



DISCUSSION PAPER

Committee:	Place, Neighbourhood and Planning
Date:	Wednesday, 2 November 2022
Report Author:	Chris Turvey - Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Officers
Report Title:	Concerns regarding the Ryde High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Project
Context:	Concerns were raised at the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning committee meeting on the 11 th October 2022. Members were concerned with the diminishing aims of the HSHAZ project and the way that the HSHAZ in Ryde was being managed.

1. SUMMARY

At the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, 11 October 2022 questions were raised in response to agenda item 11 regarding the HSHAZ project. Members agreed that the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Officer should prepare a discussion paper which highlighted the following concerns:

- That the original aims of the HSHAZ project were not going to be realised.
- Members showed concerns over the continued vehicle use in the pedestrian zone which was carrying on unenforced.
- Lack of access to the project officer since Sally Thompson had resigned.
- Lack of progress with the issues caused by access for Graces Bakery.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERS MAIN CONSERNS

That the original aims of the HSHAZ project were not going to be realised.

Members felt that there was a possibility that on completion of the HSHAZ project there would not be an identifiable long-term legacy. It was felt that a large amount of the budget had been spent on consultants' reports, and items that were not originally identified as part of the HSHAZ. This meant that the things that the committee felt were essential to the success of the project, for example the new road surface and the public realm furniture, were not going to be achieved within the remaining available funds. It has been suggested that further money from other funders could possible complete the project.

Continued vehicle use in the pedestrian zone

Access to the High Street pedestrian zone is allowed for loading and unloading between the hours of 06.00hrs and 10.00hrs. Outside of this time there is no access for vehicles including drivers with a disabled badge.

Since the inception of the pedestrian zone drivers have blatantly ignored the restrictions and parked in this area or driven through with impunity. There has been no record of a fixed penalty notice being issued or a moving vehicle offence being pursued. This is despite the fact that RTC have contacted both the parking services and the police regarding these issues.

Island Roads have been unable to offer a solution which includes a physical barrier although this is made more difficult owing to continued permitted access for Graces Bakery.

Lack of access to the project officer

At the beginning of the HSHAZ project RTC had a project officer (Sally Thompson) working on the Ryde HSHAZ. She dropped in to our offices, on average, 3 times a week and passed on the latest info and informed RTC officers of any concerns that she had. She also regularly attended Planning committee and Full Council meetings to keep members updated.

Members felt that this reduction in face-to-face contact with RTC officers and less availability of the project officer (due to the fact that he is running two HSHAZ projects) left RTC feeling that they are not getting value for money.

Lack of progress with the issues caused by access for Graces Bakery

Graces Bakery have access rights over a small length of the High Street to allow them to park on their off-street parking area. Negotiations have been carrying on since before the HSHAZ was awarded to Ryde and there seems to be, so far, little progress. There is a scheme which should be advanced as a matter of urgency which allows access and offroad parking for Graces Bakery via the Victoria Street Car Park. So long as Graces Bakery do not have this proposed new access and are forced to use the High Street access there will be no barrier and pedestrian safety will be at risk.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HSHAZ project has yearly spending targets which if not spent, the funds are lost. This year there is still £90,000 left in the budget of HSHAZ funding. £70,000 of that is earmarked for shop front improvements however each shop front will have to go through the planning process and is not guaranteed to be completed before the end of March 2023. Last year this caused a flurry of spending at the end of the year on things that were not scheduled. If this funding, which is at present reserved for shop front improvements, had to be spent on other projects owing to time constraints, the work on the shop front design code and the various planning application and architects fees could be wasted.