

ITEM 12 Romsey Future – A Vision for Romsey 2015-2035

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council

Recommended:

That Test Valley Borough Council formally sign-up to the Romsey Future Vision document attached as an Annex to this report.

Recommended to Council

SUMMARY:

- Romsey Future is a process, established by the Council, to create a long term vision for the town. In particular, it was agreed that it would be important to have a document that helped deal with the changes that would inevitably come to the town as a consequence of the new Local Plan.
- The town has many groups and organisations that are active within the community. One of the aims of the Romsey Future process has been to provide a mechanism for these groups to together in order to agree on shared priorities. It was agreed at the outset that Romsey Future would be a partnership project made up of the voluntary, business and statutory sectors.
- It is also providing an ongoing process that brings people together to help influence and shape the town for many years to come.
- The First Romsey Future vision document has now emerged from this process and it is proposed that the Council along with other partners in the town formally sign-up to the document.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The current process commenced in November 2013 with an independently facilitated workshop attended by 60 representatives of various organisations from across the town. People were asked to imagine what a successful Romsey would look like in 20 years time through the eyes of various family groups and importantly not from the perspective of their own organisations.
- 1.2 A number of ideas and proposed actions came out of this day. It was agreed to work these up for public consultation through the creation of themed groups made up of volunteers from those who attended the event.
- 1.3 At the same time a Romsey Future Members' Group, made up of Borough Councillors from Romsey and Romsey Extra, was established under the chairmanship of Councillor Martin Hatley. The role of the Members' Group was to oversee the work of the themed groups as ideas developed.

2 Progress to Date

- 2.1 Each themed group was asked to take an evidence-based approach to testing the outputs from the event and develop prioritised proposals. These were presented to the public at a large scale event held in Romsey Town Hall, in June 2014. Through the use of innovative marketing over 400 people attended and gave their views on the emerging ideas. People also had the opportunity on voting on their ideas for quick win projects. Consultations continued at a range of community events over the summer months of 2014.
- 2.2 Councillor Hatley established a Co-ordinating Group to start to build up the vision and main strategic aims, based on the ideas which had been generated by the public and the working groups. The Co-ordinating Group is made of key representatives from organisations that have developed the project to date. This group has been key to the development of the vision document which is attached as an Annex to this report.
- 2.3 A final public consultation on the vision and the emerging strategic themes was led by the Co-ordinating Group and took place over the summer months.

3 Additional Benefits Arising from the Romsey Future Process

- 3.1 A number of additional benefits have arisen from the Romsey Future process. These have included people in Romsey, talking beyond their normal organisational boundaries, about their ambitions for the town and surrounding areas. Additionally a number of projects have developed within the context of the Romsey Future process and have been delivered within the last 18 months. These have included:
- A successful “Our place” bid to DCLG which resulted in a £10k award to develop the roaming “Rendezvous” concept in partnership with Carers Together. A further £5k has also been awarded from the County Council.
 - The development of a Teenage Market with £5k awarded from the Romsey Future quick win project fund.
 - Development of coach parking at the Rapids
- 3.2 Other developing projects have benefited from the ongoing input from the Romsey Future Members’ Group. These have included:
- Improvements at Church Street
 - Improvements at Abby Garth/Pleasure Ground
 - War memorial park improvements (War Horse, Kiosk, toilets, entrance)
 - New youth building at Romsey Sports Centre

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Following the summer consultation and final public engagement event on Saturday 12 December 2015 the Romsey Future Members' Group and the Co-ordinating group have now endorsed the attached vision document and are asking partner organisations to sign-up to the document. Additionally, the Co-ordinating group has suggested that the focus for the first year's work should be on tourism, business and in particular commissioning a study to examine on southern Test Valley's niche business offer and developing a strategic vision for the redevelopment of the south side of the town centre.

5 Options

- 5.1 The Council has led on the implementation of the Romsey Future process and has invested much effort in facilitating the development of the first vision document, in partnership with other organisations. Councillors have also been fully involved and engaged in the development of the vision document so whilst not signing up to the document is an option, it is not recommended.

6 Resource Implications

- 6.1 A number of relevant partners are being asked to sign up to the Vision document. The basis of the sign up will be that the ideas are supported as aspirations and that the funding and project development will require further work. It is envisaged that as each programme area develops it will require support financial and staff resource from a number of organisations. Any resource requirements from the Borough Council will remain within the gift of Cabinet and Council.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Issues

- 8.1 No equality issues have been identified in the Council signing-up to the Romsey Future vision document. As a result, a full Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed in accordance with the Council's EQIA methodology as a result.

9 Other Issues

- 9.1 Community Safety – None
- 9.2 Environmental Health Issues – None
- 9.3 Property Issues – None
- 9.4 Wards/Communities Affected – All Romsey wards and Romsey Extra

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 The First Romsey Future vision document has emerged from an inclusive process that has been led by the Borough Council. It is therefore proposed that the Council, along with other partners which work in the town, formally sign-up to the document.
- 10.2 An annual event will be held each December for stakeholders and the public to find out about progress on Romsey Future. Additional public consultations will be carried out on specific projects as they develop. In the meantime the Romsey Future Members' Group and Co-ordinating Group will continue to exist to take forward the process.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1	File Ref:	
(Portfolio: Deputy Leader) Councillor Martin Hatley			
Officer:	Andy Ferrier	Ext:	8121
Report to:	OSCOM	Date:	17 February 2016