

From European Demonstration Programme to Eco-Island, the Isle of Wight - UK

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Integrating coherent strategies covering the risk-dimension (prevention to response) into planning and investment
- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Ecosystems based approach
- Technical

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

How a local authority has determined to try and reach a sustainable future and reduce its carbon footprint to be the lowest in England.

4. Overview of the case

The Isle of Wight used funding for the European Demonstration Programme (1996-99) to give a boost to the work and cooperation to its coastal zone management programme. In the intervening decade, the Council has grown stronger and now has developed, with its partners in the Island Strategic Partnership, an Eco Island strategy to last to 2020.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Isle of Wight, off the southern English coastline in the English Channel, was one of the original projects in the European Demonstration Programme. It planned i.a. to give more consistency of its coastal zone sectoral plans, improve information on the project area and on management techniques and practices, and develop model systems of administration and cooperation which allow for integration and subsidiarity.

The Island has a population of 142,000 in a total area of 380 km² with a coastline of 1680 km. Tourism is one of the main industries on the Island with over 2 million of people visiting annually and the population more than doubling between July and August. It generates £360 m. of direct expenditure and supports over 20% of all jobs although it tends to have low skilled and low paid jobs. Nonetheless, based on the economic Gross Value Added contribution to the economy/head and unemployment, the Island ranks below the regional average with a significant number of people not in education, employment or training. This results in the Island ranking within the most deprived quartile of local authorities in SE England. However, the Island is home to a rich variety of important habitats and species. 70% of the Island is protected by UK or European environmental designations and 51% designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with most of the coastline also designated. However, there are

risks from climate change. Sea level rise may lead to increased erosion of the Island's coastline, landslip and flooding and an increase in the area of land that cannot be developed. The increasing population (with many retirees and second home owners) and visitor numbers could place considerable strain on the landscape and biodiversity of the Island if they are not properly managed. The biggest sector on the Island with regards to both output and employment is Public Administration (including Education, Health and Defence). Small businesses (1-10 employees) represent 83% of the total number of businesses on the Island. However, being an Island weakens the competitive position in attracting and retaining business investment because of higher costs in delivering goods and services.

b) Objectives

The Island Strategic Partnership, of which the Isle of Wight Council is a member, has, most recently, developed Eco Island, an ambitious change programme. It has the intention to turn the Isle of Wight into an Island with the lowest carbon footprint in England by 2020.

6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

a) Management

The highest level of local administration on the Island is the Isle of Wight Council, a unitary local authority. Eco Island will be co-ordinated by the Island Strategic Partnership (ISP), a representative group of leading Island organisations responsible for ensuring that it becomes reality by 2020.

b) ICZM tools

Since the closure of the EU LIFE project which supported the Demonstration Programme, ICZM on the Island has improved particularly with respect to shoreline management. Eco Island has been developed as the strategy which will shape the future of the Isle of Wight until at least 2020. It is the Island's Sustainable Community Strategy which has three main strands: Economic Environmental, and Social. It is not just a document to explain a Sustainable Community Strategy but a live and ambitious project, bringing together a long lasting commitment to a sustainable future. This ambition for an Eco Island grew out of public opinion on the Island. Environmentally, the whole Island's ecological footprint will be reduced with better energy efficiency in homes and work-places and high environmental awareness in new developments. The Council is exploring the option of introducing electric cars, reduce landfill and develop its own renewable energy supplies. The Eco Island Vision has guiding values that reflect those of Island communities and businesses. By 2020, the Isle of Wight seeks to have the lowest Carbon footprint in England, will develop new sectors of employment, create a centre of excellence in renewable energies and generate capacity of over 100Mw of electricity by 2020. To this end, a new spatial plan for the Island is being developed, called the Island Plan, which will replace the existing Unitary Development Plan. Since sustainability on Eco Island is about keeping local communities thriving through the encouragement of businesses and investment, the Council will be able to use its Island Plan to encourage local businesses to start up and sustain the local communities.

The ISP has agreed a vision, values and priorities for Eco Island set out under four themes viz. Thriving Island, Healthy and Supportive Island, Safe and well-kept Island and Inspiring Island. Each will be managed by a specific Key Delivery Partnership. The ISP has determined where there is the most urgent need for change and development. This has been developed into a list of fifteen priorities that will guide the first steps of Eco Island e.g.

- Target: Three new local nature reserves across the Island by 2010. This will contribute to the Island's Biodiversity Action Plan
- Target: The design of a low carbon design manifesto. This will set design principles to embrace and promote low carbon technologies and will be used to supplement the Island Plan.
- Target: Five projects demonstrating sustainable living in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This will develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life in an area of great beauty and landscape diversity.
- Target: Three new renewable energy systems in community buildings across the Island. The Council is particularly keen to see the installation of technologies which have not been previously supported, such as biomass and micro-wind systems.
- Target: Use of planning powers to generate sustainable development across the Island. The new Island plan will provide a clear policy framework for the spatial future of the Island until 2026.

Eco Island is being supported by the implementation of an Agreement (called a Local Area Agreement in the UK) between the Island Strategic Partnership (ISP) and the Government, signed in 2008. It sets targets and actions which can be measured with indicators selected from the Government's National Indicator Set. It will allow all of the total, non-targeted funding within certain government grants to support delivery of defined local, regional and national priorities.

7. Cost and resources

The government department, Defra, provided funding of £2.7 million to meet 35% of the £8 million cost of developing and operating a new gasification facility during the first year.

8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)

A new Gasification plant - the first of its type in the UK - converting waste to energy, was opened in 2008. The pioneering, government-backed technology creates energy from waste and will generate 2.3 Mw of electricity, enough to power 2,000 homes. Gasification is an alternative to incineration and converts waste into a gas via an advanced two-stage thermal treatment process. The resulting heat energy is used to produce steam, which is then be used to generate electricity. The plant generates energy from 60,000 tonnes of waste, diverting an extra 15,000 tonnes of waste away from landfill each year.

9. Success and Fail factors

The Isle of Wight has been actively involved in coastal management for a decade prior to the demonstration programme and thus came into the programme with a wealth of experience. Enthusiasm, commitment and continuous funding have all been important in placing the Isle of Wight at the forefront of UK ICZM. The LIFE project gave a boost and financial injection and allowed consolidation and additional co-operative projects/partnerships to be developed. Local consultation events and listening to the islanders has also been very important.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

None so far.

11. Prepared by

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13. Sources

- Eco Island The Isle of Wight's sustainable community strategy 2008-2020. (2008) Island Strategic Partnership,
- LAA2 Delivery Plan - Projected Activities (all measures) (2009) Isle of Wight
- www.eco-island.org.uk
- www.iwight.com





LAA2 delivery plan (457.52 KB) 