

#### Introduction

This Investigation Areas Report provides further information and analysis to support the development of the new Structure Plan for Romsey. It builds on the previous, *Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Paper*, 2022 and the *Issues and Opportunities Paper*, 2018.

The Romsey Structure Plan will replace the current *Romsey Outline Development Plan, 2009* which sets directions for the town to 2021. The structure plan will determine the settlement boundary as required under the Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy. This will then provide the basis for a Protected Settlement Boundary to be determined through the structuring planning process that is aligned to section 46AV(2)(b) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

According to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme (MRPS), Romsey is a developing township and is anticipated to grow from a district town of  $\sim$  6,000 people to a large district town of around 10,000 people.

This report builds on the Emerging Options Paper providing a more detailed assessment of the four options explored in that Paper. The four options presented aimed to stimulate debate and discussion with the community and stakeholders. As the report noted, not all the land explored for potential expansion of the settlement boundary is required. This report provides a finer grain assessment of those growth options to enable the settlement boundary to be determined.

Seven investigation areas around the existing Romsey township have been assessed based on a set of ten criteria.

#### Criteria

These criteria to assess the settlement boundary options are derived from State Planning Policy and the Settlement Principles tested in the Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Paper, Feb 2022.

## Criteria 1: Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies

Existing Council policy in the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme identifies Romsey to grow from a district town to a large district town by 2036. Clause 21.13-4 provides direction on the town growth highlighting the need to protect areas to the immediate south and east of the town from encroachment by rural residential development. This is to safeguard the possibility of future expansion.

## Criteria 2: Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary

Avoid expansion that could result in leapfrogging of development and ensure that expansion of the settlement boundary forms a logical extension to the town.

## Criteria 3: Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land

The ability of land parcels to be developed. Smaller land parcels/multiple land owners make delivering good quality development more challenging.

## Criteria 4: Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre

Providing permeable and walkable links to access shops, schools and other services and community facilities within 400m of the Main Street is key to creating healthy, liveable neighbourhoods, economically successful businesses and encouraging active travel modes.

### Criteria 5: Impact of barriers to access

Barriers to access, such as major roads and watercourses, can inhibit the choice of routes and ease of movement. Having multiple entry and exit points to an area allows for efficient movement.

## Criteria 6: Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township

Limit impact on waterways such as Five Mile Creek and Deep Creek, significant remnant vegetation and areas with known high biodiversity values or topographical constraints. Enhance views of significant landscape areas and the rural setting of the town. Maintain and enhance the Aboriginal cultural, local and state heritage of Romsey.

### Criteria 7: Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards

Whether development minimises environmental hazards particularly risks to human life through bushfire. Consider the impact of flooding and the limitations/opportunities of the Romsey Water Treatment Plant buffers.

## Criteria 8: Ability to access utility services

The feasibility of supplying water, electricity and sewage services to new areas including existing capacity, upgrades and new infrastructure.

### Criteria 9: Maintain a rural break between settlements

Preservation of the rural landscapes between Romsey and Lancefield and other settlements including Macedon and Riddells Creek to maintain the rural break between settlements. Defining a township boundary will prevent land speculation and development pressure on these areas.

## Criteria 10: Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land

Reducing development on high quality agricultural land preserves valuable land within the peri-urban fringe of Melbourne and maximises economic opportunities for the town.

#### Assessment

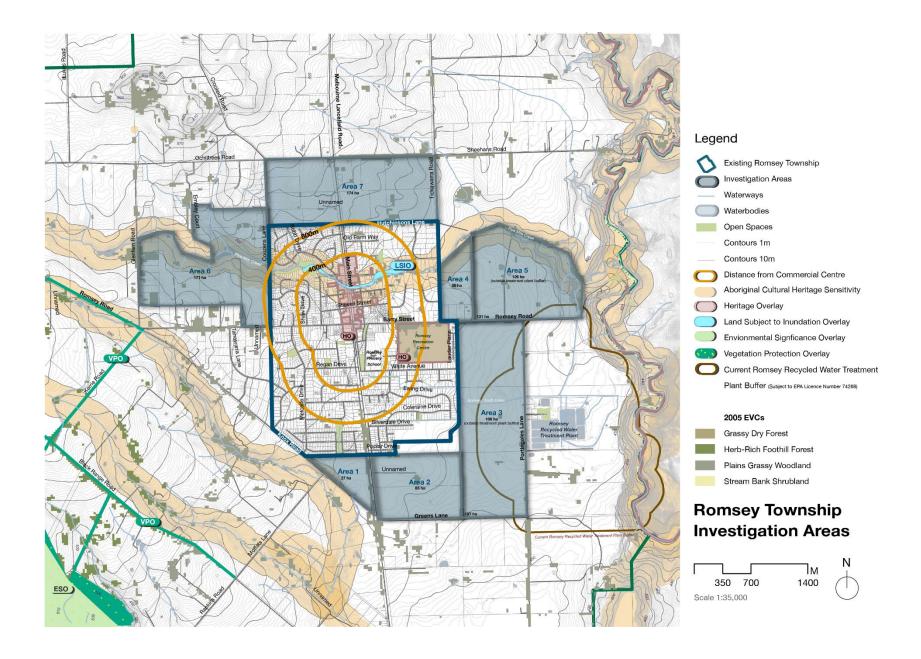
Each criteria will be ranked with the following score method:

1 = substantially meets criteria

0.5 = partially meets criteria

0 = does not meet criteria

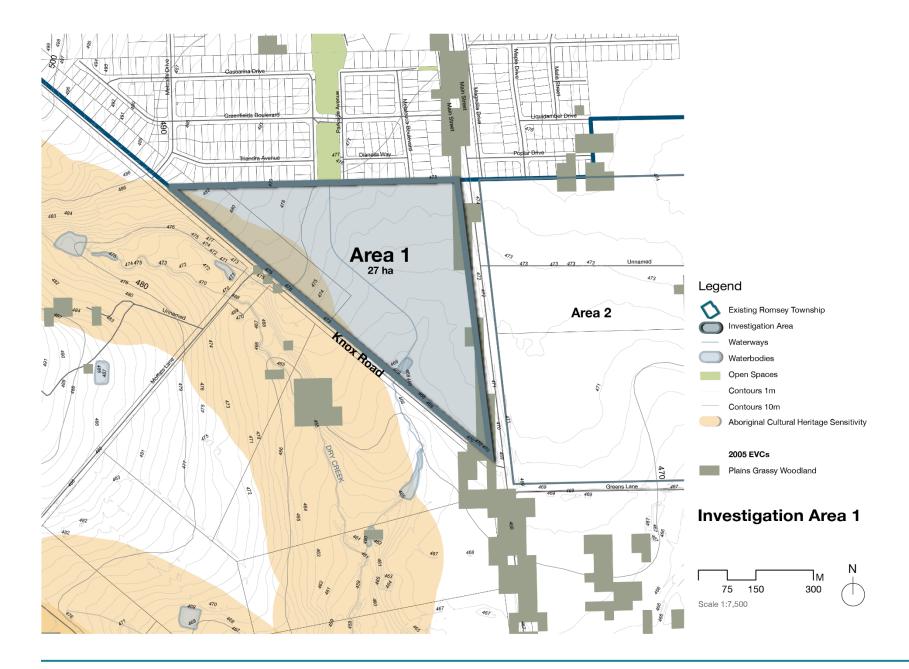
Based on the evidence and information contained in a range of background documents including the *Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Paper, 2022*, each investigation area has been assessed against the criteria. This assessment involved a range of qualitative and quantitative judgements. A score of 0 was applied if the investigation area was unable to meet the criteria. A score of 0.5 was applied for investigation areas where it was partially able to meet the criteria with evidence provided in the commentary. Those sites that substantially met the criteria were allocated a score of 1.



**Zone:** Rural Living Zone

Overlays: None

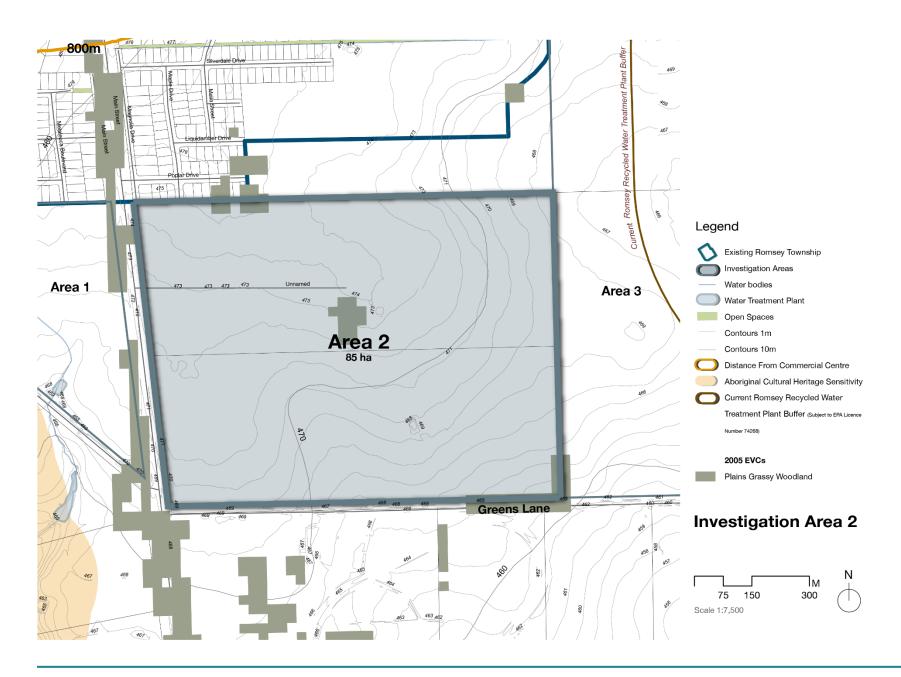
	Criteria	Assessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic	This area is consistent with existing policy to focus growth on the immediate southern edge of	1
	directions and policies	Romsey.	
2	Whether land adjoins the existing	Land adjoins existing township boundary to the north.	1
	town boundary		
3	Minimising land fragmentation	Land is minimally fragmented comprising of a single landowner reducing the challenges of facilitating	1
	and maximising developable land	development across multiple land owners	
4	Capacity to deliver walkable	The land falls outside of the 400 and 800 metre walk distance of the commercial centre. However, it	0.5
	access to shops, and services, and	is within reach of open space to the north (within Lomandra estate) and Dry Creek to the south,	
	emphasise the town centre	which provides amenity.	
5	Impact of barriers to access	Land is serviced by Melbourne-Lancefield Road on its eastern border and Knox Road on the diagonal	1
		edge. There are opportunities to integrate road connections to the existing residential area in the	
		north. There are limited barriers to access.	
6	Impact on the visual and	Analysis of aerial imagery displays that the area lacks vegetation and appears rural in character. A	1
	environmental setting of the	row of trees sparsely lines the main road.	
	township	There are no environmental overlays and NatureKit Strategic Biodiversity mapping shows likelihood	
		of moderate to low biodiversity in that area.	
		Dry Creek is located to its south. Development would need to be setback from the creek frontage.	
		This is site of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity which will trigger the development of a Cultural	
_		Heritage Management Plan if land is developed.	
7	Reduce the likelihood of	Performance assessment conducted as part of the Emerging Options Paper noted that land in the	1
	environmental hazards	South-East had a reduced bushfire risk to the town. In addition, there is no flooding risk directly	
		within the area itself but due to the close proximity of Dry Creek, flooding risk manifests close to its	
		boundary.	
8	Ability to access utility services	The Cardno technical report conducted as part of the Emerging Options Paper stated that significant	0.5
		upgrades to sewerage, water, gas and electricity were needed in order to facilitate further	
		development. It is understood that significant infrastructure has been installed as part of developing	
		'Lomandra' to the north particularly in relation to drainage ready to service this area.	
9	Maintain a rural break between	The site forms part of the entrance to Romsey from Riddells Creek and Lancefield and serves as a	1
	settlements	continuation of existing development within the boundary.	
10	Minimising impact on high quality	The land is not identified as having high agricultural value so its development would be unlikely to	1
	agricultural land	impact on agricultural land qualities.	
Total			9



**Zone:** Commercial 2 Zone, Industrial 1 Zone and Farming Zone

Overlays: DD019 AND DP013

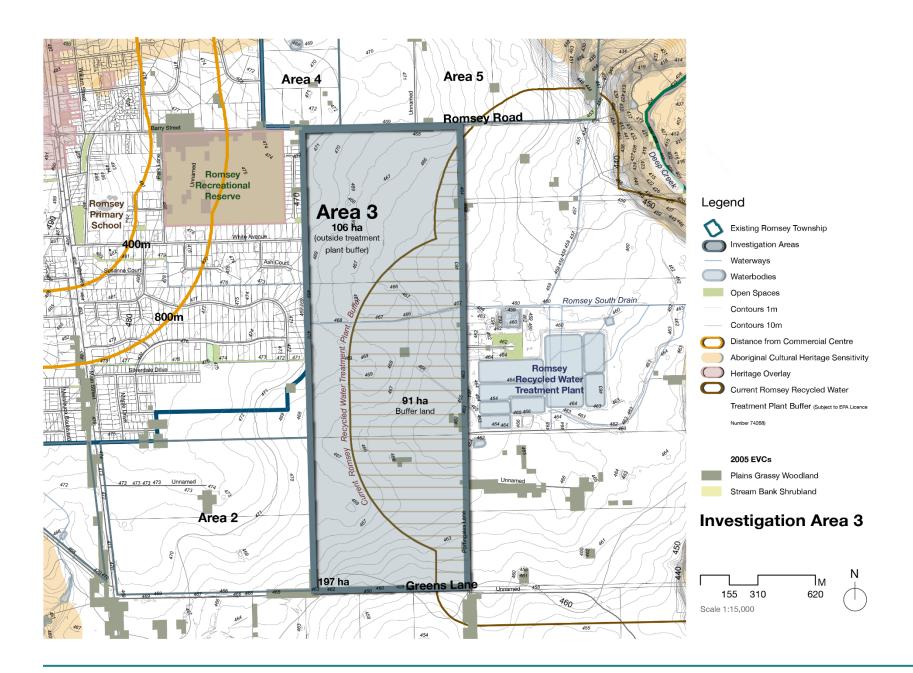
	Criteria	Asessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies	This area is consistent with existing policy to focus growth on the immediate southern edge of Romsey.	1
2	Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary	Land adjoins the existing township boundary to the north.	1
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	The land is minimally fragmented, comprising of a single landowner reducing the challenges of facilitating development across multiple land owners.	
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	The land falls outside of the 400 and 800 metre walk distance of the commercial centre but has direct access to the town centre along Melbourne-Lancefield Road.	0.5
5	Impact of barriers to access	Land is situated adjacent to Melbourne-Lancefield Road to its west and Greens Lane to its south. There are few barriers to access.	1
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	The land is characterised by relatively flat terrain compared to the north. There are no environmental overlays on the land and very little remnant vegetation. A row of exotic trees along Melbourne-Lancefield Road is the defining vegetation in the area, providing a visual barrier between the road and the land. Naturekit Strategic Biodiversity mapping shows a moderate to low biodiversity value.	1
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	Performance assessment conducted as part of the Emerging Options Paper noted that land in the South-East had a reduced bushfire risk to the town. The land is not identified as subject to flooding.	1
8	Ability to access utility services	The Cardno technical report conducted as part of the Emerging Options Paper stated that significant upgrades to sewerage, water, gas and electricity were needed in order to facilitate further development, however their location adjacent to existing infrastructure would make this more feasible.	0.5
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	The site forms part of the entrance to Romsey from Riddells Creek and Lancefield and serves as a continuation of existing development within the boundary.	0.5
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	The land is not identified as having high agricultural value so its development would be unlikely to impact on agricultural land qualities.	1
Total			8.5



**Zone:** Farming Zone

Overlays: None

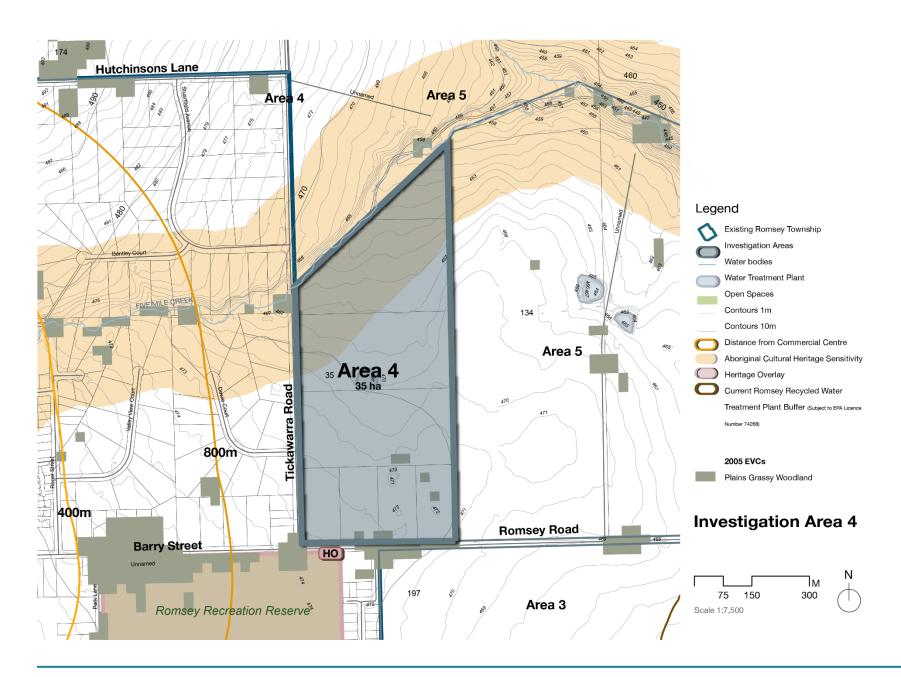
	Criteria	Asessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies	This area is consistent with existing policy to focus growth on the immediate eastern edge of Romsey.	1
2	Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary	The land adjoins the existing township boundary to its west.	1
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	There is minimal land fragmentation, comprising of only 2 land owners, reducing the challenges of facilitating development across multiple land owners.	1
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	The area lies outside the 400 and 800 metre walk distance to the town centre. However, it is within relatively close proximity to the Romsey Primary School and Recreational Reserve.	0.5
5	Impact of barriers to access	The land is impacted by the Romsey South Drain, which is partially protected by a row of trees. This effect can be seen in the back interfaces of properties along Ewing Drive and Coleraine Drive, which continues throughout the centre of the land area.  The presence of cul-de-sacs in the established area to its west would make improving connectivity challenging.	0.5
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	Land is of a predominantly rural character, with very little remnant vegetation according to the 2005 EVCs. Aerial imagery displays a lack of tree canopy, excluding the row of trees down its central region which serves to protect the Romsey South Drain. Despite this, the Naturekit Strategic Biodiversity mapping displays very high values (up to 95) in a small area within its central region and moderate values throughout the remainder of the land.	0.5
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	The land lies within close proximity of the Romsey Water Treatment Plant. An indicative buffer provided by the EPA disqualifies 91 hectares from the investigation area for urban development. While there was no high bushfire risk identified within the Emerging Options Paper, flooding risk was identified along the Romsey South Drain, which could limit development.	0.5
8	Ability to access utility services	The Cardno technical report conducted as part of the Emerging Options Paper stated that significant upgrades to sewerage, water, gas and electricity were needed in order to facilitate further development however their location adjacent to existing infrastructure would make this more feasible.	0.5
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	The Romsey Recycled Water Plant buffer would serve to form a logical visual differentiation from residential to rural between townships.	1
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	The land is not identified as having high agricultural value so its development would be unlikely to impact on agricultural land qualities.	1
Total			7.5



**Zone:** Rural Living Zone

Overlays: None

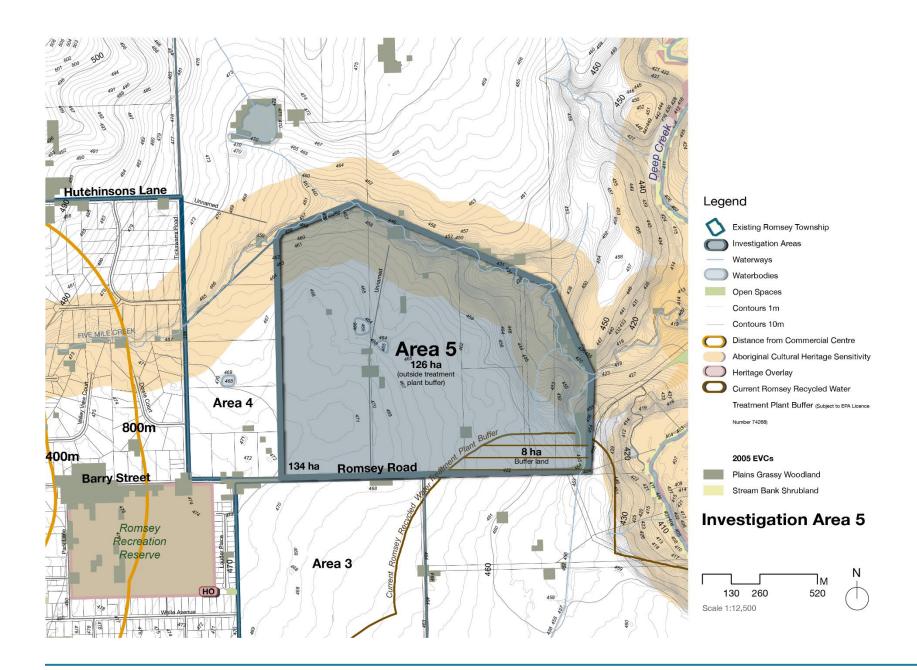
	Criteria	Assessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies	This area is consistent with existing policy to focus growth on the immediate eastern edge of Romsey.	1
2	Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary	Land adjoins the existing township boundary on its eastern edge.	1
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	The land is very fragmented, comprising of 7 landowners within 8 properties. The majority of land within this area has already been developed for rural residential living.	0
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	The land falls outside of the 400 and 800 metre walk distance to the town centre. It is however, almost directly adjacent to the Romsey Recreation Reserve and adjoins Five Mile Creek, providing amenity for residents.	0.5
5	Impact of barriers to access	Land is constrained by Five Mile Creek to its north. It lies on Romsey Road, which provides a linear connection to the town centre. However, the cul-de-sac nature of the land to its east will prevent any improvements to permeability and fractures any future internal connection to the town centre. Five Mile Creek does not currently provide pedestrian access but this is planned to be provided in future.	0.5
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	Land comprises large, expansive rural living blocks. There are significant rows of trees, which serve to delineate different properties.  There are no environmental overlays. There is minimal remanent vegetation left and the Naturekit Strategic Biodiversity mapping displays a moderate to low biodiversity ranking.  Five Mile Creek is located to the north. This is site of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity which will trigger the development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan if land is developed.	0.5
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	There is some flooding risk along the northern boundary of this area, due to the presence of the creek. Bushfire risk has also been identified.  There is a slight flooding and bushfire risk along the northern boundary of this area adjoining the creek.	0.5
8	Ability to access utility services	There is an absence of wastewater services and likely difficulties arising in providing sewerage in the future. The Cardno technical report conducted as part of the Emerging Options Paper stated that significant upgrades to sewerage, water, gas and electricity were needed in order to facilitate further development.	0.5
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	This area forms part of the entrance into Romsey via Romsey Road from Woodend and Wallan. The site does not diverge too far from the existing Romsey Township boundary.	1
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	The land is not identified as having high agricultural value but has existing value in terms of farming so its development could impact moderately on agricultural land qualities.	0.5
Total			6



**Zone:** Rural Living Zone

Overlays: DD019 AND DP013

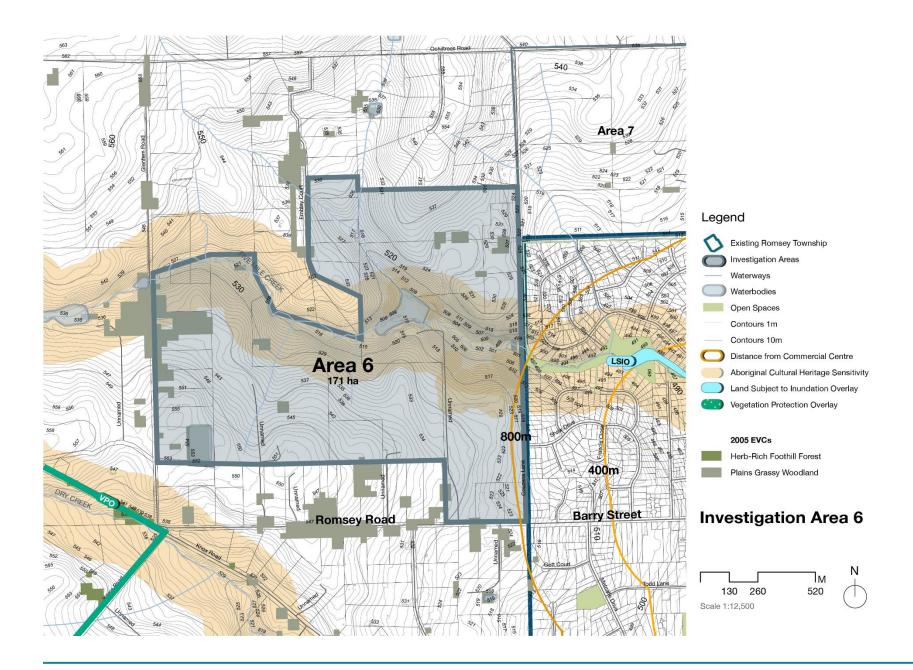
	Criteria	Assessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies	This area is consistent with existing policy to focus growth on the immediate eastern edge of Romsey.	1
2	Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary	Land does not adjoin the existing town boundary. This is the only investigation parcel that does not adjoin the existing township boundary.	0
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	Land ownership is fragmented in this investigation area, with five landowners total.	0.5
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	The area falls outside of the 400 and 800 metre walk distance to the town centre. It is within close proximity to Five Mile Creek which forms the northern boundary of the area. It is near the Romsey Recreation Reserve and adjoins Five Mile Creek, providing amenity for residents.	0.5
5	Impact of barriers to access	Five Mile Creek and Deep Creek provide a barrier to access concentrating access onto Romsey Road. Five Mile Creek does not currently provide pedestrian access but this is planned to be provided in future.	0
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	The area has an undulating landscape, with particular steepness near the creek areas. It comprises predominantly rural plains and rows of trees that serve as a visual indication of boundaries. Despite being home to Five Mile Creek, there is little remanent vegetation left in this area. According to the Naturekit Strategic Biodiversity mapping, the area exhibits moderate to low biodiversity.  The presence of Five Mile Creek and Deep Creek are areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity which will trigger a Cultural Heritage Management Plan if developed.	0.5
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	The Romsey Recycled Water Plant buffer slightly falls into the boundary of this area, removing 8 hectares of potential urban land for development from the area. There is a high likelihood of bushfire and flooding risk along the northern boundary, which incorporates a significant proportion of the area.	0.5
8	Ability to access utility services	There is an absence of wastewater services and likely difficulties arising in providing sewerage in the future.	0
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	This area forms part of the entrance into Romsey via Romsey Road from Woodend and Wallan.	0.5
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	The land is not identified as having high agricultural value but has existing value in terms of farming so its development could impact moderately on agricultural land qualities.	0.5
Total			4



**Zone:** Rural Living Zone 1 and Public Use Zone 1

Overlays: DDO7 and DPO8

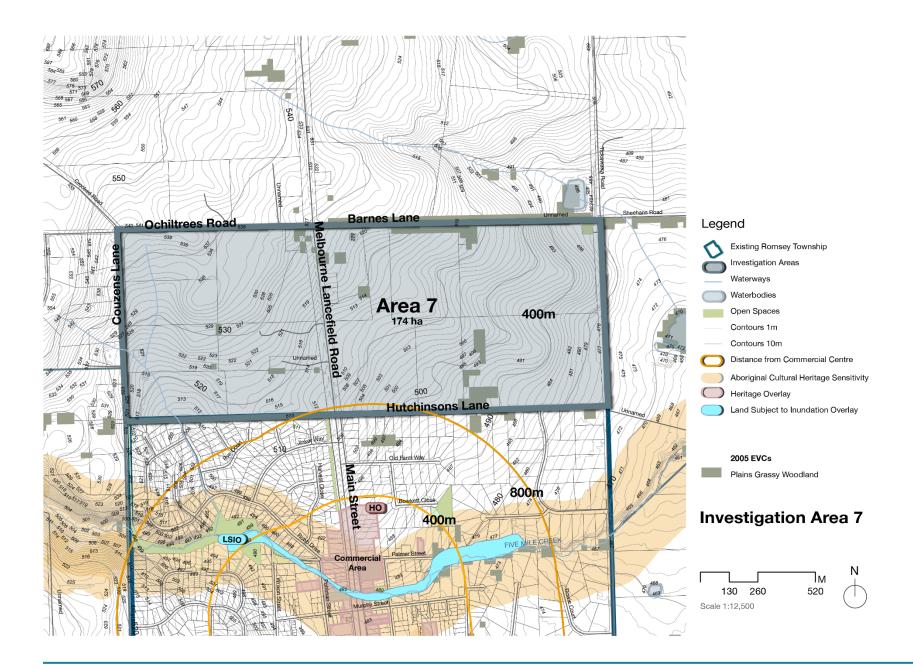
	Criteria	Assessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic	This area is inconsistent with local policy, contradicting policy efforts to focus growth to the east and	0
	directions and policies	south of the township.	
2	Whether land adjoins the existing	The land adjoins the existing town boundary on its east.	1
	town boundary		
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	This is an area with the highest volume of land fragmentation, with 27 parcels and 19 different landowners. There is an inconsistency with land parcel size and land use which could cause conflict between land owners. Land will be difficult to develop without significant consolidation of lots to achieve high quality urban outcomes.	0
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	A small amount of the 800 metre distance buffer falls into the area, however the majority of the area does not encompass this catchment.	0.5
5	Impact of barriers to access	The land is bound by Glenfern Road, Romsey Road and Couzens Lane. Aside from the following streets, there are few other access points. The nature of pre-existing development on the edge of the township boundary comprises cul-de-sacs and sealed exit points which restrict improvements to connectivity. Five Mile Creek also runs throughout the centre of the area, which serves as a natural barrier.	0
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	Land comprises developed rural living. Most recent aerial imagery (2021) displays a mix of residential uses and undeveloped rural plains. There are pockets of remanent vegetation present throughout and significant clusters of tree canopies, unlike other investigation areas. Dense rows of trees line the boundaries of properties. According to the Naturekit Strategic Biodiversity mapping, the area exhibits a moderate biodiversity rating. Five Mile Creek is located in the south of the area. This is site of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity which will trigger the development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan if land is developed.	0
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	This area has the high likelihood of flooding and bushfire risk, encompassing a large proportion of the area.	0
8	Ability to access utility services	According to the technical report conducted by Cardno, significant growth to the west of Romsey may not be appropriate, due to the distance from the water treatment plant. Significant augmentation would need to occur in order to facilitate growth.	0
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	Further intensification of development in this area would reduce the rural break between Romsey and Lancefield.	0
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	The land is identified as having high agricultural value but is currently used for rural living. Its development for urban purposes could impact significantly on agricultural land qualities.	0
otal			1.5



**Zone:** Rural Living Zone and Transport Zone 2

Overlays: DD07

	Criteria	Assessment	Score
1	Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies	This area located in the north is not consistent with policy to focus growth on the southern edge of Romsey.	0
2	Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary	The land adjoins the existing township boundary to its south.	1
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	The land is heavily fragmented with a total of 15 landowners for 19 lots. Lot sizes are varied, with uses ranging from vast rural plains to smaller residential sized plots.	0
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	The majority of the land falls outside the 800 metre catchment from the commercial centre.	0
5	Impact of barriers to access	The land is bound by four roads and bisected by Melbourne-Lancefield Road, which is the gateway to Lancefield and Riddells Creek. There are no major watercourses within the area, as Five Mile Creek falls outside its boundary. While Melbourne-Lancefield Rd acts as a good access point for both sides of the area, there are few chances of increasing permeability with the existing development on its southern border due to the presence of cul-de-sacs and closed access points.	0
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	Land comprises developed rural living. According to the 2005 EVCs, there are sparse amounts of remanent vegetation. Dense rows of trees are planted along the boundaries of residential properties. The Naturekit Strategic Biodiversity mapping displays a low to moderate biodiversity value within the area.  There are no environmental overlays or Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity in the area.	0
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	There are pockets of high bushfire risk within the area alongside a potential flooding risk, which could limit development.	0
8	Ability to access utility services	According to the technical report conducted by Cardno, significant growth to the west of Romsey may not be appropriate, due to the distance from the water treatment plant. Significant augmentation would need to occur in order to facilitate growth.	0
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	Further intensification of development in this area would reduce the rural break between Romsey and Lancefield.	0
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	The land is identified as having high agricultural value but is currently used for rural living. Its development for urban purposes could impact significantly on agricultural land qualities.	1
Total			2



### Conclusion

The table below provides an assessment of the seven investigation areas against the ten criteria. It highlights that the top three investigation areas are numbers 1, 2 and 3. These areas perform the best against the ten criteria.

Based on this assessment these areas should form the basis for the development of the structure plan. Investigation areas 6 and 7 performed poorly against the criteria and should be removed from any discussion about expansion opportunities. Areas 4 and 5 partially meet criteria for most categories, however have significant challenges that could make expansion into these areas more difficult.

**Table 1: Investigation Area Assessment Criteria Scoring** 

	Criteria			Investigation Area				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Consistency with existing strategic directions and policies	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
2	Whether land adjoins the existing town boundary	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
3	Minimising land fragmentation and maximising developable land	1	1	1	0	0.5	0	0
4	Capacity to deliver walkable access to shops, and services, and emphasise the town centre	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0
5	Impact of barriers to access	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0
6	Impact on the visual and environmental setting of the township	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0
7	Reduce the likelihood of environmental hazards	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0
8	Ability to access utility services	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	0
9	Maintain a rural break between settlements	1	0.5	1	1	0.5	0	0
10	Minimising impact on high quality agricultural land	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	1
Total		9	8.5	7.5	6	4	1.5	2

# **CONTACT**





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