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| <b>Report title</b>          | Climate Change Action Plan                            |
| <b>Report author</b>         | Stephanie Broadley, Principal Planning Policy Officer |
| <b>Department</b>            | Planning, Economy and Built Environment               |
| <b>Exempt?</b>               | No  |
| <b>Exemption type</b>        | Not applicable  |
| <b>Reasons for exemption</b> | Not applicable  |

## **Purpose of report:**

- **For recommendation**

## **Synopsis of report:**

The report presents the latest iteration of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) for consideration and recommendation to Full Council for adoption, to become part of the Council's policy framework. The CCAP proposed for adoption is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.

The CCAP has been developed to deliver the objectives and targets in the Council's Climate Change Strategy, adopted in October 2022. Actions in the CCAP have been informed by evidence such as the Council's Estate and Area Greenhouse Gas Baseline Report, and by engagement and consultation with local stakeholders, including the local community. The report describes the outcomes of the formal public consultation which took place from 1 December 2023 to 14 January 2024, and how this amended version of the CCAP has been revised to address feedback. The Consultation Statement is attached at Appendix 2 for Members' consideration.

The CCAP will be subject to high-level review annually, and updated or amended if required to take account of changes in legislation, new best practice and evidence, advances in technology or other changes in circumstances.

## **Recommendation(s):**

- 1) **To recommend to Full Council that:**
  - a) the Runnymede Borough Council Climate Change Action Plan attached in Appendix 1 be adopted; and
  - b) the Corporate Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, in consultation with the Chair of Corporate Management Committee and the Climate Change Members Working Party, be authorised to carry out annual high-level reviews and make minor amendments to the Climate Change Action Plan as necessary.

## 1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 In January 2022, the Council committed to tackling climate change and adopted a target to achieve operational 'net zero carbon' emissions from its services and operations by 2030. In October 2022, the Council adopted its Corporate Business Plan and supporting corporate strategies for the 2022-2026 period. This included the Council's overarching Climate Change Strategy, which sets out the 2030 target, but also an objective to work with local communities and stakeholders to progress towards the national target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In December 2023, the Council formally declared a climate emergency to officially recognise that urgent action is needed to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 1.2 Although the Council has undertaken activities that serve to reduce its carbon footprint and improve its local environment for many years, the development of a comprehensive CCAP following extensive engagement and consultation with internal and external stakeholders, helps to identify exactly what is being done across all service areas of the Council; identify new actions that can be incorporated into service area plans over time; and present these actions in one accessible document - the delivery of which can be monitored, and adjustments made as necessary, to reach net zero targets.
- 1.3 This report presents the latest version of the CCAP, having been revised to address feedback from public consultation, together with further senior officer and Climate Change Member Working Party feedback. The response to the public consultation was generally positive, with respondents reiterating the need for the Council to take action and making suggestions to strengthen the actions. The report describes how representations have been analysed and used to shape the latest iteration of the CCAP for consideration and adoption.

## 2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

- 2.1 The purpose of the CCAP is to support delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. The CCAP contains measures that will help reduce the Council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, but also contains measures that will help reduce borough-wide emissions to net zero by 2050 in line with national targets. It also contains climate change adaptation actions, which will help build resilience to climate change impacts.
- 2.2 The CCAP contains several introductory chapters describing how the document is structured; how actions have been identified; how the Council's estate and area greenhouse gas baseline has informed actions (presented in Appendix 1 of the CCAP, available [here](#)); how outcomes of the engagement activities (presented in Appendix 2 of the CCAP, available [here](#)) and formal public consultation have helped shaped the document; how actions will be financed and resourced; and how the CCAP will be delivered and monitored.
- 2.3 The actions themselves are then presented, grouped under eight themes as follows:



- 2.4 Actions include both those that the Council can take to directly or indirectly impact on its own emissions, and those of the wider borough. Whilst it will take some time to develop business cases for some actions, there are other actions which can be ‘quick wins’ such as implementing the recently adopted Electric Vehicle Strategy and producing a targeted Communications Plan each year to influence and encourage residents and businesses to reduce their emissions.
- 2.5 A report to the Corporate Management Committee (CMC) meeting of 23 November 2023<sup>1</sup> described the extensive early engagement activities undertaken – set out in detail in an ‘Early Engagement and Summary of Findings Report’ - and how the CCAP had been informed by this exercise. Actions have been included in the CCAP to address some of the barriers to action identified by respondents, such as providing assistance with accessing grants, working with partners to improve active travel and sustainable transport infrastructure, and developing awareness-raising campaigns and events. At this CMC meeting, a period of formal public consultation was approved.
- 2.6 The Public Consultation Statement is attached in Appendix 2 of this report. It summarises the main methods used for public consultation (paragraphs 1.2-1.4) and the main issues raised by respondents (paragraph 2.1). 18 responses were received in total – 10 from individuals, 4 from local community groups and 4 from statutory organisations, including Surrey County Council. Taken together with the early engagement survey, feedback has been received from 1,308 individuals and organisations across the Borough during the preparation of the CCAP.
- 2.7 Overall, during this latest round of consultation, respondents indicated that the development of the CCAP is a positive step towards tackling climate change at the local level, and there was a collective emphasis on keeping up the momentum. A table at Appendix A of the Public Consultation Statement summarises each representation received, and how the Council has responded. The final column explains how, if relevant, issues raised in the representation have led to amendments to the CCAP.
- 2.8 All revisions were presented to Members attending the 24 January 2024 Climate Change Members Working Party meeting. This included revisions made in response to senior officer feedback now that the 2024/25 Service Area Plans have progressed and/or due to the fact that further information has become available since the previous version was published for consultation – described in paragraph 2.4 of the Consultation Statement. Members discussed the importance of reducing carbon-intensive meat and dairy production/consumption and encouraging support for healthy, plant-based meals and sustainable food systems. The CCAP presented in Appendix 1 to this report now includes revised Action ID 5.7 and sub-actions which contribute towards addressing this issue.
- 2.9 The CCAP indicates where actions are expected to be delivered in the short (2024-2026), medium (2026-2030) and long-term (2030+). The format of the CCAP sets out key deliverables rather than a detailed, costed plan at this stage. More detailed information on costs will be developed as part of exploring the business cases for the separate actions identified, which in turn form part of separate decisions on whether to proceed. However, in recognition that further work needs to be done to identify costs, possible savings and reductions in emissions that could be achieved as a result of each action to assist with decision-making, a new Action ID 7.1.5 has been

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [– Runnymede Borough Council](#)

added to the CCAP: “Work to cost and carbon impact model the actions set out in this Action Plan (and other actions as they are developed)”.

- 2.10 It is recommended that the Committee notes the changes made to the CCAP following consultation, and recommends to Full Council that the version attached in Appendix 1 is adopted as part of the Council’s policy framework. Once adopted, specific actions will be delivered by the relevant service areas as described in paragraph 10.1 below, with priorities agreed annually through the Service Area Planning process.
- 2.11 The Committee could choose not to recommend adoption of the CCAP, however, this approach would mean the Council does not have an up-to-date set of actions for taking local action to tackle climate change ahead of the 2024/25 financial year. This could significantly delay progress in meeting the objectives and targets of the Climate Change Strategy, as reinforced by the Council’s climate emergency declaration.
- 2.12 It is also recommended that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Management Committee and the Climate Change Members Working Party, to make revisions to the CCAP as further information and evidence becomes available as part of high-level annual reviews. The CCAP is intended to be a living document. Although it will be comprehensively reviewed in line with Corporate Business Plan cycles and formally brought before Members for consideration through the committee process at these times, high-level reviews will be required at more regular intervals to remove actions which have been completed, make minor revisions to existing actions as projects evolve, and add any new actions needed to meet the Council’s net zero targets as new data becomes available and new challenges and opportunities arise.
- 2.13 An alternative option would be for all modifications to the CCAP to be considered by Corporate Management Committee and/or Full Council as appropriate, but this may lead to delay in delivery of projects. As described in paragraph 10.1 below, climate change update reports will be presented to the Committee at regular intervals to keep Members informed of progress with the Council’s climate change response.

### **3 Resource implications/Value for Money (where applicable)**

- 3.1 Production of the CCAP has been undertaken in-house. Consultation activity and analysis of feedback generated by this has also been undertaken by officers of the Climate Change team. No additional resource implications beyond that provided for within the agreed climate change budget will be required to oversee implementation of the CCAP.
- 3.2 The introduction of the CCAP, if adopted, will support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and the climate-related objectives of the overarching Corporate Business Plan. It is expected that there will be costs associated with delivering the new actions in the CCAP. The introductory chapters describe the financial, resourcing, delivery and monitoring implications in detail, which have been reviewed by the Heads of Public Relations & Marketing, Law & Governance and Financial Services.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 5.1 All of the projects/activities included in the CCAP which are underway, would have had their legal implications assessed. Future planned activities will need to have their legal implications considered at the relevant stages, as appropriate.

## **6. Equality implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Duty under the Equalities Act 2020 to have due regard to the nine 'protected characteristics' stated within the Act. The draft CCAP as a whole was screened ahead of public consultation to establish whether there may be an impact, whether positive or negative, on any of the nine protected characteristics. The conclusion of the screening assessment confirmed that the draft CCAP complies with the Council's duty under S149 of the Act, and that a full Equalities Impact Assessment was not required. The assessment was revisited after public consultation and no issues were identified for any protected groups, so the conclusion remains unchanged.
- 6.2 If the CCAP is approved, further equalities implications should be considered as and when specific projects are rolled out.

## **7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 7.1 Although there will be no direct carbon impact as a result of a Full Council decision to adopt the CCAP, the CCAP is directly focused on tackling climate change. Adopting and implementing the CCAP is essential for the Council to meet the aspirations set out in the climate emergency declaration and Climate Change Strategy.
- 7.2 The draft CCAP underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening, with the conclusion that there will be no likely significant effects on designated habitats or any other significant environmental effects. This conclusion has been confirmed by the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 7.3 A Screening Determination Notice was issued on 1 December 2023 and published alongside the draft CCAP for public consultation – this fulfils the publicity requirements under Regulations 11(1) and 11(2) of the Regulations. There have been no significant changes to the CCAP following public consultation, so the determination outcome remains unchanged.
- 7.4 All of the projects/activities included in the CCAP which are underway, would have had their environmental/ sustainability/ biodiversity implications assessed individually. Future planned activities will need to have their implications in terms of environment, sustainability and biodiversity considered at the relevant stages, as appropriate.

## **8. Risk Implications**

- 8.1 There are three key risks to the implementation of the CCAP. The first is the uncertainty associated with setting such a long-term framework for delivery; the second is the potentially high cost and complexity of delivering the action plan; and the third is uncertainty over future government policy and the influence this will have on achieving net zero targets. The wide scope and long-term nature of the CCAP, the many ways in which each high-level action could be delivered, the complex and rapidly changing evidence and unknown future economic factors mean that it is not possible to identify in full all activities and costs that the Council could incur.

- 8.2 The Council's existing risk management and project management processes will be used to track and manage associated risks with the delivery of the CCAP. Actions have been included in the CCAP which address these uncertainties and make sure that progress against the net zero targets can be assessed. Action ID 7.1 commits the Council to monitor progress with CCAP delivery and its ongoing development; Action ID 7.3 commits the Council to ongoing staff training to ensure carbon emission considerations are incorporated into project management procedures; Action ID 7.5 seeks to support, monitor and revise project management procedures which seek to minimise carbon emissions. All of these actions are supported by a number of sub-actions which seek to improve monitoring and delivery of the CCAP.

## **9. Other implications**

- 9.1 Individual actions in the CCAP will be assessed for other implications as appropriate.

## **10. Timetable for Implementation**

- 10.1 The CCAP is a cross-service document that sets out shared responsibilities, with specific actions being owned by the relevant service area leads and implementation supported by other relevant service areas where necessary. The various actions identified in the CCAP therefore all have their own timescales for delivery. As described in the CCAP, detailed monitoring and climate change update reports will be prepared by officers of the Climate Change team and reported to the Corporate Management Committee at regular intervals.

## **11. Background papers**

- 11.1 Members' attention is drawn to the Corporate Management Committee reports of 25 May and 23 November 2023, detailing the early engagement activities and outcomes. They are available at:  
<https://democracy.runnymede.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=758&Ve r=4>. and  
<https://democracy.runnymede.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=950&Ve r=4> respectively.

## **12. Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Climate Change Action Plan, with Appendix 1 (Aether GHG Baseline Report) available [here](#), and Appendix 2 (Early Engagement and Summary of Findings Report) available [here](#).

**Appendix 2:** Public Consultation Statement