

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP held at ZOOM on TUESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor L Pepper (Chair)
Councillors G Driscoll, R Freeman and R Pavitt

Officers in attendance: B Brown (Assistant Director of Environmental Services), C Fiddy (Climate Change Project Officer) and A Lindsell (Democratic Services Officer)

ECC7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Light.

There were no declarations of interest.

ECC8 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

ECC9 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE MARCH CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN MILESTONES

The Chair confirmed that the Climate Change Project Officer would provide a verbal progress report on the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) milestones to enable Members to fully understand the CCAP adopted by Cabinet 11 January 2022 and viewable on the Council website.

The Chair noted;

- Eleven milestones were currently on track to be completed by March 2022
- There have been 1600 responses to the Active Travel Survey to date
- The appointment of an Ecology Officer has provisionally been approved to come out of the Climate budget subject to a persuasive business case being assembled.

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that the Let's Talk Uttlesford website was almost ready to be launched and included individual tabs for each area identifying what is being done, why and offering links to key documents and pertinent web pages. Additionally there was to be a consultation tab and it is hoped that the website would provide a quick reference for residents to pick out areas of interest.

The website would also be useful for Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to communicate to residents what actions they have taken in response to climate change.

GDPR agreements were currently being finalised with the host.

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that all CCAP milestones were currently on target for completion and detailed progress made in each Climate Change Action;

Action 1 - March 2022 – Transport Emissions – Uttlesford’s Own Vehicles
Fleet review booked with Energy Saving Trust (EST) for the next financial year subject to EST receiving ongoing Government funding as part of the planned transition of the UDC fleet to low emission.

Action 2 – Complete - Domestic Energy – Consumer Advice

The website provided impartial and up to date consumer energy advice to help residents decarbonise their homes.

Action 3 – March 2022 – Governance – Climate Change Project Management

Governance processes have been established for future decision making on climate change project spending. Review of the CCAP and process was reported through the management levels and meetings regularly held with management, the Chief Executive and all projects were brought to the attention of the Joint Executive Team.

Action 4 – March 2022 – Industry and Commerce – District Wide Decarbonisation

The Local Energy Asset Representation (LEAR) map was completed in 2021. All Members have received data relating to off street and on street parking in their wards to identify the need for electrical charging points. This data resulted in an additional two spaces being allocated to Uttlesford.

Parish wide decarbonisation for housing has been investigated and demonstrated different pilot projects for whole area decarbonisation.

Action 5 – March 2022 – Transport Emissions – Active Travel

The Active Travel Survey would be completed by Spring 2022 and had an incredible response. Data would be fed to the consultants and some comments would be passed to Highway Rangers

Action 6 – March 2022 – Transport Emissions – Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

The review of EV charging spaces within UDC housing commenced as part of mapping the estate and assets.

Action 7 – March 2022 – Transport Emissions – Pollution Awareness

Work continued with a Clean Air Day campaign in June 2022.

Action 8 – March 2022 – Governance – Procurement

The procurement process was currently being evaluated.

Action 9 – March 2022 – Governance – UDC Energy Use

The review of the energy use and footprint of the UDC estate was underway and a strategy was being drafted for decarbonisation of the estate. Once in place independent surveyors would be recruited to maximise the potential and programme associated works.

Action 10 – March 2022 – Governance – District and Parish Council Resilience Plans

UDC were one of the first Councils to contact Public Health England and the Met Office regarding their guidelines on reviewing resilience plans in the light of the potential for heatwaves and flooding.

Action 11 – March 2022 – Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) – Biodiversity Mapping

The mapping survey conducted in 2021 received great feedback and would be helpful during the planned appointment of an ecologist. Work continued with all departments at UDC that use ecologists to identify a job specification and requirements, whilst also mapping the nature recovery plan and implementing and delivering the projects resulting from the survey.

Action 12 – March 2022 – Waste and Recycling

The strategic review was underway to understand the carbon impact of UDC's waste and recycling.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services confirmed that he had reviewed nine different collection models, demonstrating alternative recycling performance and decarbonisation.

Councillor Driscoll asked the Assistant Director of Environmental Services whether UDC recycle the collected green garden waste, and he confirmed that the waste is composted and used as a soil improver.

Action 13 – December 2022 – Transport Emissions – Uttlesford's Business Travel

The new working model considered the reduction of the carbon footprint of staff and business travel to and from work.

Action 14 – December 2022 – Transport Emissions – Active Travel

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP) was being procured /commissioned currently. The travel map survey would feed in specific project ambitions by spring 2022. Essex County Council (ECC) would add technical notes by Summer 2022 (subject to ECC capacity).

The consultants that undertook the East Herts LCWIP were being considered as so many routes would join up and overlap, and they were well approved by ECC.

Action 15 – December 2022 – Transport Emissions - Active Travel

Projects were being built from the residents survey results.

Action 16 – December 2022 – Transport Emissions - EVs

The potential of an electric vehicle car club, with UDC being an anchor client would be investigated once the new UDC working model progressed.

Action 17 – December 2022 – Transport Emissions – EV Charging

EV charging points, profitable and non-profitable spaces are bundled to prevent cherry picking of profitable spaces and future public subsidy of unprofitable spaces. Work has continued closely with the Essex team and their strategy has been agreed.

Action 18 – December 2022 – Domestic Energy – Private Housing

Data has been gathered from almost all the properties in the private rental sector and enquiries continued into enforcing minimum energy efficiency standards where properties do not meet the requirements.

Action 19 – December 2022 – Domestic Energy – New Build

A green check list would be written and used for new applications by December 2022.

Action 20 - December 2022 – Industry and Commerce – District Wide Decarbonisation

Parishes to be surveyed to identify appetite to work together in 2022 to retrofit community buildings.

Action 21 – December 2022 – LULUCF – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The BNG policy was being improved as part of the Local Plan and further demonstrated the need for an inhouse ecologist.

The Chair asked what work would be considered by ECC within their Climate Action Challenge Fund (CACF).

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that Parish Councils could apply to ECC for up to £20,000 and that community building retrofitting or provision of electric vehicle charging points would be excellent projects for application.

The Climate Change Project Officer raised concerns regarding the lack of publication of the recent Highway Code changes and suggested that publicity promotions to educate drivers could also be considered a viable application to the CACF.

She confirmed that she would be happy for individual Parish Councils to contact her directly and she would look at their specific local energy representation data.

Action 22 – December 2022 – Waste and Recycling

The Waste Strategy Panel was scheduled for December 2022.

Action 23 – December 2022 – Waste and Recycling

Action plan being produced to reduce food waste and promote food waste recycling.

Action 24 – December 2022 – Waste and Recycling

Conversations have continued with voluntary services in Uttlesford to investigate potential of linking council led re-use projects and repair cafes.

The Railways Arms PH in Saffron Walden have offered their space to roll the project out.

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that she was happy to help facilitate it.

Action 25 – December 2022 – Waste and Recycling

Marketing was being planned to encourage residents to sort their recycling better.

Action 26 – 2023 – Domestic Energy – Uttlesford’s Own Housing

Covid had prevented Norse from entering properties to assess their housing to enable them to create a works programme to decarbonise their stock.

Action 27 – 2025 – Transport Emissions – Norse’s Vehicles

Norse would be asked to move over to electric vehicles as their lease agreement comes up for renewal

Action 28 – Ongoing – Transport Emissions – Public Transport

Lobbying of ECC continued for improvements to public transport in Uttlesford.

Action 29 – Ongoing – Transport Emissions – Active Travel

Encouragement of active travel via the Local Highway Panel (LHP) continued. It was hoped that the survey would help inform and support projects put forward to the LHP and that a heat map layer could be created to build up a picture of the locations and types of requests being put forward.

Action 30 – Ongoing – Transport Emissions – Active Travel

Support for ECC continued through school travel plans and encouragement of active travel.

Work continued with clean air strategies in relation to vehicles idling around schools.

Action 31 – Ongoing – Transport Emissions – UDC/EV Charging

4 x 22kW dual outlet floor standing fast chargers installed at London Road Council Offices, Saffron Walden.

Action 32 – Ongoing – Transport Emissions – EV Charging in Public Car Parks

4 x 7 kW floor/post mounted dual outlet fast charger installed in White Street car park, Dunmow.

4 x 7 kW wall mounted dual outlet fast charger installed in Chequers Lane car park, Dunmow.

4 x 7 kW floor/post mounted dual outlet fast charger installed in Crafton Green car park, Stansted Mountfitchet.

22kW Fast EV dual outlet charging post installed in The Common car park, Saffron Walden.

50kW rapid charger dual outlet installed at Lord Butler Leisure Centre, Saffron Walden.

Action 33 – Ongoing – Domestic Energy – Private Housing

Energy Company Obligation and Government grants for insulation for low income households were being promoted on social media.

Two one week apart full-page newspaper adverts would be undertaken in the local press.

Six copies of A4 posters would be delivered to every Member for them to distribute to their local doctors, shops and community centres to get the message out around the wards.

The impact of the advertisement and marketing would be reviewed and if

deemed necessary community outreach would be undertaken in the spring or early summer.

Action 34 – Ongoing – LULUCF – Tree Planting

490 trees and 450 hedging plants have been planted in the district. Roadside verges under our control were left or rewilding during spring and summer months. Parishes were asked to put forward sites for planting additional trees.

Councillor Freeman asked for further details about the “Tree for Babies” scheme. The Climate Change Project Officer explained that it was a potential scheme, where every baby born in Uttlesford would have a tree planted. There was unfortunately a lack of sites for planting, although sites continued to be sought.

Action 35 – Ongoing – Governance – Consultations

The officers continued to respond to consultations as they arose and Members lobby in the interests of the district.

Action 36 – Complete – Transport Emissions – EC Charging at New Properties

Policy on EV charging points at new developments supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Action 37- Complete – Transport Emissions – Pollution Awareness

Air quality was monitored and reported in real time.

The Chair thanked the Climate Change Project Officer for the update.

Councillor Pavitt asked whether there was a timeline for the Biodiversity Officer joining the team.

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that consultation was underway with internal stakeholders regarding what projects the Officer would undertake and for positive and negative inputs to ascertain what the role required.

Councillor Pavitt recommended that it would be useful for the candidate to have knowledge and established relations with the farming communities to better understand what and how farmers are contributing in this field.

Councillor Driscoll asked whether consideration has been given to powering the EV charging points on council property by solar power.

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that a number of council properties already have solar panels in place, but that EV charging points in parking courts would be assessed on a case by case basis to maximise opportunities.

Councillor Driscoll noted that Dundee District Council have cars with solar panels on their sun roofs.

Councillor Freeman raised the following questions in relation to Action 37
Pollution Awareness;

- What did real time mean?
- Was there any additional real time monitoring other than Radwinter Road and the Council Offices.
- Whether the diffusion tube integrated all pollution it saw over time or in real time.

The Climate Change Project Officer confirmed that the monitoring stations were installed in the areas considered the highest concerns at the time of installation and offered to undertake a review of the pollution monitoring.

She went on to explain that the Let`s Talk Uttlesford website utilised a FAQ section which will include ideas that have been considered but discarded, and the reason behind that decision where ideas turn out to not be feasible, so as to keep residents fully informed of progress.

Councillor Driscoll requested an update on the proposed use of solar panels on waste trucks.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services confirmed that six new vehicles scheduled to arrive in the summer will have solar panels fitted on the roof, which will top up the alternators. The panels can be recycled on to other vehicles. Uttlesford are currently the only fleet in the country trialling these vehicles.

Councillor Driscoll asked whether the panels would power the bin lifts and the Assistant Director of Environmental Services confirmed that the distributor enabled anything to be powered by the solar power. It was hoped that they save 1000litres per year per vehicle, which predicted a saving of 15 tonnes of carbon for the Uttlesford fleet.

It was noted that the panels cost £3,500 each and would take three years to pay off so performance during winter months would be monitored carefully.

Councillor Driscoll noted that ECC have put a number of bus routes out for consultation as their contracts come to an end in July 2022. Councillor Driscoll resolved to forward the details to the Climate Change Project Officer to ensure that residents are made aware and have an opportunity to comment.

Councillor Pavitt noted that January 2022 was the tenth driest in the past 150 years, almost certainly guaranteeing a summer hose pipe ban and the river being bone dry in terms of natural flow in a few months.

Councillor Freeman noted that 2021 was one of the most wind free on record, which is worrying when have so many windmills and one third of the usable wind across Europe.

The Chair confirmed the need to consider sustainable travel, with all sources needing to be considered.

Councillor Driscoll explained that hydrogen is becoming hugely popular in the bus world. Aberdeen DC have fuelled their buses and dustcarts with hydrogen for some time.

The Climate Change Project Officer explained that there has been a lot of investment in Aberdeen in hydrogen and they have been identified as a hydrogen cluster. Should hydrogen become useful for fuelling airplanes then Uttlesford would also become a hydrogen cluster but that is not believed to be imminent due to the very specialised usage.

The Chair asked Climate Change Project Officer what ECC are doing about decarbonising their bus fleet and she confirmed that there has not currently been much action as the bus companies were badly hit during covid.

The Climate Change Project Officer noted that NHDC shared their responsive transport data on take up and usage of routes which was an eyeopener and it was hoped that ECC would share the Uttlesford Demand Responsive Service data to compare and learn how to build on and improve what exists rather than starting again with something new.

Councillor Driscoll detailed a contact who is an Uttlesford operator was interested in meeting with UDC and the delivery of electric vehicle provision within the area.

The Climate Change Project Officer explained that a better understanding of what we have is required, what the DART is delivering, the bus services that exist, what runs, timetables and passenger numbers. Once that is established and understood, then further action can be considered.

The Climate Change Project Officer agreed to continue chasing ECC and reconvene.

Cllr Pavitt left the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Climate Change Project Officer for all her work.

The meeting closed at 20:18