Runnymede Borough Council

Draft Local Plan Engagement Strategy

October 2025

Classification: Official

Glossary

DLUHC	-	Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities
FAQs	-	Frequently Asked Questions
GDPR	-	General Data Protection Regulation
IFS	-	Institute of Fiscal Studies
IMD	-	Indicies of Multiple Deprivation
LSOA	-	Lower Super Output Area
MHCLG	-	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
MSOA	-	Middle Super Output Area
NOMIS	-	National Online Manpower Information System
ONS	-	Office of National Statistics
OA	-	Output Areas
PID	-	Project Initiation Document
RBC	-	Runnymede Borough Council
RHUL	-	Royal Holloway University of London
SCI	-	Statement of Community Involvement
SLA	-	Single Living Accommodation
SoS	-	Secretary of State
TASIS	-	The American International School in Switzerland
UK	-	United Kingdom

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1   In July 2023, a consultation was published by the government titled 'Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms'. This proposed a series of reforms to the planning system.

1.2   The rationale for proposing these reforms was as follows:

'The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill enables a more streamlined, focussed plan-making process so that local plans and minerals and waste plans can be produced, examined and adopted more quickly, and updated more often. Reducing the amount of work required during the plan preparation process, whilst maintaining and improving the quality of plans, is key to achieving this goal, and the wider reforms in the Bill have a crucial role to play' (para.3)

1.3   Included in these reforms was a proposal for local authorities to create Project Initiation Documents [PIDs] early in the plan making process. The purpose of these documents was outlined in paragraph 49 of the consultation material which states:

'To augment the regulations, we propose to set out, in guidance, the following key activities that the planning authority will need to complete during this phase, prior to the commencement of the 30 month plan-making process.

a. Prepare a Project Initiation Document, using a digital template provided by government, which will form the basis of discussions at the first gateway assessment and will help set out the context, trends and possibilities of the planning authority's area. It should:

i. define the scope of the local plan (or minerals and waste plan) and identify evidence required to create a sound plan;

ii. identify any local issues likely to be relevant to the plan or environmental assessment;

iii. set out the project management, governance, risks to delivery and resourcing arrangements; and

iv. outline the overall approach to community and stakeholder engagement'.

1.4   The government issued its response to the consultation on 27th February 2025. Included in this response was a reaffirmed requirement for all local authorities to produce a Project Initiation Document [PID] as part of Local Plan preparations under the new plan making system.

1.5   The PID is intended to be published at Gateway 1 of the new plan making system. This is immediately prior to the beginning of the 30 month plan making process (shown below in figure 1). The document is required to set out the consultation methods to be used at the key stages of the plan making process. In particular, the PID should identify how the local authority should seek to engage with hard-to-reach groups, or groups historically underrepresented in the planning consultation process. This was first referenced in paragraph in paragraph 140 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation and reaffirmed in paragraph 112 of the Government response to the proposed plan-making reforms.
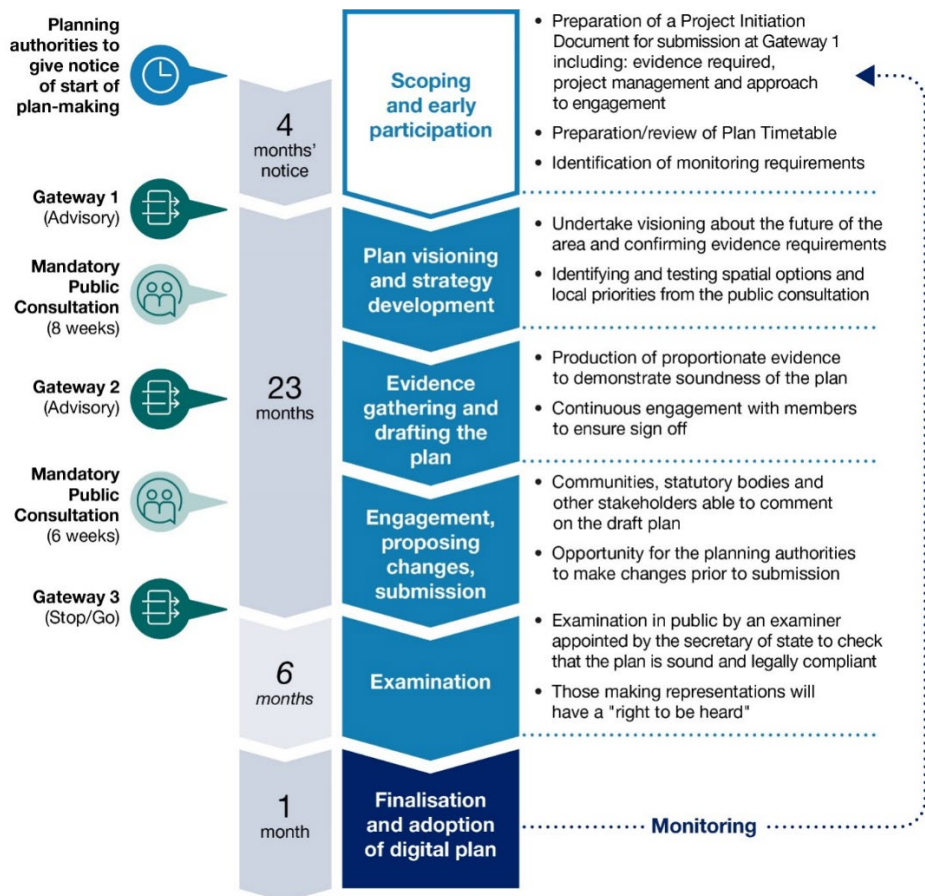
1.6 Engaging underrepresented groups marks a significant challenge for local authorities and may require innovative methods to encourage participation where traditional methods have failed to be effective.

1.7 In addition to this, and in order to fully achieve this, local authorities will have to identify which groups have been historically underrepresented. In the first instance, this requires a comprehensive demographic review of the population of the borough to establish a baseline. This can then be cross-referenced with equalities data collected from previous consultations. This process can help establish which groups are under and overrepresented in planning consultations. This will then allow the Council to establish new approaches to maximise opportunities for engagement.

1.8 This report continues by setting out the demographic profile of Runnymede in chapter 2 which is then summarised in chapter 3. The profile is then compared against the profile of responders from previous consultations in chapter 4 which shows which groups have previously been over and underrepresented.

1.9 Based on the analysis in the preceding chapters, the engagement strategy developed is presented in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of techniques to be used to better engage with the underrepresented groups identified in chapter 4, whereas

chapter 6 provides an overview of the engagement techniques to be used at each stage of Local Plan preparation

1.10   The document concludes by discussing how these proposals will be monitored and reviewed in chapter 7

2. Demographic Profile of Runnymede

2.1 This section presents the findings of the 2021 Census as reported by NOMIS. This utilises single variable data to show the structure of Runnymede across 21 different indicators. These can be used to dissect the population and build a picture of the population of the Borough. The data will be used to underpin a tailored and effective engagement strategy to support the development of the next Local Plan.

2.2 The use of single variable data at local authority level has been chosen to demonstrate the demographic composition of Runnymede for two reasons. The first reason is that this was the first tranche of data released by NOMIS regarding the 2021 census and covers a wide range of topics which gives a comprehensive overview of the population of the UK at a range of geographical scales. The second reason is that while an increasing number of multi-variable analyses are possible e.g. the breakdown of respondents by sex and age, the sheer volume of possibilities could not adequately be realised in a single report and would make the analysis over complicated. In light of this, the decision was made to present the data initially by individual variables in a tabulated format

2.3 The data presented has been extracted directly from NOMIS and the Council has not amended or edited the statistical data in any way. The Council is aware that there are some minor inconsistencies contained within the published data specifically relating to the total number of respondents to each variable not aligning. Unfortunately, whilst this is clearly erroneous there are no remedial actions available to the Council. On balance though it is considered that these minor anomalies do not detract from the overall message and trends shown within the data sets discussed below.

Age

2.4 The data shown in Table 1 shows the two largest population brackets are the 35 to 49 years and the 50 to 64 years brackets. These account for 33,865 of the 88,085 respondents which is 38.45% of the total population. For Local Plan consultations to be truly representative, we would expect the proportion of respondents to be broadly consistent with that shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 Age of Runnymede Residents

Age	Value	Percent
Aged 4 years and under	4,781	5.4
Aged 5 to 9 years	4,788	5.4
Aged 10 to 15 years	5,794	6.6
Aged 16 to 19 years	5,620	6.4
Aged 20 to 24 years	7,443	8.4
Aged 25 to 34 years	10,631	12.1
Aged 35 to 49 years	17,378	19.7
Aged 50 to 64 years	16,487	18.7
Aged 65 to 74 years	7,582	8.6
Aged 75 to 84 years	5,109	5.8
Aged 85 years and over	2,472	2.8
Total	**88,085**	**100.00**

Sex

2.5   The division in terms of sex within Runnymede is fairly even with 48.3% of residents being male and 51.7% female. This should be one of the easier variables to monitor and evaluate in terms of participation with focus groups, consultations etc.

Table 2. Sex of Runnymede Residents

Sex	Value	Percent
Male	42,534	48.3
Female	45,545	51.7
Total	**88,079**	**100.00**

Gender

2.6   The data collected by the census shows that at least 67,811 (93.3%) residents identify as the sex they were given at birth. This figure should be treated as a minimum as some of the 4,561 residents who opted not to answer this question may be included in this number.

2.7   A total of 346 residents answered that they identify as a different sex to that given at birth. This represents 0.5% of the population although this figure may be higher considering the group of 4,561 residents who opted to not answer this question.

Table 3. Gender Identity of Runnymede Residents

Gender Identity	Value	Percent
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	67,811	93.3
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	119	0.2
Trans woman	49	0.1
Trans man	74	0.1
Non-binary	74	0.1
All other gender identities	30	0.0
Not answered	4,561	6.3
Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over	**72,718**	**100.1**

Religion

2.8   The published data shows that the single largest religious group is Christianity with 44,415 of the 88,079 (50.4%) respondents. The next largest group is those residents that identify as non-religious with 30,654 Runnymede residents (34.8%). In total, these groups combined represent 85.2% of all Runnymede residents. These figures whilst significant, also have the potential to obfuscate the fact that there are sizeable Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities within Runnymede. These three groups combined represent 5,817 residents based on the data collected and shown in Table 4.

2.9   It is advised that these figures should be treated as minimum figures and not as definitive representations of individual religious communities. This is based on the high level of non-response to this question which numbers 6,062 residents, the third largest category. It seems logical to suggest that some individuals within this number would belong to a religious group.

Table 4. Religion of Runnymede Residents

Religion	Value	Percent
No Religion	30,654	34.8
Christian	44,415	50.4
Buddhist	458	0.5
Hindu	2,029	2.3
Jewish	223	0.3
Muslim	2,519	2.9
Sikh	1,269	1.4
Other Religion	450	0.5
No Answer given	6,062	6.9
Total	**88,079**	**100.00**

Ethnicity

2.10   The ethnic profile of Runnymede shows that the vast majority of residents, 83.5%, identify as White. The remaining 14,522 are split across various other ethnic groups the largest of which is those of Asian origin which accounts for 8,140 (9.2%) of Runnymede residents.

Table 5. Runnymede Residents by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Value	Percent
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	8,140	9.2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	1,591	1.8
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	3,113	3.5
White	73,557	83.5
Other ethnic group	1,678	1.9
Total	**88,079**	**100.00**

Country of Birth

2.11   At the time of the Census, 70,554 of the 88,080 residents were born in the United Kingdom representing 80.1% of the population. The remaining 17,526 were born outside of the UK. Unfortunately this information is not presented on a national level but rather on a continental/regional level.

2.12   The largest region of origin, discounting those born in the UK, is Europe with 7,060 residents. This represents 8.0% of the total population in Runnymede. This is followed by the Middle East and Asia from where 5,011 residents were born. This represents 5.7% of the total population in the borough. The remaining 5,455 residents were born in one of Ireland, Africa, The Americas (including the Caribbean) and Oceania. These are sizeable communities that represent significant multiculturalism in Runnymede and as such the Council should be actively seeking means of engaging these communities.

Table 6. Runnymede Residents by Country of Birth

Country of birth	Value	Percent
United Kingdom	70,554	80.1
Ireland	683	0.8
Europe: Other Europe (Excluding Ireland)	7,060	8.0
Europe (All)	**78,297**	**88.9**
Africa	2,565	2.9
Middle East and Asia	5,011	5.7
The Americas and the Caribbean	1,814	2.1
Antarctica and Oceania	393	0.4
Total: All usual residents	**88,080**	**100.00**

Primary Language

2.13 Table 7 below shows the primary languages spoken by the residents of Runnymede together with the number of speakers. Due to the number of languages spoken within the Borough the decision has been made to cap those included at the most frequently cited 15 languages. A complete breakdown can be found on the Census website.

2.14 It is likely that this data can largely be read in tandem with the country of birth data discussed in paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13 as well as Table 6, for example the 78,275 English or Welsh speakers would likely include the majority of the 71,237 residents born in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Whilst this is a logical approach it should be treated with some caution as no cross-variable analysis has been undertaken to this effect.

2.15 There were 2,842 residents who answered 'Does not apply'. There are multiple possible reasons why this may have occurred including:

- Residents being multi-lingual;
- Their primary language being omitted from the list of options;
- Misunderstanding the question.

2.16 In light of this it is advised that the figures contained within Table 7 should be treated as minimum numbers and not definitive representations of the linguistic communities within Runnymede, especially as there is no way of knowing how the 2,842 residents should be appropriated.

2.17 The figures do suggest that there are notable populations of Polish, Romanian, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian speaking communities within Runnymede. The data does not show how competent these residents are with the English language.

Table 7. Primary Language of Runnymede Residents

Primary Language (Top 15)	Number
English (English or Welsh in Wales)	78,275
Does not apply	2,842
Other European language (EU): Polish	679
Other European language (EU): Romanian	661
Portuguese	592
Spanish	427
Other European language (EU): Italian	402
East Asian language: All other Chinese	266
Russian	233

Other European language (EU): Bulgarian	217
French	211
East Asian language: Tagalog or Filipino	202
South Asian language: Panjabi	201
Turkish	193
Other European language (EU): Hungarian	185

Household Language

2.18 The analysis of household languages largely follows on from analysis discussed within the Primary Language section using the data contained in Table 8. The Primary Language data is presented on an individual level whereas the Household Language data effectively takes this data and compresses it into household units. This data is shown below in table 8.

2.19 The published data shows that English or Welsh is a main language spoken within 31,293 of the 34,838 households within Runnymede (although this does not preclude these households from speaking other languages). This represents 89.8% of the total, but it also shows that 3,545 Runnymede households do not utilise English as a primary language.

2.20 There is however some ability to speak English within this group as 1,666 households have at least one adult resident proficient in the English Language. There are 403 households where no adults are proficient in the English Language, although these households do have at least one child proficient in the English Language. The remaining 1,476 households have no English speaking residents.

Table 8. Languages of Runnymede Households

Household Language	Value	Percent
All adults in household have English in England, or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	31,293	89.8
At least one but not all adults in household have English in England, or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	1,666	4.8
No adults in household, but at least one person aged 3 to 15 years, has English in England or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	403	1.2
No people in household have English in England, or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	1,476	4.2
Total	**34,838**	**100.00**

Household Composition

2.21 There are 9,939 single person households within Borough and a further 21,981 single family households. These two typologies represent 91.6% of the households within Runnymede. The remaining 2,921 (8.4%) households are classified as 'Other household types' the definition of this category includes:

- Mixed households;
- Houses occupied in their entirety by full-time students;
- Residences where all occupants are over 66 years of age.

2.22 A review of Council Tax data shows that student exemptions have been granted for 941 privately rented houses within the Borough. This is in addition to 734 care home units and the 3,070 available student halls of residence units all of which would meet the definition of 'Other household types'. The level of occupancy of these units at the time of the census is unknown.

Table 9. Runnymede Household Composition

Household Composition	Number	Percent
One-person household	9,939	28.5
Single Family Household	21,981	63.1
Other household types	2,921	8.4
Total	**34,841**	**100.00**

Number of usual residents in households and communal establishments

2.23 The overwhelming majority of Runnymede residents live in some form of a household. This numbers 84,214 residents and represents 95.6% of the population. The remaining 3,865 (4.4%) reside in a communal establishment. These include:

- University halls of residence and boarding schools;
- Care homes, hospitals hospices and maternity units;
- Hotels, guest houses, hostels and bed and breakfasts with capacity for seven or more guests;
- Prisons and other secure facilities;
- Single Living Accommodation [SLA] in military bases;
- Staff accommodation;
- Religious establishments.

2.24 In Runnymede there are currently 734 rooms available in Care Homes, Nursing Homes or similar institutions. There is no way of knowing exactly how many of these units were occupied at the time the census was undertaken, however, a research paper released by ONS in 2021 shows the average capacity of care homes in England was 84.7%. If this capacity were to be applied we could estimate that there are 622 residents within residential care facilities in Runnymede.

2.25 In terms of student accommodation there are a number of halls of residence provided in the borough in connection with Royal Holloway University of London [RHUL]. In total these provide accommodation for 3,090 students both undergraduate and postgraduate, although the exact occupancy at the time of the census is unknown.

2.26 There are also several schools within Runnymede which provide residential accommodation for students on site. These are:

- Meath School (Primary)
- TASIS (Ages 3-18)
- St John's Beaumont School (Ages 3-13)

The exact residential capacities of these schools is currently unknown.

Table 10. Individual Residents Type of Residence

Type of Residence	Value	Percent
Lives in a household	84,214	95.6
Lives in a communal establishment	3,865	4.4
Total	**88,079**	**100.00**

Household Tenure

2.27 A sizeable proportion of the households within Runnymede own their own home outright. This numbers 11,431 of the 34,838 households in Runnymede representing 32.08% of the total number of households. This suggests a level of affluence within the population.

2.28 In contrast there are 4,499 households living in socially rented accommodation. This is a high number of households representing 12.9% of the total population. A study by the IFS found that these are often amongst the most deprived households and it is important that efforts are undertaken to engage with this group.

Table 11. Runnymede Household Tenure

Household Tenure	Number	Percent
Owns outright	11,431	32.8
Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	12,216	35.1
Social rented	4,499	12.9
Private rented or lives rent free	6,692	19.2
Total	**34,838**	**100.00**

Economic Activity Status

2.29 In Runnymede 42,374 residents are economically active which represents 58.3% of the total population. Within this number, 40,532 residents are employed which is 55.7% of the total population and 95.65% of the economically active population. Conversely 1,842 residents considered economically active were unemployed. This represents 2.5% of the total population and 4.35% of the economically active population.

2.30 There are 2,729 economically active students within the Borough (3.8% of the total population) of this number 1,924 (70.5%) are in employment whilst the remaining 805 (29.5%) are not.

2.31 There are 27,616 residents who are economically inactive. This represents 38% of the resident population. The largest group within this category is the retired population these number 14,005 and represent 19.3% of the total population.

2.32 A notable figure is the 1,597 residents who are long-term sick or disabled, and economically inactive. This represents 2.2% of the population of Runnymede.

Table 12. Economic Activity Status of Runnymede Residents

Economic Activity Status	Number	Percent
Economically active (excluding full-time students)	*42,374*	*58.3*
In employment	40,532	55.7
Unemployed	1,842	2.5
Economically active and a full-time student	*2,729*	*3.8*
In employment	1,924	2.6
Unemployed	805	1.1
Economically inactive	*27,616*	*38.0*
Retired	14,005	19.3
Student	7,142	9.8
Looking after home or family	3,046	4.2
Long-term sick or disabled	1,597	2.2
Other	1,826	2.5

Weekly Hours Worked

2.33   The data shows that 29% of residents in employment are considered part-time workers. This is taken to be any individual who works 30 hours per week or less. This data is broken into two sub-groups: those that work less than 25 hours per week and those that work between 16 and 30 hours per week. There are 5,215 workers who work less than 15 hours per week, representing 12.3% of the workforce. It is likely that these individuals would be amongst the least affluent residents of the borough based on individual income. This should be treated as indicative data only as it is possible that some of these individuals will be supplementing an existing household income which may be quite high, some may be post-retirement but choose to work a small number of hours per week and other similar scenarios.

2.34   In contrast there are 30,135 workers who are considered to work full-time representing 71.0% of the workforce. This is defined as being any amount in excess of 30 hours per week. This is also broken into two sub-groups – those that work between 31 and 48 hours per week and those that work at least 49 hours per week. There are 5,458 residents who work at least 49 hours per week.

Table 13. Weekly Hours Worked by Runnymede Residents

Weekly hours worked	Number	Percent
Part-time	12,322	29.0
15 hours or less worked	5,215	12.3
16 to 30 hours worked	7,107	16.7
Full-time	30,135	71.0
31 to 48 hours worked	24,677	58.1
49 or more hours worked	5,458	12.9
Total	**42,457**	**100.00**

Homeworking Proportion and Number

2.35   The data shows that 16,530 of the residents of Runnymede in employment primarily work from home representing 38.9% of the population. This would suggest that these residents hold professional jobs and highly skilled jobs. This is assumed as these jobs can be done from home in contrast to industries such as retail, hospitality, manufacturing, performing arts or other physical work which are unlikely to conducted from home.

2.36   There is less insight relating to those who do not work from home. This is due to the large amount of possible industries which are not suitable for home working.

Table 14. Primary Working Location of Runnymede Residents

Primary Working Location	Number	Percent
Working from home	16,530	38.9
Other locations	25,928	61.1
Total	**42,458**	**100.00**

Students

2.37   A sizeable proportion, 24.3% of the residents of Runnymede are currently enrolled in some form of education. A likely reason for this is that Runnymede is a university borough with Royal Holloway University of London [RHUL] having 12,652 students, correct as of their 2023/24 intake although it is unknown exactly how many of these students permanently live in Runnymede.

2.38   The remainder of the figure will include students from Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Colleges and similar institutions.

Table 15. The Number of Runnymede Residents Currently in Education

Educational status	Number	Percent
Student	20,277	24.3
Not a student	63,021	75.7
Total	**83,298**	**100.00**

General Health

2.39   The general health of the Borough is largely of a good standard with 75,574 residents reporting that that they have either a good or very good standard of health. This represents 85.8% of the population of Runnymede with a further 9,344 (10.6%) in fair health. The remaining 5,161 residents, 3.6% of the total population, reported that they were in bad or very bad health.

2.40   The data provided does not show what type of ailments are contributing to these responses so formulating a strategy to increase engagement may be difficult.

Table 16. The Standard of Health of Runnymede Residents

Level of General Health	Number	Percent
Very good health	46,128	52.4
Good health	29,446	33.4
Fair health	9,344	10.6
Bad health	4,487	2.8
Very bad health	674	0.8
Total	**88,079**	**100.00**

Disability

2.41   In response to the question on disability, 69,112 respondents answered that they were experiencing no long term physical or mental health conditions. A further 6,126 reported that they were experiencing conditions which did not impact their day to day lives. This totals 75,238 residents and represents 85.5% of the population.

2.42   A combined 12,842 residents (14.6%) reported that their health conditions impacted their lives either a little or a lot. This is broadly comparable to the 14,505 residents who reported that they were in in fair, bad or very health (table 18).

Table 17. The Level of Disability Experienced by Residents of Runnymede

Disability	Number	Percent
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	4,802	5.5
Day-to-day activities limited a little	8,040	9.1
Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	6,126	7.0
No long term physical or mental health conditions	69,112	78.5
Total	**88,080**	**100.00**

Provision of Unpaid Care

2.43   The provision of unpaid care provision is defined in the census as the following:

> 'An unpaid carer may look after, give help or support to anyone who has long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions, illness or problems related to old age.
>
> This does not include any activities as part of paid employment.
>
> This help can be within or outside of the carer's household.'
>
> This means that the definition does not include childcare.

2.44   In Runnymede 92.1% of the population do not provide for residents who are either elderly or in poor health.

2.45   There are however a sizeable number of residents who do provide unpaid care to friends or family. This group numbers 6,609 in total with 3,581 residents providing 19 hours of care or less, representing 4.3% of the total population and 54.18% of the number of residents who provide care. This is followed by 1,165 who provide between 20 and 49 hours of care and 1,863 who provide 50 hours of care or more.

Table 18. The Number of Residents Who Perform Unpaid Care-Work and the Number of Hours

Provision of unpaid care	Number	Percent
Provides no unpaid care	76,686	92.1
Provides 19 hours or less unpaid care a week	3,581	4.3
Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	1,165	1.4
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	1,863	2.2
Total	82,295	100.00

Deprivation

2.46 The level of deprivation and number of households which fall into each category is a summation of data collected throughout other sections of the census. The census sets out the <u>definition of each of these dimensions</u>. There are four-dimensional themes in total which are:

- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Housing

2.47 One of the metrics relating to housing deprivation is the level of occupancy, or overcrowding. The Occupancy Rating of a property is determined by calculating the level of bedrooms required by the household relative to the household size. This is calculated using the <u>standards set out by NOMIS</u>.

2.48 The optimal score for a household is zero. This represents the level of bedrooms required by a given household is equal to the number available. A negative score represents a household with too few bedrooms while a positive score suggests there are more bedrooms than required.

2.49 There are a total of 23,356 with a score of at least +1. This shows that 67.04% of the residential properties within Runnymede which are under-occupied. In contrast there are 1,249 which are over-occupied and consequently overcrowded. 123 of these households require at least 2 bedrooms in order to ensure adequate living space. Engaging those affected within consultative and decision making processes may be advantageous.

Table 19. Runnymede Household Occupancy Rating

Household Occupancy Rating	Number
Occupancy rating of bedrooms: +2 or more	12,204
Occupancy rating of bedrooms: +1	11,152
Occupancy rating of bedrooms: 0	10,233
Occupancy rating of bedrooms: -1	1,126
Occupancy rating of bedrooms: -2 or less	123
Total	**34,838**

2.50 Overall, Runnymede households perform well against these measures with 18,603 of the 34,838 (53.40%) households not meeting the definition of any of the four themes of deprivation. A further 11,306 (32.45%) households meet a singular definition of deprivation, meaning a combined 85.85% of the households in Runnymede.

Table 20. The Level of Deprivation Experienced by Runnymede Households

Level of household deprivation	Number of households
Household is not deprived in any dimension	18,603
Household is deprived in one dimension	11,306
Household is deprived in two dimensions	4,106
Household is deprived in three dimensions	773
Household is deprived in four dimensions	50

3. Key Demographic Highlights

3.1 The key statistical data summarising the population composition of Runnymede was presented in chapter 2 with accompanying data tables and commentary for a range of indicators. This chapter seeks to provide a summary of the key findings.

3.2 It is important that this summary is considered when creating an engagement strategy for the Local Plan, so to ensure that the level of engagement is maximised and proportionate to the composition of Runnymede residents. The key findings are as follows:

3.3 The largest age groups within Runnymede are those aged 35 – 49 (19.7% of the population), 50 - 64 (18.7%) and 25 – 34 (12.1%). Whilst the smallest age group are those aged 85 and over (2.8). The Council should seek to ensure that the number of respondents by age group is broadly representative of the population composition. This data could be collected from respondents using a simple equalities form attached to the local plan consultations. This would give an indication as to who is responding, and which groups are over and underrepresented.

3.4 In terms of sex, the Runnymede population is made up of 51.7% females and 48.3% males. This data could be collected by asking a question alongside the age question discussed above to monitor who is responding to the local plan consultations.

3.5 A similar analysis on gender shows that the vast majority of Runnymede residents (93.3%) identify as their birth sex whilst 0.3% identify as a different gender to their birth. Adding a question on gender in any equalities form would help the Council establish if it is reaching all respective genders.

3.6 More than half the population of Runnymede (50.4%) identifies as being a Christian. This is the largest single religion by a significant margin. There are however notable populations of those who practice Islam (2.9%), Hinduism (2.3%), and Sikhism (1.4). There is a small Jewish population in Runnymede representing 0.3% of the population, whilst 0.5% of the population answered 'Other' to their identified religion. It is important that any consultation undertaken by the Council is accessible to all faiths. Including an equalities question relating to religion would allow the Council to assess whether all the religious communities are being reached.

3.7 There are a large number of primary languages used by the residents of Runnymede. A lack of English language skills would represent a significant barrier to engagement. It may be the case that the Council needs to consider more innovative ways to engage such communities. Options may include:
- Identifying community groups organised around language;
- Identifying language skills within the organisation and utilizing these resources for face-to-face engagement;
- Publishing documents in alternative languages.

3.8 The analysis of Household Languages suggest that residents may face barriers to engaging with local plan activities and consultations as up to 10.2% of households

may lack the linguistic skills to engage with the traditional consultation material published by the Council. This has historically been published in English only. This figure represents households who have one or fewer adults in the household (in houses of multiple adults) who use English as a primary language. This would provide further evidence of the need to further explore the potential need to publish documents in a range of languages.

3.9　　In Runnymede 27,616 residents are considered economically inactive.　This number is largely driven by those who have retired (14,005) and students (7,142). There are however 1,597 who are recorded as having a long-term illness and disability. This can be a barrier to engagement in a variety of activities and can be potentially isolating. The Council should seek to use innovative means to increase engagement amongst this group. A further 3,046 stated that they were primarily looking after home or family. In total 6,609 residents provide some element of unpaid care. The majority of these (3,581) provide up to 19 hours of unpaid care, 1,165 residents provide between 20 and 49 hours of care and 1,863 residents provide at least 50 hours of unpaid care per week. It is not unreasonable to assume that those who provide a large amount of care would have less social and economic capital. As a consequence it maybe harder to engage with these individuals due to conflicting priorities and constraints on their time.

3.10　　There are a total of 42,457 residents employed in paid work. It is noted that 5,458 of these work at least 49 hours a week. This may make engaging with this section of the population more difficult due to the amount of hours worked restricting the amount of hours they can put towards other activities/priorities.

3.11　　In terms of deprivation, Runnymede generally performs well.　There are four identified domains of deprivation, these are:
- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Housing

3.12　　There are 34,838 households in Runnymede. 18,603 of these, representing 53.4% of all households, were not deprived in any way. A total of 11,306 households (32.45%) were assessed to be deprived in one of the four domains. The remaining 4,929 (14.15%) of the households within the Borough are assessed as having between two and four dimensions of deprivation. It is this segment of the Borough's population which is most likely to be under-represented in consultations and decision making. It is therefore essential that every effort is undertaken to consult with this segment of the population to avoid taking decisions which further exacerbate these dimensions of deprivation.

4.   Runnymede Consultations

4.1   Runnymede Borough Council has recently begun collecting equalities data as part of larger planning policy consultations. It is important to note that this is an optional process and there is no requirement to complete equalities questions. If a respondent chooses not to complete this part of the survey, it does not invalidate the survey. The collected data should therefore be treated as indicative but not exhaustive.

4.2   To date two consultations have been conducted which have involved the collection of equalities information. The first of these related to the provision, quality and usage of open space within Runnymede. This was conducted between Monday 20th February 2023 and Friday 7th March 2023. The second was related to the Runnymede Climate Change Action Plan. This was divided into three separate surveys with the respondent able to complete the version of the survey which best represented them. These were:

- Young Persons (under 18s)
- Residents (over 18s)
- Organisations

4.3   Equalities data was only collected in one of these surveys; the residents survey.

Open Spaces - Age

4.4   In 2023 Planning Policy commissioned Built-Id to survey the residents of Runnymede. They were asked questions around the themes of what they use the borough's open spaces for, how often they use them and what improvements could be made to them to improve their function and desirability. Alongside this, respondents were asked to provide their age and gender identity.

4.5   In total 1,294 responses were received to the consultation 542 of these respondents gave their age. The same number (but not necessarily the same respondents) gave their age. These were the only pieces of personal data requested due to GDPR considerations.

4.6   The responses to the age questions are presented below in Table 21.

Table 19. Age of respondents to the Open Space consultation

Age Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18 to 24	6	1.11
25 to 34	28	5.17
35 to 44	79	14.58
45 to 54	126	23.25
55 to 64	153	28.23
65 to 74	98	18.09
75+	43	7.94
Prefer not to say	9	1.63
Total	**542**	**100.00**

4.7 This data is presented in the form that it was collected. Unfortunately this format does not match that used by the census. In order to adequately compare the two datasets, the data collected by Runnymede Borough Council has been reapportioned to be consistent with the census data this is shown below in Table 22.

Table 20. Level of representation of age groups in the Open Space consultation

Census Data			Runnymede Data			Variance
Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent	Age Group	Number	Percent	
4 and younger	4,781	5.4	4 and younger	0	0	-5.4%
5 to 9	4,788	5.4	5 to 9	0	0	-5.4%
10 to 15	5,794	6.6	10 to 15	0	0	-6.6%
16 to 19	5,620	6.4	16 to 19	1.71	0.32	-6.08%
20 to 24	7,443	8.4	20 to 24	4.29	0.80	-7.6%
25 to 34	10,631	12.1	25 to 34	28	5.25	-6.58%
35 to 49	17,378	19.7	35 to 49	142	26.64	6.94%
50 to 64	16,487	18.7	50 to 64	216	40.52	21.82
65 to 74	7,582	8.6	65 to 74	98	18.39	9.79
75 to 84	5,109	5.8	75 to 84	21.5	4.03	-1.77
85 and older	2,472	2.8	85 and older	21.5	4.03	1.23
	88,085	100		533	100	

4.8 When comparing the data collected through the survey against the collected census data, the nine respondents who answered 'Prefer not to say' were removed as no effective analysis can be done with this data.

4.9 The data shows that the population of those under 16 years old had zero representation. This is perhaps unsurprising as the survey was primarily promoted on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram. These sites typically have an age restriction of 13 years of age to access. This has since been made law through the Online Safety Act 2023 which was adopted on 26th October 2023 and this will have supressed the response rate from this age group.

4.10 The combined age groups of 16 to 34 were underrepresented within the survey. The optimum level of combined representation would have been 26.9% instead the representation was only 6.37% which is an underrepresentation of 20.53% and a proportional underrepresentation of 76.32%.

4.11 In contrast, the age groups covering ages 35 to 74 were significantly overrepresented. Respondents in these age groups accounted for 85.55% of all responses whereas residents in these age groups represent 47% of the population of Runnymede.

4.12 Responses from the 75+ age group were broadly consistent with the population of Runnymede with 8.06% of respondents in this age group compared to the 8.6% of residents within this age group

Open Spaces - Gender

4.13   The second question we asked respondents was related to their gender. There were seven possible answers to this question which was answered by 542 respondents. This is set out below in Table 23.

Table 21. Gender of respondents to the Open Space consultation

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	181	33.39
Female	341	62.92
Gender Fluid	1	0.18
Third Gender	1	0.18
Non-Binary	2	0.37
Other	2	0.37
Prefer not to say	14	2.58
Total	**542**	**100**

4.14   The census data does not provide a dataset which covers all of these variables. There are two published datasets which can be used to determine proportional representation. The first is 'Sex'. This accounts for the number of residents who are either Male or Female but does allow for any other response. The second is gender identity. This provides data for the same identity as at birth, but makes no distinction between male and females. It also allows for other identities to be given. In considering this, the Council has undertaken an analysis of both of these variables based on responses received.

Table 22. Comparison of the gender of respondents to the Open Space consultation and the population of Runnymede

Census Data			Runnymede Data			Variance
Sex	Number	Percent	Sex	Number	Percent	
Male	42,534	48.3	Male	181	34.67	-13.63%
Female	45,545	51.7	Female	341	65.33	13.63%
Total	**88,079**	**100**		**522**	**100**	

4.15   Approximately two out of three of the respondents to the open space survey identified as female. This shows that a disproportionate amount of females responded to the survey. There are approximately 3,000 more female residents than male residents within the borough and consequently a greater number of female respondents was to be expected, however this difference equates to roughly 3%. In contrast the survey respondents show a difference of approximately 30% between males and females showing a significant underrepresentation of males.

4.16   The survey was also responded to by six residents who identify as a different gender to that given at birth. It is assumed that the 522 respondents who answered either male or female retain their assigned sex from birth. This assumption has been made as there were options to state otherwise. In order to adequately compare the collected data, all other gender identities have been compressed in to a single category in table 25 so as to make the data from the census and the survey comparable.

4.17   The census shows 99.49% of the population have the same gender now as at birth. This is broadly comparable with the 98.86% of the respondents to the survey who gave this answer. The same is true of those residents who have a different gender to birth. This is 0.51% of the population based on the census and 1.14% of the respondents. This may appear to be an overrepresentation of this community, but given that the actual respondents number six it is not considered to be statistically significant.

Table 23. Comparison of the Sexual identity of respondents to the Open Space consultation and residents of Runnymede

Census Data			Runnymede Data		
Sex	Number	Percent	Sex	Number	Percent
Gender as at birth	67,811	99.49	Gender as at birth	522	98.86
All other Gender identities	346	0.51	All other Gender identities	6	1.14
Total	**68,157**	**100**		**528**	**100**

Climate Change Action Plan - Age

4.18   In 2023 the Council commissioned Built-Id to survey the residents of Runnymede. They were asked questions around the themes of sustainability, active travel and priority actions. As part of this, in the residents survey, respondents were asked to provide their age, ethnicity and gender. In total 818 responses were received to this survey of which 209 answered the question on age. The responses are summarised below in table 26.

Table 24 Age of respondents to the Climate Change consultation

Age Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18 to 24	4	1.91
25 to 34	7	3.35
35 to 44	18	8.61
45 to 54	47	22.49
55 to 64	60	28.71
65 to 74	47	22.49
75+	21	10.05
Prefer not to say	5	2.39
Total	209	100.00

4.19   The age parameters used for the survey were the same as those used for the open space survey and, as discussed in paragraph 4.8, these statistics are incompatible with that produced by the census reports. In order to allow for effective comparison, these age bands will need to be to be reapportioned to be consistent with the

census data. This is shown below in table 27. Please note that those who answered 'Prefer not to say' have been removed from this analysis for the reasons discussed in paragraph 4.9.

Table 25. Comparison of the ages of respondents to the Climate Change consultation and the residents of Runnymede.

Census Data			Runnymede Data		
Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent	Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent
4 and younger	4,781	5.4	4 and younger	0	0
5 to 9	4,788	5.4	5 to 9	0	0
10 to 15	5,794	6.6	10 to 15	0	0
16 to 19	5,620	6.4	16 to 19	1.71	0.84
20 to 24	7,443	8.4	20 to 24	2.29	1.12
25 to 34	10,631	12.1	25 to 34	7	3.43
35 to 49	17,378	19.7	35 to 49	41.5	20.34
50 to 64	16,487	18.7	50 to 64	83.5	40.93
65 to 74	7,582	8.6	65 to 74	47	23.04
75 to 84	5,109	5.8	75 to 84	10.5	5.15
85 and older	2,472	2.8	85 and older	10.5	5.15
	88,085	**100**		**204**	**100**

4.20 The numbers show a zero response rate from the under 16 age group. This was largely expected due to the platforms on which the survey was held, and given that there was a separate survey for under 18s. There was also a significant underrepresentation within the 16 to 34 age groups. This represents 26.9% of the population but only 5.39% of the respondents. Again, it is possible that some of this age bracket responded to the under 18s survey.

4.21 The response level within the 35 to 49 age group was largely representative of the population. The responses in this age group represented 20.34% of the responses received. This compares favourably with the 19.7% of residents within this age group.

4.22 The largest age group (by response rate) was 50 to 64 years of age. This group provided 40.93% of the responses despite only 18.7% being within this age group, more than double the optimum response rate. This is a significant overrepresentation of residents in this age group. There was a similar level of overrepresentation observed within the 65 to 74 age group. This group provided 23.04% of the responses despite only 8.6% of Runnymede residents being within this age group, nearly triple the optimal rate.

Climate Change Action Plan - Gender

4.23 The Council also collected data on the gender of respondents. This was a more streamlined question compared to the one asked as part of the Open Space Survey (see paragraph 4.14). Within this survey, respondents were asked to answer whether they identified as male or female, with the additional option of 'Prefer not to say'. The responses received are shown below in table 28 alongside the census data. To enable effective comparisons, the respondents who answered 'Prefer not to say' have been discounted. These number five in total.

Table 26. Comparison of the sex of respondents to the Climate Change consultation and the population of Runnymede

Census Data			Runnymede Data		
Sex	Number	Percent	Sex	Number	Percent
Male	42,534	48.3	Male	110	54.19
Female	45,545	51.7	Female	93	45.81
Total	**88,079**	**100**		**203**	**100**

4.24 There were a greater number of male respondents than female respondents. This is inconsistent with the composition of the Borough which has a greater number of females than males. There were 110 (54.19%) male respondents and 93 (45.81%) female respondents.

Climate Change Action Plan - Ethnicity

4.25 The survey also collected data on the ethnicity of respondents. There were 208 respondents in total. These are shown below in table 29.

Table 27. Ethnicity of the respondents to the Climate Change consultation

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White British	170	81.73
Asian British	4	1.92
Irish	2	0.96
White and Asian	1	0.48
White and Black African	1	0.48
Other	9	4.33
Prefer not to say	21	10.10
Total	**208**	**100**

4.26 The data collected is useful but not entirely consistent with the published census data and as a result, effective comparison is not possible in the present form. In order to enable comparison, the White and Asian respondent as well as the White and Black African respond will be treated as 'Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups' and Irish treated as 'White'. The comparative survey data and census data is shown below in table 30. The 21 residents who answered 'Prefer not to say' have not been included in this analysis. This reduces the number of respondents to 187.

Table 28. Comparison of the ethnicity of the respondents to the Climate Change consultation and the population of Runnymede

Census Data			Climate Change Action Plan		
Ethnic Group	**Number**	**Percent**	**Ethnic Group**	**Number**	**Percent**
White	73,557	83.5	White	172	91.98
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	8,140	9.2	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	4	2.14
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	1,591	1.8	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0	0
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	3,113	3.5	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2	1.07
Other ethnic group	1,678	1.9	Other ethnic group	9	4.81
Total	**88,079**	**100**	**Total**	**187**	**100**

4.27 The data shows that the largest ethnic group in Runnymede is those that identify as White. This represents 83.5% of Runnymede residents. Despite this high number, the population is overrepresented within the survey with 91.98% of respondents identifying as White.

4.28 The census data shows there are 1,591 residents who identify as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African. This is a significant number and represents 1.8% of the total population. Despite this, there were zero respondents to the survey who identified within this ethnic group.

4.29 There were two respondents who identified as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups. This represents a moderate underrepresentation against the 3.5% within Runnymede. The nine respondents who identified themselves as 'Other ethnic group' represented 4.81% of respondents. This is a moderate overrepresentation against the 1.9% of residents of this ethnic group within Runnymede.

Combining the results

4.30 It is important to consider that each consultation/survey will produce a unique set of results with its own unique demographic profile. It is much more helpful to take a more holistic approach to identify who is engaging in the process, rather than any one event.

4.31 At present there is a small sample size to draw upon, with only two surveys having asked for equalities information for analysis. Nonetheless, it is considered to be useful to combine the data collected from the two surveys using the common variables of age and gender.

Combined Analysis - Age

4.32　The Open Space Survey and the Climate Change Action Plan Survey both asked for users to identify their age by selecting the correct age group from a number of preset options. It is useful that the two surveys used the same age groups which make completing an overall analysis achievable. These have previously been set out in tables 22 and 27. This data will now be combined in Table 31 below.

Table 29. Combined analysis of the respondents to the consultations and the population of Runnymede

Census Data			Runnymede Data		
Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent	Age Group (Years)	Number	Percent
4 and younger	4,781	5.4	4 and younger	0	0
5 to 9	4,788	5.4	5 to 9	0	0
10 to 15	5,794	6.6	10 to 15	0	0
16 to 19	5,620	6.4	16 to 19	3.42	0.46
20 to 24	7,443	8.4	20 to 24	6.58	0.89
25 to 34	10,631	12.1	25 to 34	35	4.75
35 to 49	17,378	19.7	35 to 49	183.5	24.90
50 to 64	16,487	18.7	50 to 64	299.5	40.64
65 to 74	7,582	8.6	65 to 74	145	19.67
75 to 84	5,109	5.8	75 to 84	32	4.34
85 and older	2,472	2.8	85 and older	32	4.34
	88,085	**100**		**737**	**99.99**

4.33　The combined data shows that engagement is highest amongst those aged 50 to 64. Respondents in this age group represented 40.64% of all respondents despite only forming 18.7% of the population. This is a significant overrepresentation of this age group. The next largest group of respondents by number is the 35 to 49 age group. These represent 24.9% of all respondents. This is an overrepresentation of this group who comprise 19.7% of the residents of Runnymede. This, whilst being an overrepresentation, is comparatively moderate to the 35 to 49 age group.

4.34　The third largest group of respondents by number was those 65 to 74 years. This group represented 19.67% of respondents. This is a vast overrepresentation of the 8.6% of residents within this age group.

4.35　The remaining age brackets all received over 100 less respondents than the 65 to 74 years group, the third largest group by respondent count. Each of these remaining groups represented no more than 4.75% of respondents. These were mostly underrepresentation of age groups with the exception of those 85 years of age or older. These comprised 4.34% of respondents, but only 2.8% of the population of Runnymede are within this age bracket.

Combined Analysis - Gender

4.36　As well as age, the Council collected gender data in each of the surveys although as discussed in paragraph 3.24, the scope of the question contained in the Climate Change Action Plan survey was more limited, although still viable for a comparison.

4.37   The combined gender statistics shown below in table 32 is made up of data taken from tables 24 and 28. This shows that more females than males have been engaging in the surveys undertaken by the Council. The difference between the response levels is notable but is not considered that the data demonstrates that there is a significant lack of engagement from males and that this group can be considered hard to reach.

Table 30. Combined comparison of the genders of both consultations and the population of Runnymede

Census Data			Runnymede Data		
Sex	Number	Percent	Age Group	Number	Percent
Male	42,534	48.3	Male	291	40.14
Female	45,545	51.7	Female	434	59.86
Total	**88,079**	**100**		**725**	**100**

Summary and Key Findings

4.38   A number of key findings can be drawn from the analysis of the responses received to the two surveys. These are set out below:

- Overall, there is no reason to be concerned about the level of engagement amongst either males or females;
- There is a significant overrepresentation amongst the 35 to 74 age groups;
- The survey means excluded responses from those aged 13 years and under. Innovative means will need to be considered if we wish to consult this age group;
- The 16 to 34 age groups are significantly underrepresented;
- There was a zero response from the Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African community;
- Those of Asian ethnicity were underrepresented;
- There is an overrepresentation of white respondents across the two surveys.

5. Consulting Hard to Reach Groups

5.1 In constructing the draft engagement strategy, consideration must be given to maximising engagement from groups recognised as being hard-to-reach. This is also at the core of the Governments ambition for PIDs (see section 1). Achieving this will provide a more robust evidence base and maximise the chances of positive outcomes for all sections of the community.

5.2 Runnymede Borough Council have previously identified several hard-to-reach groups in its adopted 2021 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and which this Local Plan engagement strategy seeks to build upon. These are:

- Minority Ethnic Groups including the Gypsy and Traveller communities

- Disabled People

- Young people/school children

- Older People

- Low income groups

5.3 As part of the Climate Change Action Plan and Open Space consultations undertaken by Runnymede Borough Council, and explained in chapter 4, data on ethnicity and age was collected. The analysis of this data showed that there was an underrepresentation of younger persons (up to 25 years of age) and Minority and Ethnic Groups. This is consistent with the list previously published in the SCI.

5.4 In contrast, where data is available (as referred to in chapter 4), the proportion of older persons (75+ years of age) responding to consultations was broadly consistent with the demographic composition of Runnymede. Whilst the analysis of these consultations cannot definitively state that there is no issue engaging this demographic group, it does suggest that this is perhaps less of an issue than it is for other segments of the population. However it would be sensible to investigate methods of maximising engagement with this group as it has previously been identified as an issue.

5.5 There was no data collected regarding disability or income in the previous two consultations where equalities information was captured, so no comment can be made as to the current level of engagement of these groups. In light of this it is considered prudent to consider that disabled residents and low income households continue to be treated as hard-to-reach groups.

5.6 It may be the case that some of the consultation activities devised can be tailored to focus on particular under-represented groups, for example, most social media platforms are equipped with a facility which allows for posts to primarily to be targeted to users of certain characteristics such as age, ethnicity or location. This may not be the only activity which can be focused in such a way, but existing methods are unlikely to achieve the desired response rates alone. As such, more innovative approaches will need to be utilised to maximise engagement with these communities.

5.7 The remainder of this section will seek to demonstrate means that the Council could utilise in engaging these communities during the preparation of the Local Plan.

Minority Ethnic Groups including the Gypsy and Traveller Communities

5.8   The analysis of the two consultations described in chapter 4 shows a very high response rate from residents who identify as 'White'. These was a significant over-representation as a percentage of respondents compared with other ethnic groups in Runnymede.

5.9   However, it is considered necessary to take a more targeted view and not consider ethnicity in isolation to identify potential minority groups within this category. The data collected on country of birth shows that close to 18,000 residents who responded to the census were born outside the UK, more than 7,500 of these were from Africa and Asia. If this is considered alongside the prevalence of a wide number of primary languages (Table 7) and the 3,545 households lacking an adult who speaks English as a primary language (Table 8) then it is entirely possible that a sizeable proportion of the population may up to now have been excluded from consultations due to language considerations. In order to counter this the Council may wish to explore the practicality of publishing consultation documents in a select number of alternate languages. This has the potential to increase the levels of engagement amongst these residents.

5.10   The published Census data does not currently provide specific information for the Gypsy and Traveller communities at the borough level however, the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation 2018[1] (currently being updated), shows a notable population in Runnymede. The Council's experience is that these communities do not necessarily engage directly with planning policy consultations. The Council will therefore seek to take a proactive approach when engaging its gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople communities.   The Council has previously been successful in engaging with these communities in different areas of work, for example in producing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments and has good relationships with representative groups (including the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, Surrey Community Action and the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum) and the residents on a number of sites. It is hoped that that this will be advantageous during the preparation of the Local Plan. The Council has previously delivered leaflets to residents of known traveller sites informing them of upcoming projects and engaged with representative groups as part of its engagement. These techniques may be replicated through the Local Plan process.

5.11   The Council will also seek to identify any appropriate cultural groups, such as the North Surrey Ukrainian Support Group, and approach them to see if they can raise awareness of the Local Plan consultations and processes. If invited, officers from the Planning Policy Team may attend meetings of these groups to discuss planning matters with members.

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[1] 2030 Local Plan Evidence Base documents – Runnymede Borough Council

5.12   The Council will also look at the geographical distribution of the population. As referenced in paragraph 2.2, the analytics undertaken within this document has been conducted at a local authority level but there may be scope to interrogate this data at a smaller geographical scale. There are a range of potential geographical scales that the Council could review. Subject to this data being made available, these are listed below with an indicative size of each based on data published by ONS:

- Output Areas [OA] – 40 to 250 households
- Lower Super Output Areas [LSOA] – 400 to 1,200 households
- Middle Super Output Areas [MSOA] – 2,000 to 6,000 households
- Wards – 14 electoral wards in Runnymede. Further information is available on the Council's website

5.13   The ability to gather this data should provide more information on areas of the Borough which have the highest concentration of minority ethnic populations. This information may give the Council the ability to focus on small geographies where the proportion of ethnic or minority populations is high and establish activities designed to maximise engagement in these areas. Whilst the nature of these activities is still being considered, examples may include leaflet drops, organising a public meeting within these areas and attending/contacting existing representative groups within these areas.

Disabled People

5.14   Runnymede has at least 12,842 residents who have a disability which impacts on their day-to-day lives (table 7). This represents 14.58% of the population. This group is included even though data related to disability was not collected in the surveys discussed in section 4. The rationale for including this group, anticipated to have had low engagement levels in planning consultations previously, is based on it previously being identified as hard-to-reach by Runnymede Borough Council in its SCI. A number of other local authorities within Surrey have also identified this group as hard to reach including Reigate and Banstead, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath and Waverley.

5.15   A lack of engagement could lead to outcomes which negatively impact upon this group's life experiences. It is therefore essential that the Council seeks to maximise engagement with this group.

5.16   This is not easy to achieve as disability covers a diverse range of conditions and experiences. Reasons for not engaging with consultations may be equally as diverse.

5.17   One potential means of addressing this would be to establish a focus group of disability advocacy groups who can not only speak about the needs of disabled people within their specialised areas but potentially encourage those they represent to participate in the consultations.

5.18   The Council could also investigate the potential for making consultation documents available in larger print for those with visual impairments.

Younger Persons and School Children

5.19   The level of engagement amongst those aged 34 and below was disproportionately low during the Open Space and Climate Change consultations. This is something which will need to be addressed. It should be stated that the demographic analysis shows a complete profile of Runnymede and it is not expected that the 5 to 9 years and under 4 years aged will be proportionately represented as they are likely to lack the skills and interest required to adequately engage.

5.20   One method which the Council has previously used to engage with children (including during Great Big Green Week) has been to visit schools with assistance from a third party to engage students in topical issues through play. Previously, the Council has worked with Brickies who are specialists in this area. They have previously worked with primary school classes utilising lego as an educational tool. On the occasions that the Council has run these sessions before, the feedback has been positive. The Council is considering using such sessions to engage with primary age children during the preparation of the Local Plan, and also devising bespoke engagement sessions for secondary school children who will become adults during the next plan period and potentially form their own households and/or work in the borough. It is possible that other platforms may also be used to capture the views of children, including those based on Minecraft. This would be subject to the level of interest from the schools within Runnymede.

5.21   There may also be potential to offer a session to schools, likely after school, where the Planning Policy team deliver a presentation on planning and the Local Plan and conduct a question-and-answer or focus group style session. This would be done on a voluntary attendance basis. An alternate version of this may be to invite schools to select student representatives to attend a meeting at the Civic Centre to discuss planning matters. This is envisaged to be similar to a Youth Council type model.

5.22   Runnymede is also home to a prestigious university in the Royal Holloway University of London [RHUL]. The university currently has 12,597 students enrolled of which a significant number within the Borough. The vast majority of the students are undergraduates. There are 10,397 undergraduates students which represents 86.23% of the total student cohort. These students typically (but not exclusively) are between 18 and 22 years of age. This would place them within the age range which was underrepresented in both the Open Space and Climate Change consultations. It is hoped that the Council may be able to reach an agreement with RHUL to stage a pop-up event to discuss planning matters with students on campus and collect their views during the different stages of plan preparation. It is recognised that for many of these students, Runnymede will be their home during the term-time only and that they may have another residence elsewhere and may move on entirely at the end of their education. This is not considered to be an issue as a student population is likely to be a permanent characteristic of the Borough and consequently it is important that steps are made to ensure that efforts are being made to engage with them.

5.23   We will investigate the possibility of engaging groups who work with younger persons in a diverse range of areas including sports clubs and youth centres. These groups can act as representatives for this hard to reach group during periods

of consultation. We will also ask these representative groups to communicate details of the consultations to their members which will hopefully increase the response rate.

Older Persons

5.24   In the two consultations analysed in chapter 4, the responses from those aged 75 years and older were broadly proportionate with the population of Runnymede. It is considered however that this group be continue to be considered hard-to-reach for the following reasons:

- The analysis was based on two relatively small consultations;
- The Council has previously identified this group as being hard-to-reach;
- A number of other local authorities within Surrey have also identified this group as being hard-to reach including Surrey Heath, Spelthorne, Reigate & Banstead and Waverley

5.25   The Council will actively seek to maximise the engagement of this group by utilising various methods including utilising existing representative groups and facilities.

5.26   The Council owns and operates three-day centres. These centres are largely frequented by the more elderly residents of the Borough. It may be possible to hold consultation events in these facilities. There may also be other assets owned by the Council, such as the Community Centres which could also present an opportunity to engage with older people (or potentially other hard to reach groups). This will be subject to further review to establish whether they may be good venues to hold consultation events.

5.27   The Council is also aware of a number of groups who act on behalf of the aging population. These groups will be consulted on issues affecting the aging population. These groups may be able to provide an insight into the issues and concerns of the more elderly residents which would be valuable information when developing the new Local Plan.

5.28   It is hoped that these groups may also be able to encourage residents that they engage with to participate in Local Plan consultations and they may also be able to advise on future consultation activities/techniques which have not so far been identified.

Low Income Groups

5.29   Those receiving low-incomes are considered to be one of the most deprived groups in society. It is one of seven variables considered during the construction of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation [IMD] produced by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government [MHCLG] which ranks all 32,844 LSOAs by deprivation levels. This, along with employment deprivation, is given the greatest weight when calculating the deprivation rate which shows just how important it is.

5.30   The current definition of Income Deprivation is set out in paragraph 2.5.3 of the Indices of Deprivation 2019 Research Report and covers the following affected groups:

- Adults and children in Income Support families;
- Adults and children in income-based Jobseeker's Allowance families;
- Adults and children in income-based Employment and Support Allowance families;
- Adults and children in Pension Credit (Guarantee) families;
- Adults and children in Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit families not already counted, that is those who are not in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-based Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit (Guarantee) and whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefit) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs;
- Adults and children in Universal Credit families where no adult is in 'Working - no requirements' conditionality regime;
- Asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence support, accommodation support, or both.

5.31   The Council is already committed to holding a number of events around the Borough at different times, on different days of the week and in different settlements during periods of consultation where residents and stakeholders can discuss planning policy matters related to the Local Plan with members of the Planning Policy team. It is hoped that through such roadshow style events, the majority of residents will have the opportunity to attend at least one of these events if they wish to, even if it is not in the settlement they live in.

5.32   There are also a number of organisations operating in and around Runnymede, such as the Foodbank, who support low-income residents. The Council's Community Action Group meetings are also attended by a range of organisations who work with vulnerable and low income households. It may be possible to consult with these groups to see if information about the Local Plan could be distributed by them.

5.33   It is hoped that these bodies may also help to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation among residents.

6. Proposed Engagement Strategy

6.1 In order to maximise response rates to local plan consultations generally and from currently underrepresented/hard to reach groups, the Council has devised a draft engagement strategy. This covers all of the expected consultation phases which the Council is proposing to undertake during the Local Plan update process.

6.2 The Council is currently proposing to undertake three phases of consultation as part of the Local Plan process. This is in line with the expected requirements of the new plan making system. The examination phase of the Local Plan is also included in the draft engagement strategy overleaf as it is likely that residents and stakeholders will have an interest in the proceedings, and the Council will seek to ensure that awareness is raised about this stage of the process. This stage also provides the opportunity for interested parties (who have made representations previously) to respond to the Inspector's questions in writing, and to ask to be heard during the hearing sessions.

6.4 The draft engagement strategy seeks to build on the minimum consultation commitments contained in the Council's adopted SCI. It is expected that SCIs will be replaced by Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) in the new plan making system which is expected to be introduced by the end of 2025. At the time of writing however, the Council's adopted SCI remains in force.

6.5 Pulling together the findings from the demographic analysis, the analysis of who has responded to previous consultations and factoring in the information gathered on possible hard to reach groups, the Council has produced a draft engagement strategy for the Local Plan. This can be seen at figure 2 below and sets out the methods and activities proposed to be utilised at each stage of Local Plan development. The range of methods proposed are intended to reach and engage a wide variety of residents and stakeholders.

Figure 2. Draft engagement strategy

Stage	What will our Engagement Strategy seek to achieve? (NOTE: these messages will be reviewed once full details of the new plan making system have been published, and as such, should be considered as subject to change)	*Possible Activities*
1. Scoping and early participation stage. Public Consultation Date TBC	1. To officially notify the public of the Council's intention to commence plan making (4 months notice required). 2. To invite views on what the plan should contain and feedback on key issues that should be addressed. This will include signposting people towards our website and asking them to attend our 'roadshow'. 3. To garner the views of communities and key stakeholders on how they would like to be engaged throughout the process. 4. To give people an understanding of the development needs of the area and the scale of challenges to be grappled with. 5. To help people understand why they should get involved and encourage them to sign up to the Planning Policy database. 6. To engage as many people as possible to comment during the scoping consultation.	• Internal consultation such as staff newsletters and councillor briefings. • Information to be posted on the Council's website including FAQs. • Targeted digital media advertising to promote the consultation. • Advertise consultation on the Nextdoor community website. • Tweets related to development of a new Local Plan, and promoting the public consultation. Link back to Runnymede's website and Facebook pages. • Community Planning Panel-online MS Teams Meeting/forum. • Possible use of Citizen's Engagement Panel for focus group style event. • Send letters to statutory bodies and all registered on the Council's Planning Policy database. • Targeted consultation with hard-to-reach groups (or the bodies representing them) (see the types of activity which may be undertaken by the Council in chapter 5). • Road show style event where drop in sessions will be held across the borough. Events to be held on different days, at different times and in different settlements • Make documents available for public inspection at the council offices and local libraries during period of consultation. • Contact faith groups within the Borough asking them to raise awareness of the consultations and/or whether they will allow materials to be placed in their venues.

Stage	What will our Engagement Strategy seek to achieve? (NOTE: these messages will be reviewed once full details of the new plan making system have been published, and as such, should be considered as subject to change)	*Possible Activities*
		• Display posters about the consultation in various locations across the Borough where residents are likely to see them, for example, public notice boards and a selection of other publicly accessible buildings. • Runnymede E-News & Business Newsletter • All Borough (all households) mail out about the Scoping consultation and Local Plan update more generally. • Animated PowerPoint film: Overview of what a Local Plan is and the process. • Online and hard copy questionnaires
2. Plan visioning and strategy development stage. Public consultation. Date TBC	1. To gather views to help establish the vision, aims and objectives of the local plan, building on the work done at the scoping stage. 2. To gather views from a wide range of stakeholders on the issues the area is facing and how they may be tackled in the local plan. 3. To engage as many people as possible to comment on the Vision and Issues material being consulted on. 4. To advertise our Vision and Issues consultation; pointing people towards	All activities listed for stage 1 above with the exception of: • All borough mailout as this is intended to be a one off activity at the start of plan making. Additional activities at this stage are likely to include: • Hold a 'shape your place' event - with local primary and secondary schools and sixth form/colleges. Group activities will be dependent on age but may include building a Lego town[2], Minecraft world[3] or Junk model world[4], allowing children to express how they wish to see development of buildings and spaces in the future with Brickies. These sessions have been popular in the past when used during the Great Big Green Week and are an optimal way of engaging

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[2] Lego town competition and setting up a Brickies workshop would come at a cost.

[3] Minecraft is free to download. Children could type up piece about their own Minecraft world and send to the Council. Nominal amount for competition, could be part of a curriculum geography class. Lesson planning and teacher involvement. Posters in school and we could get other Local Plan posters on notice boards.

[4] Junk Modelling using free recycled materials, nominal amount for competition, could be part of a curriculum geography class lesson planning and teacher involvement.

Stage	What will our Engagement Strategy seek to achieve? (NOTE: these messages will be reviewed once full details of the new plan making system have been published, and as such, should be considered as subject to change)	Possible Activities
	our website and asking them to attend our 'roadshow'. 5. To engage people on design issues and a design vision for future development.	the younger population of Runnymede in a simplified and meaningful way. Youth Council/focus group style events with secondary age children. • Hold an event with businesses to debate the possible issues and options for the economic and town centre strategies.
3. Evidence gathering and drafting the plan stage. This stage will not include any public consultation, but will involve consultation feedback from stages 1 and 2 and lead-in to consultation which will be part of the next	1.To feedback a summary of the key issues raised during the early scoping and 'Vision and Issues' consultations. 2.To provide further focus and information on any core issues that arise. 3.To confirm the current focus of plan making activity as well as the next steps in the plan-making process and the timing of consultation on the Draft Plan. 4. To signpost interested parties to the Local Plan hub webpage for updates on progress with producing the evidence base.	• Publish findings in Runnymede Newsletters: E-News & Business Newsletter, and to all registered on the Planning Policy Database. • FAQs developed to help answer core questions that have arisen. FAQ accessed through our website and Facebook pages. • Nextdoor community website – link to Facebook page. • Community Planning Panel online meeting. Feedback on comments received and Council responses and next steps. • Utilise social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X) to highlight key findings from the consultation and next steps.

Stage	What will our Engagement Strategy seek to achieve? (NOTE: these messages will be reviewed once full details of the new plan making system have been published, and as such, should be considered as subject to change)	Possible Activities
stage of plan making		
4a. Engagement, proposing changes and submission of the plan stage. (Regulation 19 stage) Public consultation. Date TBC	1. To advertise our formal consultation on the Draft Plan, to point people towards our website and how they should make representations on the Plan. 2. To encourage as many people as possible to make representations on the Draft Plan. 3. To signpost interested parties to where they can access support and ask questions.	• Internal consultation such as staff newsletter, councillor briefings. • Information to be posted on the Council's website including FAQs (updated). • Targeted digital media advertising to promote the consultation • Advertise consultation on the Nextdoor community website. • Tweets related to development of a new Local Plan, and promoting the public consultation. Link back to Runnymede's website and Facebook pages. • Community Planning Panel-online MS Teams Meeting/forum. • Send letters to statutory bodies and all registered on the Council's Planning Policy database. • Targeted consultation with hard-to-reach groups (or the bodies representing them). • Make documents available for public inspection at the council offices and local libraries during period of consultation. • Contact faith groups within the Borough asking them to raise awareness of the consultation and/or whether they will allow materials to be placed in their venues. • Display posters about the consultation in various locations across the Borough where residents are likely to see them. • Online and hard copy questionnaires • Press releases in local and regional media
4b. Engagement,		• Ultilise Runnymede Newsletters E-News & Business Newsletter, and Planning Policy database.

Stage	What will our Engagement Strategy seek to achieve? (NOTE: these messages will be reviewed once full details of the new plan making system have been published, and as such, should be considered as subject to change)	Possible Activities
proposing changes and submission of the plan stage. (Regulation 19 stage) Consultation feedback from draft plan consultation and submission of Local Plan to Secretary of State for examination. Date TBC	1. To feedback a summary of the key issues raised during the Draft Plan consultation. 2. To provide further focus and information on any core issues that arise. 3. To confirm any proposed modifications in response to comments made. 4. To confirm the next steps in the plan-making process: Inform the community that the draft plan has now been completed and submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. 5. Outline the next steps in the process and when we anticipate the Examination to take place.	• FAQs developed further to help answer core questions that have arisen. FAQ accessed through our website and Facebook pages. • Nextdoor community website – link to Facebook page. • Community Planning Panel online forum. Feedback on comments received during consultation and Council responses including any proposed modifications and next steps. • Utilise social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X) to highlight key findings from the consultation and next steps.
5. The Local Plan Examination Date TBC	1. To thank people for their input to date during the local plan process and inform them of the Local Plan Examination process, hearings timetable and matters to be discussed.	• Utilise Runnymede E-News & Business Newsletters and Planning Policy mailing list to direct interested parties to the Council's examination webpage. • Local media • Update FAQs on local plan hub website.

Stage	What will our Engagement Strategy seek to achieve? (NOTE: these messages will be reviewed once full details of the new plan making system have been published, and as such, should be considered as subject to change)	Possible Activities
	2. To direct people to the Council's Examination webpage for more information	• Local Plan Examination webpage to be kept up to date and will act as a central location for all information relating to the independent examination process.
6. Finalisation and adoption of digital plan Date TBC	1. To communicate the Inspector's decision on the Local Plan 2. To communicate the Council's consideration of the Local Plan for adoption. 3. To advertise our intention to adopt the Local Plan.	• Runnymede E-News & Business Newsletter, and Planning Policy mailing list. • Update FAQs on Local Plan hub website. • Update web pages, Facebook and Tweet news of adoption and thank all individuals and groups (including the CPP) for their involvement. • Advertise the conclusion of the process in local media using press releases.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 This document outlines the proposed engagement strategy for Runnymede Borough Council as it begins to prepare a new Local Plan. This includes a range of consultation techniques and activities in an attempt to better engage with a diverse audience including hard-to-reach groups.

7.2 During each consultation stage, the Council will seek to collect some basic equalities data from respondents. This will enable the Council to analyse the responses to the consultations against the population characteristics of the Borough as set out in chapter 2.

7.3 It is recognised however that the collection of equalities data is not, and cannot be, mandatory. Respondents reserve the right not to complete this section of any consultation questionnaire. Despite these limitations, it is considered that this method remains the most efficient way of monitoring engagement with the local plan from different groups

7.4 At the conclusion of each round of public consultation, the Council will review the demographic composition of the respondents. This will show who has engaged with the consultation and if the attempts at increasing engagement with under-represented groups has been successful.

7.5 This will also allow the Council to review which engagement techniques have and have not been successful and modify the local plan consultation strategy accordingly. This is consistent with paragraph 41 of the government's response to the July 2023 Planning Reforms consultation [5] which advises that such documents should be subject to review and not a one-off document which is rigid and inflexible.

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[5] Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation, July 2023https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plan-making-reforms-consultation-on-implementation

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