

# Romsey Ramblers

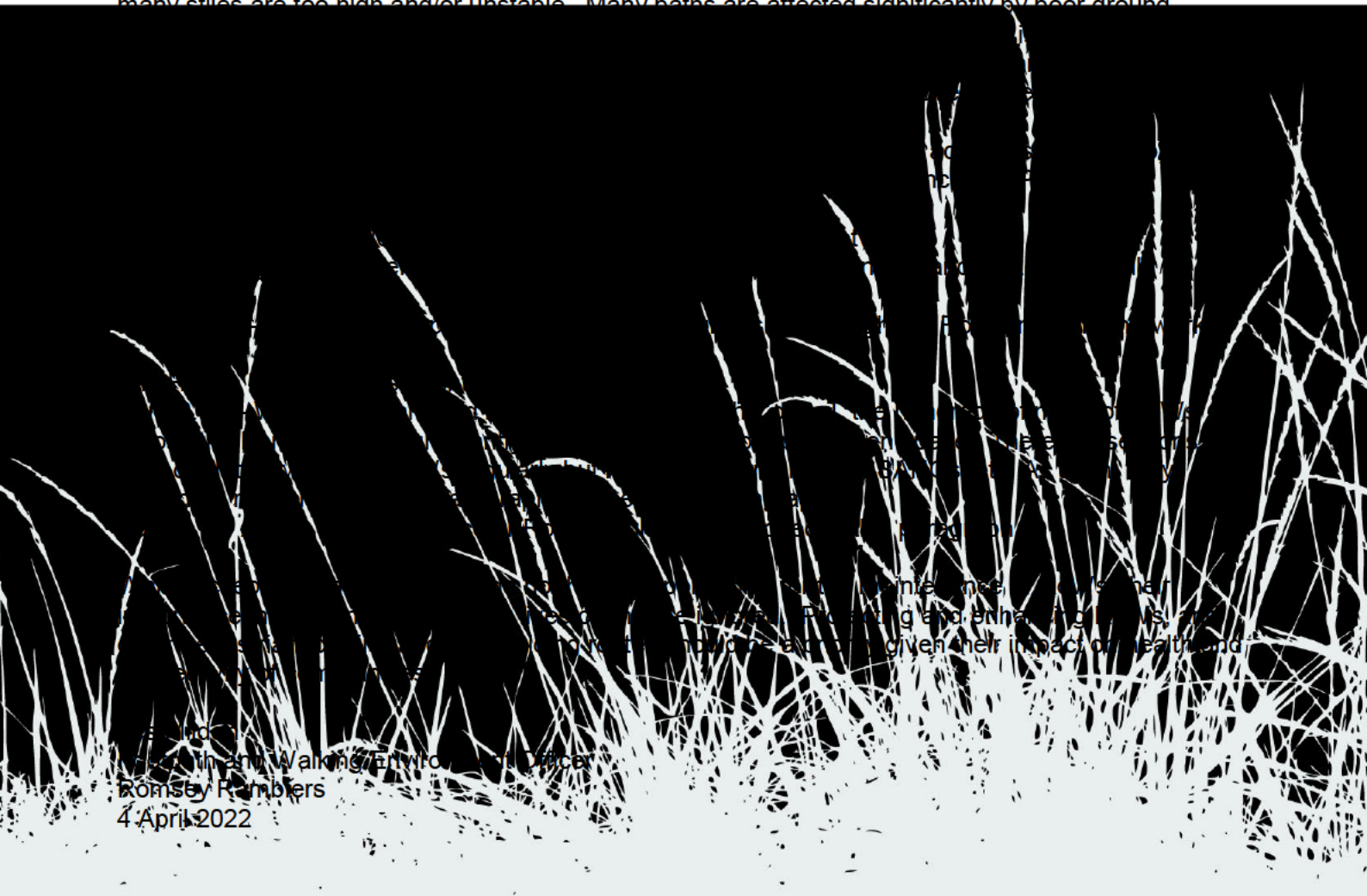
## COMMENTS TO TVBC PLANNING POLICY ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2040

Thank you for encouraging responses from the community in relation to the Draft Plan. As the Footpath and Walking Environment Officer I am responding on behalf of Romsey Ramblers – a part of the Ramblers Association.

I note, with interest, the initial paragraphs of the Plan, in which references are made to the impacts of the pandemic have had on us all. The impact of the pandemic on the nation's mental health has been a hot topic throughout the last two years. Many people have found, as a result of the pandemic, the benefits of walking in the countryside. Indeed, during the initial lockdown many of our footpaths became rivers of mud, such was the level of use. With more people working from home, they find they have more time to devote to their personal wellbeing. Our Group has seen a steady increase in membership now that we are able to arrange group-led walks once again. Despite the references to the pandemic in the Plan, there is no recognition of this particular impact in the detail; there is but one instance of the word "footpath" in the entire document – see para 4.102. There is no reference at all to 'Rights of Way'.

Within the detail of the Plan, I make the following observations:-

Para 2.1 The Vision. Reference is made to "enjoy access to our diverse and outstanding countryside". Where Rights of Way (RoW) currently exist, the infrastructure is often poor. Far too many stiles are too high and/or unstable. Many paths are affected significantly by poor ground



Footpath and Walking Environment Officer  
Romsey Ramblers  
4 April 2022