

TEST VALLEY REVISED LOCAL PLAN
REFINED ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION – AUGUST 2020

JOINT RESPONSE FROM
ROMSEY EXTRA PARISH COUNCIL AND ROMSEY TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Title*		First Name*	
Surname*			
Organisation* <i>(If responding on behalf of an organisation)</i>	Jointly for Romsey Extra Parish Council and Romsey Town Council Planning Committee		

If you wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your email address below:

Email Address*	
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These are the responses of Romsey Town Council Planning Committee and Romsey Extra Parish Council. These responses are deliberately focused on providing a Romsey/Romsey Extra view. Matters that solely concern areas outside that area are, in general, not commented on.

ANSWERS TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

The answers below are to the specific questions posed in the consultation document. Refer to the document for the wording of the actual questions posed.

1. The retention of STV as a separate HMA to determine demand is preferred but with a review of the boundaries to include a wider area in the STV HMA area. The option should be left open as to whether demand for housing in an HMA must be satisfied solely within that HMA.
2. HMAs, as determinants of demand, should reflect reality not artificial local authority boundaries but local authority boundaries will need to be reflected in any subsequent land allocation.
3. Ideally HMAs should be settlement-based not parish-based. However, this is likely to be impractical so parish boundaries should be retained for now.
4. There is no need to increase the number of steps for the analysis of the settlement hierarchy. What is important how this hierarchy is used in determining the sustainability of proposed developments. Sites are not necessarily more sustainable just because of the proximity to a settlement higher up the hierarchy.
5. The method of allocation of settlements to steps in the hierarchy is not vital provided use of the resultant hierarchy is not mechanistic.
6. It would be a good idea to group rural settlements.
7. Rural settlements should be included in the broader settlement area to which they are adjacent.
8. New allocations should be included within settlement boundaries.
9. Public open space should be included within settlement boundaries but not with the implication that it is available for development.
10. The existing approach of whole curtilages being within a settlement boundary should be retained.
11. Settlement boundaries should be drawn more loosely to provide for some flexibility
12. Settlement boundaries should allow for limited growth.
13. Yes, there should be a policy for self-build homes and encouragement for self-build in rural areas.
14. Evidence needs to be produced to show a demand for the allocation of self-build areas within new developments.
15. Self-build should be supported as part of community led development, preferably delivering a high proportion of affordable homes.
16. Self-build is likely only to be a minor influence on climate change.
17. Tourism policy should allow of new attractions.
18. Tourism policy should be supportive of innovation.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Paragraph	Comment
	CONTEXT
2.3/2.4	Agree that climate change is the biggest challenge we face and that the next Local Plan must focus on addressing this. This should be a major running theme through our next Local Plan.
2.5	Concur with this list of topics as a minimum but can we add encouragement of homeworking?
2.9/2.10	Fully support the South of Town Centre Masterplan and commend the processes that have led to it and the role of Romsey Future in this.
2.13/2.14	Fully support the activities of Romsey Future.
2.15-2.17	The problem of developing Neighbourhood Plans for large settlements such as Romsey and Andover must be acknowledged. The key issue is the level of detail in the Local Plan versus the flexibility to be given to Neighbourhood Plans.
2.22-2.24	We urge the development of a high-level sub-regional plan to guide the need for co-operation between local authorities. An early sight of a list of bodies it is proposed to consult would be helpful.
2.32-2.34	We would urge that the definition of sustainability and its use in the assessment of options is more in accord with general understanding rather than the very mechanistic approach used for the last Local Plan which led, almost exclusively, to large new settlements adjacent to existing settlements.
	LIVING IN TEST VALLEY (HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)
5.2-5.10	We would prefer a local demand-led approach to assessing housing requirements rather than a market demand-led one. However, we accept that in the end we will have to accept whatever methodology the government requires.
5.11-5.15	See answers to questions 1 – 3 above.
5.16-5.19	We urge that large new settlements adjacent to Romsey are avoided and that a more dispersed pattern of development involving a wider range of landowners and developers is adopted.
5.20-5.23	The problems of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Romsey are described at 2.15-2.17 above.
5.24	We have no issues with defining a settlement hierarchy but would want it to be used less mechanistically in sustainability appraisals. See answers to questions 4-7 above.
5.25-5.29	Settlement boundaries need to be more flexible to allow for some growth. Currently the concept of no development outside of settlement boundaries has been overruled locally or by the Planning Inspectorate specifically with the Cupernham Lane area. See answers to questions 8-12 above.
5.30-5.35	We would welcome a mix of housing types and tenure that reflect local needs. We would support the setting of the minimum bar for affordable housing at 40%. We would also observe the government definition of “affordable” housing by reference to local market prices puts housing beyond the reach of many of our local young. There should be a policy on internal space and accessibility standards for new housing.
5.36-5.40	See answers to questions 13-16 above.
5.41/5.42	There are two aspects to consider. Firstly, the allocation of land on which gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople can establish family bases. This is being addressed. The other is the provision of transit sites to permit travelling people to travel without being forced to make illegal temporary encampments on recreation grounds, sports fields and village greens. This aspect must be addressed.
	WORKING IN TEST VALLEY (TOWN CENTRES AND LOCAL ECONOMY)
6.1-6.6	The next Local Plan must be realistic in reflecting the changing pattern of retail

	shopping. It must reflect the need for town centres to evolve as destinations for social and leisure purposes. It should also plan for increased residential use within Romsey town centre.
6.7-6.11	Tourism is seen as a key contributor to Romsey's economy. Romsey Future has identified the need to encourage the development of visit packages and the need for a wider range of overnight accommodation from top class hotels through to touring and camping facilities. See answers to questions 17 and 18 above.
6.12-6.20	We endorse the need to provide for employment in the area, but it must be of an appropriate type to suit the nature of the broader Romsey area. There is a need for "step up" provision to allow growing businesses to remain in the area. The Local Plan should provide for active support of rural homeworkers not just broadband but support hubs and shared local facilities.
6.21-6.24	Support for the rural economy is vital. Romsey is described as the jewel in the crown. A thriving rural economy, possibly diversified from traditional agriculture, is essential to maintain that crown.
6.25-6.29	We concur and would suggest a scheme of mentoring especially if we see a shift away to small entrepreneurial businesses and homeworking.
	ENJOYING TEST VALLEY (ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE)
7.1/7.2	Mention of climate change is vital up front in this section and as a running theme throughout.
7.3-7.5	We concur.
7.6-7.11	Design must not only address the physical appearance of developments but the performance of buildings in respect of energy efficiency and low carbon build.
7.12-7.15	Local gaps have served us well since the abolition of strategic gaps. We believe it is vital to maintain the local gaps to avoid Romsey coalescing with neighbouring settlements.
7.16-7.19	Local green space is important and needs to be within easy reach of settlements. That is not so easy with established settlements like greater Romsey. However, it must be a goal. But local green spaces should not be planned in isolation but as a network connected by protected green corridors (akin to TPO protection for trees) to support a flourishing biodiversity.
7.20-7.25	Agree. It is vital that improvements to Romsey do not destroy the essential features of Romsey as a historic market town.
7.26-7.30	As far as planning law permits, we should set a high bar for energy efficient homes and establish the practice of local energy generation. We should set the goal of Test Valley being a leader in this respect.
7.31-7.34	We are fully supportive of measures to increase local biodiversity and support the need for new developments to be positive contributors to biodiversity.
7.35-7.39	We need to explore the possibility of establishing some challenging goals for the provision of larger and more interesting areas of public open space. The green infrastructure needs to be based around connected places not just green pockets. In Romsey, the blue infrastructure is as important as has been established in the recent Citizens' Assembly and the emerging South of Town Centre Masterplan. We support increased tree cover and there should be a specific policy.
7.40-7.44	Agree
7.45-7.47	In addition, it is necessary to establish a system of air quality monitoring points to be able tell whether we have a problem or not and what progress is being made to improving matters. Objectives without measurement are merely aspirations.
	INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
8.1-8.4	Agree but would suggest that CIL priorities should be set by public consultation.
8.5-8.7	Agree
8.8	The Local Plan needs to push harder and faster towards sustainable transport albeit the

	constraints are recognised.
8.9-8.11	The plan needs to focus on the rapid delivery of a well-connected network of cycleways. Cycleways need to be made safe routes, well maintained and giving priority to cyclists not motor vehicles. Cycling and walking are not just leisure and health activities but are expected to evolve into active transport replacing the car. They should be seen as general methods of transport alongside the bus, train and car.
8.12	Romsey Future has expressed the need for the expansion of the availability of the public transport network and especially the rail network by the provision of halts and other access points. We expect that alternative sources of energy such as electricity or hydrogen will emerge for public transport and provision for these should be encouraged.
8.13-8.15	In the ideal world we would like to see a reduced demand for parking but, while we may see different types of vehicle emerge, it is not that likely that the demand for parking will seriously reduce. Adequate provision for parking will be necessary for our town centres and facilities such as surgeries. On new developments ideas must come forward to permit parking that is safe, visible and easily accessible but without blocking the flow through the highway network.
8.16-8.19	Agree
8.20	We would encourage expanded close working between the Borough Council and the local health bodies to establish robust evidence for physical or financial support for health facilities both for the Local Plan but also to require contributions from new developments.
8.21	Agree
8.22	Agree
8.23-8.25	The plan to roll-out Superfast Broadband must address small local "not spots" as well as the challenges of enabling rural areas and new developments. The Local Plan should encourage this. Broadband is essential in support of increased demand for homeworking.
8.26	Agree
8.27	Agree but we would like to see more public consultation on CIL to both raise awareness of its availability and engage the public in what sort of projects they would like to see.

for Romsey Extra Parish Council and Romsey Town Council Planning Committee.

28 August 2020.

