



**Appendix One**  
**Uttlesford District Council**

# **Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)**

**A report on the public survey about Local Council Tax Support provision in Uttlesford for the year 2016-17**

**October 2015**





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## 1. Executive summary

In April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by a new local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme. The Government required councils to protect pensioners so that they would receive the same level of support as they did under Council Tax Benefit. This means that LCTS has applied only to working age people. Since the start of this scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 30% from 1,321 to 920.

This is the fourth year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the provisions that the council makes for local people within the scheme.

Information about the LCTS setting process and the survey was distributed to every household in the district as an insert into the council's magazine *Uttlesford Life* and, as part of the authority's drive towards channel shift, the 2015 survey was also available through an online questionnaire which was publicised on the website and in press releases. A small number of additional copies of *Uttlesford Life* were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district to ensure that all residents would have a chance of taking part even if they had lost their original issue of the magazine. A copy of the survey was not included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently. The results are detailed below.

**Local Council Tax Support Questionnaire**

**Introduction**  
Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and each year the council must consult on the proposed scheme for the following year. The results of this consultation will be presented to councillors in the autumn with the final scheme for 2016/17 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2016. The government's aim for the scheme is to promote the work ethic and ensure that people are better off working than not. Since the start of this scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 30% from 1,321 to 920. The council wants to hear your view on this scheme so please take a few minutes to complete the form and send it back to us in the envelope provided. If your envelope is missing, please contact the council by phone 01799 510510 or email [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk). Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS). This consultation is anonymous but collated results will be publicly available, including written answers. These will not be attributed to any individual but please do not include any personal or confidential information in your responses.

1. The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. At the moment Uttlesford also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.

Do you agree with this? Yes  No

If no, why not? You can add other comments, such as other groups that should be protected, in this box


Please turn over

## Results summary

The results of the survey have been analysed using Snap Survey Version 11 and are supplied as both counts (the number of people who answered each question) and percentages (the proportion of people who answered a question in a particular way). Data from both online and paper survey submissions has been merged to provide a single dataset.

The Uttlesford District Council LCTS scheme is the most generous in Essex providing additional protection and support for vulnerable working age people. Questions in the 2015 survey sought the views of residents and stakeholder groups as to whether this stance is generally supported and should be continued into the 2016/17 financial year. Since April 2014 discounts available on Council Tax liable for empty homes and second properties have been curtailed and the funds used to support the LCTS scheme. Additional sections of the survey asked for feedback on this approach. The results are given below:

## Results actuals

### Questionnaire responses

*NB In a number of instances respondents who answered “Yes” to a question also added a comment in the box allocated to those answering “No” to that same question. This has led to an apparent disparity in the count return rates for a number of questions.*

*Headline results are highlighted in bold. Full text responses are available in Appendix 1.*

Headline question	Result (counts) percentage
<p><b>Q1</b> The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. At the moment Uttlesford also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.</p> <p>Do you agree with this?</p>	<p><b>Yes: 979 (95.2%)</b></p> <p>No 49 (4.8%)</p>

Headline question	Result (counts) percentage
<p>If "No" why not? You can add other comments, such as other groups that should be protected.</p>	<p>90 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q2</b> For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £23.07 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £209,000. Do you agree that the council should keep the rate at 12.5% for a third year?</p> <p>If "No" why not? You can add other comments, such as other groups that should be protected.</p>	<p><b>Yes 800 (77.9%)</b></p> <p>No 227 (22.1%)</p> <p>250 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q3</b> The council currently makes sure town and parish councils do not lose money by providing a grant to make up the difference. If the council didn't provide this money it is likely that the amount town and parish councils charge residents would need to increase. For 2016/17 it is likely that the cost of this funding will be in the region of £170,000 across all town and parish councils in the district. Do you agree that Uttlesford District Council should continue to protect town and parish council budgets by bearing this cost?</p> <p>If you have answered "No", why not?</p>	<p><b>Yes 946 (93,5%)</b></p> <p>No 66 (6.5%)</p> <p>90 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q4.</b> To help fund the LCTS, the council reviewed Council Tax Discounts on second homes and empty homes.</p> <p>a. Second homes</p>	<p><b>Yes 971 (93.8%)</b></p> <p>No 64 (6.2%)</p>

Headline question	Result (counts) percentage
<p>Prior to 1 April 2014 a second home received a council tax discount of 10%. This discount was removed so the charge is the same as for every other house. Do you agree that this treatment of second homes is correct? If "No", please explain why.</p>	<p>83 comments received</p>
<p>b. Empty homes undergoing major repair Prior to 1 April 2014 there was a 100% discount for a period of up to 12 months from when the property became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 12 months. Do you agree that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property undergoing major repairs? If you have answered "No", what should be used and why?</p>	<p><b>Yes 813 (79.4%)</b> No 211 (20.6%) 249 comments received</p>
<p>c. Empty homes Prior to 1 April 2014 properties that were empty but not undergoing major repairs received a discount of 100% for up to 6 months from the date they became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 6 months. Do you agree that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property not undergoing major repairs? If "No", please explain why.</p>	<p><b>Yes 752 (73.9%)</b> No 265 (26.1%) 289 comments received</p>
<p>d. Empty homes premium Prior to 1 April 2014 there was no incentive within the Council Tax scheme to encourage owners to bring empty properties back in to use. As from 1 April 2014 an additional charge of 50% was introduced for properties that had stood empty and unfurnished for a period of 2 years or more (ie the owners of such homes would pay</p>	<p><b>Yes 753 (74.1%)</b> No 263 (25.9%)</p>

Headline question	Result (counts) percentage
<p>150% of the Council tax per house). Do you agree that this is the correct level of additional charge and that two years is the correct time period? If "No", please explain why.</p>	292 comments received
<b>Q5</b> Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme	123 comments received
<b>Q6</b> Postcodes data entered	1014
<b>Q7</b> Are you in receipt of LCTS?	<p><b>No 909 (90.3%)</b></p> <p>Yes 98 (9.7%)</p>
<b>Q8</b> If you in receipt of LCTS, are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	<p><b>Yes 83 (91.2%)</b></p> <p>No 9 (9.9%)</p>

## Results priority analysis

Previous surveys conducted in 2012 for the initial introduction of the scheme in 2013-14, in 2013 for the 2014-15 scheme, and in 2014 for the 2015-16 scheme were conducted to determine the most effective resolution for recipients in Uttlesford.

Questions have been varied during each of the annual consultations. Whilst not directly comparable, the 2015 consultation for the 2016-17 scheme in part seeks to revisit a number of elements previously adopted in order to determine if there has been a move in public opinion. An example of this is seen in Q4a where the decision on second home discounts, implemented in 2014-15 following the 2013 consultation, is re-visited.

### Local Council Tax Support Priorities:

The broad principle of the scheme has been maintained since its introduction, with some elements being refined in succeeding years. Headline results across all consultation streams indicate that the public are broadly in favour of the local scheme as currently delivered. Following public consultation, in December 2012 the Council adopted an LCTS scheme which included protection for pensioners (a mandatory requirement for all schemes) but added further protection for vulnerable working age people. Respondents indicated a marked preference for the continuation of this discretionary element with 95.2% supporting ongoing protection within LCTS for disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.

The LCTS scheme for 2014/15 implemented an amendment to increase the minimum amount paid by LCTS recipients formerly entitled to full Council Tax Benefit from 8.5% to 12.5%. This still represents the most generous support package in Essex, but costs the Council approximately £209,000 per annum. Just over three quarters of residents (77.9%) indicated their continued support for retaining this arrangement.

A further financial implication of the scheme arises from the support Uttlesford District Council provides to town and parish councils in order to ensure that they are not adversely affected by the loss of Council Tax income. Again, there was consistent support for continuing this course of action with 93.5% of respondents indicating their approval.

A further section of questions sought to ascertain the current views of residents on Council discounts for second home owners and empty homes that were amended from 1 April 2014. These included the removal of second home discounts and the reduction of relief for empty homes undergoing repair. The resulting additional income has been used to support the LCTS scheme, thus reducing the direct impact on Uttlesford District Council budgets. Across the board there was support for maintaining the current level of discounts. Over nine in ten people (93.8%) continue to support the removal of the 10% discount for second homes whilst just under eight in ten (79.4%) maintain their approval for the reduction of empty homes discount – this was scaled down to 50% from 1 April 2014. Some 73.9% of those responding to the survey also continued to approve of the current level of discount on homes that are empty but not undergoing major repairs whilst a further 74.1% of respondents further agreed that the premium to encourage owners to bring empty properties back in to use should be continued.

## 2. Purpose methodology

Uttlesford District Council has a statutory duty to consider annually whether to revise its Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS), replace it with another or make no changes. If it wishes to amend or substitute the scheme in the forthcoming year the Council is obliged to consult with interested parties. The results of this consultation will inform the decisions made by officers and councillors when setting Council Tax spending for the year April 2016 to March 2017.

In a departure from the format of previous years the LCTS survey for the 2016-17 scheme was distributed as a centre page insert into the summer edition of the Council's widely distributed community newsletter, *Uttlesford Life*, which is delivered to

every household in the district. A copy of the survey was not, this year, included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently.

The consultation was run over the period 27 July to 30 September 2015. Respondents were asked to indicate their support for the scheme as it currently stands and to provide comments where they thought any amendments might be applicable. They were also offered the opportunity to make any further observations. For profiling purposes they were also invited to include a postcode and to state if they were in receipt of LCTS.

The following consultative methods were used, in all cases the same questions were asked:

- Dedicated pull-out four page survey distributed with *Uttlesford Life*. A reply paid envelope was also included so as to make it as easy as possible for residents to respond. Additional paper copies were also distributed to the Council's main contact points at the Great Dunmow Library, Thaxted CIC and the CSC in Saffron Walden.
- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the Council's website from 27 July to 30 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform.

General promotion was carried out with a press release and exposure via the Council's social media channels and prominent placement on the homepage of the Council's website.

By the close of the consultation period, 1042 paper responses had been received and a further 47 online submission were registered. This represents a significant increase in overall submissions on each of the previous years when the consultation was not so widely distributed. It should be remembered that not all respondents chose to answer all of the questions and that in

a number cases residents opted to submit statements and comments in support of the 'No' option even though they had answered 'Yes' to a particular section of the consultation.

### **3. Survey results, detailed findings**

#### **Survey results across all streams**

The results for each of the different consultation streams – paper and online surveys – are reported below as a single merged dataset.

#### **LCTS substantive questions**

This analysis comments on the responses received across both consultation channels and makes some reference to previous consultations. Results are broadly in line with the views of residents as reported in previous years, principally research undertaken with stakeholders and the Uttlesford Citizens Panel to inform the 2014/15 scheme.

Q1 Protecting pensioners and disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income saw 95.2% support with only a 4.8% rate of dissent. Protection for pensioners is a mandatory requirement, though Uttlesford District Council has also opted to provide additional protection for vulnerable working age people – disabled people, carers and blind people. Although only 49 people considered that this additional support should be withdrawn, some 90 respondents chose to make a comment. These comments ranged from support for the long term ill – “People who are genuinely long term ill, but not necessarily classed as “disabled” ought to be included at the discretion of the council” to a suggestion that “Everyone should pay something.”

Q2 Maintaining the level at which non-vulnerable LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay Council Tax at 12.5% for a third year was supported by 77.9% of respondents. Those who answered 'No' in relation to this question were invited to supply additional

comments on other groups that might be protected or additions to the scheme. In all 250 people offered additional information ranging from suggestions for a “Slight increase, say to 15%. We seem to lag behind all other councils, significantly behind some. Whilst there may be a good explanation, none is given” to suggestions that it should be raised to “At least 20%”. The survey for the 2014/15 scheme undertaken in 2013 saw a 58% support rate for the 12.5% payment level. By comparison the current survey results represent an almost 20% increase on that figure.

Q3 Supporting parish and town councils to ensure that they do not lose money was backed by 93.5% of those who answered this question. Some 66 people (6.5%) did not agree with the continuation of this funding to which a further 90 added some additional clarifying comments. These ranged from “The money saved would be better spent on the section of the community who need it and who the council are currently cutting” to “In the end it all comes from us”.

Q4 The partial funding of the LCTS scheme via changes to the Council Tax Discounts on second homes and empty homes elicited a range of responses. Prior to 1 April 2014 a second home received a council tax discount of 10%. This discount was removed and as part of the consultation residents were asked if they considered it right that second homes should be charged at the same rate as for every other house. In total 93.8% agreed that this amendment to second home discount should remain in place, with just 64 people objecting. In all 83 comments were made in relation to this part of the consultation with statements such as “10% discount to continue” and “Second homes should receive discounts of 25% unless they are being used all the time or rented out”. In relation to empty homes undergoing major repair, there has, since April 1 2014, been a reduction in the Council Tax Discount available (down from 100% to 50%) for a period of up to 12 months whilst works are being completed. From both paper and online surveys 79.4% of residents agreed that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property undergoing major repairs. Supplementary comments were well supplied in relation to this question with 249 people quantifying their opinions. These varied from “Should be no discount” to “If the owner does not, or cannot, repair these properties, the council should be able to requisition and bring it back to good living standard then either rent it out or sell it!”. Prior to 1 April 2014 properties that were empty but not undergoing major repairs received a discount of 100% for up to 6

months from the date they became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 6 months. Some 73.9% agreed that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property not undergoing major repairs and again there was a significant response rate in the additional comments box with 289 people leaving some extra detail. Some considered that the “Discount [should] be phased out completely” whilst another noted that “3 months is long enough to find a new tenant especially at present with short age of suitable rented properties”. Again, prior to 1 April 2014 there was no incentive within the Council Tax scheme to encourage owners to bring empty properties back in to use. As from 1 April 2014 an additional charge of 50% was introduced for properties that had stood empty and unfurnished for a period of 2 years or more (i.e. the owners of such homes would pay 150% of the Council tax per house). Of those who expressed an opinion 74.1% (753 people) agreed that this is the correct level of additional charge and that two years is the correct time period, though 292 people added some supporting comments. These ranged from “I don't think it's fair to pay more than the normal council tax and with the increased development I can see a problem for sellers and those wanting to rent their properties in the future. I already know of people being unable to sell properties now because of the developments” to “Should be 100% i.e. Pay 200% after 2 years empty”. In the 2013 survey for the 2014/15 scheme there was 84% support for the removal of the 10% second homes discount. The current return takes this up to just under 94% indicating the continued support. Likewise, in 2013, 79% approved of the reduction in empty homes discount in relation to those buildings undergoing repairs. This figure is virtually unchanged in the current survey, again indicating continued popular support. Similar questions posed in respect of empty homes vacant for up to six months and the empty homes premium were again approved in 2013 with 82% and 89% support respectively. In 2015 there has been an 8% drop (down to 73.9%) in support for the first of these and a 15% drop in the second (down to 74.1%). These two elements represented the only significant fall off of public opinion throughout the entire survey.

Q5 Respondents were invited to make any additional observations on the scheme and 123 people chose to take up this option offering a range of opinions from “We are told we need more housing, let's get what we have back on the market. I fail to understand why single occupancy receives a discount, they use the same services and should pay going rate” to “Nice to be asked for an opinion”.

Q6 Although 1089 responses were received via the paper and online surveys only 1014 people chose to enter their postcode data. This still provides a comprehensive dataset and permits the plotting of response distribution across the district.

Q7 Of those who answered this question 98 people indicated that they were receipt of LCTS. This represents 9.7% of those who replied.

Q8 In relation to the previous question 83 people in receipt of LCTS noted that they considered themselves to be in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carers). It will be noted that whilst a further 9 replied that they were not in a protected category this makes a total of only 92 – 6 people then answered Q7 but omitted to follow through to Q8.

## 4. Appendices

### 4.1 Open text responses received

The following open text responses were received.

**Q1 The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. At the moment Uttlesford also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income. If "No" why not? You can add other comments, such as other groups that should be protected.**

#### Responses received

Should be available only if claimant has been a resident of Uttlesford for a qualifying period - perhaps the three years prior to being eligible to claim

Your question is misleading – am I saying yes to what the government is saying? Or yes to what Uttlesford is doing? I agree with the Government stance on this. Not Uttlesford's.

Would like to see young vulnerable people e.g. those leaving care, protected. 18-25 year olds are very unlikely to earn more than a low income wage.

We should encourage all people to be self dependent.

People who are genuinely long term ill, but not necessarily classed as “disabled” ought to be included at the discretion of the council.

While I agree with Government's aim for this scheme, there are always those in dire need and it is part of the state's and citizens' duties to support them to avoid further and more expensive problems in health and education so that future generations can prosper.

As few as possible to be supported. Further 30% off 2016-17.

There is no reason why pensioners should receive a better settlement than the rest of the

community.

Disabled people and carers already receive benefits why should I as a full rate tax payer subsidise them anymore.

However - a small contribution should be made. Anything free is often abused. Most pensioners these days have adequate pensions.

A good scheme - enables those on low income to live on a reasonable standard of living and hopefully not be a burden on the community and state

Pensioners and disabled people on a low income do not have the same sorts of choices in seeking employment. Therefore financial threats are not likely to work, but are punitive.

Anybody who is in need.

While I have no objection in principal to protecting certain pensioners on low incomes and disabled people on low incomes.....should not their 'free' savings be taken into account ('free' savings meaning assets excluding the home itself)? The principal ought to be to protect individuals who cannot afford the CT, not whole categories of people.

Does 'disabled' income include those with mental health difficulties? This particularly vulnerable group should be included. Staff would, however, need a very intensive training in how to deal with distressed or vulnerable people, which they have clearly never received.

But those with a history or background of criminal history, refusal to work etc. Should not have same help as those who deserve it. People who have worked most of their lives and behaved in a proper manor.

Somehow, but other areas should be considered too like Health care aged, less able people, incapacitated mentally due to depression PTSD, anxiety attack, dementia sufferers (ALZ) and so on.....etc. And on top of this we have problem with Health care cost every time we travel to GP, Mind, hospitals etc. Financial poverty exists.

If they are not working then I think they should demonstrate their inability to work (eg. Number of hours in a caring capacity, the extent and type of disability) before being able to receive LCTS.

Those with the lowest incomes should be supported and not taxed with charges they cannot pay. But applicants should be properly assessed by competent people.

But you are cutting back where ever you can.

This benefit should be restricted to existing groups.

Definition of low income is crucial here. It should be around the level of state benefits e.g. Disability Living Allowance.

How is 'low income' defined?

Everyone should pay something.

Unfair they already receive plenty of other support and funding. They need to bear some personal sacrifices and not only demand more help. Maybe carers can remain their carers benefit but not disabled as carers have a choice so should be supported.

'Protected' yes, but to what degree?

Families who have a sick child, requiring frequent hospital visits/treatment should also be included. I work with parents in this situation and the financial impact on their households is huge - often needing to take unpaid leave from work to attend appointments - so whatever their income they are usually unable to meet normal financial commitments, and are not all in receipt of DLA or carer's.

Whilst agreeing in principal with the notion of protecting disable persons and their carers a distinction needs to be drawn between disabled groups. A person requiring a carer is more likely to be unable to work and thus increase their income; however, the definition of 'disabled' is too generic and may for example, include such groups as obese where the 'disability' is essentially a lifestyle cho

Not certain one way or the other.

This depends on the level of disability and support needed.

I think too many pensioners have never saved a penny for their old age. Their attitude is the state will have to look after me. There is too much protection promised by Government. Why do you think all these migrants want to come and live here.

I am 88, I live alone in a council bungalow and I do not feel protected from anything.

Although answered 'Yes' I think pensioners/carers where there are only 1 or 2 persons in a household should be considered. Today's salaries are much greater than they were, average £25,000 p.a. and ordinary pensioners and people who care for them will not receive ANYTHING like this as their income. In other words widen the income range. 'Single' households do not pay as much rates as v. elderly pensioners.

How is a 'low income' figure derived and how is it checked?

It rather depends on the circumstances surrounding their “low income”. Are they genuine cases or people who have chosen the benefits route. How long have they been resident in the UK?

Should be increased by 2.5% next year and a further 2.5% the year after.

Add low-income cancer patients who cannot work (Temporary protection).

Someone may have a low income but have huge wealth. If the criteria was low wealth and low income, I would agree.

There are very few pensioners left who did not have the means to provide for their old age whilst in employment. Would like to see scheme abolished within 10 years. There might need to be protection for those with health issues who struggled with employment.

. At the moment there is not enough proper jobs and support like day care for a lot of people outside of even these exempts. Young people can hardly even start their life without help from family - who already struggle.

I don't see why pensioners should be given special treatment either but if that is government policy you have to. Other groups have their needs meet with welfare and should not be given extra perks on spending.

It depends if they spend their income on smoking.

People who are in the ESA “support group” should also be protected as they are effectively “disabled” and unable to search for work at that time. They are therefore unable to increase their income i.e. anyone that is unable to increase their income should be protected.

This should be covered by disabled allowance.

Should follow government policy and minimise social care costs - promote work ethic.

Low income is not defined so difficult to judge without a threshold to work with. 'Some' of the people in these groups may have factors taken in or left out when calculating lets. Define low income?

People on low incomes because they are unable to work owing to mental or physical disability or long term illness.

Pensioners on low income should be encouraged to downsize to cheaper property. The LCTS should reflect this aim. Disabled people and carers should receive MORE support as they have little or no choice in their circumstance.

If they have pissed it up the wall all their lives, why should the rest of us support them in their

excess?

Protection should be means tested. Some pensioners are very well off.

Everyone on a low income should be given the benefit of the scheme.

Council Tax should be incorporated into income tax thus reducing bureaucracy, staff and time.

Single parent families on a low income should also be included.

Anyone on a low income should be protected

Each year UDC do a BIG media push proclaiming "CUTS" in council tax! Each year I end up paying more?

Stick to government scheme.

Households on low income include working age people on Employment Support Allowance and Income Support. It is (lawful) age discrimination to give protection to pensioners and not others, who are likely to be on lower income than many pensioners.

All those on low incomes must be protected from any schemes that would affect their income and reduce it in any way.

So long as people who are already working aren't penalised.

All people on low income. Some disabled and OAPs have a lot of money.

Throughout a person's working life, there is plenty of time to make provision for post-retirement income. Disability, apart from the most severe cases, is not a reason to work and make provision for future income. The onus here is for society as a whole to enable people with all but the most severe problems to provide income for themselves and to increase and maintain their self-esteem.

But I believe it only protects disabled people in the ESA support group and not disabled people in the work related group who have been told they are unable to return to work at the moment without extra help or support.

Everyone needs to be doing their bit to help the country cut the debt. There are lots of jobs and volunteering they could do to give something back to society.

No - there are obviously some disabled or carers that need this support, but others, do not and take advantage of 'the system'.

"Yes" as a general principle, but a more detailed answer would depend on the definition of and the policing of "low"

The discount should be reduced. The abuse of "Blue Badges" by the disabled is well known. Doubtless the discount scheme is also widely abused.

"Other groups" should include those in the retail trade who earn only pence more than the minimum wage.

Low wage earners with no other income should also be supported.

It would have been handy to have been able to know what % of the Council's budget we are dealing with here. It looks like a very small %. That makes the decision easier.

Pensioners should have made provision for their old, carers should be paid a living wage, disabled are entitled to benefits.

All people should be protected if their state is through no fault of their own.

If people have worked hard all their lives, they should have the benefits they deserve.

People who need social security support and housing "benefit" should not pay Council Tax. If people with no property are required to pay Council Tax, then it is effectively a poll tax.

Subsidies should be considered when all adults pay council tax and not just the householder as at the moment. There is already too great a burden on householders which is disproportionate.

Stay at home mothers/fathers who need to look after under 5s, if they are on low income.

single occupants

As pensioners are protected - UDC has no say on this. Everyone on low income should be protected. UDC should absorb the cut in funding as some councils in London do, This should come before all services except those that UDC must by law provide. To do other creates division and indeed ill will against those who are protected.

I think UDC should concentrate on the quality of services it is giving, not on charging for services it doesn't give, or charges by the back door (brown bins - which take cut flowers but not garden waste because you want to be able to charge for that!)

All people on low income should be given protection. I know a number of people who have moved from benefits to working and have been worse off because of losing several benefits including council tax and housing.

Being disabled and a carer I hope we will not be shoved to the back burner again. We have worked all our lives paying into the system so we should be treated with respect not as a nuisance.

Protection should also be given to single mums on low incomes with children under five years old. Protection should be withdrawn from pensioners on low incomes paying council tax and living in houses in bands E-H of the council tax assessment scheme.

In principle those requiring financial assistance should be provided but this should be subject to regular scrutiny and revision if circumstances change.

I see no reason why pensioners should be protected

I agree that disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income should be protected, but NOT pensioners on low income. Disabled people and carers are usually unable to change their low income status, whereas I believe pensioners have more options.

Pensioners etc. get other benefits and top ups so should be treated as others entitled to LCTS. Whilst pensioners have earned the right to special treatment (they've paid their dues already), everyone else on a low income should be treated equally. This is about reducing the amount of money demanded from people with limited means, so it should be based on peoples' abilities to pay, not merely whether or not they fit into two arbitrary categories (however worthy they might be).

There could be a scale, dependent on how much a person can afford.

I don't see why pensioner should be protected, simply because they are old but if the Government insist you can't do anything. People on the same income should not be treated differently because they are disabled or a carer

**Q2 For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £23.07 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £209,000.**

**Do you agree that the council should keep the rate at 12.5% for a third year?**

If "No" why not? You can add other comments, such as other groups that should be protected.

## Responses received

20% as a minimum. Uttlesford should not be out of line with other districts

Uttlesford's rate is too low. 25%-30% would be fairer to local tax payers

But only if the extra money is spent on repairing the roads around the district in desperate need of repair

That is half the rate of some other districts. Be realistic!

20%

15%

Why is Uttlesford's % so much less than all the others? Surely it should increase just as the council tax increases every year. A small increase would help cut the cost to the council.

20% for fairness and equality across Essex

15% to bring us nearer average

Slight increase, say to 15%. We seem to lag behind all other councils, significantly behind some. Whilst there may be a good explanation, none is given.

20% is more in keeping with other councils

13% a small increase in line with most others.

15% - This keeps rate lowest in Essex

It should be brought in line with Chelmsford and Braintree + 20% seems to be the average.

increase to 15% in third year, it is less than 50p a week and educates the public to the cost of services - 'nothing is for free!'

Council contributions should reduce to zero

An increase should be considered certainly it should not be reduced. Perhaps 20% is fairer.

Q2. We should bring the rate up to 15% this is still too low figure compared to other councils. But as a council we should encourage people to pay as much as possible.

15% it's good that we're below the rest of Essex, but I'm not sure we need to be that far below, so a small increase is justified.

12.5% is very commendable providing it does not cause problems with the council's budget elsewhere.

Correct and reasonable to ask for contributions of £23 p.a

17.5% still better than other Essex Council and the additional cost is less than £1 a week.

15% UDC need to raise its percentage by 2.5% over the next 3 years. 20% is asked for by other councils. Why is UDC discriminating against its council tax payers yet again - green garden bin discount etc.

No reason is given for why Uttlesford should be more or less generous than the rest of the County! The money released could be better allocated.

25% a much fairer rate for tax payers and more in line with other councils.

15% still lower than anyone else.

Take average of the other councils. This rate is too low!

20% which seems to be in line with similar councils.

What about people who are struggling having worked all their lives their state pension has been delayed why should I support after I cannot afford to do this.

On second thoughts I feel that a good small increase of 2.5% should be applicable. This would mean that Uttlesford claimants would still be paying less than elsewhere but is a fair increase after two years at the same level.

25% The protection should be uniform in the district

Not fair to subsidise towns and villages.

8.50%

Make work pay

Should be more in line with other councils.

Although I agree in principle with the authority it should be more in line with other councils.

It's too low

I think it should be slightly higher 15% with the money put towards benefitting the community

I dont have the information to answer 2 & 3.

To keep the rate the same is a cut because of inflation shameful that you would even think about it. Parish Council is kept well briefed by its representatives attendance at Parish Council meetings at Hempstead.

I am proud to live in a district that that look, after the genuinely needy.

21 is average between all councils. This amount makes more sense UDC is low compared to other councils.

17.5% would be appropriate. it would cost an average recipient £46.14 a year:less than £1 a week. The figure would be justifiable because at present Uttlesford DC's rate of 12.5%is seriously out of line with all other essex authorities.

Original community charge promises were that charges would take into account ability to pay over 10% is injurious and inexcusable.

Not sure why Uttlesford is so low. What is the money being spent on?

It should be brought into line with other councils, with a minimum increase of 2.5%

Raised to 15% this would ease the pressure on the council's costs, albeit not significantly, without imposing a wholly unrealistic financial burden on the LCTS recipient.

Raise to 15%

At least 20%. I don't get any relief even when I'm out of contract (sole employed) and struggling to pay. Why should I help the feckless.

It should be 8.5% or less. The people receiving the LCTS have not seen their income rise by 12.5% therefore they are worse off having to pay 12.5%.

At least 20%

Suggest 15%, this is still lower than all other councils in Essex.

Put up 2.5%. Uttlesford need more money.

At District Council boundaries, near neighbours in similar circumstances would be paying very different council amounts causing potential stress/desire to move across the street.

20% as at VAT increased and inflation rate and no job sector available to take peoples skills, and recessions and pverty of social, makes legitimate 2 the help not make them more vulnerable.

15% would be fair

Uttlesford % is so much lower than all the other Councils. It needs to increase in steps each year to come up to around 25% (stepped over 5 years).

The additional income will provide funds for those people who are less well off.

15% Even then it would be the lowest in Essex.

15% would be a minimal rise and keeps us at the lower end compared to other Councils.

Suggest 20% in line with other Essex Councils.

I don't know as I do not have access to the Council's budgetary information.

Increase to 15%

It should be in line with other local councils (20%)

15% seems a fair amount.

On the assumption that UDC is in a position to fund it easily.

The old and vulnerable should not be asked to pay any increase.

20% its in line with other low % councils.

15% improve litter collection, road repairs etc.

15% wouldn't be unreasonable.

20% in line with most others

The increase of £23.07 is a modest amount, given that LCTS recipients are already being treated favourably compared with others who despite having relatively low incomes nevertheless are paying the full tax. I suggest therefore that the 2.5% increase should be implemented.

It should be slightly increased to 15%

I think it is reasonable to pay 30% as Castle Point. After all services have to be maintained by council. In a time of adversity everyone should pay a little more. They still get 70% discount!!!

The mean of other council's figure - between 20-25%

15% - 17.5% - 20% over 3 years and continue to match lowest rate in Essex thereafter.

We need to support people who are not too well off.

22.5% Average of remaining councils. Why is Uttlesford's claimants contribution so low?

15% It seems reasonable to me that UDC should narrow the wide gap between itself and other

authorities in Essex.

I would prefer us to be a beacon district, providing more help, than one which offers less. However it is difficult to judge without knowing numbers involved and relative levels of hardship.

25%

It should pay it's way. It should be more in keeping with other councils. I'm suprised they are not all the same 20%.

As you are out of line with ALL the others an increase to 20% seems correct.

If we want to protect services esp for vulnerable we need to pay a little more and we are out of recession so the time is right to do so.

25% - to make it comparable with other areas and reflect the fact that Uttlesford is not a particularly poor district.

The figure should accord with the lowest figures of other Essex councils i.e. 20%, as a minimum. There is no reason to maintain an artificially low contribution which i suspect has political connotations. In any case the increase would be a mere £10 on a little over £1.00 p.w.

We live in a special part of the UK, the quality of life is excellant. Whilst there are less fortunate individuals who need support I do not see why their contributions should be out of line with other Districts in the area.

15% would still be the lowest in Essex.

Increase to 15% to bring closer to other Essex Councils but still keep the rate low for those in need.

It should be more in line with other councils.

8.50%

The disparity between Uttlesford and the other councils is too great. I suggest raise it over 3/5 years to 20% paid. The money raised bight be better used for targeted social care at home.

Where did the 12.5% come from when the nearest rate is 0.5% and I have not had a pay rise since 2008. I try to do everything to reduce my outgoings but somehow all this rate hike always seems to make it a losing battle. Even if we go by the rate of inflation, this is way too high. This is government taking money because they can. That's all.

Those who suffer from certain 'mental' illnesses may find it hard to return to the work place - even though physically able. Such things should be taken into consideration and this group should be

protected.

It appears ridiculously low, and out of step with other Essex councils.

20% fall in line with other councils

We should be in line with other areas nearer to 15 % or 17.5% . This higher rate would therefore add less than £0.13 per day to recipients rather than increasing the cost to those of us NOT receiving LCTS.

Uttlesford should position itself in line with the other councils in the county - may 20-25%. Asking people to make a sensible contribution to the cost affects the way all view and use the service.

As the number of people has dropped, the percentage could be increased.

Should be lowered - say 10% - Pensioners, fixed income.

15% first year, 17.5% second year, 20% third year. Can't see why Uttlesford should be so much less than others.

Initially 15% increasing to 20% in 2017/2018

15% because holding at the lower figure for another year may stretch other council resources and even low incomes will rise enough to cope with the higher rate (living wage introduction...).

No, Uttlesford should not be significantly out of step with other councils. 20% should be charged but increase would need to be stepped.

It should be about 20% in line with the rest of the county.

20% to maintain parity.

At least 30% . Genuine needy cases will hopefully be covered 100% by benefits. All Essex councils should be in unison.

It would be sensible to raise it to 20% in line with many other local councils. This still seems like a relatively small contribution to ask people to pay. The bill for keeping rate at 12.5% is very high.

We are currently out of step with other councils. I would suggest 20%.

15% an incentive to recipients of LCTS to help themselves.

Should go up to level like other councils - e.g. 20% so that the cost of £209,000 is reduced.

20% (or more)

Council should consider bringing rate more in line with other local areas.

Uttlesford is well below Essex average. If not in 2015/16 the rate should rise to 15%, possibly with a commitment to hold it therefore at least 3 years.

15% . If amount does not rise slowly, then at some point a larger increase would be required.

A rise to 15% = an extra £2 (almost) a month should not cause too much pain

It should be increase to align with other local councils. Currently too low at 12.5%.

Possibly not. Seems low.

20%. Average amount by all councils = 21.75% therefore 20% is a fairer charge.

20%. Incentive to find work. Council use surplus to help pensioners, disabled and other services.

Increase to 20% so it is comparable.

Work upwards from 12.5 to 20 in increments say 15,17.5, 20. I can't think of a reason why council money should be spent in this way while so many other services are being cut.

As long as the council can maintain this and is viable given budgets.

Review bands. The poorest of even working families struggle. House owners struggle to maintain their properties. DO NOT RISE. GO BACK.

If Southend and Basildon can charge 25% so should you. Big issue would effect my vote to be honest you are giving my money to others.

15% - A reasonable increase per annum when other council services are under stress less than £2 a month/6p a day.

The average of the other councils is 22.461% I consider it should be increased gradually to 20% ion keeping with other councils.

I believe that Uttlesford residents have a better chance of employment than in many other areas. I think that the level of support should be more in line with other councils. The figure should be 25%.

20% to be in line with other Essex councils.

Should be no lower than 20% to be in line with the other Essex Councils.

Suggest an increase of 1.5% - i.e. Roughly in line with inflation.

12.5 is very low maybe 15% would be more in line with other councils.

It is not comparable. It ought to be nearer 20% the minimum of other Essex councils. It would be less than £1.50 a week extra, but mean a significant increase in revenue for the council.

20% Bring it into line with other Essex councils

Uttlesford should be brought more into line with other Essex Councils so that residents in Uttlesford will not be expected to provide a greater subsidy than elsewhere in Essex.

15% as a trial and the following year reconsider whether it should return to 12.5% or raised further.

Revert to 2013-14 figure.

But only for the people in the defined groups but again what defines low income?

12.5% is well out of line with other authorities. The arithmetic average of the other districts is 22.5

Uttlesford should aim to bring itself into line with them.

At least 15% Uttlesford is a prosperous council and should support those who are on low incomes.

See Q1

20%. This seems to be the amount considered apt by most areas.

My question would be at what rate in next 5 years will Uttlesford need to be at. I would suggest rising rate slowly rather than a larger hike like other councils. If 2019/20 20% then a modest rise of 2.5% a year seems in order.

Before answering I would want to know what use the £209,000 saved would be put to.

20%

We should be more in line with other local councils - maybe 15%

At least 15% to bring it nearer to other Councils. That figure is still a long way below the next highest so perhaps 17.5% or even 20% would be more appropriate. Whatever I think it should definitely be raised.

20% to bring us closer to the mean.

- I would prefer LCTS recipients to pay 0%.

Make small increase to help stop cut backs

20% to be more appropriate

The council have already worked wonders by keeping the rate so low for the past 2 years. The money has to be found from somewhere!

20% adjacent areas, such as Chelmsford (20%) and Harlow (24%) have considerably higher rates

It should be brought in line with other districts 15% to 20% seems about right.

People are paying much less here than in other districts. They have to be realistic that we all have to pay

more.

This figure is a lot lower than any other council, and should be more in keeping with their rates. At least 20%.

Uttlesford rate @ 12.5% is much lower than the rest of the list it should be be min 15% for 15/16 and rise a further 5% next year.

The rate should be 720% to match other essex councils.

Should be more inline with other areas.

A rise of 15% would seem reasonable.

15%

15% An increase of £23.07 per recipient is reasonable to ensure that the benefit is available to all that need it.

15% would seem more realistic.

15% will be nearer to the Essex average.

15% would seem more realistic.

The majority is 20% which seems more realistic

Needs to be increased to Essex average - 20%

It isn't quite clear what you mean here. Could it be tiered? So 12.5% for first year, then increase?

A much lower figure and one that means I pay less!

Congratulations on having the lowest rate in Essex. However, this should not be a "postcode lottery". I feel the rate should be zero across the country subsidised by the government. Less admin for Uttlesford.

Should be more in line with other districts.

A figure between 20-30% in line with other councils. The subsidy provided by Uttlesford is unaffordable given the need to show austerity.

Instead of 12.5%, maybe lowering it to 12%

LCTS must continue to be available for those who need it the most.

Should go up to 20% for comparable purposes.

The rate should be increased in line with other councils. What makes Uttlesford different?

15%. Because this is still lower than most other councils and is moderate increase.

If Yes it will be taken elsewhere and may double next year. I think an increase of 2.5% is acceptable.

Fair to pay 25%. People will have to cut down on drink and fags.

I think 20% is reasonable. Uttlesford is too generous in this instance.

It should be brought in line with the majority of councils e.g.20%

15% with a view to increasing 2.5% year on year towards 20% in line with the modal average of other LAs. Currently UDC is considerably lower than other LAs therefore not unreasonable to increase.

15% to move forward again and gain parity eventually with other Essex Councils by regular annual increases

It should be 20 the same as the lowest % for other areas.

15% minimum

£209K - or even an increase to , say, £251K, is such a small percentage of the overall budget that the importance of protecting the low paid is more important than increasing towards the Essex average.

The figure should remain at 12.5%. The Council should continue to operate within its means and not seek to raise its charges endlessly as it did a few years ago. There is still much waste that can be cut from the Council expenses.

20% still compare favourably with other areas.

1.Many low income households have a high income male who stays overnight and weekends/holidays.

Also some children /teenagers work. 2.These same households can run 2 cars (typically 3 to 7 year old models), own a dishwasher, high end cookers/hoods, expensive garden tools/lawnmowers 3.The average of the above in the table for the years 2014/16 is 21.75% (with the mode and median figures both 20%) making Uttlesford's 12.5% look ridiculous. Use 20% to 25%. 4. Increases in minimum wage due April 2016 increasing to £9 /hour by 2020

15%

Slight increase say 15%

Should be in line with other councils and be at least 20%

Perhaps a little bit higher to bring it in line with the others - say 20% contribution from claimant or just below.

The council should aim to reduce it back to about 8% on the basis that CT is a tax on property. In general the richer you are the larger your property, the subsidy is thus well directed and funded.

15%, we are all having to make sacrifices.

Need to calculate monetary value claimant contributes for each council in Essex and ensure UDC claimants pay an equal value. EG Braintree c/tax is less than Uttlesford therefore 20% of Braintree c/tax is less than 20% of UDC tax. Need to adjust accordingly - needs to be greater than 12 1/2%. May need transitional period?

Public finances are under pressure. Assuming these funds are directed to 'good use'. Else where there is no reason why Uttlesford shouldn't fall in line with other Councils.

The benefit culture is becoming a way of life, it has become a problem to differentiate between the needy and the greedy. They can afford mobile phones, cigarettes etc.

The benefit culture is becoming a way of life, it has become a problem to differentiate between the needy and the greedy. They can afford mobile phones, cigarettes etc.

If it were to go higher, people on low income will fall into debt.

20% to bring Uttlesford into line with other Essex Councils.

15%, as a first step in gaining harmony with other Essex councils.

Rather than keeping the money it needs to go to pensioners who need it.

The rate for recipients of social security and for people in rented accommodation on low incomes should be zero. Council tax should be paid by private landlords, and not passed on to tenants. Social housing schemes should not pay tax.

Everyone should make a greater contribution to spread the cost fairly between all the adults within the area.

15% - 20% same as other local councils and will enable Uttlesford to spend in other areas.

It should be increased to 15% this time and up to 20% next time to come in line with neighbouring councils.

12.5% represents too great a deviation from the Essex average.

At least 20%. Why should those who pay 100% continue to subsidise. 12.5% is a JOKE. An extra £69 is probably less than they spend on luxury goods such as the latest phone with 4G or SKY TV

It should be brought in line with other councils rates

Do not understand

15% need to come closer to the other Essex councils

15% at least, possibly 20%. In cases of real hardship and poverty help should be given.

If you have more money then you can provide better services and a smarter town in Saffron Walden.

17.50%

The rate should be increased to 15%. This will mean that local claimants still pay 5% less than other districts. The economy is improving and this should be reflected in the payment

20. The figure should be more closely aligned with the rest of Essex. Uttlesford needs to find ways to save money.

15% and gradually increased inline with majority i.e. 20%

100% benefit - already poor recipient should pay nothing

20% is more in line with other Essex councils. However, it would have been good to see data for adjacent councils e.g. South Cambs before making any response here.

We should be in line with other councils

25% should be used, paying a quarter of what everyone else has to pay seems very fair and in line with other councils. The £209,000 could be used on facilities for everyone to benefit from especially the elderly or children.

This sum could be better spent improving facilities for all council tax payers who are struggling.

20-25% in line with other councils

The figure should be 15% and would still be one of the lowest for Essex. This would enable the council to make a substantial saving for allocation elsewhere.

20%. The current rate is significantly lower than all other Essex Council and I don't see the justification in maintain this disparity. I would hope that an increase 5 would reinforce the encouragement that work pays. In these times of reduced funding. I don't think that we can be so much more generous than other councils.

The average for all 14 councils is some 21%. I see no reason why Uttlesford's should be maintained at the lowest level. I would suggest at least 15-18% for 2015/16 us when compared with other parts of Essex.

Increase to 15 % to bring in line with others.

15% - The figure remains relatively low, saves the council a significant amount of money and only impacts recipients by less than £2/month.

20% to keep in line with other councils. Uttlesford currently way out of line.

A higher figure to encourage more people to go to work. We are an affluent area with low unemployment and much opportunity to work.

Increase the rate to encourage more people back into full time employment and if this rate is increased more can be done for the pensioner or the disabled.

20 so we get better public services.

As other councils can give a 25% discount I feel we should do the same for the most needy

Raise it to the Essex average

I think 12.5% is too low, considering the demands on the Council Tax. I would suggest 20%, which is in line with other Essex councils.

Unless there are special circumstances affecting Uttlesford, the rate should not be so much lower than the average for the county. Suggest matching Tendring at 15%

The average for other Essex Councils for 2014/2015 is 22%, so why are you so out of step? Should increase to minimum 20% for next year.

It should be increased in line with the other councils

The Uttlesford rate is way below other councils, and even the second lowest, Tendring, has increased from 15% to 20%. I think that an increase to 15% would be justified, and still leave Uttlesford the most supportive of Essex councils.

Why not reduce the discount to the level of our peers and spend the money saved on allowing others, not currently covered by the existing scheme but who are on an equally low-income, claim the same benefits?

All councils appear to have a different rate, which is effectively a post code lottery. Uttlesford should set a rate of 20% to bring the rate in line with other councils. The 20% rate would still be the lowest in Essex. 20% should be used, as this figure reflects the average of our neighbouring councils.

According to [http://npi.org.uk/files/9214/3386/4426/CTS\\_challenges\\_and\\_options\\_FINAL.pdf](http://npi.org.uk/files/9214/3386/4426/CTS_challenges_and_options_FINAL.pdf) minimum payments have mostly risen; the most common is now 20 per cent.

I would suggest 15%. It is difficult to argue in favour of subsidising the low income groups by so much more than elsewhere in Essex.

We are the lowest in the area, I think there should be a small increase to 15% at least (if not even more to 18%)

It is too high.

It should be more in keeping with other councils. It is not clear why it should be so much less.

The council should charge these people as much as they are allowed to - fairness to all council taxpayers

**Q3 The council currently makes sure town and parish councils do not lose money by providing a grant to make up the difference. If the council didn't provide this money it is likely that the amount town and parish councils charge residents would need to increase. For 2016/17 it is likely that the cost of this funding will be in the region of £170,000 across all town and parish councils in the district.**

**Do you agree that Uttlesford District Council should continue to protect town and parish council budgets by bearing this cost?**

**If you have answered "No", why not?**

## Responses received

Each Parish and Town Council should pay their own way. Balance their books!

It's just book-keeping. Robbing Paul to pay Peter

Town and Parish councils can raise their precept more easily than UDC who I believe are capped by central government as to their ability to raise money - the taxpayer has to pay whichever way it falls.

It is vital that this is continued.

In the end it all comes from us.

They should have their own grants etc.

Selective support may be acceptable, depending on the causes of the need being justified. But general support could lead to unjustified dependence.

The Councils should be responsible for their own losses.

Council tax is charged across the full area of the council. Town and parish should not be involved.

It surely makes no difference where the money comes from, it will be paid by tax payers.

Yes: (in the interests of 'keeping things simple!')

Parish Council so charge the right amount in the first place.

Local/Parish councils must propose and execute their own budgets. Makes Councillors accountable for their own proposals and results.

Need to know what they do first before I can answer this.

Have to pay for it either way so makes no difference.

The money saved would be better spent on the section of the community who need it and who the council are currently cutting.

Depends on other factors. A yes/no answer is not as straight forward as you have worded it.

Unfair

However I am aware of Parish Councils who have tens of thousands in reserve, never touching it whilst contingency cash is good practice, perhaps those with a sizeable pot do not need a council boost of cash.

Times are tough for Councils. Households will have to absorb the few pence increase in Parish Council Tax.

Not sure/don't know.

See Q.2 reasoning.

It is impossible to answer this without more knowledge of what the councils concerned are providing, and what will suffer at parish or district level if either has reduced funds.

Parishes should be able to self finance their needs.

Providing there is not a difference between Town and Parish Councils and one may be expected to pay disproportionately more than another - NO.

People should pay the difference themselves.

If the county council is prepared to find the shortfall of other Councils at a minimum of 20% why should Uttlesford be different? The only losers are Uttlesford residents who should expect the same level of service as elsewhere - less money available must reflect in reduced services.

The system you are using encourages financial discipline rather than thrift.

It is more important to protect disabled vulnerable people than to protect the generality of tax payers from increases.

This layer of council should be abolished entirely - it is unnecessary and a waste of money.

Each town or parish council should shoulder more responsibility to fund their spending. A very small increase in highest band properties would easily collect the amount stated. They should live within their means as all of us are always advised to.

Yes - but scrutinise how they own their budgets - to be satisfied that the funds are applied for policies Uttlesford supports.

If possible

(Yes) although ultimately the same tax payers are paying!

Why can they not budget for it themselves?

Essex County Council should bear the cost.

Town and parish councils should set realistic budget for the needs of the local community and they should stick within those budgets. They should be able to hold contingency funds.

It's swings and roundabouts! We would pay through our Council Tax, however it is labelled!

I think this relief should be better targeted at those councils with the highest need.

The grant to our village is too high at the moment. Villages like our village (the majority) take on developments / so called improvements unnecessary which would not occur if funds provided by Uttlesford were less.

I don't know enough about this to comment. I would like the area to be liveable in a by a range of socio/economic classes/groups, so if support in this way would help that, my answer would be yes.

I don't understand this question and I am not so very stupid. This questionnaire is NOT right.

Councils should as much as possible raise their own money and justify it to the voters.

I have yet to find out just what parish councils do?

Transparency means UDC, Town and Parish Councils should truly and accurately demonstrate THEIR costs. By hiding a proportion of the costs inflates UDC costs. Whilst the tax payer will pay the same, each council should take full responsibility and accountability for THEIR costs.

This needs to be directed to the recipients to shoulder.

I feel local areas should meet their cuts. These are usually for benefit of their local areas. I am not happy to have costs from other districts charged to my area (precept).

The charge to residents should increase.

Grant for what (why do the P' and T' councils lose money?)?

Yes, because this helps distribute wealth from richer to poorer parts of the district.

Local communities should have authority over their own budgets as well as responsibility.

Parish and Town Councils should raise their own income in order to maintain transparency of operation.

See above.

If an area has a higher proportion then why would local town/parishes suffer.

Again, what does this mean per household. If it is just a few pounds I would be prepared to see the increase to my charges.

But only if this is REALLY financially possible.

My parish council do almost nothing yet take a healthy precept. Let them use that or Uttlesford DC can use the money for other high priority services.

We'll be paying it either way.

My parish council still give money to the church for their fire insurance. Surely if church goes prayed harder, they wouldn't need it! Better still, the church should make the "goers" pay an entry fee, should not be a burden to council tax payers!

Town/Parish councils should pay their own way so we can judge their financial performance.

As Above (" A figure between 20-30% in line with other councils. The subsidy provided by Uttlesford is unaffordable given the need to show austerity") - ultimately tax payer will end up subsidising, wherever the responsibility falls be it Uttlesford / Town / Parish council.

It will hit people somewhere else.

If there is a shortfall in grant availability then other residents should bear the cost.

Town and parish councils should be empowered to set own rates and stand by their decisions.

Town and Parish councils would be more answerable to their residents.

Parishes/towns should have some impact on finances as district

I think the council tax is already enough, over £100pm from each household! Traffic congestion and road states are shocking. The character of the town is being lost by putting as many houses as possible that look like ugly messes.

The money all comes out of the same pockets ultimately, and the present system allows PCCs and town councils to focus "their" budgets on other, more local issues of importance.

The amount should not be increased. To stop the grants then the money would be kept by Uttlesford and disappear into its budget.

Town and Parish residents should pay for what their council spends - and know that they will - local accountability.

Town and Parish residents should pay for what their council spends - and know that they will - local accountability.

The Council should remove the discounted subsidy from 18.5% to 20% and fall in line with other Council's. This will lessen any need to provide grants.

As above, subsidised living is not the way forward, I have worked and saved for my old age and continue to do so.

As above, subsidised living is not the way forward, I have worked and saved for my old age and continue to do so.

It depends on how much the council gives to each council.

By removing part or all of the protection would ensure each parish/town council continued to focus on their local area responsibility to control claimants.

Every household across the district should pay the same rate for each band. It is unclear why these subsidies exist and whether there is any benefit to the region as a result.

Why should my money be taken to other parish councils where it does not benefit me/

Either way the resident still needs to pay. By putting the onus back to Town and Parish level local residents will be more aware of the cost to the town/parish.

Uttlesford needs to be more realistic about budgeting and citizens should be aware of what they have to pay for. Perhaps we should stop funding all unnecessary organisations.

I feel that there needs to be a big shake up. Why does the council need to provide grants. The expenditure for town and parish and district councils need to be looked at!

Depending on what the town/Parish budgets are being use for ?

It's irrelevant how the taxpayer pays for this , They will still have to pay one way or the other.

Bureaucratic nonsense!

Towns and parishes need to appreciate the cost implications of policies and should not be safeguarded

I may have missed something here but I believe the onus should be on town and parish councils to set the precepts they need and work within them. If the grant is phased out it might reduce any pain by spreading it over several years.

why should we

Parish & Town Councils have the ability to raise their own precept and without limits, if they require more funding the money should be raised locally in their boundary and not expect to be topped up by the District as a whole. Where this has gone wrong is Saffron Walden Town Council for example puts Council Tax up to pay for services they have taken on from Uttlesford while also accepting grants.

If town and Parish councils are spending the money they should have to justify the raising of it to the residents at election time

**Q4. To help fund the LCTS, the council reviewed Council Tax Discounts on second homes and empty homes.**

**a. Second homes**

**Prior to 1 April 2014 a second home received a council tax discount of 10%. This discount was removed so the charge is the same as for every other house.**

**Do you agree that this treatment of second homes is correct?**

**If “No”, please explain why.**

## Responses received

2nd homes should receive discounts of 25% unless they are being used all the time or rented out.

If you have 2 homes in UDC you should receive some discount for the second home.

2nd homes do not use facilities the same as first

People who own a second home should pay 100% council tax on both homes. If they can afford to buy a second home they can afford 100% council tax.

There should be a transitional period to allow for the extended time it takes to sell original home whilst funding second which will become permanent.

If they can afford a 2nd home they can afford the full (or more) amount.

Second homes should be taxed and empty forced to give to poor or needy.

Second homes should pay full council tax

They should still pay full tax.

Start increasing this - e.g. 10% extra...

No . If you have two houses you should've paid the the full amount

I believe 2nd homes should be charged at a higher rate. They are a luxury that doesn't help the current housing shortage.

Second homes are usually a luxury - if people have the means to own one - good luck to them - but they probably have the means to pay the full council tax on the second home.

Tax on second homes should be double empty homes, holiday homes do not add life to the community and should be discouraged, especially during housing shortages.

Most 2nd properties are rented out, therefore, the demands on local services remains the same.

If people can afford a second home they can afford to pay more for it.

Empty home should be exempt after all they are not using any council services.

10% discount to continue.

They don't use the resources so why pay.

They are only using Council services for part of the year.

Second homes should be discouraged unless they are genuine Buy-To-Lets. All other second homes should pay a penal rate of tax say 10%.

People who can afford second homes can also afford to pay full council tax in my view.

Second homes should be charged a higher council tax rate than other houses.

If individuals are wealthy enough to 'own' multiple properties then they cannot expect subsidies in full whack please!

If the owner is actively in process of trying to sell second house then some other scheme is required.

Second homes do not use the same amount of services as first homes.

If they can afford 2 homes then they can pay 2 council taxes

Sometimes inherited and there can be many high costs to deep in repair/or suitable for rent (providing a house for a family). Securing, for example, from vandals/squatters can cost home owners a great deal.

Yes, as many of these may be let out as a source of income.

Given the current lack of housing I think owners of second homes should be charged more rather than less council tax, to discourage second home ownership and provide funds to the council to support those who do not have a home.

Second homes should be discouraged by a 200% rate until housing development reaches the level that is required.

Where no occupants then no services required. Second homes - again less occupancy, demand for services are less.

Second homes should be treated the same as a first home and pay 100% council tax.

Some people have worked hard and use the rent from a second home to supplement their state pension so it is unfair to penalise them.

1) Second home users tend to use less services. 2) Second home users contribute to the economy

Should receive a discount as they make less use of services.

A second home owner will be using less local services so should have a discount.

Many times a person with a 2nd home may perhaps had to move because of changing jobs into new area, or perhaps they have had further increase in size of family and needed to move and because of this unable to sell existing home thus leaving it empty.

Second home and empty homes provide employment (gardeners, carers, cleaners).

A second home is not usually using as many services.

If one has a large enough income to buy another house they should certainly be charged the same per house as the rest of us.

People using a second home do not benefit from all the facilities in the same way as two separate families.

I think second homes should pay an increased council tax as they do not contribute as much to the local community and add to housing pressure. So an increase in council tax for them would be fairer to the community as a whole.

Council tax on 2nd homes should be surcharged significantly rather than discounted. Luxuries, such as 2nd homes, should attract a higher level of tax than necessities - ie a 1st home.

There should be a premium on second home council tax. It may discourage second home ownerships and thus make more housing available.

If they can afford 2nd homes they should pay double on whichever is the dearer!

Council tax could be increased for second home.

Because second homes use the services provided through council tax less eg less rubbish generated. There should be a discount to reflect this.

second and empty homes should have to pay an additional premium - set at a rate double that of occupied dwellings.

I think second homes should pay higher council tax to discourage this to ensure local people can buy 1st home.

It is unfair as owners of second homes generally do not use any of the council services such as refuse collection education etc.

CT should be levied at a rate to discourage 2nd homes in view of chronic housing shortage.

People with a second home should pay HIGHER council tax

People who have worked hard to buy a second home should not have to subsidise people on benefits.

If a household does not use the Council facilities it should have a discount.

Second home owners should pay more because local first time owners cannot afford the rise in price that second home owners bring.

All second home owners should pay "DOUBLE".

By definition a "second home" is not used all the time, so neither are the council's services.

Owner should estimate how much home is used. Council could estimate bin empties. Then estimate discount.

Second homes would tend to have a lesser call on council services. The only reason for charging second homes at (or above) the same level as main residences is to increase council income.

Second homes should incur a charge greater than the charge levied on first homes

If it is legally possible, second homes should attract a council tax surcharge. They should not be charged less than residents.

Owners of second homes should pay at least 150% of the appropriate rateable value of the property. Having a second home means they can afford the increased rate. This should help the less fortunate in society.

Charge 2nd homes / empty homes no discount.

Second home owners should pay full rate.

Each house should pay the same.

Second homes should be charged a premium as for LTE greater than 2years @ an additional 50% . This would act as a disincentive to owners to declare a property as second home when it isn't - + encourage empty property to be brought back to use.

2nd homes should pay 110% - its not us though the owners are needy.

It is their choice to have a second home so should pay.

The concept of providing a council tax discount on second homes is reasonable and should be reinstated. This principal applies in many other areas of life/commerle.

People who have second homes should sell them so that familys can move in when they have no where else to go.

The second home is not utilising as many services as the first.

However, if it was put up to say 110% it may get people to sell their second homes and increase the stocks available for sale.

A second home should not receive a discount

Second homes ara luxury. If someone can afford a second home, they can pay tax.

If they are rich enough to own two houses they are rich enough to pay full tax if not a surcharge on top.

You should not charge for a service you are not providing - 10% is not much, but at least its something.

Unless there is a clear need for work or educational demands, second home should be surcharged (50%)

There should be some link between occupation of property and cost i.e. an empty property requires less in the way of council services.

TEST

There are various reasons for people having second homes. A small rebate is a fair reflection of the reduced call on local services.

It is unfair that second home owners, who are already paying full council tax on their main home, should have to pay the full rate of council tax on a second home. The property owner probably makes very little use of the local services relating to the second home, and should receive an appropriate discount.

If you can afford a second home a 10% discount on council tax is unlikely to make any difference to whether or not a second home is purchased.

it will use less services

**b. Empty homes undergoing major repair**

**Prior to 1 April 2014 there was a 100% discount for a period of up to 12 months from when the property became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 12 months.**

**Do you agree that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property undergoing major repairs?**

**If you have answered "No", what should be used and why?**

## Responses received

Six months should be adequate

No discount should be offered. This would encourage rapid completion + deter those waiting for the property values to rise

Residents who are wealthy enough own two homes should pay the full tax on all homes. Why are wealthy people given any discounts?

If a home is undergoing repair it should not take more than 12 months. Therefore I believe a discount should only be given for the first 12 months. There are too many empty homes not being used / rented out.

We feel it should be 50% for 6 months so that properties will be completed.

I think an empty property undergoing major repair should be free at 100% for the first 6 months and then at 50% for the next 6 months. After all someone is bringing a property up to date and making housing improvements, bring what could only be a derelict property back to life usually for someone else's benefit. I will encourage them to do it quicker.

An empty home does not mean UDC services and costs

Yes - if it really is undergoing repairs and the work is completed in 12 months. Otherwise deliberately empty - no discount should be allowed.

12 months is too long.

Reduce to 50% for six months or until a Planning application is approved whichever is the sooner. Then another six months following approval, to encourage builders to get on with it. What about properties which are left to decay for a long time e.g. Three Colls on Cambridge Road Stansted

No facilities used should mean no charge.

Rate should be 50% discount for up to six months as this is a realistic timeframe in which to renovate a property.

Surely 50% for 6 months is adequate?

should be 25% for 6 months. If the owner can afford major repairs which take say 6 months to complete they can afford the extra council tax.

Because refurbished properties are a benefit to the community.

Costs are so high.

There is too much possibility of manipulation of the time taken.

12 months is too long 6 months should be long enough for most major repairs.

As a landlord 100% for 6 months would be better. Using an estate agent for management in Chelmsford only 3 months is allowed.

Should be no discount.

Why can't it be treated simply as 'empty'?

I don't think these should be any discount on empty homes undergoing repair.

If people can't afford to renovate a property and pay charges maybe they shouldn't start the project.

I think 100% for 6 months is better. Many families take time to clear and sort out houses when a parent dies. Having to pay Council tax for an extra property as well as their own can be a burden.

The discount should be 25%. Most improvements are to increase market value.

As above

No discount

There should not be any empty homes

. Should be 100% for 6 months and 50% for next 6 months (if needed). To encourage faster repairs/ property to be brought back into use sooner.

Reduce to 25% it should not take 12 months to make a property habitable. After 12 months it should be NIL.

Yes for discount but time period should be 6 months. Surely most work should be completed in that time.

do not know (understand)

Reduced to 25% for 12 months as these properties are often sold within a few years at a hefty profit.

Surely a house unergoing major repairs can be completed with 12m. Therefore I would say 100% discount for 6m and 50% for second 6m

I believe this should be reduced to 6 months

Should be part of the cost of developing home. Full tax should be paid.

If the owner do not, or cannot, repair these properties, the council should be able to requisition and bring it back to good living standard then either rent it out or sell it!

50% for six months.

When the work is finished, the property will have increased in value giving the owner a tax free increase. He/she will then charge a bigger rent if applicable.

if the home is empty due to accidental/fire damage the reduction should be 100% until repairs are completed. if the house is being improved or developed for profit there should be no reduction.

No discount should be given to encourage the house to be ready as soon as possible.

The only exception to this should be if a property has become uninhabitable, e.g. due to a fire, when the discount should still be 100%.

In order not to penalise people buying run-down properties i think that if they intend to live in the property then the 1st 6 months should be 0%, the 2nd, 50% then 100% after that.

Developers/second home buyers etc should pay 100% from the start.

Property pays tax always: if any property remains empty for 6 months then discount applies if property is updated/repaired for 6 months. After any property empty for more than 6 months a premium above tax of 25% applies. For 6 months then 50% thereafter.

Empty homes needing major repairs need to be renovated and lived in people need to be encouraged to use these properties to stop slums forming, giving full discount will encourage the take up of empty homes.

If the owners only home they should still pay.

If the owners only home they should still pay.

If the owners only home they should still pay.

No discount should be given, if a house needs repair it is still an asset to the owner. Houses increase in value - TAX should be paid.

This could be used as a play to evade tax. 12 months is too long to renovate a house.

Six months should be absolutely enough for any single dwelling repairs - you can build a whole house in less than that time!

The level of discount (%) is too generous. The percentage should be around 20%.

We want homes to be repaired so why penalise them for doing so.

6 months encourages land owners to get the work done quickly and re let.

6 months encourages land owners to get the work done quickly and re let.

I do not agree that this level of tax should be placed on these houses as it is very expensive doing renovation work and after as in my case I am paying tax on a rented home.

I do not object to the discount for home empty due to being uninhabitable e.g. flood or fire. I do not object to a discount for second homes that may fall into the empty homes undergoing major repairs category or investment properties.

Yes- Assuming property is fully unoccupied if it is occupied whilst undergoing major repair then no discount.

Every house should pay 100% even if empty.

It should be possible to arrange repairs within 6 months.

There should be a further sliding scale whereupon the property should receive a discount of 50% for 3 months not 6 months to incentivise quick turnaround work.

So long as the total discounted period is no more than 24 months.

The reason may be a factor i.e. because of flooding - structural damage - should be taken into account.

The area is very desirable so renovation should pay for itself no need for subsidies should be 25% max.

If work is not complete within the initial 12 months discount period then 100% tax should apply. If not occupied after 24 months then a penal rate of 150% should apply.

I also think there should be certain cases that are reviewed on their own merit.

This expense should be planned for - along with major repairs.

Major repair will often take at least 12 months including obtaining permissions etc, and will increase the values of the property to enable higher valuation of council tax, therefore no charge should be incurred for first 12 months followed by full 100% after this period. As no services are being used.

Would reduce further to 30% discount.

A fairer way would be to support property developers to carry out their work quicker. So, 100% discount for 6 months, 25% for next 6 months.

Not quite sure I understand this \* explanation it shouldn't cost the council any more money. 25% discount for 6 months for empty houses going through repairs. There's a housing shortage, why should people have a house empty and get such a generous discount for such a long time, when repairs are made???

This is simply a punitive tax on home-owners. Suggest 50% after 6 months with first 6 months free.

6 Months is a reasonable period to complete major repairs - 100% over 6 months would better motivate the completion of work at no loss of revenue to UDC (100% over 6 months same as 50% over 12 months).

Builders can hit snags and hold up repairs but I feel tax payers should not have to underwrite private property.

If a home is empty, it doesn't need to 'receive' any local services.

Too generous

In my view a 50% discount for 6 months is sufficient.

100% for 12 months is excessive. 50% more realistic but why give any concession.

12 months is a high length of time and people need to get a move on. Reducing it to 6 months would focus attention on getting work on house done.

The definition of 'undergoing major works' is too vague. This may merely be a ruse to hold the property whilst upgrading and awaiting rises in property values. The disruption to nearby residents is also not considered. Maximise income and decrease subsidies!

Investing in property seems to be a national hobby, why does it need to be treated as a special case? Dustbins still need emptying, streets cleaned, old people protected etc.

100% for 12 months - the upgrading work to our house took over 9 months.

I believe that major repairs/restoration particularly of historic properties can take much longer than even 12 months due to nature and size of the buildings and shortage of companies fully competent to undertake such work. Also horrors come to light once work starts!

Should be 100% for 6 months being that the property is not inhabitable.

But I think this can be changed if genuine major repair works happening.

If no-one is living in the home, no one is using any of the council amenities. So the discount should be 100%. At the same time the repairs will provide a home of good standard.

12 months is too long and encounters repairs to be delayed 6 months is more realistic to allow planning and repairs.

It depends on the repairs. Some are bound to take over 6 months

There should be some flexibility for exceptional cases only - for instance if an important archaeological find beneath the property.

It should remain at 100%, so long as it is owner-occupied, and the owner has to move out while repairs are going on.

I consider 6 months should be adequate for repairs to be carried out.

If you own property you should pay 100% tax all the time.

Why is the property needing major repairs? It means that the property has been neglected over the years and what is to stop the property being left open and not occupied in the future? These landlords should be made to let the property.

A major repair can take more than 6 months - a 12 month timescale seems fair. As the homeowner is investing in updating and improving the property, they should not be penalised for doing so. A 100% discount for 12 months is fair.

If they can afford 2 homes then they can pay 2 council taxes

Should be 100% for 1st 12 months to help the house owner (not property developer) to repair the house to live in /sell/or let. We found this very beneficial when we had major repairs on our own Grade II listed building.

Should be 100% as sometimes extensive maintenance / alterations, updating is nowadays very expensive

If the home is empty, what services are they paying for?

Because if they can afford major repairs they can afford to pay council tax at the same rate as everyone else - major facilities e.g. water, sewage, rubbish collection, roads to and from will all be used just the same.

I agree providing planning applications are dealt with more speedily.

Presumably a large proportion of recipients of this discount are builders and developers - and this seems hardly fair. It should be reduced or discontinued if there are professional builders or developers involved.

I do not understand the question

A house is a house. This is a loophole that should be closed. All houses should be subject to the same tax level. Houses are often empty because of speculation and speculators should not be subsidised.

If uninhabitable then no user so not making use of any council provision so shouldn't pay at all. Could shorten time period to max 6 months to encourage return to market.

100% discount for 6 months would give a greater incentive to complete major repairs/refurbishment, without any change to the cost of the scheme to the council.

6 mths should be more than adequate

I would propose a 50% reduction for 6 months

Every effort should be made to bring property back into housing stock. This includes financial assistance to do it.

It may encourage owners to delay completing the repairs for 18 months/2 years

Increasing the amount of discount is no incentive to getting work done. Decrease the discount to 15% and work would be done and more homes for people would follow.

50% (or less) for 6 months might provide an incentive for getting on with the work.

Some people have worked hard and use the rent from a second home to supplement their state pension so it is unfair to penalise them.

Should be 100% for 6 months then 50% for a further 6 months, as a major refurbishment can be subject to delays.

I consider the time span should be reduced to 6 months.

Most people doing major repairs have to live somewhere else and pay for that, not always by choice.

12.5% is fair in time like this but first time buyer should get more help 50% as long as they undertake to live in finist house 10 years.

Should be 100% for 12 months - better to improve properties and invest in them, than build new ones.

I feel it should be 100% discount if the home is uninhabitable. Perhaps a sliding scale of 100% for 6 months 50% for 6 months.

it should be means tested. Couples under 40 should get 100% discount. Over 40s should get 50% discount.

There should be no discount. Firstly, the property is using council services while being repaired (Police, roads, fire brigade, planning department). Secondly, paying full council tax will encourage to make the property habitable as soon as possible.

There should be no discount on empty properties unless they are up for sale.

But should be reviewed annually to see if it is still appropriate.

It depends on who owns the property and why it is empty. Say a family home burns down compared to a landlord speculation on price hikes etc.

But only provided it is undergoing major repairs.

A empty house is using no council services so should no pay anything.

12 months is too long. Keep the discount as 50% but for 9 months as incentive to get work finished quickly and bring houses back into use.

I agree with the level of discount but feel that a discount for 6 months only would be fair. No house need take longer than this to repair.

If you buy a house you should expect to pay council tax on it!

The discount should be 50% for the first three months and nil thereafter.

First 3 months = no council tax. Second 3 months = 50% to pay. After 6 months = 100% to pay. It will not take 1 year to major repairs. I think this should be reduced from 12 months to 6 months. Should be 50% for 6 months or 25% for 12 months.

An empty home undergoing a major repair will provide an extra unit of accommodation. This is desirable. On the assumption that no Council service are provided for an empty house no charges should be raised against it.

50% for 12 months, there after NO discount.

Should be 50% for 6 months so that the premises are brought back into use earlier.

Suggest that as soon as discount application is received that a building inspector is sent to access the timescale needed for reasonable completion and thus set the period for which the discount shall apply.

There is no cost to the Council if no-one lives there, so why not 100%? We want empty homes repairs and brought back into use.

Should be reduced to 6 months. Builders and investors are the main beneficiaries.

Make it 25% we need all empty homes to be occupied asap. It would concentrate minds.

If undergoing repairs should not pay any tax.

We agree with this but houses that have are 'Listed' could remain as the 12 months because getting permission for the changes can take some time so no work can/dared be done!

Empty homes should be back in use as soon as possible.

Sometimes it takes more than six months to repair a building especially if it is a sensitive listed property.

There should be no discount.

50% for 6 months. Most major repairs can be completed in that time.

If a property is uninhabitable due to major works, no one is using the facilities for which council tax is levied i.e. schools, street lighting, refuse collection etc. and therefore no charge should be expected for the first 12 months. We have been made aware that police will not attend burglaries from inhabited properties so not even policing will cover empty properties.

A property that has been neglected for many years before new ownership could take a long time to be made properly habitable.

6 months for major repairs is reasonable.

12 months is adequate for major repairs.

Provided renovations are really being done.

Empty houses cost money and deprive people in need of a possible home. The % should be decreased to 25% and the time period to 3 months. Owners (esp Buy to Let owners) should be made to be efficient.

It should 100% from the off when sold to developers etc

Depends on the reason for major repairs eg if due to flooding/fire beyond the owners circumstances the amount should be reviewed, as the persons involved will have to pay tax on the property they are renting.

Should be 100% for six months, then 50% for the next six months. After that, full payment.

If a property requires major repairs it will need to be empty and the owners would need to live elsewhere while work was undertaken. They would be paying council tax where they lived.

What is 'major repair' - can people use this as a loop-hole. Two years seems a long time for a major repair.

Major repair, especially after a collapse or other failure, can take a long time to be agreed with insurers etc. From personal experience this can take more than 12 months.

Major repairs may take up to 12 months and a 100% discount should be applied.

- but maximum period should be 12 months and a review should be made to see if owner is using 50% worth of council tax service. If not should go up to nearer 100% discount.

The timescale should be reduced to six months after which the full tax should be paid.

Should stay the same to encourage owners not to leave empty when so many people are

needing a home.

Allowance should be made for extenuating circumstances beyond an owner's control.

6 months is appropriate not a year.

6 months is appropriate not a year.

Major repairs could well for 'old' ie listed properties exceed 12 months. Repairs to listed properties should receive full discount.

CT should be levied at a rate to ensure that contractors proceed expediently. Discount only for 6 months.

As long as they are not accessing rubbish collection!

No tax should be paid on an empty property.

Because property developers are pricing families/young people out of the market. They are in no rush to complete their work and already make a fortune in profit. Pay 100%!

Repairs can take longer than planned.

If nobody is living in the property they will be having to live somewhere else (usually nearby) where they will be paying council tax. They will not require double the services of the council so should only have to pay once. Hence I believe the 100% discount for a maximum of a year is suitable, not 50%.

If only 25% given to solo residents - if you can afford to renovate a house you should be able to afford to pay council tax.

I think if a property is rendered uninhabitable by natural causes i.e. flood, fire etc. it should be council tax exempt. If it then becomes an unaffordable liability to the owner the council should fund restoration, then reclaim on their insurance!

Again, if the house is not occupied, council services are not being used. Rate should be 100% discount but perhaps for only six months unless it can be shown works have been delayed for unavoidable reasons.

The 50 % level should be reduced to 6 months.

Often difficult to carry out major repairs quickly - especially on listed buildings. Unfair to charge people for a property they cannot use.

50% for 6 months would be better.

The period of discount should be limited to 6 months or less. This would encourage property repairs to be completed asap and properties available to rent/sold

The wording should read “undergoing repairs prior to re-occupation”

For landlords declaring a property under repair could be used to dodge paying council tax, therefore reduce the % and timescale.

50% discount for 6 months feels fairer. Any major repair should be complete inside 6 months.

Why should the council over-subsidise people gaining additional wealth from developing 2nd homes?

I do believe that repairs should be able to be effected in 6 months. I think the discount should be 100% for 6 months. After all an empty property is not using council resources.

It encourages people to buy old properties to improve otherwise there will be lots of derelict houses.

Major repairs are seldom undertaken by the poorer groups and 6 months should be the limit.

The discount should be reduced to 6 months to encourage owners to repair their property.

Charge full amount

Empty homes should be liable for 100% of council tax.

If they have the money to carry out the work they have the money to pay 100% of the tax these are not poor people.

It should be 100% discount for 2 months then minimum of 50% from 3 months, then after 12 months full amount due.

6 months is long enough to sort problems - longer people have the less they will be motivate to sort.

A property may be occupied whether or not major repairs are ongoing. Also C Tax is a property tax and not a poll tax. Hence just because it is undergoing repairs should not entitle it to a reduced rate of C. Tax.

Difficult to answer the question without definition of ‘major’ + without understating how burden of proof is managed, but the decision by the owner to renovate is a function of commercial decision(e.g. +rent/price will rise) + therefore ‘50% for 12 months’ is too generous. Suggest 10% for 6-12 months.

A reduction would be an increase in Council funds. A discount of 10% would ensure the repair work is carried out quickly and housing made available.

But should only be to a maximum period of say one year or eighteen months

Treat as a second home, therefore no discount.

50% for 6 months - as 6 months is long enough for a refurbishment.

Depends on circumstances. Ok as long as major repairs have a time limit and major repairs are being completed so that house is habitable and intends to be lived in.

The cost of empty property should be the same as an occupied one at all times.

Six months should be adequate

25% for 6 months to encourage re-occupation sooner.

Need to prevent people from sitting on houses. Why not give 75% discount for first 3/12, then reduce to 50% for 3/12 with final reduction of 25% for remaining 6/12. Houses need to be lived in - if not sold or rented out - don't subsidise people who sit on property! (developers and landlords).

Cannot assess this properly in the absence of any definition of what constitutes a 'major' repair.

Most homes undergoing major repairs refurbishing is to the benefit of developers and speculators.

Six months should be adequate

Six months should be adequate

If homes are in need of major repair then the CT payer should not have to pay while the works are on going ie 100% relief/discount should be applied for 6 months.

If it is for living in.

If somebody has the financial means to undertake significant renovation then they can find the money to pay council tax. This money will typically just remain in the hands of small property developers.

There are too many costs involved already without adding further burden. This will deter many developers.

The full council tax should be charged for all homes left empty for longer than 12 months. This would encourage the owneres to complete the repairs and make a home habitable in a more timely manner.

If the property cannot be occupied it should not attract tax for 12 months. The owners presumably pay tax on their temporary accommodation. If not should do so.

Should only be 50%. Even an empty property still needs fire and police cover.

Need to encourage landlords to improve the quantity and quality of properties in the Borough. If a scheme genuinely takes longer than 12 months Council Tax should not be charged. It should be charged if it is empty for any other reason than a normal void 9 i.e. 2-3 months between tenancies)

Empty homes should be charged council tax.

Should go back to 100% - if they're not living in the house while it has repairs - they're not using services.

No use of council services is being sought if the property is empty.

Make CT simple - every home pays it whatever the circumstances. May encourage people to speed up renovations and get house back into use.

Discount should balance with CT discounts given i.e. 20% for 12 m.

They should pay full tax. That will teach them to bring the property back into use asap.

Newcastle City Council is 100% for six months. Why do you always want to charge?

If you can afford to buy and renovate a home you should be liable to pay the council tax in full.

50% for 6 months would encourage landlords to facilitate repairs. There could be a process to apply for an extension in exceptional circumstances.

If discount was reinstated at 100% (for 12 months) it would be a better incentive to get run-down properties back on to the sales/rental market to ease the housing shortage

100% discount for six months would give a stronger incentive to planning the work thoroughly beforehand . Before moving out and executing the work swiftly, subsequently.

Reduce to 30% for 6 months . Too many empty properties which are deteriorating.

Those undertaking renovation and repairs are increasing the value of the properties .Empty houses should be taxed the same as those occupied to ensure they return to the market ASAP.

A reduced time scale that leaves properties empty for a shorter time.

Restore the 100% discount, the property is being improved and may provide housing in the future.

I don't think that it would be unreasonable to reduce the period to 9 months (keeping the discount at 50% as an incentive for work to start on a property and to be completed in a timely fashion. I think 50% for 6 months is fair with a simple appeal process (backed by architect's/surveyors reports).

50% discount for 9 months

12 months seems reasonable for major repairs, but paying as much as 50% for a home you can't live in does not. I think the percentage discount should be increased to 75% at least.

Empty properties are often refurbished and repaired by property developers and I believe they should bear more of the cost.

100% for six months

Should be 100% for 6 months. Do not see why major repairs should take longer than 6 months if properly project managed. Only fair to give 100% if property uninhabitable.

TEST

Six months would be better

It would be better to halve the cost by halving the duration, not the %age. If one's house is rendered uninhabitable, it's wrong to be charged a tax for the services provided to inhabited houses, so a 100% reduction is appropriate (and softens the blow of losing one's house), but 6 months should be enough to make arrangements.

Some time ago I was fortunate to inherit an almost derelict house. It took almost one year to receive planning permission for the renovation and rebuilding work. It is totally wrong that the owner of such a property should have to pay Council Tax when the house is uninhabitable, and renovation cannot commence because the Councils Planning department will not approve the plans!

A 50% discount should only last 6 months, this will encourage properties not to remain empty for long periods.

I don't see why any discount should be applied at all.

The time period should be reduced to 6 months, this will give more incentive to complete any major repairs. Too many properties appear to remain empty for long periods of time when the lack of housing is at such a high level.

There is huge money and wealth in the property development market in this District. Developers and homeowners can easily afford the Council Tax, so why should they be exempt? Homes are sold for large profits in this area and is a lucrative business, we shouldn't be propping up the free market with support.

I think it would be better to give 100% discount for 6 months. When properties need a major refurbishment this would be an incentive to get them done within 6 months

the owners should still pay 100% council tax even though the property is empty

If a home is empty and unliveable due to major repairs, I would prefer the discount to increase (perhaps to 100% as it previously was)

The housing stock is improved if people do repairs and they shouldn't be penalised for doing so

**c. Empty homes**

**Prior to 1 April 2014 properties that were empty but not undergoing major repairs received a discount of 100% for up to 6 months from the date they became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 6 months.**

**Do you agree that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property not undergoing major repairs?**

**If "No", please explain why.**

## Responses received

No discount should be offered and a positive rate introduced to encourage the return of the property to the housing market

As with question b) above. Local taxation should apply uniformly. Repairing houses cannot justify lower taxes

If a home is undergoing repair it should not take more than 12 months. Therefore I believe a discount should only be given for the first 12 months. There are too many empty homes not being used / rented out.

To release property back to open market in time of housing shortage.

Should the housing market slow down again a renew may be necessary. The house of a deceased person could take longer than 6 months to sell.

50% for 3 months sufficient - there should be no empty homes in Uttlesford

No discount. Too many empty homes

Should be 9 months at 50%. If it's a probate case it should be free.

An empty home does not mean UDC services and costs

There should be no discount for empty homes given the shortage of available properties to purchase.

If a house is empty due to death of the occupant, probate can take a long time to come through and then to sell the property for the estate may also take time. It is unreasonable for an estate to

pay tax on uninhabited property due to death. The rate should return to 100% for 6 months. My view is that each case needs to be reviewed as I am sceptical as to why properties are empty.

No discount should be allowed

There should be a strong dis-incentive to keeping properties empty

This time should be reduced.

Properties should be renovated within a certain time.

Be fair to landlords who are not using facilities.

50% for 3 months.

3-4 months would seem more reasonable. 6 months is a long time for a house in reasonable condition to be empty.

Discount to be phased out completely.

If a home is empty and no attempt to regenerate or to let is so, then a possible home for a desperate tenant is not going to happen and anyone able to own a empty home and not do anything to change this can afford to pay more.

Should be 25% for 6 months. An incentive to move the property on - let/sell etc.

Can make more than 6 months to sell or arrange tenancy.

I believe some people are unable to pay.

See the answer above. Also some pressure to bring empty property into use is valid.

With a shortage of housing stock there should be a stronger incentive for houses not to remain empty. A lower discount is more appropriate.

3 months is long enough to find a new tenant especially at present with short age of suitable rented properties.

As an encouragement to use the property should get no discount.

There is a housing shortage therefore an empty home is a waste and burden. It should not receive any reduction - encouraging fill occupancy at all times.

Should be no discount.

Why can't it be treated simply as 'empty'?

I don't think there should be any discount on empty homes.

Empty homes need to be filled there are lots of homeless people so it might encourage people to move faster if there are no discounts.

If the house remains empty, with no evidence of effort to sell or undergo major repair, then they should pay full council tax. The house shouldn't sit empty.

Not sure empty homes owned by Council should be repaired asap.

For the same reason as above (Many families take time to clear and sort out houses when a parent dies. Having to pay Council tax for an extra property as well as their own can be a burden). It also depends on whether the family had to move for work reasons and cannot immediately find a buyer. There needs to be discretion written into these rules.

no discount should be given, there is a nationwide shortage of housing, this 'no discount' should encourage owners to get these houses occupied.

The discount should be 25%

No discount

3 months is better incentive

. 3 months should be at 100%, 3 months at 50% and 3 months at 25%, again to encourage properties to be brought into occupation sooner.

Reduce to 25% it should not take 12 months to make a property habitable. After 12 months it should be NIL.

C. Tax should relate to the person using the services not the home.

Should reduce time to 3 months except for service personnel or people in hospital or like.

Empty properties should be sold or rented ASAP. Reduce discount to 10% and start from 2 months.

Reduce to 50% for 3 months

Do not know (understand)

But no more than 6 months

Why should there be a discount? The owners should ensure their property is lived in.

Reduction was too small - should be 25% to encourage owners to take some action. Also why not 12 months instead of 6 as other types.

With the current housing shortage I believe 3 months is sufficient for a tenant to be found or house to be sold

Should be part of the cost of developing home. Full tax should be paid.

If the owner do not, or cannot, repair these properties, the council should be able to requisition and bring it back to good living standard then either rent it out or sell it!

No tax discount for houses left empty.

i see no reason why, if a property is vacant, the rest of us should pay more.

If a house is empty or full, the cost to the council is the same, if not undergoing major repairs then the house is fit to be rented/sold so therefore should not be subject to a discount.

I would suggest 50% fr up to 12 months remaining empty many properties become empty on the death of the sole resident. Six months is nowhere near long enough to prepare a property for sale and find a buyer at a fair price.

Houses empty due to bereavement/illness or family crisis should be at the 50% for 6 months rate, otherwise no discount should be applied.

Empty house should not stay empty for longer than one month to check repairs.

No discount should be given to encourage the house to be occupied as soon as possible there are too many empty houses.

It should be 0% to pay for the 1st month, then 50% for next 2 months, then 100%. That avoids penalising house buyers doing urgent but minor repairs and families where elderly parents living alone have to move out suddenly.

No discount. Property pays tax or council apply for order to set unpaid tax against sale price.

Council should always intervene if property empty for more than 24 months.

Empty properties should receive no discount and if not occupied within a certain time should be subject to a compulsory purchase order.

See 4.

Should get no discount then perhaps they would sell them or rent them out instead of leaving them empty to rot or be squatted etc.

If owner deceased then ok. If just left empty owner should pay something.

Cannot see why there should be any discount at all.

They should pay the full amount as there are many people who need a house or home.

Especially local people.

Unsure. If the house is empty due to death you should not have to pay. If it is an empty rental property - should pay the full amount.

An empty house is an asset, and should pay tax even if it is not occupied.

The house has any excuse to remain empty for any length of time. If the rent is too high making it stay empty, then reduce the rent and pay the correct amount of tax.

Three months should be sufficient for minor repairs and decoration and finding new tenants. If someone can afford a house they don't live in, even during that 3 months discount should only be 50%.

Should be reduced to 3 months considering the national shortage of houses.

Depending on circumstances the discount should be removed.

Again, no more than 20% for 6 months.

There should be no excuse for delaying repairs to getting the property habitable.

Chances are that the home is empty due to a bereavement (death) and so you are putting increased burden on those left. Could be empty due to hospital illness.

This could be reduced to 3 months to encourage landlords to relet asap.

As above, I do not object in the case of hardship e.g. repossession, domestic violence but I do object in the case of second homes and investment properties.

I would prefer 100% for 3 months only to encourage properties to become occupied after 3 months.

As above.

It depends on the reason for the property being empty. If, for example, the owner has died it may take more than 6 months to sell the property.

If someone has an empty property, quite often by choice reduction to 3 months should be sufficient.

As above. Noting Hastings Council had an issue with poor quality beachfront housing. To the extent mandatory purchase orders could be imposed to force landlords to undergo repairs and thereby ease their immigration housing issue. In short order.

If it's not undergoing major repair, wouldn't this be a second home and taxable as such?

No empty property not undergoing repair pay 100%.

There should be 0% discount for empty homes not undergoing major repairs. There should be no advantage for leaving a home empty.

Again the reason: - i.e. empty thro Death should matter. If house on market - funds may not be available.

If a landlord cannot get a tenant for upto 6 months, he should not pay rates on an empty property. I think a discount of 100% for 6 months is fair.

Should be 25% MAX as current encourages empty homes.

If a house is empty, habitable and not being renovated then NO discount should be given if empty more than 24 months a penalty rate should apply at 200%.

I think there should be AT BEST a token discount on empty property. Again, I believe certain cases should be reviewed on their own merit (ie: owner deceased); all properties should be subject to CT - even if empty, the property needs the immediate area maintained.

If citizens can afford a second home and leave it empty then they should be charged the full amount. This may encourage them to return it to use again. Empty home are bad for the community.

Housing is in short supply. If the house is empty for no good reason the full council charge should apply.

I still feel that owners of empty properties should pay council tax as the rest of us do. We should not be encouraging people to keep properties empty by giving them reductions.

Demand for property (rental) is high so Landlords are unlikely to leave properties empty. I have property in London Boroughs and there is 0% discount for it being empty! This is harsh, I think it should be 100% for 3 months.

Abolish the reduction as an incentive to speed up the works.

If house is empty for 6 months, max of 10% discount, after that full council tax. There's a housing shortage, why should people leave houses empty and get discount in council tax anyway????

Suggest as above N4b. ie first 6 months free @ 100%, then 50% for further 6 months.

Empty homes could be let so full council tax could be paid or if not 3 months is better not 6 or 12. No discount should be allowed. This would encourage landlords to ensure that houses are not left vacant.

Maybe a month - one month - no more!

Difficult to answer - probably depends on circumstances surrounding reason for empty property (although a scheme whereby different circumstances received different discount would be difficult to administer.)

This will then provide an incentive for renting out or selling at the earliest opportunity.

Where an empty property is empty following bereavment is under probate a 'period of grace' seems reasonable and the existing discount likewise. However for any other reasons seems to be merely speculative on the part of the owner and no discount should be applied.

Similar comments to a) and b) above.

I have been clearing a large house for over a year. The house has been in the family for almost 100 years and everything needs to be gone through. One cannot work, visit elderly relatives in homes 25 miles away and be clearing the house in a hurry.

There should be no discount of any type for empty homes and I feel that even the new 50% for 6 months is a waste of tax payers money.

Think it should return to 100% for 6 months from personal experience, mortgage still has to be paid on empty home. Paying council tax makes things even more difficult for owner, i.e. inherited property with mortgage still to be paid. When that person living in rented property and already paying one lot of council tax.

If a house does not need major repairs it should be inhabited. There should be no discount. Uttlesford has a housing crisis.

If a property is genuinely empty because of Bereavement or families moving abroad they should be given 100% disc for 12 months and 50% discount for a further 6 months.

Empty homes, without a valid reason should pay full council tax.

Owners of empty properties need to be encouraged to keep their properties in use. A heavier penalty should be imposed to ensure this.

But only in the case of awaiting probate on administration.

I think if you own a property one should pay 100% tax all the time.

No discount should be given, it only encourages landlords to keep the property unoccupied.

If they can afford 2 homes then they can pay 2 council taxes

6 months. no longer. It may be the house is empty due to a parent's death and families are trying to sort out the parent's affairs.

If a property does not need major repairs 25% discount for 6 mths should help to get it back into occupation.

Still, what services are they paying for?

Because if they can afford major repairs they can afford to pay council tax at the same rate as everyone else - major facilities e.g. water, sewage, rubbish collection, roads to and from will all be used just the same.

Similar criteria to the answer above. Council tax payers in general should not have to fund the activities of developers/builders, aiming to buy and then sell at a profit at a time to suit themselves.

Incentive to get repairs done.

The discount should be less than 50% other than in the event of a sole resident's death and a 6-12 month 50% discount should apply to give the estate time to be settled.

I do not understand the question

Speculators should not be subsidised.

I think the council should be allowed to use empty properties for short lets. They would then receive the council tax from the tenants.

It should be 200% to discourage empty houses and get them back in use after a reasonable time, say a year.

Too many people looking for homes. This allows for houses to stay empty at no cost. Cut the discount.

Only OK if property is passed as part of a deceased estate. Otherwise 200% level (as in 4a above) should apply.

It may take families this long to settle wills/probate/sale following a death.

I would advocate reducing this discount to encourage properties to be filled as promptly as possible.

Empty homes are a sin when people are homeless or in need. No discount should be given and owners should be forced to let or sell empty houses.

Empty homes should not receive any discounts as it contradicts the housing crisis. It should be the responsibility of the empty home owner to populate it, therefore taking some pressure off the new build market.

I'm not sure it is correct. Serious consideration should be given to reducing both discount and timescale.

If the property has been advertised but has not tenanted for the period, Council tax should not be paid. If it is vacant because owners are absent (e.g. holiday home) then it is fair to charge a council tax of 50%.

Timescale should be shorter. A house empty for 6 months could be rented out.

Full council tax to be paid

Need discretionary exemptions for people with long-term sickness or need to go into care. 100% discount for 12 months would be appropriate in these cases.

If the percentage and timescale were reduced it might encourage rental or sale of the property. Thereby assisting the housing shortage.

Empty properties should receive no discount. Should be charged at 100%

Although I do agree for the sake of funding the scheme, it is very helpful to not have the worry of paying council tax on an empty property at times of bereavement, when probate is being dealt with.

Depends why they are empty. Should be more if empty due to someone in care.

They should not be empty.

There should be no discount. Firstly, the property is using council services while being repaired (Police, roads, fire brigade, planning department). Secondly, paying full council tax will encourage to make the property habitable as soon as possible.

There should be no discount on empty properties unless they are up for sale.

The owner of empty property should pay 50% rate from outset. This providing a greater incentive to get the property back in occupancy.

Properties with no attempt to improve/sell for e.g. residential occupation should pay the full amount.

Reduce to 50% for three months only

It could be reduced further to encourage occupancy / re-occupancy (say to 25% for 6 months) and to discourage property ownership solely for investment in bricks and mortar/land.

As above. (It depends on who owns the property and why it is empty.) No discounts as a rule.

There are housing shortages in the UK. No house should be empty for no reason.

Then after 6 months NO reduction in Council Tax (as also applies to second homes) until after 2 yrs Council Tax become 150%.

Whether people have empty houses or not should be up to them not you. It's like saying, I have to drive my car!

Reduce this to 40% for six months. With housing in short supply there should be no encouragement to leave property empty unless subject to probate delays.

If people own houses they should pay the council tax whether the house is used or not. I consider the time should be reduced to 3 months.

Why should the owner of an empty house receive any discounts?

Many times a person with a 2nd home may perhaps had to move because of changing jobs into new area, or perhaps they have has further increase in size of family and needed to move and because of this unable to sell existing home thus leaving it empty.

As above if you own a property you should pay for it.

The discount should be 50% for the first three months and nil thereafter.

First 3 months = No council tax giving time to find tenants. After that 100% to pay. There shouldn't be empty homes with people desperate for housing.

It should be bought down to 0 months. The fire brigade will still come out to an empty house.

An empty home undergoing a major repair will provide an extra unit of accommodation. This is desirable. On the assumption that no Council service are provided for an empty house no charges should be raised against it.

50% for the first 6 months only. This should ensure home owner/landlord seek a tenant.

Should be 50% for 3 months so that the premises are now allowed to deteriorate and left empty.

'Yes' in so far as stated but (1) 50% discount should be extended in cases of complicated probate and (2) Rate should be increased by increments of 50% for every 6 months over 12 months of the property remaining empty.

As above. Homes may be between tenants for a short time. How about 100% for one month?

Make it 25% we need all empty homes to be occupied asap. It would concentrate minds.

There should be no discount at all for these homes.

There should be no discount.

For completely empty houses I consider that one month is sufficient time to find a tenant or put the property on the market.

50% for 3 months. With the housing crisis all properties ought to be lived in.

It takes an inordinate amount of time to sort out Probate and subsequently to dispose of a property and as no one is in that property using the facilities for which council tax is levied, it is unfair to penalise those who are trying to organise everything whilst grieving for the lost relative/friend.

In the case of a death a house can take considerably longer to empty and market than 6 months (experience x2)

Reduce it further in view of the shortage of housing abolish the discount all together?

Time period should be 3 months only to encourage letting at reasonable market rates.

I can see no reason for any discount whatsoever.

See above. NO discount should be allowed.

See above

In the case of death if the property cannot be sold the people involved may not be able to afford council tax in an empty property.

I would like this to be the same as an empty house with repairs. If there are no residents in the property there should be a discount for a year.

It does not give the property owner sufficient time to deal with the property.

100% for six months seems reasonable for a short period.

If a property is empty and no attempt is being made to refurbish/rent then there should be no discount.

It may take up to 6 months to find a suitable occupant for a property a 100% discount should be applied.

Properties in this category should pay the same as 2nd home owners.

I do not think empty homes should receive a discount. People need homes and the owner should pay full council tax or rent the house to someone in need of housing.

People should not be encouraged to leave homes empty. After 3 months they should pay double the standard rate.

To discourage owners to get on with any work needed so they can be lived in

Full tax should be payable as this will encourage sale or use of property.

However perhaps the CT charge should be 200% after 24 months to encourage properties to be brought into occupation because of the chronic housing shortage.

If they can afford to keep it empty they can afford to pay council tax. I suggest 50% for 3 months not six.

No tax should be paid on an empty property.

An empty home is no benefit to the community

In circumstances where the property owner has died and the deceased family have the property on the market to sell but no buyer comes forward there should be a 100% discount for at least 6 months and I would suggest up to 1 year provided the family are seen to be doing all they can to sell the property at a sensible price agreed by the agents. They should be protected

Seems hard for people moving from their own home into a Care Home who can't sell their home within 6 months. Suggest 100% and 12 months for this category of people.

There should be no discount or a discount for less time i.e. 3 months. An empty property is possible a 2nd property or rents out - no need for a discount to be applied. This also ties in with 4d) overleaf.

Time between selling or renting and moving can be an issue - 6 months & 100% discount seems fair - but no longer.

But...Why not make it a 100% discount but for a shorter period of time? E.g. 100% for 3 months. This would encourage them to get newer tenants /occupants in quicker and minimise the number of empty homes in the district.

There are people crying out for houses - there is no reason property should be empty for 6 months or more.

Too complicated! If the owner is proven to be on the fiddle, then compulsory purchase property and rent it out.

Each case should be judged on its merits. When I lost my parents it took me a year to grieve, decide what to do, empty their house and dispose of it. Sometimes people are forced to move, and cannot sell their house.

The 50 % level should be for 3 months only

Probably all right at present but somewhat unfair when the property market stalls and selling takes a long time.

No discount for any period should be given.

By charging council tax immediately hopefully avoid property developers holding on to potential housing put back on market.

At a time of shortage of properties for sale or rent no discount should be given to empty properties unless they are undergone major repairs, leaving properties empty should not be encouraged.

Due to market conditions selling houses can be difficult and prolonged. Sensible negotiation should be considered.

For the above reasons (“ For landlords declaring a property under repair could be used to dodge paying council tax, therefore reduce the % and timescale.”) Additionally the value/assets are increasing.

There should be no discount.

Zero discount for an empty home. 2nd homes should be let to private or council tenants if they are empty. Again, why should the council (and taxpayer) subsidise those who may be making capital gains?

Empty properties should be discouraged. A period of 3 months should apply.

There should be no discount for empty homes. This will encourage the sale of such properties.

Charge full amount. 2 month discount fair.

Empty homes, even under repairs should be liable to 100% of council tax.

The same comment at b) is true for c) (“If they have the money to carry out the work they have the money to pay 100% of the tax these are not poor people.”). No discount should apply.

It should be 50% for 2 months , plus encouraging the owner to rent out the property on a 6 month lease to help reduce the housing crisis in Uttlesford.

No discount should be given.

Suggest 100% to discount for 3 months then full amount chargeable after that. Downside is that empty property ??? cannot easily determined no. of LTE from council tax data (need proper report). Upside is - owners are focussed on repairing property to use speedily.

All homes should pay Tax. It is a good way of holding one’s money in property, the property goes up in value, thus the tax needs to be paid.

There is more than enough demand for homes in the area - no excuse any should stand empty.

If the house is empty, no cost to council.

There is no justification for a reduced rate. The property, whether empty or not, should pay the normal rate of C.T. If the owners are not happy about this they can sell or rent the property. An empty property is a waste of resources and should not be encouraged.

No discount should be given. Houses are there to be lived in and everything should be done to encourage occupation.

In view of housing shortage, empty houses should be occupied as soon as possible.

Empty properties should be charged full rate Council Tax., There are too many empty properties and we surely need more housing - so any discount is a disincentive to bringing the properties back into use.

This depends upon reason property empty. Medical grounds Yes - owner living abroad for 6 months - No

Would it increase admin costs to have a scheme for which empty homes had to qualify? i.e. if it's just a second home, no discount, if it is empty because for example, an estate is awaiting probate, then ok to give discount.

Would it increase admin costs to have a scheme for which empty homes had to qualify? i.e. if it's just a second home, no discount, if it is empty because for example, an estate is awaiting probate, then ok to give discount.

Discount for 6 months IF on open market.

Discount for 6 months IF on open market.

No house should stand empty for more than 3 months - discount should be lost after that time encouraging Landlords to look for new tenants.

50% for 3 months - 3 months is long enough to sell a property.

We should discourage empty properties in an area where there is a housing shortage. E.g Is there a good reason for not renting out. Is the property habitable?

Individual cases need to be investigated as to why the property is empty in the first place.

The cost of empty should be as occupied weather under going repairs or not.

If property is habitable give discount for 3 months only. Owner can either move in, sell or let - 3/12 plenty of time to sort out houses need to be lived in - this will reduce problem of houses not being available for people in need. Stop subsidising landlords and developers.

Same as b. above. Need to define what is a major repair and what isn't.

Failure to charge the full amount means rate payers pick up the loss. Homes should not be left unoccupied, but returned to the Council as a source of income.

I do not believe that a discount should be offered at all. Because it does nothing to encourage the process of repair and therefore increases the likelihood of the property being neglected further.

An empty house NOT undergoing repairs should be treated as a second home.

Why is house empty if there is a Housing Shortage. Only get discount if is undergoing repair.

Empty homes could be "For sale" or just "empty" reducing time scale to 3 months would encourage quicker sales and also focus empty house owners to occupy or sell property.

If the owners are trying to sell a property after a death the discount should stay on for a longer period.

Should be longer where the homes are empty due to the delays caused by probate

As above ('If somebody has the financial means to undertake significant renovation then they can find the money to pay council tax. This money will typically just remain in the hands of small property developers.') Empty homes should not receive any discount from council tax.

Do they then pay 100% after 6 months .before the 150% after 2 years.

Why should owners be penalised for not occupying a property?

Empty homes should receive 50% discount for 3 months only.

It should depend on the reason a property is empty. A single occupant death should qualify for 100% for 12 months or until sold - for example.

Basically yes but normal voids should be zero rated. It is an administrative nonsense to extract a few days tax from the landlord .

Empty homes should be charged council tax.

Needs to be 12 months to allow for the sale of properties to go through and then repair.

After two bereavements with legal complications regarding ownership, the period of discount was inadequate and took no account of the timescale for resolution. Very stressful!

As above ('Make CT simple - every home pays it whatever the circumstances. May encourage people to speed up renovations and get house back into use.') There is a shortage of homes in Essex and rising homelessness. There should be no benefit for leaving a home empty.

Empty homes should be discouraged considering how many new ones are being built with the shortage of housing?? 20% x 6m

They should pay full tax at least. That will teach them not to leave a house empty while this country is facing a massive housing shortage.

No discount at all. Too many empty homes.

Bereavement? Divorce? There are numerous reasons for property being empty, and if you are not providing a service, they should be charged for it! You do not refund for people going on holiday - why should you charge owners with empty property - JUSTIFY THIS!

If you can afford to have a home that is empty and not being used you should be liable to pay the Council Tax

Reduce the period to 3 months max at 50%, 3 months at 25% then 0%. Empty homes should be occupied ASAP.

Homes for sale should receive the benefit of 100% discount for 6 months when empty.

If it was 100% for 12 months it would encourage more landlords to keep rental properties in good condition - e.g. a couple of weeks between lets to carry out small repairs and decorating.

They should not receive such a high discount . Housing is scarce and so empty homes should be filled quickly. Not having a discount would encourage homes to be filled by landlords/owners

If the house has become empty as a result of the death of the council tax payer and probate is required a period of six months without payment should be granted.

25% for 3 months

Empty houses should be taxed the same as those occupiers. This would ensure houses return to an occupied state ASAP. Otherwise those leaving houses empty are rewarded

Empty property does not need council services.

50% discount for 3 months

Empty homes should not receive any discount - unless the person is in residential care or hospital . Anyone who owns a home and can afford not to live in it can afford council tax.

With the current housing crisis the council should be discouraging homes standing empty. Give a discount of 50% for a max. 3 months.

Depending on WHY the property is empty and what the circumstances are. Could the property be used for a short term meaning more revenue for both parties.

Should be less. There are plenty of people looking for housing. No one should be sitting on a property that isn't available for habitation and not have to pay for the privilege.

Because these houses there should be no empty houses in Uttlesford District Council and whether council or not so many homeless people everywhere.

TEST

Why is there any discount?

No discount should be given.

The only reason for a house to be empty when not under repairs would be for example houses left in wills and in the process of being sold, if there is no rationale for it being empty there should be council tax

Simpler to treat all 'empty houses' the same, regardless of the reasons. Saves on administration costs. I do agree that it should be time-limited to discourage long-term disuse of properties.

I am the landlord of my late parents' home in a beautiful rural area in the North of England. The house is currently vacant since the last tenant moved out, and there is not a strong demand for large rental properties in the area. I strongly object to having to pay the Council Tax when I do not make any use whatsoever of the local services.

With the amount of people in need of housing at the moment, there should be more encouragement in filling empty housing quicker. There is no reason a liveable house should be left empty for 6 months when there are so many people looking for housing. I appreciate the housing market in Uttlesford is extortionately priced but perhaps this would encourage a change. I don't see why there should be any discount applied at all.

As previously stated to many properties appear to remain empty for long periods of time. The discount should remain at 100% but the timescale reduced to 3 months, which should be ample time to make arrangements for the sale or occupation of the property.

As before, property development is a huge business in this District with large profits being made on the sale of homes. They can afford to pay 100% of the Council Tax.

The housing market can leave an empty home for a long time. This can put a heavy financial strain on someone, if they have already moved and are still trying to sell.

I think if a house is being refurbished, it should get 100% discount for 6 months. Rental properties need to be kept to a decent standard and landlords should not be discouraged from doing renovations

There should be no discount

A empty house is not costing the council expense in services so should pay less until it is occupied

I see no reason why an empty property should allow the owner to avoid paying 50% of the council tax for up to six months.

Where property is for letting, I think landlords should be given a much shorter time to find a new tenant, say 2 months. However there needs to some consideration for holiday lets where there may be longer out of season empty periods which are quite reasonable. Where property is not for letting but just left empty I don't think any discount should be given in view of the national housing shortage.

**d. Empty homes premium**

**Prior to 1 April 2014 there was no incentive within the Council Tax scheme to encourage owners to bring empty properties back in to use. As from 1 April 2014 an additional charge of 50% was introduced for properties that had stood empty and unfurnished for a period of 2 years or more (ie the owners of such homes would pay 150% of the Council tax per house).**

**Do you agree that this is the correct level of additional charge and that two years is the correct time period?**

**If "No", please explain why.**

## Responses received

Empty homes are an insult to eople desperate for housing. A punitive council tax might be the spur the owners need

I think it should be introduced after 1 year

Absurd premium!! A private house is exactly that. Not really anyone's business if it's empty but council tax is paid. (BTW I do not have an empty house)

Suggest additional charge of 100% to reflect the need to increase available housing

1 year is sufficient - no home should be left empty for longer without penalty.

Should be discretionary as circumstances will vary.

The unfurnished and empty period should be reduced to 1 year.

Full charge to encourage compliment and occupancy.

I think this is Daylight Robbery. If the property is empty no one else is living there and therefore not using any of the Council's services - they will already be making a contribution to the LCTS both in their primary residence and also paying a second council tax anyway.

It is essentially unreasonable and unfair

The property should be brought back into use as soon as possible. A property should not be left empty any longer than six months. The additional charge is correct.

The time period before the premium becomes due should be decreased.

Full charge should be applied

As per 4 (c). Even stronger incentives should be applied to get properties occupied.

The 2 year timescale should be reduced to 1 year.

There should be latitude given to properties held within difficult / disputed probate cases.

People need homes. There should be no empty houses. Landlords/owners should be penalised.

This is a red herring in housing policy.

It should be increased as unoccupied property adds to the local housing shortage 2 years is enough. Why not increase it to 200% and 100% per year then every year.

I agree this is the correct level of charge, but it should be charged after a property has been empty for 12 months.

Additional charge of 50% after 1 year, additional charge of 100% after 2 years.

Think it should be only ONE year, 2 years too long and not justifiable.

As with C) I would reduce timescale to no more than a year and ideally less.

Council tax to be fully decreased.

. Should be 1 year or more with an additional charge of 100% ie owners would pay 200% of the council tax per house. This would encourage owners to get things sorted out.

Just pay normal council tax at 100%.

Reduce the time scale to 12 or 18 mths.

To encourage use should pay full amount.

The level of additional charge is correct but the time period should be reduced to 1 year.

Correct time 6 months. After that 100%

Should pay more for leaving property.

There should be a higher additional charge after one year eg 100%

there should be no limit houses become disrepaired vermin move in plenty of people need homes. People keep houses and want for the property value to change to make more money.

Very good idea

100% is what is charged on occupied houses why the extra unless it is a builder/speculator wanting to let the property deteriorate so much that it has to be pulled down leaving them able to build flats or more smaller houses!

It does not give the homeowners encouragement to get the house back on the market or rent  
Less than one year.

Should come in after 1 year

Should be 100% ie. Pay 200% after 2 years empty.

No penalise anyone who leaves a property empty. They will cash in on the inevitable rising price of the property.

C.Tax should relate to the person using the services not the home.

1 year. I thought council were able to acquire long standing empty homes.

Correct level - Yes; Two years - No, suggest 1 year

1 year is adequate

The period should be reduced to one year

I don't think it's fair to pay more than the normal council tax and with the increased development I can see a problem for sellers and those wanting to rent their properties in the future. I already know of people being unable to sell properties now because of the developments

150% is the minimum - could be higher . again to encourage quicker action by owner

The length of time property left empty should be reduced to six months of one year. But the cost remain at 150%. Unless property on the market for sale.

Additional charge - Yes; tow years excessive - one year reasonable I think

The additional charge should 100% (total 200%) and operate after six months.

The additional charge should come in force as soon as possible. The owners should show why they have made their decision.

Additionally, pubs that are left derelict (in hope of forcing reversion to domestic use) should be charged even more.

There should be no endtime. If a house is empty it should be used, so incentives to bring it to market must be in place.

Please see previous answers.

Increase the 'penalty' for empty houses. It is immoral to leave houses empty when there is such a need for houses.

If the property already incurs 100% council tax, a 50% hike is unjust and will not address current housing shortages for a number of reasons.

2 years period should reduce to 6 months.

They should use a sliding scale after six months grace which increases till the house is used to buy or rent instead of standing empty. Its like parking your car at a reduced rate in the car park and clogging the system.

With housing so difficult there can be almost no reason why a house stands empty (agree in some cases there might be legal reasons these are the exceptions.)

Additional charge should be applied after one year, ie reduction in timescale which would generate more revenue and encourage owners to bring property back into use more quickly.

There should be no time limit on empty homes - a house is an asset, the owners should pay maximum amount of tax.

1 year is long enough for a landlord to make a decision before 150% applies.

18 months

Unless an owner can show conclusively that there is a valid reason for it being left empty the surcharge should be increased by a further 50% every 6 months.

Period should be 18 months

200% - 1 year or more.

Should investigate reason for house being empty for such a time. Most people if able would want to cash the asset in.

But in certain circumstances there could be some level of discount ie where probate is going through courts and court has no concern of situation.

One year should be the norm.

% rate should increase every year after the first two years.

Too confusing to answer!

It should also apply to furnished properties. Unless the property is empty due to hardship e.g. severe damage, domestic violence, the timescale should be reduced to one year.

150% is fine, but should start after only 1 year.

The time should be reduced to 1 year. It can have an adverse affect on neighbouring properties for a home to remain empty for prolonged periods.

Bring the period down to one year.

To alleviate housing issues there should be a ratchet timescale i.e. 50% after 3 months. Zero after 6 months + 50% after 9 months + 100% after 12 months + 150% after 18 months +200% after 24 months.

Shorten the time period to 12 months (2 years is unnecessarily long).

The council does not provide any greater service therefore should not charge extra.

The 50% premium should be levied on homes left empty for 1 year not 2 to encourage empty homes back onto the market.

A second home is an investment. 100% is already adequate and reasonable. One should not be forced into seeling one's investments, whatever the nature of the investment. This is an objective opinion, as I do not have a second home as described above.

Increase additional charge to 100% ie 200% in all.

I think 1 year is sufficient time, but I think the amount is correct.

Depends if this level of charging is working? How many of these homes are now back in use?

If the house empty for no good reason the council charge after two years should double.

Property owners paying the full 100% are already making a contribution.

Would reduce period to 18 months rather than two years.

Should be 50% for one year, then full council tax. I do not agree with 150%.

I don't think empty house owners should be charged more than an occupied property. If it is empty, thus uninhabited then there are no demands on council services - no bins to empty etc etc. 100% should be the maximum and a better incentive (grant?) to help owners bring properties into use.

Raise to 200% after 2 years - 300% after 5 years. Empty homes are a blight and are socially reprehensible.

There's a housing shortage! A lot higher council tax if house empty for more than 6 months, there are a lot of people waiting for housing, people should be charged for leaving properties empty to encourage properties back to use, especially as Uttlesford are selfishly stopping any new homes in the area of being built.

Empty for 12 months is sufficient to resolve most issues with property including probate. I would suggest additional 50% after 12 months and increase to additional 100% after 2 years. This would provide a strong incentive to bring property back into use.

That seems rather excessive. There could be circumstances beyond their control to why is empty for so long. As they are not using any services, refuse collection or otherwise, then NO.

In my view reduce to 1 Year.

Keep it at 50% owners pay 150% of council tax per house but not 2 yrs - reduce to 1 yr or even 6 months.

See previous.

Reduce to a year to incentivise selling or renting out.

Two years is far too long for the property to stand empty - consider anti-social implications - and should be reduced to a maximum of 12 months. The additional cost should be 100% of Council Tax to facilitate swift disposal - despite services not being used they are available!

I don't see why you must wait 2 years before you do this, the UK is short of accommodation and you wish to permit no sanctions for 2 years, make it 1 year.

I suggest that the period should be reduced to one year, unless the house is undergoing major repairs.

But I think individual circumstances should come into play.

12 months is long enough to sell or let a property.

Reduce time to one year

I would like to see the 2 year period reduced as there are still too many empty properties.

But period could be reduced to 18 months

A house should not stand empty when people are homeless.

I agree with the level but I think that the timescale should be reduced to 1 year. That should be long enough to get the property sold or let.

2 year period should be reduced to 1 year max.

I think the correct level should be £150.00 after one year.

That 2 year period should be reduced to 6 months.

This amount could be raised to 200% and still have our support.

If a home is left empty for so long it should be bought by the council and used for the less fortunate (like me!!)

150% ? I do not see why the owner should pay ½ as much again. No call on bin collections, education etc. etc. I think this is unfair. 2 year time scale agreed.

I can't see how this fits in with c) (Empty homes). Assuming that I follows the period of 6 months .

What happens between 6 mths (disc) and 2 yrs (Premium)?

It feels very punitive and too high - not encouraging.

Additional charges is correct but timeframe is too long.

I believe the time period should be reduced to one year which seems fair.

Make owners pay 200%

100% full charge should apply (i.e. no refund/discount) but why more than 100%?

Increase the charge - increase what Uttlesford receives or consider compulsory purchase of the properties

Suggest reducing time period.

I do not understand the question or statement

Not sure - Depends on why the house is empty - for example this is not fair if due to someone being ill and relatives not wanting to sell house - especially relevant for elderly. Otherwise OK - should be exceptions.

Make it one year and increase the tax to 200%. There is a housing shortage. Houses kept empty for speculation is a crime.

I agree with the charge but the house should only be allowed to remain empty for a maximum of 1 year.

Some properties not suitable for use.

Reduce the timescale to 18 months to bring empty property back into use earlier.

200% after one year.

Empty houses should attract: After 1 year 150% tax After 2 years 200% tax After 3 years 500% tax

I would propose that the rate increases to 150% after 6 months, and that after 12 months there is an additional increase.

Only OK if property is passed as part of a deceased estate. Otherwise 200% level (as in 4a above) should apply.

Double or treble the additional charge - houses should not be empty when people are homeless. As per response (C), this should be 100% payable for 6 months and increase to 150% immediately thereafter.

Additional charge after one year

Should go up to 200% after two years and 150% after one year to provide an incentive to make houses available.

I consider all empty properties not undergoing any repair to make them inhabitable should pay the full 100% council tax.

Time period should be reduced to bring homes back in use sooner.

A further addition of 50% (i.e. the owners pay 200%) would be acceptable. We need to have all our empty houses occupied as soon as possible.

2 years should be reduced to 1 year`

Percentage increased/timescale reduced - see comments on previous question (If the percentage and timescale were reduced it might encourage rental or sale of the property. Thereby assisting the housing shortage.)

I believe 1 year would be adequate.

1 Year

Make them pay more to incentivise them to bring the property under occupation or sell onto someone who will.

The two year period should be reduced so that people are encouraged to bring empty houses into use sooner.

Depends on circumstances.

Charges are ok but timescale too long. 1 year would be better.

The time limit should be one year.

Reduce empty period to one year before increasing to 150%

Could be brought in after 1 year @ +50% . 2nd +75%, 3rd +100%, for same reasons as c)( to discourage property ownership solely for investment in bricks and mortar/land.)

Would suggest that this additional charge is on a sliding scale - it should increase the longer the property is empty. Would bring down period from 2 years to 1 year.

Not sure I understand this but no property should be empty. Help with letting if people are in hospital/prison/abroad?

Same as last reason none of you business.

I consider it too generous. I consider 1 year efficient and that if an owner wants to leave a house empty if unfurnished, council tax should be levied at 150% after 12 months.

It seems logical to allow any empty house to escape the additional charge. Why should the charge be removed for 2 years or any other period?

Once again this should depend on certain issues whether you are able or unable to sell your home because of certain changes to your life.

They would be encouraged more to get the homes ready for use if full tax had to be paid.

Council tax should be payable in full after 3 months non-occupancy.

Second home and empty homes provide employment (gardeners, carers, cleaners).

After 2 years empty properties should be confiscated by the council and used to house people without housing. I would apply this to 2nd homes when others have none.

I think that the level of time is brought down to 6 months. Otherwise we are paying for people with properties bought for investment. This pushes the house prices up.

Should be levied after property empty and unoccupied for one year or more.

See 4b) overleaf (An empty home undergoing a major repair will provide an extra unit of accommodation. This is desirable. On the assumption that no Council services are provided for an empty house no charges should be raised against it). Also 2 years is arbitrary, does it have any economic justification?

12 months max.

Should be 150% for 1 year after the premises become empty to encourage owners to act sooner. See c) : (1) 50% discount should be extended in cases of complicated probate and (2) Rate should be increased by increments of 50% for every 6 months over 12 months of the property remaining empty.

Unless covered by probate, 12 months is a more reasonable period.

Shorten it to a year.

If people wish to leave houses empty they should be able to. But pay tax after 12 months but maybe less 10%.

The Premium should be paid after 1 year.

That period should be until the property is back in use

I agree with additional charge but it should be brought in sooner (6 months)

I consider that the percentage should be increased and the timescale should be reduced.

Time scale should be 1 year (See previous answer: 'With the housing crisis all properties ought to be lived in.')

Empty houses should be occupied within 6 months.

Many pensioners need to go into Care Homes towards the end of their lives and Uttlesford, like many councils in the S.E., do not fund these pensioners. Uttlesford should therefore not profit from these empty homes, the only asset left to such pensioners, as they are not providing any facilities at all to these homes for which council tax is levied.

The council tax should remain the same as no one will be using council facilities.

Charge more after a shorter time e.g. +100% after 1 year. Helps increase housing stock.

I would increase it. Say 50% after 1 year and 100% after 2 years to prevent owners from sitting on empty property. If properties listed I would increase more to enforce repairs and use.

Charge 200% as large profits are made from property speculation on empty property.

6 months should be quite enough. Houses should not be left empty - please discourage.

Level of charge should be raised to 200%, and time limit reduced to one year. A further 50% should be charged for each additional year.

The premium should be introduced after 6 months especially where there might be legal problems such as waiting for probate.

Should be 200%

If property is trying to be sold during the whole time and hasn't been sold it's unfair on the owners.

Should be additional 50% after 1 year.

I feel charging 150% is a bit too much.

The additional charge should be increased there are no gains for leaving properties empty.

1 year 150% 2 years +200% as a reasonable stronger encouragement.

?

The council tax for any property should never be more than 100%. To charge above this is to use council tax for a purpose other than that for which it is intended.

The period during which a home is empty should be three months after which the council tax should be set to 200%.

I think the additional charge should be increased to maximise properties being in use.

As 4 B+C

This explanation is not clear!!

Should be more if it's just a greedy landlord or indecisive council. Many properties un-inhabited actually belong to local authorities / councils.

Reduce time limit

See (c)

Correct level of charge but it should commence after ONE year.

Agree with charge but feel two years is too long for owners - perhaps 1 year.

They shouldn't have to pay more - just pay the 100% like everyone else.

However after two years ie 200% increase would be fair.

Home owners should not be forced to occupy their property if it does not suit them.

Should be 1 year - to encourage selling or letting property.

It is the owners choice if they want their property to remain empty. They should not be made to pay more than 100%

I think the grace period should be reduced to 12 months except if there is a genuine planning application in progress, then 2 years is sufficient.

Should be additional 100% after one year - empty properties must be discouraged.

Or even double the council tax.

Reduce time to 18 months. Housing is in very short supply and every effort should be made to bring empty properties back into use.

If you own a property you should pay council tax.

No timescale, if proven owner unable to afford restoration, then compulsory purchase and rent out.

This does seem reasonable. Although again I would urge to judge each case on its merits. As why is this house empty for so long, and perhaps there are circumstances where discretion should be used.

I cannot believe that people leave houses unfurnished and empty for 2 years + without good reason. If they have good reason I hope there is some discretion for the council to waive part or all of this surcharge.

200% should be payable after one year

Limit the empty property to 12 months and then additional charge is added - hopefully encourage housing back on 'market'.

The additional charge of 50% should be introduced after 1 year, also, an additional charge of 100% (i.e. double council tax) should be introduced after 2 years or more, owners need to be encouraged to bring empty properties back into use.

But ...Deliberate attempts to allow properties to depreciate and then applying for planning permission for several swellings should be unlawful and charged appropriately.

Empty homes premium should start after 1 year vacancy.

Housing shortage is acute, therefore empty houses need to be available ASAP therefore reduce the timescale.

Reduce time period to zero.

The timescale should be reduced to 6 months and the % should be increased to 200% this to encourage these properties to be sold for the benefit of the community.

Charge full amount. You have powers for forcing people not to leave homes empty.

Empty homes should be liable for 100% of council tax.

The time should be one year and a charge of 200% after that. This would put more pressure on them to bring the property back into use in addition this should double for each extra year it is not in use. Unless a very good reason is put forward to the council in chambers to agree.

This premium should be brought in after 1 year at least.

Make it a 100% premium - so 200%

I think Council tax should be paid at the point of the house becoming empty. (nice way to make an enormous amount of capital on one's house going up in value.)

I think this should apply after 6 months - especially as the town is not designed for the amount of houses it currently has - if all vacant building were in use it would relieve the pressure to keep building.

Why should owners be taxed for doing nothing?

Double the rate to incentivise owners to fill homes and apply this both furnished and unfurnished, if legally possible

Absolute maximum of 1 year; "genuine" reasons for standing empty over 1 year must be few and far between.

Increase the premium to 100% after six months if substantial progress has not been made to bring the property up to liveable condition.

It is unbelievable that Uttlesford only charges 12.5% (2014-2016) compared to the average from the table on page 2 of 21.75%. Why is this so low? A reasonable figure surely would be 20-25%  
Yes right charge. No to timescale - why two years when all other time scales are based on 12 months

Reduce period to one year. There are too many empty properties in the area.

No building should be left empty for 2 years. Perhaps assistance should be offered to Landlords in return they would allow the council to reduce their waiting list.

200% for properties empty and unfurnished for 1 year or more.

Perhaps, one year or more, unless there are circumstances that cannot be resolved e.g. in hospital. If empty that there is some evidence of maintenance and protection of habitability OR

market for sale.

With the shortage of housing why are they empty in the first place, 2 years is too long.

I believe that in a democratic society home owners should be allowed to do what they want with their own property and not be subjected to additional Tax charges with the provision that the property is NOT causing nuisance or a health problem to neighbours.

No house should be left empty for more than one year.

You should consider levying this surcharge after 18 months at 150%.

Should be one year.

Additional charge should be 100% 2 yrs is correct timescale.

Additional charge should be 100% 2 yrs is correct timescale.

This should be raised to at least 200% and the period reduced to a minimum of 12 months.

Would reduce to 1 year to encourage homes to be left empty for a shorter period.

If a house is empty for no reason they should pay council tax. Should not have had a discount in the first place.

Without knowing the reasons why a property is empty I do not believe that you can charge more than 100%

The period should be reduced to one year

To encourage occupancy of empty properties Reduce time 1 year

Should be exceptions for delays within the probate office.

Remove any discount for empty homes and keep everything at a flat rate this should help remove administration costs fo council tax and keep the system simple

How can you justify charging extra for no services being used? It is entirely feasible that the property cannot be sold adding further problems for the owner.

Too blunt. It should depend on circumstances

Should be reduced to one year only. We need homes now not in 2 years!

For most instances the answer is yes, but if an old couple die intestate (without a will) problems can go on for a long time tracing family members etc.

Should be encouraged to get someone living/using the property. Needs to be short term window to allow them to get someone in, but after that they need to be encouraged to get it in use.

As stated overleaf ('After two bereavements with legal complications regarding ownership, the period of discount was inadequate and took no account of the timescale for resolution. Very stressful!') there should be an appeals procedure that can be referenced in individual cases.

These appeals could be verified by solicitors acting for the applicant.

The timescale should be reduced to 18 months . There is a real need to bring homes back on the market and this may be an encouragement.

Reduce from two years to one year. No excuse in current situation not to ensure that all properties are used to provide homes.

House left empty this long should be compulsorily purchased, failing that tax should be much higher.

No. I don't own a second property - but if I did I believe it is my right to do what I want with it - it's nothing to do with the council!

It should be 12 months and not 2 years. Leaving a property unoccupied for over 12 months is not acceptable or justifiable.

Reduce the period to one year at 150% then increase to 200% - shortage of homes means empty properties should be back in use ASAP

But each case must be considered on its merits and reasons.

I agree with the level of charge but consider that one year is quite long enough to keep a property completely empty without incurring (an additional) charge.

Even assuming the 50% surcharge is lawful this may not be the best way to achieve the objective, given potential redevelopment value and risk to listed or character buildings.

Compulsory purchase should be considered.

100% is fair enough. 150% is unduly targeting landlords but owners/landlords need to prove that work is being carried out.

Make it 200%, not 150% i.e. double the council tax . apply it to furnished homes as well.

18 months at 200%

Do not make any additional charge in line with government guidance when a property is genuinely on the market for sale.

The period should be reduced to one year to encourage owners of multiple properties to either occupy, sell or rent them. In the current property shortage this is appropriate.

My thoughts at that the additional charge is correct at +50% but that the time period could be reduced to 1 year as an incentive to return a property to use in these times where housing is desperately needed! Perhaps this should be done in 2 stages - first reducing to 18 months, then to 1 year.

Reduce time period to 1 year

I think there should be exceptions in cases where owners are unable to sell the home - e.g. planning blight.

With current lack of housing, there should be no incentive to leave a property empty for more than 12 months. However, there should be provisions to allow homes being empty before and after major repairs without penalising home owners.

With the current housing crisis owners should be encouraged to bring empty properties back into use by an additional charge of 100% after 6 months.

My answer is an empty homes premium is whatever My answer is less than 2 years is people should not a second home just not keep for just live in, always not standing empty

TEST

The percentage is fine, but reduce the timescale to 12 months.

In some cases there may be good reason that the property remains empty e.g there may be no buyers for that property or the housing market is stagnant. Also, an empty property is not generating demand for council services and there is no real justification for any charge let alone a surcharge.

I believe that the timescale should be reduced to ONE year for empty homes.

Should be after 1 year.

The question does not provide sufficient information to give a response. If the Council is empowered to fine owners of empty properties, then there should be a process that takes into account the reasons for the delay in bringing the property back into use. The mass of restrictions, often arbitrarily applied in Uttlesford (as compared with other councils) can make it a slow and difficult process

Don't stop there - keep raising the cost as time goes on. 150% isn't a big enough stick - add another 50% each year (and in the event of non-payment, eventually enough will be owed that the property can be claimed in lieu so that the council can then bring the property back into use itself).

150% should be applied after 1 year not 2 years.

I think you could argue that the period could be reduced from 2 years to 1. The owner receives a discount for the first 6 months (as per previous question), pays the full rate for the following 6 months and I think should be penalised thereafter for failing to keep the property occupied.

The time period should be reduced to 1 year and an additional surcharge should be made equal to any increase in property value made in the same period.

That will not help owners to renovate, as they will not be able to afford it.

I believe the additional charge should apply after 12 months and increased by 50% for each subsequent year. It is totally unacceptable to have homes empty for longer than a year when there is a problem of housing need. Residential property should not be treated as an asset like art or fine wine to appreciate in value for future sale, but as something that should be lived in.

Don't understand the implications

The additional charge should begin six months after the property had stood empty, whether furnished or unfurnished.

I agree there should be an additional charge but I think a shorter period of say a few months should be the case before the premium is charged. This will discourage owners from keeping property empty and unfurnished.

## Q5 Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme

### Responses received

If you have any further comments to make regarding the LC...

Apart from the desperate need for housing empty properties have a deteriorious effect on neighbourhoods

I think the amount of support available should be increased where individual circumstances may merit this additional assistance

You should review who is exempt from Council Tax . Whilst I agree with most there are certain individuals that should no longer be exempt e.g. Religious communities, USAF personnel and dependants and diplomats. They all earn a good wage.

It is very important to protect the frail or elderly who are poor and still living in their own home from council tax which in some cases is their biggest bill. To have to choose food or heat or council tax is undignified in a civilised rich western country.

A useful study!

. It should help ALL those on low incomes of less than £16,500K. Low income families who are working but own their own houses still need help!

Uttlesford is a wealthy area and we should be prepared to support those less fortunate and ensure that usable housing is not left empty in a period of shortage.

Uttlesford virtually full employment, affluent area. UDC should phase out discount support to all others than those with total or proven financial needs.

Any incentive is good to provide much needed homes.

On an urgent matter pensioners would appreciate details of honest work people & gardeners. I find it very difficult. Roof and hedge top of list (it was cut one month ago a now needs doing again!) Thank you.

Hit the rich not the poor or disabled Make a stand. Advise people who are a the pour disabled being hit - Disgrace conservative policy!!

Cuting grass round rout more not just twice a year not safety walk with children and fixed more

pothalls.

What about Pensioners in three bedroom houses and only using downstairs when there are family waiting for them

Low income but working is an important consideration - i wouldn't want this reduced

Seems quite complicated - but fair

As an elderly, low income, lady I find the scheme a godsend that enables be to live the rest of my life in a happy and safe 'sheltered' flat with the occasion treat - thank you.

My answers are in accord with improving work ethic and ensuring people one better off working when possible. Benefits should not otherwise be provided.

I think that the costs should be lowered for people over the age of 75. My wife and I are over 80 and and we need to have all the help/assistance we can get.

As a disabled pensioner I am relieved that I will receive some protection. I did work, very hard, for 40 years as a farm labourer but need some mercy in my current situation and in need of help at this time in my life, which the government should understand.

Re. 4d. Two years is a long time and, unless there are absolutely genuine reasons for the house to remain empty for two year, owners should be encouraged even further than at present, to bring it back into use.

We can only hope this new scheme is not as error-ridden or discourteously implemented as the previous 'benefit' one. The structure was extremely wasteful and punitive. Also, the credit card surcharge for payment is throughly outrageous.

i like the aim to not allow properties to remain empty as we need to use our existing housing stock rather than build more houses - so why then do you not do something about all the properties with agricultural ties that are empty. If the tie was removed from all these a lot more houses would be available.

Within the (ridiculous) parameters and budgets set by central government I think the council should protect the vulnerable, especially if they rely on welfare benefits, whilst encouraging best use of clement housing stock.

Arrears of tax is unacceptable. Either apply for court orders to lobby to change law for council to directly seize monies owed from sale of property. Talks less and do more.

Why was this pretty much only about property.

**GET EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO THE MARKET.**

In this area the scheme needs to focus on the target groups mentioned who must be protected. There are too many house owners etc in this affluent area who are exploiting the system.

n/c

Make some allowance for people trying to sell.

Landlords who make money buying and selling houses should pay maximum taxes and society should look after the vulnerable.

Those with enough money/extra properties should be subsidising those on low/no income who CANNOT (not choose not to) work.

You should protect and help the vulnerable people in real crisis.

Thank you!

Keep the activity of the council to a minimum so that extra bureaucracy is avoided.

Pay more attention to the section of society who needs help.

Does the drop in LC support mean that we have more people out of work? Need to survey those who have dropped out of school. Why is this?

Bring back national council tax benefit!

The quick and easy way to reduce housing shortages is to make use of the 300 000 + houses already built in the UK that are empty or not fully repaired. Kick start the process with incentives to get going and repair!

Empty business properties should also be taxed in this way. It is shocking to see so many old local pubs being intentionally vacant and left to rot, so that developers can knock them down and make vast profits. For example The Colts in Stansted.

A sliding scale for LCTS would be fairer. As a retired, married couple we pay full tax on our home, despite living on a modest income. Our house is a large one, because we have worked hard to make it so, yet our consumption of council services is very low. A balance should be struck.

There are too many empty homes/second homes this should be discouraged we are an over crowded island and need to stop building new homes when existing are empty or under used.

UDC have got it about right, well done.

The days of 'feather bedding' benefit claimants at the expense of property owners has surely to

cease with a so called conservative government.

It is clear that there is a need for this scheme and I suspect we have more people in the protected groups than most people assume. It is difficult to answer the questionnaire without more info about the alternatives or what else the money could be spent on.

What are you doing to actually get people to pay this (ie overdue amounts)

Consideration should be given to 100% discount for empty homes that are 'for sale' or in the process of being sold. Some circumstances should be assessed on a case by case basis.

Shame people should have to pay for Garden Waste. Don't think about Pensioners or disabled people. Also I don't think Pensioners should have to pay Council Tax

I am not familiar with LCTS. Last question below not sure how to answer. Do you have to be already designated by a professional to say you are in a protected group? I have put our status beside previous question. (2 pensioners / Poor health. I am carer for my husband)

It's difficult to believe that this is anonymous when you ask for a post code! Perhaps it would be just as useful if you asked for just the first part.

With more houses being built the LCTS should go down not increase, because you will be collecting more money from more people, so pooling of the rates. So in actual fact the rates should go down.

Would the council consider taking over empty houses to help their housing lists. (just a thought)

Recipients should

Vital that this is targeted to those who really need it - stringent eligibility rules must apply.

There should be a strong message that empty homes do not help anyone. En masse, they destroy communities, often fall into disrepair and could be used by those less fortunate who are desperate for housing.

Plus a rebate 25 % 2 years once in use.

No further comment.

Almost every article in 'Uttlesford Life' refers to an email address for further information!! What about we who have no computer??

Thanks for asking but I'm not sure many, including me, are well enough informed to make other than 'in principle' judgements.

I rent over 60 years old the rent keeps going up £25 every year their needs to more help for us because were does it end they the landlords are priceing us out I can't get a council house because they go to people with kids who haven't done a days work in their lives had child to get a council house and benefits.

People with more than one property (how many rooms do you need?) can better afford to pay, there should be no discounts!

Like all activities you should try to spend as little of other peoples money as possible.

We are happy to help people that can't help themselves but not people that won't help themselves. If you can afford a second home, you can afford council tax.

As a pensioner living alone on a low income the 25% discount for lone occupancy is not enough.....

If we are here and benefit from its balmy climate we should pay for it. They could always try Margate or Hastings.

Your authority needs to get unpaid tax paid - you need to charge tax when monthly payments are not made. Stop 6 and 12 month payments. Attention to LET properties, these should pay in advance as tenants leave without paying.

All empty home owners should be encouraged to rent them or sell them. Inthsi housing shortage staying empty only makes them deteriorate faster.

If an elderly person has to go into a carehome this should after the house being empty for up to a year - so it sells.

I think Uttlesford Council do a wonderful job. Thank you.

Would suggest looking at longerterm (5 to 10 years) and see where LCTS level needs to be. And base rates criteria on a level incline to that point. Easier for recipients to acclimatise to.

If a house lies empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years then the owner can afford to pay a maximum amount. Unless they are ill, work abroad or a legitimate reason then the house for them is just an investment.

Staff needed to make checks and not let owners keep get away with excuses for not paying what is due.

I think pensioners should not have to pay council tax if they only have a state pension.

It is very wrong to take extra tax from hard working people to subsidise people on benefits.

Looks like the council are making the right decisions.

Without the LCTS I would be in dire straits. It is a very worthwhile scheme. Regarding empty home - I really think the government's scheme of building no homes is wrong and with a million empty homes in the UK anything that helps to fill these is surely the best use of resources.

People purchase a second home or buy to rent to make money - IF THERE SO GREEDY they'd rather keep property empty till they rent out at above market rate - of course rates etc. increase People from abroad, who own property for investment / holiday homes, in UK should be charged more to subsidise LCTS.

Each time I complain some smartarse at UDC explains why I'm wrong! Sack the b\*\*\*\*\*d!

A more generous LCTS scheme would reduce arrears which incur transactional costs for the Council (chasing, court procedures), so may even save money.

I'm using this to bring forward about lack of potholes fixed in Saffron Walden. also the amount of houses being built is a joke. There's a lot more traffic . Thus people are becoming more aggressive with their driving. All accidents and deaths are on your hands!!

I am in the happy position of being able to afford my Council Tax. I wish to see those less fortunate than myself helped as much as possible please.

Charge or sue.

My husband and I are both approaching our 80s always worked hard never claimed anything, We just are out of the threshold of claiming help. It is a financial struggle to hold onto our home, but we love our home. So why should we expect people with second homes benefiting. Surely they should be the first to be able to afford council tax as others do. If you can't pay your way DO NOT EXPECT OTHERS TO ONLY if you are disabled.

What is happening to the buildings next to the hospital opposite Tesco which are abandoned and look ugly?

The LCTS should be kept to a minimum to avoid excessive expenditure by the council and increasing demands on council tax payers.

This questionnaire covers quite complex issue. It might have been helpful to know how many people receive this benefit. The principal of protection of those in need, living in an affluent area is correct.

Maintain strict control of LCT

We are told we need more housing, lets get what we have back on the market. I fail to understand why single occupancy receives a discount, they use the same services and should pay going rate.

I'm not sure how listed buildings are covered, (it at all), by this scheme but there must be some action/monetary sanction to protect such buildings from deliberate neglect by unscrupulous developers.

There are always exceptions or unforeseen circumstances and consequences. Therefore, whilst the cited criteria all appear reasonable and justifiable, there ought to be a review system available for claimed special cases. Perhaps it already exists.

Hard working people must be protected.

“Work ethic” is a doubtful concept. Karl Weber, who coined the term, did not do so appraisingly. He also described the capitalist “iron cage”. Work is a complex notion. André Gorz criticizes the ideology of work as supportive of inequality. Much of the best rewarded “work” is socially useless or even destructive.

Nice to be asked for an opinion.

In cases of real hardship and poverty help should be reviewed.

It would have helped with some of the questions if you'd told us what constitutes a 'low income'. Single occupancy houses should have more reduced rate. Not fair to punish people for living alone.

There should be more support for elderly applicants, who are often very anxious and confused about their entitlements.

Although I myself pay CT anyone who refused to do so has my full support. I give UDC what I must by law - beyond that, money or anything else, nothing whatsoever.

How about using some of these empty houses to house some of the refugees.

Who worded this document? The questions aren't good enough to elicit a response that can be properly assessed.

Cases of a single parent who goes out to work, but has to pay after school and holiday child care should be carefully considered. Some people are struggling with this.

If a house stands empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years then the owners should pay more

that 150% council tax.

I would not wish to see anyone who has to been residing in the UK for at least 5 years benefitting from this scheme.

2nd home discount should still apply to annex attached to a home...dependent on how this is viewed by the council.

Get homes (empty) back on the market a.s.a.p.

There are clear steps the council can take here to help the housing crisis while reducing cost of LCTS. So do it!

My husband, 81 years of age born at Ingleside Place in 1934 April 1st . 21 in 1939 his Dad was allocated a new council house at 10 Catons Lane Saffron Walden , Essex. No LCTS in 1939

TEST

As long as the people in need get the help I agree but safeguards must be in place to prevent any fraud

I benefited from the council tax reduction when my home was empty and undergoing major repairs so I know how welcome this reduction was when faced with the costs of refurbishment/repairs. The temporary reduction acts as an incentive to bring a home up to modern standards and is to be welcomed generally as a way of improving the housing stock of the nation/council.

The need for a support system suggests that the Council Tax scheme itself is flawed but this is a matter for Parliament and beyond the control of the council.

I am happy with the current scheme as long as LCTS is provided for those genuinely on low incomes. I would however like to see a reduction in the timescale for the empty homes premium to one year, this would benefit UDC in an increased income and be an incentive to owners of empty properties to put them back on the housing market.

Lower rates for single person living.

This survey limits the amount of text one can enter. Modern IT systems should be able to cope with more text than most of the public can be bothered to type in with negligible cost - being unable to complete a paragraph because a programmer decided that 400 characters was enough is unacceptable (and annoying). Either you want people's opinions, or you don't. Seems that you don't...

Please check this document for advise:

[http://npi.org.uk/files/9214/3386/4426/CTS\\_challenges\\_and\\_options\\_FINAL.pdf](http://npi.org.uk/files/9214/3386/4426/CTS_challenges_and_options_FINAL.pdf)

I am not in favour of promoting the 'work ethic' in cases where people are genuinely unable to work. Current policies seem uncomfortably close to Social Darwinism.

I believe this is a positive step forward, the people on lowest incomes should not be hit harder with these changes. People who leave houses empty and are in no rush to fill them because they know they have 6months - a year before they have to start paying should not be allowed to get away with this to the detriment of residents who pay their council tax every month/cannot afford to pay any/more.

Property that remains empty for long period of time soon become uninhabitable and therefore steps should be taken ensure the council is aware of the owned reasons for the property being empty and their intentions for the property. If the council is not satisfied with their explanation, steps should be taken for the compulsory purchase of the property.

The Conservatives at UDC need to get a grip of Town & Parish Councils abusing their grants while also increasing their share of Council Tax. The most cost effective resolution for residents in Saffron Walden is for the Town Council to become a unitary authority with UDC. Why are we paying out for two Council buildings, two sets of staff and so on when the public doesn't understand the difference?

It can be punitive against those with very low incomes. The Council Tax dept is atrocious and quite inept and unhelpful.

Questionnaire should have had a don't know option.

I hope you mean to reduce spending on this as much as possible

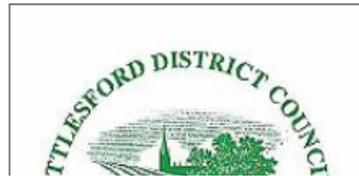
I don't think benefits claimants should be charged anything, particularly those with children

## 4.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire forms for the paper and online consultation followed an identical format.

### Have your say on council tax support scheme

Every resident in Uttlesford has the chance to have their say on how much financial assistance should be given to working age recipients of local council tax support.



As a result of changes to the welfare system, councils now run a scheme called Local Council Tax Support (LCTS), which has replaced the old Council Tax Benefit. It is a government system designed to ensure people are better off working than not.

The scheme is administered by councils, which have some discretion over how LCTS is set, and are also required each year to ask residents how much support they think



#### Uttlesford Local Council Tax Support Questionnaire

Q1 The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. At the moment Uttlesford also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.

Do you agree with this?

Yes

No (Please specify below)

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for Uttlesford's scheme in 2016/17 are for working age recipients to pay their bill - the same as this year.

ell, Cabinet Member for Finance & Administration, said: "Uttlesford has consistently maintained the most generous Local Council Tax e in Essex and this is something we can be proud of. That we are able in which the council has been run.

inity, and so we must balance our financial ability to support those on s such we are committed to ensuring all residents get the opportunity to

short questionnaire which is included in the latest edition of *Uttlesford* or by calling the council's Customer Service Centre on 01799 510510.

**d) Empty Homes Premium**

Prior to 1 April 2014 there was no incentive within the Council Tax scheme to encourage owners to bring empty properties back in to use. As from 1 April 2014 an additional charge of 50% was introduced for properties that had stood empty and unfurnished for a period of 2 years or more (ie the owners of such homes would pay 150% of the Council tax per house).

\* As a guide, if the percentage is reduced and/or the timescale increased the amount of Council Tax payable is reduced and the cost of the scheme increases. Equally, if the percentage is increased and/or the timescale is reduced the amount of Council Tax payable is increased and the cost of the scheme decreases.

**Do you agree that this is the correct level of additional charge and that two years is the correct time period?**

Yes  No

If no, please explain below

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**5. If you have any further comments to make regarding the LCTS scheme please use the space below**

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**About you**

Please enter your postcode here

Are you in receipt of LCTS? Yes  No

If yes, are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)? Yes  No

**Next steps**

This consultation will close on 30 September 2015.

This scheme needs to be agreed by Uttlesford District Council's Full Council, in this case by 31 January 2016. If approved, the scheme will take effect from 1 April 2016.

Following the decision, the results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

**Local Council Tax Support Questionnaire**

**Introduction**

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and each year the council must consult on the proposed scheme for the following year.

The results of this consultation will be presented to councillors in the autumn with the final scheme for 2016/17 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2016.

The government's aim for the scheme is to promote the work ethic and ensure that people are better off working than not. Since the start of this scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 30% from 1,321 to 920.

The council wants to hear your view on this scheme so please take a few minutes to complete the form and send it back to us in the envelope provided. If your envelope is missing, please contact the council by phone 01799 510510 or email [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS)

This consultation is anonymous but collated results will be publicly available, including written answers. These will not be attributed to any individual but please do not include any personal or confidential information in your responses.

**1. The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. At the moment Uttlesford also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.**

Do you agree with this? Yes  No

If no, why not? You can add other comments, such as other groups that should be protected, in this box

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Please turn over

**2. The table below shows how Uttlesford's rate compares with other Essex councils.**

	% how much claimant pays 2013/14	% how much claimant pays 2014/15	% how much claimant pays 2015/16
Basildon	15	25	25
Braintree	20	20	20
Brentwood	20	20	20
Castle Point	30	30	30
Chelmsford	20	23	23
Colchester	20	20	20
Epping Forest	20	20	20
Harlow	24	24	24
Maldon	20	20	20
Rochford	20	20	20
Southend-on-Sea	25	25	25
Tendring	15	15	20
Thurrock	25	25	25
Uttlesford	8.5	12.5	12.5

For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £23.07 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £209,000.

**Do you agree that the council should keep the rate at 12.5% for a third year?** Yes  No

If you have answered no, what figure should be used and why?

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**3. The council currently makes sure town and parish councils do not lose money by providing a grant to make up the difference. If the council didn't provide this money it is likely that the amount town and parish councils charge residents would need to increase. For 2016/17 it is likely that the cost of this funding will be in the region of £170,000 across all town and parish councils in the district.**

**Do you agree that Uttlesford District Council should continue to protect town and parish council budgets by bearing this cost?** Yes  No

If you have answered no, why not?

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**4. To help fund the LCTS, the council reviewed Council Tax Discounts on second homes and empty homes.**

**a) Second homes**

Prior to 1 April 2014 a second home received a council tax discount of 10%. This discount was removed so the charge is the same as for every other house.

**Do you agree that this treatment of second homes is correct?** Yes  No

If no, please explain why below

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**b) Empty homes undergoing major repair**

Prior to 1 April 2014 there was a 100% discount for a period of up to 12 months from when the property became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 12 months.

\* As a guide, if the percentage or timescale is increased the amount of Council Tax payable is reduced and the cost of the scheme increases. Equally, if the percentage or timescale is reduced the amount of Council Tax payable is increased and the cost of the scheme decreases.

**Do you agree that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property undergoing major repairs?** Yes  No

If no, please explain why below

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**c) Empty homes**

Prior to 1 April 2014 properties that were empty but not undergoing major repairs received a discount of 100% for up to 6 months from the date they became empty. This was reduced to 50% for 6 months.

\* As a guide, if the percentage or timescale is increased the amount of Council Tax payable is reduced and the cost of the scheme increases. Equally, if the percentage or timescale is reduced the amount of Council Tax payable is increased and the cost of the scheme decreases.

**Do you agree that this is the correct level of discount and time period for an empty property not undergoing major repairs?** Yes  No

If no, please explain why below

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## 4.3 Profiling

### Geographical distribution

CM6 2BA	CM24 8JD	CM6	CB10 2XD	CB11 3PQ	CB11 3QD	CM6 3NJ	CM6 2QS
CM22 6DD	CM6	CM6 2PF	CM6 3QQ	CM6 2PH	CM6 3QS	CM6 1UG	CM6 2DD
CB10 3LE	CB11 3LE	CB11 4DX	CM22 7TG	CB10 2XH	CM6 3BA	CM6 1YI	CB10 2SB
	CB11 3UJ	CM22 6JS	CM6 3LU	CB11 3EE	CM6 1BY	CB11 3AA	CB11 4BH
CM6 1PT	CM24 8HU	CM24 8HX	CM24 8HP	CM24 8HJ	CB10 2AX	CB11 3ES	CB11 4PE
CB11 3UH	CM6 3NE	CM22 6HY	CM24 8BD	CM6 3EP	CM6 2AA	CM6 2AQ	CM22 6QH
CM6 1LU	CM6 1BS	CM6	CB11 3YG	CB11 3UG	CB10 2BS	CM22 6HH	
CB10 2HA	CB10 2SW	CB11 3DN	CB10 2BB	CB10 2BA	CM23 1DR	CM22 6AB	CM6 3FH
CM6 1SE	CB11 3AR	CM22 7EU	CB11 3DZ	CM24 8EJ	CM6 2LL	CB11 4JU	CM22 6LB
CB10 1BY	CB11 4QS	CM24 8BD	CB11 3FA	CB11 4HD	CM6 3HQ	CM24 8GJ	CM24 8HW
CM24 8HJ	CM6 3DY	CB11	CM6 3RT	CM6 3HY	CM6 3NP	CM6 3NE	CM6 1BU
CM6 1BS	CM22 6AT	CM23 1BD	CM6 3NA	CM24 8FQ	CB10 2XW	CM22 6AU	CM24 8ES
CM22 6TD	CM6 1NF	CM6	CM6 2LJ	CM6 1UD	CM6 1SR	CB11 4QN	CM22 6AE
CM6 1TY	CB10 1BD	CM1 4Q	CB11 4QT	CB11 4HA	CM6 2HY	CM22 6RW	CB11 4DE
CB10 2ED	CM6 2AE	CM24 8FP	CM24 8DL		CM24 8RL	CM24 8HJ	CB11 3GZ
	CM6 2QD	CM6 2FL	CM24	CM24 8NB	CB10 1TS	CB10 2DF	CM22 6TG
CM6 2H	CB11 4TH	CM6 2LN	CM6 1JP	CM6 3HY	CM23 1DR	CM23 1HP	CB10 2XD
CB11 4HA	CB11 3DA	CB10 1DG	CM6 1UG	CM6 1BP	CM6 2AQ	CM6 1XW	CB11 4SB
CB10 1QD	CB11 4LQ	CM6 3HD	CB11 3TJ	CB10	CM6 3SX	CM6 1LZ	CB11 3XJ
CB10	CB10 2AJ	CM6 3RA	CM6 3DP	CM6 3DL	CM6 2AY	CB11 4DX	CB10 1PH
CM22 6LL	CB11 3DJ	CM22 6HZ	CM24 8DL	CM24 8JT	CM6 3QT	CM22 6RX	CM22 6PP
CM22 6LH	CM24 8NF	CM22 6HA	CM6 3DY	CM6 3AY	CM24 8LD	CM6 3QF	CM6 3JD

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CM6 3HB	CM6 2PZ	CB10 2SR	CB11 3SG	CB10 2SE	CM22 6QT	CM6 2ND	CM6 3HY
CM6 1DA	CM22 6TG	CM6 1EE	CM6 3PP	CM6 1ED	CM6 3QU	CB10 2TZ	CM22 6HG
CB11 4UU	CB10 2XR	CB11 3LP	CB11 3HF	CB11 4BA	CM22 6AX	CB10 2DS	CM22 6ED
CB11 2ES	CB11	CB11 3AD	CB11 3DE	CM6 1JP	CM6 2AB	CM22 7EH	CB10 2HG
CB11 4NP	CM6 3HX	CB11 3BT	CB11 4BL	CB11 3AG	CM6 3DU	CB10 1AJ	CB11 3HU
CM22 6LR	CM24 8HQ	CB10 2AH	CB10 2DW		CM22 7ET	CM23 1DD	CM6 3GN
CM6 3SA	CB10 2PE	CB10 2PD	CB10 2TZ	CB10 2DP	CM6 1PL	CM6 3TE	CB10
CB10	CB11 3PZ	CM6 1HQ	CM6 1TF	CM22 6DQ	CB11	CM22 6PJ	
CB10 1NY	CM6 1TQ	CM6 3QU	CMY 4TN	CB10 2XA	CB10 1BD	CM24 8SP	CM22 7DH
CM24 8AR	CM22 7AA	CM6 2ND	CM22	CM6 1PW	CM6 1ER	CM6 2NB	CM6 2LT
CM6 2LL	CM6 3EG	CM6 1WP	CB11 3EH	CB10 1LZ	CM6 3GF	CM6 1YQ	CM6 3NG
CM6 1PJ	CM6 3BU			CB10 2AE	CB10	CB10 1JF	CB21 4NN
CM24 8HX	CB10 2LQ	CB10 2TQ	CM24 JKL	CM24 8DN	CM24 8JS	CM22 6LD	CB11 3SG
CM6 1DS	CM3 1HU	CM6 1AF	CM22 2TG	CM22 6AQ		CM6 1FJ	CM6
CB10 1AH	CM24 8JX	SG8 8NP	CM22 7DB	CM6 1EE	CB11 4DE	CB10 2BS	CM6 1EA
CB10 2NA	CB11 3WH	CM6 2LT	CB10 1NP	CB11 3DB	CB10 2HR	CB10 2GF	CB10 2AB
CM6 3QR	CB10 2DA	CB10 2AA	CB10 2AZ	CM6 3LX		CM22 6SP	CB10 2YY
CB10 2QW	CB11 3TZ	CB11 3XF	CM6 3HT	CM6 3DG + 3DX	CM6 3EG	CM6 4FR	CB10 2AS
CB10 2AX	CB11	CM6 1AS	CM6 1SL	CM6 1RL	CM24 8PB	CB10 2PL	CB10 2DF
CB11 3HG	CM6 1UG	CB11	CM6 2H2	Ashdon	CB11 4GJ	CB10 2AH	CB11 3PE
CB11 4BL	CB11 4TS	CM6 3QD	CM24 8AT	CB11 3PP		CM6 1QZ	CB11 4HJ
CB11 3UG	CB11 4EX	CM6 1NS	CM6 1QB		CM6 1PX	CB11 4AW	CM6
CM6 1FA	CM6 1JP	CB10 2QG	CM22 6QP	CB11 3DE	CB11 3DB	CB10 2LF	CB10 1BY
CM6 1LT	CM22 6DD	CB11 3XJ	CM24 8NB	CM6 1XE	CM22	CM6 1PN	CM22 6PP
CM22 6DH	CM22 6QZ	CM24 8		CB11 3ES	CB10 2BP	CB11 3S4	CB11 3WH

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CM6 3HP	CM22 6RA	CM6 3AX	CM6 3EU	CB10 2RQ	CB10 2UT	CM6 1GA	CM24 8TF
CM22 6NN		CB11 3EQ	CM24 8NN	CM6 1HB	CB10 1EJ	CM24 8HP	CB10 2XP
CM6 2QR	CB11 3GP	SG8 8QT	CM22 6NL	CB11 4AS	CB10 1PJ	CM6 1HG	CM6 1BL
CB11 3AE	CB11 4XJ	CM22 6TD		CB21 4PE	CB10 1AU	CB11 3WH	CB11 3LN
	CM6 2QW	CM22 7EN	CM22 7EN	CB10 2BA	CM24 8NF	CM22 6HL	CM24 8LZ
CM6 2BS	CM24 8RL	CB11 4BD	CM23 1DS	CB11 3SQ	CB11 4TG	CM22 7EG	CM23 5QD
CB11 3PU	CB10 1XN	CM23 1AX	CB11 4DJ	CB11 3BU	CB11 4BG	CB11 4GJ	CM6 3EL
CB10 2RY	CM23 1BT	B10 IJF	CB10 1NU	CM22 7QP	CM6 2EJ		CM22 6RT
CB11 4LT	CB10 1AH	CM22 7RH	CM24 8LE	CB11 4DW	CM23 5QL	cb11 3af	cb11 4dh
CB10 1AT	CB11 4JJ	CB10 2AP	CM6 3FD	CM6 1PL	CM3 1QQ	CM6 3JR	CB10 2AZ
CB11 4UU	CB10 2ED	CB11 4DG		CB11 4DJ	CB11 3QT	CM22	CB10 2HL
CM24 8UJ	CM6 3EP	CB11 3FZ	CM24 8NS	CM24 8JD	CM6 3GL	CB10 2AS	CB11
CB11 3DG	CM22 7EZ	CB10 2D	CM7 4TP	CB11 4TH	CB11 3BL	CB10 1NB	CM6 1PH
CM24 8EH	CM23 5QG	CM23 5QD	CM6 1YQ	CM6 3DT	CM6 1PH	CM6 2DR	CM22 7HY
CM24 8JT	CM6 3PU	CB10 1EH	CB10 2GF	CB10 2ED	CM23 1DS	CB10 2TJ	CM22
CB11 3TH	CM6 3GW	CB10 2DQ	CM24 8GY		CB10 1RD	CB10 1XH	CM6 1RG
CM6 3SX	CM6 3RG	CM6 1DT	CM22 6TD	CB11 3RU	CB11 4DX	CM6 2PE	CB10 1AT
CM22 7EZ	CB10 2HG		CB10 2BP	CB10 2AZ	CB10 1PU	CM6 1XW	CB11 4AR
CB11	CB11 4EA	CB11 3XD	CM22 7AD	CM24 8JS	CB10 1UX	CB10 1BN	CB10 1NA
CB10 1DZ	CB11 4PQ	CM22 6BN	CB10 1NA	CM24 8DW	CM6 1HW	CB11 3BJ	CB11 4XB
CM6 3SF	CM7 4TS	CB10 2TG	CB11 4KS	CM6 2JX	CM22 7PH	CM24 8DT	CM24 8UF
CM24 8AX	CB10 2PP	CM6 2RF	CB10 1XB	CB11	CB11 3DB	CB10 1PL	CB11 3RD
CB11 4JG	CB10 2HZ	CM6 1BU	CM6 2LJ	CM7 4TN	CM7 4PU	CM6 2PG	CB21 4PE
CB10 2LY	CM24 1RL	CM6 3NY	CM6 3NE	CM22 7JD	CM6 3SW	CB11 4PP	CM6 2JY
CM6 1FW	CM22 7AP	CB11 3AH	CB11 4UU	CM24 8JD	CB10 2HR	Broad Oak	CB11
CM22 6HW	CB11 4QS	CM22 7PH	CM22 7TZ	CM6 2PF	CB10 1AG	CB10 1EH	CB11 4QU

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CB10 1TS	CB11 3QB	CM6 1PB	CM3 1JY	CM6 1AZ	CM24 8FY	CB11 4PQ	CB11 4 JY
CB11 4AW	CB10 1QD	CB10 1PL	SE8 8QR	CB10 2HN	CM22 7TA	CM6 3ND	CB11 4DE
CM23 1AX	CM23 1AA	CB10 2AX	CM24 8FW	CB11 3EF	CM6 1WG	CB10 2RQ	CB10 1DG
CM6 2DD	CB10 2LZ	CM6 1EE	CM22 7HY	CB11 3FA	CM6 1BG	CM6 1PX	CB11 3PJ
CB10 2AT	CB11 4RT	CB10 2BE	CM6 3SY	CB11 4GN	CB10	CB10 1QF	CB10 2HS
CM22 6QR	CM24 8DU	CB10 2HL	CB11 3A	CM22 7JB	CM22 7QS	CM6 3RA	CM6 1AS
SG 8 8QJ	CM22 6LA	CB11 4PE	CM22	CB11 3BL	CB10 2AB	CM22 6SH	CM24 8TJ
CB10 1LZ	CB10 1EU	CM22 7ER	CB10 1PL			CM6 1BW	CM22 7HX
CM22 7HY	CM22 6RA	CB11 4DF	CM24 8EZ	CM22 6DJ	CM6 3ND	CM6 3LU	CM24 8AU
CM24 8FP	CM23 5QA	CM6 1TL	SG8 8QJ	CM6 2DU	CM6 1SA	CM24 8UX	CM24 8AD
CB11 3UG	CB11 3SF	CM2	CB11 3PJ	CB11 3EF	CM22 7EZ	CM23 5QA	CM22 7SW
CB11	CB10	CB10 2XA	CB10 2BA	CB10 2DP	CB11 3FA	CB10 1AW	CB10 1AW
CB10 2BY	CB11	CM6 2HR	CM6 1QT	CM6	CM24 8H	CM6 3TE	CM
CM22 7RH	CM6 2SE	CM6 2AY	CM22 7JD	CM22	CM22 6	CM22	CM6 3
CM6 3NN	CB11	CM1 4QX	CB10	CM6 3ST	CM6 ZAY	CM6 2AG	CM6 3LF
CM6 3SA	CM6 1BX	CM22 6EZ	CM24 8DS	CM1 4QZ	CB11	CB10 2LW	
CB11 4TH	CM22	SG8 8QN	CB10 2LF	CM22 6RP	CM6 2DT	CM6 2QS	CB10 1JS
CM23 1DG	CB10 1NW	CB10 1BN	CB10 2BN	CM6 1WU	CM24 8FQ	CB10 1NY	CB10 1BJ
CB10 1BJ	CB11 4JB	CB10 1FP	CM22 7AZ	CM22 7RF	CB10 1JQ	CM6 3PP	CM23 1BT
CB11 3DU	CM24 8AR	CM24 8LN	CM22 7LT	CM22 7RE	CM24 8HH	CM6 2JT	CM22 7PH
CB10 1PX	CB10 2DF	CM3 1JY	CM24 8JX	CM1 4QW	CB11 4QY	CM6 3QL	CM22 7RL
CM6 1FW	CB10 1AQ	CB10 1LZ	CM6 3EG	CM6 1RE	CM22 7AJ	CM24 8NH	CB11 3XJ
CM6 3	CM6 2EY	CM24 8RL	CM6 2LS	CM6 1QD	CM6	CB10 2RJ	CB10 1JG
CB11	CM6 3SQ	CM24 8HX	CB11 3SJ	CB11 4AF	CB10 1AQ	CM3 1QF	CM22 7RF
CB10 1NA	CM6 2BE		CB10 1QA	CM6 1DY	CM22 6LA	CB10 2AQ	CB11 4GA
CB11 3TR	CM22 7BT	CB10 2XG	CM24 8FE	CM23 5QH	CM6	CM6 3PX	CM6 2NE

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CB10	CB10 2AP	CB10 1JS	CM6 1BS	CM6 3BE	CB10 1PW	CM22 7QU	CM22 7BH
CM6 3SN	CB11 4BE	CB11 4BT	CM6 2QF	CM6 1LX	CB11 4QS	CB11 4AR	CM22 6RT
CM22 7QY	CB11 3EA	CM23 1DR	CM6 2QR	CM24 8DA	CB10 1NN	CB10 2LG	CB11 3EQ
CM6 1SL	CB11 3RS	CM22 6TB	CM22	CB11 4TQ	CM22 6AY	CM22 6RG	CB10 2BN
CB10 2DP	CM6	CM22 6TG	CB11 3PJ	CB10 2BA	CM22 7ER	CM6 3SE	CM23 1DY
CM6 1PX	CB11 3JN	CB11 4DQ	CB11 4PU	CB11 36A	CB11 4QR	CB11 4XB	CB11 4JB
CB11 3PU	CM22 6SP	CM6 2JA	CM23 5QS	CM6 1SY	CM6 2SE	CM24 8SS	CM22 7ET
CM22 6TG	CB11 4SN	CM6 3RG	CB11 4HB	CM24 8HG	CM23 5QH	CM6	CB11 3RW
CM22 6LB	SG8 8RP	CB10 1PA	CB11 4HA	CB11 3LB	CM6 1WF	CM22 7RF	CB11 3QG
CB11 3PX	CM22 7PH	CB11 3SB	CB10 1PT	CM24 8DT	CM6 2BQ	CB11 3AH	CB11 3PP
CB11 4HB	CB10 1PT	Takeley	CM6 3NG	CB10 1PZ	CB11 4BT	CB10 2AX	CM24 8NW
CB11 3LN	CM6 2FG	CM6 1BX	Cb11 3QN	CM23 1HD	CM22 6TH	CB10 2NE	CM6 3NW
CM23 1AX	CB10 2EG	CM22 6HL	CM6 1WZ	CM3 1QQ	CB11 3AA	CM23 1BT	CB11
CM22 7 RZ	CM24 8QB	CB10 2SS	CM6 1UL	CM22 7	CM6 3EY	CB10 1AW	CB10 2PD
CM24 8FB	CM24 8SH	CB10 1PZ	CB10 2DJ	CM77 8QW	CM6 3SP	CB11 3AA	CB114BA
CB10 1TS	CB10 2RX	CB11 4PQ	CB11 3LF	CB10 1BZ	CM22 6SH	CM6 3EP	CB10 1NR
CM7 4SH	CB11 4QX	CM22 7TA	CM24 8HH	CB10 2XW	CM23 5QP	CM22 6RN	CB10 2SR
CB10 2AN	CM22 6JS	CB11 4RY	CM6 2AY	CM6 3QS	CB11 3GP	CM6 3QH	CB11 3BX
CM6 3RG	CB10 1WA	CM6 1SB	CM22 6TG		CB11 3XE	CM6 3TU	CM23 5QL
	CB10 2TJ	CM6 3FH	CM6 1PL	CM24 8RJ	CM23 5OR	CM6 2LA	CM24 8UT
CB10 1PE	CB10 1JW	CM6 2AA	CM22 6HA	CM23 5QD	CM6 2QT	CB11 4SB	CM3 1QB
CM6 1BY	CB10 2HG	CM22 6LH	CB10 2DP	CB10 1BD	CM6 2	CB11 3LZ	CM22 6AF
CM6 3GW	CM24 8HG	CM6 2BE	CB11 4DW	CM24 8UX	CB11 3PP	CM24 8JJ	CB11 4QS
CB10 2UA	CB10 2BD	CM6 2HQ	CB11 3GP	CB11 4AL	CB11 4XG	CB11	CB11 4XB
CM22 7QS	CM6 1TA	CB11 3SE	CM6 2SE	CM6 3GL	CM6 2AA	CM6 2AA	CM1 4QU

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CM6 3EG	CB10 2BU	TEST	CB113EN	Cb10	CM24 8LB	cm62ld	Cm6 2bs
CB11 4JU	CM6 2AY	cm6 1qw	CM6	CM227HG	cm22 6ra	CB11 4JU	cb11 4ds
CM22 6LD	CB10 2EF	CB11 4QR	CB11 4QY	CB214PQ	CM24 8HJ	CM23 1BP	CB11 3JW
SG8 8QT	CB11 3HB	cm22 6by	CM6 3PZ	cb11 3ex	CB10 2DF	CB11	cb10 1aa
CM24 8AN	CB10	cm22 6ay	cb11 4de	CB10 2BH	cb10 1eh	cm1 4rd	
CM22 6LS	CM7 4SH	cm23 1aa	CB11 3D	CB114QP	CM6 2RB	CM6 1DT	CM24 8HP
Cb11 4ae							

### Respondents in receipt of LCTS

*(% of those who answered the question)*

No	909 (90.3%)
Yes	98 (9.7%)
Not provided	82

### Respondents in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)

*(% of those who answered the question)*

Yes	83 (91.2%)
No	9 (9.9%)
Not provided	6