

<b>Report title</b>	Draft 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:**

To resolve

**Synopsis of report:**

**The draft Climate Change Action Plan updates the existing, preliminary draft considered previously by Members during the preparation of the Climate Change Strategy, but not formally adopted. The report describes how background research and early engagement with a range of stakeholders has informed the updated version of the Action Plan, and how formal public consultation is now proposed. Paragraphs 2.8-2.11 of the report describe the proposed consultation and communication methods to be used to maximise responses. The feedback received will inform the final iteration of the Climate Change Action Plan ahead of its adoption.**

**Recommendation(s):**

**Corporate Management Committee is requested to:**

**1: APPROVE the draft Runnymede Borough Council Climate Change Action Plan for public consultation for a period of five weeks, commencing on Friday 1 December 2023.**

**1. Context and background of report**

- 1.1 The Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026 sets out how the Council will play a key role in creating a greener environment and ensuring an effective response to climate change. The Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030, adopted in October 2022, describes how the Council will approach this and sets out Runnymede’s 2030 climate vision: how the Council intends that all its operations will be carbon ‘net zero’ by 2030. The Strategy also sets out how the Council will work with local community groups and a range of other stakeholders to reach net zero carbon emissions across the wider borough by 2050, in line with national targets.
- 1.2 A preliminary Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) has previously been drafted to support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy, but further work on this has been necessary to ensure proposed actions (both in relation to the 2030 and 2050 targets) are informed by the latest evidence (such as the baseline emissions findings of the

Climate Change Study) and feedback from extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation. In this regard, on 25 May 2023, the Corporate Management Committee approved an extensive research and engagement plan to be conducted over the summer period, primarily consisting of an online climate change survey for residents, young people and businesses. The engagement activities have now concluded, and feedback has been used to inform the development of the draft CCAP.

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

- 2.1 The draft CCAP updates the existing, preliminary Action Plan which was prepared alongside the Climate Change Strategy, but never formally adopted.
- 2.2 The purpose of the CCAP is to support delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. The draft 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.
- 2.3 The draft CCAP contains several introductory chapters describing how the CCAP is structured; how actions have been identified; how the Council's estate and area greenhouse gas baseline has informed actions; how outcomes of the engagement activities have helped shaped the document; how actions will be financed and resourced; and how the CCAP will be delivered and monitored. This penultimate chapter (before the action plan itself begins) stresses how the CCAP is a living document, and actions will evolve and continue to be developed as more information is gathered about potential new projects and activities which will help the Council respond to the challenges of climate change.
- 2.4 The actions themselves are then presented, grouped by theme. The actions have been developed through a combination of means, including:
  - a desk-based literature review to identify existing evidence on actions associated with reaching net zero, including reports produced by the Climate Change Committee and their recommendations to Government;
  - drawing on and transposing where relevant, the county-wide climate change actions identified by Surrey County Council in its Climate Change Strategy and Greener Futures climate change delivery plan 2021-2025;
  - drawing on feedback from the 'summer of engagement' with residents, local community groups, businesses, schools and young people (see paragraph 2.5 below);
  - consulting action plan toolkits and best practice case studies, such as the Ashden / Friends of the Earth "*31 climate actions that councils can take*" publication, and the Local Government Association climate change hub;
  - familiarisation with action plans from similar local authorities, including those across Surrey with whom the Council will be working with to tackle climate change at a larger spatial scale;
  - drawing on recommendations made by Aether and Land Use Consultants in the Council's Climate Change Study (2023), including the Council's detailed Greenhouse Gas baseline report (included at Appendix 1 of the Climate Change Action Plan);
  - drawing on feedback from senior officers across all Service Areas of the Council at meetings held throughout June-September to ensure the actions are fit-for-purpose and reflect service area plans;
  - drawing on feedback from Members of the Climate Change Working Party.

- 2.5 At the Corporate Management Committee meeting of 25 May 2023, Members agreed an extensive 'summer of engagement' plan. The draft CCAP has been informed by feedback received from these engagement activities, described in detail in Appendix 2 of the CCAP. In summary, engagement activities included:
- an online climate change survey, which saw 450 under-18s, 815 residents and 25 organisations respond over a 6-week period;
  - focus group sessions and meetings with local community groups including Resident Associations, Neighbourhood Fora, Community Action groups, Eco-churches, the Showmen's Guild and the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum;
  - attendance at business meetings and network events including the Town Teams meetings in Chertsey and Addlestone, and the Business Runnymede Steering Group meeting;
  - seeking feedback at events such as summer fairs, Surrey Youth Games and the Great Big Green Week;
  - in-person and virtual feedback sessions with senior officers of the Council, including at the Climate Change Officers Working Group meetings; and
  - seeking feedback from Members at the Climate Change Members Working Party.
- 2.6 Various barriers to action were identified during the course of these engagement activities, with the most common response being upfront costs and expense, followed by lack of time, resources, skills or information. Actions have been included in the CCAP to try and address some of these barriers, 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.
- 2.7 Where possible, the CCAP also identifies potential cost implications, carbon reduction impacts, and co-benefits that can be achieved in addition to climate change mitigation and adaptation (such as health and wellbeing benefits, economic prosperity; and inclusivity and community engagement). In relation to cost implications and carbon reduction savings, Members will note that currently, information for many activities/projects is missing. This is because, in many instances, projects have not commenced, or have commenced but are still at the relatively early stages. However, officers will continue to work with the Service Areas across the Council to obtain this information wherever possible as projects develop, and add it into the CCAP at review points.
- 2.8 It is proposed that the draft CCAP should now undergo a period of public consultation following which any representations received will be considered by the Council prior to adoption. The period for consultation is proposed to be for 5 weeks. As the required length of the consultation is not determined by any legal requirement, 5 weeks is considered to represent a proportionate amount of time taking into account the extent of early engagement already conducted; and will allow enough time to review the material given the Christmas period. The proposed timescales will allow officers to analyse feedback and present the revised CCAP to the Climate Change Members Working Party on Wednesday 24 January 2024.
- 2.9 Officers will utilise a number of consultation methods to ensure that the consultation material is shared as widely as possible during this period. Communications activity will include:
- hosting the material, including a consultation response form, on a dedicated page on the Council's climate change website, with links from the Council's consultation webpage;

- advertising the consultation on the Council's social media channels, other websites such as Business Runnymede, and via the monthly Community Life (circulated to 22,000 households);
- e-marketing and press releases – launching the consultation via email to the Council's climate change database of contacts, which includes contact details of those who indicated in the climate change survey that they wished to be kept updated about the Council's climate change work (approx. 460 individuals and organisations), and also via residents' e-news (approx. 1,500 individuals);
- outdoor communications - publicising the material on the borough's noticeboards where available;
- displaying hard copies of the consultation material in community buildings (more on this in paragraph 2.11 below);
- publicising the consultation when attending events such as the Town Teams, Community Action and Community Planning Panel meetings;
- encouraging local community groups to publicise the material in their newsletters and electronic communications.

2.10 Officers will also organise and invite stakeholders to a dedicated webinar to present the material, encourage discussion and invite written feedback. This is considered to be a proportionate approach, given the extent of early engagement which has already helped shape the draft CCAP.

2.11 In order to ensure the consultation is as inclusive as possible, officers will:

- produce hard copies of the consultation materials and display them in accessible community buildings such as libraries;
- provide the consultation materials in an accessible format (such as large print, audio and other language) on request;
- ensure downloadable PDF consultation documents meet accessibility standards; and
- encourage people to get in touch with the Climate Change team with any questions and to help overcome any issues in accessing the materials.

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

3.1 Production of the draft CCAP has been undertaken in-house. Consultation activity and analysis of feedback generated by this will also be 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 run the public consultation.

3.2 The introduction of the CCAP, when adopted, will support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and the climate-related objectives of the overarching Corporate Business Plan. The CCAP describes the financial, resourcing, delivery and monitoring implications in detail in the introductory chapters, 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 has been screened 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 has confirmed that the draft CCAP complies with the Council's duty under S149 of the Act, and that subject to a further review following the conclusion of the consultation process, a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.
- 6.2 All of the projects/activities included in the draft CCAP which are underway, would have had their equality implications assessed individually, where relevant. Future planned activities will need to have their equality implications considered at the relevant stages, as appropriate.

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

- 7.1 The draft CCAP has undergone Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening, with the interim conclusion that there will be no likely significant effects on designated habitats or any other significant environmental effects. This conclusion is being confirmed by the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004. Once consultation responses are received, the final determination will be published alongside the consultation material.
- 7.2 All of the projects/activities included in the draft 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. Other implications**

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

## **9. Timetable for Implementation**

- 9.1 It is proposed that the public consultation is launched at 9am on Friday 1 December. It will last five weeks, closing at 5pm on Thursday 4 January 2024. Officers will monitor feedback during the course of the consultation, but also have 8 working days upon the close of consultation to revise the CCAP taking into account representations made. The revised CCAP will then be considered by the Climate Change Members Working Party on Wednesday 24 January. This timetable should allow for the adoption of the CCAP before the end of the financial year.
- 9.2 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 draft 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.

## **10. Background papers**

- 10.1 Members' attention is drawn to the Corporate Management Committee report of 25 May 2023 seeking approval for the CCAP early engagement plan, for background information. It is available here:  
<https://democracy.runnymede.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=758&Ver=4>.

## **11. Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Draft Climate Change Action Plan

**Appendix 2:** Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline (Appendix 1 of the Action Plan)

**Appendix 3:** Early Engagement Summary of Findings Report (Appendix 2 of the Action Plan)