

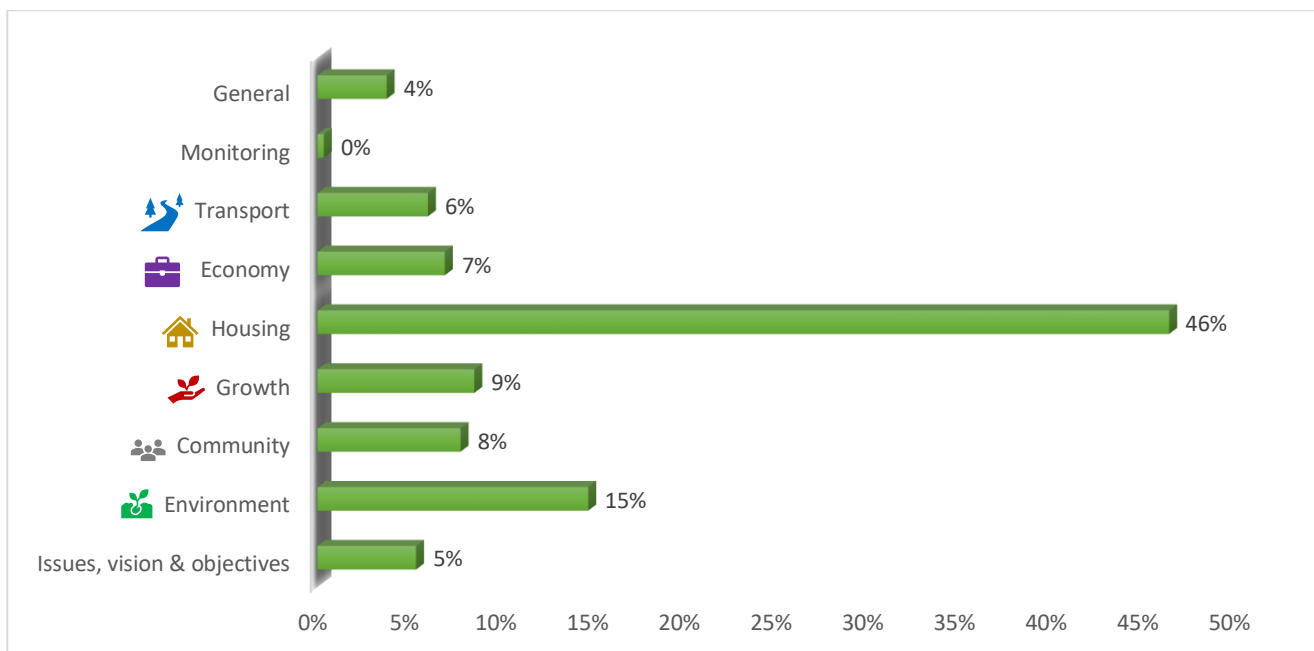
## Draft Island Planning Strategy consultation - Summer 2021

During August and September of 2021, the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) consulted on a new version of the Draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS). In conjunction with the Town and Parish Councils across the island, planning staff presented at over 20 separate meetings and together with a number of drop in sessions run by Councillor Paul Fuller, over 600 people attended these events to hear about the Draft IPS and have the opportunity to ask questions.

There was a fantastic response from the community and local stakeholders and over 2,800 individual comments were made on the draft plan and supporting evidence base. Planning staff continue to work through and read all of the comments made, however it is useful to set out some of the key statistics and headlines that are emerging.

### Section by Section headlines

As shown on the chart below, just under half (46%) of the comments made on the Draft IPS related to the issue of housing, with the Environment section (15%) attracting the next highest number of comments. There were similar levels of comments on each of the Community, Growth, Economy and Transport sections.



#### Environment

- **Strong support for settlement separation / gaps;**
- **Support for both the policies on dark skies and ecological protection;**
- **Concern how 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved and how much land this could need;**
- **Question how net zero by 2030 will be achieved without identifying sites for planting to absorb CO2;**



#### Community

- Understanding that there is a need to improve the environmental performance of housing;
- Welcome the plan emphasis on health and wellbeing but there is a perceived significant lack of health facilities / capacity;
- Concern over whether sufficient infrastructure will be provided to support new housing;



#### Growth

- **Welcome most development being within settlement boundaries;**
- **Large opposition to adjustment of the settlement boundary at Freshwater and Bembridge;**
- **The proposed 'hard' settlement boundaries will restrict growth and decrease affordability;**



## Housing

- Welcome the reduction in housing number but it is still too high. Perception that empty properties can meet the housing need;
- Others consider the figure to be too low and not effective forward planning by removing suitable land;
- More affordable housing is needed to stem the flow of young people from the island. Affordable housing and local needs should be the cornerstone of the IPS;
- Support for challenging the government set standard assessment of housing need due to the `exceptional circumstances` of the island;



## Economy

- There is general support for employment allocations and the question is raised whether more are needed to support local employment;
- Support for the policy on rural employment but concern is raised about a lack of employment opportunities especially in West Wight;



## Transport

- Support more electric car charging and proposed cycle tracks;
- Concern on the perceived worsening congestion on the Island roads particularly junctions in Newport and ongoing issues with the floating bridge;
- Support for more rail lines and infrastructure investment and more reference to the IOW Restoring your Railway bid

## What happens now?

As a result of the comments made, there are some key areas that we are now exploring in more detail ahead of preparing the next version of the IPS, including:

- How can the IPS better reflect the UNESCO Biosphere status of the island and should a specific Biosphere policy be included?
- Further investigation into the potential case for `exceptional circumstances` and whether there is robust demographic evidence to support such a position and what that would mean to the housing number;
- Ongoing discussions with key infrastructure providers and consideration of whether IPS policies can provide greater clarity on how and when infrastructure is delivered;
- A comprehensive review of the SHLAA to provide an up to date assessment of available and developable land across the island;
- How can the IPS support the emerging Solent Freeport, and can policies help to secure some of the potential economic benefits to the island?

All of the comments are being reviewed and considered, and where appropriate, further changes may be made to the Plan that are in accordance with national planning policy. The evidence base will also continue to be updated and a Final Draft IPS (known as a Regulation 19 Submission version) will then be produced. This will be subject to a further public consultation in the first half of 2022, before the IPS is submitted to the government for public examination in Summer 2022.

## Where can I find out more about the Draft IPS?

To keep up to date on the progress of the Draft IPS, please visit [www.iow.gov.uk/planthewight](http://www.iow.gov.uk/planthewight)