

Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Information Statement

1. Purpose of this information statement

A referendum on the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan will be held on Thursday 7 May 2026. This statement provides information on the referendum that is taking place and how to take part in it.

2. What are Neighbourhood Plans?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and gives new rights and powers to help local communities shape new development in their local area. It enables communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and develop local policies for determining planning applications.

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

3. The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan

The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum. The Forum established an area which the plan applies to, and this is detailed in the map below. The boundary of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area was designated on 27 March 2019, and the Forum was re-designated for a further five years on 5 August 2024. The referendum area is identical to the area that has been designated as the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area. People who live within the neighbourhood area can vote on the neighbourhood plan.

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

4. Referendum on the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan

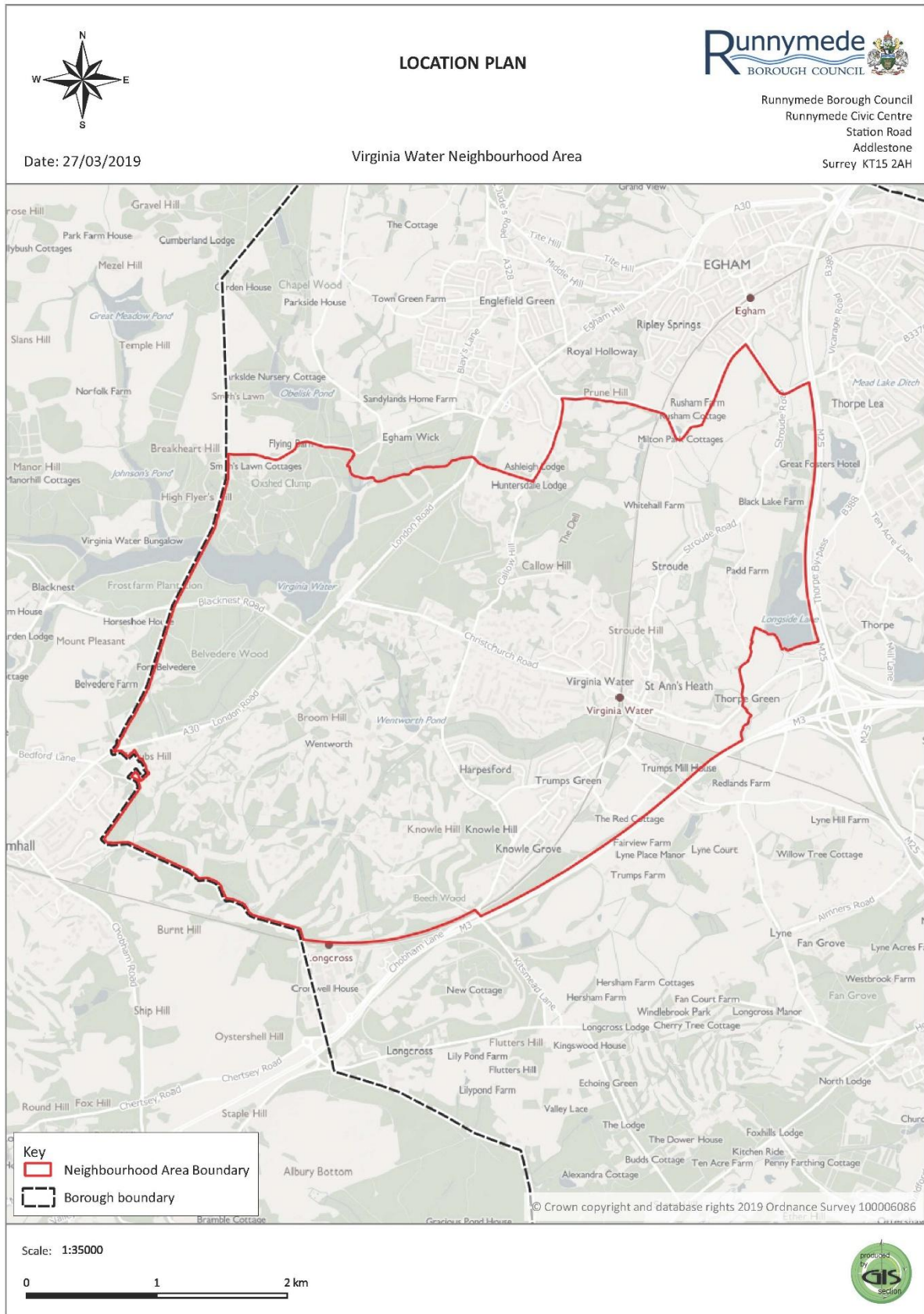
A referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' on a specific question. For this referendum you will receive a Ballot Paper which asks the following question:

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

5. What does the Referendum result mean?

If more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan the Council must 'make' i.e. adopt the neighbourhood plan, as soon as reasonably practical. It will become part of the statutory development plan for the area to be used in determining decision on planning applications.

Map of Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area



6. Can I vote in the Referendum?

A person is entitled to vote in the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan Referendum if on the 7 May 2026:

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

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

To vote in the referendum, you must be registered to vote by midnight on Monday, 20 April. Electors who are currently on the register at a qualifying address do not need to make a new registration to vote at this poll.

7. How and where can I vote?

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

In person:

On Thursday 7 May between 7.00 am and 10.00 pm at one of your local polling stations below:

- Jurgens Centre, adjacent to the Catholic Church, 91 Harvest Road, Englefield Green, Surrey, TW20 0QR
- Old Church Hall, rear of Station Parade, Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 4AB
- Thorpe Village Hall, Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe, Surrey, TW20 8TE
- Virginia Water Community Centre, Beechmont Avenue, Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 4EY

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

By Post:

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

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

Paper applications must be emailed to elec.services@runnymede.gov.uk or deliver it to:

Electoral Services,
Runnymede Borough Council,
The Civic Centre,
Station Road
Addlestone,
KT15 2AH.

The deadline for us to receive your Postal Vote application is 5pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026. You should get your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it does not arrive in time, you can get a replacement up to 5pm on 7 May 2026.

By Proxy:

If you are unable to vote in person you can ask someone to vote on your behalf. This is called a proxy vote. Application to vote proxy can be made online at <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote>

The deadline for us to receive your Proxy vote application is 5pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026. After this date you can still apply for an Emergency Proxy Vote if your circumstances meet certain criteria. Information on how to apply for an emergency proxy is available on <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voting-person-post-or-proxy/voting-proxy> or by phone on 01932 425653.

8. How to mark your ballot paper

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

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

9. Referendum Expenses

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

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to this referendum is £2607.086. The number of persons entitled to vote in the referendum is 4154.

10. The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan and other documents

The plan and other documents¹ as listed below, can be seen online at <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/3>

The specified documents are:

- The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version),
- The independent examiners report into the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan,
- The summary of representations submitted to the examiner,
- The Decision Statement of the Local Planning Authority (Runnymede Borough Council) as published on 18 March 2026, which confirms the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions specified by statute and complies with the provisions made by or under section 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- A statement that sets out the general information as to Town and Country Planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum.

11. Viewing electronic and hard copy versions of the information

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

The information is available on the Runnymede Borough Council neighbourhood planning website: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/3>.

Hard copies of the documentation are also available to view at the Civic Centre in Addlestone, the Virginia Water library:

Civic Offices: Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AH.
Opening times: 9am – 4pm Monday - Friday.

Virginia Water Library: 6 Station Parade, Virginia Water GU25 4AB.
Opening times: Sunday – Monday: Closed, Tuesday: 10am – 4.30pm, Wednesday: 5-7pm, Thursday: 10am – 12.30pm, Friday: 10am – 4.30pm, Saturday: 10am – 1pm.

12. How to find out more

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