

A Vision for Romsey

2022 to 2042

Romsey 
Future
Our town, our future

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 the towns and villages in southern Test Valley to come together.

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

Retaining its character as a compact historic market town, Romsey will continue to be closely related to the countryside around it.



Welcome

Everyone involved in Romsey Future knows how special and strong Romsey's community spirit truly is. We are proud of its past and positive about its future as we look ahead to the next few years and the part that we all have to play for the town, local countryside and wider environment. This is about our Romsey, for our future.

Just like other towns, Romsey is changing, and will continue to do so over the next 20 years. That's why, as a community, we have been working together to develop a plan of action to help Romsey manage this change and ensure its heart as a vibrant, thriving market town, remains strong.

Over the past five years, Romsey Future has worked to deliver our shared ambitions. We have now revisited what those ambitions are and how we can continue to respond and adapt to the progression that Romsey needs. The opportunity for change makes this an exciting time, but this can also bring challenges, which means it is vital that we all have a shared vision and a shared ambition.

Our journey so far has been about involving as many of you as possible to help mould this vision. As a result, a number of ambitions have been developed alongside our community.

These are for Romsey to be:



Well connected



Environmentally responsible



A strong community



Place focused



People centred



Economically thriving

As we take this opportunity to revisit the ambitions and priorities for Romsey Future we will continue to ensure that the partnership is 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 play an active part in taking forward projects that will enhance Romsey, for everyone.



Romsey Future

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.

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 Romsey for many years to come.

Romsey Future sets out a long-term vision for Romsey. The intention is to have a plan of action in place 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 town itself and its surrounding neighbourhoods.



Our principles for Romsey Future are to:

“ Be **ambitious** when thinking about current and future opportunities for Romsey ”

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

“ Be **committed** to working in partnership to deliver our shared ambitions ”

“ Be **proud** of our town and what we achieve for it ”

“ Be **sustainable** when developing our ideas ”



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 21,518 people live in Romsey and by 2027 this figure is predicted to rise to 23,640, an increase of ten per cent.

People are living longer and by 2027 it is anticipated that around 29 per cent 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 access to will begin to change.



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 seen as 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 while 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 continue to be attractive places to live, while Romsey's distinctive sense of place remains strong.



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 Test Valley Borough Council's Local Plan. With new homes will come new facilities and infrastructure.

These 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.



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 to 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.

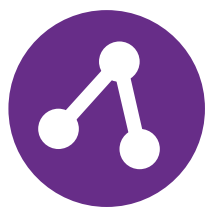
Enabling the community to work alongside organisations to develop joint approaches will be at the heart of Romsey Future.



A town responding to global change

Romsey will benefit from advances in technology and the way communities have adapted to more hybrid ways of working and socialising. However, as this develops, it is necessary to adapt to any future changes and ensure our communities are supported to engage with them.

The impact of climate change is an increasing priority for our communities and responding proactively will help to ensure that Romsey is able to thrive and grow in a way that supports current and future generations.



Ambition 1: **Well connected**



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

Being able to move around Romsey safely, efficiently and reliably all form 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 continues to grow through new development and more people visit the town as a destination, and as habits change, 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 response to the climate emergency, 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 ambitions a reality we will work together to:

- Ensure that the transport and accessibility needs of the community are communicated and actively advocated for, making sure Romsey is well connected and an easy place for all to move around.
- Contribute to the enhancement of Romsey's walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Work with partners to understand Romsey's car parking needs and share relevant information.
- Support improved access to and information about public and community transport and provide a platform to engage with partners around transport and accessibility needs for everyone.



Romsey Future Consultation



Ambition 2:

Environmentally responsible



Romsey has its own part to play in responding to the global Climate Emergency, at a local level. It is increasingly important that any ambitions and decisions made for the town consider their environmental impact and seek to be environmentally friendly and sustainable.

This is important for the communities of Romsey now and in the future.

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

- 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.
- Communities, businesses, and other groups in Romsey are responding to the climate emergency in ways appropriate to them. Romsey Future will need to be in a position to support these changes and adaptations so that we can best support all communities in our town.
- There is continued development planned for Romsey which is likely to call for a greater demonstration of environmentally-friendly decisions that are sustainable.

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

- Take a lead in promoting and encouraging any future changes to the town to be environmentally-friendly and sustainable.
- Find opportunities to introduce schemes and ideas to improve our environment.
- Address potential environmental risks such as flooding, as well as ensuring sensitive and proper management of our waterways, wildlife and heritage across Romsey.
- Continue to support delivery of environmental enhancements to established housing developments across all of the town and surrounding areas.
- Contribute to any planning consultation processes to ensure Romsey's voice on environmental matters is heard.



Fishlake Meadows



Ambition 3: A strong community



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

As the town continues to grow 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:

- There are some new developments in progress, such as in the south of Romsey's town centre and Whitenap.
- The gap between house prices and income is a key issue that affects Romsey. Based on income, many people in Romsey cannot afford to buy a home in the town. This represented over 40 per cent of residents in 2013 and continues to increase.
- The population in Romsey is changing, with the biggest change being an increase in age. 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 these needs are met.
- It is likely that there will be a change in the way people choose to work in Romsey, with a potential increase to

home working among both current and new residents. This could mean more people living in Romsey but working for organisations based outside of the town.

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

- 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.
- Support the integration and linking of communities within Romsey as the town develops.
- Use Romsey Future as a platform to communicate with and connect our communities, supporting partners to promote news, events and activities within the town.
- Work with infrastructure providers to help meet future need identified through any planning processes.
- Deliver new recreational spaces.
- Update and deliver new community facilities and services that meet the future needs of the town.
- Ensure the community voice is heard in consultations around the future provision of homes.



Romsey Lantern Parade



Ambition 4: People centred



Our ambition is for people to be at the centre of decision making for Romsey.

Improving the number, offer availability and awareness of a range of facilities and activities for residents is vitally important to the wellbeing and ambitions of Romsey's communities.

Ensuring that the people in Romsey have their voices heard and are able to contribute to decision making for the town is vital in ensuring that decision making for Romsey is informed by the needs and ambitions of the people who live, work and play here.

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

- 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.
- New development will bring opportunities to develop new facilities that meet the needs of residents. 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
- People's working habits are changing; a large number of people work outside of the town, however, with the shift to more home working the town is starting to see more people using Romsey and its facilities throughout the week. As the town grows it will be important to cater for the opportunities and face the challenges that a changing workforce will bring.

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

- 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.
- Develop and sensitively manage open spaces for the benefit of people and the environment, including access to open space to support health and wellbeing.
- Understand, promote and respond to the needs of all generations in Romsey to develop and support their resilience.
- Support and promote the way people use public spaces and engage in activities in Romsey.



Market Place



Ambition 5: Place focused



Our ambition is to enhance and maintain all areas of Romsey so that it retains its character and is evermore 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:

- 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. We will look to achieve this through the South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan.
- New development has and will continue to 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 while other areas benefit from new development; we must ensure that Romsey's sense of place is strengthened as a result.

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

- Work collaboratively to make Romsey a great place to live, work and socialise, founded on and around our community.
- Deliver improvements to areas of the town centre which are compatible with the historic character to make the town more accessible and attractive and give space for people to enjoy.
- Ensure that any other enhancements to the town preserve the unique identity of Romsey.
- Continue to contribute to the strategic vision for the redevelopment of the south side of the town centre by representing the views and priorities of people in and around Romsey.



Romsey South of Town Centre Masterplan



Ambition 6: Economically thriving



Our ambition is to develop Romsey's offer as a sustainable and vibrant place where footfall increases and employment and business opportunities thrive, as well as being a renowned place to visit and spend time in.

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 20 years the following factors have been considered:

- Romsey is a successful market town. The town centre economy is buoyant with very few vacant units and a high number of independent retailers which draw 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.
- 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 embrace. Romsey's historic nature, coupled with its location at the gateway to the New Forest, means it is a place that people want to visit.

- Tourism is an increasingly valuable part of the local economy, and as a result can bring new jobs and help existing businesses thrive. With continued visits to popular 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.

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

- Continue to support Romsey's adapting town centre and thriving independent sector.
- Seek and lobby for support and funding from external sources such as the 'EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership' to highlight the benefits of a greater focus on Romsey.
- Work and engage with existing and emerging businesses to shape our approach.
- Have a role in any planning processes to shape and influence the changing look of retail and social activities in the town to ensure it support Romsey's sustainability as a unique market town.
- Continue to promote Romsey as an attractive tourist destination through seeking opportunities for the town and working in partnership to deliver them.
- Continue to support and promote Market Place events within the town.



Corn Market



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. However, we will continue to engage with communities throughout each year to ensure that Romsey Future is responding and adapting to the needs and ambitions of Romsey communities.

An initial reporting structure has been drawn up based on the suggestions for actions and projects that have been made in recent years. This will enable us to begin to take forward and work with partners to deliver against our ambitions.

The priorities for Romsey Future will be managed by a programme board, which is made up of representatives of the community. This group will be supported by local advisory and working groups to ensure all communities are represented and have a voice in how Romsey Future continues to deliver its priorities.

A number of project groups will be formed to deliver target areas of work for the partnership. These groups will be made up of representatives of the community as well as partners who can help to deliver the Romsey Future ambitions. Communities are encouraged to propose new projects and seek support from Romsey Future in setting up, securing funding, running and delivering their project ideas.

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

To find out more please visit:
romseyfuture.org.uk