

# Minutes of Romsey Forum

## 12 March 2008 held at Romsey Town Hall

**Present:** 78 members of the public were present, including Cllr Mrs P Mutton, Mayor of Test Valley.

**Speakers:** Steve Lees, Madalene Winter TVBC

**In the Chair:** Jill Gethin. **Minutes:** Sandra Smith.

**Item 1: Apologies:-** Ian Bullivant, Cheryl Collier, Clive Collier, Mark Cooper, Sue Derbyshire, Karen Dunleavey, Sandra Gidley MP, Sally Leach, Caroline Nokes, Roy Perry, Peter Phillips, Gill Roberts, Hal Sanchez.

### Item 2: Minutes of the Romsey Forum 21st November 2008

These had been circulated electronically and in hard copy at the meeting.

It was proposed by D Barker, seconded by Euan Russell that the minutes be approved. Carried

**Item 3: Matters Arising.** None

**Item 4: Test Valley Borough Council Core Strategy.** Presentation by Steve Lees on Core Strategy preferred options; notes on the presentation were available at the meeting. Briefly:

1. This covered the context for further development in southern Test Valley set by the South East Plan which requires 3910 additional dwellings 2006 – 2026.
2. Romsey in broad terms when compared with other settlements in southern Test valley is a good location with access to a range of facilities e.g. schools, employment, leisure, health etc.
3. The merits of potential locations around Romsey have been considered and preferred locations identified both at Romsey (Abbotswood and Whitenap) and elsewhere at North Baddesley and Nursling.
4. A number of concerns have been raised through the consultation process e.g. impact on infrastructure, drainage, increase in traffic, loss of countryside, impact on the character of Romsey. They were considered by the Council in identifying its preferred options and will be reviewed again before the Core Strategy Document is published for further consideration.

M Winter asked the meeting not to shoot the messenger. The Government require this strategy. Advice was to make comments which gave realistic viable alternatives rather than saying “not here”. An analysis similar to that presented by Cllr Cooper for Whitenap would need to be repeated for all 12 sites.

### Questions and comments

Printed copies were available of Cllr Cooper’s response to the Preferred Options Document. His objections have been sent to TVBC. Cllr Leach had sent a copy of her short press release expressing concerns about the core strategy and asking why planners had ruled out a new settlement nearer the motorway corridor. This was read to the meeting.

There were many questions asked covering areas of phasing, budgets and preferred sites, possibility of a completely new settlement, impact on existing residents; public

transport, travel, parking, access; Crosfield Hall; shopping, superstore/supermarkets; allotments;

In his responses Steve Lees gave the following information:-

The Government has asked for the authority's preferences not just a list of sites. Abbotswood was reserve site under the old County Structure Plan. The new SE plan covers 2006-2026. Abbotswood could be the first site, with Nursling, North Baddesley and Whitenap to follow starting in 6 or 7 years taking up to 9 years to develop. Development should be sustainable. A new settlement would not support sufficient services so residents would drive, Impact on present residential areas would be considered at a later stage. The Council would seek to minimise the impact on council budgets by getting the developer to fund resources needed because of the developments.

There is a need to look at parking in the town. The intention for public transport would be to get it funded by the developer for a period then it would need sufficient use to be viable. Access to the Whitenap development could be at Ashfield with bridge. Possible pedestrian and cycle routes by Tadburn and Botley Road.

In response to questions about shopping stated 57% already leave the town to shop. Retail consultant's advice and government support for choice mean it would be hard to reject proposals for another supermarket. The centre of town was preferred but it would be a major development, difficult to achieve. The plan would seek to maintain Romsey's "small town offer" together with a major store and possibly environmental improvements. If a store was located outside the centre shoppers were unlikely to come into the centre. Mention was made of a food store at Whitenap or Baddesley.

Council policy seeks to retain the allotments. There may be land between the railway and Southampton Road which could provide more. It would be sensible to get this recognised even if objecting to the developments.

Other comments from those present:

Although aim is to keep size so people can walk to centre in reality people take cars. Walking from Abbotswood would be most unlikely.

Look at Romsey found most respondents in lower Cupernham and Fishlake did walk.

The name Whitenap is appropriate as the site, in Romsey Extra, is the old Whitenap Farm.

Suggestion that a superstore be built on Crosfield Hall site with parking underneath and Crosfield Hall be rebuilt south of the bypass.

Suggestion that there should be tertiary education in the town, there is none at present. This could reduce travel

#### **Item 5: Any Other Business**

Shirley Rogers presented leaflets for the Romsey and District Society's Flood Defence Forum which will be held at the Crosfield Hall on Saturday 10 May 2008 from 9.30am to 1.30pm. Apply to Romsey Town Hall for free tickets.

**Next meeting Wednesday 18 June 2008, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall**