

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** Thursday 20

**Title:** Zero Carbon Communities Fund

October 2022

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Louise Pepper, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues, Equalities

**Report Author:** Ben Brown, Assistant Director - Environmental Services

**Key Decision:** No

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## Summary

1. Uttlesford District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. It has pledged to take local action to prevent a climate and ecological catastrophe, through the development of practices and policies which aim to achieve net-zero carbon status by 2030 and to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district.
2. The Council set aside a specific Climate Crisis budget of £1M to be spent over three years. A figure of £300,000 of the overall Climate Crisis budget has been provisionally allocated to support community-based projects, that reduce carbon dioxide emissions or improve biodiversity.
3. This report and APPENDIX 1 set out the principles behind the Zero Carbon Community Fund and seeks feedback from the committee on the proposals.

## Recommendations

4. To approve the proposed principles set out in APPENDIX 1.
5. To note the draft timetable for Round 1 bids set out in APPENDIX 2.

## Financial Implications

6. The Council has already agreed a specific climate change budget totalling £1,000,000 spent over 3 years. It is proposed that a total of £300,000 is allocated to Community based carbon reduction and or biodiversity projects.
7. It proposed that two bidding rounds are held an £150,000 is allocated for each round.
8. It is proposed that funding be made available of between £1,000 and £35,000 per project.

## Background Papers

9. 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:

10. Climate Change Action Plan, Climate Crisis Strategy.

## Impact

11.

Communication/Consultation	The proposed Zero Carbon Community Fund has been reviewed by the Climate Change Working Group and corporate management team.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	A clear plan setting out Uttlesford district councils' approach to addressing climate change will have a positive impact on sustainability issues.
Ward-specific impacts	Potential projects should have specific ward impacts though these are not known at this stage.
Workforce/Workplace	None

## Situation

12. The Council's Climate Crisis Strategy defined the Council's ambition to achieve net-zero carbon status by 2030 and to improve biodiversity and was published

in September 2020. The strategy has specific reference to taking local action to help reduce carbon emissions and or improve biodiversity.

13. The principles of the proposal to create a community-based grants scheme (the Zero Carbon Community Fund) providing direct financial support to local community groups is set out in APPENDIX 1. If agreed these principles and will be used to develop further the funding documentation required, including eligibility, bidding processes, assessment criteria and measures.
14. The proposal directly links with the Council's aims within the Climate Crisis Strategy.
15. Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the principles set out in APPENDIX 1 and note the provisional timescales shown in APPENDIX 2.
16. The aim is to launch the scheme in October with the first round of bids being assessed and finalised in February, this may require an additional meeting of Cabinet to give sufficient time for bidders and approve bids before the Purdah period.

## **Risk Analysis**

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Limited Parish level capacity to prepare and sign off bids within timescales proposed.	2	2	Two rounds of funding are proposed and officers are actively looking at ways to support bids.
Scheme is oversubscribed	3	2	Clear and transparent guidance on how projects will be assessed and grants

			awarded will be published.
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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.