



**RYDE**  
TOWN COUNCIL

# **PLANNING FOR RYDE**

## **RYDE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT**

**Revised Version 3.10**  
May 2024

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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, the *Island Plan*, 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 Planning 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.
- 1.3 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 Place, Neighbourhood and 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 reference documents were, where appropriate, re-examined as part of the development of the initial version of the Position Statement and the subsequent revisions. A list of these documents can be found in Appendix 7.

## 2. The Current Issues for Ryde

### Infrastructure Issues

- 2.1 Ryde is one of the two main towns on the Island and 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.
- 2.2 The *National Planning Policy Framework* requires (para. 20) local authorities to liaise with other bodies to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and
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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.

- 2.3 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.

## Housing Issues

- 2.4 The delivery of new housing on the Island is one of the most challenging issues that the local plan has to address. Since the adoption of the Island Plan core strategy in March 2012, there has been a significant shortfall in the delivery of housing against the identified annual housing number in the core strategy, as shown in Figure 2.1. Monitoring indicates that there seems to be a 'ceiling' to the delivery of housing on the Island, as it has averaged around 365 dwellings per annum (dpa) since adoption of the core strategy, with a peak of 417dpa in 2015/16.

Housing completions on the Isle of Wight since 2015

Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
Homes required	520	520	520	520	520	4160
Actual homes built	417	321	360	350	253	2916
Shortfall						-1244

- 2.5 Most significant is the acute decrease in the delivery of affordable housing, as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary - National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)). In 2019/20 just six affordable housing units were delivered. For 2018/19 none were delivered, in 2017/18 it was 18 units, 2016/17 it was 34 and 35 in the monitoring year 2015/16. There are now over 2,000 individual households on the housing register in the four most urgent categories of need. With around 300 re-lets per year, it is clear there is a greater need than is being met within the current housing stock.

## Health Issues

- 2.7 Information from a March 2013 study produced by the Isle of Wight Business Intelligence Unit on health would suggest that the whole Island in general in terms of physical health and life expectancy is lower than the rest of England. There is an even more stark difference if compared with the South East which is much healthier than the average for the rest of England. The age profile for the Island has a lot to do with this but the levels of deprivation are almost certainly a contributing factor.
- 2.8 There is a shortage of general practitioners on the Island and this has been instrumental in the closure of some doctor's surgeries on the Island. There is also a chronic shortage of beds at St Mary's Hospital and Cancer, Heart and many other

more serious issues require a trip to the mainland to either Portsmouth or Southampton. The time delay can be crucial in the treatment of serious issues.

- 2.9 There is an extremely long waiting list for ancillary services such as physiotherapy etc. and this does not help with the length of time that it takes for recover.

### **Deprivation**

- 2.10 The dimensions of deprivation used to classify households are indicators based on four selected household characteristics.

#### **Education**

*A household is classified as deprived in the education dimension if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student.*

#### **Employment**

*A household is classified as deprived in the employment dimension if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability.*

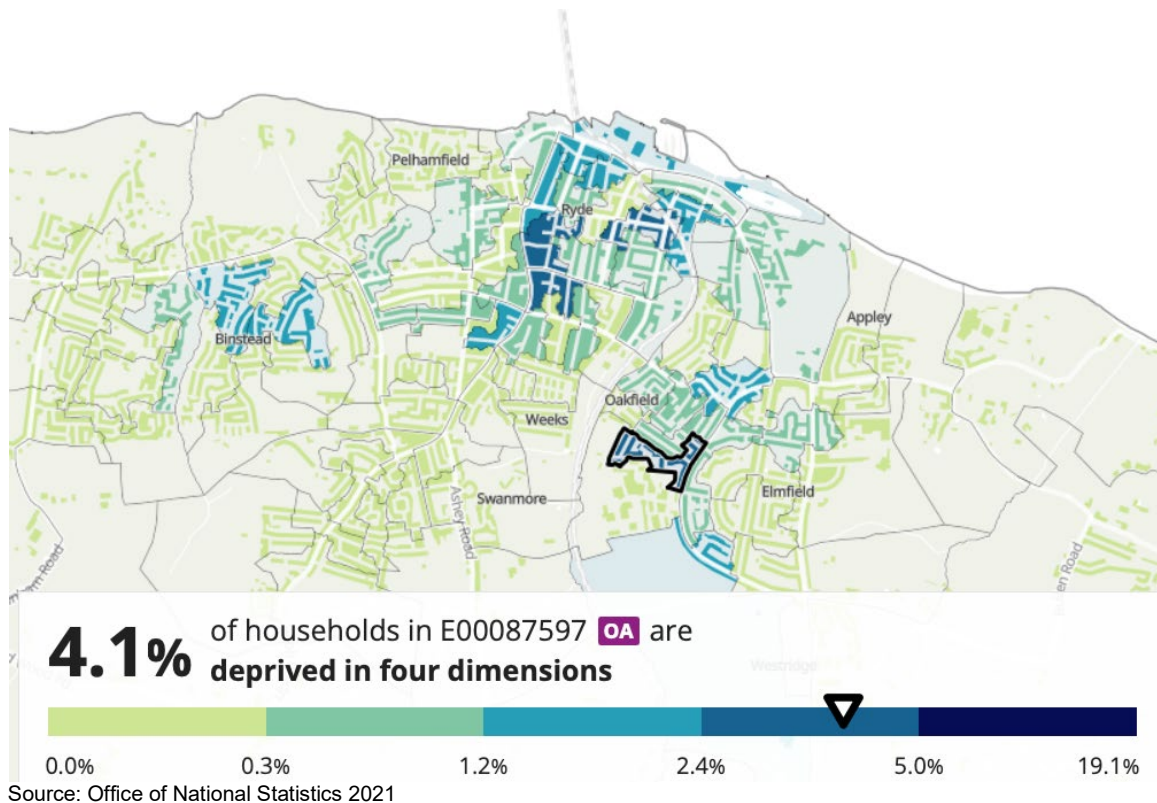
#### **Health**

*A household is classified as deprived in the health dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled. People who have assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the harmonised standard for measuring disability and is in line with the Equality Act (2010).*

#### **Housing**

*A household is classified as deprived in the housing dimension if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.*

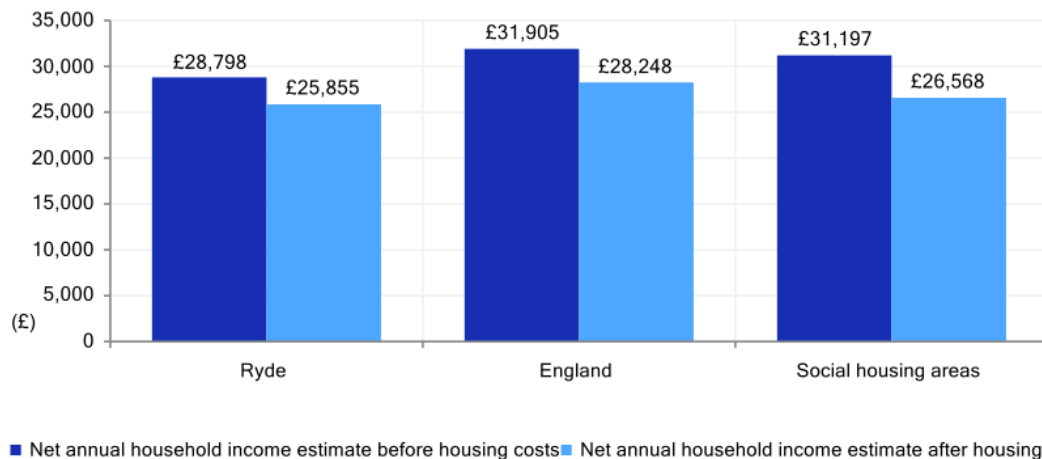
- 2.11 The Map below shows the extent of the 4 levels of deprivation encountered in Ryde.



## Economic Issues

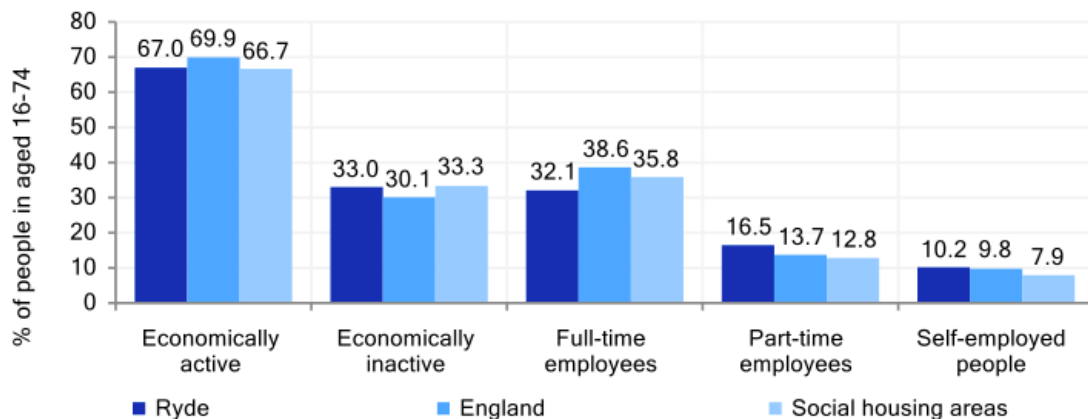
- 2.12 The overall value of the local economy measured in £ per capita, is well below the Solent and UK averages, reflecting the lower proportion of working age residents and the value each job generates as suggested by qualifications, occupation and earnings data. GVA per capita on the Isle of Wight stands at £20,000 compared to nearly £25,000 in the Solent area. Average earnings for individuals working on the Island are at a level of 80% of those across the South East. Crossing the Solent is perceived as a barrier to the economic growth and regeneration of the Island.
- 2.13 Average household earnings in Ryde, when compared with the national picture, show that household income is approximately 10% lower. When compared with national earnings for people living in social housing nationwide the figure is around 5% lower.

Figure: Annual household earnings (£)  
Source: Office for National Statistics (2017-2018)



- 2.14 The number of people who are economically inactive between the ages of 16 and 74 is higher than the national figure by approximately 10%. Full time employment rates are roughly 20% lower than nationally.

Figure: Economic activity, Source: Census 2011



- 2.15 Nicholson Road is seen by the Isle of Wight Council as essential to the economic future of Ryde. IWC have been granted planning permission for the development but at present no money is available to install the infrastructure required to facilitate the development.

### Island Specific Transport Issues

- 2.16 The Island is unique within the UK with all mainland links provided by private sector companies, with no public service obligation and/or no community-based service level agreement. The Island is linked to the mainland by six cross-Solent routes, three of which carry both vehicles and foot passengers and three operate only for foot passengers.
- 2.17 Ryde has 2 of the cross Solent foot passenger links which terminate at the Ryde Interchange. These links are essential for Ryde residents to have access to the mainland for study, health, work and leisure. During the winter the Hovertravel links stop early in the evening with the last sailing to the Island at 20.30. The Wightlink Fastcat service is timetabled to run until 22.45 although in previous years the timetable has been changed during the year giving a last sailing of



20.20. This has severe consequences, in particular, for people attending day surgery at the Queen Alexander Hospital Portsmouth or returning from holiday.

- 2.18 The distance between Ryde and the landing sites in Portsmouth is approximately 4.5 miles. The cost of passenger travel across the Solent is high with a single Wightlink Ticket costing £19.70 for the 20 minute crossing. That's almost £1.00 per minute. For a similar journey the Hovertravel fare is £23.00 for a 10 minute crossing, that's £2.30 per minute. When the cost of parking whilst you are on the mainland is added, this becomes an even more costly exercise.

### **3. Position Statement Aims and Objectives.**

#### **The Aims of Ryde Town Council's Position Statement**

- 3.1 This version of the Position Statement, like its predecessors, had three main aims:
- To inform the IWC of Ryde's position on planning-related issues.
  - To provide a policy framework to assist RTC's Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Committee (PNP) in fulfilling its statutory role as a consultee on planning applications within its boundary.
  - To supplement the Ryde Place Plan with additional guidance on planning issues.

#### **The Position Statement's place in local planning**

- 3.2 It is intended to sit side by side with the new Island Planning Strategy (IPS) in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document. This will give it additional influence as a reference for IWC planning decisions. It therefore follows the same structure as the current draft IPS and refers directly to that document's policies.
- 3.3 It is likely to be some time before the IPS comes into effect. It is therefore hoped that, in the meantime, the Position Statement will be used alongside the current Core Strategy.

### **4. Environment**

#### **Historic Environment**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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 2013 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>*

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

- i. *“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

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

4.4 The special interest of the Ryde St John’s Conservation Area Appraisal 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>3</sup>*

4.5 The three 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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal p1

<sup>2</sup> Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal, p1

<sup>3</sup> Ryde St John’s Conservation Area Appraisal, p1

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 Designation does not mean, however, that development cannot take place within a conservation area. Planning Authorities are able to consider applications within 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>4</sup>
- 4.8 Ryde Town Council has made many representations to the IWC over recent years about neglected, dilapidated and empty buildings within 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 deeply regrettable that the IWC has not utilised its own statutory powers and duties to address these issues properly and effectively nor has it taken advantage of the funding offered by RTC for this purpose. RTC are at present in negotiation with the IWC regarding our participation in a scheme which allows parishes to buy in enforcement services from the Local planning authority.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 The following historic assets are of particular significance:
- i. **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. It was originally owned by the IWC, but in 2013 was sold to a private individual, who has failed to utilise or maintain it. Various steps have been taken in an attempt to bring it back into community ownership and use. In February 2019 a feasibility report was prepared under the auspices of the Ryde Regeneration Working Group.<sup>5</sup> This provided the basis for a bid by Ryde Town Council in October 2019 for a grant from the Lottery's Heritage

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<sup>4</sup> Ryde Conservation Area Appraisals, p1

<sup>5</sup> Ryde Empty Buildings Group, *Creative Ryde: Acquiring and Developing Ryde Town Hall as a Landmark Cultural Centre*, February 2019.

Horizons Fund. The bid was unsuccessful but efforts continued. A second feasibility study was undertaken in 2020 with support from the HAZ project.<sup>6</sup> In 2022, Ryde Town Council helped to establish the Ryde Town Hall Trust to facilitate discussions with the owner and possible funders, and part-funded a third feasibility study, which was published in November 2023.

- ii. **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. The project attracted further funding of £30,000 from the AHF to repair the roof and £578,000 from the Youth Investment Fund to carry out all the works required to provide a new comprehensive youth service.
- iii. **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.
- iv. **The Royal York Hotel**, an art deco building in private ownership, has been empty since 2006. Ryde Town Council and IWC have made various efforts to bring it back into use, including attempts to negotiate with the owner and the service of section 215 notices on him – so far without success.
- v. **Ryde Pier** and the Ryde interchange have benefitted 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 pedestrian walkway.

RTC supports Policy EV1 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy.  
In line with this policy RTC will:

- Use its statutory right to comment on planning applications to support applications that enhance the town's public realm and preserve its architectural heritage and raise objections to those that do not.
- Request, encourage and support the IWC to take 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:

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<sup>6</sup> East Hants Regeneration Company, *Ryde Town Hall/Theatre Outline Business Case Report*, vs.2, November 2020

- 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 and use its section 215 powers and, if necessary, its compulsory purchase power, to protect buildings threatened by neglect or disrepair.
- Take account of the importance of the town's architectural heritage when planning existing and future regeneration projects.

## Ecological Assets

- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 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 Solent Special Protection Area (SPA). The sands area also has the internationally important Ramsar designation for the protection of overwintering birds.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 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.
- 4.16 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.*
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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.
- 4.19 Natural England have noted the potential damage to protected sites in the Solent caused by the discharge of sewage from new developments into the Solent. The IWC therefore requires new developments to make alternative provision for sewage disposal. This affects some new developments in the Ryde area.
- 4.20 RTC supports policies EV2, EV3 and EV4 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with these policies, RTC will:
- Object to planning applications that could have a negative impact on these protected ecological site.
  - Emphasise the need for new developments to contribute to the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership.
  - Work with organisations such as *Bird Aware Solent* to protect and promote wildlife along the Ryde coast.

### **Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows**

- 4.21 Ryde also 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.
- 4.22 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.



4.23

RTC supports policy EV5 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Promote and support measures to preserve and manage areas of ancient woodland within the Town Council boundary.
- Object to planning applications that will have a negative impact on individual trees or woodland.
- Request, encourage and support the IWC to take enforcement action against developments that damage trees or woodland.

### Green Open Spaces

- 4.24 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.
- 4.25 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.
- 4.26 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"*.
- 4.27 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.
- 4.28 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.
- 4.29 Consultation undertaken to inform the 2013 *Ryde Masterplan* showed 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.
- 4.30 The *Ryde Place Plan*, having reviewed the findings of the above studies, reiterates the need for more green spaces. It concludes (p.27) that Ryde "is

deficient in the provision of freely accessible green space when measured against national standards”.

- 4.31 RTC recognises the value of its 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*.
- 4.32 In 2022 RTC took over the management of Eastern Gardens, one of the main green spaces on the seafront, from the IWC on a leasehold basis.
- 4.33 RTC provides top-up funding for maintaining and enhancing other 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.
- 4.34 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.
- 4.35 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.

- 4.36 RTC supports policies EV6 and EV7 in the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, it will:
- Promote and support measures to increase the amount of public green space in the Town Council area, 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 Council area.
  - Work with the IWC and other agencies to undertake an inventory of all green spaces and prepare a Green Infrastructure Plan for the Town Council area.
  - Increase community involvement in the improvement and maintenance of its green spaces through its *Greening Ryde* project.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:



- Work with RTC to undertake an inventory of green spaces in Ryde and prepare a Green Infrastructure Plan for the Town Council area.
- Negotiate with RTC to give the Town Council more control over the development and management of parks and open spaces currently owned by the IWC.

RTC will also:

- Negotiate with the IWC to obtain more control over the improvement and management of parks and open spaces owned by the IWC, particularly Western Gardens and adjacent green space in the Interchange area.

### **Protection of Agricultural Land**

- 4.37 Ryde is predominantly an urban area. However, there are significant areas of agricultural land within its boundaries, particularly in the southwest and southeast. Some of this land is in productive use, but some of it, especially in the southeast, is not.
- 4.38 Applications for the development of housing on some of the agricultural land in the southeast have caused contention in the town. This is discussed further in sections 7 and 8. In principle, however, RTC objects to the loss of high grade agricultural land.

- 4.39 RTC therefore supports policy EV8 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:
- Object to proposals to designate productive agricultural land for residential or industrial development.
  - Object to planning applications that involve the loss of high grade agricultural land.

### **Protection of Landscapes and Seascapes**

- 4.40 Ryde, like most parts of the Island, has many stunning landscapes and seascapes. Because of its long stretch of coastline, the concept of seascape is particularly important.
- 4.41 The Draft Island Planning Strategy defines seascape as *“the coastal landscape and adjoining areas of open water, including views from land to sea, from sea to land and along the coastline and describes the effect on landscape at the confluence of sea and land.”*
- 4.42 Since much of Ryde’s coastline is developed, it is important this development does not have a negative impact on the seascape. RTC maintains that not enough consideration is given to this, particularly in cases where permitted development rights allow landowners to erect structures near the seashore.

4.43 RTC therefore supports policy EV9 in the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC it will:

- Object to planning applications that have a negative impact on the landscape or seascape.
- Request the IWC to take enforcement action against developments that have a negative impact on the seascape.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to develop a policy to protect the Ryde seascapes.
- Use its enforcement powers to take a strong stand against developments that have a negative impact on the seascape.

### **Settlement Identity**

4.44 Ryde is only separated from neighbouring settlements by small areas of green space, Given the pressure to extend the built up area of the town, it is important that these spaces are protected.

4.45 RTC therefore supports policy EV10 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy.

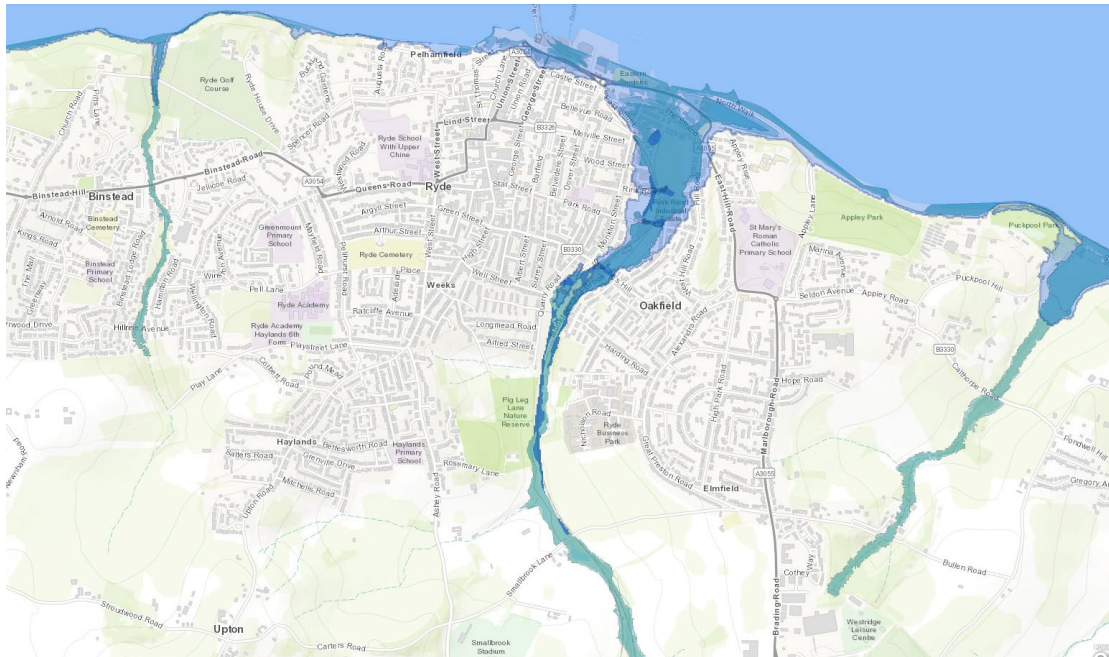
- In line with this policy, it will object to planning applications that threaten Ryde's settlement identity.

### **Management of Water Resources and Flooding**

4.46 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.

4.47 The following map shows the main rivers within the RTC boundary and the areas most at threat from flooding at that time.

Map 3



Area taken from the Core Strategy Proposal map

- 4.48 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.
- 4.49 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.
- 4.50 It was hoped that this scheme had addressed the flood risk problem. However, severe flooding in this area in October 2023 demonstrated that this was not the case. An enquiry into the causes of this flooding is currently underway. It will hopefully determine whether it was due to failure to operate the flood control gates properly or to flaws in the design of the scheme.
- 4.51 Furthermore, as noted in the *Ryde Place Plan* (p. 87), the scheme has 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.
- 4.52 The *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix N) reckoned that flooding from the Binstead watercourse was less of a hazard. However, since then there have been two significant incidents of flooding, in July 2021 and October 2023. Surface water modelling for the area indicate that this is due to the flow of surface water from rural land to the south of the village, along

Greenway and Sandpath to the area around the Cemetery at Cemetery Road and Binstead Hill and then back into the Binstead Watercourse further to the north.

4.53 A flood management plan for the area already exists and, following the July 2021 flood, the IWC has allocated funding to implement this.

4.54 Much of the drainage in the older part of Ryde is serviced by combined sewers which take storm and surface water through the same drainage system. During heavy rainfall these combined drains overload the sewage system, result in the discharge of untreated sewage into the sea. Such incidents are increasing, due partly to heavier rainfall but also to more exposed surfaces, such as roads, roofs and driveways.

4.55 RTC supports policies EV13, EV14 and EV15 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with these policies, RTC will:

- Object to applications for developments that are liable to flooding.
- Explore ways of restoring the Simeon Road Recreation Ground as a viable recreational area.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Investigate and address the causes of the 2023 flooding in the Monktonmead area.
- Work with RTC to restore the Simeon Road Recreation Ground
- Act urgently to implement proposed flood control measures in Binstead.
- Put pressure on Southern Water to reduce sewage discharges into the sea.

RTC will also:

- Encourage the use of measures designed to reduce run-off such as SUDS.
- Support organisations like Surfers Against Sewage that are monitoring sewage discharges and their impact on the quality of the sea water.

### **Coastal Management**

4.56 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.

4.57 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.

4.58 On Appley Beach there is a natural westward drift of sand which, if not reversed mechanically, results in blocking of the Marina mouth and an accumulation of sand against the Marina arm and, at times, on the Esplanade. This is an area where the policy is to undertake sea defence work. However, in recent years, due to financial and other constraints, the IWC has failed to take regular action to reverse this drift. RTC now owns the Harbour and is currently investigating ways of addressing this problem, particularly its impact on the Marina. However, since it is part of a wider problem, it cannot do this alone.

4.59 RTC supports policy EV18 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy in principle but will support sea defence measures west of Pelhamfield in exceptional circumstances. In line with this policy, RTC will also:

RTC will also:

- Continue to seek ways of addressing the impact of the movement of sand west of the Marina on the operation of the Marina.
- Call on the IWC to work with the Town Council and neighbouring parish councils to address the wider problem of the westward drift of sand along the beach.

## 5. Community

### High Quality Design

5.1 RTC maintains that high quality building design is necessary to enhance the general appearance of the town and promote its economic and social development. Through the HAZ project, we have worked with the IWC to produce a Design Code for the town.

5.2 RTC therefore supports policy C1 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Support applications for new development that are aesthetically pleasing and appropriate to the location and object to those that are not.
- Encourage the owners of existing properties to enhance the quality of design of their buildings.
- Encourage the IWC to take enforcement action against property owners that neglect the appearance of their buildings, especially but not only listed buildings.

## Public Realm

- 5.3 RTC maintains that the quality of the public realm is equally important in enhancing the appearance of the town and promoting economic and social development. RTC has a budgetary allocation for improvements to the public realm and a Public Realm Policy (see Appendix 8) that prescribes the criteria for its use. The Town Council also works with the IWC and other organisations responsible for the public realm to ensure that existing facilities are maintained and new developments appropriately designed.

- 5.4 RTC therefore supports policy C2 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy RTC will:

- Work with other organisations to ensure that new public realm projects are appropriate and well designed.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Maintain public realm infrastructure in the town for which it is responsible.
- Consult RTC regarding the design of new public realm projects in the town.

RTC will also:

- Use its public realm budget to make improvements to the public realm.
- Encourage other organisations to maintain existing public realm infrastructure for which they are responsible.
- Call upon the IWC to maintain public realm infrastructure in the town for which it is responsible.

## Promotion of Health and Wellbeing

- 5.5 RTC's *Place Plan* emphasises the need to provide facilities within communities to enhance residents' health and wellbeing, including safe and accessible open spaces to encourage outdoor leisure, exercise and sporting facilities. RTC works with Gift to Nature to acquire and manage open spaces, is working to improve access to the beach, and provides financial support for sporting activities, such as the Waterside Pool and beach soccer.



- 5.6 RTC therefore supports policy C3 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy RTC will:

- Continue to encourage and support activities that promote health and wellbeing.
- Object to applications for new development that do not provide facilities to promote health and wellbeing.

RTC will also:

- Continue to encourage and support activities in the town that support vulnerable residents.

### **Support for Independent Living**

- 5.7 RTC recognises the need to provide facilities for people who struggle to live independently. The town is home to many private residential homes and several supported living facilities, including the first independent living facilities on the Island (Ryde Village) and the Island's only women's refuge. There are also many voluntary organisations providing activities and services to support vulnerable residents. RTC supports the latter in various ways, including grant funding, and employs a Community Development Officer, who promotes and coordinates such activities.

- 5.8 RTC therefore supports policies C5 and C6 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with these policies, RTC will:

- Encourage and support applications for developments that promote independent living, including appropriate extensions of existing residential properties to provide annexes for family members needing support.
- Continue to encourage and support activities in the town that support vulnerable residents.

### **Locality Hubs and GP Services**

- 5.9 The IWC plans to establish 'locality hubs', where a range of health and wellbeing services are provided in fit-for-purpose buildings. The Island Planning Strategy allocates land for such hubs in Newport and Sandown. Ryde already has a Health and Wellbeing Centre, but the services provided are limited and its location on the outskirts of the town makes access difficult.
- 5.10 As elsewhere on the Island, there is also pressure on GP services. The 2018 *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* predicted (p.37) the need for additional GP services

in outlying areas of the town. It proposed that at least one of the three town centre surgeries move into the suburbs to meet this demand. RTC acknowledges that an additional surgery may be needed in the suburbs but maintains that the existing surgeries should remain open. Since the Plan was written, one of these surgeries announced that it was closing due to lack of staff. This would have increased the pressure on the two remaining surgeries. Thanks in part to intervention by RTC, a new GP practice has taken it over and it remains open.

- 5.11 RTC therefore supports policy C7 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. However, it calls upon the IWC to:

- Provide a third locality hub at an appropriate location in Ryde.
- Provide land for an additional GP surgery in the southeast of the town in addition to, not instead of, the three town centre surgeries.

### **Blue Light Services**

- 5.12 The IWC is considering the establishment of a 'blue light hub', bringing together police, fire and ambulance services into a central location in the Newport area. Ryde already has police and fire stations. The police station has been closed to the public for several years but there are plans to reopen it in 2024.

- 5.13 RTC supports policy C8 of the Draft Island Planning:

RTC will also:

- Call upon the IWC and relevant service providers to ensure that, whether or not such a hub is established, the police station in Ryde opens as planned and is open to the public for a reasonable number of hours each day.

### **Education Provision**

- 5.14 Future demand for education provision in Ryde will depend partly on demographic trends in the town but also on the extent of new residential development (see section 8). The 2018 *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* predicted (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 did not indicate a likely shortage of secondary school places; however, circumstantial evidence suggests that due to parent's tendency to send their children to schools with the best Ofsted rating, there may already be an excess of demand over supply in Ryde.



5.15 RTC supports policy C9 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy.

In line with this policy, it calls upon the IWC to:

- Ensure that adequate provision is made for education facilities when planning new developments in the town.
- Work with RTC to monitor the overall need for education services in the town and prepare a coordinated plan to deliver such services.

### **Renewable Energy and Net Zero**

5.16 RTC is committed to the promotion of renewable energy and the achievement of net zero goals. In line with this commitment, it is striving to increase the use of renewable energy in its own buildings and projects. For example, it has recently installed renewable sources of heating in its new youth centre in St Thomas' Church.

5.17 RTC therefore supports policies C10 and C11 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with these policies, RTC will:

- Support applications for renewable energy projects in the town, provided they are appropriate in form and location.
- Object to applications for major new residential developments that don't provide access to renewable energy sources.

RTC will also:

- Continue to increase the use of renewable energy in its own buildings and projects.

### **Utility Infrastructure**

5.18 Much of Ryde's utility infrastructure is already struggling to cope with existing demand and new developments increase the pressure.

5.19 Water and sewage services are of particular concern. Most of the infrastructure is old and, although some major works have been undertaken recently, much remains to be done. In recent years, there have been several sewage breakages, including the major collapse of a sewer at the eastern end of the esplanade, which caused major disruption. Moreover, as already noted in section 5, since most are combined sewers, heavy rainfall causes sewage spillages into the sea.

- 5.20 The problem regarding new developments is exacerbated by the fact that, although Southern Water are expected to service any such developments, they are not statutory consultees on the planning applications.
- 5.21 There is also concern about waste collection in older parts of the town. The Ryde Conservation Area has, in recent times, seen a large build-up of large guest houses and hotels converted in to blocks of flats and studio flats. Many of the flats that are within these areas do not have appropriate spaces to store their waste. Many have been issued, by the waste service, with gull sacks. These hang from their railings and spoil the character of the Conservation area, encourage rats and block the pavements.
- 5.22 RTC is exploring ways of storing and collecting household waste which will better separate it and reduce its impact on the conservation area, including above and below ground solutions. Such schemes could also be included in future residential development sites.

- 5.23 RTC therefore supports policies C12 and C13 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. However, it urges the IWC to also review its waste storage and collection system. RTC will therefore:

- Raise concerns about infrastructure provision when commenting on planning applications, even when it cannot be cited as a material consideration.
- Encourage developers to liaise with utility providers when planning developments.
- Work with Southern Water to find ways of reducing pressure on existing infrastructure and improving its maintenance.
- Continue to explore better ways of handling domestic waste in the Ryde Conservation Areas.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to explore better ways of storing and collecting domestic waste in Ryde Conservation Area and in the Island as a whole.

### **Social and Community Infrastructure**

- 5.24 According to the Island Planning Strategy, 'social and community infrastructure' includes, but is not limited to, schools and other education facilities (including libraries), health care facilities, local shops, post offices, pubs, places of worship, community buildings such as community halls, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, and youth facilities.
- 5.25 When RTC was established in 2008, most social and community infrastructure was owned and managed by the IWC. However, in recent years, many of these facilities have been taken over by RTC because the IWC lacked the financial

resources to maintain them and were therefore either threatened with closure or in a poor state of repair. They include:

- Various allotments
- Public toilets at St John's Hill, Eastern Gardens and Appley Park
- Ryde skate park
- Ryde harbour (now known as Ryde Marina)
- Eastern Gardens
- A section of Quay Road Car Park
- St Thomas's Rest Garden.

5.26 RTC has also established its own youth service (Network Ryde), following the closure of the IWC's youth service, and contributes to the costs of maintaining other facilities, including:

- Maintenance of public parks
- Beach cleaning
- Staffing of IWC Help Centre in Ryde Library

5.27 Discussions are currently ongoing regarding further IWC assets that could be transferred to RTC, including:

- Quay Road coach park
- Western Gardens
- Ryde Library
- Ashley Gardens
- Ryde Canoe Lake and Splash Park
- Appley Park.

5.28 RTC has also purchased or is leasing various privately-owned land and property for the provision of public services, including:

- 10 Lind Street: Leased for RTC offices.
- 147 High Street: Leased for Network Ryde.
- St Thomas's Heritage Centre: Purchased and being refurbished as future premises for Network Ryde.
- Vectis Hall: Purchased to bring back into community use.

5.29 As the town expands, new social and community infrastructure will (as already indicated in the sections on health and education) be required. At present there is no integrated approach to the provision of these facilities. Decisions are made on an ad hoc basis, 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.

5.30 Furthermore, RTC has very little say in the use of s.106 contributions for such infrastructure and such contributions are not always used in the Ryde area.

5.31 RTC therefore supports policy C14 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy.

In line with this policy, it will:

- Continue to maintain the infrastructure for which it is responsible.
- Negotiate with the IWC regarding the maintenance, and if necessary, takeover of other essential infrastructure.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to prepare a comprehensive review of social and community infrastructure needs in the town and use this when reviewing applications for new developments.
- Consult RTC in the use of infrastructure levies.
- Ring-fence such contributions for use in the Ryde area.

### **Community-Led Planning**

5.32 RTC already has three types of local plan, all of which are updated as and when needed. They are:

- i. Ryde's Place Plan provides strategic overview of development.
- ii. The Position Statement provides a basis for making and attempting to influence statutory planning processes.
- iii. The Corporate Plan provides a basis for internal management and budgetary decisions.

RTC has also contributed to the preparation of a Design Code through the HAZ project.

5.33 RTC therefore supports policy C15 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, it calls upon the IWC to:

- Confirm its endorsement of Ryde's Place Plan
- Consult RTC on all major planning decisions that affect the town.

## **6. Growth**

### **Role of Ryde in IWC's Growth Strategy**

6.1 Ryde has for many years been recognised as an area where future growth is likely to occur. The Island Plan identified several greenfield sites in the south-east of the town for potential housing development, the Regeneration Strategy 2019-2030 identifies Ryde as one of the main areas of growth potential and the Island Planning Strategy classifies it as one of five 'primary settlements' where future development will be concentrated.

6.2 RTC accepts the fact that, as one of the Island's two main towns, some growth is not only inevitable but also desirable. This is recognised in the Council's Place Plan. However, the Place Plan also emphasises the need for such growth to be planned in an integrated and sustainable manner.

6.3 Recent experience in the south-eastern extension of the town has demonstrated the difficulties of doing this. A number of major developments were planned in the area, including 900 houses on the Pennyfeathers site and expansion of the Nicholson Road industrial site. On the basis of these plans, ward boundaries were revised to create a new ward in this area. It was also assumed that all the projects would contribute through section 106 agreements to the infrastructure improvements necessary to support such development. However, most of these developments have failed to materialise. In particular, planning permission for the Pennyfeathers site has lapsed, following refusal of a reserved matters application (see section 7 below) and development of the Nicholson Road site has been delayed indefinitely due to lack of financial resources (see section 8 below).

6.4 RTC therefore supports policy G1 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which outlines the general approach to sustainable development and growth, and policy G2, which identifies Ryde as a primary settlement. It also supports the principle, outlined in policy G2, to concentrate future development within settlement boundaries. However, RTC maintains that there is a need to review the approach to development in the south-east extension of the town in the light of previous experience. RTC will:

- Support applications for development within the Ryde settlement boundary that it considers to be appropriate and sustainable in their own right.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to review current and future plans for development in the south-east extension in the light of changes in the status of the Pennyfeathers and Nicholson Road sites.

### **Developer Contributions to Infrastructure**

6.5 Most economic and social infrastructure in the Ryde area is already overstretched. It is therefore essential that further residential and industrial development is accompanied by the provision of additional infrastructure, especially but not only improvements to the road network. This has been emphasised in the Ryde Place Plan, in previous versions of this Position Statement and in RTC's response to new planning applications.

6.6

RTC therefore supports policy G3 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which outlines the IWC's policy regarding developer contributions to infrastructure, and policy G4, which explains how the Council will respond to applications that maintain that it is not viable to provide the required contributions. However, it maintains that contributions related to developments in the Ryde area should be used for infrastructure in that area, not in other parts of the Island. RTC will:

- Support applications for development that include developer contributions for provision of related infrastructure.
- Object to, or request the imposition of conditions on, applications that don't provide such contributions.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Ensure that contributions related to developments in the Ryde area are used in that area.
- Involve RTC in discussions about the use of developer contributions.

### **Ensuring Delivery**

6.7 As already indicated, Ryde has experienced significant problems due to the failure to deliver planned residential projects. Pennyfeathers is the most obvious, but by no means the only, example. The first application for development on this site was made in 2012. This was rejected but outline planning permission for a revised scheme was eventually granted in 2017. There were further delays before the submission of the reserved matters application in December 2020 and a decision on this was not made until April 2023. The application was refused and, since the developer has not appealed or submitted a revised application, the initial permission is no longer active. However, as this case demonstrates, the problems are due not only to the developers, but also to delays by the IWC in processing applications.

### **Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy payments**

6.8 There are two main mechanisms whereby local authorities can, at present, obtain contributions from developers for the provision of affordable housing (if not provided on site) and infrastructure:

- i. Section 106 (s106) agreements. 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, at the moment 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.

- ii. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). 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.

These 2 mechanisms are soon to be replaced with a simpler infrastructure levy which will replace the CIL and most s.106 agreements.

6.9

RTC therefore supports policy G5 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which outlines the measures the IWC will take to ensure that developers deliver promptly. However, it also urges the Council to speed up its own review and decision-making process.

RTC will:

- Support applications that appear likely to deliver (e.g. by developers with good track record) and question those that do not.
- Put pressure on IWC to make decisions on outstanding applications.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Speed up its review and decision-making process.
- Work with RTC to review housing targets and consider future residential development options in the south-east extension of the town, with a view in particular to increasing the provision of affordable housing.

## 7. Housing

### Housing Need

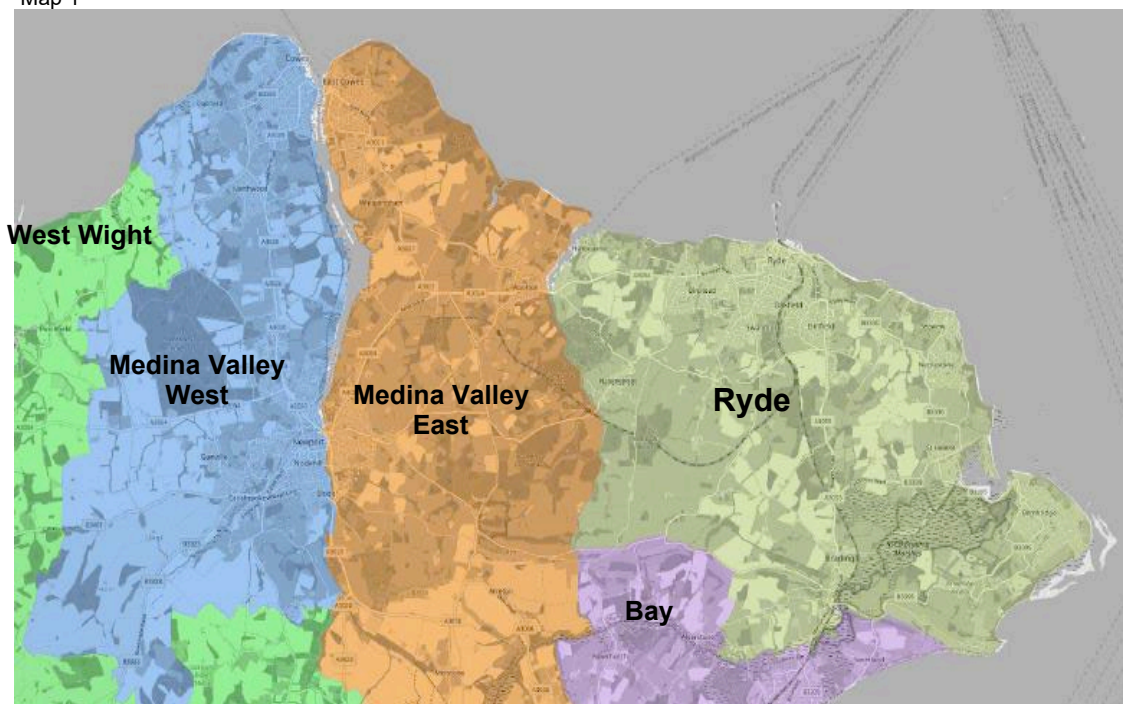
- 7.1 The GL Hearne *Housing Needs Assessment* (HNA) April 2022, commissioned by the IWC, calculated that the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the whole Island between 2022 and 2037 was 667 new homes per annum or 9,975 dwellings over the Plan period. In this latest report the housing need for the Ryde area, as defined in the previous HNA has not been evaluated.
- 7.2 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 Asheys. See Map 1 below.
- 7.3 The Ryde area as defined in the HNA 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 is to consider the number of homes throughout the Island and compare Ryde homes in percentage terms. This would give a credible way of working out Ryde's housing need 2022 to 2037.

- 7.4 Of the approximately 64,000 homes on the Island there are roughly 13,000 in Ryde. This equates to 20% of the Island homes being in Ryde. From this figure it would be reasonable to assume that 20% of the required 9,975 new dwellings should be in Ryde. This equates to roughly 1,995 or 134 per annum over the plan period. The figures in the previous 2018 HNA were 152 but this related to the area for Ryde which was identified in Map1 below on page 33.
- 7.5 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 2022 to 2037 population growth across the Isle of Wight is projected to grow by around 12,527. This is an 8.7% increase.
- 7.6 The level of homes planned 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.

Map 1



Areas as defined in the Housing Needs Assessment 2018

## Housing Delivery

- 7.7 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:



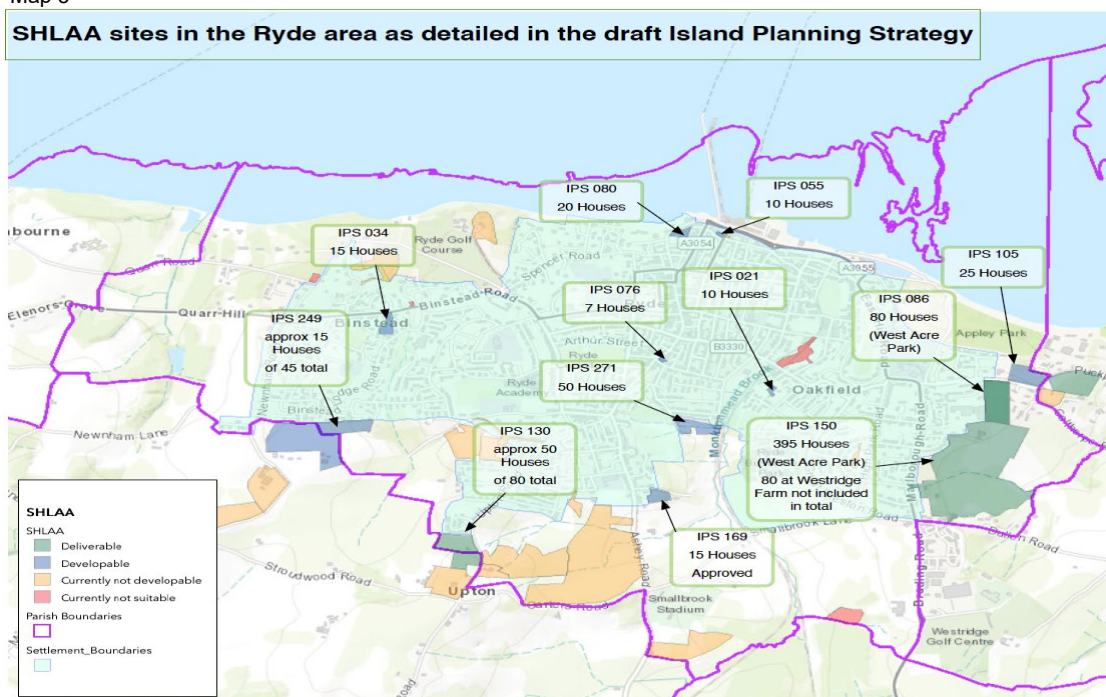
Table 2: Housing Completions since the Adoption of the Island Plan Core Strategy

Delivery Year (2011-2019)	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/16	18/19
Market Price	222	268	298	246	382	287	342	350
Affordable (-20%)	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

- 7.8 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.
- 7.9 However, the above targets have limited impact on current planning decisions because, the Island Plan is out-of-date. The LPA has failed to meet previous housing delivery targets and is required to use the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and that such applications should be approved unless they would be contrary to NPPF policies or the 'adverse effects would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.'
- 7.10 The 2018 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies nine possible sites for housing delivery in the RTC area, with an estimated potential to deliver 775 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 north eastern 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 3



Map source: Island planning core strategy proposal map

- 7.11 As Table 4 below shows, nine of the thirteen sites are greenfield sites and all but two of these greenfield sites are on land outside, but adjacent to, the existing settlement boundary. The existing Island Plan (Policy SP1 and para. 5.5) endorses development outside but adjacent to the boundaries of 'defined settlements', while the Draft Island Strategy (PSDG3 and paras. 4.11-4.12) redefines the Ryde settlement boundary to include these areas.

Table 4: Future Development Sites

SHLAA Ref	Address	Parish	Yield	Size Hectares	BF/GF
IPS130	Land to the West of Upton Road	Ryde	50 of 80	2.9	Greenfield
IPS150	Westridge Cross Dairy and Land to the North of Bullen Road	Ryde	393	33	Greenfield
IPS086	Land between Grasmere Avenue and Thornton Cross	Ryde	80	3.39	Greenfield
IPS021	Land to the rear of 34 High Street, Oakfield	Ryde	10	0.17	Greenfield
IPS034	Old Hosiden Besson Site, Binstead Road	Ryde	15	0.64	Brownfield
IPS055	6 – 8 George Street	Ryde	10	0.09	Brownfield
IPS080	St Thomas Street Car Park, Ryde	Ryde	20	0.45	Brownfield
IPS105	Land Adjoining Puckpool Hill	Ryde	25	1.8	Greenfield
IPS249	Land at Binstead	Ryde	15 of 45	9	Greenfield
IPS271	Land at Quarry Road	Ryde	50	1.68	Greenfield
IPS076	Ryde Youth Centre, 97 High Street	Ryde	7	0.08	Brownfield
IPS169	Land at Rosemary Lane, Ryde.	Ryde	15	0.81	Greenfield

Source: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Nov 2018

## Existing Housing Deliveries and Planning Consents

- 7.12 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. of Units	Status
Ryde Village	102	Completed Dec 2020
Westridge Farm	80	Completed 2022
Pennyfeathers	900	Lapsed. New scheme being planned
Rosemary Vineyard	140	Outline permission Dec 2019
Nicholson Road	15	Outline permission Sept 2020
Upton Road	70	Lapsed Requires new scheme
West Acre Park*	473	Full approval awaiting judicial review

\*IPS150 and IPS086 in Table 4 make up West Acre Park in Table 5

- 7.13 Pennyfeathers has been at various stages of planning since 2013. The site achieved outline approval however the reserved matters failed to gain planning permission. This site would have yielded 905 new homes, 35% affordable, and infrastructure improvements to the road network and schooling. This whole site is back on the drawing board and early engagement with the IWC and RTC has already taken place. The draft Island Planning Strategy assumes that future applications could yield around 800+ properties on this site although the developers have indicated that the application could be for around 900.
- 7.14 West Acre Park has full planning consent for 473 new homes including 166 affordable properties. However, since permission was granted, a local group has raised funds to challenge the decision in court via a Judicial Review.
- 7.15 The developments in Table 5 either have delivered or are scheduled to deliver a total of 1,680 of the 1,995 housing units required in Ryde during the period identified in the Draft Island Planning Strategy. This constitutes 85% of the target for the Ryde 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 further major developments on greenfield sites outside the settlement boundary are likely to be not only unnecessary but also undesirable. They would result in further loss of green space, possibly including productive agricultural land or green space accessible to the public, and in some areas to overdevelopment. Furthermore, they would increase the pressure on the town's economic and social infrastructure (see section 8 below). RTC considers that applications for development that have such negative impacts 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.
- 7.19 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*'. We consider that this coordinated approach is urgently needed.

7.20

RTC therefore supports policies H1, H2 and H3 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which set out the overall plans for housing delivery, but maintains that the sites already allocated in Ryde are adequate to meet housing need for the area. In line with these policies, RTC will:

- Encourage and support appropriate applications for housing development in the allocated sites.
- Object to applications on other greenfield sites unless any of the allocated sites are no longer available.
- Emphasise the need for developments to be planned in a coordinated manner and accompanied by appropriate infrastructure.
- Support housing development that is outside the settlement boundary so long as it is 100% affordable.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to prepare a coordinated plan for the development of the south-eastern extension.

### **Delivering 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."*

7.24 The IWC's current policy, as defined in the 2017 *Affordable Housing Contributions SPD* and the recent additional *Housing Affordability SPD 2023* state 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."*

7.25 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.



- 7.26 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."*
- 7.27 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.
- 7.28 Data on affordable 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%.
  - Inadequate social rented housing resulting in a relatively high proportion of households (up to 40% in some wards) living in private rented accommodation.
  - Most privately rented accommodation unaffordable for those on low incomes and only 11% affordable to those on housing benefit.
  - Highest levels of overcrowding on the Island.
  - Inadequate supported accommodation, reflected in rapid uptake of the new extra-care facilities at Ryde Village.
- 7.29 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 '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 Home finder 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.
- 10 Isle of Wight Council, Isle of Wight Facts and Figures: Ward Area Data, Ryde Place Plan.
- Work closely with partners to improve access to affordable housing.

7.30 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.

7.31 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 like to see the provision of more social rented housing by the IWC itself.

7.32 RTC therefore supports policy H5 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Support applications that provide the required amount of social housing and encourage developers to provide more than the minimum.
- Object to applications that don't provide the required amount.

RTC will also:

- Call upon the IWC to increase their effort to address the shortage of affordable rented housing in Ryde by, among other measures, providing its own social rented housing.

### **Ensuring the Right Mix of Housing**

7.33 The Island Planning Strategy proposes (policy H8) that development proposals for 10 or more dwellings should aim to deliver the percentage splits for housing sizes and tenures as set out in the table below, or those within an up to date Housing Needs Survey for the parish, or alternatively provide evidence to justify any different approach

Table 6

Tenure	1 - Bed	2 - Bed	3 - Bed	4 + Bed
Private	50%	30%	40%	25%
Affordable rent	40%	30%	25%	5%
Low cost home ownership	20%	40%	30%	10%

Source SHLAA 2018

### New Housing on Previously Developed Land

- 7.34 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.
- 7.35 Questionnaires seeking information on available brownfield sites have been circulated by the IWC. These sites once identified should be evaluated to bring forward the maximum number of homes and any planning requirements should be fast tracked, if necessary, to facilitate delivery.
- 7.36 RTC therefore supports policy H9 of the Island Planning Strategy. In line with this strategy RTC will:
- Support appropriate applications for developments on brownfield sites.
  - Continue to seek appropriate brownfield sites within the town.

### Self and Custom Build

- 7.37 There are no self- or custom build sites in Ryde at present. However, RTC maintains that such schemes should be encouraged because they tend to develop a greater sense of community and place when compared with national housing providers standard residential housing. RTC has been working with the IWC's Community-Led Housing officer to encourage such schemes.
- 7.38 RTC therefore supports policy H10 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this strategy, RTC will:
- Continue to encourage and support appropriate self- and custom-build projects in the town.

### Planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people provision.

- 7.39 At present there are no sites reserved for travelling communities on the Island. However, the IWC's total provision suggested for Gypsies and Travellers on the Isle of Wight is for 16 Permanent pitches required now rising to 19 by 2035. It is also recommended that a Transit Site of 2 pitches rising to 3 by



2035 site be planned to allow for enforcement action on illegal encampments and facilitate planned move onto a suitable permanent pitch, if appropriate.<sup>7</sup>

7.40

RTC therefore supports policy H11 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Support plans, if required, to establish a site in or near the town.
- Should the need arise RTC will endeavour to find such a site.

## 8. Economy

### Employment

8.1 Ryde is one of the two main centres of employment on the Island. It provides a variety of employment opportunities, including industry, tourism, retail and transport. However, as in the Island as a whole, many jobs are unskilled and so low paid and those in tourism tend to be seasonal. This was highlighted in the 2011 'Ryde at the Crossroads' report and more recently in the Ryde Place Plan. Moreover, observation suggests that, despite post-Covid increases in employment opportunities, unemployment levels remain relatively high.

8.2 RTC supports the Ryde business community in various ways, including promotion, marketing and consultation. The Council is a member of the Ryde Business Association.

8.3

RTC therefore supports policies E1, E2 and E3 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which outline the IWC's plans to diversify the economy, upskill the population and reduce unemployment.

In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Support applications for development that will provide employment opportunities and reduce unemployment in the town.
- Look critically at applications that would involve the loss of jobs.

RTC will also:

- Continue to support the Ryde business community.

### Industry

8.4 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.

8.5 The Nicholson Road Business Park was identified in the draft Area Action Plan as an area for industrial expansion and in 2017 this site was identified by the IWC as one of its key regeneration projects. Detailed plans for the development

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<sup>7</sup> Isle of Wight Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment

of the site have been prepared and in 2020 outline planning permission was granted. 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. However, the site is still listed in the IPS as one of six areas earmarked for future industrial development.

- 8.6 RTC continues to support the principle of the development of the Nicholson Road site and therefore to support policy EA2 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. However, it maintains that such development should be part of an integrated plan for the development of the south-east extension of the town and should not be at the expense of other industrial locations in the town.

8.7

RTC will therefore:

- Support future applications for development of the Nicholson Road site, provided that it is part of an integrated plan for the area.
- Support applications for developments that will enhance employment opportunities in other parts of the town.

RTC will call upon the IWC to:

- Work with RTC to prepare an integrated plan for the development of the south-eastern extension of the town.

### **Ryde Town Centre**

- 8.8 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.
- 8.9 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'.
- 8.10 Until the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, Ryde saw relatively low numbers of empty premises. However, 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.

- 8.11 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 thus its attractiveness to visitors. 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.
- 8.12 The pedestrianisation coincided with the start of Ryde's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) project. The project was 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. The main components of the project included the resurfacing and redesign of the High Street itself, the production of a Design Code for shop fronts, financial support for businesses to upgrade their shop fronts in accordance with the Code, and feasibility studies of at-risk listed buildings.
- 8.13 The project is now in its final year. It has encountered some problems, the main one being a shortfall in funding which has delayed the resurfacing and redesign of the High Street itself. However, this shortfall has been met by a grant from the government's Sustainable Travel Fund and the work is due to be completed in 2024.
- 8.14 Another problem has been that Grace's Bakery have established rights for access to their off street parking area in the High Street. Plans are being drawn up to allow vehicular access to the bakery via the Victoria Street car park. This will completely prohibit access for registered motor vehicles between 10.00am and 06.00am the next day. The benefits of this ban will be that the local businesses can expand on to the traffic free area during the day to give this area of Ryde a chance to take advantage of the opportunities that this will present.
- 8.15 There is increasing pressure, locally and nationally, to convert commercial premises into residential properties. This has been facilitated by changes in government legislation that 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 within the designated town centre (as referenced in para 8.17 below), but to object to any ground floor conversions within this area.
- 8.16 There are smaller retail areas in other 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.
- 8.17 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 Paras 9.23 – 9.31.
- 8.18 The area designated as the Ryde Town Centre just covers the High Street and Union Street. This Town Centre designation allows residential properties to be built
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without the need for dedicated parking as set out in the Guidelines for Parking Provision as Part of New Development SPD January 2017. RTC have initiated talks with IWC regarding extending the Ryde Town Centre Boundary to facilitate residential development which is, at present, impossible due to lack of on-site space.

- 8.19 RTC therefore supports policy E7 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which outlines the IWC's approach to retail development. In line with this policy, RTC will:
- Continue to support and encourage retail development within the town centre.
  - Oppose the conversion of ground floor premises in the retail centre as from commercial to residential use but support such conversion of upper floors.
  - Require new developments to follow the Design Code
  - Support and promote the development of small retail centres in other parts of the town.

## **Tourism**

- 8.20 Ryde is important not just as a 'gateway to the Island' but as a destination in its own right. It 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, apart from an inevitable decline in 2020/21 due to the Covid pandemic, have been increasing again in recent years. Its tourist potential is recognised by the IWC and it is designated as a 'tourist opportunity area' in the Island Planning Strategy (policy E11).
- 8.21 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.
- 8.22 The town provides a variety of tourist accommodation, including hotels, self-catering properties and more informal Airbnb-type facilities. However, in peak holiday periods it can be difficult to find accommodation in the town. In recent years there have been a number of applications by hotel owners to convert their properties into residential accommodation. If this trend continues, there could be a serious shortage of beds in the town, which would in turn hamper attempts to develop it as a tourist destination.
- 8.23 RTC has supported the tourist industry in various ways, including the provision of grants to help local organisations market their events. It also 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

- 8.24 Ryde's main attraction as a tourist resort is its extensive sandy beaches and long esplanade. Many development plans have been produced for this area over the years but, until recently, none have been implemented. However, this changed in 2022/23 with the construction of the interchange project, which has significantly enhanced the area's tourist potential. At the same time, the IWC commissioned WSP consultants to recommend other development projects in the area. Their study, entitled 'Ryde Esplanade: Strategic Opportunities Development Framework', was published in 2022.
- 8.25 RTC has long recognised the potential of this area. This is reflected in the Ryde Place Plan and in previous versions of the Position Statement. RTC has in particular emphasised that the Esplanade should continue to be used solely for recreation and leisure purposes.
- 8.26 RTC would like to be more directly involved in the development of its assets and to benefit from them, but its capacity to do so has been limited because most of them are owned by the IWC. However, in the last three years, RTC has begun to take steps to gain more control over these assets.
- 8.27 Paras. 8.27 - 8.33 outline the main assets, their current status and action taken by RTC to have a greater say in their development.

**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 it can initiate or support other measures to enhance the quality of Ryde's beach offer.

**Appley Tower** is an iconic building on the seafront. It was owned by the IWC but in 2023 local residents, with support from RTC and Natural Enterprise, obtained a Heritage Lottery grant to purchase the building and bring it back into community use.

**Ryde Marina** is a drying harbour which provides 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 took over the ownership and management of the Harbour and some of the immediately adjacent land from the IWC. This has enabled RTC to upgrade the services, including the provision of electricity and internet and improvement of shower facilities. It will also, in the near future, enable the provision of facilities such as a café and information centre.

The **Waterside Pool** is a valuable resource for both residents and tourists. Originally operated by the IWC, it was taken over by the Waterside Community Trust in 2011 to avoid its closure. The adjacent **Canoe Lake** is still managed by the IWC. Due to financial constraints, maintenance standards have declined in recent years and the lake has become a roosting place for wild birds rather than a pleasant place for tourists. Options for the Canoe Lake's future include RTC taking control over this area, in order to restore and develop it as a tourist asset.

**Ryde Arena**, which provided ice skating facilities for residents and visitors, has been closed since 2016. Its future is currently unknown, following the collapse 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.

**Smallbrook Stadium** is located at the Smallbrook roundabout, on the outskirts of the town. It provides various sporting facilities, including a race track. In 2019, plans were submitted to the IWC for an ice rink and other sporting facilities on privately owned land adjacent to the Stadium, but these have been put on hold since the Covid pandemic. Attempts to either enhance the facilities at Smallbrook or develop the adjacent site are, however, hampered by access problems, including inadequate highway infrastructure at Smallbrook roundabout (see section 8 below) and lack of public transport for those without cars.

**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 is only residential and construction has yet to begin.

- 8.28 In light of the above, RTC supports policies E8, E9 and E11 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy but will also continue to negotiate for more control over its tourism assets.

RTC will:

- Oppose any measure that would enable the Esplanade to be used for anything other than recreation and leisure.
- RTC calls upon the IWC to:
- Work with RTC to establish a development plan for the Esplanade area, drawing on proposals in the WSP report and other relevant documents.
- Recognise the importance of the Waterside Pool as a community asset similar to its own leisure centres and support it accordingly.
- Work with RTC to maintain and develop the area around the Canoe Lake
- Negotiate with RTC to find a mutually beneficial way of giving RTC more control over the beaches and Esplanade.
- Address the access problems at Smallbrook Stadium and consider ways of improving the recreational offer on this and the adjacent site.

RTC will also:

- Continue to negotiate with IWC for more control over the beaches and Esplanade.
- Continue to contribute to the maintenance of Ryde's beaches and Public Realm
- Continue to support events which enhance the local and tourist community.
- Continue to support the management of waste on the seafront and beaches.
- Call upon the IWC to recognise the importance of the Waterside Pool as a community like its own leisure centres and support it accordingly.
- Call upon the IWC to negotiate with RTC to find a mutually beneficial way of giving RTC more control over the beaches and Esplanade.



## 9. Transport

### The Ryde Gateway

- 9.1 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.

### Sustainable Transport

- 9.2 RTC recognises the need for more sustainable approaches to transport. The Ryde Place Plan emphasises the need to improve public transport, to provide employment and services near to people's homes in order to reduce unnecessary travel, and to improve cycling and walking infrastructure.
- 9.3 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 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.
- 9.4 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.

- 9.5 RTC therefore supports policy T1 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Support development applications that encourage sustainable travel and object to those that do not.
- Continue to encourage and support the improvement of cycling and walking infrastructure (see below).

RTC will also:

- Work with public transport operators to improve services within and to the town.

## **Better Transport Connections**

- 9.6 The need to improve connectivity within the town, with other parts of the Island and with the mainland is critical to Ryde's future development. There are two main areas of concern: the road network; and cross-Solent transport and interchange area.

### **Road Network**

- 9.7 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.
- 9.8 A number of junctions have for many years been identified as of particular concern. The draft *Ryde Area Action Plan*, the *2018 Isle of Wight Infrastructure Delivery Plan* and most recently the island Planning Strategy highlight the following in particular:
- Queens Road / West Street
  - Argyll Street / West Street
  - Binstead Road / Pellhurst Road
  - Quarr Hill / Newnham Road
  - Marlborough Road / Great Preston Road (Westridge Cross).
  - Ashey Road / Carters Road / Smallbrook Lane Roundabout.
- 9.9 Concerns about the implications of proposed new housing and industrial developments on an already overstretched road network, especially those in the south-eastern extension, 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.
- 9.10 The Smallbrook Roundabout was identified as a safety concern and therefore placed at the top of the Island Roads' Network Integrity Register and improvements made in 2021/22. However, it is recognised that improvements to the other junctions will be dependent on developer contributions.
- 9.11 The Westridge Cross junction is of particular concern. It was intended that improvements would be made through contributions from the three developments proposed in the areas (Pennyfeathers, Nicholson Road and West Acre Park). However, lack of coordination between the three developments meant that these plans were always at risk and now any improvement in the near future seems unlikely because of the indefinite delays in all three projects.

### **Cross-Solent travel and Ryde interchange**

- 9.12 Ryde is one of the four Solent crossing points on the Island and the main one for pedestrian travel. The Fastcat and Hovercraft services are used by commuters, residents and tourists. Their operation is therefore critical to the functioning and future development of the town.

- 9.13 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, most of which was completed in 2023, included revision of the road layout, redesign of the bus station and the construction of a separate pedestrian walkway along the Pier.
- 9.14 This has significantly improved the appearance of the area. However, there is still a need to improve access with the Hovertravel terminal, proposals for which were dropped from the original application due to budgetary constraints, and to improve the logistical connections between the various transport operators.
- 9.15 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 has taken some steps to improve coordination and will, in line with a recommendation in the Ryde Place Plan, seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the transport operators.
- 9.16 RTC therefore supports policies T2 (better connections) and T3 (cross-Solent transport) of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with these policies, RTC will:
- Continue to object to development proposals that do not include provision for improvements to the road network, especially in the south-east extension of the town.
- RTC calls upon the IWC to:
- Work with RTC to prepare an integrated transport plan for the town.
  - Review proposals for the improvement of the Westridge Cross junction in the light of delays in two of the proposed developments in the area.
  - Seek funding to improve access between the main interchange area and the Hovertravel terminal.
- RTC will also:
- Seek to strengthen its relations with transport operators in the town in order to improve connectivity, if possible, through a memorandum of understanding.
  - Support attempts to get funding to improve access between the main interchange area and the Hovertravel Terminal.
  - Call upon the IWC to seek funding to improve access between the main interchange area and the Hovertravel terminal.

## **Rail Network**

- 9.17 In 2019, South Western Railway received funding for the provision of new trains and related improvements to the Island Line rail service. There were several delays in the implementation of the project, but the new trains eventually came into operation in 2022.

9.18 Although the new trains are more modern and comfortable, the journey time from Ryde to Shanklin now takes longer. This has resulted in delays in resuming the original two trains an hour service and in frequent failure to connect with the Fastcat service.

9.19 Furthermore, the improvements did not include the provision of step-free access for disabled people at St John's Road Station.

9.20 RTC therefore supports policy T4 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy, which recognises the need for further improvements to the rail network. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Encourage and support the provision of disabled access at St John's Road station.

RTC will also:

- Encourage and support attempts to improve connections between rail and Fastcat services.

### **Electric Vehicle Charging**

9.21 There are currently only a few public electric vehicle charging points in Ryde for example in St Thomas Upper car park, the Quay Road car park, and at Tesco. RTC recognises the need to increase the number of charging points. It has considered the possibility of establishing charging points itself but decided that this is not feasible at present.

9.22 RTC therefore supports policy T5 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy. In line with this policy, RTC will:

- Support applications for new developments than include provision for electric vehicle charging and object to those that do not.
- Encourage and support any plans to establish such points.
- Review the possibility of establishing charging points itself when appropriate.

RTC will also:

- Review the possibility of establishing charging points itself when appropriate.

### **Parking**

9.23 When assessing parking need in Ryde, it should be noted that people visit the town for various purposes, including shopping, work, recreation, and travel to the mainland, and that they come from destinations all over the eastern part of the Island. It should also be noted that demand fluctuates, with larger numbers coming during the holiday season and when there are special events.

- 9.24 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. Additionally, there are residents only on-street parking and limited time waiting street parking covering many of the roads around the interchange and there is a new regular 30min park-and-ride scheme at Ryde St Johns Road station.
- 9.25 There are several 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 center 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 center 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.
  - Creation of additional housing in areas adjacent to but not officially in the town centre is hampered because they are required to provide parking spaces. The area currently defined as the town centre is very small. There is a need to extend it to incorporate these area.
- 9.26 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.
- 9.27 In February 2021 the IWC approved a *Parking Delivery Plan*. The main recommendations relevant to Ryde are as follows:
- Some free short-term parking should continue to be provided in town centres.
  - The distinction between short & long-term off-street car parks should be clearer.
  - Residents' only parking zones should continue to be used to avoid inappropriate parking, subject to adequate evidence and resident consultation.
  - Park-and-ride schemes should continue to be used where evidence suggests they would be of benefit.
  - Pay-and-display 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.
- 9.28 RTC supports the above recommendations, especially the need to prepare, in consultation with RTC, a detailed parking strategy for Ryde. However, it objects to the designation of St Thomas' Street Upper car park as a possible site for residential development. RTC would also like to discuss with IWC the possibility of taking over control of off-street car parks.

9.28

RTC supports policy T6 of the Draft Island Planning Strategy regarding parking provision in new developments. However, it maintains that there is a need to extend the boundary of the town centre and to address other parking issues in the town. Therefore, RTC will:

- Oppose applications for development outside the town centre that don't provide required parking provision.
- Request IWC to extend boundary of Ryde town centre to facilitate provision of infill housing in areas adjacent to but outside current boundary.

RTC calls upon the IWC to:

- Implement decision to provide residents' only parking zone in Dover Street
- Support RTC's request to extend town centre boundary.
- Work with RTC to prepare an integrated parking strategy for the town.
- Discuss with RTC the possibility of taking over or having more control over town centre car parks.



## 10. Appendix

### List of reference sources.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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'.

**Stage 1 and 2 of the Ryde Masterplan – A Ryde Town Centre Vision** was commissioned 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 and the **Housing Affordability (SPD)** commissioned by the IWC to in 2023. This later SPD works alongside the existing Affordable Housing Contributions SPD that came into force in 2017 and sets out when the IWC ask developers to provide financial contributions towards affordable housing and how much those contributions will be.

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.

In April 2022 the IWC published an updated **Housing Needs Assessment**. This considers 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.

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:

- *Ryde Place Plan*, Approved by Full Council in February 2020.
- *Corporate Business Plan 2020-25*, Approved Full Council Sept 2020.
- IWC, *Isle of Wight Regeneration Strategy: Inspiration Island*, June 2019.
- IWC, *Draft Island Planning Strategy: July 2021*
- IWC, *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24*, 2019.
- IWC, *Housing Strategy 2020-25*, 2020.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Planning for the Future*, White Paper, August 2020.
- IWC *Infrastructure and Delivery Plan*. Troy 2018
- WYG, *Parking Delivery Plan*, Isle of Wight Council, February 2021.
- WSP, *Strategic Opportunities Development Framework*, February 2023
- IWC, *Local cycling and walking infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 2020-2030*
- Sovereign Housing, *Community Insight for Ryde area*. Sept 2022.

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