

Runnymede Borough Council

Service Area Plan 26/27

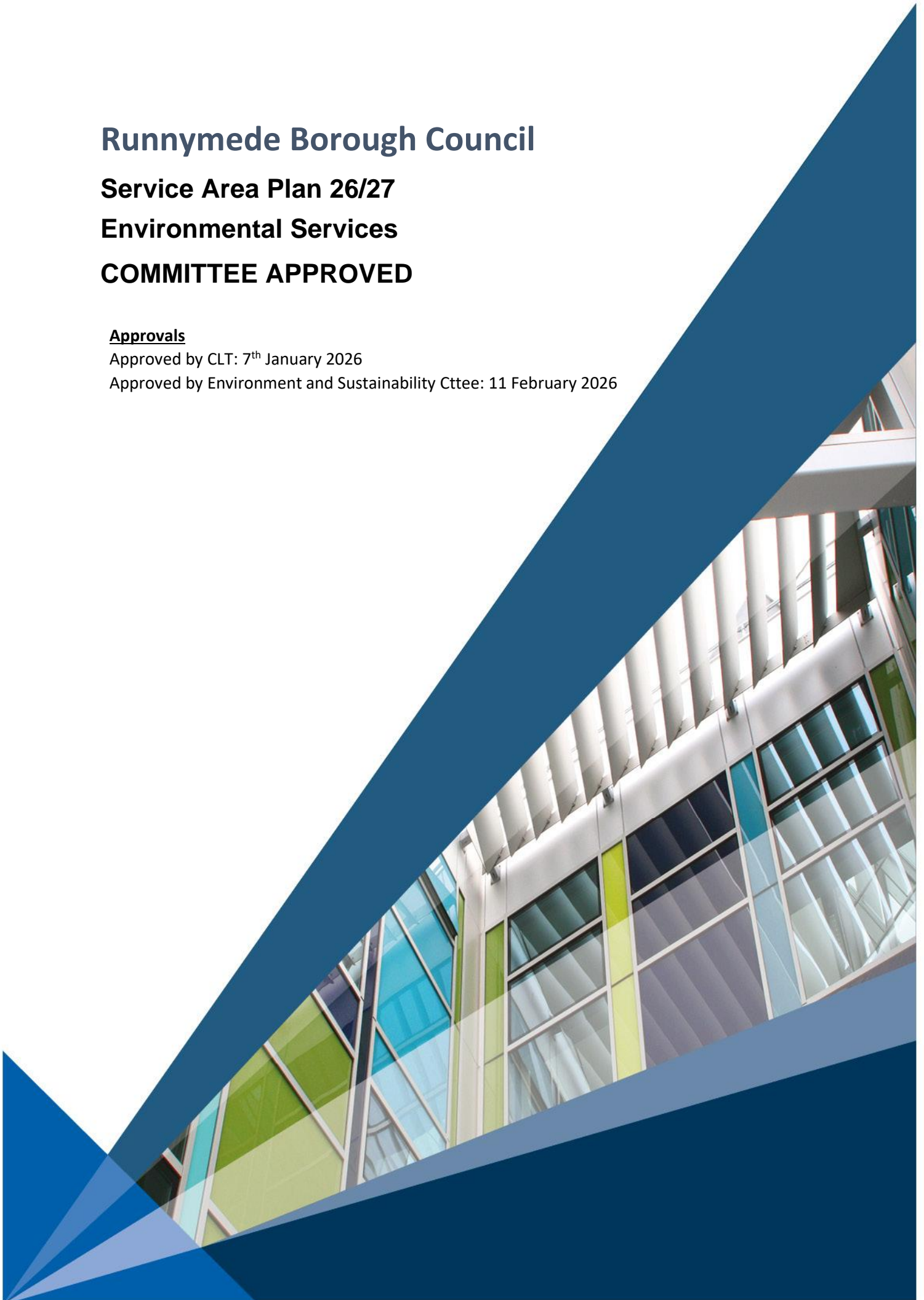
Environmental Services

COMMITTEE APPROVED

Approvals

Approved by CLT: 7th January 2026

Approved by Environment and Sustainability Cttee: 11 February 2026



Service Area Plan for Financial Year 2026/27

Service Area: Environmental Services

Corporate Head of Service: Helen Clark

Supported by: Daniel Bradding, Prince Frank, Justin Sander
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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

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 2026 to 2027:

Tackling the climate emergency and enhancing nature.

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. This project is planned to be completed in July 2026.

- Progress implementation of the sustainable fleet management strategy and review the fleet to maximise efficiency. In FY25/26 we have replaced three vehicles already with one more scheduled for replacement in FY 26/27 (DX65 LDL). This vehicle is a 15-tonne refuse collection vehicle. A further three vehicles will be replaced in FY27/28.
- Maximise use of HVO fuel with 100% target HVO fuel usage for suitable vehicles.
- Complete on-going route optimisation across the collection services to maximise efficiencies with respect to fuel and use of operational resources.
- Implement expansion of food waste collections from flats as introduced by the Environment Act 2021 from April 2026 using DEFRA funded food waste collection vehicle which is due to be delivered in January 2026.
- 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.
- Work collaboratively with Community Services colleagues to deliver a planned programme of works to enhance nature and biodiversity as per the Environment Act 2021 requirements.

Supporting our communities through change

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 and the communications team, review the way we communicate with residents to ensure they are kept advised of any operational issues or changes including for example the forthcoming route optimisation programme.

Improving health and wellbeing for all

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 sustainable delivery model for offering sports facilities which serves the community.
- The tree audit will deliver baseline database on the Runnymede tree stock. This will include information regarding the approximate number of trees across all RBC land, their approximate age, species, health and carbon sequestration value. Trees will be risk rated according to their health with trees identified as dead, diseased or dying maintained, reviewed or felled as appropriate.
- Complete the programme of memorial testing within the Runnymede Cemeteries and closed churchyards to ensure these environments are safe for visitors.

Growing a fair and sustainable economy

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 including upgrading street furniture including the litter bin and bench portfolio.
- Continue to support our trade waste customers implement changes in the proposed Simpler Recycling Regulations introduced in April 2025.

On-going services to be delivered:

Environmental Health

Continue to deliver all existing services as identified in the background service information incorporated within this service delivery plan. Support the Private Sector Housing team implement changes introduced by the Renters Rights Act in December 2025 and May 2026.

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 inspection of bridges in the borough's open spaces will continue as per the programme. The team will also continue to manage the transition to new borough-wide bus shelter infrastructure, generating increased revenue from 2026.

Direct Services Operations (DSO)

Functions to be delivered by the DSO encompass the collection services including 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. The HIT project will continue in 2026/2027 with intense programmes of work at designated priority Open Spaces to improve the quality of the sites, accessibility, and visibility.

Budget Growth required:

No growth for 2026/2027 is sought apart from carry over from growth approved in 2025/2026 for the HIT programme and additional litter bin provision. The intention is to deliver all planned services within existing revenue 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 was undertaken in 2025/26 by the Fleet Management team, to develop a vehicle replacement programme for the next five years. This programme is now being delivered with a move to electric vehicles where practical.

In early Spring 2026, improvements to streamline the collection rounds generated by the Bartec route optimisation changes will be used to improve the efficiency of the service. Although no savings will be realised through the route optimisation process, rounds will be balanced with some capacity generated for new housing developments in the pipeline.

Challenges and Opportunities:

The main challenges for 2026/2027 will be as follows:

1. Continuing to deliver front line services during a significant period of change will be a major challenge in 2026/2027. Managers will be asked to support the LGR process in addition to their existing workload. Staff shortages are inevitable and already evident as people seek more secure and predictable employment.
2. 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.

3. Relocation of the direct services office cohort to the former St John Ambulance site further along Ford Road.
4. Implementing route optimisation to streamline the delivery of the collection services will be a significant challenge as there will be changes to routes impacting crews and residents alike. Where required, comms and the web team will be asked to support communicate new arrangements to residents.
5. The Renters Rights Act 2025 introduces a range of new enforcement duties that the authority needs to prepare to deliver from May 2026. Officers have been attended Surrey D&B liaison group meetings focused on preparedness, for example exploring organising landlord forums across the county and other practical considerations on service delivery. Additionally, officers are attending regular webinars provided by operation JIGSAW (MHCLG funded) focused on next steps for implementation.
6. The review of park security offers the opportunity widen access to open spaces for residents who work or are unable to access these facilities during daylight hours. Changes could deliver efficiencies but must be balanced against the risk of anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
7. The HIT team project will continue into 2026/2027 with a race against time and potentially the elements to ensure all key sites identified for improvement are brought up to a higher standard before LGR.

Drivers for Change:

- The Environment Act 2021
- The Renters Rights Bill 2024
- Tobacco and Vapes Bill - implementation date not confirmed.
- Local Government Reorganisation and the creation of the new West Surrey Unitary Authority from 1st April 2027.

Upgrades and Service Improvements:

- Depot health and safety refurbishment works.

Scope of Services for 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 including flood prevention work and maintenance of Street scene infrastructure

Service Area 4: Green Spaces, Arboriculture, playgrounds and events

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 and Open Spaces 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 and maintenance contract and respond to issues raised by the contractor.

To deliver the arboriculture service including work generated by the 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 such as 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



Project						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Project	Delivery of HIT project in Green Spaces	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 December 2025		31 March 2027	In progress
Project	Develop plan for Memorial Testing Programme	OD - Internal	01 June 2025	01 June 2025	31 March 2027	In progress
Project	Fleet procurement 2026/27	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
Project	Manage delivery of tree audit, procurement of software, and approved schedule of rates	OD - Internal	01 January 2025	01 January 2025	31 March 2026	In progress
Project	Manage new bus shelter infrastructure delivery	Fair & Sustainable Economy	01 January 2024	02 January 2024	31 July 2026	In progress
Project	Pumping Stations Shutdown Review	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
Project	Route Optimisation - Implementation	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 January 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
Project	Street Scene Infrastructure	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 December 2025		31 March 2027	In progress

Review						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Review	Parks Security Review	Fair & Sustainable Economy	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started

One-off						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
One Off	Green Waste Reminders	Climate & Enhancing Nature	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
One Off	Procurement of new contractor for tree maintenance and approved schedule of rates	OD - Internal	01 January 2026		31 July 2026	Not started
One Off	Supported Housing (regulatory oversight) Act 2023	Supporting Communities through Change	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	Not started
One Off	Tobacco & Vapes Bill	Improving H&W	01 April 2026		31 March 2027	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	Renters Rights Act 2025	Improving H&W	01 January 2026		31 March 2027	Not started

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