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Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 2nd March, 2023

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden,
CB11 4ER

Chairman: Councillor N Gregory

Members: Councillors C Criscione, G Driscoll, V Isham, R Jones, P Lavelle,
G LeCount (Vice-Chair), S Luck, G Sell and J De Vries

Substitutes: Councillors M Caton, P Fairhurst, R Pavitt and G Smith

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AGENDA

PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**
To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 4 - 9
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3 Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee**
To consider any responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee.
- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision**
To consider any matter referred for call in.
- 5 Economic Recovery Delivery Plan - Year 3 Plan and Year 2 Update** 10 - 28
To consider an update on the progress of the Year 2 Delivery Plan, as well as the proposed Year 3 Delivery Plan for 2023/24.
- 6 Climate Crisis Action Plan** 29 - 50
To note the progress update on the implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan.
- 7 Housing Review Terms of Reference** 51 - 54
To consider the Terms of Reference for the Housing Scrutiny Review.

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Agenda Item 2

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 31
JANUARY 2023 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor N Gregory (Chair)
Councillors C Criscione, G Driscoll, V Isham, R Jones,
G LeCount, S Luck, G Sell and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), J Etherington (Assistant Director of Finance), D Hermitage (Director of Planning), P Holt (Chief Executive) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also in attendance: Councillors J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan), N Hargreaves (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget) and N Reeve (Portfolio Holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy).

SC44 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

SC45 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

SC46 **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

SC47 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

SC48 **UPDATE OF PLANNING REVIEW**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan said that work had been undertaken over the last two years to improve the service and this was the fourth report prepared to provide an update to Members. He said that the report set out the work completed in detail and he thanked the Director of Planning for the work he had undertaken and the effectiveness of what had been achieved.

He asked that the Committee noted the completion of the pathways work and endorsed the further work to be undertaken, working with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, (DLUHC), in the monitoring of a

Performance Action Plan against which the Planning Service's performance would continue to be assessed by the DLUHC.

In response to Members questions the following comments were made:-

- The work that had been undertaken fulfilled the responsibilities and statutory duties of the Planning department to a satisfactory level. However, it was the intention to work towards providing an excellent service.
- The availability of skilled planning personnel remained an issue and was the main priority for the department. It was not a problem unique to this Council.
- There was approximately a third of staff that were either temporary or agency staff.
- The Planning Policy team had three vacancies, taking into account permanent and agency staff. These were in the process of being filled and offers had been made, albeit using mostly agency staff.
- In Development Management there was one vacancy, but a number of other positions were filled with agency staff and there was a process underway to recruit permanent staff.
- The 'fit for purpose' comment in the report related to the ability of the Planning department to meet all statutory requirements; this had not been the case a couple of years ago.
- Improvements were ongoing but would take time to implement.
- On the Local Plan Team, an offer had been made to an experienced Policy Manager who had verbally accepted a six months contract, from March 2023, to run the team.
- There were still gaps in the team and this could result in slippage.
- The Local Plan team consisted of nine members of staff and there had been offers made to fill the three vacant posts.
- The Director of Planning was part of a recruitment group across Essex, and they were exploring various options in terms of shared planning services.
- Contracts for senior staff were being reviewed and in order to provide more security to the Council, a three month notice period was being considered.
- The duty planner service had been suspended but there was a proposal within the budget to reinstate, with a small fee of £90.
- In the job adverts for planning staff, the lack of a Local Plan had been stated as a positive to shape the future of the district.

Members made the following comments: -

- There was an ongoing problem with enforcement.
- Officers were thanked for the effort and progress made to recruit staff.
- Progress had been made on the S106 process.

The Chair said the report was a good piece of work; the task and finish group confirmed that they were pleased with the progress that had been made. The Committee unanimously commended the report.

SC49 **CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2027**

The Portfolio Holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy presented the report. He said that the draft plan started at the beginning of April 2023 for a four year period. He said that more changes had not been made as the new administration would have their own manifesto and plans after the election.

He said that the statutory services were included in the plan.

He said that the successes of the Corporate Plan included:-

- Personally helping one resident get into affordable housing.
- Finances, the action taken on investments and income received.
- Climate change and the £1 million for climate change actions.
- The Economic Recovery plan and the efficient distribution of grants during the Covid period.
- The 3 new sports facilities.
- The development of the Local Plan, including the Northside development which had recently been approved by the Planning Committee and would provide 5,000 jobs and new business opportunities.

Members made the following comments:-

- A Climate Change update would be on the next Scrutiny agenda.
- The underlying evidence of the Corporate Plan would be included in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.
- It was hard to comment on the Corporate Plan as it represented the priorities and plans of the administration.

SC50 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2023/24 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget presented the Report.

He highlighted the following:-

- The budget consultation document with responses.
- Council Tax would be increased by 3% or £5 and provided an extra £195k of income.
- The extra income provided additional cost of living support, separate from the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme. The government had also funded a similar grant with an extra £85k.
- The budget for 2023/24 had been balanced through the use of £1.8 million for planned specific purposes, and a further £2.7 million from the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reserve.
- Museum and parking costs had not been increased.
- Planning fees had increased to cover the full costs of the service and to be consistent with other Local Authorities, some of the fees were set by the Government.
- The 85% reimbursement of fees if an application was withdrawn was being reconsidered.

- There was a £360k improvement to budgeted income due to the low number of major planning applications going directly to the planning inspectorate.
- New rental income from Shire Hill and Little Canfield Depot and the reduction in the budget for their previous utility and premises costs.
- The budget had been reviewed to reflect recent changes including home working, the new site locations and inflation, to ensure accurate costs as Blueprint Uttlesford commenced.
- Total planned capital expenditure over the 5 year period was £55.8 million, including £9.1 million for the General Fund and £46.7 million for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- The Capital Strategy was a balance of short, medium and long term borrowing which gave flexibility to the Council.
- As at 31 December 2022, the Council held £13 million of treasury investments at an average interest rate of 3.50%.
- Housing rents for existing tenants would be increased by 7%, and 11.1% for new tenancies, in line with Central Government policy.
- Other housing charges would increase by Consumer Price Index (CPI) or by the cost of the service.
- The rises in housing charges had been endorsed by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel and the Housing Board.
- The housing budget for 2023/24 had resulted in a planned operating surplus of £2.9 million which would go towards new builds and planned new developments.
- The average rent was £106.94 per week.
- The increased income from the rise in housing charges would not fully cover the increased anticipated costs, resulting in a reduction in budgeted net operating surplus of £486k.
- The economic outlook and uncertain government policy made it difficult to produce a long term budget with any certainty which meant that it was prudent to take a more pessimistic view.
- The value of the commercial assets in September 2022 was £290 million.
- As part of the provisional Local Government finance settlement, the Government had agreed at least a 3% increase in spending power; however, as inflation was currently over 10% this represented a real time cut in the Council's core spending power for the third successive year.
- The current method for allocating government funding to local authorities was based upon data which had not been updated for 10 years.
- The latest forecast showed that the combined effect of funding reforms and the business rates reset could see the Council lose approximately £4.7 million of external funding annually.
- Despite inflation forecasts which predicted negative inflation by 2024/25, the assumption in the MTFS was to take the prudent view and to set inflation at 1%.
- The later years of the MTFS were more uncertain and a pessimistic view had been taken.
- The Commercial Strategy had been presented to the Investment Board and recommended for Cabinet approval.

In response to a question from the Chair, who asked why there had not been an external audit sign-off of the accounts for 4 years, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget said that this did not have any bearing on the budget and financial matters and he had no power to intervene. He said that there was an ongoing incident that the police had investigated, which had been rejected, but was still being pursued by the complainant. He said that the auditors would not sign off their report until this matter had been resolved.

There was further discussion about the audit sign-off and the ongoing incidence, Councillor Jones raised a point of order. He said that it was not for the Committee to debate allegations and he said that it should only be a focus where it had an effect on the budget setting process.

Councillor Isham said that the public deserved a full, clear and honest explanation of why this had not been resolved.

In response to a question from Councillor Sell, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that each time there was an audit, the auditors looked at 'value for money' but this had not yet been formally confirmed.

Councillor Sell said that this statement was important because the Government could not say, on this basis, that the Council was delivering best value for money.

In response to Members questions the following comments were made:-

- The cost of agency staff was a best estimate, all figures were robust forecasts that took a more pessimistic view in order to be prudent.
- The cost of borrowing had increased, however with negative inflation forecast in a couple of years it was unlikely that interest rates would continue to be high.
- Higher interest rates meant that revenues from the Council's contracts were increasing, with rises in rental and market value.
- It had not been a strategic mistake to pursue short term borrowing and some had been locked into longer terms. The investments that were made, at a time when others were concerned that it was too risky, had been good. In the September 2022 valuation, there was a £74 million capital gain on assets, at a point when the markets were in turmoil.
- The Council was in a good position and there was an option available to sell one or more assets to utilise the capital gains effectively.
- The bin vehicle replacement programme of £1.3 million accounted for a large proportion of the capital programme expenditure reduction in 2023/24.
- A summary of the budget could be considered, but due to the nature and complexity of the documentation, the only way to fully understand was to read all the documents.
- It was only possible to properly analyse an investment and whether the decisions made regarding the movement of monies from short to long term borrowing were the best choices towards the end of its term. These decisions could only be made at the time using the best knowledge available.

- There had been a substantial amount of investment, circa £80 million, moved to long term borrowing just before the rise in interest rates and this had already proved to be a good decision made at the appropriate time.
- Whilst the interest rates were so low, the shorter term borrowing options were cheaper as the interest rates on long term borrowing were always set at a higher rate. Once investments were moved to long term they could not easily be moved back, due to penalties incurred.
- The opportunity to move to long term borrowing had not been possible from the summer of 2021 due to the change to the Prudential Code and the Government restrictions made in December 2021. The Council then had to convince the Government that the commercial strategy complied with the new rules. Access to the Public Works Loan Board was only available at the end of this process, in July 2022, and interest rates had already started to rise at that point.
- The press release for the budget had not yet been drafted. It would set out to the general public that it was a stable budget in a tumultuous world, and that no services would be cut.
- There were plans to review car parking charges, which had not increased within the budget. The timing of the review had been delayed due to available resources and not because of the upcoming election. The review was complex and required a statutory consultation and an understanding of the economics, affordability and view of local businesses. It was likely that sometime after the election, car park charges would be increased.

The Portfolio Holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy added that:-

- The Corporate Plan formed the basis of the budget.
- A number of Council functions included in the Corporate Plan were statutory, for example, Council Tax collection, bin collections and licensing.
- There were items within the Corporate Plan that did not have a financial impact but the resources to carry them out were in place.

The Chair said it had been an in-depth discussion and asked Members to remit the report to Cabinet. It was agreed unanimously.

Agreed: That the report be remitted to Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 21:25.

Agenda Item 5

Committee: Scrutiny

Date: Thursday 2nd
March 2023

Title: Economic Recovery Delivery Plan - Year 3
Plan and Year 2 Update

**Report
Author:** Linda Howells, Economic Development
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and Change Management

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Summary

1. The three year Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan was approved on 8 December 2020 to cover the period 1 April 21 – 31 March 2024. The plan is funded by the £1million Business Recovery Fund.
2. This report provides members with an update on the Year 2 Delivery Plan progress and achievements to date and the proposed Year 3 Delivery Plan for 2023/24.

Recommendations

3. The Scrutiny Committee is requested.
 - a. to note the year two Delivery Plan progress as set out in this report.
 - b. to review and provide comment on the draft Year 3 Delivery detailed in Appendix 1 and estimated spend profile set out in Appendix 2.

Financial Implications

4. £1million was allocated to the 3 years Business Recovery Plan and approved by Members in December 2020.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Economic Recovery Plan – Dec 2020

Economic Recovery Plan Year 2 Delivery Plan - 2022

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. The Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan was approved by Council on 8/12/2020. It provides a framework for the activities delivered by the Economic Development Team until March 2024.
8. The Year 1 Delivery Plan provided the detail for delivery in the year 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. However, the management of business support grants funded by both the UK Government and Essex County Council restricted the breadth of work delivered during the year and only £130k was used to fund Economic Recovery Plan initiatives.
9. The lifting of Covid restrictions resulted in a sigh of relief and the end of the business support grants which had consumed the resources in the Economic Development Team in 21/22.
10. The year two plan included resources of four full time members of the staff, the team were unable to recruit and started the year with one full time vacancy and the full time seconded member of staff returned to her substantive post in June 2022. These two posts remained vacant until January 2023.
11. In May 2022 the Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Uttlesford's conditional allocation was £1million. There was a very short deadline imposed on Council's to submit an investment plan, which was conditional to receiving the funds. The Economic Development Team focused on developing the Investment Plan. The Investment Plan was submitted to the UK Government on 1 August 2022, with conditional approval for Year 1 given in December and final approval granted in February 2023.
12. The Government launched a further scheme, The Rural England Prosperity Fund as an addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the team had to re-prioritise their workload to meet the challenging deadline imposed. The

addendum was submitted on 30 November 2022, with the outcome expected in late March 2023 and if approved will provide £813,487 capital funds to be spent by 31 March 2025.

13. The shared prosperity funds are expected to provide £1,813,487 for projects and initiatives in the Uttlesford district under the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda by 31 March 2025. UK Shared Prosperity Fund delivery is underway, and it is hoped that approval for the Rural England Prosperity Fund will be announced in late March 2023.

14. The following table highlights the spend profile of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Year	Total UKSPF Funds (£)	UKSPF - Minimum capital funds (£)	UKSPF – Maximum revenue spend (£)	REPF – capital spend (£)
2022/23	109,808	18,000	91,808	N/A
2023/24	219,617	59,000	160,617	203,371.75
2024/25	670,575	140,000	530,575	610,115.25
TOTAL	1,000,000	217,000	783,000	813,487.00

15. Delivery of the Year 2 recovery plan initiatives has been delayed by the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and its addendum, the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). Although these were not competitive funds, each local authority was required to submit an Investment Plan for both funds to receive the conditional allocation. Staff resources were required to be prioritised on these funds to meet the required timescales.

16. Throughout December 2022 and January 2023 the Economic Development Team, with two new members of staff who joined us from January 2023, have been able to focus on the delivery of the Year 2 Economic Recovery Delivery Plan.

17. In addition to the day-to-day management of the Council's car parks, and provision of business support advice, the Economic Development Team has also:

- Launched the Growth and Increased Productivity Fund in January 2023
- Launched the High Street Premises Enhancement Fund in January 2023
- Held a Business Support Day in Saffron Walden in September 2022
- Delivered a tourism marketing campaign to promote DiscoverUttlesford website and the DiscoverUttlesford app.
- Launched an enhanced Visit Essex membership package to local tourism sector businesses.
- Produced the on and off street Car Parking Review for the whole district.

- Produced the Business Support Guide, Business Start-Up Guide and business support leaflet to accompany Council Tax bills.
- Delivery of Digital Boost Week, with an associated grant scheme.
- Produced Business e-newsletters to over 2,000 people, monthly advertising in the local newspapers and social media activity to promote initiatives,
- First meeting of the Local Partnership Group, who will oversee the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- Launched a UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant scheme for business start-ups across the district.
- Re launched the Business Development Business Rates Relief Policy

Planned for delivery in Q4

- Ambitious Women in Essex event – 28th February – in collaboration with ECC
- Enterprise Uttlesford – 2nd March - business breakfast and announcement of the winners of four Enterprise Uttlesford business award categories
- Go Green Uttlesford – 6th March - lunch and announcement of the winners of the four Go Green business award categories.
- Showcase Uttlesford – 8th March - evening reception and announcement of the four Showcase Uttlesford business award categories.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant applications for funds in 2022/23 will be discussed at the next Local Partnership group meeting in late February.

18. It is projected that Year 2 spend will be approximately £220,000 leaving a balance for Year 3 of £650,000.

19. Appendix 1 contains the draft Delivery Plan for Year 3, 2023/24. This is an evolving document as we have identified the need to survey local businesses to identify the support that they need to survive, to move forward through the cost of living crisis / recession and to grow, or to tackle Climate Change issues. Following the completion of the survey the Plan will be updated with a more detailed list of planned and costed initiatives.

20. Appendix 2 contains the expected spend profile for 2023/24 against each of the Economic Recovery Plan's priority objectives.

Challenges and Risks

21. Year 3 Economic Recovery Plan is aspirational, due to the additional management and administration of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund this may not be achievable over the next 12 months within the current staffing resource.

22. The lack of commercial premises and land is restricting the ability of local businesses to grow, and some have already moved out of the district. The availability of commercial land and premises is key to the achievement of economic growth in the district, and it is hoped that this will be addressed in the emerging Local Plan.
23. The lack of incubator units, small industrial units and business start-up space has been identified as an issue for the Uttlesford economy since 2016. Entrepreneurial activity has dropped within the district so that Uttlesford is now ranked 307th out of 309 English districts based on Dec 2022 data. This is a significant drop from our position of 225th in December 2021.
24. During 2022/23 the Economic Development Team have had access to the North Essex Economic Board procured business support services, funded through a top slice of one of the Government's Covid-19 business support grants, the Additional Restrictions Grant. These contracts will all expire by 31 March 2023. We are currently identifying which business support services are required and how best to provide access for these to local businesses.

Risk Analysis

25.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Loss of staff	1 – recently recruited	3 - if staff left there would be significant impact on the planned delivery and the work plan would need to be reviewed	Ensure that all projects are covered by 2 officers to ensure no single point of failure and staff are fully supported

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Economic Development Recovery Delivery Plan – Year 3 – 2023/24

Priority 1 Business Engagement and Support					
Objective 1.1 - Support businesses already located in Uttlesford district					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC ED Staff Resources	Cost to Business Recovery Fund	External Funding
Engage and support business networks and individual businesses 1 – 2 – 1 contact by telephone / email.	All Business Support Officers (Business Support Officers)	Evidence of regular contact with business networks inc. SWBID, GDTT, SBF, SACC and email contact via businesses@ttlesford.gov.uk in 2023/24	1 permanent Business Support Officer 2 Business Support Officers - on fixed term contracts	£95,000	
Referrals to specialist business support agencies, including BEST Growth Hub, Backing Essex Business and others	Business Support Officers	No. referrals made to specialist business support agencies in 2023/24	Existing	None	
Place based business support activity pilot and evaluate impact	Business Support Officer	Evaluation of pilot to determine if any additional places are targeted	Existing		
Delivery of business survey to identify current needs of local businesses. and what businesses need to address climate change issues and how ED can support them	Business Support Officer	Business survey completed by end Dec 2022, Agreed actions added to this Delivery Plan	Existing	£10,000	
Deliver Annual Business Breakfast as part of programme of events including business awards	Economic Development Manager	Delivery in March 24	Existing	£7,000	
Deliver "Business4Uttlesford" meetings across district on a quarterly basis with Cllr Reeve in attendance	Economic Development Manager	Quarterly meetings held, starting in October 2022	Existing	£2,000	
Sponsorship of and attendance at Check-in@stansted with LoCase and BEST Growth Hub	Business Support Officer	Postponed until 29 June 2023	Existing	£2,000 paid in 2021/22	
Support for new business networks in places where no active network exists		Link to forums?		£5,000	
Continue to lobby for cardboard recycling service in Uttlesford district as this is an important issue for many businesses causing much complaint and concern.	Economic Development Manager	UDC to provide a waste recycling service for commercial customers	Existing		
		TOTAL 2022/23	Approx	£119,000	

Objective 1.2 - Support businesses in sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Funding
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5f Work with the airport to increase local airport-based employment opportunities					
Effective re-engagement with the airport, developing relationship and offering support	Economic Development Manager	Build relationship and offer support	Existing		
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5b Increase tourist spend					
Ensure maintenance of the "Discover Uttlesford" website, and monitor the usage of the site. Make changes as required to reflect learnings from monitoring data	Business Support Officer	Website updated during the year to reflect seasonal changes and in response to monitoring data.	Existing	£2,500	
Deliver tourism marketing campaign targetting both Uttlesford residents, via social media, and visitors from up to 2 hours drive away	Business Support Officer	1.Targeted print advertisiing to target visitors from up to 2 hours drive away. 2. Delivery of social media targeting local residents	Existing	£10,000.00	
Digital trails added to discover app - working with health colleagues in Communities Team	Business Support Officer	No. trails added to app		£5,000	
Deliver competitions across district to engage local residents, to promote the district and for use on the website and app.	Business Support Officer	1. Delivery of photo competition in Summer 2023. 2. Winter 2023	Existing	£1,000 for two competitions	
Continue to grow Discover Uttlesford photo library	Business Support Officer	Increase number of photos in the library.	Existing	£2,000	
Encourage all UDC Members and staff to use photos of the district as background to virtual meetings by providing a library of seasonal photos to support the Discover Uttlesford campaign.	Business Support Officer	Promote the use of the photos to Members and staff.	Existing		

CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5b Increase tourist spend					
Be an active member of Visit Essex	Business Support Officer	Ongoing			£2,260
Keep Visit Essex website up to date with Uttlesford events / venues etc.	Business Support Officer	Ongoing until 31/3/23	Existing		
Plan for sustainability of tourism work inc website and app management	Business Support Officer				
Build awareness of the Ride London event and the benefits of participation to appropriate local businesses	Business Support Officer	No. businesses whose membership was upgraded.	Existing		
Commission Destination Research to provide 2022 Value and Volume report for Uttlesford district	Business Support Officer	Report to establish state of tourism sector in 2021	Existing		£1,450
Work with internal colleagues on the development of a Cultural Strategy following work for the Cultural, Arts and Creativity Baseline assessment which was produced in 2021/22	Economic Development Manager	Cultural Strategy in place and future actions identified.	Existing		
Review brown road signs, rationalise, ensure sense and appropriate signs are in place	Business Support Officer	Review of existing signs and costed plans for any future changes in place.	Existing		
Organise and deliver "Showcase Uttlesford" event to celebrate the best of the district's tourism, retail and hospitality sectors	Business Support Officer	Delivered in June / July 23	Existing		£4,000
		TOTAL	Approx		£27,210

Objective 1.3 - Foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5a Protect and grow our town centres as economic hubs					
Launch and manage the High Street Premises Enhancement Fund while funds are available	Business Support Officer	Fund open for applications until all funds are awarded	Existing	£40,000	
MASTERPLANNING					
Saffron Walden	Economic Development Manager / Business Support Officer	Master planning consultants commissioned and work underway	Existing	£50,000	
Great Dunmow	Economic Development Manager / Business Support Officer	Master planning consultants commissioned and work underway	Existing	£50,000	
Stansted Mountfitchet				£50,000	
Attendance at Safety Advisory Group meetings for events in town centres as required	Business Support Officer	Attendance at meetings as required	Existing		
Membership of the DIZ Special Interest Group for High Streets	Economic Development Manager and Business Support Officer	Delivery of DIZ SIG Action Plan - collection of town centre data, digital tech in car parks, online platforms, place making apps	Existing		
Attendance at UK Innovation Corridor High Streets Forum	Economic Development Manager and Business Support Officer	Ongoing attendance at meetings	Existing		
Monitor HUQ footfall data	Business Support Officer	Reports identifying matters of interest to be produced.	Existing	20,000	
Research into other data streams that would support the town centres which may include spend data.	Business Support Officer	Identifiacion of additional data streams	Existing		
Investigate the potential for a multi-user studio/retail space in Saffron Walden.	Economic Development Manager	A plan is in place to establish a multi-user studion / retail space.	Existing		
DAY TO DAY SUPPORT / EVENTS				20,000	

CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5a Protect and grow our town centres as economic hubs					
Saffron Walden					
Support SWBID					
Support SWBID in preparation for ballot for 2nd term					
Great Dunmow					
Support Great Dunmow Town Team					
Great Dunmow market - signage and promotion	Business Support Officer	New signage in place and promotional campaign delivered			
Support events in Great Dunmow					
Stansted Mountfitchet					
Support Stansted Business Forum					
Attendance at Economic Development Working Group / SBF	Business Support Officer				
Support events or other initiatives					
		TOTAL - TOWN CENTRES		£230,000	
CAR PARKS					
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 4b Implement programmes to reduce airport related village fly parking					
Deliver agreed actions from car park review including income generation opportunities and energy generation opportunities	Business Support Officer	Actions plan in place by end Sept 2022. agreed actions completed by end March 2023	Existing		? Balance of £80k to fund TROs?
NEPP performance management meetings at least quarterly	Economic Development Manager	Attendance at scheduled SLA bi-monthly performance meetings	Existing		
Day-to-day management of the car parks, including maintenance, appearance and ease of use.	Business Support Officer	Officer in post	Business Support Officer works 18.5 hours per week on fixed term contract until 28/2/2023	£25,000	
Deliver the planned upgrade of ticket machines in Council's car parks	Business Support Officer	Upgrade of all car park ticket machines completed by 31/03/2023	£92k capital monies set aside to cover costs.		
Promotion of MiPermit app to purchase car park tickets	Business Support Officer	Increase in number of MiPermit ticket sales as % of total pay and display ticket sales		£2,000	

CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 4b Implement programmes to reduce airport related village fly parking					
Car park incentives promotions through MiPermit	Business Support Officer				
Black Friday car park promotion to support town centres	Business Support Officer	Free or reduced car parking in town centres on Black Friday or that weekend. A report to be submitted in september with options.		Loss of income	
Tariff board upgrades and refresh following tariff review	Business Support Officer	As part of Car Park Review actions			
Regular inspections of car parks and risk assessments completed	Business Support Officer	As part of Car Park Review actions			
Evaluate TRO applications in Aug / Sep 2022	Business Support Officer	Applications evaluated for decision-making ar October NEPP JMC meeting	Existing		
Town centre maps inc way finding, signage in car parks	Business Support Officer	New signage installed in key car parks	Existing	£10,000	
	TOTAL - CAR PARKS			£37,000	
	TOTAL - TOWN CENTRES + CAR PARKS		Approx	£267,000	

Objective 1.4 – Support business start-ups and pre-starts.

Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Funding
Launch and deliver Business Start-Up Grants	Business Support Officer	No. grants awarded	Existing	£25,000	
Update Business Start-Up Guide as required and distribute to business start-ups and pre-start-ups	Business Support Officer	Guide produced by 30/7/2021	Existing		
Send Business Start-up guide and covering kletter to all new enterprises listed by Banksearch on their monthly return	Business Support Officer	Info sent to all business start-ups from 1/4/2023	Existing	£1,000	
Pop up shops and market stalls, including craft, teenage, artisan, new businesses	Business Support Officer	Delivery of a programme of markets across the district, incorporating business support services and cost of living advice for residents	Existing	£20,000	

The Rebel Business School after expiry of NEEB project	Business Support Officer	1 week online or face to face course delivered in the district	Existing	£20,000	
Incubator hubs and wraparound business support	Economic Development Manager				
Organise and deliver Business Start-Ups Week, with events, training and opportunities to start a business	Business Support Officer	Start-Up in September week	Existing	£2,000	
		TOTAL		£68,000	
Objective 1.5 – Work with partners to ensure the residents and businesses across the district benefit from the delivery of superfast broadband					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Funding
CPDP Champion for our District If Work with ECC and hold them to account to deliver rural superfast broadband in our district					
Monitor the delivery of the Gigaclear full fibre to the premises contract	Economic Development Manager	Contract expiry date is now 30/4/2023. Target of 95.6% of premises have at least superfast broadband available	£500,000 contract contribution – previously agreed		
Work with ECC to identify potential solutions for the remaining 5% who will not have access to at least superfast broadband by the end of March 2023	Economic Development Manager	Identify number and location of premises without access to superfast broadband by end 2023. Identify available options.		Capital previously approved £100,000 Revenue £10,000	ECC / SFE / Digital Connectivity Strategy
Attendance at Digital Essex Steering Board in order to increase availability of high-speed gigabit broadband in the district.	Economic Development Manager	Quarterly meetings	Existing		
Collaborative working within the Essex + Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) to ensure local residents and businesses enjoy maximum benefit from superfast / gigabit broadband installation	Economic Development Manager	Development and delivery of DIZ plans	Existing	£10,000	
Attend 5G and mobile telephony planning meeting in August 2022 and report back.	Economic Development Manager	Identified current position and future options	Existing		
Increase availability of high-speed gigabit broadband in the district	Economic Development Manager input through Digital Essex Steering Board		Existing		
Deliver "Uttlesford Digital Boost Week" to include free workshops sessions on video production, social media support, website development and digital marketing and a linked grant scheme	Business Support Officer	Uttlesford Digital Boost Week held with grant programme launched and training offered to participants - Oct - Nov 2023	Existing	£40,000	
Promote CVSU Digital inclusion project					
		TOTAL	Approx	£60,000	

Priority 2 – Information, Advice and Guidance					
Objective 2.1 – Promotion of national, regional, county and local initiatives					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Funding
Keep Council's business website up to date www.uttlesford.gov.uk/business to ensure that all Council departments that work with local businesses provide quality 'of the moment' information with communication that is easy to access, relevant and helpful.	Business Support Officer working with all UDC departments whose work impacts on local businesses	Refresh of website completed to reflect "new normal" and needs of local businesses by 30/9/2021	Existing		
Ensure that www.uttlesford.gov.uk resident website has appropriate information and links to assist any resident to develop skills, start or run a business.	Business Support Officer	Evidence of relevant information included on UDC resident website	Existing		
Produce a series of informative e-newsletters .	Business Support Officer working with UDC Communications Team	Minimum of 12 e-newsletters during the year	Existing		
Use social media and press releases to disseminate information as widely as possible	Business Support Officer working with town / parish councils	Evidence of use of social media and press releases to disseminate appropriate and relevant information	Existing		
Work with town / parish councils and village groups to disseminate communications as widely as possible. Currently 3 parish magazines receive materials directly from UDC to disseminate through their local media routes.	Business Support Officer / Ward Members	To increase number of parish magazines that directly receive information from UDC to disseminate via local magazine, social media groups etc. by 31/3/2023	Existing		
Promote our initiatives via social media advertising - place based and thematic					
		TOTAL		£ZERO	

Objective 2.2 Provision of information, advice and guidance to local businesses, start-ups and potential businesses					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
Updated Business Support Guide up for distribution with business rates bills	Business Support Officer	No. Business Support Guides posted out with Business Rates bills in March 2022	Existing		
Updated business support newsletter sent out with Council Tax bills, particular focus on home-based businesses and business start-ups	Business Support Officer	No. Business support newsletters posted out with Council Tax bills in March 2022	Existing		
Business Start-Up Guide produced and promoted as part of the business start-up actions included in see Objective 1.4	Business Support Officer	Guide produced and available through website and advertised through communications channels	Existing		
Pilot business support place based and evaluate					
		TOTAL		£ ZERO	

Priority 3 – Skills and Training

Objective 3.1 – Provision and promotion of initiatives to support local residents into work

Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
Promote all projects that offer support to unemployed and economically inactive residents including transitions, Touchpoint and other community hub projects	Economic Development Manager	Evidence of promotional activity	Existing		
Promotion of relevant Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair	Business Support Officer	Evidence of promotional activity	Existing		ECC Skills Commissioner leading
Work with partners (Harlow DC, Tendring DC, ECC, DWP) to provide HGV driver training project	Economic Development Manager	13 HGV drivers successfully completed training. Funds per resident.	Existing	£30,000 allocated in previous year plan	
Promotion of job opportunities	Business Support Officer				
		TOTAL		£ZERO	

Objective 3.2 Promote and support initiatives to help young people into work					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC resources	Cost	External resources
Promotion of apprenticeships schemes to help people back into work	Business Support Officer	Evidence of promotional work	Existing		
		TOTAL		£ZERO	
Objective 3.3 Promotion of skills and training initiatives, including digital skills					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
Promotion of Essex Opportunities and SELEP's South East Skills websites which contains all training and skills offers	Business Support Officer	Evidence of promotional activity by 31/3/2023	Existing		
		TOTAL		£ZERO	
Priority 4 - Creating Jobs / Inward investment					
Objective 4.1 Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
Refresh the Business Development Business Rates Discount Scheme to support the sustainable growth of existing businesses	Economic Development Manager	Scheme in place No. applicants 2023/24	Existing - £60,000 from Economic Development Reserves		
Monitor activities and performance of the Prosperity Neetwork to determine if there is value in joint working or delivery of events in the district.	Business Support Officer	Evaluate value of collaborative working	Existing		
Organise and deliver "Business Growth Week" to promote growth initiatives and provide support and advice.	Business Support Officer		Febraury 2024		
Launch and deliver Business Growth and Productivity Fund	Business Support Officer	No. grants supporting business growth in the district	Existing	£45,000	
		TOTAL	Approx	£45,000	

Objective 4.2 Increase inward investment					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5c Support the creation of amenities that stimulate and facilitates local businesses, such as enterprise zones, business parks, office blocks, industrial areas, and start-up hubs					
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5d Support the expansion and promotion of key relevant employment sectors for the district					
Develop an Economic Development Strategy to cover the period 2024 - ? identifying key employment sectors in the district	Economic Development Manager				
CPDP Active place maker for our towns and villages 5e Work with partners to promote the economic opportunities of the UK Innovation Corridor (previously known as London - Cambridge Innovation Corridor), Stansted Airport and our main transport corridors					
Membership of the UK Innovation Corridor	Economic Development Manager	Ongoing participation	Existing	£10,000p.a.	
Active participation in Innovation Core,	Economic Development Manager	Ongoing participation	Existing		
Keep the Innovation Core – prospectus and website up to date with available commercial land and development opportunities in Uttlesford district and trade shows	Economic Development Manager	Prospectus and website kept up to date	Existing		
Investigate the value of establishing an Uttlesford inward investment website linked to the Innovation Core website	Economic Development Manager				
Ensure commercial land is identified in the Local Plan	Economic Development Manager	Ongoing collaboration with Local Plan Team to include commercial land	Existing		
Continue to build business case for business incubator hubs potentially suitable locations, and ensure inclusion in Local Plan	Economic Development Manager	Ongoing collaboration with Local Plan Team to include commercial land, start up units.	Existing		
		TOTAL		£10,000	

Priority 5 – Creating a “greener” local economy					
Objective 5.1 Support local businesses to address Climate Change issues					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
CPDP Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment 1h Recognise the district's "greenest" businesses and developers					
Survey local businesses to identify what they need to address climate change issues, and what UDC could do to help and support.	Business Support Officer	Green business survey completed	Existing	As part of business survey	
Deliver Go-Green green business awards - March 24	Business Support Officer		Existing		
Promote LoCase – grants programme for green projects – expiry June 2023	Business Support Officer	Evidence of promotion	Existing		LoCase grants - max grant is £10,000
Launch and promote Environmental Sustainability Fund for businesses after expiry of LoCase and in collaboration with Climate Change Team	Business Support Officer	Launch and delivery of Fund	Existing		
Work with Climate Change Team to identify projects to support local businesses go green, go greener or start a new green business	Business Support Officer	Development and deliver of agreed projects			
Work with partners to deliver the Air Quality project in Saffron Walden	Business Support Officer	Business Engagement, communications, Zero emission deliveries, E-cargo bikescommunity hire scheme (Audley End and Great checterford rail stations), town centre parking, energy audits	Existing		£500,000 funding for project. Project management team will lead on most projects
Attendance at Big Green Expo in April 2023, with Climate Change Team	Business Support Officer	Attendance and engagement with Uttlesford businesses who are attending	Existing staff resources		
Promote the Essex Climate Action Commission Action Pack for businesses	Business Support Officer				
Organise and deliver "Go Green Uttlesford" event to bring together businesses with advisers and support projects	Business Support Officer				
		TOTAL		£45,000	

Objective 5.2 Support the growth of businesses to maximise the opportunities of the green economy					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
Promotion of Essex Retrofit Academy and their services to incentivise local businesses to become approved to deliver retrofitting services	Business Support Officer	Evidence of promotinal activity	Existing		
		TOTAL		£ZERO	
Objective 5.3 – Research and develop plans to grow the green economy in Uttlesford					
Task	Responsibility	Target	UDC Resources	Cost	External Resources
Evaluate proposals identified in University of Cambridge students’ report - listed at the end of this section*	Economic Development Manager		Existing		
Promote the iConstruct project re: new methods of construction	Business Support Officer	Evidence of promotional work	Existing		
		TOTAL		£ZERO	

**Economic Development Recovery Delivery Plan
Estimated Spend Profile – Year 3 Draft**

Objective	Approx amount of funding to deliver in 23/24
Priority 1 – Business Engagement and Support	
1.1 Support businesses already in the district	£119,000
1.2 Support businesses hardest hit by the pandemic	£27,210
1.3 Foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure	£267,000
1.4 Support business start-ups and pre-starts	£68,000
1.5 Digital connectivity	£60,000
Priority 2 – Information, Advice and Guidance	
2.1 Promotion of national, regional and local initiatives	0
2.2 Provision of information to local businesses, start-ups and potential businesses	0
Priority 3 – Skills and Training	
3.1 Provision and promotion of initiatives to support residents back into work	0
3.2 Help for young people to get into work	0
3.3 Promotion of skills and training initiatives and digital skills	0
Priority 4 – Creating Jobs / Inward Investment	
4.1 Support sustainable growth of existing businesses	£45,000
4.2 Increase inward investment	£10,000
Priority 5 – Creating a “greener” local economy	
5.1 Support local businesses to address Climate Change issues	£45,000
5.2 Support the growth of businesses to maximise the opportunities of the green economy	0
5.3 Research and develop plans to grow the green economy	0
Other Costs	
Staff Development	£2,000
Contingency - all above are estimates	£6,790
Total estimated spend	£650,000

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 2nd March
2023

Title: Climate Change Action Plan – Update Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Louise Pepper

Report Author: Vicky Reed, Climate Change, Lead Officer

Summary

1. Uttlesford District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and we have pledged to take local action to prevent a climate and ecological catastrophe through the development of practices and policies which aim to achieve netzero carbon status by 2030 and to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district.
2. This Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) was approved by Cabinet on 11 January 2022 and incorporated feedback from this Committee.
3. The new Lead Officer for Climate Change started in post on 28 September 2022 to take forward the council's CCAP, in addition to delivery of the Saffron Walden Clean Air Project which will be implemented over the next two years.
4. Recruitment to replace the previous Climate Change Project Officer role to support this work was completed early this year.
5. This highlight report and APPENDIX 1 both provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the actions due to be completed during the 2022/23 financial year.

Recommendations

6. To note progress on the implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan set out below and contained within APPENDIX 1.
7. To note highlights, arising issues, follow-on actions, and a forward plan proposed by the Climate Change, Lead Officer.

Financial Implications

8. The Council has already agreed a specific climate change budget of £1,000,000 budget over 3 years.
9. To date a total of £344,339 of the climate Change budget has been committed or spent. In addition, an allocation of £300,000 has been made to provide grants for community projects that will deliver on the Council's climate action priorities, via the Zero Carbon Communities Fund.

10. External funding totalling over £1,700,000 has also been secured.

Background Papers

11. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:

- The Council Climate Action Strategy and Climate Action Plan.
- Littlebury Village Community Energy Project Report which is available to download [here](#).

Impact

12.

Communication/Consultation	The Climate Change Action Plan has been reviewed by the Energy and Climate Change Working Group. The proposed model that will deliver the Zero Carbon Communities grant fund has also been reviewed by this group.
Community Safety	
Equalities	Scoping undertaken for climate action projects will consider the needs of all groups in the community.
Health and Safety	
Human Rights/Legal Implications	
Sustainability	A clear plan setting out Uttlesford district council's approach to addressing climate change will have a positive impact on sustainability issues.
Ward-specific impacts	
Workforce/Workplace	

Situation

Climate Change Programme Management

13. The Climate Change Action Plan has 38 components. There are expectations described in the Climate Change Action Plan for each action point. It was noted within the published plan that these expectations were provided in outline only, and it was accepted that the timelines for some objectives may be subject to change.
14. This update report focuses on the actions that were due to be completed during the financial year April 2022-March 2023 and beyond. Of the 38 actions, 9 are marked as complete, and 7 are delayed in commencing. For almost all actions there are subsequent follow-on actions or activities, which need to be further scoped and monitored, against the overall objectives of the Climate Change Action Plan.
15. In Q4 the Climate Change, Lead Officer has proposed to undertake a review of the Climate Change Action Plan including achievements to date, issues and risks, and lessons learnt.
16. The key output of this review will be to agree an updated approach with the Council Corporate Management Team, to create a revised Climate Change Action Plan for 2023/24. It is proposed that this revised action plan is also considered by the Scrutiny Committee at an early stage.

Highlight Report (March 2022)

District Wide De-carbonisation

(Actions 4 and 20)

17. Littlebury Village Community Energy Kickstart Project is complete. The project report with suggested next steps has been published. This project surveyed carbon emissions and energy usage in the community, and reviewed housing archetypes and the potential for retrofit.
18. A plan is now in early development to consider how the Council can support a 'cluster' of community energy projects. It costs on average £5k for a community energy 'kickstart' project the size of Littlebury Village. Community Energy South have confirmed they would look to match fund this. Note this cost is for a kickstart project only which would undertake energy and housing surveys to commence engagement within the communities.
19. Other next steps include consideration of an option to provide an retrofit assessor who could be trained locally and sit within Saffron Walden Community Energy, subject to funding.

Transport Emissions: Active Travel

(Actions 5, 14, 15, 29, 30)

20. The procurement process has commenced for the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The preferred consultant/bidder will be appointed by the end of December 2022. There is an arising risk that budget allocated will not deliver all outcomes contained in the project brief. Essex County

Council have no budget for this project. This study is due to complete by July 2023.

21. Essex County Highways Panel have allocated funding for the 'Great Chesterford to Saffron Walden Cycleway' (design), and for 'Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden - New footway'. The Highways panel are also due to deliver a feasibility study for a number of Saffron Walden cycle schemes arising from requests submitted by the Saffron Walden Town Council.
22. The Saffron Walden Clean Air Project is due to pilot active travel schemes which it may be possible to replicate elsewhere in the district. In phase 1 of the project, due for completion between Autumn 2022 and Summer 2023 the activities and milestones include: resident and business stakeholder engagement; agreeing an approach to commissioning e-transport schemes; and the launch of the Saffron Walden Town eCargo bike scheme.
23. Dialogue has commenced with the Strategic Highways Team and the Council Planning team, to explore how we can best influence the pre-application planning stage for housing developments, with the objective that Council expectations for active travel infrastructure needs are made clear to developers at the outset. Dialogue is ongoing about how to influence and inform other planning process, including Section 106 agreements. There is currently a lack of assurance that existing mechanisms can deliver the active travel infrastructure that is needed in the district.
24. A study has been commissioned to explore options for links between the Flich Way and the south side of Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport and Start Hill and improved links into Great Dunmow.
25. Further work is needed by the Climate Change, Lead Officer working with Planning Officers, to fully scope out the different active travel actions and work streams in the Climate Change Action Plan, which cover infrastructure, micro-mobility schemes, and behaviour change.

Domestic Energy - Government and Energy Company Grants (Action 33)

26. The Sustainable Warmth (LAD3/HUG1) government grant scheme will finish in March 2023. We have recently released some funding to Uttlesford CAB, who have resource available to deliver focused promotion of the scheme to eligible residents between now and the end of December.
27. Progress with referrals made within Uttlesford is being made and the latest figures are below:
 - Households Referred: 156
 - Surveys Completed: 77
 - Surveys Booked: 10
 - Measures Allocated: 176

- Measures Installed: 65

28. Approximately 37% of measures have been installed to date, and the Essex wide consortium assure us that they continue to work to grow the supply chain, with further installers coming on board.

29. Promotion for the current Sustainable Warmth scheme stopped on 31st December 2022 to allow time (3 months) to progress applications to installations.

30. The Sustainable Warmth grant scheme will be replaced by HUG2 which is due to commence in April 2023 and finish March 2025. The Council will be bidding for funding through the Essex wide consortium. Focus will remain on targeting low income/fuel poverty homes, with off-gas grid for heating. It has been confirmed that any off-gas grid referrals we have already received that cannot be actioned under the current scheme closing in March, can be transferred to the new scheme (if we are successful with the Essex wide consortia bid).

Zero Carbon Communities Fund

31. Members will be aware that round1 the Zero Carbon Communities Fund was launched in Autumn 2023 and commits £150,000 of funding to local initiatives.

32. In this first round, applications for grants have been invited under three themes:

- 1) Carbon Emission Reduction
- 2) Biodiversity Restoration and Enhancement
- 3) Community Engagement in Climate Change

33. 20 bids were received from groups and these have now been evaluated and the final decision on which projects to fund will be taken at Cabinet on 16 March.

34. The grant provides an opportunity for the Council to commence an ongoing programme of community engagement on climate action. Along with a regular newsletter, we will implement dedicated project pages and resources on the Let's Talk platform, in addition to further webinars to share learning from the projects funded by the grant.

Risk Analysis

35.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Gap in programme staff resources, leading to reduced capacity to deliver	2	2	Appointment to Project Officer post due end of November.

CCAP and commence SW Clean Air Project			Request made to DEFRA for 6mth extension to SW Clean Air project.
Lack of detailed scoping and clarity of outcomes for climate change actions which may lead to projects being delivered that do not contribute to the achievement of Council net zero carbon targets and/ or climate change objectives.	3	3	Review of current action plan to be completed in early 2023 in order to scope and validate existing actions, and to agree a revised action plan for 23/24, along with success measures and monitoring plan.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Action No.	Initiative	Status / RAG	Progress to date (last update)	March Update
PHASE 2	Delivery by MAR 2022			
Action 01	By March 2022, create a Fleet Decarbonisation Plan that maps the transition of our own fleet to low or zero emission by 2030 including detailing carbon savings.	Complete	<p>A draft strategy has been produced identifying a route to net zero emissions for the Council's fleet. Transport operations are primarily linked to waste and recycling operations and account for approximately 51% of our CO2e emissions, however after purchasing green energy through the green tariff, it is effectively 80% of the Council's current emissions.</p> <p>Demonstrations of two HGV vehicles that are currently on the market have been organised for later in the year. Alongside this work stream officers are in the process of exploring possible future service delivery models and this will eventually include the financial impact of any potential changes</p>	<p>Future service delivery model will identify resource need (pay and non-pay). There will be a phased plan to deliver the agreed model.</p> <p>Trials of several electric vehicles were organised, a large van was trialed in November which could be utilised for Grounds Maintenance services, workshop and street cleansing. Two refuse / recycling lorries were demonstrated in December / January but unfortunately did not prove suitable for the District's needs and distances travelled in a rural community.</p> <p>The current specification for electric vehicles available on the market would require significant changes. Decisions about future waste strategy and collection methods will be required over the next 1-2 years and this will include fleet make up. <i>Next phase to be complete June 2023.</i></p>
Action 02	Review consumer advice provided via our communications channels	Complete	Information is available on the Council's website and on www.letstalk.uttlesford.gov.uk/ .	We have commenced update of Let's Talk platform to create new content, and a 'Net Zero Hub' within this there will be a series of project tiles related to our climate programme. Content has been drafted and is due to be tested with users to gather feedback ahead of publication. Platform will be utilised for district wide engagement and partnership work on climate action including:

Appendix 1

				sharing learning from Zero Carbon Communities projects, engagement on the Saffron Walden Clean Air Project. <i>Refresh to be complete by March 2023</i>
Action 03	Governance processes established for future decision making on climate change project spending.	Complete	It has been established that projects within the Climate Change Action Plan will follow the Council’s existing Governance arrangements and the CCAP will form one workstream within the Blueprint Uttlesford Programme.	Majority of Climate Actions in the plan are due to be delivered by March 2023. The Climate Change, Lead Officer will develop an approach for review of the action plan and will lead the development of an updated Plan for 23/24. This work will commence in March. <i>To be complete by May 2023</i>

<p>Action 04</p>	<p>Scoping and delivery of district-wide decarbonisation projects (for instance mapping where EV charging points need to go, how to take whole villages off oil and onto renewable energy) and local energy generation projects identified.</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>The Local Energy Asset Representation mapping has been completed. It provides a rich dataset of energy assets and demand across Uttlesford which is useful for future planning towards decarbonisation. This is particularly important in areas which are not on the gas grid and which will have to eventually swap oil or LPG boilers for air or ground source heat pumps.</p> <p>Littlebury Village Kick Start Project is complete and the report has been shared. Essex County Council and Community Energy South offer free support to community energy groups and projects in Essex.</p>	<p>Community Energy South may have capacity to resource and support this programme, to support up to 5 communities . In December they were looking to establish a cluster and wider network, subject to funding. We are awaiting update on what further partnership opportunities will be available to the district this year.</p> <p>Littlebury Village will now start the second stage of their project plan following the Kick Start project. Stage 2 will focus on supporting early adopters in implementing energy efficiency measures in addition to further engagement around preparing for renewables. They have requested support from UDC planning team to look at how they overcome barriers implementing measures in a conservation area.</p> <p>The Climate Change, Lead Officer will be working to develop a more detailed action plan for district wide decarbonisation for 23/24. We will follow the latest updates and guidance available on partnerships and funding, working with ECC Energy and Low Carbon leads. ECC will be holding a Climate Summit on Retrofit and Supply Chain in March 23.</p> <p><i>New actions due to be agreed for 23/24 Climate Action Plan (by April)</i></p>
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Action 05	Travel survey Map to understand where and how people travel (building on the Local Plan consultation feedback that travel is an important issue)	Complete	The survey on improvements that can be made to improve active travel infrastructure is now complete (with over 2,000 responses from the Community). The survey captures perceived and real barriers to active travel that can then be addressed over time.	Key findings are due to be extracted from the survey to support the Saffron Walden Clean Air with engagement and project planning. This data was also shared with existing consultants who are working on transport studies that support the local plan. The data has been shared with the consultancy appointed to deliver the LCWIP. <i>The outputs from the transport and LCWIP studies will be published later in 2023.</i>
Action 06	Installing EV charging points at housing owned by UDC	Delayed	Assessment of UDC-owned housing sites for non-driveway parking requirements March 22 deadline has been missed due to lack of data on parking at UDC-owned housing sites. Further work on this project to be rolled into 2022-23 service plans.	Planned new build properties will be built with EV charging points. It has been proposed that feasibility of implementing EV charging points will be included in the 'housing stock condition' survey to be completed by Norse. <i>Further updates to follow. Verbal update will be provided at the working meeting.</i>
Action 07	Information campaign to highlight dangers to health from the pollution generated by idling engines.	Complete	Materials have been designed and printed and will be used throughout the year. Targeted campaign delivered June 2022 – National Clean Air Day. There will be a follow-on targeted campaign in 2023.	A more detailed comms plan will be developed for the climate action programme in addition to the communications and pollution awareness campaign that is due to be delivered for the Saffron Walden Clean Air Project. <i>June 2023</i>

Action 08	Review the procurement process including Scope 3 (which are essentially indirectly created emissions) and social value	Complete	Plans to ensure that Scope 3 emissions and social value are built into future procurement exercises are in place and will be considered as part of evaluation criteria.	Further follow up to be undertaken to review impact of new policy. <i>March 2023</i>
Action 09	Review energy use footprint of our fuel.	Complete	The Council moved to a green energy Tariff in 2020 and reducing significantly our CO2e emissions and therefore the bulk of this action can be considered complete. However, it is important to continue to consider energy use as part of Business as Usual activities.	Follow on action to work with estates and CMT to put system/process in place to track energy consumption and efficiencies, reporting and monitoring. This will be picked up as part of the review and update of the Climate Action plan for 23/24. <i>March/April 2023</i>
Action 10	Review resilience plans in the light of potential for heatwaves and flooding.	Open	As part of the Essex Local Resilience Forum, plans for dealing with potential impacts of Climate change have been prepared. These include heavy rainfall and storms, as well as heatwaves. The variables arising from climate change impacts are included in all emergency response planning by the Essex Local Resilience Forum. Any local identified issues can be escalated at any time to this forum, via our Emergency Planning & Resilience Consultant.	Exploration was previously undertaken to identify existing sites that may potentially be used as 'cooling centres' in the district, which could be promoted in future heatwaves. This work stream has not been developed any further at this stage. There is no national directive to deliver this in response to heatwaves, though some guidance has been provided by UK Health Security Agency, as to how a 'cooling centre' should operate, including staffing. The need for 'cooling centres' in Uttlesford could be further evaluated via engagement within existing local community and multi-agency forums to determine the strength of the need, and where centres would need to be located. The Climate Change, Lead Officer

				<p>will review to agree any next steps with community and housing officer colleagues.</p> <p>This will be picked up as part of the review and update of the Climate Action plan for 23/24. <i>March/April 2023</i></p>
Action 11	Map opportunities for biodiversity	Open	<p>A project to identify sites that are valued by the local community has been completed and information gained has been mapped. This information can be used to support the overarching green infrastructure plan for the district.</p> <p>An email communication was sent to survey respondents in December to thank them for their feedback and inform how the responses will be taken forward. Respondents were also made aware of opportunities arising from the Zero Carbon Communities Grant.</p>	<p>Part of the Local Plan process will include a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy that will help to identify places to protect/enhance and the inclusion of GBI in Master Plans. There will be policy backing and it is likely that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be prepared - this work will take place from mid 2023 to align with the local plan programme.</p> <p><u>Update</u> There will be a presentation to the ECCWG on 1st March to share the latest guidance on the implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</p>
Action 12	Working with ECC develop a greater understanding the carbon impact of UDC recycling services to enable future service changes to be fully understood, in terms of both carbon reduction and recycling performance	Open	<p>Essex County Council is leading a project to replace the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Essex. The replacement is being developed with full involvement from Borough, City and District Councils and includes service modelling to help plan future services. Key metrics within the models are carbon savings and recycling performance. The overall strategy will have carbon reduction and improved environmental performance at its core.</p>	<p>Service modelling is complete. There is a plan in place for a public consultation to take place on the Essex Waste Strategy. <i>Expected June 2023.</i></p> <p><i>A Member workshop on waste services took place on 23 January, to share the latest strategy and arising themes.</i></p>

<p>Action 15</p>	<p>Encouraging active travel: Micro-mobility schemes (SW Case Study SWAI)</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>This project relies on capacity at both ECC and UDC. The project has not progressed as far as planned at this stage.</p> <p>December update: The Saffron Walden Clean Air Project will pilot a number of active travel schemes and phase 1 of this project has now commenced. The Zero Carbon Communities Grant may provide opportunity to kick start local community schemes where demand for active travel schemes/infrastructure has been identified.</p>	<p>The SW Clean Air Project will pilot operating models that could be replicated elsewhere in the district.</p> <p>The SW Clean Air Project will formally launch at the beginning of March. It is expected that shared transport schemes will begin to be piloted later this year.</p> <p>Learning will be shared throughout the project.</p> <p>This action needs to be scoped in more detail to understand different work streams and priorities contained within this action at a district level.</p> <p><i>It is proposed to review and update for the Climate Action plan 23/24. March/April 2023</i></p>
<p>Action 16</p>	<p>Car club (EVs). This could be tied in with pool cars for business use by UDC staff, for instance if available to hire as a part of a car club.</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Initial investigations have been made into the potential for an EV car club in Uttlesford. It is clear that it would require an anchor client such as UDC to make it viable for a car club operate in the area. UDC may or may not be a viable client for this project as we adjust to a more hybrid approach to office/home working. Kick-start funding for an EV car club in Saffron Walden is now possible with the Clean Air Grant and this could be used for council and museum staff where the journey starts and ends in SW.</p>	<p>A pilot is due to be explored for UDC at London Road as part of the options for implementation of the active travel schemes being delivered through the Saffron Walden Clean Air project. Updates will be shared later this year, but expectation is that the EV Car Club will be commissioned during spring 23.</p> <p>More broadly, discussion has commenced to look at how to influence policy formulation and section 106 negotiations e.g. to secure car clubs within larger developments.</p>

				<p>Further work needs to be undertaken with planning colleagues to ensure there is a consistent and joined up approach going forward. A meeting is due to take place to review (March 23)</p> <p><i>Further updates to follow.</i></p>
Action 17	<p>Bundle on-street parking spaces so that profitable and unprofitable spaces are combined in packages, to prevent cherry picking of the profitable spaces and future public subsidy of unprofitable spaces.</p>	Delayed	<p>The Local Energy Asset Representation mapping, carried out in 2021, has identified areas of Uttlesford with and without high levels of off-street parking. This information has already been passed to the ECC on-street EV charging team. The team requested suggestions of two locations for EV charging points in Uttlesford and this information helped provide the data. The County is preparing an EV charging strategy. It is recommended that the draft be scanned for its suitability for Uttlesford (and to ensure that it doesn't discourage charging as a method of discouraging cars in rural areas)</p>	<p>Awaiting further information from ECC on EV Strategy which will focus on on-street residential charge points, for those 40% of households which do not have access to off-street.</p> <p>As at Feb 23, there is no further update on when this strategy is due.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this action is updated for 23/24 in line with the emerging strategy from ECC, when available. (April 2023)</p>
Action 18	<p>Enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)</p>	Delayed	<p>A verbal update will be provided at the meeting on this action.</p>	<p>Work is underway to target private renters, who may not be meeting minimum standards, as part of the Sustainable Warmth grants promotion.</p> <p>There remains an issue with delivering MEES due to the limited data available. Successful</p>

				delivery is also dependent on emerging government legislation which is due in 2023. <i>Note: a verbal update will be provided on this action at the working group meeting.</i>
Action 19	A published checklist relating to energy efficiency standards be published for developers to consider as part of their proposals	Open	Interim CC Planning Policy is in place and being used for new planning applications. Supplementary Planning document to be drafted alongside local plan when at Reg 19 stage	The inclusion of exacting energy efficiency standards are aimed to be applied in the new local plan policy but will be subject to viability considerations. Advice and guidance is available from the new Climate and Planning Unit (CaPU) at Essex County Council.
Action 20	Retrofit community buildings in Uttlesford - partnership between UDC and parishes where advantages of scale can be identified.	Open	This project has not yet started however could be linked with the pilot local energy project that is now on-going in Littlebury.	Support will be given to apply for funding to retrofit community buildings via the Zero Carbon Communities Grant. There is other emerging funding for energy efficiency and retrofit of Community buildings that may be accessible via the Rural Prosperity fund. Climate Change Team and Economic Development Team are due to meet to explore how to work together on this area and opportunities for collaboration. Meeting due March 23
Action 21	Improve biodiversity net gain (BNG) as per Environment Act.	Delayed	The Local Plan team will include a policy on Biodiversity Net Gain within the emerging Local Plan.	The national minimum requirement is to achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain but the Local Plan is aiming for 20%, subject to further evidence to ensure this is reasonable and achievable.

				Update presentation due to be given at CCWG 1 st March. Further updates will be available as the local plan develops.
Action 22	Reviewing our domestic and commercial waste collection offers	Open	The Council is participating in the development of a new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Essex. This document will focus on improving recycling performance across the County and will consider a range of environmental measures to assess future service delivery models (including disposal). This work will be managed by the Waste Strategy Panel and any decisions required will be sought through the Council’s normal governance processes.	A county wide public consultation is due to take place on the county wide waste strategy in summer 2023. Members will need to be involved in future service model discussions over the next 1-2 years. <i>Member workshop (Climate and Energy Working Group) was held in January 2023.</i>
Action 23	Promote ways to reduce food waste and promote food waste recycling	Open	Plans to promote reducing waste but specifically food waste are underway and will be rolled out from early summer. Efforts will be made to ensure that local UDC campaigns also align with national and county level messages to help avoid confusing residents.	Various social media campaigns have been run over the year focusing on food waste and reducing contamination of materials presented for recycling. The team attended the Saffron Walden Eco-Fair in September and focused attention on reducing single use plastics and home composting of food waste through home composting or wormery use. The team also attended the Gt Dunmow carnival. A comprehensive refresh of the Council's recycling guide has been produced and is being distributed to all households in the lead up to Christmas. This publication will also be

				available as a download from the UDC website.
Action 24	Shift residents thinking from 'avoiding landfill' towards minimising resource usage and a circular economy (including reducing single-use plastic).	Open	This action links to 23 and plans are in place to address these issues over the coming year.	A range of activities have taken place as highlighted in Action 23 which is directly linked. The Essex Waste Partnership have undertaken a research project that focus on environmental awareness within the general population. This will help steer where best to target information campaigns going forward and highlights current perceived barriers to participating in recycling services. A revised waste education plan was produced that sets out the issues will be targeted over the year and how engagement will be achieved.
Action 25	Improve the capture of material for recycling (within current and then emerging waste disposal/treatment frameworks) to reduce contamination.	Open	This action links to 23 and plans are in place to address these issues over the coming year.	As above a range of activities have been undertaken over the year to encourage recycling and the Council has linked in with national campaigns where possible.
Actions	Ongoing or Complete			
Action 26	Decarbonise Uttlesford's Housing Stock	Delayed	Issue re: Norse	<p>A Stock Condition Survey is due to be carried out by Norse, which is a condition of their five year contract. At present there is no update on when this survey will be completed. The Climate Change, Lead Officer is due to meet with the Housing Partnership Client Manager to review progress and milestones.</p> <p>Note: 68% of Uttlesford Council housing stock has an EPC rating of A – C. 29% has a rating of D or below. Uttlesford Norse are currently working on a 5 yr. projection to show where</p>

				the stock will be if current planned works are delivered.
Action 27	Decarbonisation of partner's fleets	Open	Norse Fleet scheduled for replacement 2025. Transition to EVs recommended	An update is outstanding on this action re: progress made, though it is understood Norse do already have some EVs in their Fleet. Climate Change, Lead Officer is awaiting meeting with Norse asset manager, with regard to the replacement plan and future milestones.
Action 28	Lobby ECC for improvements to public transport in Uttlesford	Open	Local plan to identify services gaps and opportunities for improvements.	Sustainable travel and a modal share that leans towards this is a key local plan policy and objective for the Highways Authority. The provisions of a bus route and maintaining a service is dependent on the catchment, subsidy, convenience, modal choice and behavioural matters. The aim in planning is to secure 'walkable neighbourhoods' Action to be reviewed and updated for 23/24

Action 29	Encouraging active travel: Highways infrastructure to support active travel	Open	Local Highways Panel. S106 projects	<p>Linked to Action 15. ECC Highways Panel have allocated funding for the 'Great Chesterford to Saffron Walden – Cycleway' (design), and for 'Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden - New footway'. The Highways panel are also due to deliver a feasibility study for a number of Saffron Walden cycle schemes from requests submitted by the Town Council, in order to firmly identify viability. Study has commenced to explore options for links between the Flitch Way and the south side of Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport and Start Hill and improved links into Great Dunmow. Further work needs to be undertaken to fully understand the breadth and scope of the different work streams contained within this action and how UDC can leverage through S106 agreements.</p> <p><i>Further update on these initiatives due March 2023</i></p>
Action 30	Support ECC with their school travel plans by providing local contacts where possible	Open	School children get to school via active travel modes as often as possible - supporting ECC with this work. There is also a School's Sustainability toolkit.	<p>Emerging Essex County Council work on walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods supports this action. ECC School's Sustainability Toolkit available.</p> <p>Focused engagement with schools in Saffron Walden is due to commence as part of the Saffron Walden Clean Air Project. School Education Project is due to be commissioned and supplier will be appointed by early April 23.</p>

				<i>Request to be made to ECC for full update on schools they are working with (March 23)</i>
Action 31	Installing EV Charging Points in UDC building spaces	Open	Programme of works for sites. London Road 8 outlets in place. Charging infrastructure has been installed at Lt Canfield site (staff parking)	Further follow up needed by Climate Change, Lead Officer. <i>Action to be reviewed and updated for 23/24</i>
Action 32	Installing EV Charging points in public car park spaces	Open	Already installed in number of car parks across district, though there are some gaps.	Awaiting further feedback from Car Park Study, which is due to be published shortly. Further follow up needed by Climate Change, Lead Officer. <i>Awaiting publication of recommendations from the car park study (due March 23)</i>
Action 33	Energy Company Obligation and Government Grants for low income households	Open	Sustainable warmth / ECO 4 Sustainable Warmth (LAD3/HUG1) will finish in March 2023, conversion rate remains low from referral to the scheme, through to completion of jobs on homes - UDC have released funding to CAB who can support focused promotion of the scheme to eligible residents. Promotion of this scheme will stop at end of Dec 22, any off-gas grid referrals can be rolled into the new HUG2 scheme commencing April 2023.	ECO4 open and will run to March 2026. Scheme now encourages multiple measures/ whole house retrofit with measures needing to be installed under PAS2035. UDC have bid for funding via consortium for the HUG2 Scheme which will run from April 2023 to March 2025. Focus remains targeting low income/fuel poverty homes, with off-gas grid for heating. There remains concern over the number of complaints received from residents who have been referred but not received installation measures. These issues have been escalated to the consortium. Awaiting updates on new schemes and confirmation not yet received on what

				referrals can be rolled forward into the new HUG2.
Action 34	Plant Trees around Uttlesford	Open	<p>Various schemes 2020/21 / budget remains for tree planting.</p> <p>Resource is available for trees. UDC has had planted on UDC and Town and Parish Council land since autumn 2020 a total of 524 trees, and 2,488 hedging plants at a total cost of £25,315.86. Plant losses are estimated at < 4%. Additionally, tree planting will be covered for new development in the Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p>	<p>Ecologist due to be recruited to the planning team, at which point further work may be undertaken to validate specific project sites arising from the Bio-diversity survey feedback received in 2021. Projects may also be identified through the Zero Carbon Communities Grant.</p> <p><i>Awaiting update</i></p>
Action 35	Respond to Consultations as they arise	Open	Business as usual/no clear deliverable here / lobbying other bodies on behalf of residents	This action needs to be developed further to understand what the expected outcomes are, how these can be delivered and what success would look like.
Action 36	UDC Policy on EV charging points at new properties	Complete	Policy in place	No further action
Action 37	Improve air quality monitoring and reporting through Air Quality being monitored in real time - installation of NO2 tubes	Complete	NO2 tubes outside various schools	Data collection will be complete in July 2023 when results of the monitoring and analysis will be presented. A district wide Air Quality strategy is due to be completed in 2023.

Scoping Report for Scrutiny Committee Review

Review Topic	Council Housing Management
Scoping Report to go to meeting on:	March 2023
Final report to go to meeting on:	Tbc – post May 2023 Elections
Portfolio Holder	Housing – Cllr Coote
Lead Officer	Peter Holt, Chief Executive
Stakeholders	Tenants & Leaseholders; Suppliers; Regulator of Social Housing/Housing Ombudsman

<p>Purpose/ Objective of the Review (the reason for the review and what it hopes to achieve)</p>	<p>To explore the Council’s approach to management of its housing stock, particularly with regard to repairs and maintenance; to draw and apply learning from local experience and established best practice.</p> <p>This review flows from well-publicised challenges in managing repairs, maintenance & capital improvements, the setting of rents, and quality assurance of build standards in a new built sheltered housing unit.</p>
<p>Terms of Reference (including what is in/out of scope)</p>	<p>The focus of this Scrutiny Review will be the procurement and subsequent management of both reactive repairs and maintenance and proactive capital improvements to Uttlesford’s c2,800 council housing stock, with particular reference to the selection and implementation of the joint venture vehicle Uttlesford Norse Services Ltd [UNSL] which took over management of this function in April 2020, just as the Coronavirus pandemic hit.</p> <p>A secondary set of areas of focus will be:</p> <p>The process for the setting of council house rents (and service charges for leaseholders). Rent setting includes both the process for the accurate setting of rents in line with national requirements and local Member decisions, as well as the policy on charging affordable versus social rents for new housing properties built or acquired by the Council. This is encapsulated within the Rent Standard 2020 as amended in 2023.</p>

	<p>The process for quality assuring major refurbishment work on council housing property.</p> <p>The delivery of housing management, repairs and maintenance, tenant engagement and complaints handling in relation to the current regulatory standards (some of which have been in place since 2012) – these being the Home Standard, the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, the Tenancy Standard, Neighbourhood and Community Standard</p> <p>Delivery of the housing management service in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code</p> <p>Handover process for new developments</p> <p>In terms of timing, and to give this review reasonable boundaries and thus avoid mission creep, the principal time focus will be on matters since April 2020, only going further back in time as necessary to track and understand earlier decisions and actions whose impact was felt from April 2020 onwards.</p> <p>For avoidance of doubt, both housing development and planning matters relating to the Local Plan are explicitly <u>out of scope</u> of this review.</p>
<p>Methodology/ Approach (methods to be used to gather evidence)</p>	<p>First a scoping discussion with members of Scrutiny to clarify draft Key Lines of Enquiry.</p> <p>Thereafter a gathering and presentation of information – principally committee reports, contract documentation, and management reports, culminating in an agreed timeline of key moments/inflection points.</p> <p>Thereafter, a series of discussions with key Uttlesford players on what happened at those key moments, how things subsequently played out, and what positive learning there is to draw and apply. This will include discussions with tenant and resident representatives.</p> <p>This to be supplemented as necessary by taking evidence and advice from external experts.</p> <p>Thereafter, officers will prepare for members’ consideration a draft set of conclusions and recommendations drawing out learning in a draft Report, which members will finalise and publish.</p>

<p>Potential witnesses</p>	<p>Relevant cabinet members and officers.</p> <p>Tenant & leaseholder representatives.</p> <p>Possible external experts.</p> <p>NB. Supplier representatives are not proposed as witnesses, due to the operational sensitivities and legal difficulties as explained in the section below.</p> <p>Similarly, neither the Regulator of Social Housing nor the Housing Ombudsman representatives are proposed as witnesses, as this is not consistent with their regulatory duties – though published documentation from both will feature as reference material in the evidence pack assembled.</p>
<p>Other issues</p>	<p>It is the legitimate job of members through the Scrutiny function to explore operational matters, but not legitimate to ‘cross the line’ into becoming back seat drivers, effectively seeking to influence (deliberately or unintentionally) the management of operational matters, contractual negotiations or any legal disputes.</p> <p>Councillors have previously been advised that direct approaches from them to senior staff of third parties <u>must not happen</u> because crossing over into operational activity on such sensitive matters runs an immediate and serious risk of prejudicing the proper and effective pursuance of the Council’s interests and fiduciary duties.</p> <p>It should be noted that there are extensive contractual and legal implications between the Council and third parties which are still very much live, and which are likely to remain live well into the 2023/24 financial/municipal years. There are therefore rich opportunities for unintended negative consequences of councillors engaging in reviewing historic actions which are simultaneously also very much still under active management, negotiation and potentially litigation, and thus severely prejudicing the Authority’s position, and with that risking either the current/future services provided to tenants and leaseholders and/or the Council’s legal and financial position.</p> <p>There is therefore essentially a binary choice for the Scrutiny Committee in how (and when) it establishes and operates this suggested review – either it must wait until the issues are truly historic rather than live before commencing, or it must accept the necessity of strict constraints on how it operates.</p> <p>For example, any elements of the review that touched upon still live contractual matters would have to be conducted in strictest</p>

	<p>confidence, outside of the public domain – including potentially redacting large sections of the final report. Even operating in private session, the Committee would not be able to interview or engage directly with third parties with whom officers are in live negotiations over contractual matters, as there would be an inevitable and unhelpful bleed between the two which would likely prejudice the Authority’s position.</p> <p>Councillors may well want to consider whether commencing this review at an appropriate time – e.g. perhaps late 2023, might see many (but not all) of these constraints loosened.</p> <p>Additionally, councillors must understand the constraints on officers to support such a potentially wide-ranging piece of work. Officer time will unfortunately be limited in working with councillors on this, and indeed any, Scrutiny review due to sustained pressure of work and councillors need to be realistic with their requests and what they aim to achieve.</p>
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