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Planning Policy

From: Julian Jones <
Sent: 30 July 2018 19:28
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Issues and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan
Attachments: Response to Issues and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan July 2018 JH Jones.pdf

Please find attached my response to the subject plan

Sincerely

Julian Jones

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Julian H Jones

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Phone:

Email:

Response to TVBC Consultation: Issues and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan July 2018.

Q1: What is good about living/working in Test Valley?

Romsey: Compact Market Town with a soul; Proximity to Winchester and Southampton and rail access to London and/or Salisbury/Bristol/Bath (if living in walking distance of the station).

Romsey: War Memorial Park; Market Place; Hillier's Gardens; Mottisfont; Plaza Theatre; Cinema at the Town Hall; reasonable selection of cafes, pubs and restaurants; Waitrose and Aldi plus regular market stalls and local shops; community spirit and involvement.

Q2: What could be improved about living/working in Test Valley?

Removal/alternative routing of north south traffic on A3057 through Romsey, especially through traffic of heavy lorries.

Easier access to rail transport for those living outside of Abbey ward and southern Cupernham and Tadburn wards. For most people, access to Romsey railway station is beyond reasonable walking distance and use of the car to reach the (small) station carpark involves the A3057 (Alma Road and Malmesbury Road) which is frequently busy.

Similarly, bus access to Romsey bus station is limited to two corridors: the (excellent Stage Coach 66 and the frequent Blue Bus 4). Journeys to Southampton by bus take for ever (50 minutes) but serve the destinations they pass. Journeys to Winchester are more reasonable and the route more direct. Bus access up Test Valley from Romsey, even as far as Stockbridge, let alone Andover is a joke (non-existent).

Driving a car up the A3057 to reach a) A303, b) A30 for A34, c) Andover is just a pain: narrow, windy and potholed. Car access to the M27 is currently reasonable along the A3057 south of Romsey, but will likely become worse as housing new build spreads along it adding more busy junctions. Car access to the M3 via A3094 and Otterbourne is reasonable. However, car journeys into Romsey are unviable during most of the day, where parking is at a premium. The 4pm free parking is a welcome policy, and traffic after 3:45 is not too bad except for the rush hour from the northern industrial estates. Easing Romsey congestion will help, but facilitating better use of bus and rail must be a major consideration to make the centre of Romsey, and its attractions, viable for those living beyond reasonable walking distance.

Q3: What should be the Local Plan aspiration for the next 20 years?

Maintain a vibrant selection of shops and services in Romsey Town centre together with an innovative solution for ready access on foot, by bicycle, public transport and rail so that residents on the periphery, where new housing development will continue, can look to Romsey for a selection of outlets to meet shopping and recreational needs.

Improve access to transport for residents at the periphery to reach Southampton and Winchester easily by rail and bus. Improve access to rail services (less distance to walk / cycle to a station) will also facilitate in- and out-commuting by rail if carefully planned adjacent to growing accommodation and work centres on the periphery.

Provide more car parking and less congestion in Romsey Town centre!

Q8: Do you have any comments on the approaches suggested above?

For both Romsey and Andover new housing and employment options are (inevitably) being built further and further from 'the centre of town'. If the two centres are to remain viable then they must be accessible easily from the outlying areas. This puts a strain on road infrastructure which will eventually reach capacity. Additionally, in the case of Romsey, steps must be taken to maintain clear 'green space' between Romsey and North Baddesley and Nursling & Rownhams. This leads to serious consideration of a 'new town approach, sooner rather than later. There is limited growth from filling up the villages. Likely new village householders will commute out to any one of the established large employment sites: Andover(?), Basingstoke/Reading/South Oxfordshire, Winchester, Southampton and Portsmouth, Bath and Bristol, and London. Easy access to routes for these journeys need to be put in place now together with the realisation that any new railway stations/halts must be built on land close to the railway line and include sufficient space for car parking and bicycle storage. Identify and reserve land for that purpose in the plan and make clear that development must address the building of infrastructure.

Do not ever again allow the shambles of the Romsey Brewery site to occur on other sites, brownfield or green!

Q10: Do you think we should continue with seeking up to 40% of new homes to be affordable, or should we change the percentage? Q11: What should the trigger be for seeking affordable housing?

Is the current 40% quota meeting the needs of the current young residents of Test Valley? Will it also meet the needs of overspill from adjacent jurisdictions who fall short of their 40%? How many young people in rural villages are not able to access affordable housing in their village?

The trigger level for affordable housing should not be subject to the 15 dwelling cap level but to the needs of the immediate HMA. Until met, building in that area must contribute to the 40% (at least) level for that area.

"Affordable" is a relative notion. TVBC should consider setting up a 100% council-owned housing company to deliver the "affordable" homes required based on the population demographics outlined for this planning timescale (3.1, 3.2, and 3.6). It is to the council's credit that affordable targets have been met (3.7). Don't let up! Affordable elderly housing is required to match the needs of those residents currently privately renting but in employment that will move to retirement but on low pension incomes. Is that demographic available (5.39)?

Q15: Should the Council change its approach and set out a requirement that certain sites should provide for the needs of such groups as the elderly? Yes! And not in ghettos for the elderly, but in areas with level walkable access to amenities (and not all in the centre of Romsey/Andover).

Q16: Should we include a policy that requires a mix and type of housing, or should the housing market inform what mix and type of housing to build? Housing policy should meet social needs not developer's and landowner's exclusive need for profit at all costs. Policy on minimum footprint, room size and minimal facilities should be enforced. Minimum road width should also be stipulated to allow the passage of buses (public or charity/community operated). Also recognise that most households will want to own two cars, those with adult children living at home will want four cars. Make provision for sufficient off road parking (build with the ground floor being the garage for the dwelling). Elderly downsizers will also want to retain their private transport for as long as possible as part of their retention of personal independence.

Q18: Density Standards: leaving this to the market yields rabbit warrens like Abbotswood. This should be resisted by providing standards as part of policy.

Q19: Internal space standards: Yes, these should be made policy. Avoid rabbit hutches.

Q20: Do you think we should establish standards for accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings? If there is a statistical basis for requiring a certain level and especially in homes for the elderly, then yes!

Q24 & Q25: Protection of facilities: each community requires a level of facilities to be provided and these should be protected in a manner that allows some flexibility for change in consultation with that community. Abbotswood has had a Community Centre for more than a year. It doesn't appear to be operating – what has gone wrong? Abbotswood is supposed to have a pub and a doctor's surgery. What has to happen to encourage business to take on these facilities? There needs to be some wider joined up thinking beyond the Local Plan. The Plan is sterile if it can't deliver and the new (and existing) residents disgruntled!

Q27: What are your views on promoting smaller workspaces within the Borough? There should be a range of options that support the setting up of 'pop-up' businesses, small business and larger operations. Thought must be applied to provision of road infrastructure for commuters and for heavy transport. For the latter, additional heavy traffic through Romsey on the A3057 must be minimised. For all business areas (and new and existing dwellings) it is time to require that broadband capable of greater than 20 MBps download and commensurate upload speeds be provided. (Notwithstanding 8.6.)

Q29: Should the Council continue to encourage retail uses within primary frontages or should a more flexible approach be taken with a greater range of uses being allowed? Some flexibility is to be encouraged. However, when considering bus transport, I believe it is essential that the bus stop/drop off pickup be as close to the centre of town as possible to attract visitors. Many people are put off by the thought of a 'long walk' (where 'long' is actually not very far!). The current position works well (and for coaches) even if they are then encouraged to go away to park elsewhere. (Why are large coaches still making three-point turns in Church Place at all – seen recently (July 2018)?)

Q33: Should we continue to retain the principle of Local Gaps? Should we define specific boundaries or a more general policy which aims to avoid coalescence? Yes! This reinforces a sense of community.

Q34: Should the Local Plan identify and designate Local Areas of Green Space or should this be undertaken via Neighbourhood Plans? Whatever decision is made it must be enforceable and enforced in the face of developer opposition.

Q35: Should the next Local Plan continue to promote water efficiency from new developments? Yes!

Q38: Should the Local Plan encourage energy efficiency when constructing new development? Yes, of course, (for hot and cold weather).

Q44: Walking, cycling, and public transport: Walking for commuting or for shopping (as opposed to leisure) will only be undertaken for short journeys – probably 20-25 minutes walking is the maximum, mostly 10 minutes is the limit for many. So, public transport, to be used must be sufficiently frequent and within walking distance to be more attractive than using the car. As the town expands on the periphery additional routes will be needed, but not at the cost of making existing bus routes even more convoluted and therefore longer than at present. Better access to the rail network for residents on the periphery must be planned for.

This will require interaction with the relevant operators and additional infrastructure for which land adjacent to the existing railway must be set aside. With that in mind, new cycle paths out to the periphery to connect with new rail stations must be planned. The opportunity to keep cycle ways separate from cars should not be missed. Bus services connecting with a local rail hub (or hubs) on the periphery may then be a viable business proposition for bus operators.

Q45: Parking: Recognise that most households will want to own two cars, those with adult children living at home will want up to four cars. Make provision for sufficient off road parking (build with the ground floor being the garage for the dwelling). Elderly downsizers will also want to retain their private transport for as long as possible.

This survey: It would have been helpful to have access to a form online that contained the questions already laid out to which respondents could then enter answers rather than having to type a document from scratch, copying and pasting the questions from the pdf document to a document of their own. The form could allow online completion or down loading as a pdf, MS word or Open document.

Julian H Jones

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