

Cllr Neil Reeve, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

Report to Full Council – 14 October 2025

Climate Action Updates:

Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund – launch

- On 2nd October, the Council launched the next round of the Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) Grant Scheme.
- This year there is £80k total fund available for grants of between £500 and £10,000.
- As in previous years the grant fund is open to community projects that will deliver reduction in carbon emissions, biodiversity restoration and enhancement and community engagement on climate change
- A webinar will be held at 7pm on Wed, 15th October to formally launch the scheme and participants will also hear from projects previously funded.
- For further information on the scheme and how to apply please visit our webpage [here](#). The Closing date for applications is Wed, 5th December.

Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) – Launch

- In September the Essex Local Nature Recovery Partnership held a formal launch event for the [Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#).
- The LNRS is a statutory requirement and is a tool to drive nature recovery action locally to bring about benefits for nature and the wider environment.
- For more information for how you and your communities can get involved in the partnership visit [How to get involved in the LNRS - The Essex Local Nature Partnership](#)
- A small grants fund is available to local groups to assist with nature recovery at a community level. Grants of between £500 and £2,000 are available. For further information and to apply please visit the website [here](#).

London Road Retrofit Project – Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

- The London Road Retrofit Project was mobilised earlier in the summer and is on track.
- Survey work has been completed at London Road, in addition to final detailed design drawings and specifications.
- An application for planning permission and listed building consent has been submitted which will be heard at the Council Planning Committee in mid-November.
- Procurement approach has been agreed and the tender process initiated with a view to contract award in late November.
- This project will deliver a range of energy efficiency measures at London Road including installation of insulation-draught proofing; roof insulation; secondary glazing; installation of Air Source Heat Pumps, and a small number of solar PV panels.

Sustainable Uttlesford

- On the 18th September Sustainable Uttlesford delivered another successful member event at Hales Wood Nature Reserve, Ashdon.
- Members were able to learn about this traditional coppice woodland managed by skilled woodsman Andy Basham, who demonstrated what goes on in a fully-fledged, sustainable and viable traditional coppice woodland, with a special focus on producing biochar from unsaleable brash (e.g blackthorn), a forgotten ancient technology that's been re-discovered.
- The next members event will be an interactive networking workshop on 'Waste and Recycling' which will be held on Wed, 12th November at Foakes Hall, Great Dunmow.
- The Council and Sustainable Uttlesford will be collaborating to deliver a weeklong 'Uttlesford Big Green Festival' from 6th to 14th June 2026.
- For further information about Sustainable Uttlesford or to join the mailing list for newsletters please email climatechange@uttlesford.gov.uk

Peacock Community Energy launched

- In September a new Uttlesford community energy organisation Peacock Community Energy (PCE) Ltd was launched.
- PCE was awarded a UDC Community Business grant which will support setting up the organisation.
- 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.
- It is expected that the district will see further community led energy projects driven forward by the [GB Energy](#) Local Power Plan in due course. For more information on this important national policy change read the [GB Energy Founding Statement](#) which was published in July.

Essex Local Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund update

- 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 recently 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.

Uttlesford Design Guide to Making Historic Buildings More Energy Efficient

- An Uttlesford Design Guide for retrofit on historic buildings 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.

Uttlesford Signage and Wayfinding Project

- In July the Council invited town and parish councils across the district to collaborate on a new Signage and Wayfinding Project aimed at promoting sustainable travel, enhancing access to key services and supporting local businesses.
- Officers from Climate and Planning Policy teams are delivering this project with funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- Expressions of interest have been received, and projects selected, and officers have now commenced project design and delivery.
- This project will be completed by the end of March 2026.

Air Quality update

Air Quality Strategy

Like it or not, air pollution continues to be the biggest environmental risk to human health in the UK. There is growing evidence on the complex effects poor air quality has on human health and wider costs to society.

Levels of air pollution in Uttlesford are good and within current air quality but we are not complacent. As well as the good work achieved through the grant funded Saffron Walden Clean Air project, UDC is an active member of the Essex Air Quality Consortium, made up from 12 District, Borough and City Councils as well as Essex County Council. The consortium has championed the development of an Essex Wide Air Quality Strategy. The strategy reflects that fact that air pollution does not respect local authority boundaries and seeks to share resources and deliver best practice. Thus, allowing Essex authorities to work collectively to improve air quality for all.

A public consultation on the draft strategy ran from January to March this year and the final amended strategy was approved by Essex County Council's Cabinet Committee in September. We also intend to put the strategy to Cabinet for adoption by the end of the year.

Annual Status Report

Members are reminded that each year the Council is required to prepare an Annual Status report on air quality within the district. The report fulfils the Council's statutory duty to review

and assess AQ and serves to provide the public with information on measures taken to raise awareness. Key findings of the report include:

UDC measured no exceedances of Air Quality Objectives

UDC measured PM_{2.5} concentrations demonstrate were aligned with DEFRA background PM_{2.5} mapping. Both report a decline in levels for 2024 and are below the Environment Act (2021) annual mean concentration of 10µg/m³.

Measured concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide continue to fall, and there is a downwards trend of measured PM₁₀ pollution.

Environmental Services Update:

Waste services transformation programme workshop

A second workshop was held exploring the behaviour change projects that have been operating within the district.

- **Waste Electrical Equipment collections**
- **Food recycling trials at flats**
- **Waste prevention projects**

A copy of the slides has been saved in the Member Sharepoint Training folder.

1.22 Tonnes of waste electrical equipment has been collected through our new kerbside collection service, which is a positive start to this new service.

The food waste prize draw project went live over the summer with the aim of understanding the impact of direct interventions have on how residents participate in recycling services. More details on this innovative project will be share with Members later this year.

Energy from Waste

We have reached a major milestone in the Waste Strategy for Essex and are no longer sending waste to landfill.

Instead, all general rubbish is being sent to an Energy from Waste (EfW) facility, near Rivenhall (pictured). Here, waste is transformed into electricity that can be used to power our homes.

Energy from Waste is a step in the right direction as disposing of waste in landfill is the worst thing we can do for the environment.

