



RYDE TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

Strategy for delivering co-ordinated improvements
to the Public Realm in Ryde.

Revised July 2019

Reviewed

Strategy for delivering co-ordinated improvements to the Public Realm.

Ryde is one of the main gateways to the Isle of Wight and its largest town. Considerable development in the 19th Century created a town with strong retail, economic, social and tourism functions and a rich wealth of townscape quality. Changes in the patterns of tourism and a gradual economic decline in the town since the 1960s have led to a loss of economic prosperity. This has had an impact on the quality of building maintenance, the loss of traditional urban features and the longer-term vitality of the town as a whole.

This public realm strategy is a key initiative and has been developed to ensure that the Town Councils newly established Public Realm Budget is used to deliver sustainable and appropriate public realm solutions in Ryde, underpinned by quality of design, local distinctiveness and respect for historic character. It takes regard of various plans and policies that have sought to provide a steer on the matters previously, namely Ryde Town Council's Position Statement, any future Place Plan for Ryde and the Atkins Ryde Public Realm Strategy.

Good design can help to create successful places where people will choose to live, work, invest and take their leisure. It can reinforce planning goals, making urban areas such as Ryde more sustainable by encouraging the careful use of resources, creating a quality environment, attracting business and investment and reinforcing civic pride and sense of place. It is also important to consider cause and effect throughout the town and across all aspects of infrastructure, development and social and economic provision. Conversely, piecemeal and uncoordinated initiatives can damage the character and integrity of a town.

The proposed public realm elements should reflect and respect the existing high quality architectural and townscape settings. Low quality treatments which do not respect these characteristics will not be encouraged. Quality should not be compromised for short-term improvements. A consistent and unifying response to the public realm is important for its longer-term appeal and development .

The guidance below and the supplementary guidance documents (Appendix 1 and 2) set out the following.

- The design themes of public realm elements and explains where the various styles will be adopted.
- The process by which the various projects are evaluated and graded for suitability for Public Realm Funding
- The various steps which the proposed projects will need to take to reach completion

Currently the public realm (which incorporates seats, bins, signage, shelters and planters) within the town is a mixture of 2 predominant styles. Any project should attempt to identify with the existing public realm co-ordinated approach relevant for that area. This should be done in consultation with the IW Council Conservation Officer and Island Roads, in accordance with the Ryde Public Realm Strategy but taking into consideration the changes that have already been made over the intervening years.

Island Roads have confirmed that items including shelters, railings, north walk and planters are on their network improvement register and as such the Town Council would seek to understand the full range of their asset holding within the town in order that maximum benefit could be achieved.

The present agreed 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. These schemes should be adopted for all future proposed Realm Improvement projects. This will give a more co-ordinated feel to Ryde and simplify the decision-making process.

Any proposals from a Ward Member for Public Realm Funding should, in the first instance seek agreement in principle for their project. After agreement the project should be worked up, costed fully and presented to the planning committee for approval if under £5,000 or recommendation to Full Council if over £5,000.

Ryde Esplanade has been identified by the Isle Of Wight Council as 1 of the 6 major regeneration projects being planned for the Island. Ryde Town Council would seek to gain assurance from IWC that any planned regeneration should take into account the adopted scheme already in place for that area of the Public Realm.