

Mr [REDACTED]
Planning Authority
St. Francis Ravelin
Floriana, FRN 1230

8th July, 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

**Partial Local Plan Review of the 2006 Local Plan Policies for Rural Settlements (May 2025)
Consultation in terms of Regulation 4(6) of S.L. 549.61 (Strategic Environmental Assessment
Regulations)**

Reference is made to the SEA screening consultation on the Partial Local Plan Review of the 2006 Local Plan Policies for Rural Settlements, which the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) received by email on 17th June 2025.

ERA has reviewed the information provided with this SEA screening consultation. The review was also carried out within the context of the approved Rural Policy and Design Guidance (RPDG) of 2014 which applies to the wider rural area. Strategically, no significant incremental impacts are envisaged. However, the proposed revisions should seek to limit development in rural settlements and to contain it as close as possible to the existing built-up clusters, in order to: (i) avoid risks of major impacts (e.g. excessive land take); and (ii) scattering of built-up structures and facilities in the rural landscape. ERA's recommendations for improvements are being included in Appendix 1 for your perusal.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Kevin Mercieca
Chief Executive Officer
Environment and Resources Authority



Appendix 1

ERA's recommendations on the Partial Local Plan Review of the 2006 Local Plan Policies for Rural Settlements

8th July 2025

- 1) Policy SMSE 07 of the SMLP should be revised. Only amenity structures in back gardens located within the boundaries of rural settlements should be considered.
- 2) Proposals for animal enclosures should comply with criterion (b) of Policy 5.2(1) of the RPDG. These are to be constructed in natural timber or a small part in stone and the rest in natural timber.
- 3) Swimming pools and deck areas (75m²) should be required to adhere to criteria (1) to (5) of Policy 6.4 of the RPDG as much as possible.
- 4) The separate criterion (iii) regarding the floorspace of 6m² for toilets/showers/changing rooms should be part of the criterion on swimming pools, similar to Policy 6.4 of RPDG.
- 5) With regards to the distance of the proposed amenities from dwelling units, a clear and conservative maximum distance should be established to minimise impacts.
- 6) The minimum footprint of existing buildings that qualify for extension should be reconsidered, i.e. from the current 50m² to a minimum of 100m² as per Policy 6.2A of RPDG.
- 7) Applicants should only be entitled to a structure, either a 10m² tool shed or a 25m² animal enclosure, provided that the resulting structure shall not occupy more than 10% of the area of the curtilage of the dwelling whichever is the lower.
- 8) It is also recommended that interventions that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on natural habitats and features (including garrigue, maquis, rocky outcrops, cliffs, slopes, etc.), as well as scheduled, listed, designated or protected areas, should not be permitted.