Report title	Runnymede Borough Council Green House Gas Emissions Report 2024/2025
Report author	Dan Callaghan, Senior Climate Change and Sustainability Officer
Department	Planning, Economy, and Built Environment
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

- **For information**

Synopsis of report:

This report outlines the Council's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions for the financial year 2024/25. The report sets out the approach taken to calculate the GHG emissions resulting from the Council's service and operation, and presents this data for the financial year 2024/25, with a summary of the key emissions sources and comparison with previous years provided.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 The Council has been reporting the GHG emissions resulting from its service and operation annually since the financial year 2008/2009.

1.2 In October 2023, Stage 1 of Runnymede Borough Council's Climate Change Study was completed (hereafter referred to as the Aether baseline study). This work established the emissions baseline for both the Council and the borough, improving and streamlining the Council's carbon monitoring, measuring, and reporting methodologies. The Council's emissions baseline year was chosen to be 2019 to be in line with Surrey County Council reporting.

1.3 This is the third annual report of emissions since the Aether baseline study was completed and it uses the emissions accounting approach and methodology developed in that study in its calculations. The key elements of this approach are given below. For more information on this approach, members attention is directed to the report delivered at Corporate Management Committee on 18 April 2024 concerning the Council's GHG emissions for the 2022/23 financial year and accompanying update to the Aether baseline report figures.

Approach

1.4 The emissions accounting methods used to calculate the Council's GHG emissions are derived from the guidance given in the GHG Protocol. The GHG Protocol supplies the world's most widely used GHG emissions accounting standards and establishes comprehensive global standardised frameworks to measure emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains and mitigation actions. The standards are designed to provide a framework for businesses, governments, and

other entities to measure and report their GHG emissions in ways that support their goals.

Operational Boundary

1.5 An operational boundary defines the emission sources that are included in GHG reporting. Within the GHG reporting guidelines, emission sources are divided into three scopes. Setting a clear operational boundary defines which emission sources are included in the reporting and which ones are excluded. Table 1 sets out scope definitions as described in the GHG protocol. Figure 1 below gives an overview of the scopes and emissions across a typical organisation.

Scope	Definition
Scope 1	GHG emissions from sources owned or controlled by the council.
Scope 2	GHG emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam or other sources of grid-generated energy. Includes electricity supply to the council's operational buildings.
Scope 3	GHG emissions that occur indirectly from council activities, outside the control of the council (e.g. the council's procured services and investments).

Table 1: Definition of emissions scopes as described in the GHG protocol.

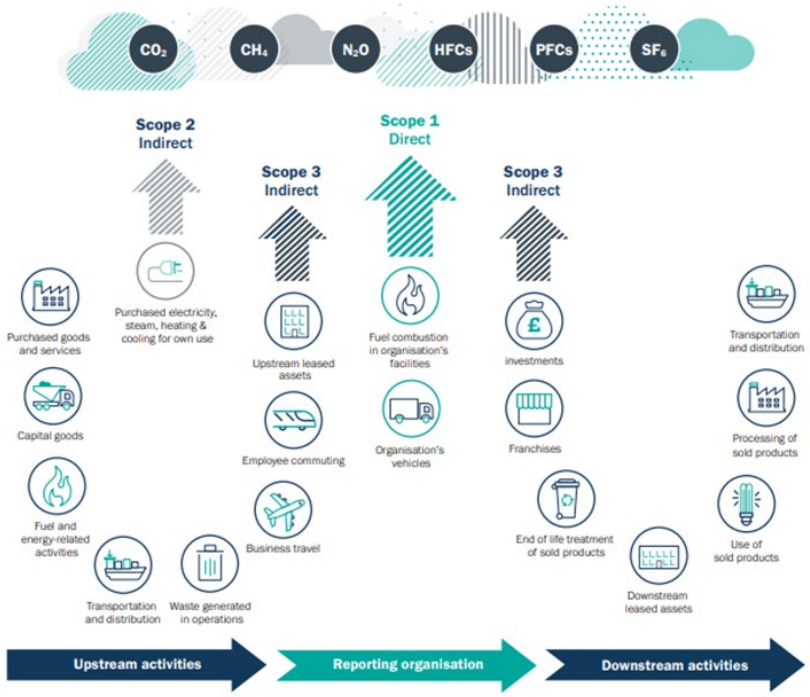

Figure 1: Overview of scopes and emissions sources for a typical organisation.

1.6 An organisational boundary defines which parts of an organisation are included for the purpose of GHG reporting. At Corporate Management Committee in March 2023, it was agreed that the Council would report its emissions using an operational boundary approach. This operational boundary approach is defined in the GHG Protocol corporate reporting guidance as:

'Your organisation reports on all sources of environmental impact over which it has operational control. Your organisation is considered to have operational control over an operation if it or one of its subsidiaries has the full authority to introduce and implement its operating policies at the operation.'

1.7 It is important to note that the organisational boundary agreed will be for reporting purposes only and does not preclude the Council from working to reduce emissions in areas of its influence not included or reported on within the chosen boundary. This also applies to areas where data to show progress is hard to come by.

1.8 The Council is committed to considering the full scope of emissions occurring within the operational boundary within the limits of the organisational boundary. Figure 2 below presents more detail on the activities within the three scopes that are included in the Council baseline and subsequent reporting.

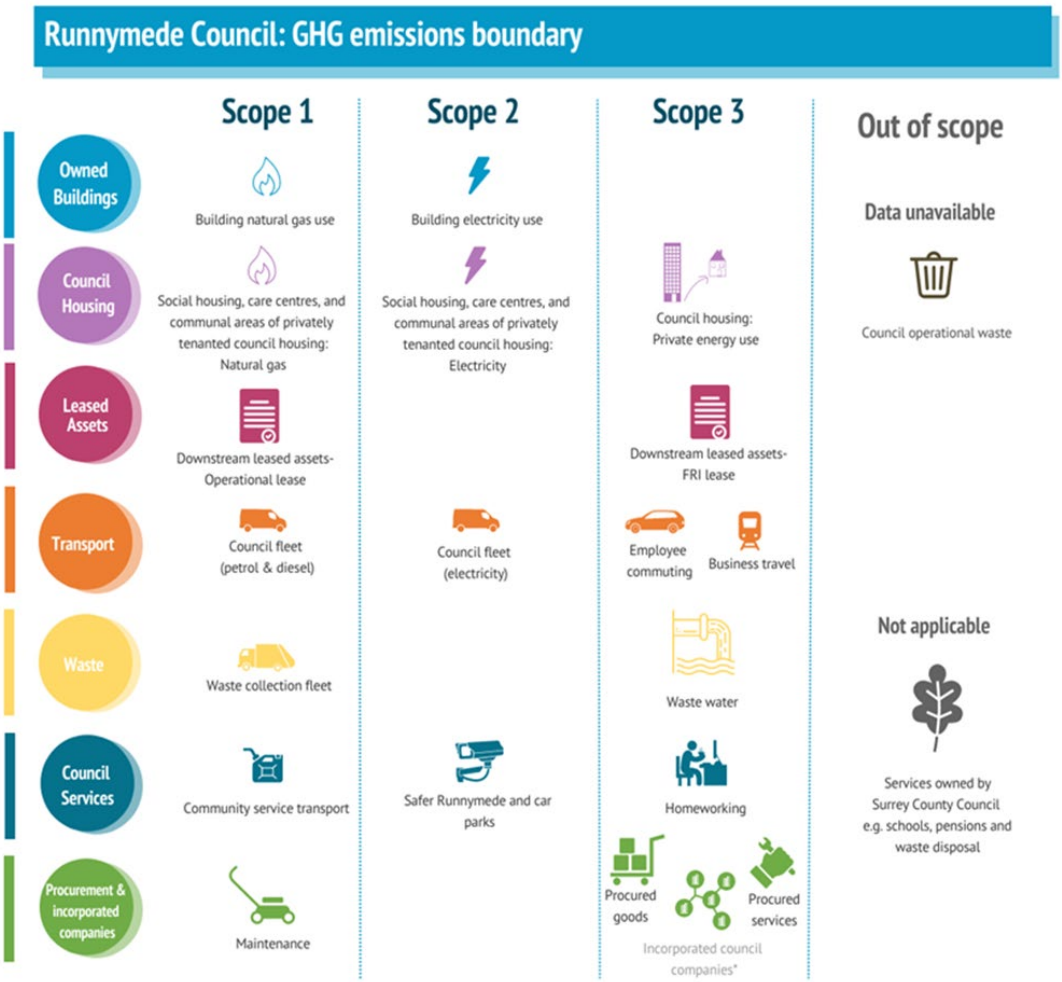

Figure 2: Details of activities included in the three scopes used for the calculation of the Council's baseline and subsequent reporting related to GHG emissions.

Key points regarding the organisational approach and emission allocation

Leased Assets

1.9 Leased assets may be included in a local authority's Scope 1 or Scope 2 inventory depending on the type of lease and the consolidation approach the local authority

uses to define its organisational boundaries. Under the operational approach chosen, when the Council leases a building to another user on a Fully Repairing and Insuring (FRI) lease, the emissions associated with the operation of that building are allocated to Scope 3. This is because the level of influence such a lease allows means that the Council is limited in the work that can be done until break clauses in the associated contracts occur.

Council Housing

1.10 **Sheltered housing and care provision**: Emissions from all council owned and operated sheltered housing, including care and retirement homes, are included under Scope 1 and 2.

1.11 **Communal areas**: The Council is responsible for communal areas of housing such as external lighting, entryways, corridors, stairways, etc. Therefore, it has control over the emissions from the lighting, heating, etc. in these areas. As the Council can influence the emissions by, for example installing more energy efficient lighting or replacing gas central heating with a heat pump, it makes sense for the Council to account for these emissions. Reporting for these areas falls under Scopes 1 and 2.

1.12 **Landlord services**: Although the Council owns the heating systems installed in our properties used for Council housing, these properties are privately tenanted. As such, the Council is not responsible for the payment of bills and does not have operational control of the use of energy. Therefore, the energy emissions from privately tenanted housing are included under Scope 3 in line with a service and operational based accounting approach.

Incorporated Council Companies

1.13 The operational emissions of the RBC Companies (RBC Heat, RBC Investments and RBC Services) are included in the 'Council buildings – community leased assets' sector.

Exclusions from scope

1.14 Surrey County Council Services i.e. waste processing, streetlighting, schools and pension fund. Runnymede Borough Council is not a waste authority and therefore in accordance with the LGA reporting guidance for local authorities will not report emissions arising from waste in the Council estate scope. The emissions from the waste collection fleet however are included under Scope 1. The same principle has been applied to other services that Surrey has operational control over such as schools.

Accounting approach and methodology

1.15 As mentioned in paragraph 1.3 of this report, this is the second annual report of emissions since the Aether baseline study was completed. The emissions accounting approach and methodology developed in the Aether baseline study have been used to compile the financial year 2024/25 GHG emissions estimates for the Council. For more information on this methodology, key concepts of emissions accounting, and input data used for these calculations, members attention is directed to the report delivered at Corporate Management Committee on 18 April 2024 concerning the

Council's GHG emissions for the 2022/23 financial year and accompanying update to the Aether baseline report figures.

1.16 Emissions are reported as a mass of CO2 equivalent, otherwise expressed as CO2e. Whilst less abundant than CO2, other GHGs such as methane (CH4) and nitrous oxides (N2O) have a greater warming effect than CO2. A Global Warming Potential (GWP) factor is applied to these GHGs to convert to CO2e.

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

2.1 The Council's estimated GHG emissions for all financial years since 2019/20 (re-defined baseline year) for all three scopes are presented in Table 2 below.

Sector	Scope	Emissions (tCO_2e)						Change between 2019/20 baseline and 2024/25 (%)
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	
Council Buildings – Operational	*1+2*	256	249	220	214	206	206	**-19.5%**
Council Buildings – Sheltered housing and communal use	*1+2*	106	93	93	78	71	82	**-22.6%**
Council Buildings – Community	*1+2*	260	212	227	210	262	275	**+5.8%**
Council buildings – Total	***1+2***	**622**	**554**	**540**	**502**	**539**	**563**	**-9.5%**
Green spaces and machinery	1+2	47	44	19	41	47	4	**-91.4%**
Council fleet	1	147	81	102	132	91	9	**-93.9%**
Streetlighting + CCTV	2	24	18	18	20	18	19	**-20.8%**
Waste collection & transport	1	513	470	470	528	496	14	**-97.3%**
Scope 1 and 2 emissions total		**1,353**	**1,167**	**1,149**	**1,223**	**1,191**	**610**	**-54.9%**
Council buildings – community leased assets	3	423	397	444	458	435	469	**+10.9%**
Water	3	38	45	36	20	36	14	**-63.2%**
Commuting	3	752	433	434	418	415	403	**-46.4%**
Business travel	3	36	15	25	26	24	23	**-36.1%**
Homeworking	3	0	180	213	189	189	201	**N/A**
Housing – tenant consumption	3	9944	9957	9909	9739	9890	9908	**-0.3%**
Procurement of goods and services	3	5612	13291	8908	6275	4977	6071	**+8.2%**
Transmission and distribution losses	3	0	0	0	0	27	29	**N/A**
Scope 3 emissions total		**16,805**	**24,318**	**19,969**	**17,125**	**15,993**	**17,117**	**+1.9%**
Council total		**18,158**	**25,485**	**21,118**	**18,348**	**17,184**	**17,726**	**-2.4%**

Table 2: GHG emissions estimates (in tCO2e) for each scope and sector for 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25 and percentage change from 2019/20 (re-defined baseline year) to 2023/24.

Total emissions for Scopes 1, 2 and 3

2.2 The Council's total GHG emissions (Scopes 1-3) in 2024/25 were estimated to be 17,726tCO2e. A 2.4% decrease in total emissions was estimated between the baseline year of 2019/20 and 2023/24. This decrease is most notably due to Scope 1 and 2 emissions reductions in sectors associated with the Council's vehicle fleet where a transition from diesel to Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) has led to emission savings of >90%. There are also decreases within the Council's operational and sheltered housing assets, and within the 'Water', 'Commuting', and 'Business Travel' sectors of Scope 3. 'Council Buildings – Community' saw a 5.8% rise in tCO2e, 'Council buildings – community leased assets' saw an increase of 10.9% tCO2e, and 'Procurement of goods and services' had an 8.2% rise in tCO2e between the reporting years of 2024/25 and 2019/20. These increases are discussed for each sector within the remainder of this section.

2.3 Overall, emissions from Scope 3 sources (GHG emissions that occur indirectly from Council activities, outside of the direct control of the Council) account for 97% of the Council's total GHG emissions. Emissions from Scope 1 and 2 (emissions arising from sources owned or controlled by the Council directly or resulting from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam or other sources of grid-generated energy) account for the remaining 3% of the total GHG emissions.

2.4 The adopted Council target to achieve operational 'Net Zero Carbon' emissions from our services and operations by 2030, agreed in January 2022, includes all Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Scope 3 emissions sit outside this target as they occur indirectly from Council activities. However, the Council is committed to reducing Scope 3 emissions and other emissions that may fall outside the scope of reporting as far as practicably and economically possible within its sphere of influence.

Scope 1 and 2 – within council target

2.5 Emissions arising from Scope 1 and 2 only, are estimated to be 610tCO2e for the year 2024/25. This represents a decrease in GHG emissions of 54.9% when compared against the baseline year of 2019/20.

2.6 Considering emissions from Scope 1 and 2 only, the most significant proportion of emissions arise from energy consumption within Council buildings (92% of the total Scope 1 and 2 for 2024/25). The remaining Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions are from street lighting & CCTV (3% of total), and fuel consumed by the waste collection and transport fleet (2% of total), Council fleet (1% of total), and green spaces and machinery (1% of total).

2.7 The significant fall in Scope 1 and 2 emissions compared with the baseline year and the 2023/24 financial year is associated with transition of the Council's fleet of vehicles from diesel to HVO, a biofuel created from waste fats and cooking oils. Runnymede is the first Council in Surrey to make this transition which was unanimously backed by Councillors at the Environment & Sustainability Committee on 7th March 2024. The action was set out in the adopted Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy. As a result of the change, emissions from the 'Waste collection and transport' sector have fallen 97.3% compared to the baseline year, from a value of 513tCO2e to 14tCO2e, with comparable savings in the 'Council fleet' and 'Green spaces and machinery' sectors.

2.8 While the move to HVO is a positive step towards reducing emissions from the Council's vehicles fleet, it is recognized that this is a transitional solution and that a further transition to electric vehicles should be sought where feasible. In addition to the electric Meals at Home vehicles which were introduced in the 2023/24 financial year, a further electric parking enforcement van was procured in July 2025, with a further two electric vehicles planned for introduction to the fleet once charging infrastructure at the Civic Centre has been installed.

2.9 A reduction in emissions is shown for Council buildings, where emissions dropped 9.5% in 2024/25 compared to the baseline year, driven by 'Council Buildings – Operational' and 'Council Buildings – Sheltered housing and communal use' where gas and electricity usage have declined, alongside the decarbonisation of the electrical grid associated with electricity consumption. However, it is evident that while 'Council Buildings – sheltered housing and communal use' have declined compared with the baseline, there has been an 11tCO2e increase compared to the 2023/24 reporting year. This is due to increased gas use from the period of November to March within all independent retirement living (IRL) properties.

2.10 It is notable that 'Council Buildings – Community' GHG emissions are 5.8% above that of 2019/20. For the 2023/24 reporting year, this increase was attributed to an increased understanding and expansion of the Council's reported assets following these assets being brought under a single energy provider. However, it is also notable that these emissions have increased by a further 13tCO2e compared with the 2023/24 reporting year. Both gas and electricity usage within the 'Council Buildings – Community' sector have increased year on year. Some of these changes are due to new sites being added to reporting for 2024/25, while others are increased usage (e.g. Eileen Tozer Day Centre electricity increased 12,511kWh year on year).

2.11 As mentioned in paragraph 2.4, the Council adopted a target to achieve operational 'Net Zero Carbon' emissions from our services and operations by 2030, agreed in January 2022, which includes all Scope 1 and 2 emissions.

2.12 Figure 3 provides a graph showing the Council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions from the baseline year 2019/20 to the current reporting year compared to a 2030 Net Zero Target Emissions line, which provides an incrementally decreasing line from 2019/20 to 2030 highlighting the annual decreases required by the Council to meet the target. Two further lines have also been added to the graph from 2024/25 projected out to 2030:

- The purple dashed line provides a Business as Usual (BAU) emissions trajectory. In this scenario, the Council completes no further initiatives to reduce emissions from Scope 1 and 2, and the continued decrease in emissions is driven only by the continued decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid. The pathway assumes that the carbon intensity of UK electricity will decrease from 255gCO2e/kWh in 2019 to 45gCO2e/kWh in 2030 (consistent with the Runnymede Climate Change Study: Emissions Pathway Report, produced in December 2023, produced by consultancy Aether and Climate Change Committee Sixth Carbon Budget).
- The green dashed line provides a 'Building decarbonisation based on HDP' scenario, whereby the Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDP) that the Council has already had produced for Manor Farm Day Centre and the Hythe Centre are used as a proxy for the emissions reductions and residual emissions expected if heat decarbonisation was completed on all Scope 1 and 2 assets.

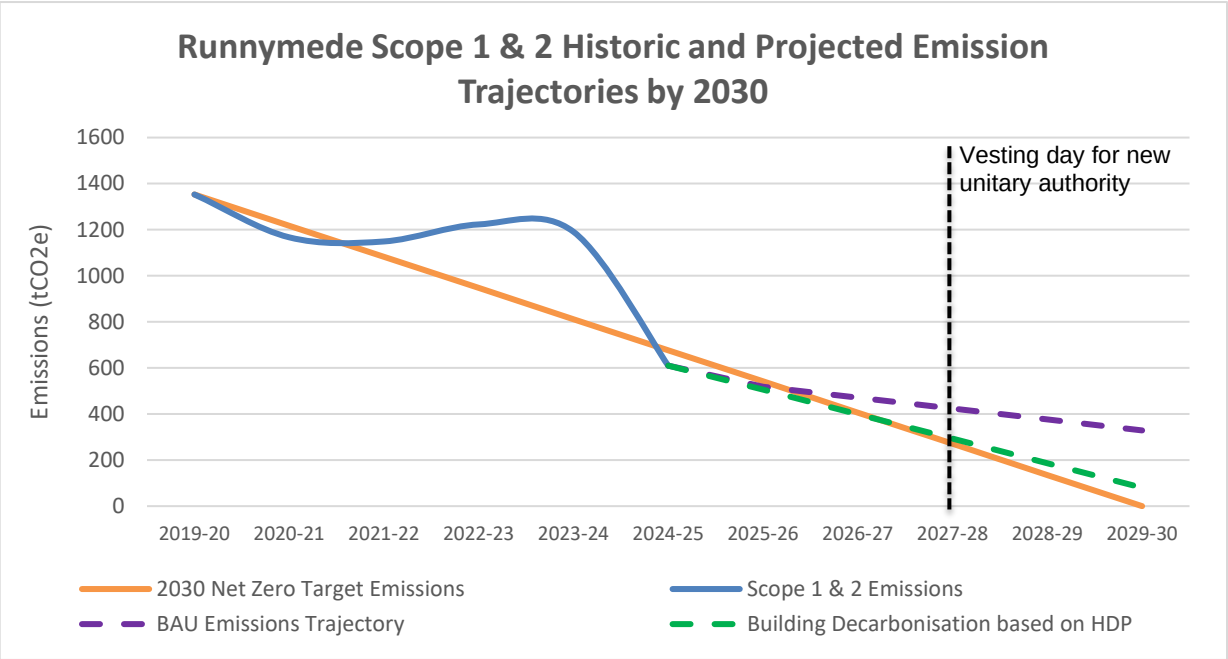

Figure 3: Graph showing the Council's Historic Scope 1 and 2 emissions from the baseline year 2019/2020 (solid blue line) and emissions trajectory required to reach net zero by 2030 with consistent, incremental annual emissions decreases (solid orange line). From the current reporting year, emissions are projected to 2030 based on a 'BAU scenario' (dashed purple line) and 'Building decarbonisation based on HDP scenario' (dashed green line).

2.13 As shown by the graph in Figure 3, the Scope 1 and 2 emissions for the 2024/25 reporting year of 610tCO2e is below the target emissions figure of 677tCO2e. This is the second time in six reporting years since the baseline where the Council has been marginally ahead of the target 2030 net zero trajectory line (the first being in the 2020/21 reporting year). While this is certainly a positive position to be in, the steep decline in emissions for 2024/25 is because of the significant reduction in fleet emissions from the transition to HVO. As such, much of the remaining Scope 1 and 2 emissions are from the Council's building assets, the decarbonisation of which will require large investments in expertise and on-site work. A costed plan for decarbonisation of the Council's Scope 1 and 2 assets is currently being worked on. The '2030 net zero target emissions' line for the 2025/26 reporting year is at 541tCO2e, so a reduction in emissions of a further 70tCO2e for the next reporting year will be needed to remain on track.

2.14 Beyond the 2024/25 financial year, the graph shows the projected emissions based on the 'BAU' scenario and 'Building decarbonisation based on HDP' scenario. The difference in emissions between these two trajectories in 2030 is 248tCO2e. It should be noted that the sooner any decarbonisation works on assets can be undertaken, the sooner that these annual emissions savings can be realized. Further worth noting is that even where the Council's buildings undergo decarbonisation works, there is still expected to be some degree of residual emissions that remain, hence why even with the decarbonisation works the Scope 1 and 2 emissions are not considered to be zero. To successfully achieve net zero by 2030, it is therefore likely that the Council would need to explore suitable programmes for offsetting any remaining emissions once all efforts to reduce operational emissions have been completed.

Scope 3 – outside of Council target

2.15 As discussed in paragraph 2.3 above, emissions arising from Scope 3 are significant, comprising 97% of the total GHG emissions from the Council estate in 2024/25. Emissions in this scope are dominated by two sectors with large associated emissions, namely 'Council housing - tenant consumption' and 'Procurement of goods and services' making up 58% and 35% of total Scope 3 emissions respectively. The 1.9% increase in Scope 3 emissions for 2024/25 compared to the baseline year is almost wholly attributable to the 'Procurements of goods and services sector' which is discussed further in paragraphs 2.19 and 2.20. Following these, the largest estimated sources are those attributed to 'Council buildings – community leased assets', 'Commuting' and 'Homeworking' contributing 3%, 2% and 1% respectively to total Scope 3 emissions.

2.16 It is encouraging that many sectors within the Council's Scope 3 emissions sources have declined since 2019/20. The most significant decline in tCO2e is evident in commuting, due to the prevalence of homeworking following the Covid-19 pandemic. During the creation of the Council's baseline emissions report, which provided emissions data for 2019/20 to 2021/22 reporting years, a survey was conducted with all Council staff on commuting patterns to enable calculation of commuting and home working emissions. The 2024/25 reporting year is the first year since then that a similar survey has been re-run, in this case to support development of a Green Travel Strategy for the Council. This Strategy will highlight barriers to the uptake of sustainable commuting and identify initiatives that encourage more sustainable commuting patterns. A total of 189 members of staff completed the survey, equating to a 39% response rate, and those responses have been analyzed and a draft Strategy created which will be taken through the democratic process in the current financial year. Alongside the creation of the Strategy, the survey provided a valuable opportunity to update the previous statistics on commuting trends among Council staff. While it is reassuring from a data accuracy perspective that there have not been large fluctuations in the commuting or home working figures following the updated survey results, the minimal changes show that more action is needed to reduce emissions in these sectors, making the Green Travel Strategy crucial to reducing the Council's Scope 3 emissions.

2.17 Water-related emissions have also reduced sharply in the 2024/25 reporting year, now showing a 63% reduction compared with the 2019/20 baseline. This change is due to an improved method of reporting these emissions which can now be done with water usage data from water bills taken from the Council's finance system rather than the previous method of using SIC (Standard Industry Classification) codes, which classify different industries in the UK, and applying an emissions figure per £ spent. Among the benefits of measuring emissions by water usage instead of SIC codes are that charges unrelated to actual usage (such as standing charges) would no longer be considered in the reporting, and water usage figure are specific to the supply and treatment of the water used rather than the SIC code which acts as a proxy for activities related to the collective water industry, thus improving accuracy.

2.18 In relation to tenant energy use, the Council's Housing Team continues to work towards achieving its target for all tenanted council homes to achieve EPC C by 2030. Following a successful £1.25M bid to the UK Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, which was matched by £1.28M from the Council, to deliver energy efficiency measures in 169 homes, a further £1.3M was awarded through the UK Government's Warm Homes Fund. The Council is again investing £1M alongside this grant value to extend the scope of the energy efficiency works that can be undertaken, which include a combination of external wall insulation, cavity insulation,

solar panels, and low energy heating. The investment will not only reduce emissions from the Council's housing stock but also save tenants money on their energy bills.

2.19 Emissions from the procurement of goods and services for the Council have risen compared with the 2023/24 reporting year and compared to the baseline. In 2024/25, there were a higher quantity of projects related to major works in the Council's social housing stock with emissions exceeding 100tCO2e (6 projects) compared to 2023/24 (3 projects), however emissions from procurement also increased as a total value for projects producing under 100tCO2e. However, it is evident when looking across all reporting years for this sector that procurement can be subject to large annual fluctuations according to significant Council projects. For more information on emission trends associated with procurement of goods and services by the Council, members are directed to the Corporate Management Committee report of 18 April 2024 providing the Council's GHG emissions for the 2022/23 financial year and an accompanying update to the Aether baseline report figures. It should also be noted that the UK Government emission conversion factors by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code were updated for 2024/25 reporting, providing the first update of these figures since the baseline year.

2.20 However, supported by the Council's adoption of a new Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Procurement policy in March 2023, procurement will continue to include consideration of ethical and environmental impacts as part of contractual requirements and seek the achievement of sustainable outcomes that support the climate change agenda. The Sustainable Procurement Policy sets out how environmental considerations will be built into the procurement and delivery of goods, works and services through its specifications, tender questions, evaluation criteria, key performance indicators and clauses of contracts. The implementation of this policy is therefore anticipated to help reduce emissions in future years.

2.21 As shown in Table 2 above 'Council buildings – community leased assets' shows a 10.9% increase in emissions compared with the baseline year. This is due principally to the commencement of the District Heat Network (DHN) for the Magna Square development during the 2022/23 financial year. The increase in emissions compared to the 2023/24 reporting year is due to an increase in gas usage associated specifically with Liberty House within the Magna Square development. It appears in the data for Liberty House that in the 2023/24 year there were some months where the usage figures were absent, however there is no such gap for 2024/25. As such, the current reporting is believed to be the most accurate picture to date of emissions from the site.

2.22 A new sector for Scope 3 GHG emissions sources was added to reporting in 2023/24 named 'Transmission and Distribution Losses'. This sector refers to "the difference between the electrical energy that enters the distribution network and the electrical energy that reaches the customer. Consequently, a proportion of the energy generated does not reach the end user, meaning more power must be produced to meet demand[1]". Calculation of this source was not considered as part of the baseline determined by Aether. However, with the continued refinement and improvement in the Council's emission reporting over time, it is a relevant emission source which will be considered in all reporting moving forward.

[1] National Grid (2024) National Grid - Distribution losses

Borough-wide emissions

2.23 Every year, the UK Government produces estimated UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics to help those working on local or regional indicators and inventories as part of their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the national datasets used and the time that it takes for these datasets to be finalized, the reporting has a time lag of two years (i.e. the data produced in 2025 is of 2023 greenhouse gas emissions).

2.24 The total greenhouse gas emissions for Runnymede borough in 2023 were 523.6ktCO2e, equivalent to 5.8tCO2e per resident. Figure 4 shows the Runnymede borough-wide emissions figures by sector for 2023.

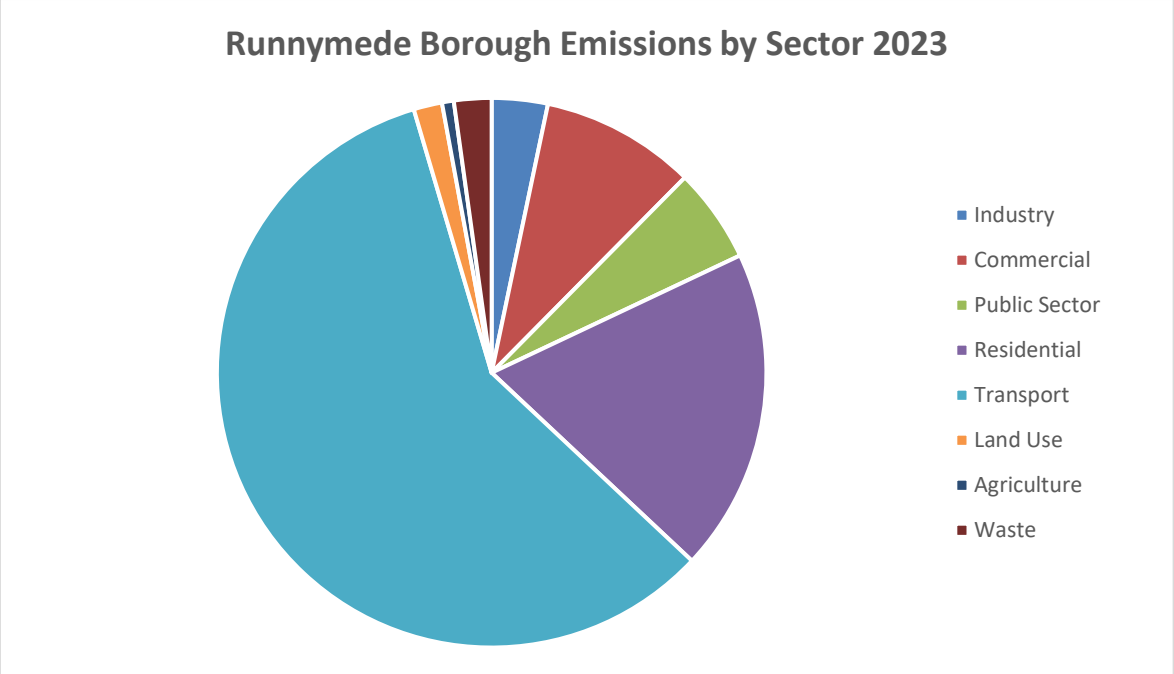

Figure 4: Runnymede borough emissions by sector for 2023 from UK Government statistics

2.25 Transport forms the most significant portion of emissions within Runnymede borough, responsible for 60% of greenhouse gases emitted across the area. This is followed by the residential sector at 20% and the commercial sector at 9%. It should be noted that while the land use sector is shown within the pie chart, the value of this sector -9.1ktCO2e, which is net positive i.e. more emissions are being sequestered through land use than are being emitted.

2.26 Figure 5 shows the total emissions from Runnymede borough from 2019 to 2023 (solid blue bars) and a net zero by 2050 target line (red) with a consistent, incremental decline in emissions from the 2019 baseline to 2030 (if the graph was extended, this line would reach zero in 2050).

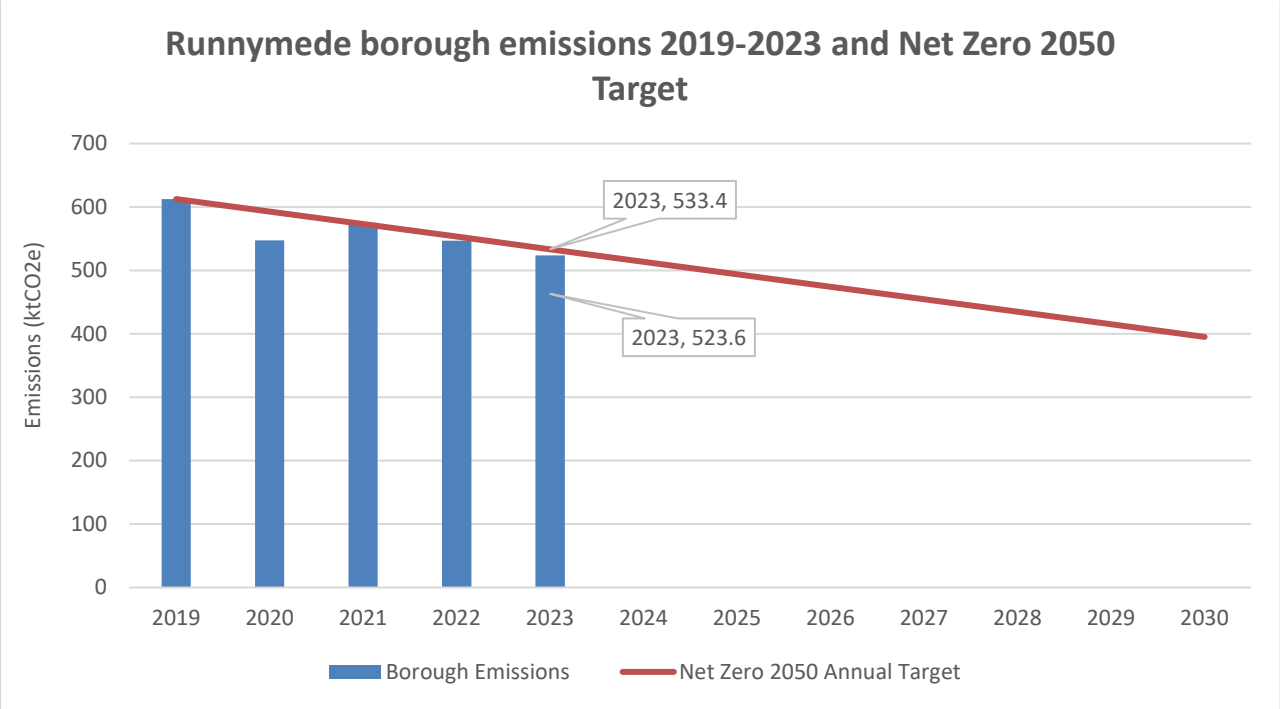

Figure 5: Runnymede borough greenhouse gas emissions from 2019 to 2023 (solid blue bars) and net zero by 2050 target line (red)

2.27 From Figure 5, it is evident that since 2019 overall emissions from Runnymede borough have declined and that this trend continues from year to year (this excludes the anomaly in 2020 associated with the Covid-19 pandemic). The borough emissions total for 2019 was calculated as 612ktCO2e, an average of 7.1tCO2e per resident, with this figure now declining 15% to 523ktCO2e, an average of 5.8tCO2e per resident. This decline in emissions has been evident across all sectors, most notably in transport (decreasing 37ktCO2e from 2019 to 2023) and residential (decreasing 25ktCO2e).

2.28 It is also positive that when compared against the net zero 2050 target line, 2023 betters this line by around 10ktCO2e at the borough level. While this is encouraging, the consistent downward trajectory of the target line necessitates continued efforts across the borough, at all levels, to reduce emissions rapidly, as exceeding the targets set by this target line reduce emissions faster and thereby contribute less to the accumulation of climate changing greenhouse gases within our atmosphere. The Council's continued focus on engaging different audiences across the borough, such as educational institutions, businesses, residents, community groups, and more, in positive behavioural change and promoting positive environmental action remains central to supporting borough-wide efforts to achieve net zero as soon as possible.

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 In January 2022, the Council committed to tackling climate change and adopted a target to achieve operational 'Net Zero Carbon' emissions from its services and operations by 2030. The overarching target for the Borough and the UK is to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

3.2 In October 2022, the Council adopted its Climate Change Strategy which reconfirms the Council's commitment to acting on climate change. A Climate Change Action

Plan to set out a roadmap of activities which the Council could undertake to help achieve the 2030 and 2050 targets was adopted by the Council in February 2024.

3.3 In December 2023, the Council resolved to declare a climate emergency, recognising that the consequences of global temperatures rising above 1.5 degree Celsius are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's priority. As such, the Council committed to using its reasonable endeavours to continue its work to meet the Council's target of net zero operational emissions by 2030, and to use its sphere of influence to support the Borough and its communities to achieve the 2050 national net zero target for the UK.

3.4 Calculating the annual GHG emissions of the Council's services and operations is essential to enable the Council to achieve these targets and successfully measure and monitor our progress towards doing so.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 Although there are no immediate resource implications arising from this report, to meet the Council's operational Net Zero target and decarbonise our estate, considerable additional funding will be needed. The Council has allocated some budget to help work towards its climate change commitments over the coming years, however this funding is likely to be insufficient to meet its operational net zero target. Therefore, officers will continue to pursue opportunities to secure grant funding where appropriate to help bridge the anticipated funding gap.

5. Legal implications

5.1 The Paris Agreement, which is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, was adopted by 196 Parties, including the UK, at COP 21 in Paris on 12 December 2015 and came into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

5.2 In June 2019, Parliament passed The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, which requires the Government to reduce the UK's net GHG emissions by 100 per cent relative to 1990 levels by 2050.

5.3 The then Department of Energy and Climate Change signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Government Association on 9 March 2011 to recognise the pivotal role local authorities have in reducing GHG emissions at the local level.

6. Equality implications

6.1 There are not considered to be any equality implications related to this report.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 The objectives set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy aim to enhance the environment and to promote sustainability and biodiversity. Annual GHG emissions reporting is essential in enabling the Council to successfully measure and monitor its progress towards achieving its targets and goals to combat climate change.

8. Risk Implications

8.1 There is a risk to the Council from not meeting its agreed 2030 net zero target its services and operations, largely due to financial and resource constraints. This risk is captured in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

9. Other implications

8.1 Not applicable.

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 The Council will report annually on its GHG emissions.

11. Conclusions

11.1 The Council's total GHG emissions (Scope 1-3) in 2024/25 were estimated to be 17,726tCO2e. Overall, GHG emissions associated with the Council's operation have declined by 2.4% since the baseline year of 2019/2020. This is due to sectors in the Scope 1 and 2 emissions associated with the Council's fleet which have declined significantly in the 2024/25 due to the Council's transition to HVO as an alternative fuel to diesel, whereas the Council's Scope 3 emissions have increased compared with the baseline almost wholly driven by the 'Procurement of goods and services' sector which is prone to annual fluctuations.

11.2 In sectors where the Council has seen an increase in GHG emissions compared with the baseline year, including 'Council buildings – Community' and 'Council buildings – community leased assets', this is largely attributed to the commencement of the District Heat Network (DHN) for the Magna Square development during the 2022/23 financial year and further refinement of the emissions reporting process leading to a continuously improving understanding of the Council's operations. However, it is also noted that these emissions have grown compared to the 2023/24 reporting year where these amendments to reporting quality were made, and that an increased usage in some assets has also caused the increased emissions. While the continued decarbonisation of the electricity grid will support the reduction in emissions from this energy source associated with Council assets, it is essential that the Council places its assets at the centre of decarbonisation efforts moving forward, both regarding heat decarbonisation and reduced energy demand. Ongoing work to develop a costed plan for decarbonisation of the Council's Scope 1 and 2 assets will support in enabling these works to take place.

11.3 There is an overall decrease of 54.9% in our estimated Scope 1 and 2 emissions totals between our baseline year of 2019/20 and 2023/24. All categories of emission sources in our Scope 1 and 2 (emissions arising from sources owned or controlled by the Council directly or resulting from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam or other sources of grid-generated energy), except 'Council Buildings – Community', have decreased compared with the baseline year 2019/20. The significant declines for 2024/25 are the result of the Council's transition to HVO as an alternative fuel to diesel, with most of the remaining Scope 1 and 2 emissions now associated with the Council's assets. While the HVO transition is a very positive step to reducing emissions from the Council's fleet, this is viewed as a transitional solution and efforts will be made wherever possible to continue to electrify the fleet.

11.4 Further ongoing initiatives to reduce the Council's total GHG emissions are described in paragraphs 2.16, 2.18, and 2.20, and are supported by the continual implementation of approved strategies and actions, including the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, Electric Vehicle Strategy, Sustainable Fleet Management

Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Policy. While the transition to HVO has drastically reduced the Council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions, there is still considerable work to be done to meet our agreed target of Net Zero emissions from our operations and services by 2030.

11.5 With access to new data sources and developing understanding of the Council's operations and services, it is expected that there will be a continuous improvement in reporting of the Council's GHG emissions over time. Dependent on the updated/refined information identified in the reporting process, this may lead to emissions increasing, decreasing, or being redistributed. Wherever these changes occur, the climate change team will highlight any such changes and provide explanation of any amendments and the impact on the reported GHG emissions for the Council.

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Appendices

13.1 None