

Runnymede Borough Council

Service Area Plan 25/26

Environmental Services

FINAL COMMITTEE APPROVED

Approvals

Approved by CLT: 4/12/2024

Approved by Service Cttee: 22/01/2025



Service Area Plan for Financial Year 2025/26

Service Area: Environmental Services

Corporate Head of Service: Helen Clark

Supported by: Daniel Bradding, Prince Frank, Justin Sander
Marc Scott

Version: FINAL

The priority and focus for service areas for 2025/26 must be demonstration of ongoing continuous improvement, delivery of savings or income generation opportunities and realisation of benefits to align with the MTFS and address the Council's budget gap. This is alongside delivery of core activity.

Initiatives that are agreed to come forward from the Savings and Efficiency programme and the rolling programme of Service Reviews will be prioritised in relevant service area plans and progress monitored during the year.

Mission statement

Environmental Services is a multi-disciplinary business centre covering a range of operational services including Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing and Licensing, Direct Services Operations (DSO) including Street Care, Collection Services, Grounds Maintenance, fine turf sports facilities, and the Cemeteries Service, Parks and Green Spaces including arboriculture, events and playground maintenance and Engineering Services.

Contribution to Corporate Strategies 2022 to 2026:

Climate Change Strategy

We will factor our aim for net zero carbon into the design and delivery of all operational activities across Environmental Services. Key deliveries as follows:

- Support delivery of the Depot site refurbishment works and the transition of staff to new office accommodation in the former St John Ambulance building which will reduce our carbon usage and operational costs.
- Implement the sustainable fleet management strategy and review the fleet to maximise efficiency.

- Maximise use of HVO fuel with 100% target HVO fuel usage.
- Deliver new route optimisation across the collection services street sweeping service to maximise efficiencies with respect to fuel and use of operational resources.
- Ongoing review of summer schedules and winter works programme for grounds maintenance to optimise efficiency.
- Preparation for delivery of waste and recycling changes impacting the household collection services as introduced by the Environment Act 2021 from April 2026.
- Progress the roll out of food waste collections from flats utilising the DEFRA food waste collection grant.
- Support and promote recycling through a project in collaboration with digital transformation and the communications team. Work will include reviewing and updating the website offer, developing a more dynamic comms programme incorporating short videos and tailored communication with residents and cohorts of residents who need additional support to recycle effectively.

Empowering our community's strategy

We will strive to design services which reflect the needs of our communities, and which enhance their quality of life. Key deliveries as follows:

- Respond within time frames to service requests and complaints across all service areas.
- Work with voluntary groups to encourage participation in a wide range of activities, such as litter picking, planting, ground maintenance and conservation.
- Work with Applied Resilience to provide information which supports communities vulnerable to flooding.
- Working with colleagues in digital transformation, review the way we communicate with residents who report fly tipping to ensure they are kept advised of any actions. Separately review the practical response, particularly with respect to vehicle availability and practicalities.

Economic Development Strategy

We will design services to enhance the street scene in our town centres and offer local employment opportunities to local residents in our direct services teams. Key deliverables as follows:

- Recruitment campaigns for all direct services to include locally directed marketing.
- Improvements to street scene infrastructure to be funded by the national Shared Prosperity Fund including upgrading street furniture including the litter bin and bench portfolio.
- Support our trade waste customers implement changes in the proposed Simpler Recycling Regulations due to be introduced from 2025.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

We will support local residents, local workers, and visitors to Runnymede through advice and, where necessary, enforcement with respect to private rented housing and health and safety

at work. We will maintain our parks and open spaces and facilities to provide safe and welcoming access to the natural environment. Key deliveries as follows:

- Respond to complaints about working conditions and investigating, advising, or enforcing as necessary to ensure appropriate safety systems are in place.
- Respond to complaints about private rented housing, giving advice or taking enforcement action where appropriate, in line with our enforcement policy.
- Deliver a programme of inspections of food businesses to ensure resident safety.
- Deliver actions as agreed in the approved Air Quality Action Plan.
- Work with colleagues in Assets and Regeneration and Community Services to develop a delivery model for offering sports facilities which serves the community.
- Identify the unit cost for delivering all discretionary services including grounds maintenance across all environmental services service areas.
- Deliver the tree audit and procure new tree management software with an embedded schedule of rates to ensure risks that are identified by the audit are addressed.
- Manage a programme of memorial testing to ensure visitor safety in our cemeteries.

Organisational Development Strategy

We will work with Human Resources to ensure we have the right staff in place to deliver our services. Key deliveries as follows:

- Where approval is given recruit to vacancies across all services, including vacancies in Green Spaces, Grounds Maintenance, Environment Health and the Direct Service teams, providing training and further development as required.
- Working with Human Resources, ensure that cohorts of staff who do not have access to the staff home pages are briefed regarding information, proposed changes or opportunities that relevant to them.

On-going services to be delivered:

Environmental Health

Following the restructure in February 2024 we will continue to deliver all existing services as identified in the background service information in section one of this service delivery plan.

Engineers

The Engineers will continue to deliver services to reduce the risk of flooding, including participation in the planning process, clearance of ditches and managing street scene and green scene infrastructure. The team will review existing drainage assets including pumping stations and gullies at Housing developments in significant flood risk areas. They will commission principal inspections of bridges in borough open spaces. The team will also manage the transition to new borough-wide bus shelter infrastructure, generating increased revenue.

Direct Services Operations (DSO)

Functions to be delivered by the DSO include the collection services, residual waste, recycling, food, garden and trade waste together with street care and cleansing, cleaning public toilets, fine turf, and grounds maintenance for green spaces housing and cemeteries.

The recycling team promote recycling, focusing on homes where recycling is harder to deliver such as flats above shops. A business support team provides administrative support for both Green Spaces and the Direct Services teams.

Green Spaces

The team will deliver the following services: arboriculture, inspections services for parks, allotment services, event management on RBC land, response to complaints, contract management of the in-house ground's maintenance service, complaint response to green spaces related enquiries, liaison with volunteers and wardens, officer support and committee reports to progress activities related to Englefield Green Committee, Cabrera Trust and Chertsey Meads Liaison Committee, general enquiries and all related enforcement functions including incursions and encampments on RBC land.

Budget Growth required:

The intention is to deliver all planned services within existing revenue budget. There are, however, some unknowns relating to the delivery of memorial testing which will need to be reviewed as indicated below.

Memorial Testing

Runnymede has responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 and the Local Authorities' Cemetery Order 1977 with respect to health and safety within our cemeteries. Officers are presently assessing our liabilities across the cemeteries and closed graveyards to determine an approach to managing the risks associated with memorials based on good practice. This work will lead to a programme of inspection, testing and remedial safety works across all cemetery and graveyard sites where RBC has liability. Some of this work may not be contained within the existing cemeteries budget.

Capital Programme

Runnymede Fleet

The Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy at Environment and Sustainability Committee on 7 March 2024. There were the three tenets within the policy; safe and compliant, fit for purpose and offers value for money, and environmentally friendly. The information technology actions identified in the policy have now been delivered with the fleet data fully digitalised.

Following this work, a full fleet review will be undertaken in 2025/26 by the Fleet Management team, to develop a vehicle replacement programme for the next five years.

In Spring 2025, the Bartec route optimisation software will be used to review all collection rounds and sweeper routes. It is anticipated that savings in the delivery of the collection rounds will be realised through the route optimisation process and this may impact on future fleet requirements.

Challenges and Opportunities:

The main challenges for 2025/2026 will be as follows:

- Maintaining delivery of the Direct Services Operations at the Ford Road Depot in Chertsey whilst a programme of repairs and improvements are delivered to ensure the site is safe and complaint.
- Relocation of the direct services office cohort to the former St John Ambulance site further along Ford Road.
- Implementing changes following the route optimisation project.
- Implementing changes to the food and recycling collection rounds to deliver requirements in the Environment Act 2021. Consultative work with Surrey CC (the disposal authority) and Runnymede's trade waste customers will be undertaken to agree and deliver services which fit with the requirements of the disposal authority and enable trade waste customers to meet their legal responsibilities.
- Additional work for the Private Sector Housing team will be generated by the draft Renters' Rights Bill.
- Managing the transitional arrangements and data migration process as the Environmental Health team move from Civica to NEC data management software.
- Delivering the tree survey and addressing tree works identified during that project within budget. This work will be done alongside a procurement process for new tree management software and development of schedule of rates for appointed arboriculture contractors. All tree management work will be delivered in collaboration with Housing and Planning colleagues.
- Managing procurement of contract renewals including stray dogs, arboriculture contractors, tree management software and playground inspections.
- Review of all Environmental Services fees and fee structures to identify where possible individual unit cost and any service subsidies. This work will be done working with colleagues in the Finance team.
- Review of Grounds Maintenance in collaboration with Surrey CC and their new contractor Relay. Both Surrey CC and Runnymede BC remodelled their grounds maintenance functions in 2022, Surrey CC took back agency for verge cutting service and Runnymede brought the outsourced grass cutting service back in house. Working with Surrey CC partners we will review collaborative arrangements to ensure the best service standards achievable are delivered for residents.
- Runnymede manages a number of public toilet facilities. These facilities will be reviewed over the summer of 2025.

Drivers for Change:

- The Environment Act 2021
- The Renters Rights Bill 2024

Upgrades and Service Improvements:

- Depot health and safety refurbishment works.

Service Information

Service Area: Environmental Services

Service Area 1: Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing and Licensing

Service Area 2: Direct Services Organisation (DSO), Grounds Maintenance / Street Care / Collection services / Cemeteries

Service Area 3: Engineering Services

Service Area 4: Green Spaces, Arboriculture

Description of Service (1) - Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing and Licensing

Main Purpose: Environmental Health and Licensing deliver a range of regulatory services across Commercial, Residential, Private Sector Housing, and Licensing teams as summarised below.

Commercial:

- food hygiene and safety (including importing and exporting foods)
- health and safety enforcement & accident investigation in retail, leisure & office premises
- private water supplies
- animal welfare licensing
- infectious diseases / outbreak investigations
- skin piercing registration
- caravan site licensing
- smoke-free
- contaminated land
- permits to control emissions to air

Residential:

- statutory nuisances (noise, smoke)
- consultation on planning applications
- air quality and monitoring
- exhumations & public health burials
- abandoned vehicles
- filthy and verminous premises
- waste enforcement

Private Sector Housing:

- housing standards (addressing unacceptable hazards, such as privately rented property)
- providing advice to residents and landlords
- house in Multiple Occupation standards and licensing

Licensing

- enforcement and administration of alcohol, personal and related licences
- gambling licences
- taxi and private hire and operator licensing
- pavement, scrap metal and sexual entertainment venue licensing

Description of Service (2) - Direct Services Organisation DSO

Main Purpose: The DSO operates from the Ford Road Depot and delivers a number of direct services.

Collection Services - The Council's collection services including recycling, residual waste, food waste, garden waste, sharps, clinical waste, and trade waste. These services are delivered by the council's fleet. The onsite workshop is used for servicing and maintenance of the Council's operational vehicles. The maintenance contract is delivered by our contractor SFS.

Street care and Cleansing – Street Cleansing includes street sweeping and litter picking and the removal of fly tips and fly posters from public highways and land. Associated services include the removal of graffiti from public facing Highway and other property, the task force team and toilet cleansing service.

Grounds Maintenance – Deliver Grounds Maintenance across the formal parks and open spaces, cemeteries, and housing sites. Fine turf services maintaining sports pitches including cricket and bowls.

Cemeteries – Selling of grave spaces and management of internments. Liaison with relatives of the deceased. Agreeing arrangements with undertakers and managing the grave digging contract.

Description of Service (3) - Engineering Services

Main Purpose: The team's Engineers oversee the Council's land drainage maintenance obligations on Council-owned land, review the borough pumping stations and housing drainage assets, and carry out inspections of bridges. They also supervise construction projects in urban and rural areas of the borough.

The team offers engineering support and technical input for other Council services including Housing, Open Spaces (growth) and Open Spaces (maintenance) who own various assets. The team leads on the maintenance of street furniture such as bus shelter infrastructure, benches, litter bin replacements and street name plates.

The team collaborates with the Climate Change delivery team and Applied Resilience, to ensure our emergency flood response is current and aligned with strategic partners such as the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council. The team provides flood risk and drainage advice on planning consultations for the Local Planning Authority.

Description of Service (4) - Green Spaces

Main Purpose: To programme inspections of all Green Spaces to ensure they are safe for residents and visitors. Manage green infrastructure including benches, paths and litter bins in parks and green spaces.

To manage the playground inspection contract and respond to issues raised by the contractor.

To deliver the arboriculture service including the planned tree survey.

Working with event organisers to manage the events process on Runnymede owned land across the borough.

Respond to all complaints and enquiries from residents, third parties and service users.

To work with and support volunteers who work in the borough's Green Spaces.

To monitor the work of the Grounds Maintenance team and check standards are maintained.

Work with the Strategic team to deliver approved strategies including the meadow management strategy.

Delivery of the allotments service including the letting of plots and maintenance activities.

Support and deliver on actions arising from the Cabrera Trust, Englefield Green and Chertsey Meads Liaison committees.

All related enforcement including encroachments and encampments on RBC land.

Planned Activities



Env Services

Total number of planned activities

20

Types of Activities

Project

5

Review

8

One-off

3

New Core Activity

4

Project						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Project	Depot Redevelopment (linked to AR003)	Environmental Sustainability	01 April 2025		30 April 2027	Not started
Project	Develop plan for Memorial Testing Programme	Organisational Development	01 April 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
Project	Manage delivery of tree audit, procurement of software, and approved schedule of rates	Organisational Development	01 October 2025	01 October 2024	31 March 2026	In progress
Project	Manage new bus shelter infrastructure delivery	Economic Development	01 January 2024	02 January 2024	31 October 2025	In progress
Project	Waste and Recycling changes due implementation of EA 2021	Organisational Development	30 November 2024	30 November 2024	01 April 2027	In progress

Review						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Review	Review of borough pumping stations and housing drainage assets	Health and Wellbeing	01 July 2024	01 July 2024	31 July 2025	In progress
Review	Street Cleansing Service review of operations	Climate Change	01 July 2024	01 July 2024	31 March 2026	Paused
Review	Review connectivity between Bartec and Jadu to improve customer journey re. fly-tipping	Health and Wellbeing	01 February 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
Review	Allotment review of sites and service	Organisational Development	01 April 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
Review	Public Toilets Review	Organisational Development	01 April 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
Review	Review of Cemetery and burial Conditions	Health and Wellbeing	01 April 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
Review	Review of nuisance strategies and data analysis for HMOs	Health and Wellbeing	01 April 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
Review	Review of Grounds Maintenance in collaboration with Surrey CC	Health and Wellbeing	01 December 2025	01 December 2024	31 March 2026	In progress

One-off						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
One Off	Assess the economic viability of the Bulky Waste Service	Economic Development	01 April 2025		30 September 2025	Not started
One Off	Environmental Health & Licensing Migration to NEC software	Organisational Development	01 April 2025		31 March 2026	Not started
One Off	Post Investment Appraisal of insourcing of Grounds Maintenance	Health and Wellbeing	01 May 2025		31 March 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	Air Quality Action Plan	Climate Change	01 April 2024	01 April 2024	31 March 2029	In progress
New Core Activity	Develop plan for principal inspections of bridges	Health and Wellbeing	01 December 2024	01 July 2024	31 July 2025	In progress
New Core Activity	Playgrounds Maintenance and Inspection Procurement	Organisational Development	11 November 2024	11 November 2024	31 March 2026	In progress
New Core Activity	Review current and future fleet needs as per Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy	Environmental Sustainability	01 May 2024	03 June 2024	01 April 2025	In progress

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