

## Minutes of the Romsey Forum 16 June 2016

**Present:** S Bannerman, A Hyde, J Jones, F Pilkington, J Russell, D Baverstock, S Lees, I Dickerson, M Dickerson, L Brimelow, I Bullivant, S & A Derbyshire, M & R Robinson, F & B Sweeny, J & C Tilley, M Arney, M Sawdy, M Greggains, A Stanley, J Bennett, A & D Chillingworth, Cllr M Cooper, R Tetstall (TVBC),

**Speakers:** Cllr Roy Perry (HCC); Cllr M Hatley (TVBC); Phil Nicholson (Hants Fire & Rescue); M Edgerley (Town Centre Manager)

**Chair:** John Parker. Minutes: Carolyn Nixon

1. **Apologies:** V Brice, J Burnage, J Haddon, J Walker, S Smith, S Leach, D Kingston, M Piggan, C Barrington-Brown, E & R Pratt, G Darby, G Smith (TVBC)

2. **Minutes 17 March 2016.**

Item 4 : The speaker was in fact PCSO Gemma Clark (not Markham). With this amendment, the minutes were approved.

3. **Matters arising.**

Item 5 : In response to a question about the new layout in Church Street, Cllr Perry stated that HCC was monitoring traffic speeds and would determine whether further restrictions were needed. He agreed to recommend to officers that monitoring be carried out in the evening as well as during the day.

Item 7 : Romsey River walk project : organisers were asking for public support in their bid for funding from the Community Assets Fund

*The Chair then asked that, in order to accommodate Cllr Perry, Item 6 be taken before Item 4*

6. **Devolution : Cllr Roy Perry (HCC); Cllr Martin Hatley (TVBC)**

In his presentation [*copy available on request*], Cllr Perry spoke of the proposal from Southampton, Portsmouth and some District Councils to create the Combined Authority of 'Solent and the Heart of Hampshire' This was in response to the Government's stated policy of devolving powers to enlarged local authorities, such as that proposed in the North of England. Such authorities would be under the control of a directly elected mayor. Cllr Perry stated that there were questions already as to how extensive the delegated powers would be and there was a resistance amongst most local authorities in this area to the appointment of a mayoral post which would have direct control over planning, effectively bringing in another tier of government.

The response of Hampshire County Council (HCC) to the initial proposal had been to commission a study from Deloitte on any other options available which would deliver similar outcomes to that of the Solent proposal. Some of these options would avoid the necessity of splitting Children's Services and Adult Services. With some there would be more savings than with others. It was HCC's intention to consult residents on these options over the next few months.\* The original time limit for bids to Government had been passed and there was concern that the Solent City bid was already in process. This bid did not include Test Valley district.

Cllr Hatley then gave the perspective of Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), which had been surprised by the publication of the Solent bid and, in response, had made a

proposal for the districts of New Forest, Test Valley, Basingstoke & Deane, Winchester and Hart to combine as 'Heart of Hampshire'. TVBC also intended to commission consultants, PWC, to carry out an analysis of the services required by Test Valley residents. This would be broader but complementary to the HCC's Deloitte study.

Cllr Cooper (HCC/TVBC) understood that the status quo was no longer an option and that Government ministers saw no future for two tier authorities.

*\* HCC has since commissioned Ipsos Mori to carry out a public consultation exercise. Full details about the Serving Hampshire consultation are available online at [www.hants.gov.uk/servinghampshire](http://www.hants.gov.uk/servinghampshire). The consultation opened on 27 July and closes at 23.59 on 20 September 2016. The findings will be published in autumn 2016 and will help to inform the County Council's considerations about what recommendation to make to central Government.*

*Additional information on the various options was circulated to Forum members on 31 July ["DECK CHAIRS GETTING MOVED AGAIN"]*

#### **4. Safe and Well - the new Home Safety visit : Phil Nicholson, Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service**

The speaker introduced himself as the Safety Officer for the Eastleigh/Test Valley Area. The new scheme involved a person-centred home visit, to identify and reduce risk to the occupier(s), taking into account their behaviours and the social and physical environment in which they live. The visit would combine a Home Safety Check to reduce fire risk in the home, such as checking and fitting smoke alarms, with health referrals for extra support where appropriate, to improve the occupier's health and wellbeing. It is hoped that Safe & Well visits will maximise the opportunity to prevent ill health and harm to people in our communities. Visits are to be free and can be requested by residents themselves. Fire Officers would be making their visits in some instances as a result of a referral by other agencies – for example after a person had suffered several falls.

Concern was expressed from the floor that unannounced visits, even by Fire Officers, would be unacceptable to many elderly residents who have been continually advised not to allow unexpected visitors into their home. Phil Nicholson said that it was planned to distribute postcards around neighbourhoods, alerting residents that Fire Officers might be calling.

#### **5. Planning update.** Graham Smith TVBC, (*written report, read by Chair*)

Borough Local Plan (BLP) The Barker Mill estate had launched a formal legal challenge on several grounds to do with insufficient housing numbers and employment need. A hearing date had yet to be confirmed but meanwhile the BLP would remain in force.

##### **Planning Applications - housing**

Ganger Farm (275 units): planning permission agreed, subject to a legal agreement, which is nearing completion.

Nightingale Lodge, Greatwell Drive (54 extra care units with day care centre) – planning permission agreed, subject to a legal agreement, which is nearing completion.

Abbotsford House, Braishfield Lane : outline application for 46 units (file ref 15/03137/OUTS) – yet to be determined

Land adjacent Luzborough Pub (56 units) (file ref 14/01383/FULLS) - planning permission agreed, subject to a legal agreement, which is nearing completion

Neighbourhood Planning : Work on the joint Romsey Town/Romsey Extra neighbourhood plan would be benefitting from share of a grant to TVBC of £30,000 for this purpose and the two parishes have been working with TVBC on a community planning toolkit to help other parishes.

John Parker further reported :

that the Community Infrastructure Levy, which replaces Section 106 funding (*see notes from earlier meetings*) had now come into force that, because TVBC could demonstrate availability of a 5 year supply of housing land, its countryside protection policy could be upheld

Abbey Hotel : this was to become an adjunct of the White Horse Hotel, to be called the Abbey Inn. The internal space would be reconfigured and original features exposed and restored, where possible. The project had been complicated by heritage considerations and the presence of asbestos. The car park and garden would also be upgraded and it was hoped to complete the work within six months.

## **7. Town Centre events : Mark Edgerley, Town Centre Manager**

The outdoor Antiques Market had proved a great success and it was hoped to repeat the event when resources were available.

July events would include The Beggars' Fair; the Mayor's Picnic with Duck Race and the Romsey Carnival. Romsey Youth Council would be organising their own event in the Park to complement the Beggars' Fair. Youth in Romsey's new building was now open and fully operational.

Romsey Food Festival : 4 Sept.; Film Festival : 24 Sept – 1 Oct

Regular film screenings were now held at the Town Hall and tickets could be booked at the Town Hall or on-line. A new floor was to be laid in the Council Room shortly.

Regular litter picks had been held in the town, with the help of Romsey Lions.

Mark was also pleased to report that M & Co was to take over the building vacated by Kersey's Jewellers and that the William IV pub was being renovated.

## **8. Any Other Business : None**

**Date of next meeting:** 29 September 2016 (AGM)

Future dates for 2016: 1 December