

The Examiner, Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan

C/o Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd

Via email (copied to Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum)

30 October 2025

Dear Mr Stebbing,

Response to Examiner's Questions

Thank you for your preliminary questions for Runnymede Borough Council and Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum (VWNF) in your letter dated 20th October 2025 (ref. 01/DAS/VWNP) in respect of your examination of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan (VWNP). As requested, I have published this on the examination website at: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/3>.

I am pleased to hear that you are happy at this stage for the VWNP examination to proceed and note that you propose to carry out an unaccompanied site visit w/c 10 November 2025.

In response to Question 8 of your letter (Examiner Procedural Matters and Questions, dated 20th October 2025), I can confirm that that Council's decision taken by its Planning Committee on 24th September 2025 is that the commencement of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan Review will await the introduction of the new plan-making system, anticipated to be introduced by Central Government by the end of 2025.

It has not been possible to formally commence the update of the Local Plan on 1st September as originally intended in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), as the launch of the new plan-making system at a national level is currently awaited, and recent correspondence from the Government's Chief Planner has confirmed that Local Planning Authorities must ensure that all formal plan-making activities are carried out under one plan-making regime. Informal plan-making activities are permitted and are currently being carried out by the Planning Policy Team in advance of the new national plan-making system being launched.

Additionally, Runnymede Borough Council has been waiting for the Government to announce its preferred model for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), before deciding how to progress plan-making in Runnymede. Now that the preferred geography has been announced (as per the [Letter to Surrey council leaders](#) published 28th October 2025), discussions with proposed unitary partners will commence regarding the future of plan-making in the new West Surrey unitary authority, and a report is due to be taken back to Planning Committee (likely in January 2026- but to be agreed with the Chairman of the Committee) to agree next steps for plan-making in Runnymede. Further details can be found in the report to Planning Committee on 22nd October 2025: [Planning Committee Report October 2025](#).

Pending the outcome of these discussions and the details of the new plan-making system being published as anticipated, officers currently intend to amend the LDS as appropriate and take it to Planning Committee for consideration early in the new year.

Please do let us know if you have any further queries for the Borough Council as part of the examination of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Corbett | Principal Planning Policy Officer
T: 01932 425239 | mike.corbett@runnymede.gov.uk