

Delegated decision recommendation report

Originator	Judith Orr
Decision type	Delegated
Date	18 th September 2025

Synopsis of report:

The purpose of this report is to consider the feedback received from the consultation on the proposed re-designation of the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum. Alongside this, there will also need to be consideration as to whether the Forum would meet the requirements set out under Section 61F (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Council's Constitution sets out that for policy making and progression in the consideration of neighbourhood development plans – which would include making a decision on whether to designate a Neighbourhood Forum– both the Corporate Head of Planning, Economy and Built Environment and/or the Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Climate Change Manager have delegated authority to make the decision on the way forward.

Recommendation (s): That the Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Climate Change Manager or the Corporate Head of Planning, Economy & Built Environment AGREES:

- 1. that Runnymede Borough Council should re-designate the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum.**

1. Background

- 1.1 Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum was originally designated on 24th August 2016 for a five-year period, which expired on 23rd August 2021. The forum was designated to advance neighbourhood planning in the approved Thorpe Neighbourhood Area, which was designated at the same time.
- 1.2 The Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum has made significant advances in progressing neighbourhood planning in the area since first being designated in 2016, having adopted (made) a neighbourhood plan for the area on 30th June 2021.
- 1.3 In order to continue to take forward the proposals contained within the Neighbourhood Plan, the Forum wishes to continue to exist, and consequently has submitted an application for redesignation. No change is proposed to the Neighbourhood Area to be covered by the Forum.
- 1.4 In accordance with regulation 9 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the Council is required to consult for at least six weeks on the proposed redesignation of the Forum. This took place for just over a six-week period between Wednesday 30th July 2025 and Thursday 11th September 2025. In accordance with regulations (9A(2)(b)) of the same regulations, a decision must be made within 13 weeks of the initial publication of the Neighbourhood Forum application, which based on this first being publicised on 30th July 2025, is Wednesday 29th October 2025. This report aims to enable a decision to be made within the 13-week period in line with the relevant regulations.

2. Considerations

2.1 Regulation 8 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the following to be submitted to the Council as part of an application to designate a Neighbourhood Forum.

- (a) the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
- (b) a copy of the written constitution of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
- (c) the name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates and a map which identifies the area;
- (d) the contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum to be made public under regulations 9 and 10; and
- (e) a statement which explains how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act.

2.2 The above information was submitted to the Council (see Appendix 1), and having reviewed the information provided, the requirements of these regulations are considered to be met.

2.3 To meet the requirements of regulation 9 as set out above, consultation on the proposed Neighbourhood Forum was undertaken between 30th July 2025 and 11th September 2025. These regulations require the Council to 'publish the following on their website and in such other manner as they consider is likely to bring the application to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the application relates':

- (a) a copy of the [Forum] application;
- (b) a statement that if a designation is made, no other organisation or body may be designated for that neighbourhood area until that designation expires or is withdrawn;
- (c) details of how to make representations; and
- (d) the date by which those representations must be received, being not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the application is first publicised.

2.4 In addition to the above regulatory requirements, as part of this public consultation, the Council has emailed those on the Council's Planning Policy consultation database, as well as putting notices in the official noticeboards in the Thorpe Neighbourhood Area. Copies of the application have also been put in Chertsey Library and the reception area at the Civic Centre in Addlestone.

2.5 Three responses were received to this consultation (see Appendix 2). None of these responses raised any objection to the redesignation of the Forum. It is therefore considered that the Council should redesignate the Neighbourhood Forum as all parts of the relevant regulations as described in this report are considered to have been met. Therefore, it is recommended to the Corporate Head of Planning, Economy & Built Environment / Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Climate Change Manager that the proposed Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum is re-designated for a further five years in accordance with the 61F(5) of the 1990 Act. This period will start from the date that this decision is made.

3. Next Steps

3.1 If the Corporate Head of Planning, Economy & Built Environment / Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Climate Change Manager determines that the proposed

Neighbourhood Forum should be re designated, regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires that the Council publicises the designation of the Forum on their website 'in such other manner as they consider is likely to bring the designation to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area'. This includes:

- (a) the name of the neighbourhood forum;
- (b) a copy of the written constitution of the neighbourhood forum;
- (c) the name of the neighbourhood area to which the designation relates; and
- (d) contact details for at least one member of the neighbourhood forum.

- 3.2 The above information will be updated (where required) on the Council's website, which already has an existing webpage specifically related to Neighbourhood Planning for Thorpe. A decision to re-designate the Forum would enable the organisation, that was the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum (until its five-year period expired), to be a recognised Forum for the Thorpe Neighbourhood Area again and thus continue to work on implementing the measures set out in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Resource/financial implications (where applicable)

- 4.1 The Council responsibilities associated with delivering neighbourhood planning are being undertaken within the existing resources of the Planning Policy Team, drawing upon the expertise of other staff as required, and utilising existing budgets and government funding at the relevant stages of Plan preparation.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Where officers have concluded that the application to re-designate the Neighbourhood Forum is legally compliant, the Corporate Head of Planning, Economy & Built Environment/Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Climate Change Manager has delegated authority to make the decision on the way forward. National regulations require that the Council considers the consultation responses received, and whether those representations should be acted upon / result in changes being made to the proposed Neighbourhood Area. The Council's decision must be published on its website as per regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) as set out above.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 Part of the Forum application includes a statement which sets out that the proposed Forum 'comprises a diverse group of residents and community representatives'. Alongside this, there is also a stated commitment that as the Forum seeks 're-designation, that they remain committed to upholding the principles of transparency, inclusivity, and democratic participation in all aspects of our work'. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process itself, the Forum had to meet a formal legal requirement to produce what is known as a 'Basic Conditions Statement', which is an assessment to examine the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the 'protected characteristics' as identified in the Equality Act 2010. This assessment required them to follow the correct legal processes in order for the Examiner and Runnymede Borough Council to conclude that the Neighbourhood Plan had had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum has adopted a Neighbourhood Plan that contains policies relating to Green and Blue Infrastructure, the designation of a local green space and high-quality design. These policies will help to preserve and enhance the Borough's environment in line with objectives 6, 7, 9 and 10 of the adopted Runnymede 2030 Local Plan.

8. Other implications (where applicable)

- 8.1 There are no known other implications.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Officers take the view that the proposed re-designation of the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum should go ahead for a further five years. This period would start from the date that the decision is made and published on the Council's website as required by the regulations set out above.

Background papers

Appendix 1 – Proposed Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum application documents (as submitted to the Council).

Appendix 2 - Summary of the consultation responses received

Recommendation agreed by the Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Climate Change Manager on 18th September 2025.

Signature:

Date: 18th September 2025

APPENDIX 1 - Proposed Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum application documents (as submitted to the Council)

APPENDIX 2 – Summary of the consultation responses received

This consultation ran from Wednesday 30th July 2025 – Thursday 11th September 2025. Three responses were received, and these are set out below.

Name	Comments	Actions / amendments made to the proposed re-designation of the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Forum
Active Travel England	Since 1st June 2023 ATE has been a statutory consultee on all planning applications for new developments that meet or exceed one or more of its application thresholds. This statutory consultee role does not extend to plan-making consultations, therefore ATE does not respond to any consultations that it does receive. However, ATE has commissioned an independent review of its planning service and undertook a Local Plan Discovery Project to scope out opportunities for ATE's involvement in local plans in the future. ATE is currently considering the recommendations from this work. Should there be any changes to ATE's role in plan-making then Local Planning Authorities will be advised in writing.	No change.
Natural England	Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.	No change.
National Highways	Following a review of the application to redesignate the Forum, we are satisfied that this consultation does not directly impact National Highways or our network. However, we look forward to being consulted on any planning applications for schemes that have the potential to impact the safety and operation of the SRN in the future.	No change.