



Mill House  
Beacon Lane  
Northiam  
East Sussex  
TN31 6PJ

6 March 2019

Joanne Wright  
Planning Strategy Team  
Rother Planning Department  
Rother District Council  
Town Hall  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex TN39 3JX

Dear Ms Wright

**Rother District Council: Public Realm Strategy Framework  
Consultation Draft**

I write on behalf of the Rye Conservation Society to express our support for the development of a Public Realm Strategy. The Society appreciates the ambition, objectives and approach and the work that has gone into producing the draft consultation Strategy, which is fully in line with the Society's aims and views.

Our principal concern is not with the design of any new elements of the Public Realm. We believe that the statutory requirements of the Core Strategy, the draft Development and Site Allocation Plan and the Rye Neighbourhood Plan, if and when adopted, are sufficient to achieve suitable high standards. It is the maintenance of what we already have that is our principal concern; we believe it is vital that the delivery actions identified for ESCC and the Statutory Contractors are implemented as soon as possible.

Our experience with ESCC and the Statutory Authorities in relation to repairs to the historic and listed cobbled streets in Rye has led us to the conclusion that the production of maintenance protocols and specifications is vital. Of equal importance is the need to ensure that such documentation is passed on to those who actually do the work on site, that the resulting works are adequately inspected and that the standards required are fully appreciated. Our experience following the production of the RCS Cobbles Specification emphasised the importance of face-to-face contact with the on-site workers.

It is not just the surfaces that are critical but also the surrounding environment, including street furniture, signage and planting, that is vital and makes up such a significant element in the overall Public Realm.

We note that little notice is given to the importance of landscaping and planting within the draft. We believe that this needs to be addressed together with emphasis on the provision of suitable enforceable maintenance policies where appropriate.

The Society believes that the approach and objectives set out in the draft Strategy could and should be ‘field tested’ before the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement within the historic centre of Rye in 2020. This will require the introduction of pay & display machines, additional signage and road markings; the Society looks forward to taking part in the discussions that will be necessary to consider the important design issues.

The Society considers that the lack of a timescale for the implementation of the Public Realm Strategy is a significant omission particularly with regard to the production of suitable and agreed maintenance protocols. A timescale to which all parties sign up would ensure that the final Strategy is not just a ‘wish list’ but instead an active working document which will actually help to achieve significant improvement in the design and maintenance of our Public Realm.

One small paragraph with which we would take issue is Role of Developers, Delivery Actions, para xxv, which we believe should be redrafted to read:

‘Ensure that any development incorporates within any public realm proposals the highest standards with regard to public spaces, choice of surfaces and street furniture and where appropriate the introduction of public art.’

High standards of design, surfaces and street furniture should not be seen as an addition but what we expect to be provided.

The Rye Conservation Society looks forward to the publication of the final Public Realm Strategy and to working with all parties to achieve our shared objectives.

Julian Lockett  
Chairman, Planning Committee  
Rye Conservation Society