



Solent power: Might the Isle of Wight look something like this in 10 years' time?

Isle of Wight set to become world's first 'eco-island'

Council plans to regenerate the whole of the island and run it on low-carbon energy

BY THOMAS LANE

The Isle of Wight may become the world's first "eco-island", powered entirely by green energy, if plans being developed by the island's council are implemented. Under the proposals, the island would become self-sufficient in low-carbon power, and could even become a net exporter of energy. Measures under consideration include tidal power and a combined heat and power plant that would run on "gasified" waste – the first in the UK. Council leaders believe the proposals will regenerate the island and provide significant investment for infrastructure. The council is understood to be working with a firm of London

architects and a leading research university to turn concepts into workable plans. It is believed that it is being advised by one of the academics who worked on Dongtan, the world's first eco-city, in China.

Joe Duckworth, chief executive of the council, said the island was ideally placed to put the plans into effect. He said: "Politically there is huge support

Politically there is huge support for this, and the private sector on the island is incredibly keen

JOE DUCKWORTH, IOW COUNCIL

for this, and the private sector on the island is incredibly keen."

Private sector companies based on the island include Vestas Blades, the largest wind turbine blade manufacturer in the UK.

Duckworth added that the island's infrastructure was in need of investment, which meant it was an ideal opportunity to develop green solutions.

He added that the island had "a specific market tied to us so it's a bit safer for our private sector colleagues".

The council is already trying to improve infrastructure. It is bidding to take part in a £900m pathfinder PFI for transportation schemes. If successful, it could upgrade all

the island's roads and streets over the next 15 years.

Duckworth said new roads could be reduced to just one carriageway, with the other lane being reserved for cyclists and pedestrians.

The council is stipulating that developers bidding to regenerate a local housing scheme construct new homes to level four of the Code for Sustainable Homes. It also has the funding to rebuild Cowes high school as a zero-carbon school.

Duckworth said the ideas would be worked up towards the end of this year and presented at a conference next March.

More on green power at www.building.co.uk/sustainability