

**Partial Local Plan Review of the  
South Malta Local Plan (2006)  
as amended**

**Area at Hal-Mula,  
Zebbug**



**Planning Authority  
February 2017**

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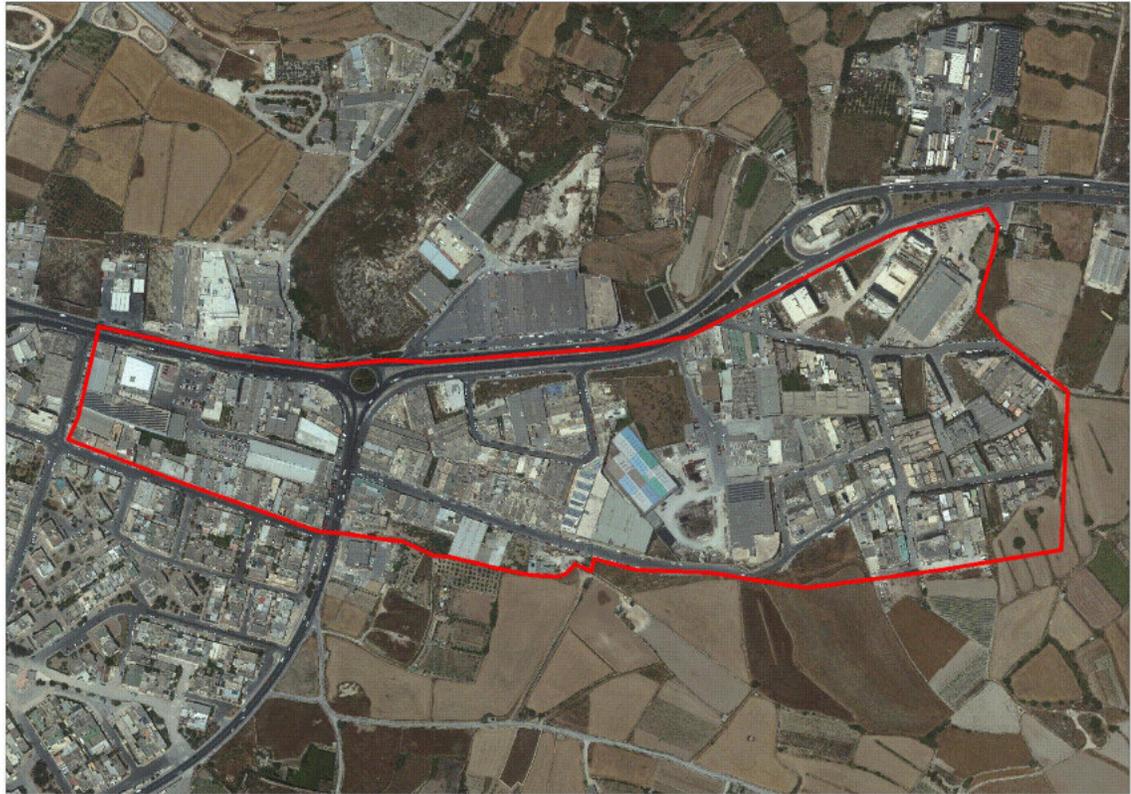
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## 1.0 Scope and Objectives

- 1.1. Following the request from Government to the Planning Authority, the Planning Directorate initiated a Partial Local Plan Review of the South Malta Local Plan (2006) for the Area at Hal-Mula in Zebbug (as shown in Map 1 below). The purpose of this review is to set the planning parameters (land use zoning, building heights and road alignments) for the development of the area. The Government Objectives listed below aim to address the conflicting development patterns and mix of land uses that currently exist leading to the deterioration of the quality of life of residents living within the area:
  - To establish the relevant planning parameters for the area shown on the attached map; and
  - To seek to reduce deleterious impacts on predominantly residential areas from other incompatible land uses.
- 1.2. In the Phase 1 Public Consultation on the Government Objectives, held between 16th August, 2016 and 19th September, 2016, 19 submissions were received from stakeholders in the area. These submissions included: 10 submissions from residents objecting to the impact of industrial activity and also requests to increase the residential zoning (Areas indicated as Area A in the partial local plan review of 2007 (PC 62/07)); 5 submissions that relate to retaining the area for industrial SME garages as originally zoned (Areas indicated as Area B in the partial local plan review of 2007 (PC 62/07)); 3 submissions that relate to as yet undeveloped large sites, indicating an interest in the future planning of this area; and 1 submission to increase the building height along Triq L-Imdina. The submissions and PA responses are included in Appendix 1 Public Submissions Phase 1 Objectives.
- 1.3. The Hal-Mula Area at Zebbug is located just south of Triq L-Imdina, a busy and major road network route, north of Triq Dun Luret Callus and Triq Luret Cutajar, east of Triq Ganni Bonnici and west of the Strategic Open Gap between Zebbug and Qormi, and has a total area of around 0.18km<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4. The Hal-Mula area is mostly developed, consisting of industrial/warehousing/storage related buildings, commercial buildings mainly facing the main access roads including Triq l-Imdina and various residential land uses mostly located on the upper floors overlying other ground floor uses including both SMEs and private car garages. The road network in the area is also already in place. A limited number of sites are still vacant providing potential for further development. The area is characterised by a long history of mixed developments resulting in an interlocking of varying conflicting land uses. The nature of the area has changed substantially from the original Temporary

Provision Schemes, 1988 industrial land use zoning with a resultant growth in residential and commercial land uses in a number of streets. This originated mostly from the previous 'casa bottega' type of developments but increased over time with the development of upper floors as additional residential units and premises fronting the main road as commercial units.

- 1.5. The area in question currently has a poor quality environment with a dense mixed use, high activity urban area of incompatible land uses that needs to be addressed. The partial review attempts to improve the quality of this area by rezoning into more specific character areas aimed to reduce the mix of use in the longer term. In this respect, the previous mixed use zoning is not being recommended further as this is less likely to reduce deleterious activity from past experiences than the following of a separate zoning strategy based on clustered predominant land uses.
- 1.6. It is highlighted that although the planning tool of 'separate zoning' can be utilised to create more distinct clusters of uses, operating entities with older permits cannot legally be guided to cease operations or be relocated. These will therefore continue to operate as per permit conditions unless redeveloped in future where the latest approved zoning would legally be applicable. It is emphasised that the possession and existence of an approved permit does not imply that operational transgressions are acceptable and such land uses are required to operate sustainably in the interest of an improved street environment.
- 1.7. New public demands for a further review are once again requesting a departure from the present mixed use situation that has led to an increased complexity in the land use of the area and also the need to take into account the extent of increased residential development in certain parts of the area. This partial review acknowledges a number of predominantly dwelling areas as residential areas. Furthermore, the potential of zones facing the arterial road, Triq L-Imdina, for commercial development with retail and showroom land uses along the main road frontages is also being acknowledged in the rezoning exercise. A number of other areas are also being retained specifically as industrial areas as per original TPS 1988 zoning, rather than mixed use. This is to ensure the continuity of the industrial function in the area with the incentive to redevelop also as commercial, from industrial.



**Map 1: Hal-Mula Area, Zebbug**

## 2.0 Strategic and Local Planning Guidance

- 2.1. The ‘Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development’ (SPED, 2015) considers and guides developments within the Urban Area in line with the Vision in Section 1.27 as follows:

**‘The Urban Area shall become an attractive place for people to live, work, play and interact. It shall be a clean, pollution free, safe....’**

- 2.2. The SPED 2015 strategic guidance is to improve upon areas with existing deleterious impacts and attempts to ameliorate on their current situation by reducing conflict and incompatibility between existing land uses. This is a complex goal. However, through this partial review exercise, existing industrial operations with permit will continue to be supported in view of their economic importance, still, the need to protect amenity of adjacent uses and surrounding areas and improve upon the street environment of the area is also being prioritised by this re-planning exercise.
- 2.3. SPED Policy TO 6.1 in effect is applicable as it requires the safeguarding of environmental health from deleterious impacts as follows:

**‘Controlling the location, design and operation of development’.**

- 2.4. Furthermore under SPED Urban Objective 3, SPED Policy UO 3.4 and 3.5 call for the following, respectively:

**‘Identifying sites which are derelict, in a state of abandonment, of poor quality or include incompatible uses and seek their upgrading through high quality development.**

**‘Controlling the proximity of non-residential uses in urban areas.’**

- 2.5. This area was originally zoned in the Temporary Provision Schemes (TPS, 1988) as an industrial area. It was rezoned within the SMLP (2006) as a Mixed Use Area subdivided into two main zoning types ‘Area A’ and ‘Area B’ zoning through Area Policy SMZG01 and Map ZG2 Zebbug East. The Mixed Use Area zoning was introduced in view of a mix of industrial, commercial and residential land uses most of which are incompatible and with conflicting land uses and arising at different levels including also incompatible ground and upper floors, apart from adjacent properties.

- 2.6. Following the Local Plan rezoning of the area in 2006, the issues arising from differences in zoning led to an increase in public demands for a further review. This review was followed through a partial local plan review carried out in 2007 which rezoned the area once again, amending the coverage of the Areas A and B zoning to try to address the situation. The areas that were zoned as Area B which prohibited the intensification of residential land use were increased in this planning exercise. This led to public complaints from residents in the area, who demanded further change leading to the request of this latest planning review.
  
- 2.7. The Partial Review attempts to improve the quality of these areas by rezoning into more specific character areas, thereby reducing mixed use. In this respect, the previous mixed use zoning category is not being recommended to be sustained further as this is more likely to increase deleterious impacts.

### **3.0 Amended Policy Guidance for Hal-Mula Area, Zebbug**

3.1. The following Policy SMZG01 is to replace the previous approved policy for the Hal-Mula Area, Zebbug and its associated policy map. Development within this area is to conform to the following parameters:

#### **SMZG01**

#### **Hal-Mula Area, Zebbug**

**Within the Hal-Mula Area, Zebbug as indicated on the Map SMHM 1 the Planning Authority will consider development applications subject to the following parameters:**

##### **Land Use Framework**

- 1. Within the areas designated as Industrial (Small and Medium Enterprise) Areas, only the following land uses are permitted:**
  - (i) All Classes in Category D Commercial Uses - Development Planning (Use Classes) Order, 2014;**
  - (ii) Class 5A Light Industry and 5B General Industry - Development Planning (Use Classes) Order, 2014;**
  - (iii) Class 6A, Storage and Distribution - Development Planning (Use Classes) Order, 2014;**
  - (iv) Taxi Business, hire of motor vehicles or public service garage.**
- 2. Within the areas designated as Commercial Areas, all Classes in Category D Commercial Uses - Development Planning (Use Classes) Order, 2014.**
- 3. Within the areas designated as Residential Areas, the land uses listed under the General Policy SMHO02 are acceptable with the exception of supermarkets and business and light industry.**

##### **Development Parameters**

**Within all designated areas:**

**In the case of existing permitted developments that are not in line with the assigned land use for the area these will continue to operate as per existing permit conditions. When a development planning application which involves a redevelopment/intensification/change of use is submitted, the new land use parameters above will become applicable.**

**The building heights of this area, as indicated in Map SMHM 1, shall not exceed the maximum allowable height of 17.5 m as per Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2015 (DC15).**

**New and/or redevelopment proposals shall lead to a general improvement in the appearance of the area, with form and treatment of the elevations that enhance through improved design the streetscape and the surrounding environment.**

### **Triq Dun Bartilmew Attard Environmental Improvements**

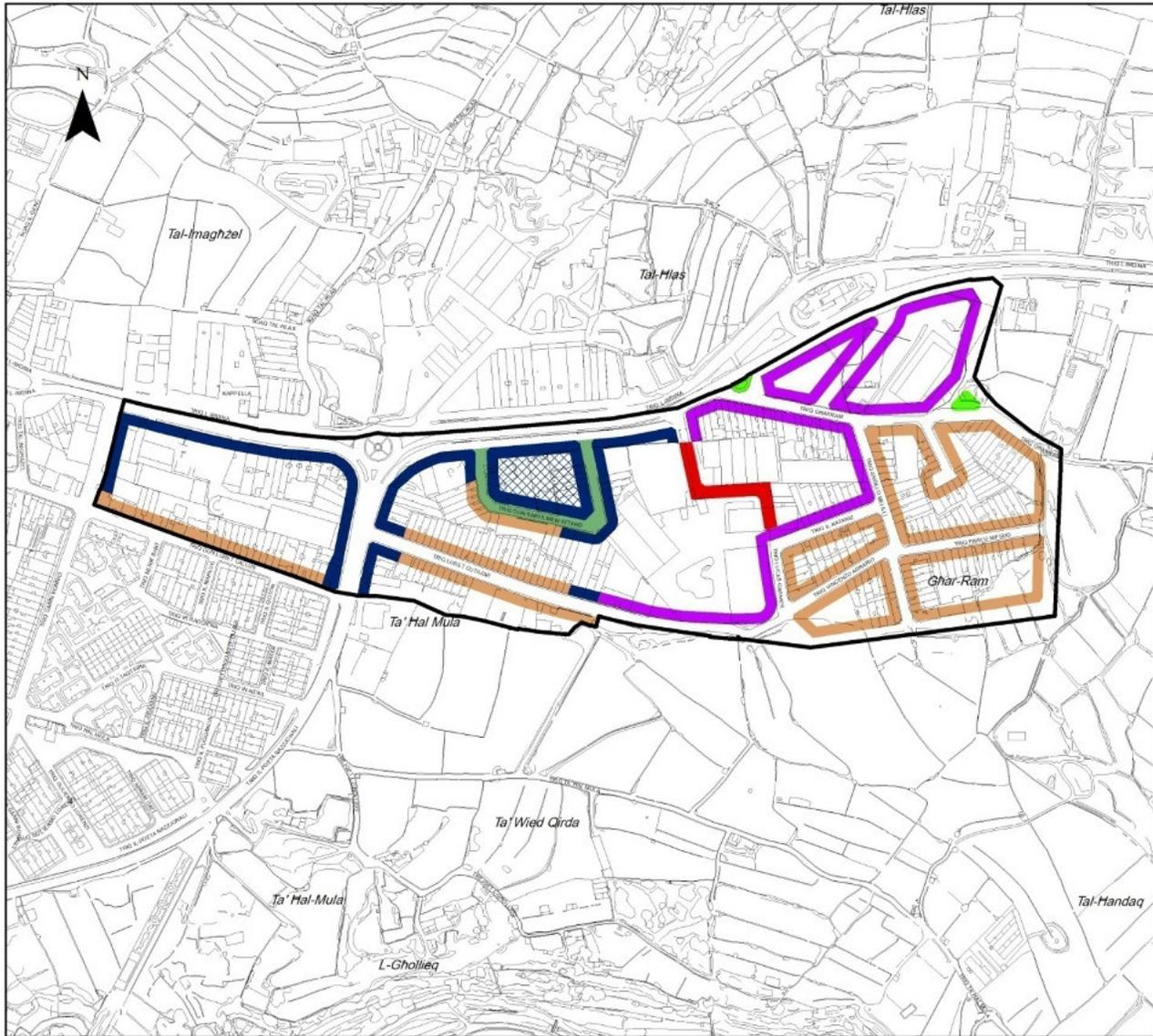
**In cases of new development or redevelopment of plots with a frontage onto Triq Dun Bartilmew Attard as shown on Map SMHM 1, environmental improvement measures will be encouraged by the Planning Authority that include:**

- 1. The the exclusion of Classes 4C and 4D - Development Planning (Use Classes) Order, 2014, within the Commercial Area;**
- 2. A minimum 6.5 m setback at street level from the existing building alignment for properties with a frontage within the block as identified on Map SMHM 1, for the provision of additional on-street parking or soft landscaped areas. The loss of gross developable floorspace (GDF) through this provision may be considered over and above the stipulated height limitation.**

### **Consideration of the Elimination of Schemed Road**

**The schemed road connecting Triq il-Kataniz to Triq L-Imdina as shown on Map SMHM 1 is to be considered for deletion provided that all the properties having frontage on the schemed road are under single ownership.**

- 3.2. Hal-Mula was designated as a mixed use area in the South Malta Local Plan in 2006, and reviewed in 2007, in view of the mix of land uses that include industrial, commercial and residential land uses, the latter overlying industrial or commercial concerns. The area was originally zoned as an industrial area in the Temporary Provision Schemes of 1988. However over time the number of permitted residential and commercial land uses increased, to the extent that the urban character and use-mix of the area has changed substantially from the previous zoning in a number of areas. This has led to the need to address the current situation. Much present activity is incompatible and conflicting, leading to a situation of increased public complaints ensuing from an urban environment declining in quality.
- 3.3. Despite the previous amendments the predominant operational issues have remained. The current mixed use area zoning has not been successful in addressing the incompatibility of uses faced in the area. The reviewed policy framework is therefore intended to ameliorate on the current situation by departing from the mixed use planning concept and controlling deleterious activity. This should lead to an improved quality of life and increased compatibility between the different land uses in the area, especially in the longer term. A poor quality urban environment is detrimental and unacceptable, regardless of whether the land use activity includes industrial, commercial or residential uses. In this respect, a separate zoning strategy is being followed that clearly defines the allowable land uses in the area subject to a continuation of present use for existing land uses with permit until redevelopment is proposed.
- 3.4. During the initial public consultation submissions related to issues within Triq Dun Bartilmew Attard were raised. This street is being specifically addressed in view of its particular narrow configuration coupled with the mix of land use activity in this area and the concentration of residential uses within a specific stretch of this road. The policy seeks to achieve environmental improvement by requiring a setback of 6.5m from current alignment to facilitate provision of additional space for public parking and soft landscaping subject to a consideration of retention of overall allowable Gross developable Floorspace (GDF). The additional space above height limitation will need to be assessed in terms of its visual impact on the surroundings.
- 3.5. The study area includes a schemed road which has been planned since 1985 but never implemented. This review has assessed the need for this road and when considering its irregular alignment, restricted width and permitted development which encroach on its alignment there is adequate justification for its elimination. However it needs to be ascertained that the elimination of this road does not affect third party development potential.



South Malta Local Plan



**Legend:**

-  Partial Review Boundary - SMZG01
-  Commercial - SMCM 06
-  Industrial (SMEs) - SMCM 08
-  Residential - SMHO 02
-  Triq Dun Bartlimew Attard Environmental Improvements
-  Triq Dun Bartlimew Attard Proposed Road Widening
-  Green Area - SMSE 04
-  Proposed Deletion of Schemed Road

Partial Review  
Hal-Mula Zebbug

Scale: 1:3,500 Date: February 2017

Map:

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

SMHM1

Base Maps - Copyright Mapping Unit, Planning Authority

## **4.0 Public Consultation**

- 4.1 The Planning Authority invites individuals and organizations to send their representations pertaining to the Partial Local Plan Review of the South Malta Local Plan (2006), as amended, for Hal-Mula, Zebbug.

Representations are to be made in writing to the:

The Director of Planning,

Planning Authority,

Partial Local Plan Review of the South Malta Local Plan (2006)

Hal-Mula, Zebbug

P.O. Box 200, Marsa GPO 01

or on the email address: [smlp.review@pa.org.mt](mailto:smlp.review@pa.org.mt)

Submissions are to be sent to the Authority by Monday 03rd April 2017.