

# Minutes of Romsey Forum

## 21 March 2012 held at Romsey Town Hall

**Present:** Eunice Hutchinson, Mary Hill, David Kaye, Cllr Roy Perry, Diane Hargreaves, James Cleary, Peter Cooper, Stuart Bannerman, Graham Shawley, Jean Russell, Dorothy Thompson, Sandra Smith, Jennifer Adams, Mark Viney, Peter J Checksfield, Derek J Bond, Glyn Darby, Julian Jones, John Parker, Tessa Parker, Geoff Uglow, Stephen Beasley, John Bennett, Barbara Milburn, Janet Coppard, Chris Amery, Denise Amery, Susan Jeremiah, Kevin Ford, Susan Ford, Kate O'Sullivan, Devlyn Rose, Tim Stemp, Mavis Sawdy, Jeff Hawksley, Richard Pratt, Elizabeth Pratt, Michael Bull, Cllr Ian Hibberd, Josh Raines, GC Raines, Carole Allan Morley, Frank Akerman, Mike Gray, Jan Gray, Steve Langford, Jane Langford, Mike Moyle, Cllr Martin Hatley, Greg Davies, David Bibby (TVBC)

**Speakers :** Tom Hanslip; Steve Lees Head of Planning Policy and Transport, TVBC (TVBC); Ray Alborough  
**Chair :** Mark Cooper **Minutes :** Carolyn Nixon

1 **Apologies:** Phoebe Merrick, Sue & Aelred Derbyshire, Dr Gill Roberts, Jane Brambley, Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Test Valley.

### 2. Minutes of the Romsey Forum held on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012

This was an additional meeting called solely to discuss the TVBC Core strategy. The minutes had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record. Proposed : J Parker; sec: J Jones.

### 3. Matters Arising

It was a matter of record that all 48 TVBC councillors had agreed the overall housing allocation for the Borough. This included the allocation of 1,853 to be built in Southern Test Valley. What had not been agreed by the councillors was the locations for these dwellings.

### 4. Closure of Ashfield Bridge : Ray Alborough, Senior Transport Engineer, TVBC

Reasons for the closure had been discussed and explained to an earlier meeting of the Forum, after which the dates for the work had been postponed. The road crossing the railway at Ashfield (A3057) would now be closed from early May to mid-June 2012. Access to Romsey Rapids and the Sports Ground would be maintained but Lee Lane would only be accessible from the Romsey end on foot or by cyclists. This would enable work to be done on the Broadland's wall and for a pedestrian refuge to be built near the Lee Lane junction.

Maps of the diversionary routes were shown. HCC Highways Dept had agreed that, on this occasion, traffic could be diverted onto the motorway. There was to be an embargo on all other HCC-instigated roadworks in the Romsey area for the period of the bridge closure. It was expected that the work would be completed within the 12-week timeframe allowed, as previous such projects had been.

In answer to questions, it was stated that:

- The police should be informed if it was found that HGVs were using local roads as 'rat-runs'
- Extensive queuing would normally ameliorate over time, as drivers found alternative routes
- Access to the Rapids and to Romsey allotments would be clearly marked.
- The diversions would be widely advertised and signs erected on all approach routes.
- Extra publicity would be given to the shops in Romsey during this period.

### 5. Fishlake Water Meadows Proposal : Tom Hanslip, landowner; James Cleary (Pro-Vision)

As owner of the water meadows and the land adjacent to it, Mr Hanslip was proposing that, if TVBC gave him permission to build 58 houses in a low density development on the land currently occupied by his livery business, then he would be able to give the Borough the meadows, together with a capital sum for its active management for 25 years. This would allow the site to become a nature reserve, with carefully managed access points for the public. TVBC, advised by the Wildlife Trust, would manage the reserve. He had already surveyed local opinion, where the returns suggested that 90% of respondents were in favour of having such a reserve and 80% accepted the mechanism for achieving this. He would be submitting a planning application later in the year and, if successful, would sell the site to a developer.

The housing would be accessed by means of a spur off the roundabout in Cupernham Lane and would include 5 x 3-bed affordable homes. As this would be an 'enabling development', it was possible for the planning authority to modify the requirement that a full 40% of the homes be affordable. The current trees and hedgerows would be maintained and the livery business would be moved to the north of the site. The design concept for the housing would be that of clusters of farm buildings and footpaths/cycleways through the site would link with the Barge Canal.

Steve Lees explained that there would need to be balancing ponds dug on the site, similar to those at Abbotswood, in order to mitigate any flooding threat. The Environment Agency would still control the sluices in the river and the meadows would continue to be used for water storage. He also mentioned that the most recently published map of areas in Romsey at risk of flooding contained factual errors, which were being corrected. TVBC would determine what strictures needed to be put on the designs and sustainability of the housing.

## **6. Romsey Town Centre – future developments : Steve Lees, TVBC Forward Planning**

SL explained the context within which any future planning application for retail development in Romsey would need to be considered, together with the likely process. It would need to be considered whether there was a need for more retail space but, prior to that, any potential applicant could approach TVBC for advice on work they would need to do in advance of a planning application. This would include an environment application, which would appear on the weekly planning list published by the Council. He thought it likely that there might be a planning application made in the summer. This would go out for public consultation before being considered by the Southern Area Planning Committee later in the year. If such an application were to be refused, there would have to be a planning enquiry, the outcome of which would be determined by the Secretary of State some time in 2013.

Planning officers and councillors were required to work within the Government's new planning policy framework, which was promoting growth. Any applicant for edge-of-town retail development would have to show that there was no suitable site within the town centre and that the viability of the existing town centre businesses would not be affected. In the planning enquiry concerning a Tesco application to build on the Broadlands site in 1993, both sides had agreed that no significant harm would accrue to town centre businesses. However, on that occasion it had been possible to point to another available site within the town, now occupied by Waitrose.

Surveys had shown that 45% of residents shop for food elsewhere than Romsey, so that any applicant would seek to show that significant custom could be clawed back to the town. At the same time, any proposal for edge-of-town development would have to show that it would not be taking trade from existing shops and that it would be encouraging secondary trips from its store to the town centre. It would also have to show sufficient reason for the council's countryside policy to be amended and that existing road networks could cope with the likely increase in traffic.

Romsey Master Plan : This was different from the statutory Core Strategy, in that it was a long-term, aspirational plan for Romsey, being drawn up by interested local citizens and councillors. A scheme such as that suggested by Romsey & District Society could cost c.£3m, funding which could not be found by the local authority. However, any new development of housing or retail brought with it S106 contributions, which could be used to ameliorate existing facilities, such as the £400k already agreed as a result of the Abbotswood development. Comments on the Master Plan could still be made via the TVBC website, where the document can be viewed.

## **7 Any Other Business**

Junction improvements : Steve Lees stated that it was likely work would start on Cupernham Lane and Braishfield Lane junctions during the summer. The proposed traffic lights would be managed remotely. At this point, a 30 mph limit would be imposed on Winchester Road from Crampmoor into the town centre. The necessary S106 funding would not be released by the Abbotswood developers until the 75<sup>th</sup> household had registered for council tax.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting** : Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall