

Runnymede Borough Council

Service Area Plan 26/27

Human Resources, Organisational Development, & Communications

COMMITTEE APPROVED

Approvals

Approved by CLT: 11 February 2026

Approved by Corporate Management Cttee: 17 March 2026



Service Area Plan for Financial Year 2026/27

Service Area: Human Resources, Organisational Development, and Communications

Corporate Head of Service: Kate Enver

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

Human Resources, Organisational Development and Communications mission is to support the Council to deliver our vision to be

“a community leader, providing high quality services, enhancing the environment and advocating for our community's interests”,

by providing RBC with effective people management strategies, internal and external communications, policies, programs, projects, campaigns and services to enable our innovative and diverse workforce to efficiently and effectively deliver for our residents and the wider Runnymede community, whilst protecting and enhancing the reputation of the Council.

Service Information

Service Area: Human Resources, Organisational Development, and Communications

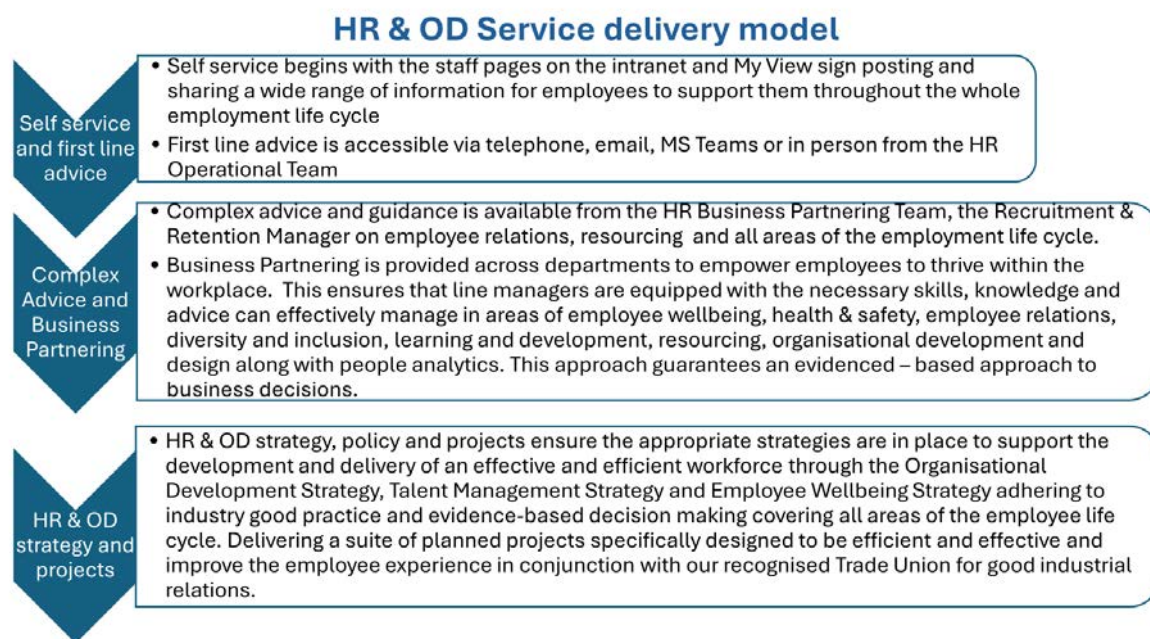
Service Area 1: HR & OD Service

Service Area 2: Communications

Description of Service (1) HR & Organisational Development Service

The Human Resources and Organisational Development service is a support service whose primary role is to lead and advise on People Management Strategies and provide a comprehensive professional advisory service to the Council and Council-owned companies. The service delivery model can be seen in diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1



The success of any organisation strongly correlates to the skills, commitment, motivation, experience and contribution made by its workforce. HR &OD has a major part to play in supporting managers to attract, develop, motivate and retain our workforce and ensure the employee experience is one that where everyone can thrive in the workplace performing at their very best and delivering for residents and the wider Runnymede community.

The consideration and analysis of good practice, legislation, workforce information and demographics is undertaken to inform an evidenced based approach to service development. Key workforce information to consider in the development of any service area plan is characterised by the following data taken from Q3 2025/26 financial year:-

All the figures below are as of Q3 2025/26:

- Average headcount – 460

- Average full time equivalent - 409(FTE)
- Average number of positions within the Council - 533
- 14 % vacancy rate*
- 4.1% Turnover rate*
- 4.1 % of days lost to sickness absence*

* indicates where we are performing the same as or better than the LGA published national averages.

Our internal customers are the Leadership Team and Members, managers at all levels and all employees including our temporary workforce. Our external customers are the management of RBCI and RBCS and applicants for vacancies. We liaise closely with our internal partners and recognised trade union UNISON, payroll, communications, finance, PMO, IT & Digital to co-design service improvements for all employees to enhance the employee experience to ensure we can work more efficiently and effectively.

Key external partnerships and contracts exist to provide a comprehensive service to the organisation where this is more economically viable than providing an in-house option e.g. Occupational Health provision, Workstation Assessments, Employee Assistance Programme, e-learning and development, DBS and recruitment advertising providers.

The anticipated drivers for change and challenges at a macro level are: -

- the demand for talent exceeds the supply, the competition for skilled candidates intensifies,
- the increased role of employers in the welfare for their employees,
- the changing expectations of employees and for employer's
- delivering on the employment legislation reforms
- human resources technology is aligned with the organisation's culture, values, and goals, and that it enhances the employee experience and engagement.
- the tight financial constraints that nationally and locally affect local government, including potential future plans for devolution, especially at borough council level

At a micro level the drivers for change and challenges are: -

- The requirement for more specialist HR & OD advice and expertise on areas to help the Council progress e.g. pay & reward, talent management, change management, organisational development,
- The continued modernisation of HR & OD systems and practices utilising technology to deliver efficient and effective service improvement
- The capability and capacity of the small team to deliver the requirements needed within existing resources.

To mitigate the challenges a key focus will be on accurately managing our time efficiently and effectively to deliver the large range of projects to fulfilling our ambitious programme alongside the business-as-usual operational requirements of the service. However, a structured approach to project management in the delivery of the 3 people management strategies, other business critical projects and business as usual is essential to deliver an evidence-based service improvement.

Therefore, our priorities for the next year will include delivering on our three key people management strategies Employee Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Organisational

Development and Talent Management alongside preparation for any plans for devolution, the continuous improvement recommendations from the LGA Corporate Peer challenge whilst adhering to the safeguarding, H&S and employment legislation to keep our workforce and the council safe.

Description of Service (2) Communications

The Communications service is a support service whose primary role is to lead and advise on corporate internal and external communications including graphic design providing a comprehensive professional advisory service to the Council and Council-owned companies to ensure the Runnymede Community are kept up to date and informed appropriately about Council business. The role of the team is to protect and enhance the reputation of the Council and to demonstrate its continuous improvement.

From a resource perspective, the team's efforts are focussed on ensuring that information available to the public is timely, accurate and consistently delivered; it is relevant and appropriate for a variety of communication methods and channels such as mass, two-way, external corporate communication – highlighting the work of the organisation as an entity, service-based communication, supporting individual service areas to raise their profile.

The service also provides a key role in reactive issues handling with the media to respond to press releases, emerging news stories, emergency response communication, in conjunction with the senior leadership team, senior councillors, Applied Resilience and public sector partners.

A core component of what the 2.5FTE team does is to try to enhance and protect the reputation of the council in managing media relations, owning and developing key channels of communication and the management of the Council's brand and presentation through its Style Rules.

For internal communications the key aim it is to help colleagues understand the role they play in achieving the aims of the organisation. To deliver a regular flow of news and information to celebrate successes, raise awareness of key programmes and build a greater level of understanding among employees of the continuous improvement of the Council, which is a key component to underpin an open and transparent organisational culture.

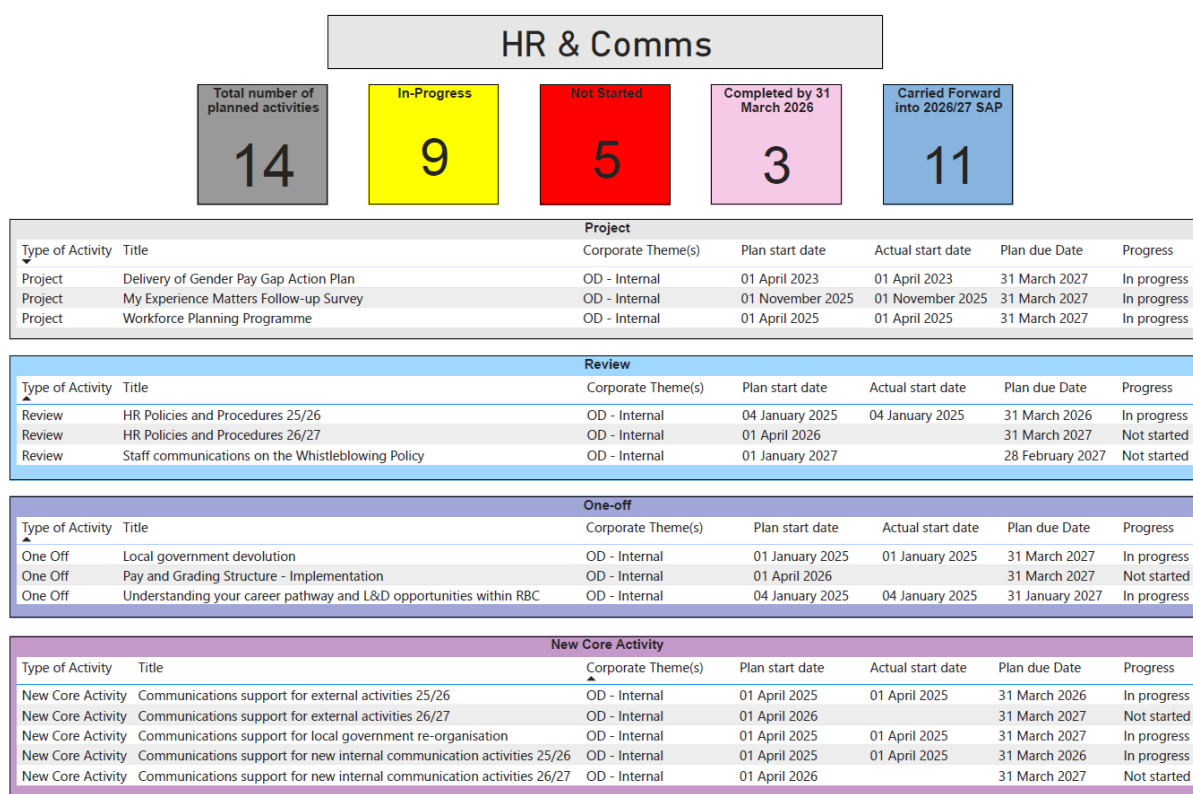
There are a number of ways this is achieved, with a range of communication methods and tools to support the Chief Executive's & CLT's open dialogue, engaging with colleagues across the Council through fora and other forms of messaging.

The team also has a key role in managing the Council's intranet, keeping core information up to date and enabling colleagues to update localised content. This is important for the council to operate efficiently and effectively enabling managers to deliver communications to their teams and support change when required.

To deploy internal and external communications successfully, it is important to ensure the Council is presented as a single professional and trusted organisation through consistent and high standard of design in print, online and video content is important. Within the team staff create individual designs, advise colleagues on service-based design work, ensuring it meets corporate standards set out in our Style Rules and supports the needs of frontline and professional services, to ensure our presence in communities is accurate, appropriate and represents the Council well, contributing to our overall brand.

Therefore, priorities for the next year will include delivering good quality internal and external communications, helping to mitigate and manage risk to keep our workforce, the council and the Runnymede community abreast of our service improvements and diligent performance.

Planned Activities



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