

Runnymede & Spelthorne Joint Member Liaison (Steering) Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that public bodies, including local planning authorities, have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities. The Government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities.
2. The NPPF is clear that joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of this Framework.
3. Local planning authorities are expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. The emerging NPPF encourages the production of Statements of Common Ground as the preferred mechanism to document the cross boundary matters being addressed between relevant parties and progress in cooperating to address these.
4. National guidance is clear that cooperation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation, resulting in a final position where plans are in place to provide the land and infrastructure necessary to support current and projected future levels of development.

Purpose of the Joint Member Liaison Group

5. To provide a governance mechanism for the Runnymede-Spelthorne Statement of Common Ground (once agreed and signed). The Group will also provide a joint forum under the duty to cooperate for engaging on matters of strategic cross boundary importance to Runnymede and Spelthorne Borough Councils where it has been identified at officer level that escalation to Member level is necessary to resolve identified issues in the pursuit of achieving positive outcomes.

The nature of the group

6. The liaison group is not a decision-making body. The Group is intended to provide Member oversight of the joint duty to cooperate activities carried out by Runnymede and Spelthorne Borough Councils. Any agreement by the Group will be subject to the democratic and local plan processes within each local authority.

Specific objectives

7. The objectives being sought are:
 - i. To agree the content of the Runnymede-Spelthorne Statement of Common Ground;

- ii. To provide steer in terms of identifying solutions to address unresolved issues between Runnymede and Spelthorne Borough Councils as set out in the Runnymede-Spelthorne Statement of Common Ground; and,
- iii. To provide steer in terms of identifying solutions to address any subsequent cross boundary issues which are identified by Runnymede and Spelthorne officers through the 2 monthly officer level duty to cooperate meetings but which require escalation to Member level to achieve resolution.

Outcome

8. The outcomes being sought are:

- i. The signing of the Runnymede-Spelthorne Statements of Common Ground; and,
- ii. The identification of potential solutions to resolve strategic cross boundary issues as part of the plan making processes of both local authorities.

Membership

9. The SHMA Joint Member Liaison Group will:

- i. Comprise up to two Elected Members from each authority; specifically the portfolio holder/chairperson for Planning and/or the Leader. Substitutes may attend if appropriate.
- ii. Comprise two senior officers/heads of department from each authority. Substitutes may attend if appropriate.
- iii. A minute taker from each local authority.
- iv. Meet as required dependent on the outcomes of the 2 monthly officer level Duty to cooperate meetings and any requirement for escalation.
- v. Hold an annual meeting in April each year to review progress with duty to Cooperate matters over the preceding year and discuss any required amendments to the Runnymede-Spelthorne Statement of Common Ground.