

Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area Decision Document

Under Regulation 7 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations Runnymede Borough Council is publishing the below decision document outlining the reasons of the decision to designate a modified Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area.

Neighbourhood Area Decision

The application from Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum for the Neighbourhood Area shown edged black on the attached plan (Appendix F) is **REFUSED**. However, Runnymede Borough Council Planning Committee **RESOLVED TO DESIGNATE** a modified Neighbourhood Area on 27th March 2019 (in accordance with Section 61G (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act) which is shown edged red on the attached plan (Figure 1) excluding the area of land comprising Longcross North and the land below Longcross North and the area known as Thorpe Green.

Statement of Reasons

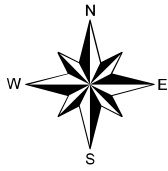
The reasons for the refusal of the Neighbourhood Area are:

- i) The inclusion of the areas known as Longcross North and Longcross South (south of the railway line, north of Longcross Road and west of Kitsmead Lane) is inappropriate to include in the Virginia Water neighbourhood area. No local connection with Longcross has been demonstrated through the submission with it being noted that no proposed forum members or businesses have been drawn from the existing Longcross community. Representations have been received from a business and a resident of the existing Longcross area objecting to the inclusion of Longcross North and South in the neighbourhood area. It is considered that the proposed neighbourhood area does not accurately reflect the Virginia Water local community. The inclusion of Longcross North and South in the neighbourhood area does not make sense to the local community of Longcross and does not accurately reflect the Virginia Water neighbourhood.
- ii) The desire for the proposed forum to contribute and manage the potential impact of the Longcross Garden Village on the wider Virginia Water community can be more appropriately realised through other existing mechanisms, including engagement in the Local Plan process. There are opportunities such as the Longcross Garden Village Steering Group as well as a Longcross Garden Village Stewardship Panel, soon to be established, through which the wider communities, like Virginia Water, can positively contribute to the emerging Longcross Garden Village. Furthermore, as part of the community stewardship and engagement ethos of garden villages, the formation of a Longcross neighbourhood forum and neighbourhood area would be encouraged for both the existing and future Longcross community in due course. Such a neighbourhood forum can work collaboratively with adjoining neighbourhood forums. A more tightly drawn Neighbourhood Area better reflects the existing community of Virginia Water and more accurately define the sphere of local influence for the proposed Virginia Water neighbourhood forum.
- iii) Outline permission exists for Longcross North and work is ongoing on site. Advanced pre-application discussions are concluding on Longcross South and a planning

application is expected imminently. Longcross Garden Village is also a strategic allocated site in the emerging Runnymede 2030 Local Plan which is currently being considered through the Examination process. Given the advanced nature of the Longcross Garden Village proposal, the inclusion of Longcross North and South in the Virginia Water neighbourhood area could unrealistically raise expectations as to the influence of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan in relation to this strategic site. In addition, subject to the emerging Runnymede 2030 Local Plan being found sound, the wider Borough significance and strategic importance of the proposed Longcross Garden Village would have larger than local impacts. Meaning a wider area, beyond Virginia Water and Longcross would have to be included in the referendum should a neighbourhood plan come forward for the area. A neighbourhood plan needs to be well targeted to a local area in the interest of the time, energy and costs incurred by the local community and such Borough level implications should not result from a neighbourhood plan.

- iv) With respect to the exclusion of Thorpe Green in the modified area, Representations were received from Thorpe Forum and Thorpe Ward Residents Association (TWRA) objecting to the inclusion of the area to the south of Longside Lake known as Thorpe Green, and an area on the eastern side of the M25 motorway, being included in the proposed neighbourhood area. Subsequent discussions occurred between the aforementioned parties and Virginia Water neighbourhood forum and the parties jointly agreed the removal of the Thorpe Green area from the Virginia Water neighbourhood area. Following this the proposed Virginia Water neighbourhood forum informally submitted an amended neighbourhood area to reflect the outcome of these discussions excluding the land at Thorpe Green but retaining within the proposed area the land to the east of the M25. It is considered that plan-making should seek to avoid small pockets of potentially unplanned areas between neighbourhood areas. Where neighbourhood areas exist, they should form a seamless patchwork of neighbourhood areas. As such, part of the discussion between the proposed Virginia Water neighbourhood forum and Thorpe neighbourhood forum focused on the intention of the Thorpe neighbourhood forum to re-apply to amend its neighbourhood area to include Thorpe Green and avoid a scenario where a small section of land is sandwiched between designated neighbourhood areas. Thorpe neighbourhood forum has informally indicated their intention to re-apply to modify their neighbourhood area boundary in the near future to incorporate Thorpe Green to avoid this. Given the agreement on Thorpe Green between the parties and the expressed intentions of the Thorpe neighbourhood forum to amend its Neighbourhood Area to include it, Thorpe Green is excluded from the Virginia Water neighbourhood area to more accurately reflect the local communities' view of their distinct neighbourhoods.
- v) With respect of the modification to exclude land to the east of the M25 as proposed by the prospective forum and support by a representation from the owner, Tarmac, it is considered that no local connection between this small parcel of land and the community of Virginia Water has been identified. The desirability to have a legible boundary for the Neighbourhood Area in this location, which the M25 provides is considered to outweigh the suggestion that the land ownership/control by the existing owner should justify inclusion of this parcel in the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area. In light of its location this area is capable of being including in any future amended

Thorpe Neighbourhood Area or any future Neighbourhood Area to the north including the community of Egham Hythe. These opportunities therefore remove the risk of a likely small section of land sandwiched between designated neighbourhood areas.



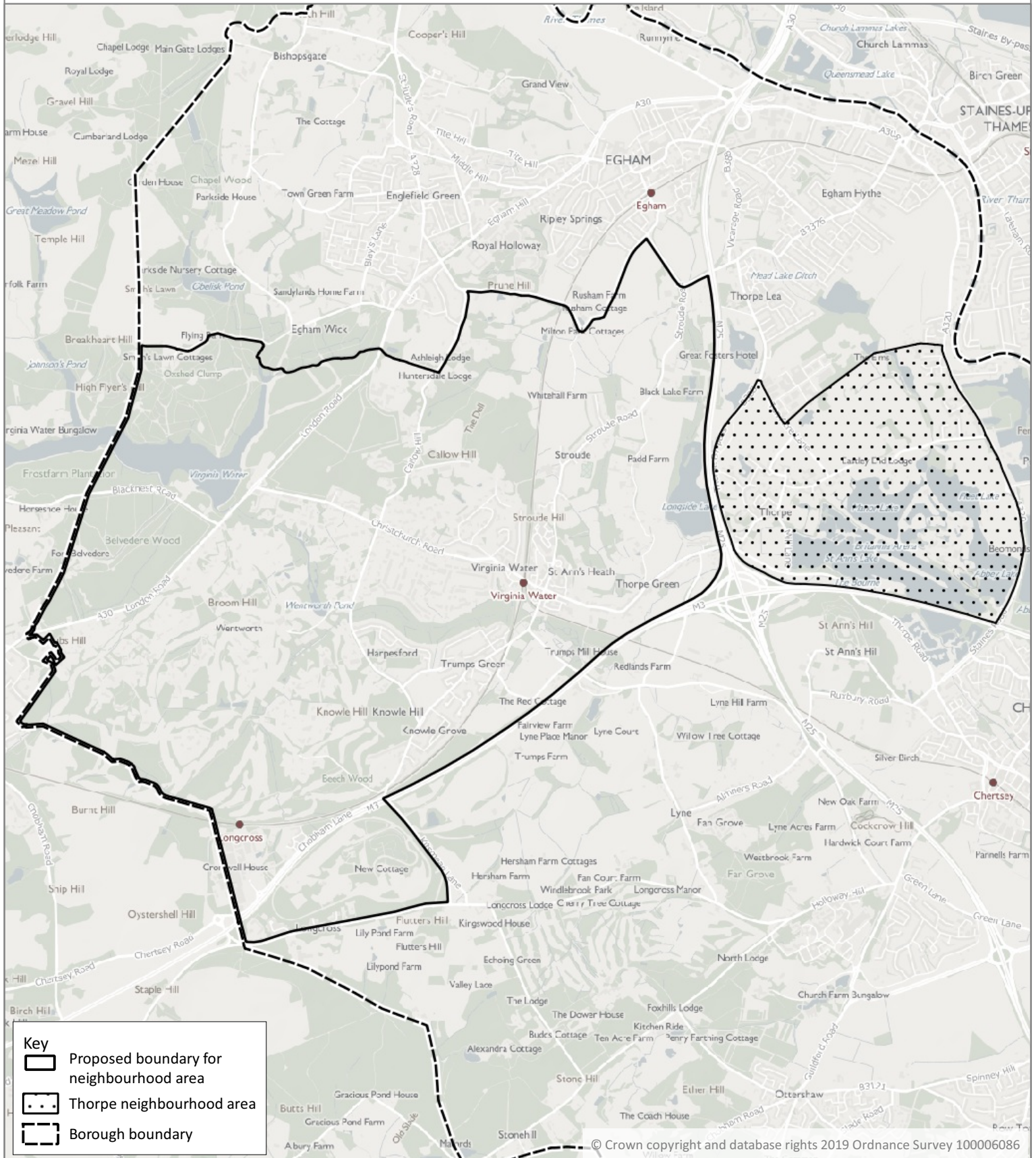
PLANNING COMMITTEE



Appendix F - Plan of the proposed Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum and Area

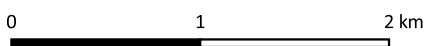
Runnymede Borough Council
Runnymede Civic Centre
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 2AH

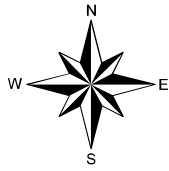
Date: 27/03/2019



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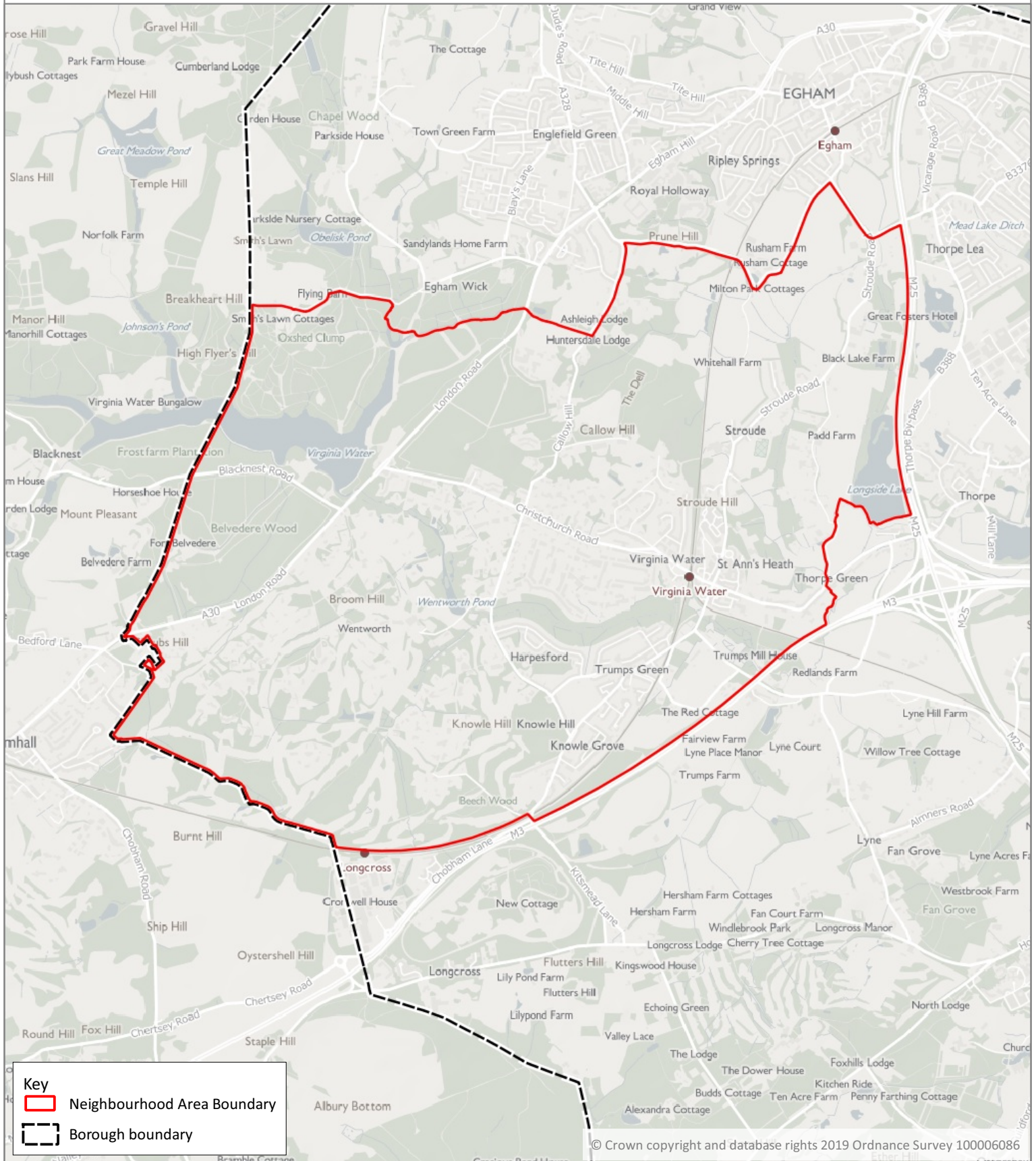
LOCATION PLAN

Figure 1

Runnymede Borough Council
Runnymede Civic Centre
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 2AH

Date: 27/03/2019

Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area



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