohibiting new urban development in rural areas, the Plan designates large Rural Conservation Areas within which agricultural, ecological, archaeological and landscape interests are protected. Guidelines are included to assist in resolving conflicts and to establish and maintain a high standard of environmental quality in the countryside (3.13).
- ***developing policy for Marine Conservation Areas.*** The Plan recognises the need for safeguarding of vulnerable marine and coastal environments by controlling destructive land-based activities, prohibiting certain marine-based development and controlling both fishing and recreational water-sports, where appropriate (3.14).

4.0.2 This section reviews progress in these areas. The review begins by dealing in turn with: the designation and management of urban conservation areas (4.1); the protection of listed buildings (4.2); rural conservation and landscape protection (4.3); archaeology (4.4); and coastal and marine conservation (4.5). This is followed by a review of pro-active initiatives to upgrade the environment (4.6). Attention then moves to more general initiatives to upgrade the environment, including: an overview of the effectiveness of the development control system in incorporating environmental considerations into the decision-making process (4.7); a review of progress in developing design guidelines and standards for all new development (4.8); and an update on standards of construction management (4.9). The final sections take a long-term perspective, considering initiatives in environmental education and research (4.10) and the incorporation of a formal system of environmental appraisal into the Planning Authority's strategic and local planning processes (4.11).

4.1 Urban Conservation

4.1.1 The overall strategy of the Plan with regard to those parts of the islands possessing valuable built heritage is based on the designation of Urban Conservation Areas. In these areas, specific policies apply to ensure the preservation and enhancement of these precious resources.

Designation of Urban Conservation Areas

The Structure Plan designates Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs), where policies for environmental upgrading are to be strictly applied (UCO1, UCO2, UCO3, UCO6, UCO8, UCO9, UCO10, UCO14, UCO15, 7.4, 7.7, TRA4, RDS7). A UCA is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Structure Plan strategy in this area rests on particularly strict control of development, coupled with an injection of public and private funds for rehabilitation (section 15.3).

The areas specified in the Plan for immediate protection are: Valletta and Floriana; the Three Cities (Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua); Mdina; the Cittadella and its environs (Gozo); the central area of Sliema; the central area of Hamrun and other village core areas in the Temporary Provision Schemes (UCO1).

4.1.2 The Structure Plan designates a total of 64 localities as Urban Conservation Areas in **UCO1**, although precise boundaries are not provided. It was envisaged that provisional boundaries would be defined for designation purposes, with precise boundaries specified in the relevant local plans (**UCO2**).

4.1.3 Six Urban Conservation Areas have been scheduled during the period 1993 to 1995, in accordance with **UCO1**. The village cores of Birzebbugia and Marsaxlokk were scheduled in the *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* (**UCO2**). Twelve additional areas have been identified and are currently awaiting Planning Authority approval (**UCO2**):

Urban Conservation Area Designated (1993-1995)	Area (ha)	Urban Conservation Area pending approval (as at 31/12/96)	Area (ha)
Valletta	76.6	Dingli	9.7
Floriana	95.5	St. Paul's Bay	10.7
Mdina	9.7	Rabat	51.8
Cittadella	9.5	Mgarr	2.4
Birzebbugia		Mellieha	14.1
Marsaxlokk		Attard/Balzan/Lija	68.2
		Cospicua	134.5
		Kalkara	21.3
		Sliema	72.5
		Birgu	21.7
		Senglea	
		St. Julians	

The Three Cities and Hamrun, along with the remainder of the 58 village cores designated in the Temporary Provisions Schemes, still require review and specific designation as individual Urban Conservation Areas.

4.1.4 The Structure Plan clearly identifies Valletta, in conjunction with the adjacent harbours, as the principal Urban Conservation Area (**15.9**). The draft *Grand Harbour Local Plan* is developing policy for the *Valletta Harbours Heritage Conservation and Improvement Area* (**UCO3**). The Local Plan's principal aim is the reinforcement of the vitality and viability of Valletta as the

nation's capital, regenerating the fabric of the city and reinforcing it as a residential, commercial and touristic centre. However, this is to be achieved without jeopardising the very characteristics which make the city a unique and pleasurable place. Specific policy directions include: the fostering of a 'mixed use' capital city; better use of existing buildings; urban renewal; improved public transport; increased vehicle access; and parking provision which is related to environmental capacity.

Rehabilitation Initiatives for Urban Conservation

The Structure Plan is committed to the enhancement of conservation areas (UCO12). The Plan encourages rehabilitation and suitable conversions within Urban Conservation Areas, particularly: residential development (HOU2, HOU7); upgrading of shopping centres (COM7); and the sensitive introduction of tourist uses (TOU9). Wherever possible, buildings, gardens and other structures of historical interest will be conserved through a combination of control and positive intervention (UCO13).

The Structure Plan envisaged recycling of fees and fines as upgrading grants for buildings in Conservation Areas through a Land Tribunal and Trust. It also proposes the establishment of an independent Heritage Trust, funded jointly by government and the private sector (15.19, 19.7, UCO12, UCO13, UCO17).

The Plan also calls for a government-funded pilot project of urban rehabilitation, in one of the smaller Urban Conservation Areas, as a priority (UCO18).

Public Sector Initiatives

Central Government

4.1.5 Central government is a major source of funding for urban conservation. However, the level of funding is declining, in real terms:

	1993 (Lm)	1994 (Lm)	1995 (Lm)
Ministry for Gozo			
Restoration works at Cittadella	39,585	31,004	15,000
Estates Management			
Enhancement of public areas	185,947	245,289	60,000
Valletta Rehabilitation Project	354,968	323,353	250,000
Personal emoluments	220,500	220,500	220,500
Cottonera Rehabilitation Project	254,703	232,305	200,000
Personal emoluments	0	0	35,000
Total	1,055,703	1,052,451	780,500

Two projects, run by the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee and the Cottonera Rehabilitation Committee, administer much of the country's public restoration funds. However, works are sometimes coordinated by a range of partners, including NGOs. For example, works to restore the Msida Bastion Cemetery were coordinated by: the Ministry of Environment Estates Management Department; the Agriculture Department; Din L-art Helwa; the British High Commission and the UK government.

4.1.6 Government has a public commitment to rehabilitate the historic harbour cities. The Valletta and Cottonera rehabilitation projects received the majority of government funding in this area, although this amount decreased substantially in 1995. St. Margherita Square in Cospicua, for example, is to be renovated by the Cottonera Rehabilitation Project. Works are being carried out by the Building Engineering section of the Ministry for the Environment.

Both the Rehabilitation Projects have, on occasion, run into conflict with the local councils of their respective areas.

4.1.7 Funding for the upgrading of historic fortifications, in particular, is available from international sources. The three fortified cities of Cottonera are linking up with cities in Greece, Italy and Lebanon in a *Cities of the Order of the Knights of St. John* project. This involves a two-year study project funded by the EU Med-Urbs programme (approx. Lm120,000). Later projects, such as the restoration of the bastions, will probably be funded under programmes such as the Cottonera Rehabilitation Project. The upper part of Fort St. Angelo is currently being redeveloped and restored by the Order of St. John (SMOM) as their headquarters. This work is being monitored by a special committee nominated by the Development Control Commission of the Planning Authority.

The Planning Authority

4.1.8 The Planning Authority, in accordance with **UCO12** and **UCO6**, has taken steps to actively promote urban conservation. An *Urban Environment Improvement Partnership Scheme* was initiated in 1995 for the improvement of public open space. This project is aimed at helping Local Councils by financing up to 50% of the total costs of works of a high quality urban renewal project. The Planning Authority has made Lm100,000 available under this partnership scheme for the financial year 1995/1996.

4.1.9 The Planning Authority has also initiated a Lm15,000 pilot project for historic buildings grants. This is based on the compensation of individuals (or their agents) for improvements to either listed buildings (including those listed in the 1925 Antiquities protection list) or buildings in Urban Conservation Areas. The pilot scheme aims to evaluate how an eventual grant scheme would work. It is aimed at small scale structural works on historic buildings. Up to 40% of total costs may be awarded. The Planning Authority is searching for co-sponsors for this scheme from the private sector.

4.1.10 The Land Tribunal and Heritage Trust has not yet been established, although draft legislation on a Heritage Trust has been presented to Parliament. In the meantime, the non-government organisations, such as Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna and Din L-Art Helwa, continue to carry out restoration of buildings of national importance, often owned by the State and administered by the NGO.

4.1.11 The pilot project envisaged in **UCO18** has not yet been started.

The Local Councils

4.1.12 A number of the local councils have undertaken urban upgrading projects. Some have used their own funding, whilst others have applied for special funds from government. In some cases, sponsorships were obtained from the private sector. The data below results from a postal and telephone survey in which councils were requested to describe projects for urban upgrading in their locality:

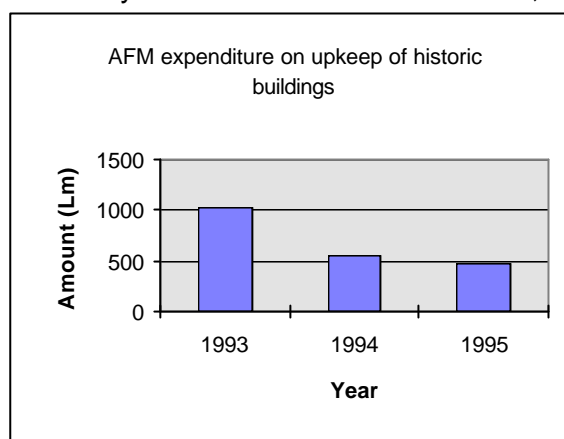
Siggiewi	Urban upgrading	40,000
Senglea	Mitrovitch Square and Debono Square	13,215
Balzan	Restoration of pavements	2,000
Hamrun	St. Paul's Square & St. Joseph High Street	40,000
Mellieha	Parish Square, Pilgrim's Cross, Tunnara promenade	78,000
Zejtun	Upgrading of village core area	356,882
San Lawrenz	Urban upgrading	29,500
Attard	Urban upgrading	60,000
Sliema	Waterfront Upgrading	25,000
Total (Lm)		619,597

The Church

4.1.13 The majority of restoration projects on religious buildings owned by the Church are funded by the respective parishes. The Archbishop's Curia also funds a number of additional projects, such as the restoration of Santa Barbara Church in Valletta, to which Lm19,000 was allocated in 1995.

The Armed Forces

4.1.14 The Armed forces of Malta also occupy a number of historic fortifications, principal among which are the Madliena Fort, the Red Tower at Mellieha, the Comino Tower, the Rinella Battery and the Mosta Fort. Expenditure over the three years from 1993-1995 was Lm2,067⁵²:



Private Sector Investment

4.1.15 Private sector expenditure on buildings of architectural and historical interest, and in Urban Conservation Areas in general, is difficult to measure. However, it is clear that there is a good deal of private sector activity. A large proportion of the development capital injected into Urban Conservation Areas relates to private dwellings, in particular (See 4.1.23).

4.1.16 The Structure Plan envisaged joint public/private sector funding of conservation initiatives, particularly through the proposed Heritage Trust. Some private sector funds have been successfully channeled into conservation projects in this way, particularly through the NGO's. The recently initiated Planning Authority schemes seek to develop this approach further.

4.1.17 Private sector investment in conservation has also been secured in connection with some major refurbishment projects, including Fort Chambray in Gozo and the Capua Palace Hospital in Sliema. At Fort Chambray, for example, the developer is spending Lm200,000 on the restoration of fortifications, in accordance with Planning Authority requirements, and will be coordinating applications for international funds for a further investment of Lm500,000 in future conservation work. Wherever possible, the Planning Authority is incorporating similar requirements into development briefs affecting historic sites (e.g. Manoel Island/Tigne' Point, Fort Ricasoli, Fort St. Elmo).

⁵² Materials costs only.

Development Control in the Urban Conservation Areas

Effective development control is a vital element in the strategy to preserve and enhance Urban Conservation Areas (UCO6, UCO13). New buildings within Urban Conservation Areas must respect their surroundings (UCO8). The Structure Plan aims to remove recent accretions to buildings and relocate existing inappropriate uses (UCO5). The Authority is to encourage the suitable development of gap sites and discourage demolitions creating gaps (UCO8, UCO9). Satellite dishes will only be permitted in Urban Conservation Areas if they are hidden from public view (UCO15).

4.1.18 The Planning Authority has made great progress in establishing the framework for development control within Urban Conservation Areas. In addition to the designation of protected buildings and Urban Conservation Areas, this has involved:

- developing an appropriate framework of policy and design guidance for urban conservation; and
- establishing an appropriate decision-making framework which ensures that adequate specialist advice is available on urban conservation matters.

Policy and Design Guidance for Urban Conservation

4.1.19 The Planning Authority has now established a consistent policy framework for development control in Urban Conservation Areas, through the publication of design guidance to support the implementation of urban conservation policy (*Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas, 1995*).

Specialist Advice on Urban Conservation Matters

4.1.20 The Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) plays a key role within the development control system in the implementation of urban conservation policy. The HAC acts as specialist advisor to the Planning Authority, sometimes also proposing specific action such as the issue of Emergency Conservation Orders. The HAC's workload is large and increasing. The Committee met 38 times in 1994, dealing with 169 proposals affecting historical buildings. In 1995, they held 92 meetings and dealt with some 600 projects. The work of the HAC has a direct effect on the quality of decisions relating to both urban and rural conservation. It is only through the HAC that some of the unknown treasures of Malta's built heritage are being saved from demolition, since the Committee conducts a site inspection on virtually every application it deals with.

4.1.21 A Cultural Heritage and Urban Conservation team has been established within the Planning Authority's Environmental Management Unit, providing a concentration of expertise on urban conservation matters. This team work very closely with the HAC. There are also professional staff within the development control teams, holding specialist qualifications in related fields, and sharing a deep commitment to the preservation of Malta's built heritage.

4.1.22 The formal protection of historic properties is now progressing rapidly, through both the scheduling of individual buildings and the designation of Urban Conservation Areas. This rapid rate of progress presents its own problems. Effective development control is sometimes hindered by the difficulties of the case officer in accessing accurate and timely information regarding the status of a given property. Accurate information is now recorded in the Planning Authority's GIS, but this is not apparently always being consulted at the appropriate stages.

Urban Conservation in Practice

4.1.23 In all, over 100,000 square metres of additional or replacement floorspace was approved for development within Urban Conservation Areas over the period 1993-95. Most of this development took place during 1993 and 1994, with a reduced level of development activity in 1995. Most of the development comprised new, replacement or refurbished dwellings and offices:

Floorspace approved (sq. m)	1993	1994	1995	TOTAL	%
Dwellings	6,180	12,090	4,660	22,930	23
Offices	12,140	2,810	1,070	16,020	16
Retail	820	1,050	470	2,340	2
Recreation	220	1,020	280	1,520	1
Services	5,050	12,360	240	17,650	17
Warehousing	780	360	280	1,420	2
Parking	2,070	8,600	2,560	13,230	13
Tourism	4,840	0	14,950	26,390	26
TOTAL	32,100	38,290	24,514	101,500	100

4.1.24 The Floriana, Sliema and Rabat Urban Conservation Areas were particularly affected by development. Sliema alone accounts for 53% of permissions granted for development in all Urban Conservation Areas (See section 3.2.8). Permissions granted in Sliema were mostly for: dwellings; parking; and community and social facilities. Permissions granted for development in Floriana concerned mostly office and community facilities, whilst those in Rabat were mostly for community facilities and parking. Major developments approved in these three areas are listed below:

Description	Floorspace in sq. metres
Capua Palace Hospital, Sliema	14,960
Planning Authority offices, Floriana	6,370
Public offices, Floriana (e.g. Pinto Wharf)	4,800
Elderly home, Rabat	6,980

4.1.25 The Planning Authority received 135 applications for alterations to listed and protected buildings in the years from 1990-1995. Of these, 80 proposals were granted and 15 refused. Most of the refusals were for the installation of aluminium balconies to replace existing wooden ones.

4.1.26 The Planning Authority's urban conservation team have identified a detectable improvement in the quality of restoration projects, although the approach to the work tends to vary between areas. In villages or towns that have been 'discovered' by estate agents, restoration seems to follow a more sensitive route, except for certain fashions such as the hacking of stone facades. The 'discovered' areas, are those such as: Attard, Balzan, Lija, Mosta, Naxxar, Gharghur, Zebbug and Mellieha in Malta; and Gharb, Zebbug and Xaghra in Gozo. In other towns and villages, restoration and upgrading is often less careful and is more likely to include alien features such as the use of aluminium on facades. There is a strong trend in all towns for the substitution of wooden doors and windows with cheaper, lower maintenance aluminium versions. In general, however, it may be said that awareness of the value of local architectural heritage is increasing. A number of restoration projects are effected by Government and NGOs; both of these actors tend to be reasonably sensitive to the needs of the building to be restored. Key examples are the restoration of various churches and fountains in Valletta.

4.1.27 Whilst positive trends can be identified, it is nevertheless apparent that many development control decisions fail to respect the Structure Plan's urban conservation policies. In the early stages of the monitoring period, the quality of case officer's assessments was variable and some assessments, identified in the 1995 Development Control File Audit, failed to take full account of urban conservation objectives. In addition, development control staff have identified urban conservation policy as subject to weak enforcement at the

level of the Development Control Commission. The Commission do not necessarily follow either the HAC's or the case officer's recommendation and will on occasion consider that alleged 'social' needs outweigh arguments related to urban conservation.

4.1.28 Forceful practical arguments have been mounted against the Structure Plan's approach to urban conservation, both by applicants and some members of the Development Control Commission. The suitability of some village core housing for modern living has been questioned, particularly due to: size limitations; problems of dampness; traffic access problems; and difficulties in accommodating parking requirements. Requirements to accord with conservation policy frequently involve a cost premium, yet grants are not yet available from the Planning Authority. Government grants have in the past been made available for housing upgrading, but these have not been linked to the Planning Authority's conservation objectives and can even prove to be counter-productive; financing the replacement of timber balconies with aluminium, for example.

4.1.29 Although limited data is currently available, the indications are that some village core areas are continuing to lose population. Analysis for the *North West Local Plan* area, using electoral registers, suggests that the populations of Urban Conservation Areas are continuing to fall, with a steadily aging profile amongst those remaining. At a larger scale, preliminary results from the 1995 Census suggest that the Valletta/Floriana conurbation is continuing to lose residents. The Structure Plan strategy for urban conservation appears to be highly vulnerable; careful re-evaluation of policy in this area is likely to be required.

Traffic and Parking in Valletta and Floriana

The Structure Plan identifies traffic and parking as a major problem in Urban Conservation Areas, but particularly in Valletta and Floriana. The intention is to enforce peak hour traffic restraint to Valletta/Floriana and other Urban Conservation Areas, coupled with a policy of restraining parking standards within the cores (15.6, TEM10, TRA4).

Peak hour traffic in Valletta/Floriana

4.1.30 Policy **TEM10** states that restraint will be sought on peak hour car journeys to the Valletta/Floriana peninsula. Comparison of recent survey data for St. Anne's Street, Floriana⁵³ with the Structure Plan team's figures from 1990 is indeterminate:

	Jan/Feb 1990	Jan 1996
Cars entering St. Anne's Street towards Valletta (morning peak hour, 7.30-8.30)	3,154	2,552
Cars entering St. Anne's Street away from Valletta (afternoon peak hour, 16.45-17.45)	2,202	3,202

4.1.31 The data implies that traffic flows into Valletta have decreased during the morning peak hour. However, this is likely to be largely artificial, since the survey point in 1996 omitted left turns from St. Anne Street at the Lion Fountain junction, whereas the 1990 data includes them. This is important, since buses are now diverted off St. Anne's Street towards Sarria Church, so would be omitted from the incoming data on the 1996 count. The 45% increase in vehicle flows during the evening peak hour over the period 1990-96 is likely to be a more accurate reflection of overall trends.

⁵³ Transport Planning Unit survey

Peripheral public parking in Valletta/Floriana

4.1.32 The Planning Authority approved an 1,180 space multi-storey car park outside the entrance to Valletta, at Floriana, in October 1994. This was an extension to a permit previously issued by the PAPB for an 850 space car park. This project accords with the Structure Plan in some important respects:

- policy **TRA4** encourages the provision of peripheral parking for Urban Conservation Areas; and
- the Structure Plan seeks to resolve the parking problem in Valletta/Floriana, to enable the capital city to function as an efficient office centre (Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 10.17).

However, the MCP car park has been implemented without parallel restrictions on parking within the Valletta Urban Conservation Area. Without such restrictions, the new car park is likely to encourage further car-borne commuting into Valletta/Floriana, compounding the problems identified in the Structure Plan. Similar arguments apply to the approved multi-storey car park in the Sliema Urban Conservation Area. Peripheral public parking for Urban Conservation Areas forms part of a coherent strategy to reduce vehicle activity within the historic core. This approach can only be effective if it is linked to improved enforcement of parking regulations and enhancements to the public transport system.

4.2 Listed Buildings

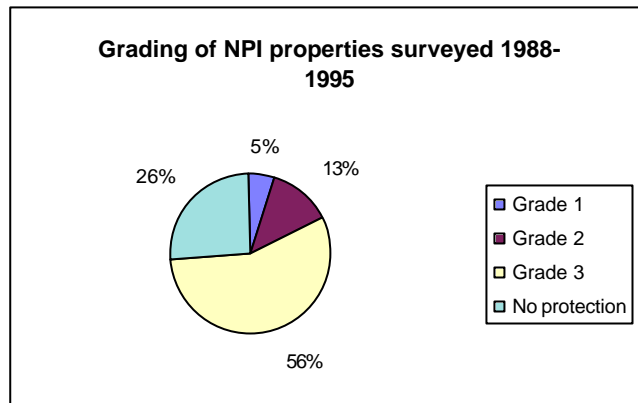
4.2.1 In addition to Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs) the many individual buildings and groups of buildings such as towers, gardens, churches and fortifications require protection. The Structure Plan therefore recommends that all the items in the National Protective Inventory (NPI) are designated as Buildings of Architectural and Historical Interest and afforded the same protection as Urban Conservation Areas (**15.10**).

National Protective Inventory

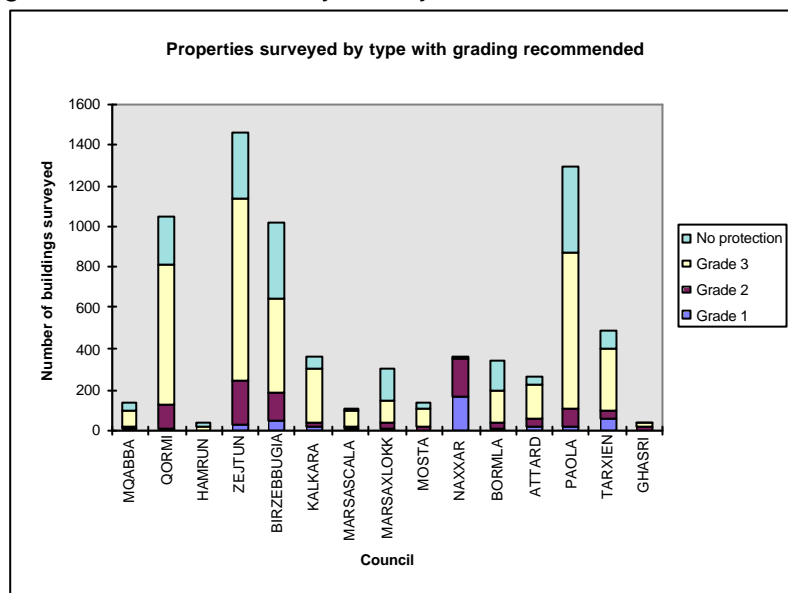
The Structure Plan calls for the designation for conservation of all items listed in the National Protective Inventory and continued research to add to the list (15.10, UCO4).

4.2.2 The National Protective Inventory survey was started in 1988. It aims at a systematic cataloguing of *all* structures in the selected areas of interest. The survey involves photography of the facade of the structure and the recording of brief descriptive details on cards. The cards are then assessed by qualified persons and an appropriate level of grading under section 46 of the Development Planning Act of 1992 is suggested. Internal access to the building is rarely possible.

4.2.3 Almost 8,000 properties were surveyed between 1988 and 1995. Around 18% of these buildings are likely to be recommended for scheduling at either grade 1 or 2:



These figures are summarised by locality below:



Tarxien data for Grade 1/2 split is estimated

4.2.4 The National Protective Inventory process is functioning too slowly to satisfy all the Planning Authority's information requirements for property scheduling. It is likely to be at least a decade before all historic village cores have been surveyed for the first time. In this space of time, many valuable localities could be destroyed. On the other hand, the National Protective Inventory provides relatively superficial coverage of the properties it includes. Access to interiors is not sought, yet this is vital for buildings which may merit grade 1 protection. An awareness of architectural history is also important, for the most significant properties. The National Protective Inventory survey provides broad coverage which suffices for evaluation of the facade, but the depth of information provided on the most important properties is easily surpassed by local architectural texts.

4.2.5 The National Protective Inventory applies a comprehensive, blanket approach to the survey localities; this involves considerable wasted effort. Many properties are visited and photographed which merit no protection or are of marginal value. Meanwhile, many of Malta's most significant properties remain sparsely documented and may lack protection for many years to come. Important areas, such as Valletta, and areas under pressure, such as Gharb (Gozo), have not been surveyed, whilst towns such as Birzebbugia and Paola have been surveyed in great detail.

4.2.6 The Planning Authority is currently reviewing the National Protective Inventory process. Issues to be considered include: the need to prioritise fieldwork; coordination and planning; budgeting; targets; and the promotion of the National Protective Inventory as a planning tool both within the Planning Authority and with external bodies such as the Local Councils.

Scheduled Buildings

The Structure Plan establishes a grading system for all scheduled buildings:

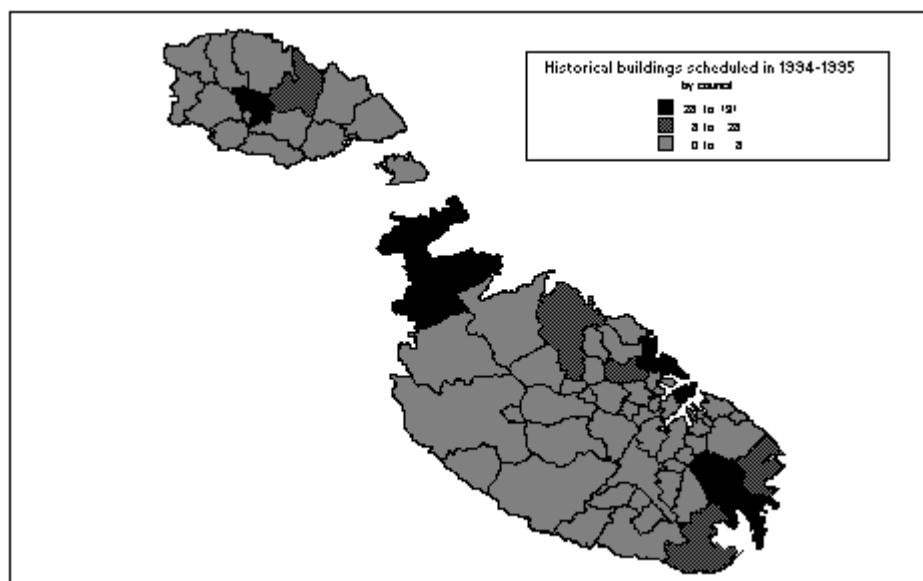
- **Grade 1 buildings are those of outstanding architectural or historical interest, for which demolition, or alteration which impairs the setting or changes the external or internal appearance of the building, is prohibited.**
- **Grade 2 buildings are those of some architectural or historical interest. Permission to demolish such buildings will not normally be given.**
- **Grade 3 properties, of relatively minor architectural interest, may be demolished provided the replacement building is in harmony with its surroundings (UCO7).**

Accretions to historic buildings will be removed, original structures and finishes will be made good and help will be provided for relocating inappropriate uses (UCO5).

4.2.7 Scheduling of properties is lagging well behind the National Protective Inventory survey work. Some 450 properties were scheduled during 1994 and 1995. The majority of these (366) were completed in 1995. So far, few of the 8000 buildings recorded in the National Protective Inventory have been listed; many of the properties which have been scheduled are in areas not covered by the Inventory. The scheduling process is often independent of the Inventory process.

4.2.8 Since the National Protective Inventory includes many buildings which are not appropriate for listing, policy **UCO4** requires review to decouple the scheduling process from the National Protective Inventory. There can be no automatic link between the National Protective Inventory and the scheduling process, which must respond to other priorities.

4.2.9 Some effort has been made to schedule properties in areas most at risk from development. Hence, Sliema and St. Julians have been treated with some urgency. The map below illustrates the number and location of historical buildings scheduled during 1994 and 1995, by Local Council:



4.2.10 The Structure Plan seeks to improve the condition and appearance of listed buildings, where appropriate, by relocating inappropriate uses and removing inappropriate accretions (**UCO5**). The Planning Authority has had some success in applying this policy to control new permanent development around the bastions of Valletta and Floriana. It has had less success when seeking to apply the policy to a number of obnoxious industries around the Cottonera, despite numerous complaints from Local Councils of the area. The Valletta Rehabilitation Project have taken action to remove unsightly wiring in Valletta, but the lack of cooperation from other departments has limited progress to date.

4.2.11 As with other types of development, there is a need for quality control of the restoration and rehabilitation of listed buildings. The Planning Authority has had some success in this respect, through the formation of monitoring committees for both the Fort Chambray project in Gozo and the restoration of the upper level of Fort St. Angelo in Senglea. The Development Control Commission has also, on occasion, asked members of the Directorate to monitor restoration works on Grade I buildings, such as: Casa Perellos in Zejtun; the Tower at Qaliet Marku; and the Comino Battery.

4.3 Rural Conservation and Landscape

4.3.1 The countryside provides the backdrop and raw material for much of the country's industrial, commercial, agricultural and recreational activities. The intensity of such activities and the delicate balance amongst them necessitate careful environmental management combined with firm control over new development.

Designation of Rural Conservation Areas

4.3.2 The Structure Plan designates Rural Conservation areas in order to:

- i. reinforce the blanket presumption against urbanisation in the countryside; and
- ii. provide the physical context and institutional means to channel positive effort and investment into the enhancement of these areas (**15.28**).

Surveys

The Structure Plan calls for a number of surveys as a prelude to the designation of potential protected areas. These include surveys of archaeological sites (ARC5 and ARC7), agricultural land quality (AHF3) and degraded landscapes (RCO19).

4.3.3 Various surveys have been undertaken as part of the local plan process, or as components of other subject or site-specific studies. The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* included a landscape survey and the *North West Local Plan* survey work has included an extensive landscape survey of almost half the island. In addition, the *North Harbours Local Plan* team have commissioned a landscape survey. Maps of agricultural land have been supplied by the Agricultural Department for the Marsaxlokk Bay and North West Local Plans. The tender for a Gozo Local Plan Landscape study has also been issued. Potential protected areas of archaeological value are indicated in both the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan and the draft North West Local Plan. Landscape studies were included within the environmental impact assessment of two tourism applications in Gozo; at Ta' Cenc and San Lawrenz.

4.3.4 The surveys listed above, being general in nature, include some coverage of protected areas (**ARC5** and **ARC7**), degraded landscapes (**RCO19**) and agricultural land (**AHF3**). However, the outcome of the surveys has not been substantiated by systematically compiled scientific evidence. Attempts made at classifying agricultural land (**AHF3**) have been rudimentary. This project, if properly carried out, should be tied to the mapping of land cover for the Maltese Islands, which will involve major expenditure.

4.3.5 No comprehensive survey and classification of agricultural land quality, as stipulated in **AHF3**, has yet taken place, although some work has been undertaken by students of the agricultural school. This lack of data makes conservation of the most valuable land difficult. However, a landscape study commissioned for the North West Local Plan process has identified some areas of agricultural value which are to be protected. There have been no detailed surveys specifically concerned with degraded landscapes.

Protected areas

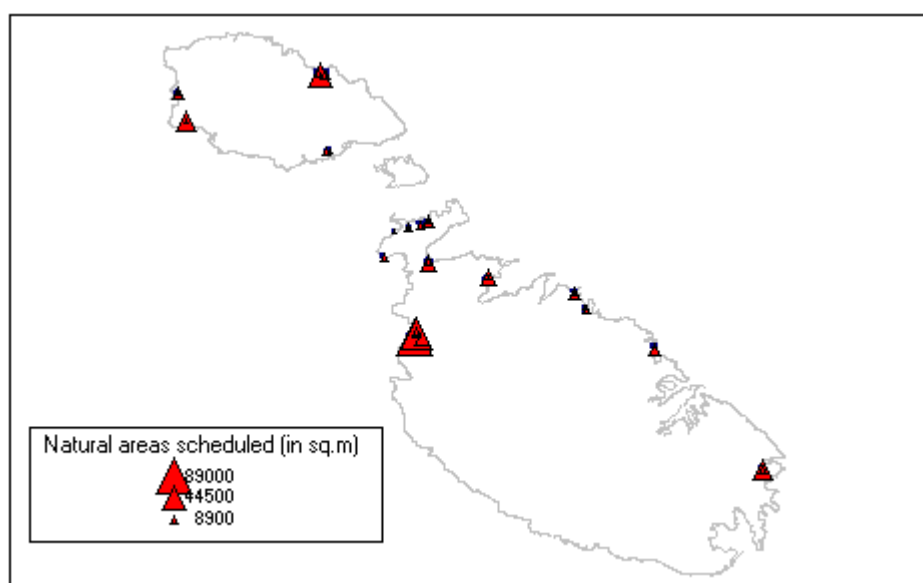
The Structure Plan designates Rural Conservation Areas to cover most non-urban areas. The Plan also calls for the designation of more specific protected areas (RCO1, RCO7, RCO10, RCO11, RCO12, ARC1, ARC2). Local Plans should develop appropriate measures of protection and enhancement for these areas (RCO3).

The Planning Authority is also charged with the designation and management of National Park(s) and potential World Heritage Sites (ARC4, TOU10, RCO14, RCO35, RCO36, RCO37, RCO38). These will include areas at Ta' Cenc, Qawra/Dwejra and Ggantija in Gozo, and Hagar Qim/Mnajdra in Malta.

4.3.6 The Structure Plan designates the Rural Conservation Areas of the Maltese Islands (**RCO1**) as identified in the Structure Plan Key Diagram.

4.3.7 Rural Conservation Areas cover almost all the countryside of Malta and Gozo. They are drawn so widely that they cannot meet their initial objective of 'positively channeling effort and investment' (**15.28**). Both management and financial resources are severely limited, so selection, discrimination and prioritisation are vital to ensure their effective application. In practice, the primary function of Rural Conservation Areas has been to provide an additional set of generic conservation policies which apply to almost all non-urban land.

4.3.8 Within the Rural Conservation Areas, a number of sub-areas have been identified as of value due to their ecology, palaeontology, geology, geomorphology, ornithology, archaeology, agriculture or landscape (**RCO1**):



Between 1993 and 1995, the Planning Authority designated 50 sites or areas of ecological, archaeological or scientific importance (**RCO1**). In total, 56 hectares of rural area have been designated within Malta and Gozo. During 1994, 0.75 hectares were scheduled in Wied Musa, No Mellieha, consisting of one watercourse site of Level 1 protection and a buffer area around it of Level 3 protection. There was a surge in scheduling activity in 1995, with the addition of 48 sites totaling 55 hectares. Differing levels of protection were accorded to these sites:

	1994	1995	Total
Level 1 sites	1	24	25
Level 2 sites	0	8	8
Level 3 sites	1	15	16
Level 4 sites	0	1	1
Total	2	48	50

4.3.9 As with historical buildings, areas considered to be under most threat have been given priority in the scheduling process. Protected sites include: the coastal wetlands at L-Ghadira s-Safra and Qaliet Marku; freshwater pools at Ta' Qassiesu, Il-Qammieh and Il-Qattara; and clay slopes at Ghajn Tuffieha.

4.3.10 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* protects a large section of rural hinterland as a Rural Conservation Area. Here, priority is given to the needs of agriculture, stressing the importance of maintaining traditional features (MA01, MA02). The agricultural landscape will form the backdrop for a set of managed recreational footpaths in which afforestation will be encouraged to improve landscape quality. This Plan also identifies and designates a number of archaeological sites and sites of scientific or ecological importance and gives some guidance on the development of management schemes. However, further measures are required for their adequate protection and conservation, which could be addressed in management plans for the area.

4.3.11 The draft *North West Local Plan* aims to protect agricultural land for its cultural and landscape value, as well as for its intrinsic worth in agricultural production. The draft plan proposes a number of sites as areas of cultural/scenic agricultural value. These sites will be designated at IUCN Category 3. Development such as greenhouses will be restricted, within scheduled or designated areas. The plan is also proactive in dealing with soil

erosion and water resources, favouring the rebuilding and conservation of rubble walls.

4.3.12 The draft *Grand Harbour Local Plan* also safeguards a small amount of agricultural land at Kalkara.

4.3.14 The *White Rocks Development Brief* designates an 8.4 hectare site as an Area of Agricultural Value, in accordance with **RCO1**.

4.3.15 The *Fort Chambray Development Brief* retains marginal agricultural activity on the clay slopes surrounding the fort, allowing minimal intervention for footpaths and agricultural improvements.

4.3.16 A small amount of land at Wied Ghomor and Pembroke has been safeguarded by the draft *Pembroke Action Plan*.

4.3.17 The Planning Authority has not yet designated any national parks. However, it is guiding the studies and management plans for the development of a Heritage Park at Ta' Cenc, Gozo (**TOU10, RCO14**).

4.3.18 The Structure Plan identifies the Dwejra/Qawra region in Gozo as a potential World Heritage Site, as well as a National Park. A call for tenders has been issued for environmental resources surveys for the development of the Dwejra/Qawra (Gozo) Heritage Park and is currently being assessed. A sum of Lm30,000 has been set aside for this project. This is the first step towards a detailed study leading to national designation and a potential proposal to the World Heritage Committee in Paris. There have already been a number of informal contacts with the Committee regarding this site (**RCO14, RCO35, RCO36, RCO37, RCO38**).

4.3.19 Currently, the Planning Authority does not actively manage any urban or rural site for conservation purposes. However, representatives of the Planning Authority sit on management committees that are aiming for the effective management of a number of sites. Some relatively small sites are currently being managed by NGOs.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The Structure Plan offers protection for trees or stands of trees of aesthetic, historical, cultural, arboricultural or scientific interest in the form of Tree Preservation Orders (RCO33).

4.3.20 No Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have yet been issued in accordance with **RCO33** and section 48 of the Development Planning Act 1992, although a number are in the pipeline. However, two Emergency Conservation Orders have successfully been issued on trees of conservation value.

Minor Islands

The Structure Plan makes a general presumption against further physical development on minor islands (RCO34).

4.3.21 The Structure Plan provides special protection for the small, uninhabited islands of the Maltese archipelago (**RCO34**). There is a general presumption against any new physical development on these islands. This position has been strengthened by action of the Secretariat for the Environment, which has declared three minor islands as nature reserves, albeit not managed ones. So far, no development control problems related to this policy have been encountered. Comino, it should be noted, is not included in the Structure Plan's definition of a minor island.

Conservation and Management Projects

Heritage Trails, Country parkways and rights of way

The Structure Plan proposes the designation of Heritage Trails (TOU11), Country Parkways, coastal and inland rights of way (REC13, AHF7) and a network of picnic areas (REC14).

4.3.22 A number of trails have been identified and preparatory work is being carried out, mainly by the local councils. A network of picnic areas will form part of the projected management plans.

4.3.23 During the preparation of the *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan*, the Delimara Area and the Birzebbugia rural hinterland were surveyed to identify likely country and coastal walkways. Country walkways are also being identified as part of the *North West Local Plan* process.

4.3.24 Wied Zembaq is the Planning Authority's first walkway project. This stemmed from the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan and is a linear route linking Birzebbugia with Gudja. The Ghaxaq Local Council also became involved and an informal committee has now been set up to implement the project. The Gudja and Birzebbugia Local Councils were leading partners, assisted by the Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, the SSCN and the Tourism Department. The Environment Protection Department were also invited to participate and the Museums Department have been contacted. The Tourism Department have cleared the parts of the Wied Zembaq watercourse which had become a large, illegal dump.

4.3.25 The main problems encountered in planning the Wied Zembaq walkway were: lack of legal provision for public access, resistance from hunters and trappers and illegal occupation of land. A route has now been identified which does not have access problems or illegal tenants. Once access problems are solved, the route will include: the Borg in-Nadur archaeological complex; the Ta' Kazzatura Roman complex; and an important ecological site in Wied Zembaq. Initial work on a management plan should soon commence.

4.3.26 The Planning Authority is also working on a project for Wied Ghomor in St. Julians.

4.3.27 The Xghajra and Zabbar Local Councils have planned a coastal military architecture Heritage Trail along the coast between Ricasoli and Marsascala. The Xghajra Council have already allocated funds for this project and a number of buildings are being restored.

4.3.28 The Structure Plan provides for an accessible coast. However, there is nothing in the legislation which caters for access or public rights of way, whether coastal or inland. Provisions for Access Agreements and Access Orders are being made in the draft amendments to the Development Planning Act.

Wildlife protection

The Structure Plan calls for collaboration amongst the agencies concerned to develop and implement policies for wildlife protection, particularly relating to threatened species (RCO13).

4.3.29 The Planning Authority has no specific policy for wildlife protection in accordance with policy **RCO13**; this policy covers areas such as hunting and trapping and the protection of flora and fauna. This area of policy overlaps with the remit of the Environment Protection Department, as set out in the Environment Protection Act of 1991.

4.3.30 A number of nature reserves exist at L-Ghadira, Is-Simar (l/o St. Paul's Bay) and at Wied L-Ahmar, Kemmuna. These three reserves are managed

by Birdlife Malta, on behalf of the Secretariat for the Environment, which provides some financial support. The Ghadira site is accessible to the public and includes a visitor reception and interpretation centre. All three sites are being run according to IUCN guidelines. Only the Ghadira reserve is open to the public and visitors enter the managed area without payment. The funds for the projects come mainly from a combination of government subsidy and public/membership contributions. Much of the work is undertaken by volunteers, who also guide visitors around the area in the Ghadira reserve. Some funds have also been received from international NGOs.

Countryside management

The Planning Authority is responsible for a programme of enhancement and management in the Rural Conservation Areas, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture (RCO3, RCO6). The Structure Plan proposes that all protected areas are established, maintained and managed according to World Conservation Union guidelines and terminology (RCO14, RCO36).

4.3.31 A range of governmental and non-governmental organisations are now becoming involved in countryside management schemes. During the monitoring period, the Planning Authority's involvement in managed areas was limited to participation in a number of management committees. Conservation and management schemes initiated during the last five years, some of which involved Planning Authority input, are listed below:

- Several meetings have been held between the Planning Directorate and the developers of the Heritage Park/multi-ownership tourism hotel at *Ta' Cenc (TOU10)*. The Planning Authority is currently waiting for revisions to the draft management plan from the developers.
- At *Buskett*, a new management scheme is currently being drafted by a joint committee composed of the Agriculture Department, the Environment Protection Department and the Planning Authority.
- The first draft for a management plan for *Ta' Qali* has been completed by the Planning Authority and is subject to consultation. Work is in progress on a second draft.
- The *Hagar Qim* Heritage Park management plan will be put into effect after the completion of visitor facilities at the Temples. This will include the provision of recreational facilities in the area surrounding the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra temples. Discussions on this project have been held between the Planning Authority and the Departments of Tourism and Museums.
- At *Ghajj Tuffieha*, the Environmental Protection Department and the Gaia Foundation have made a draft agreement for the management of the site by the Foundation. Some funding is available from Government and the Gaia Foundation is to raise additional funds from other sources. The site extends southwards towards Gnejna Bay and includes a small number of historic buildings.
- At *Gnejna Bay*, a management plan is being drafted between the Environment Protection Department and the Department of Tourism. There have been some sponsorship problems.
- Preliminary work on a management scheme for *Ramla l-Hamra, Gozo*, is now complete. Problems of funding, management and enforcement tend to hamper progress.
- Negotiations are underway between the Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature and the Environment Department over the management of two saline wetlands, both called *Il-Magħluq*, at Marsaxlokk and at Birzebbugia.

Degraded landscapes

The Structure Plan requires specific proposals from cultivators to promote the rehabilitation of sites which have been misused or neglected. Ecological sites are to be protected from agricultural reclamation (RCO9, RCO20).

4.3.32 There has been little positive action on this topic. **RCO20**, promoting the upgrading of disturbed and degraded land, has not been implemented yet except through occasional informal contacts between departments. The Planning Authority has received a small number of proposals for the rehabilitation of land, such as that due north of San Gwann Industrial estate. In this case the land was not abandoned, the application was re-organised and the site finally enhanced. There have been a number of applications for rehabilitation of sites which appeared to be efforts to mitigate the impact of illegal development.

4.3.33 There have been actions to prevent illegal reclamation of land at Marfa whereby Emergency Conservation Orders were issued in order to protect sensitive habitats. Land reclamation is recommended for refusal if it is on garigue, although a small number of projects have been accepted.

Trees

The Structure Plan encourages the planting of trees for the enhancement of landscape, provision of camouflage and shading (RCO32). Indigenous species should be used in non-urban areas and afforestation projects should not be sited on stable communities (RCO31 and RCO30).

4.3.34 The area of the Maltese Islands currently supporting tree cover is estimated at 137 ha or 0.4% of the islands total land area:

Island	Percentage Tree Cover	Area (ha)
Malta	0.5%	125
Gozo	0.2%	12
Total	0.4%	137

Source: Planning Authority

4.3.35 In accordance with **RCO32** and **RCO31**, the Authority places planting conditions on all development permits. However, the results of this work may take years to become evident.

4.3.36 Afforestation with native species, as proposed in **RCO31**, has been promoted and several local councils have readily adopted the idea. This has resulted in a situation where Government nurseries are unable to keep pace with demand for indigenous trees. This, in turn, has encouraged retailers to sell imported varieties of the indigenous species. There is a risk that these imported species may eventually substitute for indigenous varieties. Efforts must be concentrated at increasing the production capacity of Government nurseries. The draft *North West Local Plan* recommends that seven existing afforestation sites are upgraded and that six new sites, such as the Wied Fulija and Maghtab landfills (when they are full), are designated for afforestation.

4.3.37 The draft *North West Local Plan* also takes a proactive stance for landscape protection. It proposes a number of areas of cultural and scenic agricultural value, of IUCN⁵⁴ Category 3. In these areas, measures will be encouraged for the protection of soil and rubble walls and for water conservation. The draft Plan also envisages measures to increase the appreciation of the public for the landscape of the north west of Malta.

⁵⁴ International Union for the Conservation of Nature

Development in Rural Conservation Areas

4.3.38 No form of urban development is allowed within Rural Conservation Areas, except for agricultural, environmental or archaeological projects, and improvements to the landscape (RCO2). The Rural Conservation Areas were widely drawn in the 1992 Structure Plan, so any analysis of development in these areas is addressing development in the countryside as a whole.

4.3.39 The last five years have witnessed a considerable amount of development outside the 1988 development boundaries. The causes and nature of this development are examined in detail in Chapter 3 (*Constraining Urban Growth*, paragraphs 3.1.19 to 3.1.43). This section will highlight some additional points relating to the environmental aspects of this type of development, before continuing to discuss the effects of types of development that have a legitimate place in the countryside such as agriculture, quarrying, utilities and recreation.

Urban development in Rural Conservation Areas

The Structure Plan prohibits urban development in the Rural Conservation Areas. Only appropriate rehabilitation and conservation projects or agricultural development are to be allowed (RCO2). The Structure Plan urges the use of planning conditions and positive measures to improve environmental maintenance in the countryside (AHF6, AHF7, AHF8, RCO20).

4.3.40 As indicated in section 3.1, there is considerable pressure for various types of urban development outside the development zone (see 3.1.19 to 3.1.43). Some 150-200 new dwelling units per year are approved outside the development zone (3.1.25). Substantial policy breaches have occurred in the industrial, commercial and retail sectors and there are a number of areas, outside the development zone, which are predominantly industrial in character (3.1.34). In the tourism sector, whilst projects approved outside the development zone are mainly extensions or refurbishments to existing developments, the new Solemar Hotel has been approved in Mellieha (outside the designated areas for development) and the San Lawrenz Hotel in Gozo has secured a renewal of development permission (3.1.36). Seventeen projects for social and community facilities were approved over the period 1993-95, outside designated areas for development (3.1.37), although many of these projects are providing extensions to existing facilities. Most, but not all, of these developments outside the development zone fall within a Rural Conservation Area⁵⁵.

4.3.41 In addition to these approved developments outside the development zone, it should be noted that new development within Scheme, in scenic clifftop or hilltop areas such as Xemxija (Malta) and Nadur (Gozo), also has a direct impact on the visual amenity of surrounding Rural Conservation Areas.

4.3.42 Planning Authority policy towards development in rural areas has evolved over the last three years. Although permits are still sometimes given for some infill sites in rural areas, the Development Control Commission is now applying strict criteria to swimming pools in the countryside in order to discourage the conversion of farmhouses into villas. In general, new homes in the countryside must qualify as farmhouses for full-time agricultural workers who need to live on the land. Some difficulty apparently remains with renewal

⁵⁵ Both the San Raffaele Hospital and the St. Philip's Hospital, for example, lie outside the development zone but are excluded from the Rural Conservation Area.

applications for expired permits granted by PAPB⁵⁶, which have sometimes been approved notwithstanding policy violations.

4.3.43 The lack of social and community facilities in newly-developed residential areas puts pressure on the countryside to accommodate these facilities. Due to their considerable landtake, both school and hospital projects have been proposed on sites outside development boundaries. One notable example is the approved school at Ta' L-Imselliet, limits of Mgarr (3.1.38-3.1.39).

4.3.44 Whilst approval of major new tourism projects in the countryside is now rare, many hotels already exist in remote areas of the north of Malta and in Comino. Many of these developments are now upgrading their premises and this may involve significant expansion. Applications at the existing Verdala Hotel, the Seabank Hotel, the Festival Tourist Village, Ta' Cenc and the Comino Hotel have all attempted to increase the ground floor area, making further inroads into natural areas or agricultural land. In the case of the Seabank Hotel, and at Ta' Cenc, negotiations with the developers have resulted in a permit for expansion.

4.3.45 A small number of applications have also been received for new tourist accommodation in rural or coastal areas outside the development zone. The renewal application for the Tal-Gidi hotel at San Lawrenz, in Gozo, has recently been approved by the Planning Authority, contrary to the Directorate's recommendation and in violation of numerous Structure Plan policies to protect the countryside. However, recent refusals have been given to touristic development projects at Munxar and Xlendi.

4.3.46 There is also pressure for recreational development in countryside and coastal areas. Applications have been received for theme parks, such as the water theme park on a wetland at Salina Bay.

4.3.47 The broad principle of resisting inappropriate development in the countryside has generally been upheld by both the Planning Authority. Policy prohibiting urban development within Rural Conservation Areas (**RCO2**) has been very important for development control and in some cases has withstood the acid test of appeal. Problems have arisen as to the interpretation of urban development, especially with facilities (such as horse stables) which are not compatible with residential uses.

4.3.48 There is also considerable concern regarding the level of inappropriate illegal development in the countryside. The Planning Authority has little firm data in this area, so comprehensive figures cannot be given. However, casual observation and selected spot-checks have confirmed that there is a genuine problem. Apart from blatant construction without a permit, a number of more subtle abuses have been identified. On some occasions new farm buildings, ostensibly for animal breeding, are covered by plans for buildings resembling villas, wedding halls, restaurants, health farms and other non-agricultural uses. A recent site inspection revealed a newly built 'stable' with fresh laundry hanging on the roof. Similar inspections have revealed pumphouses in use as garages and reservoirs used as underground foundations for houses, or swimming pools.

4.3.49 The draft *North West Local Plan* aims to strengthen policy for the protection of rural areas in some localities. Key gaps have been identified between selected settlements which are to be protected from development. The Plan also has specific policy on vehicular access to the countryside, recommending that improvements to roads are only permitted where the Planning Authority is convinced that the increased visitor traffic will not result

⁵⁶ Planning Areas Permits Board

in further environmental degradation⁵⁷. Various policies for the protection of well-heads and aquifers are also included.

Legitimate Development in Rural Conservation Areas

The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that any new development that is permitted within rural areas will protect and enhance areas of scenic value (RCO4, RCO5, RCO6). Agricultural buildings are to blend with the rural landscape or be hidden from view (AHF5). The restoration of rubble walls, removal of visual intrusions and establishment of rights of way are to be encouraged through the use of conditions on development permits (AHF7, AHF8). Water storage reservoirs are either to be located underground or to blend with the landscape (PUT7).

4.3.50 In seeking to prohibit further urbanisation, it is not the intention of the Structure Plan to prohibit built structures of various kinds which are normal and legitimate inclusions in the non urban scene: farmhouses and other genuine agricultural buildings; reservoirs; picnic area toilets and car parks; and control buildings and walls or fences at archaeological and ecological sites. Nevertheless, the provision of such structures must be controlled in order to preserve and enhance the environmental quality of the countryside. Applications for development permits for such uses are to be judged against the policies and design guidelines of the Local Plans for Rural Conservation Areas, as well as the Structure Plan policies (7.6, BEN5).

4.3.51 The Structure Plan places a high priority on minimising visual and other environmental impacts, where development is permitted within Rural Conservation Areas. This section will evaluate the controls applied to legitimate development types within rural areas, in particular; agriculture, minerals, utility projects and appropriate recreational activities.

Agriculture

The Structure Plan aims to foster improvements in agriculture, horticulture and fisheries, whilst minimizing environmental conflicts (AHF1, RCO8). The Plan also aims to encourage projects to achieve the enhancement of degraded agricultural areas (RCO6, RCO8).

Agricultural buildings are to blend with the rural landscape or be hidden from view. Greenhouses, in particular, should be hidden from long-distance views. Agricultural buildings should be on least good agricultural land, where possible. Locations must be acceptable in terms of noise, smell and effluent impacts (AHF5).

4.3.52 The rural landscape has been significantly affected by farming changes over recent decades; at one extreme by abandonment and dereliction, at the other by intensification leading to large farm buildings, the use of plastic and glass, and the overuse of pesticides and fertilizers. Agricultural development clearly affects the quality of the rural environment. In order to clarify policy in this area, the Planning Authority published Policy and Design Guidance on Farmhouses and Agricultural Buildings in 1994.

4.3.53 Little progress has been made in the implementation of positive action to improve the agricultural and rural landscape, although policy and design guidelines have been established for farmhouses and agricultural buildings (AHF1, RCO8). In terms of minimising conflicts between agricultural development and the environment (AHF1, RCO8), more conditions have been introduced relating to landscaping, rubble walls and mitigation measures to

⁵⁷ Subject to Structure Plan policy AHF13, which seeks to improve rural roads and tracks used for agricultural purposes.

reduce the impact of farm buildings. However, the enforcement of planning conditions remains a weak link at this stage.

4.3.54 The Agriculture Department has introduced some measures to protect the rural environment. For example, it has recently implemented incentives to encourage farmers to reduce the use of conventional pesticides and to save water by using drip rather than sprinkler irrigation systems.

4.3.56 Nevertheless, there is a general environmental concern regarding the growing use of pesticides and fertilizers. Greater yields have often come about through the use of large amounts of organophosphate pesticides and nitrogenous fertilizers. Meli (1993) quotes a figure of 2.2 million tonnes of imported fertilizer for that year, some 87% by weight of which is nitrogen, compared to almost half this figure in 1983/1984. These figures amount to the annual application of some 185 kg of fertilizer per hectare.

4.3.57 The Structure Plan makes clear that buildings and structures essential to the needs of agriculture will be permitted in the countryside, but it also places considerable emphasis on careful management of the environmental impact of such development. In some instances, it does appear that the criterion of agricultural need has assumed pre-eminence, to the exclusion of the variety of environmental safeguards and provisos in policy **AHF5**. There is, apparently, some reluctance to allow aesthetic criteria and considerations of visual impact to over-ride arguments related to agricultural need. There is also a lack of clear parameters to guide decision-making in this area. Landscape evaluation of the countryside is still in its infancy, although a firm step forward has been taken with the completion of the North West Malta Landscape Assessment. Whilst landscaping requirements and the need for careful siting are now receiving more emphasis, the Planning Authority's capacity to enforce these provisions has so far proved to be limited.

4.3.58 *Farmhouses* have proved to be a contentious form of agricultural development over the monitoring period (1993-95). The Planning Authority issued policy and design guidance on farmhouses and agricultural buildings in 1994. An applicant for a residential farmhouse must be a *bona fide* registered full time farmers/breeder. Strict criteria must be satisfied to demonstrate the applicant's eligibility. Unless a genuine need to be on hand day and night can be demonstrated, new residential quarters for farmers will have to lie in villages or hamlets.

4.3.59 The main legitimate form of new housing in rural areas is residential accommodation for *bona fide* registered full time farmers/breeders. Since this is one of the few potential loopholes for applicants seeking to build a new house in the countryside, applications for residential farmhouses are rigorously assessed. New farmhouses account for a minority of the 150-200 dwellings per year which are approved outside the development zone. Just 27 new farm houses were approved over the three year monitoring period, with 38 additions to existing farmhouses which may have included the addition of a new dwelling unit. Recent permissions for farmhouses in the countryside have been restricted to agricultural dwellings adjacent to livestock units, justified by husbandry duties such as calving. One issue which has arisen is with respect to applications for farmhouses with swimming pools, which the Authority is now controlling; this is seen as extending beyond development 'essential to the needs of agriculture' (**AHF5**). (see also section 3.1 on dwellings outside development boundaries).

4.3.60 *Farm stores* are the most common type of agricultural development. Between 1993-95, there were 63 permissions for new stores. Since agricultural garages are often used for semi-industrial activities, such as spray-painting and panel beating, careful vetting is applied to try to minimise abuse.

4.3.61 The number of *animal breeding farms* continue to rise, with 42 new units granted a permit between 1993-1995. This includes 11 stables, 9 pig farms and 10 chicken and other poultry farms. These farms can pose considerable threat to the environment in terms of pollution of the water table or watercourses, since their effluent is rarely treated. Such difficulties have arisen in Qormi, for example. The Water Services Corporation has begun to control these farms, with relocation to areas such as at Mghatab and Xghajra where the water table is less open to contamination. Animal breeding units can also be a source of complaint from neighbours, featuring as the most frequent source of complaint in a recent survey of obnoxious industry amongst the local councils (4.6.36).

4.3.62 *Irrigation facilities* are a further common category of agricultural development. Between 1993-1995, 35 reservoirs and 6 pump rooms were granted permission. There is also some potential for abuse here, with reservoirs becoming swimming pools and pump rooms becoming villas; the Planning Authority is currently drafting a policy paper on this topic.

4.3.63 There have been 24 approvals for *greenhouses* over the three year period from 1993-1995. Visual impact is a primary issue, which can be addressed both through appropriate siting and through landscaping measures. Several large and highly visible new greenhouses have been erected over the monitoring period. The suitability of siting greenhouse and agrophonics projects in the countryside is becoming an issue, particularly when soil is not used. The potential for such developments in industrial estates has been raised and there has already been one such relocation in Gozo. The Planning Authority is now in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the restriction of such uses in certain areas and is in the process of drafting a policy paper.

4.3.64 Some demand for the development of land-based aquaculture projects has emerged during the monitoring period. A permit for one land based *fish hatchery* has been approved in Qala, whilst a permit for a farm in Qormi has been refused.

4.3.65 AHF5 permits the sensitive conversion of agricultural buildings for rural recreation uses. However, the draft North West Local Plan seeks to be more restrictive. It stipulates that the loss of farm buildings would only be justified if there were overwhelming advantages for rural recreation or environmental purposes; for example, in areas subject to heavy vehicular pressure or to provide services for archeological or ecological sites.

The Structure Plan provides a framework for the continued working of important mineral deposits in an environmentally acceptable way. The Planning Authority is to review all existing quarry operations, regularizing them where appropriate (MIN16, MIN17). Land is to be released, as necessary, to maintain 20 year reserves (MIN4). An Environmental Impact Assessment is required for all new mineral extraction and processing projects and the need must be fully justified (MIN8, MIN9). There will be a presumption against works close to scheduled areas and in areas of good agricultural land (MIN5). Operators will need to demonstrate adequate environmental safeguards, including reclamation measures (MIN11, MIN12). Enforcement is strengthened through insistence on bank bonds, the imposition of time limits on permits and five yearly reviews (MIN10, MIN12).

4.3.66 The Planning Authority is seeking to introduce a degree of environmental management to the quarry industry (see section 2.6). The Minerals Board was successfully established in 1992, in accordance with the Structure Plan. A Minerals Planning Unit was established within the Planning Authority in 1992; this became the Minerals and Waste Planning Team in 1996.

4.3.67 The Structure Plan envisaged that, on the coming into force of the Development Planning Act, existing Police licenses for mineral extraction would no longer be renewed and existing quarries would be required to make an application in accordance with the Act and with Structure Plan policies **MIN8 - MIN11 (12.18)**. The approach taken to regularizing the minerals industry, under the terms of the Development Planning Act 1992, has been slightly different: existing operations with a Police licence are being regularized through the licence renewal system, subject to provision of a site boundary plan and a number of other conditions, including:

- restrictions on the storage of oil, fuel and other chemicals to prevent pollution of aquifers;
- provision of a boundary wall; and
- provision of restoration proposals, within six months of the permit renewal.

4.3.68 Application for a Planning Authority permit has only been required for illegal quarry operations, new quarries and quarry extensions. During the period 1993/95, there were 6 applications for new quarries and 11 applications for quarry extensions (see also 2.6.20). By the end of 1995, just three of the estimated 108 quarries in Malta and Gozo had received Planning Authority approval, as opposed to approval under the Police licensing system. In these cases, the issue of permits was withheld pending agreement on the required restoration bonds (2.6.20). Restricted access to existing sites in certain areas has made enforcement problematic. Many quarry operators have applied for a permit on being served with enforcement notices (**MIN16**). They are fined a maximum of Lm1000.

4.3.69 Besides the Planning Authority conditions included with the development permit issued, a Code of Practice for minerals operations has been introduced. This is distributed with all permits and concerns issues such as machinery (noise levels, vibrations), dust (correct sheeting of trucks, covering of plant in quarries) and emissions.

4.3.70 Before a permit is granted for a new minerals extraction project or an extension to an existing site, an environmental impact assessment is required by policy **MIN8**. Usually, an Environmental Planning Statement is requested,

but, depending on the ecological or archaeological value of the site, a full Environmental Impact Statement may be necessary.

4.3.71 The Planning Authority has recently updated the terms of reference for environmental assessment of quarries, based on the 1991 Wardell Armstrong Environmental Assessment of quarrying in Malta⁵⁸. The applicant is required to produce a landscaping scheme to protect the surroundings before operation begins. The landscaping scheme is accompanied by a bond, paid to a bank, subject to forfeit on failure to implement the scheme or to maintain the scheme throughout the operational life of the quarry. A restoration scheme is also required. The final form of the restoration bonds scheme is currently under discussion with representatives of the industry (see 2.6.27).

4.3.72 In the minerals sector, accurate evaluation of the need for development is critical. Proposals for mineral extraction will normally be refused where the need to work the mineral is not sufficient to justify the environmental impact that is likely to arise (**MIN9**). Currently, it is virtually impossible to assess need accurately. Need cannot be assessed on a case by case basis, yet accurate industry-wide data is lacking to gauge supply and demand. However, it is expected that national demand figures will be prepared as part of the *Minerals Subject Plan*, which will draw extensively on the recently completed Mineral Resources Survey (see 2.6.15 - 2.6.19).

4.3.73 The Minerals Board is currently tending to refuse permits for new quarry sites, given the apparent oversupply of softstone. Whilst accurate data is not available, high wastage rates are reported for softstone, since operators are reluctant to maintain large stocks on site and are equally reluctant to scale down their workforce in the short-term. Continuation of this situation may imply a need to apply firmer constraints on permits for further extensions to existing sites.

4.3.74 It is, in practice, very difficult to avoid mineral working on sensitive sites, in accordance with policy **MIN5**. In Malta, most quarrying takes place either on agricultural land (for softstone) or on ecologically sensitive sites (for hardstone). In Gozo, the situation is more mixed: coastal softstone and hardstone quarries are found on both agricultural and ecologically sensitive sites. For this reason, extensions to existing quarries may well jeopardise sensitive areas.

4.3.75 Some success has now been achieved in discouraging further development of quarries next to archaeological sites. Other conservation objectives are proving more elusive, because of the difficulty of finding a site which does not impinge either on good agricultural land or on environmentally sensitive sites. Since agricultural land can be restored, but natural communities cannot, the first priority protection tends to go towards archaeological and ecological sites. Another problem is the lack of agricultural land classification; if land is not graded, the best land cannot be afforded more protection than the worst.

Utilities

The Structure Plan aims to minimise the visual impact of infrastructure in rural areas (RCO5). Local Plans are to include proposals for the layout and siting of primary utility facilities (PUT5).

4.3.76 As with agricultural development, the Structure Plan aims to ensure that the location and design of infrastructure facilities are carefully planned to minimise environmental impact (**RCO5**). Few projects have been approved in

⁵⁸ Wardell Armstrong, *Environmental Appraisal of Quarries*, Government of Malta, Planning Services Division of Ministry of Works, July 1991.

this category over the review period (see 3.1.43). For the majority of infrastructure projects, government is the applicant.

4.3.77 Some form of environmental assessment has been required for large infrastructure projects, such as sewage treatment plant. For example, an 8km network of underground galleries connecting Xemxija to ic-Cumnija, limits of Mellieha is planned to solve the sewage problems at St. Paul's Bay. An environmental impact assessment has been requested to examine the possible impacts on the hydrology of the area and on irrigation water supply, as well as the visual impact of a number of pump and maintenance shafts. A large amount of inert excavation waste will be generated and a site for dumping will need to be identified.

Recreation

The Structure Plan allows for some provision of sports and recreational facilities in the countryside, with particular attention to minimising adverse environmental impacts. Rural locations for major impact sports, which are generally inappropriate for residential areas, should only be chosen after a full environmental impact assessment, in conjunction with a thorough appraisal of alternative sites (REC8).

4.3.78 Some popular recreational activities can only take place in the countryside and careful planning is required to mitigate any potential negative impacts. The Planning Authority has become involved in a number of initiatives to improve the planning of recreational facilities, particularly in connection with the draft *North West Local Plan*.

4.3.79 *Offroading* and other motorized sport have become popular in areas of scenic beauty and ecological value such as Mgiebah and Chadwick Lakes. The draft *North West Local Plan* will not permit this type of recreational activity in areas of archaeological importance, scientific importance, ecological value or areas of high landscape quality. The environmental impact of this sport requires the use of degraded sites such as spent quarries, disused landfills, derelict land away from residential areas and, where possible, sites which are close to other uses generating considerable noise.

4.3.80 *Golf* is another sport with considerable environmental impact. Notable applications include one for development at the approach to Mdina, which is still pending. The draft *North West Local Plan* is suggesting prohibition of the use of agricultural land for golfing purposes. In the absence of a Golf Subject Plan, the local plan does not identify suitable areas for new golf courses (but see 2.7.23).

4.3.81 Rental of land for use in *hunting* restricts countryside access for the public. *Trapping* also has considerable impact on the natural environment, since the trapping sites are generally cleared of their plant cover and leveled. The North West Local Plan seeks to prevent this type of activity in protected areas.

4.4 Archaeology

4.4.1 The Structure Plan identifies Malta's cultural heritage as ... *one of the most important of the Mediterranean region (15.42)*. Although the responsibility for this sector lies with the Museums Department of the Ministry for Justice and the Arts, the Planning Authority does hold responsibility for protecting the country's archaeological heritage from damage caused by development. As with ecological sites, the Planning Authority's strategy is to identify Sites and Areas of Archaeological importance and to give them the required level of protection in order to avoid further dilapidation or destruction.

4.4.2 The Museums Department's Archaeology section has the following objectives: the recording and study of the archeological resources; maintaining, preserving and presenting key archeological sites; and caring for the national collection, consisting of three museums. An Operations Review was taken in hand during 1994 and a comprehensive report including recommendations for restructuring, staffing and functioning of the Department was presented during 1995.

4.4.3 The Museums Department, in conjunction with the Management Systems Unit (MSU), is now engaged in the implementation of a programme of reform which will enable it to be more responsive to the needs of the public and to be more effective in its tasks of preserving and presenting the nation's heritage. This reform programme involves the following priorities: the upgrading of the Hypogeum; the comprehensive upgrading of the Museum of Archaeology to significantly improve the interpretation of the exhibits; the second phase of the Hagar Qim/Mnajdra Heritage Park, to include a visitor's centre; a visitors' centre at the Ggantija Temples; and the visitors' centre at Tad-Dejr Catacombs, Rabat.

Protection and management of archaeological sites

Designation of sites

Local Plans must ensure the designation of Areas and Sites of Archeological Interest (ARC1). Sites may be graded from Class A, of top priority and protected by a buffer zone of at least 100m, to Class D, which may be destroyed after being properly catalogued (ARC2). In the interim period all sites recorded in the National Protective Inventory are granted protection under ARC2 (ARC6). The Planning Authority is to implement further research to maintain and extend the National Protective Inventory (ARC7). Both scheduled sites and potential sites will be protected from development where there is an overriding case for preservation (ARC3).

4.4.4 Archaeological sites have been scheduled in the *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* including Ghar Dalam, Borg in-Nadur and Ghar Hassan, in accordance with **ARC1, ARC2** and **ARC5**. Archaeological Areas are defined around these sites, such as the one in the vicinity of Wied Zhuber and the areas of Tas-Silg and Xrobb il-Ghagin. No development will be allowed which would adversely affect these sites and areas (ME08).

4.4.5 A number of sites have been scheduled independently of the Local Plans process. The scheduling process for archaeological sites began in 1994. During 1994 and 1995, 15 Sites and 7 Areas of Archaeological Importance were listed. The scheduling of archaeological sites slowed down during 1995 due to staff training requirements. This delay is regrettable; scheduling of archaeological sites currently lags well behind the 200 items and areas referred to in the Structure Plan (**15.42**). All National Protective Inventory properties have not been treated as if they were scheduled, according to **ARC6**; this would provide an uncertain level of protection, in comparison with the issue of an Emergency Conservation Order under the Development Planning Act 1992.

4.4.6 Much valuable archaeological survey work has been commissioned under the local plans programme (**ARC7**). It is envisaged that many additional sites will be scheduled during 1996 and 1997, particularly resulting from the archaeological surveys prepared for the North West and Grand Harbour Local Plans. Some 300 sites have been identified in the North West Local Plan area and a further 20 sites in the Grand Harbour area. This data has already been

mapped onto the Planning Authority's GIS and as such provides an archaeological constraints map for development control.

4.4.7 Great care is required in the classification of archaeological sites. Class D is a particular source of concern, since this only allows for sites ... *belonging to a type known from numerous other examples to be properly recorded and catalogued before covering or destroying (ARC2)*. If this designation is widely used, a series of minor subsequent development decisions may lead to the long-term obliteration of sites such as the punic tombs of Malta and Gozo.

4.4.8 There has also been some criticism of the piecemeal approach taken to scheduling, to date. Scheduling of more areas of archaeological importance, rather than individual sites, would allow the Authority to apply an integrated approach to protection that would not discriminate in favour of one set of historic remains, or one particular period, over the others in the area. If a site is only partially scheduled, as were the cart-ruts at it-Telgha t' Alla w Ommu at Naxxar, this could invite development on the non-scheduled monuments or remains.

4.4.9 Concern has also been expressed regarding the depth of research undertaken before scheduling a historic site, in some cases. There is a good reason for this: the scheduling process must respond rapidly to protect sites under threat from development, so in-depth scientific research is not always possible in advance of scheduling.

Priority sites

The Planning Authority calls for the scheduling of Hagar Qim/Mnajdra and Ggantija as a matter of priority. These sites are to be developed as National Parks (ARC4). The Planning Authority is to initiate investigations into the early designation of other important areas, particularly Il-Qiegha south of Fomm ir-Rih Bay, Bingemma Gap north west of Rabat, Gebel Ciantar to Ghajn il-Kbir south west of Siggiewi and Ghar Dalam area north of Birzebbugia (ARC5).

4.4.10 In accordance with **ARC4**, Hagar Qim, Mnajdra and Ggantija Temples have been approved for scheduling. Publication in the Government Gazette awaits the more comprehensive treatment given to the area in the North West Local Plan. A management scheme for Hagar Qim/Mnajdra is being coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism in accordance with **ARC4**. The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* reserves the area of Wied Dalam and Borg in-Nadur for a Heritage Park and requires the drafting of a development brief for the area (MB25). Other priority sites are to be tackled through the local plans programme.

Development impacts on archaeological sites

The Structure Plan prohibits development on archaeological sites where there is an overwhelming case for preservation (ARC3). Otherwise adequate opportunities must be provided for the recording and possible excavation of the site (ARC3).

4.4.11 Scheduling of sites does not, in itself, guarantee protection; an effective system of internal and external communications is required to alert the case officer of the status of any site affected by a development proposal and to secure appropriate expert advice on the potential impacts within a reasonable timescale. In order to facilitate the work of case officers, a digital constraints map showing the boundaries of protected sites is planned. A start has been made with the mapping onto GIS of the *North West Local Plan* environmental data.

4.4.12 There has been some discussion regarding the need to protect the natural setting of archaeological sites, in addition to the site itself. The Structure Plan provides for a minimum 100m buffer zone for Class A sites (ARC2). Although this buffer might be realistic in some cases, a rigid application of the 100m minimum might be too mechanistic an approach in some cases, for example within an urban area. The draft *North West Local Plan* already designates buffer zones of 20m for sites of lesser importance.

4.4.13 Policy **ARC3**, providing for the treatment of sites affected by development proposals, has been criticised as being weak and reactive. It is suspected that a considerable number of sites are unearthed during construction, many of which remain unrecorded. A balance must be struck between an over-rigid approach which discourages reporting of finds, and an over-liberal approach in which valuable sites are destroyed. A more streamlined system of consultation amongst government departments and within the Planning Authority would improve the quality of protection for 'surprise' finds. Given a sufficiently rapid response, the legislative basis for protection exists through the publication of Emergency Conservation Orders.

4.5 Coastal and Marine Conservation

4.5.1 The Structure Plan envisages, following the predictions of the UN Blue Plan for the Mediterranean Basin, that the general environment of the Basin is likely to deteriorate, particularly in coastal areas, without vigorous action to prevent it. The Plan thus proposes a number of strong policies for coastal zone protection and management.

Establishing a Coastal Zone Management Team

The Structure Plan calls for the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZM1) and the preparation of a Coastal Zone Subject Plan (CZM2).

4.5.2 The Planning Authority now has a professionally qualified planning team for the coastal zone. An *Integrated Coastal Management* section was formed in April 1996 within the Countryside and Coastal Planning Team of the Environmental Management Unit. This section is staffed by two professionals, one qualified in Coastal Management (trained in the UK, and sponsored by the Planning Authority) and the second in Marine Biology. These staff were recruited during 1993 and 1994.

4.5.3 Preparation of the Coastal Zone Subject Plan has not yet begun. A discussion paper on Integrated Coastal Zone Management has been drafted and circulated for internal consultation. Priority was given during the last quarter of 1995 to addressing the coastal issues of the *North West Local Plan* area, which covers a large part of the undeveloped coastline of Malta.

Designation of Marine Conservation Areas

4.5.4 Coastal areas, by definition limited in extent, are characterised by extremely specialised ecosystems and are threatened by mounting development pressure. Coastal zones are often areas of extreme resource conflicts, and the Maltese context of a critically limited coastal area and high population density provides an urgent need for protected marine areas.

Surveys and data management

The Structure Plan calls for an underwater survey of infralittoral ecosystems (MCO4) and the establishment of a maritime GIS (MCO3 and RCO42).

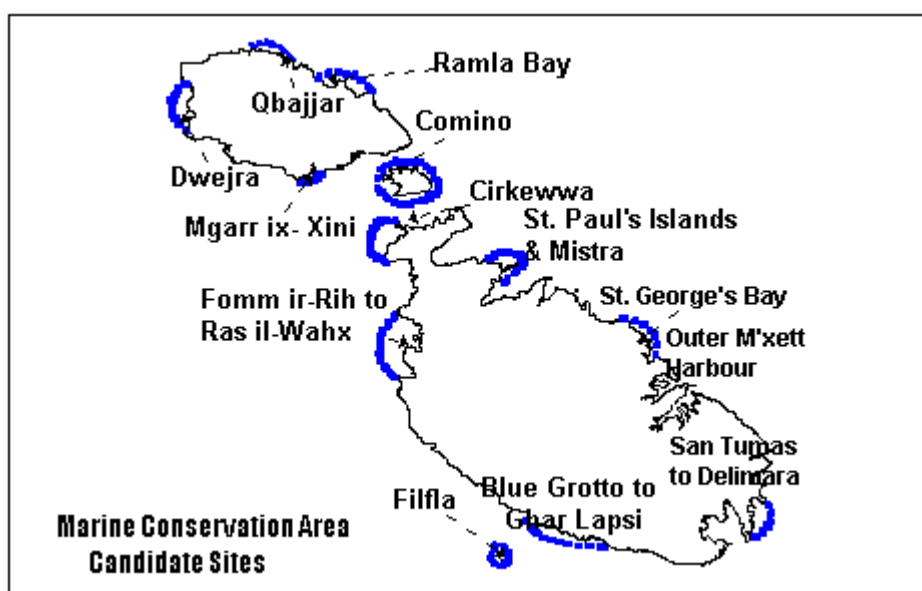
4.5.5 No underwater surveys have yet been completed. However, tenders for two surveys have been issued and are currently being processed for the *North Harbours Local Plan* coastal area and the *Dwejra/Qawra* marine park area. The inclusion of the marine environment in the surveys for the North Harbours Local Plan is a departure from the practice of previous local plans, which did not include marine surveys.

4.5.6 The Planning Authority has invested heavily in the development and application of GIS technology in the Maltese Islands. However, the priority to date has been the development of land-based GIS. Whilst there has been little progress on establishing a comprehensive maritime GIS (MCO3, RCO42), a GIS database on the beaches of Malta and Gozo has been acquired under licence from the Management Systems Unit as a tool for coastal zone management. This database gives details of beach size, access provision and existing structures, among other data, and is regularly updated and monitored in conjunction with the Local Councils.

Designation

The Structure Plan calls for protection of the coastal zone (TOU15). The aim is to designate and manage Marine Conservation Areas, following extensive survey and consultation work (MCO1, MCO5, MCO7, MCO8, MCO9, MCO10, MCO12, MCO13). These should be linked to land-based Conservation Areas where possible (MCO6). Archaeological sites and wrecks should be included, where appropriate (MCO2). Fishermen should have first option on any work related to site protection (MCO11).

4.5.7 The Structure Plan identified fourteen candidate sites for Marine Conservation Areas:



Source: Structure Plan, 1992

No Marine Conservation Areas have yet been designated. The main constraint impeding the legal designation of these areas has been the financial cost of the underwater surveys that are required to document the state of the environment in these areas and to facilitate site selection. In addition, the

marine environment and its protection and management is a relatively unexplored area in the field of conservation.

4.5.8 The Local Plan process has taken up the issue of marine conservation. The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan*, although unable to undertake the marine surveys required to designate the Delimara Marine Conservation Area, does make provision for the designation of the site. Prior to formal designation, a study is to be undertaken by the Planning Authority, in consultation with the Environment Protection Department and local fishing groups. The draft *North West Local Plan* stipulates that no development which would compromise the proposed MCA should be allowed. It also includes a policy for the Planning Authority to initiate, in conjunction with the Environment Protection Department, surveys of the marine environment in the following sites: Cirkewwa; Selmunett; il-Mistra; Ras il-Qawra; South of Fomm ir-Rih to Ras il-Wahx; and Wied Babu to Ghar Lapsi.

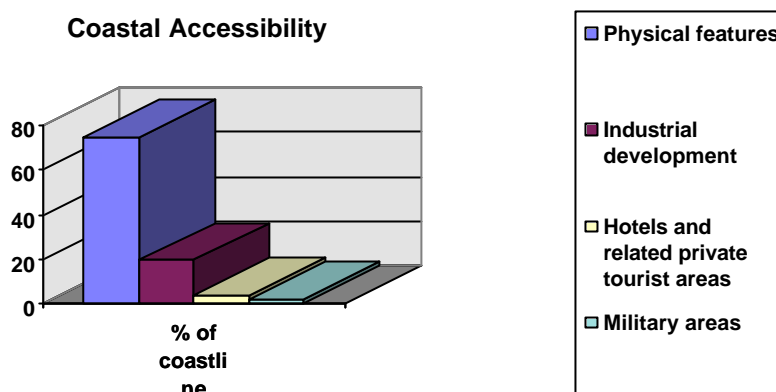
Access to the coastal zone

The Structure Plan aims to secure public access to the coastline either adjacent to the sea or along cliff tops. All the coastline is to be brought into public ownership within a specified period. This will include government acquisition of illegal developments and encroachments (CZM3). Fishermen are to be given first option to utilise resources such as access to waterfront areas, where traditional rights existed (MCO11). Government will identify sites for the establishment of secure boat storage with maintenance facilities near to, but not on, the coast (AHF13).

4.5.9 In this area of policy the Planning Authority has achieved limited success. In new coastal developments, care has been taken to retain public access to the foreshore. For example, the three new hotels at St. George's Bay, St. Julians all provide open public coastal access within five metres of the high water mark. However, it remains true that the quality of public coastal access has been diminished in some of these areas. The development permit for Fort Chambray stipulates that cliff tops and the sea shore should remain open to the public, as required by the Development Brief. The Enforcement Unit of the Authority took action over illegal curtailing of public access at il-Fekruna, St. Paul's Bay during 1995, leading up to direct action in 1996 to remove gates obstructing public access to the beach.

4.5.10 There have not, as yet, been any government acquisitions of illegal developments on the coast or of encroachments. Many hotels retain their beach concessions. One of the reasons for this is the difficulty of revoking permission on an existing site which is covered either by a building permit or by other operating licences.

4.5.11 A coastal survey in 1989 found that 50% of the Maltese coastline is inaccessible at sea level. However, 75% of this inaccessibility is due to physical features, such as cliffs. A further 19.5% is inaccessible due to industrial development, 3.5% to hotels and related private tourist areas and 2% due to military areas⁵⁹:



Although the tourism industry restricts access to just 3.5% of the inaccessible coastline, these areas generally form part of the most pressured segments of the coastal strip.

4.5.12 In line with policy **MCO11**, the *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* has given fishing activities predominance at the Marsaxlokk waterfront (MM12). In St. Julians, Government is to build boathouses on the coast, in conflict with policy **AHF13**; this will effectively reduce the amount of work area available to both fishermen and recreational users. Conflict between fishing uses and commercial development has some history in this area, and the *North Harbours Local Plan* is well placed to attempt its resolution.

4.5.13 Pressure from new tourist development on the coastal zone has been intense throughout the monitoring period. A series of very large projects have been approved, largely within the development zone, which increase the intensity of coastal development in highly pressured areas. These projects include: the Hilton Redevelopment Project; the Excelsior Hotel; the Corinthia San Gorg Hotel; the Bay Point Hotel; the Marina San Gorg Hotel; and the Fort Chambray project. Whilst most of these projects are consistent with the current Structure Plan, there is now a need to question whether coastal protection needs to be strengthened within the development zone in order to improve the effectiveness of policies such as **TOU15**, **CZM2** and **CZM3**.

Development control in the coastal zone

4.5.14 The coastline is one of the country's main touristic and recreational assets: its landscape value and quality mean that it represents a real resource with strong potential. This potential is however threatened. The rural coastal landscape is often characterised by loss of landscape related to agricultural abandonment. Derelict plots and buildings and collapsing rubble walls contribute to coastal erosion. There is an urgent need to reconcile such development pressures, especially those related to tourism and recreation, with conservation of the unique coastal landscapes and ecosystems of Malta.

⁵⁹Anderson and Schembri, 1989. Coastal Zone Survey

Beaches

The Structure Plan prohibits permanent construction on beach and dune areas. It calls for the removal of existing beach structures, wherever practicable (RCO16). Overnight camping and vehicle access on beaches are also prohibited (RCO17). To prevent coastal erosion, sand binding vegetation in dune areas is to receive special protection (RCO18). The development of coastal defences and enlargement of beaches is to be preceded by study (RCO23).

4.5.15 Beaches are subject to particularly intense development pressures which threaten their fragile and unique ecosystems. Such development can increase the risk of beach erosion. The total area of sandy beach in Malta, Gozo and Comino is currently estimated at just 15 ha⁶⁰. This estimate can only be approximate, since sand cover varies considerably according to weather conditions. The extent of dune areas can be particularly difficult to gauge.

Development on beaches

4.5.16 The removal of existing structures from sandy beaches has not happened. The total number of permanent structures remaining on sandy beaches remains high, at 62:

Locality	Total number of beach structures	Structures on sandy beaches	Structures on rocky beaches	Boathouse locations
Bugibba	20		20	
Cirkewwa	51	20	31	27
Dahlet Qorrot	5	5		5
Delimara	3		3	
Dwejra Bay	9		9	7
Ghadira Bay	6	4	2	
Golden Sands	5	2	3	
Ghar Lapsi	6		6	1
Gnejna	21	6	15	20
Ghajn Tuffieha	8	1	7	
Hondoq Ir-Rummien	4		4	1
Kalkara	9		9	3
Marsalforn Bay	12		12	2
Marsascala	6		6	4
Marsaxlokk	12	4	8	3
Mgarr ix-Xini	6	2	4	5
Mistra Bay	12	3	9	
Qajjenza	11		11	3
Qawra	7		7	2
Ramla l-Hamra	5	5		1
Salina	21	2	19	4
San Blas	1		1	1
Santa Marija	12		12	6
Sliema	21	4	17	
St. Julians	22	3	19	3
St. Paul's Bay	26	1	25	3
Xlendi Bay	11		11	2
Total	332	62	270	103

⁶⁰ Management Systems Unit (MSU) Beaches Database of 1994.

The items included in this table do not include structures such as wooden kiosks although these, being in situ for over 14 days, are also permanent development. In addition, large boathouse areas such as those at Armier are treated as a single unit.

4.5.17 There is considerable potential for conflict between Planning Authority policy on beach development and the practices of other departments involved, particularly the police (who control trading licences), HCEB (who licence hot food kiosks) and Lands Department. The Planning Authority issued planning guidance entitled *Development Control Guidance: Kiosks* in May 1994, reiterating that kiosks are not allowed on sandy beaches. This seeks to introduce a system whereby acceptability on planning grounds is evaluated before other licences are obtained; it does not address the issue of problematic uses which are already established. Partly for these reasons, limited enforcement action has been taken against permanent structures on sandy beaches.

4.5.18 Inadequate coordination is not the only difficulty. The Planning Authority itself has not always been resolute in implementing policy **RCO16**. Permission was granted for the demolition and reconstruction of an existing illegal building on the beach at Ghajn Tuffieha, in May 1995. The permit included the use of an existing roadway leading from a car park down onto the sandy beach below for the transportation of building materials.

4.5.19 Permanent buildings are also a common feature on rocky beaches and other coastal areas. Scenic areas such as Hondoq ir-Rummien and Dahlet Qorrot in Gozo accommodate a number of structures. So do popular bathing areas such as Sliema, St. Paul's Bay, Qawra and the Salina Coast.

4.5.20 Enforcement action has recently been taken against illegal boathouses at Cirkewwa, resulting in the demolition of 55 units.

Access to beaches

4.5.21 Vehicular access to beaches remains common practice in many popular localities during the summer: one reason may be that minor access roads do not require permits. At times, Government departments authorise the construction of access roads, such as the ramps used by beach cleaners' trucks. The MSU beaches data indicates that out of 42 sandy beaches, only 12 did not provide vehicular access. All three scheduled beaches can be accessed by car. The control of vehicular access presents difficult practical problems once access roads exist: attempts to install lockable gates and barriers appear to be futile.

4.5.22 There has been no prohibition of camping on beaches. However, the Environment Protection Department seek to prohibit camping in the major dune sites of Ramla il-Hamra and Ghajn Tuffieha.

Coastal erosion

4.5.23 The Authority has received a number of applications requesting permits for: beach creation; beach replenishment; structures on beaches; construction of breakwaters; and construction of coastal structures ranging from reverse osmosis plants to water polo pitches. Developments of this nature generally have an effect on coastal erosion, either through immediate impairment of the sediment budget⁶¹, through vibrations and stress associated with construction, or through indirect effects on adjacent areas.

4.5.24 The context for these applications is one of a general lack of knowledge of coastal erosion dynamics. There is no quantifiable data on which sites in Malta are particularly prone to erosion and no systematic

⁶¹ dynamic balance achieved in the movements of sand within inshore waters

attempt has been made to address methods of preventing or coping with erosion of specific areas such as *rdum* and boulder scree, cliffs, sandy beaches, or terraced fields. The Planning Authority seeks to control activities which are known to cause erosion. Nevertheless, a number of applications have been approved for beach replenishments and breakwaters.

Protecting the coastal zone

4.5.25 Implementation of the Structure Plan's strategy for development control in coastal areas remains at a preliminary stage, despite substantial efforts during the initial years of the Planning Authority's life. The Structure Plan provides a strong framework for resisting all inappropriate development in rural and coastal areas outside the development zone and places considerable emphasis on the need for an integrated approach to coastal zone management, including the designation and protection of a wide range of protected areas. Bold policies are included to take shorelands into public ownership, guarantee public access to the coastline (**CZM3**), remove all alien structures (**RCO16, RCO2**) and strictly control all new development. A Coastal Zone Subject Plan is to be prepared by a specialist management unit and a substantial repertoire of protective mechanisms is made available.

4.5.26 The Planning Authority has made substantial progress on the establishment of an appropriate professional team and the designation of protected areas. However, implementation and enforcement remain weak areas. The sheer pressure for development in coastal areas is a major problem, diverting the attention of the professional team from essential proactive work. Adequate response to ad-hoc issues is often frustrated by a lack of scientific data and research on the coastal zone, although appropriate studies are sometimes required from applicants (in accordance with **RCO16** and **RCO23**).

Aquaculture

The Structure Plan encourages development in the aquaculture industry, in order to make best use of land and sea resources (AHF15, AHF16). It also requires the establishment of detailed planning criteria and conditions for aquaculture production units in order to properly control the industry from its beginnings (AHF15).

4.5.27 Fish farming is a new industry in Malta. It offers considerable potential, but also poses a threat to the marine and coastal environment, unless carefully managed. The industry can present a number of environmental problems, both on land in terms of obnoxious coastal development and pollution, and at sea. Marine cages produce both organic and inorganic pollutants which may be harmful to coastal ecosystems. It is important that the highest standards are set and achieved in the establishment and management of all aspects of the industry from its inception. The Planning Authority's general approach to the development of the aquaculture industry is discussed in section 2.5 (paragraphs 2.5.31 to 2.5.36).

4.5.28 Aquaculture is one of the major forms of development in marine areas. The industry generally relies on intensive farming in marine cages, due to the lack of land resources on the islands. The approach of the Planning Authority has been to limit production in cages using development permit conditions. Land based farms, such as those in the pipeline at Xemxija and Salina, are restricted to production levels of up to 150 tonnes per year. Marine cages can produce up to 500 tonnes per annum. The international trends towards offshore farming has not yet affected the local industry; all farms are still located in inshore waters. The reason for this is that farm owners prefer cages close to land due to constraints of accessibility from shore facilities and depth of water (e.g. diving costs in deep water).

4.5.29 Four of the existing fish farms are located in candidate sites for Marine Conservation Areas (**MCO1**). The Planning Authority's policy guidance on fishfarming does not preclude this, although stringent conditions are laid down; there must be a significant positive contribution from the fishfarm to the effective management of the Marine Conservation Area as a whole. This might take the form of: staff resources for the supervision of other uses in the Marine Conservation Area; educational or interpretation services; or additional surveys and monitoring of the Marine Conservation Area. The impact would have to be mitigated by controlling location, production and the amount of chemicals used (e.g. pharmaceuticals and antifouling), as stipulated in the guidelines. The guidelines also stipulate that production units should submit monitoring reports on environmental standards in the waters around their installations every 12 months. Some difficulties have been experienced in satisfying these stringent requirements. In particular, monitoring reports have not always been supplied as agreed and some difficulty has been encountered in enforcing monitoring conditions.

Controls on offshore operations

The Structure Plan calls for improved controls over offshore operations, including measures for safety of navigation, safeguards for the natural environment and satisfactory abandonment measures (IND16).

4.5.30 In practice, the Planning Authority has had little involvement in this area. Most of the proposed improvements fall within the remit of the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA). The MMA is a member of an *ad hoc* committee working on a Marine Resources Network together with the Planning Authority and the Malta Council of Science and Technology. The MMA has now adopted an environmental code of practice.

4.6 Environmental Upgrading Initiatives

4.6.1 The Structure Plan contains a wide range of proposals for positive action to upgrade the environment. Many of these proposals are discussed elsewhere in this report; for example, in the sections dealing with urban conservation (4.1), rural conservation (4.3), coastal and marine conservation (4.5) and the management of the minerals industry (2.6 and 4.3.55 to 4.3.62). This section deals with the following specific environmental upgrading initiatives, which are not covered elsewhere: control of erosion; protection of valleys; the underground space strategy; relocation of obnoxious industry; and provision of access for all.

Control of erosion

Sites prone to erosion

The Structure Plan carries a presumption against development in areas prone to erosion and requires positive action to prevent further loss of soil and sand (RCO21, RCO22, RCO26, RCO27).

4.6.2 The Planning Authority has scheduled a number of sites which are prone to erosion, principal among which are Ghajn Tuffieha and Ramla l-Hamra. These were originally protected by Emergency Conservation Orders. Management schemes are being set up for these areas (see section 4.3.25). Despite this designation, a permission for a temporary road along the clay slopes at Ghajn Tuffieha was given by the Planning Authority, in conflict with **RCO21** and **RCO22**.

4.6.3 The Planning Authority often deals with projects in valleys, beaches or cliffs which affect their dynamics. Some applications in valleys prone to

erosion have been recommended for refusal on the basis of **RCO29**, which prohibits new development on valley sides.

4.6.4 The Department for the Protection of the Environment also has a policy for the protection of sand dunes and coastal slopes. They normally refuse permission to camp or perform activities on beaches or clay slopes.

4.6.5 Various Local Councils have projects for the protection of soil, including St. Paul's Bay, Siggiewi, Mqabba and Xghajra. These range from afforestation in Siggiewi, quarry reclamation in Mqabba, rebuilding of rubble walls at St. Paul's Bay and the clearing of rubble dumped over coastal fields at Xghajra.

Loss of soil

Soil conservation and saving measures are mandatory for agricultural projects. Soil replenishment measures will be adopted where the opportunity arises (AHF4, RCO24).

4.6.6 The 1973 Soil Preservation Act prohibits the transportation of more than one square metre of soil without the permission of the Agriculture Department. It also prevents the burying of soil under new construction. Despite this legislation, there is a continuing shortage of soil. The situation is exacerbated by a reduced level of building on agricultural land and the mixing of soil with building waste, due to the use of heavy excavation equipment. Few contractors sift soil out of their building waste for re-use in public projects.

4.6.7 The demand for compost material, originating both from Sant' Antnin Sewage Treatment Plant and from animal waste, is also high. The lack of soil for agricultural use has led some to question whether agricultural uses should have priority over recreational uses such as gardens. The restricted supply of soil is making the public more conscious of soil conservation; reports of misuse or dumping of soil have been made to the Agriculture Department.

4.6.8 Soil conservation is closely related both to the conservation of rubble walls and to land reclamation practices. When land is reclaimed on slopes, without suitable retaining walls, a percentage of the soil is lost to erosion. In this respect enforcement action on land reclamation projects needs to be increased.

4.6.9 Recommended improvements to procedures relating to soil conservation have been drawn up and forwarded to the Planning Authority for approval. The Planning Authority is currently upgrading its procedures for notification of the Agriculture Department regarding approvals on agricultural land.

Rubble walls

The Structure Plan encourages projects to repair breached retaining walls (AHF7, AHF8).

4.6.10 The Planning Authority does seek to implement this policy. The promotion of rubble walls is being implemented through permit conditions, whereby all external walls outside the development zone have to either be constructed as rubble walls or be suitably faced. In the agricultural sector however, incentives and educational programmes are also needed to encourage farmers to use this type of walling.

4.6.11 Whilst some applications have been received to construct rubble walls, a small number were also received to remove walls in order to join fields for improved vehicular access or to construct vineyards.

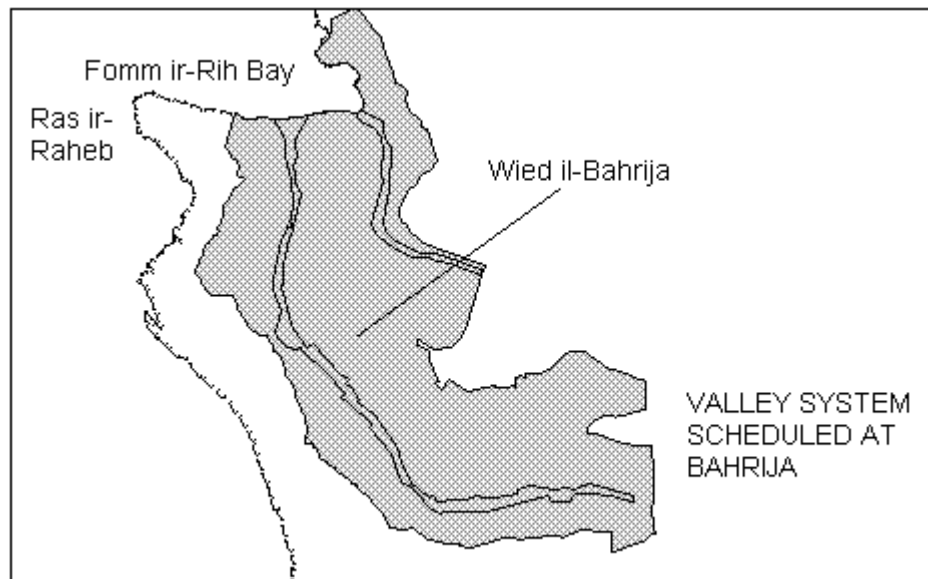
Management of valleys

4.6.12 Policy to protect valleys has been difficult to implement and monitor, except in the obvious cases, due to the fact that the boundaries of valleys in Malta and Gozo have not yet been delineated. It is not a trivial task to identify where a valley slope begins and a hilltop (*xaghri* or *qortin*) ends. A priority, then, is the identification of valleys and where necessary, the scheduling of the watercourse and valley. A start has been made with the identification and scheduling of valleys at Bahrija. The local plans have also protected specific valleys, such as Wied Zembaq in Birzebbugia.

Protection of water catchment areas

The Structure Plan calls for the protection of valleys as important water catchment areas (RCO28, RCO29);

4.6.13 The scheduling of a number of marshlands located at the mouths of valleys at Mistra, Marsascula and Armier and the dune system at Ramla l-Hamra has been a firm step forward in the protection of watercourses. Another major step forward was taken in early 1996, with the scheduling of the Bahrija valley system, an area of 257 hectares:



4.6.14 The valleys which have been scheduled so far are: parts of Wied Musa (Cirkewwa); and Wied il-Bahrija, Wied Rini, Wied Gerzuma, and Wied iz-Zebbug (the last four valleys form one system and were scheduled together as one entity). In addition, the valleys of Wied Znuber at Hal Far, Wied il-Buni, Wied il-Klima, Wied il-Qoton at Birzebbugia and il-Wied ta' Hal-Ginwi at Marsaxlokk are scheduled as Areas of Ecological Importance or Sites of Scientific Importance in the *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan*.

4.6.15 Where threats to watercourses exist, the Water Services Corporation has intervened by means of a *Joint Aquifer Protection Committee*. This includes the Department of Agriculture and the Drainage Department. There is an initiative to move polluting livestock breeding units, such as those located in Wied is-Sewda at Qormi and Wied il-Baqqija at Zebbug, to less sensitive areas. There have also been a number of projects to clear valleys during the review period which resulted in considerable environmental damage. The Water Services Corporation is now starting a new project to upgrade valleys which will be a cooperative effort with the Ministry of the Environment, Local Councils, the Armed Forces of Malta and the Italian Military Mission.

Development on valley sides

The Structure Plan seeks to prevent new development on valley sides, and especially watercourses, except for projects aimed at soil or water conservation. It also declares that the Authority will have regard to the possible detrimental effects of dredging works in valleys, and undertake positive action to prevent dumping in watercourses (RCO29). There is a presumption against developments on important natural heritage even if it is within existing urban areas (RCO15).

4.6.16 Despite the difficulty of identifying the extent of valleys, valley protection policy has been used to good effect in a number of cases. In Xlendi, Gozo, a hotel development on a valley slope has been refused by the Planning Authority using this policy.

4.6.17 In order to monitor the implementation of valley protection policy a sample study of the applications decided during 1994 and 1995 in the Bahrija valley area (17 decisions), has been carried out. The data indicates that applications for additions to existing buildings were generally approved (5 cases), whilst applications for new developments other than farm houses were normally refused (8 cases). The remainder of the applications are still pending. This limited evidence suggests a relatively consistent approach to valley protection outside the development boundaries.

4.6.18 However, there have been some notable failures to implement valley protection policy, such as the Busietta Gardens development at Wied id-Dis and the particularly visible development along Wied Ghomor at St. Julians. This latter development is on a valley site within the Temporary Provision Schemes.

4.6.19 The difficulties encountered in protecting valleys include:

- the concessions often awarded to applicants requesting extensions of existing developments;
- inadequate legal backing for the control of valley dredging activities; and
- conflicts with the 1988 Temporary Provisions schemes, despite the provisions in **BEN1, BEN2, BEN3, and RCO15**.

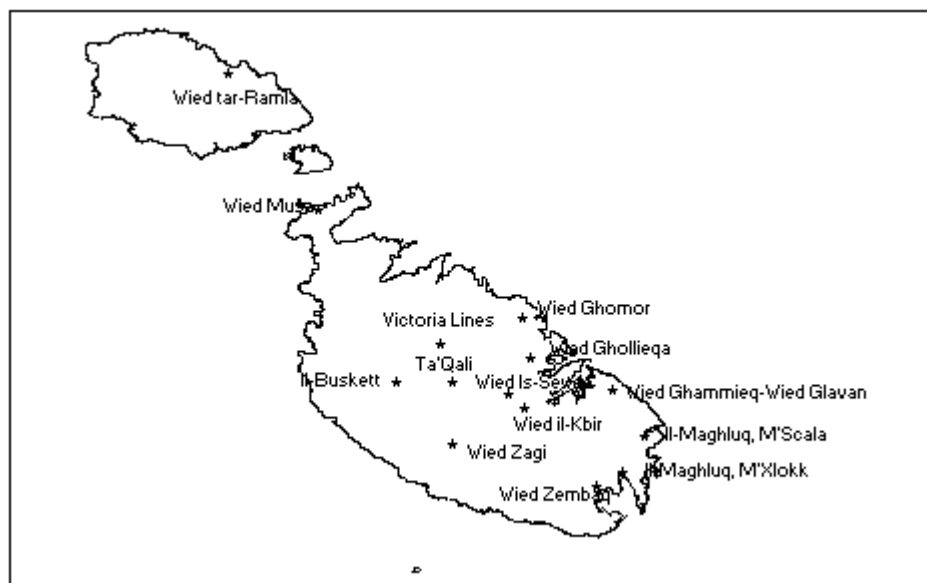
4.6.20 Conflict regarding the relative strength of Structure Plan policy *vis à vis* the Temporary Provision Schemes is apparent. The general opinion seems to be that any proposal on appropriately-zoned land within Scheme is virtually guaranteed a development permit, whereas the Structure Plan makes clear that all new development within the Temporary Provision Schemes must be compatible with good urban design, natural heritage and the environmental characteristics of existing or planned adjacent uses, and that the development should maintain the good visual integrity of the area in which it is located (**SET9, BEN1, BEN2, BEN3, BEN4, SET7**).

Recreation in valleys

Structure Plan policy RCO29 commits the Planning Authority to take positive action to safeguard valleys for walking, cycling and horse riding, through the prohibition of vehicles, other than for agriculture and maintenance, and the establishment of car parks at valley edges. The Structure Plan proposes a number of parkways along valleys (e.g. the Chadwick Lakes in Wied il-Qlejgha).

4.6.21 The Planning Authority has scheduled a number of valleys (4.6.14) and has designated a number of walkways through the Local Plan process. Walkways were identified in the Structure Plan, and the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan. The North West and North Harbours Plans are also identifying footpath systems. In addition, the Planning Authority has taken an active role on the management committee of a number of walkway projects.

4.6.22 Projects which have been initiated for the protection and recreational use of valleys are indicated below:



Source: Local Council Postal Survey, March/April 1995

The wide range of partners involved and the variety of projects in progress suggest that recreation/conservation projects of this type may provide uniquely fertile ground for inter-agency cooperation. Local Councils are playing a key role, particularly in mobilizing government funds for conservation purposes.

Wied Zembra and Wied il Qoton, Birzebbugia

4.6.23 The Planning Authority has played a leading role in the organisation of this country walkway project, which was proposed in the *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* (MB19, MB20). Preparatory work is at an advanced stage and initial work on a management scheme should soon commence. An informal committee has been set up to coordinate action, with the Planning Authority occupying the chair. The other committee members are the Gudja, Birzebbugia and Ghaxaq Local Councils, the Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna and the Museums and Tourism Departments. The Environment Protection Department was invited to participate. The Tourism Department initiated action by clearing part of the Wied Zembra watercourse, which had become a large, illegal dump. The Gudja Mayor also acted as liaison person with the hunters and trappers of the area who tended to resist the influx of walkers into the valleys. The main problems encountered in the process have been lack of legal provisions for access and the illegal occupation of land. There is nothing in the Maltese legal system which caters for access or public rights of way

(either inland or coastal). Draft proposals have been made to include provisions for access agreements and access orders in the revised version of the Development Planning Act.

Wied Ghollieqa, Kappara

4.6.24 A management committee comprising representatives of the University, the Environment Protection Department and ecological organisations has been set up. A management scheme is now being formulated for footpaths and other recreational uses in this valley. Some minor interventions, including fencing works and the planting of trees, have already been made.

Victoria to Dwejra Lines

4.6.25 A Victoria Lines Parkway project is currently underway between the Mosta and Gharghur Local Councils and the Environment Secretariat. Preparatory work is at an advanced stage and the road linking the ridge is already being upgraded. The project has recently received funding from an EU MED-URBS budget. The area, situated on the upper part of the Tas-Santi Valley, was also identified in policy **REC13** of the Structure Plan.

Wied Ghomor, St. Julians

4.6.26 A protection strategy for the valley is currently being formulated in cooperation with the St. Julians Local Council. This will include a country walkway. It is to be included in the draft *North Harbours Local Plan*.

Buskett, limits of Rabat

4.6.27 Buskett Gardens have long been used as recreational space and have been under the management of the Agriculture Department. Recent efforts have resulted in the formation of a management committee together with Environment Protection Department and the Planning Authority, but progress on implementing change has not been rapid. The Buskett area was scheduled in June 1996.

Il-Maghluq, Marsascalea

4.6.28 Consultation is under way between the Department for the Protection of the Environment (EPD) and the Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature (SSCN) on the management strategy for this wetland. The EPD has put forward a development application for a visitor centre on the site.

Il-Maghluq, Marsaxlokk

4.6.29 This is another joint project between the EPD and the SSCN and is at the same stage as the above.

Wied ta' Zagi, Siggiewi

4.6.30 Siggiewi Local Council have made an application to the Authority for the construction of a public garden that includes a pathway along the valley. This will include clearing and rehabilitating existing pathways.

Wied Ghammieq to Wied Glavan, Xghajra

4.6.31 Xghajra Local Council are currently cleaning up a coastal footpath that includes parts of Wied Ghammieq and Wied Glavan. This path stretches, on its southern edge, along the Zabbar coast to the scheduled watchtower at Triq il-Wiesgha. A heritage trail for the area is being developed, which is to include a number of military buildings such as the Delle Grazie, Santu Rokku, San Pietru and San Leonardo batteries from the British period. This initiative is a joint project between the Zabbar and Xghajra Local Councils. Funds have already been allocated for the restoration of a number of buildings, through the Local Councils. The heritage trail also includes a small valley in the Ricasoli Industrial Estate that was the source of a now disappeared sandy beach at the site still known as Ir-Ramla. This valley has been used as a dumping site.

Wied tar-Ramla, Xaghra

4.6.32 This valley is going to be cleaned by the Xaghra Local Council, to solve flooding problems.

Wied il-Kbir and Wied is-Sewda, Qormi

4.6.33 The Qormi Local Council is in the process of cleaning up the dumping sites in these two valleys, especially the existing footpaths. This initiative is intended to promote the recreational use of these valleys. Also, action has been taken on the nuisance caused by the pumping station situated in Wied is-Sewda near the residential area. Obstacles for the watercourse in Wied is-Sewda valley have been minimised.

Ta' Qali, Limits of Rabat

4.6.34 A valley and lakes country walk, as identified in the Structure Plan (REC13), is being promoted in the draft *North West Local Plan*. The walk is planned to include Ta' I-Isperanza Valley and Chadwick Lakes.

Wied Musa, Cirkewwa

4.6.35 Paths have been identified as part of the draft *North West Local Plan* and the area has been scheduled.

Underground Space Strategy

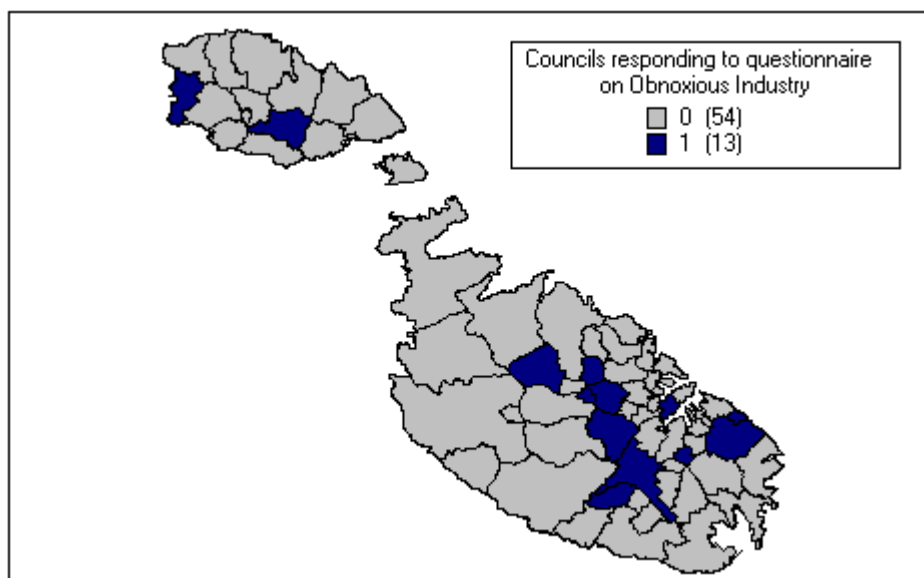
The Structure Plan calls for an underground space strategy, especially for vehicle parking in urban areas (MIN18).

4.6.36 No progress has been made in this area.

Management of Obnoxious Industry

The Planning Authority is to consider the provision of incentives to relocate obnoxious industry and other development which cause nuisance in residential areas (IND5, IND9, IND10, AHF9).

4.6.37 A postal survey was carried out in November 1995 inviting Local Councils to identify industries which had been a cause for residents' complaints. Thirteen councils replied, although two, in the Northern Harbours area, stated that there had been no complaints of this type. Xewkija and San Lawrenz councils replied from Gozo, highlighting the industrial estate and minerals extraction respectively. Of the rest, 10 councils in the central and southern regions of Malta replied. The average number of complaints per council was 3, but Xghajra mentioned 11. The Floriana council complained about the Planning Authority as a source of traffic and parking congestion:



4.6.38 The most common reasons for complaint, in order of frequency of mention, were: waste; air pollution; traffic; and noise/smell:

Reason for complaint	Number
Waste	21
Air pollution	17
Traffic and blocking of roads	15
Noise and smell	12
Human danger, health, aesthetics, slippery roads, property damage, storage of flammable liquids, potential for spread of abuse.	-

4.6.39 Livestock breeding farms are the most frequently-mentioned obnoxious industry, followed by: chemical industries; quarries; concrete batching plants; metalworkers and mechanics; stores and bakeries:

Industry	Number
Livestock breeding farms	9
Chemical industries	7
Quarries, batching plants, metalworks and mechanics	3
Stores and bakeries	2
Lime kilns, brewery, sewage outfall, tarmac plant, Planning Authority offices, bus terminus, tile factory, canning and meat processing plant, car dealers, woodworks factory, brick factory and illegal dumping site	1

4.6.40 Policy **IND8** calls for an evaluation of appropriate incentives to secure the relocation of these industries. This has not yet been carried out. The initial survey reported in this section is the first attempt to secure a list of problematic industrial sites on a national basis.

Access for All

The Structure Plan aims to improve access for the disabled, the elderly and children in prams and pushchairs to all public buildings and facilities, including public transport and footpaths (BEN15, SOC24 and COM7).

4.6.41 In general, the Maltese Islands offer very poor standards of access to anyone with impaired mobility. Even for the able-bodied, pedestrian access is often difficult and dangerous. The public environment is particularly problematic, with haphazard provision of pavements, appalling standards of maintenance, unprotected construction and repair sites, badly designed junctions and limited design control over access arrangements to public buildings. Standards in private buildings compound these problems, with many steep changes of level, both internally and externally, long staircases without landings and a typical house format spread over three or more levels.

4.6.42 Some initial steps have been taken in planning for improved access provision. The Planning Authority published guidelines in 1995 for improving access standards, entitled *Access for All*. This is a very valuable start. However, some broadening of scope is required to cater for the specific needs of: pregnant women; the elderly; the sick and people with temporary disabilities. The new building regulations, to be published by the Ministry of the Environment, are also likely to give good coverage to access issues.

Public open space and facilities

4.6.43 In terms of implementation, there are now some examples of good practice to be found in selected public facilities. New public gardens are improving their access standards, with Independence Gardens in Sliema, for example, providing satisfactory public access. Unfortunately, adequate toilet facilities have not yet been provided. Dropped pavements for improved accessibility have been on the agenda of a fair number of local councils (as described in **COM7**). They are constructed to international standards in several areas, among which are Attard and Hamrun.

Transport

4.6.44 The transport sector is also improving its accessibility record. Government projects such as the new road underpass at Birkirkara and the pedestrian flyover at Marsa have been completed to a high standard of accessibility. The new pelican lights are accessible, if the signal button is not positioned too high. However, without a complementary auditory device, they can be difficult to use for people suffering from visual impairment.

4.6.45 A major step forward in the transport sector was the commitment by government that new buses now must be accessible to all. The new bus terminal is also planned to be accessible for all.

Public buildings

4.6.46 New public buildings are applying improved standards. The Planning Authority, with its Structure Plan commitment to accessibility for all, has made efforts to attain international standards in the building of its new offices at St. Francis Ravelin. The buildings are in fact reasonably accessible except for the main lift, which is too narrow for wheelchair users.

4.6.47 The Housing Authority has begun to provide lifts with its new housing developments: the cluster housing at Mtarfa includes large lifts which can accommodate wheelchairs. Some progress has also been made at the University; the Library complex and Humanities building are reasonably accessible. However, some parts of the newly-constructed extension, such as the Architecture Faculty building, are not accessible to all. In addition, Student House is still inaccessible.

4.6.48 The banks have also started to improve access; the new Central Bank building is an example of good practice. However, improvements at automatic teller machines (ATMs) are still necessary. Some churches have made changes, but the majority of parish churches remain inaccessible to some people.

4.6.49 A number of public buildings in the pipeline should provide, on completion, a reasonably high standard of accessibility. The Libraries Association is working to improve access at libraries. It is expected that the current upgrading of the national public library at Belt is-Sebh should provide considerably improved access. The Museums Department is also working on upgrading its premises to cater for people with disabilities.

Tourist Accommodation

4.6.50 The hospitality industry is attempting to improve its facilities, with a number of hotels upgrading access standards in their buildings. Unfortunately, not all have taken advice and some misguided conversions have emerged. For example, some newly-installed ramps are too steep and are made of a highly polished and slippery type of granite.

4.6.51 A study was recently undertaken of major hotels of three star or higher rating having at least 100 rooms⁶². Out of 20 respondents, just two of the hotels surveyed offer very good accessibility. Ten hotels replied that they had special facilities for the handicapped, although the extent of the facilities was often limited, and eight hotels said they were ready to make improvements to their hotel. The average number of guests using wheelchairs was 110 per year. Amongst hotels with very good facilities, this increased to 250 wheelchair users per year.

62 J. Buttigieg, unpublished thesis for the Higher Certificate in Land Administration course.

4.7 Controlling the Impact of Development Projects

4.7.1 The Structure Plan includes a wide range of restrictions and controls which seek to ensure that the environmental impact of any new development falls within acceptable limits. Numerous policies relate to the design and environmental impacts of new development. This section examines the extent to which such aesthetic and environmental factors have been taken into account in recent planning decisions.

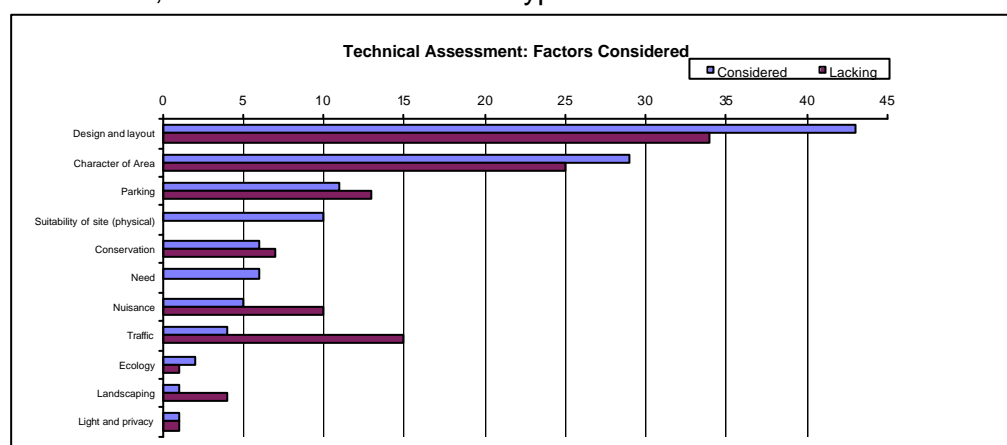
Environmental considerations in planning decisions

The Structure Plan introduces general restrictions and controls on development which either has negative environmental impacts (BEN1, BEN2, RCO4, RCO18, RCO21, RCO23, 7.1, PUT13), or is poorly designed (BEN2). The Structure Plan seeks to prevent any proposed development which is poorly designed or is likely to affect adjacent uses because of visual intrusion, noise, vibration, atmospheric pollution, unusually high traffic generation, unusual opening times or any other bad neighbourliness.

Special care is required in Urban Conservation Areas, or where scheduled property is affected (UCO6, UCO7, UCO8). Applications for development outside urban areas will also need to meet strict criteria (BEN5). No permit will be given for development that would adversely affect scenic value (RCO4). Development likely to give rise to hazardous waste will only be permitted if there are no practicable or reasonable alternatives to the process proposed (PUT13).

4.7.2 This section reviews the situation in early 1995, as reflected in the 1995 *Development Control File Audit*. Following this audit, an in-depth training programme was put in place, together with improved quality control, to seek to address many of the problems identified.

4.7.3 The Development Control File Audit evaluated the range of factors taken into account during the technical assessment of a sample of 75 development permit application files, derived from one week's output in March 1995. An expert team appraised whether the appropriate range of factors was taken into account in each case. The following chart illustrates the number of development permit application files in the Audit which either consider, or fail to consider, relevant factors of various types:



4.7.4 Although site coverage and plot densities, as defined in the Temporary Provision Schemes, are generally taken into account, a broader consideration of *design and layout* in the sample permits is frequently inadequate, in the light of **BEN2** and the developing range of policies for Urban Conservation Areas. *Landscaping* and *visual integrity* with neighbouring properties are rarely taken

into account. Aesthetic design considerations rarely feature, even on relatively prominent sites. Considerations of privacy and natural light are not usually mentioned.

4.7.5 Evaluation of the *character of the area* is frequently partial. Whilst physical characteristics are often taken into account (at least, as indicated on the enclosed photographs), the compatibility of the proposed use is rarely evaluated against the observed characteristics of the area.

4.7.6 *Traffic* impacts are rarely considered, even on commercial and industrial applications. Permits have been granted for car hire businesses, for example, without ascertaining the proposed scale of the operation, the implied traffic generation and the need for on or off-site parking. Potential access difficulties are rarely, if ever, evaluated.

4.7.7 *Parking* considerations are often incorporated, to some extent, but refinement of their treatment is required. Application of parking standards to residential developments, particularly small groups of flats, appears to be inconsistent. Delivery and servicing arrangements for commercial and industrial developments are rarely considered.

4.7.8 In many cases, decisions are being made without the required information to evaluate *nuisance* factors, such as noise, smell, dust or other forms of pollution. *Environmental impact* also receives little attention, in many cases, except on major projects requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment. Whether or not a formal Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Planning Statement is required, some consideration of environmental factors is necessary on industrial and warehousing developments and many other medium-scale projects. Indirect impacts, particularly associated with traffic generation, are rarely considered. Systematic consideration of visual impact is also rare, even where an application is to be refused using either **BEN2** (in urban areas) or **RCO4** (in the countryside).

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Structure Plan introduces a requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Traffic Impact Assessment (TIS) (BEN12, SET6, SET12, SOC7, PUT10, PUT14, MIN8, TOU11, TRA2) on large-scale projects, projects in sensitive locations and projects with unusually complex or potentially harmful effects. The purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment are: to investigate the probable effects of a project before a decision is made to proceed; to introduce changes in the design process, where appropriate; and to ensure that everybody involved understands the likely effects of the proposed development.

4.7.9 The Planning Authority has required the preparation of a good number of environmental assessments. The Authority issued Environmental Impact Assessment regulations in October 1992. These guidelines were updated in 1994⁶³ and are in the process of being updated again. Implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment process is now reaching a stage of some maturity.

4.7.10 A list of projects for which an Environmental Impact Assessment has been performed over the period 1993-1995 has been compiled (See 4.7.11). The list falls into three categories: projects requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is the written statement of a full environmental assessment procedure; projects requiring an Environmental Planning Statement (EPS) which is similar to an EIS but is less comprehensive in

⁶³ Environmental Impact Assessment in Malta, Policy and Design Guidance, Planning Authority, May 1994.

scope; and Transport Impact Statements (TIS). In some cases an EIS or EPS is accompanied by a TIS, and in some cases a TIS is requested independently of wider environmental assessment.

4.7.11 Environmental Impact Statements have been prepared for 15 projects, Environmental Planning Statements for another 20 projects and Transport Impact Statements for 16 projects. A number of requested statements, particularly Transport Impact Statements, have not yet arrived at the Authority. Overall, the types of projects for which most assessments have been made have been: tourism (9 projects), minerals (8 projects) and waste (7 projects):

Environmental Impact Statements	Environmental Planning Statements	Transport Impact Statements
Agriculture and Fisheries		
Fish Farm, Comino Channel	Fish Hatchery, Hondoq ir-Rummien, Gozo	
Fish farm, Munxar Reef	Qormi Fish Farm, (Land Based)	
Residential/Retail		
		Block of 60 apartments, 162 garages and 17 retail outlets, Bugibba Extension to commercial complex, Rabat
Infrastructure		
Desalination Plant, Zonqor Point		
Commerce and Industry		
	S.M.W Cortis Factory Extension	
Social & Community Facilities		
San Anton School, Mosta	St. Philips Hospital	St. Martin's School, Msida
San Raffaele Hospital, B'Kara		San Raffaele Hospital, B'Kara Capua Court Health Centre, Sliema
Quarrying		
Vella Hardstone Quarry 9 at Qrendi (Next to temples)	Albert Agius Softstone quarry, Mqabba	
Hardstone Quarry at Gebel Ciantar	Deguara Softstone Quarry, Tal-Balal	
Gozo Softstone Quarry, Teddy	Spiteri J. Softstone Quarry, Mqabba	
Hardstone quarry at Tas-Saghtar, Naxxar, Blokrete	San Lawrenz Softstone Quarry Gozo, Tal-Ponta	
Tourism		
Hotel, San Lawrenz, Gozo	Bay Point Hotel	Vivaldi Hotel, St. Julians
Fort Chambray, Gozo	Hagar Qim Visitors Centre, Qrendi	Dragonara Hotel, St. Julians
Hilton Hotel, St. Julians (outline)		Fort Chambray, Gozo (Outline) Hilton Hotel Redevelopment, St. Julians Extension to Topaz Hotel, Bugibba 4 star hotel, Tigne' Capua Court Hotel, Sliema
Transport		
Airstrip, Gozo	Helipoint Terminal building, Gozo	Car Park, High Street, Sliema
Yacht Marina, Salina	Marine fuel station at Spinola and B'Bugia	
	Freeport Terminal Two	Grade separated junction, Msida
Waste		
Sewage Treatment Plants in Malta and Gozo	Sinking of the H.V. Cittadella	
	Sorting Station (Green Skip), Maghtab Waste Oil Recycling Plant, Marsa Maghtab Sorting Yard Gozo Transfer Station Sewage Disposal Works	
Other		
	Underpinning of Cliff Faces, Golden Bay	Ex-Flour Mill, Victoria, Gozo

4.7.12 In general, tourism, quarrying and waste projects have undergone assessment procedures as required by **TOU11**, **MIN8**, **PUT10** and **PUT14**.

Two major exceptions are the San Gorg Corinthia and Marina San Gorg Hotels in St. Julians.

4.7.13 The record is not so good for industrial, transport and other infrastructural development projects. For example, any industrial development larger than 1000 square metres and outside areas zoned for industry should have been subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment; this provision has not always been implemented. Transport developments sometimes require full environmental impact assessment, not just traffic impact analysis as in **TRA2**. There is also a concern that road and parking projects which are either outside the development boundaries or are in sensitive Urban Conservation Area locations are not necessarily subject to environmental assessment; the regulations may require revision in this respect.

4.7.14 Some developers have simply refused to submit an impact statement, in response to a request from the Planning Authority. This has been the case, for example, with the TIS requested of the Regina Hotel redevelopment in Sliema. The developer is insisting that the project be referred to the Planning Authority for decision as it stands.

Landscaping

Landscaping concepts and guidelines

The Structure Plan introduces landscaping requirements for development projects and calls for the development of landscaping concepts and guidelines in Local Plans (BEN17, 7.16, BEN18). Development permit applications are to include landscaping proposals and maintenance programmes (BEN17). Local Plans are to include landscape concepts, with implementation guidelines (BEN18).

4.7.15 The Planning Authority has produced draft guidelines for landscaping schemes entitled *Trees, Shrubs and Plants for Landscaping in Malta and Gozo*. The design guidelines for *Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas* also provide important guidance on landscaping: they include extensive material on the treatment of spaces between buildings, with specific reference to policy **BEN17**, as well as material on the development of gardens and backyards, trees and soft landscaping, street furniture, street surfacing, street name signs, plaques and monuments.

4.7.16 Landscaping schemes are rarely submitted as a matter of course, although they are requested on the standard *Guidance Notes for Applicants* issued with development permit application forms. Schemes are frequently requested for major projects, as well as for smaller projects on rural sites and for some sites in Urban Conservation Areas. The quality of submitted schemes is often poor, leading to basic difficulties in identifying the exact location and type of existing and proposed trees. It is rare to encounter a comprehensive, considered approach to landscape design in association with development proposals.

4.7.17 A handful of developments have been completed which illustrate the potential of well-conceived and carefully-implemented landscaping schemes. Negotiated scheme improvements include landscaping schemes for a number of recently approved major projects, including: Fort Chambray, Gozo; Coastline Hotel, Salina Bay; St. Philip's Hospital, Santa Venera; San Raffaele Hospital; the Bay Point Hotel; the Corinthia San Gorg Hotel; and the Planning Authority offices at St. Francis Ravelin. Several of these schemes have now been successfully implemented. Also, a number of hard landscaping schemes have been successfully completed in public areas by the Local Councils. Examples of the latter may be found at Paola, Birgu, Naxxar, Mosta and Siggiewi.

4.7.18 The Malta Development Corporation are implementing an *environmental improvement programme* to upgrade the quality of roads, street lighting, signage, landscaping, reservoirs, service trenches and other infrastructure on their estates. Work is now at an advanced stage at Kordin. Similar approaches are being applied at Luqa and Ta' Qali. There is an increased emphasis on good quality landscaping, with contracts issued for individual estates to improve the quality of provision and maintenance. Occupants are moving onto long-term (65 year) lease agreements, rather than short-term rental agreements, so are likely to develop a keener interest in the upkeep of the estate.

Underground ducting

The Structure Plan requires provision for the installation of underground ducts to provide electricity and telecommunications services to all new development (BEN3).

4.7.19 In line with the general objective of environmental upgrading, the Structure Plan proposes a programme of undergrounding of electricity supply and telecommunications (7.4).

4.7.20 Little progress has been made in this area. Whilst provision for underground ducts has been incorporated into many major projects, permissions are routinely given on smaller schemes without such provision. There is common agreement regarding the objective, particularly for sensitive areas; the design guidelines for *Development Control within Urban Conservation Areas* identify the proliferation of wires on property facades as a problem and refer to the need for underground ducts. However, liaison with the utility agencies is required before further progress can be made in this area. Preliminary discussions relating to Mdina suggest that this issue is not currently a priority for the major utilities.

4.7.21 There is, in any case, some doubt as to whether strategic planning policy is an appropriate medium for tackling this problem. A pro-active implementation programme is required, in coordination with the service providers, rather than a reactive development control policy. A more direct approach to the enforcement of this issue will be possible through the proposed Building Regulations.

Extension of Planning Control to new development types

The Structure Plan, in conjunction with the Development Planning Act 1992, extends planning controls to adverts (BEN6), satellite dishes (BEN13), and existing quarries (MIN16).

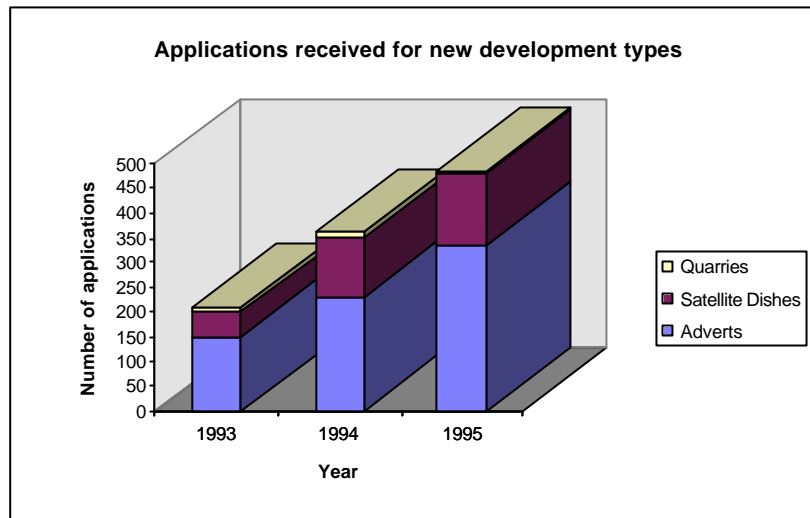
4.7.22 The Structure Plan, together with the Development Planning Act 1992, broke new ground in bringing advertisements, billboards, signs, satellite dishes and quarries within planning control. Quarries are dealt with elsewhere in this report (4.3.55).

4.7.23 The Planning Authority took a pro-active stance in bringing billboards and advertisements under control, through the publication of policy and design guidance⁶⁴ and the implementation of successive enforcement initiatives against illegal advertisements during 1993 and 1994.

4.7.24 There has been progressive growth in the numbers of applications for advertisements and satellite dishes since 1993, as awareness of the requirement to seek development permission has widened.

⁶⁴ *Billboards and Signs*, Planning Authority Policy and Design Guidance, May 1994.

4.7.25 The following chart summarises the applications received over the period 1993-95 which relate to quarries, satellite dishes and adverts. The number of applications for mineral extraction is relatively small, reflecting the nature of the industry:



4.8 Design Standards and Guidelines

4.8.1 The Structure Plan provides an array of policies aimed at improving the quality of design for urban development. A particular objective is the integration of a wider range of social and community facilities into the new urban areas. The Structure Plan sees the local planning system as the appropriate mechanism to achieve the redesign of layouts in the Temporary Provision Schemes. The Plan also seeks to set general standards and guidelines for new development, particularly relating to access, parking and infrastructure provision. The Structure Plan calls for the development of design guidelines in other areas.

Review of Temporary Provision Schemes in Local Plans

The Structure Plan judged the Temporary Provision Schemes to be deficient in their provision of non-residential uses, particularly community facilities and local employment (3.18). The Local Plans are to review the layouts of the Temporary Provision Schemes, although *boundaries* are not to be reviewed piecemeal (SET8, SET7, BEN4). Within the Temporary Provision Schemes, more favourable consideration is proposed for the serviced areas close to existing development (BEN4). An adequate range of community facilities and employment opportunities is to be provided in new housing areas (SOC25).

4.8.2 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* includes a number of detailed proposals which address these objectives:

- *Birzebuggia Inset Map* (98 ha): a policy and proposals map is included for Birzebuggia, covering former schemes 75 (Birzebugga/St. George's Bay) and 76 (Birzebugga/Tal Papa). The Structure Plan's intention of introducing a range of community facilities and employment opportunities is addressed through: a proposed development brief at Il-Ghirghien (MB18), designation of the St. George's Bay Opportunity Area (MB10) and designation of the Pretty Bay Action Area (MB11). There are additional designations within the built-up area to improve shopping and open space

provision (MB15, MB16, MB19). Also, the Birzebugga Urban Conservation Area boundary is incorporated in the inset map.

- *Marsaxlokk Inset Map* (48 ha of former scheme plus 15.5 ha in additional Opportunity Areas): development briefs are proposed for the Opportunity Areas, which are intended for a range of commercial, recreational and marine-based activities. The Local Plan defines building heights for the inset map area, designates the Urban Conservation Area boundary and extends the provision of public open space (MM16). Bearing in mind the need to use land more efficiently, the previous maximum site coverage of 30% for semi-detached development is extended to a maximum of 50% (MM17).

4.8.3 The draft *North West Local Plan* includes similar policy and proposal maps for a number of schemed areas including Qawra, St. Paul's Bay, Xemxija and Burmarrad. Others are under preparation for the remainder of the Local Plan area.

4.8.4 The *Grand Harbour Local Plan* area includes relatively small areas affected by the Temporary Provision Schemes. The strategic approach adopted in this Plan places great emphasis on improved opportunities for industrial development, strengthening of the retail hierarchy and creative design solutions which make efficient use of land.

4.8.5 The 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes included 26 Replanning Areas, which required further detailed planning. All but one of these have now been replanned, but only four include social and community facilities. This exercise must be regarded as a lost opportunity for improving the social and community facilities in the 1988 Temporary Provision Schemes and a regrettable failure to implement the Structure Plan's settlements strategy.

Residential Design Guidelines

The Structure Plan proposes the development of rules and guidelines concerning densities, building heights, design, and parking and other standards for residential areas (HOU3). Relevant Structure Plan policies and guidelines are intended as interim measures, applicable prior to the completion of appropriate standards for individual localities.

4.8.6 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* has placed considerable emphasis on improving the quality of the urban environment. In addition to the designation of Urban Conservation Areas, this Local Plan introduces the concept of *Design Priority Areas*. In such areas, applicants will need to demonstrate that the quality and prevailing architectural discipline of the immediate built environment has influenced the proposal to a satisfactory degree (MS04). Building height limitations are reviewed for the major settlements within the Local Plan area. Revised regulations are presented within a framework of specific design objectives (e.g. MM06). Site coverage restrictions are also reviewed for some areas (MM17). The Local Plan provides for the establishment of air and water quality and noise attenuation standards for new developments (ME09). Nevertheless, it does not incorporate a comprehensive set of rules and guidelines for the design of residential areas, as envisaged by the Structure Plan.

4.8.8 Preparation of more formal design guidance for residential areas is being approached through the revision of form *DC 1/88 (Conditions for Development and Design Control)*. This is a highly influential note used in the routine evaluation of residential applications within the development control teams. A draft discussion paper, reviewing the existing conditions and regulations in detail, was completed in mid-1995. This document is currently subject to internal and external consultation (including consultation with the

Chamber of Architects). Following this consultation process, preparation of residential design guidance at a national level is planned.

Design Guidance for Industrial Areas

The Structure Plan seeks a review of zonings and design standards within industrial estates and proposes that industrial estates are zoned into smaller areas and developed to high density (IND1, IND4). The Plan also proposes guidelines for both the visual and functional aspects of industrial estates (IND1).

4.8.9 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* addresses industrial development issues in some detail. A zoning scheme is included for Hal Far Industrial Estate (203 ha) which aims to improve the management and phasing of future development within the area. For future developments, MDC is to submit outline planning applications to establish phasing, layout, access, landscaping and design principles prior to the approval of any full development permit applications.

4.8.10 No progress has yet been made within the Planning Authority in the preparation of design guidelines for industrial estates, although the MDC are implementing an environmental improvement programme for several industrial estates (see section 4.7.18).

Design Guidance for Urban Areas

The Structure Plan calls for the urgent preparation of Local Plans for all existing built-up areas. These should lead to substantial improvements in environmental quality, whilst providing for all suitable uses (SET6). The Local Plans are to ensure that traffic within Urban Conservation Areas is controlled, to improve the pedestrian environment, and new access roads are discouraged (UCO14). The Local Plans are also to identify views which should be protected within Urban Conservation Areas (UCO10).

4.8.11 The Local Plan process has identified the improvement of the urban environment as a major priority. This emphasis has been supported by policy and design guidance at a national level, particularly relating to: development control within Urban Conservation Areas (July 1995); shopfronts (May 1994); billboards and signs (May 1994); and vending machines (May 1994).

4.8.12 The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* includes a number of specific strategies for improving the urban environment. In addition to general policies for Urban Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, the Local Plan designates Design Priority Areas (MSO4), Action Areas (MSO5), and Opportunity Areas (MSO7):

- *Design Priority Areas* (MSO4) are areas in which special attention is given to the quality of new buildings and townscape. Applications which fail to demonstrate an appropriate quality of urban design, respecting the prevailing architectural discipline of the immediate built environment, will not be granted permission.
- *Action Areas* (MSO5) are areas which are in clear need of improvement. They will be considered a priority for publicly-funded infrastructural works. New development, consistent with the aims of the Action Area, will be encouraged.
- *Opportunity Areas* (MSO7) have significant development or regeneration potential. Guiding principles, or a more detailed planning brief, will be prepared as required.

4.8.13 Overall strategies of sustainable development, conservation and enhancement of the positive characteristics of the settlements are also identified in the Local Plan. These are expanded into more specific objectives such as: putting the needs of pedestrians before those of car drivers; giving priority to public transport; and identifying and making provision for social and community facilities. The Plan proposals are based on these objectives, for example: giving priority to fishing activities (Marsaxlokk); upgrading public areas and maintaining access to the waterfront (Marsaxlokk); integrating town and countryside through a footpath system (Marsaxlokk and Birzebugia); and the long-term relocation of the 31st March petroleum depot.

4.8.14 Other local plan policies provide a general framework for enhancement of the urban environment, for example: the setting of standards of urban quality (ME09); facilitating access for all (MN01); protection of the skyline (MM06, MB08); the use of traditional or sympathetic materials in conservation areas; and the calming of traffic in Birzebugia (MB11).

4.8.15 Similar approaches to improve environmental quality within UCAs are likely to be features of the forthcoming local plans.

Planning Award Scheme

The Structure Plan aims for the general upgrading of all aspects of the environment. The aim is to create new urban areas which are a pleasure to live in and visit, rather than areas with the substandard, ragged and unfinished ambience which characterises most newly-developed schemes. Within Urban Conservation Areas, the aim is to redevelop, to conservation area standards, any ugly or alien buildings which have been allowed to despoil the area in the past (3.10, 3.12).

4.8.16 The Planning Authority is taking positive action to promote best practice with the introduction of a biannual Planning Award Scheme. This scheme awards prizes for: new building; building conservation; countryside conservation; and social and community facilities. Prizes are awarded for outstanding design, provision of a model project for urban renewal or use of the principles of sustainable development. In the first year of the awards, a special prize will also be awarded for the best quality application made to the Planning Authority for a development permit. No prizes have yet been awarded, although nominations have been received.

4.9 Construction Management

4.9.1 The Structure Plan identifies a number of critical environmental problems related to poor construction practices, including: derelict and neglected sites; unfinished surfaces; and discarded piles of building material and other rubble.

Construction management for major projects

The Structure Plan proposes a comprehensive attack on environmental degradation; particularly degradation associated with building sites and construction refuse. As an element in this approach, it is proposed that permit conditions should preclude unneighbourly construction procedures, unfinished surfaces and the permanent dumping of building materials on or near the site (BEN9, BEN11, section 7.9).

4.9.2 This policy is not normally implemented on routine applications. Standard conditions on all permits include a requirement that:

No building material, waste, machinery or plant shall be allowed to obstruct the pavement or the smooth flow of traffic in the vicinity of the site. Deposit of materials or placing of equipment in the street must be authorised by the Police.

4.9.3 Additional conditions which are sometimes used include:

- requirement for a hoarding: but many examples can be found to indicate that this is not universally applied;
- time restrictions on construction works and on the operation of equipment: this is rarely used; and
- adding an extra skin on party walls: this condition is generally used, where appropriate.

In addition, tailored conditions relating to construction procedures have sometimes been imposed; e.g. to restrict access routes for the transport of materials to the site.

4.9.4 It is clear from casual observation that these conditions are not applied and enforced effectively, in many cases. Frequent problems persist, including:

- building materials stored off-site, frequently restricting the public highway;
- vehicles and cranes obstructing traffic;
- failure to provide adequate pedestrian routes, where pavements are blocked;
- failure to screen and secure the site by providing hoardings, or place appropriate barriers around excavations;
- overspill of materials onto roads used for access; and
- operation of chainsaws and other equipment in the public highway.

4.9.5 For large-scale developments a construction management plan is normally required, which tackles both construction practices and waste transport/disposal issues. The quality of such plans is often high, although enforcement of their implementation can prove problematic. Nevertheless, a high-profile stance, linked with effective enforcement action, has been implemented in some cases (e.g. at Capua Palace and Ghajn Tuffieha, 1995).

Standards on construction sites

The Structure Plan calls for the introduction of contractor certification for certain types of work, such as rehabilitation. The Plan proposes the use of conditions to enforce the use of contractors having the appropriate certifications (BEN16).

4.9.6 The Structure Plan proposes the development of criteria for the certification of building contractors capable of undertaking various types of construction work. Conditions requiring the use of suitably certified contractors may then be included on development permits (**BEN16**).

4.9.7 This proposal has not been pursued, as yet. It is not clear that regulation of this type should be a function of the Planning Authority; the proposed Building Regulations are likely to be a more effective vehicle for improving the quality of works on site. Current legislation, in any case, places responsibility for the quality of implementation in the hands of the project architect.

Building Regulations

The Structure Plan calls for the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive system of Building Regulations. All building designs will require Building Regulations approval before commencement (BEN20, section 7.18).

4.9.8 Many detailed aspects concerning the sanitary, safety, and convenient use of buildings are more appropriately covered by Building Regulations rather than planning procedures. Examples include the requirements for and specifications of lifts, foundations, structural design, floor loadings, ventilation, dampproofing, water, swimming pools drainage, electricity, gas, telecommunications, fire hazards, light, lighting, privacy, internal shafts, maintenance access, toilets, hazardous processes, pollution sources, emissions, space standards, and materials specifications. These aspects are not covered adequately by existing legislation, particularly in the light of evolving European health and safety standards.

4.9.9 The Structure Plan proposes the preparation of comprehensive Building Regulations. Once appropriate procedures are in place, all building designs will require Building Regulations approval, with separate applications to be submitted at the same time as the full development permit application (BEN20).

4.9.10 A revised set of Building Regulations has been prepared, in draft form, by an MSU consultant. These draft regulations are currently undergoing extensive consultation procedures. Further work is likely to be required to modify some of the European and British standards incorporated in the draft version, to suit the local context.

4.9.11 The Building and Maintenance Department of the Works Division are currently working on preparing the legal and administrative framework for the implementation of a revised set of Regulations.

4.10 Environmental Education

4.10.1 Environmental education aims to develop a stronger sense of personal responsibility towards the environment. It also aims to facilitate active involvement in the decision-making process. Currently, the planning system labours against a historical legacy characterised by: a lack of confidence, based on perceptions of a reactive planning system; weak enforcement; and a sense of isolation from a process which appears both clumsy and unnecessary. The more participatory approach to planning initiated through the Structure Plan, coupled with efforts at environmental education, aims to shift perceptions of the entire process (5.3).

Initiatives in Environmental Education

The Structure Plan indicates that a positive attitude to the environment can best be achieved through education (15.40). Policies are included to promote educational programmes, to create positive behavioral patterns and to raise public awareness of conservation, as a means of achieving conservation objectives (RCO39, UCO16).

4.10.2 There is a growing emphasis on the environment in the school curriculum. The need to develop environmental education was expressed in the publication of the National Minimum Curriculum by the Ministry of Education, as a direct result of the Education Act of 1988. School syllabi have often featured environmental topics, in both primary and secondary levels. However, the topic was often treated as a second-class, subsidiary subject.

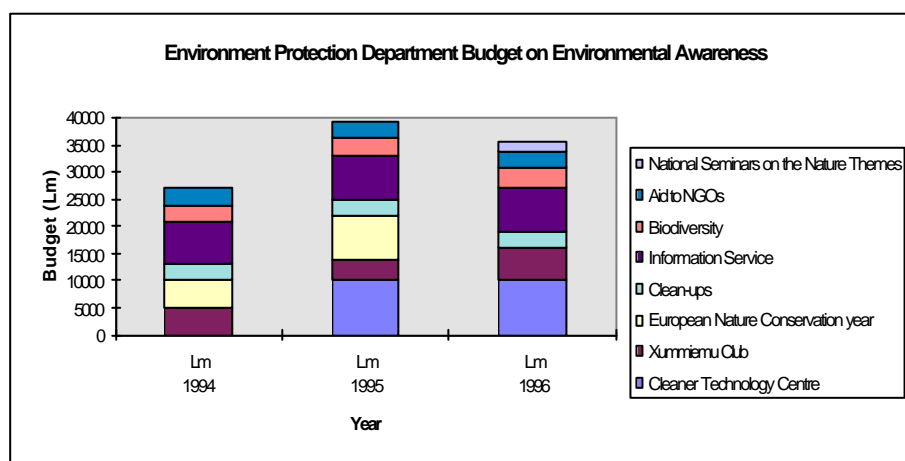
4.10.3 There is growing evidence that increasing importance is now attached to environmental education in schools. In 1991, UNESCO funded a project run by the University of Malta's Faculty of Education, called the Environmental Education Programme. This was aimed at producing a teachers' manual, with practical suggestions on how to integrate environmental education into primary school classes. The Science Center of the Education Division also inaugurated its own teachers' manual on the implementation of environmental education into the curriculum. In addition, a new Metsec examination on Environmental Studies now covers three main themes: the Natural Environment; the Human Environment; and the Built Environment.

4.10.4 The need to target a wider range of groups for environmental education has been highlighted in the National Environmental Education Strategy Business Plan (October 1995). Target groups include: government and policy making organizations; environmental and development organizations; religious organizations; industry; business and professional groups; mass media; and the arts community.

4.10.5 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played a key role in stimulating the development of environmental education. NGOs have published numerous information leaflets, magazines and articles in newspapers. More recently, the interest of NGOs has focused on the production of teaching resources and information sheets providing teachers with materials for classroom use.

4.10.6 The Secretariat for the Environment and the Environment Protection Department have also been active in the educational arena. They annually subsidize a number of activities which involve the public in environmental issues. These activities include: environmental clean-ups; the Xummiemu Club; educational spots on TV; aid to NGOs; and the Cleaner Technology Centre, which includes in its objective the aim to transfer know-how to industry about the implementation of cleaner technology. The main focus of the Secretariat's efforts has been on school children.

4.10.7 Amounts spent by the Environment Protection Department on environmental education are indicated below:



Source: Estimates 1996, 1995, 1994

After the end of European Nature Conservation Year (1995), the rise in the EPD budget on environmental awareness dipped slightly.

4.10.8 In carrying out its environmental responsibilities, the Planning Authority has also carried out a number of educational initiatives including: site visits with secondary school students; in-house courses on environmental management; and exhibitions. The Planning Authority was one of the main partners involved in setting up a Master's degree course in Environmental Management and Planning at the University of Malta. The Authority has also

funded the postgraduate studies of a number of professional officers in the environmental field.

Resource and field centres

The Structure Plan commits the Planning Authority to establish a resource centre for environmental education (RCO40). The resource centre will function to keep the Maltese public adequately informed about environmental matters, increasing their awareness of the need for environmental management and providing the media with good quality information on the environment. The Structure Plan also encourages field centres and interpretive visitor centres (RCO41).

4.10.9 No environmental education resource centre has yet been established by the Planning Authority, or any other body. In terms of publication of environmental information, the Authority is to produce a set of sustainability indicators which will provide regular environmental information to the public. Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability indicators are a list of quantified environmental, social and economic figures such as: number of cars; area of urban public open space; and percentage of built-up land. An appropriate set of such indicators can help both policy-makers and the public to monitor and improve progress towards sustainable patterns of development. Such indicators can also help in environmental education and can encourage individuals and groups to press for changes in a sustainable direction (see 4.11.4-4.11.5).

4.10.10 Encouragement has been given by the Planning Authority to the development of interpretive visitor centres at managed areas. There is one such centre at the Ghadira Bird Reserve. Applications have also been received for centres within the proposed reserves at Il-Magħluq, Marsaxlokk and Il-Magħluq, Birzebbugia.

Environmental research

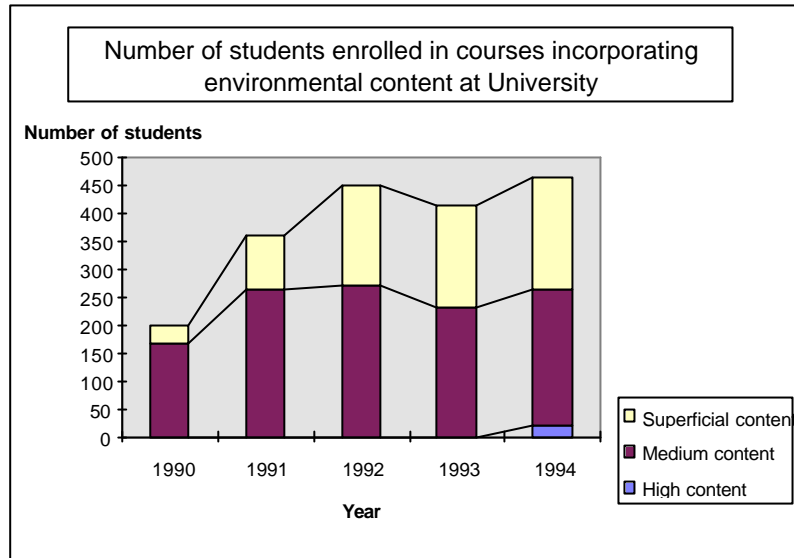
The Structure Plan calls on the Planning Authority to promote research on the environment and to disseminate it widely. A key element of this work is the establishment of a national Geographic Information System (RCO42).

4.10.11 A comprehensive GIS covering development in the Maltese Islands is now fully functional and, as envisaged by the Structure Plan, is a key element in improved environmental management. Much of the analysis for the Monitoring Report would have been impossible without this resource.

4.10.12 The Planning Authority has also commissioned a certain amount of environmental research and survey work, largely in connection with the local plans programme. Environmental resource surveys have been commissioned for the North West Local Plan and for the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan. In addition, a range of environmental research is carried out during the EIA process. For example, the EIS for the Comino Fish Farm established a benchmark for benthic conditions in the Channel. By sponsoring the postgraduate studies of a number of students, the Authority also promotes environmental research.

4.10.13 A number of conferences on the environment were also organised during the report period, which produced valuable debate on key subjects such as land markets, urban conservation and the integration of environmental issues into economic planning. The Authority is disseminating information about the environment through the publication of reports such as the Structure Plan Monitoring Report and the projected publication of a set of sustainability indicators for Malta (see 4.10.9).

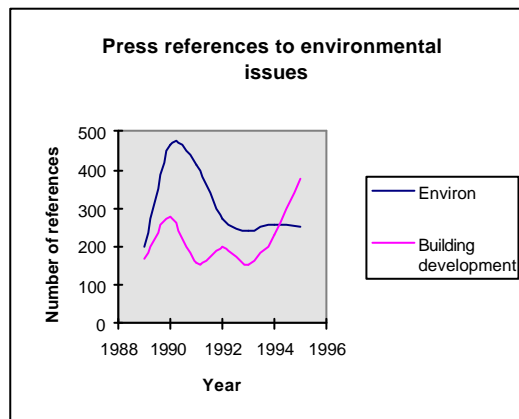
4.10.14 The University has the potential to play a key role in the dissemination of environmental research and, in turn, to stimulate new work. The number of students studying environment-related disciplines has increased over the period from 1990 to 1995. Most notable in this data is the advent of some new postgraduate degrees in environmental management and related topics.



Source: Registry Office, University of Malta

Environmental awareness

4.10.15 Press coverage provides an indicator of environmental awareness in the wider community. A recent survey of press references to environmental issues suggests that levels of coverage of the environment during recent years have changed considerably. The following chart gives an indication of the number of press references to environmental issues. This information is based on counts from the INFORMA⁶⁵ press database of mentions of the two text strings *environ* and *building development*.



4.10.16 The data suggests that the environment made much more news in the beginning of the decade rather than in the middle. This may be due to the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Brazil, as well as the elections in early 1992. It is evident that the press is carrying increasing numbers of articles about building development, in particular, and decreasing numbers about the environment in general. The data on references to building development correlates well with the increasing volumes of development work in progress.

⁶⁵ Source: INFORMA. Note that this data only refers to some 85% of actual articles in the press, with few letters included.

4.11 Environmental Appraisal of the Structure Plan

Sustainable development

4.11.1 The 1987 Brundtland Report⁶⁶ states that sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the current generation without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In this respect, sustainable development leaves each successive generation with a constant stock of resources, both natural and human-made. These concepts are directly related to the issues of land management and development, as they are tackled in the Structure Plan.

4.11.2 Currently, the Structure Plan does not explicitly address the issue of sustainability. It was formulated before the 1992 *Earth Summit* in Brazil, where Heads of State met for the first time to discuss environmental and developmental problems together, and the subsequent ratification of *Agenda 21*, an action programme for sustainable development. It also came before the publication of the EU's *Fifth Action Programme* for sustainable development, although these initiatives were largely in place by the time the Structure Plan was formally approved. The first review of the Structure Plan will need to take account of the growing international emphasis on sustainable patterns of development. To support this approach, new systems will be required to support an environmental appraisal of the Structure Plan, with associated environmental monitoring. The development of appropriate criteria has already commenced.

4.11.3 The Structure Plan calls for an Environmental Impact Assessment for each Local Plan (4.5). The *Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan* was not subject to this process. Neither were other government documents; Malta's Waste Strategy, for example, does not include any formal framework for the environmental assessment of options.

Sustainability indicators

4.11.4 The Planning Authority is coordinating an in-house consultative process to develop a comprehensive set of sustainability indicators. The objective is to identify a broad range of environmental factors which are likely to be affected by Structure Plan implementation; this will provide the basis for an environmental appraisal matrix to be applied throughout Structure Plan monitoring and review. This is consistent with the approach suggested by the UK Department of the Environment⁶⁷.

4.11.5 The project has now widened in scope to cover social and economic, as well as environmental indicators. Through successive discussions, an initial list of about 90 indicators has been identified. A Sustainability Indicators Working Group is in the process of identifying selection criteria, in an effort to reduce the list to a more practical size. The current consultative process will lead to the publication of an agreed set of performance indicators, which are to be published as sustainability indicators, and applied in the environmental appraisal process, for Local Plan as well as Structure Plan appraisal.

⁶⁶WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development) (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

⁶⁷ *Policy Appraisal and the Environment* (DOE 1991), PPG12 (DOE 1992) and *Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide* (DOE, 1993).

Environmental appraisal

4.11.6 Environmental appraisal of plans will be based on a common set of criteria, arising out of the Planning Authority's Sustainability Indicators. Many of the performance indicators already developed for Structure Plan monitoring will also be directly applicable to the environmental appraisal. The appraisal provides an additional analytical structure, evaluating the net environmental impact of the Structure Plan rather than estimating the Planning Authority's success in achieving Structure Plan goals and objectives. Awareness of the Plan's impacts on the use of natural resources and its contributions to wider impacts on the global environment are vital;

The sum total of decisions in the planning field, as elsewhere, should not deny future generations the best of today's environment⁶⁸.

4.11.7 It is envisaged that the current approved Structure Plan will be appraised in order to accomplish the following objectives: to test methodology; to highlight main impacts and whether they contribute or detract from sustainability; to provide ideas that move development in the direction of sustainability; to establish general conclusions; and to help with the drafting of review policies. It is also planned that this process will be an iterative one, which will ensure sustainability concerns are fully integrated into the plan making process. Policy appraisal will take place both at strategic and policy drafting levels. In the future, sustainability targets could also be associated with the indicators.

4.12 Summary of Environmental Upgrading

4.12.1 The Structure Plan strategy for environmental upgrading, rests on the designation of Rural, Urban and Marine Conservation Areas. Particular areas such as valleys, archaeology and coast are also given priority.

4.12.2 The strategy is working, with varying degrees of success, for the three types of conservation area. Perhaps the most successful are UCAs; six such areas have been designated, to date. However, the tide of dereliction in UCAs has not yet been turned and the major injection of funds required in such areas, as expected by the Structure Plan, has not materialised.

4.12.3 Rural Conservation Areas, widely drawn in the Structure Plan key diagram, have not been generally received a much higher level of protection than that afforded to other areas outside the Scheme boundaries. Major exceptions to this general trend are the 50 ecological areas scheduled under **RCO1**. Positive action to safeguard rural environments has also lagged behind expectations in the Plan. The Local Plans are, however, refining Structure Plan policy for rural areas on a local level and are taking on board, with particular care, the issue of landscape and visual quality.

4.12.4 The area where least progress has been registered is in Marine Conservation Areas. Designation of the first Marine Conservation Area awaits the completion of surveys.

4.12.5 The Structure Plan incorporates a firm policy framework for the scheduling of historic buildings, archaeological sites and ecological areas. It also endorses the National Protective Inventory and emphasises the need for its continuation. Whilst a large number of sites and areas have been scheduled over the monitoring period, the priority system accorded to the scheduling process is not immediately evident. There is a need to balance the flexibility necessary for the scheduling process to respond to development pressures, partly catered for by Emergency Conservation Orders, with a need for the setting of clear priorities.

⁶⁸ *Planning Policy Guidance Note 12* (para 1.8), UK Department of the Environment.

4.12.6 In a number of cases, the Planning Authority has been unable to advance its conservation objectives due to a lack of existing data and the costs of required additional research. These include: the Marine Conservation Areas and coastal environments in general; minerals workings; agricultural land quality; improvement of degraded landscapes; and the protection of archeological sites. Information is now being supplied through the Local Plan survey programme on a number of these topics, but on a partial basis.

4.12.7 Local Councils are assuming an increasingly important role in local environmental upgrading. The Structure Plan Review could consider in more depth the role of the Councils in Structure Plan implementation and, with a view to sustainability, their potential role in the implementation of Agenda 21.

4.12.8 The Planning Authority has so far been unsuccessful in implementing Structure Plan policy regarding permanent structures on beaches.

4.12.9 Resources for pro-active work in favour of the environment, such as the upgrading of the Rural Conservation Areas or the setting up of an environmental education resource centre, have been restricted during the monitoring period.

4.12.10 General awareness of the role of Environmental Impact Assessment needs to be improved: there has been some lack of clarity over the role of Environmental Impact Assessment: whether the assessment is primarily a decision support tool or whether it is a tool for identifying mitigating measures for the project acceptable on policy grounds.

4.12.11 New residential design/performance standards are now urgently required, as are new solutions to solving the problems of the management of building sites.

5. Framework for Implementation

5.1 Development Control System

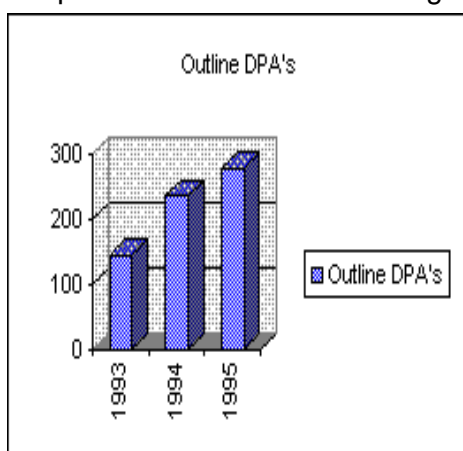
5.1.1 There is a fundamental assumption underpinning the Structure Plan that an effective, transparent system of development control can be implemented in Malta. This is a major assumption, given the widespread flouting of land-use and development controls in recent years. Implementation of an effective development control system, and achieving a high level of compliance from developers and the general public, can only be a gradual process. Nevertheless, without such compliance it will be impossible to manage development in accordance with the wide range of strategic land-use policies included in the Plan.

Legislative framework

The basis of a successful development planning, development promotion and development control process is its legal provisions and related statutory instruments and administrative procedures⁶⁹.

5.1.2 The Structure Plan team prepared a draft *Development Planning Act*, subsequently approved by Parliament in 1992. This introduced a new and wider definition of development, which now includes changes of use, the disposal of waste, quarrying, the display of billboards and other advertisements and erection of satellite dishes. It also brought development by public sector developments under full planning control. A range of other supporting legislation has since been prepared by the Planning Authority:

- Instrument of Delegation (1993);
- Building Levy Rates Regulations (1993);
- Development Permission (Method of Application) Regulations (1992);
- Planning Appeals (Fees) Regulations (1992);
- General Development Order (1993); setting out types of minor development which are exempted from the need for development permission;
- Development Planning (Use Classes) Order (1994) establishing categories of uses with broadly similar environmental implications; and
- Advertisement Regulations, setting out types of advert which do not require consent and establishing enforcement mechanisms (1993).



As advocated in the Structure Plan, outline applications were introduced to enable applicants to establish whether a proposal is likely to be acceptable in principle (**BEN8**). Outline applications are growing in popularity. Pre-application consultations are also encouraged through the Planning Shop (**BEN7**). Prospective applicants can also request a formal response indicating whether permission is required.

⁶⁹ Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 5.1.

5.1.3 The Planning Authority issued *Guidance Notes for Architects*, providing comprehensive advice and information on development control procedures (1993). A number of additional *Policy and Design Guidance* documents have also been prepared, dealing with: Environmental Impact Assessment in Malta; development within Urban Conservation Areas; farmhouses and farm buildings; shopfronts; advertisements; vending machines; kiosks; satellite dishes; aquaculture developments; development outside built-up areas; access for all; and sponsor's billboards at restoration works. Additional guidance material issued by the Planning Authority over the period 1993-95 relates to: quarry working and restoration; traffic generation and parking; kindergartens and day nurseries; scheduling of property; delegation of decision-making; enforcement of partly illegal development; and commuted parking payments.

Local Plans

The Structure Plan defines areas for which Local Plans will be prepared and establishes guidelines for their development. These will indicate the way in which Structure Plan principles, policies and standards will be applied at local-level and define a detailed framework for development control within each locality (4.1-4.5).

5.1.4 A more detailed policy framework for development control is being established through the Local Plans programme. The Planning Authority approved a local plans programme in 1993 which consolidates the requirements laid down in chapter 4 of the Structure Plan. The decision was taken to achieve full Local Plan coverage of the Maltese Islands, rather than to restrict coverage to areas which are subject to particularly intense pressure for development. The 24 suggested local plans in the Structure Plan are now encompassed within 7 local planning areas which, in combination, will provide full coverage of the Maltese Islands.

5.1.5 The first Local Plan to be completed, for Marsaxlokk Bay, was issued in May 1995. Work is now at an advanced stage on the Grand Harbour Local Plan and the North West Local Plan. Work is also in progress on the fourth Local Plan, for the North Harbours area and tenders have been issued for preliminary studies for the Gozo Local Plan. Work commenced on *Action Plans* for Pembroke and Ta' Qali during the monitoring period (see 5.3.24). Action Plans are similar in character to Local Plans but deal with smaller areas and are appropriate where the public sector intends to positively intervene in the development process by, for example, developing or redeveloping land within the Action Plan area (Structure Plan, 1.8).

Consultation and Publicity

The Structure Plan provides for an open, consultative process of development control. Consultation is to include: relevant Government Departments; the public in general; and, where the potential impact of the project is significant, neighbouring users (BEN14).

5.1.6 The Development Planning Act (1992) paved the way for a major step forward in the transparency of the planning process. Advance publicity is now given to all development permit applications through both a press advert and a site notice. In addition, there is a publicly available register of applications at the Planning Shop. Any interested party can make representations in writing to the Development Control Commission. At the Commission's discretion, they can also make verbal presentations prior to the final decision. Publicity material has been prepared to familiarise all parties concerned with these new procedures. Detailed, technical *Guidance Notes for Architects* have also been published (see 5.1.3).

5.1.7 The Development Control Commission (DCC) replaced the PAPB and Aesthetics Board in October 1992; the DCC has been granted delegated powers to decide most applications for development permission on behalf of the Planning Authority. Their meetings are open to the public and many applicants, architects and other interested parties have taken the opportunity to make verbal presentations at DCC meetings or to submit written comments. These rights of representation and discussion extend beyond the level of involvement permitted in many local planning authorities in the UK.

5.1.8 All decisions of the Commission are documented and made available for public inspection. Their agenda is published a week in advance. Full reports on all applications to be considered are distributed a week in advance to members of the Commission. These measures enable more informed involvement in decision-making by both members and other interested parties.

5.1.9 Applicants have extensive rights of appeal. They can request a reconsideration by the decision-making body (normally the DCC) before appealing to the independent Appeals Board; this gives applicants 'two bites at the cherry' when seeking a review of the original decision. In the UK, the Planning Committee cannot be asked to reconsider their decision, although an appeal to a higher level of government is possible.

5.1.10 Additional measures to encourage public involvement in the planning process include:

- appointment of a Public Relations Officer, to ensure a prompt response to matters raised in the press and to coordinate the flow of information regarding Planning Authority activities to the press;
- regular provision of information to Local Councils, including weekly lists of new development permit applications within their area; and
- extensive public consultation in the preparation of local plans, action plans and development briefs; public attitudes and opinions are playing a vital role in the formulation of policies for development control and the refinement of specific major proposals.

Public involvement in planning issues

5.1.11 Public involvement in the planning process has been facilitated in a number of ways, in particular: Development Control Commission/Planning Authority meetings held in public; public discussions and hearings; calls for comment on draft plans; exhibitions; and distributed pamphlets:

Meetings in public	1993	1994	1995
Planning Authority	8	14	18
Development Control Commission	121	116	133

Public discussions and hearings	1993	1994	1995
Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan	2		
Hilton Redevelopment			1

Call for comments on draft plans	Number of comments
Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan	384
North West Local Plan	297
Grand Harbour Local Plan	108

Exhibitions	Number of exhibitions
Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan	2
Grand Harbour Local Plan	5

Pamphlets	Number of pamphlets
Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan	2
Grand Harbour Local Plan	2
North West Local Plan	1

Consistency and quality of decisions

The Structure Plan represents the most thorough attempt to date to develop a cohesive land-use development strategy for the Maltese Islands. The Plan was prepared over a period of two years, with numerous opportunities for public input and comment. It received full Parliamentary approval and can only be amended following further public consultation, reference to an Assessment Panel appointed by the Prime Minister and approval of the proposed changes both at Cabinet level and before the House of Representatives. Structure Plan policy therefore carries great weight and cannot be ignored lightly by those responsible for making planning decisions.

5.1.12 The Planning Directorate initiated an audit procedure in 1995 to review the quality and consistency of development control decisions in the light of Structure Plan policy. The first *Development Control File Audit* was undertaken in March 1995. An estimated 40% of files were regarded as satisfactory in all important respects. Many of the defects identified in the remaining 60% of cases were minor. However, almost 25% of files revealed a serious lack of consideration of appropriate material considerations or policies, or used inappropriate reasons for refusal.

5.1.13 Factors frequently handled well included: zoning (as specified in the *Temporary Provisions Schemes*); building height restrictions; site coverage and plot density; building materials and setbacks; parking requirements; and physical suitability of the site. Factors sometimes omitted include: visual integrity with neighbouring properties (especially in *Urban Conservation Areas*); landscaping; the character of the area and its suitability for the proposed use; traffic impacts on the surrounding highway network; delivery and servicing requirements; potential nuisance to neighbouring residents; environmental impact (of smaller projects, in particular); and employment considerations.

5.1.14 Normally, there are few explicit references to the Structure Plan on file; it was clear from the reports submitted that a thorough assessment of Structure Plan policy, as it relates to the proposal in question, was not always undertaken. Policies which were widely used, such as **BEN1** (bad neighbour development) and **BEN2** (compatibility and design) were not applied consistently in all relevant situations. Traffic and parking policies (particularly **TRA4** and **RDS5**) were not applied consistently and there were few references to the car parking standards in the *Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum*. Generic policies restricting development in the countryside were widely used (particularly **RCO2** and **RCO4**). However, inadequate use was made of several urban conservation policies, particularly policies relating to gap sites, criteria for redevelopment in Urban Conservation Areas and developments affecting views into or out of Urban Conservation Areas; **UCO8**, **UCO9**, **UCO10**).

5.1.15 Parking provision has been identified by development control staff as a specific area where the application of policy has proved to be inconsistent. There is often uncertainty as to whether the Structure Plan's low, medium or high standard should be applied. In some localities, the low standard has been considered excessively demanding, in practice, and has not been adhered to (for example, many new dwelling units have been permitted with a single parking space, rather than the Structure Plan's 'low' standard of two). Interpretation of the Structure Plan's qualifications on the standards, such as the requirement to take employee density into account for industrial developments, has also been inconsistent. Indeed, it has only recently become standard practice to identify the number of employees likely to be

generated by a new development, in all relevant cases. The application of suitable design standards, determining the number of workable spaces which can be provided in a given area, has also been inconsistent. This is regarded as an urgent problem area by the Planning Authority and a review of parking standards for a number of development types is currently in progress.

5.1.16 In addition to inconsistencies in the application of Structure Plan policy within the Planning Directorate, there are differences of interpretation between the Planning Directorate and the Development Control Commission. The level of disagreement is high; the Commission rejected 25% of the Planning Directorate's 1,460 recommendations for refusal in 1995, although they accepted 99% of the recommendations for approval. However, it must be stressed that the Commission may re-negotiate a scheme, prior to over-turning the Planning Directorate's recommendation.

5.1.17 Senior development control staff have identified a number of areas of policy where the Commission's interpretation appears, on occasion, to conflict with the Structure Plan:

- Policy for *Urban Conservation Areas* is not applied consistently by the Development Control Commission. They do not always give weight to the advice of the Heritage Advisory Committee. The degree of strict control required to avoid the loss of traditional character is applied selectively, without consistent regard for policies such as **UCO8** (development of gap sites), **UCO9** (presumption against demolition), **UCO12** (commitment to restoration, landscaping, etc.) and **UCO14** (control of traffic and improving the pedestrian environment).
- Divergent views are commonplace relating to whether a proposal constitutes *bad neighbour* development (**BEN1**) and whether the *quality of urban design* (**BEN2**) is adequate; there will always be scope for debate in these areas, but some consistency of approach between the Commission and their professional advisers is vital.
- In general, the need to *restrict urban development* to the designated development zone is now being accepted by the Commission. However, exceptions are often granted for individual new dwellings, apparently without due regard for **SET11** (which prohibits urban development outside committed built-up areas). Agricultural projects tend to be approved with limited consideration for their visual and environmental impact (apparently without due regard for policies **RCO4** and **AHF5**). There is mounting concern, for example, relating to the cumulative impact of greenhouse developments on the rural environment.

5.1.18 The Development Control File Audit investigated four cases where the Commission overturned a recommendation for refusal by the Planning Directorate. In three of the four cases, a clear failure to take account of relevant Structure Plan policies or other planning issues was identified. It seems clear that there are grounds for serious concern in this area; the Structure Plan must be the primary point of reference for all decision-making activities within the Planning Authority.

5.1.19 The Planning Directorate is determined to improve the quality and consistency of development control decisions, as well as the speed of file processing. Following the first Development Control File Audit in March 1995, and a parallel *Business Process Mapping* exercise to identify procedural weaknesses within the development control process, a range of initiatives have been implemented to improve the quality of processing:

- vetting by senior development control management/consultants of development control reports, prior to their submission to the DCC;
- return of files to the case officer for re-working, where major weaknesses were identified;

- establishing an in-house *continuing technical development programme* to provide staff with on-going training in planning procedures for development control;
- consolidation of the *major projects group*, to ensure greater consistency in the Directorate's handling of larger development applications; and
- preparation of a range of *assessment sheets* to guide case officers in the appraisal of specific types of development, to ensure consideration of the full range of issues and policies which apply.

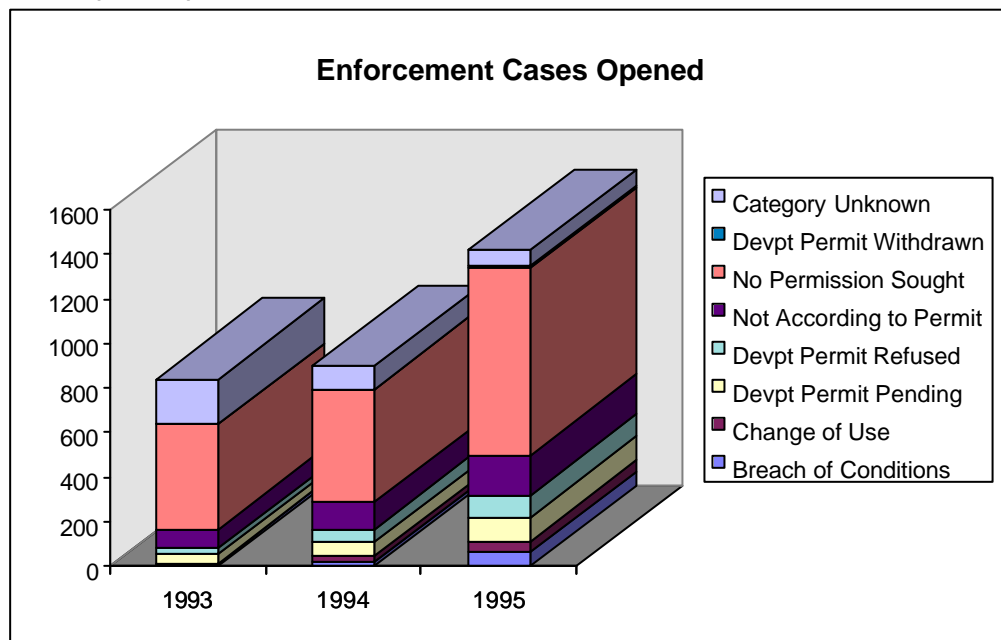
Enforcement

The Structure Plan envisages tightened enforcement mechanisms which will be actively applied as needed (5.4).

5.1.20 The Structure Plan seeks to overturn a deeply-entrenched culture of permissive development, establishing in its place a regulated approach subject to strategic and local-level planning policies. Without very determined enforcement, this attempt at profound cultural change would almost certainly fail. The political and organisational determination required to implement effective enforcement in this environment should not be under-stated; it would be unrealistic to expect overnight success in this area.

Enforcement Cases Handled

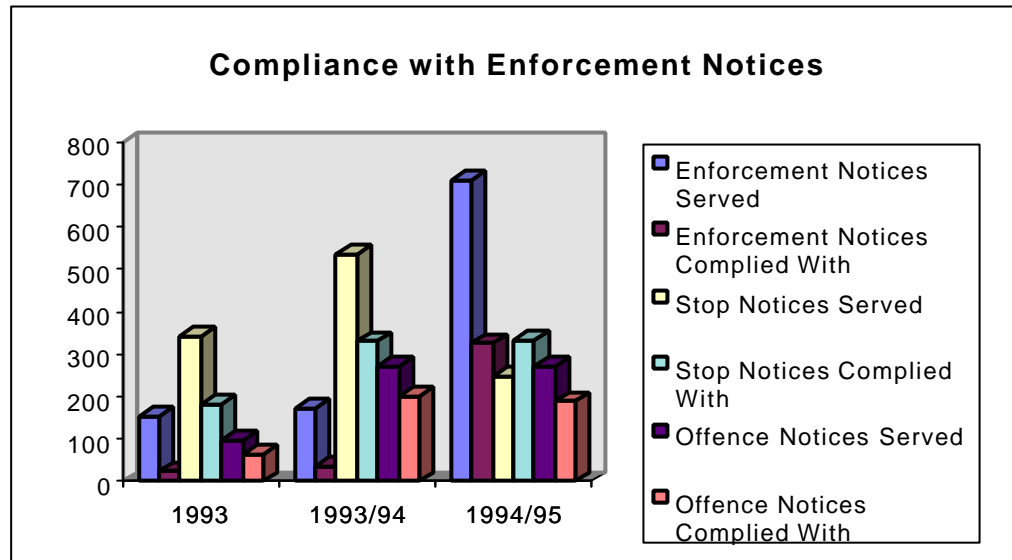
5.1.21 Control over unauthorised development has become progressively more effective throughout the first three years of Structure Plan implementation. The Enforcement Unit handled over 1,400 cases in 1995, compared with 840 in 1993. Most of these cases relate to development which has occurred without any attempt to seek development permission. However, the Enforcement Unit are now handling a growing number of cases which deal with permit infringements; that is, development which does not accord with the approved permit, or development which breaches conditions on the development permit.



5.1.22 The effectiveness of enforcement activity has increased in a number of ways. The Enforcement Unit has progressively switched from pursuing action through the Courts to taking action under its own powers under the Development Planning Act 1992. This is proving both more effective and speedier.

Compliance with Enforcement Notices

5.1.23 The Enforcement Unit is currently processing a much higher volume of Notices than in 1993 and 1994. A higher proportion of these Notices are *Stop with Enforcement Notices* (rather than Stop Notices); the developer is required to take action to rectify the situation, rather than merely stopping the illegal works. This shift of emphasis has proved successful, with a rapid increase in the number of Notices complied with.



Direct Action to Remove Illegal Buildings and Structures

5.1.24 In 1993, the Planning Authority took action to carry out court orders and demolish a number of unauthorised structures. Further demolitions took place in 1994, including the removal of an extensive, incomplete development of terraced houses near Attard. Other operations in 1994 included the destruction of unauthorised garages and sheds in a number of locations, including San Gwann, Mosta, Cospicua and Zejtun. Also, over 500 illegal billboards and signs were removed, either by their owners or on behalf of the Planning Authority.

5.1.25 Demolition operations became more frequent in 1995, with 26 actions involving the removal of illegal structures. It is now planned that such *direct action* operations will take place regularly throughout Malta and Gozo. The threat of direct action has also led to the removal of infringements by the developers themselves. Significant structures removed or demolished in 1995 include: a batching plant at Birzebugia; a farmhouse at Pembroke; boathouses and other structures at Armier; a poultry farm at Kercem; agricultural stores at Xaghra; and boundary walls, rooms, garages and other structures at Kercem, Ghasri, Zebug (Gozo), Munxar, Xlendi, Victoria, Qala, Mosta, Floriana, Zebug (Malta) and Zejtun.

5.2. Legal and Procedural Context

5.2.1 The Structure Plan includes a number of policies relating to the wider legal and procedural context for the operations of the Planning Authority. Emphasis was placed on: the introduction of comprehensive land ownership registration (19.7.6); legislation for multiple-ownership schemes (19.13); and the use of competitive development tendering for major projects (19.14).

Land Ownership Registration

The Structure Plan defines the introduction of comprehensive land ownership registration as an important concomitant of Structure Plan policies (para 19.7). This is necessary to:

- avoid delays associated with land ownership disputes;
- ensure land and property owner's legal title;
- provide a transactions record as a basis for valuations; and
- assist in land assembly activities.

5.2.2 Considerable progress has been made in this area, although achievement of complete coverage will take many years. Current policy ensures that all new transfers of property are registered, including most of the property recently acquired by the Government from ecclesiastical entities.

5.2.3 The Land Registry is compiling a computerised property log book regarding land and buildings in registration areas, using both document-imaging and GIS technology. The computerised description of property limits the chance of litigation and assures buyers that there is no dispute regarding property being bought. This will avoid the appropriation of property by third parties. Debts or other encumbrances will be discovered immediately.

5.2.4 As from February 1, 1996, no one is allowed to apply at the registry, whatever the nature of the application, unless the application is accompanied by a computer drawn plan from the office. When the registry receives an application it publishes a notice in the Government Gazette including a description of the property, providing an opportunity for objection. Members of the public may submit a caution within 10 years.

5.2.5 The government is currently in the process of introducing substantial amendments to the 1982 Land Registration Act to fine-tune existing provisions and correct certain omissions in the law. The 1982 Act had introduced the legislative framework allowing for the setting up of a cadastral system of land registration. The banks pushed for a number of amendments, which were eventually passed in 1995.

Competitive development tendering

Prior to the Structure Plan, Government tended to rely on ad-hoc proposals from individual developers for private development on publicly-owned land. The Structure Plan advocates a more pro-active approach, based on a competitive development tendering process structured around the issue of a development brief (19.14).

5.2.6 This approach is intended to secure a wider community benefit from major developments on government land, whilst improving the quality of the development achieved and reducing the risk of project failure. Government has the opportunity to establish a broad framework for the development of the site, in accordance with strategic and local planning objectives. Interested developers work within the development parameters established in the brief. Government has the opportunity to choose from a range of detailed proposals and development consortia.

5.2.7 Development briefs have been (or will be) used as a basis for competitive tendering on the following projects:

1. *Manoel Island/Tigne' Point*; development consortium appointed;
2. *White Rocks*; selection of consortium in progress;
3. *Government Administration Centre*; draft development brief prepared;
4. *Aquarium*; development brief being prepared; and
5. *Fort Ricasoli*; development brief being prepared.

Progress on multi-ownership legislation

The Structure Plan promotes the development of multi-ownership facilities (19.8-19.12). The intention, as outlined in the Plan, is to enable a developer to market freehold self-contained units to individual purchasers, with the management of central and shared facilities handled by a management company. In some cases, the management company may be owned jointly by individual property owners. The sale of freehold property, with a linked management agreement, distinguishes this approach from timeshare.

5.2.10 Policy **TOU10** advocates a multi-ownership approach for the Ta' Cenc tourism development. However, the Structure Plan also advocates the application of multi-ownership arrangements for a wide range of specialist housing developments, including: housing for the elderly; specialist markets such as health farms and language schools; low-cost housing projects; residential units in marina developments; and refurbishment projects in historic properties (19.12).

5.2.11 Multi-ownership involving freehold sale, as described in the Structure Plan, is not currently being pursued. However, controlled forms of multi-ownership which avoid the intrusive marketing characteristics of timeshare properties are being developed within the tourism sector. Fort Chambray is the leading example of this approach. This development now has full planning approval and construction has commenced. Individual purchasers of residential units may be granted a 99 year lease, whilst a management and maintenance company retains overall control of the development. To encourage continuous occupation of the residential units, the management company will operate a sub-letting facility for individual owners. Direct sub-letting by the purchaser, other than through the management company, is prohibited. The management company binds itself not to transfer the property for the purpose of time-share or similar multi-ownership arrangements.

5.2.12 Similar multi-ownership provisions are likely to be incorporated at Ta' Cenc, but this development is at a less advanced stage and is still subject to planning negotiations.

5.2.13 No progress has yet been made in the development of general legislation to facilitate multi-ownership developments, as described in 5.2.10.

5.3. Implementation Programme

5.3.1 The Structure Plan includes a discussion of the financial and human resources required for implementation (section 3). Chapter 17 of the Plan discusses financial issues; policies which require Government investment are identified and mechanisms for sourcing funds are proposed. Chapter 20, which is exceptionally brief, relates to the allocation of responsibilities between government departments and other agencies. This chapter mentions the need to identify programmes, skill requirements and budgets, together with appropriate performance measures. There is scant guidance on the content, form or details of implementation and no programme is included.

5.3.2 This section of the Monitoring Report considers progress in the development of an implementation strategy for the Structure Plan and identifies related issues for Structure Plan review.

Development of an Implementation Strategy

The Structure Plan suggests that Government needs to allocate responsibilities for plan implementation between Government ministries and departments and any other relevant agencies (20.2). A recommended schedule of responsibilities is required, relating to all Structure Plan policies. Implementation programmes and budgets then need to be identified, including those for the Planning Authority and its Planning Directorate (20.3). A central role in the preparation of an implementation strategy was envisaged for the Management Systems Unit.

5.3.3 The Management Systems Unit are primarily responsible for public sector reform within Government Departments, rather than parastatals. Consultancy work for the Planning Authority, where required, has been organised on an in-house basis through the direct appointment of appropriate technical specialists.

5.3.4 A *Preliminary Implementation Strategy* paper was prepared by the Planning Directorate in February 1992, building on a Technical Proposal dated February 1991.

5.3.5 The full *Structure Plan Implementation Strategy and Planning Authority's Role Paper* was produced in September 1993 and was formally approved in principle by the Authority in October 1993. A detailed *Action Programme* was endorsed by the Planning Authority in March 1994.

- 5.3.6 The full implementation strategy consists of eight main elements :
- i. Positive development control involvement; technical support on major projects to demonstrate how to apply Structure Plan policies, produce clear assessment reports, develop negotiating skills and show the 'positive face' of planning.
 - ii. Project identification and promotion; categorising Structure Plan policies, developing an *Integrated Development Programme* and identifying key projects from the Structure Plan for subsequent development and implementation. A list of 59 key projects and issues was produced in February 1992, following an examination of capital budgets and discussions with the Malta Development Corporation, Tourism, Agriculture, Housing, the Curia and the Employment and Training Corporation. From this list, seven key projects and issues were selected for specific development and promotion.
 - iii. Structure Plan information; producing a communication strategy and publicity material to explain the Plan and promote it to all sections of Maltese society.

- iv. Capital budget planning and allocation; review of current procedures and development of recommendations for improvement linked to the Structure Plan framework.
- v. Government/parastatal/private sector liaison and coordination; formulation of the Inter Departmental Planning Committee and the Planning Consultative Committee and the development of relationships throughout the public and private sectors.
- vi. Structure Plan monitoring and review; implementation of a monitoring programme for at least one year prior to Structure Plan Review.
- vii. Local planning; preparation of local plans.
- viii. Preparation of Subject Plans, policy guidance, Action Plans and Development Briefs.

5.3.7 The Planning Authority's immediate focus in implementation was specified as: direct action through the development of external relations; coordination; liaison; and promotional activities. It has a secondary role in the production of a Structure Plan Communications Strategy and information campaign. The Authority's role was specified as a ten point programme :

- i. Approve terms of reference for the Planning Consultative Committee and Inter Departmental Planning Committee and confirm their membership.
- ii. Prepare meetings schedule and agendas for the first meetings of the Planning Consultative Committee and Inter Departmental Planning Committee.
- iii. Establish coordinating committees with Tourism, Environment and Transport, with broad terms of reference and possible agendas.
- iv. Establish direct liaison with the Ministry of Finance for future capital budgeting procedures and a full review of the proposal for an Integrated Development Programme.
- v. Establish a coordinating body with all housing agencies, confirm its agenda and set up a meeting schedule.
- vi. Prepare the Structure Plan Communications Strategy.
- vii. Establish relations with the national executives of the political parties to discuss Structure Plan issues.
- viii. Develop relationships with all relevant ministries and departments to encourage the preparation of sectoral development plans.
- ix. Establish terms of reference for and set up the Heritage Trust.
- x. Review the operation and productivity of the Planning Consultative Committee and Inter Departmental Planning Committee.

Progress on Implementation Strategy

5.3.8 This section reviews progress on the implementation strategy, including the Planning Authority's ten point programme.

Positive Development Control Involvement

5.3.9 The Major Projects Group has been operating successfully for over two years. Regular minutes are produced and extracts are placed on the relevant case file. Ongoing schedules of progress are maintained on each project and regular core group meetings are held. The assessment of major projects is now more consistent, with the application of a comprehensive policy framework and regular progress review. Assessment reports are now more comprehensive, with an improved structure.

5.3.10 Fully worked examples of negotiations, assessment reports, correspondence, draft permits and final approvals have now been prepared for: a major mixed development scheme; seven major hotels; a major public hospital and two private hospitals; the Malta Financial Services Centre; Freeport Terminal II; two private schools; an elderly persons home; and miscellaneous other projects.

5.3.11 A seminar series was held in 1993 to discuss and explain relationships between planning and developers. Training was provided in dealing with developers and in negotiating skills. This formed part of a wider continuing professional development programme and was organised in conjunction with the University of Central England and a UK-based planning consultancy.

Project Identification and Promotion

5.3.12 Structure Plan policies have now been categorised, as follows:

- i. policies for implementation (57);
- ii. policies for the control of development (72);
- iii. policies for implementation by other agencies (74);
- iv. policies for further study or planning (64);
- v. policies for further surveys (9); and
- vi. general policies for further specification.

5.3.13 An Integrated Development Programme proposal document was prepared in August 1992 and the EC Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave written comments in August 1993. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Finance did not respond. No further action has yet been taken on the Integrated Development Programme.

5.3.14 Progress on the key projects that were identified is as follows:

- *Fort Chambray*; a Development Brief was prepared in January 1992. Outline and full development permits were issued in 1994 and 1995. Work commenced on site in 1996.
- *Manoel Island/Tigne' Point*; a Development Brief was prepared in December 1992. The contractor selection process was completed in December 1993. Outline scheme proposals were developed in 1994 and 1995. The emphyteutical deed was discussed in 1995 and 1996. Conclusions to the deed are now awaited before continuing with technical work.
- *Ta' Cenc*; a paper on the pre-development sequence of events was agreed and terms of reference for technical studies were agreed with the developer in October 1993. Technical studies were completed in June 1994. Terms of reference for the Heritage Park Management Plan were completed in November 1994. Agreement on the synthesis of technical studies and park management zones followed in February 1996. A second draft of the Management Plan was submitted in May 1996 and is now being reviewed. Once this is finalised, an outline development application will be submitted for the whole site, as well as a full development application for preliminary works on the Park.
- *Golf Subject Study*; terms of reference were completed in May 1993 and the consultant selection process completed in August 1993. The phase 1 report was submitted in December 1993. Revisions to this report are being completed.
- *Fort Ricasoli*; a Development Brief was prepared in draft form in November 1995 and will be finalised in 1996. Registrations of interest were released in December 1994 and a report on interested companies was completed in April 1995.
- *Revitalising the Three Cities*; preparatory work was carried out in 1993 and has now been incorporated into the first draft of the Grand Harbour Local Plan.
- *Hydroponics*; an early scheme has been shelved and there is no further progress to report.

Structure Plan Information

5.3.15 A draft Communications Strategy for the Structure Plan was prepared in August 1992. There has been little follow-up on this, as yet.

Capital Budget Planning and Allocation

5.3.16 Following a period of discussion with the Ministry of Finance, capital budget request guidelines for new, public sector initiatives were agreed in September 1992. These guidelines identify: primary and essential criteria; positive and negative criteria for project assessment; and a schedule of projects to be promoted in 1993. The guidelines were issued by the Budget Office, Ministry of Finance in September 1992, with the Estimate Forms applying to capital projects for the 1993 and 1994 business planning cycle. No action was taken by any department or parastatal on these guidelines. No further progress has been achieved.

Government/Parastatal/Private Sector Liaison and Coordination

5.3.17 The Planning Consultative Committee and Inter Departmental Planning Committee have now been formulated, according to the terms of reference approved by the Planning Authority, and have met several times. Relationships have now been developed with many Government departments and parastatals and are steadily improving.

Structure Plan Monitoring Review

5.3.18 The Monitoring Programme was completed in January 1996 and approved by the Planning Authority in February 1996. The monitoring process began in July 1995. The first monitoring report will be completed in early 1997 and annually thereafter.

5.3.19 The Structure Plan review process is due to commence in October/November 1997, with the actual review commencing in 1998.

Local Planning

5.3.20 The Planning Authority have approved a Local Plans programme, issued the first Local Plan for Marsaxlokk Bay and commenced work on four of the remaining six Local Plans (see 5.1.4-5.1.5). The Authority set up a Local Plans Sub-Committee to review technical content and progress on the work programme.

Subject Plans, Policy Guidance, Action Plans and Development Briefs

5.3.21 The terms of reference for the Yachting Subject Study were completed in February 1995. Both stage I and II of the study were completed in April 1996 and are awaiting final review. A proposal has been received for providing the necessary publicity material to convert the Study into a legal Subject Plan under Act I of 1992.

5.3.22 Detailed proposals for three Subject Studies are now at an advanced stage. These cover: tourism and recreation; commerce and industry; and housing. Work has already commenced on data gathering, questionnaire design, survey planning and liaison for these studies. Survey fieldwork tenders have recently been awarded and fieldwork commenced in July 1996. Work on the Golf Subject Study is discussed in paragraph 5.3.14.

5.3.23 A wide range of policy and procedural guidance has been approved by the Planning Authority, as described in paragraph 5.1.3.

5.3.24 There are two draft Action Plans:

- the draft *Ta' Qali Action Plan*, produced in September 1995 and currently under revision; and the
- the draft *Pembroke Action Plan*, produced in June 1995. Following a full public consultation programme, this Plan was finalised in June 1996 and received Planning Authority approval in principle in July 1996.

5.3.25 A number of *Development Briefs* have been prepared and approved, either by Government or the Planning Authority:

- Fort Chambray (January 1992);

- Chalet Site, Sliema (March 1992);
- Manoel Island/Tigne' Point (December 1992); and
- White Rocks (October 1995).

5.3.26 There are also a number of draft Development Briefs in preparation:

- Fort Ricasoli;
- Marine Aquarium, Marsascala;
- site at Kalkara for mixed development; and
- a site in Birzebbugia.

5.3.27 Also, in the past, draft Development Briefs were prepared for Pender Place, Paceville and the National Arts Centre, Valletta.

The Inter Departmental Planning and Planning Consultative Committees

5.3.28 The terms of reference and membership of the Planning Consultative Committee were approved by the Planning Authority in February 1994. Membership of the Inter Departmental Planning Committee was confirmed by the Office of the Prime Minister in January 1995 and the terms of reference were approved by the Planning Authority in March 1994.

5.3.29 The Planning Consultative Committee first met in March 1993 and has met 21 times up until May 1996. Committee discussions have generally concentrated on major projects, but over recent months discussions have also included policy documents, the local plans, Structure Plan monitoring and other more general issues.

5.3.30 The Inter Departmental Planning Committee first met in January 1996. They have only met once since then (May 1996), to discuss the antennae farm on the Victoria Lines and the petrol filling station relocation on Regional Road.

5.3.31 No action has yet been taken on reviewing the operations and productivity of the Planning Consultative Committee and Inter Departmental Planning Committee.

Establish Coordinating Committees in Tourism, Environment and Transport

5.3.32 A joint committee was formally established with Tourism in March 1996, after a period of 4 years of informal meetings. The Transport Committee has not yet been established. However, a draft paper on its membership, structure and objectives was prepared by the Directorate in June 1996 for consideration by Government. There is, as yet, no formal committee with the Environment Protection Department/Secretariat for the Environment, although informal meetings are held with various sections of the Directorate on an ad-hoc basis.

Establish liaison with Ministry of Finance for Capital Budgeting and IDP

5.3.33 Liaison was established with Finance in 1992, but has since diminished. A member of the Planning Authority Board is a senior representative of the Ministry of Finance and is a member of the Planning Authority's Tender Evaluation Committee.

Establish Coordinating Body with Housing agencies

5.3.34 No specific action has been taken on liaison in the housing sector, although there have been a number of informal discussions over specific issues, such as the Pembroke Action Plan and the Msida slum clearance project. It is proposed to hold more structured meetings with all housing agencies during the preparation of the Housing Subject Study.

Prepare Structure Plan Communications Strategy

5.3.35 A draft Communications Strategy was prepared in August 1992, but there has been little follow-up, as yet.

Establish key political relations

5.3.36 The Planning Authority held meetings with the PN in May 1995, MLP in August 1995 and AD in October 1995. Under discussion were the Structure Plan and the role and operations of the Planning Authority, as viewed by the political parties.

Develop relationships for preparing Sectoral Development Plans

5.3.37 Little action has yet been taken on this issue. Relationships should cover the following departments and agencies:

- Health (Policy **SOC1**);
- Education (Policy **SOC10, RCO40**);
- Agriculture (Policy **RCO6**);
- Environment (Policy **RCO6, MCO4**);
- Care of the Elderly (Policy **SOC17**);
- Tourism (Policy **TOU2**; liaison has been established in this area);
- Civil Aviation (Policy **AVN2, AVN3**);
- Enemalta (Policy **PUT22**);
- Telemalta (Policy **PUT24**); and
- Posts (Policy **PUT27**).

Set up Heritage Trust

5.3.38 A report was prepared in 1995 by a consultant, commissioned by MSU, on the setting up of a Heritage Trust. This was not followed up by Government. However, there some sympathy is developing for the merger of Din l-Art Helwa and Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna as a Heritage Trust. There has been no official action on such an idea to date.

List of Abbreviations

COS	Central Office of Statistics
DCC	Development Control Commission
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMU	Environmental Management Unit
EPD	Department for the Protection of the Environment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
HCEB	Hotel and Catering Establishments Board
GIS	Geographic Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HAC	Heritage Advisory Committee
IDPC	Interdepartmental Planning Committee
MDC	Malta Development Corporation
MSU	Management Systems Unit
NPI	National Protective Inventory
RO	Reverse Osmosis
SASTP	Sant' Antnin Sewage Treatment Plant
SSCN	Society for the Study of Conservation and of Nature
TIS	Traffic Impact Statement
TSE	Treated Sewage Effluent
UCA	Urban Conservation Area

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