

**Development Market Panel minutes
19th April 2016**

Present

Andrew Slipper (sub for Richard Jones)	Adrian Cooper
James Matcham	Ian Taylor
Steve Coggins	Richard Watkins
Adam Beamish	Colin Francis (sub for Peter Francis)
Brian Coughlan (sub for Valerie Scott)	Paul Dickinson
Ian Maguire (RBC)	Georgina Pacey (RBC)
Cheryl Brunton (RBC)	Hannah Cook (SBC)

Apologies

David Holmes

Introductions

CB asked that everyone introduce themselves for the purpose of the meeting as there were some new members/substitutes in attendance.

New substitute members were advised of the Terms of Reference and that the panel is not a decision making body, but acts in an advisory capacity.

1) **Issues and options** summary document was discussed. In particular, the following strategic matters were discussed:

- Spatial vision
 - Green Belt. The three reviews that have been undertaken of the Green Belt (ARUP strategic review, technical boundary review, GB villages review) were discussed. Thorpe village has been identified for further consideration to be included in the urban area. All are available to view on the Council's policy webpages.
 - the proposed Green Belt boundary would be consulted on as part of the issues and options
 - A query was raised about the number of units Thorpe could deliver if included in the urban area. Officers stated that the village could deliver a small number of units that would likely fall under the windfall category. Thorpe village would not be proposed as a land allocation as the village itself is not undeveloped land and would be considered an extension of the existing urban envelope. As part of the Issues and Options consultation the proposed boundary for Thorpe Village would be consulted*

on. This would include options to allow some modest expansion of the village through the release of a number of small scale sites on the edge of the village. Such an approach could help facilitate sustainable growth in Thorpe over the Plan period, but at a scale appropriate to the village.

-Officers also set out that a Thorpe neighbourhood plan was in the early stages of preparation but that no forum has yet been set up to progress the Thorpe neighbourhood plan, but the first inaugural meeting had taken place.

-Query raised about how the development of the neighbourhood plan would affect progress of the emerging Local Plan. Officers are keen that the two plans evolve in tandem. There is political support for the Thorpe neighbourhood plan (albeit from the opposition party). Land in Thorpe may come forward through a neighbourhood development order rather than a Local Plan allocation.

Officers stated that there is also interest from Englefield Green to set up a neighbourhood forum to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan.

-The concept of garden villages being consulted on by Government was also introduced. There is an expectation that guidance will be published in the next month. In Runnymede, the former DERA site at Longcross would be the only site that meets the threshold for consideration as a Garden Village (around 1500 units). Expressions of interest need to be submitted by 31st July.

-it was also confirmed there are a number of cross-cutting issues that did not necessarily warrant specific policy options but need to be considered (such as climate change and health and wellbeing).

- Housing

-There was a lengthy discussion on the housing options.

-Housing target. An overview of the SLAA evidence was discussed and the Council identified that it could not demonstrate a sustainable supply of housing that could meet the housing need apportioned to Runnymede in the HMA (466-535 dpa). This included consideration of the ARUP Green Belt Review parcels that could be considered further for inclusion in the urban area (Resultant Land Parcels).

-The Council had discussed the findings of the SLAA evidence with its HMA partner Spelthorne BC, and once it has identified how much of the OAN for the HMA the two authorities could meet, further discussion may then be necessary with other Duty to Cooperate bodies to discuss how any unmet need from the Runnymede-Spelthorne HMA could be catered for. It was noted that Runnymede would be holding a Duty to Cooperate event with DtC bodies on Friday 22nd April.

-Query raised about the issues of RBC and SBC not delivering their Plans at the same time. There is always an issue with all LPAs not delivering their Plans at the same time and this cannot be helped, but the reality is that the Government requires LPAs to have an up-to-date plan in place and as such plan making for an authority like Runnymede must continue even if the other authorities in its HMA and FEA are working to different timetables.

- Spelthorne is currently required to deliver 166 dpa through its core strategy and would be providing an update on what is being provided annually in Spelthorne on the ground in due course.

-Based on the land available, including the majority of the Resultant Land Parcels (RLPs), for Runnymede to be able to deliver the entire HMA OAN (minus what Spelthorne is already delivering), sites would need to be developed at in excess of 100 DPA.

-Officers stated that the RLPs would offer the flexibility in the Plan to deliver housing *and a further statement was made by one of the panel as to whether further flexibility could be to include more GB sites than Arup has recommended to allow an alternative to developing the existing RLPs at a high density, and to help meet the OAN. Officers stated that the approach to identifying additional areas of green belt in Runnymede that may be suitable for return to the urban area needed to be consistent with the approach adopted in the Arup Green belt Review. It might be that counter reviews are provided through the issues and options consultation which prove that other GB sites, when assessed against Arup's methodology should be included in the urban area. However, at this time, the only sites being considered are those already identified through what is considered a robust sieving process.*

-Housing mix and density and affordable housing

-Evidenced through the SHMA.

-Now Government has announced proposals for commuter hubs to maximise housing delivery opportunities, wherever feasible, requiring higher density development in these areas.

-Until such a time that Government confirms its approach, LPAs would be unwise set bespoke policy on density matters.

In addition the Housing & Planning Bill would soon be receiving royal assent (date unknown), which would have implications for affordable housing. Starter Homes were also discussed. In Runnymede it is only likely to be 1 and 2 bedroom homes which meet the monetary thresholds. *A query was raised as to whether minimum site thresholds would be applied to starter homes and whilst it is too early to say, it would seem reasonable that the classification of major v minor development would be the threshold unless local viability evidence indicated otherwise.*

-The panel were asked whether the 20% requirement for starter homes on sites of 10 units or more as set out by the Government in their proposals seemed reasonable. The panel couldn't give an answer as it was too early to say, although some suggested there would be a ripple effect on land values (although as demand is high in areas such as Runnymede, this would be unlikely to be problematic)

-a knock on effect of providing starter homes could be that affordable housing provision is greatly reduced.

-One of the panel members representing the registered providers stated the ability of the RPs to deliver affordable housing would be affected. A response by the RPs to this is to merge and form larger, more viable RPs. The LPA would also be affected by this and close monitoring and liaison with the RPs would be necessary.

-Specialist housing

-Identified through the PPG as older, student and traveller accommodation
-In relation to older people's housing, there is a push from the Government to assist people staying in their homes in to old age.

-In relation to student accommodation, a query was raised as to whether students want to live in halls or HMO. There is a step change in how universities provide bespoke student accommodation, which tends to be in small cluster flats, rather than large halls, which operate like HMOs. The university has been asked for student patterns of living to help inform the next SLAA.

-Site allocations

-Further consideration would need to be given to what the RLPs will deliver in terms of type/mix of housing and other uses. Flexibility would be required and at the current time, the options for site allocations are broad-brush.

-The LPA had written to all known land owners in the RLPs to determine whether the land was available. A generally positive response was received. Further work would be undertaken as part of the Issues and Options consultation on land availability to ensure that the likely delivery timeframes for allocations are clearly understood and realistic.

-Economy and retail

The Council has recently consulted on its draft Employment Land Review which seeks to quantify the needs for B class floorspace in the Borough over the Plan period. 3 different scenarios for growth have been tested as part of the Employment Land Review and it is concluded that Runnymede can meet its needs for office floorspace over the Plan period in all three of the scenarios tested. Indeed assuming that the approved office park at Longcross Park is delivered, Runnymede will be delivering a surplus of office space, ranging from 9202sqm to 68,382sqm. In two of the 3 scenarios tested however there is a significant need for B8 floorspace of between 105,842 and 138,887sqm. There are serious questions about whether Runnymede has suitable sites to deliver this need and whether B8 developments would be viable given the low rental levels and lack of developer interest in the Borough for such uses at the current time. *A member of the panel asked how much land would be needed to meet the borough's B8 needs. It was confirmed that between 26.3 and 34.6 ha of land would be required to meet these needs in full.*

Tourism -officers were not proposing specific tourism policies as it was considered economy and retail and recreation policy would scoop up any issues

-it may be necessary to include development management policy on hotels

It would be necessary to have infrastructure policy as a hook for delivering CIL

-Flooding

The level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was being finalised and would be published in draft form for consultation with DtC partners imminently. The

document assesses flood risk across the borough. For the issues and options consultation, the two main areas where options will be presented are around 1) whether Runnymede should include a policy to safeguard the proposed route of the River Thames Scheme flood alleviation channel which will run through the borough and 2) whether, given that the SLAA shows that Runnymede does not have enough suitable, available and achievable sites to meet its identified development needs, an automatic pass could be given in sequential test terms for certain types of development in the Borough, for example for housing in the urban area and on previously developed sites in the Green Belt. Officers were going to discuss this approach with the Environment Agency. *A member of the panel asked whether the new climate change allowances issues by the Environment Agency in February were likely to impact on the 350 dpa figure and the number of suitable sites that are available to help meet identified needs. It was agreed that this could reduce the land available for development but that there was currently no modelling available to help quantify the impacts in the borough. This is something that will need to be explored further with the Environment Agency,*

DM policies

-main issue raised was in relation to renewable energy. Building regulations pick up a lot of former planning guidance on sustainable development but the main gap relates to renewable energy. There is no evidence to suggest that Runnymede is sufficiently different from other LPA areas that would require a bespoke policy on such issues. However if there is a strong political drive to include such policy, this would need to be considered.

- 2) **AOB**-TIA modelling of the RLPs was being conducted by the County Council and the modelling is expected by mid May. It was confirmed that modelling is only conducted for sites in Runnymede and if needs for Runnymede were met elsewhere, the relevant LPAs would include in their TIA modelling data.
- 3) **DONM**-not confirmed. Next meeting likely to be after issues and options consultation is complete (approx September 2016)