

**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 30/09/25

**Title:** Climate Change Update

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Neil Reeve

**Report Author:** Vicky Reed, Lead Officer Climate Change

**Key decision:** No

---

## Summary

1. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and 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. A highlight report on the UDC Climate Change programme and updated Climate Change and Biodiversity Action plan (CCBAP) was presented at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
3. This paper provides an update report on the UDC Climate Change programme including achievements over the last 16 months and current programme priorities and activities.
4. The Council have made significant progress on several priorities including reducing carbon emissions across our own operations; delivery of net zero local plan policy; leading and supporting local action on climate change and to protect and restore nature. These achievements have been delivered through strengthened governance and partnership working across directorates and services, in addition to successfully drawing in grant funding from public sector decarbonisation schemes.
5. Going forward the Climate Change and Biodiversity Board (CCBB) will continue to provide assurance on the CCBAP and will agree priorities and resource to deliver the plan, taking account of new national policy requirements and readiness for devolution and local government reorganisation.

## Recommendations

6. To note the achievements and progress delivering the UDC Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan, including issues and follow on actions.
7. To seek the views of Scrutiny in advising Cabinet on the achievements and progress delivering the UDC Climate Change and Biodiversity Action plan to date.

## Financial Implications

8. The Council previously agreed a specific climate change budget of £ 1,000,000 budget over 3 years.
9. To date a total of £ 783,699 of the climate Change Reserve budget has been committed or spent. Of this £ 389,138 has been spent on the Zero Carbon Communities Grant Scheme. A total of £ 216,301 budget remains which has been allocated to deliver priority projects and work streams in the CCBAP.
10. The Council are in receipt of a DEFRA Air Quality grant of £517k to deliver the Saffron Walden Clean Air project. This grant will be spent down by end November 2025.
11. The Council are in receipt of two government public sector grants for decarbonisation:
  - a. £3.8m grant award from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to deliver retrofit and energy efficiency works to 276 social homes, due to complete in 2027.
  - b. £626k grant award from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to deliver energy efficiency works including Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and solar panels at London Road office. Due to complete in September 2026.

## Background Papers

12. 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.](#)

APSE Energy Net Zero Carbon Emissions Trajectory for Uttlesford District Council.

## Impact

- 13.

Communication/Consultation	<p>'Take Action on Climate Change' is a Corporate Priority. Progress against actions is overseen by the senior officer Climate Change and Biodiversity Project Board.</p> <p>Regular update reports are presented to the Climate Change and Biodiversity Project Board for direction and comment.</p> <p>The CCBAP is underpinned by a supporting communication and</p>
----------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>engagement plan.</p> <p>Regular progress reports on the Saffron Walden Air Quality project are submitted to DEFRA.</p>
Community Safety	<p>The health effects of climate change have grown significantly, with health threats from heat, flooding, water stress and scarcity, energy and food security. Building community resilience and adapting to climate change are integral to the CCBAP.</p>
Equalities	<p>Evidence suggests Climate change will disproportionately impact the most vulnerable in our communities. Scoping and delivery of climate change action and biodiversity restoration takes account of a range of impacts including health and wellbeing and fuel poverty.</p>
Health and Safety	n/a
Human Rights/Legal Implications	<p>2008 Climate Change Act commitment to bring all greenhouse gas emissions in the UK to net zero by 2050.</p> <p>In the seventh carbon budget (2038-2042) electrification and low-carbon electricity supply make up the largest share of emissions reductions (60% by 2040).</p> <p>The council have responsibilities under the Environment Act, to protect our environment, clean up our air and rivers and boost nature.</p>
Sustainability	<p>To successfully deliver the Council Climate Crisis Strategy all council committees must consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions; and develop and implement policies and strategies as required.</p>
Ward-specific impacts	<p>The Council have a responsibility to lead and influence local action on</p>

	climate change and biodiversity restoration across the district.
Workforce/Workplace	The Council Corporate plan includes a priority commitment to develop a sustainability policy.

## Situation

### Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan – Achievements

14. Uttlesford was recognised as a ‘most improved’ council in the [2025 Climate Emergency UK Action Scorecards](#). The council climate scorecards rank all UK local authorities on how they are tackling climate change, providing an independent assessment across seven key areas: buildings, planning, transport, governance, biodiversity, waste and community engagement. Uttlesford showed improvements in all sections including a 45% increase in biodiversity – this was the joint second highest improvement of any council in the UK. Overall, Uttlesford scored 48%, which is a 20% improvement on our overall score from 2023 and the best score of any council in Essex.

### Decarbonisation of Council Operations (buildings, fleet, housing)

15. Over the last year, the Council have taken steps to review and improve measurement and monitoring of carbon emissions and worked to understand their trajectory to net zero. Projects have also been initiated for both estates and fleet, which will deliver significant reductions in operational carbon emissions.
16. APSE (Association for Public Sector Excellence) Energy completed a desk top assessment of council building and fleet energy consumption data to produce an updated carbon emission baseline and net zero carbon emissions trajectory report. The carbon emission baseline year used for reporting was 2023/24, with future savings compared to this baseline, the report gave an illustration of the types of interventions and investment that will be needed by the council to achieve net zero by 2030.
17. In the report, modelling and data visualisation included the following assumptions:
- a) 1MWp (1,000kWp) of solar PV could be installed by 2030 on buildings.
  - b) 1MWp (1,000 kWp) of land-based PV could be installed which could count toward carbon off-setting.
  - c) Replacement of fossil fuel waste fleet vehicles for an EV equivalent and travelling the same annual miles from baseline year.

18. The APSE report acknowledged that further surveys and feasibility studies are required on Council assets to build accuracy into the council decarbonisation delivery plan. Recommendations and follow-on actions also include investigation to look at calculating Scope 3 emissions such as waste and purchased goods and services; and recommendation the council put in place systems and procedures to record the raw data needed to calculate emissions as it is made available, rather than trying to retrieve the data in bulk retrospectively as currently happens.
19. In July 2024 a Heat Decarbonisation Plan (HDP) was completed for the council buildings at London Road and Little Canfield. These assets are identified as the biggest emitters where most benefit would be gained in the council decarbonisation plan.
20. Consultants were appointed to undertake an audit of annual energy consumption, costs and associated carbon emissions; and undertake a site survey of existing building fabric (floors, walls, roofs, windows, doors), and the existing heating systems. The HDP for each building provides the council with an analysis of recommended energy saving measures including economic modelling with cost estimates for making improvements to building fabric, with calculated carbon savings.
21. The HDP produced for London Road met the eligibility criteria for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and a successful bid was made to the fund securing a grant of £626k. The London Road HDP retrofit project has since mobilised and is due to be completed by September 2026. Works at London Road will include insulation-draught proofing, roof insulation, secondary glazing, an Air Source Heat Pump system to replace the gas boiler, and installation of roof top solar PV. Uttlesford is one of only two councils in Essex who were successful in being awarded a PSDS grant this year and the government has subsequently withdrawn the PSDS so future funding for public sector decarbonisation projects is uncertain.
22. Following the APSE report a review of the capital investment needed alongside feasibility of replacing the council waste fleet to an EV equivalent concluded that the council should investigate switching from diesel to the low emission fuel Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO). It was demonstrated that a switch from diesel to HVO could represent a possible 34% reduction in total council emissions. A business case recommending switching the fleet to HVO fuel was presented to Scrutiny on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May this year before being approved by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> June. The fleet are due to begin using HVO fuel from December.
23. Last year the Council were successful in being awarded a £3.8million grant funding from the Social Housing De-Carbonisation Fund (SHDF) grant application. The grant is being used to upgrade some of the most energy inefficient homes in the council's housing stock by retrofitting additional insulation, solar panels and air source heat pumps. The delivery of the SHDF programme has encountered several challenges, primarily stemming from the decision to part ways with the original contractor, Equans, and the subsequent protracted mobilisation of the new contractor, Axis Europe. This transition has necessitated extended negotiations regarding tender rates, which have contributed to delays in

the programme's timeline. However, these negotiations have now been successfully concluded. As a result, it is anticipated that the programme will commence in earnest in October 2025, with a plan to deliver 176 installations year and an additional 78 units in 2026/27. The Council remain committed to overcoming these initial hurdles and ensuring the successful delivery of the programme moving forward.

24. The Council are collaborating as a member of North Essex Councils Climate Partnership (NECCP) on a Renewable Energy Opportunities Work Stream. Officers have reviewed opportunities and agreed a high-level list of ideas for Renewable Energy Generation Opportunities across our estate. NECCP will be supported by the Greater South Eastern Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) who are due to evaluate ideas put forward to help us consider next steps in developing and refining a pipeline of renewable energy projects ready for future investment.
25. The corporate account for the Co Wheels EV Car Club has been running for over a year, there are two EVs in Saffron Walden that Officers can book for business use. These vehicles are also available for hire by the public. Corporate membership has grown over the first year to 29 active members as of July 2025, with officers from a range of services using the vehicle including Planning, Housing and Facilities. Total miles travelled by UDC staff in the first 12 months was 3,548 (CO2 savings 656.84kg). Availability of the EV Car Club for business travel has supported recruitment to some key vacant posts.

### **Embed Sustainability and Environmental Priorities into Council Decision Making and Ways of Working**

26. A senior officer Climate Change and Biodiversity project board has been established to provide governance and assurance on the CCBAP. Meetings have been held quarterly since April 2024. At the most recent board meeting senior officers agreed to undertake a review of the current activities and projects in the action plan to further consider ways to embed sustainability into service delivery. The Corporate priority to develop a Sustainability Policy is due to be delivered later this year.
27. A regular joint Climate and Planning portfolio holder briefing has been established in response to emerging new national policy on clean energy, planning policy and land use. Senior Officers meet regularly with both portfolio holders to support prioritisation of projects that span Climate and Planning work programmes.
28. After successfully piloting Carbon Literacy and Climate Change awareness training for senior officers and members, it was agreed to develop an offer of carbon literacy training for all staff, however this was not rolled out as planned last year. Proposals have been sought from training providers, and the first staff training will now be delivered later this year. A UDC Climate Champions network will also be initiated to support staff in completing climate pledges, and actions will be celebrated via the staff newsletter and staff conference.

## **Provide Community Leadership and Enable Local Action on Climate Change**

29. As a Corporate priority Round 3 of the Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) Grant Scheme was delivered in 2024/25. A webinar was held in October 24 to launch the scheme. 23 applications were received in December, and 15 grant awards were awarded to community projects that will deliver reduction in carbon emissions, biodiversity restoration and enhancement and community engagement on climate change.
30. To date the ZCC Grant Scheme has funded 41 community projects. These include net zero infrastructure community projects such as installation of solar PV and energy conservation measures on community buildings and facilities; alongside community projects that provide energy surveys, advice and support to residents to install retrofit measures via their own means or via available government grant schemes. Grants have also been used to deliver local biodiversity studies and projects, river restoration and wetland projects and support a farm cluster.
31. Community engagement through the ZCC Grant Scheme led to the Council establishing a new networking group Sustainable Uttlesford in late last year, and in February the Council collaborated to formalise Sustainable Uttlesford (SU) as a community organisation, with the intention to build on the legacy of the Zero Carbon Communities Fund.
32. More than 70 people attended a celebration of the ZCC Grant Scheme and the formal launch of SU on 9th April. Following the launch, on 11th June Sustainable Uttlesford held a joint event with the Roding and West Essex Farm Cluster, who hosted both farmers and Sustainable Uttlesford members at Bury Farm, Canfield. The evening included inspiring nature walks led by RSPB and EWT with the aim of sharing how to identify and record species.
33. The Council is supporting SU with a small grant in their first year with the aim that they become formally constituted as a community interest company and develop their own funding streams. Work has commenced on design and development of the SU web site including an Uttlesford community project directory which will launch shortly. Objectives include, to share resources and expertise, create a directory of projects, groups and case studies, and support future fund raising. SU is run by volunteers and will continue to enable the growing district network of community groups and projects, as well as provide a convening power and local voice which will be increasingly important as we move into LGR.
34. A regular Zero Carbon Communities newsletter has continued to be published (c.1500 subscribers), sharing updates on the Zero carbon community projects, climate resources and climate change campaigns. Communication on climate matters, including funding and resources, has also been undertaken via the council newsletters and social media platforms, and via attendance at the parish forum and community events.
35. Last year, working in collaboration with the GSENGH, Officers supported over 30 Uttlesford residents to make successful applications to the Home Upgrade Grant

2 (HUG2) scheme, and 32 park homes on the Takeley site received external wall insulation fitted in time for winter.

36. A new government fuel poverty grant scheme Warm Homes Local Grants has now replaced HUG2. The Council have partnered with Essex County Council (ECC) to enable delivery of the Warm Homes Local Grants scheme to Uttlesford residents. ECC are the lead authority for the Essex consortia for the scheme. Procurement is complete and Happy Energy Solutions Ltd have been appointed as the managing agents for the scheme. Programme delivery commenced in September. As with previous schemes, the Warm Homes Local Grants scheme is focused on delivering retrofit measures to the most vulnerable households and Officers will work with Happy Energy Solutions Ltd to support marketing and engaging with eligible residents.
37. The Council have continued to engage with partners including Essex County Council, Community Energy Pathways and local groups to support the growth of Community Energy projects in Uttlesford. This work stream now has increased importance in view of the government Clean Power Plan and GB Energy focus on creating the conditions needed to drive investment in, and scale, locally led, community owned and managed energy developments.
38. In September a new Uttlesford community energy organisation Peacock Community Energy (PCE) Ltd is due to launch. As a community energy organisation, PCE Ltd is member led, and will be inviting investment in local renewable energy projects via share offers. The organisation will focus on covering operational costs rather than maximising and distributing profits, this allows surplus income to be invested back into local communities, to benefit local people. PCE has been awarded a UDC Community Business grant which will support setting up the organisation.
39. An Uttlesford Design Guide to Making Historic Buildings More Energy Efficient has been commissioned from Place services, this will include testing and refining a planning pre-app building audit Pro Forma on up to 8 homes some within Littlebury. The intention is to provide an energy efficiency design guide which is bespoke to Uttlesford and can be used by homeowners across the district rather than just a single conservation area. The design guide will be published later this year. In the future the Planning Development Management team may consider offering a fee-based pre-app guidance service to property owners.
40. Last year Littlebury Energy Project was awarded £40,000 from the Community Energy Fund (CEF). Bioregional and EQUANS were appointed to complete a feasibility study which looked at a community-wide solution to decarbonising heating in Littlebury. Findings from the study indicate that blending home retrofits while developing a district heat network will achieve the highest carbon savings for the greatest number of residents. It is hoped that the Littlebury Energy Project will apply for phase 2 of the CEF (£100k) to develop more detailed project proposals.



## **Plan for Future Housing Needs in a Sustainable Way**

41. The Planning Policy team are continuing with the examination of the new Local Plan with two weeks of public hearings held in June. The standards for net zero and sustainable building requirements in all new development, including green and blue infrastructure and transport have been set out in the New Local Plan. A schedule of main modifications on the Local Plan approved by the Planning Inspectors are due to go out to public consultation shortly. Members will be provided with separate updates on the Local Plan Examination from Strategic Director of Planning.

## **Renewable Energy and Energy Planning**

42. Work on a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for Essex commenced last year. Officers have been attending workshops to input to development of the plan including mapping a range of scenarios, working in partnership with ECC, other Essex Councils and UK Power Networks (UKPN). The Essex LAEP will provide a strategic plan for balancing future energy demand, including power, heat, transport, with renewable generation. This will enable Essex to be clear about the county's requirements and feed these into the new regional and national network planning policy processes. The LAEP programme is ongoing and will require continued input from Officers.
43. Officers have prepared the scope to commission a Strategy for Essential Renewable Energy and Solar farm Infrastructure in Uttlesford, this strategy is due to be commissioned shortly. The strategy is a critical element in the Council's approach to climate change and its Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan. It is needed to address the national and pressing need to embrace renewable energy generation, storage and distribution to support national and local energy needs whilst having full and sensitive regard to environmental impact and potential community benefits arising from renewable energy infrastructure and particularly from solar farms.

## **Manage Waste in a Sustainable Way**

44. The Council was among the first to adopt the new Essex Waste Strategy, which sets ambitious targets to eliminate landfill use by 2030 and implement the Government's Simpler Recycling initiative - including recycling services for flats and the collection of soft plastics by 2027. The strategy aims to recycle at least 65% of waste across the County by 2035.
45. Member workshops were held in July and September which explored current recycling performance and recent waste composition analysis. Despite comprehensive services, Uttlesford residents recycle less food waste than in other areas. Several initiatives are in the process of being explored to attempt to identify ways to better engage our communities with recycling services.
46. We have launched a new Prize Draw pilot project to attempt to encourage food waste recycling in three newer communities where historically participation has been lower than other areas. This project will also explore and measure the

impact of different communication methods and includes directly contacting residents to ensure that they have the right bins and information to participate.

47. A trial of food waste recycling has been implemented in four flat complexes across the district. The aim of this to help identify ways to improve recycling at these historically difficult sites. The early feedback and results from this show that all interventions improved recycling rates. We now need to share our experience across the county while planning the roll out to remaining flats as part of our requirement to introduce recycling at flats.
48. A new collection of small electrical items has been introduced over the summer and all residents on our main collection rounds may now leave out items for collection. We will need to continue promoting the scheme and ensuring that our 'hard to reach' vehicles are fitted with the cages so that the remaining 1000 households can participate.

### **Work with Partners to Deliver Sustainable Transport**

49. The DEFRA funded Saffron Walden Clean Air project is now in its closing phase of delivery with a final project report due to be submitted to DEFRA at the end of November, though some scheme contracts will continue until late 2026. The vision for Saffron Walden is for the town to be 'cleaner, healthier and greener' and for residents to see walking or cycling as their first choice for short in-town journeys. Alongside piloting of shared mobility schemes, the project has been raising awareness of pollution from transport emissions and has also delivered a public health awareness campaign on the impacts of pollution from domestic wood burning.
50. A final meeting of Saffron Walden Clean Air Stakeholder Steering Group was held in September last year, phase 2 of the project was complete with all shared mobility scheme pilots up and running. The schemes have now been operating for over a year (bike hire, ebike hire, community cargo bike and EV car club). A proposal was accepted to close the steering group and create a senior officer Saffron Walden Transport Strategy delivery group working with ECC, UDC and Town Council stakeholders to deliver the town sustainable transport strategy and priority schemes, drawing down available S106 funding.
51. Since the pilot shared bike schemes were launched in Saffron Walden, the Council has been able to expand the longer term bike loan scheme and make it available to anyone resident or working in Uttlesford [Uttlesford Bike Club](#).
52. In spring Officers held two community cycling events in Saffron Walden, to promote active travel, enable bike 'try outs' from our hire schemes, and encourage and boost confidence to cycle on the road. On 15th June, more than 60 cyclists participated in a family-friendly bike ride around the town – this was our second annual community cycling event, and feedback from participants included a request for the community bike ride to be a regular event in the town. A Saffron Walden Community Cycling and Walking Map was also published this year as part of the Clean Air Project.

53. The on-street App-Bike hire scheme in Saffron Walden has grown in popularity since its launch in April last year, with the most popular journey between the town and Audley End Station. Recently the scheme has been expanded to include a location for hire bikes in Littlebury village, where residents are using bikes for journeys to the train station and shopping in Saffron Walden. Further locations for bike hire are being sought in collaboration with housing developers in Saffron Walden. In July the scheme recorded a total of 5,323 trips since the scheme launch. There were 597 trips in July alone, a 77% increase on the same time last year when there had been 384 trips. For further information on the pilot schemes please go to [EV bikes: hire or try before you buy - Uttlesford District Council](#).
54. Officers are due to complete evaluation of the shared mobility schemes to consider the options and business case for continuing these schemes beyond the project, including expansion to other settlements. Earlier this year Officers commissioned [CoMobilityUK](#) to create Developer Guidance for Shared Mobility in Uttlesford. This has been in response to requests that are now coming through from developers where bike hire and EV car clubs have been agreed as part of planning consent and S106 requirements.
55. All 6 schools in Saffron Walden that were engaged in delivering a pollution awareness project including [anti-idling action](#) were able to progress to achieve [Mode Shift Stars](#) Bronze accreditation. Half of schools went further and made an 'active travel pledge' to continue to engage staff, pupils and parents in active travel to school. A grant was taken up by all 6 participating schools, which enabled them to implement measures that support mode shift e.g. improved scooter pods and cycle parking.
56. Building on the success of the Saffron Walden project, Officers commenced a district school pollution awareness project in autumn last year. This project is working with 11 schools in locations across the district to raise awareness of air pollution and encourage behaviour change (modal shift) to reduce car trips. This is being delivered with our partners [MP Smarter Travel](#) who are delivering assemblies, surveys, anti-idling events and support to each school to complete a school travel plan. During June several schools hosted anti-idling events including [Dunmow St Mary's Primary](#) where year 6 pupils at the school approached drivers idling near the school gates, encouraging them to turn off their engines, raising awareness about the dangers of air pollution.
57. In January this year the public consultation closed on the Uttlesford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The LCWIP is a 10-year strategic approach to cycling and walking improvements, it focuses on delivering a new strategic cycle network, setting out the quality of current provision and priorities for future investment in Uttlesford and has two more settlement-based plans for Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow. The consultation was managed by ECC and Officers have overseen responses to comments and final amendments to the Uttlesford LCWIP ahead of submission to government this September. The publication of LCWIPs in Essex is facilitated by ECC as this is a key requirement set by Active Travel England, which determines how much funding the County will be allocated at a future date to deliver infrastructure projects. Officers will

continue to work with ECC to prioritise the delivery of active travel schemes in Uttlesford.

58. Officers have been collaborating with the Essex EV Infrastructure Team on the mobilisation of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) project in Essex. Essex have received over £8million in grant funding for delivery of EV charge points across the County. The objective of the LEVI project is to increase the number of public EV charge points both on-street and on Council owned car parks to meet the needs of residents who do not have access to off street parking. This project is now in the procurement phase, with charge point operator contracts due to be in place by March 2026. The Council have signed a collaboration agreement providing an indicative list of locations for charge points on Council owned car parks, including social housing. Installation of charge points is not expected to commence until 2027 at the earliest, Officers will continue to work with ECC and charge point operators as the LEVI delivery plan is developed.
59. UDC is a member of the Essex Air Quality Consortium who alongside ECC, helped develop a county wide Air Quality Strategy. The strategy aims to improve air quality across Essex through working collaboratively with other members of the consortium to deliver on measures and interventions as detailed within the Air Quality Strategy Action Plan. Given our experience in delivering on the Saffron Walden Air Quality Project we are well placed to share good practice, pool resources and advise on measures to improve active travel. The draft strategy was subject to public consultation earlier this year and on 9<sup>th</sup> September ECC's Cabinet resolved to agree to adopt and formerly publish the strategy. In the coming months a report will be put to UDC's Cabinet recommending the same.

### **Restore, protect and enhance the quality and diversity of the district's natural habitats and wildlife**

60. UDC has been recognised as the first council in Essex to include a target of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain in their Local Plan.
61. In July the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published. The LNRS is a statutory requirement and is a tool to drive nature recovery action and bring about benefits for nature and the wider environment. Delivering local action on nature recovery in Uttlesford will bring multiple benefits such as carbon capture, absorption of water to reduce flooding, protection of soil quality and agricultural production, provision of spaces for nature and wildlife. The Essex Local Nature Recovery Partnership has now launched a small grants fund available to local groups to assist with nature recovery at a community level.
62. The Council are due to publish their first Biodiversity Duty Report before the end of this financial year to outline progress made against previously agreed objectives, this report will include an action plan for the next five years.
63. Climate and Planning Policy Officers are working together to deliver an Uttlesford Biodiversity Strategy. The Strategy will encompass the use and protection of

water and stream ecology, and a separate but linked strategy for tree, woodland and hedgerow planting and protection. Officers will shortly commission the first phase of the project, which is a District Tree and Woodland Strategy. The overall aim is to increase the extent of tree canopy in the district with healthy and suitable trees whilst protecting those already present and providing replacement succession planting for old and decaying woodland, single specimen and hedgerow species.

64. At present the Planning Policy Team do not have a Principal Ecologist in post, however budget has been agreed and allocated to support commissioning of priority projects in the action plan, until this post is recruited to.

## Forward Plan

65. Going forward there will be an ongoing need for joint working between the Climate and Planning Policy teams to deliver and implement:
- Local Plan Policy including Sustainable Transport Strategy and Schemes and the DEFRA Clean Air project follow on action plan.
  - Local Nature Recovery Strategy in Uttlesford, and our statutory Biodiversity Duty.
  - District strategies and actions that respond to energy system reform and the clean energy transition as well as the Clean Power Plan 2030, and the need to expand renewable energy production.
66. Collaboration with the new community organisation Sustainable Uttlesford will be a priority action, to deliver support and lead community engagement in climate change action, and nature and biodiversity restoration. This will be supported through continued joint working between Climate, Community and Economic Development teams. The Council will partner with Sustainable Uttlesford to deliver the district wide 'Uttlesford Big Green Festival' 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June next year.
67. Activities and projects in the Council CCBAP will be reviewed, updated and prioritised with service input on an ongoing basis, in response to government policy changes, and in preparation for changes coming through devolution and local government reorganisation, with oversight and direction provided by the CCBB.

## Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
As the Climate Reserve is being spent down there is a risk that capacity and resources	3	3	A priority growth bid has been drafted to support delivery of Climate and Policy

available to deliver CCBAP project activities is reduced, which may lead to progress on actions stalling, and projects ceasing.			Planning Team work plans and priority projects.
Gap in staff resources leading to reduced service or team knowledge and capacity to support or deliver critical decarbonisation projects and biodiversity projects.	3	3	Monitoring and oversight by Corporate Management Team and Chief Executive Officer.
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 achievement of Council net zero carbon targets and/or climate change objectives.	2	3	<p>Ongoing monitoring and review of actions and scope, with success measures overseen by Climate Change and Biodiversity Project Board.</p> <p>Recommendations from APSE report to be agreed by directors and taken forward in service plans.</p>

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.

## UDC Priorities



### *'Low Carbon and High Nature'*

1. To take control of and reduce our own emissions
2. To provide leadership partnering, persuading and influencing our communities, partners and Government to do things differently;
3. To improve and protect biodiversity

- Transport Waste Fleet
- Energy and Buildings
- Social Housing
- Business Travel and Operations

- Planning and development
- Transport strategy incl. EV
- Waste and recycling/campaigns
- Partnerships & project readiness e.g. community energy

- Biodiversity net gain
- Biodiversity duty
- Strategy and Action Plan

*UDC Organisation Development Plan*

*District wide Communication and Engagement*