
Environment & Green Issues February 2022 update

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

1. Uttlesford has declared a Climate & Ecological Emergency and **2030 net zero target**
2. **Transport is our highest CO2 emitter** followed by domestic heating.
3. **Biodiversity is included as a critical element** of adaptation to climate change
4. Climate Change is expected **to get worse**

Whilst Uttlesford District Council are not required to take responsibility for emissions beyond the council's own control, we intend to be aspirational and ambitious in keeping to our 2030 target. We understand why we must keep temperatures from rising above 1.5 degrees. Anything above this, will be a threat to mankind.

Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) – agreed by Cabinet to adopt on 11th January 2022. The **CCAP** is a live and evolving document and tracks progress against the actions contained within.
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/climate-change-action-plan>

UDC are on target to meet our March 2022 actions.

We have identified areas within our direct control and responsibility and those where we can play our part through persuasion, enablement, and community leadership, with the aims of:

- Achieving net-zero carbon status in council operations by 2030
- Influencing and aiding reduction to net zero of the district's entire CO2 output
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the district

As a local authority we have at least three climate challenges:

- To take control of and reduce our own emissions.

- To provide leadership partnering, persuading, and influencing our communities, partners, and Government to do things differently.

- To improve and protect biodiversity.

Reduction of emissions via direct action - what UDC can control

UDC transport fleet; EV charging points; energy use of UDC properties; carbon impact of waste and recycling; business travel

Reduction of emissions via enablement and partnership

Domestic energy; District-wide decarbonisation opportunities; planning for active travel; actions within the local plan

Climate change resilience

District and parish resilience plans (heatwaves, floods, drought)

Biodiversity

Mapping for nature recovery

We will be focusing on our two highest emitting sectors which are transport and domestic energy. Biodiversity is included as a critical element of adaptation to climate change

To take control of and reduce our own emissions.

NET ZERO COUNCIL

Switch to a green energy tariff

Green tariff – In 2018- 2019 the Council produced 1138 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from gas and electricity which represents half of the Council's total greenhouse gas emissions. After switching to a green energy tariff, the Council can now claim 100% reduction (i.e zero carbon dioxide), from electricity and in the case of biogas, 72% reduction CO2 emissions.

UDC EV charging point provision

Installed x4 points at London Road Council Offices in Saffron Walden.

Improve average energy efficiency of Council housing stock

A survey of all Council housing stock is underway by Uttlesford Norse Ltd. The purpose of the survey is to assess the current efficiency of UDC stock and to quantify the improvements that can be made to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon impact. The survey will not be completed until 2023 without additional resources being deployed through Uttlesford Norse Ltd (this is being explored).

In recent years as part of ongoing improvements to our housing stock:

- 90 council owned properties have had heat pumps installed,
- 280 have had external wall insulation installed
- 300 solar panels have been installed

Set a Net Zero Carbon goal for the Council and implement supporting policies

A target of creating a fleet decarbonisation plan by March 2022 has been established. Fleet emissions account for just under half of our overall business emissions. It should be noted that it is

unlikely that there is environmental or financial benefit in replacing fossil fuel powered vehicles that are not at the end of their useful life.

The 21/22 and 22/23 capital programme, includes replacement of:

- 5 Heavy Goods Vehicles – like for like replacements
- 3 Sweepers – like for like replacements
- 6 large vans / pickups – electrically powered alternatives will be trialled in March when test vehicles are thought to be available.
- 2 small vans.

Grounds maintenance equipment replacement has not progressed as quickly as hoped due to operational issues however this will be completed this financial year. HVO fuel has been trialled in a number of waste collection fleet vehicles and has proven to be a suitable alternative with no maintenance issues and similar performance. HVO is currently more expensive than regular diesel and there are wider questions about the true environmental cost of this product.

Set a Net Zero Carbon goal for the Council and implement supporting policies

New depot in Little Canfield - PV panels have been installed on the replacement workshop roof and will provide power to the site and potentially the National Grid. The new vehicle wash is currently being installed and will recycle 90 percent of the water it uses. This facility will replace two jet washes at Shire Hill and Dunmow depots and will help reduce our overall water consumption. The wash facility should also help keep our fleet of large vehicles looking smart.

AIR QUALITY & TRANSPORT

Increase air quality monitoring across the district

The diffusion tubes at school and airport sites are installed and data is being collected. The annual Air Quality Status Report was published in Quarter 3 of 2021/22 (see below). For 2022/23 the service is planning to redirect some funding to focus on diffusion tubes at all school locations within the district. This work is likely to commence in February and will provide the service with baseline data to allow for more targeted work, should it be considered necessary.

In October the service applied to DEFRA for grant funding to allow the service to deliver on a range of work streams that would see some further targeted air quality monitoring as well as some pilot schemes to assess the viability of e-bike hire and electric vehicle car clubs in Saffron Walden. Other schemes to improve awareness and change behaviour were also included within the bid. The service will be advised on whether it was successful in February.

Air Quality is monitored and reported in real time.

We have NO2 tubes outside the following schools: Great Easton Primary School, High Stile Primary School Gt Dunmow, Thaxted Primary School, St Marys Primary School, Hampton Rd, Stansted, Elsenham Primary School. These were put up in Jan 2020. UDC has a network of 37 diffusion tubes in total. <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/airquality#Live>

Improve air quality monitoring and reporting.

Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) August 2021 which was published 25th on August 2021. <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11129/2021-Air-Quality-Annual-Status-Report-ASR/pdf/Uttlesford-2021-ASRA.pdf?m=637701755131270000>

Officers are working closely with ECC and exploring all possibilities for reducing traffic by encouraging a shift to active travel, reducing unnecessary pollution caused by unavoidable traffic, and supporting the transition to low emission vehicles.

Deliver reductions in pollution at identified problem areas

Measured air pollution in 2020, as set out in the Annual Air Quality Report published in September 2021, reduced significantly from previous years due to Covid-19 national lockdowns and restrictions. There were no measured exceedances of Air Quality Objectives in 2020 and this represents the fourth year running of no exceedances at identified problem locations and we anticipate this to continue. This gives the council grounds to examine whether the Air Quality Management area can be revoked. However, the Council will await regulations made under the Environment Act 2021 and the results of 2021 monitoring data before considering this further. This information will also be presented in the Annual Air Quality Report in 2022.

In the meantime, many actions originally planned as part of the Air Quality Action Plan now also form part of a series of projects linked the council's Climate Change Strategy. Preparations are underway for Clear Air Day (CAD) June 2022. CAD is the UK's largest air pollution campaign and will see the council engaging with partners to improve the public's understanding of air pollution, raise awareness and encourage behaviour change.

TRANSPORT & TRAVEL

Prioritise active travel: Prioritising people who walk and cycle, as well as those who use public transport, empowers people to make travel choices that help to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

A comprehensive survey map of active travel. This map will provide the basis for feasibility studies and project planning. **The Active Travel Survey** is now live – link here: <https://uttlesfordlcwip.commonplace.is/> - **over 1600 comments to date.** It will help identify barriers to active travel and opportunities to improve infrastructure and will be completed by Spring 2022. The data would be fed to the consultants and some comments would be passed to Highway Rangers.

Introduce EV charging point provision

EV CHARGING POINTS Installed x32 new points in 2021 (34 in total).

Publicly accessible EV charging points for vehicles have now been installed at White Street and Chequers Lane car parks in Great Dunmow and Crafton Green Car Park in Stansted.

N.B If anyone wants to charge their vehicle then they will need to sign up with a BP Pulse account. <https://www.bppulse.co.uk/charging-on-the-go>

On-street EV charging points/ECC controlled

Councillors were contacted in Saffron Walden, Takeley and Flitch Green. Work has continued closely with the Essex team and their strategy has been agreed.

NB. Cllr Pepper highlighted to the Climate Officer that Thaxted could be considered. They have no sustainable travel infrastructure and limited public transport options (bus only) and job opportunities.

To improve and protect biodiversity.

BIODIVERSITY

41% of UK species declining and one in ten are threatened with extinction.

Biodiversity mapping survey

This was to identify areas where we as a district council can help improve local biodiversity, the council asked residents to help map environmentally important areas. ECC has been following progress of this survey and they are considering using it as a template to roll out in all districts. We have received 572 responses for this survey! UDC is the first local authority to use this ground-breaking mapping tool to engage local communities in identifying opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and the protection of nature-rich spaces. In fact, this UDC-inspired web tool is being offered by our partners, Commonplace, to other LAs to aid in their nature recovery. This will be one of our first key priorities for spending our climate funding. A 'good governance' scheme for funding has been set up however, we're currently seeking the right resources to implement this vital green project (an inhouse ecologist). We received a good spread of district wide projects (please see below).



'Green Champions' Cllr Pepper continues to encourage our wider community to work jointly together to fight climate change and preserve and protect our local biodiversity. **Website - Simple Steps to fight climate change.** <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/simple-steps-to-fight-climate-change>

UDC TREE SCHEME

Increase the number of trees in the district (and protect existing trees)

The tree planting initiative is an integral part of the Energy and Climate Change agenda. Funding of this initiative is from the Climate Change budget. It is intended that the annual planting initiative is rolled on for the period of the Climate Change budget allocation. The scheme offers the provision of trees and native hedging plants to parish and town councils for planting on land in their control. In addition, tree planting on UDC land is to be undertaken as appropriate. The supply of trees for planting on public open spaces which are in the control of management companies will also be considered. The take-up of the scheme this year been limited. A hedge planting scheme undertaken with **Saffron Walden Town Council at Lime Avenue** is being funded under our scheme at the cost of £2,491.50.

In addition, trees have been planted at open space at Wicken Lea, Newport, and on open space at Saxon Way, Saffron Walden. A limited number of trees are also being provided to Clavering and Felsted parish councils. The Chelmsford Diocese has been approached regarding the planting of trees in the district's parish churchyards as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy scheme. No response has to date been received. It is unlikely that this initiative is furthered during the current financial year, but it is hoped this will be pursued during the next. Six tree preservation orders (TPOs) have been made so far during 2021.



Hedge Planting at Lime Avenue in Saffron Walden

Terry Frostick and his team from Saffron Walden Town Council planted just over 1,500 hedging plants in Lime Avenue in Saffron Walden. We would like to thank everyone for their efforts.

The funding provided to the SWTC for the hedge planting at Lime Avenue open space was drawn from the Climate Change budget and was not subject to any match funding from ECC.

Before the end of March, Ben will provide Cllr Pepper with a breakdown of the total number of trees and hedging planted as part of the Tree Planting Initiative 2021-22.

Water Champion Cllr Pavitt *"2022 has already recorded one of the driest months of January in 150 years. Uttlesford received barely a third of its normal monthly rainfall. If this continues there could be real problems in the summer."*

ENERGY

Households will face a record energy bill increase of 54% from April after regulator Ofgem lifted the cap on default tariffs to £1,971.

Support local energy production initiatives

The Climate Change Action Plan includes a completed action point which was to compile a full dataset on Local Energy Assets. This full dataset (of 43 data sets at LSOA or property level) enables the Council to develop energy-related projects to assist in the decarbonisation of the district. For instance, a database of the energy generation potential of rooftop solar by property and identifies pilot areas for settlement-based decarbonisation projects.

Low-income government energy grants

Energy Company Obligation and Government grants for insulation for low-income households are being promoted on social media. Two one week apart full-page newspaper adverts will be undertaken in the local press. Six copies of A4 posters have been delivered to every Member for them to distribute to their local doctors, shops and community centres to get the message out around the wards. The impact of the advertisement and marketing will be reviewed and if deemed necessary community outreach will be undertaken in the spring or early summer.

Low-income household grants

Local Authority Delivery 2 (LAD2) Government grant **£250k**

Local Authority Delivery 3 (LAD3) Government grant **£900k** (awarded late December 2021)

If you're an Essex homeowner with a household income below £30,000, you may be eligible for up to £10,000 of work to make energy efficient improvements to your home. This could include fitting loft insulation, cavity or solid wall insulation or energy efficient heating.

These schemes will make energy-saving improvements to the homes of people who struggle to pay their heating bills. These improvements will help residents to use less energy and spend less on their energy bills. The improvements will also help to cut carbon emissions and create green jobs for those needed to carry out the work. Our consortium partner, Greater Southeast Energy Hub are looking into how this can be successfully achieved.

WASTE

Implement programmes to reduce single-use plastics

The Chair's Charter was Launched in May 2021. It has not been possible to promote the Charter within schools as originally planned during the year because of Covid restrictions. Work has begun to install 16 trial dual waste bins across the district, which will enable the public to dispose of recyclable waste in litter bins, installation will be completed by the end of March 2022. Initial locations are: Thaxted, Stansted, Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden. The aim of the dual bins is to reduce the amount of recyclable waste going to landfill, and if the trial is successful other locations will be identified and added to the scheme. Later this (calendar) year, there are plans to invite schools to get involved with the Charter and pledge to both reduce their plastic waste and investigate different ways to reuse and recycle. Alongside this there will be events run, including community litter picks, business awards for ingenuity, and school competitions to name a few.

A wider waste education plan has been drafted for 2022 which includes actions to promote the Charter, focuses on waste minimisation including single use plastics and wider environmental issues such as Climate Change. The plan will be implemented by the Waste and Recycling Officer during 2022.

Work to reduce per-Capita Land fill in the district

UDC has supported national and local campaigns to improve awareness of waste related issues. It supported National Litter Pick by providing equipment and collecting waste from community organised litter picks. Several social media campaigns have also been run for example to specifically highlight contamination within recycling collections.

Target littering and fly-tipping

We supported the National Litter Pick by providing equipment and collecting waste from community organised litter picks. There will be a targeted litter enforcement campaign around the airport during Q4, and we are seeking permissions from the landowners to act. We are also researching the software that will enable us to serve civil penalty notices for littering from vehicles.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Essex Design Guide (essexdesignguide.co.uk) to be updated to reflect best environmental practice in net zero and resilience.

Interim Climate Change Planning Policy document - published in February 2021. All developers are required to read our document before they submit planning applications. [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10714/interim-climate-change-policy/pdf/Interim_Climate_Change_Planning_Policy_01.03.21_PDF\(1\).pdf?m=637502093891130000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10714/interim-climate-change-policy/pdf/Interim_Climate_Change_Planning_Policy_01.03.21_PDF(1).pdf?m=637502093891130000)

The Interim climate change guidance is in place and considered in regard to planning applications. The Climate Change Officer is working closely with the Local Plan policy team to develop the new Local Plan which will have climate change mitigation and adaptation at its core. The **Climate Crisis Action Plan** was approved by Cabinet on 11 January 2022. The Planning Policy Team is working on a climate change supplementary planning document (SPD) with a view to be adopted in line with the new local plan. The SPD will explain how to incorporate sustainability measures into planning and place-making.

Local Plan

The Local Plan will address climate change through the strategic location of development and through policies. Work continues to progress well with the intention of the Council submitting the local plan for Examination in 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted by the Council last year. The Council will update the LDS in the early 2022 to reflect progress and a minor change to the publication date of the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This will show the regulation 18 consultation commencing in May 2022 instead of March 2022 and allows for members to better consider the emerging evidence. Seventeen consultant studies are progressing, and this work will form the evidence base that will support the local plan. Recent reports to members have included the Sustainability Appraisal, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Water Cycle, Employment, Renewable Energy, Employment, Landscape Sensitivity, Strategic Flood Risk, Heritage Sensitivity, Transport and Retail Studies.

Increase walking, cycling and sustainable transport

The Local Plan will address increases in walking and cycling through the location of development and through appropriate policies and infrastructure requirements.

Promote and support sustainable transport initiatives, such as bus, rapid transport and rail upgrades

The Council is working with its transport consultants and Essex County Council to identify the highway improvements needed to support development. These will be required in the Local Plan.

Drive programmes that increase biodiversity

A Green Infrastructure Plan is in development by the Local Plan team with support from the Climate Officer. This includes policies on natural and seminatural green infrastructure balancing biodiversity recovery planning with public access to green spaces. As part of this UDC is actively participating in Natural England's beta version of the Green Infrastructure Mapping Tool for Local Plan making, having identified flaws in the underlying data with regards to the accessibility of the green spaces, for example not all mapped sites are available for public access. UDC has carried out a citizen science biodiversity survey to identify projects that could come forward immediately as well as in the longer term. The principle of this is to layer the citizen science data with the Green Infrastructure Plan and identify and deliver those projects which would be independent of the Local Plan and those projects which would sit with the Local Plan (for instance by being associated with developer contributions and site layout design).

Implement and enforce policies that protect water and reduce energy consumption

The Council is a member of Water Resources East, an organisation comprising more than 200 members which aims to develop a collaborative approach to water resource planning. It is anticipated that greater clarity on what will be required by UDC will be established over the coming year.

Consultants have been appointed to develop a Water Cycle Study (WCS) as part of the preparation of the Local Plan. This study will look at the availability of water resources for human consumption, its treatment and supply to homes and business, its use and consequently the generation of wastewater. It then looks at how wastewater is taken away, treated, and finally what happens when it is returned to the environment. A WCS is not a mandatory document, but Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are often encouraged by the Environment Agency (EA) to undertake them as part of the evidence base for a Local Plan. In some cases, Local Plans have been found unsound where there was insufficient evidence to show the local plan had considered the impact of growth on the aquatic environment. AWCS will provide that evidence, aiming to ensure development only occurs within environmental constraints, and helping to steer growth towards the most sustainable locations. They also promote early planning of water infrastructure so that it is in place prior to development being occupied, and boost engagement between LPAs and water companies. Work to complete the WCS is ongoing.

EV charging at new properties

UDC has a policy that EV charging points must be installed at all new developments.

Government biodiversity net gain assessment <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development>

Check the long-term flood risk for an area in England -

<https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk>

Recognise the district's 'greenest' businesses and developers

Due to the ongoing impact of Covid 19, this activity will be rescheduled to year 2 (2022/23) of the Economic Recovery Action Plan as business awards were not held in 2021. In the meantime, the council is supporting regional initiatives to help local businesses reduce their carbon footprint.

LOCAL SKILLS TRAINING/Cllr Reeve/Linda Howells

The Local Government Association said councils are key to facilitating a boom in the green economy, predicting up to 1.18 million new jobs being created in low carbon sectors by 2050 in England.

The LGA said councils will require local control over skills and employment support, with increased investment to create and secure green jobs for young people and adults.

UDC Job Fair 10th February 2022

Providing leadership partnering, persuading, and influencing our communities, partners and Government to do things differently

As much as 62% of the future reduction in emissions will rely on individual choices and behaviours.

LOBBYING, INFLUENCING & RAISING AWARENESS

Monthly reports

Cllr Pepper provides two monthly written reports.

1. Town & all councillors/relevant officers and around 25 residents on my emailing list (last report 24/12/21).
2. Parish & Town council with a climate & biodiversity update (23/12/22).

Simple steps to fight climate change - Cllr Louise Pepper offers advice and updates on climate change, biodiversity and what local people can do to reduce our carbon footprint. To date, we have provided a list of steps for individuals, our local community, businesses, schools and the aviation sector. The last sector to focus on will be agriculture. <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/simple-steps-to-fight-climate-change>

Interactive website & media coverage – we will shortly have an interactive website and regular press releases that can update our community on what action UDC are taking and what is the latest

information/research on climate change and biodiversity, taking extra effort to reach communities (in particular, communities that are under presented).

ECC District Climate Forum – Chaired by Cllr Peter Schwier. The latest meeting was held on January 13th. They provided an Active Travel update and EV Strategy (suitable on-street locations for chargers), Funding and Activity Presentation, Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, Essex Green Skills Infrastructure Review, Recapped climate journey, “Love Essex website” – which can be shared with local areas and a Spring Climate Conference on 20th April. Next meeting 22nd March 2pm – 3pm via teams. Cllr Pepper updated all councillors on 11/2/22.

Strategic Aviation Special Interest (SASIG) Chaired by Keith Artus. Advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities. Cllr Pepper (a member since July 2021) Cllr Evans (a member since December 2021). SASIG is a forum for Local Authorities and other regional representatives to come together to share information and resources on regional **aviation** issues. Last meeting December 16th 2021. Cllr Pepper’s ‘**How can the aviation sector help fight climate change**’, was circulated to all SASIG members on December 29th.
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7431/Aviation-sector> Cllr Pepper updated all councillors on 13/1/22.

January 2022 update - Circulated to all parish and town councils & UDC’s FB.

The Big Garden Birdwatch - Friday 28th and Saturday 30th January.

Highway Code Changes - 8 changes you need to know - The updates take effect from Saturday 29 January.

Cllr Pepper’s letter to the Broadcast was published 10th January – **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT WE ALL TAKE ACTION TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE** (please see attached).

Cllr Pepper received a response from Kemi Badenoch, on January 18th, to her email regarding unsustainable developments and the risk of building near rivers and detrimental damage building can have to environmental and historical areas (please see attached).

Community Listening Events

- Disability event held on 27th Jan 22 - 30 attendees, Contributions from local organisations supporting those with disability and an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions
- Women’s event to be held over two lunchtime workshops on 15th March & 22nd March, Commission Over The Bloody Moon to deliver on the Menopause, Next Chapter to present on Domestic Abuse support, Physical Activity/This Girl Can will be covered by Active Essex and Celebrating Women will be captured by an update on the Snapping the Stiletto project with SW Museum
- 2022 Equality Duty now available on the UDC Website <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/equalities-and-diversity#public-sector-equality-duty>
- LGBTQ+ History Month <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LGBT-history-month> The Rainbow Flag will fly for the entire month of February at the London Road offices
- Holocaust Memorial Day <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7030/Holocaust-Memorial-Day-27-January>

Armed Forces Covenant

- The expression of interest for the ERS (Employer recognition Scheme) Silver Award has been submitted, work with UDC HR and Regional ERS lead to ensure all relevant supporting evidence is in place for April deadline
- Met with Cllr Rod Jones Elected Member lead for Armed Forces to update him on the work of the Armed Forces Covenant
- Attended Civilian Military Partnership Board
- Attended Army Community Group hosted by Carver Barracks
- Attended MOD Veterans UK – Welfare & Transitions Support Masterclass

Local Strategic Partnership

- LSP Theme group lead officers, along with Communities, Health & Wellbeing Manager, Asst Director for Housing & Health met with Peter Holt to discuss the relaunch of the LSP Board – it was agreed a further meeting inviting the theme group chairs would be arranged for April 2022, in the meantime the following theme groups meetings have either taken place or due to take place
 - H&WB Board met 11th January 2022
 - EEST scheduled to meet on 17th January 2022
 - C&F scheduled to meet on 3rd March 2022
 - CSP scheduled to meet on 10th March 2022