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Runnymede Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment

Economy Workstream:
Appendix 2 Planning Policy Context

Runnymede Borough Council

March 2026

Appendix 2. Planning Policy Context

A2.1 This Appendix sets out the national and local planning context for Runnymede. The following documents are reviewed:

- NPPF¹
- PPG
- Runnymede Local Plan (adopted 2020)²
- Economic Development Strategy 2022 to 2026³
- Runnymede Economic Assessment⁴
- Runnymede 2030 Local Plan: Runnymede Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2021⁵
- Surrey's 2050 Place Ambition: Draft Implementation Framework⁶
- Surrey Economic Growth Strategy 2025 – 2030⁷
- Surrey's Economic Future: Forward to 2030 Our Economic Strategy Statement⁸
- Runnymede Functional Economic Area Analysis, 2015⁹
- Runnymede Employment Land Review, 2016¹⁰

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

A2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England and a framework on how Local Plans and Decisions should ensure effective use of land, providing for sufficient development in a sustainable manner.

A2.3 Paragraph 8a highlights that to achieve sustainable development the planning system should have economic, social, and environmental objectives. The economic objective sets out to 'help

¹ December 2024. National Planning Policy Framework.

² Runnymede Borough Council, 2020. Runnymede Local Plan 2030 (adopted 2020). Available at: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/downloads/file/781/adopted-2030-lp>. Accessed February 2025.

³ Runnymede Borough Council, 2022. Economic Development Strategy 2022 to 2026. Available at: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/downloads/file/1535/economic-development-strategy>. Accessed February 2025.

⁴ Runnymede Borough Council, 2023. Runnymede Economic Assessment. Available at: <https://www.businessrunnymede.com/why-runnymede/economicassessment.pdf>. Accessed February 2025.

⁵ Runnymede Borough Council, 2022. Runnymede 2030 Local Plan Runnymede Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2021. Available at: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/downloads/file/1279/slaa-2021-report-final>. Accessed February 2025.

⁶ Surrey County Council, 2023. Surrey 2050 Place Ambition: A Collective Vision for Place Leadership, Infrastructure and Good Growth version 2. Available at: https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/354504/Surrey-Place-Ambition-Version-2-2023.pdf. Accessed February 2025.

⁷ Surrey County Council, 2025. Surrey's Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2035. Available at: <https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s101157/DRAFT-+ANNEX+1-+Executive+Summary-+Surreys+economic+growth+strategy+2025-2035.pdf>. Accessed February 2025.

⁸ Surrey County Council, 2020. Surrey's Economic Future: Forward to 2030 Our Economic Strategy Statement.

⁹ Runnymede Borough Council, 2015. Runnymede 2035 Functional Economic Area Analysis.

¹⁰ Runnymede Borough Council, 2016. Runnymede 2035 Employment Land Review.

build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, and ensuring sufficient land to support growth, innovation and improved productivity’.

A2.4 Paragraph 11a notes that in favour of sustainable development plans should seek to meet the development needs of the area and align growth and infrastructure, promoting a sustainable pattern of development.

A2.5 The NPPF highlights that effective strategic planning across local authority boundaries will play a vital and increasing role in how sustainable growth is delivered, by addressing key spatial issues including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure and building economic and climate resilience (Paragraph 24).

A2.6 Paragraph 85 indicates how planning policies and decisions should support existing and future opportunities for economic growth and productivity, creating conditions where businesses can invest, expand and adapt, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Policies should allow areas to build on strengths, counter any weaknesses and address challenges of the future; this is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

A2.7 Paragraph 86 notes planning policies should:

- Positively and proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, in line with industrial strategies (at the local and national level¹¹);
- Set criteria and identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- Pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy¹²;
- Seek to address potential barriers to investment; and
- Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan (including being able to respond to changes in economic circumstances).

A2.8 Paragraph 87 states that the specific locational requirements of different sectors should be recognised and addressed, including making provision for:

¹¹ Particularly, the Invest 2035: The UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy (Green Paper) and the identified priority growth sectors: advanced manufacturing; clean energy industries; creative industries; defence industries; digital and technology businesses; financial services; life sciences; and professional and business services.

¹² Including identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics.

- clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure required to support growth in these industries;
- storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations, allowing for efficient and reliable handling of goods;
- the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience.

A2.9 Paragraph 124 notes that effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy lifestyle should be promoted.

A2.10 The NPPF notes that 'local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership' (Paragraph 126) and that 'planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability' (Paragraph 127).

Draft NPPF (December 2025)

A2.11 Proposed reforms to the NPPF were published for consultation in December 2025. The proposals increase the support given to economic growth and sets out much clearer policies for planning and decision-making.

A2.12 Significant reforms set out in the draft NPPF include:

- Requiring the development of Spatial Development Strategies, establishing a positive vision for future growth and change and providing a clear spatial framework for investment and growth.
- Boosting local and regional economies by giving substantial weight to the benefits of supporting business growth and having regard the Industrial Strategy and any relevant strategic and local strategies for economic development and regeneration.
- Further strengthening the language around the modern economy.

Planning Practice Guidance

A2.13 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out guidance on assessing economic needs and the need for and supply of employment land, which includes preparing a robust evidence base to understand these needs¹³.

A2.14 PPG states that preparing and maintaining evidence about business needs to be done through liaising closely with the business community and assessing¹⁴:

- The best fit functional economic market area
- Existing stock of land for employment uses
- Recent patterns of employment land supply and loss
- Evidence of market demand, sourced from local data, market intelligence, surveys, and discussions
- Market signals relating to economic growth, diversification and innovation
- Evidence of market failure.

A2.15 There is no standard approach to defining functional economic market areas but factors that can be considered include¹⁵:

- Travel to work areas
- Housing market areas
- Flow of goods, services and information within the local economy
- Service market for consumers
- Administrative area
- Catchment areas of facilities providing cultural and social well-being
- Transport networks

A2.16 PPG guidance states that market signals can be used to forecast future needs and can include¹⁶:

- Sectoral and employment forecasts (labour demand)
- Assessments of current and future local labour supply
- Analysis of past take-up of employment land and future property market requirements
- Consultations, studies of business trends, understanding of innovative and changing business models, and economic and employment statistics.

¹³ Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 2a-025-20190220, Revision date: 20 02 2019.

¹⁴ Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 2a-026-20190220, Revision date: 20 02 2019.

¹⁵ Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 61-019-20190315, Revision date: 15 03 2019.

¹⁶ Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 2a-027-20190220, Revision date: 20 02 2019.

A2.17 PPG notes that assessing need and allocating space for the logistics sector should be considered as the sector plays an important role in contributing to local economy. Where a need for logistics facilities exists, the scale of need across the relevant market areas should be identified, informed by: consultations with logistics developers and occupiers, market signals, economic forecasts, and alignment to economic priorities in policy¹⁷.

A2.18 PPG notes it is important to understand specific locational requirements of specialist or new sectors. Through clustering industries such as high tech, engineering, digital, creative and logistics activities, it can support collaboration, innovation, productivity, and contributes to driving economic prospects of the area in which they locate. Understanding the needs for land and premises of these sectors should be considered¹⁸.

Runnymede Local Plan (adopted 2020)

A2.19 The Runnymede Local Plan, adopted in July 2020, provides the framework to guide the future development in the Borough of Runnymede. The Plan's vision states that by 2023, "Runnymede will have remained an attractive area for business and innovation with a competitive and high value economy and development of the Borough's Enterprise Zone at Longcross Park." (p. 24).

A2.20 Policy SD1: Spatial Development Strategy sets out to make provision for a minimum of 7,507 net additional dwellings and sets out to meet employment needs through a business park of 20,000 sq m at New Haw and an office/business park of 79,025 sq m at Longcross Enterprise Zone.

A2.21 Policy SD9: Longcross Garden Village sets out the allocation of land for a new garden village at Longcross. The development includes delivering:

- A minimum of 1,700 net additional dwellings and specialist accommodation, including a mix of housing tenures and types, 35% affordable housing and 10 serviced plots for Travelling Show People.
- Up to 79,025 sq m of gross employment floorspace with up to 36,000 sq m of Data Centre floorspace with a minimum of 16,000 sq m of B1 office employment floorspace within Longcross Park Enterprise Zone. The allocation will include diverse space provisions from spaces for small start-ups to large offices and a hotel and conferencing facilities.

¹⁷ Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 2a-031-20190722, Revision date: 22 07 2019.

¹⁸ Paragraph: 032 Reference ID: 2a-032-20190722, Revision date: 22 07 2019.

A2.22 Policy IE1: Employment Allocations sets out that Strategic Land Availability Assessment site 51: Byfleet Road, New Haw is allocated for employment use (20,000 sq m of B1c/B8 floorspace) to ensure a range and choice of employment floorspace is available to accommodate the predicted future growth in Runnymede's economy. The policy notes that in addition to the 20,000 sq m allocation, the Council will also consider opportunities for B1(a) or B1(b) office floorspace to be accommodated on the site.

A2.23 Policy IE2: Strategic Employment Areas (SEAs) designates five employment areas that will be safeguarded as Strategic Employment Areas. The Policy notes 'the refurbishment and redevelopment of sites in these areas for employment use, and proposals for the intensification of sites for employment use will be permitted where they accord with other policies in the plan.'

A2.24 Policy IE3: Catering for modern business needs sets out the aim to attract, retain, create and develop businesses, while promoting business competitiveness and allowing for flexibility to meet the needs of businesses and the economy. It sets out that the council will:

- Support proposals to upgrade and redevelop outmoded employment space to cater for modern business needs;
- Encourage a range of types and sizes of new employment floorspace;
- Seek to retain, re-provision and support the provision of incubator units, small warehousing units and small serviced office accommodation;
- Support small scale rural offices or other small-scale rural employment development.

A2.25 Policy IE4: The visitor economy states that 'high quality visitor experiences that increase the contribution to tourism, arts and cultural heritage make to the quality of life, social and cultural well-being and economic growth will be supported', where they align with the appropriate criteria.

A2.26 The hierarchy of centres in the Borough is defined in Policy IE5 and is as follows:

- Town Centres: Addlestone; Chertsey; Egham
- Local Centres: Englefield Green; Ottershaw; Virginia Water; Woodham and New Haw

Runnymede Economic Assessment

A2.27 The Runnymede Economic Assessment (2023) outlines the overall economic performance, competitiveness and productivity of Runnymede.

A2.28 The assessment found that Runnymede has a highly competitive economy, a significant hub of national and international companies, and an advantageous strategic location. It highlights

a number of key national and international businesses in Runnymede including Netflix, Gartner and Samsung.

A2.29 The key sectors of employment for residents in Runnymede are identified as Wholesale and retail trade, Human health, Education, Information and Communication and Transport and Storage sectors.

A2.30 The assessment highlights the high job density in Runnymede (above national and regional levels) and that it has the highest job density in Surrey. It highlights the relatively small population in relation to the volume of businesses and the high level of in-commuting.

A2.31 The Borough has high skills levels, and the assessment highlights the need for the Borough to focus on skills development to meet future demand for skills driven by automation and the green and digital economy and the need to align skills with employers' needs.

A2.32 Runnymede is one of the top ten most competitive UK economies (UK Competitiveness Index, 2023) and has the highest GVA of all Surrey boroughs. Overall, Runnymede's percentage of large businesses in Surrey (13%) is greater than its proportion of population in Surrey (7%).

A2.33 It was identified in the assessment that, compared to national averages, Runnymede has much greater shares of employment in the Information and Communication; Professional, Scientific, and Technical; and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sectors. It was identified that it has much lower shares of employment within the Manufacturing and Retail sectors.

A2.34 Runnymede has a range of institutions and businesses that place it on the cutting edge of research and innovation, and it is highlighted that emerging sectors such as creative technologies has growth in Runnymede in recent years.

Economic Development Strategy 2022 to 2026

A2.35 The Runnymede Borough Council Economic Development Strategy sets out the vision that 'the Borough continues to be a leading economy in Surrey and the wider sub-region. Runnymede will be a place where business succeed, and residents prosper. An attractive place for investors and visitors.'

A2.36 The Economic Development Strategy has been informed by the Runnymede Economic Assessment 2023.

A2.37 It sets out six objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Business relocation, expansion, and investment in the Borough
- **Objective 2:** Maintaining competitive advantage through business engagement, strengthening business networking and local supply chains.

- **Objective 3:** Developing the vitality and vibrancy of our town centres and growing the tourism and leisure economy
- **Objective 4:** A dynamic workforce for a high-tech, creative economy
- **Objective 5:** Better infrastructure for sustainable growth
- **Objective 6:** Developing the low carbon circular economy

A2.38 The strategy identifies the key sectors with a high share of employment (in comparison to other local authorities) as the Information and Communication; the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and, the Cyber Security sectors.

A2.39 It highlights the significant investment in digital entertainment by Netflix (in Longcross) and identifies digital entertainment as a significant opportunity for accelerating the growth of 'Createch' in the Borough.

A2.40 The key strengths identified are the competitiveness of the area, location and connectivity, large tech sector, good commercial property and being a centre for research and development.

A2.41 The threat identified are skills shortages, lack of investment in infrastructure, high costs, failure to adapt to automation and low carbon and congestion.

A2.42 Associated with its objectives, the strategy highlights various priorities, including:

- **Priority 1:** The strategy emphasizes the need to ensure an adequate stock of employment land is provided by increasing business engagement, promoting strategic employment sites and establishing the need for additional employment land.
- **Priority 2:** Focusing on business engagement and support and on supporting collaboration and innovation to accelerate tech clusters.
- **Priority 3:** The strategy highlights the development of the town centres (increasing footfall and spend) and growing the tourism and leisure sectors, by supporting its development.
- **Priority 4:** To develop a dynamic workforce for high-tech, creative economy, the strategy highlights the need to maintain the Borough's position as a UK tech job cluster by focusing on ensuring emphasis is placed on developing the appropriate skills.
- **Priority 5:** The strategy highlights three main goals: improving sustainable travel, investment in employment areas and town centres and investing in sustainable infrastructure.
- **Priority 6:** Encouraging businesses to be more sustainable and develop the low carbon circular economy.

Runnymede 2030 Local Plan: Runnymede Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2021

A2.43 The Runnymede Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2021 evaluates the availability of land for housing and economic development within the Borough and was conducted as a component of the evidence for the Runnymede Local Plan.

A2.44 It identifies potential sites for housing and employment development in the Borough using a joint methodology with Spelthorne Borough Council, as they have been identified as sharing the same Housing Market Area.

A2.45 Of the 193 sites examined to identify potential land for housing development, 94 of the sites were deemed 'deliverable' i.e. 'suitable, available and achievable for development and therefore can be delivered within five years'. This includes 72 sites for residential, 3 sites for residential institutions, 6 sites for student accommodation 10 sites for pitches and plots¹⁹ and 24 sites for employment development. Some of the sites have been identified as deliverable for multiple uses.

A2.46 The assessment found the 5-year supply of housing to be 3,915 units and that the housing land supply in Runnymede is sufficient for 5.82 years based on an annual 500 dwellings delivery figure (their current housing target).

A2.47 Overall, the assessment identified a supply of 53,783 sq m of gross B-use floorspace.

Surrey's 2050 Place Ambition (2023)

A2.48 Surrey's 2050 Place Ambition 'sets the collective, long-term ambition of Surrey local authorities to achieve *good growth*'. It emphasises the need for ongoing cooperation and alignment in development and infrastructure investment in the County.

A2.49 Strategic framework to guide sustainable growth and enhance quality of life.

A2.50 The approach to delivering 'good growth' is focused on using existing assets.

A2.51 The Priority Themes identified in the Ambition are:

- **Priority Theme 1:** Address the climate emergency
- **Priority Theme 2:** Improve connectivity both within Surrey and between strategically important hubs
- **Priority Theme 3:** Enhance the place offer of Surrey's towns and urban areas

¹⁹ For Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people.

- **Priority Theme 4:** Maximise the benefits of strong collaboration to achieve sustainable development in our key hub-areas.
- **Priority Theme 5:** Invest in natural capital and deliver nature recovery

A2.52 The Ambition identifies nine key Sub-Areas (SAs), defined as ‘broad areas within which significant new housing and/or employment development is proposed in adopted and emerging local plans, where new strategic infrastructure and investment to address existing infrastructure deficiencies is needed, and where impacts may cross administrative boundaries, and it is essential for issues to be considered jointly by partners on a wider geographical basis’.

A2.53 Included as one of the key SAs is the Longcross–Staines–Heathrow Corridor within Runnymede.

A2.54 The report identifies 27 towns of strategic significance and their place in being the focus of investment, unlocking major development sites, improving movement and connectivity and supporting economic prosperity and local service provision. Egham is highlighted as one of the nine towns with a key role in serving the wider regional economy and Addlestone is identified as another, smaller, town of strategic significance.

A2.55 It is highlighted that changes to permitted development rights (PDR) that were implemented in 2021 has had an impact on the stock of office space for both poor quality and higher quality offices, resulting in a loss of office stock to residential developments across Surrey.

A2.56 The community development of 1,700 new homes and 79,000 sq m of employment floorspace underway at Longcross is mentioned as an opportunity to meet housing needs and support the Ambition’s economic priorities.

A2.57 The report states that ‘Priority Theme 3 is to maximise the potential of our existing and new urban areas by making sure land is used in the most efficient and versatile way, and meets our identified needs, as far as possible’ (p. 22).

A2.58 To meet the Place Ambition’s strategic Priority Theme 3, the report recommends to (p.23):

- Increase the choice of new homes offered, with the emphasis on diversifying the types of new homes provided to meet our needs, including more affordable homes and homes to meet our ageing population.
- Depending on the specific details and locations of development, allow the removal of poor-quality stock from the employment land supply where sites are poorly located.
- Manage regenerate and/or dispose of public sector land and assets in a way that contributes to meeting identified needs and improving overall quality of place.
- Promote high street revitalisation through diversification and encouraging the development of multi-functional space and the co-location of different services.

- Maximise the contribution Surrey's natural capital makes to securing 'clean' growth, by improving the overall quality and accessibility of our green and blue infrastructure within and between our urban areas.

A2.59 Priority Theme 4 highlights that within each SA, the aims include (p. 24):

- Support the delivery of a diverse supply of new homes to meet housing needs including those of a changing workforce and help boost productivity.
- Support a small number of carefully planned urban extensions and new communities to boost the supply of new homes and employment land.
- Protect strategically important land and premises where appropriate, considering what the potential future needs may be to maintain a flexible and adaptable land supply, provide flexible workspace and multi-functional space to ensure that the right type of premises and land is readily available and ensure resilience.

A2.60 Overall, to deliver the Place Ambition 2050, collaboration and coordination between Surrey's Boroughs, and active facilitation of investment will be required.

Surrey Economic Growth Strategy 2025 – 2030

A2.61 The Surrey Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2030 highlights the strengths of Surrey, including the fact that it is well-connected and that it is the second biggest economy outside of London and that in recent year, there has been an evolution of world-class sectors in Automotive, Cybersecurity, Space, Health and Creative Industries within the County.

A2.62 The Strategy highlights various growth opportunities for the County, including Surrey's high-productivity growth sectors, the strength in knowledge intensive services, its highly skilled workforce, its strength in innovation and R&D and its infrastructure assets (including universities, anchor businesses, incubators, research hospitals, and science and business parks.

A2.63 Although it is highlighted that Surrey has been performing relatively well economically, the Strategy notes various strategic challenges that should not be overlooked. These include the decreasing number of start-ups and micro businesses, the decline in high-growth businesses, low levels of university 'spinouts' fostering innovation, high-value jobs and a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem, regional competition for talent and issues with economic inactivity rates.

A2.64 The Strategy's core mission is to 'ensure that Surrey continues to retain its position as one of the country's leading high-value and innovative regional economies by increasing productivity (GVA) and delivering wider socio-economic benefits to ensure no one is left behind' (p. 82).

A2.65 The Strategy's mission is to be achieved by:

- Ensuring Surrey's residents can support the workforce and skills demands of Surrey's businesses.
- Creating the right conditions for Surrey businesses to start, grow and thrive.
- Enabling economic infrastructure to unlock growth through place-based approaches, including making sure employment and commercial land demands are balanced against growing house targets and supporting the delivery of new and affordable homes.

Surrey's Economic Future: Forward to 2030 Our Economic Strategy Statement (2020)

A2.66 The Surrey County Council Economic Strategy Statement states that 'it highlights the influence that Surrey has on the wider sub-regional and UK economy and sets out our priorities to build on these economic strengths, supporting a resilient, productive and high-value economy that contributes to growth across the UK' (p. 59).

A2.67 It sets out the aims to drive and deliver sustainable growth, supporting short term economic recovery and increasing Surrey's contribution to the UK economy in the long term. It aims to support Surrey's innovation assets and economy by ensuring capacity for growth, identifying and strengthening key economic clusters and fostering relationships with businesses and institutions.

A2.68 A second priority is to take a 'whole place' approach to growing and sustaining quality places. This priority includes recognising changes in town centre uses (including decline in bricks and mortar retail locations) and the demand for new types of workspaces. It supports the development of 'hyper-local' connected centres and a diverse offering of housing supply.

A2.69 The third priority identified in the Strategy Statement is to maximise opportunities through achieving a balanced and inclusive economy. This priority will enable employee skills to more effectively respond to employer demand and to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 on employment.

A2.70 The final priority highlighted is of capturing the potential of a greener economy. This aims to achieve net zero carbon by 2050, promoting an economic opportunity for businesses and innovation in Surrey. This priority will be achieved through investment, business support and support for employment and skills.

Functional Economic Area Analysis

A2.71 A Functional Economic Area (FEA) analysis was carried out for Runnymede in 2015 which sets out to assess the economic markets and linkages of the borough. A number of factors (e.g.,

travel to work areas, housing, flows of goods and services) are assessed to understand their influence on economic development in Runnymede and the wider area.

A2.72 In terms of Runnymede's commercial property market, the FEA highlights that the borough itself has a strong local economic base with many commercial enterprises located in its town centres, industrial estates, business parks, and suburban business areas that support employment.

A2.73 Runnymede was assessed to have a strong representation of high technology companies and research facilities, and an increasing cluster of businesses in the information and communications sector.

A2.74 The report identifies factors that may affect future economic growth in Runnymede:

- Its extensive Green Belt (approximately 79% of its area lies within the metropolitan Green Belt), heritage and flood risk factors, which potentially limit the supply of new employment sites, and the ability of existing businesses to expand their sites/premises;
- Its high housing costs;
- High wage levels in London and other nearby areas which result in high levels of out commuting, potentially limiting local labour supply;
- Potential competition from larger economic centres nearby; and,
- Competition for land from other types of uses.

A2.75 When looking at travel to work and commuting data, the analysis found notable flows to work from Runnymede to Heathrow and London. Major local travel to work relationships were also observed between the borough and Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Woking which were the top three locations of residence of Runnymede's workforce (outside of Runnymede itself).

A2.76 In terms of the FEA, Runnymede was located in the north eastern corner of the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (which stretched from the M25 and the outskirts of London, through Surrey and Hampshire, to the New Forest and the South Coast) which was disbanded in April 2024.

A2.77 It was concluded that Runnymede is part of various FEAs. The north of Runnymede sits within the FEA centred around Heathrow and has strong relationships with Spelthorne, Hounslow and Hillingdon. The southern areas of Runnymede (in particular Addlestone and Chertsey) are considered to sit on the edge of a South West London/M3/A3 corridor market and has strong relationships with Woking and Elmbridge authoritative areas.

Employment Land Review

A2.78 The Employment Land Review (ELR) provides an assessment of economic development needs across Runnymede and sets out how much employment land is likely to be required in the Borough to the end of the Local Plan period (2035) and assess the suitability of existing and proposed sites for employment uses.

A2.79 At the time the ELR was undertaken (2016), there was approximately 631,121 sqm of commercial floorspace stock in Runnymede. Runnymede Council's business rates department list of empty commercial properties showed a vacancy rate of 13%.

A2.80 During the period 2005/06 to 2014/15, around 42,297 sq m of gross B class floorspace was developed, equating to 4,230 sq m per annum. Most of this employment floorspace within Runnymede was developed for office uses (80%).

A2.81 The ELR notes that the main drawbacks and constraints to Runnymede's future economic growth include:

- Land supply which is limited by Green Belt, flooding and heritage factors;
- High levels of in-commuting resulting in high levels of congestion and commuting in the Borough;
- Lack of affordable housing and skills shortages in some areas causing recruitment difficulties; and
- Potential competition from larger economic centres nearby.

Office

A2.82 The ELR highlights that the commercial property market in Runnymede is predominately office based in which the office market in the Borough and wider M25 market area remains buoyant. The Borough is expected to remain an attractive office location particularly amongst firms in key sectors (such as information and communication and financial and business services) seeking an accessible south west London location.

A2.83 Relatively large amounts of new office development over recent years means that much of Runnymede's office supply is of good quality. This makes the Borough an attractive place for occupiers seeking modern and high specification premises such as Head Quarter (HQ) occupiers.

A2.84 Whilst demand for office floorspace spans across all size ranges, local property market agents note that larger HQ style requirements (typically 25,000sqft and above) tend to characterise the majority of demand. The ELR notes that Runnymede has experienced historic success in attracting a wide range of international, national and regional firms who often choose to locate

their headquarter functions within the Borough. The ongoing decentralisation trend amongst office occupiers from central London locations also accounts for some demand.

A2.85 Increasing demand for office space generated a shortage of supply in office stock in the Borough, which is a similar trend to the whole of the M25 office market. The ELR highlights that office stock is in short supply with a particularly low level of vacancy within modern Grade A space.

Industrial

A2.86 Runnymede, similar to the most of North Surrey, is not recognised as a significant industrial location with the market being small in scale. Nevertheless, the ELR notes market demand for industrial space is strong within the Borough.

A2.87 The ELR highlights low levels of vacancy of industrial space in Runnymede, reflecting a limited supply of industrial premises. Smaller scale flexible business spaces are generally well catered for and there is scope to provide more space to cater for industrial start-ups.

A2.88 Industrial (particularly warehousing/logistics) employment is forecast to increase, with market demand for industrial space in Runnymede remaining strong.

A2.89 The ELR sets out the view from local agents on the industrial market is that 'at least one new industrial park/site is required in the Borough to provide a release valve and enable churn, intensification and upgrading of existing older sites, as well as to provide new space to satisfy market demand'.

Longcross Park

A2.90 A key development opportunity highlighted in the ELR is Longcross Park which is located on the western edge of Runnymede and represents the largest strategic business park site in the previous EM3 LEP area.

A2.91 Longcross Park has 22 hectares of commercial areas and since the site was bought by the Government in the 1940s, it has been a source of significant employment in the area, employing thousands of staff including military officers, scientists and engineers. The site has is home to the Longcross Film Studios.

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