

Romsey Future

Our town, our future



*A vision
for
Romsey*

**2015
to
2035**

DRAFT

Romsey

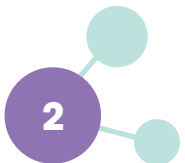
Our town, our future

– a vision for the next 20 years

Over the next 20 years, Romsey will become the place of choice for the residents of small towns and villages in Southern Test Valley to come together.

Romsey will thrive and grow, new communities will emerge and more people will visit the town centre.

The town will retain its character as a relatively compact historic market town closely related to the countryside around it.



Welcome

Romsey's strong community spirit is what makes Romsey special. We are a community which is proud of our town, we are passionate about the future of our town and we are pragmatic and enthusiastic about the part we need to play in shaping its future. In a nutshell, this is about our town, our future.

You may think that this is quite a bold statement to make, but Romsey is changing and will continue to do so over the next 20 years. As a community we have been working together to develop a plan of action to help Romsey manage this change so that the town remains at its heart a vibrant and thriving market town, both for those who live here and for those who come to visit.

It is an exciting time for our town with lots of opportunities coming as a result. However, change also brings challenges and it is therefore important that we have a shared vision for the town so that we can manage the challenges and the opportunities as they emerge.

Our journey so far has been about involving as many local people and organisations as we can to shape the vision. As a result, some really exciting ambitions for the town have been developed with the community. These focus on:



This is just the starting point. Romsey Future has been designed in a way which will mean that we continue to come together. We will work hard to encourage those who make decisions to sign up to our ambitions through our action plan, and as a community we will play our part and be active in taking forward projects that will enhance Romsey.

The Romsey Future Team
December 2015

Romsey Future – *more than just a plan*

Romsey Future sets out a long term vision for Romsey.

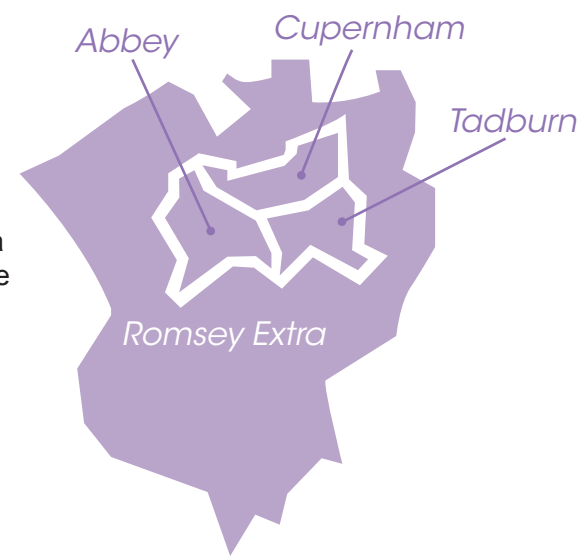
The intention is to have in place a plan of action to help Romsey deal with the changes it will face over the next 20 years.

Romsey Future is looking at the whole of Romsey, and by this we mean the wards of Abbey, Cupernham, Romsey Extra and Tadburn.

Our vision for Romsey will be delivered through a set of strategic ambitions. Each ambition has been developed as a result of local organisations and the community coming together to talk about what a successful Romsey will look like in 20 years. The vision has then been grounded by reviewing a strong evidence base of what's needed and why.

However, it's more than just a plan. Romsey Future is an active partnership of many groups and organisations working together to build consensus and deliver on shared ambitions. We will work together to deliver projects, to attract funding, and to guide future policies and strategies at a service and spatial level. From time to time we will lobby government on any barriers that are holding us back in taking forward our vision.

As a result, this document is just the starting point. Taking forward the vision and the strategic ambitions will be an ongoing process that brings people together to help influence and shape the town for many years to come.



Our Principles for Romsey Future are to:

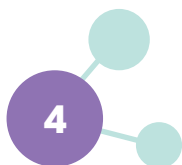
Be *ambitious* when thinking about the future opportunities for Romsey

Be *committed* to working in partnership to move forward our shared ambitions

Be *sustainable* when developing our ideas

Be *inclusive* by bringing together all of our communities within Romsey

Be *proud* of what we achieve for our town



Romsey now and in the future

In developing the plan we have considered the key factors that will need to be addressed when managing the impact of a changing Romsey:

A changing population

More people will live in Romsey over the next 20 years. Currently 18,406 people live in Romsey and by 2021 this figure is predicted to rise to 21,754, an increase of 18%.

People are living longer and by 2021 it is anticipated that around 25% of the population in Romsey will be aged 65 and over. As a result this is likely to mean that the needs of the population and the infrastructure and services people will need to access will begin to change.

A growing town with new development and infrastructure

The projected growth in population also sits alongside the expected increase in the number of new homes to be built within southern Test Valley as set out in the Borough Local Plan. With new homes will come new facilities and infrastructure.

This will provide real opportunities for the town, but a clear plan must be in place which will help Romsey deal with this growth in a way that responds to the emerging needs of the town.

At its heart an historic market town steeped in character

The historic, natural and built environment of Romsey sets the town apart from other local town centres and is an important factor in how the town develops over the next 20 years.

Preserving the historical character will continue to be at the heart of future plans, but it will also be important to explore creative ways in which enhancements can be made that add something whilst being compatible with the historic character.

The town is also made up of several established housing developments which have been built over a number of years. Maintaining these areas is going to be important to ensure that they remain in good order and that Romsey's distinctive sense of place remains strong.

A town with a strong sense of community

Romsey is a vibrant and thriving area. Like most market towns its principal offer is to be a place where people come and meet. However, as the town develops and its population changes, it is necessary to look at what will be needed, not just now but in the future, both in terms of amenities and the future provision of services.

Enabling the community to work alongside organisations to develop joint approaches will be at the heart of Romsey Future.

Our Ambitions for Romsey

Developed over a period of two years and shaped by over a thousand local people and local organisations working together, our ambitions for Romsey will help ensure the town remains a vibrant and thriving place over the next 20 years.

Getting Around Romsey

Delivering improved access to, from and within Romsey.

Enhancing Romsey

Enhancing and maintaining all areas of Romsey so that it retains and strengthens its character and attractiveness to residents and visitors.

Enjoying Romsey

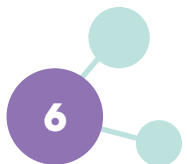
Establishing Romsey as a renowned place to visit and spend time in.

Living well in Romsey

Developing homes and communities that meet the future needs of the town.

Developing the economy in Romsey

Developing Romsey's offer as a sustainable and vibrant place where footfall increases and employment and business opportunities thrive.



Ambition 1: *Getting Around Romsey*

Our ambition is to deliver improved access to, from and within Romsey.

Being able to move around Romsey safely, efficiently and reliably forms a key part of the town's quality of life offer to residents, its quality of visit offer to tourists, and its quality of economic development offer to businesses.

The town is served by both a bus and railway station. By road, the town is connected to key destinations such as London, the South Coast and the West Country. Over the years as the town has grown, a number of important walking and cycling routes have been established to encourage easier access to and across the town.

In developing our plan for the next 20 years the following factors have been considered:

- As the town grows through new development and more people visit the town as a destination, issues such as congestion, car parking capacity and highway improvements will need to be addressed.
- As a significant proportion of the population of Romsey grows older, there is likely to be a greater demand for public and community transport as people start to use their cars less.
- As part of the global commitment to reduce carbon emissions, further infrastructure to support sustainable transport such as walking and cycling, as well as utilising new technology, will form a part of our approach.

To make our ambition a reality we will work together to:

- 1 Deliver schemes that emerge as part of the Romsey Town Access Plan and the Test Valley Access Plan.
- 2 Enhance Romsey's walking and cycling infrastructure.
- 3 Provide car parking that meets the needs of the town and the people who visit.
- 4 Improve access to and information about public and community transport.

The key stakeholders who can help deliver our ambition:

Hampshire County Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Romsey Town Council
Romsey Extra Parish Council
Romsey & District Society
Developers
Community transport providers
Public transport providers
Three Rivers Community Rail
Partnership
Transition Town Romsey
Romsey Ramblers
Sustrans
Test Valley Disability Forum
Cycle user groups
The communities of Romsey

Ambition 2: *Enhancing Romsey*

Our ambition is to enhance and maintain all areas of Romsey so that it retains its character and is ever more attractive to residents and visitors.

The historic nature of the town centre, coupled with the attractive environment that surrounds Romsey, is what sets the town apart from other areas. With the Abbey at the heart of the town, an award-winning Memorial Park and the River Test, one of the world's most important and famous chalk streams, Romsey's natural and built environment is one of its most important assets.

In developing our plan for the next 20 years the following factors have been considered:

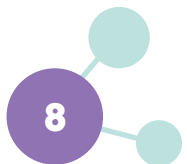
- New development will bring growth to the town. Therefore, appropriate infrastructure and facilities will need to be developed to manage the impact of this.
- For the town to continue to be a vibrant area it must ensure it is accessible and able to meet the expectations of future residents and visitors.
- As the existing residential areas of Romsey start to age, it is important to make sure that they don't decline whilst other areas benefit from new development. We must ensure that Romsey's sense of place is strengthened as a result.
- A changing climate is likely to bring new challenges in the future. Developing Romsey's resilience to managing the extremes of weather and using its resources carefully will need to form part of our onward approach.

To make our ambition a reality we will work together to:

- 1 Work with infrastructure providers to help meet future need identified through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan process.
- 2 Develop a strategic design brief for the town centre to ensure consistency across schemes.
- 3 Deliver environmental enhancements to established housing developments across all of the town and in Romsey Extra.
- 4 Develop a strategic vision for the redevelopment of the south side of the town centre.
- 5 Deliver shared space enhancements to appropriate areas of the town centre which are compatible with the historic character and which make the town more accessible and attractive.
- 6 Address potential environmental risks such as flooding, as well as ensuring sensitive and proper management of our waterways, wildlife and heritage across Romsey.

The key stakeholders who can help deliver our ambition:

Hampshire County Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Romsey & District Society
Romsey Town Council
Romsey Extra Parish Council
Developers
Environment Agency
Natural England
Aster Communities and other
Registered Providers
Friends of Romsey Memorial Park
Transition Town Romsey
Romsey and District Buildings and
Preservation Trust
The communities of Romsey



Ambition 3: *Enjoying Romsey*

Our ambition is to establish Romsey as a renowned place to visit and spend time in.

Improving the number, offer, availability and awareness of a range of facilities and activities for residents and visitors is vitally important to Romsey's future economic development and the development of its communities.

Market towns are traditionally places where local people want to spend time, both to meet up with friends and family and to undertake more day-to-day activities such as shopping. Romsey's historic nature, coupled with its location at the gateway to the New Forest, means it is also a place that people want to visit.

In developing our plan for the next 20 years the following factors have been considered:

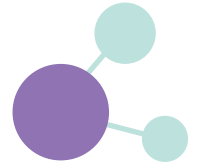
- New development will bring opportunities to develop new facilities that meet the needs of residents and visitors. Planning for this, and designing what's needed and why, is going to be an important area of work so that the right facilities are provided
- Tourism is an increasingly valuable part of the local economy, and as a result can bring new jobs and help existing businesses thrive. With over a million visits to local attractions such as the Rapids and nearby Mottisfont, Romsey's tourism offer needs to be developed, and future infrastructure requirements to support this identified.
- Romsey's population is changing. Over the next 20 years it will continue to grow and there will also be a significant proportion of people who are aged 65 and over. This means that people will need different things from the town, and facilities and services will need to evolve as the town grows and changes.

To make our ambition a reality we will work together to:

- 1 Establish Romsey as a renowned tourist destination through the development and delivery of a comprehensive Tourism Strategy.
- 2 Deliver new recreational spaces.
- 3 Update and deliver new community facilities and services that meet the future needs of the town.
- 4 Develop and sensitively manage open spaces for the benefit of people and the environment.
- 5 Use the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes to protect Romsey and its surrounding countryside.

The key stakeholders who can help deliver our ambition:

Hampshire County Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Romsey Town Council
Romsey Extra Parish Council
Romsey & District Society
Developers
Environment Agency
Valley Leisure
Tourist Information Centre
Test Valley Community Service
Tourism South East
Aster Communities and other
Registered Providers
The communities of Romsey



Ambition 4: *Living well in Romsey*

Our ambition is to develop homes and communities that meet the future needs of the town.

As the town grows it is important that there is a good mix of homes in terms of type, size and cost that addresses the aspirations of all parts of Romsey's population. Alongside this, there will be a need to continue to invest in the community of Romsey so that social action is nurtured and community spirit is further developed.

In developing our plan for the next 20 years the following factors have been considered:

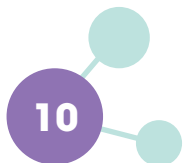
- The Borough Local Plan identifies that Romsey is going to grow with new homes being built over the next 20 years.
- The gap between house prices and income is a key issue that affects Romsey. Based on income, around 40% of the people in Romsey cannot afford to buy a home in the town.
- The population in Romsey is changing, with the biggest change being an ageing population. As people grow older their needs will change and it's important that community facilities, access to services and access to a range of homes are in place to ensure future needs are met.

To make our ambition a reality we will work together to:

- 1 Develop a shared evidence base and approach to inform and lead the future provision of homes that reflects local needs.
- 2 Develop a strategic approach to securing the resources that support the integration of new and existing communities within Romsey as the town develops.
- 3 Take a lead in lobbying government to change legislation and encouraging developers to deliver low-energy homes and reduce CO2 emissions.
- 4 Build upon the strong sense of community action in Romsey so that local people and local community organisations can work together to meet the future needs of the community.
- 5 Increase wellbeing within the community to enable people to live well for as long as possible by ensuring there is good access to the right support and services within the community.

The key stakeholders who can help deliver our ambition:

Hampshire County Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Romsey Town Council
Romsey Extra Parish Council
Aster Communities and other
Registered Providers
Developers
West Hampshire CCG
Age Concern
Carers Together
Test Valley Community Services
Youth in Romsey
The communities of Romsey



Ambition 5: *Developing the economy in Romsey*

Our ambition is to develop Romsey's offer as a sustainable and vibrant place where footfall increases and employment and business opportunities thrive.

Further developing the economy of Romsey is important both for the town's ongoing vitality and the contribution it will make to the wider sub-regional economy.

In developing our plan for the next twenty years the following issues have been considered:

- Romsey is a successful market town. The town centre economy is buoyant with very few vacant units and high numbers of independent retailers which draws people into the town. Looking forward, it will be important to further understand the role that Romsey can play as a place for niche businesses. Retaining a good retail and service mix, coupled with parking that keeps up with need, will be essential for profitable levels of footfall to be maintained.
- Unemployment in Romsey is very low. Alongside employment within the town centre there is a good mix of businesses operating locally across three industrial estates. A large number of people work outside of the town which is why there are higher levels of out commuting. As the town grows it will be important to cater for the opportunities and face the challenges that a more diverse workforce will bring.
- Romsey is a place that people come to visit. It has good leisure facilities to offer both within the town and in close proximity.
- Tourism is an increasingly important part of Romsey's economic development and this emerging opportunity is one that needs to be developed further and fully embraced.

To make our ambition a reality we will work together to:

- 1 Commission a study to examine what southern Test Valley has to offer 'niche' businesses.
- 2 Lobby the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership as to the benefits of a greater focus on Romsey.
- 3 Secure a range of opportunities that will provide different routes into employment for young people in Romsey.
- 4 Establish Romsey as a renowned tourist destination through the development and delivery of a comprehensive Tourism Strategy and investment in attractions and facilities.
- 5 Work and engage with existing and emerging businesses to shape our approach.
- 6 Use the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes to shape and influence the future retail offer in the town to ensure it supports Romsey's sustainability as a market town.

The key stakeholders who can help deliver our ambition:

Hampshire County Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Romsey Town Council
Romsey Extra Parish Council
Solent LEP
Tourist Information Centre
Romsey's tourist attractions
Chamber of Commerce
Education and training providers
The communities of Romsey

What happens next?

Romsey Future is driven by the enthusiasm and commitment of local people and local organisations working together to ensure a bright future for our town. The vision and ambitions will provide the focus for what we do next.

We will review the vision and ambitions every five years to make sure our focus is clear and that we can respond to an ever changing environment.

An initial action plan has been drawn up from the suggestions for actions and projects that have been made over the course of the Romsey Future project. This will enable us to begin to take forward and work with partners to deliver against our ambitions.

The action plan is a rolling plan and will be updated each year at the stakeholder conference where partners and the community will prioritise the things Romsey Future should be actively working on.

Strong and sustained partnership working is key to driving the work forward. Following the adoption of the action plan, programme groups will be established who will be responsible for developing the projects, sourcing funding, negotiating with service providers and developing opportunities for inward investment.

Each year we will reflect on the progress being made at an annual conference to renew our focus and agree the new and ongoing actions to deliver on our ambitions.

To find out more please contact us at romseyfuture@testvalley.gov.uk

