



## Public Document Pack

# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

## SUPPLEMENTARY PACK

### Council

**Date:** Tuesday, 23rd April, 2024  
**Time:** 7.00 pm  
**Venue:** Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

**Chair:** Councillor G Driscoll  
**Members:** Councillors M Ahmed, A Armstrong, H Asker, G Bagnall, S Barker, N Church, M Coletta, A Coote, C Criscione, J Davey, A Dean, B Donald, J Emanuel, J Evans, C Fiddy, M Foley (Vice-Chair), R Freeman, R Gooding, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, R Haynes, P Lees, M Lemon, J Loughlin, T Loveday, S Luck, C Martin, D McBirnie, J Moran, E Oliver, R Pavitt, A Reeve, N Reeve, B Regan, G Sell, R Silcock, M Sutton and M Tayler

### ITEMS WITH SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION PART 1

#### Open to Public and Press

**4 Reports from the Leader and Members of the Executive 4 - 10**

To receive matters of report from the Leader and members of the Executive.

The following reports have been included in this supplementary pack:

- The Portfolio Holder for Communities
- The Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Climate Change

**5 Questions to the Leader, Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs (up to 30 minutes) 11 - 17**

To receive responses to the written questions from members for the Executive and committee chairs.



# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

**For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services**

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## **General Enquiries**

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# Agenda Item 4

**Councillor Maggie Sutton,**

**Portfolio Holder for Communities**

**Report for Council 23 April 2024**

**Grants and community development:**

**Community Grants:**

As part of the voluntary organisation support grant making process the council is pleased to award grants to 11 organisations to support community projects and initiatives that further the council's Corporate Plan. In addition to these grants four further organisations were supported through returned funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. All grants have been awarded and organisations are in the process of mobilizing projects and activities. A total of £335,190 has been allocated towards these good causes.

Funding will be open shortly to support community buildings, sports organisations and play areas.

**Ward Members Initiatives Grant:**

Last year over 125 grant awards were made through the Ward Members Initiatives fund. Councillors have a further £2,000 to spend within their wards. It is highly recommended that you consider funding projects within your ward which align to the Council's Corporate Plan pledge of protecting and enhancing our environment which take action on climate change and conserve and enhance the quality and diversity of the district's natural habitat and wildlife. Consider low carbon high nature in all projects you fund.

**Takeley:**

The team continue to support the establishment of Takeley Youth Club with the aim of it becoming long term sustainably run by volunteers. It is currently running monthly third Thursday of the month. The team also continue to support the Sports Field working group to upgrade facilities for community use [Funded by UDC grant].

The team continue to support the integration of Touchpoint Food Share with Community Café and introduction of Together in Sound Project.

**Youth:**

The team are working to identify and apply for match funding for youth projects working with Essex County Council and other funders. The team are working with SW County High School on 2<sup>nd</sup> visit of Student Voice pupils to Uttlesford District Council to scope a climate change and or transport project.

The team are following up Mental Health Project at Helena Romanes school and meeting with Business Development and ECC to explore possibilities to develop local apprenticeship opportunities.

## Homes for Ukraine:

The Homes for Ukraine project group oversees the allocation of individual support grants and community grants. Since their launch in November 2023 the group have allocated 61 grants at a total cost of £24,391.

Grant	number of successful applications	Total grant awarded
Community grants	3	£1038
Individual Support grants Household-Relocation	25	£15,918
Individual Support Grants Emergency (all heating related)	3	£900
Individual Support Grants Integration	26	£4969
Individual Support Grants Transport	4	£1,564
TOTAL	61	£24,391

Additionally, the Homes for Ukraine Project Group has developed two proposals (which are on the agenda for Cabinet) to develop competitive grants to support both those eligible under the Homes for Ukraine scheme alongside asylum seekers. The grants proposed are to deliver the following services;

- 1. Emotional wellbeing and mental health – grants up to £70,000 per annum (£50,000 Homes for Ukraine and £20,000 Asylum Dispersal Grant)**
- 2. Information, advice and guidance about a range of topics including access to housing, welfare benefits, employment, education and training with proactive in reach into communities and ongoing support – up to £70,000 per annum (£50,000 Homes for Ukraine and £20,000 Asylum Dispersal Grant)**
- 3. Organised activities for children and young people and families (weekends, evenings and holiday periods) -up to £25,000 per annum (£15,000 Homes for Ukraine and £10,000 Asylum Dispersal Grant)**
- 4. Individual grants fund to asylum seeking communities £25,000 – Asylum Dispersal Grant** to support with adhoc funding requests and support to move into and furnish accommodation for a maximum of £1,500 per family. (Please note this scheme is already in place for those eligible under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.)

Additionally, the second Cabinet Paper makes proposals for a **housing offer for Ukrainian nationals** which comprises of a rent assist offer (deposit, 6 week's rent in advance and a council guarantee to fund the rent for the duration of the tenancy should the tenant defect) to

support Ukrainian guests to move into private rental properties. Also the paper proposes to use some of the Homes for Ukraine funds to act as a dedicated fund to bridge the gap between local housing allowance and market value rent.

### **Community Safety Report April 2024:**

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 saw the launch of the Social Outreach Service Space (S.O.S. Space) organised by partners of the Uttlesford Community Safety Hub

**It's ok to ask for help**

**SOS**  
Space

**Social Outreach Service**

Cost of Living    Mental Health    housing    Addiction

Find us between 10am - 2pm at the  
Saffron Walden Community Link ,  
1A Market Street Saffron Walden CB 10 1HX

on the **LAST THURSDAY** of EACH MONTH  
commencing **THURSDAY 29TH FEBRUARY 2024**

A collection of charities and organisations are working together in Uttlesford to help support people that are homeless, or are at risk of homelessness, and people affected by the criminal justice system with health, wellbeing and accommodation outcomes.

CSP    ESHS    openroad    PHOENIX FUTURES    Mind in West Essex    Peabody    IT'S OK TO ASK FOR HELP

This space allows for residents to conduct face to face meetings with a variety of agencies for support with mental health, housing needs, substance dependence and cost of living.

It is open on the last Thursday of each month 10-2pm at Saffron Community Link 1a, Market Street Saffron Walden CB10 1HX

The Hub asks for members to promote wherever possible and amongst parishes.

March saw the review of the Uttlesford Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) It has been agreed that Enforcement officers continue to use their additional accredited powers for the next 12 months, authorised by the Chief Constable at Essex Police assisting in joint partnership operations where required.

The Community Safety Hub was asked to promote the Community Payback Scheme

Community Payback is where offenders work on projects to pay back the community for their crimes, for example by:

- removing graffiti
- clearing wasteland
- improving and decorating a public place or building, like a community centre
- repainting communal areas
- making pathways accessible
- clearing alleys
- doing grounds maintenance and gardening
- planting trees
- picking litter

The work must:

- benefit the local community
- not take paid work away from others
- not make a profit for anyone

Whilst this round has now closed for nominations, Members are asked to consider areas that may be of benefit for future rounds

The Community Safety Partnership is utilising the Jubilee Hub to promote their Stay Safe, Stay Well project. Drop in sessions are available on the below dates to obtain key safety advice on staying well and safe 10-12pm

A poster is currently being developed, which can be shared amongst members again to assist in the promotion of the project.

16th April	NHW & Watch Groups
23rd April	Water Safety
30th April	Citizen Advice
7th May	Local Crime
14th May	Smoke Alarms
21st May	Hate Crime
28th May	Next Chapter

4th June	Crime Stoppers
18th June	Rural Crime
25th June	Safe in the home

The Community Safety Partnership is working with Crimestoppers to develop a Crimestoppers Zone within the area of Great Dunmow -here [CM6.cdr \(dor2dor.co.uk\)](http://CM6.cdr (dor2dor.co.uk))

This zone aims to increase the reporting of crimes, and the quality of the intelligence gained. It will specifically target the area above and the partnership is working with GDTC to launch this on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Last week saw the Community Safety Partnership assist Homegroup Housing Association, in obtaining a partial closure notice for a property causing ASB. This is Uttlesford's first partial closure notice and will be reported more widely in the press once details are finalised.

The Community Safety Partnership received £6300 as part of Op Minerva funding. Op Minerva identified zones and required the partnership to conduct projects to tackle the causes of violence against women and girls. The Minerva Zone identified was Great Dunmow, and discussions are taking place with HRS to commission TicBox Theatre to deliver their Stronger Together theatre production , exploring misogyny and sexism with an aim to create a safe community for all. As part of this project it is hoped that 30 ambassadors within the school will be created , allowing for culture change within the school.



## **Cllr Neil Reeve, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change**

### **Report to Full Council 23 April 2024**

**This report reflects the highlights of the Portfolio from End February to Mid April 2024**

#### **Climate Change**

Cabinet approved the 2024/2025 Climate Change Action Plan on 19 April 2024. The report is on the agenda of this full Council Meeting. The report notes the achievements and progress made on the Climate Change Action Plan 2023/2024; and presents the forward plan under the motto 'Low Carbon, High Nature', noting the increasingly tight linkage between aiming towards zero emissions and increasing biodiversity. It details the Council's Corporate Plan priorities; and supports the Council's Climate and Biodiversity Crisis Strategy. I would like to thank the 'Team' that put this together.

I attended the Essex Climate Change Summit on 20 March 2024, with the theme 'Water'. The Summit saw the launch of the 'Water Strategy for Essex'. This is (one of) the first such strategy documents in the country. There is much work to be done on this subject.

On 4 April 2024 was held the first (quarterly) meeting of UDC's officer Climate and Biodiversity Change Board, chaired by the Chief Executive. The purpose of this is to ensure council-wide attention to the climate and biodiversity 'agenda'.

Work continues on analysis of the comments received on the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, in relation to climate change and biodiversity, in preparation for the Regulation 19 stage. Solid policies on these will help achieve our strategy goals for many years to come.

#### **Environmental Services**

The 'Task and Finish' Group established by the Scrutiny Committee to analyse UDC's 'Operational Resilience' has completed their report. This was in the context of the waste collection disruption in January and February 2024, but with a brief to look at all UDC's operations and services. The report was discussed by the Scrutiny Committee on 16 April. I would like to thank the 'Task and Finish' Group for their report and their conclusion and recommendations. The report is on the agenda of this full Council Meeting.

On 11 April I sent an email to all Councillors concerning further relatively minor disruptions in early April. It should go without saying that I follow this service very closely. As soon as it is clear that our capacity is again insufficient, I will be arguing to increase capacity again. I don't believe that this is needed right now.

I attended a meeting of the Essex Waste Partnership - Member Advisory Board on 18 March 2024. At that meeting it was noted that ECC Cabinet had approved the

ECC Waste Strategy 2024-2054. Its adoption into UDC is being prepared, with UDC Cabinet to consider in July 2024.

Preparations are in hand to restart opening increased availability of the green waste bin collection service.

**A personal climate change note**

I joined 50 people, of all ages from 3 to a lot, in the village of Pleshey (next village to High Easter in the direction of Chelmsford) on the morning of 3 February 2024 to plant up a 'Community Orchard'. The orchard initially has some 45 different fruit trees (apples, pears, plums, gages, cherries and quinces) mostly comprising Essex's Heritage Fruit Tree varieties. The trees were supplied by the East of England Apples and Orchards Project (EEAOP is a charity of which I am a Trustee). Within 3 hours they were planted; protected from deer, and rabbits; and given a hedge. They were paid for by ECC, through a grant scheme honouring the Kings Coronation. The land was given up by a local farmer, and another used a tractor to bash in the fencing posts. EEAOP grafts and distributes 3000 to 4000 East of England heritage fruit trees each year. Apart from the fruit, and heritage interest, they help a little towards carbon sequestration. I had helped design this orchard; and I always get a huge buzz from planting them. Promise for the future. There are several places in Uttlesford with fruit tree collections, open to the public. These include the Gardens of Easton Lodge, in Little Easton; and Bridge End Garden in Saffron Walden.

## Uttlesford District Council Meeting 23 April 2024

### Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs

#### Written responses published on 22 April 2024

**1. By Councillor Gregory to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities:**

“To ask Cllr Coote what progress has been made on remediation of the problems discovered at Reynolds Ct, the cost to date and the extent to which those costs have been recovered?”

**Response from Councillor Coote:**

“To date, UDC has borne costs due to contractor deficiencies, resulting in additional expenses for ongoing works.

Remediation costs currently total circa £115K and the costs of having to instigate a waking watch was circa £64K

Further expenses are expected for the completion of the heating system overhaul, with discussions ongoing with Lovells to finalise remaining tasks.

Progress on heating and hot water system works stands at 90% completion, with fire remedial works finished and snagging underway.

Pending fire stopping beading works are acknowledged by Lovells and UDC will incur no further cost for their remediation.

The Projects Compliance Manager, Mark Dyer is overseeing outstanding works and provides regular updates to The new Interim Director of Property Services - Brian Burton.

The new Interim Director of Property Services and Interim Strategic Director of Housing, Health, and Communities are at present collaborating with UDC’s legal team to gather evidence and explore legal options to recoup any costs that have been borne out of contractor inefficiencies.”

**2. By Councillor Gregory to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities:**

"At Scrutiny in late 2022, Mr Hermitage explained that criminal sanctions were possibly available in this matter- what further investigations into pursuing these have been undertaken please given the apparent negligence and disputed £68000?"

**Response from Councillor Coote:**

"From a Building Regulations perspective there are two routes for enforcement action. (1) Prosecution through the Magistrates Court, which must commence within two years of work being done. The building was completed in 2018 and there is no evidence of further work being done with respect to the areas of the building in question a later date. Prosecution was thus not open to us under Building Regulations. (2) A Local authority enforcement notice, which is also timebound and would have to be taken against the building owner rather than the builder, which would be the council itself. The purpose of Building Regulation enforcement is corrective, and as the works have been corrected, we have not sought to pursue further action under Building Regulations legislation. Our route to resolving these issues as addressed in answer to the previous question therefore remains the most appropriate approach."

**3. By Councillor Gooding to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning:**

"The outcome of the Grenfell Fire Enquiry has resulted in Registered Building Inspectors being required to improve their levels of competency and it was intended that Local Authorities ensure that their staff be accredited by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024. However, this has now been extended to 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024 but this extension is only applicable to building control professionals who have registered as Class 1 RBI by the 6<sup>th</sup> April. Failure to achieve this status within the staff cohort would result in Local Authorities being unable to offer Building Control Services.

Would the relevant Portfolio Holder please confirm that Uttlesford Building Control Staff will have the necessary accreditation to ensure that there is no break in the Building Control Service Offer?"

**Response from Councillor Evans:**

"Thank you for raising this important issue. Our small Building Control Team inspects around 80% of new developments in the district every year and ensures that they meet building safety standards. The team is highly regarded by local builders and service

users. I am pleased to report that three of our Officers registered as 'Class 1 Registered Building Inspectors' and recently sat the relevant exam. All three have passed (results issued in April) and are now Class 2 Inspectors. This means they can continue to inspect a range of building projects. A fourth officer has registered as Class 1 and has sat the higher 'Class 3' assessment to inspect higher risk buildings. We await the outcome. A fifth member of the team has registered and can continue to work under the supervision of other officers. The team has achieved sufficient accreditation ahead of the July deadline such that it will continue to offer the same high level of service it has done up to now."

**4. By Councillor Gooding to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy:**

"It is noted that an additional person is being recruited to sit on the Investment Board.

Would the Portfolio Holder please explain what remit this post would hold and what benefit would be achieved given the assumed cessation of further Commercial Investment by UDC at this time?"

**Response from Councillor Hargreaves:**

"The purpose and remit of independent persons on the Investment Board is on the UDC website [Investment Board Independent Member - Uttlesford District Council](#). Cllr Gooding's attention is drawn to para 58 b) of the Commercial Strategy agreed by the Investment Board of which he is a member and that he will be aware of the effective contribution of the current Independent Person."

**5. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Reeve – Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Climate Change:**

"Is the portfolio holder satisfied with the current resilience of this service area?"

**Response from Councillor Reeve:**

"Additional resources to bolster our frontline domestic recycling and waste services have recently been agreed and the team is in the process of recruiting to any vacancies within the service. It is understandable that we are all very alert to any disruption, after the situation in January and February. Even when fully staffed there will always be operational difficulties such are the realities of operating services that rely on large

numbers of people and vehicles. Service levels will be monitored on a weekly basis over the coming months to ensure that we have the right balance between service resilience and efficiency.”

**6. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning:**

“Can the portfolio holder give an assurance that in future meetings of the local plan working group will have written reports by officers as opposed to reliance on oral reports?”

**Response from Councillor Evans:**

“We are at the halfway point in the Regulation 19 phase of Local Plan production, which runs from January to July 2024. Throughout January and February Officers have sorted, reviewed, published, and began preparing responses to the 5,000 or so individual comments made in response to the draft plan. Many of the responses warrant the updating of evidence, the further consideration of certain matters, and then the drafting of proposed amendments to the plan. This work has been taking place throughout March and much of it is essentially a period of ‘thinking’ and ‘testing’, hence the lack of written material at the 10 April Local Plan Panel (LPP) meeting. You will note, that since February, the LPP has received reports on our emerging ‘Affordable Housing Policy’, ‘Regulation 18 Consultation Responses’, and ‘Housing in Larger Villages’ strategy. I expect that the LPP will receive further written reports on key matters between now and July.”

**7. By Councillor Lemon to Councillor Reeve – Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Climate Change:**

“On Friday 5<sup>th</sup>. April there were hardly any refuse bins collected in Hatfield Heath or White Roding. A disaster in such windy weather and refuse being blown about the village. I phoned on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April to UDC (The phone call took 40 mins to be answered!) I was informed that the bins would be collected on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>- This did not happen no bins were collected so late on that day I rang to see when the refuse from the whole area would be collected-the residents in my area are getting very frustrated with the situation.(Phone call 15 mins this time) Sadly they could not tell me when there would be a collection of our bins. It is now the 10<sup>th</sup> April and our bins have not been collected!

Why are our bins not being collected and why does it take so long to speak to an officer in the environmental department?”

**Response from Councillor Reeve:**

“It is understandable that we are all very alert to any disruption, after the situation in January and February. I have recently written to all members setting out in detail the reasons for the relatively small level of disruption in recent weeks. I am concerned that given we collect from wheeled bins and have a strict no extra waste policy why there would be refuse blowing about the streets, however we have deployed our street cleansing team to inspect in that area and rectify any problems they find. In terms of call answering times.... If calling the main 01799 810810 telephone number calls will be dealt with by our Customer Services team. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that there is a specific email inbox for specific casework queries in this case [memberenvironmentcasework@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:memberenvironmentcasework@uttlesford.gov.uk). This system is specifically designed to enable Members to reach officers at a service level to assist in providing accurate and timely information.”

#### **8. By Councillor Dean to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning:**

“There are signs that the preparation of the Local Plan is not being conducted in an open and honest manner. Will the Portfolio holder for Planning give Council an explanation of concerns expressed at the LP meeting on April 10th about the absence of written reports and assure Council with evidence that progress in completing a credible Local Plan is on target and is sound?”

#### **Response from Councillor Evans:**

“I refer Cllr Dean to my response to Cllr Sell with regards to written material.

I strongly reject any notion that the local plan process is being carried out dishonestly. Indeed, I have been very honest about the general direction the plan is heading and the challenging situation we find ourselves in as a district without a plan since 2005.

Not all aspects of plan-making can be played out in public throughout the process. At the 21 March meeting of the LPP it was noted that relevant regulations set out the need for public authorities to have ‘space to think in private’. Releasing draft documents, unfinished strategies, and ideas that have not been tested, poses greater risk to the local plan and does not best serve the interests of residents. Planning regulations require the council to make documents public for 6 weeks at Regulation 18 stage and for 6 weeks at Regulation 19 stage. There is no legal requirement to release anything at any other time. However, the council has committed to holding at least one public LPP meeting a month throughout the Regulation 19 period in order to review key elements of the plan, and is doing so.

I refer Cllr Dean to the 16 April meeting of Scrutiny Committee, which considered the progress of the local plan programme. I refer him also to the recent review of the

programme carried out by the government's Planning Advisory Service (PAS), which is included in the Scrutiny papers. The PAS report is positive. Whether or not the final plan is found 'sound' is ultimately a decision for the Planning Inspectorate. The current strategy is regularly reviewed by leading counsel and is more robust than the strategies contained within the plans drafted between 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 which were found to be 'unsound'."

**9. By Councillor Silcock to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities:**

"How is the council ensuring the robustness of its monitoring processes for the current repair service provider, Uttlesford Norse while actively seeking an alternative provider?"

**Response from Councillor Coote:**

"Thank you for your question regarding the robustness of our monitoring processes for the current repair service provider, UNSL, and our efforts to seek an alternative provider.

The council has taken several steps to ensure that we maintain a strong oversight and accountability framework during this transition period.

Firstly, we have employed an interim Director of Property Services who brings extensive experience in managing maintenance contractors, including previous experience working with Norse. This interim director has a proven track record in overseeing robust monitoring processes and ensuring high-quality service delivery.

The interim Director of Property Services is embedded within the operations, working from the UNSL depot on a weekly basis. This hands-on approach allows for direct observation and real-time monitoring of the service delivery. Additionally, weekly operations meetings are held to discuss any challenges or issues that may arise, ensuring prompt resolution and continuous improvement, this includes weekly director meetings between the Director of Property Services and the Operations Director of UNSL. These meetings provide an opportunity for regular communication, addressing any concerns, and ensuring alignment between the council and the service provider.

To maintain transparency and accountability, the property service team conduct monthly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) meetings focused specifically on repairs and planned delivery. These meetings allow for a comprehensive review of the service provider's performance against agreed-upon targets and benchmarks.

Moreover, a weekly compliance dashboard has been created to monitor and track various compliance metrics, ensuring that the service provider adheres to all relevant



regulations and standards. This proactive approach helps identify and address potential compliance issues before they escalate.

Complementing the compliance dashboard, monthly compliance management meetings are held to review the service provider's compliance performance and implement any necessary corrective actions or improvements.

Through these robust monitoring processes, we aim to maintain a high level of accountability and ensure that the current repair service provider, UNSL, continues to deliver this transition period. Additionally, these measures will inform our decision-making process as we actively seek an alternative provider that can meet our rigorous standards and deliver a quality service to our residents.”