

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)****DATE: 24 FEBRUARY 2014****LEAD OFFICER: SUSIE KEMP – ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****SUBJECT: MAGNA CARTA 2015****DIVISION: EGHAM/ENGLEFIELD GREEN****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The sealing of the Magna Carta in Runnymede is a major part of Surrey's heritage and cultural identity, and the 800th anniversary (15 June 2015) will be an occasion of national and international prominence and significance. The Runnymede Meadow site witnessed the sealing of the Magna Carta which established the Rule of Law and Human Rights and effectively challenged for the first time the divine right of Kings. The County Council is providing strategic oversight, working with local, national and international partners to ensure that the 800th anniversary is celebrated and a lasting legacy is created by raising the profile of the area, attracting inward investment - for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked for comment on the progress of the project.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The aim of these recommendations is to celebrate our heritage, raise the profile of the area, increase economic growth and enhance existing facilities to encourage healthier lifestyles.

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1 In December 2012, in response to the local bid for HLF funding for a proposed visitor centre, SCC requested that officers develop a Masterplan for the site together with proposals for the 800<sup>th</sup> celebrations. In July 2013, Surrey County Council's Cabinet approved funding of £1 million towards a partnership project that will to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta in Runnymede and to bring a lasting legacy to the area.
- 2 Surrey County Council has been working closely in a leadership role with key stakeholder organisations (Runnymede Borough Council, National Trust, Royal Holloway University of London and Brunel University) to develop and implement these ambitious plans. At a national level, all partners are represented on the Magna Carta 800<sup>th</sup> Committee. This ensures coordination with national plans for celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- 3 Surrey County Council and the National Trust have jointly appointed a Project Manager, Geri Silverstone, whose principal role will be to oversee the delivery of the plans for 15 June 2015 and the anniversary weekend and be the a key contact for all partners. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined, and the governance structure that involves the principal partners and stakeholders in the project has been set up.

**ANALYSIS:**

- 4 Surrey County Council is supporting this scheme because of the tremendous importance of Magna Carta in terms of heritage education, economic development, tourism and civic pride in our county. Through the events in 2015 and the legacy of an enhanced visitor offer, the profile of the area will be improved both nationally and internationally which will benefit the economy of the area. This report covers:
- 5 The legacy – One of the key ambitions for the 2015 anniversary (at both local and national level) is to provide improved visitor facilities and interpretation arrangements at the historically important site in Runnymede with minimal impact on the natural environment.
- 6 Celebration events – creating an event programme that will raise the profile of the area, bring the community together to participate in a variety of cultural, healthy and educational pursuits, and provide an international celebration worthy of the occasion.

**UPDATE ON THE PROPOSALS:**

**The Legacy**

- 7 Runnymede and Ankerwycke offer sanctuary in an urbanised landscape, and it is this landscape which in many ways is the legacy of the Magna Carta. This project will better tell the stories of Runnymede and Magna Carta; improve the conservation of the historic landscape and the buildings within it; provide a more comprehensive and considered learning offer in conjunction with our partners; and encourage more people to come and spend time at this unique place. An option Masterplan was produced for the partnership in

summer 2013 and many elements of the project are based on its recommendations.

- 8 The vision for the legacy is based on a regional park concept to create a culturally branded destination and tourism identity for the Runnymede area - with the aim to increase economic benefit to the vicinity through increased visitor numbers and promote awareness of the national and international historic significance of the location – its heritage, countryside, wildlife, landscape conservation and bio-diversity of the area. This will be achieved by raising the profile of Runnymede and its environs. Historic Egham will be promoted as the “gateway” to “Magna Carta Country” – thereby generating an economic dynamic to support the growth/regeneration of the rural area and associated towns.
- 9 The area will embrace the site of the sealing of the Magna Carta, Runnymede Pleasure Ground (which has been agreed by the Pleasure Ground trustees), the ancient historic Meadows/NT Runnymede estate, Wraysbury, Ankerwycke, the Magna Carta and Kennedy memorials – as well as including the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial and its adjacent woodland setting. The diverse habitats at Runnymede are rich in flora and fauna and represent a distinctive landscape area to be promoted for conservation and access. The Langham Pond area of the National Trust estate is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and therefore protected under legislation. Key to the concept would be the promotion of access to the wider adjacent countryside and landscape for leisure and recreation purposes – land-based on the southern stretch and water- based activities on the northern section of the park.
- 10 Additional funding for the project is being sought on behalf of the partnership through a Heritage Lottery Fund application. The bid will seek support for long term improvements to the Runnymede Meadow and Runnymede Pleasure Ground sites as well as creating a gateway to the area from the town of Egham. An initial application will be submitted in April 2014, and if successful, a full bid for a 5 year legacy project will be submitted in 2015.
- 11 There will be increased numbers of visitors, which will require greater safety for pedestrians crossing the A308 Windsor Road. The Local Committee will be kept fully informed of the traffic management recommendations, for which there will be a subsequent report.
- 12 The plan to improve the visitor offer includes:
  - a. Improving and enhancing visitor facilities by better utilising existing buildings such as toilets, cafes, and educational facilities.
  - b. Safe pedestrian access across the A308 Windsor Road.
  - c. Providing a lasting legacy of the sealing of the Magna Carta through an iconic commission in the landscape of a British memorial for Magna Carta.
  - d. Improved interpretation through digital smartphone technology which is being designed by Royal Holloway University, and will be ready for testing by the end of 2014.

## ITEM 9

Creating the economic dynamic to support the growth and regeneration of Egham and surrounding areas which will inform the Egham Masterplan (see [www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk)) and Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) Masterplan ([www.rhul.ac.uk](http://www.rhul.ac.uk)). These Masterplans are in development and will create an additional inward investment into the area and provide a significant revitalisation/improvement to the town centre and local economy.

- e. Promoting awareness and understanding of the national and international historic significance of Runnymede and the surrounding area.
- f. Improving access to, movement around and understanding of the area's heritage, countryside, wildlife and biodiversity. This will include improvements to the Thames Path, walking and cycling trails around the area, and improved opportunities for boat trips along the river.
- g. Creating a new range of volunteering opportunities in the following areas: walking guides, rangers, visitor welcome, research, administration, operational support (tea room, exhibition space, education resource coordinator).
- h. Work with partners, particularly RHUL and Brunel to deliver a resource which can be used to deliver significant education programmes to a wide range of stakeholders, including school age children (KS3, KS4, KS5), university students and staff (undergraduate, postgraduate and research), and the wider public through local youth groups and initiatives such as the University of the Third Age.

### **Celebration Events**

- 13 Awareness raising events in 2014 and early 2015 will increase awareness and interest in preparation for the major celebratory events on the weekend of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary and subsequent activities on the site during the summer months/school holidays. The events will be a range from high profile events attracting international attention, to community events involving celebrations with local residents.
- 14 June 15<sup>th</sup> 2014 will be used as a 'one year to go' event, to take place on the Runnymede Meadows to raise awareness and increase the profile of the project.
- 15 A Magna Carta themed event will be delivered by Surrey Arts at the Royal Albert Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015, providing an opportunity to showcase a range of high quality local music and drama at an iconic venue.
- 16 The weekend of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015 will be Egham's Magna Carta Day on Saturday, and an exciting new fair event is being planned at the Royal Holloway University on Sunday, which it is hoped will become an annual occasion. The partnership is working with the Houses of Parliament to be part of national celebrations, such as 'Liber-teas' that will be enjoyed during the weekend.

- 17 Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, it is anticipated that this occasion will be marked by the attendance of national and international dignitaries.
- 18 During the summer of 2015, projects will take place in Egham, to ensure that visitors continue to spend time in the town and as a gateway to access the Runnymede Meadows.

#### **CONSULTATIONS:**

- 19 Regular consultation has taken place with key stakeholders in Runnymede. A programme of regular member updates and stakeholder events is planned.

#### **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 20 Resourcing for the project is from a variety of sources. The project is a long term legacy development for which funding for 5 years has been sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Surrey County Council has committed to invest £1 million (comprising £700,000 towards the commission in the landscape, £300,000 towards events). Contributions in kind have been committed by partners such as
- 21 The Project Manager post (Para 3) is jointly funded by SCC and NT and SCC will, on behalf of the Surrey Partnership, finance the local contribution to the Magna Carta Trail Marketing and promotion initiative.

#### **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 22 The site currently has very limited accessibility and the proposals will improve this for all visitors and residents.

#### **LOCALISM:**

- 23 Localism can be defined as how communities can be more empowered and have a bigger say on the issues that matter to them. In this context, the Magna Carta anniversary programme has already provided an excellent opportunity to engage with communities and to encourage local residents and businesses to guide the partnership in how best to deliver this project successfully.
- a. Consultation results have shown that about 96% of respondents feel that the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta in Runnymede should be commemorated. Consultation with a range of local groups and organisations has helped to shape the Masterplan, and is linked to the needs of the local area.
  - b. Health is a concern in Runnymede, since statistics reveal that Runnymede has a higher than average percentage of residents who are obese. This is particularly marked in Englefield Green West and

Egham Hythe. The life expectancy of men in Egham Hythe is more than 5 years less than the Surrey average. The legacy plans for the site includes walking and cycling trails that will provide better opportunities for physical activity, which was also a need identified in the consultation.

- c. Runnymede has the largest proportion of single occupancy households in Surrey (30%), and levels of single occupancy households of residents over 65 is significantly higher than the national average in Egham and in the Runnymede Meadows area. Opportunities for cultural activity and learning are therefore planned as part of the Magna Carta programme. The partnership has made contacts with Adult Social Care in order to create suitable cultural and volunteering opportunities.
- d. In 2012/13 Runnymede had 60 NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training), which equated to 97 people. The Magna Carta project will provide opportunities for volunteering, further learning. Employment is likely in the hospitality and leisure industry, that will be created to service the needs of visitors.
- e. Regular engagement meetings are planned with local stakeholders, to ensure that the project continues to meet the needs of local communities and businesses.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

24

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below.

a. Sustainability implications

Legacy work that will enhance local natural landscapes will be carried out using sensitive techniques that will ensure protection of the local environment and ecology.

b. Public Health implications

By increasing the opportunities for physical activity in the area, through improved walking and cycling trails, there will be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of visitors.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

25 The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked for comments on the progress of the project.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

26 The views of the Local Committee will be fully considered and the project team will provide regular updates as and when required.

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