

## Uttlesford District Council 19 July 2022

### Written response to clarification question (Question 8) asked at 19 July 2022 meeting

#### **Original Question: By Councillor Caton to Councillor Pepper - the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Green Issues; Equalities**

“The Corporate Plan commits the Council to deliver outstanding levels of transparency and accountability, and I note that that the Annual Report on UDC’s Greenhouse Gas emissions in the 2021/22 financial year was published in early June.

Firstly can the portfolio-holder please tell the Council why this Report was not considered by the Energy and Climate Change Working Party, the Cabinet or the Scrutiny Committee before being publicised in a party political press release and whether the data within the report was validated by external experts?

Secondly, I note that only about £80k of the £1m of revenue spending allocated towards Climate Change action has been spent to date. Can the Portfolio-holder please tell the Council what criteria are being used to assess applications from Parish Councils and other Community Groups for funding projects to tackle Climate Change at a local level within the District and who is responsible for determining any such bids for funding?”

#### **Reply from the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Green Issues; Equalities:**

“The Council is required to publish its annual performance in relation to Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) each year. This year’s report was published on the Council’s website on 30 May and circulated to Members of the Energy and Climate Change Working Group for their information the following day. There was a slight delay in publishing the report as a result of the need to check some of the raw data relating to the Council’s fleet emissions and usage of bunkered fuel. The report is produced using guidance and standardised conversion data provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. While there is no requirement to have the data or calculations externally verified, a recent internal audit provided assurance on the methodology for the 2020/21 calculation. The same methodology and data sources were used to prepare 2021/22.

A number of Parish Councils and community groups have expressed an interest in receiving some of the Council’s Climate Crisis budget for local

green projects. Officers are in the process of developing a draft Environmental Grants Scheme which will then be considered by the Climate Change work group and their comments fed into a report that will be then considered by Cabinet. As a matter of principal, the draft scheme will need to have a transparent bidding process and decisions around funding will be need to be defined over the coming weeks. However it would be sensible to mirror the Council's existing community grants application and evaluation processes."

**Clarification Question asked by Councillor Sell on behalf of Councillor Caton:**

"Is the £80,000 figure [referred to in the original question regarding the total spend of the Climate Change budget] correct and could any further details be shared relating to the green initiatives for the local parishes, including the specific sums available?"

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Green Issues; Equalities:**

"The total spend of the Climate Change budget to date is £75,501.06 Going forward, the team are currently working on potential green initiatives for parishes and community groups, and details relating to these proposals will be considered by the Energy and Climate Change Working Group in September before consideration by Cabinet. Proposed details of these initiatives will be shared with all members when they become available."