

Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Information Statement

1. Purpose of this information statement

A referendum on the Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan will be held on the 6 May 2021. This statement provides information on the referendum that is taking place and how to take part in it.

2. What are Neighbourhood Plans?

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.

In Runnymede, neighbourhood plans are prepared by neighbourhood forums. The local community can decide what to include in a neighbourhood plan, but it must meet 'basic conditions' as set out in legislation.

3. The Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan

The Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum. The forum established an area which the plan applies to, this is detailed in the map below. The boundary of the Thorpe Neighbourhood Area was designated on 24 August 2016. The referendum area is identical to the area that has been designated as the Thorpe Neighbourhood Area. People who live within the neighbourhood area can vote on the neighbourhood plan.

The Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in accordance with the statutory requirements. An independent examination took place on the plan, which recommended with some modifications the plan could proceed to referendum.

4. Referendum on the Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan

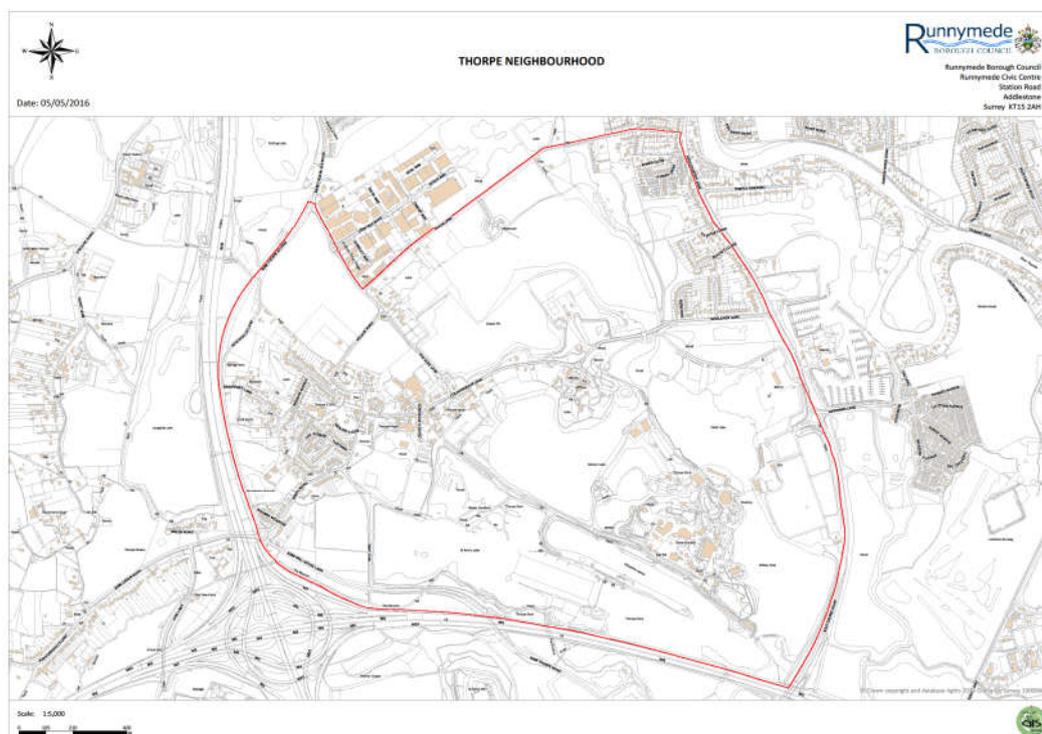
A referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' on a specific question. For this referendum you will receive a Ballot Paper which asks the following question:

'Do you want Runnymede Borough Council to use the Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

5. What does the Referendum result mean?

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. It will become part of the statutory development plan for the area to be used in determining decision on planning applications.

Map of Thorpe Neighbourhood Area



6. Can I vote in the Referendum?

A person is entitled to vote in the Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Referendum if on the 6 May 2021:

- He or she is entitled to vote in a local government election in the referendum area; and
- His or her qualifying address for the election is in the referendum area.

The referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures similar to those used at local government elections.

In order to vote in the referendum, you must be registered to vote by Monday 19 April 2021. Electors who are currently on the register at a qualifying address do not need to make a new registration in order to vote at this poll.

7. How and where can I vote?

There are three ways of voting, you may vote in person, by post or by proxy:

In person:

At your local Polling Station on Thursday 6 May 2021 - Thorpe Village Hall, Coldharbour Lane, Egham. TW20 8TE between 7.00 am and 10.00 pm.

Polling stations will be safe places to vote. To keep yourself and others safe on polling day, please:

- Wear a face covering (over your mouth and nose) inside the polling station,
- Sanitise your hands using the hand sanitiser provided,
- Maintain and follow social distancing instructions at all times, and
- Bring your own pen or pencil to mark your ballot paper, if possible.

If you do not want to vote in person on polling day, you can either vote by post or proxy.

By Post:

If you already have a Postal Vote you will receive a Postal Poll card confirming this and Postal Vote Pack with your Ballot Paper.

If you do not have a Postal Vote, but would like to vote by post in the referendum, please complete a Postal Vote Application form. Application forms can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote>

Once completed either scan a copy to elec.services@runnymede.gov.uk or deliver it to:
Electoral Services,
Runnymede Borough Council,
The Civic Centre,
Station Road
Addlestone,
KT15 2AH.

The deadline for us to receive your Postal Vote application is 5pm on Tuesday, 20 April 2021. You should get your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it does not arrive in time, you can get a replacement up to 5pm on 6 May 2021.

By Proxy:

If you are unable to vote in person you can ask someone to vote on your behalf. This is called a proxy vote. Details on applying to vote by Proxy and application forms can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote>

The deadline for us to receive your Proxy vote application is 5pm on Tuesday 27 April 2021. After this date you can still apply for an Emergency Proxy Vote if your circumstances meet certain criteria. Information on how to apply for an emergency proxy is available on <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voting-person-post-or-proxy/voting-proxy> or by phone on 01932 425653.

8. How to mark your ballot paper

You should show your choice by putting a cross (X) in the box next to your choice on the Ballot Paper.

Put a cross in only ONE box and do not mark your Ballot Paper in any other way. If the Counting Officer is not able to clearly understand what your intention was your vote will not be counted.

9. Referendum Expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the referendum for referendum purposes.

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to this referendum is £2462.60. The number of persons entitled to vote in the referendum is 1705.

10. The Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan and other documents

The plan and other documents¹ as listed below, can be seen online at www.runnymede.gov.uk/article/15578/Thorpe-Neighbourhood-Plan-Update.

The specified documents are:

- The Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version),
- The independent examiners report into the Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan,
- The summary of representations submitted to the examiner,
- The decision statement of the Local Planning Authority (Runnymede Borough Council) as published on 11 December 2020, which confirms the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions specified by statute and complies with the provisions made by or under section 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- A statement that sets out the general information as to Town and Country Planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum.

11. Viewing electronic versions of the information.

Due to the latest COVID 19 lockdown restrictions, which came into force on 5th November, the Borough's libraries are offering limited opening hours and services. To ensure access to these documents a CD of documents will be available at:

Chertsey Library: Guildford Street, Chertsey Surrey KT16 9BE.

Opening times: 2pm to 5pm Monday, 10am to 1pm 2pm to 5pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10am to 4pm Saturday.

Egham Library: Egham Library, High Street, Egham Surrey TW20 9EA.

Opening times: Tuesday to Saturday 9.30 – 5pm.

Staines upon Thames: Staines Library, Friends Walk Staines Middlesex TW18 4PG.

Opening times: Monday to Saturday 9.30 – 5pm

These documents will be made available on CD/hard copies (if permitted by the COVID Regulations) to view at the Addlestone Civic Centre / Addlestone Library and any civic buildings within the referendum area that reopens between 12 April and the referendum.

12. How to find out more.

Further information on neighbourhood planning can be found at www.runnymede.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning

¹ Plan and other documents – known as ‘specified documents’, detailed in regulation 4(3)(b) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

