

Meeting of the Runnymede-Spelthorne Joint Member Liaison Group

Wednesday 18th April at 3pm

Spelthorne Borough Council offices

Attendees:

Ann Biggs, Spelthorne Borough Council

Councillor Ian Harvey, Spelthorne Borough Council

Councillor Colin Barnard, Spelthorne Borough Council

Ian Maguire, Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor Gail Kingerley, Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor Marissa Heath, Runnymede Borough Council

Minutes of meeting

1-Introductions: All attendees introduced themselves.

2-Purpose of meeting and relevant background information: IM and AB provided some background information on the contents of the draft National Planning Policy Framework which was subject to consultation, in particular in relation to the Duty to Cooperate. The draft NPPF placed more emphasis on the need for Statements of Common Ground to be produced between partners to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working. Given the strength of the functional relationship between Runnymede and Spelthorne, officers at both authorities were of the opinion that a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) should be produced.

A SoCG had been drafted collaboratively by officers at both authorities and sent to all attendees in advance of the meeting. The SoCG aimed to set out where there were strategic cross boundary matters of interest to both authorities, where cooperation had occurred to date, outcomes achieved through cooperation and where matters for resolution remained. The purpose of the meeting was to agree the content of the SoCG so that it could be finalised, signed and published. The SoCG would then form the basis for future discussions under the Duty to Cooperate.

Another aim of the meeting was to agree the amended Terms of Reference for the Runnymede-Spelthorne Joint Member Liaison Group. The Group had originally been formed for the purpose cooperating during the production of the joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Now that the SHMA had been completed, officers were of the opinion that it was appropriate to amend the Terms of Reference for the Group to widen its scope so that it was a suitable Member level mechanism to discuss a range of matters associated with the Duty to Cooperate.

Officers had drafted an amended Terms of Reference which had been circulated to all attendees in advance of the meeting.

3-Terms of Reference for the Joint Member Liaison Group: Following a review of the drafted Terms of Reference, all Members agreed the wording of the amended Terms of Reference for the Joint Member Liaison Group with no amendments.

4-Content of the Runnymede and Spelthorne Statement of Common Ground: Members went through the SoCG to agree its contents. Councillor Harvey asked for officers to produce revised wording on the River Thames Scheme. No other substantive changes were requested by Members. Officers confirmed that there were a number of areas where officers still needed to input information i.e. to reflect the most up to date position with the timescales for the production of Spelthorne Borough Council's evidence base documents. These factual additions would be completed in the final draft of the SoCG which would be circulated to Members prior to signing. Members noted and agreed the intention of RBC to formally request that SBC plans for an additional 1,499sqm of retail provision in Staines upon Thames. Members also noted and agreed that, at this time no other specific requests between the authorities were being made.

5-Discussion of annex Statement of Common Grounds: Officers advised that they felt it would be useful for Runnymede and Spelthorne to pursue an annex Statement of Common Ground with Elmbridge Borough Council and discussions at an officer level were underway. Beyond this, Runnymede had already signed a Statement of Common Ground with Surrey Heath Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and was pursuing Statements of Common Ground with Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

6- Timescale for signing of agreements: It was agreed that officers would produce amended wording on the River Thames Scheme and then share with Members for agreement. Other factual information currently missing from the Statement of Common Ground would be inputted. Officers would then recirculate the amended draft to Members. IM advised that he thought it would be useful for the agreement to be signed and published in advance of Runnymede's upcoming consultation on its draft Local Plan which was due to commence on 18th May and in advance of Spelthorne's upcoming Issues and Options consultation which was also due to commence in May. There was agreement that all parties would endeavour to sign the Statement of Common Ground and publish in support of these dates.

7- AOB: None