

Minutes of the Community Planning Panel meeting of 18th January 2018

In attendance

- Egham Residents' Association
- Englefield Green Village Residents' Association
- Hamm Court Residents' Association
- Lyne Residents' Association
- The Chertsey Society
- The Ottershaw Society
- Thorpe Ward Residents' Association
- Virginia Water Community Association
- Wentworth Residents' Association
- West Addlestone Residents' Association
- Ian Maguire – Corporate Head of Planning and Environmental Services, Runnymede Borough Council
- Georgina Pacey – Local Plans Manager, Runnymede Borough Council
- Anna Murray – Planning Assistant, Runnymede Borough Council

IM opened the meeting with introductions.

AM provided an overview of the current draft Local Plan consultation.

ERA asked for some clarification on the point raised about any amendments to the Draft Local Plan. IM clarified that once the draft Local Plan consultation has ended, officers will be reading all representations made. If on the basis of the comments made during the course of the consultation substantial amendments need to be made to the Local Plan, the Local Plan will need to go before Full Council prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State. However if only non substantial changes need to be made to the Plan following the current consultation, authority has been given to the Corporate Director of Planning and Environmental Services, further to discussion with the Chief Executive, Chairman of the Planning Committee, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Independent Group to make the required changes/updates to the draft Local Plan before submitting it to the Secretary of State on or before 31st March 2018 (although due to the Easter Holidays, the Local Plan will need to be submitted by 28th March).

The OS queried whether all representations sent into the Council are sent to the Inspector. IM stated that this was correct. IM also added as a point of interest, that all information on the Ottershaw Society website was factually correct. IM explained that on the standardised representation form under paragraph 4.2 it identifies how 'groups who share a common view' can submit a single representation. IM highlighted that whilst this would be useful for the Council and for the Inspector it is up to the residents associations to decide how they would like their residents to respond to the consultation. GP stated that a summary of representations will be produced, along with a schedule of any modifications (if any have been made) explaining where the Local Plan has been modified, how the Local Plan has been modified and why the modifications were made. IM emphasised that any representations received after midnight on the 22nd February will not be accepted. In addition, it would be useful for representations to be submitted well in advance of this date to maximise the

amount of time that the Council has to consider all of the comments made. It is after this time that a decision will be made on whether any changes required are substantive or not.

IM gave some explanation regarding the representation form and it was noted that the last two pages of the form give Government guidance on legal compliance, soundness and the duty to cooperate. GP emphasised the importance of using the form for the Inspector. IM particularly focused on Question 7 which asks whether the representor would like to speak at the examination of the Local Plan. This box must be ticked if anyone wishes to speak. LRA asked whether those who do not speak are still able to attend the examination. IM confirmed that any one will be allowed to attend the examination in public. WRA asked whether an Inspector had already been appointed for the Local Plan examination. IM stated that this would not happen until the Council had submitted the Local Plan. GP added that she would be speaking to the Planning Inspectorate this week to give an update on where the Council currently is with the progress of the Local Plan. GP rounded up the discussion on the representation form by emphasising the importance of setting out that a modification should be suggested (where appropriate) if a representor does not think the plan is legally compliant or sound.

IM confirmed that ERA been in contact with some queries regarding the spatial distribution map. IM clarified that any comments on technical clarifications and issues within the draft Local Plan that residents think could be expressed better will also be considered by the Council. These types of representations would constitute as non-substantive changes. Both GP and IM emphasised the importance of the local people informing the Council of any technical amendments that they thought would be helpful.

The OS raised the point that most residents will just want to object. IM clarified that local residents are able to make these objections to the consultation. The CS queried whether the public can make a representation about something they think needs to be added in. IM clarified that any representation can be made through this public consultation.

WRA queried whether Surrey County Council had commented on any of the public consultations. GP confirmed that Surrey County Council had commented on both consultations so far in the Local Plan process. AM stated that she would send the representations which Surrey County Council had previously sent in to WRA. WRA queried whether SCC had commented on transportation. GP clarified that Surrey County Council had commented on this aspect from her recollection. WRA asked whether the Council had made any comments on the current Surrey County Council Waste Policy consultation. GP explained that a response had been drafted. Before being sent to Surrey County Council, the draft response will go before those Councillors who sit on the Local Plans Members Working Group. IM raised the point that there were some concerns that two consultations were going on at the same time. With regards to the Council's response to the Surrey County Council consultation it was agreed that the Local Plans Members Working Group would be asked whether the Council's response could be shared with any local residents who were interested. The OS queried whether the Council would be commenting on those allocations outside of the Borough which were included in the Surrey County Council consultation. GP stated that the Council would need to come to a judgement on that point. The CPP voiced concerns that the Surrey County Council consultation was technical and hard to understand. IM reassured the CPP that any questions regarding that consultation could be directed to Surrey County Council officers who are able to help.

IM mentioned to the group that the Heathrow consultation would start the following day. IM clarified that the consultation was being carried out by Heathrow Airport and it was not a statutory consultation but an informal one. The informal consultation would help to inform Heathrow's statutory consultation later in the year. LRA asked whether Heathrow expansion was one of the assumptions of the draft Local Plan. IM clarified that it was not as there was not currently sufficient certainty that airport expansion would go ahead, and if it does, what form it would take. There should be a greater level of certainty at the first review of the Local Plan which would occur within 5 years of adoption. It will take a lot longer than this for any developments on Heathrow to take place. IM confirmed that relevant evidence based documents produced to underpin the Local Plan had provided some commentary around the possible impacts from expansion at Heathrow. LRA queried whether the Objectively Assessed Housing Need takes into consideration the expansion of Heathrow. GP confirmed that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment update has specific references to Heathrow Expansion, in particular in paragraph 3.68 but this does not currently inform the OAN figure.

LRA noted that the need for Gypsies and Travellers had gone up since the last Local Plan consultation. GP confirmed that the Council had recently updated its evidence as the definition of traveller had changed. In addition, many of the Surrey Local Authorities had begun to refresh their evidence base and therefore Runnymede decided an update was necessary. The draft Local Plan is proposing a total of 35 pitches. The Council has identified 2 sites in the Borough which were granted permission (due to a traveller need) and in addition have conditions stating that they should only be used for this use however, these sites are not currently used by travellers. GP clarified that there was a meeting taking place this week regarding how to bring those pitches back into the correct use and to consider how the remaining unmet needs could be met.

WARA queried that if these allocations are within the plan, if a developer wants to build 100 homes and will need to provide 2 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, then the Council will not be willing to accept any payment to not have these. GP clarified that there is an identified need for traveller pitches to be provided in the borough over the period of the Local Plan and where a policy in the draft Local Plan confirms that pitches are required, the Council will expect them to be provided. IM emphasised that the Government planning policy required the creation of mixed communities and the Council was of the opinion that traveller pitches needed to be located in sustainable locations where they could be part of the local community and access services and facilities. IM confirmed that a 1/3 of all gypsy and traveller sites are being allocated at Longcross Garden Village.

WARA queried how the Council had decided where to place the Gypsy and Traveller pitches around the Borough. GP explained that it was a combination of the Council's site capacity and site selection work. Furthermore, GP clarified that sites need to be directed towards the Urban Area and certain aspects have to be looked at, for example access, topography and flood risk. The Council have spread the distribution across the Borough and each allocation has been looked at with regards to suitability for gypsy and traveller pitches. WARA queried whether the travellers have been asked whether they would like the pitches in these areas. GP clarified that through the Local Plan the Council consults with the Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT), Surrey County Council, the Showmen's Guild and other travellers who are signed up to the Planning Policy database. GP stated that the Council had not had any feedback that the approach being taken is not satisfactory. WARA further queried what the size of a gypsy/traveller pitch is. GP explained that pitch sizes in the

Borough vary considerably; the Council is carrying out further analysis to determine what the minimum size is likely to be in order to cater for Gypsy and Traveller needs.

WRA asked how long the Gypsy or Travellers can they stay on the pitches for. IM stated that the Government guidance on this identifies that the Gypsy or Traveller must have a nomadic way of life. WRA further queried who would own these plots of land. IM clarified that it would be the gypsy or traveller that would own the plot. WRA expressed concern that these could then be turned into two houses instead. IM explained that Runnymede Borough Council is not a development company and therefore would only have a certain amount of control but that the use of the pitches would be controlled through the use of a planning condition. GP highlighted that this sort of comment could be suggested as a modification on the Gypsy and Traveller policy within the Local Plan. IM encouraged WRA to make a representation to the consultation on this matter. The CS asked whether the allocations will remain allocated for gypsy or traveller pitches even if they are not in use and who is going to maintain the sites if they are not being used. IM responded that it would be for the landowner to ensure it was being maintained in the correct state. Another query regarding gypsy and travellers was raised by ERA who asked whether local residents who were located next to these pitches would receive compensation. IM clarified that property prices are not a planning matter and there would be no compensation.

IM introduced the next agenda item of Neighbourhood Planning and passed onto TWRA who sits on the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum. TWRA provided an overview of the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum's current position. TWRA stated that a flyer was being sent around to all households in the Neighbourhood Area in the next few weeks, to provide them with information and to advise that there are some consultation events planned. TWRA confirmed that the Forum had recently picked up an extra 4/5 members. EGVRA added that they had now got a steering group together of about 30 people and were holding their first meeting at the end of the month. WRA mentioned there were some members of the local community in Wentworth who had wanted to set up a Neighbourhood Forum and asked how many members the Forum would need. IM clarified that a Neighbourhood Forum must have 21 members and they must be representative of the local community.

IM asked whether there was any other business any members in the Group had. ERA mentioned that he had some queries he wished to raise. Firstly, ERA queried the underlying issue of population and whether Runnymede is proposing to build more housing to meet population growth needs or if the population is growing because Runnymede will be building these houses. IM confirmed that the Council is not exceeding its Objectively Assessed Housing Need and therefore will be under delivering, therefore there will not be the supply to drive any additional population in Runnymede. ERA had a query relating to the percentage of Green Belt which is being released. GP stated that these figures were not included within the latest public consultation however, IM confirmed the figures to be from around 78.6% to 75%. AM stated that these figures would be clarified to ERA and circulated to the rest of the group. ERA asked if under the new Conservation Area policy in the draft Local Plan, the recent planning application at 40-44 High Street would have been recommended for refusal by officers. IM felt that the decision of officers would have remained unchanged and that a judgement had been taken by officers that the scheme design was acceptable. ERA queried why there was a policy in the draft Local Plan encouraging the provision of student accommodation when in another place in the background text it was confirmed the private provision would meet the uplift in student numbers. GP clarified that through providing accommodation on private sites within the

area, the Council would not be expecting the same demand in the area for houses to be converted to Houses of Multiple Occupancy but a policy was required to confirm how the Council would assess any relevant schemes over the period of the Local Plan.

VWCA raised some concerns with the draft Local Plan with regard to the growth in population and its particular impact on the roads in the area. VWCA queried that if Runnymede is not responsible for roads, where do Surrey County Council and Runnymede agree on what is feasible in terms of transport infrastructure? IM clarified that Surrey County Council is a Duty to Cooperate partner and have an obligation to assess the growth coming through transport assessments and then put into place road improvements plans. WRA raised the issue that Surrey County Council does not have any money. IM stated that money towards transport infrastructure would come through contributions to any development scheme and other sources of funding that can be applied for.

IM ended the meeting by mentioning the Council's Boundary Review which was moving forward. The Council has informally come to a conclusion on ward boundaries which will be taken to the 25th January Corporate Management Committee. The report will be available to view 5 days before the meeting. If approved, the report will then be taken to Full Council and a public consultation will be held later in 2018 and a final decision at the end of the year.

With regard to the next meeting, it was agreed that after the consultation AM will be in touch with the prospect of having the next meeting in late spring 2018.