

# Runnymede Borough Council

## Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030





# Runnymede Climate Change Strategy

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# Context: The challenge we face

The United Nations and the international scientific community have clearly identified the severe global human, environmental and economic threats that man-made climate change poses. If the world is to avoid the most serious effects of climate change, global warming must be limited to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as laid out in the UN Paris Climate agreement.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has set out the likely effects of the average global temperature increasing beyond 1.5°C. These include more extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and significant disruptions to natural ecosystems resulting in loss of biodiversity, shortages of food, and water.

The fundamental challenges which we all face are twofold:

- Mitigating the worst effects of climate change by limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and
- Adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change which are already in progress.

The Runnymede Climate Change Strategy sets out the overarching objectives which the Council has adopted to meet these challenges.

The strategy is a dynamic document which will evolve and adapt as new impacts are identified, regulatory changes are brought forward, and further actions become known.

All actions will be subject to evidence and fact based evaluation against their effectiveness to achieve the strategy's objectives before being brought to elected members for a decision.

## Reducing the Council's emissions

The primary focus of the climate change challenge is to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and the first action of the strategy is to identify the Carbon emissions arising from the Council's operations.

While Carbon Dioxide is the primary driver, it is not the only greenhouse gas driving global warming. To address this, the Council has adopted the international convention to present all Carbon emission calculations in tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (TCO2e). All greenhouse gas emissions will be converted to CO2 equivalents based on their global warming potential and represented as Carbon Dioxide. Consequently:

**The primary objective of the strategy is to reduce Carbon emissions from the Council's operations and the wider Runnymede community.**

In 2019 the UK became the first major economy in the world to legislate a binding target to reach 'Net Zero carbon' emissions by 2050.

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.

Net Zero Carbon is achieved when the total operational Carbon emissions released on an annual basis average to be zero or negative, so the amount of emitted Carbon balances with that removed or offset.



## The public declaration of a 2030 operational Net Zero Carbon target commits the Council to tackling climate change across every aspect of our service provision and estate.

The overarching United Kingdom target to reach Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2050 can only be achieved by everyone working together: governments, local authorities, business, local communities and right down to our own individual choices.

The Council has an obligation to reduce Carbon emissions from its operations and to play its part in supporting communities and businesses to do the same.

There are difficult decisions to make, and we recognise that the community has a right to be informed and to contribute to the decision-making process.

An integral part of the strategy will be to convene a Citizens' Panel which will be truly representative of Runnymede residents and communities, to provide the channel of communication to achieve this.

The Council has reduced its Carbon emissions through embedded changes in our day-to-day operations over many years, but there is more to do. This can only be achieved by making radical changes to all of the Council's services.

Our existing Carbon emission reduction measures and additional future programmes address both mitigation and adaption to climate change. These are identified in the strategy.

## ....but it is not all about the Carbon

Carbon emissions are internationally identified as the principle driving factor behind the increase in global warming.

The consequences that flow from this also impact other important changes in our environment including biodiversity, food production and water management which necessitate adaptation.

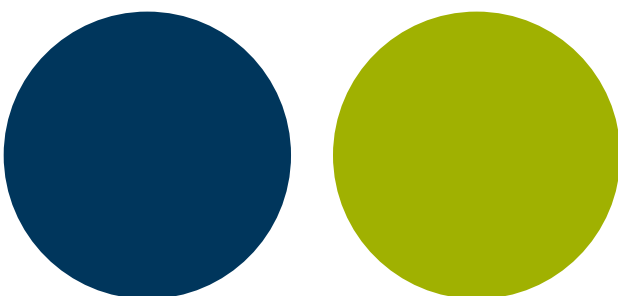
There is an existing internal mandatory requirement to take account of and consider the environmental, sustainability, and biodiversity implications of all Council decisions and these are embedded within the actions laid out in the strategy.

Specific actions to address biodiversity include but are not limited to the Council's active participation in the River Thames Scheme. If the Development Consent Order for this is granted it has the objective to increase biodiversity in addition to providing flood alleviation. There are also actions to evaluate and where possible improve the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces.

Runnymede Borough Council supports Surrey County Council's Climate Change Strategy and the shared ambition of the Surrey local authorities that our residents live in clean, safe, green communities where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities. The Council recognises the advantage to be gained from working collaboratively with the county, district and borough authorities.

Achieving these ambitions and successfully reaching our targets for Runnymede also requires action from national Government including further decarbonisation of the grid and changes to national policy and regulations. We will seek to engage with Government to facilitate and input to these changes and to support the objectives laid out in this Strategy.

● Net Zero Carbon is expressed with respect to operational Carbon emissions. It is generally accepted that is not possible to address historical carbon emissions in the current timeframe.



# Responsibility for the Climate Change Strategy

**Responsibility for delivering the Climate Change Strategy sits with the Leader of the Council. Councillors will receive reports on all climate change actions and regular updates on progress against the strategy’s objectives.**

Operational responsibility for delivery of the strategy is located in the Chief Executive’s Office.

This underlines the importance which the Council attaches to it while acknowledging that change can only be achieved at the scale necessary if it is embedded within every aspect of our operations.

Within the Chief Executive’s Office an External Projects and Climate Change Team of staff members has been established. This team is led by Dr Marcel Steward and will oversee the day to day delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and lead on stakeholder engagement.

Dr Steward will co-ordinate the efforts of our lead officers who will all play a vital role in developing new policies and initiatives.

His team reports to the Council’s Environment and Sustainability Committee, chaired by Cllr Nigel King, where decisions are made about overall direction and where an annual action plan will be approved.

## Clarity of mission

Changing the direction of a complex organisation is not easy and requires a sustained input from all areas of our operations.

This demands clarity about our mission, and everyone involved understanding how they will contribute.

Each lead manager will have responsibility for filtering down the climate agenda into the work of their teams and ensuring there is proactive consideration of the strategy throughout their portfolios.

Actions sit within the three ‘scopes’ broadly described by the 2001 Greenhouse Gas Protocol for accountability purposes (Please see scope definitions on opposite page).

By aligning with this approach, our operations will be clearly defined and can be understood by those around us.

**It is about how we will work together with our residents and external stakeholders to tackle the greatest challenge of our age.**



Cllr Tom Gracey,  
Leader of the Council



Cllr Nigel King,  
Chair: Environment and  
Sustainability Committee



Paul Turrell,  
Chief Executive



Dr Marcel Steward, Head  
of External Projects  
and Climate Change

## Working with our communities

This strategy is not just about Runnymede Borough Council.

In the short term, in order to achieve our vision, we may have to update and modify previous decisions, and the way in which we deliver some services may change.

Compromise will be needed, and, in some cases, an economically balanced approach means that we will have to act incrementally to make progress.

The Council’s hope is that residents will work with us as a critical friend, both challenging and supporting the work with the understanding that success will not be achieved if residents do not all take an

## Levels of influence over emissions

The Council can never expect to reduce all Carbon emissions produced across the Borough as the majority are beyond our control. The 2001 Greenhouse Gas Protocol developed by the World Resources institute and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development categorised emissions into three scopes.

### Scope one: Direct emissions

Activities owned or controlled by your organisation that release emissions straight into the atmosphere.

Examples of scope one emissions include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, or owned or controlled vehicles.

### Scope two: Indirect emissions

Emissions being released into the atmosphere associated with the consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling.

These are indirect emissions that are a consequence of your organisation's activities, but which occur at sources you do not own or control.

The most common type of scope two emission is electricity purchased for your own consumption from the National Grid or a third party.

### Scope three: Other indirect emissions

These are discretionary to include those that are a consequence of your actions, which occur at sources which you do not own or control and which are not classified as scope two emissions.

Examples include business travel not owned or controlled by your organisation (use of public transport), commuting, use of 'grey fleet' (use of employees' own cars for which fuel costs are claimed back via expenses), emissions from contractors, and supply chain procurement.

## Statutory framework

Through various Acts of Parliament and secondary legislation, commitments were placed on Government to act on climate change issues. However, from a regulatory perspective, the actions set out in this strategy are discretionary. The Council chooses to deliver them to improve people's quality of life.

The Climate Change Act 2008 established a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent in 2050 from 1990 levels.

In June 2019, Parliament passed The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, which now requires the Government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases by 100 per cent relative to 1990 levels by 2050.

The Localism Act 2011 places a general duty on councils to implement action on climate change.

For the most part, regulations around climate change are enshrined within planning law with specific reference to the Local Plan. Runnymede's 2030 Local Plan is compliant with these regulations.

The Council is mandated to report all current greenhouse gas emissions to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

There are no other regulatory requirements on local authorities specific to climate change.

Therefore, from a regulatory perspective, the actions identified in the strategy are 'discretionary'.

## What the Council is doing now

The Council has already taken a number of positive actions on climate change both to mitigate and adapt to its impact. This page sets examples of what has already been done.

### Local Plan policies

The Runnymede Local Plan 2030 includes four climate change-related policies. They relate to the use of decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy, managing flood risk, flexible, multiple use design and sustainable construction and demolition.

### Cutting paper use

- Introduction of Hybrid Mail which has reduced our paper based postal delivery needs.
- Launch of e-invoicing: Online self-service administration, reducing paper usage.
- Introduction of Modern.gov: Paperless administration of committee meeting documents

### Reducing power and energy

- Decarbonisation of the Council's power supply by 58 per cent against the 2009 baseline.
- £4m grant funding secured to combat fuel poverty and fund installation of renewable energy / sustainable heating in residents' homes.
- All existing social housing properties owned by the Council are in the process of being upgraded to achieve a minimum EPC C rating by 2030.
- Chertsey Business Park: EPC A-rating, low air permeability design, electric vehicle charging points, transparent roof panels (increased natural lighting and reducing need for electrically powered light), high performance insulated cladding and roof materials, secure cycle parking.

### Environmental issues

- River Thames Scheme. A circa £0.75bn flood alleviation scheme protecting 11,000 homes, 1,600 businesses and roads, rail, power, and water from the worst effects of flooding with anticipated opportunities for Carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity. This is designated as a Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Project.
- Air Quality Management Zones have been established throughout the Borough.

### Sustainable power supplies

- Hythe, Woodham, and New Haw day centres fitted with solar panels.





## Future actions the Council has already committed to

As part of the Council's ongoing action on climate change, we have already committed to a number of new actions.

### Supporting communities

The Council will provide active support for community groups to take positive action through event information, education, grants, support for voluntary initiatives and signposting sources of funding.

Staff will actively seek additional ways in which people can be encouraged and enabled to activate the changes which we must all make.

### Citizens' Panel

The Council will set up a Citizens' Panel made up of representatives from all of our residents, businesses and communities.

The Council has an important role to play in supporting our communities to make the necessary changes. Many, if not most of the businesses in our Borough have already taken steps to reduce their Carbon emissions. We recognise that climate change is a major concern to our residents and communities and many individuals and groups are already acting in their personal life choices.

The panel will work to regularly consult with stakeholders and exchange updates on community and Council actions and initiatives, and we will track the Council's progress to its Net Zero 2030 target

and Runnymede's progress towards the national target of Net Zero 2050.

The panel will be the conduit for stakeholders to inform the Council's decisions which we make on your behalf, but it will also be a forum for stakeholders to give us their ideas and share their progress too.

### Localised services

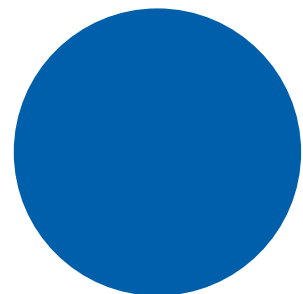
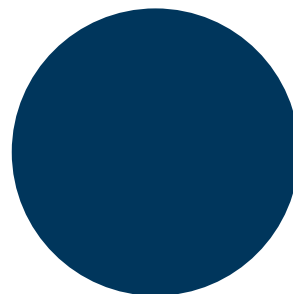
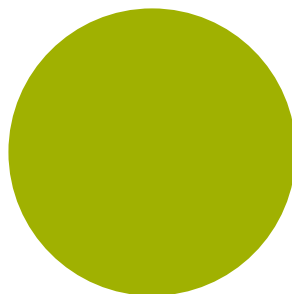
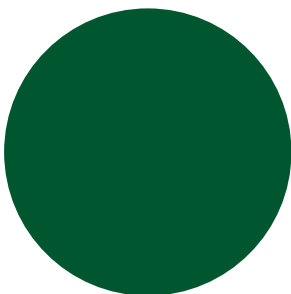
We will continue to work towards achieving the '20 minute' principle where possible by supporting schemes which bring essential services within easy reach of local communities by walking, cycling and public transport.

### Public sector working together

Runnymede supports the Surrey County Council Climate Change Strategy, and is actively working with neighbouring district and borough councils to adopt a joint approach wherever possible and practical.

### Members and staff showing leadership

The Council's commitment will be demonstrated by how we push ourselves beyond our comfort zone to operate in new ways without compromising our standards.



## Runnymede's 2030 climate vision

### **The Council intends that all its operations will be Carbon Net Zero by 2030.**

**To work with our communities and businesses to create a sustainable living environment where people can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987).**

**To support the international climate change response to limit global warming to a 1.5 degrees centigrade temperature increase while simultaneously delivering a prosperous, caring, healthier borough where people are valued and cared for and where strong communities pull together.**

**To support and encourage the private sector and green technology innovation within the Borough and incorporate it into our strategy wherever possible.**

## Mission statement

To make an effective and lasting positive impact on Runnymede's climate and environment, and to work with our residents, community groups, stakeholders, and partners in order to achieve exacting environmental standards by 2030.

### *The Council's mission:*

- To deliver Carbon Net Zero for Council operations by 2030.
- To align climate change actions and environmental improvements with economic gain. We will promote and maintain a balanced approach to ensure that our actions are both environmentally and financially sustainable. We will do this by supporting our local economy wherever possible.
- To promote the principles of the circular economy

(take, make, use, repair, reuse) and decouple from the linear economy (take, make, use, throw) to minimise Carbon emissions and waste, reduce environmental damage and increase biodiversity and health.

- To merge our procurement strategy with technology to create effective solutions to deliver strategic aims.
- To drive biodiversity net gain and protect our natural assets.

## Strategic objectives

1

Reduce Carbon emissions from Council operations to Net Zero by 2030.

2

Positively influence our environment by embedding climate change avoidance and mitigation, sustainability and promotion of biodiversity and conservation in all Council decisions and actions.

3

Positively engage with residents, businesses, community groups, national and local government and universities to share information and encourage positive behavioural change to adapt to or mitigate climate change.

## Delivering this strategy

**The Council services are complex and diverse. Monitoring and co-ordination will be delivered by the External Projects and Climate Change Team. Individual projects will be identified and delivered by the Council's service units.**

### Bringing the strategy to life

The overall strategy, objectives and direction will be the responsibility of elected members with input from relevant officers and members of the Citizens' Panel.

The Climate Change Strategy will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Climate Change Team.

The action plan and projects to achieve the Council's Strategic Objectives will be owned and delivered by the service areas.

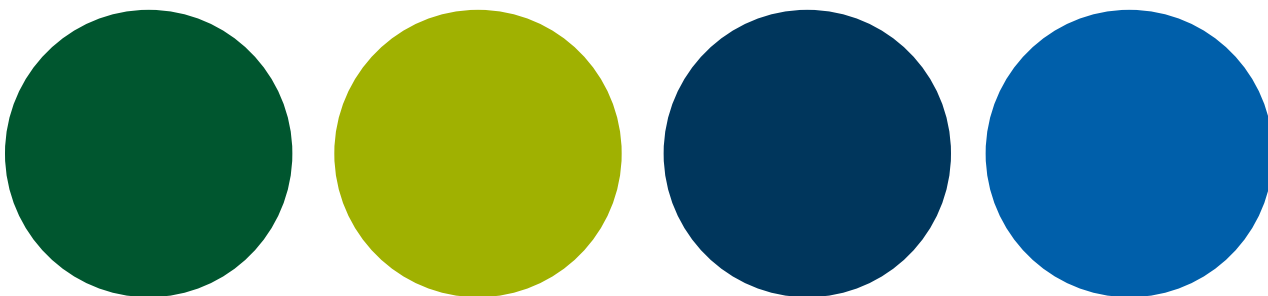
This approach will deliver the overall plan by making most efficient use of the Council's strengths in diverse and specialist knowledge to deliver specific projects.

### Funding

To meet the challenges set out in this strategy will require funding from central Government.

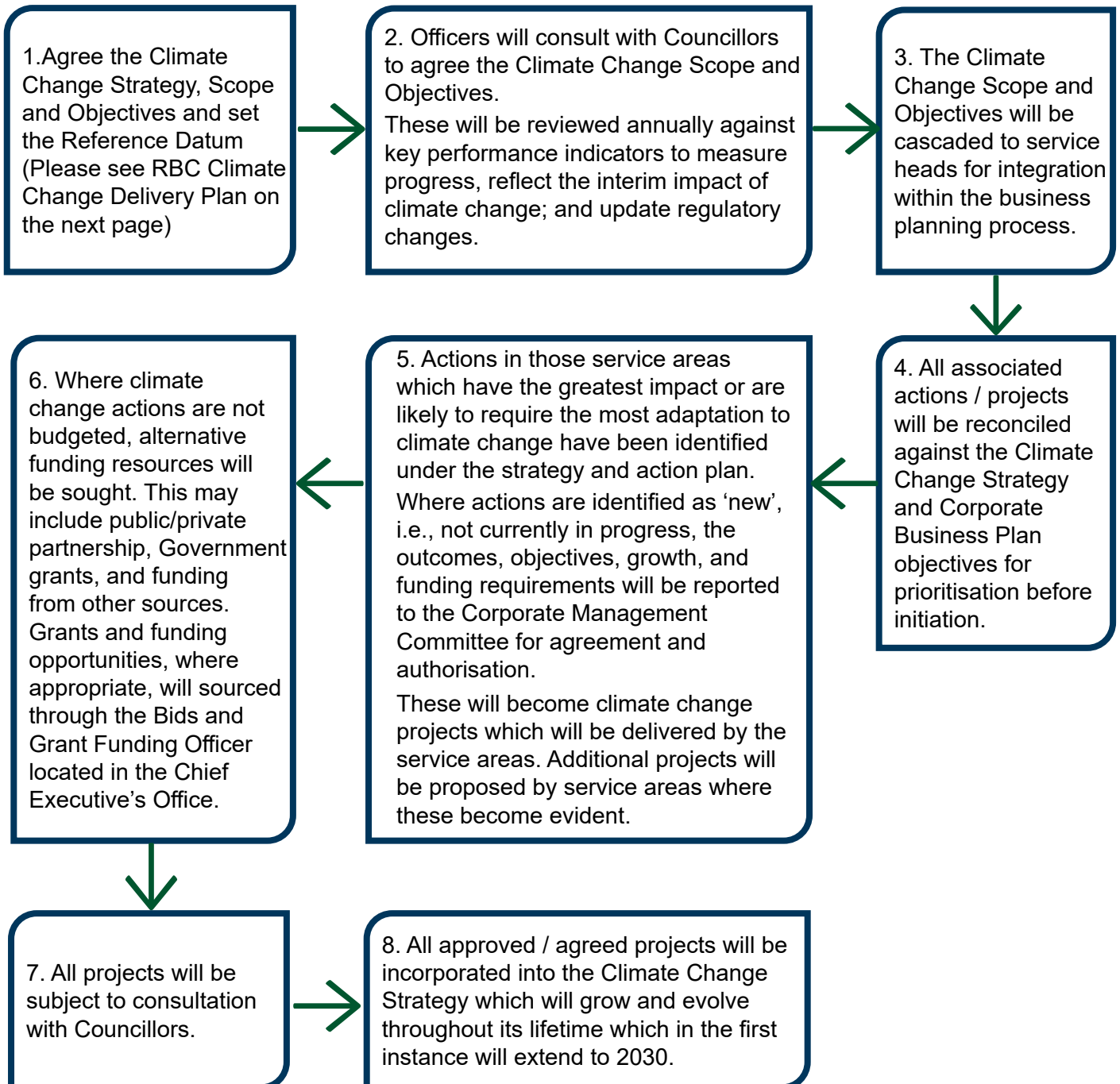
The Council will seek to make maximum use of any opportunities to bid for funding, working with partners like Surrey County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Council will utilise funding within individual service revenue budgets and capital programme to deliver green outcomes and will use developer funding and the Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver green initiatives.

Officers will continue to lobby Government to make available specific funding for local authorities to tackle the environmental and climate crisis.



## Delivery process and democratic accountability

The Runnymede Climate Change Strategy is a living document which will be continuously added to and will evolve. The projects already engaged with are listed in the action plan. While these continue, staff will implement the initial stages of the strategy to bring these and the new projects within the Climate Change Strategy framework. This will be achieved by the following route:



## Preparations

The Climate Change Strategy will require changes and amendments to Council policies and operations. Our resources will primarily focus on reducing the Carbon emissions from our operations and our estate in line with our 2030 Net Zero target.

### Standardising measurement

Emissions calculations will be presented in tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (TCO2e)

To achieve this all greenhouse gas emissions will be converted into CO2 equivalents based on their global warming potential and represented as Carbon Dioxide.

### Monitoring performance

For those operations which the Council directly controls or influences, key performance indicators will be created as a measure of success and to track and report progress.

These will be reported to the Environment and Sustainability and Corporate Management committees.

### Creating a baseline

All projects will be referenced to the Runnymede Carbon Baseline which will be set at inception of the Climate Change Strategy.

There is no standardised methodology for setting the Carbon baseline for any council. Progress is being made by many organisations and institutions in the field and a common consensus is emerging. The Council has a contributory role to play in this process at both county and national level. Until a universal standard is agreed,

**The Council will future proof investment in the Climate Change Strategy by developing the Runnymede Standard Carbon Baseline (RSCB) to ensure internal consistency in how it records progress and success as a means of future proofing data against alternative baseline standards when they emerge.**

Getting this right is key to ensuring that we can evidence our work and investment as well as establishing our credentials to drive wider changes in areas outside our direct control.

### Enabling actions led by the Climate Change Team

- Establish the RSCB for the Council's scope one and scope two emissions as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (2001).

This is an integral part of the preparation for the Climate Change Strategy inception and will be carried out in parallel with the immediate elements of the action plan.

**The components and elements which make up the Runnymede Standard will draw on the most up to date information available.**

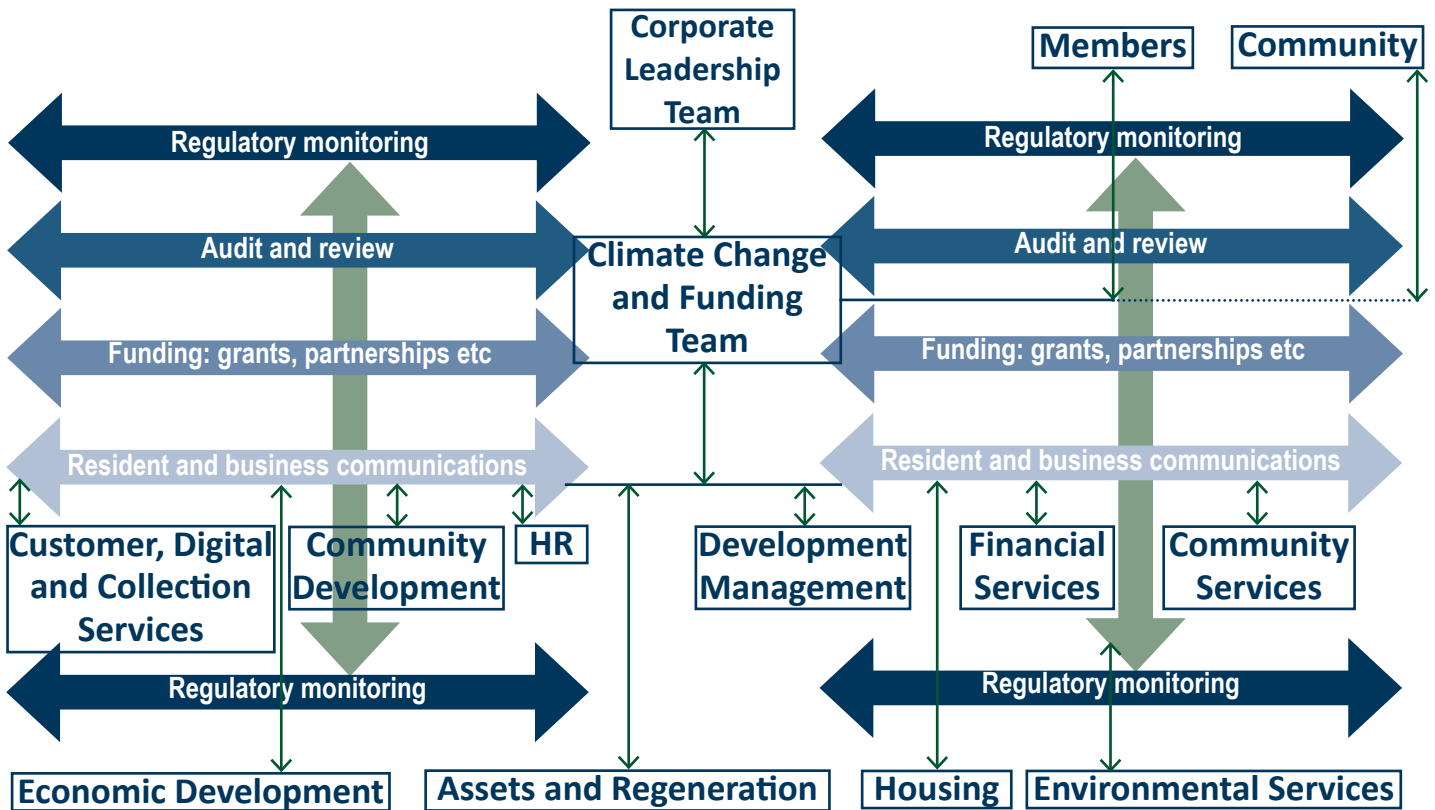
This is with the express intention to be supportive to the Surrey County Council strategy and those adopted by our neighbouring districts and boroughs with which we seek to co-operate.

- Create a self-service methodology to enable service areas to identify Carbon emission reduction projects for evaluation and incorporation in the Climate Change Strategy in line with Corporate Business Plan objectives
- Establish key performance indicators at project and corporate levels to monitor and report progress against the RSCB
- Prioritise all actions referenced against maximising Carbon emission reduction and the objectives of the Corporate Business Plan within a balanced approach to the Council's wider responsibilities and objectives
- Key projects which bridge multiple service areas, outreach to other organisations or third parties will be co-ordinated by the Climate Change Team.

Examples include the Citizens' Panel creation and maintenance, renewable energy initiatives, engagement with Government, think tanks and universities under the oversight of the Council.

The Runnymede Borough Council Climate Change Delivery Plan on the opposite page gives a detailed visual representation of how this will be achieved in practical terms.

## Runnymede Borough Council Climate Change Delivery Plan 2023-25 / 30 / 50+



### Definitions

#### Net Zero Carbon: Institute for Government

Net Zero refers to achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. There are two different routes to achieving Net Zero, which work in tandem: reducing existing emissions and actively removing greenhouse gases.

A gross-zero target would mean reducing all emissions to zero. This is not realistic, so the Net Zero target recognises there will be some emissions but that these need to be fully offset, predominantly through natural carbon sinks such as oceans and forests. In the future, it may be possible to use artificial carbon sinks to increase carbon removal, research into these technologies is ongoing. When the amount of carbon emissions are cancelled by the amount removed, the UK will be a net-zero emitter.

#### Net Zero Carbon 2030: Runnymede Borough Council

To achieve a balance between the amount of carbon emissions produced by the Council's scope one and two operations and the amount of carbon emissions removed from the atmosphere by actively reducing emissions and actively removing greenhouse gases.

#### Net Zero 2050: Institute for Government

In June 2019, the UK government committed itself to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 'Net Zero' by 2050, meaning the UK would emit no more than it takes out of the atmosphere. In doing so it became the first major economy to enshrine such a commitment in law.

## Runnymede Borough Council

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