

# Councillor Louise Pepper – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities

## Report to Full Council: 6 December 2022

---

### *Environment & Green Issues November 2022 update*

---

#### **Climate Change Staffing**

Vicky Reed joined the Council as Climate Change Lead Officer in late October. Vicky has a wealth of programme management experience alongside excellent technical knowledge and will be coordinating the Council's Climate Crisis Action Plan. Recruitment to a second role that will support Vicky is also nearing completion.

**The Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund** is a new grant that was launched in November with the aim of supporting community groups in Uttlesford take action on climate change.

Non-profit groups or organisations, including any town or parish council within the district, can apply for funding for new projects that are focussed on carbon emission reduction, community engagement in climate change, or ecological enhancement in your community



Community projects might include:

- **Community buildings** – for example, energy conservation or efficiency measures
- **Sustainable transport** – for example, community cycle parking or electric vehicle charging points
- **Nature and biodiversity projects** – this could include community allotment projects, or the restoration, creation, or enhancement of a community nature area
- **Other projects** – such as waste reduction projects, or community initiatives that promote sustainable lifestyle choices

A webinar to help interested groups understand the bidding process, funding criteria and potential projects was held on 15 November with over 20 attendees.

View a copy of the launch presentation [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11712/Zero-Carbon-Communities-Grant-launch-event-presentation/pdf/ZCC\\_Launch\\_Webinar\\_15\\_11\\_22.pdf?m=638042915520970000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11712/Zero-Carbon-Communities-Grant-launch-event-presentation/pdf/ZCC_Launch_Webinar_15_11_22.pdf?m=638042915520970000)

The first round of funding is open until January 2023, with bids being assessed and finalised in February. Grants of between £1,000 and £35,000 are available. A second round of funding will follow later in the new financial year.

**Further information about the Zero Carbon Communities Grant** is available at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/zero-carbon-communities-grant](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/zero-carbon-communities-grant). Or Email [climatechange@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@uttlesford.gov.uk) .

#### **Tree Planting initiatives**

As part of the late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy initiative UDC is grant assisting tree planting for the participating parish councils of Hadstock, Hempstead, Wimbish, Widdington, Little Dunmow, and Hatfield Broad Oak. The JGC scheme was to be closed at the end of December this year, but it is King Charles' wish that the scheme be extended until the end of the current planting season March 2023.

As part of the tree planting initiative UDC is also supplying in total 43 trees and 100 hedging plants to Felsted, and Great Hallingbury Parish Councils. In addition, 3 trees are to be planted on UDC land at The Grove, Great Hallingbury.

It is anticipated that a second tranche of tree planting will be undertaken before the end of the current planting season. It is worth noting that interest from Parish Council's on tree planting has declined.

### **Local Cycling Walking Highway Improvement Plan (LCWHIP)**

The council has committed, through the Climate Crisis budget, to developing a LCWHIP which will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The contract to help develop the plan is currently out to tender and will be evaluated and awarded in January.

### **Flitch Way Cycleway Study £4925**

UDC has provided funding for the **Flitch Way Action Group (FWAG)**, for a proposal to investigation options for cycle links between the Flitch Way and the south side of Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport and Start Hill.

### **How is UDC assisting with the Energy Crisis?**

#### **Making your home cheaper, warmer, and greener through funded energy-saving improvements**



Could a free, fully funded Sustainable Warmth Grant transform your home and your carbon footprint?

Government-funded Sustainable Warmth grants up to £10,000 are designed to support those households most impacted by rising energy bills.

Funding is available for homeowners, private tenants and people in social rented accommodation who live in a home with a low energy (EPC) rating and have a household income of less than £30,000 a year, or unemployed and receive an income, health, or disability benefit.

**For further information on this grant** [Sustainable Warmth Grant Scheme Application Form \(est.org.uk\)](https://www.est.org.uk)

### **Is your home weather ready for winter?**

With colder weather on the way, there are a number of steps that you can take to prepare your home and garden for severe weather.

There are some simple steps you can take to stay safe and healthy at this time of year – from preparing your home or business to taking care of yourself, your family, and neighbours.

**[Visit the Met Office website for tips on how to get your home weather ready for](#)**

**winter**     WeatherReady - Met Office

**UDC have a number of other energy websites: -**

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5775/Energy-efficiency-what-you-can-do>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5771/Energy-efficiency-advice-for-landlords>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5772/Energy-Efficiency-and-Historic-Buildings>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5694/Domestic-and-commercial-energy>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7986/Energy-rebate-exceptional-hardship-scheme>

The **Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford**, also offer an energy saving link.

<https://cvsu.org.uk/category/funding/>

**Transport is Uttlesford's highest CO2 emitter.**



**Cycling**

**Walking**

**Rail**

**Bus**

In Uttlesford **12%** of people commute by public transport, **1%** cycle, and **9%** walk.

**Friends of the Earth says Uttlesford should aim to have 50% of people commuting by public transport, cycling, and walking by 2030.**

With a decrease in traffic, air quality and pollution levels will dramatically **improve**

The government need to be prioritising spending on **active travel** and **public transport** rather than £27b on road building. Even when all vehicles have gone green, manufacturing still comes with a carbon footprint and causes congestion. Pollution from tyres is 1,000 times worse than emissions from a car's exhaust.

Public transport & 'active travel' is cheaper and more sustainable and 'active travel' is also better for your health and mental wellbeing.

**N.B** It will also cost more money for ECC on additional road repairs, rather than allocating money to upgrade existing roads (often in poor repair) and on new & existing footpaths, and cycle lanes.

However, walking & cycling won't be the preferred option during winter months (especially when it's pouring with rain) therefore, adequate public transport throughout the year, is essential.

**It's imperative we promote bus travel throughout the district and make sure choices in sustainable travel options are available and remain a key priority.**

## **Recycling, Waste and Resources**

Work continues on the replacement for the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex. The new strategy is currently being developed and aims to deliver higher recycling rates and reductions in carbon emissions and will link to the principles set out in the new Environment Act. The strategy will set out how

Essex will manage waste over the next 25 years.

Essex County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority for Essex are leading the project, and all districts, boroughs and city councils are involved. A consultancy company, Richardo have been engaged and have developed a range of models that assess the impact of waste collection and treatment models across a range of criterion including carbon impact, environmental performance, financial cost, and public acceptability.

The draft strategy will be the subject of a public consultation exercise in the summer.

All Members will be invited to attend a workshop in January that will be focused on the emerging strategy and the potential collection options that the Council may wish to consider in future. The Council is reaching a point in time where our existing fleet will need to be replaced and this, alongside the strategy, new legislation and financial pressures will make service planning even more important.

In readiness for this trials of electrically powered vehicles, have been arranged for November and December. Last week an electric caged vehicle was used on street cleansing and grounds maintenance duties. In December two electric refuse / recycling lorries manufactured by Renault and Dennis Terberg will being trialled.

In January, the Council will no longer be able to use the Dunmow Waste Transfer Station that is operated by ECC. Instead, our vehicles will need to travel to Braintree twice a day to unload. Ahead of this change our current collection rounds have been refocussed and work reorganised to accommodate that major change with minimal impact on residents.

### **Waste Avoidance Education**

In late September officers attended the Saffron Walden Eco Market on the Common and promoted recycling of food waste using the council's services alongside home composting and using wormeries. Alternative to many single use plastics where also on display linking back to the Chairmans Charter and raising awareness of this issue.

Finally, a new recycling guide has been produced and will be circulated to all residents ahead of Christmas as well as being available on the council's website for future reference. Christmas always impacts on collection arrangements, and these will be publicised through the guide, social media, press releases, communications with parish and town councils as well as adverts in local press.

### **Planning & Development – Urban workshop**

On Saturday 22 October, UDC hosted an Urban Design workshop at St Mary's Parish Church in Saffron Walden. The purpose of the day was to share the aims and ambitions of the Design Code for the Local Plan and to hear feedback from residents across the district. Discussions focused on buildings, places and landscapes that create Uttlesford's distinctive character and how these could inspire future developments.

Some of the issues raised were concerning community facilities gaps and shortages in Uttlesford (schools, doctors, dentists & pharmacies). Congested narrow roadways that hinder emergency and refuse vehicles, limited public transport, lack of local employment, the importance of green space and nature (connecting green corridors) and protecting our rich heritage and rural setting.



**Bike storage**



**Communal EV charging points**



**Communal parking**

**Some key infrastructure suggestions: -**

- Good cycling & walking connectivity
- Cycle storage throughout developments (bikes aren't as easily stored at home).
- Off-street parking for families, disabled & the elderly a must.
- Communal parking for single & starter homes
- Separate parking for visitors
- Wide footpaths that cater for mums with small children and buggies, disabled wheelchairs users and the elderly and mobility scooters, providing safe connectivity onto our country roads and pavements.
- Senior on-street lighting in well-lit areas
- Good access to bus shelters on rainy cold days
- Good access for emergency services and refuse vehicles

Homes need to be future climate proof and should include **Heat pumps, EV charging points, Solar panels** (to offset EV charging points), **Electric cookers** (not gas!), **Low carbon materials** like timber and hemp for insulation and **Draft proofing housing** for mitigating extreme heat conditions (especially for the elderly, young and vulnerable). **SuDS (sustainable drainage systems)**, to manage surface water run-off. **Water efficiency** (optional requirement' of 110 litres per person per day in 'water stressed areas). Water abstraction is Uttlesford's greatest concern. Chalk streams are both rare and sensitive. Last year, the Cam and the Ouse, were the only principal rivers in England rated by the Environment Agency as exceptionally low. The East is also one of the driest parts of the UK. *Grey water recycling and harvesting of rainwater is therefore essential (water butts).*

Building in the right places and avoiding climatic impacts like flooding (*house insurance will become a problem in flood zones*).

We need parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for sport and physical activity which is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver the wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.



Access to healthier food for all members of a community to enjoy by providing land for allotments. Creating additional green biodiversity layouts that will encourage easy access to walk and cycle and will also benefit biodiversity enhancement and restoration.

## Open green space is important for nature, our health and well-being



Uttlesford has 3,500 listed buildings and numerous conservation areas within the district. We need to safeguard Uttlesford's unique **rural** distinctiveness, character, and **rich** heritage and ensure we create safe, healthy, and attractive new settlements to live, work and visit.

## UTTLESFORD HAS A RICH TAPESTRY OF ENGLISH HISTORY & RURAL CHARM



### Local climate documentary

Cllr Pepper took part in a local documentary about climate change and how to save the world.

Here's the link to view

<https://eynon.media/home/district-15/>

Thank you  
Cllr Pepper



*One planet one race*

