

# Multi-million pound investment in Ryde

October 6, 2020



The redundant tramway on Ryde Pier looks set to be transformed into a dedicated cycle and pedestrian walkway as part of a multi-million pound package of active travel and public transport improvements announced by the Isle of Wight Council.

It follows a successful bid to the government's Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) which will see £10 million invested in Ryde.

The ambitious proposals include the long-awaited regeneration of the town's transport interchange with vast improvements for pedestrians and cyclists not only at this key transport hub, but along the entire length of Ryde Esplanade to Appley.

Councillor Ian Ward, Cabinet member for transport and infrastructure, said: "The exciting announcement represents unprecedented investment in active travel and public transport improvements in Ryde.

"The scheme will provide a safe cycling and walking route along Ryde Pier, separate from vehicles, and create an improved transport hub at this gateway to the Island.

"The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has accelerated the changing travel patterns we were already

beginning to see. With more people already cycling and walking, this is a critical time for us to make changes for the future.”

The council submitted a joint bid with Portsmouth City Council, Hampshire County Council and local public transport operators with a shared commitment to transform the way people travel in the area.

The bid was awarded £56 million towards the total scheme package of £96.5 million, with match funding provided by each of the bidding authorities and their partners.

The success of the bid is seen as an important next step for the three authorities towards developing a rapid transit network for the area.

The Isle of Wight schemes include a fully accessible cycling and walking link along the historic Ryde Pier utilising the redundant tramway pier. The project would address the current conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles using the pier.

The plans for Ryde interchange include a total reconfiguration of the current layout with significant public realm improvements, refurbished public toilets and greatly enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists including widened footways, new crossings and cycle routes.

The local Ryde Regeneration Group has already inputted to the early stages of the plans to help ensure the investment complements the wider regeneration of the town, including the £1 million investment in the Heritage High Street programme.

People will be invited to have their say as part of a comprehensive consultation when detailed plans are published in the coming weeks.

Paul Walker, head of strategic development at Go South Coast (Southern Vectis), said: “We fully endorse the concept of an improved public transport interchange at Ryde which builds on our investment on the Isle of Wight to services connecting to the Island.

“This programme is essential not only to improve modal interchange in terms of building the economy but also promoting the Island to visitors getting around the Island by bus.”

Mark Hopwood, managing director, South Western Railway, said: “South Western Railway is delighted that Ryde Esplanade will receive additional funding to improve transport connectivity on the Island.

“This funding will add to the £26 million already being invested in Island Line and will significantly improve the customer experience at this important interchange”

Wightlink chief executive, Keith Greenfield, said: “We are thrilled the Island has been awarded this grant. The old tramway will be transformed into a pleasant route for walkers and cyclists along our historic pier towards Wightlink’s foot passenger terminal.

“FastCats are cycle-friendly and they will now be easy to access directly from the esplanade, thanks to this

welcome investment in active travel and public transport.”

The news follows successful bids to the government’s ‘Restoring Your Railway ‘Ideas Fund’ to restore railway lines lost to the Beeching cuts, and the £26 million announced by the transport secretary last September for refurbished rolling stock and a new passing loop on Island Line.

*Photo credit: South Western Railway*

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