

30 September 2019

Dear Householder,

You could be **one of only 50 people** selected to take part in a **Citizens' Assembly** to help answer the important question:

**How do we improve the area around Crosfield Hall and the Bus Station to deliver the maximum benefit to Romsey?**

The Citizens' Assembly will be **held over two weekends in Romsey: 9 and 10 November, 10am to 4pm, and 23 and 24 November, 10am to 4pm.** You need to be able to attend both weekends. If you are selected to take part we will provide your food, cover transport costs, and give you **£300** to thank you for your time.

The Romsey Future Partnership, through previous consultations, knows that **improving the area around Crosfield Hall and the Bus Station is important to many local people.** The Citizens' Assembly will bring together a diverse group of people, from across the area, to discuss and recommend ways to do this that helps and supports all the communities in and around Romsey. This will include looking at how the area could be used as a place to live, work, and have fun.

**You don't need any prior knowledge to take part.** You will hear from experts in the field and about what has happened so far. All you need to do is listen and share your opinions with us and your fellow residents.

**Then what will happen?** The recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly will be presented to the Romsey Future Partnership and Test Valley Borough Council and will help shape major planning documents for the area, which set out what we want to achieve and guide developers. **This is an opportunity for you to influence key decisions about the area's future!**

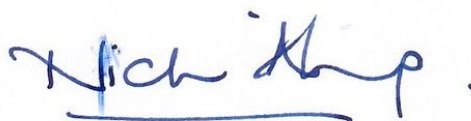
**Everyone aged 16 and over**, who lives at this address, can register their interest by visiting [www.sortitionfoundation.org/rsvp](http://www.sortitionfoundation.org/rsvp) or by calling **0800 009 6486** (9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Saturday). The deadline to register is **Monday 14 October**. More details about the event are available overleaf.

We thank you for your interest and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Phil North  
Leader of the Council



Nick Adams King  
Chair of Romsey Future and Deputy Leader

## **Frequently Asked Questions: The Test Valley Citizens' Assembly on Improving Romsey**

### **How was I selected to receive this invitation?**

The Sortition Foundation randomly selected 10,000 addresses from Royal Mail's address database of Romsey and surrounding areas and your household was one of those selected. Lucky you!

### **What is Romsey Future?**

In 2013 Romsey Future set out a long term vision for Romsey. It is an active, community led partnership of many groups and organisations working together to build consensus and deliver on shared ambitions. We work together to deliver projects, to attract funding, and to guide future policies and strategies. More information about Romsey Future can be found on the Romsey Future website: <https://www.romseyfuture.org.uk/>

### **What is a Citizens' Assembly?**

A Citizens' Assembly is an innovative democratic tool used all over the world. It brings together a randomly selected group of people who broadly represent the wider population. The people who attend learn about important issues, discuss them with one another, and then make recommendations about what should happen and how things should change.

### **What will happen after the event?**

The unedited recommendations from the Citizens Assembly will be presented to the partners of Romsey Future and Test Valley Borough Council and will be used to shape the Masterplan that will also become a Supplementary Planning Document in 2020 that will guide potential developers in the future.

### **What will taking part involve?**

Fifty people will be randomly selected to take part in the Assembly. If you are selected to take part you will have the opportunity to meet with others who live in Romsey and the surrounding areas. You will hear from engaging expert speakers, and you will discuss the issues involved in small groups with facilitators making sure everyone's voice is heard. You do not need to have any prior knowledge of the topic – all the information you need will be provided during the day.

### **Who is funding the event, and who is running it?**

Test Valley Borough Council is one of only three authorities in the country to be selected to take part in the Innovation in Democracy Programme, a new government programme to trial new ways of involving residents in council decision-making. The programme is

supported and run by the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Two independent organisations are delivering the event:

- The **Sortition Foundation** promotes the use of randomly selected groups of people in decision-making. The Sortition Foundation is responsible for recruiting people to take part in the Assembly. The aim is to ensure the Assembly is broadly representative of Romsey and the surrounding community.  
[www.sortitionfoundation.org](http://www.sortitionfoundation.org)
- The **Democratic Society** ('Demsoc') is a UK-wide not-for-profit organisation that promotes participation and dialogue in democracy. Demsoc will run the Citizens' Assembly - facilitating the process by which the Assembly members learn, discuss, and come to recommendations about the topic. They will also compile the report on the outcomes of the Assembly. [www.demsoc.org](http://www.demsoc.org)

### **How will you ensure that the Assembly is accessible?**

If you are selected to take part we will give you lunch and refreshments during the Assembly and £300 to thank you for your time. We will also reimburse your travel costs and any caring expenses. The funding for this has been provided by the UK Government through the Innovation in Democracy Programme.

We will also ensure that the venue is fully wheelchair accessible, and if you require BSL interpretation or translation, hearing loops, or any form of additional support, then every attempt will be made to provide this. Please just let us know about your specific requirements.

### **I'm on benefits. Will this mean that I can't attend?**

If you are on benefits, it is your decision about whether or not to accept the thank-you gift as it may affect your benefits. We are happy to explore other options with you, such as providing the gift as vouchers – for example for your preferred supermarket. But even in this case your benefits may still be affected. You are welcome to attend the event without accepting the gift if you wish to do so. We can cover your food, drink and other expenses without it affecting your benefits.

### **How do I get to the event?**

All reasonable travel expenses to get to the event will be refunded, such as standard class bus fares, or car mileage (at 25p per mile) and parking costs. You will need to make your own travel arrangements.

We will give you information on how to claim your travel and other expenses if you are selected to take part. You can also let us know if you have any specific transport needs.

If you have any concerns about having the money to pay for expenses up front and then claim from us, please speak to us.

## **Who can apply?**

Everyone aged 16 and over, living in a household that has received this invitation, can register their interest, with a few exceptions set out below. However, please note that a maximum of one person from any single household will be selected to participate.

**The following people cannot apply:** Elected representatives from any level of government, or local authority staff working on transport or planning.

## **After I register my interest, what happens next?**

Once registration has closed, the Sortition Foundation will select 50 people at random, from those who registered their interest, to take part in the event. This random selection will be weighted to make sure that people from all walks of life are represented in the group.

If you are selected, we will contact you by phone and email on or around **Tuesday 15th October** to let you know. We will then arrange a call with you to explain transport arrangements, discuss any requirements you may have to make it possible for you to attend, and explain what happens next.

## **Where can I get more information?**

If you would like to talk to someone about the event before registering, please call the Freephone number below. For further queries about the South of Romsey Town Centre project, please find some Frequently Asked Questions at:  
<https://www.romseyfuture.org.uk/south-of-town-centre-faqs>

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[www.sortitionfoundation.org/rsvp](http://www.sortitionfoundation.org/rsvp)  
or call Freephone 0800 009 6486  
(9am-5.30pm, Monday-Saturday)  
before Monday 14th October**