

Committee:	Environment Committee	Agenda Item
Date:	15 September 2009	5
Title:	Lead Officer's Report	
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Summary

- 1 This report updates Members on matters that are not included elsewhere on the agenda.

Bourn Stream Flood risk management, Ashdon

- 2 The Environment Agency has confirmed that Ashdon has been selected for the first "pathfinder" round of the Defra property-level protection grant scheme. At the Agency's recommendation, an award of up to £79,800 will allow increased protection to 14 of the worst affected properties in Ashdon. The Engineer has now had an initial briefing as to how the scheme is to be implemented. The first step is to secure a specialist surveyor to identify the necessary works to each property. The specification for the competency of the surveyor is awaited from the Agency. Property owners will then be briefed.

Eco towns Planning Policy Statement

- 3 The PPS was published on 16 July. It set out the standards for eco-town development and included four locations identified as suitable. North East Elsenham was not one of these four locations. The Secretary of State, in a government statement announcing the publication of the PPS said, however:

"In addition to the first four pioneering locations in the PPS we have said we want to see up to ten eco-towns by 2020, so I am making the offer to work with and help fund a further six more local authorities in developing proposals through regional and local plans. We have offered additional support to two authorities where proposals were not sufficiently advanced to be included in the PPS - Uttlesford and Doncaster to enable them to take forward these locations through their local plans if this is the preferred option they choose to pursue. I have set aside £5M to support these and other areas to carry out further assessment and technical work including potential future locations to come through plans in other regions."

Local Development Scheme

- 4 Officers have now met with the Deputy Regional Director in the Government Office for the East of England with responsibility for development and infrastructure to discuss issues related to the preparation of the local development framework for Uttlesford. The Government Office emphasised the external funding potentially available to the Council referred to above, to carry out further technical work to assess options for development, if one of those options included an eco-development at North East Elsenham.
- 5 As reported to the Local Development Framework Working Group on 24 August, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment procured by Harlow on behalf of six authorities including Uttlesford will shortly be finalised and then go out for consultation following sign off by the project group which meets on 6 October. There will be a launch event. As an extension to this work there will be an additional study that will look at the viability of the different development site types in the current market. This study is being commissioned and is expected to take between 6 – 8 weeks. The two studies need to be taken together before future policy for affordable housing can be developed.
- 6 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment carried out in house is complete and the site information is now available on the Council's website. Officers are currently analysing housing completion data for the year to end March 2009 now supplied by ECC. This will enable Uttlesford's figures for residential land availability and the 5 year supply of housing to be updated.
- 7 The Water Cycle Study should have been circulated to our partners involved in its preparation by the date of the Committee. Once finalised a summary report will be posted on the website and circulated to members.
- 8 The Transport Assessment being carried out for us by the County Council requires completion of further stages. This study together with the water cycle and other infrastructure information will then enable the sustainability appraisal to be completed.
- 9 In view of the over running of key studies, decisions about further consultation the future direction of the core strategy cannot be taken until later in the autumn. An extraordinary meeting of the Committee will be arranged. The date currently proposed is Tuesday 24 November with consultation commencing in January 2010. A member workshop to explain the findings of the studies is planned for Tuesday 3 November.

Consultation on the East of England Plan review

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- 10 The East of England Regional Assembly is carrying out consultation on four scenarios for housing and economic growth, which outline the implications of different approaches in terms of rate and scale of growth and broadly where that growth should go. EERA has agreed to arrange a presentation on the issues for communities in Uttlesford and Braintree, and arrangements for this are being progressed. It is likely to take place in October. A report on the Council's response to the consultation will be on the agenda for meeting on 10 November. The consultation runs to 24 November. A link to EERA's consultation material is being placed on the Uttlesford website and e mailed to town and parish councils.

Internal carbon saving target

- 11 UDC has a target of reducing the emissions by 25% in the financial year 2011-12 compared to a baseline year of 2006-07. We have a carbon management programme for making investments in our buildings to improve energy efficiency which as well as reducing carbon emissions also reduces the Council's energy costs. We are presently investigating new ways to take this work forward more quickly using external project management, rather than managing projects ourselves as we have been doing.

UDC carbon footprint to 2008-09 (kilotonnes CO₂ equivalent)

Fuel	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Saving 2007-08	Saving 2008-09	Total saving
Electricity	802	819	728	2.1%	-11.1%	-9.2%
Gas	1088	1000	1093	-8.0%	9.3%	0.5%
Heating oil	181	177	185	-2.4%	4.4%	1.9%
Fleet diesel	1151	1260	1144	9.4%	-9.2%	-0.7%
Business travel	160	139	116	-13.4%	-16.7%	-27.8%
Total	3382	3394	3265	0.4%	-3.8%	-3.5%
Target	3382	3213	3044	-5.0%	-5.0%	-10.0%
Heating degree days	1828	2050	2338			
Temperature-corrected gas and oil	1506	1218	1172	-19.1%	-3.8%	-22.2%
Total with temperature corrected gas and oil	3619	3436	3160	-5.1%	-8.0%	-12.7%

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- 12 The table above summarises all the emissions arising directly from UDC operations, including operating our vehicle fleet and buildings. The absolute reduction in emissions is falling short of our target, however this is partly explained by the mild baseline year 2006-07 as shown by the low number of heating degree days. We have had to use more heating fuel in the colder years since. If this is taken into account, we can see that if all years had been average temperature (that is, there had been 2181 heating degree days in each) progress would have been much greater. We should see progress against target for absolute emissions leap ahead in mild years. Note that the baseline shown here differs from that published in the first edition of the UDC Climate Change Strategy as the accuracy and completeness of data used to calculate it has since been improved, and the methodology used has been modified. A consistent approach has been used across all three years shown here. A procedure for producing this report has been written.
- 13 Our carbon footprint is now reported to central government for NI185, but the baseline for this has been set as 2008-09, so we will not get credit for our progress so far. However as we have achieved an absolute reduction in emissions, the council is presently seeking external accreditation of this by the Carbon Trust. For more information see www.carbontruststandard.com

Key concerns and areas for improvement

- 14 Diesel usage: This represents a large proportion of total emissions. Two initiatives have been introduced firstly a fuel additive trial and secondly fuel efficient driver training. Further methods of improvement need to be explored and future procurement of fuel efficient vehicles researched. Thefts of fuel from the depots will also impact on the reported performance and measures are in hand to step up security. Work is currently ongoing for the generation of improved performance data in collaboration with the manufacturer of the fuel pumps.
- 15 Heating oil usage (Holloway Crescent): Usage of this site has reduced significantly with the emptying of the sheltered block. Yet usage of heating oil has stayed high. The site is isolated and vulnerable to theft. Installation of an oil meter on the fuel line from the storage tanks to the boilers and regular dipping of the tanks to assess stocks would help isolate where the oil is going. Approximate annual cost of oil used at this site is £26,800 in the last year.
- 16 The council will be audited of its use of natural resources for all activity up to 31 March 2010 in the following financial year. As well as energy and CO₂, this includes, water, materials and pollution used or

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produced by the council in the course of its operations. A briefing paper for SMB is attached. Jake Roos is lead officer, however he will be leaving the council in early January 2010.

Background Papers

Letter from the Central Area Flood Risk Manager, Environment Agency Eastern Region dated 25 August

The Secretary of State's statement of 16 July, which can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/statements/corporate/ecozerohomes> ; and the Eco towns PPS, for which the link is: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps-ecotowns>

EERA's consultation on the East of England Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.eera.gov.uk/What-we-do/developing-regional-strategies/east-of-england-plan/east-of-england-plan-review-to-2031>

For Uttlesford, and particularly Scenario 2, the Regional Scale New Settlement study in the evidence base is especially relevant

<http://www.eera.gov.uk/publications-and-resources/studies/topic-based-studies/regional-scale-settlement-study>