

THE URBAN EXTENSION ANNEX JUNE 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic, the public health emergency and socio-economic impacts that have followed, and the curtailment of normal activity in so many areas, has inevitably generated a pause for thought in local authority plans and programmes. In the case of the Ryde Place Plan, the urban extension, its spread of development proposals, housing numbers and types, infrastructure improvements and wider community relevance, is one such topic for re-evaluation. The themes of community open space, pedestrian and cycle access, local health services and economic recovery are natural priorities for change in the context of the pandemic.

The extent to which RTC can influence these development schemes is constrained by the fact that some have already been approved by the local planning authority and there is no legal basis for revoking those decisions other than through the planning process itself (i.e. schemes seeking variations and the possibility of ‘timing out’).

This annex therefore explores areas of useful intervention by which RTC can seek to secure better post-Covid outcomes for the Place Plan, through development, or object to plans and variations that it does not consider beneficial.

1. SCALE AND IMPACT

The schemes with the largest potential impact on Ryde, in housing, employment, public realm, landscape and road infrastructure are Pennyfeathers, Nicholson Road and West Acre (Bullen Dairy). All are ‘live’ in the planning system (Pennyfeathers through variations to approval, the others still under consideration at the time of writing) and therefore their proposals are open to influence, alteration, or withdrawal.

RTC needs a professional working relationship with each project team in order to be able to effectively communicate its own point of view, discuss options, challenge claims, and ask for essential information on the development details. This action does not impair or compromise RTC’s entitlement to object to, approve, or defer judgement on the same proposals. Response to a submitted planning application, in the normal process of public consultation, is not enough on its own; there must be more proactive engagement and dialogue from RTC.

Each of these development sites is likely to persist as a potential future impact whether current applications succeed or not and so the relationship between RTC, landowners and development interests is essential if proper influence over the expansion of Ryde is to be achieved and overarching community benefit, for the people and places of the town, set in place as the essential benchmark.

The points for consideration given in this annex are based on the three major developments, but all apply equally to the smaller schemes nearby and can be applied in the same way to, for example, Rosemary Vineyard/Trotters and Smallbrook Stadium.

2. CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

RTC will need to carefully consider the in-combination offer of infrastructure improvements shared between these major development proposals. RTC will need to seek clear and regular briefing from the IWC team working on priority junctions for example, to understand the degree to which all developments are dependent upon one another, i.e. can a minimum acceptable level of infrastructure be delivered by any one scheme alone and how will any deficit be solved given the local authority's extreme financial constraint following the pandemic?

Transport

The problems that affect Westridge crossroads junction, the Great Preston Road/Smallbrook Lane junction, road safety issues on Smallbrook Lane to Ashey Road, road safety and traffic management in and around the existing Nicholson Road industrial estate, might all be exacerbated by partial or site-only highways changes delivered by individual developments. A complete overview can only come from IWC and Island Roads but a well-informed, local voice demanding coherent planning must come from RTC. The relationship between the proposed developments and the LCWIP is similarly essential. Do the schemes facilitate its delivery, add value and capacity, or do they make it harder by working against the local cycling and walking targets?

Green

The same evaluation must apply to green and community infrastructure. To what extent does each scheme add to, expand, and enhance the existing public open space, public access, and permeability of its local environment? Do any of the proposals provide a means of better overall management of existing and neighbouring public greenspace or will they add pressure and risk eroding the existing resource?

There is an opportunity to combine the plans for Ryde Country Park with those for community land and buildings. The new park would incorporate the greenspace provision from both Nicholson Road and Pennyfeathers and could potentially 'twin' with the proposals for an eastern park at West Acre, creating the largest area of its kind on the Island. A consistent land management approach will be needed across the whole park and so a 'ranger base' sited at the most convenient or expedient development should be considered a priority. This would then also allow environmental outreach and engagement activity to grow from the same centre.

Community

Each of the three major schemes is offering to provide a community building or centre. It is important that there is clarity around the sorts of activities and services imagined. If each is essentially the same all-purpose facility, then it may be that one or more becomes redundant and is at risk from redevelopment for housing or workspace.

It is important that RTC makes it clear, to both developers and the LPA that it expects to see some element of masterplanning in the decision making around community contribution.

The new community centres promised by each development all include GP services. It is essential that RTC works with the NHS, CCG, ICP and locality hub to ensure that there is no permanent drift of health service provision from existing areas in Ryde which are currently accessible by walking for many who would find it much harder to reach the urban extension without driving (and may not have a car).

Housing

The three major developments deliver approximately 1380 new homes, of which approximately 480 would be affordable. Ryde, as is the case for the other main urban centres on the Island, has an urgent need for smaller (1,2 bed) affordable housing provision. The track record of delivery after approval is poor across the island and this is a critical consideration for RTC when reviewing and responding to the current applications and their revisions. Is it clear who the affordable provider is? Does the scheme phasing show early delivery of the affordable stock? What assurance is there that priority housing for local people has been put ahead of more speculative development? An important question is whether assured sale and delivery of the affordable component of a much larger, and more uncertain scheme, might provide a point of leverage for RTC to propose partial, meanwhile, amended or alternative development options.

Economic

Each of the proposed major developments includes some workspace and retail provision. Nicholson Road is predominantly an employment scheme whereas Pennyfeathers and West Acre are residential, but the principle of maximum local benefit should still apply.

As with the other critical infrastructure issues, the key concern is the extent to which new centres of economic activity promised by new development, complement, connect with, support, and extend existing local business. Will new development build additional local economic resilience and opportunity, or will it put existing business under new stress?

S106

Critical local infrastructure is the basis for s106 negotiations. It is important that RTC insists on discretionary and justifiable contributions to natural and social infrastructures alongside transport and education. These are allowed for in the Island Plan supporting documents but need lobbying for as a local priority.

Development schemes should be expected to provide both on-site works and off-site contributions to critical infrastructure issues such as the emerging Ryde Country Park and the delivery of the LCWIP if they are to meet RTC and Place Plan criteria for relevance, suitability and public benefit.

3. PHASING AND PRE-COMMENCEMENT

There is scope to influence the delivery of public benefit on any approved developments that do begin work. Planning conditions will set out pre-commencement requirements and the milestones for discharge against any phasing programme. RTC can influence these matters, whether through new application or variation, to deliver better outcomes for existing and future communities.

Key objectives to consider are:

- Early phase delivery and management of public open space contributory to the Ryde Country Park.
- Early phase delivery of affordable housing both because it is a social priority and because it is managed as a single estate and can therefore be integrated into the open space/park 'manco' arrangements.
- Early phase delivery of new community facilities to support existing neighbourhoods first.

4. LAND STERILIZATION

If any of the major development projects fail, either through refusal of planning permission or by permission lapsing, then there is the potential for large areas of land to become dormant, disused, or derelict. RTC will need to consider if there are ways in which it can intervene to secure meanwhile or permanent benefits for the town and its communities. These might be alternative development conversations with the landowners where RTC plays an active role, or temporary community uses that provide site owners with some benefit, financial or otherwise. Whatever options might emerge, the voice of RTC and its partners in shaping those next possibilities is essential.

5. CONCLUSION

The urban extension across the south-east of Ryde is a significant component in the Place Plan. The scrutiny, coordination and management of the extension is made much harder by the lack of a masterplan, LDO or other mechanism to enable desired outcomes to be designed and regulated en bloc. This has resulted in piecemeal and uncoordinated development pressure, duplication of generic community offers, fragmented infrastructure delivery and a disjointed timetable of planning applications and project commencements.

RTC is therefore limited in its ability to review the urban extension other than by actively engaging in the various live planning consultations currently underway, a mix of schemes yet to be determined, those approved but returned for variation, and those approved but presumed stalled pending some change yet to come. This is a messy and challenging approach, but it is all that is now available.

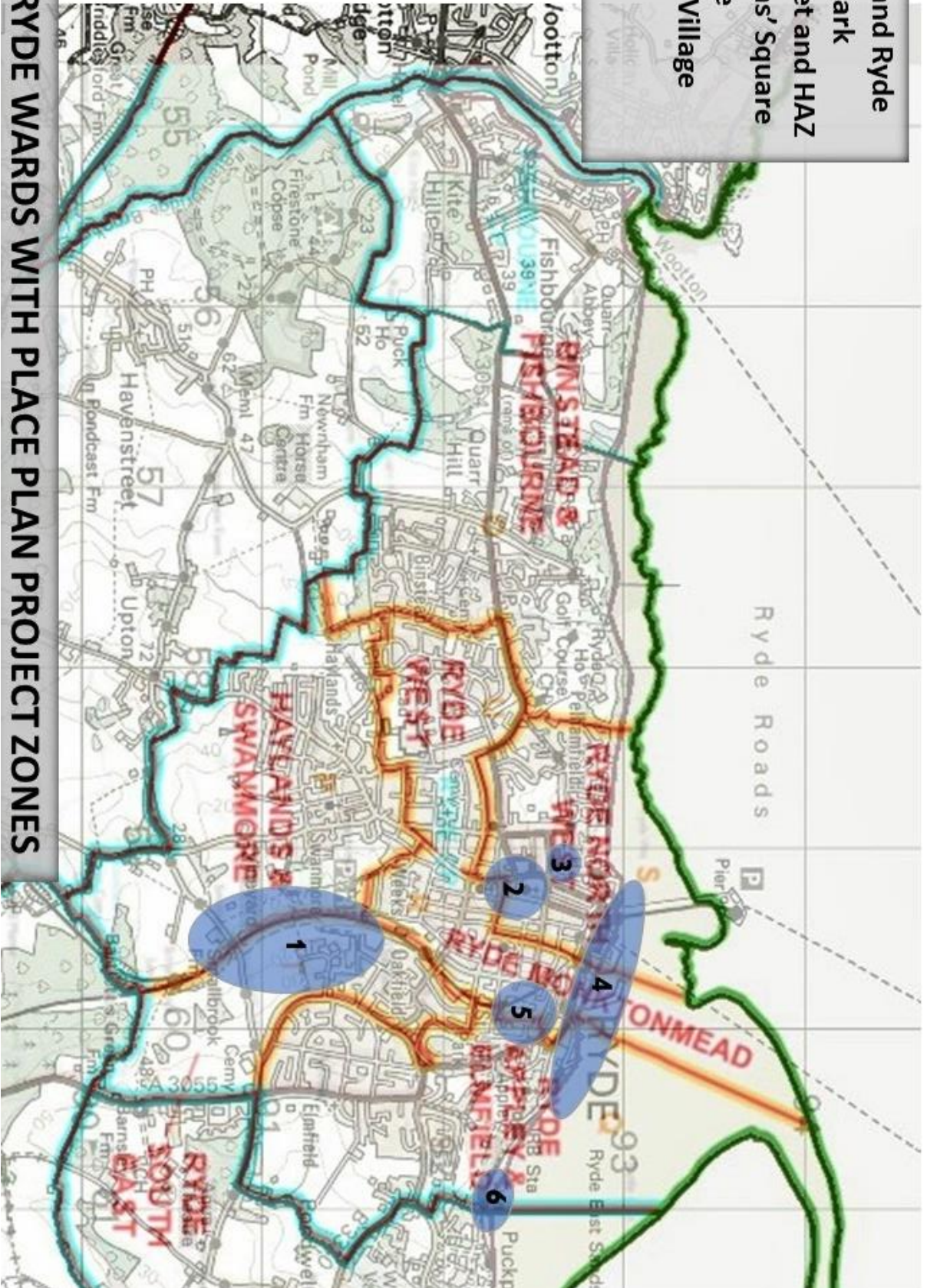
The impact of Covid-19 on the consideration of accessible open space, neighbourhood-level community services and partnership working has provided a set of cues for re-engaging with the urban extension that can be used by RTC to prompt changes to the development schemes presented. These are set out in this annex.

The component schemes within the urban extension must show how, individually, and together, they:

- Extend, and contribute to the management of Ryde Country Park.
- Extend and deliver the LCWIP.
- Add new neighbourhood community facilities without displacing existing town centre services (in recreation, sport, health, education, and social support) and without unhelpful duplication/competition within the urban extension itself.
- Ensure necessary upgrades to critical local infrastructure without the risk of incomplete, disjointed, and ineffective piecemeal implementation.
- Connect with and enhance local centres of business and employment.

RTC is encouraged to work closely with major development stakeholders in order to strengthen its ability to shape change during the current planning timetable, and to create the conditions for better alternative proposals should existing schemes withdraw.

1. Oakfield and Ryde Country Park
2. High Street and HAZ
3. St. Thomas' Square
4. Esplanade
5. Monkton Village
6. Appley



THE 2021 RYDE WARDS WITH PLACE PLAN PROJECT ZONES

Ryde Country Park (RCP)

1. Pennyfeathers extension to RCP
2. Rosemary Vineyard extension to RCP
3. Nicholson Rd. extension to RCP
4. Swannmore Meadows and Pig Leg Lane core of RCP
5. Sovereign Arc extension to RCP

HAZ

6. Network Ryde
7. Minghella Square
8. Town Square
9. Ryde Library

St. Thomas' connector between HAZ and Union St.

10. Ryde Town Hall
11. St. Thomas' Square

Esplanade

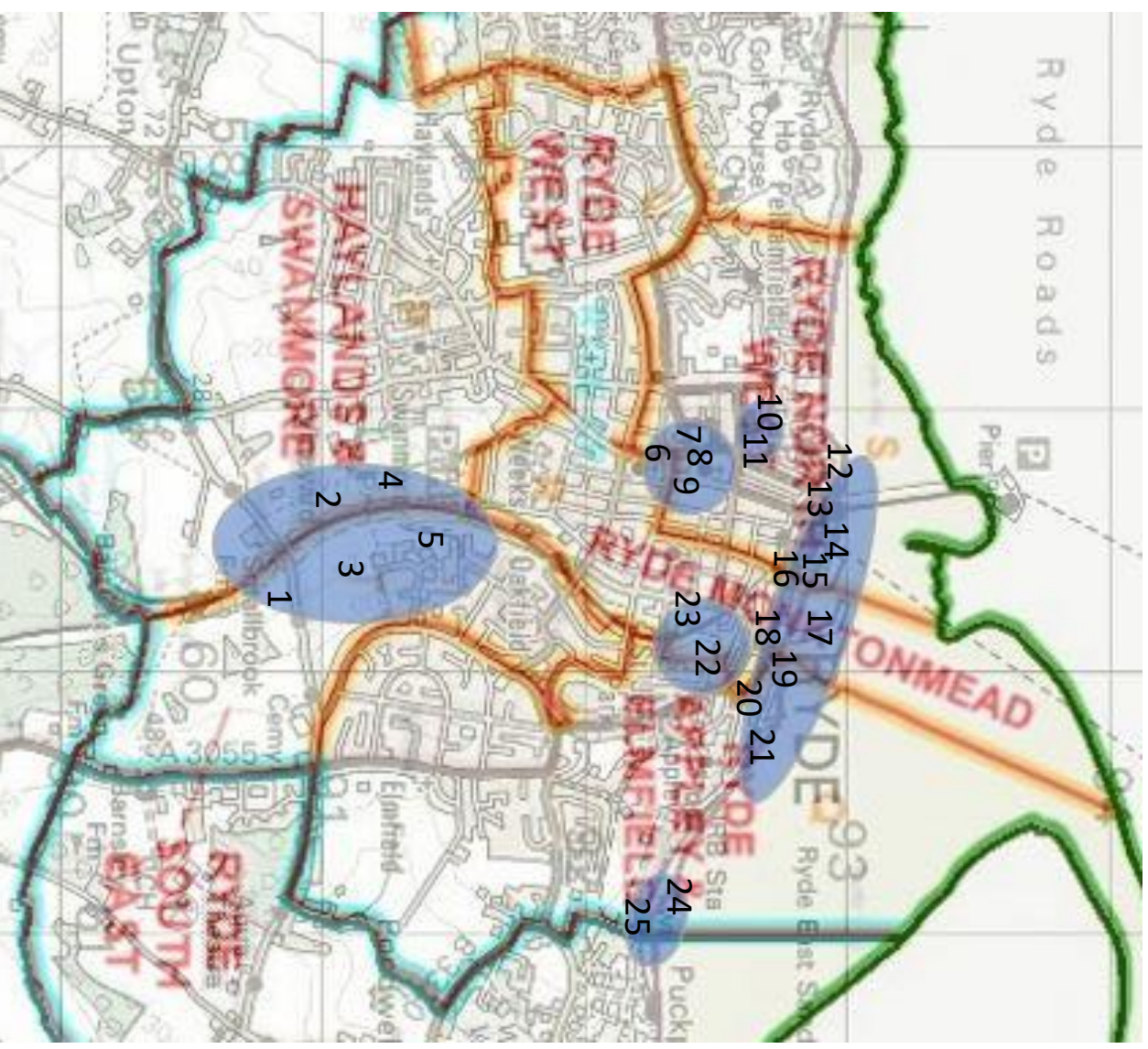
12. Western Gardens and beach
13. The interchange
14. Ryde Arena site
15. Ryde Skatepark
16. The Rose Garden
17. Ryde Harbour
18. Ashely Gardens
19. Eastern Gardens
20. Memorial Gardens
21. Eastern Gardens

Monkton

22. Simeon Rec
23. Monkton Village

Appley

24. Appley Tower
25. Appley Park



NOTES

- There are ward themes forming around common geographical issues and priorities:
 1. Ryde North West/Ryde Monktonmead/Ryde Appley and Elmfield - town centre(s), seafront and Esplanade
 2. Ryde South East/Haylands and Swanmore – urban extension and Ryde Country Park
- There is an absence of identified Place Plan actions and projects in Ryde West, Binstead and Fishbourne, and the western part of Haylands and Swanmore. This block of western wards has a distinct local character and presents an opportunity to trial a finer-grained approach to local action for change, drawing on the Ryde Place Plan method, findings and recommendations, but potentially supported by new public consultation and engagement. The overlap with Fishbourne Parish (at IWC level) also creates a reason to combine efforts in areas of common interest, such as their shared Key Regeneration Area in the Island Plan, their shared and distinctive unit of AONB, and the England Coastal Path between Wootton Creek and Ryde Pier.
- The overlap with adjacent parish councils is also relevant to the northern and southern ward groups as the Harcourt redevelopment, and its associated links with Appley and Puckpool connects Ryde with Nettlestone and Seaview, and the greenspace proposals for the Pennyfeathers development connect Ryde with Brading and St. Helens.