

Examiner of the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan Examination

11 April 2023

Dear Examiner,

Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation Response

The following comments constitute Runnymede Borough Council's response (as the Local Planning Authority) to the Regulation 16 consultation on the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2030 (Submission Draft, January 2023) ('the Plan'). This response does not include any comments from the Council in its capacity as a landowner.

Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) is generally supportive of the principles put forward in the Plan, and appreciates the work invested by those involved in its preparation.

Basic Conditions

It is considered that a number of policies, as currently worded, do not meet the Basic Conditions. Full details are provided in Appendix 1. However, it is anticipated that a number of modifications could be made to the Plan in order for it to meet the Basic Conditions.

Other suggested changes/comments

Other comments that don't relate directly to the Basic Conditions are set out in Appendix 2 of this response. The Council considers that the suggested changes to policies/supporting text (including factual updates) will help to ensure consistency and robust decision-making at the development management stage. Comments made at Regulation 14 stage have been reiterated where it is considered they have not been fully addressed. The Council's response to the Regulation 14 consultation has been summarised at: <https://egvplan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Reg-16-RBC-Reg-14-response-.pdf>.

Strategic Development Plan Policies

A list of strategic Development Plan documents is presented in Appendix 3, for your information.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any clarification on the points raised.

Yours sincerely,



Stephanie Broadley | Senior Planning Policy Officer

E:stephanie.broadley@runnymede.gov.uk | T:01932 425273

Appendix 1 – RBC comments on the submitted Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the Basic Conditions

Where comments relate to the ‘basic conditions’, these are defined as:

- A) Having regard to national policy and guidance
- D) Contributing to the achievement of sustainable development
- E) General conformity with strategic policies contained in the development plan (see Appendix 3)
- F) Not breaching retained EU obligations; and
- G) Meeting prescribed conditions e.g. whether or not it has a significant effect on habitat sites.

Note that B) & C) are not referred to, as they only apply to Neighbourhood Development Orders.

Key: **Bold underlined** text for additions; ~~**bold strikethrough**~~ for deletion.

Policy / Para. No.	Suggestion / Basic Condition	Comment
Para. no. 8.10	D, E	Paragraph 8.10 sets out how, within the settlement boundary, development will be accepted for infill development, small-scale employment uses, and community facilities in principle. Suggest that this sentence is amended or removed as it is at odds with strategic policy in the 2030 Local Plan, including policy SL5 which allocates land at Blays House, Blays Lane for sustainable redevelopment which is not considered to constitute infill development, small-scale employment uses, or community facilities. The Council considers this to be too narrow a definition of ‘acceptable development’ within the settlement boundary and could hinder the achievement of other types of sustainable development.
Policy ND1	A, D, E	The current wording could be interpreted to mean that if all new development meets the criteria within the policy, it would be supported regardless of whether it meets other development plan requirements. Suggest the following modification: “New development, including housing, small scale commercial development and community facilities, will be supported on infill or redevelopment sites inside the settlement boundary (i.e. outside the Green Belt boundary) where there is no significant adverse impact on existing residential, employment and community uses, <u>and where the requirements of other relevant policies of the Development Plan are met.</u> ” This amendment would help ensure proposals contribute to achieving sustainable development.

Para. no. 8.20	E	<p>Suggest the following amendments to improve conformity with 2030 Local Plan site allocation policy: “...and includes criteria on boundary treatment, safeguarding biodiversity and <u>avoiding impacts on</u> the Thames Basin Special Area of Protection, <u>assessing impacts</u> on the listed building and its setting, <u>assessing impacts on the</u> road network and <u>improving the</u> pedestrian footway, <u>and making</u> financial contributions to <u>schooling infrastructure</u>, provision of open space, and <u>assessing</u> flood risk”.</p>
Policy ND3 and Masterplans document, p40 & p42	D, E	<p>The Council appreciates that changes have been made to this policy and the supporting text in response to our response to the Regulation 14 consultation. However, RBC would welcome the introduction of more flexibility in the policy wording itself to allow for variation in site layout and design pending the outcomes of various technical appraisals conducted in accordance with policy requirements of the 2030 Local Plan. For example, alternative design concepts may come forward based on detailed Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Assessment, habitat/species surveys, and landscape assessment, as required by policy SL5 of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan policy should recognise that the proposed design vision, concept and principles put forward in the Masterplans document reflect a very high-level site analysis.</p> <p>Page 40 of the Masterplans document which supports policy ND3 sets out how “it is not considered contextually appropriate for this site to meet outdoor sports facilities requirements in the Local Plan Policy SL26”. RBC suggests an amendment is made to make it clear that, whilst on-site provision may not be considered inappropriate, policy SL5 of the 2030 Local Plan (in accordance with policy SL26), would seek a financial contribution towards off-site outdoor sports facilities and allotments.</p> <p>The third bullet point of p42 of the Masterplans document, under ‘Masterplan layout’ refers to housing typologies which reflect guidance in the Design Codes, but RBC believes these codes have now been removed in response to comments made during Regulation 14 consultation. Housing typologies should therefore be considered in accordance with Policy SL19: Housing Mix and Size Requirements of the 2030 Local Plan, which states that, generally, a housing mix should be provided which reflects the needs identified in the Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment or similar evidence. Again, flexibility should be introduced to the policy to ensure that a suitable housing mix is considered in detail by future proposals, taking into account the Council’s latest housing needs evidence.</p> <p>The sixth bullet point of p42 of the Masterplans document, under ‘Masterplan layout’ refers to two car parking spaces being provided per property, in line with Neighbourhood Plan policy. Policy TT1 of</p>

		<p>the Plan sets out how parking should be provided in line with RBC's parking standards. These are contained in the Council's Parking Guidance SPD (adopted November 2022), and provision varies according to the unit size, as defined by number of bedrooms – generally from 1 space for studio/1/2-bed homes to 2 spaces for 3/4+ bed homes. The standards in the Council's parking guidance therefore differ to the principle that 'two car parking spaces are provided per property', as stated in the Masterplans document. Suggest that the calculations in the Masterplans document are amended to align with the Council's parking guidance, or removed in order to avoid confusion. If, as per policy ND3, proposals for development of the site will be supported where they are in accordance with the design principles set out in the Masterplans document, including on parking, yet the figures provided do not accord with the Council's parking guidance, as signposted in policy TT1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is unclear how a decision-maker should react to development proposals.</p>
<p>Policy ND4, para no. 8.29, and Masterplans document, p56, p57 & p60</p>	A	<p>With the Government's future planning policy proposals in mind, RBC suggests that the policy is amended to read "Development/redevelopment proposals for this site will be required to comply with <u>national</u> Green Belt policies of the NPPF and <u>those of</u> the Runnymede Local Plan".</p> <p>Similar to comments made above, RBC has concerns about the flexibility of the policy wording should detailed assessments conducted in response to 2030 Local Plan policy requirements conclude that a different quantum of development, design concept and design principles are more appropriate to achieve sustainable development.</p> <p>The second paragraph of p56 of the Masterplans document suggests that very special circumstances (VSC) should be demonstrated for any additional building footprint proposed. However, national and Local Plan policies on Green Belt do allow for e.g. limited infilling of previously developed land in the Green Belt providing there would be no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. There are therefore limited circumstances in which additional building footprint may be considered acceptable without VSC being demonstrated.</p> <p>Page 57 of the Masterplans document suggests that "It is important that no trees will be removed". This is inconsistent with the principles of the NPPF (and the Neighbourhood Plan's Design Codes) which seek to ensure that existing trees are retained <i>wherever possible</i>. Suggest amending this sentence to set out how the removal of significant or mature trees of good quality will be resisted. The Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD requires applicants to conduct a Green and Blue Infrastructure Audit to identify natural features – including mature trees – which could offer</p>

		<p>opportunities for retention and enhancement. Where there is potential risk of a proposed development harming a tree, applicants should seek specialist arboricultural advice to ensure compliance with legislation and planning policies (see para 4.2.11 of the GBI SPD).</p> <p>The second bullet point of p60 of the Masterplans document, under ‘Masterplan layout’ refers to housing typologies which reflect guidance in the Design Codes, but RBC believes these codes have now been removed in response to comments made during Regulation 14 consultation. Housing typologies should therefore be considered in accordance with Policy SL19: Housing Mix and Size Requirements of the 2030 Local Plan, which states that, generally, a housing mix should be provided which reflects the needs identified in the Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment or similar evidence. Again, flexibility should be introduced to the policy to ensure that a suitable housing mix is considered in detail by future proposals, taking into account the Council’s latest housing needs evidence.</p> <p>Whilst the indicative quantum of development shown on the masterplan concept for the Blays House site is similar to that required in the 2030 Local Plan site allocation (policy SL5); the quantum of development proposed on p60 of the Masterplans document for the Coopers Hill site does not appear to be based on any robust evidence base (particularly now the relevant sections of the Design Codes document have been removed in response to Regulation 14 consultation comments). The Council would therefore expect to see its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) be referenced as a starting point to determine an indicative quantum of development. The 2021 SHLAA indicates that the site (ID 404) could be suitable for approximately 161 units (gross), which differs significantly from the 84 units indicated in the Masterplans document. RBC would like to see the figure amended or removed as there is a lack of evidence underpinning it.</p> <p>Similar to comments made above, the tenth bullet point on p60 of the Masterplan, and in para no. 8.29 of the Neighbourhood Plan, refers to two car parking spaces provided per property. These calculations should be reconsidered in light of the Council’s adopted parking guidance. For example, the guidance suggests that only 1 parking space be provided for 1 and 2 bed homes, so the number of proposed parking spaces to serve the flats would need to be reduced in order for a decision-maker to consider the proposal in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan policy TT1.</p>
Policy ND5	A, E	Paragraph 190 of the NPPF highlights the desirability for new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. However, RBC believes the policy as worded sets

		<p>an unreasonable threshold against which planning applications should be determined as it requires all new development to enhance the Character Area in which it is situated. This sets a higher threshold than that of policy EE5 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan, which seeks to protect, conserve and <i>wherever possible</i> enhance the special interest, character and appearance of <i>Conservation Areas</i>. Suggest the following modification: “All new development <u>must should, wherever possible,</u> be designed to enhance the Character Area in which it is situated...”.</p> <p>The policy goes on to specify, in the last bullet point, that all new development must be designed to be well integrated with the community and facilities by reinforcing pedestrian connections and taking opportunities to provide new ones. It is unreasonable to require this of ‘all new development’ and RBC would suggest the policy is amended to provide clarity about what scale and type of development this refers to, taking into account the requirements of policy SD3 of the Local Plan. Policy SD3 sets out how the Council supports schemes and development proposals which enhance the accessibility and connectivity between people and places by active and sustainable forms of travel; and seek integration with, or the provision of new accessible, safe and active and sustainable travel networks. The policy requires development proposals “which generate significant traffic movements” to submit and implement Travel Plans demonstrating how active and sustainable travel options have been considered and how they will be delivered. It is considered that the proposed policy requirement is not in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan (Policy SD3 of the Local Plan) and it therefore contrary to Basic Condition E.</p>
Policy ND6	A, E	<p>The Council supports the intentions of the policy which seeks to reduce carbon emissions emitted by new development. However, the Government has set out its intentions to develop a Future Homes and Buildings Standard and policy requirements in policy ND6 to target net zero operational emissions would go beyond existing national Building Regulations standards, as well as Local Plan standards in policies SD7 and SD8. The NPPF expects local planning authorities when setting any local requirement for a building’s sustainability to do so in a way consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopted nationally described standards. Local requirements should also be based on robust and credible evidence and pay careful attention to viability¹. The Planning Practice Guidance goes on to state that energy performance standards for new housing of the adaptation of buildings to provide dwellings should be capped at the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes – this level has now been superseded by Part L of the Building Regulations which</p>

¹ Paragraph 009 Reference ID: 6-009-20150327 of the [Planning Practice Guidance](#).

		<p>came into effect in June 2022. However, the PPG states that these restrictions do not apply to non-housing developments.</p> <p>Policy ND6 does not distinguish between residential or non-residential development, and presumably encourages all new development to target net zero operational carbon emissions. Whilst the PPG and NPPF have not been updated to reflect the latest direction of travel with the Government's zero carbon homes policy, RBC believes that unless viability evidence is provided to support the inclusion of this policy requirement, the policy should be amended to suggest that net zero operational carbon emissions be targeted <i>where viable and feasible</i>. Net zero carbon operational energy would also be difficult to achieve without introducing a carbon offset mechanism to allow any remaining carbon to be offset (after reducing energy demand and consumption and increasing renewable energy supply as far as possible), using a recognised offsetting framework. Without further guidance in the supporting text, a decision-maker will have difficulty ensuring the principles in this policy are achieved effectively.</p> <p>The policy sets out how relevant information, including a number of measures, should be demonstrated via the Design and Access Statement accompanying a planning application. However, paragraph 8.42 recognises that Policy SD8 of the Local Plan requires the submission of an energy statement for major development proposals to demonstrate that energy efficiency and renewables have been considered. The policy should be amended to achieve consistency and certainty around what should be submitted with planning applications for minor/major development proposals to demonstrate that the policy requirements have been considered. In order to achieve general conformity with development plan policies (i.e. to meet Basic Condition E), suggest amending the proposed policy to provide clarity around what major and minor development proposals should submit, bearing in mind that a Design and Access Statement is not mandatory for all types of application (see section 6 of the Council's Validation Checklist).</p> <p>The third criterion of Policy ND6 refers to the installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and triple glazing. Although it is useful to understand which measures will be used to reduce carbon emissions in order to meet overarching targets in a planning policy (e.g. in line with the Energy Hierarchy as specified within policy SD8 of the Local Plan), this level of specification is a matter for Building Control and it is not clear how control would be exercised over this matter during the development management process. Therefore, it is considered this would be contrary to Basic</p>
--	--	--

		Condition A with regards to national policy as it is not clear how a decision-maker would react to development proposals (NPPF para. 16(d)).
Policy HE2 and supporting text	A, E	<p>The Council reiterates comments made at Regulation 14 consultation stage about this policy: some of the buildings identified as Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) should not qualify. Page 5 of the evidence base document ('A Survey of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in Englefield Green Forum Area' highlights eight criteria to assess potential assets, and if a building/object meets just two of these, it is included as a NDHA. RBC's concern here is that there has been no justification for the development / utilisation of these criteria which are quite vague (particularly criterion eight), without any further explanation as to how they work, or an example as to how they would be applied etc., and why meeting only two criteria is sufficient for it to be included in the NDHA list. In addition, some of them (e.g., criteria 1 and 8) could be applied to modern buildings, and do not specifically relate to the heritage value of a potential asset.</p> <p>There are also no references made to formal guidance such as the section of the PPG that relates to the Historic Environment². This states that: 'A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets'. The table setting out the NDHAs on p.6 of the Survey document lists a total of 290 individual buildings / assets (stemming from 147 entries), which is a large number for one settlement. This suggests that the PPG has not been sufficiently considered.</p> <p>Further, paragraph 40 of the PPG states: 'Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence'. This paragraph also links to Historic England Advice Note 7 (HEAN7: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage). HEAN7 states sets out on p.11 a table of commonly applied selection criteria used for assessing the suitability of assets for inclusion in a local heritage list. This includes the following categories: Asset type; Age; Rarity; Architectural and artistic interest; Group value; Archaeological value; Historic interest; and Landmark status.</p> <p>It should be noted that some / similar criteria to these have been used by EGNF, including:</p>

² For example, the part that [discusses NDHAs in detail](#) from Paragraph 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has architectural interest or quality (similar to bullet 4 above) 2. Is a landmark feature (similar to bullet 8 above) 3. Has a relationship with adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way 4. Individually, or as part of a group, should illustrate the development of the local area (similar to bullet 5 above) 5. Has significant historic associations with features such as a historic road layout, a park or a landscape feature (designed or natural) 6. Has historic associations with important people or past events (similar to bullet 7 above) 7. Reflects the traditional functional character or former uses of the area 8. Contributes positively to the character or appearance of the area <p>However, paragraph 38 of HEAN7 states that: ‘The national listing selection guides and supporting documents published by Historic England (dealing with listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and protected wreck sites) set out further information on the types of criteria that can be adapted to local heritage listing’. It does not appear that this guidance has been used in the process of drawing up the eight criteria used by EGNF, even as a starting point to collate a ‘long list’ of criteria that applies to lots of different types of heritage assets, and then distilling these down into a single set that can be used to assess a wide variety of potential NDHAs in Englefield Green.</p> <p>In addition to the above, having reviewed the proposed NDHAs, none of them have ‘scored’ below meeting at least three criteria. This raises concerns about how individual each of the criteria are, as there are no assets listed as scoring against only one or two, and thus it seems that if a building will meet one criterion, it will also ‘automatically’ meet at least another. There is also no evidence of any wider survey being undertaken which would include other potential assets being assessed but found to be unsuitable for designation etc. In effect, there does not appear to have been any kind of ‘sieving exercise’ where a ‘long list’ of potential assets have been assessed against the criteria, with some falling short of this, and then those that meet the threshold being put forward for potential designation as a NDHA. If the NF has done this, then evidencing this would be useful as it would show that a more careful assessment has been undertaken, as the current assessment seems to show that everything that has been assessed has been found to meet the criteria. This raises questions about the assessment process if everything (that appears to have been assessed) has ‘passed’ – this raises</p>
--	--	--

		<p>questions about the robustness of the assessment in meeting the high thresholds suggested by the PPG.</p> <p>For those that have passed, there are also examples where the proposed designation is questionable. One of these that has meet three of the criteria includes Yockley (entry 5.1 - see p.14 of the Survey, meeting criteria 1,4 and 8 as set out above). The description / justification for this is as follows: ‘Half-timbered brick cottage under tiled roof believed to have been built in the 1960’s but looks much older’. Having looked at the planning history for this site (Online Standard Details (runnymede.gov.uk)) it appears it was granted planning permission in 1955 and thus it is highly questionable whether this property has historic significance to the point that it warrants designation as a NDHA.</p> <p>A second example of this would be entry 18.15 - Former site of Pentlands. The description / justification for this is: ‘The former property, Pentlands, was demolished in 1970 and four large neo-Georgian houses were built as a group on the site. One of them retains the name’. The fact that a previous property was demolished, and four homes built in the 1970s on that site, with one of them retaining the previous name, does not (in the opinion of RBC officers) meet the threshold of having ‘enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage asset’.</p> <p>The lack of detailed research into a number of potential assets, and the Forum’s own (often limited) assessment that takes the view (in the above cases) that these modern buildings have sufficiently high heritage value to be listed as NDHAs gives the impression that the presumption has been to add virtually (if not) all buildings / structures etc. into the list, as opposed to taking a more nuanced and selective approach as required by the PPG. This therefore suggests that the approach taken has not been ‘based on sound evidence’, and the NDHA list includes buildings with ‘little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets’. There are numerous other entries in the Survey that seem to fit this same / a similar approach (e.g., a lack of sound, heritage related reasons as well and little to no detail / justification for the potential assets inclusion in the list of NDHAs), and includes (inter alia):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakeham Cottage (entry 5.2); • Alderwood (entry 5.4); • Hartwood House (entry 6.3); • The Lurels and The Homestead (entry 6.4);
--	--	---

- Paxton Villas (entry 9.1);
- Nos 25-31 Bond Street (entry 9.2);
- Nos 97 & 99 Bond Street (entry 9.3);
- North Royd (entry 11.2);
- The Old Cowsheds, Cowman's Cottage and Middle Cottage (entry 13.1);
- Nos 52-58 Harvest Road (entry 15.7)
- Nos 10 & 11 Middle Hill (entry 18.2)
- Lairg House (entry 18.6)
- Hillside Cottage (entry 18.10)
- Mayside Next to Lancaster Close (entry 18.11)
- Moss Lea & Park View No (entry 19.5)
- Roselea (entry 19.6)
- Lewington Villas (entry 19.7)
- Nos 1 -12 Northcroft Villas (entry 20.1)
- Benalder and Glenfeshie (entry 22.1)
- Greenacre (entry 25.5)
- Frivolous Spender "Emporium of lovely things" (entry 27.2)
- Wick Cottage (entry 28.8)
- Transvaal Cottages (entry 29.2)

The above are just a few selected entries that lack a proper justification for their inclusion in the list, and this is not an exhaustive account of those proposed entries that may not justify designation as NDHAs. Others that scored against more than three criteria seem to have (in some cases) a lack of justification / detail as to why they should be NDHAs. The concern arising from this is that if all of these are designated as NDHAs, then it will 'devalue the currency' of the designation rendering it less meaningful. This would then affect those assets which are worthy of designation but including them in the same category as those which do not.

Overall, it appears that despite there being formal guidance available, this has not been fully accounted for, and when this is combined with a series of vague criteria, a low threshold to meet for inclusion in the list and often little justification for some proposed designations, this has resulted in a large number of buildings / structures / groups of buildings etc being included that may not warrant

		<p>being designed as a NDHA. It is therefore recommended that the EGNF undertakes a more thorough review of the potential NDHAs and thus produces a revised list of assets to be listed. This would ideally include setting out a more detailed methodology, the full list of assets reviewed with more detailed assessments for each one, and recording which ones should and should not be included as a NDHAs in the EGNP. In its current form, RBC cannot support the approach taken, or the large number of assets proposed to be designated as this does not appear to be following the PPG and other guidance in relation to heritage designations.</p>
Policy NE1, para. nos. 11.8-11.10	A	<p>The supporting text does not define ‘minor extensions’. It is considered this would be contrary to Basic Condition A with regards to national policy as it is not clearly written and unambiguous (NPPF para. 16(d)).</p> <p>The proposed policy requires delivery of offset green and blue infrastructure to be within the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Area. It is not clear how a decision-maker would react to development proposals as set out by para.16(d) of the NPPF as a detailed mechanism for securing delivery of offset green and blue infrastructure has not been provided. The supporting text suggests that any compensation habitats or participation in other green and blue infrastructure schemes should be on sites/initiatives within the Neighbourhood Area, but further clarity is required as to how this would work in practice. RBC is concerned that this approach may exclude sites with good green and blue infrastructure potential which are situated outside or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Area boundary – and the catchment areas of these spaces may still extend into the Neighbourhood Area and thus serve the local community within it.</p> <p>RBC reiterates its comments made at Regulation 14 consultation stage in relation to this policy, including that paragraphs 11.8-11.10 seem to set policy requirements, but are not within the policy itself. The Biodiversity Report does not provide sufficient guidance on the offsetting mechanisms to allow a decision-maker to ensure the policy requirements are implemented effectively.</p>
Policy NE2	A, E	<p>The proposed requirement that new development (where relevant) will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites is considered to be unreasonable, and is not in general conformity with existing requirements in the development plan. Policy EE9 provides protection for important habitats in the Borough; and policy EE11 seeks to protect significant trees and avoid habitat fragmentation, but the policies of the Local Plan do not set a threshold that all existing natural features of a site be protected and enhanced. It is also unclear which “new development” is relevant. Suggest amending the policy and supporting text to accord better with the principles identified in the</p>

		<p>Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (GBI SPD), and amending the supporting text to provide clarity about what type of development the requirements relate to.</p> <p>Similarly, the policy suggests that all new development ("where relevant") will be required to provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This is impractical as development proposals include small-scale proposals such as change of use or advertisement consents. Suggest modifying the wording to better define what types of relevant development will be required to provide both BNG and ecological buffers. It is considered that as worded, this policy would be contrary to Basic condition A with regards to national policy as it is not clearly written and unambiguous (NPPF para. 16(d)).</p> <p>RBC reiterates comments made at Regulation 14 consultation stage and continues to believe that a blanket 15m buffer for the protection of all statutory and non-statutory designated sites and other important habitats is unreasonable. Even the underlying Biodiversity Report states that the exact size of a buffer should reflect the habitat being impacted and its location within the landscape (para 5.3.28). Rather than setting an arbitrary 15m requirement, RBC is of the view that the use of an appropriate extent of undeveloped buffer zone should be considered through ecological assessment and presented in Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategies and masterplans submitted with planning applications (proportionate to the scale and nature of development proposed), as advised in the Council's GBI SPD. This is inferred in para. no. 11.16, but not reflected in the policy itself. RBC also consider it unreasonable that all developers (e.g. of householder proposals) appoint an ecologist to assess the impact of the development on ecological receptors. Para. no. 11.16 should be amended to define the type and scale of development to which this applies.</p> <p>RBC stands by its comments made at Regulation 14 consultation stage regarding the lack of viability evidence supporting a 20% BNG requirement. The NPPF (para 34) and supporting PPG (para 001) are clear that policy requirements should be informed by evidence of infrastructure need and a proportionate assessment of viability that takes into account all relevant policies, and local and national standards, including the cost implications of CIL.</p>
Policy NE3	A, E	<p>The aspirations of the policy are supported but RBC is concerned about the practicality of implementing the requirements. Strategic Local Plan policies require development proposals to consider the impact on existing trees and to include measures to enhance their role through retention, additional or replacement planting (paras 7.5, 7.64), but Policy NE3 introduces very prescriptive requirements which go beyond Local Plan requirements and those of the NPPF. Para 131</p>

		<p>of the NPPF seeks to ensure existing trees are retained <i>wherever possible</i>; and para 180(c) confirms that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside of ancient woodland.</p> <p>The prescriptive nature of the 3:1 ratio for all development sites would be unwise to be applied generally, and could place limitations on making effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses (para 119 of the NPPF). The policy should introduce caveats where a ratio of 3:1 is not feasible and, if it retained, better define which type of development proposals to which the requirement applies (e.g. major development proposals only). RBC's preference is for this requirement to be applied on a case-by-case basis: the Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD recommends that site-specific arboricultural impact assessments / surveys should be relied upon to determine the most appropriate approach on a case-by-case basis. Policy NE3 or its supporting text should provide clarity on what needs to be submitted with a planning application to demonstrate requirements have been achieved.</p> <p>The final sentence of the policy refers to two new trees being planted for "each dwelling". This needs to be defined more clearly – presumably it refers to each new dwelling as per para. no. 11.19? Where additional tree planting is proposed, this should be evidenced in a landscaping plan/strategy appropriate to the scale of development.</p>
Policy CF1	E	<p>As written, the policy suggests that "proposals to improve the viability of a community facility by way of the extension or partial replacement or redevelopment of buildings, structures and land, will be supported" as long as a limited number of criteria are met. It does not take into account other policy requirements which should be met in order to be supported. In order to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, suggest an amendment as follows: "...will be supported, provided the design of the scheme and any increased use respects the village character in general, and will not have negative impact on the amenities of adjoining residents properties, <u>and where the requirements of other relevant policies of the Development Plan are met.</u>"</p>
Policy I1	A	<p>Paragraph 20 of the NPPF sets out how strategic policies should make sufficient provision for various types of infrastructure, which is implemented by Policy SD5 of the Local Plan. Policy IE1 sets out how development proposals must provide for the timely delivery of essential infrastructure needs arising from the scheme. This is slightly at odds with Policy SD5 which sets out how development proposals which give rise to a need for infrastructure improvements will be expected to mitigate their impact, whether individually or cumulatively, and at a rate and scale to meet the needs that arise from that</p>

		development or a phase of that development. Policy SD5 also sets out how development proposals which rely on the delivery of critical infrastructure projects (as defined in the Infrastructure Delivery & Prioritisation SPD) will only be permitted prior to completion of that project or where appropriate, a phase of that project which has been identified as necessary, where the council is content that the infrastructure or phase of that infrastructure will be in place within a reasonable timetable from the date of permission. RBC believes that policy SD5 clearly sets out the parameters for infrastructure provision and timing, whereas Policy I1 does not define how the “timely delivery” of essential infrastructure will be managed. The term “essential infrastructure” should also align with the definitions used in the Infrastructure Delivery & Prioritisation SPD to avoid confusion.
Policy TT3	A	<p>Policy refers to ‘New development’ which suggests that all development proposals should include measures that keep traffic speeds low and improve the provision of pavements and access for pedestrians and cyclists and horseriders. This is impractical as development proposals include small scale proposals such as change of use or advertisement contents. Wording should be modified so only relevant development will be required to include these measures, where a Transport Assessment and/or Transport Statement and/or Travel Plan has assessed the impacts of the proposal and highlighted the need for such mitigation measures (in accordance with Local Plan policies SD3 and SD4).</p> <p>It is considered this policy would be contrary to Basic Condition A with regards to national policy as it is not clearly written and unambiguous (NPPF para. 16(d)).</p>
Policy RHUL1	D	As per comments submitted at Regulation 14 consultation stage, the Council would suggest that the language in the first paragraph is improved to provide a positive framework for sustainable development, in conformity with national and Local Plan policy, rather than referring to the resistance of RHUL development proposals in any other part of the Neighbourhood Area.
Masterplans document, p22 and Design Codes document, p16	E	It is incorrect to say that ‘no development is permitted within 400m of the SPA’. Policy EE10 of the 2030 Local Plan states that within 400m of the boundary of the SPA, no additional residential development will be permitted. However, it goes on to say that non-residential development may be permitted subject to the findings of an Appropriate Assessment. Suggest amending the sentence to “No additional residential development is permitted within 400m of the SPA”.

Appendix 2 – RBC comments not relating to Basic Conditions

Key: **Bold underlined** text for additions; ~~**bold strikethrough**~~ for deletion.

Policy / Para. No.	Suggestion	Comment
Para. no. 2.4	Clarification / amendment	Provide further clarity as to the true extent of the Development Plan for Runnymede i.e. amend the paragraph to signpost those documents referred to in Appendix 3 below, in addition to the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan.
Para. no. 2.6	Clarification / amendment	In order to provide clarity for applicants, include a reference to the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan Policies Map, which illustrates the Minerals Safeguarding Area designation referred to in this paragraph.
Para. no. 3.13	Suggestion	RBC in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC) has been updating its guidance on the Englefield Green Conservation Area (EGCA). AS part of this work, SCC has prepared a draft Englefield Green Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). The Council is currently consulting on the draft CAA with the local community, before formal public consultation on the CAA takes place later this year. It would be useful to highlight in this paragraph that the existing EGCA is currently subject to appraisal and may be revised in the near future subject to the outcome of the CAA.
Policy ND2	Suggestion	This policy duplicates existing policy in both the 2030 Local Plan (policy SL20 on Affordable Housing, supported by the Council's Interim Policy Statement on First Homes) and the NPPF, and the Council does not believe it is necessary or adds any additional level of detail. Suggest policy is deleted.
Para. nos. 8.18-8.21, Policy ND3, Masterplans Document	Clarification / amendment	<p>For consistency, it is suggested that all references to the 'Blays Lane (Wick Road) Site' be amended to align with the name of the site quoted in the 2030 Local Plan i.e. 'Blays House, Blays Lane', to avoid confusion.</p> <p>Paragraph 8.21 states that "Applicants will need to prepare full technical appraisals and will be expected to broadly align with the design principles set out". It is not clear to which design principles this sentence refers. Presumably it should reflect the same sentence in the Masterplans document on p40 which sets out how applicants will be expected to broadly align with the design principles set out on p40 onwards of the Masterplans document. Suggest amending this sentence to provide clarity to read: "Applicants will need to prepare full technical appraisals <u>in accordance with policy requirements in the 2030 Local Plan, including those of policy SL5,</u> and will be expected to broadly align with the</p>

		design principles set out <u>in the Masterplans and Design Codes documents pending the outcome of these appraisals</u> ".
Para. nos. 8.36-8.38 and Policies Map Inset 2	Clarification / amendment	<p>This paragraph refers to the Urban Area Design Code Zone, but the Design Code document has been amended to refer to the Built Up Area Design Code Zone in response to concerns regarding conflicts with the Local Plan's designated Urban Area. At Regulation 14 consultation stage, the Council identified a conflict between the extent of the proposed Design Code Urban Area and that of the Local Plan designated Urban Area – specifically, the 'North Edge Character Area' crept into land designated as Green Belt, and was not therefore considered to be defined as 'Urban Area'. To avoid confusion, the Design Code has now been amended to refer to the Built Up Area, but references in the Neighbourhood Plan to the Urban Area Design Code Zone also need to be amended to reflect this change. The key of the Policies Map Inset 2 also needs to be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Para. no. 8.38 refers to a table at Annex C, but there does not appear to be a table within Annex C.</p>
Policy ND5 and Design Codes document p6	Clarification / amendment	The Design Code document has been amended on p6 in response to the Council's comments to set out how not all types of development proposal will be able to apply all design code principles, but they should refer to those principles that are achievable and are relevant. RBC would like to see this reiterated in Policy ND5 and/or its supporting text to ensure that, for example, a minor household proposal would not be expected to provide a written statement addressing all 18 Built Up Area Design Codes, but rather concentrate on e.g. Design Code HO.05 Housing, which refers to extensions (on p52). This would provide additional clarity for applicants.
Policy C1	Suggestion and clarification / amendment	Suggest moving Policy C1 up the page to sit under paragraph 9.4, before supporting text on 'Views' begins. RBC would signpost its response at Regulation 14 consultation stage in that the policy and its supporting text do not differentiate between different forms of new development which are expected to provide visualisations and plans to demonstrate impacts on designated views, and that this would potentially be an onerous requirement for householder and minor development schemes.
Policy ES2	Clarification	RBC reiterates comments made at Regulation 14 consultation stage, and would welcome further clarity on how applicants can calculate and demonstrate the percentage of units remaining in Use Class E – would each applicant for commercial proposals be required to undertake an up-to-date survey of existing uses within the Local Centre Boundary, or will information be provided on the Forum's website and updated periodically, for applicants to access?
Para. no. 10.4	Suggestion	Suggest the supporting text is amended to read: "It covers the extent of the Green and neighbouring areas. It has been reviewed by RBC in 2021, <u>and a Conservation Area Appraisal has been drafted which proposes various changes to the Conservation Area</u> and the resulting assessment has not yet

		<u>been published. The following policy applies to new development within or affecting the setting of the future, revised Conservation Area”.</u>
Policy NE1	Clarification / amendment	The policy refers to ‘minor extensions’ but the supporting text does not define what constitutes a minor extension. Further clarification should be provided in the supporting text, or the policy should be amended to provide more certainty.
Para. no. 15.10	Clarification / amendment	Suggest the second sentence is amended to read: “RBC will be producing up to date <u>has adopted</u> parking standards in a new Supplementary Planning Document in due course , <u>available at: https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/planning-policy/preparation-supplementary-planning-documents/7</u> ”.
Policy TT1	Clarification / amendment	Instead of repeating SCC’s EV standards for new housing development, suggest amendment as follows: “Electric charging points for cars should be incorporated in new housing development <u>in accordance with Surrey County Council Vehicular and Cycle Parking Guidance, as reproduced in Runnymede Borough Council’s Parking Guidance SPD providing 1 socket for each dwelling</u> ”. This policy requirement duplicates that in the adopted Local Plan, so this part of the policy could alternatively be deleted.
Policy TT2	Clarification / amendment	The Council reiterates comments made in relation to this policy at Regulation 14 consultation stage. Further evidence needs to be provided on design and cost factors in providing adaptable space and access for storing and charging mobility aids. The size, access and storage requirements for bicycles are considered to be materially different from that of powered mobility scooters. If this evidence is cited, clarity also needs to be provided on standards for different types of development – it is anticipated that sheltered/supported/specialist older persons housing units might demand higher standards than C3 market housing units, for example. Any requirement for ancillary structures for mobility aids could link back to the requirement in Policy SD7 which requires a proportion of major residential schemes to deliver wheelchair adaptable and wheelchair accessible units.
Masterplans document and Design Codes document (throughout)	Suggestion	References to the ‘NF Area’ should be amended to read ‘Neighbourhood Area’, to be consistent with references in the Neighbourhood Plan, the designation in the 2030 Local Plan Policies Map, and the official name given to the Area as defined by Regulations.
Masterplans document, p10	Clarification / amendment	Reference to the 2025-2040 Local Plan should be amended to refer instead to the revised, or next iteration of the Local Plan, as the 2025-2040 plan period is now uncertain. The revised Local Plan is likely to go beyond 2040.

Masterplans document, p31 & p32	Clarification / amendment	<p>The document states that the site is allocated for housing development in the RBC Local Plan and ‘will be removed from the Green Belt as part of the site allocation’. Suggest amending this sentence to indicate land has already been released from the Green Belt upon adoption of the Local Plan. This is also referred to on p32, under ‘Natural features’.</p> <p>The final paragraph of Policy SL5 has been omitted, but this is an important policy requirement which should be included for completeness (i.e. addressing potential flood risk issues).</p>
Masterplans document, p42	Clarification / amendment	<p>The second bullet point under ‘Masterplan layout’ refers to ensuring the Locally Listed Park House and its setting is maintained and enhanced (not extended) in line with Policy SL5. An amendment to this sentence was made in response to the Council’s Regulation 14 representation. However, RBC believes its comments were misunderstood. There may be scope to extend the listed building if it can be demonstrated that this would accord with the heritage policies of the Local Plan. Suggest deleting “(not extended)”.</p>

Appendix 3 – Development Plan Documents

In Runnymede, a number of policy documents are used to guide the location and other aspects of future development. The policies in these documents are important in deciding planning applications. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that decisions are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Regional Policy

The South East Plan was partially revoked on 25th March 2013. [Policy NRM6](#) that deals with the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area remains in place.

Local Policy

This comprises the following plans:

- [2030 Local Plan \(16 July 2020\)](#) - A high level document containing the Council's long-term aspirations for the Borough, and policies to guide and manage development in Runnymede until 2030. A range of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been produced to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies of the Local Plan, and these are available at: [Supplementary Planning documents and other guidance – Runnymede Borough Council](#).
- [The 2030 Local Plan Policies Map](#) - Shows 2030 Local Plan designations, including sites allocated for development.
- [Surrey County Council's Minerals and Waste Development Framework](#) – a portfolio of plans and related documents that provide the blueprint for future mineral extraction and waste management in Surrey. The Framework comprises the following adopted Plans:
 - Surrey Waste Local Plan 2019-2033
 - Surrey Minerals Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011
 - Surrey Minerals Plan Primary Aggregates DPD
 - Surrey Minerals Plan Minerals Site Restoration SPD
 - Aggregates Recycling Joint DPD for the Minerals and Waste Plans 2013

It should be noted that Surrey County Council is preparing a [new Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#) for Surrey which will replace the existing Surrey Minerals Plan 2011 and the Surrey Waste Local Plan. The issues and options public consultation was completed in March 2022, and a preferred options consultation on the 'Regulation 18 Draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan' is due to take place in June 2023.