

Report title	Runnymede Climate Change Study Stage 1: Council Estate and Area Green House Gas (GHG) Baseline
Report author	Sarah Hides, Principal Climate Change Officer
Department	Planning, Economy and Built Environment
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	Not applicable
Reasons for exemption	Not applicable

Purpose of report:
To recommend

Synopsis of report:
The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings of the Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area Green House Gas (GHG) Baseline report which has been produced by the Council’s retained consultants Aether Ltd. This includes setting out the key results and recommendations. The contents of this report and the Aether Baseline are intended for information only.

Recommendation:
Corporate Management Committee is asked to:

1. Agree that the Aether Ltd Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline report at Appendix 1, alongside other sources of information (including consultation feedback from Summer 2023) should be used to develop a Climate Change Action Plan for the Borough.
2. Recommend that Full Council note the contents of the Aether Ltd Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline report.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 Runnymede Borough Council’s Climate Change Study began at the end of October 2022. The main purpose of the project is to support the implementation of Runnymede Borough Council’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, and also to underpin the Local Plan Review process. The work of the study is split into two main stages:

- a. The Stage 1 work will establish the Council’s and the Borough’s emissions baseline and improve and streamline our carbon monitoring, measuring and reporting methodologies. The Council’s emissions baseline year has been chosen to be 2019 to be in line with Surrey County Council (SCC) reporting.

- b. The Stage 2 work will establish the evidence base needed to underpin the development of future planning policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the revised Local Plan. Building on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and using the baseline work on emissions from Stage 1 of the Climate Change Study, the Stage 2 work will recommend decarbonisation pathways which will help identify priority areas for action and show where policy gaps remain.
- 1.2 The Climate Change Study will have a key role to play in helping the Council better understand the scale of carbon emissions from different operations/sectors. This will assist in developing and then prioritising actions needed to achieve operational net zero carbon emissions from Council services and operations by 2030, and also guide the Council in developing actions within its areas of influence, to reduce emissions across the wider Borough by 2050, in line with national targets.
 - 1.3 The emissions accounting methods used to develop the baseline are derived from the guidance given in the Green House Gas (GHG) Protocol. The GHG Protocol establishes comprehensive global standardised frameworks to measure GHG emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains and mitigation actions. The standards produced are designed to provide a framework for businesses, governments and other entities to measure and report their GHG emissions in ways that support their goals.
 - 1.4 Land Use Consultants Limited (LUC) are the consultants who hold overall responsibility for the project management of the Climate Change Study and are completing the majority of the Stage 2 work. However, as a broad field of expertise is needed to cover all parts of this project, LUC subcontracted the bulk of the Stage 1 work to Aether Ltd, who are the authors of the baseline study which is the subject of consideration in this report. Aether Ltd holds considerable expertise and experience in carbon modelling, measuring, monitoring and reporting, and work with a range of local authorities and other public bodies in this area.
 - 1.5 The Stage 1 work of the Climate Change Study has now been completed and the associated report 'Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline' is attached in Appendix 1. The purpose of the remainder of this report is to summarise its key points and recommendations, as well as next steps. The contents of this covering report and the Aether Baseline are intended for information only.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 The Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline report (from now on referred to in this report as 'The Aether Baseline report') presents a summary of the outcome of the first stage of work which focused on developing a baseline emission estimate for the Council estate and the borough (Section 4 and Section 5 of the report respectively). The Aether Baseline report also presents recommendations on how the baseline can support monitoring against the Climate Change Strategy and how the Council could establish a governance structure for effective monitoring (Section 6).
- 2.2 Section 1 introduces the report within the framework of the global climate agenda, UK 2050 Net Zero target and RBC's climate vision and 2030 Net Zero target.
- 2.3 Section 2 sets out the background concepts and principles that have been used to draft the emissions baseline for the Council Estate and wider borough. As such, this section sets out the carbon accounting principles used to define the organisational

boundary which will be used for reporting emissions for the Council estate and operations. Table 1 on p.4 describes the carbon accounting definitions of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emission sources. Figure 1 on p.6 shows the activities that are included in the Runnymede borough baseline and Figure 2 on p.11 sets out the scope of the emissions baseline for the Council estate and where our assets and services sit within the three emission scopes as defined within the GHG Protocol corporate guidance (Table 1 on p.4).

- 2.4 The carbon accounting principles detailed in Section 2, the organisational boundary approach used to develop the emissions baseline for the Council estate (an operational control boundary has been chosen) and the scope allocation of RBC assets and services have all been previously discussed and agreed by Members at Corporate Management Committee in March 2023 (please see the relevant reports and briefing notes under the 'Background Information' heading at the end of this report for further details).
- 2.5 Section 3 of the Aether Baseline report presents the methodology used to compile the GHG emissions estimates for the Council estate and wider borough area. It introduces the key concepts of emissions accounting and presents the input data used in the calculations. This methodology has also previously been presented by Aether and discussed with Members at an all Member briefing in February 2023. The recording of the presentation and the slide pack are available on the All Members Teams Channel.
- 2.6 Section 4 of the report sets out the Runnymede Borough Council GHG inventory. A GHG inventory is a data set which presents estimates of emissions of various greenhouse gases from a wide range of activities in an organisation, country or other geographical area. A GHG baseline is the GHG inventory for a specific year chosen by the reporting organisation from which progress in decarbonisation is monitored. The Council baseline year has been chosen as 2019 to be in line with SCC's reporting as described in point 1.1a above.
- 2.7 Runnymede Borough Council's GHG emissions for 2019/2020 were estimated to be 19,836 tCO₂e increasing to 21,922 tCO₂e in 2021/2022. This equates to an 11% increase. The sources which contributed most to this increase were Council buildings-sheltered housing and communal use which saw a 26% increase in emissions over this period, and procured goods, works and services where a 59% increase in emissions was observed.
- 2.8 Emissions by sector are presented in Figure 3 and Table 4. Figures 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 present subsets of the main data set. Figure 4 shows Scope 1 and 2 sources, Figure 5 shows building emissions split by electricity and gas by building type and Figure 6 shows total Scope 3 sources. Figures 7 and 8 provide a further breakdown of the Council's scope 3 emissions by source. Further information on the estimation of emissions which result from the third party provision of goods, works and services (this is through the Council's procurement processes) is reported in section 4.1.4. Please note, that as methodologies for estimating emissions from third party suppliers are not yet well established and have a high uncertainty, they are presented separately from the inventory. A breakdown of emission hotspots within the Council's supply chain (i.e. from procured works, goods and services) can be viewed in Table 5.
- 2.9 Overall, the most significant emission source within Scope 1 and 2 is 'all Council buildings', making up 38% of the total emissions across all scopes in 2019/2020. Next is waste collection and transport at 2.6% of the total emissions in 2019/2020. For scope 3 emissions, the largest sources by a significant margin are tenant energy use, making up 49% of the total emissions in 2019/2020, then those produced by third party

provision of goods, works and services making up approximately 28% of the total emissions in 2019/2020. The next most significant source is staff commuting estimated to equate to 14% of total Council GHG emissions in 2019/2020.

- 2.10 It is noteworthy that if you compare the emissions for the Council's Scope 1 and Scope 2 sources for each year with those we have previously reported to BEIS (now Department of Energy Security and Net Zero), our emissions total has now increased by 15% for 2019/2020, 29% for 2020/2021 and 22% for 2021/2022. This was to be expected and reflects the improved detail and accuracy, as well as the increased number of assets from the Council estate that have been included for the purpose of calculating the new Council baseline.
- 2.11 Improved understanding of the Council's Scope 3 emissions has enabled the extent of sources that can be reported to increase. Therefore, this has also contributed to increases in total emissions reported each year when compared to previous figures. These new figures will be reported and updated from 2019/2020 onwards in this year's emissions report to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). They will also be provided to Surrey County Council to whom we also report our emissions on an annual basis.
- 2.12 The new refined and updated baseline will now provide the Council with the most accurate data possible to help prioritise decarbonisation actions and measure the effectiveness of our actions over time.
- 2.13 Section 5 of the Aether baseline report sets out the GHG inventory for the wider borough of Runnymede. The borough's GHG emissions for 2019 have been estimated to be 634ktCO₂e. Emissions by sector are presented in Figure 9 and Table 6 on p.27. The most significant emissions source is the transport sector, comprising 58% of total emissions for 2019 with 47% of total emissions for this year attributable to private car, LGVs and motorbike use. The second largest source at 21% of total emissions, is from heating of residential homes. Emission from land use and land use change in Runnymede are currently a small net sink at -4.3ktCO₂e. This is due to carbon sequestration in woodland and grassland areas of the Borough.
- 2.14 Figure 10 and Table 7 on p.29 show the change in Borough emissions from 2019 to 2020. Total emissions decreased from 634ktCO₂e in 2019 to 556ktCO₂e in 2020 equating to a 12% reduction. The largest decrease is seen in emissions from commercial and industrial electricity use. This is probably due to the decrease in electricity demand due to the impacts of COVID-19 and temporary closure of non-essential commercial activity combined with the ongoing decrease in the carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid. There is also a decrease from transport emissions most likely attributable to stay at home orders during the pandemic.
- 2.15 Section 6 of the Aether Baseline report gives recommendations for use in future monitoring and governance. These recommendations include:
- a. establishing and formalising data supply chains so that emissions can be monitored and reported with confidence at regular intervals.
 - b. placing operational (non-political) governance for the council's net zero targets, both for the Council's own emissions and those from the wider borough at Corporate Leadership Team level to ensure that that the commitment to net-zero comes from the top of the Council down.

- c. embedding carbon literacy training within the Council to create a net-zero culture.
- 2.16 Section 7 of the report brings together the conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations focus on the following 4 areas:
- a. Establishing and maintaining data flows;
 - b. Making data set improvements where possible;
 - c. Engaging with the Council's largest suppliers and contractors to better understand scope 3 emissions from third party suppliers procured by the Council; and,
 - d. Future tracking and reporting of GHG emissions.

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Runnymede Climate Change Study is essential to support implementation of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. The Climate Change Strategy states in relation to the Council's baseline work that *'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'*.
- 3.2 The overarching target for the Borough and the UK is to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In addition, the Council adopted its own climate change target in January 2022 'to achieve operational 'Net Zero Carbon' emissions from its services and operations by 2030'. The baseline and emissions accounting work from Stage 1 of the Climate Change Study is essential in enabling the Council to achieve these targets and successfully measure and monitor our progress towards doing so.

4. **Resource and finance implications**

- 4.1 The Aether baseline report draws conclusions on the level of carbon emissions emitted by the Council and the Borough as at 2019. The next step in the process will be to use the findings of this work, alongside the responses received through the public engagement on climate change over the summer to inform the development of a Climate Change Action Plan and Environmental Behavioural Change Strategy for Runnymede. Through the development of these important documents, the impacts of different decarbonisation actions can be considered in more detail; both in terms of resources required from different Service Areas and also financial implications.
- 4.2 Both the Climate Change Action Plan and Environmental Behavioural Change Strategy will be developed with input from Councillors this Autumn.

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 The Paris Agreement which is a legally binding international treaty on climate change was adopted by 196 Parties, including the UK at COP 21 in Paris on 12 December 2015 and came into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to preindustrial levels.
- 5.2 In June 2019, Parliament passed The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, which requires the Government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases by 100 per cent relative to 1990 levels by 2050.

- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Council's Climate Change Study and baseline work will be vital in ensuring that the Council has the best chance of success in delivering on the above commitments.
- 5.5 Any specific legal implications associated with organisational boundary setting for the Council's emissions reporting will be assessed as they occur.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Duty under the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) to have due regard to the need to:
 - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share those characteristics;

in relation to the 9 'Protected Characteristics' stated within the Act.

- 6.2 The Council will need to ensure a fair transition to net zero for all parts of its communities; including those with protected characteristics. Each strategy developed as part of the Council's response to climate change will be accompanied by an equalities screening to assess the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics and to ensure that necessary mitigation is put in place to limit adverse effects.

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

- 7.1 The objectives set out in the Climate Change Strategy aim to enhance the environment and to promote sustainability and biodiversity. The work of the Climate Change Study is fundamental to taking forward, and then meeting these objectives.

8. **Other implications**

- 8.1 As detailed in point 2.11 above, officers will need to update past emissions reports given to DESNZ (previously BEIS) and Surrey County Council to reflect the increase in emissions calculated within the Aether Baseline report.

9. **Timetable for Implementation – Next steps**

- 9.1 Once the Aether baseline report has been considered by Corporate Management Committee and Full Council it will be published on the Council's website (October 2023).
- 9.2 Separately, at the current time, officers are in the process of reviewing the comments received during the summer of public engagement on climate change. These are the comments received through the online climate change survey, and also during focus group and 1:1 meetings held. Some additional engagement is also due to take place in September with the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum and the Council's Community Action Groups. The feedback from the engagement undertaken is being

summarised in a Consultation Report which will be distributed to Members this Autumn and which will underpin the development of a draft Environmental Behavioural Change Strategy. This draft strategy is expected to be consulted on with the public in late 2023/early 2024. Adoption is anticipated in Spring 2024.

- 9.3 Based on the feedback received to date through the public engagement, as well as the comments received from the different Service Areas across the Council, a draft Climate Change Action Plan is also being developed. This Action Plan will be shared with Members this Autumn before being the subject of public consultation (most likely in late 2023/early 2024). Adoption is anticipated in Spring 2024.
- 9.4 The details of other ongoing activities which will assist in the Council's wider response to climate change are set out by Service Area in item 6 of this agenda.
- 9.5 Members may also note that the Forward Plan sets out that a report will also be brought back through Corporate Management Committee in due course reporting on the Council emissions for the 2022/23 financial year.

10. **Conclusions**

- 10.1 This report presents a detailed summary of the outcome of the Stage 1 work from the wider Runnymede Climate Change Study. This focuses on developing a baseline emissions estimate for the Council estate and the wider borough. The Aether Baseline report can be viewed in full at Appendix 1.
- 10.2 The Aether Baseline report sets out GHG gas emissions inventories and associated emissions estimates by source for the Council and the wider borough area. Recommendations are given for future improvements that can be made to further improve the Council's data acquisition and future monitoring of both Council and borough emissions.
- 10.3 The Aether Baseline report has refined and updated the Council and borough emissions estimates, and provided an improved understanding of emissions within the Council, especially in relation to Scope 3 emissions. The more detailed emissions estimates, which are based on a wider range of information held by the Council, will provide the most accurate data possible to help prioritise decarbonisation actions and measure the effectiveness of these actions over time.

Accompanying report (attached)

Appendix 1: Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and area GHG Baseline – Stage1 – Runnymede Borough Council June 2023

Background papers

1. RunnymedeNetZero_CarbonReporting_Briefing Note_Feb8
Please see Corporate Management Committee papers for 23 March 2023
2. Climate Change Study Part 1 – Organisational Boundary and Scope Allocation
Please see Corporate Management Committee papers for 23 March 2023