

Runnymede Community Planning Panel

TERMS OF REFERENCE-JUNE 2021

Background

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages Local Planning Authorities to carry out early meaningful engagement and collaboration with communities and local organisations as Local Plans are prepared.

Runnymede has therefore re-established a Community Planning Panel originally established in December 2015 with residents'/community groups across the Borough to act as a channel for the engagement and collaboration with the Borough's communities as sought by the NPPF¹.

This approach is also in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (March 2021) which notes in paragraph 1.23 that, *Residents' Associations (RA's) are important groups for Local Authorities to consult with regard to formulating Plans and policies. They are formed of individuals from specific communities. The RA's meet regularly to discuss local issues, acting as a voice for their local community. There are a number of RA's within Runnymede that the Council has consulted – and will continue to do so – in reviewing and updating its Runnymede 2030 Local Plan. During periods of lockdown associated with the COVID 19 Pandemic, the Council will continue to consult with Residents Associations who are registered on the Council's Planning Policy database, encouraging them to disseminate information to their members as appropriate.*

Primary purpose of the Community Planning Panel

To provide a panel made up of community representatives from across the Borough to comment on emerging evidence/draft policies and to engage with Council officers as the new Runnymede Local Plan is prepared.

The nature of the group

The Community Planning Panel is not a decision-making body. Any agreement reached between Council officers and the Panel will be subject to the democratic processes of the Council and the statutory provisions of the Local Plan process.

Panel meeting outputs

- Discussion of emerging evidence and policies with Council officers.
- Identification of land and sites in different areas of the Borough which may have development potential for different land uses or designations.
- Dissemination of information by Council officers to the residents'/community groups; and,
- To provide an opportunity for the residents'/community groups to ask questions of Council officers on behalf of their communities.

¹ Whilst Council members are the democratically elected representatives for their communities, this Panel is aimed specifically at residents'/community groups in the Borough. Council members will be fully engaged in the Plan making process through other methods/events.

Membership

- The Community Planning Panel will comprise one representative from an established community/residents group from communities in the Borough, where an interest is expressed. Substitutes may attend if appropriate;
- The Community Planning Panel will include the relevant officers from the Runnymede Planning Policy team, to lead discussion on certain agenda items. A council officer will chair the meetings;
- A minute taker from the Planning Policy team will attend each meeting. Minutes will generally be limited to action points;
- The Panel will meet approximately quarterly to allow for discussion of topical planning matters in the Borough;
- To avoid over-representation from any particular area, normally only one residents'/community group from each community in the Borough will be invited to sit on the Panel. If multiple requests are made from different groups operating within one community to sit on the Panel, it will usually be the group representing the largest number of people that will be asked to sit on the Panel. These larger groups will be encouraged to engage with the smaller residents'/community groups (which generally cover individual roads or very localised areas) where possible;
- Council officers will consider requests from residents'/community groups to sit on the Panel at any time. However, such requests will only be granted if all of the criteria in the Membership section of this ToR are met and if there is sufficient space remaining on the Panel.

Administrative arrangements

- The Council will aim to circulate meeting agendas and any information to be discussed at least 7 days before a meeting of the CPP is due to take place;
- The minutes of each meeting will normally be distributed to all attendees within a week of the meeting taking place;
- The meetings of the CPP will be held on line via MS Teams;
- Meetings would normally be expected to last for no more than 2 hours and will be evening meetings starting at 18:30 unless otherwise agreed by the Panel.