

Councillor Louise Pepper,

Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities

Report to Council: 11 October 2022

Environment & Green Issues August 2022 update

Climate Change is now featured at the beginning of the **Corporate Plan Delivery Plan**, which indicates its growing importance and focus.

Our **Climate Crisis Action Plan** and tasks which are due to be completed by December 2022, are on target.

Overview of actions plan (tasks due by December 2022)

Number	Detail - Transport Emissions	RAG
Action 13	Reduce carbon footprint of UDC business travel and travel to work through use of zero emission vehicles and or changes in ways of working, seeking to be carbon neutral by 2030	
Action 14	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP)	
Action 15	Encouraging active travel: Micro-mobility schemes.	
Action 16	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.	
Action 17	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.	

Action	Detail – Domestic Housing	RAG
Action 18	Enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)	
Action 19	A published checklist relating to energy efficiency standards be published for developers to consider as part of their proposals	

	Other Actions	
Action 20	Retrofit community buildings in Uttlesford - partnership between UDC and parishes where advantages of scale can be identified.	
Action 21	Improve biodiversity net gain (BNG) as per Environment Act.	

	Waste and Recycling	
Action 22	Reviewing our domestic and commercial waste collection offers	
Action 23	Promote ways to reduce food waste and promote food waste recycling	
Action 24	Shift residents thinking from 'avoiding landfill' towards minimising resource usage and a circular economy (including reducing single-use plastic).	
Action 25	Improve the capture of material for recycling (within current and then emerging waste disposal/treatment frameworks) to reduce contamination.	

The new Climate Change Officer will pick these up when they start, and they will also make sure measurables are added onto the action plan.

Uttlesford Climate Change £1m funding- We have allocated most of the funding for the following objectives (please see below). It will also include staffing costs (Climate & Ecology Officers).

Climate Change Spend or commitments		24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	Totals
Comments		£	£	£	£	£
Climate Crisis - Project Costs						
Littlebury Energy Plan Project <i>provided by Community Energy South</i>	Project initiated and will be progressed by Lead Climate Change Officer			5,070		5,070
Uttlesford Active Travel and Biodiversity Surveys <i>provided by Common Place Digital</i>	Surveys completed and next steps will be progressed by Lead Climate Change Officer				9,950	9,950
M&B Printing	Completed				213	213
LetsTalk Uttlesford Website / Engagement Tool	Project initiated and will be progressed by Lead Climate Change Officer		11,000	11,000		22,000
Solar Panels for 5x LGV fleet – Provided by Trailer	Order placed fitting this week. Review of performance End 2023 as part of fleet decarbonisation strategy.			17,500		17,500
Historic water infrastructure deficit project	Value subject to procurement of necessary external expertise.			60,000		60,000
Zero Carbon Communities Initiative	Feedback on budget allocation sought from working group		150,000	150,000		300,000
Inhouse Carbon Saving Initiatives*	Feedback on budget allocation sought from working group		145,000	5,6000		201,000
Projects Financial Year totals			306,000	299,570	10,163	615,733

Funding has been commissioned for an independent water and rivers survey (see **Historic water infrastructure deficit project**). The Local Plan and the Climate Change team have been communicating to make sure that work is not being duplicated.

An **Inhouse Carbon Saving Initiatives** will include an audit of council owned buildings to establish whether any are suitable for solar panel installations.

Zero Carbon Communities Fund. £300,000 has been allocated to fund community-based projects that are designed to reduce direct carbon emissions or that will lock up carbon or improve biodiversity. It is due to go to Cabinet for approval on October 20th.

Littlebury Energy Plan Project was a trial set up to produce practical plans for individual households to improve energy savings and a community-based approach with potential collective buy ins (please see attached document).

The **new Climate Change Officer** started on the 26th of September 2022. One of their roles will explore Community Energy Projects to create renewable energy to light and heat houses.

Sustainable Warmth government grant total £1,268,000 (LAD2 - £249k & LAD3 £919k). Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy for energy efficiency grants for low-income households. The Environmental Health Manager provided an update on sustainable warmth at the Climate Working Group meeting on September 7th. The previous scheme, authority delivery (**LAD2**) scheme and home upgrade grant (**HUG**) had ended, and they were being combined under a single scheme called 'Sustainable Warmth'. The scheme had been delayed and now had only 6 months left for the funding to be spent. We are trying to target vulnerable and low-income households. He has no idea what will happen when this scheme closes in March 2023 but currently any money not spent would go back to the Government. Cllr Pepper asked Councillor Smith and all Members to write to Kemi Badenoch and request for an extension to implement the scheme properly so that monies allocated, can be spend on low-income families.

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7419/New-initiative-launched-to-help-homes-be-warmer-greener-and-save-on-fuel-bills-this-winter>

Saffron Walden Air Quality Initiative government grant £517,124. A novel Market Town Clean Air initiative in Saffron Waldon. The Environmental Health Manager provided a verbal update at the Climate Working Group meeting on September 7th, saying the project had been put back (due to lack of resources) however, with the agreement of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), it would continue until October 2024.

2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report has been published. The annual report is a legal requirement and approved by Defra. The Environmental Health Manager presented the findings at the Climate Working Group meeting on September 7th and highlighted the following: -

- There was a downwards trend of monitored NO2 air pollution.
- No air quality exceedances had been identified in 2021
- There were no new developments that would have a significant impact.

Concerns over future air quality increases due to planned additional housing were raised. There are 35 monitoring locations which can be expanded and each year these are reviewed. There is also a new requirement to prepare an Air Quality strategy in 2023. This in effect, would replace the AQAP.

https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11646/2022-Air-Quality-Annual-Status-Report-ASR/pdf/Uttlesford_2022_ASR.pdf

The **Waste Team and Cllr Pepper** took part in the **Eco Market** on the Common on September 24th to talk about waste and recycling. There was a good display of single use plastics and eco alternatives, composting ideas, replacement food bins, guess the plastic bottles in the bin competition and a refuse vehicle with solar panels installed. The children (and dads), enjoyed sitting in the front cab.



A **review of the waste fleet** will shortly take place to ascertain whether the current electric refuse vehicles are suitable for a Uttlesford. The cost for each vehicle is around £400 - £600. There is currently only one UK electric refuse manufacturer. Vehicles are smaller in size and only have one section to collect waste (UDC have two – one for waste & recycling/black bin waste and a separate section for food waste). Hydrogen-fuelled waste collection vehicles are also being trailed; however, relevant infrastructure will need to be investigated. **X5 refuse vehicles have been installed with solar panels.**

A **waste and recycling newsletter** is now available for residents to sign up to. The most common things that are wrongly put into recycling bins are **black bin bags, nappies, food waste, textiles** and **electrical items**. <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/keep-me-posted>

Community Engagement – Stansted Airport. After the circulation of Stansted Airport's Community Flyer (please see attached), Cllr Pepper contacted Daniel Burford, the Community Engagement Manager at Stansted Airport. We have agreed to work together and implement and explore local green solutions to address the climate and biodiversity crisis.

A list of green objectives was discussed that can be jointly implemented: -

- Airport eco school garden grants (UDC can email schools on available grants up to £10k).
- Seeking available sites to plant 1,500 - 2,000 trees. One for every employee at Stansted (Cllr Pepper will enquire at the Dunmow Town Council meeting 6th October).
- Confiscated customs food & toiletries waste to food banks & discarded buggies (Cllr Pepper will engage with relevant people).

- Senior Climate Airport School champions (Cllr Pepper will liaise with relevant Community Officers & District Councillor).
- Linking up Flitch Way cycle path with Stansted Airport (Cllr Pepper will liaise with the Flitch Way Action Group)
- Can the airport provide secure cycle hangers for cyclists? (Cllr Pepper has emailed and example).
- Daniel to enquire into green skilled courses at Stansted College (plumbers & electricians - where there is a real shortage) & cheap accommodation for Stansted students at local hotels (offer sustainable options to get to college).

We also spoke about reducing single use plastics and hosting annual sustainable aviation events that provide up-to-date information on employment within the industry, places of education and advising the public, on what the industry is doing to transition to a green economy and what new technology is being explored (or manufactured). Encourage the younger generation to want to work in the aviation sector due to new green innovative solutions/technology that will help to secure their future and planet.

Lobbying Cllr Pepper will email Kemi Badenoch to raise concerns on fracking & North Sea licences, new planning, and infrastructure law and 'investment zones', wildlife protection, reversing plans to support nature-friendly farming and to request for an extension to spend government energy grants.

Equalities October 2022 update

- Community Listening Events - Exploring with district secondary schools their engagement with our next theme LGBTQ+ - provisional meeting arranged with SWCHS for 19th September was postponed due to the Queen's funeral, new provisionally date arranged for 9th November at SWCHS. Both Helena Romanes and Joyce Frankland will be attending.
- Essex Equality Network meeting scheduled 28th September 2022
- Essex Faith Covenant meeting scheduled 20th October 2022 – Annual Faith Covenant event to be hosted by Epping Forest District Council November 2022
- Equality Health Impact Assessment workshop for /CMTSMT to enable senior managers to provide peer-to-peer support for colleagues completing the EqHIA. The training will be delivered by Hayley Bennett HVTB Consultants
- Menopause Mentors Accreditation with OTBM – 15 spaces allocated for members of staff to complete the accreditation and sign up to become Menopause Mentors for the organisation. 19th October has been provisionally booked for a 45minutes introduction session for staff, with the remaining training on-line.
- Amendments to the first draft of the Menopause Policy to be go back to SMT/CMT for approval
- BHM October 2022 - a draft page for BHM 2022. When published will be available directly on www.uttlesford.gov.uk/bhm2022
- Attended a 'Lets talk about Race' session with LGA - presentation slides will be available soon via the following link: <https://www.local.gov.uk/events/past-event-presentations>
- Attending an Advancing Menopause Policy in the Workplace workshop delivered by Institute of Government & Public Policy – 5th October 2022
- World Menopause Day is held every year on the 18th October 2022 led by the International Menopause Society <https://www.imsociety.org/education/world-menopause-day/> – this year's theme for World Menopause Day 2022 is Cognition and Mood.

Armed Forces Covenant

- ERS (Employer Recognition Scheme) Silver Award was successful, CEO to be invited to awards event, more details to follow. ERS Silver logo now on UDC website.
- Civilian Military Partnership Board scheduled to meet on 28th September 2022
- Army Community Group met 5th September 2022 – Peter Holt attended on this occasion
- Armed Forces Covenant NEW Induction AFC e-learning module for LA's – shared with HR colleagues for consideration yet to be implemented

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5540/Armed-Forces-Community-Covenant>

Thank you
Cllr Pepper