



**PLANNING FOR RYDE**  
**RYDE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT**

**Revised Version 2.0 (Draft)**  
Feb 2021

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2019, Ryde Town Council (RTC) published its first *Position Statement*. Its main purpose was to set out RTC's position with regard to the Isle of Wight Council (IWC)'s draft *Regeneration Strategy*, which was published in August 2018, and its Core Strategy, a review of which was about to begin.
- 1.2 Since then there have been many changes in the local, regional and national environment. In particular:
- RTC has produced two additional planning documents: the *Ryde Place Plan* in 2019 and a *Corporate Plan* in 2020.
  - A number of major new projects have begun or are proposed in the town, including the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) project, refurbishment of the Ryde interchange, new residential developments, and RTC's acquisition of two key historic buildings.
  - The final version of the IWC's *Regeneration Strategy* was published in June 2019.
  - The IWC published a first draft of its new Core Strategy, known as the *Island Strategy*, in November 2018. It was intended that the Strategy come into operation in the 2019/20 financial year. However, for reasons explained in section 3 below, it has not yet been finalised.
  - In August 2020 the Government published a White Paper proposing major changes in the planning system which could have a significant effect on the nature of the local planning process and the format of local plans.
- 1.3 It was always intended that the *Position Statement* would be reviewed and updated regularly and these various events have exacerbated the need for this. It was originally intended to conduct the review early in 2020. However, due mainly to the Covid-19 outbreak, it was not possible to begin the review until October 2020.
- 1.4 The revised *Position Statement* has two main aims: to inform the IWC of Ryde's position on planning-related issues and to provide a policy framework to assist RTC's Planning, Environment and Regeneration Committee in fulfilling its statutory role as a consultee on planning applications within its boundary.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Ryde Town Council (RTC) is a Statutory Consultee in the Planning Process. This means that there is a requirement by the local Planning Authority, the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), to consult with the Town Council on planning applications and strategic planning proposals, such as the Island Plan. The Town Council has delegated responsibility for the consideration of both planning and highways related matters to a dedicated Planning Committee. The Committee comprises eight town councillors from across the parish and meets regularly throughout the year. In addition, since the Town Council was established in 2008 it has either led or been closely involved with a

number of recent plans, policies and consultation exercises about the town. These were, where appropriate, re-examined as part of the development of the initial version of the Position Statement.

## 2.2 These documents are as follows:

- (i) The *Atkins Ryde Public Realm Strategy 2004* was commissioned by the Isle of Wight Partnership and Ryde Development Trust in 2000 and funded by the South East England Development Agency. This predated the establishment of Ryde Town Council in 2008 but was a key initiative within the Ryde 2000 regeneration programme, which was developed to ensure that Single Regeneration Budget funding awarded to Ryde was used to deliver sustainable and appropriate public realm solutions in the town, underpinned by quality of design, local distinctiveness and respect for historic character.
- (ii) The *Entec Isle of Wight Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* was Commissioned by the IWC in June 2010. This provided the IWC with an evidence base when determining flood risk, drainage and other classifications used to attribute each potential development sites.
- (iii) The *Halcrow Isle of Wight Green Infrastructure Mapping Study* was commissioned by IWC and adopted in July 2010. The report included reference to IWC's Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17) 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study'. This assessed the quality, value, quantity and accessibility of all publicly accessible open space and determined what local needs were in relation to open space provision on the Island. It also included a mapping study of all Green Infrastructure assets for the Island, from a strategic level to a local level.
- (iv) The *Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal*, which was adopted by IWC in April 2011. This appraisal was produced using information contained within Historic Environment Records, the Historic Landscape Characterisation, the Historic Environment Action Plan, and the Isle of Wight Records Office.
- (v) The 2011/12 community-led "*Ryde at a Crossroads*" work, which represented findings of a community led group forums looking specifically at 'health, community and wellbeing', 'arts, heritage and the environment' and the 'economy, business, tourism and transport'.
- (vi) *Stage 1 of the Ryde Masterplan – A Ryde Town Centre Vision* was commissioned in 2012 by the IWC from the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce. This primarily assessed the town's urban environment and looked at a range of issues facing Ryde including flood risk and transport.

- (vii) The *Island Plan Core Strategy* was adopted by the IWC in 2012. This is the overall term for a number of separate documents known as Local Development Documents and sets out in spatial planning terms the IWC's vision of how the Island will develop up to 2027. As explained below the IWC is in the processing of replacing the Island Plan Core Strategy with a new Island Planning Strategy.
- (viii) *Stage 2 of the Ryde Masterplan* was produced by the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce in 2015. This built on Stage 1 by identifying a range of fundamental issues facing Ryde and outlined a new innovative and far reaching Ryde Town Centre Vision. RTC supported the findings of the Stage 2 Masterplan.
- (ix) The *Draft Ryde Area Action Plan (AAP)* was produced as a consultation document by the IWC in November 2015. It was intended to provide detailed policy guidance for the Ryde area as one of three key regeneration areas identified by the IWC set out in the Island Plan Core Strategy. The draft Ryde AAP was never formally adopted by the IWC. The contents of the draft Ryde AAP had been consulted on and recommended for adoption by RTC prior to the decision by IWC to produce the new Island Planning Strategy.
- (x) Inner Circle Consulting's *Regeneration Programme for the Island* was commissioned by IWC, with support from the Local Government Association, in August 2016 and focused on the three key regeneration areas of Newport, Ryde and The Bay.
- (xi) The *Affordable Housing Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* prepared by IWC to regulate the provision of affordable housing and adopted by the IWC in March 2017.
- (xii) The *National Planning Policy Framework* stipulates that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements. The IWC prepared the Five Year Land Supply Update 2017 to comply with this requirement.
- (xiii) In April 2018 the IWC published an updated *Housing Needs Assessment*. This takes into account recent housing related data and uses a standardised approach to determine objectively assessed housing need. It covers issues such as affordable housing, tenure mix and the type and size of any newly built housing units.

2.3 This revised version of the *Position Statement* draws upon a number of additional documents that have become available since the publication of the first version. They are:

- i. Ryde Town Council, *Ryde Place Plan*, Approved by Full Council in February 2020.
- ii. Ryde Town Council, *Corporate Business Plan 2020-25*, Approved by Full Council in September 2020.
- iii. Isle of Wight Council, *Isle of Wight Regeneration Strategy: Inspiration Island*, June 2019.
- iv. Isle of Wight Council, *Draft Island Planning Strategy: Development Plan*, November 2018.
- v. Isle of Wight Council, *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24*, 2019.
- vi. Isle of Wight Council, *Housing Strategy 2020-25*, 2020.
- vii. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Planning for the Future*, White Paper, August 2020.
- viii. IWC Infrastructure and Delivery Plan. Troy 2018
- ix. WYG, *Parking Delivery Plan*, Isle of Wight Council, February 2021.

### 3. New Island Planning Strategy and Draft Regeneration Strategy

- 3.1 The final version of the IWC's *Regeneration Strategy* was published in June 2019. It divides the Island into six regeneration areas, one of which is Ryde. The Ryde area includes Brading, Bembridge, St Helens and Seaview. RTC requested that Ryde town be identified as an area in its own right, as Newport is, but this request was not adopted.
- 3.2 The 'area profile' for the Ryde area identifies a number of major concerns expressed by residents (including empty buildings, green space, youth provision, affordable housing and improved transport and parking) and two key regeneration projects: expansion of the Nicholson Road Business Park and improvements to the Ryde Interchange.
- 3.3 The first draft of the IWC's new *Island Strategy* was published in November 2019 and was open for consultation until 19 February 2020. RTC was pleased to see that some of its views, as expressed in the *Position Statement*, had been taken into consideration. The Council submitted some additional, more specific comments on the draft and also received verbal assurance that in the final document the *Position Statement* be referenced as a Statutory Planning Document.
- 3.4 However, the timetable for the finalisation of the *Strategy* had to be put back. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, the draft aroused considerable controversy, particularly over housing targets, and so the IWC decided to do another assessment of housing needs, with the intention of arguing the case for reducing the targets (see section 7). Secondly, the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak reduced the IWC's capacity and so necessitated the revision of the timetable. In addition, the publication of the government's White Paper, *Planning for the Future*, adds to the uncertainty, because it proposes major changes in the role and format of such plans that could, if accepted, be applied to the new *Island Strategy*.

- 3.5 It now appears that the final version will not be published until after the local government elections in May 2021. In the meantime, the 2012 *Island Plan*, in conjunction with the *National Planning Policy Framework*, remains the basis for making planning decisions.

## 4. Scope and methodology

- 4.1 This revised version of the *Position Statement* was, like the original one, produced by a working group appointed by RTC's Planning Committee, now known as the Planning, Environment and Regeneration Committee. The Committee appointed the working group at its meeting on 6 October 2020. At this meeting, members discussed whether the *Position Statement* was still needed, given that the RTC now had two other plans: the *Ryde Place Plan* and the *Corporate Plan*. It was decided that it was still needed, since it provides more detail regarding issues pertinent to RTC's statutory planning functions. It was, however, emphasised that the *Position Statement* should be consistent with the other two plans.
- 4.2 The Terms of Reference for the review are attached as Appendix 1. Meetings of the working group were held on 16 November, 15 December, and 18 January. The final draft was approved by the Planning, Environment and Regeneration Committee at a meeting on .....
- 4.3 The review involved the documentation of changes in the local, regional and national environment and an analysis of those documents produced since the publication of the original version. Some sections of the document have been substantially rewritten while others have merely been updated. The public was invited to comment on the draft prior to its publication and these comments were taken into account in preparing the final version??
- 4.4 The *Ryde Place Plan* and the *Corporate Plan* provide a strong policy framework for the revised version of the *Position Statement*. Particular reference has been made to the *Charter for Ryde*, which reflects the core principles of the *Place Plan* and provides a framework for the *Corporate Plan*. The *Charter* is reproduced in Appendix 2.

## 5 Heritage

### History of Ryde

- 5.1 Ryde is one of the main gateways to the Isle of Wight and its largest town. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century the town developed from the two small communities of Lower and Upper Ryde into a fashionable resort for sea bathing and walking. After Queen Victoria adopted nearby Osborne as a summer residence so Ryde grew with the building of a number of key landmark buildings and the pier and railway adding to the architecture of the town. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw the further enhancement of the town with an emphasis continuing to be on a strong retail and tourism offer. Changes in the patterns of tourism and a gradual economic

stagnation in the town since the 1960s have, however, led to a loss of economic prosperity. This has had a consequential impact on the quality of building maintenance, the loss of traditional urban features and the longer-term vitality of the town as a whole. (See appendix 3, timeline of important buildings in Ryde)

## Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

5.2 Local Planning Authorities have a duty under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any areas considered to be of special architectural or historic interest. The Ryde Conservation Area was first designated by the IWC on 15 December 1969, was re-evaluated and amended on 7 December 1999, and again on 27 April 2011. The Ryde St John's Conservation Area was first designated by the IWC on 6 December 1988 and was re-evaluated and amended on 27 April 2011.

5.3 Following the re-evaluation of both areas in 2011 Conservation Area Appraisals for both were then adopted which set out the IWC's definitions of the special interest of the Ryde Conservation Area and the Ryde St. John's Conservation Area. These are used by the IWC as a basis for planning decisions, appeal statements and conservation advice. The Appraisals "*recognise that a quality built environment is an essential element in creating distinctive, enjoyable and successful places in which to live and work. The IWC's own ..... Island Plan Core Strategy recognises that our historic environment assets attract investment and tourism, can provide a focus for successful regeneration and are highly valued by local communities.*"<sup>1</sup>

5.4 The special interest of the Ryde Conservation Area can be summarised as follows:

*"It encompasses a large proportion of the town's built environment and a mile (1.6 km) of coastline: the sea, sands and foreshore are together designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The area includes the historic core and commercial centre of Ryde which grew to prominence in the early 19th century and the residential areas east and west of this historic core, a collection of Regency and Victorian architecture which help to give Ryde a distinctive sense of place. Also included in the conservation area is Ryde Cemetery to the south west of the town."*<sup>2</sup> The 5 character areas in the Appraisal are:

Area 1: Esplanade, Pier and Seafront

Area 2: Historic core and commercial centre

Area 3: Regency and Victorian Housing

Area 4: Pelhamfield, Ryde School & All Saints Church

Area 5: Ryde Cemetery

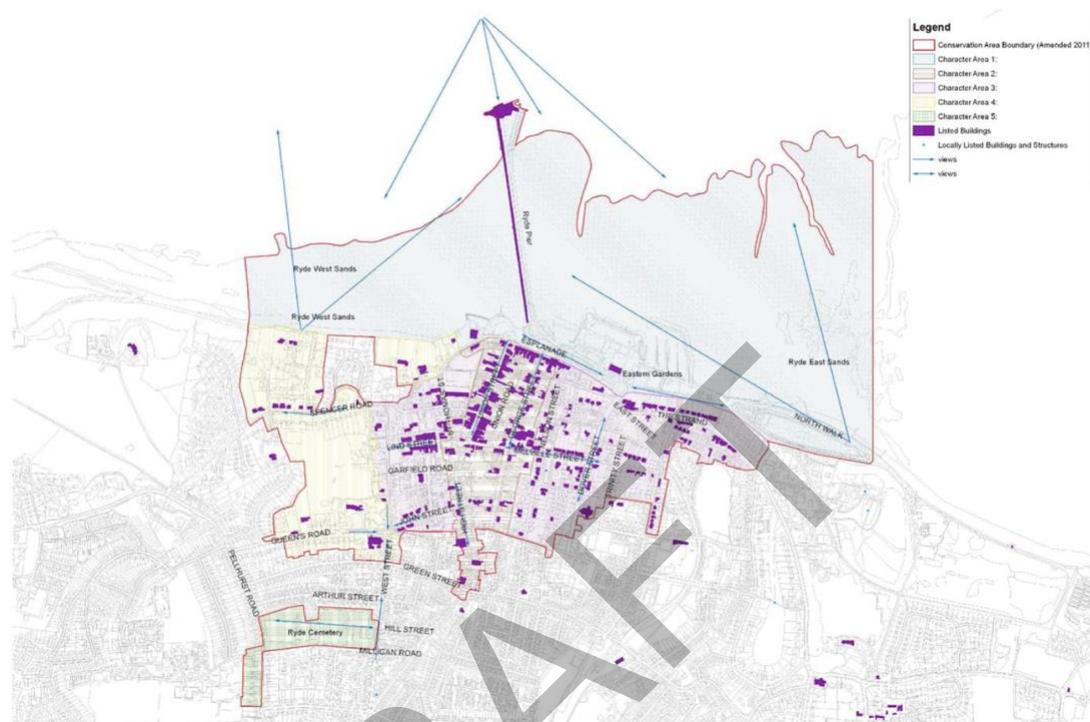
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1 Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal p1

2 Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal, p1

The Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal described the above character areas in depth and these descriptions are attached as Appendix 4.

Map 1



Source: Ryde Conservation character Appraisal<sup>3</sup>

5.5 The special interest of the Ryde St John’s Conservation Area Appraisal can be summarised as follows:

*“The special interest of the Ryde, St John’s Conservation Area can be summarised as follows: it incorporates a large part of the area’s 19th century architecture, mainly grand villas, Italianate in style, situated within generously sized gardens. Although St John’s is formerly part of St Helen’s, it is closely linked to the outward suburban expansion of Ryde. The conservation Area also includes historic landscaping associated with St John’s House, the Abbey of St Cecilia and the mid-Victorian Church of St John the Baptist.”*<sup>4</sup> The 3 character areas in the appraisal are:

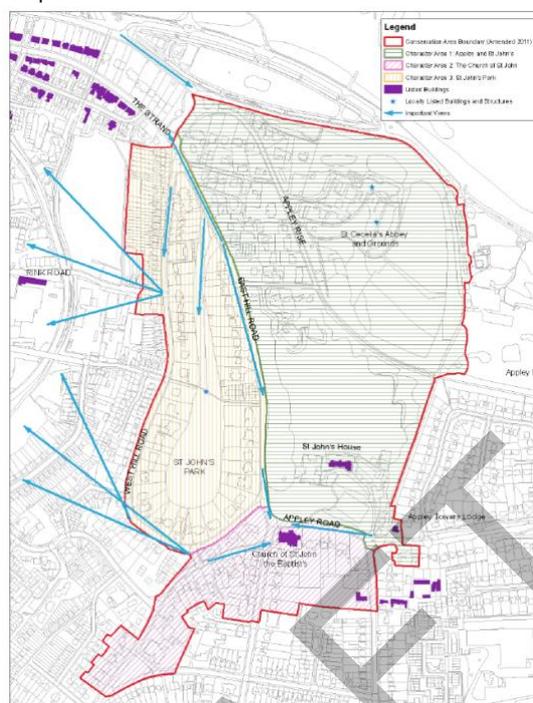
- Area 1: Appley and St John’s
- Area 2: The Church of St John the Baptist
- Area 3: St John’s Park

<sup>3</sup> Map showing Ryde conservation areas and listed buildings taken from the Ryde Conservation Character Appraisal 2011

<sup>4</sup> Ryde St John’s Conservation Area Appraisal, p1

The Ryde St John's Conservation Area Appraisal described the above character areas in depth and these descriptions are attached as Appendix 5

Map 2



Source: Ryde Conservation character Appraisal

- 5.6 Later in 2011 the IWC invoked Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended 2010) in order to protect the special quality of, and extend, the Ryde conservation areas of Ryde and Ryde St. Johns. This was intended by the IWC to act to control and deter the cumulative changes which can adversely affect the special character of a conservation area by removing permitted development rights.
- 5.7 Designation does not mean, however, that development cannot take place within a conservation area. Planning Authorities are able to consider applications with a conservation area to ensure that any application that proposes demolition is justified and that any proposed schemes (which are acceptable on all other planning grounds) are of a suitable design, are of high quality and appropriate to the special character. Both Ryde Conservation Area Appraisals note that *“this additional level of consideration allows the Planning Authority to insist upon the best possible standards of design within a conservation area, and equally to refuse development proposals on the grounds of poor design or quality.”*<sup>5</sup>
- 5.8 Ryde Town Council has made many representations to the IWC over recent years about neglected, dilapidated and empty buildings within in the town's conservation areas. In addition RTC made £10,000 available to the IWC for planning enforcement measures in respect of these buildings. RTC finds it

<sup>5</sup> Ryde and Ryde St John's Conservation Area Appraisals, p1

deeply regrettable that the IWC has not utilised its own statutory powers and duties to properly and effectively address these issues nor has it taken advantage of the funding offered for this purpose by RTC.

- 5.9 The 'Ryde at a Crossroads' findings from 2011/12 found that the community felt there should be a focus on the historical importance of conservation areas and enforcement of conservation rules. RTC's Public Realm Strategy also recognises the existing high quality architectural and townscape settings in the town and commits the Town Council to reflect this in any project that seeks to enhance the public realm. New public realm projects are needed to enhance the town and these should, in RTC's view, be underpinned by quality of design, local distinctiveness and respect for historic character.
- 5.10 RTC's Public Realm Strategy splits the Public Realm into 2 zones which roughly equates to above Cross Street and below Cross Street. Above Cross Street the agreed and previously adopted theme is stainless steel street furniture and below Cross Street the agreed and previously adopted theme is a 'heritage' approach. The splitting of these 2 zones was based on a number of previous decisions by IWC to install new stainless steel street furniture at 2 sites in the High Street.

### **Ryde Regeneration Working Group and Heritage Action Zone Project**

- 5.11 In January 2019 the Ryde Regeneration Working Group was formed to coordinate regeneration activities in the town. It comprises representatives from the Isle of Wight Council, Ryde Town Council, Ryde Business Association and the Ryde Society. One of its main concerns was to seek funding for the preservation and development of the town's architectural heritage and in July the Group submitted, through Ryde Town Council, a bid for funding from the government's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) fund. A similar bid was made by Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council.
- 5.12 Meanwhile, in June 2019 Historic England's Historic Places Panel visited the Isle of Wight. Their attention focused on three towns: Newport, East Cowes and Ryde. The visit coincided with, but was independent of, the bids for HAZ funding for Newport and Ryde.
- 5.13 The report of the Panel's visit,<sup>6</sup> highlighted both the potential and the problems of Ryde's architectural heritage. It concluded (para. 5.2.4) that: *"Ryde is a townscape which is just beginning to fall apart. The Panel considered that, if nothing is done for the town centre soon, then its problems are likely to worsen considerably. With the limited resources the Isle of Wight Council have, the Panel considered that Ryde would be another clear candidate for a High Streets HAZ. This should focus on addressing the alarmingly-poor public realm, repairing and reinstating shop fronts and tackling inappropriate signage. This has been shown to attract higher value retail businesses and high-quality*

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<sup>6</sup> Historic England, *Historic Places Panel Review Paper: The Isle of Wight*, September 2019.

*restaurants, which could be an engine for growth for the remainder of the retail area. The High Street HAZ should also seek to encourage residential reuse of some of the vacant upper floors, particularly in the middle section of the High Street. .... However, the Isle of Wight Council cannot simply rely on grant aid, alone, to deliver the regeneration of the commercial core of the town. Addressing the problems of the town centre will require the Council not only to make effective use of its powers under the Planning Acts (such as Urgent Works, Repairs and S215 Notices) but also to ensure that it has a well-resourced conservation team.”*

- 5.14 The report went on to add (para 5.2.5) that: *“If the above were not challenging enough, the Panel was concerned by the high-profile problem buildings within town centre – the Grade II listed Roman Catholic Church of St Mary (with its derelict convent) at the top of the High Street; Harrison and Gilke’s modernistic Royal York Hotel on Cross Street/George Street (listed Grade II); and one of Ryde’s most important landmark buildings the Town Hall, also listed Grade II. These have a disproportionately negative impact upon the town centre.”*
- 5.15 In September 2019, Ryde Town Council was informed that its HAZ bid had been successful and the town would receive about £480,000. Following a period of detailed design, the project document was finalised in January 2020.<sup>7</sup> Its objectives (para. 3.3) include to: *“increase access for all sections of the community and attract more visitors and business investment from a wider range of businesses by improving the quality and design of the public realm along the High Street”;* and to *“increase civic pride and heritage awareness among businesses, residents and visitors through developing and adopting a design code and other activities to promote heritage”.*
- 5.16 Implementation of the HAZ project began in April 2020 and a Project Officer was appointed in June 2020. For further information about the project and related planning issues in the town centre, see paras. 6.19-6.20 below.

### **Specific Historic Assets**

- 5.17 **Ryde Town Hall** (most recently known as Ryde Theatre) has long been regarded as the most important but also the most problematic historic building in the town. Various steps have been taken in an attempt to bring it back into community ownership and usage. In February 2019 a feasibility report was prepared under the auspices of the Ryde Regeneration Working Group.<sup>8</sup> This provided the basis for a bid by Ryde Town Council in October 2019 for a grant from the Lottery’s Heritage Horizons Fund. The bid was unsuccessful but efforts continue. A second feasibility study has been undertaken<sup>9</sup> and negotiations with the owner regarding both the maintenance and the possible purchase of the building are ongoing.

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<sup>7</sup> Ryde Town Council and Historic England, *Ryde High Street HAZ: Scheme Programme*, January 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Ryde Empty Buildings Group, *Creative Ryde: Acquiring and Developing Ryde Town Hall as a Landmark Cultural Centre*, February 2019.

<sup>9</sup> East Hants Regeneration Company, *Ryde Town Hall/Theatre Outline Business Case Report*, vs.2, November 2020.

- 5.18 **St Thomas' Church** was restored to community ownership in December 2020, when Ryde Town Council purchased it from the previous owner. The building will be used for various purposes but its main use will be to house the Council's youth service, Network Ryde. A grant of £15,000 has been received from the Architectural Heritage Fund for a detailed feasibility study.
- 5.19 **Vectis Hall**, which housed Ryde's first free school, was also brought back into community ownership in December 2020, when Ryde Town Council purchased it prior to auction. Its restoration and possible uses are being explored in conjunction with members of the community and the Isle of Wight Council's Conservation Officer.
- 5.20 **Ryde Pier** will benefit from a £10 million grant from the Department of Transport, awarded in November 2020 for improvements to the Ryde Interchange, which will include the conversion of the previous tramway into a walk-and-cycleway (see section 8 for further details).

RTC will continue to:

- Support planning applications that enhance the town's public realm and preserve its architectural heritage and raise objections to those that do not
- Facilitate enforcement action against developments or lack of development that threatens the town's architectural heritage
- Take action to conserve and restore the town's historic buildings for the benefit of the local community
- Work with the IWC, Historic England and other appropriate organisations to preserve and enhance the town's architectural heritage.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Take note of, and where possible support, RTC's comments on planning applications that affect the town's public realm and architectural heritage
- Strengthen its conservation and enforcement teams
- Take account of the importance of the town's architectural heritage when planning existing and future regeneration projects.

## 6. Economy

### Overview

- 6.1 Ryde's economy is based on a combination of tourism, retail, transport and light industry. It is rightly known as 'the town on the beach' and a 'gateway to the Island'. Because of its status as one of the two largest towns on the Island and a major transport hub, it is open for business all the year round. However, it is particularly busy in the summer months and during other holiday periods.
- 6.2 As in other parts of the Island, and the country as whole, all sectors of the economy were hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and early 2021. However, the brief resurgence in activity in August/September and immediately prior to Christmas suggest that, although there will be some casualties, the town will bounce back relatively quickly.
- 6.3 The town accounts for a significant share of the Island's employment. However, like other parts of the Island, much of this employment is seasonal, part-time and/or low-skilled. Moreover, many of the town's economically active population work on the mainland, commuting daily to Portsmouth or elsewhere.
- 6.4 Many local businesses are members of the Ryde Business Association, which works closely with RTC and other local organisations to promote the interests of the business community and the economic development of the town.

### Tourism

- 6.5 Ryde is a long established and popular seaside town that continues to offer a range of traditional attractions, including seafront shops and kiosks, bowling green, swimming pool and cinema. Tourist numbers declined in the 1980s but have increased again in recent years and, although 2020 was inevitably a bad year for tourism, the brief resurgence in August and September indicated that the post-Covid recovery will be rapid.
- 6.6 The town hosts a number of annual events, including Ryde Pride, a Classic Car Festival, a Scooter Rally and various beach sporting events – all of which attract large numbers of visitors and make an important contribution to the local economy.
- 6.7 RTC supports the tourist industry in various ways, including the production of a town map and promotional video and the provision of grants to help local organisations market their events. It also funds beach lifeguards, helps to finance the Waterside Pool and contributes financially to the provision of additional services (such as beach cleaning and bin emptying) required in the summer season.

## Ryde's Beaches, the Esplanade and Ryde Harbour

- 6.8 Ryde's main attraction as a tourist resort is its extensive sandy beaches and long esplanade. However, RTC has been unable to develop the full potential of these assets, or to gain revenue from them, because they are owned by the IWC.
- 6.9 **Ryde's beaches** are safe and those east of the Pier are accessible even at high tide. There is potential for a wide range of activities, traditional and modern. The recent expansion of beach soccer on Appley Beach is a good example of this potential. In 2020 the IWC agreed to give RTC the concession to provide deckchairs on the beach. RTC would like to have more control over the beaches so that we can initiate or support other measures to enhance the quality of Ryde's beach offer.
- 6.10 **The Esplanade** is outside the settlement boundary and, at present, is used predominantly for recreation and leisure. Throughout the IWC's consultation on its Regeneration Strategy and draft Island Strategy, Ryde residents have clearly demonstrated their opposition to any change in its use. This point is emphasised in the Ryde Place Plan.
- 6.11 **Appley Tower** is an iconic building on the seafront. It is currently owned by the IWC but local residents, with support from RTC and Natural Enterprise, are currently exploring ways of bringing the building back into community use.
- 6.12 **Ryde Harbour** is a drying harbour which provides relatively low-cost moorings for permanent berth holders and visitors. Access is available about two hours either side of high tide for boats drawing 1.5m. In April 2021 RTC will take over the ownership and management of the Harbour and some of the immediately adjacent land from the IWC. This will enable RTC to upgrade the services, including the provision of electricity and internet and improvement of shower facilities. It will also enable the provision of facilities such as a café and information centre.
- 6.13 **Ryde Arena**, which provided ice skating facilities for residents and visitors, has been closed since 2016. Its future is dependent on the outcome of a court case between the IWC and the lessee, AEW. Its closure has not only meant the loss of ice-skating facilities but also created an unpleasant eyesore on the seafront. When the court case is resolved, there is need for a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of this area, including the building, the adjacent car park, and the promenade between the car park and the sea.
- 6.14 **Harcourt Sands** is a former holiday resort at the eastern end of the Esplanade. Although just outside the RTC boundary, its future affects the character of the town's seafront and its tourist offer. The site has planning permission for a combination of residential and tourist use, but the first phase of the development, which began in late 2020, is only residential.

## Town Centre and Retail

- 6.15 Ryde town centre is a relatively compact area, comprising Union Street, High Street, Upper High Street as far as the St John's Road traffic lights, Cross Street and the western end of Lind Street. It includes three squares, St Thomas' Square, Town Square and Minghella Square, and several walkways connecting the various parts of the area. It is located within the Ryde Conservation Area.
- 6.16 Its retail offering includes a number of high street chains and a diverse range of smaller independent outlets. These cater for both residents and tourists, but with tourists tending to predominate in the lower part of the town and residents in the upper part. There is also a wide selection of cafes, restaurants and bars. Its retail offering is almost comparable with that of Newport but, unlike Newport, it has not been designated by IWC as a 'main retail area'.
- 6.17 Until the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, Ryde saw relatively low numbers of empty premises. As in other parts of the country, the pandemic resulted in a number of closures, especially of national high street chains. Recent evidence suggests that, as the economy recovers, new businesses will open up in most of the smaller premises but that it will be more difficult to fill the larger premises vacated by the high street chains.
- 6.18 In March 2020 the long-anticipated full pedestrianisation of the High Street finally occurred. Traffic is now only permitted for loading and unloading and only between the hours of 6 and 10 am. This not only increases the safety of pedestrians but also provides a basis for improving the High Street's visual appearance and visitor attraction. After a nine-month trial period, it was decided in January 2021 that signage was not enough to deter access outside the permitted times, so arrangements were made to have a semi-automatic barrier installed.
- 6.19 The pedestrianisation coincided with the start of Ryde's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) project (see paras. 5-15-5.16 above). The project is designed not only to enhance the area's architectural heritage but also to achieve the above objectives of improving the area's visual appearance and making it an attractive place to visit. Its scope will include the development of the three town squares and their links with the main street and the diversification of commercial use.
- 6.20 There is increasing pressure, locally and nationally, to convert commercial premises into residential properties. This is likely to be facilitated by proposed changes in government legislation that will allow such changes under permitted development rights. The policy of RTC, and of the HAZ project, is to encourage such conversions on upper stories and to permit ground floor conversions outside the designated town centre (as defined in para. 6.15 above), but to object to any ground floor conversions within this area.
- 6.21 There are smaller retail areas in various parts of the town and its suburbs. The recent development of that at the lower end of Monkton Street, which includes shops, a pub and a café and art gallery, demonstrates the potential for the development of such areas in other parts of the town.
- 6.22 The town's retail outlets have benefited from the availability of significant amounts of free on-street parking, albeit time limited. If they are to thrive, it is important that parking restrictions are kept to a minimum. This is discussed further in section 8.

## Industry

- 6.23 Ryde has a range of light industrial industries, located on four main sites: Cothey Way, Nicholson Road Business Park, Rink Road Industrial Estate, and Ryde Business Park.
- 6.24 The 'Ryde at a Crossroads' in 2011 indicated the need for more highly paid and skilled job opportunities. These could be met by providing new opportunities for mid-size companies to locate to the town.
- 6.25 The draft Area Action Plan identified the Nicholson Road Business Park as an area where such expansion could take place and in 2017 this site was identified by the IWC as one of its key regeneration projects. Detailed plans for the development of the site have been prepared and in 2020 outline planning permission was granted. However, implementation has been hampered by three factors: the need for highway improvements on adjacent roads; uncertainty regarding the long-term impact of Covid-19 on demand for industrial space; and cuts in the IWC's regeneration budget due to the impact of Covid.
- 6.26 RTC continues to support the principle of the development of the Nicholson Road site. However, it maintains that such development should be planned in conjunction with the proposed residential developments in the area (see section 7) and that all these developments should be contingent upon improvements in infrastructure, especially highways (see section 8).
- 6.27 The draft Area Action Plan also established the need to retain employment in the other three sites. RTC supports this and recognises its particular importance now, in the light of the loss of employment during the Covid period.

### RTC will:

- Work with IWC, Visit IW, transport operators and other organisations to facilitate the recovery of the town's economy following Covid and to ensure that it makes the most of the opportunities of a post-Covid environment
- Oppose any measure that would enable the Esplanade to be used for anything other than recreation and leisure
- Develop the Harbour and adjacent land as a tourist attraction and a source of income for the Council and community
- Continue to support the Waterside Trust financially and help it to restore its financial viability
- Facilitate the use of the Esplanade and beaches, including the provision of deck chairs on the beach
- Continue to negotiate with IWC for more control over the beaches and Esplanade
- Continue to participate in, and contribute financially to, the HAZ
- Continue to work with Ryde Business Association to support local businesses and facilitate the diversification of the local economy
- Support applications for change of use from commercial to residential of the upper stories of properties within the town centre but object to those on the ground floor.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Use its planning and licensing powers to minimise the negative impacts of Covid on the town's economy and facilitate its recovery
- Finalise the transfer of the Harbour and adjacent land to RTC
- Recognise the importance of the Waterside Pool as a community asset similar to its own leisure centres and support it accordingly
- Negotiate with RTC to find a mutually beneficial way of giving RTC more control over the beaches and Esplanade
- Ensure that Ryde Arena is retained for community use and work with RTC to prepare a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of the site and the adjacent area
- Involve RTC in the planning of the new Ryde Interchange (see also Infrastructure section)
- Designate Ryde as a 'main retail area'
- Continue to support the HAZ financially and recognise its importance in facilitating the post-Covid recovery of the town's retail sector
- Maintain ownership of the Nicholson Road site and review its plans for its development, including the implications of a post-Covid environment and (see also Infrastructure section) the infrastructure implications

## 7. Housing

### Housing Policy

7.1 The IWC's current housing policy is set out in six main documents:

- *Island Plan Core Strategy (2012)*: Although outdated, this remains valid until a new Core Strategy is in place.
- *Affordable Housing Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2017)*: This prescribes the policy regarding the provision of affordable housing by developers.
- *Housing Needs Assessment (2018)*: This was produced for the IWC by G.L. Hearne as part of the preparation of the new core strategy. It used a prescribed government method for calculating need. In response to the widespread criticism that this evoked on the Island, the IWC is now conducting another assessment, using its own methodology.
- *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2018)*: This is an informal document, produced to assist in the preparation of the new core strategy. Since it has not been formally adopted, it can be used for guidance only.
- *Draft Island Planning Strategy (2018)*: This provides the best indication of the IWC's recent thinking, but because it is only a draft, it is not legally binding.

- *Isle of Wight Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24* (2019): The IWC is legally required to produce this strategy, which sets out the Council's policy for preventing and addressing homelessness.
- *Isle of Wight Housing Strategy 2020-25* (2020): Also a legal requirement, this document sets out the IWC's broad policy for addressing housing need, including supply, affordability, homelessness, special housing needs and the respective roles of the Council, housing associations and the private sector.

## Housing Need

7.2 The GL Hearne *Housing Needs Assessment* (HNA) April 2018, commissioned by the IWC, calculated that the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the whole Island between 2016 and 2034 was 641 new homes per annum. For the Ryde area, as defined in the HNA, the OAN is 152 per annum. This is equivalent to 2736 new homes in Ryde over the assessment period. This is set out in the table below:

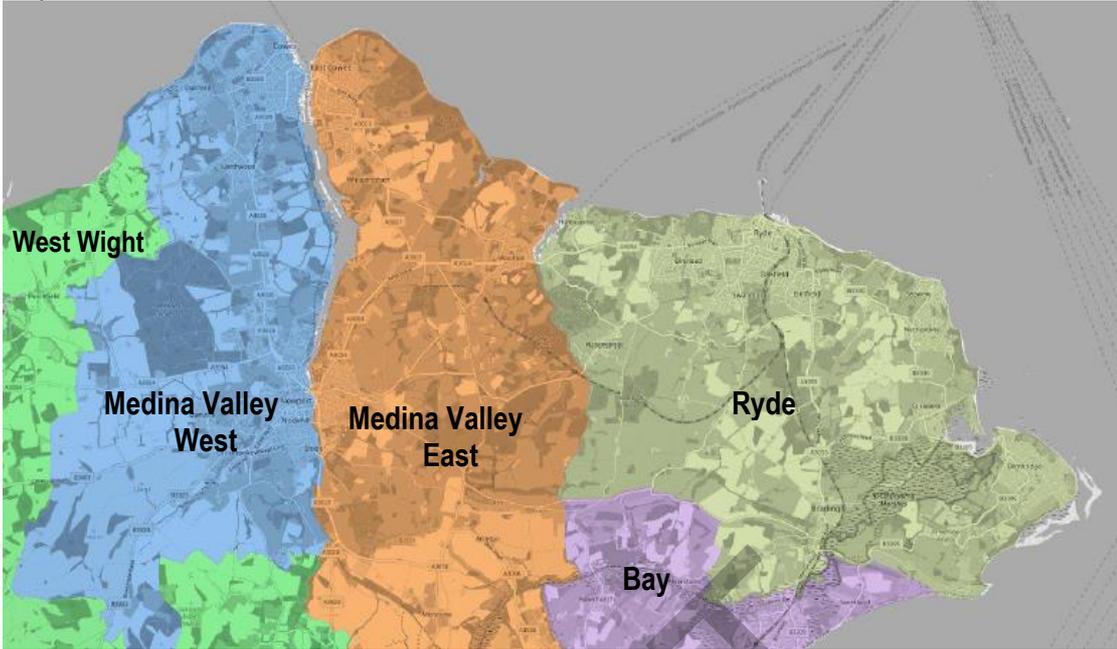
Table 1: *Isle of Wight Housing Need by Area*

	House-holds 2016	House-holds 2034	OAN (2016-34)	OAN (per annum)	% of OAN
Bay	17,518	20,828	3,615	201	31.3%
Medina Valley	22,460	26,078	3,950	219	34.3%
Medina Valley – East	8,074	9,341	1,384	77	12.0%
Medina Valley – West	14,387	16,736	2,566	143	22.2%
Ryde	15,789	18,297	2,740	152	23.8%
West Wight	7,249	8,373	1,228	68	10.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,016</b>	<b>73,576</b>	<b>11,533</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: GL Hearne Housing Needs Assessment, Isle of Wight, April 2018

- 7.3 The GL Hearne assessment indicates that, across the Island, there is a need to provide new housing as the population is growing, people are living longer and typically living in ever smaller households. Over the past 13 years, the strongest population growth has been in the 60+ age groups.<sup>6</sup> The data in the HNA shows that between 2016 to 2034 population growth across the Isle of Wight is projected to grow by around 12,000. This is an 8.5% increase.<sup>7</sup>
- 7.4 The level of homes planned for will form a key element of the regeneration proposals for the Ryde area, helping to address housing need and demand, upgrading the quality of the physical environment and supporting local services and the viability of new developments.
- 7.5 The Ryde area as defined in the GL Hearne HNA includes other Parishes which are outside the Ryde parish boundary. Amongst the Parishes included within the Ryde area in the assessment are Bembridge, Brading, St. Helens, Nettlestone and Seaview, Fishbourne and part of Havenstreet and Ashe. See Map 1 below.

Map 1



Areas as defined in the Housing Needs Assessment 2018

- 7.6** Table 1 above confirms the housing need for the Ryde area as defined in figure 1. This area is significantly larger in area than the Ryde parish boundary. There is no data contained within the latest GL Hearne HNA which would enable housing need figures for Ryde town alone to be extrapolated or estimated. A credible option would be to consider the populations in the ward areas and extrapolate the housing need for Ryde town as a percentage of the population figure for the whole HNA area.
- 7.7** The population within the Ryde town boundaries, provided by the Office of National Statistics, is 18,901 and the population of the parishes included in the HNA Ryde Plan area is 35,373.<sup>9</sup> This means that Ryde town contains  $(18,901 / 35,373 \times 100 = 53.43)$  or 54% of the population resides in the RTC area.
- 7.8** If the figures in the HNA for population are taken as the main indicator of housing need, the housing need figure derived from the calculation above gives a housing need for RTC of  $(152 / 100 \times 54 = 82)$ . This equates to 82 homes required to meet the housing need in the RTC area. During the assessment period 2016 – 2034 the housing need for RTC would therefore be  $82 \times 18 = 1,476$  new homes.

## Housing Delivery

- 7.9** As both the *Draft Island Planning Strategy* and the *Housing Strategy* point out, the number of houses delivered on the Island in recent years has been very low. Table 2 below summarises the position:

Table 2: *Housing Completions since the Adoption of the Island Plan Core Strategy*

Delivery Year	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Market	222	268	298	246	382	287	342	350
Affordable	196	141	112	150	35	34	18	0
Total	418	409	410	396	417	321	360	350

Source: *Isle of Wight Housing Strategy 2019-25*, Table 1.

**7.10** As with housing needs, there are no specific targets for the RTC area. However, Ryde town is identified in the *Island Plan* (Policy SP1, para. 5.7) as a ‘key regeneration area’ and in the *Draft Island Strategy* (PSDG3, p.34) as a ‘priority location for development and growth’. This suggests that we are expected to contribute a larger share of this target than the 54% needed to meet housing need in the area.

**7.11** However, the above targets have limited impact on current planning decisions because, since the *Island Plan* is out-of-date, the new *Island Planning Strategy* is still in draft form and the Planning Authority has failed to meet previous housing delivery targets, the Authority is required to use the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ in the NPPF when assessing applications for new residential development. This states (para. 11) that such applications should be approved unless they would be contrary to NPPF policies designed to protect ‘areas or assets of particular importance’ or the ‘adverse effects would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits’.

### Possible Deliverable Sites

**7.12** The *Draft Island Planning Strategy* (Appendices 1 and 2) identifies nine possible sites for housing delivery in (or partly in) the RTC area, with an estimated capacity to deliver 810 new homes. It also identifies two sites (Harcourt Sands and the Archery site), with a combined potential of 153 houses, adjacent to the town’s northeastern boundary. These eleven sites are shown on Map 2 and basic information on each provided in Table 4. They are based on those identified in the 2018 *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment* (SHLAA).

Map 2

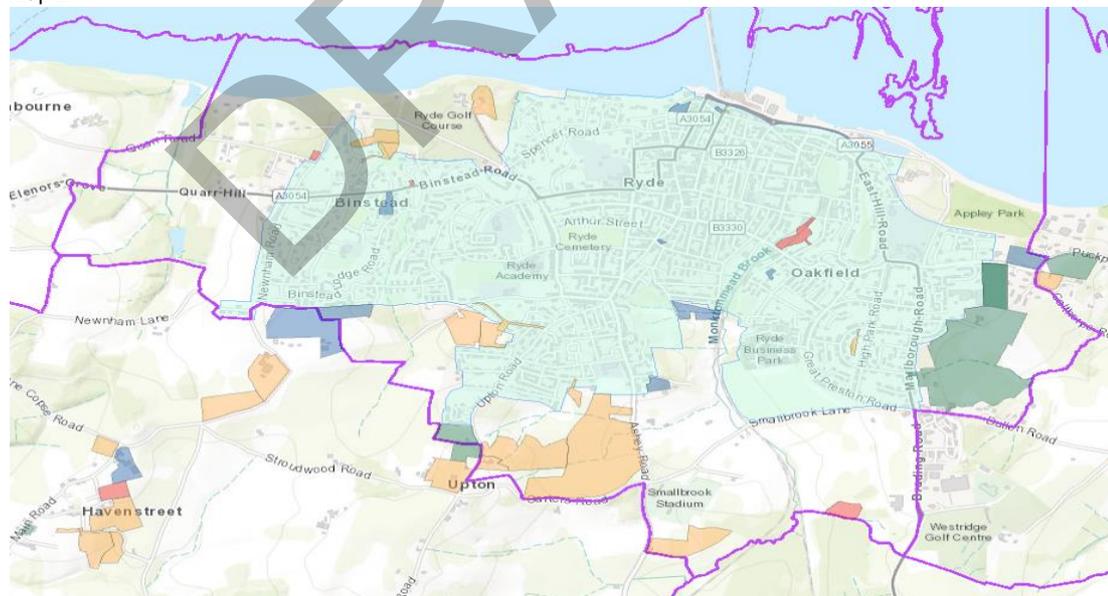


Table 4: Future Development Sites

Island Strategy number	SHLAA number	Location	No. homes	Type of site	Relationship to settlement boundary
HA054	IPS021	Oakfield	10	Greenfield	Inside
HA055	IPS169	Rosemary Lane	15	Greenfield	Adjacent
HA056	IPS055	George Street	10	Brownfield	Inside
HA057	IPS080	St Thomas St CP	20	Brownfield	Inside
HA059	IPS130	Upton Road	80*	Greenfield	Adjacent
HA060	IPS150	West Acre Park	555	Greenfield	Adjacent
HA061	IPS249	SW Binstead	45*	Greenfield	Adjacent
HA062	IPS271	Quarry Road	50	Greenfield	Adjacent
HA063	?	?	25	?	?
HA058	IPS105	Archery site	25	Greenfield	Adjacent
HA0112	-	Harcourt Sands	128	Brownfield	Inside

\* Partially outside town council boundary

? Not enough information to identify site; could be IPS034 (brownfield site on Binstead Road).

- 7.13** As Table 4 shows, at least seven of the eleven sites are greenfield sites and all but one of these greenfield sites are on land outside, but adjacent to, the existing settlement boundary. Both the existing *Island Plan* (Policy SP1 and para. 5.5) and the *Draft Island Strategy* (PSDG3 and paras. 4.11-4.12) endorse development outside but adjacent to the boundaries of ‘defined settlements’.

## Existing Housing Deliveries and Planning Consents

- 7.14** There are a number of sites in Ryde, including some of those in Table 4, where development is already anticipated or under way. They include sites where development has already started (and in one case recently completed), sites where planning consent (outline or full) has been granted, and those for which applications have been submitted but no decision made. Table 5 summarises the status of the main sites:

Table 5: Existing Housing Deliveries and Planning Consents

Name of site	No. units	Status
Ryde Village	102	Completed Dec. 2020 (supported housing)
Westridge Farm	80	Under construction
Pennyfeathers	904	Reserved matters submitted Dec. 2020
Rosemary Vineyard	140	Outline permission Dec. 2019
Nicholson Road	15	Outline permission Sept. 2020
Upton Road	70	Outline permission Nov. 2016 so now lapsed
West Acre Park	555	Outline and full application submitted July 2020

- 7.15** The first three of the developments in Table 5 either have delivered or are scheduled to deliver a total of 1,086 housing units during the period identified in the *Draft Island Strategy* (2019/20-2033/34). This constitutes 80% of the target for the Ryde Regeneration Area. This figure excludes the various small ad hoc infill developments likely to be approved and implemented during this period and the possibility that any or all of the three above sites with outline permission may go ahead. It also excludes the possible developments on sites adjacent to but outside the town boundaries mentioned above.

- 7.16** It therefore seems highly likely that the target number of houses identified in the *Draft Island Strategy* will be achieved in the Ryde Regeneration Area and that the vast majority of these will be delivered in or adjacent to Ryde itself. Bearing in mind that, if the IWC is successful in justifying its case, this target may actually be reduced, RTC considers that there is no need for any new major housing developments on within or adjacent to the town's boundary.
- 7.17** RTC also considers that any more major developments on greenfield sites outside the settlement boundary are not only unnecessary but undesirable. They would result in further loss of green space and overdevelopment in some areas and would put undue pressure on the town's economic and social infrastructure (see section 8 below). RTC therefore considers that applications for such development should not be approved under the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' since the 'adverse effects would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'.
- 7.18** RTC is particularly concerned about the concentration of new development in the eastern part of the town. We are concerned about both the risk of overdevelopment in this area and the lack of a coordinated approach to its development. Regarding the latter, we note that in the *Draft Island Strategy's* vision statement for Ryde, it is anticipated (para. 3.62) that by 2035 'in Ryde town expansion will have happened to the east, where a number of sites are being brought forward *in a co-ordinated fashion and where the accompanying infrastructure is well planned and delivered in a timely manner*' (italics added). We consider that this coordinated approach is urgently needed.
- 7.19** The position adopted in paras. 7.15-7.17 is based on the assumption that the Pennyfeathers scheme will be implemented. If for any reason the reserved matters are not approved or development does not start within the required two years after approval, it may be necessary to review this position.
- 7.20** RTC considers that, in order to maximise housing provision while minimising the loss of green space, appropriate developments on brownfield sites should be encouraged, including infill in existing residential areas and conversion of upper stories to residential use in the town centre.

### **Affordable housing**

- 7.21** The IWC's record in ensuring the provision of affordable housing is poor, especially in recent years. As Table 2 above shows, the number delivered declined from 196 in 2011/12 to 18 in 2017/18 and nil in 2018/19.
- 7.22** The *National Planning Policy Framework* defines (Annex 2, pp.63-64) affordable housing as:

*"Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:*

(a) *Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions:*

- i) *the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable);*
- ii) *the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and*
- iii) *it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).*

(b) *Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.*

(c) *Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.*

(d) *Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.”<sup>12</sup>*

**7.23** The IWC's current policy, as defined in the 2017 *Affordable Housing Contributions Supplementary Planning Document*, states the following:

*“In accordance with Policy DM4 of the adopted Island Plan Core Strategy the IWC will seek to deliver affordable housing over the plan period with all C3 Use Class development proposals and conversions from an alternate Use Class to C3 that result in a net increase in dwellings being required to:*

- *provide 35% of the development as on-site affordable housing, based on developments of 15+ units in Key Regeneration Areas and 10+ elsewhere;*

- *provide financial contributions towards affordable housing for developments of 1-14 units in Key Regeneration Areas and 1-9 units in Smaller Regeneration Areas and rural areas; and*
- *deliver a target mix of 70% affordable housing to be affordable/social rented and 30% for intermediate tenures.”*

**7.24** The 2018 *Housing Needs Assessment* estimated that there is a need for an average of 242 units of affordable housing (38% of the total 641) per annum between 2016 and 2034. Although this is slightly higher than the current IWC policy, the *Draft Island Planning Strategy* does not propose any change in the developer contribution. This is because, in accordance with guidance in the *National Planning Policy Framework* and as noted in the *Affordable Housing Contributions Supplementary Planning Document* (p.12), the need for affordable housing has to be balanced against the viability of schemes and therefore the capacity of developers to deliver.

**7.25** The IWC's *Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy* and *Housing Strategy* both recognise the need for more affordable housing, and in particular affordable rented housing. The *Housing Strategy* maintains (para. 60) that:  
*“The main factor affecting “Frustrated First Time Buyers” and “Struggling Homeowners” is the increasing mismatch between housing supply and demand across all tenures, but especially for “affordable” market housing. House prices have risen steadily on the Island over the past 5 years whilst wages haven’t seen similar increases. The average cost of housing on the Island is £231,000 with the majority of housing selling for around £200,00. In 2013 the average price of £172,280 (Feb 2013) was 7.5 times the gross annual wage (52 x weekly wage). In 2018 the average price of £210,413 (Feb 2018) was 8.2 times. So, whilst house prices are up to 30% lower on the Island than on the mainland, they remain “unaffordable” to many local working households, younger people, and those of the council’s waiting list.”*

**7.26** It also emphasises the lack of, and problems of providing, affordable rented housing, including:

- Inability of housing associations to access government grant funding for new developments of affordable housing
- Increasing gap between ‘social’ housing rents and housing benefit rates
- Increasingly high private sector rents and increasing reluctance of private landlords to accept tenants relying on benefits
- Poor quality of private sector rented property.

**7.27** Data on housing need in Ryde is piecemeal. However, various indicators suggest a number of interrelated housing problems, particularly in Ryde Northeast, Ryde Northwest, Ryde South and Ryde East wards. These include:

- High levels of multiple deprivation, with much of the town in the lowest 30% of areas in terms of household deprivation in the UK and the central area in the lowest 10%;<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Isle of Wight Council, *Isle of Wight Facts and Figures: Ward Area Data, Ryde Place Plan*.

- Inadequate social rented housing,<sup>11</sup> resulting in a relatively high proportion of households (up to 40% in some wards)<sup>12</sup> living in private rented accommodation;
- Most privately rented accommodation unaffordable for those on low incomes and only 11% affordable to those on housing benefit;<sup>13</sup>
- Highest levels of overcrowding on the Island;<sup>14</sup>
- Inadequate supported accommodation, reflected in rapid uptake of the new extra-care facilities at Ryde Village.

**7.28** The *Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy* and *Housing Strategy* set out various measures that the IWC will take to increase the supply of affordable housing, to buy and for rent. These include:

- ‘Deliver or facilitate’ 300 homes ‘affordable’ homes over first three years
- Maximize the provision of ‘affordable’ housing on council-owned land
- Define ‘true affordability’ levels and develop tools for monitoring this at local level
- Provide evidence to challenge the government to enable housing associations to obtain grant funding to provide affordable rental housing at 60% of market levels
- Revise ‘affordability rent guidance’, which determines what constitutes an ‘affordable’ rent for all housing providers
- Review the Island Homefinder scheme
- Improve housing opportunities for key workers
- Improve the quality of private rented accommodation by monitoring and enforcing standards more closely
- Continue its efforts to bring empty buildings back into use
- Encourage and support schemes to provide independent living facilities
- Work closely with partner organisations to improve access to affordable housing

**7.29** A *Housing Strategy* update report, presented to the IWC in February 2021, indicates that some progress has been made in achieving these objectives. In particular: 100 ‘affordable’ homes were delivered in 2020/21; provision for the delivery of 600 homes ‘has been agreed with Island-based housing associations’; the case has successfully been made for housing associations to qualify for the government’s Social Housing Grant, enabling them to rent properties at 60% of market rent; and Ryde Village, which provides 102 extra-care facilities, including 77 for rent, has opened.

**7.30** RTC endorses the above policies and recognises the progress that has been made. However, we consider that stronger action is needed in order to address the problems in areas like Ryde. We would, in particular, like to see the provision of more social rented housing by the IWC itself.

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<sup>11</sup> Exact numbers of housing association properties are unknown; the two main providers are Southern Housing, which has 259 general properties plus several sheltered schemes in the town, and Sovereign, which has 1131 properties in the greater Ryde area (personal communication from providers)

<sup>12</sup> Isle of Wight Council, *Isle of Wight Facts and Figures: Ward Area Data*

<sup>13</sup> *Housing Strategy*, pp.66-67

<sup>14</sup> *Draft Island Planning Strategy*, para. 2.19

## Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy payments

**7.31** There are two main mechanisms whereby local authorities can obtain contributions from developers for the provision of affordable housing (if not provided on site) and infrastructure: Section 106 (s106) agreements and a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The main differences are that CIL contributions can be used for a wider range of infrastructure and 15% of the levy has to be passed directly to the relevant parish or town council. The IWC relies entirely on s106 payments. The possibility of introducing CIL was considered in 2015 but rejected.

**7.32** The IWC is not required to consult parish and town councils when negotiating s106 agreements or to spend the monies collected within the area where the development takes place. Furthermore, although the IWC is now legally required to publish information on s106 agreements and contributions, this information is not published in a form easily accessible to local councils or the general public. RTC would like to be consulted when s106 agreements are negotiated, to be assured that contributions will be spent in the Ryde area, and to be kept informed of current agreements and contributions. τ

### RTC will:

- Use its statutory right to comment on planning applications to object to further housing development on greenfield sites
- Use this statutory right to support applications for appropriate housing developments on brownfield sites, including small infills in existing residential areas
- Use this statutory right to support appropriate conversions of the upper floors of town centre properties to residential
- Use this statutory right to support the provision of affordable housing in new housing developments, especially affordable rental accommodation
- Work with existing and potential future providers of social housing to increase availability
- Work with IWC's Empty Buildings Team to identify empty buildings in Ryde and bring them back into use
- Encourage private landlords in Ryde to improve and maintain their rented accommodation

RTC calls upon IWC to:

- Refuse further applications for housing development on greenfield sites in Ryde
- In conjunction with RTC, prepare an integrated development plan for the Ryde east extension
- Reduce the threshold at which developers are required to provide affordable housing to 10+ units in key regeneration areas and 5+ units in rural areas [is this still applicable?]
- Prioritise new developments that provide the highest numbers of affordable housing and, in particular, affordable rented accommodation
- Either require all developers in Ryde to provide affordable housing on site or use their contributions to develop affordable housing in other parts of the town
- Work with existing and potential future providers of social housing to increase availability
- Expand and accelerate plans to establish its own housing company
- Work with RTC to identify empty buildings in Ryde and bring them back into use
- Increase its capacity to inspect private rented accommodation and enforce repairs and improvements when necessary
- Liaise with RTC regarding the use of s106 contributions (and CIL payments, should they be introduced), commit to using all such monies for infrastructure improvements within the Ryde area, and provide periodic reports to RTC on agreements and contributions in the Ryde area.

## 8 Infrastructure

### Introduction

- 8.1** Ryde is one of the two main towns on the Island and, as previous sections have demonstrated, it has a vibrant economy and is growing rapidly. It is therefore essential that the town has adequate and appropriate infrastructure to support this development, including transport provision, social infrastructure and telecommunications.
- 8.2** The *National Planning Policy Framework* requires (para. 20) local authorities to liaise with other bodies to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and the ability to meet forecast demands, when preparing policies and plans and considering future developments. At present, however, infrastructure in Ryde tends to be provided in a piecemeal manner, often after rather than before other development takes place.

- 8.3** RTC maintains that there is a need for a comprehensive infrastructure plan for the town as a basis for future development. The *Isle of Wight Infrastructure Delivery Plan* (2018), which covers the whole Island but includes useful data on needs in Ryde, could provide a starting point for this. The need is particularly great in the eastern part of the town, due to the expansion planned in the area (see para. 8.12 below).

### **The Ryde Gateway**

- 8.4** Ryde is a gateway to the Island from the mainland, with a car ferry terminal close by at Fishbourne and passenger hovercraft and ferry terminals in Ryde itself. There is a rail service from Ryde Pierhead and Ryde Esplanade through to Shanklin in the south-east of the Island and, adjacent to Ryde Esplanade station, there is a bus station, with services to all parts of the Island, and a taxi rank. The Esplanade is also the start of a cycle route (NCN 22) westwards to Newport and east along the coast to Seaview and on the round-the-Island Coastal Path.
- 8.5** The transport interchange on the Esplanade is critical to Ryde's position as a transport hub and many previous studies have emphasised the need to improve it. Finally, in September 2020, £10 million for this was awarded from the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund. The project, which has to be completed by 2023, will include revision of the road layout, redesign of the bus station and the construction of a separate cycle and walkway along the Pier. RTC, through the Ryde Regeneration Working Group, have emphasised the need to be involved in the detailed design of the project.
- 8.6** In 2019, South Western Railway received funding for the provision of new trains and related improvements to the Island Line rail service. The new trains are expected to begin operating around April 2021. However, RTC is concerned that the improvements will not include the provision of disabled access at St John's Road Station.
- 8.7** Coordination between the various transport operators and between them and RTC is essential for the smooth running of the town's transport services. Experience during the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated both the need and the potential for such cooperation. RTC will therefore, in line with a recommendation in the Ryde Place Plan, seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the transport operators.

### **Roads**

- 8.8** The main road transport routes into and through Ryde are congested and crowded with heavy goods vehicles (HGV). Many of the roads used by these HGVs are unsuitable and not fit for purpose. Furthermore, they have a negative effect, in terms of noise and air pollution, on the residential areas through which they pass.
- 8.9** A number of junctions have been identified as of particular concern. Both the draft *Ryde Area Action Plan* and the *2018 Isle of Wight Infrastructure Delivery Plan* highlight five main ones:

- Queens Road / West Street
- Argyll Street / West Street
- Binstead Road / Pellhurst Road
- Quarr Hill / Newnham Road
- Marlborough Road / Great Preston Road (Westridge Cross).

The *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* includes them in its list of 15 priority junctions, but notes that funds for their improvement would have to be obtained through developer contributions.

- 8.10** The Smallbrook Roundabout has been identified as a safety concern. It is currently at the top of the Island Roads' Network Integrity Register and work is due to begin in Spring 2021.
- 8.11** Concerns about the implications of proposed new housing and industrial developments on an already overstretched road network have been repeatedly expressed by RTC and Ryde residents and have been one of the main reasons for objecting to applications related to these developments.
- 8.12** There is particular concern in the eastern part of the town, where the various large developments proposed (see sections 6 and 7) would have a major impact, particularly (but not only) on the Westridge Cross junction. These developments all include proposals for, and contributions towards, the improvement of the highway network in the area. However, there is a need to coordinate these and prepare an integrated highway improvement plan for the area. IWC has recognised this and commissioned Island Roads to undertake such a study, but this has been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. RTC maintains that this study should be extended to include all forms of infrastructure in the area and that no further planning applications should be approved until a comprehensive infrastructure plan has been prepared.
- 8.13** Previous studies, including the 2013 *Ryde Masterplan* and the 2015 draft *Area Action Plan* have made various proposals for a more radical reorganisation of transport routes both into and through the town, including the construction of a semi-pedestrianisation of the western section of the Esplanade. RTC would support any viable scheme that would reduce traffic, especially HGVs, from the town centre and Esplanade, but recognises that resource constraints are likely to preclude any such major changes in the near future.

## Parking

- 8.14** Parking provision in Ryde takes various forms: there are several adjacent short-stay and long-stay off-street car parks serving the Esplanade and town centre; residents only on-street parking and limited time waiting street parking cover much of the roads around the interchange; and there is a park-and-ride scheme at Ryde St Johns Road station which will be improved by a new regular 30min service on Island Line from April 2021.
- 8.15** There are a number of parking-related problems in Ryde, including:

- Most parking in the town is controlled by the IWC and, since parking is one of its main sources of revenue, charges tend to increase every year. This threatens the viability of town centre businesses and the tourist trade.
- Residents' reluctance to pay parking charges results in under-use of off-street car parks, including the park-and-ride facility, and undesirable on-street parking by commuters and other non-residents in residential areas near the town centre and transport interchange, which in turn leads to requests to extend resident only parking zones.
- Inadequate off-road parking in many residential areas leads to dangerous roadside parking and, in some areas, parking on pavements.

**8.16** The IWC's approach to parking in Ryde has tended to be ad hoc. Following an extended period of consultation, the introduction of a new residents' only parking zone in the Dover Street area has been approved in principle but has yet to be implemented.

**8.17** In February 2021 the IWC approved a *Parking Delivery Plan*. The main recommendations relevant to Ryde are as follows:

- Some free short-term on-street parking should continue to be provided in town centres.
- The distinction between short- and long-term off-street car parks should be clearer.
- Residents' only parking zones should continue to be used to avoid inappropriate parking, subject (as now) to adequate evidence and resident consultation.
- Park-and-ride schemes should continue to be used where evidence suggests they would be of benefit.
- A wider range of parking charges should be used to manage parking issues more sensitively.
- Pay-and-display (plus phone apps) should continue to be the main payment method.
- The IWC should work with local parish and town councils to prepare more detailed parking strategies for specific areas, especially the main towns.

RTC supports the above recommendations, especially the need to prepare, in consultation with RTC, a detailed parking strategy for Ryde. RTC would also like to discuss with IWC the possibility of taking over control of off-street car parks.

## **Cycling and Walking**

**8.18** There is a network of cycling and walking paths linking various parts of the town and linking the town with neighbouring areas. These include a large stretch of the Island Coastal Path, which is soon to be incorporated into Natural England's national Coastal Path. The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the need to increase cycling and walking provision in order not only to promote sustainable transport but also to protect people's health and wellbeing.

**8.19** In April 2020 the IWC approved a *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan* for Newport and Ryde. This includes provision for extending and improving the existing network and filling gaps, such as a cycleway between Ryde and Newport. RTC supports these and any other measures to support cycling and

walking in the town and will use its status as a statutory planning consultee to encourage the provision of cycling and walking infrastructure in all new major developments.

## **Water and Sewerage**

- 8.20** The 2018 *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* notes (p.24) that the Island is likely to need 20% more water during the plan period (2020-40) and that major housing developments may require additional sewage provision. RTC maintains that a review of water and sewerage provision in Ryde should be included in the infrastructure plan proposed in paragraph 8.3 and that no major new development should be approved unless adequate provision is made for meeting any increases in water and sewage provision that may be required.

## **Social Infrastructure**

- 8.21** At present there is no integrated approach to the provision of education, health and community facilities in the town. Decisions are made on an ad hoc basis and there is no coordination between the provisions proposed in the various major development applications. This is particularly evident in the south-east of the town, where each major new development makes its own proposals.
- 8.22** The 2018 *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* notes (pp.32/33) a likely deficit in primary school provision and a possible deficit in early-years provision in Ryde town during the plan period. It also notes (p.37) the need for additional GP services in outlying areas of the town. It proposes that at least one of the town centre surgeries move into the suburbs to meet this demand. The inclusion of a GP surgery in plans for the expansion of the Nicholson Road Business Park (see section 6), suggests that the IWC is seeking to implement this proposal.
- 8.23** RTC maintains that a comprehensive review of social infrastructure needs should be included in the infrastructure plan proposed in para. 8.3 and that this should be taken into consideration when reviewing applications for new developments. RTC also maintains that any new GP surgery should be established in addition to, rather than instead of, any of the existing ones.
- 8.24** Developer contributions for education through s106 agreements may at present be used in any part of the Island. RTC maintains that any such contributions from developments in the Ryde area should be ring-fenced for use within Ryde.

## **Telecommunications**

- 8.25** Telecommunications in Ryde are relatively good, especially since the completion of Wight Fibre's Gigabit Island project in the town, which enables households to have access to a full-fibre network. However, RTC considers it important that telecommunications be included in the overall infrastructure plan for the town and taken into consideration when considering any new development.

RTC will:

- Seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with transport operators
- Work with IWC to prepare a comprehensive infrastructure plan and a parking delivery plan for the town
- Work with IWC and transport operators on the detailed design of the Ryde Interchange project
- Liaise with South Western Railway regarding improvements to the Island Line, including the provision of disabled access at St Johns Road Station
- Use its role as a statutory consultee to object to new developments, especially but not only in the east of the town, unless or until there is adequate provision to meet the related infrastructure needs
- Use its role as a statutory consultee to encourage developers to provide appropriate forms of infrastructure
- Oppose any attempt to move any of the existing GP surgeries out of the town centre.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to prepare a comprehensive infrastructure plan for the town
- Involve RTC in the detailed design of the Ryde Interchange project
- Postpone decisions on the major planning applications in the eastern part of the town until the results of Island Roads' highways study are available
- Work with RTC to prepare a parking delivery plan for Ryde
- Consider the transfer of off-road car parks to RTC
- Consult RTC when negotiating s106 infrastructure agreements related to developments in the Ryde area
- Ring-fence s106 contributions for education from developments in the Ryde area for use within Ryde

## 9 Environment

### Designated Ecology sites

- 9.1 The whole of the Isle of Wight was awarded Biosphere Reserve status in 2019 and Ryde has a range of habitats and species of conservation interest across the parish. However, the only specific nature conservation designations within Ryde occur along the coast. They cover the entirety of Ryde's shoreline and intertidal area.
- 9.2 The diversity of habitats and species in the Solent make Ryde an internationally important wildlife resource. The Ryde shoreline is a nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area. The sands area also has the internationally important Ramsar designation for the protection of overwintering birds.
- 9.3 The Isle of Wight Council (IWC) has obligations under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* (the Habitats Regulations) to achieve favourable conservation status for these designated sites. This obligation has become challenging, given the effects of increasing development and recreational pressures and the implications of climate change and sea level rise.
- 9.4 The *Habitats Regulations* require a precautionary principle to be applied to planning zones such as place plans, neighbourhood plans, key regeneration plans or other local plans so that only projects ascertained to have no adverse impact on the integrity of the European site may be permitted.
- 9.5 Both Natural England and IWC are therefore constantly assessing the potential impact of new recreational pressures, stemming from proposed development, on the Ryde Sands protected sites.
- 9.6 The IWC is a member of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership, which was established in 2017 and is made up of 19 organisations with interests around the Solent. The Partnership has developed the *Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy* which "aims to prevent bird disturbance from recreational activities. It seeks to do this through a series of management measures which actively encourage all coastal visitors to enjoy their visits in a responsible manner rather than restricting access to the coast or preventing activities that take place there". The *Strategy*, which is marketed under the name *Bird Aware Solent*, entails (p.4) the provision of:
- "A team of 5-7 coastal rangers to advise people on how to avoid bird disturbance, liaise with landowners, host school visits, etc;
  - Communications, marketing and education initiatives and an officer to implement them;
  - Initiatives to encourage responsible dog walking and an officer to implement them;
  - Preparation of codes of conduct for a variety of coastal activities;
  - Site-specific projects to better manage visitors and provide secure habitats for the birds;

- *Providing new/enhanced greenspaces as an alternative to visiting the coast;*
  - *A partnership manager to coordinate and manage all the above.*
- 9.7** The Island has a full-time Bird Aware Solent ranger, who is undertaking a variety of activities designed to increase public awareness of bird life along the Ryde coast and to promote responsible behaviour, including the production of a short video.
- 9.8** Implementation of these measures and monitoring of their effectiveness, is funded by developer contributions, equivalent to an average of £564 per dwelling, applied to new homes built within 5.6 kilometres of the SPAs. All new homes in the RTC area are subject to this levy.
- 9.9** Ryde includes some significant areas of ancient woodland. The largest such area is in the north-west of the town, on land along the shoreline that is owned by Ryde Golf Club and Ryde House. Other ancient woodland areas are found in Appley Park, Little Appley, Quarr Road, Smallbrook roundabout, Swanpond Copse, Angels Copse, Prestwood Butt, Pennyfeathers and land at Slade Road.
- 9.10** Guidance indicates that planning permission should be refused for developments that adversely affect ancient woodland unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of the woodland. Ryde Town Council (RTC) agrees with this policy. It also maintains that positive action needs to be taken to ensure the proper management of such woodland, on both public and privately owned land.

### **Countryside, Green and Amenity Spaces**

- 9.11** Ryde has a range of countryside, green and amenity spaces, including a number of historic community gardens. These are listed in Appendix 6. These green spaces are enjoyed all year round by residents and visitors and contribute to Ryde's unique sense of place.
- 9.12** Guidance from the *National Planning Policy Framework* states (p.29) that:
- “The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.”*
- Furthermore, “the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:*
- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
  - b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
  - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”*

- 9.13** In 2010 the IWC commissioned a *Green Infrastructure Mapping Study*. This examined all the landscape assets across the Island to assess what exists, where it lies, what level of designation and quality of provision it provides. It also aimed to establish any deficiencies and what potential might exist.
- 9.14** The Study identified (p.10) “*a number of issues in the Ryde area, in particular the deficiencies in the quantity of provision of parks and gardens and natural green space, which are well below their proposed quantity standards. However, a number of small sites do satisfy accessibility distance thresholds within the area. Links to the wider countryside are also relatively limited within Ryde*”.
- 9.15** Despite the range of green spaces in the town, the Study noted that “*public open space is limited in Ryde. The promenade has always been, and remains, the most significant public open space in the town, both socially and as a place of recreation. Over the years, the Esplanade has been extended through to Appley Park and Puckpool Battery, which has also been developed as a park.*” The Study recommended that this should continue to be the case.
- 9.16** The 2011/12 *Ryde at a Crossroads* study found that the community was significantly concerned about the perceived loss of green spaces and playing fields within the town. It was felt by contributors that a dedicated Ryde Environmental Strategy was needed along with a register of green spaces.
- 9.17** Consultation undertaken to inform the 2013 *Ryde Masterplan* showed (Stage 2, pp.7-9) that participants valued the town’s parks (and beaches) and that these needed to be key elements of Ryde’s offer to residents, visitors and businesses. The Masterplan recognised the value to the community of the town’s green spaces and in addition recommended that all of Ryde’s community gardens, such as Ashley Gardens and Coronation Gardens, should be included in a Green Infrastructure Plan for Ryde.
- 9.18** The *Ryde Place Plan*, having reviewed the findings of the above studies, reiterates the need for more green spaces. It concludes (p.27) that the town “is deficient in the provision of freely accessible green space when measured against national standards”.
- 9.19** RTC recognises the value of the town’s green and amenity spaces and supports them in various ways. Funding has for some years been provided to a voluntary organisation, *Gift to Nature*, for the improvement and maintenance of several countryside sites within the parish boundaries, notably Pig Leg Lane, Haylands Wood, Binstead Wood and the Appley Park ‘Picture Frame’. In 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council facilitated the designation of land owned by the IWC adjacent to the Nicholson Road Business Park as public green space. This area, named Rosemary Meadows, is also now managed by *Gift to Nature*. And in 2021 the Council agreed in principle to purchase St John’s Park, which currently belongs to a private residents’ association, to ensure its continuation as woodland and enable access by the general public.

- 9.20 RTC also provides top-up funding for maintaining and enhancing amenity sites, community gardens and principal parks owned and maintained by the IWC and has indicated an interest in taking more control over the development and maintenance of these areas.
- 9.21 In 2021 RTC initiated a *Greening Ryde* project, through which the Council will work together with a team of local volunteers to develop and maintain the town's green spaces. In order to facilitate this community-led initiative and ensure that maximum use is made of the town's green spaces, RTC maintains the need for a comprehensive inventory and audit of all such public spaces.
- 9.22 RTC welcomes the proposal, made in the 2020 *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan*, for a 'green corridor' route for pedestrians and cyclists to travel from Simeon Street Recreation Ground to Smallbrook Lane, following the line of the Monktonmead Brook, and avoiding roads.

### Flooding

- 9.23 The IWC produced a *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* in June 2010, aimed at identifying key areas of flood risk around the Island and developing region-specific strategies in accordance with the national frameworks, and a *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* in July 2016.
- 9.24 The following map shows the main rivers within in the Ryde town boundary and the areas most at threat from flooding at that time.

Map 3



Map taken from the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Appendix N: Ryde July 2016

- 9.25 There are two significant fluvial sub-catchments within the Ryde settlement boundary, defined in their lower reaches by the Environment Agency as main rivers, namely the Binstead Watercourse and the Monktonmead Brook.

- 9.26** The Monktonmead Brook has, in the past, been responsible for frequent flood events in the area around Simeon Street and The Strand. This led to the design of a £5 million flood alleviation scheme for the area. The scheme, which was funded by the Environment Agency, the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and the IWC, was completed in 2019. It included the realignment of the outfall from the beach to the harbour and the construction of a flood wall around the Simeon Street Recreation Ground, which will act as a reservoir for surplus runoff in times of flood.
- 9.27** The scheme has hopefully addressed the flood risk problem. However, it has, as noted in the *Ryde Place Plan* (p. 87), had a detrimental effect on the Simeon Street Recreation Ground. There is a need to find ways of reversing, or at least reducing, the damage to this important area of green space, so that it can still be used for recreational purposes by the local community.
- 9.28** According to the *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix N), flooding from the Binstead Watercourse is far less extensive, and there have been few, if any, confirmed events of flooding occurring directly from this watercourse. There are known surface water issues in Binstead, particularly around the Binstead Cemetery. This is also shown in the surface water modelling for the area which shows flow routes following the highways down to this area and beyond. The most notable flow route from the modelling in the Binstead area originates from rural land to the south, along Greenway and Sandpath to the area around the Cemetery at Cemetery Road and Binstead Hill before finding its way back into the Binstead Watercourse further to the north.

### **Shoreline Management**

- 9.29** The IWC produced a *Shoreline Management Plan* in 2010. The Plan prescribes (p.111) that, along the shoreline from Pelhamfield to Puckpool Hill, the policy is to 'hold the existing defence line', while west of Pelhamfield it is to 'retreat the existing defence line'. In other words, in the area west of Pelhamfield no attempt should be made to prevent the natural erosion of the shoreline.
- 9.30** RTC supports the general principle underlying this policy, but maintains that in certain cases (for example, where some sort of sea defence already exists or public assets such as footpaths are threatened), it may be appropriate to allow landowners to provide or strengthen a sea defence.
- 9.31** On Appley Beach there is a natural westward drift of sand which, if not reversed mechanically, results in blocking of the Harbour mouth and an accumulation of sand against the Harbour arm and, at times, on the Esplanade. In recent years, due to financial and other constraints, the IWC has failed to take regular action to reverse this drift.

RTC will:

- Work with organisations such as *Bird Aware Solent* to protect wildlife along the Ryde coast
- Promote and support measures to preserve and manage areas of ancient woodland within the town's boundary
- Promote and support measures to increase the amount of public green space in the town, including where appropriate taking ownership of them
- Use its statutory role as a consultee to object to any plans that would entail the loss of existing green spaces within the town
- Work with the IWC and other agencies to undertake an inventory of all green spaces and prepare a Green Infrastructure Plan for the town
- Negotiate with the IWC to obtain more control over the improvement and management of parks and open spaces owned by the IWC
- Increase community involvement in the improvement and maintenance of its green spaces through its *Greening Ryde* project
- Seek ways of rectifying the damage to Simeon Road Recreation Ground, so that it can still function as a valuable recreational resource
- Support sea defence measures west of Pelhamfield in exceptional cases
- Work with the IWC to address problems related to the movement of sand west of the Harbour.

RTC calls upon IWC to:

- Work with RTC to undertake an inventory of green spaces in Ryde and prepare a Green Infrastructure Plan for the town
- Negotiate with RTC to enable RTC to have more control over the development and management of parks and open spaces currently owned by the IWC
- Work with RTC to rectify the damage to Simeon Road Recreational Ground
- Take regular action to reverse the westward drift of sand on Appley Beach.

### Position Statement Review Working Group: Terms of Reference

At the first meeting of the Working Group on 16 November 2020, it was agreed that:

1. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group would be:

*To review the status and content of the Position Statement in the light of changes in circumstances over the last two years.*

2. The Position Statement is an important document that should remain in its own right. It should be consistent with, but has not been superseded by, the Place Plan. It focuses on statutory planning issues. It provides a basis from which to respond to planning applications and to attempt to influence the IWC's planning policy.

3. Attempts to have the Position Statement accepted by the Isle of Wight Council as a Statutory Planning Document should be pursued. One way of doing this would be to make this a condition of the proposed MOU between RTC and IWC and/or to include the PS as an annex to the MOU.

DRAFT

## A Charter for Ryde

*Ryde Town Council* is committed to protecting and enhancing the health, wellbeing and economy of Ryde for the benefit of all who live, work and visit here, within a culture that makes the best possible use of our rich natural, architectural and cultural heritage and conforms to the Biosphere Principles.

In order to achieve this, we will always seek to:

1. Protect and improve access to public services for all our residents, especially:
  - Adequate and appropriate facilities in our public spaces
  - Affordable, sustainable and accessible transport
  - Adequate and affordable housing
  - Social support and emergency help
2. Protect, enhance, support and celebrate our town's unique environment, especially our:
  - Wildlife
  - Beaches
  - Green spaces
  - Iconic buildings and architectural heritage
  - Cultural life
3. Protect and support our local economy, through the promotion of:
  - Adequate and sustainable employment opportunities for local people
  - A diverse and sustainable retail and industrial base
  - An enriched tourism experience
  - Viable social enterprises
  - Strong local procurement networks
4. Protect and promote the interests of residents with specific needs, especially:
  - Children and young people
  - Older people
  - Those with disabilities
  - Those on low incomes.
5. Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of governance in the town by:
  - Monitoring and reviewing our policies and procedures and measuring our performance to ensure that we are acting in the best interests of the town;
  - Promoting and supporting our local community organisations
  - Working in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors for the benefit of the town as a whole
  - Promoting and facilitating access to public information
  - Respecting the integrity of the town and its people and promoting a culture of 'Ryde First'

## History of Ryde

- 1780/81** Union St was set out by William Player, eventually to be named Union Street after the Act of Union joining Britain and Ireland.
- 1782** On 29th August, the sinking of the Royal George at Spithead resulted in the drowning of almost all her crew; the dead were buried on the sandbanks in an area that was later to become the Strand.
- 1811** The population of Ryde was 1,601. Ryde's building boom continued until the 1850's.
- 1812** The first meeting of the Ryde Pier Company was held on 30 July, and the foundation stone of the pier was laid on 29 June 1813. The pier, designed by John Kent of Southampton, cost £12,000. It was one of the first piers in the country, and it set Ryde up as a popular seaside resort and the principle entry point to the Island.
- 1814** The nearly completed pier opened on 26th July 1814, and was, as it still is, a timber-planked promenade. The original structure was originally almost wholly timber, and measured 527m/1740 feet.
- 1817** First steamboats operated between Ryde and Portsmouth for only four weeks.
- 1821** The population of Ryde was 2363.
- 1825** The steam boat service started in earnest and never looked back.
- 1827** St Thomas Church was built by George Player to replace the previous chapel of ease, at a cost of £3,500.
- 1827** St James Church was built in Lind Street.
- 1833** Extensions to the pier took the overall length to 681m/2250 feet.
- 1836** The Royal Victoria Arcade was opened, named after Princess Victoria, later to become Queen Victoria. Her coat of arms can be seen over the entrance – a rare occurrence of the arms of a princess.
- 1841** The population of Ryde was 5840.
- 1843** The British Schools were built in St Johns Rd.
- 1845/46** St Mary's Roman Catholic church was built to a design by Joseph Hansom, who also designed the coach named after him.
- 1846** Prince Albert laid the corner stone of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.
- 1851** The population of Ryde was 7,147.
- 1855** In January, a plan of the proposed Esplanade was submitted to the Lords of the Admiralty for approval. The construction of the section between the George Street Slipway and the Cornwall Street Slipway was carried out 1855/6/7, by the reclamation of some 20 acres from the sea, and at a cost of £5,000.
- 1861** The foundation stone was laid for the church of St Michael and All Angels in Swanmore. It was opened in 1862.
- 1861** The Population of Ryde was 9,269
- 1864** The Pier was lengthened several times and was a great success. So many people used it that a tramway service was proposed in 1861 and a second pier was built next to the first, opening 29 August 1864. This allowed trams to take passengers from the Pier Head to Ryde Esplanade. It opened for passenger traffic with horse drawn vehicles, having made an unsuccessful trial with a locomotive in March of that year.
- 1868** On the 23rd July, by Royal Charter, the Borough of Ryde was incorporated within the boundaries of the Town of Ryde as constituted by the Ryde Improvement Act of 1854. It is possible that Queen Victoria's affection for the town following her many visits during her stay at Osborne may have influenced her decision to grant Borough status on such a small town.
- 1868** The negotiations for the development of the railway from St John's Station to the Esplanade were long and protracted, commencing in December, and continuing until July 1900, when the line was opened. The

original proposals of the Railway Company included the laying of a double line along the Esplanade (at ground level), through Cornwall Street and across the Strand and Simeon Street and part of Monkton Street. The Council strongly opposed any running of locomotives along these roads, and much litigation ensued opposing the several Bills in Parliament in which these proposals were contained.

- 1869** The construction of the parish church of All Saints was commenced to a design of Sir G. G. Scott, at a cost of £20,000, the corner-stone being laid by Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (Helene, daughter of Queen Victoria) on behalf of Queen Victoria on the 4th August 1869; the consecration of the Church being performed by Bishop Wilberforce in January 1872.
- 1870** On 8 September, the Empress Eugene, wife of Napoleon III, Emperor of France, and a longtime friend of Queen Victoria, landed at Ryde Pier from Sir John Burgoyne's yacht "The Gazelle" after her flight from Paris. The boat had left France to escape the riots in Paris where the citizens were up in arms demanding a Republic. She spent a night in the York Hotel in George Street – later to be known as the Royal York Hotel. The Empress was apparently in such a disheveled state when she landed at Ryde, that she was refused entrance to the grander Pier Hotel!
- 1870** Appley Tower built by Sir William Hutt who owned the Appley Estate.
- 1871** The Theatre Royal was built on the site of an older theatre in St Thomas's Square.
- 1876** In September, a plan and estimate for the extension of the Esplanade to Seaview was approved and application made to the Local Government Board for sanction to borrow the money for the work. However, a public meeting held at Seaview (which area was then not within the Borough boundary) resolved that the project was not one that the district was prepared to fall in with, and requested a remodeling of the scheme. A roller skating rink was developed close to West Hill Road giving the name Rink Road. Apparently, a rail station was developed there for a short time.
- 1877** The first proposal for development of the foreshore west of the Ryde Pier was contained in a resolution on the 24th July, "That the necessary steps be taken to form an Esplanade West of the Pier to Binstead, and that application be made to the owners of that portion of Pier Terrace facing Union Street asking on what terms they will be willing to sell the property to make an approach to the proposed Esplanade".
- 1878** A plan of the proposed extension of the Esplanade from the Sluice at Cornwall Street to the Eastern Borough boundary at Appley Slipway was approved. This work, together with the construction of the Canoe Lake, was completed in the year 1880.
- 1881** The population of Ryde stood at 11,461.
- 1880** The Canoe Lake was opened.
- 1880** On 12th July a third pier was opened, alongside the first two, providing a direct steam railway link to the pier-head from St John's Station.
- 1891** The population was reported to be 17,984.
- 1895** A concert pavilion was constructed at the pier-head and over the next sixteen years the original wooden piles were replaced in cast iron.
- 1901** The census showed the population of the town to be 18,167.
- 1903** Electricity was switched on in Ryde by the Mayor, Mr A Millward, on 1st October at the local works of the IW Electric Light Company in Benett Street.
- 1922** In August, it was proposed that plans should be prepared for the erection of a permanent Pavilion. Its location was decided following a referendum of the ratepayers; the Eastern Esplanade was selected, and sketch plans drawn up by Messrs. Vincent and West. Final decisions were not made until September 1925, when it was resolved that the Council take immediate steps for the erection of the Pavilion. In January 1926, the Council unanimously approved that application be made for sanction to borrow £10,025.
- 1926** A further improvement to the Western Esplanade in the form of a new Bandstand and Enclosure was carried out by the Council.
- 1929** Following a fatal accident when a bus turned over at the bottom of Union Street, the decision was made to widen the road leading to the Pier (Pier Street, as it then was called, was bounded on the North side by the Pier Hotel and other properties, which had to be demolished. The final scheme, which included improvements to the western Esplanade, was approved in 1931.
- 1932** In January the demolition of the Pier Hotel was completed, and on the 26th March the new concrete carriageway was opened to traffic.
- 1936** The Commodore Cinema was opened – the largest cinema on the Island.

- 1945** *The Galleon Café opened in Union Street – this and Beti’s café (now Hursts) were the gossip centres for the town.*
- 1945/50** *The town gradually returned to normal following the war. Bomb damage was repaired, and the first new houses to be built where bombs had destroyed the Victorian villas, were on each side of the road at the West Street end of Arthur Street. Prefabs were built on Great Preston Road and Arundell Road.*
- 1961** *The population of Ryde was 22,500.*
- 1961** *In May, the Theatre Royal in St Thomas’ Square burned down and was demolished.*
- 1966/67** *The Westminster Bank was built on the site of the old Theatre Royal.*
- 1989** *Ryde Harbour was built.*
- 2006** *In April the renovation of St Thomas Square was completed.<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Town Centre Vision 2012

## The Ryde Conservation Area Characteristics

### ***Esplanade, Pier and Seafront***

This is very much the face of Ryde, easily read from the seaward approach, in particular from the pier, as buildings rise up from the foreshore, prominent elevations tilted towards the sea. Views of the Pier, the Solent and the mainland are a permanent backdrop when viewed from the town. Along the Esplanade, the town's origin as a traditional seaside resort and transport interchange is inherent in its architecture and landscaping. Here open space, public gardens, sandy beaches and seaside stalls meet the hustle and bustle of the transport interchange and merge to create a distinctive coastal resort.

### ***Historic core and commercial centre***

This is the historic core of Ryde. The main streets are the backbone of the town and contain vestiges of two historic settlements. There is unity in the architecture. Regency sits comfortably beside Victorian, creating a pleasing irregular skyline. The commercial centre with its historic shopfronts, merge at St Thomas's Square, the area's most notable public space. Glimpses of the sea are a constant reminder of its location as a seaside town.

### ***Regency and Victorian Housing***

This area incorporates an eclectic mix of finely proportioned Regency and Victorian housing, mainly two or three storey in height, mainly constructed in stone or buff coloured brick or rendered in stucco. Classically fronted Regency terraces sit beside Italianate style facades, sited within generous gardens which contribute to the overall feeling of openness. The unifying linear street pattern enables clear views across Ryde with occasional glimpses of the sea.

### ***Pelhamfield, Ryde School & All Saints Church.***

This is a pleasant, quiet area, with some fine examples of early to mid 19th century detached villas, set within spacious gardens facing the sea. The style of architecture is mixed: white painted stucco is common but local stone and brick is also present. The original street pattern remains and through traffic is restricted, giving the area an almost semi-rural feel, assisted by the presence of stone boundary walls and hedges.

### ***Ryde Cemetery***

Within the confines of Ryde Cemetery a wealth of social history is contained within the memorials of the people that lived and worked in Ryde. This reserved space, once open pastureland, is now home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, an enclosed and intimate environment that benefits the wider surroundings and the current inhabitants of the town.<sup>16</sup>

## The Ryde St John's Conservation Area Characteristics

### ***Character Area 1: Appley and St John's***

This is a pleasant, quiet area, diverse in use, the original settlement pattern of which is clearly displayed in its boundaries. There is a mix of 19th and 20th century architecture; elegant 19<sup>th</sup> century villas, some of it Italianate in style, sit beside 20th suburban housing. Remnants of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19th century parkland have a significant visual impact and some areas, semi-contained and semi-concealed by trees, feel shadowy, secluded and enclosed although overall the area is spacious and green reflecting its suburban nature.

### ***Character Area 2: The Church of St John the Baptist***

This is primarily a peaceful residential area which radiates southwards from the church, a church which sits prominently and comfortably at the junction of several roads. At times the area is awash with the chatter of children travelling to and from school, a pleasant contrast to the background murmur of constant traffic. 19th century villas sit beside 20th suburban housing, essentially linear ribbon development, situated within generously proportioned gardens.

### ***Character Area 3: St John's Park***

Climbing gently from the seafront, St John's Park is a fine example of 19th century residential planning on a grand scale: these 19th century residences retain many of the characteristic decorative features of Italianate architecture, the richness of which matches the area's elevated position dominating views across Ryde, a dominance assisted by the thickly wooded parkland at its core. The woodland and gardens contribute significantly to the spaciousness of the area. Towards the north-west is a distinctive row of Victorian and Edwardian houses which retain many original features.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ryde St Johns Conservation Character Appraisal 2011

## Countryside, Green and Amenity Spaces in Ryde

### Isle of Wight Council owned and managed sites

Appley Park  
Ryde Esplanade, including Eastern Gardens and Western Gardens  
Ashley Gardens  
Royal George Gardens  
Coronation Gardens  
Simeon Street Recreation Ground  
Salters Road Recreation Ground  
Binstead Recreation Ground  
Ratcliffe Avenue  
Oakfield Football Club  
Gassiots Green  
Binstead Park (Coniston Avenue)  
Pell Lane

### Cemeteries

Ryde Cemetery  
Ashley Cemetery  
Binstead Cemetery

### Gift to Nature managed (on behalf of Isle of Wight Council)

Pig Leg Lane  
Haylands Wood  
Binstead Woods  
Rosemary Meadows

### Allotment sites (Ryde Town Council owned and managed)

Quarry Road  
Marlborough Road  
Upton Road  
Alfred Street  
Mayfield Road

### Other (where public access is allowed)

Play Lane Millennium Green  
Ryde Golf Club/Ladies Walk  
Land north of Hillrise Avenue  
St Johns Wood  
Dame Anthony's Common

Ancient Woodland

Adjacent to Ryde Golf Club

Appley Park

Little Appley

Quarr Road

Land South of Quarr Hill

Smallbrook roundabout

Swanpond Copse

Angels Copse

Prestwood Butt

Pennyfeathers

Land at Slade Road

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