



# Runnymede Borough Council Annual Report 2019/20



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# Forewords

## From the Leader of the Council



Cllr. Nick Prescott

First and foremost I am a resident of Runnymede, like the 89,000 people the Council exists to serve, and I am proud of the efforts councillors and officers have made to continue to support a high quality of life in the Borough. Before we take time to review where we want to be as a local authority in the future given the significant impact of Covid-19, it is important that we reflect on and evaluate our performance on behalf of our residents in 2019/20.

Among particular areas of pride for me, we have collectively made great strides with the green agenda. We replaced the Council's refuse fleet with new vehicles capable of using bio-diesel fuels to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions which contributed to reducing carbon emissions from all local authority operations by 14.79% - 167.60 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. We also increased the number of Green Waste customers by 1,273 to 9,773 and introduced a single use plastics policy across all areas of council services aiming to eliminate single use plastics.

It was also a year when partnerships were skillfully developed leading to significant support and benefits for our residents. Working with Surrey County Council we successfully bid for nearly £42million from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to support upgrades to the A320 which will enable the building of more homes. We provided over 46,200 individual trips with our Community Transport Service, including delivery of Adult Social Care, health and voluntary sector contracts which led to a reduction in the overall cost of delivering Community Transport. Working with neighbouring boroughs, we also successfully delivered a hospital discharge service, linking residents to services upon their return from hospital. Most significantly, when our residents especially needed us during the pandemic, councillors and officers worked hand in hand putting in many, many extra hours to set up a comprehensive local welfare response system. This was in partnership with Runnymede Foodbank, Voluntary Support North Surrey, Surrey County Council and Surrey Local Resilience Forum. The system later went on to provide over 40,000 welfare phone calls to vulnerable people, managed 34,000 incoming calls giving advice, distributed £12m of business grants via government funding, and delivered over 20,000 meals. We demonstrated the power of localism; councillors, staff, neighbours and community groups all pulled together for the common good. Thank you to all who were involved, especially people involved with Runnymede Foodbank and Voluntary Support North Surrey.

The next year and beyond will certainly be shaped by the pandemic. It is important that we hear your views of how we can best serve you in the 'new world'. Please take the time to know who your local councillors are and let them know what you feel we deliver well, or indeed any local issues or concerns you and your families may have, as we look to move forward together.



# Forewords

## From the Chief Executive



Paul Turrell

Runnymede is a great place to live and work and this Annual Report highlights the successes and diversity of our activities to support the Borough.

The latter end of the year in particular was very tough given the pandemic, but I am extremely proud of my staff who rose to the challenge head on to deliver excellent support services to our residents as described by the Leader. This Annual Report of the Council's work and performance is an appropriate place to put on record my thanks to all colleagues, councillors and members of the public who gave their time, expertise or financial support to help the Borough's vulnerable people through an unprecedented period. Work still continues.

Other standout achievements were that we completed stage three of the Examination in Public of the Local Plan. This plan has since been adopted and it will ensure sustainable development, environmental protection, and provision of new open spaces in the Borough. The quality of our planning decisions also gained recognition in the national planning press for its record at appeal. Planning Magazine reported that Runnymede had the lowest proportion of appeals for five+ homes allowed in England over the period 2017-2020. At the same time, we supported the delivery of nearly 300 new homes in the Borough, including 50 affordable units, and more than 230 rooms/units for those with care needs. We also introduced a shared house model for temporary accommodation to assist single homelessness people, now being used by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as good practice. Through new temporary accommodation initiatives, we reduced the use and cost of out of Borough bed and breakfasts as emergency accommodation.

Benefitting all our employees, we introduced a new leadership and staff competencies framework as a basis for performance management and the identification of training needs to develop our staff and ultimately improve services for our residents. To assist the organisation and employees to work in a more agile manner, we also implemented new technology to enable Council staff to work remotely. At the time we weren't fully aware just how critical these would prove to be, but they have obviously been invaluable in keeping services running for the pandemic.

We also created an additional £1.8 million per annum in ongoing gross revenues from property acquisitions compared to the previous year. However, the impact of Covid-19 is far reaching, and it will take time for the full financial impact of the pandemic to be understood. As a council we have always looked at innovative ways of generating revenues to, not just maintain services, but improve and deliver new services. Having completed a Local Government Association Peer Challenge this year it was comforting to receive the feedback from independent sources which strongly supported the approach we have taken with our commercial strategy, as well as providing recognition that we have a strong reputation with our partners and that we understand what residents value and are concerned about. All these aspects will be essential to lead us back on to the road of recovery and these plans will be reflected in our next strategic Corporate Business Plan, due to be adopted in 2021.

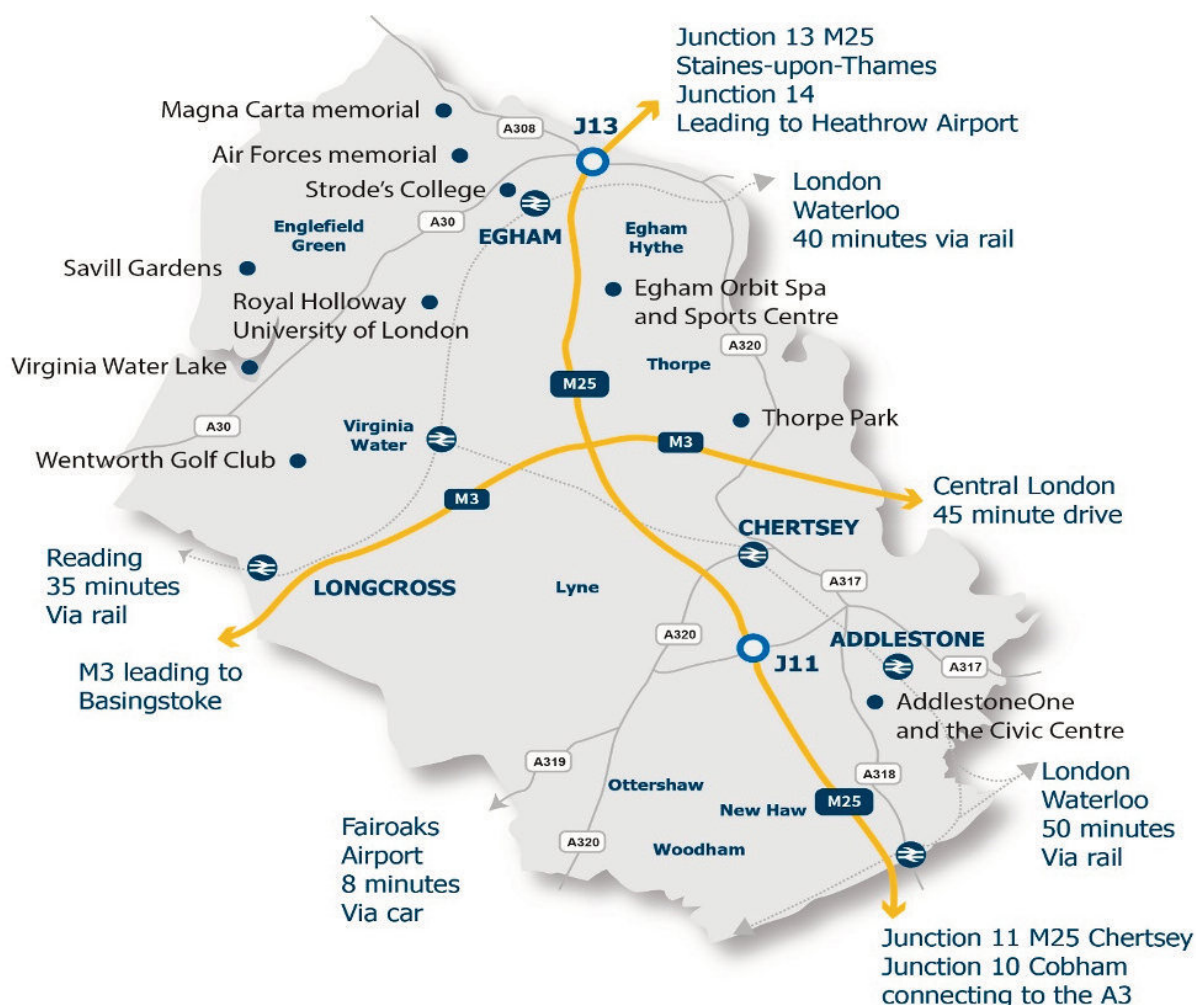


# About Runnymede

Runnymede is a borough in north-west Surrey with a population of 89,400 (ONS population estimates, July 2020). It covers 7,807 hectares, of which 6,139 hectares are Green Belt (Ordnance Survey, 2020) and it includes the settlements of:

- Addlestone
- Chertsey
- Egham
- Englefield Green
- Longcross
- Lyne
- New Haw
- Ottershaw
- Row Town
- Thorpe
- Virginia Water
- Woodham

The borough boundary can be seen below.



Key statistics related to the borough of Runnymede are shown below.

Male life expectancy

**80.6 years**

(Great Britain 79.6 years)

Percentage of adults  
physically active

**73.0%**

(England 67.2%)

Female life expectancy

**84.3 years**

(Great Britain 83.2 years)

Percentage of population  
aged 16-64 in employment

**82.5%**

(Great Britain 76.0%)

Index of Multiple  
Deprivation average score

**12.01**

(England 19.62)

Percentage of population  
aged 16-64 with  
NVQ4+ qualification

**59.0%**

(Great Britain 40.3%)

Persons per hectare

**11.45**

(Surrey 7.1)

Percentage of  
social housing

**13%**

(Surrey 12%)

Percentage of  
Green Belt land

**78.6%**

(England 12.4%)

Percentage of all children  
living in poverty

**10.6%**

(Surrey 8.6%)

Hospital admission for alcohol  
specific conditions (aged under  
18) per 100,000 of population

**19.9**

(England 31.6)

Infant mortality rate per  
1,000 of population

**2.8**

(England 3.9)

Incidents of anti-social  
behaviour per 1,000  
of population

**25.4**

(Great Britain 28.4)

Notifiable offences (crime)  
per 1,000 of population

**78.0**

(Great Britain 83.5)

Incidents of domestic abuse  
per 1,000 of population

**7.4**

(England & Wales 8.3)

Sources: Office of National Statistics, Local Government Association, Surrey-i, and Public Health England



# What we do

## Council services and responsibilities

Runnymede Borough Council forms part of a two-tier local government system with Surrey County Council.

### As a Borough Council we are responsible for:

- Abandoned vehicles
- Allotments
- Building Control and dangerous buildings or structures
- Business Rate collections
- Cemeteries
- Council Tax collections
- Emergency Planning and Business Continuity
- Environmental Health and inspection of food premises
- Homelessness
- Land Charges
- Licensing
- Local elections
- Off-street car parks and parking enforcement
- Planning applications, enforcement and Planning Policy
- Refuse and recycling collection
- Street cleaning

### We also choose to provide the following additional services to further support local people:

- Administrative support for Business Runnymede (formerly Runnymede Business Partnership)
- Centres for Older People
- Chertsey Museum
- Community Alarms
- Community Halls
- Community Meals
- Community Safety and CCTV open space surveillance
- Community Transport and school transportation scheme
- Economic Development
- Garden waste collection
- Graffiti removal
- Leisure Development and Parks and Open Spaces
- Managing a portfolio of property assets
- Managing the Council housing stock
- Regeneration of town centres

The main roles and responsibilities of Surrey County Council are:

- Education
- Fire and public safety
- Transport, Traffic and Highways
- Lead Local Flood Authority
- Libraries
- Social care
- Trading Standards

On behalf of Surrey County Council, we cut grass on highway verges, maintain highway shrubs and also carry out on-street parking enforcement.



# Our Vision, Corporate Values, Corporate Goals, and Corporate Themes

The following were set in 2016 as part of the Corporate Business Plan 2016-2020.

## Our Vision

Our Vision is to be: *“A vibrant Borough with a high quality environment, where we maximise opportunities with partners to provide services which are highly regarded by local people.”*

## Our Corporate Values

We have a set of Corporate Values which form the foundation on which we perform work and conduct ourselves. We will work in such a manner that shows we are:

- **Customer-focussed:**  
We will put our customers at the heart of what we do and they will be able to interact with us easily in the way they want.
- **Passionate:**  
We will empower our staff to be passionate about all we do.
- **Performance driven:**  
We will strive for excellence in all we do.
- **Innovative:**  
We will aim to creatively improve our services.
- **Promoting equality and diversity:**  
We believe in fairness as well as creating a diverse workforce so we can draw upon a wide range of views and experiences to meet the changing needs of our customers.
- **Delivering excellent value for money:**  
We will strive to be as efficient and effective as possible.

## Our Corporate Goals

Our Corporate Goals are our broad guiding principles which will help us to achieve Our Vision. The principles we set were:

- We will deliver cost effective services.
- We will have very satisfied customers.
- We will train, develop and motivate our staff.
- We will be financially stable.
- We will have sound leadership and governance.
- We will have a clear performance management system.
- We will provide customers with a range of channels to interact with us.
- We will be a more agile organisation responsive to changing circumstances.



## Our Corporate Themes

We recognise that a fundamental role of the Council is to provide a voice for Runnymede to help improve the quality of local people's lives. This can be achieved through working with others to direct support for people, improving the environment in which we live, work and play, and also helping ensure we have a vibrant economy.

Given the importance of each of the above elements in achieving a high quality of life, we have chosen to categorise our Corporate Priorities in to four themes:





# Achievements in 2019/20

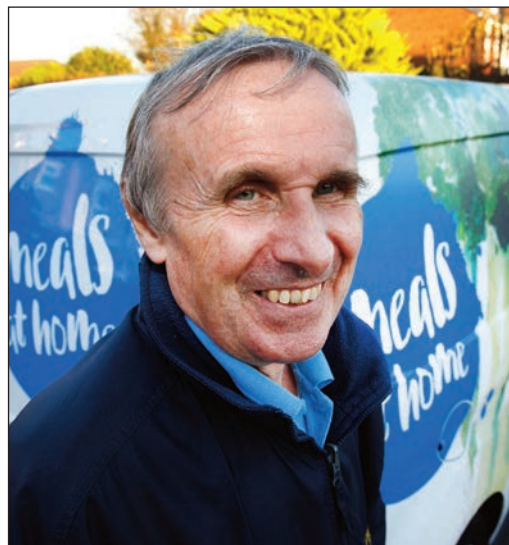
The Council's key achievements in the 2019/20 financial year are shown below. Many support the progress of more than one Corporate Theme, but have only been listed under one to avoid duplication.

## Supporting Local People achievements

*This theme involves improving the quality of people's lives through developing healthier and safer communities, improving life chances, as well as listening to and representing local people.*

### Older and vulnerable people

- We set up a local welfare response system to support residents during the pandemic. This system later went on to provide over 40,000 welfare phone calls to vulnerable people, managed 34,000 incoming calls giving advice, distributed £12m of business grants via government funding, and delivered over 20,000 Meals at Home deliveries between March and August.
- We received more than 45,600 calls to our Careline service and of these 99.92% were answered within 60 seconds.
- We delivered a Living Well Week in September linked into the National Older People's Day on 1 October. Overall attendance was 418 and there were 50 activity sessions over the week.
- Our Social Prescribing service, where a Runnymede Wellbeing Adviser helps residents access a wide variety of local services to help improve their wellbeing, was a huge success with 263 referrals.
- Working with neighbouring councils, we have successfully delivered a hospital discharge service, linking residents to support services upon their return home. A total of 1,100 referrals were received by service in the year, including 200 referrals to Runnymede residents.
- We operated three social/day centres, increasing the range of activities and services available to residents, despite it not being a service that we have to deliver.
- In February our Community Alarm installation service passed its accreditation with the Telecare Services Association.
- The average number of days taken to process new benefit claims or changes was just 3.6 days against a target of 12 days.

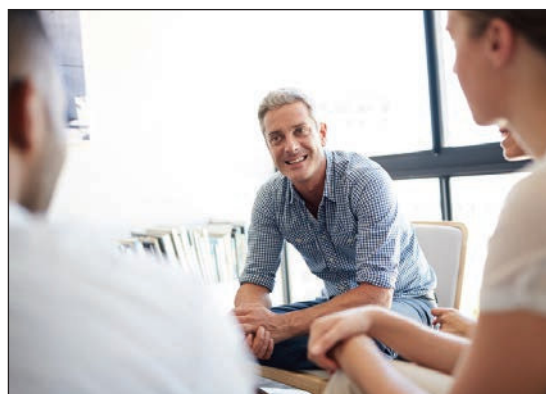


## Communicating with our residents

- Our ability to talk and listen to our residents improved with the growth of our corporate communication channels, which all increased their following, meaning more people and businesses began to see what the Council has to offer them.
- A review of the Council's website started in March to ensure it carries only the most useful information about our services, priorities, and successes.
- We worked with our current website provider and an independent web technology company to improve the accessibility standards of the site, so ever-greater numbers of people can use it to access information and services.
- The residents e-newsletter was relaunched and gained new followers for every edition.
- Runnymede Talks, the Council's flagship publication completed its three issues trial and a fourth edition was also published in order to help keep residents up to date with key news.

## Family support

- We provided a range of targeted support services to 51 families in Runnymede.
- We introduced a shared house model for Temporary Accommodation to assist single homelessness people, now being used by the Ministry of Housing & Local Government as good practice. Through new Temporary Accommodation initiatives we also reduced the use and cost of out of Borough B&B as emergency accommodation.
- 46 households were prevented from becoming homeless due to Council assistance and 181 households were assisted with emergency or interim accommodation.
- We arranged 37 private sector tenancies, of which 20 were through our own Magna Carta Letting service.
- There were 215 lettings to Council homes (social stock) and 63 nominations to housing associations.
- We carried out 1,591 stock condition surveys of council homes.
- We reduced the number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than two weeks from 15 at the end of 2017/18 to zero at the end of 2019/20.
- We introduced a new Tenancy Audit function to identify unreported repairs and support residents experiencing difficulty in managing their homes, hoarding and fire risks etc.
- We used powers under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to take possession of four Council home properties where serious criminal activity and antisocial behaviour had taken place. Community Protection Warnings (CPW) and Community Protection Notices (CPN) were also utilised in partnership working with the police.
- We supported the delivery of nearly 300 new homes in the Borough, including 50 affordable units, and more than 230 rooms/units for older people or those with care needs.



## Community Transport

- We provided over 46,200 individual Community Transport trips and also continued to deliver a number of other Adult Social Care, health and voluntary sector contracts which contributed to a reduction in the overall cost of delivering the Community Transport service.

## Partnership working

- A comprehensive local welfare response system was set up in partnership with Runnymede Foodbank, Voluntary Support North Surrey and Surrey County Council to support residents during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- We continued to work in partnership with Surrey Heath Borough Council to provide community services and we further developed the partnership with the amalgamation of the two council teams and services expected to be realised in 2020/21.
- A corporate fraud partnership with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council commenced on 1 April 2019 which is expected to generate significant cost savings and income in the future.

## Community development

- We facilitated 245 children / young people taking part in the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games training programme.
- We renewed the accreditation for Chertsey Museum and delivered four new exhibitions and 56 schools signed up to the education programme. There were 16,666 users of the Museum.
- We held six Xplorer events attended by around 500 parents and primary and pre-school children.
- In May we ran an event to celebrate 10 years since the opening of Hythe Park. The event was run in conjunction with Friends of Hythe Park and attracted 150 people with a range of activities.





## Elections

- We successfully delivered our first all-out Local Election in early May following a review of our wards, as requested by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Council normally elects a third of its councillors per year). In late May we conducted European Parliament elections which had been called at short notice, and in December delivered a General Election, also called at short notice.

## Community safety

- We delivered the Junior Citizen scheme at Thorpe Park with a range of safety workshops to 932 Year 6 primary school pupils from 21 schools across Runnymede.
- We continued to implement the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to assist our residents and visitors in understanding the assessed hygiene levels in places they eat. At the end of March 2020, 93.9% of food businesses had a rating of 3 or above.
- 18 referrals were received and managed via the Community Harm and Risk Management meeting for multi-agency case co-ordination.
- Every Council home property achieved a gas safety certificate.
- As part of the Community First programme we completed 14 activities which included the community safety activities of 'Prison me no way' (educating pupils about the negative experience of being in prison) and a cuckooing project (which educates vulnerable young people who may be targeted by drug gangs).



# Enhancing Our Environment achievements

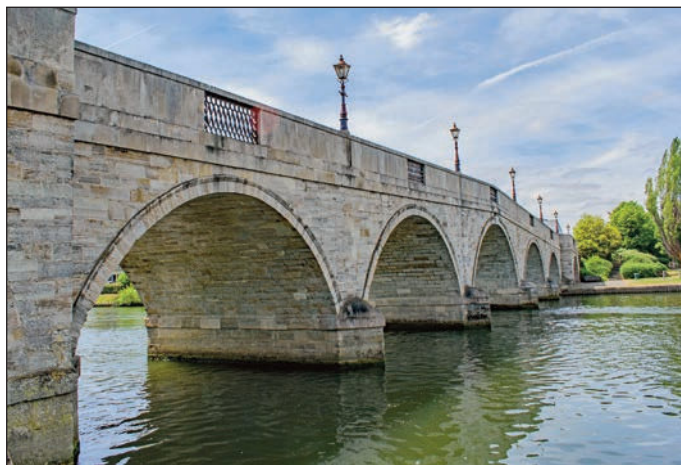
*This theme involves developing a more sustainable environment, preserving our built and natural environment, and revitalising areas in need of physical improvement.*

## Planning

- The quality of our planning decisions gained recognition in the national planning press for its record at appeal. Planning Magazine noted that Runnymede BC had the lowest proportion of appeals for 5+ homes allowed in England over the period 2017-2020.
- We processed 816 planning applications and completed 220 pre-application enquiries, with 100% Major planning appeals and more than 70% of Non-major planning appeals determined in accordance with the Council's decision.
- We determined 100% of Building Regulation applications within the relevant statutory periods.

## Infrastructure and flood management

- We completed Stage 3 of the Examination in Public of the Local Plan, and consultation on the main modifications which paved the way for adoption. The plan ensures sustainable development, environmental protection, and provision of new open spaces.
- We continued to work with the Environment Agency, Surrey County Council and affected local authorities to finalise the design of the River Thames Scheme (RTS) and ensure its implementation. The scheme could reduce flood risk to 15,000 homes and 2,400 businesses located along the Thames from Datchet to Teddington. The design includes proposals for landscape enhancement, recreation opportunities and habitat conservation.
- We represented Runnymede's interests in the Southampton to London Pipeline Development Consent Order process including negotiation of a financial settlement and Environmental Investment Funding for Chertsey Meadows.



## Airport expansion

- We responded to every pre-Development Consent Order consultation related to Heathrow Expansion in order to represent the interests of Runnymede.



## Leisure provision

- We completed a review of the services, facilities, and hire packages associated with our community halls at Chertsey and Egham Hythe. This work resulted in enhancing the facilities and launching new, more attractive, hire packages for our customers.

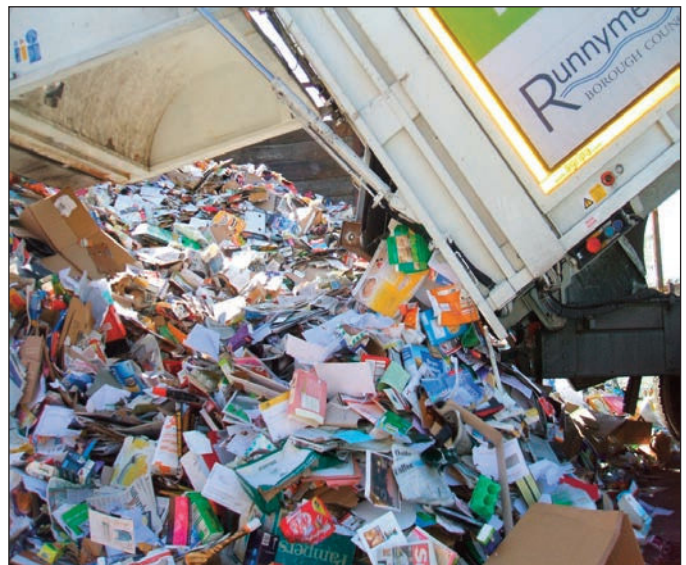
## Enforcement

- We completed 229 investigations of potential breaches of planning control.
- We dealt with 886 incidents of fly-tipping and 135 reports of abandoned vehicles of which 37 were destroyed.
- We took part in several stop and search operations with partners tackling illegal waste carriers, seizing and crushing one vehicle.
- We investigated 439 noise complaints and carried out 426 food related visits.
- We enhanced the protection of 20 open space site boundaries in the Borough.
- We implemented a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to control dog nuisance and dog fouling within the Borough.



## Waste management

- We increased the number of customers subscribing to our garden waste collection service by 1,273 to 9,773.
- We introduced a single use plastics policy across all areas of Council services aiming to eliminate single use plastics.
- We replaced the Council's refuse fleet with new vehicles capable of using bio-diesel fuels to reduce the Council's carbon dioxide emissions.
- We carried out just under 4 million bin collections e.g. residual, food, recycling, and garden waste



## Air quality

- We introduced an Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle strategy for Runnymede with the aim of reducing and phasing out of the use of high polluting diesel and petrol vehicles across the Council fleet.
- We continued to reduce carbon emissions from local authority operations by 14.79% - 167.60 tonnes CO2e.



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# Improving Our Economy achievements

*This theme involves maintaining and developing more prosperous and vibrant communities, attracting infrastructure improvements, and supporting and nurturing our businesses.*

## Business support

- We delivered a number of business events to enable business leaders to engage with the Council and discuss any support they may need.
- We published a regular Business Runnymede newsletter and maintained the Business Runnymede website with information on funding, skills and apprenticeships, networking, and commercial property opportunities.
- We produced a promotional video to attract inward investment into the Borough.
- In progressing the development of the Local Plan towards adoption, the plan allocated additional employment sites and added policies to help protect town centres and the main strategic employment areas.

## Infrastructure improvements

- We worked in partnership with Surrey County Council to successfully bid for nearly £42million pounds of funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to support upgrades to the A320 required to enable the building of more homes.
- We supported the Longcross Enterprise Zone and Garden Village by establishing a draft detailed forward project plan, granted planning permission for a discovery building, and secured £230,000 capacity funding to the Longcross site.
- We supported neighbourhood planning in Thorpe, Virginia Water and Englefield Green.
- We secured £145,000 of design quality grant funding which will allow the Council to undertake reviews of its heritage assets and produce an updated Supplementary Planning Document on Design in consultation with local communities and interest groups.

## Skills

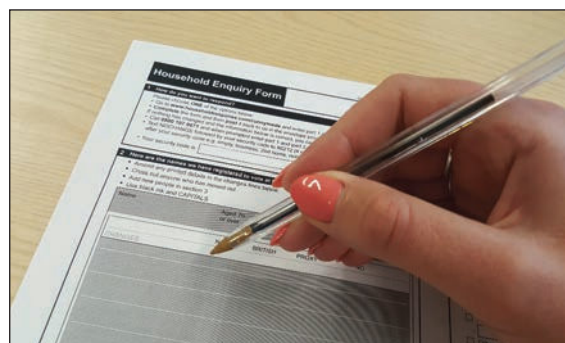
- We created nine new apprenticeship opportunities within the Council.

# Organisational Development achievements

*This theme involves developing our organisation internally in order to help support the achievement of all the Corporate Priorities in our Corporate Business Plan as effectively as possible.*

## Customer services

- We managed 143,798 incoming calls through Customer Services over the year. This was a 3.4% increase compared to the previous year.
- Nearly 5,000 residents signed up to our customer portal which enables our residents to check their Council Tax or Housing Benefit accounts, sign up for e-billing, register moves, apply for discounts and set up Direct Debit payments for Council Tax 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.
- A new payments system was developed to increase the number of payment methods available to the customer and to reduce the number of cheques being received.
- We improved efficiency within Housing Benefits and reduced fraud and overpayments by automation, putting us in the top quartile of all local authorities.
- We managed over 700 Freedom of Information requests and responded to 97.5% of the requests within statutory deadlines.



## Digital Services

- We implemented new technology to enable Council staff to work remotely.
- We migrated Office365 for 350 staff.
- We upgraded from Windows 7 to Windows 10 across the organisation to help futureproof our systems.

## Project management

- Further refinement and development of project management toolkit resources was achieved with the delivery of training courses on Working in Projects, Managing Projects, Writing Better Business Cases, and Project Charter.
- A Project Management newsletter was developed and launched on a quarterly basis for project managers which provides an opportunity to share best practice, celebrate achievements and advise on upcoming reporting deadlines and training dates.

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## Procurement

- Retendering of contracts generated total savings over the life of the contracts of £138,401.
- The Procurement Office completed a total of 54 contracts with a total value of £6.2M.

## Human resources

- A new leadership and staff competencies framework was completed as a basis for performance management and the identification of training needs to develop our staff and improve our services.
- A new performance review process for staff was completed and rolled-out with a view to improving the management of individual performance within the organisation.
- A new recruitment and induction website was developed to attract new talent which will help us further improve our services.

## Income generation and funding

- We created an additional £1.8 million per annum in ongoing gross revenues from property acquisitions compared to the previous year to support the delivery of services.





# Our 2019/20 accounts in summary

Each year Runnymede Borough Council publishes a set of accounts which explain how we manage our finances. They show the resources available to the Council and how they are used in providing services to the community.

The document which contains our full accounts for 2019/20 is called the Statement of Accounts and this has to comply with accounting rules which dictate how the accounts should look and what information they should contain. A full copy of the Statement of Accounts can be seen on the Council's website at [www.runnymede.gov.uk/finance](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/finance).

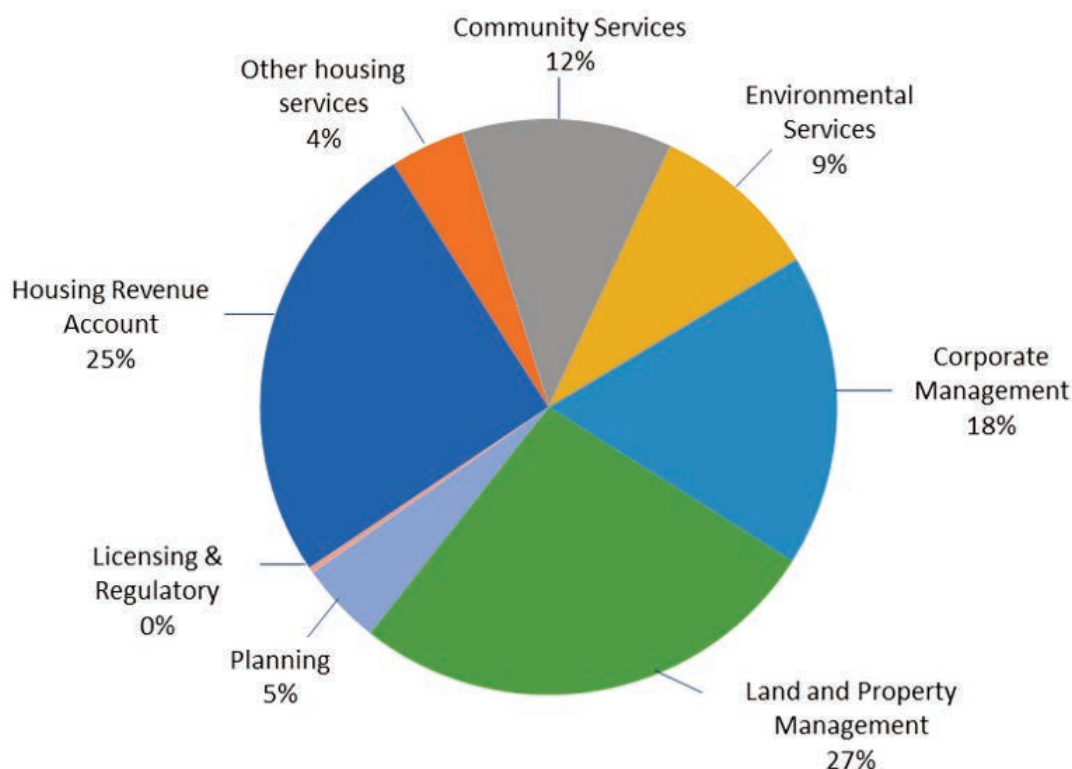
The following paragraphs are simplified versions of the figures contained within our accounts.

## Our spending

Our spending is classified into capital and revenue. In general terms, our capital-spending pays for the acquisition/creation of a new asset or the enhancement of an existing asset, and our revenue spending pays for day-to-day services and operations.

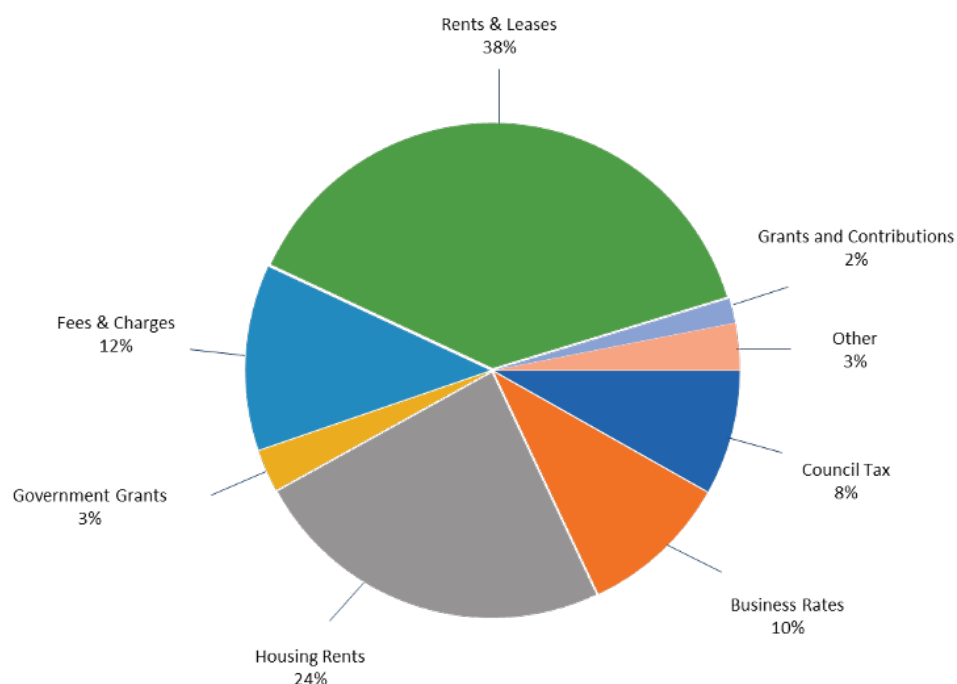
### Revenue spending 2019/20

During the year, the Council spent its money on a wide range of services. This spending came to £54million and is split between General Fund services and a Housing Revenue Account which is funded entirely by Housing rental income. The Council's money was spent in the following areas:





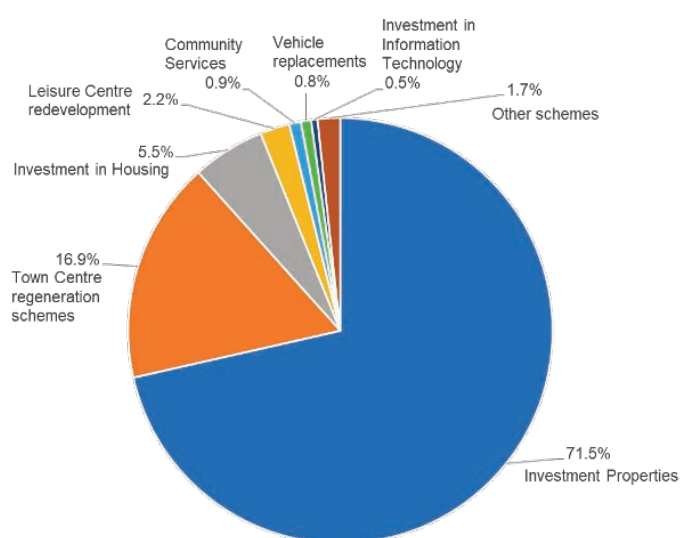
This expenditure was financed as follows:



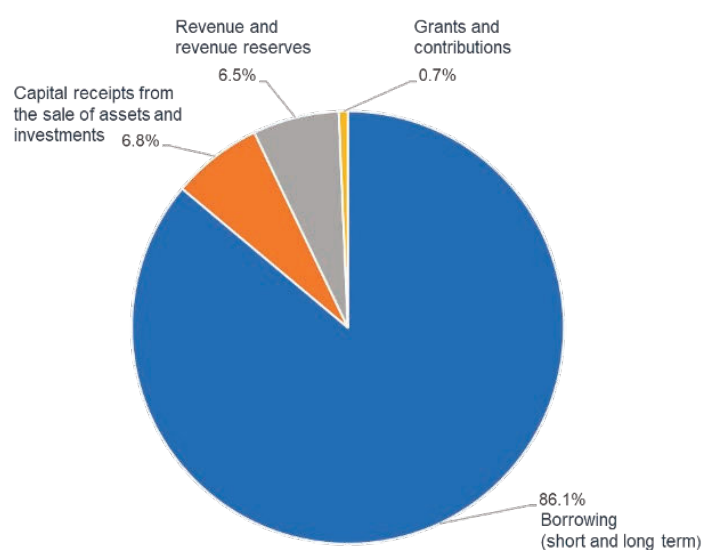
## Capital spending 2019/20

We also spend money on buying and improving our land, property and other assets so that we can provide services to the community over the longer term. Capital expenditure incurred in 2019/20 was £63.449million, and was spent as follows:

Capital expenditure - £'000



Sources of income - £'000

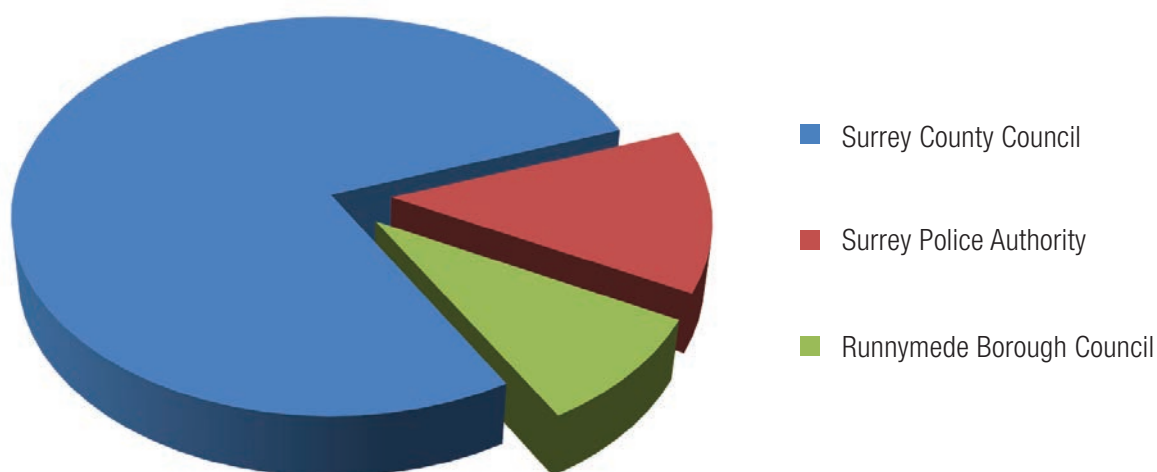


## Collecting local taxes in 2019/20

Runnymede Borough Council collects all the Council Tax, but we then pay Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority their share of the Council Tax that they set each year. Runnymede Borough Council has the smallest share of your Council Tax bill. The Band D Council Tax and how this was shared during 2019/20 is shown below:

Council Tax	£'000	
Surrey County Council	1,453.50	77.37%
Surrey Police Authority	260.57	13.87%
Runnymede Borough Council	164.59	8.76%
	<b>1,807.45</b>	

In 2019/20 we collected £64million of Council Tax due – a collection rate of 98.6%.



The Council also collects business rates from businesses in the Borough. In 2019/20 Runnymede retained approximately £4.5million of the £57 million collected with the remainder going to Surrey County Council and Central Government. Of the total amount due for the year, the Council achieved a collection rate of 99.2%.



# The next year

Our planned areas of work are collated in our Business Unit/Team Plans. Highlights of our planned work for the 2020/21 year include:

- To finalise a new Corporate Business Plan 2021-2025 which will set the strategic direction over the next four years.
- To develop a new 30-year Housing Business Plan to reflect the Housing Revenue Account's financial commitments and strategy.
- To tender and procure a number of key telephony and IT systems, with the aims of creating better interconnectivity for our residents and enabling staff to work more flexibly.
- To support delivery of the River Thames major flood alleviation scheme from Datchet to Teddington.
- To continue representing the interests of the Borough in respect of any Heathrow Airport expansion plans.
- To develop a Climate Change Strategy to support the local environment becoming more sustainable.
- To develop a strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough.



Runnymede Borough Council  
Station Road  
Addlestone  
Surrey  
KT15 2AH

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