

Planning Policy

From: Richard Buss <richard.buss@planning.vic.gov.au>
Sent: 07 September 2018 08:34
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Issues and Options Comments
Attachments: TVBC response.pdf

Please see attached comments.

Regards,

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The big issue as far as I see it is one of not how many new dwellings are needed in the borough but what type of new dwellings are needed.

I live in Romsey and all we see is expensive housing with little affordable housing being built. Developers always seem to try and reduce the affordable housing mainly I assume because it's not cost effective for them.

The catch all phrase "affordable housing" doesn't really address Social Housing. The Local Plan seems to be based on the concept people buy their homes rather than rent and there's little or no provision for those who struggle to rent. The Council doesn't seem to be providing any new Social Housing at all and I think it should. I don't believe it is right for the Council to totally rely on Housing Associations to provide social homes.

Next problem is where do you build?

Romsey has been swamped with new development over the last decade and will continue to be for the next decade what with 1300 new dwellings at Whitenap and a further 300 at Hoe Lane that will inevitably impact Romsey. The town may well be a Strategic Local Centre but its infrastructure is totally incapable of dealing with much more growth. Car Parks are almost full on a regular basis, people are parking down residential roads during the day to either not pay car park fees or because of the lack of space.

The road network is at capacity now. Gridlock in the town centre is a regular occurrence, often during the afternoons and especially if the Waitrose barrier is broken or the car park is full. If Romsey is to survive there needs to be a North/South bypass, which would at least help reduce the heavy goods movements through the centre of town.

The entire town is fed up with the lack of development of the old Brewery Site. I appreciate there are legal issues surrounding this site, but really the Council must sort this mess out quickly and once and for all. We simply can not have further development on Green Field sites while the Brewery remains as it is.

I approve of the concept of Garden Villages. They should be placed near good roads with easy access to the main road network.

The use of Neighbourhood Plans or Community Led schemes seems all well and good but from personal experience the level of expertise and level of detail required to achieve a successful plan is beyond a lot of communities. Joint Parish schemes also come with their difficulties which can become more 'political' than necessary leading to failure. Community engagement is critical but I don't have an answer as to how a Council can fully engage with each community.

Q1 I like the rural nature of the Borough, the access to the countryside and the feeling of open space.

Q2 The road network north/south is pretty slow and takes you some very pretty villages and towns but sometimes I wish it were a bit quicker.

Q3 To aspire to provide low cost housing for rural communities and social housing where there is little or none.

Q4 The government's methodology really only provides you with a number of dwellings, not necessarily the mix of dwelling needed. I think attention should be paid to providing more low cost housing. Your documents clearly identifies that Test Valley is an expensive place to live, why not provide lower cost housing for people on low incomes?

Q5 I think it's dangerous to increase the housing requirement beyond the guidelines because it will only be seen as more profits for the developer, more loss of green fields and more impact on struggling communities in terms of infrastructure

Q6 I've had many debates over the HMA boundary and am persuaded it should remain as it is for the moment.

Q7 I don't believe large scale development is the way forward anymore. Smaller pockets of infill development seems to be more acceptable rather than massive 1300 home extensions to Romsey. The Garden Village idea does however seem like a good idea.

Q8 As mentioned earlier Community Led schemes and Neighbourhood Plans are difficult, time consuming, can become over 'political' and are expensive for a small community.

Q9 Where the line is drawn for a settlement can sometimes seem a bit strict. During the consultation on the previous Local Plan it became clear planners were not prepared to adopt a pragmatic view of where the boundary should go. They drew a line down the middle of Sandy Lane leaving out a site that would be right for development. In the future I think a soft focus line should be drawn around a settlement allowing for sites that maybe attached to a settlement but not directly part of the settlement to be included.

Q10 Yes you should maintain the 40% level and in addition ensure developers do not find ways of reducing that number as some have done in the recent past. You should also make it clearer what 'affordable' means. I understand there is a split of shared ownership, low income and so on.... where is the 'social' element and how large is that?

Q11 Go for 10 as a starting point.

Q12 You could allow market housing on rural exccerpting sites, however they should be in the minority. A development of say 15 affordable homes could have 2 market houses. I would oppose it being the other way round.

Q13 Self build is a great idea and should be encouraged but should be restricted to one house per self build, not a small development to pay for the one self build.

Q14 no comment.

Q15 There are currently ample provisions for retirement homes, certainly in and around Romsey, do we really need an entire site for 55 plus? Not sure we do.

Q16 I think it is about time TVBC insisted on the type and mix of housing on a site. Allowing the developers to decide only means they go for maximum profit which is not necessarily what is needed in any given location.

Q17 If the current Local Plan adequately covers extensions in the countryside then maybe leave it alone.

Q18 The danger of not having a density policy is that developers in rural locations will be more likely to construct large and expensive homes that are not necessarily of benefit to the existing community. A density policy could also help inner town development, rather than only a few houses on a plot but insist some flats are part of the deal.

Q19 and 20 Yes to both.

Q21 No. A rural worker by the definition you provide suggests some one who works on the land, however in this day and age of electronics and the internet, a rural worker could just as easily be someone who can work from home on a computer without having clients or business customers coming to their place of work. I know of several people who operate like this and I could also do the same.

Q22 Anything that prevents unauthorised use of land by these people is an advantage.

Q23 I'm not sure how the Local Plan can restrict the sale of fatty and sugary foods near schools but if it can, do it.

Q24 How would you decide which facilities were more important than others? A pub in one community might need more protection than another one in a different location. Not sure I see how this could work.

Q25 Yes.

Q26 No comment

Q27 Seems like a good idea for small businesses.

Q28 Any encouragement should be given to people working from home.

Q29 I understand the business rates in Romsey are high and as a consequence many small independent shops struggle to be successful, as a result we are blessed with a unnaturally large amount of charity shops. If something could be done to encourage small independent shops back into Romsey then that would be good. If a more flexible approach to retail made the shopping experience better then that would be beneficial.

Q30 No Comment

Q31 Is there anywhere for visiting coaches to park? If not then I suggest this should be looked at.

Q32 Yes.

Q33 The principle of Local Gaps must be maintained. The Council and residents fought hard to keep them in the current Local Plan. The examiner was minded to dispose of them but was persuaded to keep them. It is this policy that prevents unwanted development and coalescing of communities.

Q34 As stated earlier a reliance on Neighbourhood Plans is not the only way forward. I think if a neighbourhood plan can get to the point of designating a green space then it should be allowed to, otherwise the Local Plan should designate the area with consultation of the local community.

Q35 Yes.

Q36. Yes, however not Wind Farms. They are ugly things that would destroy our borough. How about putting solar cells on every new house?

Q37 I am in favour of small scale hydroelectric generators as we have a fast flowing river in the borough. I'm not a massive fan of solar farms again they are ugly, but if hidden away then perhaps. Have developers put Photovoltaic cells on every new build.

Q38 Yes.

Q39 no comment

Q40 The Local Plan should take account of existing provisions and future requirements. If it were to be specific then it might be too a strict rule.

Q41 The Council should continue with the per dwelling/hectare standard for recreation. It provides flexibility in the type of green space rather than the Playing Pitch strategy which is purely about playing fields.

Q42 A combination of both would offer a more flexible approach.

Q43 There is no mention of Transport in this document. If sustainable development is to be successful then a decent and robust transport network is essential. Take Romsey for example, a North/South bypass is becoming a necessity yet there's no thought to that here.

