

Draft Statement of Consultation on Article 4 Direction
for removal of permitted development rights to change from Class
E (commercial class) to C3 (residential) on Strategic Employment
Areas

The Direction was made on 30th January 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Runnymede Borough Council made a non-immediate direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) on 30th January 2026 which removed permitted development rights to change of use from Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to C3 (residential), known as Class MA, across five locations in the Borough.
- 1.2 The Article 4 Direction applies to all five Strategic Employment Areas as defined in Policy IE2 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan. However, the boundary of one of the Strategic Employment Area, SEA3: The Causeway and Pinetrees Business Park (shown with a red edge with black hatching on the Direction) has been amended to remove the three previous office buildings located at 30 The Causeway. This is because all three of the office buildings on this site have been converted to housing since the adoption of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan, resulting in the loss of approximately 6,900 sqms of employment floorspace.
- 1.3 This Statement of Consultation summarises the consultation and notification measures which are being undertaken to publicise the 'making' of the Direction. Once the consultation is complete, the Statement of Consultation will be updated to include the consultation responses received, and to set out the Council's response to them.

2. Summary of Proposed Consultation and Notification Measures

- 2.1 The requirements for notification of making of a non-immediate Article 4 direction is set out in paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 of the GPDO. Notice must be served as follows:
 - By local advertisement (1(1)(a))
 - By site notice in at least two locations within the area (1(1)(b))
 - By serving notice on every owner and occupier (1(1)(c)) unless individual service is impracticable because it is difficult to identify or locate that person or the number of owners or occupiers makes individual service impracticable (other than for statutory undertakers)
 - By notifying the Secretary of State (1(6)).
 - Give notice to the county planning authority, if any (1(8)(b)).
- 2.2 The GPDO further states (1(4)(d)) that the notice must specify a period of at least 21 days within which any representation may be made to the local planning authority.
- 2.3 Formal consultation on the Article 4 Direction will take place for 6 weeks from Friday 30th January 2026 to Friday 13th March 2026. This is three weeks longer than required by the Regulations, to allow as many representations to be submitted as possible. The approach taken to consultation is consistent with the [Council's Statement of Community Involvement](#).
- 2.4 The following steps will be taken to publicise the consultation and show that these steps have been complied with.

Local Advertisement

- A new webpage was set out on the Council's website setting out details about the consultation
- The Communications Team will be publicising the consultation on various social media platforms.
- Local Advertisement was placed in the Surrey Advertiser on Friday 30th January 2026.

Site notices

- The statutory requirement is that site notices should be placed in at least two locations within the area.
- Given the geographical extent of this direction, it is considered that far more than two site notices will be required on some of the Strategic Employment Areas. Site notices will be placed at all five of the Strategic Employment Areas Employment Sites at the start of the consultation period. At least two notices will be placed at each of the employment areas, but more will be placed at the areas with multiple accesses. Photographs will be taken of each of the notices in situ as a record that the notices were put up.

Owners and Occupiers

2.5 Paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 3 of the GPDO makes clear that local planning authorities are not required to serve notice on every owner and occupier of every part of land within the area if:

- (a) individual service on that owner or occupier is impracticable because it is difficult to identify or locate that person; or
- (b) the number of owners or occupiers within the area to which the direction relates makes individual service impracticable

2.6 The Council is of the view that the number of owners and occupiers within the area makes identifying them all impracticable. In 2020 the Council started to try and locate the landowners and occupiers within the proposed Article 4 area, based on title checks. It was found that many of these, being commercial properties, had a separate owner and occupier, which meant that the number of organisations and individuals to contact was significantly higher. Almost all properties required an individual Land Registry search. Land Registry ownership data generally identifies address details only, meaning contact by letter would have been required. The Council does not have the resources to individually identify the owner or occupier of each property and to send out a letter to each.

2.7 Reading Borough Council in November 2021, cited Broxbourne's Article 4 Direction Secretary of State's modification letter in their Article 4 Direction work. This stated that:

“Please let us know when and where the notices are to be published – we assume, given the numbers involved, it may be impracticable to serve the owners and occupiers of the buildings / land affected and accordingly only local advertisement and site display is required pursuant to GPDO Article 5(1)(a) and (b) and 5(2).”.

2.8 The council considers that this approach is in line with the requirements and is

consistent with what has been applied elsewhere in similar circumstances.

Email Notifications

- 2.9 The council will send out emails to all those on the Planning Policy Database (approximately 1,000 email addresses) at the start of the consultation period and also letters, to those on the database for whom we haven't been provided with an email address. Those contacted by email/ letter include developers, planning agents, residents, statutory consultees, utilities etc.
- 2.10 In addition, the Council's Economic Development Team sends out a monthly newsletter, known as 'Business Runnymede', to 550 business contacts in the borough. The Council will be sending out details of this consultation, together with a link as to where they can find out more about the Article 4 Direction, as part of the February 'Business Runnymede' newsletter.

Secretary of State

- 2.11 Paragraph 1(6) of Schedule 3 of the GPDO specifies that the Secretary of State must be notified of the direction on the first date that notification was given under sub-paragraph (1). The notice, the direction itself and the Justification Report containing the evidence for the Direction will therefore be sent to the Secretary of State on the day that this notice is first published.

Surrey County Council

- 2.12 Paragraph 1(8) of Schedule 3 of the GPDO specifies that on "making a direction under article 4(1)
 - (a) A county planning authority must give notice of it to any district planning authority in whose district the area or part of the area to which the direction relates is situated; and
 - (b) Except in metropolitan districts, a district planning authority must give notice of it to the county planning authority, if any."
- 2.13 Consequently, the Planning and Place Making Team at Surrey County Council will be sent a copy of the notice, the direction itself and the Justification Report containing the evidence for the Direction on the day that this notification is given.

Website

- 2.14 Information about the proposed Article 4 Direction was added to the Council's website under the [Supplementary Planning documents and other guidance page](#). The web page describes the purpose of the consultation, provides links to the consultation material available and also sets out how to make representations. Hard copies of documents, including representation forms, have been placed in all of the libraries and the reception at the Civic Centre for the full six-week period. In addition, as some of the Strategic

Employment Areas lie close to the boundary of Runnymede Borough, hard copies will also be put in Staines and Weybridge libraries.

- 2.15 During the consultation period people will be able to send in their comments by emailing or post.
- 2.16 If the direction is confirmed, the notices of confirmation of the direction will need to be served in the same way as notices of making the direction, including by site notice, local advertisement, notification of statutory consultees, planning policy consultation database and the Secretary of State and Surrey County Council.
- 2.17 The direction will come into force on Monday 8th February 2027, and from that date any proposal for development specified in the direction, within the specified area, would require planning permission.