

Romsey Town Design Statement ‘Look at Romsey’

Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal Report (draft for consultation)

May 2007

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1. Non-technical summary

- 1.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all plans and policies that guide the use of land must now be tested for their contribution to sustainable development. Sustainable development can be summarised as balancing social, environmental and economic issues. This process is known as sustainability appraisal.
- 1.2 This document is the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the 'Look at Romsey' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The purpose of this planning document is to help consider design and character issues when determining planning proposals in Romsey. It will help the interpretation of design policies in the Borough Local Plan (2006) when applied to planning applications in the town.
- 1.3 The SPD has been produced to form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which will replace the Borough Local Plan (2006) as the framework for guiding development in the Borough.
- 1.4 Appraisal of the planning document has involved testing it against a set of sustainability objectives that were agreed to address sustainable development issues in the Borough. It has predicted what effect, if any, the plan is likely to have on these issues.
- 1.5 The appraisal shows that overall the SPD is likely to complement the sustainability objectives although in many cases there is a limited relationship between the plan and sustainability.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning documents are subject to a process of sustainability appraisal. A Sustainability Appraisal Report is required to support each Development Plan Document (DPD) and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the Local Development Framework (LDF). These reports will explain how the objectives of sustainability have been taken into account in the preparation of each planning document.
- 2.2 This report is the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the 'Look at Romsey' draft SPD to explain how the document has been appraised. It should be read in conjunction with the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March, 2007).
- 2.3 The purpose of the SPD is to guide the consideration of design and character of the town of Romsey therefore the likelihood of significant impacts on the environment is minimal. The SPD in itself will not determine what type of development is acceptable or where development will be permitted, but rather provides detailed guidance on what style and design new development is likely to be acceptable to maintain and enhance the town's character.
- 2.4 The draft SPD, together with this report, is subject to a period of consultation from 18 May to 15 June 2007. The consultation includes the statutory environmental bodies: English Heritage, Environment Agency, and Natural England.
- 2.5 Comments on either the draft SPD or this report should be sent to:

**Planning Policy Team
Planning Service
Test Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Duttons Road
Romsey
Hampshire
SO51 8XG**

Or by email to: **planning@testvalley.gov.uk**

3. Appraisal methodology

- 3.1 The sustainability appraisal of this SPD has been based on the guidance prepared by the former ODPM¹. As the SPD has been prepared to supplement a policy of the adopted Borough Local Plan, which itself was subject to an appraisal, it was considered appropriate to simplify the appraisal.
- 3.2 Preparation of the SPD, including extensive community involvement, began before the completion of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March, 2007) produced to cover the scope of all of the planning documents for the LDF. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to simplify the appraisal to a test of the document's objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework (section 7 of the Scoping Report) and an assessment of the likely effects. Different options have not been tested.
- 3.3 Table 1 (below) details the stages of the appraisal of this SPD. Further detail about the stages and tasks involved in sustainability appraisal are provided in the Scoping Report (available at: www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning).

¹ *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005 (www.communities.gov.uk/planning)

Table 1: Record of the appraisal process

SA Stage/Task	Who was involved?	When was the work undertaken?	Difficulties/issues encountered
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope			
A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes	Planning Policy Team	July 2006 to February 2007	See Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March, 2007)
A2: Collecting baseline information			
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems			
A4: Developing the SA framework			
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA			
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects			
B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework	Planning Policy Team	April 2007	
B2: Developing the SPD options	n/a	n/a	Alternative options were not tested for this SPD as preparation of the document commenced before the completion of the Scoping Report and the guidance applies to policies of the adopted Borough Local Plan (2006) which was subject to an appraisal.
B3: Predicting the effects of the draft SPD	Planning Policy Team	April 2007	By virtue of its purpose, the SPD is unlikely to have a significant impact in terms of the sustainability of the Borough.
B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft SPD			
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects			
B6: Proposing measures to			
			As there are unlikely to be any significant effects, and

SA Stage/Task	Who was involved?	When was the work undertaken?	Difficulties/issues encountered
monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD			assessing the impact of this SPD would involve measuring quality of design, it is considered impractical to include measures to directly monitor implementation of this planning document.
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report			
C1: Preparing the SA Report	Planning Policy Team	May 2007	The SA Report has been simplified as preparation of the SPD began before the completion of the Scoping Report produced for appraisal of LDF documents. This document supplements policies of the Borough Local Plan.
Stage D: Consulting on draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report			
D1: Public participation on the SA Report and the draft SPD	To be completed post consultation		
D2: Assessing significant changes			
D3: Making decisions and providing information			
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD			
E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring			
E2: Responding to adverse effects			

4. Background

- 4.1 The purpose of this SPD is to articulate the interpretation of adopted Borough Local Plan (2006) design policies (chapter 8) as they should be applied to the settlement of Romsey, particularly policy DES 02, which addresses settlement character. It aims to provide more detailed guidance for the consideration of design and character issues when assessing development in the town.
- 4.2 The SPD has been produced to form part of the Test Valley Local Development Framework (LDF) which will replace the Borough Local Plan (2006) as the planning framework for the Borough.
- 4.3 The purpose of the sustainability appraisal of this SPD is to ensure that it contributes to the overall objective of sustainable development. This Sustainability Appraisal Report has been produced to explain how the plan has been appraised and how it performs against the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal framework (set out in section 7 of the Scoping Report).
- 4.4 The objectives of the SPD are as follows:
- A. To provide a record of local distinctiveness by describing the unique qualities and character of the settlement, its setting and buildings.
 - B. To identify the key features and characteristics of the local natural and built environment to be respected and protected from the impact of inappropriate development.
 - C. To provide design guidance for new development, so that change is managed so that it is in keeping and in harmony with the character of its setting.
 - D. To achieve a higher standard of design and where possible enhance the local environment.
 - E. To increase the involvement and influence of the local community in the planning system.
 - F. To assist in community development through participation in the preparation process.
 - G. To provide a specific description of distinct areas of the settlement based upon; the character of built form, history of development and neighbourhood identity.
 - H. To identify potential features and locations which could be improved to the benefit of visual amenity and enhancement of local character.

5. Sustainability objectives, baseline and context

- 5.1 Baseline information, sustainability issues in the Borough and the sustainability objectives for the LDF are detailed in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March 2007). No further information was added to support the baseline for this appraisal, other than information presented in the Scoping Report.
- 5.2 The following table lists the sustainability objectives from the Scoping Report (Section 7) which were used to appraise this SPD and explains why they were considered relevant. The objectives selected for this appraisal cover the three broad themes of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic issues. The remaining objectives were considered to cover issues which are beyond the scope of this SPD e.g. flood risk, but that would be dealt with by higher level plans within the LDF.

Table 2: Sustainability Appraisal Framework: objectives used for the appraisal

Sustainability Objective
<p>1. Increase the affordability and mix of housing</p> <p>As the document covers design issues these may have an influence upon the mix of new housing.</p>
<p>6. Maintain a safe community for everyone</p> <p>As the document covers design issues this may have an influence on a safe community where this is related to the public realm.</p>
<p>7. Promote a place with strong and vibrant local communities</p> <p>As the document is prepared by the local community and addresses community issues in Romsey it is likely to have an influence on the strength and vibrancy of the local communities .</p>
<p>8. Improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to key services and facilities particularly in the rural areas</p> <p>As the document covers design issues and potentially enhancement where these are related to the public realm it may have an influence on access by non car modes to service and facilities.</p>
<p>9. Promote a community that participates in leisure and cultural activities</p> <p>As the document covers design issues and potentially enhancement where these are related to the public realm it may have an influence on participation in leisure and cultural activities.</p>
<p>10. Encourage efficient use of land including maximising the potential of previously developed land</p>

As the document covers design issues it may have an influence of the use of previously developed land.

13. Conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity assets

As the document covers the identification of natural features it may have an influence on biodiversity assets.

14. Protect and enhance the high-quality natural environment and landscape, and enable more people to appreciate it

As the document covers the identification of natural environment and landscape features it may have an influence on these assets.

15. Protect and enhance the historic environment and enable more people to appreciate it

As the document covers the identification of historic environment features it may have an influence on these assets.

23. Make best use of existing commercial floorspace

As the document covers design issues in Romsey town it may have an influence of the use of existing commercial floorspace.

25. Support sustainable local tourism industry, particularly in the rural areas

As the document covers the identification and protection of the natural and built environment it may have an influence on tourism.

6. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 6.1 The guidance produced by the former ODPM (2005) recommends incorporating an assessment of environmental effects, required by the SEA Regulations², within the sustainability appraisal process.
- 6.2 The following table links the sustainability objectives to the relevant SEA topics. This demonstrates that the appraisal of this SPD has incorporated the majority of topics covered by the SEA.
- 6.3 Further information regarding the sustainability objectives, baseline environmental information, and links with SEA is provided in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March, 2007).

Table 3: Links with SEA

SEA Directive Issue	Relevant SA objectives used in this appraisal	Page reference(s)
Biodiversity	13, 14	See Sustainability Appraisal Matrix (section 8 below) and Table 4 (below).
Population	1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 25	
Human health	1, 6	
Fauna	14	
Flora	14	
Soil	10, 14	
Water	14	
Air	8, 14	
Climatic factors	none	
Material assets	1, 10, 15	
Cultural heritage	9, 15, 25	
Landscape	10, 13, 14	

² *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004* (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633).

7. Plan issues and options

- 7.1 As discussed in the methodology (paragraph 3.2 and Table 1), it was considered appropriate in this case to simplify the appraisal process. The SPD has been produced to supplement policies of the adopted Borough Local Plan and preparation of the policy document began prior to completion of the Sustainability Scoping Report and higher level Development Plan Documents.
- 7.2 Different options for the SPD were not considered, other than to produce the SPD or rely on the design policies and supporting text in the Borough Local Plan.

8. Appraising the Plan Objectives

- 8.1 The following matrix records the performance of the SPD objectives against the relevant sustainability objectives from Section 7 of the Scoping Report. This represents Task B1 of the appraisal process (see Table 1 above).

Sustainability Appraisal Matrix

Key:

✓✓	Very compatible – the SPD objective is very likely to help to achieve this SA objective
✓	Compatible – the SPD objective is likely to help achieve this SA objective
0	Neutral – the SPD objective is likely to have some positive and some negative impacts on this SA objective
!	Potential inconsistency – this SPD objective may work against achieving this SA objective
!!	Likely conflict – this SPD objective is likely to interfere with achieving this SA objective
	No relationship – this SPD objective is unlikely to have any direct influence on this SA objective

SA Objective	SPD Objectives (see para. 4.4 above)								Commentary	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
Social objectives										
1. Increase the affordability and mix housing			✓							The only impact is likely to be some limited influence on the mix of new housing, so that it is in keeping with local character. Generally little to contribute towards this objective.
6. Maintain a safe community for everyone			✓	✓					✓	A higher standard of design and enhancement of the environment may result, which would potentially reduce fear of crime and insecurity related to the public realm and increase community safety. Generally limited contribution towards this objective.
7. Promote a place with strong and vibrant local communities	✓	✓			✓✓	✓✓		✓		The process of preparing the SPD should assist in community development and involvement and enhance local people’s influence on planning decisions. It should also assist in fostering a collective understanding and appreciation of the local environment to stimulate its care. Generally contributes well towards this objective.

8. Improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to key services and facilities, particularly in the rural areas								✓	The identification of opportunities to visually enhance specific locations may have the additional gain of improving the ease (legibility) and desirability to use linkages into and within the town, particularly access by cycling and walking.	
9. Promote a community that participates in leisure and cultural activities									Unlikely that there will be a relationship, given the issues covered by the SPD. Generally no contribution towards this objective.	
Environmental objectives										
10. Encourage efficient use of land including maximising the potential use of previously developed land	0	0	0	0				0	The identification of valuable built environment features, characteristics and design guidance should result in higher quality townscape. In some cases, it may promote a higher quality of development so reduce the scope for maximising the potential intensity for its redevelopment. Generally neutral contribution towards this objective.	
13. Conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity assets	✓	✓	✓					✓	The identification of key natural features, including biodiversity should further their consideration in terms of protection from the potential impact of any inappropriate development and opportunities for enhancement. Generally limited contribution towards this objective.	
14. Protect and enhance the high-quality natural environment and landscape, and enable more people to appreciate it	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓				✓ ✓	✓	The focus of the SPD on the qualities and local distinctiveness of the setting of the town, its natural environment and landscape features should significantly increase their protection from the potential impact of inappropriate development and consideration of opportunities for possible enhancement. It should also assist in fostering a collective understanding and appreciation of the local environment to stimulate its care. Generally contributes well towards this objective.

<p>15. Protect and enhance the historic environment and enable more people to appreciate it</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p>	<p>✓</p>			<p>✓ ✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The focus of the SPD on the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment, particularly the built environment should significant increase its protection from the potential impact of any inappropriate development and consideration of opportunities for possible enhancement. It should also assist in fostering a collective understanding and appreciation of the local environment to stimulate its care. Generally contributes well towards this objective.</p>
<p>Economic objectives</p>									
<p>23. Make best use of existing commercial floorspace</p>			<p>0</p>	<p>0</p>					<p>Design guidance should result in a higher quality townscape, and so encouraging the attractiveness and therefore use of existing commercial floorspace. It may also in some cases, by promoting a higher quality of development, reduce the scope for maximising the potential for some commercial development. Generally neutral contribution towards, or limited relationship with, this objective.</p>
<p>25. Support a sustainable local tourism industry, particularly in the rural areas</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>				<p>✓</p>	<p>The identification of key features and characteristics of the natural and built environment should significantly increase their protection from the potential impact of inappropriate development and consideration of opportunities for possible enhancement. It should also assist in fostering a collective understanding and appreciation of the local environment to stimulate its attractiveness to local people and visitors encouraging potential for visits. Generally some contribution towards this objective.</p>

Summary of matrix

- 8.2 The appraisal shows that overall the SPD is likely to complement the sustainability objectives although in many cases there is a limited relationship between the plan and sustainability. The SPD is likely to best help achieve strong and vibrant communities (objective 7), protecting, enhancing and enabling more people to appreciate the natural and built environments (objectives 14 and 15). The relative weaknesses are shown as being encouraging people to participate in leisure and cultural activities (objective 9), the uncertainty over whether reuse of previously developed land will be promoted (objective 10), and some uncertainty regarding promoting best use of commercial floorspace (objective23).
- 8.3 These results are considered acceptable as the theme of the SPD is focused on design and settlement character issues within Romsey. Many of the sustainability issues and the sustainability objectives identified in the Scoping Report are beyond the purpose of this supplementary document.

9. Assessing effects

- 9.1 Sustainability appraisal includes an assessment of how the planning document is likely to influence the baseline (identified in the Scoping Report). This involves identifying how the plan is likely to perform against the sustainability objectives. This represents Stage B (Tasks B1 to B6) of the appraisal process (see Table 1 above).

Table 4: Assessing the effects of the SPD

Key:

++	Very positive effect	-	Negative effect
+	Positive effect	--	Very negative effect
+/-	Positive and negative effects	?	Uncertain effect

SA Objective	Targets (where relevant)	Effects over time	Significant effect?	Need for mitigation?	Comments
1. Increase the affordability and mix housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 100 affordable homes per year (from 2008, deliver 200 per year) 	?	No	No	Uncertain what impact, if any, the SPD will have on affordability and mix of housing. Other documents within the LDF will influence this target.
6. Maintain a safe community for everyone	none	+?	No	No	Enhancement of settlement character may help maintain a safe a community
7. Promote a place with strong and vibrant local communities	none	+?	No	No	The SPD is likely to help towards promoting a sense of community through identifying, protecting and enhancing local character
8. Improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to key services and facilities, particularly in the rural areas	none	+?	No	No	Uncertain what impact, if any, the SPD would have on access. Potential for improved legibility, permeability and attractiveness of the local transport network.
9. Promote a community that participates in leisure and cultural activities	none	+?	No	No	The SPD may contribute to this objective over time but unlikely to have any significant effect
10. Encourage efficient use of land including maximising the potential use of previously developed land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% of dwellings on previously developed land by 2008 (PPS 3 and SEERA) minimum 30 dwellings per hectare (PPS 3) 	-?	No	No	The SPD by promoting enhancement of character and high quality design may not help make the most efficient use of land, but other policies of the Borough Local Plan and emerging LDF will have a greater influence on the use of land.
13. Conserve and	none	+	No	No	The SPD may help towards this objective

enhance the Borough's biodiversity assets					in that it will help identify and appreciate the natural environment of Romsey and its biodiversity.
14. Protect and enhance the high-quality natural environment and landscape, and enable more people to appreciate it	none	+	No	No	The SPD may help towards this objective in that it will help identify and appreciate the natural environment of Romsey and its biodiversity.
15. Protect and enhance the historic environment and enable more people to appreciate it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of historic buildings on the 'At Risk' register 	+	No	No	The SPD may help towards this objective in that it will help appreciate the historic environment of Romsey and identify opportunities to enhance historic assets.
23. Make best use of existing commercial floorspace	none	-?	No	No	The SPD promotes enhancing local character which may not always equate to the best use of existing commercial floorspace, but other policies of the Borough Local Plan and emerging LDF will have a greater influence on the use of commercial floorspace.
25. Support a sustainable local tourism industry, particularly in the rural areas	none	+	No	No	The SPD is likely to help towards this objective in that appreciating and enhancing the character of Romsey will help maintain the town as a tourist attraction.

10. Implementation & Monitoring

- 10.1 The SPD will be applied through the development control process in the determination of planning applications. Its purpose is to guide the interpretation of the design policies of the adopted Borough Local Plan (2006) when applied to the settlement of Romsey.
- 10.2 As no significant effects have been predicted, and this appraisal has shown that the SPD has a limited influence on the sustainability objectives, it is considered that there is no requirement for specific monitoring. Measuring the quality of design in new development is subjective and therefore direct monitoring is impractical in this case. General monitoring will continue through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.
- 10.3 Table 4 identifies several uncertainties over the effect the SPD will have. However, none of the effects are considered to be significant and so these uncertainties are acceptable.

11. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 11.1 The Habitats Directive and draft Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) (Amendment) (England and Wales) 2006, requires land use plans to be subject to an Appropriate Assessment where they are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (Special Protection Areas and Special Area of Conservation) or Ramsar site. These sites, within or neighbouring the Borough, are identified in the Scoping Report.
- 11.2 The Look at Romsey SPD is unlikely to have any effect on these sites as it relates to design and character issues in the settlement of Romsey. The SPD in itself will not determine what type of development is acceptable or where development will be permitted, but rather provides detailed guidance on what style and visual design new development is likely to be acceptable to maintain and enhance the town's character. Therefore, implementation of this supplementary plan, on its own or in combination with other plans, is unlikely to have any impact on the sites identified in the Scoping Report. Consequently, an Appropriate Assessment is not necessary.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 The SPD will help apply the design policies of the adopted Borough Local Plan (chapter 8) to the settlement of Romsey. Overall this appraisal demonstrates that the SPD has a limited influence on sustainability and that there are no obvious conflicts with the sustainability objectives. There is no need for any mitigation or an Appropriate Assessment.