



# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

## Energy and Climate Change Working Group

**Date:** Wednesday, 1st March, 2023

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Venue:** Zoom

**Chair:** Councillor L Pepper

**Members:** Councillors M Caton, G Driscoll, R Freeman, B Light, R Pavitt and G Smith

### AGENDA

**1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

To receive any apologies and declarations of interest.

**2 Minutes of the previous meeting**

3 - 7

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.

**3 Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (presentation and update)**

To receive the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan update.

**4 Biodiversity Net Gain and Essex Local Nature Partnership (presentation and update)**

To receive the Biodiversity Net Gain and Essex Local Nature Partnership update.

**5 Zero Carbon Communities Grant**

8 - 14

To consider the Zero Carbon Communities Grant update.

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

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## **ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP held at ZOOM, on MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2023 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor L Pepper (Chair)  
Councillors M Caton, G Driscoll, R Freeman, B Light and G Smith

Officers in attendance: B Brown (Assistant Director - Environmental Services), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer) and V Reed (Climate Change, Lead Officer).

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pavitt.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th December 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

Councillor Light asked some questions relating to the last minutes and the Climate Change, Lead Officer gave the following responses:-

- There would be a formal update of the Climate Change action plan's achievements in quarter 4 which would be published in March.
- The transport studies being commissioned were linked to the Local Plan and supported the Saffron Walden Clean Air Project.
- The local cycling and walking infrastructure study had just started and would be a key piece of work for the Local Plan. The consultants were PJA.
- The Saffron Walden Clean Air Project, funded by the Department Of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), had been delayed due to resourcing, however, work had been carried out since November on stakeholder engagement. A press release was imminent to start the project. The Environmental Health Manager (Protection) had received an extension from DEFRA which meant the project would run for the next two years. A road map would be produced with more detail and some mobility schemes could be up and running by the summer.

The Chair said there were 20 applications for the Zero Carbon Communities Grants which closed on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023. She said that an update would be provided to the working group, and a paper prepared for Cabinet in due course.

The wording of the last minutes were incorrect in relation to Councillor Driscoll leaving the meeting, the wording would be changed.

### **ESSEX JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE STRATEGY (VERBAL UPDATE AND PRESENTATION)**

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services presented an update on the Waste Strategy from Essex:-

He began by going through National Issues:-

#### **Deposit Return Scheme**

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that the government had published more details on the scheme, which had been pushed back to 2025. He said that the scope of the scheme had been specified and it related to all drink packaging including plastic and tin, but in England it excluded glass. He gave details of the scheme but said that there was no information yet on the implications, including financial, for the Local Authorities.

In response to Members questions the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said :-

- Glass would be included under a different scheme, Extended Producer Responsibility, (EPR).
- The scheme would be mandatory for retailers, including online companies. The idea was to remove the items from the waste stream to minimise the risk from contamination and therefore increase successful recycling.

#### **Extended Producer Responsibility**

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that this included a range of products including household packing, furniture recycling and batteries. He said that this scheme had also been delayed, and would run alongside a new labelling arrangement, to help consumers understand what materials were recyclable. He said that there was a recent trend increasing compostable plastic, however, he said that this was still difficult to recycle, and under new arrangements there would have to be a label stating that it could not be recycled. He said that retailers would then pay into a collective pot according to the packaging they produced and eventually this money would be distributed back to Local Authorities, who were ultimately dealing with the recycling of the packaging produced.

He said that there would be an assessment of each Local Authority's collection service, and EPR funding money could be withheld if recycling was not effective and efficient. He said that the aim would be to have a more consistent collection system across the whole Country.

In response to a Member question the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that the scheme was likely to cover commercial and trade waste.

### **Consistency of collections**

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services explained that there had been strong Government emphasis on providing the same service and systems across the Country. He said that details of the consultation would be available shortly and were likely to have more emphasis on kerbside sorting of waste.

### **Garden Waste Services**

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that ability to charge for the removal of garden waste by Councils could be removed. He said that 50% of Councils did charge and it would be a significant loss of income.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that Uttlesford's garden waste service was a non-profit scheme that provided income to run the service.

### **Waste Management Strategy Essex**

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that there was a need to update the Waste Management Strategy in Essex. He said that in the County approximately 50% of waste was recycled, with food waste being collected separately.

He said that the new strategy would focus on improving environmental performance, using proven technology already in existence within the Country. He said that incineration (with energy from waste) within Essex was a possibility and this process had to have good environmental controls and energy recovery from waste.

In response to Members questions the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said:-

- The Anaerobic Digestion System, used to recycle food waste, produced electricity which was used to run the plant with any excess feeding into the national grid.
- There was no location identified for an incinerator yet, but there was one being built near Rivenhall which had no County connection.
- The waste transfer site in Dunmow had closed and vehicles were now travelling to Braintree near Freeport. He said the routes had been changed because of this and the impact was being monitored. He asked Members to send details of any streets that had been missed but thought that all collections were up to date.

Councillor Freeman said that he had details of a company in Sweden who very successfully ran an incinerator to heat the whole town.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that Essex County Council (ECC) were in the process of modelling outcomes from their disposal options including environmental performance, cost, carbon capture and heat recovery. He said that they had also looked at each Council to identify what waste systems were currently being used. He said this would eventually feed into an overall document which would go out to public consultation in the summer of 2023.

He said that he would bring regular updates to the Working Group and at some point this would need to be considered as a Council.

The Chair said that one of ECC's objectives was that nothing would go to landfill by 2030.

In response to a question from Councillor Light, the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that an incinerator required a lot of space due to the scrubbing technology required to clean the gases. He suggested that if there was any interest, he could arrange a trip to a facility. He said that the anaerobic treatment of food waste could be smaller sites and that there were a number within the County.

Councillor Light asked if this could be included within the strategy. The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that Uttlesford District Council (UDC) could use the consultation period to feedback to ECC about smaller incinerators, but it would be up to them to decide what was included as the disposal authority.

The Chair said that the Government was planning to ban single use plastic by October 2023. The Economic Development team were also encouraging local businesses to get involved with green issues.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that ECC were engaging with Councils throughout the process and had paid for a number of models for delivery that could be used across the County. There was no obligation to sign up to any of them but it was a good opportunity for the Council to look at and consider all the issues.

The Chair said that at a recent meeting she had attended there was an organisation that was turning plastic into sustainable aviation fuels. She said she would find the link and circulate to the Working Group.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services gave an update on the decarbonisation strategy. He said that the fleet emissions were the main carbon source at the Council. He said that they were looking into ways to decarbonise the fleet and had considered a number of options. He said that the challenge for the district was to find a viable option that could cover the whole district due to its rural nature.

He said that small electric vehicles had been trialled for ground maintenance teams and the current vehicles were up for renewal later this year. He said that the grounds fleet could be replaced with at least some electric vehicles where this was possible.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that there was charging infrastructure available at the Canfield site and investigations were on going for ground equipment to be battery powered by solar, moving away from petrol.

He said that hydrogen was potentially of interest although there were currently supply challenges. The Chair said that in Aberdeen there was a hydrogen hub,

and Councillor Driscoll said that they made their own hydrogen. He said that Dundee ran all their buses using electric vehicles and that they had solar panels in car parks. The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said he was due to attend a fleet decarbonisation webinar, and Councils were sharing information all the time.

Councillor Freeman said to be cautious in advocating hydrogen as 95% produced was made from hydrocarbons which produced carbon dioxide. He said that the only green hydrogen came from the electrolysis of water.

In response to a Member question the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that the majority of the fleet would need to be replaced in 3 years time; in the future he would try to replace them on a more cyclical basis. He said that it was likely that the fleet would use existing technology as the current challenge in a rural area was that electric vehicles did not have enough charge to cover the distance, especially now that the Braintree waste transfer site was adding an extra hour onto the day.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services talked through operational issues including the waste transfer station, which meant longer journeys for the waste vehicles.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that there was a new requirement to manage the disposal of sofas, upholstery and other furniture. The Environment Agency had talked about banning these from landfill, and new enforcement regulations had come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. He said that this service had been paused to allow for the logistics to be considered. He said there was a cost implication for the Council and these items would need to be taken to a different waste facility near Colchester.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services agreed to circulate the slides to Members.

There was discussion about the number and challenge of the objectives coming from the Government, the Assistant Director of Environmental Services said that the Waste Strategy was ambitious but it was mainly sensible suggestions that the Council would look at as they came through. It was agreed that the deposit return scheme would hopefully reduce littering and make bigger retailers look at the amount of packaging they were using.

*The meeting closed at 8:24pm*

# Agenda Item 5

<b>Committee:</b>	Energy and Climate Change Working Group	<b>Date:</b> 01/03/2023
<b>Title:</b>	Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund	
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Louise Pepper	
<b>Report Author:</b>	Vicky Reed, Climate Change, Lead Officer	<b>Key decision:</b> N/A

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## Summary

1. The Climate Change programme agreed an allocation of £300,000 over the next two years to enable funding of community projects that will support the delivery of priorities within the Council's Climate Change Strategy.
2. The ambition for the fund is to be able to stimulate engagement within the community about climate action, to share project ideas, success and learning.
3. The Zero Carbon Communities Fund was launched at the end of October 2022 with £150,000 available in the first round of funding. The closing date for applications was the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2023.
4. Community groups, parish and town councils were able to apply for grants between the value of £1k, and up to £35k. Applications were invited under the themes of carbon emission reduction; biodiversity restoration and enhancement; and community engagement in climate change.
5. Twenty applications were received at the closing date, with a total of £250,000 funding requested.
6. The evaluation and selection of projects took place in January. Applications were independently evaluated and scored by Councillor Pepper, Councillor Pavitt, and Councillor Caton. After collation of scoring by UDC officers, a moderation meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> January and eleven projects were approved to receive grant awards.
7. A paper confirming the approved grant awards will be tabled for the Cabinet meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2023.

## Recommendations

8. To note the evaluation and selection process that has been undertaken to determine the successful projects in this funding round.
9. To note that the Zero Carbon Communities Fund will open for a second round of applications later this year.



## Financial Implications

10. A total of £125,426 grant funding has been awarded in year 1.
11. £150,000 was allocated for year 1, and any surplus funding will roll forward to year 2.
12. All applicants will receive feedback from the selection panel. For successful projects this will include details on any conditions attached to receiving their grant award.
13. Grant payments will only be released to a project when Officers are in receipt of a signed agreement and any other requested information, to confirm that conditions of the funding have been accepted and/or met by the applicant.

## Background Papers

14. 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.
  - The Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund Criteria (*see Appendix 2.*)

## Impact

15.

Communication/Consultation	The model for the Zero Carbon Communities Fund has been reviewed by the Energy and Climate Change Working Group.
Community Safety	
Equalities	Grant funding will be allocated so that we can support as wide a range of projects as possible across the district. All projects will need to demonstrate how they will engage with others within their community.
Health and Safety	
Human Rights/Legal Implications	
Sustainability	The fund specifically supports enabling community groups to deliver sustainability

	and carbon reduction projects aligned to the Council Climate Change priorities.
Ward-specific impacts	
Workforce/Workplace	

## Situation

16. The Zero Carbon Communities Grant was launched on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the closing date for applications was 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
17. In this first round, applications for grants were invited under three themes:
  - 1) Carbon Emission Reduction
  - 2) Biodiversity Restoration and Enhancement
  - 3) Community Engagement in Climate Change
18. All projects were asked to provide a method for how they would evaluate and measure the impact of their project. For projects delivering interventions to reduce carbon emissions, the impact needed to be quantifiable.
19. At the closing date, a total of twenty applications for funding were received. Please see the summary of applications received in *Appendix 1*.
20. The selection panel independently scored and assessed each application ahead of a moderation meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January, where all applications were discussed and the successful grant awards agreed.
21. A traffic light system was used to evaluate each application against the grant award criteria, please see further details at *Appendix 2*. Panel members were asked to declare any interests ahead of the moderation process, to ensure transparency and fairness in the assessment of projects.
22. Eleven projects were selected to receive a grant award this year. The list of successful grant awards and projects will be tabled at the Cabinet meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
23. The grant provides an opportunity for the Council to commence an ongoing programme of community engagement on climate action. The Climate Change team will monitor and engage with projects over the next 12 months, sharing stories and details of their implementation, via the Let's Talk Uttlesford Platform.
24. Key milestones to be aware of are set out in the table below:

Activity/Milestone	Key Dates
<b><i>Cabinet Approval</i></b>	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b><i>Publication of Grant Awards</i></b>	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b><i>Outcome letters issued to applicants</i></b>	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b><i>Grant Award Funding Released</i></b>	20 <sup>th</sup> March onwards
<b><i>Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund opens for 2<sup>nd</sup> round</i></b>	End August 2023

## Risk Analysis

25.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the demand for grants cannot be met by the funding that has been allocated, leading to projects not being delivered, and community climate action plans being delayed in delivery, and the disengagement of community groups.	2	2	Detailed feedback will be given to all applicants on the outcome of their proposal. Arising themes from applications will be reviewed to look at where other grants or resources could be utilised to support delivery.  Other suitable grant funds will continue to be publicised which provides a further opportunity for community groups.
There is a risk that project impact measurements are not quantifiable, which means the	3	3	Available and recognised community carbon calculation resources and methodology are shared with applicants and projects.

contribution of projects to the reduction of carbon emissions cannot be monitored or understood, leading to a failure of the fund to achieve its aims.			
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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.

## Appendix 1 Summary of Applications

**Total Grants requested**

**£249, 314.00**

By Ward	No of Applications	Total Value
Clavering	1	£15,000
Debden and Wimbish	2	£19,150
Felsted and Stebbing	3	£18,150
Great Dunmow	1	£23,000
Hatfield Heath	2	£11,360
Littlebury Chesterford	3	£34,885
Newport	1	£5,425
Saffron Walden	2	£69,000
Stansted North	2	£4,993
Stansted South Birchanger	2	£39,893
The Sampfords	1	£7,500

Theme	No of Applications	Total Value
Carbon Emission Reduction	10	£172, 601
Biodiversity	7	£33 926
Community engagement and behaviour change	3	£42,787

Organisation type	No of applications
Parish or town council	11
Village hall/scout hall/Church	4
Recreational group	2
Other	3



## Assessment Criteria

You need to read each application form and supporting documents to assess the following:

### PROJECT PLAN

- Is there a clear project description, have they identified what the group wants to do and what the project will achieve?
- Has the plan clearly set out how the project will get the necessary people, support and resources? Do you understand the project objectives? Do the project objective/s align well to the grant theme?
- Did they submit a quote? Are you confident there is readiness and capacity to deliver the project?

### VALUE

- Does the project represent value for money – is there a good impact for the amount of money requested?
- Does the project contribute additional value? this might include any of the following: other funding contributions; volunteer time/expertise from other sources; collaboration between organisations, and/or evidence of local support; communication of the project to the local community

### MEASUREMENT AND IMPACT

- Has the applicant set out how they will measure and assess the difference that the project will make? For carbon emission reduction projects this should be quantifiable.
- To what extent will the project have a lasting impact on the local community?



## Your Score and Comments

- For each application on the spreadsheet please complete Columns 'H' and 'I'.
- In column H: select one of the following to indicate your assessment of the application: **Green**, **Red** or **Amber**
- In column I: provide any brief notes and comments to support your assessment.

Quality Criteria – Traffic Light Assessment	
Please select your evaluation score (either <b>RED</b> , <b>AMBER</b> or <b>GREEN</b> )	
<b>GREEN</b>	The project meets all the requirements of the grant criteria The answers provided are regarded as excellent and fully relevant to the project outlined. I have full confidence in the capabilities or capacity of the applicant.
<b>AMBER</b>	The responses meet all the requirements of the grant criteria. The answers provided are regarded as good and are in part relevant to the project outlined. I have a good level of confidence in the capabilities or capacity of the applicant
<b>RED</b>	The responses meet some requirements of the grant criteria. The answers provided are of low quality. I have some doubts about the capabilities or capacity of the applicant.