

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Climate Change Action Plan – Progress Update

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Neil Reeve

Report Author: Vicky Reed, Climate Change Lead Officer

Date: Thursday, 11 January 2024

Summary

1. Uttlesford District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and we have pledged to take local action to prevent a climate and ecological catastrophe through the development of practices and policies which aim to achieve netzero carbon status by 2030 and to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district.
2. The existing Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) was approved by Cabinet on 11 January 2022 and incorporated feedback from this Committee.
3. The Lead Officer for Climate Change started in post on late September 2022 and has taken forward the council's CCAP, in addition to delivery of the DEFRA funded, Saffron Walden Clean Air Project.
4. In January 2023, Scrutiny Committee previously considered an update report detailing the CCAP actions that were due to be completed during the 2022/23 financial year.
5. This report provides a brief update on the work undertaken to update the UDC Climate Action plan, proposed approach and next steps.

Recommendations

6. To note progress on the Climate Change Action Plan as set out below.
7. To note highlights, arising issues, follow-on actions, and a forward plan proposed by the Climate Change, Lead Officer.

Financial Implications

8. The Council has already agreed a specific climate change budget of £1,000,000 budget over 3 years.
9. To date a total of £842,000 of the climate Change budget has been committed or spent. An allocation of £300,000 was made to provide grants for community projects that will deliver on the Council's climate action priorities, via the Zero Carbon Communities Fund.

10. External funding totalling over £1,700,000 has also been secured.

Background Papers

11. 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:

- [The Council Climate Action Strategy and Climate Action Plan.](#)

Impact

12.

Communication/Consultation	The Climate Change Action Plan has previously been reviewed by the Energy and Climate Change Working Group. The Action plan is underpinned by a robust supporting communication and engagement plan.
Community Safety	
Equalities	Scoping and delivery of climate change action projects and activities will consider the needs of all groups in the community.
Health and Safety	
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The council have responsibilities under the Environment Act, to protect our environment, clean up our air and rivers and boost nature.
Sustainability	Putting in place a carbon management plan will support the council in improving their energy use and driving down carbon emissions.
Ward-specific impacts	The council have a responsibility to lead and influence action on climate change across the district.
Workforce/Workplace	A new council operational 'Environment and Sustainability' Group has been agreed to oversee the delivery of UDC actions on Climate Change across all key services and teams.

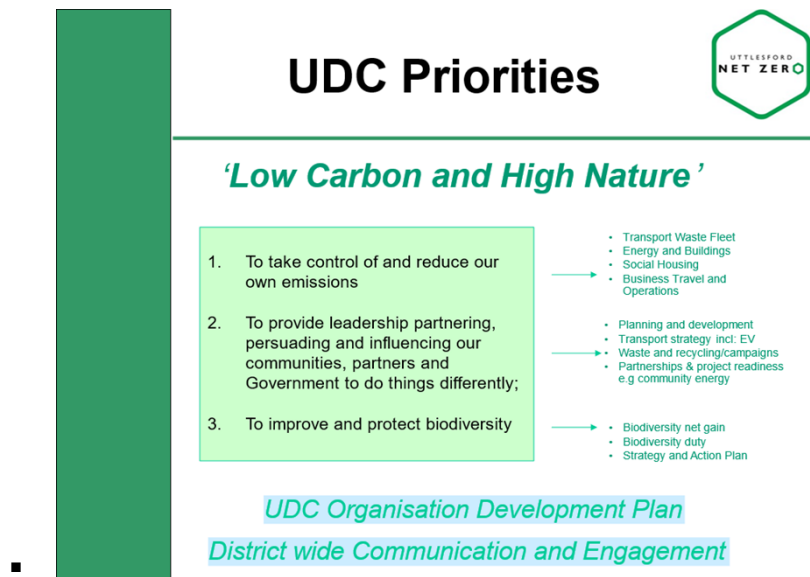
	The Council Corporate plan includes a commitment to providing carbon literacy training for all staff.
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Situation

Climate Change Future Programme Management

13. It has previously been reported to this Committee that the Climate Change Action Plan would be updated. After researching best practice across the Country, reflecting our own experience, it has been concluded that an annual plan should be developed. As well as being more focused with SMART objectives, activities and tasks, an annual plan enables the Council to adapt to the changing landscape around climate related matters and legislation.

14. Key themes and priorities within the UDC Climate Change Strategy remain underpinning the updated action plan as illustrated below:



15. In the updated Climate Change Action Annual Plan 2024/25 activities and tasks will be grouped/framed using the UDC Corporate priorities as follows:

UDC Corporate Priorities	Including
Take Action on Climate Change	<i>Councils own housing, Council buildings, services and people</i>
Manage Waste in a Sustainable Way	<i>Waste and Recycling; Campaigns</i>

Work with partners to deliver sustainable transport	<i>Transport strategy; EV infrastructure; active travel: air quality</i>
Conserve and enhance the quality and diversity of the district's natural habitats and wildlife	<i>UDC Biodiversity Duty; Implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain Legislation</i>

16. 'Low Carbon and High Nature' will be the core objective at the centre of the annual Climate Change Action Plan.
17. The council have agreed to develop a Carbon Management plan, building on best practice in carbon and energy management. This plan will be crucial to achieving the UDC commitment of Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030. The aims of the carbon management plan include a robust framework to track carbon emission reduction, and more formal procedures and awareness of energy management responsibilities of all staff that have control or influence over energy, fuel and water consumption.
18. To support the successful delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan and activities, the council have agreed to improve operational governance by creating an officer level 'Environment and Sustainability' group that will provide oversight to the action plan and which will mitigate any arising risks to delivery.
19. The annual Climate Change Action plan for 2024/25 will be presented in draft form to the next meeting of this Committee. This will include an annual report on UDC Climate Change Action achievements made in 2023/24.

Risk Analysis

2.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Gap in programme staff resources, leading to reduced capacity to deliver CCAP and commence SW Clean Air Project	2	2	Priority growth bid to ensure Climate Team resources are made permanent.
Lack of detailed scoping and clarity of outcomes for climate change actions which may lead to projects being delivered that do not contribute to the	2	3	Review of current action plan to be completed in winter 2023 in order to scope and validate existing actions, and to agree a revised action plan for 24/25, along with success measures

achievement of Council net zero carbon targets and/ or climate change objectives.			and carbon management plan.
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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.