

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date:	7 September 2010
Title:	Romsey Town Access Plan – Consultation Draft
Reference:	1961
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report presents the draft Romsey Town Access Plan (Romsey TAP) which sets out a shared vision for how access to facilities and services within the town will be improved. It provides an update on the progress being made on the preparation of the Romsey TAP and seeks approval for a public consultation of its draft document.

1.2. The Romsey TAP has been developed jointly by Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council. It is an important element in defining what kind of place Romsey is and it connects directly with the Local Transport Plan. It is intended that the Romsey TAP will have the status of a 'Supplementary Planning Document' within the Test Valley Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.3. This report seeks to:

- (i) provide contextual information on the emerging Romsey TAP and summarise the current stage of the project;
- (ii) set out the way the Romsey TAP will improve accessibility both to, from and within Romsey for utility and leisure trips;
- (iii) summarise the work already completed in terms of Member and community involvement as well as a number of relevant strategies; and
- (iv) provide information on available funding for taking the Romsey TAP forward.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The Local Transport Plan 2006-11 sets out the role of Access Plans and how they will guide the longer term vision and strategies covering all modes of transport within larger settlements in Hampshire, such as Romsey.
- 2.2. The Action Plans that form the main focus of the Romsey TAP set out the way forward in terms of projects to implement, in the short and longer terms. Funding will be sought for the schemes that form the Action Plans through the Transport Contributions Policy which defines transport improvement schemes that will help justify contributions from local developers.
- 2.3. Schemes that appear in the Action Plans have been prioritised through stakeholder engagement. The categories of improvements considered were roads and traffic, parking control and management measures, walking and cycling, public and community transport, and smarter choices.
- 2.4. The Romsey TAP reflects and supports other strategies, transport plans and policies already in place regarding the town and access, including the Romsey 2020 'Vision for Romsey' and the Romsey Movement and Access Review (2006).
- 2.5. The key aims of the Romsey TAP are to:
 - (i) inform an agreed priority list of future transport schemes for which funding can be sought and for which contributions can be collected under the Transport Contribution Policy;
 - (ii) encourage greater use of more sustainable modes of transport;
 - (iii) improve access to public transport;
 - (iv) improve personal safety for all road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists;
 - (v) reduce severance caused by main roads and railway lines;
 - (vi) encourage the development of a town-wide network of cycle and pedestrian facilities;
 - (vii) encourage healthier and more active lifestyles;
 - (viii) enhance and protect the character and setting of Romsey; and
 - (ix) support enhancements to Romsey urban public realm underpinning the future economic strength of the town.
- 2.6. The TAP covers the built-up area of Romsey Town and that part of Romsey Extra immediately adjoining it (see Figure 1 in background document). It does not extend to the surrounding villages to allow the plan to focus on localised issues and improving access to key destinations within the town.

- 2.7. Additional development is envisaged within the Southern Test Valley area and should this be allocated on the edge of Romsey then the new development will also be covered by future updates to the TAP. The boundary will be extended, as appropriate, to include it in future reviews.
- 2.8. Romsey has a range of services and facilities to serve local residents within the town. The majority of these are located within the town centre with some local shops, community halls, schools and employment areas spread around the town. There are also bus and railway stations in the town centre which provide public transport to the nearest main centres such as Salisbury, Southampton and Winchester for higher order services. The Romsey TAP also looks at access to all modes of transport and at the accessibility of key destinations from the main residential areas.

3. Member and community involvement

- 3.1. Development of the Romsey TAP has been informed through consultation and evidence gathering. In the summer of 2009 a series of Community Street Audits (CSA) was undertaken in Romsey. The information obtained on the four walks along main routes into the town centre has been used in the preparation of the TAP. It has helped in identifying the main barriers to access and movement within the town, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians. Identifying and understanding the problems encountered on the ground in detail is crucial and the CSA plays an important role in this. The results of these street audits have already led to some changes taking place, such as signposts being moved and crossing points put in place.
- 3.2. Two workshops have been held to help inform the preparation of the TAP. A workshop was held with local Members from the Borough Council and County Council to discuss the main transport issues to be addressed by the TAP and to consider some potential solutions. More recently, Test Valley District and County Members made comments on the draft document at a special meeting of the Test Valley Borough Council Planning Advisory Panel. The draft document for consultation was also approved by Test Valley Borough Council's Cabinet on 28 July 2010.
- 3.3. Local groups in Romsey with an interest in transport in Romsey were invited to participate in a later workshop to discuss issues and potential solutions. Representatives from Romsey Disability Forum, Southern Test Older Independent Campaigners (STOIC), Cycle Touring Club (CTC) and other local cycle groups, Test Valley Community Services (TVCS), Romsey Primary School, Three Rivers Rail Partnership, Romsey and District Society and Friends of the Earth attended the workshop. There was further discussion on the TAP at a separate meeting with Romsey retailers.

4. Finance

- 4.1. A contribution towards funding for the printing of the draft report will be made by Hampshire County Council to Test Valley Borough Council. Hampshire

County Council and Test Valley Borough Council have jointly supported the workshops and the community street audits.

- 4.2. Implementation of the schemes will be mainly through developer contributions, either already held or forthcoming. Other funding mechanisms such as special grants or County or District funds will also be sought where possible. It is noted, however, that the current economic climate and uncertainty as to the future of the planning system means that there are likely to be substantial delays in commencing some schemes that are reliant upon developer or other funding.
- 4.3. The Romsey TAP will have a coordinating role for the financing of schemes.

5. Consultation Arrangements

- 5.1. The public will be consulted on the draft Romsey TAP during autumn 2010. The consultation will be managed by Test Valley Borough Council and jointly coordinated with Hampshire County Council's dedicated consultation web pages. It will adhere to the statutory timescales associated with advertising a draft Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.2. Following the public consultation, it is anticipated that the Romsey TAP will be adopted by both authorities and will be used to inform decisions on developer contributions as well as the associated mitigation measures required to necessitate developments. Each scheme will also be subject to the appropriate scale of local consultation prior to implementation.
- 5.3. The document will be used to determine the allocation of funds sought from developers by Development Control officers as well as Highway officers from both authorities. Developers will also use the document when assessing the amount of financial contribution likely to be sought for the Romsey area and what those funds seek to provide.
- 5.4. The document will help to guide future development of the town in terms of improving accessibility and providing better traffic management to better integrate the town.
- 5.5. The Romsey TAP will be monitored by Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council on a regular basis. The progress of the Romsey TAP and those schemes implemented as a result will be reported to Council Members. Outstanding issues will be reviewed and new priorities added as necessary.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1. That the draft Romsey Town Access Plan be approved as a basis for consultation.

Rpt/1961/HB

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Draft Romsey Town Access Plan	Hampshire Highways West, Totton

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Statement one: The short-term minimum required to meet this action:

The Romsey TAP has a duty to ensure that its recommendations provide fair and equal access to the town centre regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, mobility and social and geographic inclusion (eg people on low income and those living in areas of the town with the poorest transport links). Preparing the recommendations involved assessing the local population and understanding the varied access needs.

Statement two: Longer term minimum required to meet this action:

The Romsey TAP has a duty to ensure that it reflects the access needs of the local community. Developing the plan involved carrying out community street audits with local members and residents to identify its varied access needs. The results from these audits and information form a range of strategies (roads and traffic, parking control and management, walking and cycling, public and community transport, and smarter choices) and helped to produce recommendations for the schemes included in the Romsey TAP. These aim to provide fair and equal access to the town centre regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender sexual orientation, mobility and social and geographic inclusion (eg people on low income and those living in areas of the town with the poorest transport links).

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. Schemes that provide enhanced or new lighting could have a beneficial impact on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour owing to fewer areas with secluded outlooks.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint/energy consumption?

The Romsey TAP will seek to improve accessibility and therefore increase the opportunities for use of more sustainable modes of transport than the motorised vehicle.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The Romsey TAP supports the need to adapt to climate change by looking to promote and support a move towards more sustainable modes of transport. In particular by improving walking and cycle routes within the town centre and looking to further improve public transport facilities such as the railway and bus stations.