

General Information on Town and Country Planning and Neighbourhood Planning

The Planning System

- 1.1. The planning system manages the use and development of land and buildings. There are two main parts to the planning system.
 - Plan making – setting out the policies to guide development over time;
 - Determining planning applications – decisions on whether or not a proposed development should receive planning permission.
- 1.2. Not all development requires planning permission as some building operations, such as small extensions to the rear of residents' properties, or some changes of use, are covered by permitted development rights. For development proposals in Runnymede that do require planning permission Runnymede Borough Council are responsible for deciding whether development should go ahead. Decisions on planning applications are based on national planning policy and the statutory development plan (The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan, South East Plan Policy NRM6, Surrey County Council Minerals and Waste Plans and any made neighbourhood plans).

National Planning Policy

- 1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, both in terms of plan making and determining planning applications. It makes clear 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The NPPF can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>. It is supported by associated planning practice guidance on a range of topics, which can be viewed at www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance.

Development Plan

- 1.4 Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In Runnymede the development plan is comprised of:

South East Plan Adopted 2009 – Policy NMR6 relating to new residential development near the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) and as such still forms part of the Development Plan for Runnymede.

Surrey County Council Minerals and Waste Plans provide up to date minerals and waste planning policies. These policies can be found at www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/minerals-and-waste.

Runnymede 2030 Local Plan – adopted in July 2020, this sets out planning strategy for growth to meet the social and economic needs of the Borough’s communities while identifying development sites and providing detailed policies on a range of matters Green Belt land, affordable housing, flood risk, biodiversity, nature conservation and heritage assets. Available here:

<https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/planning-policy/runnymede-2030-local-plan>.

Once ‘made’, neighbourhood plans will also form part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area they relate to.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.5. Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and gives new rights and powers to help local communities shape new development in their local area. It enables communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and develop local policies for determining planning applications.
- 1.6. Neighbourhood plans can be prepared by neighbourhood forums. The local community can decide what to include in a neighbourhood plan, but it must meet the following ‘basic conditions’. It must:
 - have regard to national planning policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local; and
 - be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.
- 1.7. In accordance with the NPPF, neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan (in the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan) or undermine its strategic policies.
- 1.8. There is a statutory process for making a neighbourhood plan. The boundary of the neighbourhood area to which any neighbourhood plan relates must be designated by the Council, there can only be one neighbourhood plan for each neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood plan must also set out what time period it will apply for.
- 1.9. The draft neighbourhood plan must be prepared through a process of consultation with local businesses and residents. The final draft of the plan must also be consulted on for a period of 6 weeks - interested parties are given the opportunity to submit representations on it. An independent examiner reviews these representations and checks whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other requirements as set out in the recommendations. The examiner issues a report which explains whether any modifications should be made on the on the plan and whether it should proceed to referendum.
- 1.10. Runnymede Borough Council then decides, as directed by the regulations on neighbourhood planning, whether to accept the examiner recommendations and proceed to referendum. If the neighbourhood plan proceeds to referendum, the council is responsible for organising the referendum. The referendum will determine whether the council should use the neighbourhood plan for the area concerned to help decide planning applications. All those registered to vote in the

election of councillors within the neighbourhood area are entitled to vote in the referendum.

- 1.11 If more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan the council must 'make' i.e. adopt the neighbourhood plan, as soon as reasonably practical.
- 1.12 Once the neighbourhood plan has been approved at referendum, it will be part of the statutory development plan and will be used by the council in determining decisions on planning applications.