

# Romsey Future

South of the Town Centre Masterplan



## Romsey: South of Town Centre Masterplan

Baseline Report

October 2018





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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2018, the Romsey Future Partnership, in conjunction with Test Valley Borough Council, commissioned Nexus Planning, Perkins + Will, and Alan Baxter Associates to work in partnership with them to undertake a wide-ranging consultation exercise and prepare a masterplan for the area described as 'Land South of Romsey Town Centre'.
- 1.2 The main objective of the work is to develop a vision and masterplan in partnership with the community and other key stakeholders which will help to contribute to the vitality and viability of the wider town centre and Romsey. Test Valley Borough Council, along with its partners, intends to use the masterplan as a blueprint for the future of development throughout the site to deliver improvements, attract inward investment and inform decisions.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Baseline Report is to provide an early evidence base to support the next stages of work. The Baseline Report presents the results of a number of interrelated lines of enquiry concerning the current composition and performance of the wider town centre, its physical environment and infrastructure, and relevant local policy. In doing so we seek to draw out the wider town centre's existing assets and opportunities for improvement. Our further work will build on these findings to develop the masterplan for the Land South of Romsey Town Centre and the strategic options for delivering this vision.
- 1.4 The remainder of this report is set at as follows:
- **Section 2 – Local Context**, in which we provide an introduction to Romsey and the community context under which the master plan will be prepared;
  - **Section 3 – Planning Policy Context**, in which we set out the strategic context for the development of the masterplan;
  - **Section 4 – Conservation and Heritage**, in which we provide an assessment of the historic environment;
  - **Section 5 – Environment and Infrastructure**, we consider key environmental issues relevant to the study;
  - **Section 6 – Traffic, Transport and Parking**, we assess the current transport position including car parking and accessibility;
  - **Section 7 – Conclusion**, providing a conclusion and guide to next steps of the project.
- 1.5 This document will be a 'live' document throughout the master planning process, and as new information emerges, can be further expanded.





South of the town centre



Market Place



Stirling Walk pedestrian connection



Retail and residential development north of Broadwater Road



Edwina Mountbatten House



Crosfield Hall - Council owned Hall and car park



Bradbeers Department Store

## 2 | LOCAL CONTEXT

### Introduction to Romsey

- 2.1 Romsey is a compact market town in southern Test Valley in the heart of Hampshire. The town is home to over 14,000 residents and is located 11 kilometres northwest of Southampton, 18 kilometres southwest of Winchester, and 27 kilometres southeast of Salisbury. It is served by a train station that is in walking distance of the core town centre, and a bus interchange which is right in the centre of town.
- 2.2 Romsey Town Centre has a unique history, benefiting from medieval architecture, and has numerous heritage listed buildings. The town's Abbey, in particular dates back to 907 AD, and creates a stunning backdrop for the town. Romsey Town Centre serves both its residents and those of its immediate rural catchment as a shopping, service and business destination. Romsey is set apart from other immediate town centres by its historic character. In addition, the mix of town centre uses has a positive effect on its viability and vitality.
- 2.3 The core town centre area is comprised of The Hundred, Bell Street, and Church Street. The Hundred is the main shopping street, providing a mix of food stores, clothing stores, restaurants and an Aldi supermarket. The other main food supermarket is Waitrose, which is located with pedestrian access from Latimer Street.
- 2.4 Romsey is classed as a 'major centre', making it one of the most important settlements within the County. The area is predicted to grow, as a result of the number of planning permissions and allocations, the largest of which is the Whitenap site, which will include 1,300 new homes, as well as employment and community facilities. The Whitenap

allocation is discussed further in Section 3.

### Community Facilities

- 2.5 The town is served by one leisure centre, called The Rapids. The Rapids is located just south of the town centre, located on the corner of Bypass Road and Southampton Road. The Rapids is operated by Places Leisure in conjunction with Test Valley Borough Council. The centre's facilities include a swimming pool, gym, studios, group cycling, squash courts, meeting rooms, crèche, and a café.
- 2.6 The Romsey Library is located on Station Road, between the town centre and the train station. The library is operated by Hampshire County Council and is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
- 2.7 There are a number of schools located within the vicinity of the town centre, including:
- The Romsey School (Secondary School)
  - Romsey Primary School
  - Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School
- 2.8 Romsey Town Centre hosts a number of markets, including:
- Romsey regular market, which operates every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, and is located in the Corn Market;
  - Hampshire Farmers Market, which operates the first Sunday of each month in the Alma Road car park;
  - The Romsey Antiques, Collectables and Decorative Arts Market, which is a biannual event held at multiple locations throughout the town;

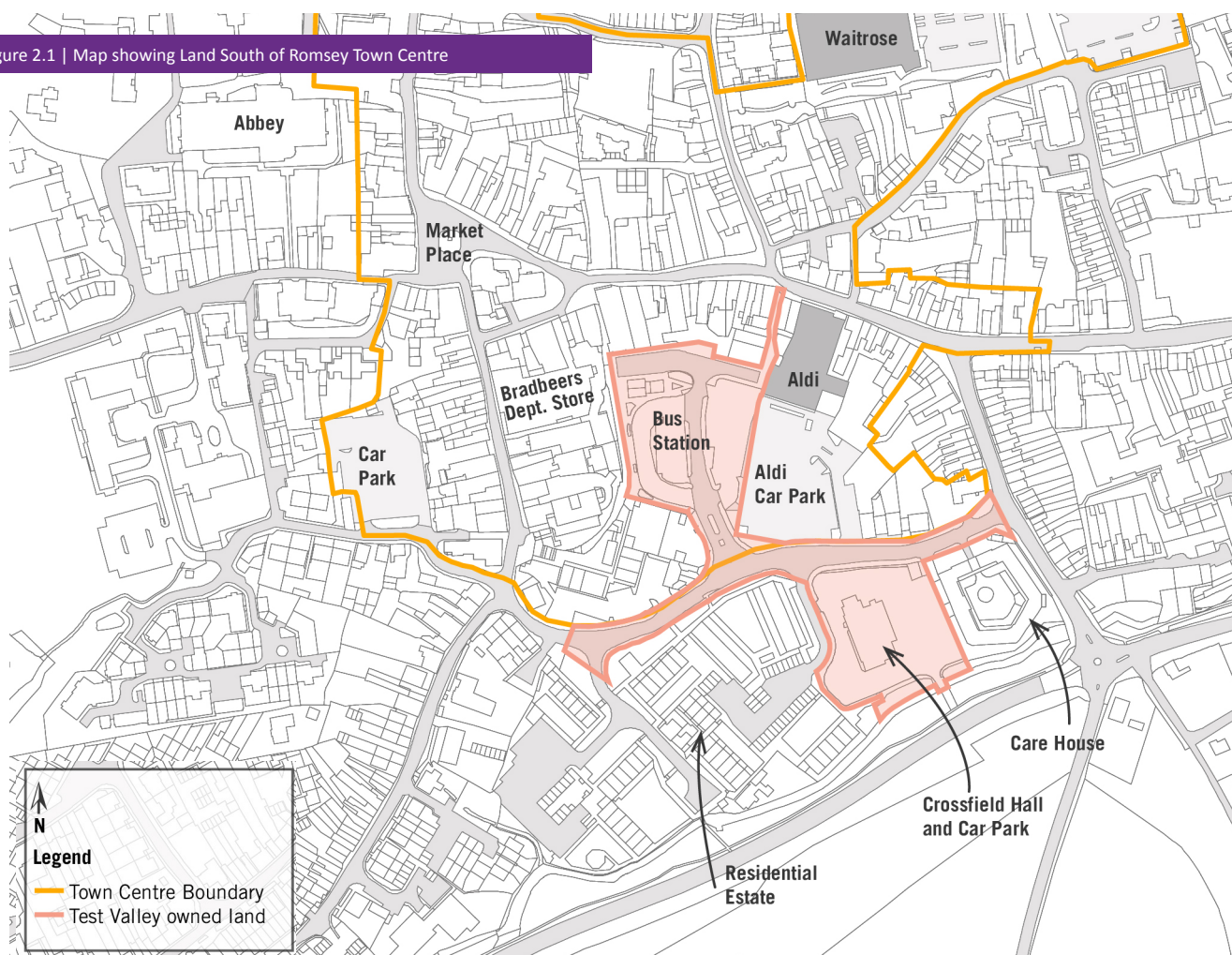


- French Food and Brocante Market, which was held for the first time in March 2018 and is proposed to happen annually;
- Plans to incorporate and promote a 'Romsey Youth Market' as part of the Romsey regular market from Spring 2019.

## The Study Area

2.9 Land to the South of the town centre will have a critical role to play in the next stage of Romsey's future, particularly given the historic nature of the majority of the core town centre area, the Conservation Area status (part of which also covers the Study Area) and lack of available sites within the wider Romsey town area. The area has been identified in the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD 2011 - 2029 as an area for redevelopment with potential for improvements in terms

Figure 2.1 | Map showing Land South of Romsey Town Centre



of the range of facilities and activities – complimentary to the existing town centre offer.

- 2.10 The land South of Romsey Town Centre Study has a flexible boundary presently. The following land parcels may form the Study Area:

- Bus station
- Council run car park
- Aldi and Aldi car park
- Edwina Mountbatten Care Home
- Crosfield Hall and car park
- Eastwood Court
- Public highway

### **Romsey Future Partnership**

- 2.11 Romsey Future is a partnership comprised of local residents, groups and organisations that work together to help shape the future of Romsey by delivering shared ambitions. To help guide these ambitions for the area, Romsey Future has created a vision statement that sets out their long term goals for Romsey from 2015 to 2035. A number of organisations have signed up to the Romsey Future vision document, including County, Borough and Parish Councils, societies, schools and local community groups.

- 2.12 The organisations and groups that have signed up to the Romsey Future vision document include:

- Hampshire County Council
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Romsey Town Council
- Romsey Extra Parish Council
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Hampshire Constabulary
- Aster Communities
- The Romsey & District Chamber of Commerce

- Romsey and District Society
- Test Valley Community Service
- Test Valley Disability Forum
- Age Concern Romsey and District
- Carers Together
- Romsey and District Carers Forum
- Sparsholt College
- The Mountbatten School
- Valley Leisure
- Romsey Abbey
- New Life Church
- Romsey Women's Institute
- Romsey Ramblers
- Romsey District Neighbourhood Watch Association
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

- 2.13 The Council and Romsey Future have been working hard over the past few years to engage with residents on a long term vision for Romsey. In addition, a number of initiatives, with a view to making the town centre as appealing and accessible as possible for those who live, work and visit, have now been implemented. These initiatives are discussed overleaf.

- 2.14 Romsey Future has undertaken numerous projects in the area that help deliver their shared visions and ambitions, as set out in their Vision Statement. These projects include the installation of new cycle parking at Viney Avenue, the installation of new outdoor leisure equipment that provides a means of free exercise in Memorial Park, coach parking at Romsey Rapids and helping to secure a government grant used to set up the Romsey Rendezvous community café, amongst others.



## Key Stakeholders

2.15 Romsey has a strong community spirit and numerous passionate stakeholders. There are several site specific stakeholders, namely the landowners. These include:

- **Aster Communities:** a local housing developer and ethical landlord that runs the residential estate.
- **The Broadlands Estate:** the former Prime Minister Palmerston's 18th century country estate located opposite the masterplan site.
- **Edwina Mountbatton House:** a care home operated by a registered charity.
- **Aldi:** supermarket with Frontage to The Hundred and car park located behind.
- **Eastwood Court:** home to Youth Options, a registered charity aimed at supporting young people



Pedestrian Link between The Hundred and the Bus Station



Aldi entrance, facing car park



Banning Street residential development

# 3 | PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect in July 2018 and aims to streamline the planning process. The framework outlines a presumption in favour of sustainable development, taking account of the economic, social and environmental elements of sustainability.
- 3.2 To ensure the continued vitality of town centres, paragraphs 85 to 90 of the NPPF promote and support new development and investment within the settlement boundaries of town centres, recognising that town centres are the heart of communities. The NPPF identifies that at suitable locations mixed use developments including residential development and leisure uses can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres. In addition, paragraphs 91 to 95 of the NPPF promote the achievement healthy, inclusive, and safe places.

## The Local Plan

- 3.3 The Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD 2011-2029 (the Local Plan) is the adopted Local Plan for the Borough. The Local Plan was adopted on 27 January 2016. Within the Local Plan, Romsey is classed as a Major Centre in the settlement hierarchy, making it one of the most important settlements within the Borough, along with Andover.

## Romsey Town Centre

- 3.4 Policies LE11 and LE12 relate to development within town centres, and specifically to development within Romsey Town Centre. The Local Plan states:

*Within Romsey town centre, there are limited opportunities for additional large scale retail development, which*

*would need to have regard to its historic environment. However, the Council will consider favourably proposals for additional retail development, including extensions, in the town centre. Taking account of constraints, the southern side of the town centre may provide potential.*

- 3.5 Policy LE12 relates to permitted ground floor uses within Romsey's primary and secondary shopping frontages. The Local Plan States:

*Only shops (Class A1 use), financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurants and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishments (Class A4 use), and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use) will be permitted within the ground floor units within the primary and secondary shopping frontages fronting a street or pedestrian thoroughfare.*

*Within the primary shopping frontages of Romsey, the use of ground floor units fronting a street or pedestrian thoroughfare for financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurant and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishment (Class A4 use) and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use) will be permitted provided that:*

*a) the proposed use would not result in the number of units in non shop (non-Class A1) use exceeding the proportion of 35%; or*

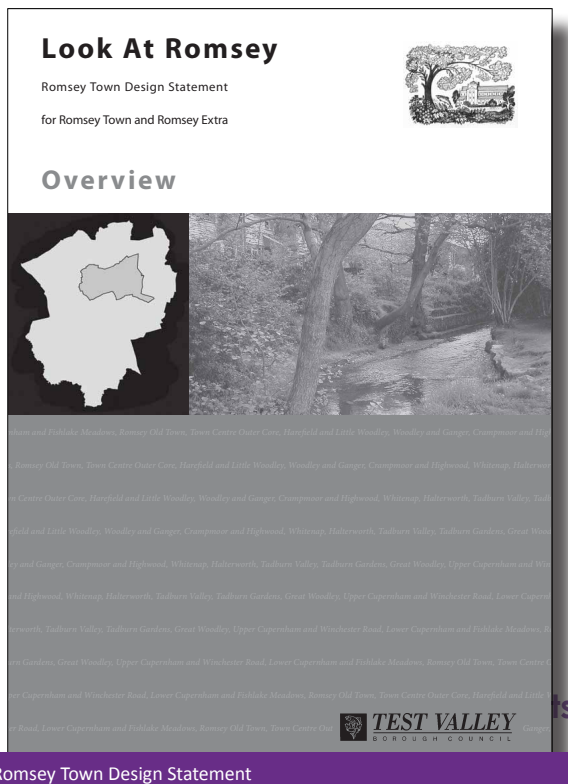
*b) the proposed use would not result in a concentration of more than three consecutive units in non shop (non-Class A1) use.*

- 3.6 Policy E1 of the Revised Local Plan relates to all new development in the Borough. It requires all new development to be of a high quality in regards to design and local distinctiveness.



## Whitenap

- 3.7 Policies COM3 and LE3 relate to the proposed new neighbourhood at Whitenap. This proposed neighbourhood is allocated for 1,300 new homes, and as it is located on the edge of the Romsey settlement area, is likely to have a significant impact on the town centre.
- 3.8 In addition to the provision of new homes, development at Whitenap will provide significant employment floorspace, community and education facilities, including a primary school, community hall, a local centre, and ample public open space and landscaping. Romsey Town Centre may experience some pressure based on the additional population at Whitenap.



- 3.9 The Revised Local Plan DPD (2016) is underpinned by a range of studies and supplementary planning documents (SPDs) that have been produced as part of the evidence base. The most relevant of these documents have been summarised below.

## Romsey Town Centre Access Plan

- 3.10 The Romsey Town Access Plan Supplementary Planning Document was first adopted by the Council in April 2011. This document has since undergone a review and subsequent public consultation. The revised version was subsequently adopted in September 2015.
- 3.11 The purpose of the Romsey Town Access Plan (TAP) is to set out the Council's strategy for improving access to facilities and services within Romsey, and guide funding to connect high level strategies with local level transport schemes. The TAP extends across the built up area of Romsey to parts of Romsey Extra that immediately adjoin it, and the residential area of Abbotswood.
- 3.12 Some of the key objectives set out in the TAP include encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling, improving infrastructure for those with poor mobility, and encouraging active lifestyles.

# Romsey Town Design Statement

- 3.13 Romsey Town Design Statement (TDS) SPD, or 'Look At Romsey', was prepared by the Romsey and District society, and adopted by the Council in January 2008. This document primarily analysis the appearance of Romsey Town and Romsey Extra, identifying important visual features and townscapes, whilst providing some design recommendations. The

primary aim of the TDS SPD is to provide a guide by which future development can be assessed to ensure they are visually cohesive within their setting.

#### Cycle Strategy and Network SPD

- 3.14 The Cycle Strategy and Network Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by the Council on 11 November 2015. The document sets out the proposed approach to improve facilities for cyclists, including a network of potential cycle routes across the Borough.

#### Shopfront Design Guide SPD

- 3.15 A Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by the Council in September 2010. The SPD was produced to assist owners, tenants, developers and architects in considering alterations to or the renewal of shopfronts to retail and commercial premises within Test Valley. It includes general advice on what permissions are needed, historic shopfronts, elements of a shopfront, canopies and blinds, security, further reading and useful links.

#### Evidence Base

- 3.16 The evidence base is an extensive library of documents that help to inform and support the preparation of planning policy. Some of the relevant documents are discussed below.

#### Retail Studies

- 3.17 Previous Retail Studies undertaken by NLP in 2008 and updated in 2012 identified that a significant amount of Borough expenditure leaks to other towns in neighbouring Boroughs including Chandler's Ford, Totton and Southampton. As such, an increase in the amount and quality of comparison and convenience floorspace within Romsey Town Centre would help to improve the retail offer.
- 3.18 The Retail Study update (2012) also identified that there is capacity within Romsey for an additional foodstore of total floorspace between 1,600 to 1,800 sq m gross floorspace. That Study explores opportunities for a new foodstore within the Town Centre, and assesses a number of key sites including parts of the South of Romsey Town Centre area. None of those sites were found to be immediately suitable at that time.
- 3.19 The Andover and Romsey Retail Capacity and Leisure Study undertaken by Carter Jonas in 2018 concludes that, despite continuing to experience expenditure leakage to neighbouring Boroughs, Romsey Town Centre is a healthy and vital centre benefiting from a good offer of comparison and convenience stores and services. In addition, the town centre was found to have a particularly low vacancy rate.



- 3.20 The 2018 Retail and Leisure Study makes several recommendations for the improvement of Romsey Town Centre, including recommending the Town Centre plays host to higher end fashion retailers to raise the profile of the Town Centre and reverse comparison expenditure leakage. Additionally, the study recommends improving Romsey's leisure service provision to bolster its evening economy and attract younger users. The Study also identifies the potential capacity for an additional foodstore within Romsey Town Centre.

#### Employment Land Review and Andover Employment Floorspace Demand

- 3.21 DTZ were commissioned by Test Valley Borough Council to produce an Employment Land Review of the Borough, which was subsequently published in July 2008. The Report focused on the STV as key areas of Andover and Southern Test Valley (STV) in which Romsey is located. This study identified the STV as successful, with low employment rates. Romsey was identified as the most suitable location for additional retail and office facilities in the Southern Test Valley area.
- 3.22 The study identified Romsey as historic market town characterised by predominantly retail uses with small office units located above. The report suggested that Romsey has a more buoyant office market than Andover, by that the small size of Romsey offices are restricting its ability to meet demand as growing business are unable to expand.

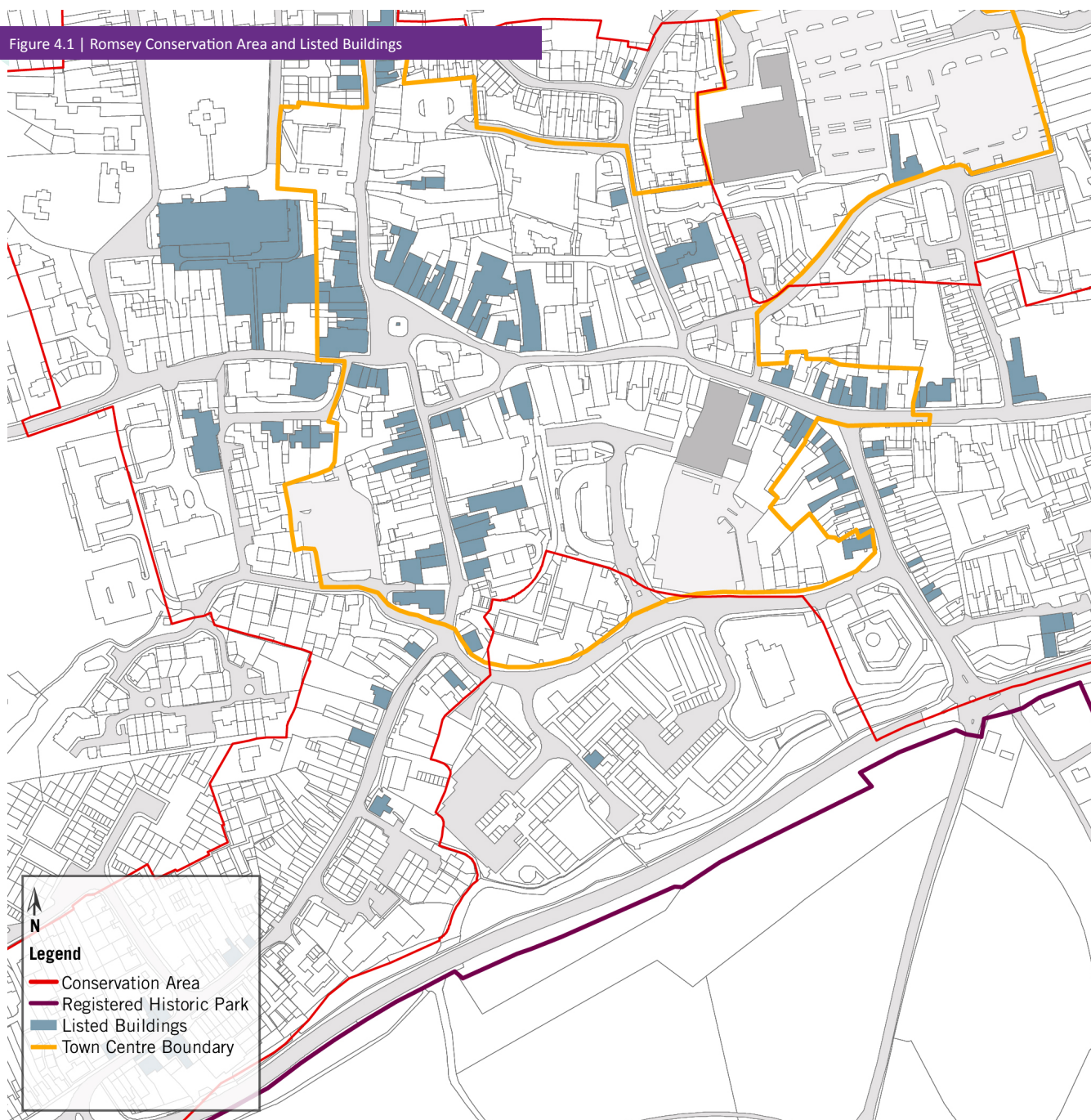
#### Car Park Study

- 3.23 i-Transport produced a Car Park Study for Test Valley Borough Council in June 2018. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

# 4 | HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

- 4.1 Romsey has a long history of settlement. It began in the 10th century as a small village serving Romsey Abbey. The Abbey Church of St Mary and St Ethelflaeda, rebuilt in the 12th century, survives today as the Anglican parish church, which still dominates the centre of the town – the largest parish church in the county. The historic market place, positioned just outside the abbey precinct, naturally became the focus of the local road network, as it remains to this day. Over time the village became a prosperous market town.
- 4.2 This long history has given Romsey a rich historic townscape, centred on the Market Place, with buildings spanning over eight centuries. Particularly noticeable is the local red brick, used as infill in the older timber-framed buildings (e.g. 15th-16th centuries) and as the main construction material in later development (e.g. 18th-19th centuries). This is a key characteristic of the town and its conservation area. Also noticeable is the use of stucco, or render, as used for example on the Corn Exchange of 1864.
- 4.3 As a historic market town with a conservation area designation, the history of Romsey is important as it characterises the design, appearance, massing and connectivity of the built environment. The historic nature of the town has had an impact on how the town looks today. The Town Centre is predominantly comprised of buildings that are two and three storeys.
- 4.4 The core of Romsey Town Centre was first designated as conservation area in 1970. The original designation was later extended to include the majority of the Town Centre. The historic centre of Romsey is focused around Market Place, from which key roads lead north, south, east and west. The Town Centre is characterised by a fairly continuous line of old houses that meander slightly to provide numerous unique vistas of the town. Only part of the Study Area is located within Romsey Conservation Area.
- 4.5 Given the historic nature of Romsey Town Centre, there are numerous statutorily listed buildings in the area. Some historic buildings of note include the Abbey Church of St Mary and St Ethelflaeda, a 12th Century Grade I listed church, and the Grade I listed King John's House.
- 4.6 Figure 4.1 illustrates the number and location of the listed buildings in Romsey in relation to the Study Area. One listed building is located in the South of Town Centre Area, 64 Banning Street, a Grade II listed former public house dating from the 18th Century. Other listed buildings within the vicinity of the Study Area include:
- Manor House (Grade II)
  - 1-18 Palmerstone Street (Grade II)
  - Park House (Grade II)
  - 51-55 The Hundred (Grade II)
  - 47 and 49 The Hundred (Grade II)
  - Red Lion Public House (Grade II)
  - 11-15 Corn Market (Grade II)
  - Dolphin Hotel (Grade II\*)
  - Baptist Church (Grade II)
- 4.7 Much of the town centre is included within the Romsey Conservation Area. It is also noted that there are a series of heritage listed buildings in the northern section of the town centre, particularly around the Market Place, Bell Street and the Corn Market. As a result, future development is likely to occur in areas of the town centre that are less constrained by heritage assets.
- 4.8 In addition, trees located within the Conservation Area are also protected from development. Protected trees located within the Study Area include parades adjoining the Aldi car park, Broadwater Road and the stream north of Bypass Road.

Figure 4.1 | Romsey Conservation Area and Listed Buildings





# 5 | ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

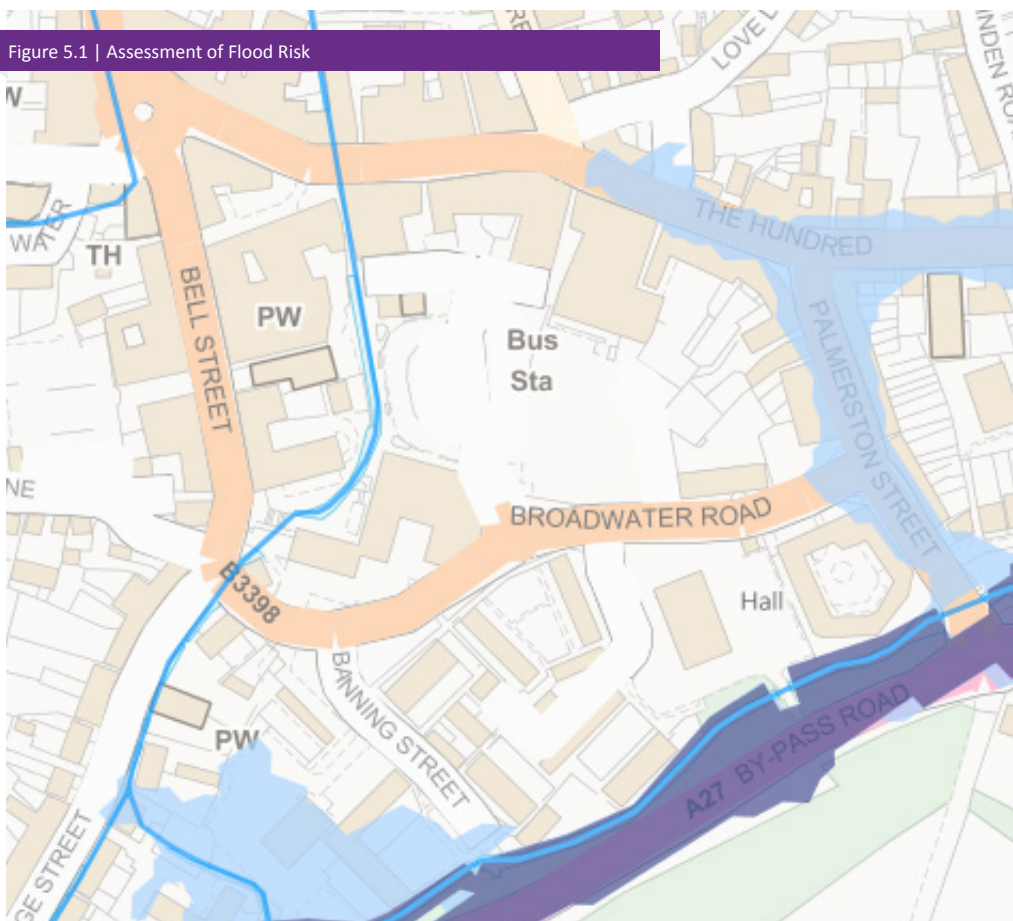
## Environment

- 5.1 The geographical landscape of Test Valley Borough is dominated by the River Test which begins in Basingstoke and Deane Borough and ends at Southampton Water. A number of tributaries join the River Test, including the Anton, Dun and Wallop Brook, and a number of winterbournes contribute to the river during periods of high groundwater levels.
- 5.2 The River Test is a designated Environmental Sensitive Area and a Site of Strategic Scientific Importance (SSSI).

- 5.3 The River Test and other waterways including chalk streams within Romsey are for the most part hidden from view and are therefore underexploited natural assets to the town centre.

## Flood Risk

- 5.4 Whilst it is acknowledged that the Borough is vulnerable to a range of flood risks, the long term flood risk information provided by the Environment Agency and included in Figure 2 below indicates that the majority of the Study Area has a very low risk of flooding (less than 0.1%) by reservoirs, rivers, or surface water.



Source: Environment Agency, 2018

## Geology and Ground Conditions

- 5.5 The majority of the Borough is underlain by chalk which acts as the Borough's principle aquifer, the source of a number of public and private water supplies, as well as the base of the River Test. As such, protecting the quality of the groundwater from pollution is important for the Borough.

## Topography

- 5.6 The south of the Borough, including the area around Romsey Town Centre is relatively flat, with undulating land forms in the centre of the Borough, and high chalk ridges in the north.

## Public Open Space

- 5.7 Romsey Town Centre contains a number of public parks and open spaces, the largest of which is the War Memorial Park. There are also extensive grounds around the Romsey Abbey building, which provide attractive and publicly accessible open spaces during the day.
- 5.8 Market Place, the historic centre of the town, is a large, attractive open area with retail stores, commercial premises and the Town Hall. The Market Place, within Romsey Town Centre, is proposed to be undergoing urban improvements works. The works will result in a large portion of the Market Place being pedestrianised. This will allow for markets and public events to occur in this space. In addition to the Market Place, the Corn Market is a smaller open area located adjacent to Market Place that holds outdoor markets.

# 6 | TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT AND PARKING

## Romsey Future Vision

- 6.1 Ambition 2 of the Romsey Future Vision document relates to transport and accessibility within and around Romsey. This ambitions seeks to enhance Romsey's waking and cycling infrastructure, provide car parking that meets the needs of both residents and visitors, and improve access to and information regarding public and community transport.

## Romsey Town Access Plan SPD

- 6.2 The Romsey Town Access Plan (TAP) SPD was formally adopted following recommendation by the Council's Cabinet in July 2015. This report identifies that Romsey Town Centre acts as the main centre for the wider rural area. Given the limited availability of public transport in these areas, the majority of visitors travel by private vehicle, thereby access to the centre by car is important for the continued vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 6.3 Public transport is also important for both environmental and community reasons, and to ensure the centre remains accessibly to less mobile groups such as the elderly and the younger populations.
- 6.4 The Romsey TAP identifies the following:
- Romsey has good transport links, particularly to other parts of southern Hampshire;
  - Barriers and constraints to Romsey public transport network include the two railway embankments that run roughly North to South, and East, and the medieval street patterns within the historic town centre;
  - Ensuring the town can accommodate the required vehicle movements whilst maintaining the character and quality of the town;

- Romsey town centre is within walking and cycling distance for the majority of the essential areas;
- There is congestion on the road network, particularly during peak times and there are limited alternative routes meaning that any road incident will result in major traffic congestion;
- There may be a need to intervene on the main routes of the A3090, A3057 and A27 to ensure increasing levels of car usage do not lead to heavy congestion;
- Walking is the most popular means of transport after the car. The provision and quality of footpaths within Romsey is varied. Footpaths in the historic centre are very narrow but broaden in the main shopping areas of The Hundred and Latimer Street owing to recent improvement works;
- The upper end of The Hundred, Market Place and Bell Street has pedestrian provision and required intervention to ensure the area is safe and attractive for pedestrians and cyclists;
- There is a recognised need to improve the narrow streets leading to Market Place, particularly for pedestrians;
- Segregated walkways are located throughout Romsey, some of which are located along the river and canals. However, accessibility for some of these walkways can be difficult for less mobile users, particularly for wheelchair users and intervention is required to ensure they are accessible for all members of the public;
- Some segregated walkways are located within Romsey, some of which provide pleasant environment away from the busier roads.

- 6.5 In addition to the issues and comments



raised above, the TAP identifies a number of trends that are likely to contribute towards future challenges to the provision of transport. These include:

- A projected increase in car ownership leading to a significant growth in traffic and associated congestion;
- An aging population, with a predicted 50% increase in the number of residents aged over 65 between 2001 and 2026 and the changes in transport mobility and preferences an older population entails;
- The impact of climate change on transport patterns.

## Public Transport Infrastructure

- 6.6 Romsey Train Station is located approximately 0.4 miles (or 7 minutes walking distance) from the Study Area. Great Western Railway and South Western Railway trains service this station, providing access to Portsmouth, Cardiff, Bristol and Salisbury.
- 6.7 Romsey's Bus Station is located within the Study Area. Several services run from this bus station, which includes a coach drop off and pick up point, providing access to Salisbury, Southampton, Winchester and Eastleigh and some of the villages in the area. The TAP considers the bus station to be of an adequate size for current provision of bus services but recommends improving the existing services to the edge of town employment areas, the train station and the Sports Centre. In addition, the TAP recognises the need to improve the existing waiting facilities in the bus station including addressing concerns regarding its security.

## Car Park Study

- 6.8 i-Transport produced a Car Park Study in June 2018 on behalf of Test Valley Borough Council as part of an evidence base to guide future decision making. The study

covered the Borough's two key towns, Andover and Romsey, focusing on publicly available off-street parking within the two towns.

- 6.9 The Study assessed the quality, quantity and capacity of the available short, medium and long term car parks in Andover and Romsey, before predicting future demand in relation to current capacity. Of the eight car parks in Romsey, seven were found to be of a high quality, and one of medium quality. Future forecasts predict that, in the short term, Romsey's car parks will have space capacity during peak times whilst in the medium term, both short stay and medium stay car parks will exceed their capacity during peak times. Furthermore, in the long term, all car parks are predicted to exceed their capacity at peaks times on Fridays.
- 6.10 The Study recommends providing additional short and medium stay car parking in Romsey Town Centre in the next 10 and 15 years. Other recommendations include, improving wayfinding from car parks to the Town Centre and local attractions, and improving traffic management in Romsey to allow easier access to car parks.

## Cycle Strategy

- 6.11 Test Valley Borough Council adopted the Cycle Strategy and Network SPD in November 2015. The purpose of this document is to encourage and facilitate cycling throughout the borough by ensuring the necessary facilities are in place. Several measures aimed at improving and encouraging cycling in the Borough are outlined in the SPD. These include, linking the Boroughs cycle network with those of the neighbouring boroughs, promoting cycling in the Council's consideration of new development proposals including encouraging safe cycle routes and ample cycle parking, integrating cycle with other transport infrastructure, and maintaining existing cycling routes and rights of way.

## 7 | CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Baseline Report provides a broad analysis of the context of Romsey Town Centre, with particular reference to the Land South of Romsey Town Centre study area. The evidence base will allow the masterplanning team to set out a coherent and shared vision for the town centre and potential options for achieving that vision as the next stage of our work.
- 7.2 This report has explored the current composition and performance of the town centre, and its physical environment and infrastructure. In doing so we have sought to draw out the town centre's existing assets and opportunities for improvement. An outline of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Romsey Town Centre that have emerged through a combination of baseline research and initial consultation with Town Centre Manager, are outlined opposite.
- 7.3 Our further work will build on these findings to develop the masterplan for the Land South of Romsey Town Centre and the strategic options for delivering this vision. This document will remain a 'live' document throughout the masterplanning process.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of community within the town, that creates loyalty to local retailers;</li> <li>• Attractive, historic character of the town centre;</li> <li>• Strong cultural foundation;</li> <li>• Community based events are popular;</li> <li>• Independent retailers present in the town centre;</li> <li>• Bradbeers Department Store as a flagship store for the town;</li> <li>• Growing population which will continue to grow through development such as Whitenap;</li> <li>• Low vacancy rate in the town centre;</li> <li>• Strong mix of shops to ensure viable and vital town centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road system that is under pressure at peak times;</li> <li>• Public car parking spaces are difficult to identify;</li> <li>• Lack of modern pedestrian navigation methods such as signage and public maps;</li> <li>• Majority of retail units are privately owned;</li> <li>• Pedestrian and cycle movements generally;</li> <li>• Poor bus services;</li> <li>• Lack of high quality flexible meeting and event spaces;</li> <li>• Few available vacant units for offices and other employment uses.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner organisations that are receptive to new ideas;</li> <li>• Historic environment that provides a unique setting for visitors;</li> <li>• The Romsey Abbey as a tourist destination;</li> <li>• The town is small enough to have a nurturing community, but large enough to provide opportunities;</li> <li>• Make greater use of local waterways;</li> <li>• Potential to develop an evening economy including more restaurants and leisure uses in the town centre;</li> <li>• Market Place enhancement will increase available space for public events;</li> <li>• Exploit the proximity of two major tourist attractions (the New Forest and Paultons Park) to boost visitor numbers in Romsey;</li> <li>• Development of land at Whitenap and the associated growth in population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing trends in shopping and retail and having a town centre that can adapt;</li> <li>• The historic environment and numerous listed buildings may restrict more contemporary development;</li> <li>• Large housing developments putting pressure on existing infrastructure;</li> <li>• Protect smaller, local, independent shops in the town centre;</li> <li>• Loss of local bank branches;</li> <li>• Increasing pressure on car parks.</li> </ul>



# Romsey: South of Town Centre Masterplan