

Cllr Neil Reeve, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

Report to Full Council – 18 December 2025

Climate Action Updates:

Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund

- Round 4 of the Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme closed for applications on Wed, 5th December.
- This year there is £80k total fund available for grants of between £500 and £10,000.
- As in previous years the grant fund was open to community projects that will deliver reduction in carbon emissions, biodiversity restoration and enhancement and community engagement on climate change
- 26 Applications were received at the closing date. Evaluation of applications will be taking place later this month.
- Applicants will be notified of outcomes early in the new year.

London Road Decarbonization Project

- In November project designs received planning permission and listed building consent
- Procurement and tender evaluations are complete. A shortfall in funding for project delivery has been identified.
- The status of the London Road Decarbonization project will be discussed at Cabinet on 16 December 2025.

Sustainable Uttlesford

- In November UDC waste team delivered an interactive networking workshop on 'Waste and Recycling' at Foakes Hall, Great Dunmow. Over 40 attendees were updated about waste and recycling challenges facing the district and county and were challenged to help identify ways to engage with residents on sustainability issues.
- For further information about Sustainable Uttlesford or to join the mailing list for newsletters please email climatechange@uttlesford.gov.uk
- The next Sustainable Uttlesford event will be held on Thurs, 5th February at 6.30pm when Sustainable Uttlesford will be holding their AGM and 1st Birthday celebration event, to be held at the UDC London Road Offices. All welcome. To book a place please visit EventBrite [here](#).

Uttlesford Big Green Festival 6th to 14th June 2026

- In June next year, in partnership with Sustainable Uttlesford, the Council will be organising a weeklong festival to celebrate community climate action across the district.

- For more information and to find out how to get involved please visit our website <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/green-festival>

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.
- As of December 2025 ECC are part way through the procurement phase of this project, with charge point operator contracts due to be in place by March 2026.
- Cross Pavement Charging pilot. ECC have applied for funding from Department for Transport to support delivery of a cross pavement charging trial in the near future.
- Officers will continue to work with ECC and charge point operators as the LEVI delivery plan is developed.

Uttlesford Signage and Wayfinding Project - update

- 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 were received from Saffron Walden, Hadstock, Thaxted, Great Dunmow, Takeley, and the projects for these settlements have now been fully scoped.
- Officers have commenced procurement for design, print and installation, with projects due to be completed on the ground by March 2026

Enhanced Biodiversity Duty

- Officers from the Climate and Planning policy team have commissioned a project and report to meet our Enhanced Biodiversity Duty. This is a statutory duty, and we must deliver our first report by March 2026.
- This project will identify opportunities for increasing delivery of Enhanced Biodiversity Duty on the Council estate, and develop a delivery and monitoring plan, along with a set of indicators to enable effective reporting on our progress.
- A report is also being prepared to meet the statutory requirements for Development Planning and Biodiversity Net gain.

Solar Farm Mapping and Strategy

- Officers from the Climate and Planning policy teams have commissioned a review of Renewable Energy policy and planning guidance to prioritise focus on the emerging requirements for community benefit contributions.
- The project will support the council with managing solar farm development in Uttlesford, and will be considering landscape, biodiversity, and nature conservation, in addition to providing best practice examples for community benefit schemes.
- A report on this project is due in January 2026.

Saffron Walden Clean Air Project

- The DEFRA funded Clean Air Project in Saffron Walden was formally closed at the end of November 2025.
- A follow-on action plan will be developed in the new year and will consider options for continuing successful shared transport schemes (Bike Hire and EV Car Club), in addition to opportunities for expanding schemes to other developments in the district.
- Officers have partnered with the operator Active Cycling Projects on a bid for funding the Active Travel England Innovation Fund, which if successful will support retaining successful bike hire schemes in Saffron Walden, as well as plans for expansion.

Air Quality update

The Essex-wide Air Quality Strategy is anticipated to be formally adopted at Cabinet on 16 December. This strategy has been developed collaboratively by all district, borough, and city councils across Essex, alongside Essex County Council and the two unitary authorities—Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council. Essex County Council adopted the strategy earlier in September.

Implementation is already underway, with dedicated working groups established to deliver the strategy's actions. Uttlesford District Council is playing an active role, participating in the Development and Planning subgroup. This subgroup focuses on the practical and consistent use of Section 106 funding for air quality initiatives, including shared car and bike hire schemes and electric vehicle charging accessibility.

Our involvement strengthens our ability to deliver the agreed actions. With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, the strategy also provides a strong foundation for collaborative working and a coordinated approach to achieving positive outcomes for residents.

Environmental Services Update:

Holiday / Christmas recycling and waste collection arrangements are live now on UDC website, will be promoted via social media, direct mail and newspaper adverts. Link to the website pages <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/christmas-bins>

The results from three behavioural change projects operated over the summer months are in and presented below

Food Waste Prize Draw

This project aimed to incentivise households to recycle their food by entering those who put their caddies out for collection into a prize draw.

Households had the chance to either win the large prize worth £1,000, or one of 10 prizes up to £100 in value (e.g. garden waste subscription, vouchers, charity donations).

We targeted two treatment areas in Uttlesford and one control round.

Objectives:

- Increase food recycling tonnages in target areas by 5% during the intervention.
- Increase participation in food waste recycling across those areas.

Impact Summary:

Starter packs were offered to encourage food recycling. Uptake differed strongly by location: Flitch Green saw 9.6% of households request items (website-only), while Forest Hall reached 29.3% through both online orders and door-knocking. Notably, **door-knocking was the most effective method**, accounting for 67.6% of all starter pack deliveries and strongly correlating with the more positive results in Forest Hall.

Behavioural Metrics:

- **Set-out rates:** Flitch Green saw a 1% decrease; Forest Hall saw a 5.3% increase.
- **Participation rates:** Flitch Green dropped by 4.5%; Forest Hall increased by 2%.
- **Tonnages** - Flitch Green saw an increase in tonnage collected of 6.7%; Forest Hall saw an increase in tonnage collected of 15.7%

Summary of findings:

The increase in set-out and participation rates at Forest Hall estate were closely linked to high door-knocking activity, suggesting face-to-face engagement had a much greater impact than online requests alone. While Forest Hall showed the most encouraging results, largely driven by effective door-knocking, we saw stronger gains in the control area that indicate external factors were likely at play. The intervention shows potential but cannot be isolated as the cause of the observed increases.

Food Waste at Flats

Aims:

Introduce food waste recycling to flats that previously had no access to the service, using four diverse trial locations—Reynolds Court (41 households), The Old Cement Kilns (28 households), Beaumont House (6 households), and Manse Gardens (33 households). Food waste tonnages from each site were monitored over a 12-week period to assess participation, performance, and the overall impact of providing this new service to communal properties.

Delivery:

On-site visits were completed at each block to assess the bin stores, identify suitable locations for food waste bins, and address any access or capacity issues. To encourage participation, a starter pack containing a kitchen caddy, liners, and a simple user guide, was delivered to every household. We also worked with property managers to clean and tidy the bin stores, and installed clear, updated signage both inside the stores and in internal communal areas to help residents use the new service correctly.

Key findings:

Over the 12-week trial, crews used portable scales to measure the amount of food waste collected from the four participating blocks. In total, 797.6 kg of food waste was captured.

As part of the project, we also trialled different styles of food waste bins with various lid types to assess resident preference and ease of use; in all locations, bins with standard, non-locking lids were used more frequently and were clearly preferred over restricted-aperture or lockable options. Overall, nearly 800 kg of food waste was successfully diverted from general waste, demonstrating strong engagement. Based on these positive outcomes, it is our intention to roll out food waste recycling to all flats across the district, ensuring full alignment with the requirements of the new Simpler Recycling legislation.

One Bag Challenge

On 17 March we launched a project in partnership with Love Essex to encourage residents to reduce their general rubbish. This involves sending 9,227 households a booklet and bin sticker, followed by a postcard to 5,271 households.

Aim:

Run a behaviour change campaign to reduce residual waste collected at kerbside for Uttlesford residents with a Tuesday collection.

Objectives:

Use best practice to design and test small-scale interventions via physical and digital comms.

Achieve a change in residual waste tonnage in a targeted area between March and May 2025.

Increase residents understanding of waste and recycling, and confidence in using bins correctly

Build an evidence base to inform and enable scaled-up campaigns across Essex

Delivery:

Delivered physical comms to 9,227 households in Uttlesford: a booklet, bin sticker and postcard

Webpage on UDC website social media adverts and posts shared by parish councils

Metrics and data:

Tuesday tonnages from weighbridges

Thursday collection round as control

Pre- and post-challenge resident surveys to qualitatively assess impact

Waste composition analysis

Key Findings:

Scope - POCs are more successful when a **service change** or physical tools are involved (i.e. caddies)

Design -booklets were deemed more useful by residents than bin stickers due to their content. 75% of respondents surveyed found the booklet 'Very' or 'Quite' useful

Stickers – some residents said the stickers were ironically wasteful as they curled at the edges (icy conditions?)

Postcards – the 'nudge' comms halfway through did not have an impact on engagement in the challenge

Results – The project had a limited impact on behavioural change and in fact black bin tonnage increased over the trial period in both the trial and control areas. This is clearly disappointing but the overall project highlight the impact of some communication types.

Survey – only the post-intervention survey questions were useful. Only allowing those who answered the pre- to answer the post- limited the number of respondents

I attended the meeting of the Essex Waste Partnership in Harlow DC offices on 2 December 2025. Main items discussed were: sharing updates across the Local

Authorities; 2025 Annual Review; Government Waste Reforms update;
Examples/Challenges in the complex area of 'Reuse/Repair' (rather than the oft
discussed Reduce and Recycle – and Rethink or Refuse)

Finally, the Environmental Health service continues to perform well under ever
increasing strain. In November the team successfully secured prosecutions against
the owners and person in control of the of the former Skyline Hotel in Barnston.

The former hotel had been converted into a two storey House In Multiple
Occupation. Inspecting Officers found that the property was in a serious state of
disrepair with serious health and safety failings that included the absence of fire
alarms and emergency lighting, blocked escape routes and locked fire doors. Both
parties were ordered to pay to fines totalling £58,000.