

Runnymede Borough Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday 2 September 2020 at 6.30 pm

A D D E N D U M

Item 7- Runnymede Borough Council Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Officers have reviewed the Equality Screening Report with the Council's Equalities Officer and have updated the Equality Screening. The full document as amended is copied at the end of this addendum.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RU.19/1146 214 Wendover Road, Staines Upon Thames

Description at the top of the report to be amended to reflect the revised plans deleting the individual dwellings and increasing the size of the flatted building – the description is :For the demolition of the former Vicarage and the erecting of an apartment building containing 12 no. apartments with associated bin and cycle stores and ancillary works including minor alterations to access arrangements (amended plans received)

In respect of electric vehicle charging points, an error has been identified in condition 13 which specifies 2 parking spaces; It is considered that in order to comply with policy SD7, all parking spaces in the development should be provided with electric vehicle charging points. The text of Condition 13 is to be amended to reflect this as follows:

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until all the parking spaces serving the flatted accommodation are provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirements - 7 kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230v AC 32 Amp single phase dedicated supply), in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter retained and maintained.

Reason: To sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, in accordance with Policy SD7 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

RU.19/1436 – Sycamore Farm Chertsey Lane

Description at the top of the report to be amended to reflect the revised plans removing 8 of the storage containers from the scheme so that only 6 storage containers are now proposed. Description to read as follows

Continued use of the site for storage (Use Class B8), including external storage in the form of 6 no. storage containers, erection of 2.4m high perimeter fencing (retrospective), resurfacing of yard, provision of 6 no. car parking spaces, and landscaping.(Amended plan received 29.7.2020 removing container storage from southern boundary, acoustic fence to western boundary and along southern boundary of access road, and raising of containers above ground level).

Two additional letters of representation have been received on the revisions: This includes an 11 page document from residents which has been circulated to the members of the Planning Committee. The main concerns are detailed below:

- The description of the application needs to be amended to reflect the plans
- The notification period for the revised plans is too short
- The Acoustic fencing will not be permeable to flood water
- The previous owner leased the yard to an airport company which ran the site 24 hours a day. There should be restrictions regarding vehicle movements and times.
- The storage containers would impact on the openness of the Green Belt

- The palisade fencing impacts on the openness of the Green Belt
- The applicant has installed a drain from the existing building to the main sewer in Chertsey Lane
- Has the EA been asked to consider the effect of underground drainage as the site lies over a zone 3 Groundwater Protection Zone.
- Lighting is proposed to be installed on the fencing and building at 1.5 metres high. Previous permissions restricting lighting on the building and fencing.
- The ownership of the land did not change in 2004, but changed in October 2018.
- RU.04/0119 had a personal permission for on site lorry parking for the then occupier operating as Samson Lifting services Ltd.
- The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been provided to overcome the harm to the Green Belt or other harm.

Additional paragraph 6.9 to read:

Neighbours have raised concerns with regard to lighting and hours of use. The submitted information details the lighting to be low level 1.5 metres high around the fencing of the site. The information states that the maximum hours of operation will be the same as the current restriction and therefore the lighting will only be required during the winter months. The applicant states that any lighting spillage will be de-minimus and further reduced by boundary screening. It is considered that given the low level nature of the lighting the impact on the amenities of the area and the immediate neighbour would be limited. However, taking into account the proximity of the neighbour to the site and the access, and the location of the site within the Green Belt, a condition regarding the submission of a lighting plan prior to occupation is recommended, and a condition restricting the hours of use of the site (to reflect the existing restrictions) and operation of the lighting is also recommended. The proposal complies with policies EE1, EE2 and EE17.

New Condition 11 to read:

Prior to first use of the containers, full details of the proposed lighting around the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include a light contour plan and the lighting shall incorporate cowls and shields. Any lighting to be installed shall comply with the details as shall be approved and the lighting shall not operate outside the hours of 8am – 7pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am – 1pm on Saturdays and not at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent neighbouring properties and to protect the character and appearance of the Green Belt and to comply with Policies EE1, EE2 and EE17 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan.

New Condition 12 to read:

There shall be no use of the site and no vehicles arriving or leaving the site, outside the hours of 8am – 7pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am – 1pm on Saturdays and not at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent neighbouring properties and to comply with Policies EE1 and EE2 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan

RU.20/0789 Wentworth Roads, Virginia Water

1 further letter of representation has been received. The main concerns are outlined below:

- Barrier 6 on Abbots Drive and Wellington Avenue is unsafe with regards to traffic leaving and entering the Estate as the intercoms are on the driver's side of the road.
- Both vehicles will be on opposite sides of the road with visibility restricted.

RU.20/0880 Wentworth Roads, Virginia Water

1 further letter of representation has been received. The main concerns are outlined below:

- Gate 21 is unsafe as the sight line on exiting East Drive is more limited due to the nature of Wellington Avenue.
- At the majority of gates, there is not enough space for the safe transit of cyclists and pedestrians
- Conditions requested regarding sufficient space for safe transition past the gates and for gates at Abbots Drive and East Drive to be permanently open.

Amendment to condition 6 on request of the applicant

No part of barrier 26 (as shown on plan VACB-26/a) shall be installed unless and until the proposed Diversionary Order has been secured allowing for the diversion of footpath 63. Once secured the barriers shall not be operational unless and until a scheme, to be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority has been provided detailing the proposed design of the diversion.

Reason: The above condition is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, to satisfy Policy SD4 of the 2030 Runnymede Local Plan and to meet the objectives of National Planning Policy Framework.

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Runnymede Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020)	Sukhpreet Khull

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

The aim of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is to set out how Runnymede Borough Council will engage with the community; including residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders on Local Plan matters, planning applications and as part of the planning enforcement process.

The Council's SCI was adopted in December 2014. More recently it was updated in May 2020 to confirm how the Council will engage with its communities for the duration of the COVID-19 lockdown. This is because due to the pandemic, some of the methods of engagement specified in the original 2014 SCI cannot currently be utilised. The May 2020 amendments to the SCI are temporary in nature and will cease to be applicable once the lockdown measures are lifted. However, the current redrafting of the SCI has been undertaken as the Council has a legal requirement to update its SCI every 5 years. The Council has had regard to national planning policy and legislation in preparing this September 2020 version. This SCI, once adopted, will replace the SCI adopted by the Council in December 2014 and the temporarily amended SCI which was published in May 2020.

How will it deliver what is intended?

The SCI sets out the key stages for engagement during the production of various planning policy documents. It also sets out the consultation methods for the development management process. The SCI will be checked at each of the stages listed by Council officers to ensure that the methods of engagement specified in the SCI are utilised to ensure that the Council is using its best endeavours to engage with local communities and other interested parties, including those with protected characteristics.

The Council will consider consultee and Member feedback on the consultation/engagement processes undertaken by the Council's Planning teams during the lifetime of the SCI to help identify whether changes are required in the next iteration of the document to address any equalities issues which are highlighted or to improve the Council's engagement/consultation processes more generally.

The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the wider community and regular service users. It has the potential to affect both groups. However, any effects it has on the wider Borough community and service users is likely to be beneficial through the more careful consideration of the consultation processes employed by the Council, the aim of which is to ensure that the engagement and consultation undertaken by the Council is accessible to all including those with protected characteristics. The SCI is not however expected to have a positive or negative impact on employees of the Council.

B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs

or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential based on adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.

The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

The SCI does relate to an area where it is known that different groups have different needs, in particular in terms of how they are able to access Planning Policy documentation subject to consultation or notification. In particular young people/school children, older people and people with disabilities have been identified in the SCI as hard to reach groups/ groups that are under represented in the Planning process. These groups also cover the protected characteristics of age and disability.

The contents of the draft SCI sets out how the Council will seek to best overcome barriers to participation and engage with hard to reach or under-represented groups. This includes the measures set out at paragraphs 1.16 and 1.17 as well as the commitment to carrying out additional methods of consultation where necessary (for example, the carrying out of targeted workshops/work with specific interest groups for example young people/school children, the elderly, the travelling community and disabled people) to ensure that such groups are engaged as part of the consultation process.

It acknowledges that targeted consultation may be required with such groups to overcome any barriers /difficulties that may prevent anyone, who may have a protected characteristic, from taking part in the consultation process. The SCI also clarifies that the Council will ensure that hard copy documentation is made available in various locations across the Borough for inspection during public consultations and also sets out that the Council allows interested parties to respond to consultations in a variety of ways including by hand written letters posted to the Council as opposed to online or by email in line with its aim to facilitate engagement and to overcome barriers for those without ready access to technology.

Similarly, the Council has found that young people and school children are generally under-represented in the planning process. Social media is a popular means of interaction for young people and the Council is committed to the use of online platforms to try and reach young people and encourage them to engage on planning matters. The SCI also sets out that the Council is equally committed to carrying out targeted consultation with school children/young people as appropriate.

More generally, the Council's Planning Policy database contains the details of a number of groups who represent hard to reach groups (including those with protected characteristics, for example the Runnymede Access Liaison Group who seek to provide a representative "voice" for disabled residents). The SCI sets out that the Council will work with such groups to encourage them where possible to disseminate information as appropriate to try and ensure that hard to reach groups including people with protected characteristics are made aware of public consultations and other important notifications.

The draft SCI details consultation approaches which could be implemented individually or in combination, however, it is not specific as to which approaches will be applied for which document or stage of consultation. This is to future proof the document in the event of unexpected events such as the current COVID 19 pandemic. However it is considered that the range of consultation methods set out in the SCI provide flexibility to ensure that the Council is able to tailor its consultations to maximise participation from all interested parties including those with protected characteristics.

If the policy, function or activity is relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics, then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected Characteristics but measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

A six week public consultation on the SCI will provide the opportunity for relevant consultees and members of local communities to provide comments which will be considered in relation to any protected characteristics. Equality implications will also be discussed with the Equalities Group to ensure that the SCI is fully compliant with the Equalities Act.

When adopted, the SCI will set out clearly how the Council will engage with all members of the community and other interested parties, including hard to reach groups which includes those with the protected characteristics of age, race and disability. The SCI will be checked at each of the stages of consultation listed to ensure that the methods of engagement specified are utilised to ensure that the Council is using its best endeavours to engage with local communities and other interested parties, including those with protected characteristics.

With such 'best endeavours' being made in regards to consultation and engagement, including the amended processes to address the implications of the COVID 19 pandemic, and including a range of consultation techniques for Planning Policy consultations so that can be flexibly applied/tailored to maximise effectiveness of engagement, it is considered the document results in an overall neutral impact to any person or group with protected characteristics.

Continued monitoring of the SCI will take place after the SCI is adopted to help identify areas for future amendments to ensure that the Council can continue to carry out consultation and engagement in such a way as to minimise as far as possible any negative impacts on anyone with protected characteristics.

It is not considered therefore that a full EqIA is required.

Date completed: 05.08.20 and cleared by Legal on 26.8.20

Sign-off by senior manager: Georgina Pacey