

Councillor Louise Pepper,
Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Green Issues; Equalities
Full Council, 5 October 2021

Climate change action plan progress

The CCAP went to the Climate change Working Group on September 8th. Input and suggestions were incorporated into the action plan which will next go to the JET meeting on October 11th. Following this meeting it will go to the November Scrutiny Committee for approval.

The CCAP includes projects spanning the breadth of climate action, from the 'easy' to the most innovative, and in some cases almost national pilot projects. All projects have timeframes and certainty as appropriate for the status of the project. Budgets are allocated accordingly.

Transport

Surface transport is the highest emitting category of CO₂ in the district, even when data from the M11 is removed. The M11 is considered to DEFRA to be outside the remit of local authorities, while all other roads are within it. Recent improvements in vehicle emissions have been counteracted by trends towards larger vehicles and population growth, meaning that emissions are climbing, especially on local roads (as opposed to A roads).

Work is currently in progress on a cycle strategy for Uttlesford and a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. This will be complemented by an active travel survey across the district to help identify barriers to active travel and opportunities to improve infrastructure.

In Saffron Walden, where there is an AQMA in place, an active travel for clean air initiative is being put together which draws on the measures recommended in the air quality action plan. Funding will be drawn from S106 money (already collected by ECC for developments built out), grant applications (in the process of being applied for) and the climate action plan. The active travel for clean air initiative incorporates the best of the successful projects carried out in cities but adapted for a market town.

The lessons learned from planning and delivery in this project will provide the basis for roll out in Great Dunmow and other settlements where there is a high volume of short local journeys being made by car that could realistically be replaced with active travel.

Housing

Private housing is the second highest emitting category of CO₂ in the district and rolling projects to deliver government grants are in place. The most recent project being launched is the Local Authority Delivery Grant (£248,000), which is being delivered across Essex by Warmworks (as procured by the BEIS-funded Energy Hub). Rounds of grant funding have precise deadlines and values.

Large scale fact-finding projects are underway to map and define potential area-based decarbonisation projects across the district. An initial report from Energy Catapult is due in the week commencing 11th October.

Work continues on a checklist for new developments – this checklist would provide information on the energy efficiency of new development in a consistent and comparable format, that would also provide meaningful information for the lay reader.

Biodiversity

The biodiversity survey remains open until the end of September at which point the responses will be collated and projects will begin to be planned. ECC has been following progress of this survey and is considering using it as a template to roll out in all districts. <https://uttlesfordbiodiversitymap.commonplace.is/>

Community Engagement



Saffron Walden's Eco Market - Credit: Saffron Photo



The Mayor of Saffron Walden, Cllr Richard Porch, with Uttlesford District Councillor Louise Pepper at the Eco Market in Saffron Walden - Credit: Saffron Photo

An Eco Market saw Great Big Green Week off to a strong start on Saturday September 18th on Saffron Walden Common.

The Great Big Green Week is a national event organised by The Climate Coalition which runs until Sunday, September 26.

The market on The Common was supported by a range of stallholders, from coppice woodcraft experts to a display about the threat to the River Cam, sharing their ideas and drive to tackle the climate crisis on their doorsteps.

District Councillor Louise Pepper, who is responsible for green issues at Uttlesford District Council, attended the event. Cllr Pepper said: "This is exactly what we need to be promoting - sustainable businesses. I think over the lockdown, we had time to think about what is important to us, so more people are interested in getting stuck into their gardens or enjoying open green spaces and the outdoors. This gives people a chance to find ways of doing that."

<https://www.saffronwaldenreporter.co.uk/news/eco-market-celebrates-saffron-waldens-green-economy-8339108>

Equalities Report September 2021

- The next listening event will be held in October and will be facilitated by Hayley Bennett. We are awaiting confirmation of the date.
- An EDI survey has been produced to be distributed to all staff to encourage individuals to become Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advocates. The survey encourages staff members to comment on training topics that they feel would be beneficial to the workplace. The advocates will then form an internal staff group who will share good practice and champion EDI throughout UDC.
- Web pages have been updated