

Full Council Meeting 25 November 2025

Mayor's Report

Introduction

The Mayor has two main roles:

1. To take a lead in the *operation* of the Council, including chairing Full Council meetings, attending all other meetings and working with other councillors and staff to ensure the Council operates as efficiently and effectively as possible.
2. To represent the Council *publicly*, including representing it on other bodies (such as the Ryde Neighbourhood Board), attending public events and holding informal meetings with members of the public.

I describe below my main activities under these two headings.

Operational activities

I am pleased to say that a draft of our new Plan, now to be known as an Action Plan, has been completed and will be presented to Full Council at this meeting. If approved, it will result in some changes to the Council's organisational structure, including the creation of a Community Services Committee and the division of the Operations and Resources Group (commonly referred to as the OGRE) into a Personnel Committee and a Chairs' Group.

The Plan will provide the basis for the preparation of next year's budget and a review of staffing needs. The budget preparation process has already begun; committees and steering groups have met to discuss their financial priorities; there was an informal meeting of councillors on 21 November; and a public consultation will soon begin. We will launch both the Action Plan and the public consultation at a public event at 11 St Thomas Square (the former Natwest building) on Friday 12 December.

Public activities

In the last two months, I have undertaken the following duties:

1. *Ryde Neighbourhood Board*: I have attended two meetings of the Board, one on 3 October and the other on 10 November. Minutes of these meetings can be found on the Board's website. However, the key points are:
 - The consultants, Place Spark, have prepared the required documents for submission, via the IW Council, to the government by the end of November deadline. They include a *Ten-Year Vision* and a list of possible projects. Board members were given a week to comment on drafts of these documents. We were informed that we could not share them with non-Board members until after they have been submitted and a response received from the government. I expressed my concern about this at the meeting on 10 November and subsequently in writing as part of my comments on the drafts.

However, I would like to reassure members that the documents are not set in stone. They do not commit the Board to fund any specific project and leave room for further consultation.

- At the meeting on 10 November, there was a lengthy discussion about the Town Hall. It was agreed that this is the most important heritage asset in the town and the Finance Sub-Committee was tasked to consider possible ways in which the Board could help to bring it back into community use.
- We were informed that, due to a change in government policy, the capacity building funding will not after all be extra money but deducted from the £20 million.
- Following concern about the procedures for appointing someone to establish a business association, this was put out to tender and bids have been received.
- Bids have also been invited for someone to manage the Board's public communications.

2. *Meet Your Councillor*: I have attended two of these monthly sessions in the Library: on 1 October and 5 November. Cllr Malcolm Ross joined me for the second. Public turnout continues to be low but I still think it's important that we continue to offer this opportunity for residents to come and talk to us.

3. *Boards to Boards*: On Thursday 30 October I was delighted to open this innovative Town Council project, in which two community artists, Hollie and Emma, worked with young people from Network Ryde to design and install graffiti boards around the skate park. This was one of a number of initiatives to tackle graffiti that emerged from discussions with Hollie and Emma several years ago.

4. *Remembrance services*: I attended three different Remembrance services: Ryde Social Heritage's service in the Cemetery Chapel on Saturday 8 November; the main service on Sunday 9 November, which this year was held at Ryde School because All Saints Church is closed for refurbishment; and a service for Ryde School students at the School on Tuesday 11 November.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage all councillors and members of the public to come to two important events in December:

- The Merry and Bright Festival on Friday 5 December, at which I will be switching on the Christmas lights; and
- The launch of the Action Plan and budget consultation on Friday 12 December

And, of course, please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any issues or concerns you would like to discuss.

Diana Conyers
November 2025