

**Minutes of the Romsey Forum held in Romsey Town Hall  
7.30pm Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**Present:** 105 signed the attendance list including 8 Parish, District and County Councillors.  
Chair: Mark Cooper. Minutes: Sandra Smith

**Apologies:** Dorothy Baverstock, Mayor of Test Valley, Sandra Gidley, Ian Hibberd, Richard Jordan-Baker, Carolyn Nixon, Mike Richardson, Gill Roberts, Geoff Uglow, Christine Watkins.

**2. Minutes** of the Romsey Forum, 20 June 2012  
These were accepted as a true record

**3. Matters Arising.** None

**4. Appointment of Officers** for coming year  
Chair: Mark Cooper, Vice Chair: John Parker, Secretaries: Carolyn Nixon, Sandra Smith  
There being no other nominations the above were appointed.

**5. Planning Update** given by David Bibby TVBC  
The current Local Plan is that dating from 2006. A revised plan will go to cabinet in mid October followed by consultation. It will take account of the Core Strategy and update of the evidence base. The South East plan is still current. Comments on the Romsey Master Plan are still being considered.

The Tesco planning application was registered at the end of the previous week. Comments can be made up to 12 October. Plans can be seen at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/tesco](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/tesco)

**6. Proposals by Tesco Plc for site on Broadlands Estate**

Representatives from all interested parties were invited to attend the Forum meeting and present their point of view.

At times during the meeting questions were raised about the Town Council and the Tesco surveys. The Chair and the Town Clerk clarified that 6000 questionnaires had been delivered to people in Romsey Town (Abbey, Cupernham and Tadburn Wards). It was meant to be available only in the Town Council area so it was not put on line. 787 had been returned (12%). The majority of respondents were over 60. Most were against the scheme, but younger respondents were 50/50.

Tesco's survey was by telephone in the area around Romsey. JM asked if anyone at the meeting had been surveyed by Tesco. No one had.

Donna Lamb speaking on behalf of STAR noted that the majority of their members had not received the questionnaire sent to the people of Romsey. Expressed support for Romsey "our town" but considered the stores in Romsey do not offer everything a family needs, e.g. children's clothes, cds. Most people shop outside the town. Another supermarket is needed. STAR consider people will park at Tesco and stroll into town for more shopping.

Bruce Maddick spoke for Love Romsey (Say No to Broadlands Tesco). There would be serious and adverse effects on the town centre, small businesses and the people of Romsey. The development is for a megastore on a Greenfield site, 7 acres with space for 400 cars. Rather than draw people into the town it would suck them out. Plans already included a coffee shop and Tesco has a history of retrospective applications so may add other facilities. In 2008 a report to the council said Romsey did not require a store of this size and such a store could harm existing shops. He also noted the impact on residents of the huge increase in traffic and extra congestion caused by the construction of a new

roundabout and a pelican crossing between the Southampton Road and the Palmerston roundabouts. There was no objection to Tesco in the right place. This is the wrong place.

David Willox, joint President, Chamber of Commerce, said a substantial number of shoppers went elsewhere as the town centre did not have the facilities they wanted. If there was a need for additional retail, studies showed provision in or on the edge of town centres made a positive contribution, out of town shopping parks had a negative effect. The town centre needed development and the Chamber would like to meet Councillors for discussions.

Individual views expressed during the rest of the meeting fell into 3 categories.

Those supporting the Tesco development.

These cited the need by local families for a supermarket with a wider range of goods and affordable prices without having to travel outside the town. LJ "Real Romsey people are for Tesco". CK "There are things that can't be bought in Romsey". Andover was cited as example of town centre thriving in spite of big supermarkets. The Chair noted Andover's much larger population (35000) and Romsey being already in the orbit of Southampton and many large stores.

New housing developments will increase the need for a wider shopping offer.

Those who did not object to Tesco but considered the proposed development in the wrong place. DW "right scheme, wrong site". It was said that both Sainsbury and Morrisons considered town centre sites viable. There were views against this on access and traffic grounds. The need for a long term development plan was expressed.

Those who objected to the proposed development did so on several grounds.

The main one was the threat to the viability of the town centre and small businesses. Many examples were offered and studies cited on the effect of out of town stores on small town centres. The development "will suck people out of the town". The idea that shoppers would walk into the town centre was considered unrealistic. The second major objection was on the grounds of hugely increased traffic leading to major congestion and the need for changes to the infrastructure. The site is designated as countryside and development should only be allowed if essential. There are many major supermarkets close to Romsey, 27 Tesco stores in the area and a new hypermarket planned for Lordshill.

Finally there were comments on the planning process (MC, RP, DW). Forum members were encouraged to look at the application, read the documents, make their views known based on evidence and planning criteria. The decision must be made on planning grounds.

A questioner asked how many councillors were on the planning committee and how many were present. There are 24 members on the Southern Planning Committee and 3 were present.

Cllr Martin Hatley, planning portfolio holder said the planning committee must have an open mind not a pre-determined view and must consider the application as land use. He encouraged residents to comment.

## **7. Any Other Business**

Romsey and District Society will hold an open meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

The public can attend Romsey Town and Romsey Extra Council meetings. Parish council views are given to planners.

Next Romsey Forum meeting - 21st November 2012