

Runnymede Borough Council

Service Area Plan 26/27

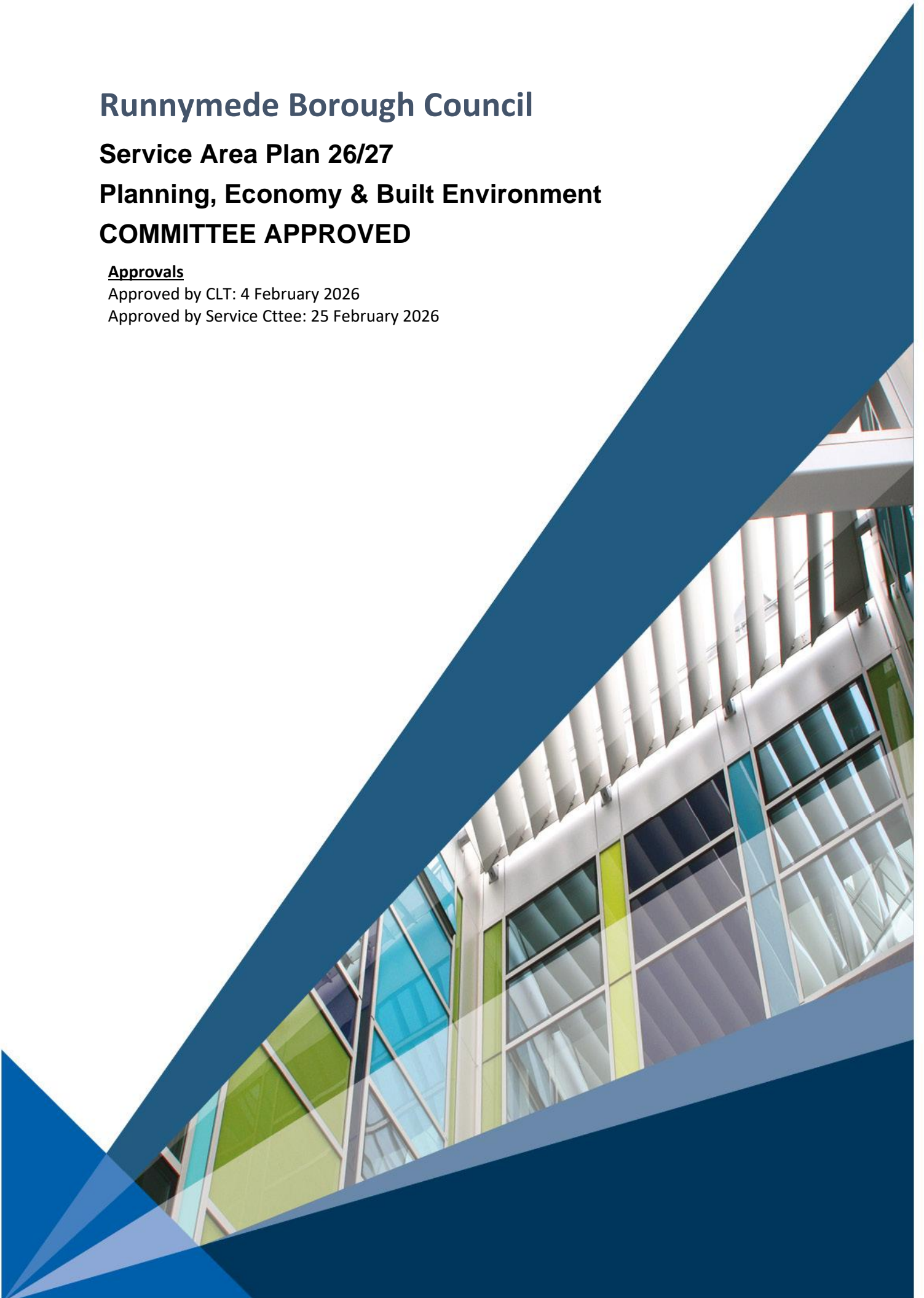
Planning, Economy & Built Environment

COMMITTEE APPROVED

Approvals

Approved by CLT: 4 February 2026

Approved by Service Cttee: 25 February 2026



Service Area Plan for Financial Year 2026/27

Service Area: Planning, Economy & Built Environment

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Supported by: Georgina Pacey, Victoria Gibson, David Edwards, Paul Hadfield

Version: Final

The priority and focus for service areas in 2026/27 is to actively support the Council's transition to the new unitary authority as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (which will take effect on 1 April 2027) alongside the delivery of core activity. Plans reflect the dual responsibility of delivering for Runnymede now, while preparing for a successful handover to the future unitary council. This includes ensuring financial sustainability, clarity of purpose, and alignment with the Corporate Business Plan for 2026/27. Initiatives from the Savings and Efficiency Programme and the rolling programme of Service Reviews will be prioritised and monitored throughout the year, contributing both to current performance and to the legacy we leave behind.

Mission statement

The Planning, Economy and Built Environment Service Area was formed during the 2023/24 financial year following a merger of the Development Management and Building Control Service Area with the Planning Policy and Economic Development Service Area (which also included the Climate Change and Sustainability Team following a restructure in 2023). An Infrastructure and Developer Contributions sub-team was also formed during the 2024/25 financial year, using existing resource.

The Council's Development Management and Building Control services are currently performing to a high level. This is demonstrated by a high level of performance against national and local targets, a very good success rate when decisions have been appealed and a low level of customer complaints.

Both services have delivered a number of key projects in recent years including process updates, system roll outs and service restructures. In 2024/25 it is intended to build upon this work and deliver service objectives and statutory services from these strong foundations that have been laid in recent years.

For Development Management, the service remains in a key delivery phase; working positively with applicants and stakeholders alike as major applications are brought forward for a number of the allocated sites in the Local Plan. Alongside this, the team continues to determine a high volume of other planning applications across the Borough, as well as deliver a high-quality pre-application service.

This delivery is focused on quality, with the service looking to deliver good infrastructure rich communities where people wish to live and visit as well as good conditions for businesses to deliver and thrive. The service will look to maintain its high level of service and performance even with the continued increase in complex work expected over the coming years. The structure of teams and allocation of resource is regularly reviewed to help meet these challenges and improve the resilience of the service. Following enhancement of the Planning Enforcement team in recent years the team will seek maintain it's staffing levels and continue with decreasing cases on hand and issuing notices.

In relation to the Planning Policy Team, over the last year, non statutory plan making activities associated with the update of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan have continued. This has included working on the production of a Local Plan Engagement Strategy and updating of the Local Plan evidence base and other supporting documents (such as the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Duty to Cooperate evidence). The team has also continued to work with partners to progress strategic projects including the delivery of the A320 improvements and stage 2 (feasibility design/development) of the Runnymede Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The Infrastructure and Developer Contributions sub-team (IDC team) has focused on both the effective collection of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 funds generated by new development; and on implementing the first annual Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) Funding Programme in accordance with the adopted Developer Contributions Governance Arrangements, alongside the implementation of procedures set out in the Governance Arrangements for the expenditure of Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) funds. After working with infrastructure providers to update the Infrastructure Delivery Schedules (a longlist of infrastructure schemes intended to support new development arising from the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan), a SCIL bidding round took place in Spring 2025, followed by a NCIL bidding round in Summer 2025. The new Developer Contributions Advisory Group met to assess bids and recommend projects for the allocation of CIL funding, informed by initial officer assessments against set funding criteria. Reports were taken to Corporate Management Committee seeking authorisation of funding allocations in Autumn 2025, and the IDC team has since been working with infrastructure providers to agree terms of funding and monitor project delivery.. The IDC team has also worked closely with various Service Area managers to support them in identifying appropriate projects for the expenditure of S106 funds. Progress on the use of developer contributions is reported on annually via the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

Building Control has reverted in to an in-house service having in previous years been in a shared service arrangement with Surrey Heath. Building Control service has continued to deliver a high-quality service to its customers and its main focus is ensuring compliance with the Building Safety Regulator requirements, maintaining market share and work on control and systems.

The Economic Development Team commenced delivery of the Economic Development Strategy and new corporate business plan. Economic Development will seek to continue delivering the strategy, increasing employment skills of residents and ensuring prosperity within the Borough.

The Climate Change and Sustainability Team have supported a number of community engagement initiatives over the last year, particularly the 2025 Great Big Green Week and Junior Citizen events. These initiatives combined are estimated to have engaged approximately 2850 people including 2050 children. The team also launched a Climate Change Staff Interest Group within the Council and have started work to establish an Environment Champions Network in the local community; the aim of which is to better connect local individuals and groups to share knowledge, tips, and real-life successes in responding to the Climate Emergency whilst also exploring new ideas.

Working with other Service Areas within the Council, the team has also played a key role in producing a Green Travel Strategy for staff which was adopted in November 2025, securing the delivery of electric charging points at the Civic Centre and producing a Costed Decarbonisation Plan to help the Council better understand the costs involved in decarbonising the Council's operational estate, and to help identify short term priority actions for progression.

Key priorities of the Service Area over the 2026/27 financial year will be as follows:

Development Management team

- To deliver a high level of planning applications and appeals performance, determining applications in a timely and professional way.
- To seek to deliver an effective planning enforcement service and make progress on a wide range of cases.
- To participate as Local Planning Authority on behalf of Runnymede's residents and businesses in existing and future National Strategic Infrastructure Projects, including the River Thames Scheme and Heathrow third runway.
- To have due regard to recent new material planning considerations in decision-making such as a revised NPPF, biodiversity net gain rules, or similar local or national changes.

Planning Policy Team

- To fulfil the Council's statutory duties with respect to the development of planning policy to guide decision making within the Borough, in particular:
 - Continuing to produce an updated Local Plan for the borough in line with the Council's adopted local plan timetable;
 - Continuing with the refresh of the Local Plan evidence base, as appropriate to support the update of the Local Plan :
 - Publication of the Annual Monitoring Report and other required reporting which is necessary to support the Planning Policy function;
 - Provision of support to Neighbourhood Fora on delivery of Neighbourhood Plans;
 - To work with partners to support delivery of improvements to transport infrastructure in the Borough, in particular through the delivery of the A320 improvement works..

- To participate in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group, and other strategic planning initiatives where appropriate.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions sub-Team

- To fulfil the Council's statutory duties with respect of the collection and monitoring of developer contributions, continuing to monitor project delivery for which CIL has been allocated;
- To work with other Service Areas, external infrastructure providers and members of the Developer Contributions Advisory Group (or future equivalent) to deliver the Council's annual Strategic CIL Funding Programme in accordance with the Developer Contributions Governance Arrangements.
- To work with other Services Areas to run consultation and engagement activity with a range of stakeholders, including local community groups, on the use of neighbourhood CIL monies in accordance with the Developer Contributions Governance Arrangements and CIL Regulations (ensuring consultation outcomes inform decision-making) and to run the Council's annual neighbourhood CIL bidding round.

Building Control Team

This is a high-level overview of a more detailed service plan for building control, demonstrating compliance with the Building Safety Regulator's operational service rules.

- To continue to deliver the statutory and non-statutory elements of the building control service.
- To ensure compliance with the Building Safety Regulator's audit requirements, which must be fulfilled prior to March 2027 in West Surrey.
- To deliver a reliable and accountable collection service for the new Building Safety Levy by October 2026

The key scope of the team's activities during 2026/27 is estimated as shown below.

- To determine circa 350 Building Regulation applications and undertake 3,200 site inspections of building works within 24 hours, or on the same day where notification is received by 10.00am.
- Undertake investigations of approximately 24 reported unauthorised building works.
- Administer 10-15 demolition notices with sites attended during the demolition process.
- Provide a 24/7 dangerous structure callout service, with staff committed to attending site within 2 hours of initial notification; approximately 6 callouts are projected within the period.
- The team also project manage the processing of 230 approved inspector applications and maintain a register of 4,000 approved inspector and competent person notifications.

In addition, the section is legally obliged to provide free general advice, assistance and up to 1 hours pre submission consultation for proposed works as such these works are dealt with in the most cost/ time efficient method generally by telephone.

Economic Development Team

- To deliver on the priority areas identified in the Economic Development Strategy and Corporate Business Plan relating to a fair and sustainable economy.
- To participate in the enterprise zone Steering Group with the Surrey County Council (who were successor to the EM3 LEP) and other partners to support the successful delivery of the Enterprise Zone at Longcross.

Climate Change Team

- To work with other Service Areas and external partners, as appropriate, to deliver the climate change commitments within the 2026/27 Service Area Plans across the organisation.
- To work with other Service Areas to deliver the projects agreed for pump prime funding during the 2026/27 Financial Year.
- To implement practicable actions from the approved Green Travel Strategy for Staff.
- To take forward the 'Instant Energy Saving Measures' recommended to reduce emissions from the Council's buildings as contained in the Carbon Profile Asset Review and Implementation Report in collaboration with the Assets and Regeneration and Community Services Service Areas.
- Publication of the 2025/26 carbon emissions report and other reporting which is necessary to support the Climate Change function.
- To roll out the agreed 2026/27 Communications Plan in collaboration with Community Services. The focus of this plan will be on encouraging local food growing and healthy plant based diets.
- To promote and participate in the GBGW 2026 and attend the Junior Citizen event as part of the Council's ongoing outreach with schools.
- To work with SCC to maximise delivery of the Warm Homes: Local Grant across the Borough.
- To run the Community Environment Champions Community Network and Staff Environment Champions Network

Key challenges/opportunities and drivers for change including:

- Potential legislative changes are on the horizon. In planning, introduction of National Development Management Policies, the implementation of further provisions from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (for example those which relate to the introduction of the new plan making system) and the expected introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Act have the potential to impact upon the service. The new obligations in the Building Safety Act 2022 are being implemented during this plan period, including meeting the Building Safety Regulator's audit requirements and establishing the Building Safety Levy collection service by October 2026. The Service Area is however considered to be in a good position to plan for and react to changes as they arise.
- To adopt and respond to increasing requirements to digitalise the Planning System, including future digitalisation and communication of Local Plans.
- To overcome increasing budget constraints, in particular capital funds to deliver infrastructure and urban realm improvements and then identify sufficient funding to maintain them in the longer term. In relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, successfully sourcing grant funding opportunities to aid project delivery continues to be a challenge given the highly competitive nature of many funds which are generally hugely oversubscribed.

- Ensuring projects are evidence base driven by the effective use and interrogation of data and utilisation of new technology where appropriate to monitor change.
- Achieving local community buy-in to enable effective project delivery and the need for increasing and effective joint working with other Service Areas and stakeholders, including further cooperation with the five boroughs which are proposed to be grouped with Runnymede in West Surrey on economic development initiatives and with infrastructure providers on priorities for CIL expenditure.

Service Information

Service Area:

Planning, Economy & Built Environment

Service Area 1:	Development Management
Service Area 2:	Building Control
Service Area 3:	Planning Policy Service
Service Area 4:	Infrastructure and Developer Contributions
Service Area 5:	Climate Change
Service Area 6:	Economic Development

Description of Service (1) Development Management

Main Purpose: The management of development and the delivery of new homes, through the encouragement and assessment of applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, to deliver the housing and economic growth specified in the adopted Runnymede 2030 Local Plan including the Longcross Garden Village; the use of enforcement powers under that Act to control harmful and unauthorised development, and the protection of trees that are protected under that Act, and the administration and monitoring of contributions received under that Act.

Development Management decisions are made against the development plan for Runnymede which is the adopted Runnymede 2030 Local Plan; Development Management decisions are to increase housing supply by 7629 net additional dwellings 2015-2030 as well as provide significant employment floor space and other opportunities.

The key functions within the Development Management Team are:

- The provision of planning advice to customers (both external and internal) including pre-application advice.
- The processing and determination of applications for planning permission and associated consents.

- The investigation of breaches of planning control and exercise of the Council's planning enforcement functions.
- The administration and collection of developer contributions and obligations under s106 agreements, the supporting of CMC in accordance with Developer Contribution governance arrangements for the spending of infrastructure moneys.
- The protection of trees which contribute to the quality of the environment and the protection of heritage assets which contribute to the historic environment and provision of advice to residents and processing associated consents.
- The defence of Council decisions in these areas in appeal and court, as may be required.
- Partnership working with other service areas, including in relation to National Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and equivalent (as LPA) and policy formulation.

The number of enforcement requests for the plan period is estimated to be in the region of 250-300, and the number of requests is expected to remain at a similar level to previous years.

The number of planning submissions of all types determined in previous years is estimated to be 2000 and expected to remain at a similar level in the plan year. Applications are likely to continue to be of a complex nature due to the adoption of the Borough Local Plan.

Description of Service (2) Building Control

Main Purpose: Providing a Building Control Service as required by the Building Act 1984, including a 24/7 dangerous structures callout provision.

The key functions within the Building Control Team are:

- The provision of Building Control advice to customers (both external and internal).
- Ensuring compliance with Building Safety Act.
- The determination of applications for building regulation approval and associated consents.
- The setting and collection of application charges ensuring the section breaks even in its fee related account.
- The inspection of works on site to ensure compliance with the building regulations and associated legislation.
- The investigation of potential breaches of the building regulations and exercise of the section's enforcement functions.
- The inspection of unauthorised building works and exercise of the section's enforcement functions.
- The processing of demolition notices and safety inspections of works on site.
- The provision of a 24/7 dangerous structure call-out service including major incidents.
- The defence of council decisions in these areas in court, as may be required.
- The processing of approved inspector applications and maintain a register of their works.

- The processing of competent persons applications and maintain a register of their works.

Description of Service (3) Planning Policy

Main Purpose: Key functions of the Planning Policy Team are:

- Gathering evidence to inform plan making.
- Preparation of planning policy including the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance documents;
- Supporting communities as they prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their areas.
- Monitoring the implementation of adopted policies to ensure contingencies can be enacted and future policy is evidence based.
- To support partners in preparing and implementing strategy for protection of the Borough's key environmental assets (i.e. SNCIs, SANGs delivery etc.) and to help meet Net Zero targets.
- Assisting with responses to NSIPs/major infrastructure projects as required.
- Working positively with partners during the preparation of planning policy documents and responding to consultations undertaken by neighbouring authorities and other relevant bodies during the preparation of policy documents.
- To work in partnership with Surrey County Council on relevant projects, for example delivery of the A320 mitigation works.
- To input into the formation of sub-regional/regional/national policy where applicable through public consultations and other forms of engagement such as the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group.

Description of Service (3) Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Team

Main purpose: The key functions within the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Team are:

- The preparation of relevant infrastructure documents and implementing governance arrangements in accordance with the adopted Developer Contributions Governance Arrangements.
- Supporting the Developer Contributions Advisory Group and Corporate Management Committee in accordance with Developer Contribution Governance Arrangements for the spending of infrastructure monies.
- Working positively with internal and external infrastructure providers, local communities and other stakeholders to understand infrastructure needs and priorities to accommodate development growth.

- Understanding how changing national, county, and local infrastructure plans and strategies affect Local Plan-making and related documents such as the CIL Charging Schedule.

This includes the following activities:

- To administer the collection, enforcement, management, and monitoring of developer contributions and planning obligations, including CIL and S106 Agreements.
- To produce and provide guidance and advice on infrastructure and developer contributions matters, including keeping the Public Facing Module and other relevant web pages updated.
- To manage the budgets and financial contributions relating to all developer contributions, working with associated Council departments.
- To run engagement activity and prepare documentation for the annual CIL Funding Programme and annual neighbourhood CIL bidding round.
- To organise and convene the Developer Contributions Advisory Group, and provide support, advice and report on options and recommendations for infrastructure spending.
- To provide ongoing engagement with infrastructure providers, local communities and other relevant stakeholders to understand infrastructure needs, to inform their future investment plans and update the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Schedules.
- To monitor project delivery and CIL expenditure for projects which have been allocated both neighbourhood and strategic CIL funding.
- Review of CIL charges at appropriate intervals, including in association with updated policies in the Local Plan.
- The preparation of infrastructure-related local development plan evidence, policy, supplementary planning documents and other planning guidance as appropriate.

Description of Service (4) Climate Change and Sustainability

Key functions of the Climate Change Team and Sustainability Team are:

- To coordinate the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy, delivery and annual review of the Climate Change and Nature Action Plan and other relevant strategies/programmes in coordination with Corporate Heads of Service and Members.
- Work with Corporate Heads of Service and frontline staff to promote and support the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy, including relevant supporting initiatives required to meet adopted carbon reduction targets.
- To provide advice and guidance to internal and external project leads in regard to planning, prioritisation, specification, and delivery of projects as far as this relates to climate change policy and the wider delivery the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- To work to continually refine and streamline the Council's processes around emissions monitoring and reporting (both internally and to relevant external bodies), and compile regular reports to Corporate Management Committee, other relevant committees and

working parties on various aspects of the Council's response to climate change, including progress towards key objectives and projects, and potential new initiatives and other developments.

- To develop and deliver a continual rolling programme of training for employees, elected Members and other relevant groups within the wider community (as appropriate) to ensure high levels of carbon literacy. For example, through formal training sessions and initiatives like the Climate Change and Sustainability Staff Interest Group.
- To engage with Runnymede's communities (including young people), organisations and other stakeholders in a variety of ways to encourage behavioural change in line with the relevant Council strategies and policies. For example, via the quarterly Climate Change and Sustainability Newsletter, Community Environment Champions' Network and attendance at events such as Junior Citizen.
- To monitor the progress of internal and external projects which have implications for delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and make recommendations for corrective action where necessary to bring projects back on course with any identified climate change/sustainability objectives.
- To input into applications to external bodies / Government for funding to enable delivery of the Council's climate change objectives.
- To take a lead role in the compilation of responses to Government and other consultations on Climate Change and information requests from external bodies.
- To actively participate with Surrey County Council and other relevant groups (including but not limited to the HSPG and Surrey Climate Change Officers Group).
- Organising and coordinating all activities associated with the Climate Change and Nature Working Party.

Description of Service (5) Economic Development

Main Purpose: The key functions within the Economic Development Team are:

- To deliver the objectives and projects in the Economic Development Strategy and corporate Business Plan.
- Maintaining the Business Runnymede website and supporting the activities of Business Runnymede.
- Supporting the economic development and management of Addlestone, Chertsey and Egham Town Centres to enhance the urban environment and increase viability and vitality.
- To support delivery of improvements to the transport network through partnership working with Surrey County Council Highways Authority, Network Rail, South West Trains, Transport for the South East and other relevant partners.
- To work in partnership with the Surrey County Council (who were successor to the Local Enterprise Partnership) to promote delivery of the Enterprise Zone and consider funding proposals for investment in the zone.

- To work in partnership with other Council business units to identify, prepare and support funding bids to deliver economic development objectives and priorities.
- To monitor the legacy of the Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan;
- To administer Business Runnymede and strengthen engagement with and between the business community.

Ongoing business as usual activities include:

- Support the activities of Business Runnymede, organising events, producing the monthly newsletter and maintaining the website.
- Ongoing engagement with the business community, SCC and other relevant stakeholders.
- Engagement with town centre stakeholders to support markets/events and other relevant projects.

Planned Activities

Planning, Economy & Built Environment



Project						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Project	Climate Change Comms Plan Initiative 1: Sustainable cookery programme	Supporting Communities through Change	01 February 2026	01 February 2026	31 March 2027	In progress
Project	Climate Change Comms Plan Initiative 2: Local Food Growing	Supporting Communities through Change	01 February 2026	01 February 2026	31 March 2027	In progress
Project	EV Charging at the Civic Centre	Climate & Enhancing Nature	04 November 2024	04 November 2024	28 February 2026	In progress
Project	Update to the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan	Fair & Sustainable Economy	01 June 2026		31 December 2029	Paused
Not Reported	A320 scheme	Fair & Sustainable Economy	01 April 2021	01 April 2021	31 December 2026	In progress

Review						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress

One-off						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
One Off	Building Control compliance with the Building Safety Regulator's audit requirements by March 2027	Fair & Sustainable Economy	01 February 2026	01 February 2026	31 March 2027	In progress
One Off	Collection service for the new Building Safety Levy by October 2026	Fair & Sustainable Economy	01 April 2026		31 October 2026	Not started
One Off	Great Big Green Week 2026	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 February 2026	01 February 2026	30 June 2026	In progress
One Off	Implementation of the Green Travel Plan	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
One Off	Instant Energy Saving Measures - Tenant Engagement	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 December 2026	Not started
One Off	Pool Car - Pilot	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 December 2026	Not started

New Core Activity						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
New Core Activity	Community Environment Champions Community Network	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
New Core Activity	Facilitating Carbon Literacy training within the borough	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		30 September 2026	Not started
New Core Activity	Staff Environment Champions Network	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 March 2026		31 March 2027	Not started

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