



Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

Council

Date: Thursday, 08 December 2016
Time: 19:30
Venue: Council Chamber
Address: Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Members: All members of the Council.

Public Speaking

At the start of the meeting there will be an opportunity of up to 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions and make statements subject to having given notice by 12 noon two working days' before the meeting.

AGENDA PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**
To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

- 2 (i) Minutes of the meeting on 26 July 2016** 7 - 20
To consider the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2016.

- 2 Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting on 16 November 2016** 21 - 46
(ii) To consider the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 16 November 2016.

- 3 Matters arising**
To consider any matters arising from the Minutes.

- | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|
| 4 | Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel - 2017-18 Scheme of Allowances | 47 - 54 |
| | To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on proposals for review of the 2017/18 Members' Scheme of Allowances. The Chairman of the panel, David Brunwin, will be in attendance to present the report. | |
| 5 | Chairman's announcements | |
| | To receive any announcements from the Chairman | |
| 6 | Reports from the Leader and members of the Executive | |
| | To receive matters of report from the Leader and members of the Executive | |
| 7 | Matters received from the Executive (standing item) | |
| | To consider items referred from the Executive | |
| 7 (i) | Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017-18 | 55 - 152 |
| | To consider a recommendation from the Cabinet to apply a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18. | |
| 7 (ii) | Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan | 153 - 156 |
| | To consider whether the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan should be made as part of the statutory development plan. | |
| 7 (iii) | Corporate Plan 2017-2021 | 157 - 162 |
| | To consider a report on the Corporate Plan for 2017-2021. | |
| 8 | Devolution update | |
| | To receive an update on devolution from the Leader. | |
| 9 | Members' questions to the Leader, members of the Executive and chairmen of committees (up to 15 Minutes) | |
| | To receive members questions | |
| 10 | Matters received about joint arrangements and external organisations | |
| | Matters concerning joint arrangements and external organisations | |

11	Matters received from committees and working groups (standing item)	
	To consider items received from committees and working groups.	
11	Appointment of External Auditor	163 - 166
(i)	To consider a recommendation from the Performance and Audit Committee on arrangements for the appointment of external auditors.	
11	2018 Review of Parliamentary Boundaries	167 - 170
(ii)	To consider a recommendation from the Electoral Working Group on a response to be sent to the Boundary Commission for England as part of the present consultation on Parliamentary boundaries.	
11	Changes to the Constitution	171 - 184
(iii)	To consider the following recommendations from the Constitution Working Group on changes to the Constitution:	
	(a) the deletion from agendas of the standard item "matters arising from the minutes"	
	(b) change in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules to allow a scrutiny committee meeting to be cancelled following the withdrawal of a call-in request	
	(c) inclusion of powers to allow the Monitoring Officer to make routine changes to keep the Constitution up to date	
11	Youth Engagement Report	185 - 188
(iv)	To receive a recommendation and progress report from the Youth Engagement Working Group.	
12	Appointment of Monitoring Officer	189 - 192
	To consider the appointment of Simon Pugh as the Council's Monitoring Officer.	
13	Delegations to officers	193 - 196
	To consider proposed changes to delegations to officers previously assigned to the Assistant Chief Executive - Legal.	

14 Investment opportunity

To receive a report on investment opportunities (item to be withdrawn, please refer to part 2).

15 Any other items which the Chairman considers to be urgent

To consider any items which the Chairman considers to be urgent.

PART 2

Exclusion of the Public and Press

16 Exempt item Report on Investment Opportunity

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

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The agenda is split into two parts. Most of the business is dealt with in Part I which is open to the public. Part II includes items which may be discussed in the absence of the press or public, as they deal with information which is personal or sensitive for some other reason. You will be asked to leave the meeting before Part II items are discussed.

Agenda and Minutes are available in alternative formats and/or languages. For more information please call 01799 510510.

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COUNCIL MEETING held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 26 JULY 2016 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillor J Davey – Chairman.
Councillors K Artus, H Asker, G Barker, S Barker, R Chambers, P Davies, A Dean, P Fairhurst, M Felton, M Foley, J Freeman, R Freeman, R Gleeson, J Gordon, N Hargreaves, S Harris, E Hicks, S Howell, D Jones, B Light, J Lodge, A Mills, S Morris, E Oliver, E Parr, J Parry, V Ranger, J Redfern, H Rolfe, G Sell and L Wells.

Officers in attendance: D French (Chief Executive), R Harborough (Director of Public Services, M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive – Legal), P Snow (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services).

C20 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mr A Bennett and Dr M Beer both spoke about the effect on the communities of Felsted, High Easter and Stebbing of the change of Stansted flightpath usage and the impact of night flying. They both asked the Council to make representations to the CAA and the Department for Transport. Their full statements are included in the appendix to these minutes.

Councillor S Barker responded as the executive member responsible for environmental services. She confirmed that the leader and Chief Executive had recently met with the Chief Executive of the Manchester Airport Group and they were happy to facilitate a meeting with NATS, CAA and residents to discuss the issues more fully. She would send a fuller response to both public speakers in due course.

Mrs J Cheetham made a statement as a member of Takeley Parish Council in relation to item 10 on the agenda, Local Plan Development Strategy. She said that a disproportionate amount of development had already taken place in the southern part of Uttlesford and there were concerns locally that there was no clear strategic plan for accompanying infrastructure. The preferred strategy being recommended for approval made provision for 200 houses to be located in key villages as well as for the development of new settlements. She said that Takeley had already taken 200 new dwellings. The Council should consider carefully where it would allocate the new round of housing to be located and ensure the necessary infrastructure was put in place. Existing village communities such as Takeley should not be swamped with more new housing as they would be unable to cope.

Councillor S Barker said that a letter would be sent asking all town and parish councils to indicate whether they would be able to accommodate new housing during the plan period. Communities such as Takeley, Thaxted and Elsenham had already taken their fair share and this should be taken into account when the Local Plan strategy was being agreed.

Mrs Cheetham asked a supplementary question about infrastructure. Councillor Barker said that some money had already been spent on The Street in Takeley. There was a recognised problem with lorry traffic and she hoped it might be possible to open up a through route via Coopers End. This subject would be raised in talks with Stansted Airport. She also raised the proposed provision of a new health centre in Great Dunmow but the Council could not make this happen without NHS co-operation.

Councillor Lodge commented that the PPWG was working rigorously to ensure the right infrastructure was in place. The previous administration, of which Mrs Cheetham had been a member, had misled the Planning Committee so in his view her remarks were hypocritical.

C21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anjum, Goddard, Knight, Lemon, Loughlin and Ryles.

Councillors Asker, Fairhurst, R Freeman and Morris each declared their membership of Saffron Walden Town Council.

C22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting on 17 May 2016 were received, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

C23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported on his attendance at a number of recent civic events. He also drew attention to forthcoming events and made special mention of the garden party at Easton Lodge to which he encouraged all members to attend.

C24 REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Leader said that the outcome of the recent referendum on EU membership would have undoubted repercussions for the economic climate and the Council's financial outlook. It was already apparent that the financial position was relatively bright for both this year and next but that the position would then become more challenging with a forecast £³/₄m gap in funding to be faced.

Four strands had already been put in place to meet this challenge. He summarised these as maximising income, increasing funding from local taxpayers, and achieving both more operating efficiency and greater effectiveness.

He said that a successful workshop had taken place on the structure of the Local Plan and a further one was planned to consider site allocations on 7 September. There was a tight timetable to follow including a call for views from local councils for site allocations before the workshop, following which public meetings would take place in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted.

A letter would be sent to all parish councils seeking a response by 2 September and this would necessitate parishes arranging special meetings in many cases. Letters would be sent to all councillors asking them to indicate where they would like housing to be sited.

All of this activity would be followed by a special meeting to consider and decide upon the outcome.

The Council had a proud record of promoting rural exception sites. Twenty five years had now passed since the first such development in Ashdon. The provision of affordable housing was pivotal to the healthy survival of rural communities.

He commented on the devolution agenda which had been driven by the former Chancellor including a renewed drive for directly elected mayors. A meeting was planned with DCLG representatives to discuss the implications of a possible change of direction by the Government.

In concluding his remarks, the Leader referred to the executive decision he had taken to increase the maximum length of stay at The Common car park in Saffron Walden from two to three hours. He confirmed that the necessary order would be made and brought into effect as quickly as possible but, in the meantime, he gave a commitment not to enforce against anyone exceeding the existing two hour maximum stay period by one hour from 1 August onwards.

Councillor Howell then made a short statement about the unqualified approval of the 2015/16 accounts due to be reported to the Performance and Audit Committee on Thursday. The accounts had been given unqualified approval for the eighth successive year and value for money had been demonstrated over a period of six years.

Draft accounts had been submitted to the auditors on 9 June and then completed, ahead of time, on 21 July. This was a commendable achievement and he wished to congratulate Mr Webb and Mrs Knight and their team for their exceptional performance.

He reminded members about the outstanding response to consultation on New Homes Bonus. The outcome would have a significant impact on the Council's finances. Members would be briefed about all of these matters in the early Autumn.

C25 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Councillor R Freeman commented on the ingenious solution found to the problem of maximum stay parking at The Common and asked the leader to give a written response and commit to providing adequate signage confirming that anyone exceeding the two hour limit would not be prosecuted.

The Leader confirmed the proper process would be followed and he would provide a written response.

Councillor Foley asked for assurances the Council would make clear its position of opposition to any proposal to build a second runway at Stansted. Suggestions had appeared in the local press that MAG might be keen to resurrect this idea. He wanted the leader to support local communities against increased levels of aircraft noise, especially at night.

The Leader stated unequivocally the Council's opposition to a second runway. Councillor Barker had already dealt with the earlier question about new flight paths and night flying. A meeting would be taking place soon with MAG and NATs to attempt to iron out any continuing problems.

Uttlesford's location halfway between Cambridge and London brought significant challenges in terms of local infrastructure. He would be working hard to address local concerns about road and rail services. He expected that MAG would soon bring forward a proposal to increase passenger throughput from 35m to 42 or 44m and said there would be a price to pay in terms of infrastructure provision. In discussing these matters with MAG he would be raising the position of junction 8 and the £3 airport pick up charge.

Councillor Lodge asked for an assurance that the Leader had not made any contact with developers in connection with the land between Radwinter and Thaxted Roads in Saffron Walden.

The Leader confirmed it was his firm policy not to speak to any developer. He understood a further proposal was at the pre-application stage.

C26 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Leader reported briefly on the LSP chairs meeting on 22 July. It was intended to improve communication links between the four work-stream groups and the Council. Ideas would be developed under the general heading of 'Living Well' under the three themes of 'Start Well, Stay Well and Age Well'. He intended that specific outcomes would emerge from this process tackling problems such as child poverty, dementia and mental health.

He informed members that Peter Fentem was standing down from the Health and Wellbeing Group and that Clive Emmett had been appointed as chief officer of the Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Services.

C27 LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Councillor S Barker proposed the recommendation from the Cabinet to adopt Scenario 5 for a hybrid distribution strategy, subject to the conditions as set out in the report. This included a fall-back position in the event that a new settlement(s) proved impossible to achieve.

Councillor Hargreaves commented on the inclusion of a fall-back position in the recommendation. He felt this would make the achievement of the preferred hybrid solution more difficult because those with a vested interest in development sites could make it an impossible aspiration.

The fall-back position was not put before members at the recent workshop and was in his view ill-advised. Councillor Hargreaves then requested a separate vote on the two parts of the recommendation.

Councillor R Freeman said that single settlement sites had not come forward but any proposals that were received would require a great deal of officer support including levels of ability and competence not presently available to Uttlesford as a small council. The cost of developing a new settlement was greater than simply tacking on new housing to existing communities.

The progression of garden city developments was a serious problem requiring substantial expertise and it was foolish to have a fall-back position.

The Leader said that he had been happy to include a fall-back position but it had been Councillor Dean's specific proposal at the PPWG meeting. His own position and the Council's was to go full bore to developing a single settlement and revert to developing sites in existing towns and villages only if the chosen option became impossible.

Officers were already in discussions about potential garden city developments and other projects were being progressed in Essex. His intention was to pursue option five with all energy.

Councillor Dean explained the reasoning for his proposal to incorporate a fall-back position. There were many unknowns in planning for a new settlement and the need to maintain a five year land supply. An opt-out position may be required if the pathway to a garden city was not clear. The condition was to make suitable infrastructure provision and not to be put in the position of total reliance on a single developer. In that context the inclusion of a fall-back position made more sense.

Councillor Asker asked the Leader to explain his definition of impossibility.

The Leader responded by saying that the development of a new settlement would be impossible if no sites were put forward for consideration, or there was no willingness to develop a new settlement. He considered this scenario to be unlikely.

Councillor Lodge supported Councillor Hargreaves' proposal. By the time it became apparent that a new settlement might not be viable the Local Plan process would be some months down the line and the planning inspector might already have approved option five. In that case, the selection of option four would be futile.

Councillor Light commented that the new environment post BREXIT might reduce the need for new housing provision.

The Leader responded that the impact of BREXIT could yet be known. The Council had to use the current housing projections as indicated in the SHMA study. It appeared the new Prime Minister was even more keen on new house building than the previous one.

Councillor Hicks said that the answer to Councillor Lodge would depend on whether the planning inspector judged the Local Plan process to be sound. It was in his view not feasible to embark on a plan including only one option with no alternatives considered.

The Chairman then called for the vote on the motion to be taken and this was approved by 27 votes to one against.

Councillor Lodge questioned why the amendment proposed by Councillor Hargreaves had not been taken. The Chairman responded that no amendment to the motion had been proposed.

RESOLVED to implement the following decision for consultation:

The preferred strategy for the Local Plan is Scenario 5 (Hybrid Distribution Strategy – New Settlement(s), Main Towns and Villages), as attached at the Appendix to the report, and that contingency is built into the Plan to allocate further homes if necessary;

the following conditions are stipulated as part of the adoption of Scenario 5:

- that a five year land supply is available;
- the required building rate can be maintained;
- infrastructure in existing towns and villages will be enhanced and taken into account in planning developments wherever possible; and
- Garden City Principles will be used and application made to Government for funding

Scenario 4 (Combination of Development in Main Towns and Villages) will become the fall-back position if Scenario 5 cannot be adopted, but only in the circumstance that it becomes impossible to proceed with New Settlement(s).

C28 APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER AND DELEGATED POWERS

The Leader confirmed the retirement of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal on 5 August 2016. He proposed the interim arrangements set out in the report.

Mr Perry had been with the Council for nearly 15 years. He placed on record his grateful thanks and appreciation for the help Mr Perry had provided over that time and extended his best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Chambers who referred to the expert advice offered to him as Chairman of the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee and for the hard work and loyalty he had always displayed. Mr Perry had always been truthful and straight in the advice he had given and he wished both him and his family a happy and long retirement.

Councillor R Freeman paid tribute to Mr Perry describing him as a good teacher of the principles of law. A fully-fledged legal department would be needed to deal with the significant challenges lying ahead.

The Chief Executive reassured members that Mr Perry would be replaced and she was expecting an interim appointment to be in place by the beginning of September. She gave an assurance that resources on providing legal cover would not be diminished.

Councillor Sell said that Mr Perry was the sole survivor of the previous management team.

Councillor Oliver said it was his understanding that internal audit duties had been transferred to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

The Chief Executive confirmed this was the case on an interim basis and had been done with the consent of the external auditors and of Mr Webb.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Council appoints Mrs Christine Oliva as a Monitoring Officer for the Council and gives her delegated power to grant dispensations under s.33 Local Government Act 2011 to district, parish and town councillors who have disclosable pecuniary interests to speak and/or vote on issues relating to such interests and to grant dispensations under the Code of Conduct to district, parish and town councillors with other pecuniary interests to speak and/or vote on issues relating to such interests.
2. the powers delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal by the council's Scheme of Delegation be delegated to Mrs Oliva.

C29 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS 2016/17

Councillor Howell proposed to conduct a community governance review of the parishes of Little Canfield and Takeley parishes concentrating on the area of Priors Green presently divided by the parish boundary. This followed a formal request for a review from Little Canfield Parish Council.

A review of the boundaries of Little Easton and Great Dunmow had already been agreed but had been deferred pending the outcome of the planning appeal presently lodged with the Secretary of State for determination.

RESOLVED to agree to conduct a review of the parishes of Little Canfield and Takeley with particular reference to the Priors Green area, and to refer the matter to the Electoral Working Group for consideration and to make any proposals for change in due course.

C30 **2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES**

Councillor Howell reported the 2018 review of Parliamentary boundaries by the Boundary Commission for England would commence with the publication of initial proposals on 13 September.

RESOLVED that the Electoral Working Group be invited to consider the initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituencies in England and prepare the Council's response.

C31 **MOTION ON HATE CRIME AND TOLERANCE**

Councillor Morris proposed the following motion:

"This Council notes with concern the increase in hate crime (57% increase by 27 June 2016) following the outcome of the EU Referendum.

Council restates that we are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society and unequivocally condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes which have no place in our country.

We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Council reassures all people living in Uttlesford that they are valued and equal members of our community.

Council resolves to work with the appropriate channels to prevent racism and xenophobia and promote tolerance and diversity."

She said this was in response to petitioning by constituents and on social media. It was important for the whole community to stand together against abuse and in support of tolerance.

Councillor Light seconded the motion.

Councillor Dean said the country had been divided down the middle during the recent referendum and he felt this had promoted a climate of intolerance. A fear of foreigners had been stirred up by one side. He urged members to support the motion.

Councillor Gordon said he hoped the Council collectively would condemn hate crimes. There was a duty on everyone concerned to ensure that all such incidents were reported correctly. The reporting centre for hate incidents had no such reports but his understanding was that 13 incidents had been reported to the Police. He urged that such incidents should be reported, challenged and stopped through the community safety partnership.

Councillor Gordon said that he supported the aims of the motion but would prefer the word 'country' to be changed to 'community'. His youngest son, who originated from Sri Lanka, had asked him whether a problem of racial intolerance

existed in Uttlesford. He had replied that there was no problem in Uttlesford compared to elsewhere but the wording in the motion might give that impression.

Councillor Howell then spoke about his personal experience of racial intolerance. His father-in-law had married an English lady and adopted an English name but had lived in England as an illegal immigrant. He was the embodiment of all things to be celebrated in terms of living in a racially tolerant community. It had been said that English people liked immigration but not immigrants but he felt it was the reverse.

His personal experience was that most people were very welcoming but a small minority could act in an unkind and insulting manner. He endorsed the motion but felt it should not be linked to one event such as the recent Referendum.

Councillor Rolfe expressed his full support for the motion. Research had suggested that 18.3% of secondary pupils felt afraid to go to school for fear of bullying. The Police had now allocated civilian staff to liaise with schools on this subject and he hoped that everyone would remain vigilant.

In concluding the debate, Councillor Morris said she appreciated the support expressed by members. She confirmed she would have no problem with any amendment that might be suggested.

The motion was put to the vote and approved.

RESOLVED to approve the following motion:

This Council notes with concern the increase in hate crime (57% increase by 27 June 2016) following the outcome of the EU Referendum.

Council restates that we are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society and unequivocally condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes which have no place in our country.

We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Council reassures all people living in Uttlesford that they are valued and equal members of our community.

Council resolves to work with the appropriate channels to prevent racism and xenophobia and promote tolerance and diversity.

C32 MOTION ON ESTABLISHING A YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Councillor Fairhurst proposed the following motion:

“To approve the establishment of a Youth Assembly to the Uttlesford District Council”

He said that young people had been described as unreliable, rebellious, undisciplined and disrespectful as long as 2,000 years ago in ancient Greece. There was no choice other than to entrust the future to the youth of today. Young people were confronted with the same problems facing everyone else.

He asked members to imagine the chamber filled with the smiling faces of 16, 17 and 18 year olds enabling them to take part in the democratic process. This could be brought about by supporting the motion to set up a youth council. He considered the timing was right because there was now more interest in politics than for a long time.

There was already a youth council in Essex and we were playing catch up as there should already be four Uttlesford delegates. A youth council had been established in Harlow for 12 years and this was a suitable model to follow. The hustings process for Essex was scheduled for September and October. The Council should commit in a full bloodied way to set up a similar body in Uttlesford.

Councillor Lodge seconded the motion.

Councillor Rolfe proposed the following amendment:

“This Council supports engagement with all residents including with young people. To better understand how that engagement with young people might be carried out, a cross party working group will be established and will report back to Council with initial recommendations at the October Council meeting.”

He said he did not disagree with the intentions of the motion but there was not a simple solution. We did not know that young people in Uttlesford necessarily wanted a youth assembly. The Council must find ways to engage with young people many of whom would not want to go into a debating chamber. It was now important to discover what young people wanted to do.

Councillor Chambers seconded the amendment. He thanked Councillor Fairhurst for making a passionate speech. He was in favour of engagement but the majority of young people did not understand politics and expectations should not be raised too high.

Councillor Rolfe spoke again to emphasise he wished to engage with all residents, not just young people. There were practical problems with the wording of the motion but the Essex hustings could still proceed.

In responding, Councillor Fairhurst said he supported the idea of a cross-party group to report back by October and was happy to support the amendment. The outcome should be based on the needs of young people only and the timing designed so as to ensure we did not miss the bus.

The amendment was put to the vote and carried with no votes against.

A number of members then joined the debate. Councillor Light proposed an amendment to the substantive motion to add the establishment of a youth assembly and this was seconded by Councillor Fairhurst. The following words were proposed to be added to the substantive motion:

“with the objective of establishing a youth council.”

The amendment was put to the vote and lost by 17 votes to 14.

The Chairman then called for the substantive motion to be put to the vote.

Councillor Ranger requested a recorded vote.

The outcome of the recorded vote was as follows:

For the motion:

Councillors Artus, Asker, G Barker, S Barker, Chambers, Davey, Davies, Dean, Fairhurst, Felton, Foley, J Freeman, R Freeman, Gleeson, Gordon, Hargreaves, Harris, Hicks, Howell, Jones, Light, Lodge, Mills, Morris, Oliver, Parr, Parry, Ranger, Redfern, Rolfe, Sell and Wells

No councillors voted against the motion.

RESOLVED that this Council supports engagement with all residents including with young people. To better understand how that engagement with young people might be carried out, a cross party working group will be established and will report back to Council with initial recommendations at the October Council meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.33pm.

APPENDIX – PUBLIC SPEAKING STATEMENTS

In Feb 2016 NATS implemented changes to Stansted flightpath usage, moving flights from the Detling/Dover NPRs onto Clacton NPRs, for both runways 22 and 4. The result has been a more than doubling of flights using the Clacton NPRs.

The impact on the people under and beyond the Clacton NPRs has been severe. Felsted, High Easter and Stebbing Parish Councils have been asked by our parishioners to make representations to object to this change, and its resulting increase in flights over our Parishes, and help secure its reversal.

UDC's response to the original change consultation, like that of over 80% of responses, was to object to the change at this time. Days after the CAA approved the change, an independent review by Helios found the CAP725 change process unfit for purpose, on a number of grounds. CAA has since proposed significant changes to CAP725, in line with Helios recommendations.

There is a formal review of the Stansted flight change in February 2017, for which information is being collected now.

We are asking UDC to write now to the CAA, supporting the Parishes impacted by the change in flightpath usage from both runways 22 and 4. We ask you to:

1: Call for consideration to be given to ways in which increases in noise disruption can be mitigated, whether this change is reversed or not, through a review of existing NPR routings and the use of Performance Based Navigation to introduce respite.

□

2: Highlight the unconsidered impact of the change and call for its reversal.

Cllr Andy Bennett
Felsted Parish Councillor

In the recent past East Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils and this Council have been consistently opposed to the nighttime flight regime at Stansted. Stansted is allowed twice as many nighttime flights as Heathrow, some 12,000 over a 12 month period.

There is currently a renewed level of concern and disquiet amongst residents with regard to nighttime flights. This extends to the shoulder periods from 11:00 to 11:30pm and 6:00 to 7:00am the very times when most people are trying to get to sleep or before they wake up. This is evidenced by an increasing use of the shoulder periods and nighttime slots immediately adjacent to the shoulder periods. There are currently no restrictions over the use of these shoulder periods. This combined with increased scheduled nighttime flights (11:30pm to 06:00am) is sufficient to perpetuate sleep disturbance/deprivation.

On the night of June 21st/22nd there were some 23 flight arrivals, both scheduled and late flights from 11.30pm up to 2:00am and another 2 flights between 2:00 and 4:00am. This ability to fly throughout the night allows and

encourages the low cost airline industry to schedule flights close to the nighttime deadline in the full knowledge that any delays costs to them will be negligible regardless of the environmental and health effects on communities affected.

Additionally the number of night flights at Stansted has significantly increased over the past year, believed to be largely due to the closure of Manston Airport which led to Manston's cargo airlines transferring to Stansted. Manston was subject to a ban on night flights. There is no such ban for cargo airlines at Stansted.

We ask UDC to write to the CAA and the DfT requesting that night time and shoulder period flights should be reduced year on year in the short term and in the longer term there should be a total ban on night flights except for emergencies.

Dr Margaret Beer
Resident of High Easter

**EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 16 NOVEMBER 2016 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillor J Davey – Chairman
Councillors A Anjum, K Artus, H Asker, G Barker, S Barker, R Chambers, A Dean, P Fairhurst, T Farthing, M Felton, M Foley, R Freeman, T Goddard, J Gordon, N Hargreaves, E Hicks, S Howell, D Jones, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, A Mills, S Morris, E Oliver, J Parry, V Ranger, J Redfern, H Rolfe, H Ryles and G Sell

Officers in attendance: D French (Chief Executive), R Harborough (Director of Public Services), S Pugh (Interim Head of Legal Services), P Snow (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

C33 MINUTE'S SILENCE IN TRIBUTE TO FORMER COUNCILLORS RON DEAN AND KEITH MACKMAN

The Chairman referred to the recent deaths of former councillors Keith Mackman and Ron Dean.

Keith Mackman had represented Great Dunmow South Ward from 2011 to 2015 initially as a Conservative and then as a founder member, and first leader, of the Residents for Uttlesford Group. Councillor Lodge then spoke about the contribution Keith Mackman had made to the Council, especially in the planning arena, and said he had been one of the most honest and public spirited councillors he had known.

Ron Dean had represented Saffron Walden Shire Ward from 1991 to 2003 and served as Chairman of the Council for the year from 1999 to 2000. Councillor Chambers spoke in tribute to Ron Dean who he said had been a quiet gentleman, persuasive and straight forward in manner, with an impressive period of war service. He then read a poem written by Mr Dean as part of a volume published during his period of office as Chairman.

All those present then stood in silent tribute to the memory of Ron Dean and Keith Mackman.

C34 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chairman explained that because of the unusually high number of people registering to speak at this meeting he had decided to extend the time available to one hour and urged all those speaking to be as concise as possible.

Those listed below all made statements during the public speaking part of the meeting. In some cases questions were asked and, where applicable, answered by Councillor S Barker. All of the statements received and answers given are appended to these Minutes.

In order of speaking, those making statements were:

1. William Brown on behalf of Hinxtton Parish Council
2. Jackie Cheetham on behalf of Takeley Parish Council
3. Ken McDonald from Stansted
4. Richard Gilyead from Saffron Walden
5. Moyra Tourlamain on behalf of Neil Gregory, both of Great Chesterford Parish Council
6. Nick Buhaenko-Smith from Stebbing on behalf of SERCLE
7. Paul Stuart-Turner from Saffron Walden
8. Alexander Armstrong from Great Dunmow
9. Anthony Gerard from Newport
10. Chris Audritt on behalf of Little Easton Parish Council
11. Louise Luke from Great Chesterford
12. Mike Passfield on behalf of Elfreda Tealby-Watson, both of Great Chesterford
13. Richard Westbrook from Ashdon
14. Neil Green on behalf of Clive Hopewell, both from Great Chesterford
15. Michael Culkin on behalf of the Thaxted Society

C35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Freeman, Davies, Harris, Knight, Lemon and Wells.

Councillors Anjum, Asker, Fairhurst, R Freeman and Morris each declared their membership of Saffron Walden Town Council. Councillor Ranger declared an interest as a member of Barnston Parish Council. Councillor S Barker declared her interest as a member of Essex County Council. Councillor Redfern declared an interest as a member of Great Chesterford Parish Council. Councillor Parry declared her interest as a member of Newport Parish Council.

C36 SIMON PUGH INTERIM HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Simon Pugh as the Council's Interim Head of Legal Services.

C37 LOCAL PLAN

The Chairman explained how he intended to conduct the business of the extraordinary meeting called by eight councillors to consider reasons for delays in the Local Plan process, to question the Cabinet member concerned on a number of matters specified in the requisition, and to consider a tabled motion. The requisition from the eight members had divided consideration of the business into three distinct strands and he intended to keep these separate within the overall debate. An order of business paper had been circulated to members in advance. He urged members to show courtesy and to respect the rules of debate.

He invited Councillor Lodge to introduce the debate.

Councillor Lodge said that he was greatly encouraged that the public had turned out in such numbers. As a member of the Planning Policy Working Group he had set out on the path of producing an evidence based plan with ample opportunity to discuss options but it had not worked out that way. Evidence was still being awaited and there not been time or opportunity to consider how the plan might be implemented on the basis of the spatial strategies. Officers had worked tremendously hard to meet the deadline set by the Government although this was probably unrealistic.

There had been no significant time for the working group to discuss the plan and there was now confusion about the way ahead. There was neither a plan nor a plan to produce a plan and so the PPWG had not fulfilled its purpose. He and other councillors wanted to know what was going on and he called on Councillor Barker to provide answers.

Councillor S Barker acknowledged this was a complicated question and she thanked officers for the guidance they had provided. It had become clear at the recent member workshop that members had a number of questions and concerns that officers had not had time to address. This had been compounded by the need to report to Council on 8 November on work commissioned from Troy Navigus Planning about our readiness for examination. This could have been addressed in time for the Council meeting but not in time to present to the PPWG or Cabinet.

Routine conversations with Braintree identified potential areas for concern that would benefit from further joint work.

So the area of major concern had been the timetable. The Council had adopted the LDS in December 2015 against the threat of intervention by the DCLG where a plan had not been published by March 2017, or early in 2017 as DCLG had subsequently clarified. The timetable was tight but considered achievable but had not taken account of other factors concerned with the day to day working of the programme. It was the Chief Executive's judgement that a pause was preferable to continuing regardless. Subsequent events had supported the decision to pause the process.

Officers had arranged for a principal planning inspector to review the evidence during the first week in November to assess the potential soundness of the emerging proposals. At the same time a conference had been arranged with the Council's barrister. Those meetings resulted in some technical challenges to the adequacy of the proposed scale of housing provision both within Uttlesford and the West Essex/East Herts strategic housing market area as a whole. There was also a challenge to the proposed distribution within the HMA with its focus on the growth of Harlow and on strategic sites within Uttlesford. The meetings also discussed the outcome of the inter authority strategies. It was clear there would be benefit in giving all of those matters further consideration.

Councillor Barker went on to tell the meeting about the consequences of the pause in terms of potential intervention by DCLG, the impact on New Homes Bonus, and the need to adopt a revised LDS. She said that a revised LDS would enable the PINS to schedule an examination with confidence. If the Government

decided not to make NHB allocations to authorities unable to submit a plan, this could have an impact in the region of £300k, although the allocation for 2017/18 was not yet confirmed. In terms of possible intervention, the test would be whether the process could be moved on more quickly than would otherwise happen and she expressed confidence that was not the case. In her view the pause was enabling the plan to move forward with greater assurance.

The Council did not presently have a preferred strategy other than the Full Council resolution to meet housing needs through a combination of new settlement(s), towns and villages. The pause was put in place to enable further consideration of what the preferred strategy should be after considering the distribution strategies and new settlement options and taking account of the sustainability, environmental and transport assessments. The pause would also enable the evidence gathered to be reviewed to ensure it remained relevant.

Duty to cooperate discussions had continued with South Cambridgeshire District Council focussing on the need for a clear and sequential process to identify growth choices. Proposals of cross-border interest would continue to be discussed including the Wellcome Trust's proposals for Hinxton Hall. If Uttlesford were to choose a significant growth site around Great Chesterford, SCDC would seek to test the evidence to demonstrate soundness, bearing in mind problems with transport infrastructure.

Similar duty to cooperate discussions with Braintree had focussed on its draft local plan preferred options including the West of Braintree new settlement location and its potential to be a cross boundary allocation. Officers had agreed to further joint work including strategic transport assessment modelling to establish the scope for increasing the supply of new homes from the West of Braintree site. In the event of a cross border site proceeding, both councils would need to commit to a joint area action plan and a common strategic policy approach. Uttlesford had agreed to cooperate in a concept framework being developed by consultants.

In summary, Councillor Barker said that a new LDS would be underpinned by a detailed project plan but this would need to be preceded by timescales for the additional evidence, a duty to cooperate review to align plans with adjoining districts, the outcome of the NHB consultation, and further member input. All of this was intended to put in place a timely and sound plan for the district.

At this point, a paper was tabled setting out the terms of reference for the Planning Advisory Service's review of the Local Plan process.

Councillor Lodge said that the original intention was to agree the plan for consultation at a meeting of the Council scheduled for last week. He asked how that would have been possible in the absence of a highways strategy.

In response to Councillor Barker's comment that there was a draft highways strategy in place, Councillor Lodge remarked on the lack of a highways strategy for Saffron Walden. Councillor Barker agreed that she had not seen a detailed highways strategy for Saffron Walden but that a draft highways strategy was

nevertheless available. She said that we were where we were and the pause would enable further work to be done as she had already explained.

In response to a question from Councillor Parry, she confirmed that the consultation process would happen as originally agreed once the plan was in place. There was then an exchange about the number of consultations to be carried out. Councillor Barker confirmed that it was agreed there would be two consultations during the present process not three as had happened previously. She said the Council would consult on the draft plan and would decide on the basis of the comments made whether to modify the plan before it was sent for examination.

Councillor Foley asked the following questions:

- If there is no separate study, would Uttlesford commission its own study on the impact of development on the character and transport of Great Dunmow?
- Will the transport assessment indicate the cost of works needed for junction 8 of the M11 given the existing problems impacting on the A120?

He expressed the concern and anger of the southern parishes at the way the press had been briefed and said it had given the impression a study of options for the development of a new settlement based on garden city principles would not extend beyond the south of the district. Above all there was a wish for fairness in the process.

In answer to the first question, Councillor Barker congratulated Great Dunmow Town Council on being the first parish to have a neighbourhood plan in place. She agreed that the development of a new town to the west of Dunmow would have an impact on the town but might enhance the High Street by providing more local businesses. There were already 2,800 new homes allocated for Dunmow regardless of the new town option.

She agreed the press briefing had been unfortunate especially since the Chief Executive had decided to pause the process shortly afterwards. However, the press had in some cases not respected the embargo even after they had been contacted and asked not to publish.

Councillor Rolfe then referred to the helpful contributions made by members of the public at this meeting which had demonstrated the challenge for the plan. He said there had been speakers from most parts of Uttlesford. In general, everyone speaking had been saying the same thing, that they did not want development in their area. The Council had to produce a plan and knew what the numbers were. The plan had been paused so that the evidence could be respected by everyone even if there were disagreements about where development should be located.

He acknowledged that junction 8 was under severe pressure. A scoping study had been financed with money from the Greater Cambridge and Peterborough LEP and from Essex County Council, and was high on the Government's agenda

in terms of improvement. There was also a study of potential improvements from Galleys Corner on the A120 through to the A12. In summary, the need for improvements at junction 8 was well recognised and had been the subject of much lobbying over many years.

Councillor Dean said that the question of air pollution in Saffron Walden must be addressed and asked for assurances that more information about new settlements would be made available for members as he would not have felt able to make a decision on the basis of the evidence produced to date. He said that one of the reasons advanced for not placing a new settlement at Great Chesterford had been that not all trains stopped there but the same considerations applied at Elsenham and the question had not been raised in the past.

Finally, Councillor Dean asked that a review be carried out of the way the PPWG operated.

Councillor Rolfe said there were three key areas to be considered. These were the two new settlements being considered in the south of Uttlesford, second the why not Chesterford question, and finally the concerns about development in Saffron Walden. The purpose of the pause was precisely to enable all three questions to be considered in detail.

He wanted to be crystal clear that either all or some of the sites being considered would take housing to accommodate the 4,600 homes needing to be allocated. Like Councillor Dean he was concerned to make sure that decisions would be taken only when the evidence was available. That principle underpinned the whole process.

An alternative site in Saffron Walden was possible but more progress could not be made until the highways study was ready at which time it would be considered in conjunction with the Town Council. The highways study in turn would impact on the air quality study and that would also be considered with the Town Council.

Of the 900 people unable to find a home in Uttlesford more than 250 were in Saffron Walden. The Council had a moral duty to look after them.

Councillor R Freeman said he chaired the planning committee on the Town Council. In referring to the recent workshop he said that members had been advised that, of the nearly 10,000 jobs expected to be created in Uttlesford, 9,000 were ascribed to Stansted Airport. That had been used to justify development along the A120 but ignored the two largest employment centres for Uttlesford of London and Cambridge and yet this error had not been corrected.

Councillor Rolfe confirmed that Councillor Freeman was right to say that Stansted Airport was the district's largest employer but less than 20% of the airport workforce lived in Uttlesford. It was correct to say that a large proportion of Uttlesford's residents commuted out of the district. It was encouraging that unemployment in Uttlesford was one of the lowest in the country at 0.7%. He welcomed news of extra jobs creation at the airport associated with Jet2 and

said the Council would be asked to decide soon on MAG's proposed expansion of airport capacity at Stansted from 35 to 43 million passengers per annum. There were other encouraging initiatives including the provision of a new tertiary college for the study of engineering skills and a proposal for a new business park on the north side of the airport on the site of the old terminal. He wanted to provide opportunities for local business with the capacity to grow.

Councillor Fairhurst said he had seen the press reports that the plan was ready to be published. He wanted to know why officers had jumped the gun by speaking to the press and asked whether that was an attempt to prejudice the plan by coercing members.

In response the Chief Executive said that it was normal practice to brief the press on key aspects of policy in common with other organisations. When she had spoken to the press there was no reason to suppose the PPWG papers would not be published for the following meeting and it only became apparent after the Monday when the briefing was given that a decision needed to be made to pause the process.

Councillor Morris said that the 4,600 homes already given permission but not built appeared to have been ignored in the allocation of a similar number of new homes in the draft spatial strategy. For example, a further 2,800 new homes were to be allocated in Great Dunmow and a further 600 in Saffron Walden. She asked how that could be seen in the evidence base.

Councillor Barker responded that every site was indicated on the information included on the website. The Council could plan only for what would be built within the period of the plan.

Councillor Asker asked about the selection of transport scenarios. She understood that 12 potential scenarios in the draft transport study had been provided to the consultants but of those four had been dismissed because they assumed more homes than proposed and four as unrealistic because they assumed no development in the towns and villages. The consultants had been asked to study only four and these were all based on the assumption that at least 700 homes would be built in Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden. She asked who had decided on the instructions to be given, why had the PPWG not been involved in that process, and why were no other scenarios considered that would not involve building at least that number of homes?

The Director of Public Services confirmed that all the scenarios had been provided to the transport consultants. Part of the work being carried out during the pause was to look at the variations on those scenarios so that members would know what the impacts of each of them would be.

Councillor Hargreaves referred to the first workshop where members had been presented with a range of options and had discussed these in a thoughtful and business-like manner. A straw poll indicated that the majority of members supported development of two sites but at the following workshop the views of members had been ignored. He asked for an assurance that members views would be listened to at any future workshop sessions.

Councillor Rolfe said the purpose of the workshop had been to enable free private discussion of the available options and the straw poll mentioned had not been based on a range of substantive evidence. He had been staggered to discover that figures had been released to the public by Councillor Hargreaves' group and he considered this to be a total breach of confidentiality.

In welcoming public attendance, Councillor Light said that it had been the first opportunity for feedback from residents across Uttlesford. She wished to echo many of the points raised and question the methodology used as this was flawed. She had no confidence that the evidence presented was sufficient to make an informed decision and it appeared that the evidence had been made to fit the decision not the other way around.

Councillor Rolfe asked Councillor Light whether she had read all of the evidence and said it was clear she had not read enough.

In response Councillor Light questioned the process followed at the public exhibitions as there was no paperwork or anything to suggest public feedback was being recorded.

Councillor Rolfe responded that he had attended all of the public exhibitions, together with officers, and confirmed that all public comments were listened to most carefully. He had afterwards received very many emails from members of the public. The Council was obliged to hold a Regulation 19 consultation once all of the available evidence had been obtained and considered.

Councillor Redfern said she felt incensed to be told the public had not had a chance to have their say and this was an unfair comment. The role of the PPWG was to feed information to the Council and this was being done. She totally understood why members felt the need to ask for more evidence but it was simply incorrect to say that evidence was being altered to suit a particular conclusion.

Councillor Chambers said that all meetings of the PPWG were open to the public and many had attended as well as other councillors. There had been many briefings from officers and pages of evidence provided to be considered. The need was to get to the point where a decision could be taken and it was the job of councillors to do that without losing control of the process.

Councillor Loughlin said she had walked out of the predecessor to the PPWG as it was not open but that was not the case now. If it was the case she would walk out again. Members should be telling their parishes to come along to the meetings and have their say.

The Chairman concluded part 1 of the discussion and announced he would now move to part 2. This was to enable councillors to identify any omissions, deviations or departures from acceptable practices in the planning process they considered to have been made in the Local Plan and to make proposals for any corrective measures to be considered in the following part of the debate.

He invited Councillor Lodge to speak. He said that the PPWG had spent zero minutes talking about where any new settlements should be located and he consequently felt the working group was not doing its job. There had been a failure to allow enough time or space for discussion.

Councillor Barker said that some sites were commercially sensitive and for that reason could not be discussed in a public meeting. When the time was right they would come forward for discussion by the PPWG.

Councillor Asker asked for confirmation that meetings of the PPWG were public and the public had entitlement to see all papers.

Councillor Rolfe confirmed that all meetings of the PPWG were public. He did not disagree with Councillor Lodge that the working group should be looking at the detail. There was now a degree of consensus that meetings should fall into two parts consisting of an open part and a closed part. This was not intended to exclude the public but to avoid damage from commercial speculators.

Councillor Asker asked for clarification about the status of papers prepared for the cancelled PPWG meeting. In response, Councillor Barker said that papers were prepared for that meeting but it had not taken place because of the pause now introduced and so those papers were not now available and would not be published.

The Chairman announced the closure of part 2 of the debate and said he would now invite Councillor Lodge to propose the motion on the agenda, subject to any alterations he wished to make.

Councillor Lodge proposed the following motion as submitted by Councillors Asker, Fairhurst, R Freeman, Hargreaves, Light, Lodge, Morris and Parry:

To consider, debate and vote upon the following MOTION, of which due notice has been given:

“That Cabinet put in place immediate corrective measures to instil transparency and public confidence into the emerging Local Plan. These measures to include:

- Reviewing and making public the criteria and the weightings used to select sites for possible new settlements or large housing developments and to decide between different alternative spatial strategies. This review to take particular account of the need for many residents to travel outside of Uttlesford for their employment, and their consequent need to access the M11 motorway and the national rail network*
- Ensuring that all material matters relating to the Local Plan, including any instruction of any expert or other third party assistance or the commissioning of any material evidence or other work stream in connection with the Local Plan, or the consideration of any spatial strategy of any material component of it, are referred to the Planning Policy Working Group for consideration.*

- *Reviewing the projected growth plans for Uttlesford, taking a realistic estimate of the expected growth of Stansted Airport (including the potential impact on the UK economy of Brexit) and the fact that many residents travel outside the district for work, for example to London, and to the expanding high-technology industries around Cambridge and along the M11/All corridor.”*

Councillor R Freeman seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak later in the debate.

Councillor Rolfe proposed the following amendment:

“The Council has confidence in officers to present in a comprehensive and timely manner all necessary information and reports to the Planning Policy Working Group, Cabinet and Council to enable the development of proposals for a new local plan that will be found sound at examination.”

He said he supported some of the spirit behind the original motion but it needed simplification and the need to express confidence in the talented team of officers, in the consultants and in all others involved to produce a sound Local Plan. He urged all members to support the principle that the Council would have to make a decision.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Howell.

On a point of order, Councillor Lodge asked for a ruling on the effect of Procedure Rule 12.6 (iv) as to whether the amendment negated the motion.

The Interim Head of Legal Services advised the meeting that, in his view, it did not do so because it met the test that the same effect could not be achieved by voting against the motion. The amendment set out an alternative course of action and so did not negate the motion.

Councillor Howell spoke in support of the amendment. In welcoming those members of the public present he said he had wrestled with this matter for the whole of his ten years as a councillor and considered it to be an insurmountable challenge. He urged all members of the community to come together to strive to agree a Local Plan in the interests of everyone as a failure of that endeavour would mean that responsibility would be transferred to central government and control taken away at a local level.

In making that decision members must rely on the facts and the evidence alone. The plan would be tested by the inspector and, if found unsound we would again go through the embarrassment of what happened in December 2014 when the plan was rejected.

The Inspector’s conclusions in effect gave us the answer in identifying two areas in which the plan had failed. His report had said that an uplift of at least 10% would be a reasonable and proportionate increase, say to about 580 houses per annum. He then said he endorsed comments made by local ward councillors at

the time about the unsuitability of the site at Elsenham including challenges around the transport links.

We should now learn those lessons and reach conclusions based on the evidence presented.

Councillor Howell also spoke about the growth in passenger numbers at Stansted Airport and said it was essential to take the impact that might have into account.

In response to an intervention from Councillor Light, he said that if a site at Great Chesterford were to be put forward without sound evidence it would fail in just the same way the previous plan had failed in respect of the Elsenham site. He confirmed he was happy to second the amendment.

Councillor Fairhurst said this brought back the whole purpose of the meeting taking place. The motion he supported asked for immediate corrective measures to be put in place to instil transparency and public confidence into the emerging Local Plan and he considered there was no such confidence, honesty or transparency at the moment.

Councillor Dean thanked the Residents for Uttlesford members for calling the meeting as it had been useful to hear from the public. In thanking Councillor Barker for her statement he said the danger in the motion was that it contained too many technical points. He asked Councillor Rolfe to accept the insertion of the words “supports the present pause and” so that it would now read:

*“The Council **supports the present pause and** has confidence in officers to present in a comprehensive and timely manner all necessary information and reports to the Planning Policy Working Group, Cabinet and Council to enable the development of proposals for a new local plan that will be found sound at examination.”*

Councillor Rolfe accepted inclusion of the additional words in his amendment to be put to the vote.

Councillor Asker said there was never any suggestion that her group did not have confidence in officers. The issue was the timescale of what was needed to get the process on track. The wording “in a timely manner” in the amendment was not specific enough as there was no time scale indicated.

Councillor R Freeman agreed and refuted any suggestion that the motion called into question members’ confidence or otherwise in officers. The main problem was the nature of the evidence that was being presented and the weighting that was given to that evidence.

Councillor Artus expressed annoyance with the political nature of the debate as he could otherwise have voted for much of the original motion. However, it was worth coming to listen to the views of the public.

Councillor Ranger called for the question now to be put.

A vote then took place on the amendment and this was carried by 21 votes to one against.

Councillor Lodge then replied to the debate as the mover of the original motion. He said he accepted the legal officer's opinion but the acceptance of the amendment had made a farce of the meeting.

Members then voted on the substantive motion and this was carried with no votes against.

RESOLVED that the Council supports the present pause and has confidence in officers to present in a comprehensive and timely manner all necessary information and reports to the Planning Policy Working Group, Cabinet and Council to enable the development of proposals for a new local plan that will be found sound at examination.

The meeting ended at 10.10pm.

APPENDIX – PUBLIC SPEAKING STATEMENTS

1. William Brown on behalf of Hinxtton Parish Council to make a statement and ask the following questions:

My questions relate to the possibility that Uttlesford DC might plan to develop a housing settlement on land north of Great Chesterford on the boundary with South Cambridgeshire (sites 08GtChe15 and 10GtChe15).

The background is that such a development would have severe implications for the S Cambs villages of Hinxtton, Ickleton, Duxford and Whittlesford immediately down the River Cam.

According to the assessments on UDC's website, there is 'currently no capacity in the sewerage network for additional dwellings' and it would require a new connection that would be required to cross the M11/A11 to the Ickleton sewage works which would be likely to '... require extensive upgrades to accommodate the flows ...'. The assessment considers that 'A new settlement would increase the discharge of treated effluent to the River Cam thus warranting more stringent consent standards' (Source: UDC Water Cycle Study, 2010).

It is reported that: 'Development in this locality has the potential to increase the level of flood risk from the River Cam downstream by increasing water run-off' (Source: Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2008). The aforementioned villages immediately downstream are all already highly vulnerable to flooding.

The UDC website's assessment of the 'Landscape Character of the Uttlesford District' says of the River Cam valley, where the proposed settlement would be on high ground: 'The open skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive, with new development potentially being highly visible within panoramic inter and cross-valley views' (7.2.1). Such visibility would be particularly high for these S Cambs villages.

Given comparative employment opportunities and housing costs, a high proportion of householders in the proposed settlement would commute to work in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. There is no option to access the northbound M11 from Great Chesterford other than Junction 10 with the A505. Access to Junction 10 is via the A1301 to the A505 past Hinxtton, or by local roads to the A505 through Ickleton and Duxford. The increased population in Great Chesterford would substantially increase the pressure of traffic on these access roads, which already suffer severe congestion.

My questions are:

Question (1): 'Given this background, how would Uttlesford DC propose to bear the costs and mitigate the damage that would be caused by the proposed Great Chesterford settlement to the villages of S Cambs immediately over the district boundary?'

Answer: The costs of infrastructure to address the impacts that would be caused by the development would need to be capable of being met. In the case of a strategic site these would either have to be met by a delivery vehicle, or through planning

obligations. A viability assessment would be carried out to check the deliverability of any proposals.

Question (2): 'What evidence does the Uttlesford DC have that such a settlement would not primarily meet the housing needs of South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, rather than those of Uttlesford District?'

Answer: The location is well situated in relation to Cambridge and the south Cambridge Science Cluster. However, South Cambridgeshire has not asked UDC to help meet its objectively assessed housing need as it, and Cambridge City Council, have their own proposals to meet their needs. A local plan allocation for a new settlement at Great Chesterford would count towards Uttlesford's objectively assessed housing needs but it would need to form part of a portfolio of sites that collectively represented the most appropriate of all the reasonable alternatives.

2. Jackie Cheetham on behalf of Takeley Parish Council to make a statement and ask the following question:

'The headlines from the proposed new Local Plan indicate that yet again housing development is focused in the south of the district; including two 'new settlements'. We are being told that development in the north of the district is constrained by the influence of South Cambs. What does this mean? The evolving S Cambs Local Plan (the Examination is in progress) shows no major development proposals near the boundary with Uttlesford. There is no published objection from S Cambs about development constraints in the north of Uttlesford, nor could any be justified. In addition, given the all too well known problems at jtn 8 of the M11 in the south and the available capacity at jtn 9, will the Council please explain what evidence is available to demonstrate that the proposed allocations in the south of the district are sustainable, and why the north of the district is not?'

Takeley is still absorbing the substantial development allocated in the 2005 Local Plan: Takeley/Lt Canfield provided almost 20% its total. Now, in this new plan it, it appears that further development is to be allocated to Takeley - possibly up to 500 extra homes or more than 10% of extra new housing. How can this be justified when Takeley is well down the settlement hierarchy with few local services, education, employment etc. and poor transportation links?'

Answer: No decision has been made about the appropriate distribution of housing. SCDC has expressed potential concerns about the impact on a new settlement at Great Chesterford and has challenged UDC to assemble evidence of these impacts and how they might be mitigated if it were minded to propose such a development. The respective impacts on the strategic road network and in particular junction capacity are material to the choice of the most appropriate of the reasonable alternatives, but additional scenarios are still being modelled and assessed. Takeley is a key village in the A120 corridor close to Stansted Airport and therefore in an important strategic location. Land to the north of the village though contributes to the objectives of the Countryside Protection Zone which have previously been supported.

3. Ken McDonald from Stansted Mountfitchet to make the following statement:

Good evening. My name is Ken McDonald. I have lived in Uttlesford for 35 years. I have no loyalty or leaning to any political party. I only wish to see Uttlesford develop a sound plan that passes inspection and does not destroy the character of our district. My comments relate to the Plan as a whole.

I hope you are aware that Uttlesford's Local Plan is founded on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment – the SHMA.

For more than a year I have been trying to draw attention to a number of significant deficiencies in the SHMA and also arguing that it has led to Uttlesford planning to build far more houses than it needs – perhaps four thousand too many.

The current draft plan seeks an increase in housing stock of 38% - more than a third - over just 22 years – far more than almost everywhere else in the country.

I have been unable to follow how key conclusions in the SHMA have been arrived at, most notably the number of houses needed in Uttlesford. I am a chartered accountant, familiar with analysing figures. Now, if I can't follow the calculations, I suspect most reasonable people (including planning inspectors) will also not be able to.

The SHMA's lack of audit trail, as it is called, echoes a fundamental reason for the failure of the 2014 plan– I'm sure none of us want to see another failure.

Sadly, the Council has failed to answer my criticisms of the SHMA, responding instead with reference to figures emanating from the failed 2014 Plan. In 2014 the same fundamental forecasting mistake was made - basing future need on an atypical base period – the period of exceptional “airport-related” house-building.

The Council's blind faith in the 2014 forecasts and failure to critically appraise the evidence that is being offered in support of this plan is a recipe for either another failed plan or, even worse, a thorough trashing of Uttlesford.

I was given hope by the recent announcement that independent consultants have been asked to review progress – something I have been seeking for many months.

I hope these new consultants will be asked to consider the weaknesses that have been identified in the SHMA which is the basis - the unsound basis for the new Plan.

Also, I hope the consultants will consider the case for a lower house-building target, based on longer-term trends and not just the exceptional period of airport-related housebuilding.

I hope they will be asked if a lower target, based on longer-term trends, might stand a reasonable chance of acceptance at the examination in public.

I have been told that the new consultants have not be asked to review the SHMA, but I hope you will ensure they do.

4. Richard Gilyead from Saffron Walden to make the following statement:

Mr Chairman, Members of the Council. The Local Plan is supposed to be a plan for the future well-being and prosperity of our district. It should cover employment, transport, housing and the environment we all depend on. Air quality is a key factor in planning for a healthy future.

As recently as September, a cross-party group of MPs called the national air pollution problem a “public health emergency”. At the beginning of this month, the government’s plan for tackling the UK’s air pollution crisis was judged as illegally poor in the high court. It is clear that not enough is being done.

And yet, here we are again with a plan to build hundreds of new houses on the wrong side of Saffron Walden, with no workable proposals to deal with all the traffic, even though pollution levels are already rising again.

The latest available Highways Assessment from 2014 predicted an average increase of 350% in peak queues at key junctions even with all the proposed mitigation measures in place and that’s before all the extra houses now included in the plan.

The Council’s own Air Quality Action Plan 2016 says, “... the growth of Saffron Walden and surrounding areas will lead to increased traffic using local roads, and improvements in emission quality of new vehicles may be insufficient to mitigate against increases in the levels of harmful pollutants emitted by the overall traffic fleet.”

In other words, there is no real plan to tackle the traffic queues or the air quality problems which will worsen as a result of this unsustainable development plan. Nobody knows when, or even if, the Air Quality Management Area designation will ever be lifted from our town.

The Council should be meeting its legal obligation to consider the cumulative effect of development on air quality. But it also has an ethical responsibility to protect the health and well-being of all residents. Will UDC now take their responsibility seriously and commit to control development so that pollution levels are brought within legal limits both now and for the foreseeable future?

5. Moyra Tourlamain on behalf of Neil Gregory both of Great Chesterford Parish Council

Chairman

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this meeting.

I am Moyra Tourlamain, and I am speaking at the request, and on behalf of Great Chesterford Parish Council.

We have studied the requisition for this extraordinary council meeting and the notice of motion. Accordingly, we have the following observations. We welcome the focus of this meeting in seeking clarity as to process and as to the timetable of the local plan.

We further welcome the request for specification of the potential spatial strategies and the evidence base that illuminates those spatial strategies. In particular the state of the evidence base when the local plan was paused last month.

We welcome clarity as to the discussions and interactions with neighbouring authorities, notably South Cambridgeshire, in fulfillment of the duty to cooperate.

We note that members of this council received briefings on the proposed strategy on 11 October and 17 October. We note that the press were also briefed. Sadly, this same courtesy has not been extended to residents or to parish and town councils. Indeed our request for sight of the evidence base and the briefings made to members of this council and the press has been refused by officers, who *inter alia*, have asserted the need for what they term a “safe space” to develop the plan.

We regard it as essential to have a robust understanding of the evidence base at the date the plan was paused. Our concern, which we must make clear, is that the motion before you is explicit – it seeks to substitute revised assumptions, presumptions and starting points in order to influence the outcome of the process. We question the relevance of a number of points in the draft motion before you and suggest it may be an abuse of process with the intention of influencing what must be an objective and evidence led plan.

Thus; The purpose of the local plan is to meet the housing needs and employment land needs of the district. That and that alone. It is not to assist with the housing needs of the Cambridge region or to aid or augment the Cambridge phenomenon. That is a matter for South Cambs, Cambridge City and national government.

We are informed that South Cambs would not welcome a major development on their southern boundary, and, by definition our northern boundary. We understand that the A1301/a505 junction is frequently gridlocked as is junction 10 of the m11. Extra traffic is unsustainable as Cambridgeshire County Council have made clear. Even if development on our northern boundary were welcomed by our neighbours, the transport infrastructure does not exist to support it. We feel it incumbent upon us to remind members of this Council that unless neighbouring authorities request our assistance then the local plan must restrict itself to our district.

The motion before you is fatally flawed and to pass it would we suggest increase delay, add to cost and make the local plan more susceptible to challenge at the public examination.

Thank you

6. Nick Buhaenko-Smith from Stebbing to make a statement

My name is Nick Buhaenko-Smith and as some councillors already know I represent SERCLE, the residents group opposed to the West of Braintree new settlement proposal.

Whilst I could list many valid reasons why the West of Braintree is not a sustainable location, I would like to take this opportunity to draw the councils attention to what we believe are key points, related to the wider region, that

would contribute to the success of Uttlesford's Local plan and future prosperity.

SERCLE is pleased that UDC's strategy for a Local Plan has been paused to review evidence, especially after the press releases about the decision having been made to locate both new settlements in the south of the District. It is within this review period we believe the questions that councillors should be asking is where does Uttlesford want to be by 2033 and beyond? And how could the long-term strategy of the region's economic growth and UDC's housing distribution strategy help achieve this goal?

The obvious economic growth areas where Uttlesford could play a major role are first, the Government backed strategy for the growth along the M11 corridor supported by the LSCC and Cambridge / Peterborough LEP (in which Uttlesford are key partners) and secondly, the growth of employment opportunities in the global biotech and biomedical industries called the "Southern Cluster" in the north of Uttlesford and South Cambridgeshire. A growth we also add that is also supported by a sustainable transport strategy and that help accommodate this growth.

This can be compared to the economic growth along the A120 being promoted by Haven Gateway who state on their own website:

"The SME sector (businesses employing less than 250 staff) form the vast majority of businesses in the Haven Gateway area."

Along with economic growth, one of the key tenets of a housing distribution strategy is deliverability. Always a major concern for councils. In the recently withdrawn new settlement strategy, the council would have expected it's housing numbers to be fulfilled by the concentration of the all major development within a 7-mile corridor of the A120. The potential outcome - the council create a scenario in that developers are faced with building and then trying to sell houses in that concentrated corridor.

This concentration would also compound the M11 / Junction 8 issue, already a cause for concern not only by residents but by a major UDC employer, as was expressed in their responses to the consultation issued by Braintree DC on its local plan proposals. The M11 / Junction 8 contributing to the failure of the last Local Plan.

We all appreciate this question of deliverability is crucial as it could impact Uttlesford's duty to continuously deliver a 5-year housing supply into the future.

If this is not achieved, because of lack of housing being built or lack of suitable local employment opportunities to attract people to the area, then it could open the door to planning appeals that may prove difficult to defend. As time is limited, I have only touched upon a two of the many risks that SERCLE have identified in UDC's local plan process, overall distribution strategy and evidence.

Local residents and SERCLE hope you will take the longer term strategic picture

into account, when reaching your decision on the Uttlesford Local Plan.
Thank you for listening.

7. Paul Stuart-Turner from Saffron Walden to ask the following question:

Has it been made clear to national government that Saffron Walden is an exceptional case because the Audley End Estate blocks development to the West of the town and the key transport links and secondary school are on this side of town. Any development on the east of the town therefore creates severe congestion especially in the morning and evening rush hours?

I am not aware of many towns in Britain that face this unusual difficulty.

Answer: Local planning authorities are charged with preparing local plans and determining how best to deliver growth in their areas drawing on their local knowledge of their communities and fulfilling their place shaping role. Saffron Walden has particular issues but congestion on local transport networks In peak hours is commonplace in large and small towns. Government will only intervene to ensure plans for growth are prepared if would be able to speed up the process.

8. Alexander Armstrong from Great Dunmow to make a statement.

9. Anthony Gerard from Newport to make a statement and ask the following question (please note that the question was not submitted by the deadline for questions to be accepted under the Access to Information Rules):

"Saffron Walden County High School and Helena Romanes School are effectively full and there is no likelihood of them expanding. Joyce Frankland is planned to take an extra year group but will then not expand further. Despite this ECC Education predict a net deficit of 130 secondary school places in Saffron Walden within 3 years.

1) If UDC's currently proposed spatial strategy is implemented, where will the additional children go to secondary school?

2) How has this been factored into the spatial strategy?

3) Where is UDC's education strategy for the next 15 years to support the Local Plan?"

Councillor Barker answered the question to state that the responsibility for the allocation of school places was a matter for Essex County Council and the matters raised would be taken into consideration.

10. Chris Audritt on behalf of Little Easton Parish Council to make a statement.

Statement on behalf of Little Easton Parish Council

Following the failure of the previous local plan in December 14 UDC were at pains to say that the workings of this new local plan would be open and transparent. Indeed one

of the first documents produced was a joint statement by the council group leaders saying and I quote

“We support recent work to establish a fresh approach to preparing a new local plan based on step-by-step, deliberative and transparent ways of working”

and

“We will do everything we can to set out clearly the justification for what it contains and the process followed in reaching the decisions taken”

It is an indication of how UDC have not met that commitment that one of the signatories to that document has felt it necessary to put forward the motion before you this evening. In effect saying there is a lack of transparency and confidence in the process.

The single settlement option at Easton Park directly affects the residents of Little Easton and indeed the very existence of Little Easton and yet there has been no direct consultation with Little Easton parish council on the prospect of this new town on Easton Park. The press and media seem more well informed than we are. The Easton Park settlement has been a developer led proposal we believe based on inaccurate and misleading information.

UDC have been at pains to stress that any new settlement should be to garden village principles one of which specifically says:

“The garden village must be a new discrete settlement and not an extension of an existing town or village”.

Yet at its closest point the Easton Park settlement would be just 100 yards or so away from the large town of Great Dunmow.

The lack of consultation and transparency by UDC has led to serious concern among residents and parish councils, as was shown at the recent parish forum, that decisions are being taken regardless of the facts and without full and detailed consideration of all the options.

Any new settlement site chosen should be the best available site, taking all factors into account, which meets the defined garden village principles and is in the best interest of the community not because it is the easy option and in the best interest of the developer.

We support the statement by councillor Martin Foley and agree that UDC cannot make any recommendation without there being a full and thorough study of the new garden settlement proposal located to the north of the district at Great Chesterford.

UDC need to learn from past mistakes and produce a local plan that is both robust and fully supported by the council and the community.

11. Louise Luke from Great Chesterford to make a statement and ask the following question:

Question: what steps are being taken to consider the environmental impact on S Cambridgeshire/Essex border of a new town approaching the size of Saffron Walden. e.g. improved sewage, water, improved transport facilities (buses, road capacity, M1 junction, rail capacity, station parking, cycle routes)

Answer: This will be addressed through the water cycle study, transport assessment and sustainability assessment and strategic environmental assessment work.

12. Mike Passfield on behalf of Elfreda Tealby-Watson, both of Great Chesterford, to make a statement and ask the following questions:

Firstly, I would like to register my interest in speaking although I will only be able to confirm my attendance on Wednesday depending on work commitments.

Secondly, I would like to note formally to Council that as both as a resident and former Councillor myself I appreciate all efforts (and as per the motion public statements of support for) towards transparency in any Council discussion and decision making.

Thirdly, I would like to submit the following questions:

1. In view of the wish for transparency

- a) what efforts were made by the District Council and their elected members to publicise this extraordinary meeting to members of the public*
- b) What will happen if the time allotted for public speakers – 15 minutes – is insufficient to include all those wishing to speak*
- c) How will time be allocated between speakers registered to speak*

A: These questions will already have been addressed by the Chairman

2. Referencing comments regarding the need of many residents to travel outside Uttlesford for their employment (bullet 1) and then (bullet 3) the expected growth of the expanding high technology industries around Cambridge:

- a) What steps will be taken beyond any statutory need to cooperate between authorities to establish potential developments, commercial or residential, outside Uttlesford boundaries that are under discussion but not yet in planning but which for the sake of best practice future proofing evidence should be considered with regarding to sustainability issues of traffic, water management and demographics*
- b) With reference to the comments regarding the M11 corridor and hi-tech industries, specifically what efforts are being made to establish the impact of developments under discussion for instance regarding Sanger and Smithson building proposals in South Cambridgeshire on the north of Uttlesford*
- c) What effort is now being made to publicise these possible South Cambridgeshire developments in the context of the proposal for the Chesterford site so that full and transparent evidence of any “pincer” development can be examined*

d) *What steps will be taken to gain demographic predictions or existing evidence of work destinations for Uttlesford residents across the district to support such statements regarding the increasing need/ tendency of residents to work outside the district*

A: Conventionally, only local plan proposals and committed development are taken into account. Proposals for major development by the Welcome Trust and others in South Cambs would be accompanied by strategic environmental and other assessments as part of any consideration through the development management process.

3. *Generally, for proposed sites across the district what account is being made of the need for supporting infrastructure for new large scale developments versus entire new settlements for example examining factors. {NB A recent example of difficulties encountered in such infrastructure planning has been education e.g. noted publicly last year the unbalanced demand for school places throughout Uttlesford with over-subscription and under-subscription in different catchments, again with problems for parishes in the north of the district widely publicized}*

A: The necessary infrastructure to support development will be identified. The planning system has ensured adequate school capacity in Uttlesford to support the delivery of growth.

13. Richard Westbrook from Ashdon to make a statement.

14. Neil Green on behalf of Clive Hopewell from Great Chesterford to make a statement and ask the following questions:

I would like to register my interest in the meeting on Wednesday evening but should I be unable to attend due to professional engagements then I wish the following points to be submitted:

1. *I believe there is great importance in keeping a green belt between Cambridge and Saffron Walden. We now have ribbon development from Sawston to Cambridge so to develop south of Sawston as proposed on the north Uttlesford site we would have risk developing urban sprawl to the boundaries of Saffron Walden itself. This comment is in response to the several mentions in the motion of workers travelling to or employment developments in South Cambridgeshire/ M11 border. Surely it is imperative that if we are trying to account for this we are in transparency discussions with those authorities to establish what is also being proposed for Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk to address those needs?*

A: The Duty to Co-operate between councils is the vehicle for considering such concerns.

2. *Re the motion commenting on the need for establishing the criteria on which sites are considered best for local plan developments, can Council clarify whether that process takes into account unbuilt developments which already have planning approval. Similarly, and in order to have a local plan that develops Uttlesford in a sustainable and balanced way across the District, appropriate to existing and historic built and rural environment and in anticipation of future factors, what*

evidence is being considered with regard to how many houses have been built/ approved per capita inhabitant ward-by-ward or parish-by-parish in the last 5 years? This would give an indication of the saturation levels per community to date, comparing e.g. village to town environments.

A: It does. A policy which sought to cap development in settlements based on percentage growth over the last 5 years would be arbitrary and subject to challenge.

15. Michael Culkin of the Thaxted Society to make a statement:

Statement by Chairman to UDC ECM Wednesday 16th November 2016

THERE IS AN UNHAPPY GROWING TREND TODAY, DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND UNSOUND POLITICAL PROMISES THAT WE CAN ALL GET WHAT WE WANT. UTIELSFORD IS NO EXCEPTION

WELL WE CANT. IF WE ALL DID GET WHAT WE WANTED WE WOULD NOT LIVE IN A DEMOCRACY BUT IN CHAOS.

WHEN IT COMES TO WHAT WE WANT, CLEARLY THERE ARE SOME WHO DO GET IT AND SOME WHO DO NOT BUT LETS BE CLEAR THEY ARE NOT ALWAYS THE SAME PEOPLE.

THE PLANNING SYSTEM, HOIST AS IT IS BY GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE A HOUSING SOLUTION NATIONALLY, IS IMPERFECT AND NOT TRULY FIT FOR THAT PURPOSE. HOWEVER GOVERNMENTS OF WHATEVER SHADE PERSIST IN THIS.

AND SO WE ARE LEFT SOME OF US WITH HOUSES WE DO NOT WANT AND SOME WITH NONE OF THE HOUSES WE DO WANT.

BUT THIS IMPERFECTION OF PROCESS DOES NOT OBVIATE ITS USE AND LIKE IT OR NOT WE ARE STUCK WITH IT.

BUT WITHOUT A LOCAL PLAN, ACCEPTABLE TO THE INSPECTOR AND GOVERNMENT WE ARE IN A FAR WORSE POSITION THAN WITH ONE SOME OF US DON'T LIKE.

WITHOUT A CURRENT PLAN, THIS SPECIAL CORNER MUCH ENVIED AND IN DEMAND, SIMPLY FALLS PREY TO SPECULATIVE AND PREDATORY DEVELOPMENT.

WE HAVE SEEN THIS IN THAXTED AND THE TOWN HAS SUFFERED IN THE ABSENCE OF AN UP TO DATE LOCAL PLAN.

IN THE END WE ARGUE THE WHERE AND NOT THE WHY. AND IN THE 'WHERE' IT IS CLEAR SOME WILL BE UNHAPPY. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO

THE GREATER GOOD, FOR ALL OF US, WE ARE BETTER OFF WITH A LOCAL PLAN AND SOME PAIN THAN NONE AT ALL AND WORSE...

LET CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MISTAKE PLANNING FOR DELIVERY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE. LET US NOT FOLLOW THAT EXAMPLE AND USE THE LOCAL PLAN AS A POLITICAL FOOTBALL!!!

Committee: Council

Agenda Item

Date: 8 December 2016

4

Title: Proposals for Members' Scheme of Allowances 2017/18

Authors: David Brunwin (Chairman), Steph Harding and Janet Pearson, assisted by Peter Snow and Rebecca Dobson

Item for decision:

Summary

1. This report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a Members' scheme of allowances for the year 2017/18.

Recommendations

2. That the Council adopts the amendments to its scheme of allowances as set out below for the year 2017/18:

Type of allowance	Existing £	Recommended £
Basic allowance	5,050	5,100
Special Responsibility Allowances		As Special Responsibility Allowances are expressed as a multiplier of the Basic Allowance, the recommendation is that all would be adjusted to reflect the proposed 1% increase in the Basic Allowance. The phrase "no change" used in this table below signifies there is no change to the multiplier, but that the 1% increase is to be applied.
Chairman	4,040	4,080 (no change other than as a consequence of the proposed increased Basic Allowance) + civic expenses

Vice-Chairman	2,020	2,040 (no change other than as a consequence of the proposed increased Basic Allowance)
Leader	12,372.50	12,496 (no change)
Deputy Leader	6,565	6,630 (no change)
Portfolio Holders	6,060	6,120 (no change)
Overview/Scrutiny Committee Chairmen	3,535	3, 570 (no change)
Planning Committee Chairman	3,787.50	3,825 (no change)
Planning Committee members	466.20	470 (no change)
Licensing & Environmental Health Committee Chairman	3,787.50	3,825 (no change)
Standards Committee Chairman	2,020	2,040 (no change)
Main opposition group leader	3,535	3,570 (no change)
Other opposition group leader(s)	2,020	2,040 (no change)
Independent members of Standards Committee	505	510 (no change)
Panel members of Independent Remuneration Panel	505	510 (no change)

All other elements of the scheme to remain unchanged. Only one special responsibility allowance may be claimed.

Financial Implications

- The recommendations have costs but these are already budgeted. The estimated cost of implementing the recommendations is £272,238 (increasing from £269,573 in 2016/17) and is already included within the General Fund Programme budget.

Background Papers

- None.

Impact

-

Communication/Consultation	Group Leaders were consulted
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

The Independent Remuneration Panel

- The Panel this year consists of David Brunwin (Chairman), Janet Pearson and Steph Grace-Harding. Janet Pearson is retiring after three years' service and one additional year as a shadow member. A new Panel member will be recruited before the next year's review commences.

General Position and the Basic Allowance

- The Panel is recommending an increase of 1% in the basic allowance to reflect the local government pay award implemented in May 2016. A similar modest increase was recommended and agreed last year. This follows a long

period in which the basic allowance had been frozen in recognition of the dire state of public finances and the general constraints operating in local government. Although the state of public finances remains serious, the Panel feels that making regular small incremental increases in the basic allowance is the best way to maintain its relevance and validity as a mechanism to recognise the time and commitment demanded of elected councillors, without making unrealistic demands on the budget. It is infinitely preferable, in the Panel's view, to maintain the value of the allowance in this way without the necessity to consider larger increases less often which might be considered politically unpalatable, or difficult in setting budgets.

8. The basic allowance is still seen as the best available means to enable all sectors of society to serve their local community without significant disadvantage. The original basic allowance was set by reference to an hourly rate recommended by the Local Government Association and based on the presumption that the average commitment of councillors not performing special responsibility duties was ten hours per week, or 520 hours per annum. This figure was then offset by a 35% reduction to take account of public service commitment.
9. We have not challenged the assumptions behind this assessment of time commitment as it was checked against a survey of members only three years ago. However, one of the group leaders has suggested a thorough analysis of time commitment should be carried out and this possibility will be explored as a possible option for the 2018/19 review.
10. More recently, the LGA's daily rate was discontinued and the Panel decided to benchmark the hourly rate against the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for residents in the Uttlesford district. Successive years of keeping the rate at the same level gradually divorced the basic allowance from the hourly ASHE rate to the extent that we consider it is no longer feasible to maintain it and we have accordingly decided to discontinue that link.
11. At present therefore we do not consider it possible to benchmark the basic allowance at Uttlesford to a specific index and we will continue to explore a means of restoring indexing at some suitable point. However, we have continued to look at allowances paid by similar authorities both within and outside Essex and consider that the basic allowance remains both valid and reasonable. If our recommendation is accepted the hourly rate paid to councillors in 2017/18 will be £9.81.
12. We have decided at this stage not to recommend linking the allowance to future local government pay awards as we wish to maintain some flexibility in determining the appropriate level of basic allowance, but we will continue to look at the merits of recommending a linkage.
13. The annual cost of a 1% across the board increase in the allowances scheme is approximately £2,700. Of course, if the increase in basic allowance is accepted it will impact on each of the special responsibility allowances to the extent that all SRAs are benchmarked to that allowance.
14. We have consulted each of the group leaders about our thinking and have taken their comments into account in formulating this report.

15. The Panel has examined a number of other aspects of the allowances scheme and the following report sets out our thinking on each of these factors. In order of consideration, we have looked at: whether the scheme should provide for penalties for non-attendance at member workshops; whether the extra commitment involved in Licensing Committee membership should be recognised (as for the Planning Committee); and the role of executive members.

Member training and development and attendance at member briefings and workshops

16. The Panel considered whether the scheme of allowances should provide for penalties for non-attendance at member workshops. The aim of the proposal would be to incorporate within the scheme an incentive to encourage better attendance at training events. The Panel in looking at this proposal looked at the current attendance levels at all-member training events, sought information on how such events were scheduled, and asked officers to obtain any relevant comparative data regarding practice at other local authorities. The Panel considered carefully the potential benefits and disadvantages of this proposal, endeavouring to balance the practicability of how it might work against the desirability of encouraging attendance at training. The Panel concluded it would not recommend a deduction from basic allowance for failure to attend training.

17. The position found at Uttlesford District Council was that member training events were generally not attended by a majority of members, and on some occasions fewer than a third of members had attended. In terms of scheduling, members tended to be invited to several all-member briefings during any given year, but a number of these sessions were not set far in advance or according to an annual programme, but would be called in response to forthcoming business.

18. Where in 2015-16 dates had been set within the committee system to provide upcoming quarterly briefings dates, data was not available as to whether advance scheduling had improved attendance levels. It was more likely to be the subject matter of a particular briefing session which played a part in whether members wished to attend or not. Without knowing the dates of required member training in advance, it would be unfair to expect all members to commit to coming to all such events.

19. The Panel took note of the fact that member attendance at briefings was not recorded. Introducing a penalty provision for non-attendance would be likely to require a well-publicised programme of briefings giving advance dates and possibly also topics, clear information about which briefings were categorised as mandatory, a means of applying deductions for varying levels of non-attendance, and a means of determining whether reasons for non-attendance could be treated as exceptions, for instance through absence because of illness or other events outside a member's control. For these reasons, the administration of such a scheme could be disproportionately onerous.

20. Finally the Panel expressed a view that for the great majority if not all, members, financial reward was irrelevant to them in carrying out their public duties, and that imposition of a penalty for councillors not attending specific events was unlikely to be an effective deterrent for not turning up.

21. We considered the view of the Leader of the Council that there is a strong case for a programme of member training and development and we are advised this was highlighted in the recent LGA Peer Review. However, before proper consideration can be given to structuring the allowances scheme to take account of member training needs and requirements, we consider it is first essential for the Council to articulate its expectations in terms of a structured approach to training and development. Once a programme is in place and the commitment expected of members is set out clearly, the Panel will feel better able to consider a sensible response.
22. We are advised that legislation requires the basic allowance to be the same for every member so careful consideration will have to be given to ways of incorporating incentives or penalties in terms of attendance or non-attendance at key training events.

Licensing and Environmental Health Committee

23. The Panel also considered a proposal for remuneration of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee members who attended extraordinary meetings. This proposal initially was made as a response to a survey conducted for the Independent Remuneration Panel in 2015. The Panel had decided to consider this suggestion further, to permit time to undertake additional research and consider the implications of such a change. The suggestion was that a small SRA should be payable to members of the Licensing Committee, as they were called upon to attend extraordinary meetings fairly regularly. The extraordinary meetings of the Licensing Committee tended to comprise a panel of four members of that Committee, called at fairly short notice to determine matters such as premises licenses, or more commonly, private hire/hackney carriage drivers' licences.
24. The Independent Remuneration Panel considered data obtained about the number and composition of extraordinary licensing meetings. There were approximately 14 extraordinary licensing meetings during each of the three preceding years. It was likely this number of meetings would continue to be required. It was clear the majority of meetings were attended by two members in particular, as for some members of the Committee it was not possible for them to be available due to working and other commitments. Accordingly there was a significant disparity between the workload of members who frequently attended extraordinary meetings of the committee compared with those who did not. The Panel felt it was right to consider options for more equitably remunerating those licensing members' additional responsibility.
25. The Panel therefore explored whether a small SRA such as that paid to members of the Planning Committee could be paid to members of the Licensing Committee. The Planning Committee SRA is paid to all members of that committee. This reflects also the requirement for committee members to attend site meetings on a regular basis, often preceding meetings of the committee. By contrast, in the case of the Licensing Committee not all members attended every meeting, as only certain individuals tended to be available. The Panel therefore felt it would not be equitable to pay all members of the licensing committee an SRA.
26. The Panel also looked at research regarding other authorities' licensing committee arrangements. It was apparent that in some authorities there

existed a system of having licensing sub-committees. In such arrangements, the chairmanship of sub-committees was rotated between all members of each sub-committee, and an SRA was payable to the Chairmen. The Panel felt such a system might be rather administratively heavy, for Uttlesford. In addition other factors were likely to be relevant, such as the willingness of the members currently forming panels for licensing determinations to share duties of chairmanship.

27. We therefore concluded that, given the present structure of the Licensing Committee and the way that meetings of the committee meeting as a panel are arranged, a change in the allowances scheme to recognise the extra commitment involved is simply not possible. However, if the Council were to decide to change the structure of Licensing Committee panel meetings to ensure a more equitable sharing of the workload between all committee members then we would not rule out the payment of a SRA.

Executive Member Functions

28. We looked at the workload and responsibility levels of executive members and decided these had not altered significantly in the last year. The one area in which time commitment has increased is in respect of the Local Plan but the Cabinet continues to operate as a collective body with a total lack of delegation to individual members. Therefore, only the Leader is presently able to make individual executive decisions and this happens comparatively rarely. Our predecessor panel decided three years ago not to recommend the final element of a three year plan to rebalance SRAs to reflect the change from a committee to an executive structure, principally on the grounds that collective rather than individual decision making was the norm at Uttlesford.

29. This is not intended as a criticism merely as an observation of the way that Cabinet decision making operates at Uttlesford, but, in these circumstances, we consider it is unlikely that we will reassess SRA payments to executive members in the absence of a major change in time and responsibility commitment.

30. Last year we considered the role of portfolio leads and concluded the role was insufficiently clear or well enough developed to justify the introduction of a new payment and that view remains unchanged.

31. Our report is presented for members' consideration.

Risk Analysis

32.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That member allowances do not continue to be set at a realistic level reflecting duties undertaken,	2 – allowances paid to elected members do not reflect the time	3 – the Council may be less well governed if allowances are not set at	Adoption of suitable levels of allowances taking account of relevant commitment and responsibility of

which may deter future prospective councillors	commitment and level of responsibility demanded	a realistic level	members
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Council

Agenda Item

Date: 8 December 2016

7(i)

Title: Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)
Consultation 2017/18

Author: Councillor Simon Howell

Item for decision

Summary

1. There is a requirement to annually review the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme, and propose changes to the scheme for the following financial year. The decisions made, even if no change is proposed, must be consulted upon before a decision is taken at Full Council in December on the final scheme for the following financial year.
2. Uttlesford has the lowest percentage contribution requirement of any authority in Essex. This demonstrates the council has used its resources effectively to support the scheme.
3. It has been the council's policy to make a full contribution to protected claimants.
4. At its meeting on 14 July 2016, the Cabinet set out its draft LCTS scheme for 2017/18. The Cabinet approved a number of amendments to the proposed scheme to be included in the consultation.
 - a) Parish and Town Subsidy Grant to be reduced by 50%
 - b) To align the LCTS scheme with the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit reforms
5. On 22 November 2016 Scrutiny Committee reviewed the consultation outcomes and noted the views of the public.

Recommendations

6. That the Council approve the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2017/18 as recommended at Cabinet on 1 December 2016 and as set out in this report.
 - a) To maintain the contribution rate at 12.5% for a further year.
 - b) To continue to provide Town and Parish Councils with a discretionary grant but for this to be reduced by 50%.
 - c) To align the LCTS scheme with the Housing Benefit Reforms as detailed in point 10, with the exception of the 'Removal of the severe disability premium where another person is paid universal credit (carers element), to look after them'.

Financial Implications

7. None.

Background Papers

8. None.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Public consultation is carried out as part of the LCTS process.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None – open consultation
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The council is required to have the 2017/18 scheme agreed prior to 31 January 2017
Sustainability	The objective is to achieve a financially sustainable set of arrangements.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	Ongoing demands on the Revenues & Benefits, Housing and Customer Service teams

9. The 2017/18 LCTS scheme runs from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Taking into account the consultation results along with any comments from this committee, the Cabinet meeting on 1 December will recommend to Full Council on 8 December that a final scheme is approved.

10. At its meeting on 14 July 2016 the Cabinet set out the draft proposals for the 2017/18 LCTS scheme.

a) The 2017/18 LCTS scheme is set on the same contribution rate as the 2016/17 scheme and therefore the contribution rate is frozen at 12.5% for the third consecutive year.

b) Discretionary subsidy for town & parish councils for 2017/18 in accordance with the principles set out below.

I. UDC should continue to provide discretionary funding to town and parish councils at a reduced level of 50% to assist in mitigating the effect of LCTS discount taxbase reductions on the Band D Council Tax calculation.

II. The total UDC parish subsidy pot to be distributed using the formula of [2012/13 Parish Band D x 2016/17 Parish LCTS

taxbase reduction] – thus avoiding UDC subsidising any precept increases made since 2013/14. The payment to then be adjusted by 50%.

c) There are six key reforms to the way benefits are assessed and of these the following four have already been implemented and it is recommended that these are incorporated into the LCTS scheme for 2017/18.

- I. Removal of the family premium for all new working age claimants
- II. Reduction of backdating of a claim from 6 months to 1 month
- III. Removal of the element of the work related work activity component in the calculation of the current scheme for new employment and support allowance applicants
- IV. Period of absence from Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks whilst still being able to claim benefits

d) There are two remaining reforms that are likely to be implemented by April 2017 and it is recommended that the LCTS scheme also incorporates these into the 2017/18 scheme as they become applicable.

- I. Limiting the number of children within the calculation to a maximum of two.
- II. Removal of the severe disability premium where another person is paid universal credit (carers element), to look after them.

11. The 2017/18 council tax discounts are set at the same rates as in the previous three years and these are set out below.

	Discounts given 2013/14	Changes introduced as from 1 April 2014
Second homes	10%	Remove discount
Empty Homes Class A (major repairs)	100% for up to 12 months	Reduce discount to 50% for up to 12 months
Empty Homes Class C (vacant)	100% for up to 6 months	Reduce discount to 50% for up to 6 months
Empty Homes Premium (empty & unfurnished for more than 2 years)	None	Add premium of 50%

LCTS consultation outcomes

12. The consultation period ran from 15 August to 30 September and 1,206 (1,115 paper and 91 online) responses were received. This is one of the largest responses for any non-planning consultation that the council has undertaken in recent years and is a 10.7% increase in responses compared to 2016/17.

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 15 August 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.

13. It should be remembered that not all respondents chose to answer all of the questions and that in a number of 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.

14. The consultation full report is attached as Appendix One. In summary the responses to the proposed LCTS scheme for 2017/18 are;

- 71.6% said that we should keep the contribution rate at 12.5%
- 63.8% said that the council should continue to pay the grant to Parishes at 100%, down from 93.5% last year.
- Overall the responses were in favour of the alignment of Housing Benefits reforms to the LCTS scheme, with the exception of the removal of the severe disability premium (extra money paid to a severely disabled person to assist in employing a carer), if the claimant's carer already receives the carer's element through universal credit (Q4 e).

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
A detailed risk assessment shall accompany the budget proposals. There are no specific risks at this stage.			

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

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 2017-18

October 2016



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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 40% from 1,321 to 789.

This is the fifth year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the provisions that Uttlesford District Council makes for local people within the scheme.

Following the success of the 2015 consultation on the 2016-17 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*. As part of the authority's continuing drive towards channel shift, the 2016 survey was also available through an online questionnaire which was publicised on the website. 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 to take part even if they had lost their original issue of the magazine. 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 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 2017/18 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2017.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system. The government's aim of the reforms to the welfare system is to help more people into work, while supporting the most vulnerable. Since the start of the scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 40% from 1,321 to 789.

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 on 01799 510510 or email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online. Visit 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. Uttlesford's current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.

Do you agree with this? Yes No

If you wish to add a comment, please do so below:

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 2016 survey sought the views of residents and stakeholder groups as to whether this stance is generally supported and should be continued into the 2017/18 financial year. The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money that town and parish councils receive as some households do not pay the full amount of Council Tax. For the last three years Uttlesford District Council has provided grants to town and parish councils to make up the difference. Additional sections of the survey asked for feedback on this approach and of the implications for claimants arising from central government benefit reforms. The results are given below.

Results actuals

Questionnaire responses

NB In a number of instances respondees who answered “Yes” to a question also added a comment in the box allocated to the 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.

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
Total number of Paper submissions:	1115 (92.45%)
Total number of web submissions:	91 (7.55%)
Total number of submissions:	1206 (100%)

Headline question	Result counts (percentage)
<p>Q1 The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. Uttlesford’s current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.</p> <p>Do you agree with this?</p> <p>If you wish to add a comment, please do so.</p>	<p>Yes 1098 (93.5%)</p> <p>No 76 (6.5%)</p> <p>145 comments received</p>
<p>Q2 For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £39 of Council Tax each year.</p> <p>The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £340,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £5,100.</p> <p>Do you agree that the council should keep the rate at 12.5% for a fourth year?</p> <p>If you wish to add a comment, please do so.</p>	<p>Yes 824 (71.6%)</p> <p>No 326 (28.4%)</p> <p>247 comments received</p>
<p>Q3 In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area.</p> <p>The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. For the last three years the council has provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. In 2016/17 this cost £154,000. The council proposes to reduce this grant by 50% next year. The table on the opposite page shows how much each parish received in 2016/17 and how much they would have received if the grant had been reduced by 50%. It would be up to each parish/town council to decide</p>	<p>Continue to pay the full grant 729 (63.8%)</p> <p>Reduce the grant by 50% 413 (36.2%)</p>

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
<p>if they wished to cover the shortfall in grant by increasing their part of the Council Tax.</p> <p>Do you think the council should:</p> <p>Continue to pay the full grant</p> <p>Reduce the grant by 50%</p> <p>If you wish to add a comment, please do so.</p>	<p>166 comments received</p>
<p>Q4. As part of central government’s benefit reforms, rules are being changed for housing benefit and universal credit (two other types of benefit people can receive). The council is proposing to make the same changes to LCTS. By doing this, the council aims to make the LCTS system easier to understand for claimants as the criteria for all these different benefit schemes will be the same.</p> <p>The proposals are:</p> <p>a. Reduce the time a claimant can be absent from the United Kingdom and continue to receive LCTS, from 13 weeks to 4 weeks. Do you agree?</p> <p>b. Reduce the period for backdating a claim from 6 months to 1 month. Do you agree?</p> <p>c. Removal of the family premium (an additional payment to people with children) for all</p>	<p>Yes 1066 (90%) No 118 (10%)</p> <p>Yes 842 (71.4%) No 338 (28.6%)</p> <p>Yes 712 (60.7%)</p>

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
<p>new working age applicants.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>d. Limit the number of children within the claim to a maximum of two (so even if a claimant has three or more children they will only receive LCTS payment based on having two children).</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>e. Remove the severe disability premium (extra money paid to a severely disabled person to assist in employing a carer), if the claimant's carer already receives the carer's element through universal credit.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>f. Remove the work related activity element for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>If you wish to add a comment about any of these proposed changes, please do so.</p>	<p>No 461 (39.3%)</p> <p>Yes 936 (78.8%) No 251 (21.2%)</p> <p>Yes 502 (42.6%) No 676 (57.4%)</p> <p>Yes 613 (59.3%) No 421 (40.7%)</p> <p>206 comments received</p>
<p>Q5 Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme</p>	<p>96 comments received</p>
<p>Q6 Postcodes data entered</p>	<p>1177</p>
<p>Q7 Are you in receipt of LCTS?</p>	<p>No 1079 (92.1%)</p> <p>Yes 93 (7.9%)</p>

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
Q8 If you in receipt of LCTS are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carers)?	Yes 75 (80.6%) No 18 (19.4%)

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 to seek specific views. The 2015 consultation for the 2016-17 scheme adopted a new format with wider ranging questions designed to more accurately gauge public opinion. Whilst not directly comparable, the 2016 consultation for the 2017-18 scheme in part revisits a number of elements of the 2015 survey, principally Q.1-2, in order to ascertain if there has been a move in public opinion.

Local Council Tax Support Priorities:

The basic tenant 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. In December 2012, following public consultation, the Council adopted an LCTS scheme which included protection for pensioners (a mandatory requirement for all schemes) but added further protection for disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income. Respondents indicated a marked preference for the continuation of this discretionary element with 93.5% supporting ongoing protection within LCTS for vulnerable people 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 has been continued across the 2015/16 and 2016/17 schemes and represents the most generous support package in Essex. The cost to the Council of keeping the rate at 12.5% during the forthcoming year would be approximately £340,000. Just under three quarters of residents (71.6%) 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. In 2016/17 this cost £154,303. The Council has proposed to reduce this grant by 50%, down to £77,152, from 2017/18 leaving each parish/town council to decide if they wish to cover the shortfall in grant by increasing their precept. Whilst there was a reasonable level of support for Uttlesford District Council continuing to support the town/parish councils, a significant minority (36.2%) indicated that they would be happy to see the grant reduced by half.

A subsequent section of the consultation sought to ascertain the current views of residents on forthcoming governmental reforms relating to housing benefit and universal credit. Uttlesford District Council is proposing to make the same changes to the LCTS. By doing this, the Council is aiming to make the LCTS system easier to understand for claimants as the criteria for all these different benefit schemes will be the same. Across all proposals there was a general level of approval voiced by residents, though there were variations in support for the different propositions. Nine in ten people (90%) supported the recommendation to reduce the time a claimant can be absent from the United Kingdom and continue to receive LCTS, from 13 weeks to 4 weeks. A further 71.4% approved of the move to also reduce the period for backdating a claim from 6 months to 1 month, whilst just 60.7% agreed with the suggested removal of the family premium (an additional payment to people with children) for all new working age applicants. A much higher level of backing (78.8%) was evident for a contingent limit on the number of children within the claim being pegged at a maximum of two. By comparison, respondents were very much against any proposal to remove the severe disability premium with almost six in ten (57.4%) indicating that they did not agree with any

such move. An almost similar level of support (59.3%), though, was achieved for the final proposal which posited the removal of the work related activity element for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants.

A number of question points offered consultees the chance to further expand on their responses in an open text box. These additional comments are reported verbatim as part of Appendix 1.

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 2017 to March 2018.

Following on from the successful consultation exercise run in 2015, the LCTS survey for the 2017-18 scheme was included 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 15 August to 30 September 2016. 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 employed, 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.

1115 responses were received

- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the Council's website from 15 August to 30 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform.

91 responses were received

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, 1115 paper responses had been received and a further 91 online submission were registered. This represents a 10.7% increase in overall submissions on the previous year. 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

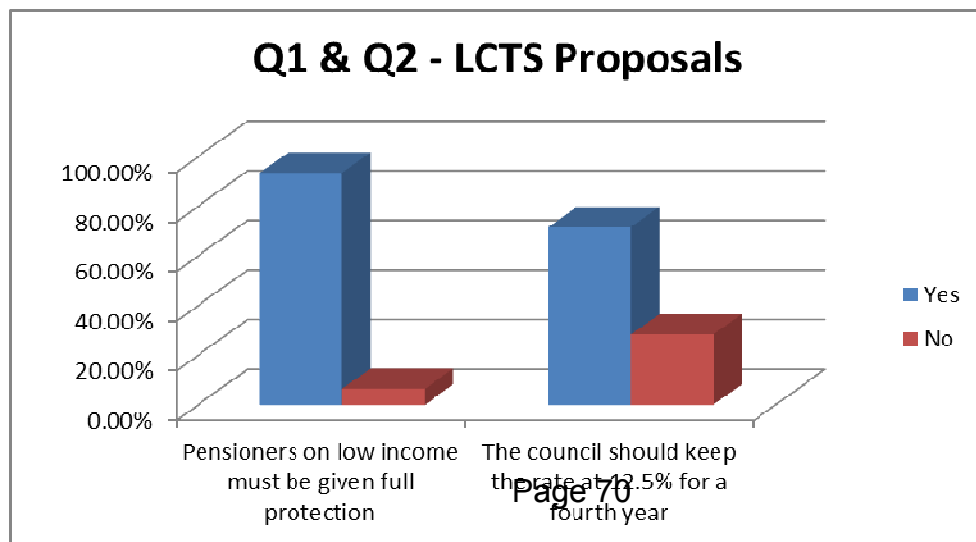
Survey results across all streams

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

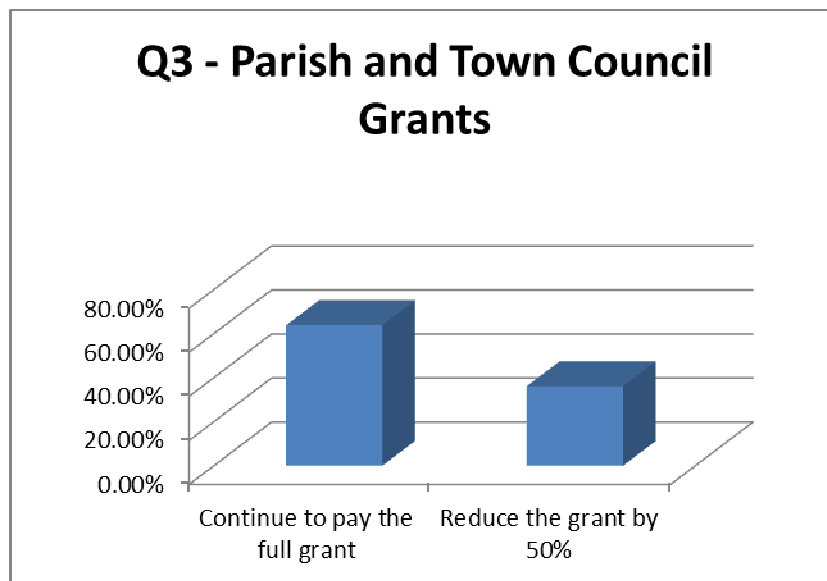
LCTS substantive questions

This analysis comments on the responses received across both consultation channels. A further section then makes reference to the previous consultation and identifies trends. 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 and the district wide consultation for the 2016/17 scheme.

Q1 Protecting pensioners and disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income saw 93.5% support with only a 6.5% 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, carers and blind people. Although only 76 people considered that this additional support should be withdrawn, some 145 respondents chose to make a comment. These comments ranged from support for pensioners who wish to remain independent to concerns that some disabled people might be well enough off to pay Council Tax at a full rate.

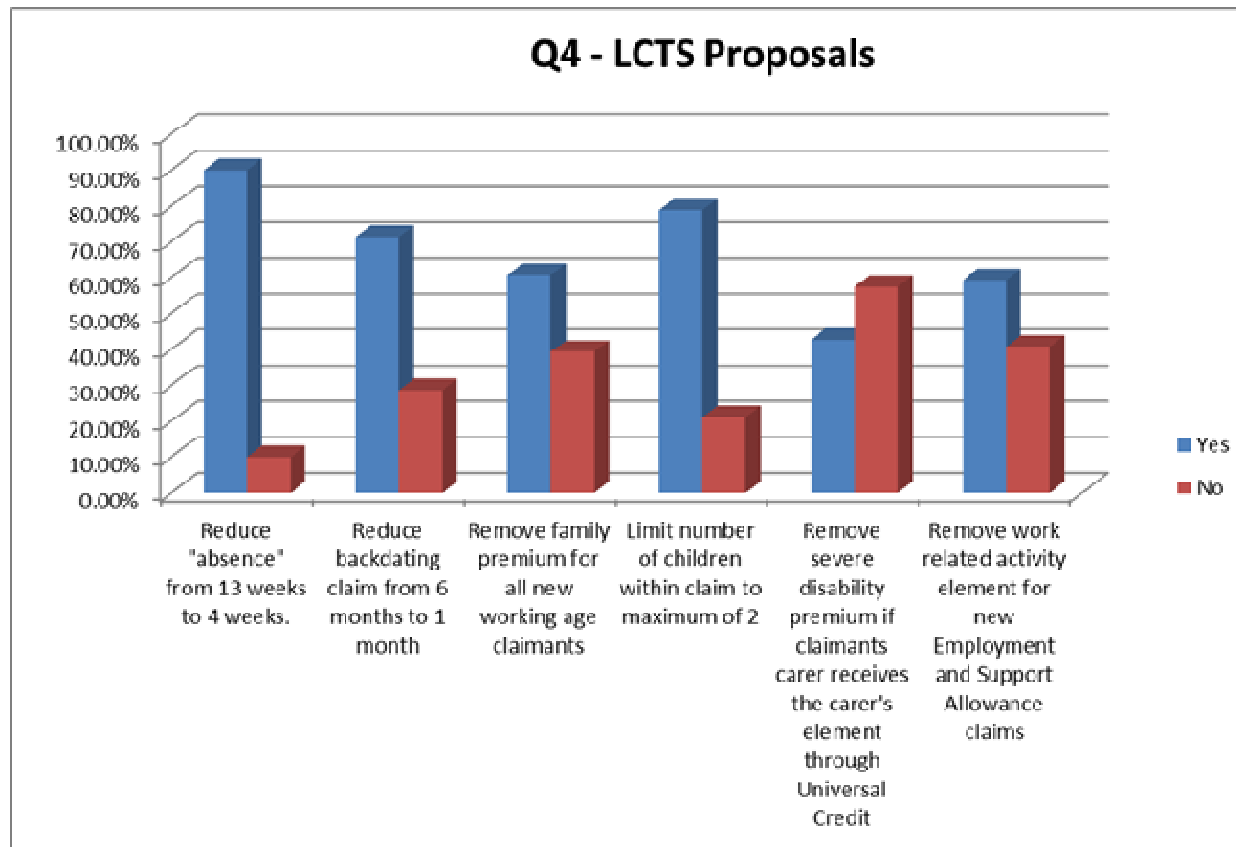


Q2 Maintaining the level at which non-vulnerable LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay Council Tax at 12.5% for a fourth year was supported by 71.6% of respondees. Those who answered this question were invited to supply additional comments on this aspect of the scheme with 247 people taking this opportunity to record their opinions. Again views were wide ranging, with quite a few respondees suggesting the rate a LCTS recipient should pay might be increased. Generally these responses proposed a rise to 15% to 20%, others made more generalised comments such as 'Bring rate in line with other councils. Uttlesford is the lowest band'.



Q3 Supporting parish and town councils to ensure that they do not lose money was backed by 63.8% of those that answered this question. This represents a significant melting away of support since the previous survey when the proposal was supported

by 93.5%. Some 413 people supported a 50% reduction in the grant that Uttlesford District Council gives to town and parishes, though it is clear from the open text comments that there may be some further support for a less stringent reduction. Comments left by those who wished to quantify their responses included ‘Why not reduce it by 25%?’ and ‘50% reduction is too big’. Some, though, were less supportive of the system just offering more pithy retorts such as ‘Parish Councils are a waste of time’.



Q4 As part of central government's benefit reforms, rules are being changed for housing benefit and universal credit (two other types of benefit people can receive). The Council is proposing to make the same changes to LCTS. By doing this, the Council aims to make the LCTS system easier to understand for claimants as the criteria for all these different benefit schemes will be the same. Consultees were asked to respond to a portfolio of six proposals and then to add, if they so wished, any general comments. Generally, support was high for all of the proposals with, for example, 90% of people who answered the question supporting the suggestion to reduce the time a claimant can be absent from the United Kingdom and continue to receive LCTS, from 13 weeks to 4 weeks. Only one proposal did not meet with public approval, this being the initiative to remove the severe disability premium (extra money paid to a severely disabled person to assist in employing a carer), if the claimant's carer already receives the carer's element through universal credit. Here just 42.6% of people agreed, with a majority 57.4% registering their disapproval. This was mirrored in the open text comments with statements such as 'Carers already receive a low allowance so cannot afford to lose any amount' being received.

A further trend noted from the open text comments, both in relation to Q4 and in general (as reported at Q5) is that many respondents continue to feel confused by the complexities of the LCTS scheme. Comments such as 'I do not understand what the implications would be here. e) I do not understand the implications of this situation' and 'Regarding e and f above – do not have enough knowledge regarding these benefits to make a comment either way' were not uncommon responses. Indeed some 26.4% of those who left a text response to Q4 voiced some level of understanding of the full implications of the proposals put forward.

Q5 Respondee were invited to make any additional observations on the scheme and 96 people chose to take up this option offering a range of opinions, from general comments on the delivery of the survey, 'Think this form could have been more user friendly – lots of figures but not much explanation as to the consequences of each decision. Surely each case can't be as black and white as you suggest - 4c and d for instance?' to 'Please don't stop the financial assistance scheme in rent and council tax'. It is clear that in spite of the LCTS scheme having been in operation for a number of years that there is still a general level of

confusion amongst the public. Comments in this section were indicative of this, though respondees had obviously attempted to complete the form – ‘More information regarding ‘LCTS’ would be helpful!’ and ‘What is a LCTS Scheme?’ are just a few examples.

Q6 Although 1206 responses were received via the paper and online surveys, only 1177 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 the 1172 people who answered this question 93 indicated that they were in receipt of LCTS. This represents 7.9% of those who replied.

Q8 In relation to the previous question 80.6% of those in receipt of LCTS, some 75 people in total, noted that they considered themselves to be in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer). AS a group these respondents represent just 6.4% of the 1172 people who answered question 7.

Survey trends 2016/17 versus 2017/18 schemes across all streams

A comparison is made between the results of consultation run in 2015 for the 2016/17 scheme and that run in 2016 for the 2017/18 scheme. A direct correlation of any responses is only reported here where the same question was asked in both surveys.

Overall the response rate to the survey has increased by 10.7%, rising from 1089 in 2015 to 1206 submissions in 2016. Across the two delivery streams, though, there are some differential rates of return with a nearly 3% jump in web submissions. Although still very much the non-preferred route for the majority of consultees, online responses this year accounted for 7.5%. This is perhaps indicative of the aging demographic of the district where residents still feel happiest completing a paper questionnaire rather than utilising an online resource.





Support for protecting pensioners from the implications of the scheme remains high, only dropping by 1.7% from 95.2% to 93.5%. The number of comments received in relation to this question has, though, risen significantly from 90 to 145. A further question asking residents to express agreement or disagreement with the proposal that the Council should keep the rate at 12.5% was asked in both the 2015 and 2016 surveys. Approval levels for this course of action are still high but have slipped by 6.3% in the past 12 months, down from 77.9% to 71.6%. Supporting comments dropped just marginally from 250 to 247.




Approval for continued support for the town/parish element of the LCTS scheme has also slumped. This has dropped significantly from 93.5% in 2015 to 63.8%, a tumble of 29.7%. As with the first question the number of comments received has risen significantly, this time from 90 to 166.

Question 4 dealt with government benefit reforms and forthcoming amendments to rules. As this is a new section, no direct comparison can be made with results obtained in 2015.





As in the previous year, repondees were invited to make any further observations in a free text box. This has dropped from 123 to 96. Given that overall there has been an increase in the number of comments appended to questions 1 through to 3 there would seem to be a general trend in people focusing their responses rather than waiting to add them in a final catch-all box.

With regard to the basic profiling carried out at Q6 to Q8 for the survey, the general geographical spread of those responding is much the same as in 2015. There was also, as in 2015, an opportunity for consultees to indicate if they are in receipt of LCTS. A slightly higher proportion, 92.1% up from 90.3% noted that they are claiming the benefit, though a smaller proportion consider themselves to be in a protected group.

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)		Trend
	2016/17 scheme	2017/18 scheme and trend	
Total number of paper submissions:	1042 (95.7%) 47	1115 (92.45%) 91	
Total number of web submissions:	(4.3%) 1089 (100%)	(7.55%) 1206 (100%)	
Total number of submissions:			
Headline question	Result counts (percentage)		
Q1 The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. Uttlesford's current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income. Do you agree with this? If you wish to add a comment, please do so.	Yes 979 (95.2%) No 49 (4.8%) 90 comments received	Yes 1098 (93.5%) No 76 (6.5%) 145 comments received	 
Q2 For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £39 of Council Tax each year.	Yes 800 (77.9%) No 227 (22.1%)	Yes 824 (71.6%) No 326 (28.4%)	

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
<p>The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £340,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £5,100.</p> <p>Do you agree that the council should keep the rate at 12.5% for a fourth year?</p> <p>If you wish to add a comment, please do so.</p>	<p>250 comments received</p>	<p>247 comments received</p>	
<p>Q3 In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area. The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. For the last three years the council has provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. In 2016/17 this cost £154,000. The council proposes to reduce this grant by 50% next year. The table on the opposite</p>	<p>Yes 946 (93.5%)</p> <p>No 66 (6.5%)</p> <p>90 comments received</p>	<p>Continue to pay the full grant 729 (63.8%)</p> <p>Reduce the grant by 50% 413 (36.2%)</p> <p>166 comments received</p>	 

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
<p>page shows how much each parish received in 2016/17 and how much they would have received if the grant had been reduced by 50%. It would be up to each parish/town council to decide if they wished to cover the shortfall in grant by increasing their part of the Council Tax.</p> <p>Do you think the council should:</p> <p>Continue to pay the full grant</p> <p>Reduce the grant by 50%</p> <p>If you wish to add a comment, please do so.</p>			

Q5 Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme	123 comments received	96 comments received	
Q6 Postcodes data entered	1014	1177	
Q7 Are you in receipt of LCTS?	No 909 (90.3%) Yes 98 (9.7%)	No 1079 (92.1%) Yes 92 (7.9%)	
Q8 If you in receipt of LCTS are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	Yes 83 (91.2%) No 9 (9.9%)	Yes 75 (80.6%) No 18 (19.4%)	

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. Uttlesford's current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income. Do you agree with this?

Lots of OAP's and disabled have a lot of money and are well off.

I do not see why pensioners should benefit from this scheme. There may be a case for disabled people and carers, but including them in a scheme designed to "help people into work" is just another example of the chaotic way that support is managed!

It should be means tested for pensioners.

Difficult to understand what the financial implication is of this to either the council or the pensioners/disabled?!

Many carers and others on low incomes have well-paid alternative jobs and on which they usually don't pay tax. Most own a car which I can't afford to do.

However if the carer and the disabled person share the same house their joint income should be taken into consideration.

Although there is no reason at all why pensioners should be protected - should be means tested.

Don't assume that all pensioners are on low incomes.

What is considered to be a low income.

Yes I agree to a certain amount. I just think that a lot of these cases should be looked at a lot deeper.

There must be sufficient checks to ensure disabled people are continually disabled.

I agree for this year, but the simpler that overall provision for welfare support, the better. For next year, the benefits for the disabled and carers on a low income should be examined to establish whether these in fact provide adequate support without the additional element of LCTS.

Not if they have big bank balances.

Pensioners on low income should be helped.

I agree completely about all three groups described above, provided they are on low incomes. However there are instances where people are allegedly on low incomes, who disappear on holidays annually, still smoke and attend clubs regularly. This type of defrauding needs more investigating.

Within reason, but not at a level that would disadvantage other council tax payers. This level should be in line with other local authorities as a different mix of people will require spending in different areas e.g. recreational facilities.

Depends of how much are the income. If the person have a low income it is ok, but if not, the case will need to be studied.

There is to much abuse of the system. Genuine cases should have help. Charlatans need to be weeded out as they are taking away from the real genuine claims many that are in need get missed.

As long as these people are really on low income.

Your q is ambiguous! I agree with the Uttlesford position.

Councils should not walk away from their social responsibilities to line their C.E.O's pockets!

They should all be protected if necessary means testing should apply.

Some pensioners and the disabled have high levels of disposable income.

Agree

I also would like to see low income working single parents having a discount in proportion to what income under £20k they earn.

I disagree with the whole basis of the LCTS scheme. The explanation given above seems to regard the reduction in the number receiving LCTS as a virtue - I say it is the opposite. ALL those on low income, not just pensioners, carers and the disabled, should be given access to the scheme. I write as a "pensioner" myself and would be prepared to pay a higher council tax myself to protect all those on a low income.

The extension to protect disabled on a low income along with carers in similar circumstances is both morally and financially the right thing to do. People/society should be judged on how it supports its most vulnerable - well done.

I agree fully that pensioners on a low income as myself should be given full protection as the cost of living keeps going up, it gets a lot harder to manage.

All vulnerable household groups should be protected.

who defines "low income"? Is it nett or gross? Does it take a/c of cost of necessary support eg medical care?

I am unable to comment on most of the questions. See 4 only

No idea. I don't understand the implications of this scheme as referred to in the questions

We must protect the most vulnerable in our society.

As long as disability has been reassessed on regular basis.

It would seem from figures overleaf that Uttlesford is particularly protective of the named group.

What is considered the threshold of income for pensioners?

This should only be the case if born and paid NI etc tax in UK for last 3 to 5 years.

Those who wish to work at retiring age should be encouraged to do so. They so often have a stronger work ethic than many younger people.

As long as all claimants are genuine and have been fully checked and verified.

They should do that to keep people safe!

Pensioners should be fully protected and be able to have the council tax at no charge.

It is vital that all vulnerable people are protected, especially pensioners and the disabled, visually impaired etc.

It depends on the individual as to their background and history. Some people have spent their money or wasted it during their working past. This can be why they are on a low income. Some are just carefree individuals who do not save but keep any savings below £3,000 to get the maximum claims possible. Why should they benefit.

And as someone who can afford to pay council tax, I believe those like me should subsidise this.

I have never heard of this LCTS scheme but it sounds like a good idea. Pensioners and particularly disabled ones need all the help they can get as I have found.

I fear that not all low income pensioners and disabled people and carers will fill in form and therefore not show an accurate assessment. There has not been any publicity about the form and how important it is to fill it in and the outcome won't show a true percentage of disadvantaged in the district that has contributed to the survey.

Minor disabilities that do not cause impacts to income should not be covered.

I had full support as low income and low rate personal income payment from EHDC. I moved into Essex area and find this is no longer automatic support. Instead I am asked and told "Do you have a room specific for a wheelchair"! My disability (so far) does not include use of wheelchair. There are many disabilities as this for PIP.

Surely there is no question of changing this policy? Monstrous.

It is very important that the elderly and people who have a disability is protected because some of the people with a disability are not able to work.

PROVIDED that disabled people and carers are genuinely looked after and have a reasonable quality of life.

I am a disabled pensioner, after a 40 year working life on a farm. Over recent years the government has made quite a reduction in our, that is my wife and I, our living standards. The assistance that UDC has helped us with is invaluable and a safety barrier against extreme poverty. I do fear that amongst young and healthy, working people that there is not too much sympathy with the plight of elderly disabled pensioners and until you are such, then that is understandable. We need help.

What a waste of the excessive amount of council tax all this **** is.

I am very fortunate that although I am a pensioner (and pay no tax) I am not on a low income, but those pensioners who have only their pensions to live on must find it very difficult to make ends meet.

On balance yes, this in line with government policy to minimise the liabilities and obligations of the poorest - off in society. However, how does one weigh a pensioner who has run down his assets and is capable of work, against one who has always struggled financially in life and deserves his dues in later life? It's a hard call.

It is important to do so if you are a pensioner or disabled you still pay FULL VAT on most things if changed if change to be made could someone look in to this problem little hope but the problem is REAL.

Who could possibly object! One mans cut back is another persons job loss!!

Be very careful before equating or linking Uttlesford's response to government decisions, and the 'Government's' decisions themselves - the motives may be quite different. It says above: "the governments aim of the reforms" - as if this were accepted as the case. The government's 'aims' may be quite, quite different - and certainly nothing to do with 'helping' people into work! (by the way, it should be FOR the reforms, not OF - very poor grammar!)

I agree to Uttlesford's scheme of protecting disabled people and carers on low incomes.

Paving stones and man hole outside shops (indian restaurant) Great Dunmow High Road, are dangerous and a severe trip hazard, these have been reported but no action taken.

Why is it that 2 sisters living together on *****, pay little or no rent or council tax, have seven dogs and three cats to feed. Their income is more than some couples both working and pay full rent and council tax. Does this seem fair to you, it sure does not to me. They both also smoke, other people are not able to afford to smoke let alone have any pets.

I didn't understand the question!

I'm sorry, but although I am a university graduate, I feel unable to complete this form. It has not been explained on this what the consequences of completing this will mean to the area and to residents. I feel this is a paper exercise in consultation and not a true consultation.

I think there should be a caveat on pensioners - in line with the removal of the spare room subsidy. If low income pensioners are occupying above CT band A/B and the property is under-occupied they should NOT receive LCTS. I agree that disabled people and carers on a low income should be protected - but not passported so that LCTS acts as a disincentive to work. And why can't we extend to lone-parents on a low income?

What Scheme? Any scheme is unknown to me.

Only to pensioners, disabled and carers.

I feel that provision should be wealth based not income based. This is not a suggestion that provision should not be provided to those with assets, or that, for instance, a house someone strove years to acquire should be seized - work needs to be encouraged, but maybe state support could be levied against an estate upon death and assets frozen as in a CCJ until that point.

Agree with above and would want this to continue into new scheme.

I agree if you put into practice and be honest.

I believe persons falling into the categories above have few choices about their incomes and earning potential so it is right that they are protected from welfare reforms, i.e. government reductions to the welfare budget.

Uttlesford is one of the more affluent areas in Essex. We should be able to look after those who are in need or less fortunate.

Without this protection we would be extremely much poorer. I didn't ask for the illness to be so bad, and my carer looks after me. Without available support we would be even worse.

These groups of people deserve support like this as their lives are more difficult than most peoples.

With the bedroom tax, this is causing hardship to many people including ourselves (£110 per month) in receipt of disabilities income the figure above hits very hard! and comes straight out of our benefits - SCRAP IT!!

However, there should be rigorous checks to ensure those who state they are disabled, and carers, actually meet the criteria.

There should be more education for people in 50s to plan for retirement. I would not want any pensioner left in a difficult situation, this is leaving it too late. Help is needed earlier.

Having been a carer on my own - whilst I myself have a disability - looking after a disabled child, I have had to give up a career and income and paid my taxes into the 'system'. I now rely on the protection to disabled people and this must be maintained to all those who require it. The council could NOT afford to pay carers and parents for the care, protection and teaching they provide to vulnerable individuals.

Every month our real money goes less and less but very hard to get more help.

Financial assistance to low income pensioners will help them stay independent and in control of their lives.

Banning vans from council encourages fly tipping. If your dog fouls £1,000 fine. If you fly tip £200 fine should be other way round.

I would qualify my answer by saying that there are a number of people who make no attempt to save for retirement during their working life so care needs to be taken to subsidise them at the expense of those who have made an effort to save.

We need to protect the elderly and the disabled as they are the most vulnerable in our community and deserve our support.

Provided it does not go to benefit cheats.

Please continue to protect and help those who need it. We will all be pensioners one day and equally an awful illness could hit anyone of us at any given moment. Caring for a loved one is traumatic let alone having to worry about money.

Yes protect disabled people.

I believe severely disabled people on a low income should be protected.

Yes pensioners and disabled people get full benefits as they suffer enough as it is with health problems and many of us are on very low incomes and sometimes go without heating or food just so we can pay our bills.

As a pensioner on a low income I have to depend on my savings that I have saved through my working life. I need all the financial support I can get and often feel that the government forget about the elderly especially those like myself who live on their own.

No one on a low income should pay anything.

There should be a very comprehensive examination of claimants to ensure that they are entitled to the correct amount support.

Without full details it is hard to know what this means. However, it seems reasonable to protect pensioners if their income is poor.

As long as they are not taking the Micky.

Of course if pensioners (of which I am one) Are on low income they must have support - Prices - keep going up - our income hardly moves.

People who have disabilities are not themselves disabled, but do need (and merit) support to help them to manage their problems and live as independently as possible. 2. 'Carers' covers a range of situations. Some give support to help their people live independently, even to be able to work; some carers provide full-time care; some carers are employed professionally, often part-time from choice. These different circumstances need different types/levels of care/protection.

The government welfare system - to help people into work and support the most vulnerable. NO THEY DUMP THESE VULNERABLE PEOPLE NO HELP NO ADVICE NO MONEY FACT!! BUT LOOK AFTER EVERYONE ELSE!!

If people are severely handicapped - they need help always.

Council has to be much more precise on the phrase. "Full protection" - see how much.

I agree with this, because what other option do they have very little money?? I think they have put enough money in over the years, they should be exempt from this scheme. I'd like to think my council tax would be helping vulnerable people.

I agree with the scheme but find that not enough is allowed for full time residents and ex worker who were born and bred in this country.

Are they all British citizens?

Low income - no income - we don't get pay rises - we just get threatened about disability payments - lowering the pension and disability rates get rid of bus passes? (we don't have a car)

I think it is absolutely appalling that you are, targeting the elderly and disabled in order to make cuts. Most elderly have worked hard all their lives, and I'm sure would like to continue to do so! Some cannot even afford to heat their houses!! Disabled people would also like to work, but are unable to! So STOP taking away from the most vulnerable, and giving to the work-shy parasites with 4 kids, by 4 different fathers, who can and should be working!!

These people have little control over their income and should therefore be protected.

Depends whether or not the scheme would benefit them.

Any person in need on a low income deserves protection, even if it means the better off (including myself) paying more.

We are living in a wealthy area and should support pensioners on low incomes and disabled people. This is a mark of a civilised and compassionate society and there is no excuse in Great Britain in the 21st century not to carry out this responsibility for those who need some help from those who can afford it.

We must support all vulnerable groups.

A lot of elderly people had low paid jobs early in their lives. Why not give as much help as possible. Uttlesford Council are very good.

Why do pensioners have to pay income tax when they pay well over £500 per month in rent and Council Tax. Apologies, my child has drawn on this.

To make the right decision it would be helpful to know what a low income is.

The mark of a good society is how it cares for the weakest and most vulnerable.

Pensioners and disabled on low incomes are important - probably more important is small children who should NOT be going to school hungry as we are not told some poor children are (going to school) hungry in Uttlesford. There are an awful lot of very wealthy people living in Uttlesford who are mainly excellent - good people.

Provided that the claimants are genuine.

Pensioners, disabled people and carers should always be protected as they are the most in need of any support they can get.

Not sure to say 'yes' which I would do to support disabled and carers. However how do benefits play a part in level of 'income'?

Everybody on a low income needs support, whether they are a pensioner or working age.

See comment at part 2

Everyone with a low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme.

Obviously pensioners on a low income must be given full protection but so also do disabled vulnerable people need full protection - something the government and local authorities seem to forget!!

What you are doing is calculated to sow divisiveness in a recent article in the evening standard Clegg, who is partly to blame for this said: - "the generations are not at war with each other" not yet, but thanks to you and your kind things are heading that way. Still, of the two most to blame one has gone to the back benches, the other out of the commons altogether, good, serves them right.

They have enough struggles without having financial hardship too.

The Government then proposes to hitting people financially when they are down. I am happy to live in a caring community with the current councillors.

All people on a low income should be given full protection from the implications of this scheme, not just the old and disabled.

Pensioners on low income should have help with their payments.

Older people who are vulnerable need to receive all the help we can give them. Most of them have worked hard all their lives and frequently did not have an opportunity to save for their old age.

Two questions in one but only one answer option!

After checking they are genuine.

It may help pensioners remain in their own homes for a longer period of time.

The council need to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

Provided that the “lower income” is set at a realistic level and that the figures provided by the individual are correct and represent their total income.

Everyone should pay a share - plenty of people on a “low income” don't qualify for benefits so won't be exempted.

It is essential we support vulnerable people and those who care for them.

Only if pensioners/disabled/carers pay 20% tax or less - NOT if pay 40%

We once claimed Council Tax Benefit but made an error in completing the form. The letter sent to us by Uttlesford Council made us almost suicidal and we vowed we would never claim it again even if we were desperate.

I was employed as a caseworker for the Citizens Advice Bureau and still work in the charity sector for a disabled charity - it is important to protect those groups on disability benefits and pensioners. What with the new PIP assessment being 'stricter' than the old DLA system, these claimants are the most needy and vulnerable.

This question is lazily phrased and impossible to answer without prior knowledge of the 'implications of this scheme' which you make no attempt to spell out. However, given that the Government guarantees pensioners a minimum income, and given that pensioners are the fastest-growing group in society, and are often much better off in terms of assets like property than young people, it is no longer realistic to protect every 'low income' pensioner from economic forces. Also, what do you call a 'low income' for a pensioner, disabled person or carer? As I say, the question is so woolly and vague that it defies an accurate response, but in general I disagree that pensioners and other vulnerable groups must or can be totally protected from the impact of LCTS when other sources of State funding such as Universal Credit are designed to make financial allowances for those facing hardship.

It's a no brainer people, low income pensioners cannot afford the price of council tax..... council tax is another way for the government to spend on a jolly up!!!!

In principle there is no issue with this but care needs to be taken not to open the scheme to fraudulent claims

How do all residents know if Uttlesford gives full protection from the implications of this scheme. This is for Uttlesford to set out how they comply. do you comply? what do you mean by full protection? have you made any changes? how have you justified these changes ?

No one should need a top up to their Pensioners as they have had the same chance to add an extra top up to the government pension, they just used their money for holidays and cars etc.

Given that this protection is provided for those in most need, I am strongly in favour of the scheme remaining at least at present levels.

It should protect all people who cannot afford their council tax but it doesn't.

There should be some form of assessment or criteria not all individuals (pensioners or disabled persons) should automatically be eligible for LCTS. For example those that spent rather than saved for their old age. Provided they are genuine

Responses received

Q2 For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £39 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £340,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £5,100.

Should the council keep the rate at 12.5% for a fourth year?

Responses received

15%

Why should Uttlesford be a better place than the rest?

Uttlesford seems to be out of step with everyone else.

Why is Uttlesford again using 12.5% the lowest in Essex should be increased sharply to at least 20%.

There should be a standard 20% for all of Essex.

It is unjustifiably low. We should at least be the average of Essex authorities. 20-25% seems fair.

Uttlesford should increase the figure to 20%.

Raise it to fall in line with the average above over a set period.

I think this should be taken by what are you live in.

There is no logic in having here the lowest rate in Essex. The Uttlesford rate should be 20%, in line with Braintree and Brentwood. But I note that in the most deprived Districts (Castle Point, Thurrock etc.) the rate is in fact higher than in the more affluent Districts.

That is excellent going, but if there are matters that require urgent attention I could well understand it having to be increased, but not into layabouts pockets.

The minimum tax in Uttlesford should be similar to other councils in Essex ie 20%.

Increase the percentage to be similar to other Essex Councils. The average is 22,25%. Its fair use this percentage.

We surely can and should maintain this support.

People are still struggling even with this amount.

Reduce it

Keep it

I do not full understand, but I think the council rate of 12.5% should be kept.

Reduce subsidy to 85%

This should be increased by 2.5% = 15%

It should be raised to 20% in line with the majority of other councils.

15% would not be unreasonable percentage

We can see no reason why Uttlesford should contrive to be so out of line in dispensing taxpayers' money. 50% would not be unreasonable.

The council should also consider reducing the rate as the demand is decreasing.

It does not seem to save much money if the minimum is increased and would probably cost more to chase the payment.

Or lower if possible to 10%

Round up to 15% to bring in line a little more with other Essex councils but I believe 20-3-% is too high!

Why do we need to be the lowest?

I would like the rate to be reduced, if possible, but certainly not increased.

However, you have the finer, global picture of need versus cost. So long as Uttlesford's representatives do what is right for the people of Uttlesford based on clear data rather than any government diktat it should be supported. Elected reps are elected to work for us not central government.

The council needs to explain why Uttlesford is so out of line.

For purely selfish reasons keeping the rate low would be great. However for the good of everybody it should be raised and the money saved spend on other services.

We should be proud to have such a low level.

Disgraceful that should have to pay any council tax.

Uttlesford's rate seems to be disproportionately low.

It would help if you stated how much effect this had on the council tax bill for everyone else - I'd guess it's such a small amount that most people would accept it, but I can't make a proper judgement about this without knowing the impact.

This does seem out of line with other Essex councils and could perhaps be raised.

UDC are way below every other council, so increase at least 2.5% per year until you reach 20%.

To bring it up to an 'in line amount' (20) is too much. The saving of £5,100 is minimal but expecting people to find £39 a year could be difficult for them.

As almost the lowest district in Essex, it would rise by 2.5%.

Don't understand the full implication.

Looking at the table it would appear that Uttlesford could combine its protective core with a small increase - say 2.5% - and still be, in this regard, generous.

Uttlesford is a well-off area so should be charged at least like Harlow.

Try eliminating unnecessary expenses i.e. road works that last and not repair again and again. Buses that run turn of light in council offices not in use

15%

The information provided above provides no basis for offering an objective, reasoned view e.g. what % are of the council's overall budget does £340,000 represent, what do the percentages in other councils mean in absolute terms.

You should come into line with other councils 15-20% seems reasonable.

The rate should be increased to be in line with other local councils - closer to 20%.

It should be in line with other councils.

The council should make it even lower.

Disabled people with - demand - to be treated the same as everyone else - they should pay the same, everyone's circumstances are different and many able-bodied people struggle to find money but do not qualify for benefits.

Increase by 2.5%

The council is to be congratulated on keeping this at a low level.

I suggest that the council explore the possibilities of crowdfunding the extra cost. The wealthy of the district will more than likely be happy to give a donation of an amount they themselves wish to give.

Uttlesford's rate of 12.5% is so far below other councils that it should increase to 15-20% to come into line with several of the other Essex councils.

15%

I think the money individuals will save will be more use to them than it will be to the council (or at least it will be put to better use).

Why not make them fully exempt if they really cannot afford to pay.

Inflation has to be noted.

As a resident lucky enough to be able bodied and, though a pensioner, without responsibilities, I would rather pay more myself than see an increase put onto people who cannot afford it.

The about statistics state 'minimum' not 'maximum'? 12.5% of what? I've said yes because it appears to be least very few people will understand the above. Politics!

We need to protect vulnerable people such as those on low pay. The amount of saving for 2.5% to the council is minimal, but the effect of any increase in amount allowed to individuals on low pay is very significant to them.

A gradual increase is more realistic, and hopefully would mean less likelihood of an eventual sudden large increase.

SUBJECT to my answer/comment on the first page. ("PROVIDED that disabled people and carers are genuinely looked after and have a reasonable quality of life")

Pensioners on low incomes should not have their small incomes decreased in any way.

Those in most need have been hit badly enough in recent years.

Think should be 20%

Uttlesford is a fairly wealthy district. If Uttlesford DC needs more income, it should look at re banding homes in Saffron Walden as these properties are banded far too low!

It should be in line with others ie nearer 20% otherwise others are subsidising LCTS recipients even more.

We should be roughly in line with all other Essex Councils ie 20% (staggered over next 3 years 2.5% rise each year)

You don't inform us on how any extra money would be spent.

Uttlesford D C is admirable in its record for assisting the most vulnerable of its people. Uttlesford is a relatively affluent area and its help in helping the poorer members of our society is commendable.

The above para is highly ambiguous. Is the absolute cost at the current rate £340,000 or does the 12.5% cause the £340,000 if the later, then 2.5% increase would save £68k.

The poor and disabled are in need of additional support resultant welfare "reforms".

I would like to know why UDCs rate is so low compared to areas of Essex with greater structured deprivation. Is it simply greater benevolence or is there more to it?

It would be reasonable to increase the % to 15% or 17.5% IF Uttlesford were planning to spend the money on something useful, not on keeping CT low for people with valuable (top 30% of bands) properties.

The rate could increase to 15% but no higher. Ideally it shouldn't increase at all!

Uttlesford is a pleasant place to live BECAUSE we help our weak and poor. It would be better to help them more not less - I'd make this 10%.

Far too complex to work out!

Up it to 15%!

I believe the council must support vulnerable people and families to the maximum possible in their time of need.

An explanation as to why Uttlesford rate is much lower than the others would have been useful!

If possible.

Since the entire region is being wrecked by endless horrible building, the council is obviously lolling in ever increasing amounts of revenue.

Not a good time to be talking about any kind of increase of payments, but better a 2.5% increase now than a greater increase in the not too distant future.

Council Tax should be lowered so that ALL residents pay the full amount for their property. People have a choice of how to spend their money - council tax or lottery ticket or cigarettes!

It is good that Uttlesford is protecting people on low incomes, rather than just copying what other councils are doing.

What ever the figure shows and are boasted about each year, I always end up paying more!

My feelings are that we are ALL expecting bills to go up - maybe 15% would ease the burden as the council - this chart does NOT show incomes/outgoings relative to each council/individual.

Raise to 15%

I don't think the info provided here is sufficient to conclude it should be increased. I would rather any savings were achieved through better targeting. Subject to assurance that provision is well targeted I would be happy to pay more council tax to support those struggling.

What scheme is at a rate of 12.5%?

Increase to 15% not unreasonable.

Increase to 15%.

15% would still be the lowest.

15% would be more appropriate.

With government cuts and cost of living rising those who pay should pay. It's all about community. Some pensioners and the disabled have high levels of disposable income.

Can't see why we are so far out to other councils?

25%

It should increase to allow for an improvements + expansion of services.

Too low. Match other Essex councils average.

Why should Uttlesford's rate be so much lower than other Essex councils? 20% is more realistic.

Suggest a gradual uplift to 20% more in keeping with other councils. Sadly we are lacking xxx in other essential areas which fall under council responsibility e.g. road repairs.

As a pensioner I would struggle to meet the increase charge of £39.

Uttlesford should be more in line with other councils - is it regarded as an achievement to be lowest?

Don't have a clue.

There is less work availability in Uttlesford compared to the other councils name above. Also, wages appear to be lower.

15% would be acceptable.

But please protect those disabled, and pensioners continuing.

To add 2.5% i.e 15% would be acceptable and avoid a possible massive hike in years to come. Set it at 15% for the next 3 years 17/18 18/19 20/21.

Raise to 15%.

How mean is Uttlesford?

Currently the highest discount in Essex. How long can the discount continue without affecting other services. 2.5% will be a small increase.

Perhaps an increase of 2.5% the 1st year we are way behind other councils.

The benefit to the council of increasing the minimum is very small in relation to the whole budget; the increase would have a far greater impact on the individual recipient.

2.5 increase would still be less than other areas.

The average appears to be around 20% which still represents a significant discount. A 20% figure would be fairer to those of us who pay 100%. Current figure is likely to attract those on benefits to the borough.

It would be reasonable to increase the amount payable, gradually to bring it in line with other councils in Essex.

Should be lower to be in line with other councils in the table above.

3.25 increase p.c.m is reasonable.

15% is still one of the lowest levels in the area.

Uttlesford District Council rate should be comparable to other Essex councils.

25% rate is fair.

The council get enough money from all the council tax they collect as the roads don't get repaired properly and the rubbish collected could do with some changes as well.

If possible.

Bring into line with other councils.

We think the rate should be increased to 15% which is more in line with other local authorities.

If this has to be increase at some time in the future it should be increase very gradually at no more that 2.5% in a year. The burdens on the less well of are difficult enough to manage.

Should not be any increase.

A slight increase would seem appropriate as Uttlesford is at the moment right at the bottom of the list.

As Uttlesford's rate is well below the rest, a slight increase is acceptable and sensible.

It should be risen closer in line with other Essex Regions - the average of slightly below.

I do not fully understand the question.

Increase to 20%

We are a wealthy and privileged area and can afford to look after the less well off.

yes

I am pleased that Uttlesford heads the table for care for our less fortunate neighbours. The aim should be to build on our generosity and lower the rate still further - perhaps to 10% initially.

Increase the rate by 2.5% or 5%

Insufficient if done in this country for the poorest/most vulnerable. Uttlesford is a very prosperous area that can easily afford to support those of modest means.

Increase to 20%

Uttlesford should be brought more in line with the other Essex Councils.

I do not think it is appropriate to keep the rate the same if the benefits that we get from the Council tax are going to stay the same or even reduce because of lack of funds. We need more benefits not less.

Uttlesford should move towards this norm, starting at 15% ASAP.

15%

Three years is quite long enough for a freeze. It has left Uttlesford requiring the lowest % of LCTS. I think it risks attracting more potential beneficiaries to live here.

Amount should be in line with similar councils so not to create a haven for benefit claimants.

A small increase would be acceptable.

Increase it to 15%

I would support an increase to 15%

If UDC keeps this up I hope the CAB gets a bigger building because the courts are going to get busy that means more spending so what GAIN!! More and more in dept!!

Otherwise what would it rise to.

The saving of £340,000 is an insufficient reason to reduce this support. This is no a poor area and UDC finances can not support the additional amount. If cabinet disagrees it should at least not eliminate the payment in 2018/19.

Average income are higher here so the council can provide more support than others do.

A modest 2.5% increase would still be on par with Tendring and the lowest rate.

Why is Uttlesford lower than most in Essex?

Times are hard - especially for pensioner so to increase c.tax makes life even more financially difficult.

Up to 17.5%

I do not understand the question but feel we should limit the outlay, however possible, on LCTS.

Perhaps a 1.5% increase?

People should pay a fair rate for the services they receive like all taxpayers. 25% would be a fairer distribution.

I consider an increase of 5% would be reasonable and still offer a good comparison with other Councils.

15% maybe money saved could help low income families towards school travel costs.

The statement made above appears contradictory when read. The first paragraph implies any increase on 12.5% would increase my council tax. The second paragraph implies it costs the council less if the 12.5% is increased. This implies an increase in my council tax either way.

As my previous response. We do not want to have people living in poverty in a supposedly developed world.

I believe a small increase is justified when comparing to other councils.

Good for Uttlesford - I feel proud to live here.

These are very complex questions and the questions seem to be expressed in a manner that suggests political obfuscation which makes the question even more complex!

Reduce, if possible to 10%. There are more houses and businesses than there ever were. So Council should have a greater input of funds from new housing.

What is the equivalent £ paid - this would be a better comparison than %.

All the new build houses in my area. My question is why is my Council Tax still the same rate.

Yes, keep the rate as it is - people who are already struggling, can't afford another £39/£78/£117/£156, or however much is decided to increase.

There should be no question. Pensioners disabled and carers on low income should be given every help available.

Council should absorb entire cost. This should come before all service except those you must provide by law.

It should increase. There is clearly justifiable scope for a small increase if these figures are to be believed.

Uttlesford contains a relatively high proportion of very prosperous households. We can afford to absorb it to alleviate hardship for households where every single pound really makes a difference to their wellbeing.

Sadly, with the expense of the Town Hall repairs and the many needs of the area I don't think they can.

An increase of 1% (or inflation) would not be unacceptable after 4 years. Assuming benefits % has increased in past 4 years.

Uttlesford totally out of step with other Essex councils, why? Average of others is 23% - needs to be increased to at least 20%.

In America you only get out of the state what you have put in. This should be the same for England. Pay Tax and NI for on yr. receive benefit for one year only!

Rate should be similar to other councils at 25%.

The % applied should be increased in line with other L.A.

Increase to at least 20%

15% will still be the lowest 2016/17 increase less than £1 a week. Unfortunately everyone should contribute in keeping UDC costs down.

Increase to 15%

15% should be affordable.

If you do not bring the rate in line with most other councils there will be a perceived draw to really low income families/individuals to the area.

Uttlesford is clearly out of step with other councils in this area increase to 15% in 17/18 should be considered and 17 1/2% the year after.

Rise to 15%

Increase to 15%

I would support a small increase, of say, 5-7.5% as we seem to be the most generous Council by far.

25% Same as others.

Bring it into line with other councils at say 20%

Uttlesford should follow the average (in percentage terms) of all the other councils in Essex. No reason why Uttlesford residents should be treated differently than anywhere else.

UDC rate should be no longer than the next lowest.

Increase to 15% in-line with Tendring.

12.5% is the lowest rate in Essex. To reduce cost to the Council, an increase to at least 15% should be considered.

It would be reasonable to increase it to a rate comparable with other Essex Councils.

Its much lower than all the other councils in the table. My own opinion is that it should be raised to 20%.

15% would still make UDC the cheapest council.

An increase of a further 7.5% would be a suitable increase bringing a total of 20% in line with most other councils.

We should be similar to other council's.

Increase in line with other Essex Councils

25%

20% is a fairer rate to pay and in line with the majority of other councils.

Increase to 20%

Raise to at least 15%, preferably 20%.

Should be at least 20%

Should be around 23%

Rate should be 20%.

UDC is lagging behind other Essex Councils, and should not be seen to encourage people to move here to take advantage.

Reduce to 10% further savings are important to make in an atmosphere of stringent cuts the programme should always aim to reduce to encourage claimants back to work.

Why is Uttlesford's % so much lower than other Essex Councils?

15% would be appropriate to the area.

20% is equitable.

Increase it by 3%

Increase to 15%

The rate should be raised to the average of 20%.

Standardise across the county at 20%

If taxes are spent to support the most vulnerable and the services are provided then those that are able to pay more should and the lower income families should not.

Bring rate in line with other councils. Uttlesford is the lowest band.

Rate should be the same (or broadly the same) across a county. Next lowest is 15%, most 20+%. Take an average.

If you wish to add a comment, please do so below:

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it should be reduced. UDC should not be considering an increase.

Well done Uttlesford - But my Council Tax is easily my biggest monthly bill (by over 66%), and I have NO street lighting, mains drainage, gas or fibre to the house!

However, if it means the Council having to borrow money and getting into debt to do this then it should be considered.

Comparing it with other councils I would agree to a slight increase maybe 15%. I strongly agree with a contribution for council tax - as all the years working for the CAB when I had to do benefit checks and give general/debt advice, I would ask my clients for their council tax amount and there were only a handful of people in all that time that actually knew!

I believe the rate should rise to at least the Essex average of the other councils quoted in the table, and I would propose 20 per cent as a fairer figure. Council tax is already at such astronomical levels that it is only responsible for Uttlesford to stop being a fairy godmother with our money. It is striking that Uttlesford's current rate of 12.5% is roughly half the going rate elsewhere in Essex and a full two thirds less than Castle Point. Why does Uttlesford feel it must be so extraordinarily generous with council tax subsidies? What would be wrong in bringing the council into line with the rest of the county?

25%

Uttlesford appears to have a very low rate at 12.5%, a gradual increase would be appropriate

It should be raised to be brought into line with other councils

It should be brought up to at least the average of Essex councils.

Not if vulnerable and poor people are affected by your proposed cuts. Not if residents are not fully consulted. If I pay a 1% increase this would amount to £3 a month (a cup of coffee) and might help ensure pot holes are repaired and save me the cost of a new wheel, (not tyre) and might help ensure that public services are not closed. Not enough information is provided in Uttlesford life and other media about the services provided and the cuts. The Council is too keen to talk up their services and they should consult more about the challenges of budgets and raising standards.

It should be more comparable to other areas of Essex (which are generally around 20%)

It is time this was reduced.

in this period of austerity and uncertainty about future incomes all residents should share the burden of LCTS and therefore a small increase should be made

% to increase to 20% matching other areas lowest

The government should scrap the scheme and bring back council tax benefit but they would rather the rich got richer and the rest of us get poorer.

Uttlesford should increase its percentage to the average of other Councils - thus, as I understand it, increasing its available funds for other activities that benefit a wider number of residents and probably some more deserving ones.

I think the rate should equate to the average of other councils rates should be increased in line with inflation.

Still seems low in comparison to other councils.

Uttlesford seems far too generous compared to everywhere else in Essex. Uttlesford should raise the rate to 20% at least.

Uttlesford is making a significantly larger contribution than the other Essex councils, which seems excessive in these financially challenging times

Uttlesford's rate should be more in line with other Essex councils but to achieve this the increase should be introduced gradually over a few years.

Q3 In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area.

The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. For the last three years the council has provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. In 2016/17 this cost £154,000. The council proposes to reduce this grant by 50% next year ... It would be up to each parish/town council to decide if they wished to cover the shortfall in grant by increasing their part of the Council Tax.

Do you think the council should:

Continue to pay the full grant / Reduce the grant by 50%

Responses received

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Stop the support

OR 100%

Any sensible governance would devolve power to the lowest level that can use it, even at the expense of "senior" bureaucracies!

Local Councils can increase their parish share accordingly. Residents can then see exactly where the money is going.

This would make the LCTS scheme more comparable with other Councils.

The people who we use the services should pay for them why is the Council supporting the parishes at all?

The Parish Councils do an important job, Uttlesford should therefore support them fully. Not line their own pockets.

Pay full grant

If percentage increased as above P/councils and T/councils would receive more from these households and D/council full grant would reduce.

The council should find the £154,000 by cutting jobs within the council offices. Too many overpaid and underworked people working for the council. Tax money should be only spent on those who really need it - the poor & needy.

Parish councils should consult before choosing to increase their part of the council tax.

Town and parish councils seem an anachronism and should be abolished. Their work could be done by charitable trusts or volunteers.

Why should helping the poor affect parish/town councils.

It's unfair as some areas will have far more LCT recipients - council should continue to pay full grant.

Increase CT for top 2 bands, increase CT on properties empty for 6 months & on 2nd homes to make up shortfall.

Whilst understanding the external financial and political pressures impacting on the UDC, any reduction will have to be made up from somewhere or standards will drop rendering vulnerable people at even greater risk. I'd like to be assured that pressure is being strongly sent back to centre. You represent us - fight for us.

I'm not convinced that the starting point of councils deciding what they need to run services in the first place is a prudent way to budget, and too subjective on local decision makers.

Items 1-3 seem a reasonable way to assist people on low incomes and for the rest of us to help.

The majority of the funding appears to be allocated to the highest % of hardship/high unemployment areas. I suggest you allocate funding to the greatest need on a 100% basis.

Duplication (or multiplication!) of admin for parish councils would be ridiculous.

? Where does Uttlesford get the money to make up the shortfall?

Surely it makes no difference; we, the rate payers, will end up paying in one form or another.

Or wipe it out! Otherwise why bother? Gt Canfield, Langley, Little Chesterford etc are hardly going to be having parties or doing anything constructive with such small amounts of cash.

Otherwise households like myself will bear the brunt (we pay full council tax). Maybe consider reducing by 25% instead.

If grant is reduced, parish councils will have to raise precept. Parishes have a very tight budget. Don't understand as above.

With the small increase suggested (as above), perhaps the full grant could be maintained - or a much smaller reduction than one half!

This is too hard to call! I will go with the council proposal.

It is a disgrace that SWTC have been allowed year on year to spend taxpayers money at will.

Must be stopped, 50% reduction minimum.

A 50% reduction is huge, like a 50% price increase. With inflation, the base rate of general costs being very low, why would UDC impose a 50% hike in reality?

50% is too large a reduction in one go. Having recently had dealings with Essex CC I am at a loss to see exactly where my council tax goes - certainly doesn't benefit the Uttlesford area.

I cannot answer this question easily because I don't know how the £154,000 grant is funded. 1. If it is from central government then a 50% reduction is clearly going to impact council tax payers. 2. If the £154,000 is funded out of general council tax revenue then it will have little net effect on council tax payers.

Why should others pay for some who have never bothered to consider their future. But there are others who perhaps deserve help because of bad health.

Keep all payments for disabled people.

Same as above but at parish level.

Parish councils should calculate on a rough means tested basis, not per home, but by ref to the home's rateable value.

This is a cost that must be borne by the whole area otherwise parishes with a high % of claimants suffer.

Undecided.

We live in a 'wealthy' area and the parish council should be able to cover this shortfall.

The council should pay the full grant to all parish and town councils. They should not try to pass the cost to individual households via the parish/town councils.

Unfair on areas which have more benefit claimants.

Unsure how parish council would cope.

Why not reduce the grant - but by less than 50%. "Every little helps" (Tesco)

Paying full grant - reduction by 50% is too much in one go.

Again I do not understand the ramifications upon the individual, other than you require individuals to pay more.

Uttlesford is generally a relatively wealthy area. However, there are parishes who will have a higher proportion of those on LCTS. Reducing the grant puts more of a burden on those Parishes so would be unfair.

Communities with higher numbers of reduced payment households are usually the very communities which need a helping hand.

Villages are more dependent on grants than many towns in the north of Essex; I would be happy to reduce the subsidy to towns but maintaining for villages in the Uttlesford.

To reduce the grant would seem to favour wealthier areas with fewer recipients of LCTS at the expense of the less well off.

The Parish and town councils in Uttlesford need more money, not less.

If council don't continue to pay full grant this shortfall should be partially offset by item 2 above (increasing LCTS recipients contribution)

Why does Saffron Walden have the highest grant?

Responsibility should be devolved down to the lowest level of competence - and closer to the voter and tax payer.

Most payments are of smallish amounts in absolute terms and it is not appropriate to reduce them by 50% forcing the councils to increase their CT.

A reduction of 50% is appalling. Up to 10% reduction would be acceptable, as long as no further reduction is made the following year.

Since any shortfall can be covered by increasing the CT, this proposed change would be a costly one.

Uttlesford is a pleasant place to live BECAUSE parishes have adequate funds. Grants should NOT be reduced.

Too complex!

If the cut is made it will mean that P/C and T/C will have to charge resident much more by the precept change NO not a good more don't do it.

We must help people in their time of need if we are to be a civilised society.

Continue to pay the grant until more information has been made public and a full discussion has taken place regarding the practical implications of a shortfall in grant to local parish.

Keep as it was.

This money is invariably wasted on self-indulgent luxuries - well, maybe not invariably! - Like noisy carnivals, playgrounds etc. if people want them, let them pay for them!

Incremental reduction maybe.

It would be helpful to receive more information about what this money can be/is spent on.

Trick questions. If the majority say to reduce the grant then Parish Councils will assume they have been given the green light to raise council tax accordingly rather than spending a small budget wisely.

If the Parish increases their part then the overall yearly bill will increase for everyone not just those on low incomes.

Don't know what the grant was used for so don't know the impact of slashing it.

Public transport should be vastly improved in the area if a reduction in the grant is made at the councils expense.

Too complicated to understand!

There is an irreducible number of people who have genuine difficulty with meeting bills. Some illnesses, and mental health problems are in this, where this is an absolute necessity. This group are not "shirkers".

Isn't this swings and roundabouts? Won't we all end up paying?

I fundamentally disagree that those areas with a greater share of low income households should be penalised.

Scheme is unknown to me!

50% reduction is too big.

The burden of finding the 50% difference should be relieved by the district rather than the parish councils.

Allowing the parish/town council to decide devolves the decision to a more local level.

The proposal makes no difference to residents. It simply shifts the responsibility of making an additional charge to parish/town councils. This would seem irresponsible for the district council to take such a decision and leads to less transparency.

Without clearer explanation/information of expenditure of parish/town councils it is difficult to give an informed answer - more detail required for better consultation.

I think the council should use money they have invested and give the people a better deal altogether.

Reduce by 25%

Should continue to pay the full grant especially the low income, disabled, carer.

I would rather the parish councils receive their full allocation of funds, surely saving £77k is fairly insignificant to Uttlesford District Council.

By reducing the grant by 50%, many people in Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden will be affected, especially in the latter, where living costs are already pretty high. I'm pretty sure that council tax rise or cut in some public services will be needed to cover any shortfall, thus impacting even more people.

Just to reiterate said before, financial support is vital.

Reduce by 25%, following year 35%, following year 45%. To do it in one hit is very hard.

Residents could then elect the parish/town council partly based on candidates' policies on charges to households.

If this results in increases in c/tax which in Clavering is extremely high, many pensioners cannot afford any increase, which has already gone up this year.

We have already seen the implications of cuts to residential areas in the countryside, reducing my village will have serious impact that the parish would have to cover.

I am sure if all the local community chipped in towards the remaining 50% it should be able to manage.

Too expensive and complicated to administer.

Neither. Reduce 50% to 25%.

I am concerned that the towns provide services used by villagers eg tourist information centre in Saffron Walden but are not paying to provide them.

This will just move taxation from UDC to parosh in the same way Nat Gov moved it to UDC. Do you really think the public are not aware.

Increase the number of AFFORDABLE homes for people to purchase so the divided cost goes down, or remains the same. Build more homes closer to Audley End Railway Station.

Parish councils should bear a share of the cost.

Some rural areas need the support of Parish Councils much more, as we are generally forgotten about or ignored by ECC, so we need and deserve the full grants. It would be totally unfair to many regions to reduce these payments.

As above.

Not paying the grant simply shifts the burden. Whats the point of that?

I assume the amount to pay/receive in grant will change with those still requiring support or not. These are isolated figures and individual cases will often no doubt depending in other benefits payable.

Leaving parishes to decide smacks of the medieval! Charity for the poor from the church! (Parishes are areas disquieted within the purlieu of a church).

Isn't reducing the grant by 50% rather drastic.

Why not reduce the grant by 30%?

Reducing this grant by 50% seems excessive. I would think a reduction of 15% to 25% would be more acceptable.

No I think if Parish Council need help - they should receive help.

Neither. 50% is an unreasonable %age. Suggest 25-30%.

Again why is this the fault of the vulnerable. Maybe if the UDC looked in house at the waste of money by the way this shambolic outfit runs, you will get this money back!

Parish Councils are taking on increasing responsibilities and they support, if kept at the existing rate, is not excessive at £96,000 once again if halved it should be maintained at that level in 2018/19.

Does this matter? Either way it means a small rise in total Council tax, which we think would be ok.

This would be quite a small increase in Parish Tax.

Depending upon location - councils in some areas need to be individually assessed according to needs required of them.

These Parishes and Town Councils will have to prioritise elsewhere, I have to cut back all the time to pay my full Council Tax!

Do not keep building houses in the district as all villages are becoming too large which makes the roads more busy and it would seem the costs keep going up.

Less grant - less money for maintenance works.

Maybe the parish and town councils should be challenged to find ways of making up the shortfall, or/and encouraging more volunteer activity.

To provide the same quality of service they would almost inevitably have to increase their part of the tax which would cost and make the change immediate as the costs would still come from Council tax payers.

Parish Councils do a very good job. Why destroy what's good.

UDC should (by law) give villages the same benefits as towns or make a grant to each village.

A reduction of 25% would be more acceptable.

I would have liked to see the justification for 50%

If this question and Uttlesford's actions here are accurately expressed and if a rather dense person (like me) understands correctly - then Uttlesford is to be commended greatly.

Parish Councils are a waste of time.

They need the support.

Our local parish council is struggling now, to make ends meet - how does UDC expect them to survive if they cut the grant!!

If you reduce it a Tory council (most of them are) will stick the boot into the poor that is Tory nature.

. Either way, most parish/town council money is spent on administration and staffing and the public see little benefit!

Neither! Could the grant be reduced by less than 50%? It would not be unreasonable for Uttlesford minimum Council Tax to be 15%.

Parish Councils need to do their bit in reducing costs.

As Tax payers we cannot continue to carry everybody its time voluntary or compulsory work should be put into place for all benefits. Too many holes in our system for abuse!

If the grant payment is reduced there must be a corresponding reduction in the UDC charge. This is neither an opportunity to spend more or use to offset savings targets. The rate payer should not pay for any change.

50% would hit the larger parishes badly.

Only reduce the grant by 50% if the short fall is covered by the increased income from the Council Tax paid by LCTS recipients being increased.

Parish Councils do not have the staff to monitor the efficiency of the scheme.

It would appear the parish council will be able to maintain their income whatever way is chosen.

Why not reduce it by 25%?

You should increase it by 50% not reduce it Rural Communities receive the least amount out of the council tax we pay. It's about time rural communities received more form this council tax we pay.

It is not the fault of the parish if some households do not pay full council tax.

Reducing the grand by 10% would be acceptable.

Town and Parish Councils already struggle to keep their services going as both district and county pass ever more services (CCTV, toilets, land, speed warnings etc.) on to Parish and Town Councils. 50% reduction is too much too soon. Why not 20% per year? Give councils a chance.

Our council tax is already extortionate.

LCTS recipients should pay more and Council less.

Parish Councils have least access to other funds.

Parish Councils are more in touch with their communities that EC and UDC

Reduce the grant but at a lower percentage i.e. 25% ? - or apply a tier system over 3-5 years.

Without proper justification of the reduction it is impossible to form a judgement, therefore maintain the status quo.

If the district council receives less money it is logical that this loss would be transferred to the parish and town councils.

Why should those who have to pay in an area have to also pay more for those who don't pay? (See also Q1 "Everyone should pay a share - plenty of people on a "low income" don't qualify for benefits so won't be exempted")

How are Parish Councils expected to make up the shortfall? I am not necessarily against a reduction in the grant if councils have a means by which they can raise money to make up the difference if they want to.

If you wish to add a comment, please do so below:

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Where would the money come from if the grant was reduced by 50%.

Some of these areas will have more vulnerable families than others. Is there a way it can be looked at where the Parish and Town councils are not punished in the poorer areas and the ones with a higher volume of social housing? By reducing the grant you are affecting the poorer and more vulnerable in society, and inevitably other public services will be cut .

I applaud any initiative to reduce council tax, whether directly or via local grants. In essence, the current situation means that local taxpayers have to pick up the bill for the council's largesse towards protected groups. I would like to see less largesse and a 50 per cent cut in the grant. I would be totally opposed to the idea that the parish council would then raise its own element of council tax to make up the shortfall.

it would be helpful to know how parishes raise their funds, an immediate 50% cut seems too drastic for parishes to recoup

This is a stupid question. If you pay GDTC 50% what services would they cut and how would this affect me!! We have graffiti in our town now (never before) and it is not getting cleaned up - who is responsible. There is loads of rubbish at the roadside at the entrance to GD who is responsible. There are old cars parked outside the school near Tescos advertising buying old cars, why are they not removed? We don't have any Police patrolling streets and our police station is closed I guess all these things are not the responsibility of Uttlesford? We are hounded with parking fines when we don't have the opportunity of paying when we leave a carpark, we have shops struggling and parking some days is difficult.

A Waste of council tax money

If you pay grants to the parish you are asking people to pay twice, their should only be a Council Tax and a Parish Tax

Reducing the grant would put more people at risk of poverty, ill health and death.

if you don't pay it, the Town Council will simply have to raise more of their own money. When this money was given by Central Government to Councils, it was with the intention that it would be filtered to town and parish councils.

The parish/town has no choice in the number of LCTS recipients it has so should not be penalised, this cost should be carried at council level

Without further information as to the cost per household (in increased council tax) this would entail it is hard to make an informed decision.

This is central government money for parishes so what is the justification for UDC cutting it and pocketing the money??!! Parish councils generally offer their constituents excellent services but on limited budgets,

The District Council has already off loaded to Town and Parish Councils who have had to absorb the cost. The District should not be causing local councils to suffer

With more and more services being devolved to parish councils, it is inappropriate to remove this funding to them. This funding is provided by central government to mitigate against the loss in revenue as a direct result of the change in the council tax scheme.

Q4. As part of central government's benefit reforms, rules are being changed for housing benefit and universal credit (two other types of benefit people can receive). The council is proposing to make the same changes to LCTS. By doing this, the council aims to make the LCTS system easier to understand for claimants as the criteria for all these different benefit schemes will be the same.

The proposals are:

a) Reduce the time a claimant can be absent from the United Kingdom and continue to receive LCTS, from 13 weeks to 4 weeks.

Do you agree?

b) Reduce the period for backdating a claim from 6 months to 1 month.

Do you agree?

c) Removal of the family premium (an additional payment to people with children) for all new working age applicants.

Do you agree?

d) Limit the number of children within the claim to a maximum of two (so even if a claimant has three or more children they will only receive LCTS payment based on having two children).

Do you agree?

e) Remove the severe disability premium (extra money paid to a severely disabled person to assist in employing a carer), if the claimant's carer already receives the carer's element through universal credit.

Do you agree?

f) Remove the work related activity element for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants.

Do you agree?

Responses received

Error! Not a valid link.

People who need this help to get into work must be encouraged to behave in clever smarter ways. Most of these “extra” make the scheme slacker.

The simpler and more uniform welfare support payments are, the better. They are then more easily understood. And welfare support is best provided through a generous NATIONAL scheme rather than through a mixture of national and local support schemes.

(f) Far too many people in the UK, which must include Uttlesford are claiming benefits and at the same time accepting monies via the black economy.

It all needs to be as simple as possible.

Do not use the savings in LCTS to support other services and payments to managers ETC on bonuses.

If you cannot afford to have more than two children, then you should not be receiving support in the first place. I can't afford more than two children.

Agree all

If people cannot afford children they should not have them! Why should I and the other tax payers support their children

a) We can see no reason for any special dispensation at all for those who can afford to travel abroad.

There must be the ability to apply for exceptional circumstances, certainly in cases A & B for example if someone is hurt or injured whilst abroad requiring a hospital stay which means they could not safely return to the UK within a month.

In respect of d) it should be noted that many families not in receipt of benefits limit the number of children to meet their means.

People have to understand, we cannot keep on borrowing money; when interest rates go up to Grt Britain PLC we may run out of money. We then go cap in hand to the “IMF”.

b) Reduce the period to 1 month, unless they is a valid reason why the claim was not submitted earlier. d) Yes, but only for new claimants.

There is no further need to penalise the unfortunate, disabled or children so that taxes for taxpayers & companies are kept artificially low.

I would rather people were involved in productive work - rather than on "activity" which is ill defined.

I disagree with the general trend of the government's welfare benefit proposals.

a) 6 weeks b) 4 months min c) Absolutely not, so Dickensian d) What! & ask them to sell the extra children or maybe just starve them f) What is this - you should have explained Children, the disabled and the unemployed should be supported not bullied.

Sorry I find the above E F difficult to understand. By element i.e carers element does that translate as carers payment?

b) Unless the delay is council caused. c) Depends upon circumstances. d) A complex issue at times - not a yes/no issue. e) As said, this is extra, given because of need as above. Whilst consulting the public is positive the issues raised are often far more personal and complex case by case therefore yes/no answer without case context can appear to give permission for action whereas a different answer would be given with more specific details.

(comment unreadable)

I don't understand f) so cannot say yes or no.

c) and d) With so many blended families, which benefits children in a modernising society, this could seem unfair, and may have the counter effect of families not blending = not so good for children, and more pressure on housing (particularly smaller houses). f) I do not understand the consequence of this - please explain.

I don't understand (f). Claims should be reasonable, but protection for the disabled and for children should be preserved.

This would discriminate against multiple births. I had one child and then had twins. How about those with triplets?

I'm not certain what (f) is, so cannot give opinion.

d) Reduce to 3 or 4 now, & 2 but only with notice being given, or saying people with more than 2 children in the future, i.e. protecting those currently having more than 2. f) Don't understand

what this is.

f) No idea what this means! Jargon.

f) Have no idea what this means...

f) I don't know what the 'work related activity element' means.

I can't answer (f) as I don't know what it means - more detail please!

Don't understand f above.

Insufficient knowledge of detail.

Sorry, I don't understand f) above.

Unable to respond to f) as do not understand exactly what this is!

I haven't answered 'f' as I don't know what the 'work related activity element' is.

I don't understand (F)

a) 8 weeks b) 3 months f) Don't understand the jargon, what is 'work related activity element'?

f) Don't know what this is.

I do not know what f is referring to.

e) Should be very carefully administered to ensure best possible recipient outcome.

Don't understand f) so cannot answer.

d) Having children is a choice, and should not be paid for by the government. Two is fair.

f) I don't know enough about this to comment.

f) I do not know enough about (f) to comment.

No comment. More info please.

b) With provision.

Anything that can be done to prevent people getting money for nothing would be good!

If you are on jobseekers allowance, you shouldn't be entitled to as much compared to those with a disability.

a) If you live abroad it should stop!

I think people get too much money.

Children's needs vary and childcare is extremely expensive, families and severely disabled need more support.

I do believe disabled and vulnerable people should have their benefits protected but those with more than 2 children should not. I think claims should be backdated 3 months not one month.

Disabled people should not have money deducted. There is no way most of them can enhance their finances themselves.

I don't know anything about f) so have no comments.

I cannot answer f, as I am not sure of the definition of work related activity element.

f) Don't know what this is!

f) Don't know what the work related activity element is so no opinion.

I am not quite sure that many of the people reading this form will understand it. Most of it hardly makes sense to me and although I am 83ish and was educated to university entrance standard but went straight into a profession. So I can't see its point and most people will bin it anyway and I admit I was tempted to do just that.

I don't understand Q4 sect f

f) Not sure what this means.

I don't know what (f) above means.

I don't know enough to answer f)

I don't understand question (f) or the implications.

f) What is the work related activity element? Insufficient info to be able to make an informed decision.

Not sure what this means.

I don't know what question f) means.

I cannot answer question f as I do not know what the work related activity element involves.

Reducing the backdating does not seem fair, if people need it they should get it. 100% agreed with reducing the time someone can be absent from UK to 4 weeks.

Do not understand f

What is this?

b) Feel 3 months fairer c) If employment available? e) Feel disabled would find good carers hard to get. f) Would this stop people trying to work not sure what is entailed here.

a) In principle, but no compromise possible? Say 6/8 weeks? b) See above - yes to notion - but why so, apparently, draconian? e) In my experience this is already totally inadequate. f) I don't know enough about this.

(a) Why 13 weeks to 4 weeks too much why not 6-8 weeks. (b) Backdating claim for 6 months seems too much, however to reduce to 4 weeks again too short why not 12 weeks 'happy medium'

Have no idea what (f) means.

It is very important that all disabled people who employ a carer keep the extra money because this money helps them to pay the carer and ensure that they are able to live on their own.

We need to protect the poor and vulnerable in our society.

(f) needs a little clarification for those of us not familiar with benefit structures.

(a) If absence over 4 wks is involuntary eg illness or travel problems then claimant should not be penalised. (d) For new applicants, NO if already have 3. Its only reasonable to limit to two if notice of reasonable period is given that this is coming into force.

Try to encourage all working age people to work rather than rely on state benefits. The severely disabled need all the help they can get.

The rate would be better in the medium, rather than the lowest quartile, so 15-20% is more representative of the other local councils.

The proposal I feel most strongly about is 4a. It is hard to understand the implications of some of these proposals (particularly 4f). It would be helpful to have more information so people in need are not disadvantaged.

Part-time work wages are inadequate and therefore help should be given; resumption of FULL-TIME employment disqualifies individual, especially if young and able. Assistance should be available to really needy. Laziness should not be encouraged to avoid work.

Ill and disabled people should not be hit as they cannot make up the income. These changes should only impact on those on Working Tax Credits.

You must protect severe disabled and the illest - we have to look after people who can't look after themselves.

(b) BUT depends who created the delay. Severe disability requires greater care therefore requiring additional funds - if removed from the disabled individual it takes their feeling of independence.

You need to explain what these benefits refer to any what the typical payments are, for those who have no idea what they're about.

I am not too qualified to comment but it has been my experience that the new universal credit is very difficult and stressful for the disabled person or carer to qualify for and receive. Any support for disabled people is the mark of a civilised society. It is not a gift, it is recognition of inability to earn a living.

1. Ask all these questions, because u won't take any ***** notice, you'll already b made up your minds to put it into your personal SLUSH FUNDS

(f) I presume this mean clients claiming LCTS would not need to actively seeking work, which is why I answered no. If I misunderstood (the question is not clear) please ignore.

Proposals a) and b) are supported on the assumption that there will be on "exceptional circumstances" option.

I understand that Uttlesford DC is an area of high employment and some affluence therefore it can continue to sub those of us who are not so fortunate.

(b) There might be cases where this could impact a genuinely deserving claim. (d) I would prefer a tapered approach - say 50% for a 3rd child, for example. Is this really an effective incentive to have fewer children, or do less fortunate people have more children to compensate for their lot in life, regardless, ie is there evidence to support this as a policy? (e) The disabled are the most deserving of our care and compassion. (f) sorry, I don't know enough to comment.

Reducing financial benefit to the poorest people, which includes people with serve disabilities x on sick pay, is unfair and retrogressive as well as inhumane at a time when public services are being cut back so there is less community support available.

(b) Could reduce to 3 or 4 months, but not 1 month. I can easily imagine a claim could take longer to sort out than just 1 month - backdating should therefore be for up to 3 months. (d) a limit of 2 children is too harsh. I could accept a limit of 4 children. (f) severely disabled and their carers are insufficiently supported already. Their allowances/premiums should NOT be cut.

These changes unfairly affect those who are dependent upon the claimant. Claimants for ESA need current work related skills and providing these keeps that employment door ajar. The above suggested removals will result in solve disadvantaged people falling through the net.

The council should NOT follow the Governments unkind scheme, even though life needs to be simpler for these people (and for all of us).

Carers already receive a low allowance so cannot afford to lose any amount.

We should not impose any burden on those who already struggle, particularly those with children who must be protected and those who find it hard to work for physical and mental reasons.

I feel that it is unwise to limit the payment to as low as 2 children I would say yes to four. We have to realise that a lady may have twins no fault of theirs is it, so think again to allow for this.

I do not approve of any attempt to cut benefit while tax dodgy millionaires and corporations are allowed to get away with not paying their share.

Anyone could find themselves in need in this troubled word lets help make lives better.

While changes in the rules are acceptable the proposed changes are too stringent.

Should be checked for abuse at times say six month (spot).

c. Not always it depends on whether the children are at risk, or being produced simply to claim benefits. Case-by-case judgement? d. Difficult - yes and no! - what about actively supporting the 3rd or 4th child? But again, people abuse the system. So, don't know. e. The carer's element is nowhere near enough. f. Don't understand what this is.

D and e are not always as easily defined to a y/n response. Is there any room for "grey area" assessment!

E. Yes if this is a duplication of money.

The time limits seem harse. I would support 3 month limits for everything for all claimants.

D. In respect of this, I agree to a point but as the average family is 2.4 children perhaps it should be increased to say 3.4 and not penalise families.

a. Good to know that claimants can afford a four week holiday aboard! b. Should not be back dated at all. f. Should be in work.

3 months reasonable backdating period.

I am assisting my son who has mental health issues, and who is supported by CMHT. I would request that when you assess claims you remove mental health from the general 'disabilities' as from experience, they can appeal "good" one day and be incapable another, thus it is very difficult to assess "in general".

Unable to say Yes or No, each case has to be judged on its merit.

My comment is its going to cost me more than last year.

A. I do not understand what the implications would be here. e. I do not understand the implications of this situation.

Don't fully understand f) so unable to give an opinion.

Most seem hard but fair - children should be protected.

D. Limit the number of children to a maximum of 4 children.

There are some Religions where the wife never stops having children - whether they can afford so many children or not. Yes I am sure, lessening the amount of money will make a great difference to the size of the family.

Regarding e and f above - do not have enough knowledge regarding these benefits to make a comment either way.

We feel its easiest to stop all the above for ease of application but each case should be decided as there is always a contry to the rule.

The important thing in relation to these various elements is not to re-introduce the "cliff-edges" and disincentives in the system that universal credit seeks to remove.

I have no idea as to what this scheme refers to.

c) What if they genuinely cannot find employment? This suggests their children could be disadvantaged (???) f) ???

b) Depends on circumstances - compromise 3 months. d) Their choice to have kids. f) Evidence based activity to ensure appropriate benefits are paid to claimants. It is not always achievable to attain jobs these days, however claimant must show intention to work. No evidence - no pay!!

a) I agree should continue to receive 13 weeks. b) Agree backdating 6 months

f) have no idea what work related element for new Employment and Support Allowance claims are to make an informed decision.

Don't know.

I'm against limiting or removing benefit for circumstances which are out of a claimant's control, e.g being disabled, being ill (and therefore may miss the proposed 1-month backdating claim deadline), or any dis-incentive for people into employment. On the contrary, having children or being away from the country for over 4 weeks is more a personal choice and should be at the claimant's own costs.

c) not sure. You have to protect the disabled, pensioners and those who have the lowest income. With disabled even though the carer is paid an allowance the work they do for the person they care for is incredible and without help disabled will be even worse.

b) Why not 3 months? I feel this is a more reasonable timescale.

Disabled residents rarely choose to be disabled. We can plan to have a family, the amount of children we will have. Hopefully we can plan for our retirement - but maybe there needs to be more support with this so funding is on education - planning for retirement.

Suggest that the council tries living on benefit. Very few want to be and for some it wasn't a choice to be placed in this position.

b. This should have some degree of discretion. c. Are we still trying to take children out of poverty. d. I cannot believe you are asking this q. the proposal is outrageous. e. Depends on the circumstances. f. There should have been some explanation of this.

Work related activity is a reasonable requirement for most, but the draconian way in which trivial or unavoidable breaches are used to deprive the most desperate is quite unacceptable.

f. Cannot comment as not enough information provided.

Cannot comment on f) because we do not understand this element.

f. Don't know what this is or implication.

d. Only to encourage drop in number of children eventually per family for the sake of our planet.

I do not know enough about 'F' to comment.

I don't understand the question (F)

Do not understand F

f. Do not understand what this is so I cannot answer the question.

f) I don't know what this means

I'm sorry but I don't understand Question F, no matter.

A Yes no doubt if not here in UK do not get. b. As above why pay for people leaving the country. d.Yes. Why should I pay for them having to many kids. f. Not sure think need to get into work. Totally unfair people having extra kids - living of the state why should they - 4 they have kids at their cost not ours.

I do not understand the effects of f above as no extra info provided.

b) One month is too short. Suggest 3 months. f) Don't understand how this element works.

f) insufficient information in question to make a judgement.

No idea what f means!

E) I think every person is different with severe disabilities, words written are cheap we don't know or understand what these people go through in life so how can anyone comment by reading question E - like the narrow minded GOVNT.

E&F Not really sure of the implication of these 2 statements.

Not in enough info to comment.

I have no idea what is meant for questions E&F - so I can't comment. I am very concerned that the severely disabled should not be worse off.

E) Don't understand the question. F) Don't understand the question.

Let's not make things any more difficult for the severely disabled.

If people wish to have a larger family they should be prepared to pay and take care of them themselves!

D) Most definitely Some disabled people DO NOT even have a carer as they cannot afford one, through now being able to claim for one!! Likewise for carers, who care for elderly/ disabled family members FOR FREE!! Saving councils millions!!

The reduction in the period eligible for back-dating is too severe. People needing help with claims etc may have to wait weeks for the night help. Some have periods when they are unable to deal with things. They should not be penalised.

We must protect all children and vulnerable people.

Why should older people pay tax for other people's children when they had to bring up three children and only got paid for one?

Look! In the immediate post WW2 years the government put the care of children (ie the future) top. Now we are in danger of putting OAP's top (and my wife and I ARE OAPS) wrong emphasis surely - completely wrong!

It is tough enough for many disadvantaged people to manage so cuts are not going to be good and create another cost further down the line and leave them in unfair poverty meanwhile.

a) If taken ill abroad, or other catastrophe of "no fault" it would be unfair. b) As above.

No! Reducing back-dating times, etc, means people will end up losing benefit to which they are fairly entitled, by shortening the time available in which to claim. How this is part of "making the system easier to understand", I don't know!!!

If we only want wealthy people in Uttlesford, we should make all the proposed changes, if we want a variety of people in the area, make none of them but raise significantly the council tax charges in the top two charging bands; I say this as someone in one of those top two bands, who does not want to live in a ghetto peopled only by people like me, and is happy to pay a fair share by raising what I am charged.

Re (d) if a family has more than 2 children those children need support too.

This scheme will just make the gap that's exists now between the "haves and have nots" wider and wider. We live in the 21st century not the 18th century when poverty was rife!!

Each and every one of them is against the person on LCTS.(c) How many over working age have dependent children? (d) Are the Tories prepared to let children starve?

Unnecessarily harsh, with the potential to cause serious hardship. In other parts of the country where similar rules have already been imposed, people have died from lack of food or heating. I hope that Uttlesford is a more civilized and progressive council.

(a) and (b) Claimants are unlikely to be absent from the UK without good reason. It should be allowable for the authorities to question them about such absences but not automatically to add a financial penalty to what may be a family disaster - that would be cruel. (c) and (d) While over population is a major factor is global warming, depriving children of needed help is not going to stop procreation. It is a deplorable, vicious, mean, old testament style proposal. (e) As is the proposed cull of the severe disability payment. The severely disabled have many extra expenses besides employing a carer. (f) People finding it impossible to get full time paid employment need not only financial help but the encouragement and experience occasional work can give (it sometimes leads to full time work too).

Austerity does not work. Why punish the working poor?

(f) Do not know enough about the benefit to comment.

(d) Idealistically yes - morally no. (f) I don't know exactly what you mean by this!!

(d) Idealistically yes - morally no. (f) I don't know exactly what you mean by this!!

All benefit systems need simplification so that it is clearly understood.

LCTS payments should only be available to working age people who have worked in the UK for at least 3 years unless they are disabled or a carer on a low income.

f) Not enough detail given to make an informed decision

f) Not sure

f) I don't understand this question

f) Do not understand this.

f) Do not know what this means.

f) I don't understand F so can't comment

f) not sure what this is.

Avoid double claiming

All these measures will significant impact on the less well-off and more vulnerable parts of our community.

f) Do not know what this question means (hasn't been explained)

c) Don't know; d) Don't know

I have no idea what this is. If it mean people can still claim even if they work on very low income then NO.

All residents should pay toward the services they receive. Those paying higher rates of council tax do not get their bins emptied more often than those paying a lower rate. Typically if you pay more for a service you get a better service. It appears this logic does not apply to council tax. I know that it's not to do with this particular survey but it still needs saying, often and LOUDLY. What about the ridiculous cancellation of free school transport for those living several miles away from both Saffron Walden High School and newport Grammar. Also. Newport Grammar is nearer than Saffron Walden for those living in Chrishall so why claim that Saffron Walden is nearer?

People can choose the number of children they have (if they are educated and fortunate), disabled people do not 'choose' and are unfortunate - so need maximum support. But there do need to be checks - as with every aspect of spending taxpayers money.

I was employed by the CAB as a caseworker for 3 years was funded by a Housing Association (volunteer for 3 yrs too) . I was very pleased to see the new benefit reforms - about time! I always felt on the old system there was too much top up of WTC/CTC though - I very rarely saw any single mother that worked more than 16 hours though! It was the same old thing - if they worked more hours ad-hoc it would mess up their HB and they didn't want to take the risk with an over payment so easier and better for them not to work too much. I do have doubts about HB being paid directly to the claimant - I do believe (along with my ex-colleagues) it is being a bit naive to believe the rent will come first! I do not agree on benefit claimants being allowed to leave the UK for weeks and weeks and not get their benefits stopped/sanctioned - not right ,even for those on Disability benefits.

These changes are sensible and can hardly be called harsh or Draconian when one looks at the colossal size of the benefits bill even after these minor adjustments have been made.

The entire questionnaire is an appalling attempt to cut benefits without explaining to residents and service users of the consequences. It will no doubt be used as a fine example of people voting for the cuts and Uttlesford being able to hold down council tax. This is a truly appalling attempt to push through cuts that could potentially have a devastating affect on individuals and families. There needs to be a sensible discussion on the pros and cons and the consequences of cuts. The questionnaire is far to simple and designed to get the public to support the Conservative party objectives of cuts through the back door as they were caught out last year when the Chancellor had to back track after the House of Commons revolt about such cuts. Sorry not sure if comments completely relevant to this survey! Most people appreciate that the council need to try to reduce the expense of all benefits issued, however for the large majority of people claiming support these payments make a massive difference to their ability to stay afloat. Although you will always get people who take advantage of the system in place there are far more who genuinely feel embarrassed by their circumstances and are very grateful for any help that they receive. I do think that combining the various benefits which I believe is the thinking behind the universal credits (although wasn't sure if the council tax support and housing would eventually be included) would save money, control the amount people are claiming, reduce cost involved in having multiple departments and accounts to monitor and also keep better track on capping claims and identifying fraudulent claims. As a brief example of costs that could perhaps be reduced, if a claimants situation changes new paperwork is issued to reflect these changes, often from more than one department involved, if someones hours vary this could potentially happen monthly and produce vast quantities of paperwork all involving time and expense. If all benefits are produced from a linked account then just one batch of paperwork, if you could look at transferring accounts online and encourage online paperless accounts when people have access, paying a single benefit payment, which would encourage better management of personal finance and responsibility for people who are capable.

Disabled people cannot help being disabled. Family's who have raised disabled people at a detriment to their own lives and enjoyment are entitled to know that their disabled relatives have the funding to ensure their physical, social and emotional welfare is financially supported. These cases must be prioritized over people refusing to work for a salary less than their benefits. People who live apart to obtain social housing and benefits and people who come to our town expecting housing and hangouts.

Stop taking money away from the poorest, most vulnerable people in society.

I agree that claims should not be back dated longer than 1 month but the amount of time to assess a claim needs to be taken in to account so the claim should be backdated to 1 month after the claim submission date and there should be an element of financial support for the period that the claim is being assessed. Whilst I agree that those on benefits should not benefit from having additional children whilst receiving benefits but consideration does need to be given to those who have more than 2 children when hardship hits them.

We must do everything we can to protect the very most vulnerable groups from living in poverty (or below).

Again, without clear information in the form about what the proposals mean it is hard to make an informed decision.

The changes to apply to new claimants only

Disabled people are already suffering - don't make it any harder for them

No individual should receive payments twice

Regarding (c) and(f) we have no opinion because we do not fully understand the implications.

Q5 Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme

Responses received

Error! Not a valid link.

As long as it works, Great! When it starts to fail, dump it!

Simplicity and equity point clearly to a 20% LCTS rate for Uttlesford, and for aligning the local rules with the new national rules (question 4).

I get the normal reduction on council tax being a person living on my own.

Keep up the good work.

Uttlesford seems to have become very town centric and cutting village services the LCTS saving should only go to support the existing LCTS budgets not as has been obvious in the past to rob peter to pay Paul and increase their own bonuses and payments.

People who are well off, i.e savings, shares, property etc should not get any relief, regardless of employment, income, age, disability.

Pensioners and disabled people no longer able to work deserve all the help get especially if they have paid NI Stamp. Any additional payment is deserved.

No further comments

I do not fully understand what is involved in the LCTS scheme, nor do I understand what the people involve go through.

Thank you for asking my opinion.

It is clear the council has done its best to keep this simple to understand but we feel it would assist if this document/information was submitted to a focus group to evaluate the possibility of further simplification.

Help them that genuinely help themselves (unless of course severely disabled, then they genuinely deserve LCTS)

Not a lot of time between end of consultation and implementation if you suddenly find you are no longer fully protected and have to find extra £ hundreds per year.

It is a scheme to help not penalise people - there are too many Range Rovers, Audis, BMWs around Uttlesford - tax should rise.

Low income single parent families where the parent is working but in low paid work need help & a discount as this payment can amount to 10% of their income!!

I want to see those who are ill or disabled being support - whilst ensuring those who genuinely can work are encouraged so to do.

Look globalisation & automation plus lack of will to deal with bankers/fat cats 'cheating' is reducing part of the UK's pop to 3rd world standards - increased equality improves the lives of all.

Given that Uttlesford has a considerable number of wealthy taxpayers (including myself) it would be unforgiveable to target the disabled, young, and less well-off members of the community.

The cost of this exercise presumably reduces amount that could be paid to those in need - stupid! 4f) should be explained.

It seems the council is required to consult annually. If so, on-line only consultation would be cheaper.

I agree that all council taxpayers should be consulted. However we cannot make informed decisions or comments without further background explanation. Claimants have an advantage in being a part of (and therefore understanding) the system/scheme.

Some your questions not clear.

4f) Not sure what his means; if the work related activity element is unpaid, then clearly no effect on total income, so 'yes' ok.

Whilst not wanting to cause hardship to people, I do not want to pay for shirkers and people who can work, but choose not to. Use the money saved to make people learn English and get a job when they come into the country.

It is time only people who have paid in receive out on all count. One month can only work if people know about it in the first place.

It is very difficult to answer these questions fairly. There are many who deserve help and many who have never worked and have grown used to dependency as their right.

Councillors are elected to make these decisions and justify them to the electorate, consultation is a smoke screen and given the complexity is likely to get very little response or simply an exercise of individual prejudices (rather like Brexit!).

I am a single resident and so enjoy the related discount.

Need to do more to help old age pensioners and disabled people.

In particular item "B" should remain as many elderly pensioners do not fully understand new rules and may not have any family visiting for more than a month.

With the amount of extra homes being built and even more proposed in this area, there should be no question of having to cut funding - just get rid of the overpaid bureaucrats at Chelmsford who are not only incapable of doing their jobs, they refuse to admit their lack of interest and know-it-all attitude means they should not even be employed by the council.

Difficult to understand some of the welfare/benefit terminology and the implications for LCTS. I think we can blame central government for this mess.

Increase council tax (for the higher bands) if necessary to support those in need! Don't penalise the poor.

We must always provide a safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society.

I recently applied for LCTS as I thought I was on a low income - but gave up on the application as they wanted to know a lot of personal information. I think it would be simpler if you stated the maximum income you can have to receive it. Maybe if it was linked to tax credits it would be easier. Since moving to Clavering from Bishop's Stortford I was shocked that my council tax is more than £40 per month more than East Herts for a property that was £200,000 less than my previous one. I feel that you victimise people with mental health issues - people who have trouble coping with everyday life.

I am fully aware of the difficulties councils have with their budgets, I would be happy for council tax to go up a little, to help with this problem.

Uttlesford is one of the top places to live in the UK. We should assume that the high quality of life we enjoy is shared throughout the community and with those in greatest need.

While there may be a few who 'play' the system, the vast majority of benefit claimants are in that situation through no fault of their own. Taking away benefits only drives them deeper into despair and makes a recovery from their situation more difficult. Poverty also is a drain on our NHS.

. Is there any kind of local loading for people who grew up in Uttlesford (educated, not just born here) or who have lived here for 10 years or more? There should be a local priority for finding assessments and payments.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/lcts <<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/lcts>> does not work!! Note to CEO UDC needs a big shake up it does not comply with the wishes of the people who live in the area.

Enough money has already been taken from poor people. Uttlesford needs to ensure that better off people pay a more realistic proportion of council tax.

I do implore the council to continue is necessary support to prevent the elderly and disabled becoming an underclass, while they deserve a fair life.

I previously knew nothing of this topic. It is hard to offer off the cuff responses. However, I will look out for more information and am very pleased to have had the opportunity to comment.

I think it is more important to support the vulnerable than to fall in line with unfair benefit "reforms".

This is a very expensive part of the country to live ad rents etc are much higher than in other parts of the country outside of London. Please continue to provide support - especially to young families.

Potentially there should be more criteria around the above proposals and the amount of allowance should be based on individual circumstances.

There can be no doubt that many households in Uttlesford could bear a small increase in CT to pay for scheme helping the disadvantaged. Be brave do it.

A caring society taxes the rich and supports the poor. It is pleasant to live in a caring society. The Government's schemes make the country less pleasant to live in. Uttlesford should not follow them.

No Council should penalise those on low incomes or those who are seriously disabled. Nor should families in work this with large families ever lose out. To suggest penalties for these groups is outrageous! Wages remain low for many.

Save elsewhere - environment, leisure activities, lunch clubs.

I pay taxes to help people not so fortunate as myself. I am surrounded by people living in large houses, although mine is more modest. Let's redistribute wealth.

We all don't wish to see money wasted but any one can fall on bad times. Most of the problem is high VAT that everyone has to pay no matter how poor.

I would like the scheme to help people more.

YES IT'S RIDICULOUSLY COMPLICATED!! How many people do you think can understand this form! Pensioners on low income should NOT have to struggle to pay expensive bills.

I'm proud that we care for our 'less able', and those who've come on hard times, humanely. It's a sign of the quality of our local communities.

Increasing poverty and homelessness - which will be the result of these charges - will result in greater cost to UDC as well as impacting most on vulnerable members of our society.

It would be helpful to have more background information in advance of surveys like this (or accompanying it).

If people on benefits spend their money wisely they would be able to pay full council tax.

I don't feel I can comment on other peoples benefits.

To all of the above as to 2,3, and 4. Questions totally incomprehensible.

Having regard to the weight which UDC planners gave to our objections to a local planning application, we have decided that it would be a complete waste of time to complete your form.

This survey has been very well designed to confuse everyone. I had never heard or read anything about LCTS until now.

It would be interesting to know the percentage return rate on this "consultation" I would expect it to be low.

We have a severely ill son who is in receipt of council tax rebate. This is an enormous help in the management of his condition - we are very appreciative of this.

Think this form could have been more user friendly - lots of figures but not much explanation as to the consequences of each decision. Surely each case can't be as black and white as you suggest - 4c and d for instance?

I have not answered all questions as I do not understand them not having to apply for help myself. I am one of the fortunate ones at the present time.

I think this consultation could have included more useful contextual information - what % of UC total spend goes on LCTS? Under different scenarios/options presented what would this mean for annual council tax bills? E.g. Q2 if it will cost me £5 to save an LCTS recipient £39 my response will be different than if it cost £1/£10/£20/£40..... (plus I think many of the questions are leading, and potentially motivated)

What is a LCTS Scheme?

Not at this time.

Please don't stop the financial assistance scheme in rent and council tax.

I have never been a position to claim housing benefit - yet unemployed can claim more money than I have earned at times this seems a distorted system.

More information regarding 'LCTS' would be helpful!

We are not all politicians a council employees. Some explanations would not go amiss if you really mean to engage the public, your votes, in this questionnaire.

To easy to generalise but need strong guide rules - people take advantage - ALL WRONG

I was shocked to see on TV the situations of two single people. Once received c£13k pa, the other £17k pa. These are more than a person working 35hrs on minimum rate and paying PAYE, NIC and (possibly) Council Tax. Seems the system is unbalanced. They both had very luxurious lifestyles!

To say I am blown away by this form is a understatement UDC and CC want to look into care companys that are being paid for looking after the elderly. I have the proof to prove they are providing a very poor service maybe you should look into this asap! Save money and also bout the illegal immigrants that gets EVERYTHING FACT!! NOTHING SAID!!!

This questionnaire is not clearly explained. Broadly we oppose reducing the level of support/benefit provided.

I think Uttlesford D.C on the whole do a very good job and fair job.

Why are there so many immigrants allowed into the area, working at low salary which affects the local job seekers.

YES - Get WORKING AGE people into work, and STOP councils giving them an 'easy ride' in life!! Then perhaps the 'benefits' would go to those who NEED it, through no fault of their own!!!! You shouldn't even put elderly/disabled people in the same category as WORK SHY ADULTS! A lot of elderly DO NOT even claim, to what is/should be rightfully theirs!

I think it boils down to the fact that people on low incomes, whether they are in low-paid jobs, pensioners or have a disability, need support to pay council tax. I think it is not unfair for the wealthier residents to pay more.

We have a responsibility to come for those less fortunate or less able than ourselves. If we subscribe to "The Weakest to the Wall" we damage our own humanity and send out a disturbing message to future generations.

The scheme must be seen as fair and policed well to make sure that the most vulnerable get support.

Very difficult to understand and appreciate fully the implications of the questions and the probable long term effect of the proposals. Good questionnaire though just scrub out the political shibboleths.

a) But where do they go??! b) On balance agree - but what is this actually about? c) children must not be punished for the dissolute behaviour of parents. f) But what exactly is "work related activity element" how can anyone respond without knowing this?

Similarly with (d) (e) and (f) - these are cuts, which will affect the most vulnerable. Town Council extremely strongly opposed to any cuts to support scheme payments. 93% of those surveyed in 2015 supported protection of the parish council grant.

Why keep squeezing the poor. They don't have spare money, they need the grants.

What an utter shambles!!

It is difficult to understand why the district councils should absorb the loss of income and not pass onto town/parish councils.

Don't build houses for the sake of getting government grants ! Get grants for infrastructure (roads etc) AND facilities e.g. Schools, surgeries, shops, pubs, Village Halls etc.

It is all too easy to make these proposed changes sound like an agenda against the vulnerable, but the reality is that council tax has risen remorselessly year by year to the point that it is breaking the back of family finances. We cannot keep on making everyone a special case for a rebate, as Uttlesford seems to wish. In our council area, an average family in an average-sized home is now paying around £2,000 a year in council tax out of earned income, much of which goes to fund unaffordable local authority pensions and huge payoffs for failed managers. My own wish would be for the council to do much less, get rid of half its staff, sell off most of its property portfolio and go back to basics: empty the bins, clean the streets and run a few libraries. But so long as the council wishes to regard itself as a taxpayer-funded empire, the bills will just rise and rise. So while I sympathise with the hard-up elderly, the disabled and the carers, I cannot agree that we can continue to make them all special cases. The price of running Uttlesford Council must be shared amongst everybody.

I feel the Council is trying to make out that this is a very amateur consultation but what they really have done is to design a questionnaire to get the result they want without setting out the services they currently provide and the way in which the cuts will be made and the consequences. The government including local government are very poor in accepting their responsibilities for effective communications and reaching out to people who are affected. It can be months or years before a person realises that they could get support and financial help only to find that their claim can only be backdated so far. Cutting claims to a month will help save the Council money but I have first hand experience assisting someone who has lost money because the information provided by one department about what could be claimed did not cover another government department. Use modern technology, develop focus groups and communicate in more effective ways please. less politics and more transparency

We are all had to work hard and save for a pension,cars etc. this often means having no holiday or new cars each year, instead of using money left in a will they go on a spending spree reducing their money in banks just below the limits set.

It is unfair that pensioners are given full protection under the LCTS scheme. Are the Local Authorities putting pressure on the government to remove this anomaly?

Most of the town councils have spending liabilities that they can not get rid of at short notice. They will have no option but to increase council tax. If UDC wishes to bring in these changes to support it should be phased in gradually, with the town councils given a timetable for the changes so that they can prepare for them.

4.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire forms for the paper and online consultation followed an identical format.



Uttesford Local Council Tax Support Questionnaire (2017/18)

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 2017/18 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2017.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system. The government's aim of the reforms to the welfare system is to help more people into work, while supporting the most vulnerable. Since the start of this scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttesford has dropped by 40% from 1,321 to 789.

The council wants to hear your view on this scheme so please take a few minutes to complete the form.

Click "Next" to see how to complete the survey



Uttesford Local Council Tax Support Questionnaire (2017/18)

3. In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area.

The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. For the last three years the council has provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. In 2016/17 this cost £154,000. The council proposes to reduce this grant by 50% next year. It would be up to each parish/town council to decide if they wished to cover the shortfall in grant by increasing their part of the Council Tax.

[Click here to view a table to show how much each parish received in 2016/17 and how much they would have received if the grant had been reduced by 50%.](#) (PDF 87KB opening in new window)

Do you think the council should:

Continue to pay the full grant

Reduce the grant by 50%

If you wish to add a comment, please do so 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 2017/18 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2017.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system. The government's aim of the reforms to the welfare system is to help more people into work, while supporting the most vulnerable. Since the start of the scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 40% from 1,321 to 789.

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 on 01799 510510 or email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online. Visit 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. Uttlesford's current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.

Do you agree with this? Yes No

If you wish to add a comment, please do so below:

Please t

2. The table below shows how Uttlesford's rate compares to other Essex councils. The lower the percentage, the less Council Tax an LCTS recipient is required to pay.

	The minimum % Council Tax an LCTS recipient paid in 2014/15	The minimum % Council Tax an LCTS recipient paid in 2015/16	The minimum % Council Tax an LCTS recipient pays in 2016/17
Basildon	25	25	25
Braintree	20	20	20
Brentwood	20	20	20
Castle Point	30	30	30
Chelmsford	23	23	23
Colchester	20	20	20
Epping Forest	20	20	25
Harlow	24	24	26
Maldon	20	20	20
Rochford	20	20	20
Southend-on-Sea	25	25	25
Tendring	15	20	20
Thurrock	25	25	25
Uttlesford	12.5	12.5	12.5

For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £39 of Council Tax each year.

The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £340,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £5,100.

Should the council keep the rate at 12.5% for a fourth year? Yes No

If you wish to add a comment, please do so below:

3. In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area.

The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. For the last three years the council has provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. In 2016/17 this cost £154,000. The council proposes to reduce this grant by 50% next year. The table on the opposite page shows how much each parish received in 2016/17 and how much they would have received if the grant had been reduced by 50%. It would be up to each parish/town council to decide if they wished to cover the shortfall in grant by increasing their part of the Council Tax.

Do you think the council should:

Continue to pay the full grant Reduce the grant by 50%

If you wish to add a comment, please do so below:

Grant Payment (£)					
Parish/Town Council	100%	50%	Parish/Town Council	100%	50%
Arkesden	130	65	Leaden Roding	458	229
Ashdon	658	329	Lindsell	0	0
Aythorpe Roding	48	24	Little Bardfield	190	95
Barnston	1,183	592	Little Canfield	591	295
Berden	248	124	Little Chesterford	48	24
Birchanger	1,016	508	Little Dunmow	698	349
Broxted	769	385	Little Easton	744	372
Chickney	0	0	Little Hallingbury	1,289	644
Chrishall	479	240	Littlebury	919	459
Clavering	503	252	Manuden	236	118
Debden	489	245	Margaret Roding	307	153
Elmdon & Wendens Lofts	357	179	Newport	3,076	1,538
Elsenham	2,650	1,325	Quendon & Rickling	970	485
Farnham	287	144	Radwinter	653	326
Felsted	3,321	1,661	Saffron Walden	56,194	28,097
Flitch Green	618	309	Sampfords, The	384	192
Great Canfield	27	14	Sewards End	144	72
Great Chesterford	2,048	1,024	Stansted	11,503	5,751
Great Dunmow	37,242	18,621	Stebbing	1,553	776
Great Easton & Tilty	798	399	Strethall	0	0
Great Hallingbury	394	197	Takeley	7,038	3,519
Hadstock	356	178	Thaxted	7,642	3,821
Hatfield Broad Oak	1,573	787	Ugley	226	113
Hatfield Heath	1,441	721	Wendens Ambo	310	155
Hempstead	352	176	White Roding	206	103
Henham	744	372	Wicken Bonhunt	87	43
High Easter	213	107	Widdington	384	192
High Roding	0	0	Wimbish	435	217
Langley	74	37			
	58,018	29,009		96,285	48,142
			Total	154,303	77,151

4. As part of central government's benefit reforms, rules are being changed for housing benefit and universal credit (two other types of benefit people can receive). The council is proposing to make the same changes to LCTS. By doing this, the council aims to make the LCTS system easier to understand for claimants and the criteria for all these different benefit schemes will be the same.

The proposals are:

- a) Reduce the time a claimant can be absent from the United Kingdom and continue to receive LCTS, from 6 weeks to 4 weeks.
Do you agree? Yes No
- b) Reduce the period for backdating a claim from 6 months to 1 month.
Do you agree? Yes No
- c) Removal of the family premium (an additional payment to people with children) for all new working applicants.
Do you agree? Yes No

d) Limit the number of children within the claim to a maximum of two (so even if a claimant has three or more children they will only receive LCTS payment based on having two children).

Do you agree? Yes No

e) Remove the severe disability premium (extra money paid to a severely disabled person to assist in employing a carer), if the claimant's carer already receives the carer's element through universal credit.

Do you agree? Yes No

f) Remove the work related activity element for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants.

Do you agree? Yes No

If you wish to add a comment about any of these proposed changes, please do so below:

5. If you have any further comments to make regarding the LCTS scheme please use the space below:

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

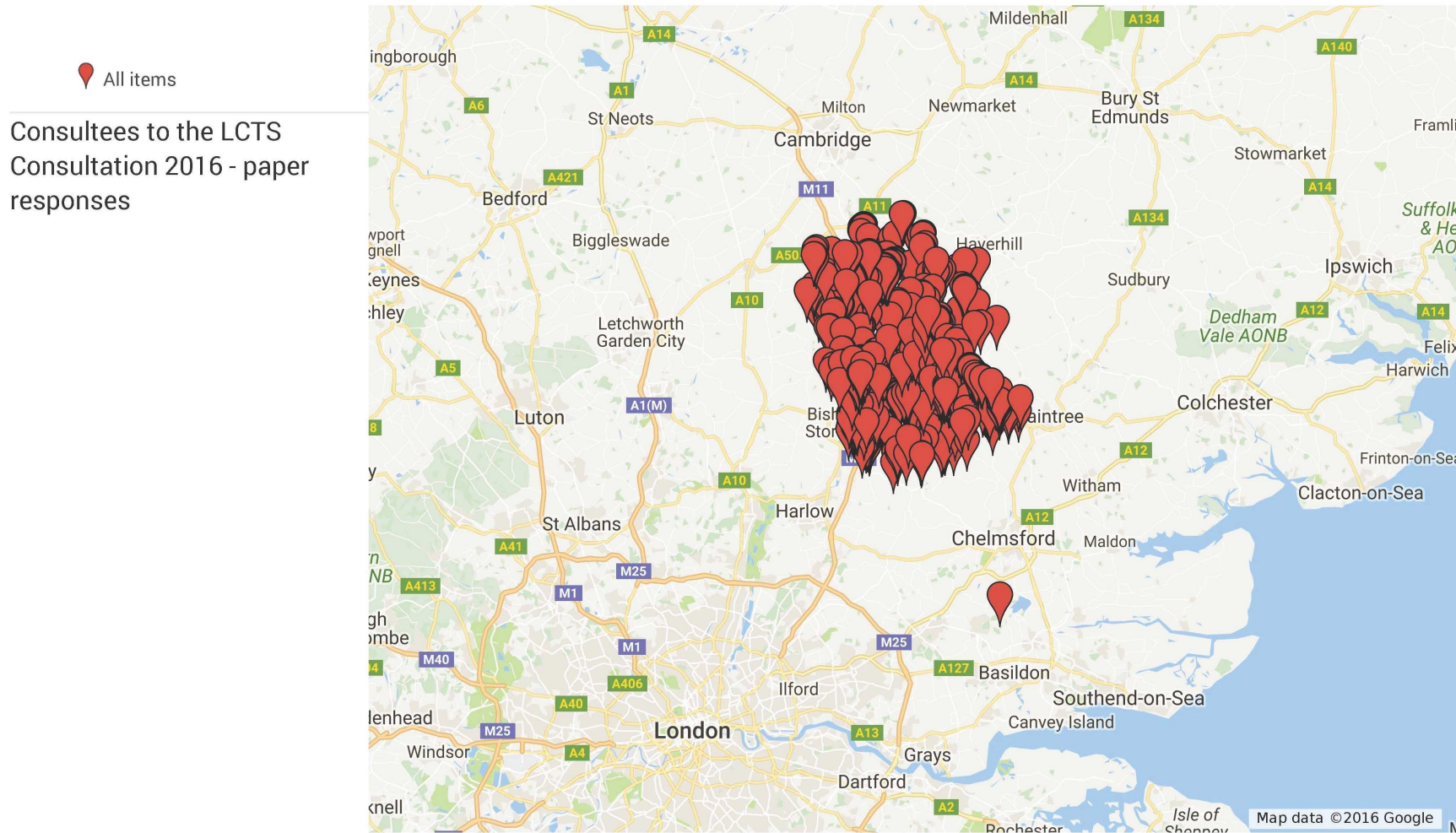
This consultation will close on 30 September 2016.

The final scheme will be agreed by Uttlesford District Council's Full Council on 8 December 2016. This will be after the proposed scheme and results of the public consultation have been reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee on 22 November and by Cabinet on 30 November. The approved scheme will take effect from 1 April 2017.

Following the decision, the results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

4.3 Profiling Geographical distribution – paper survey returns

LCTS Consultation 2016



CB10	CB10	CB10	CB10	CB10	CB10	CB10	CB10
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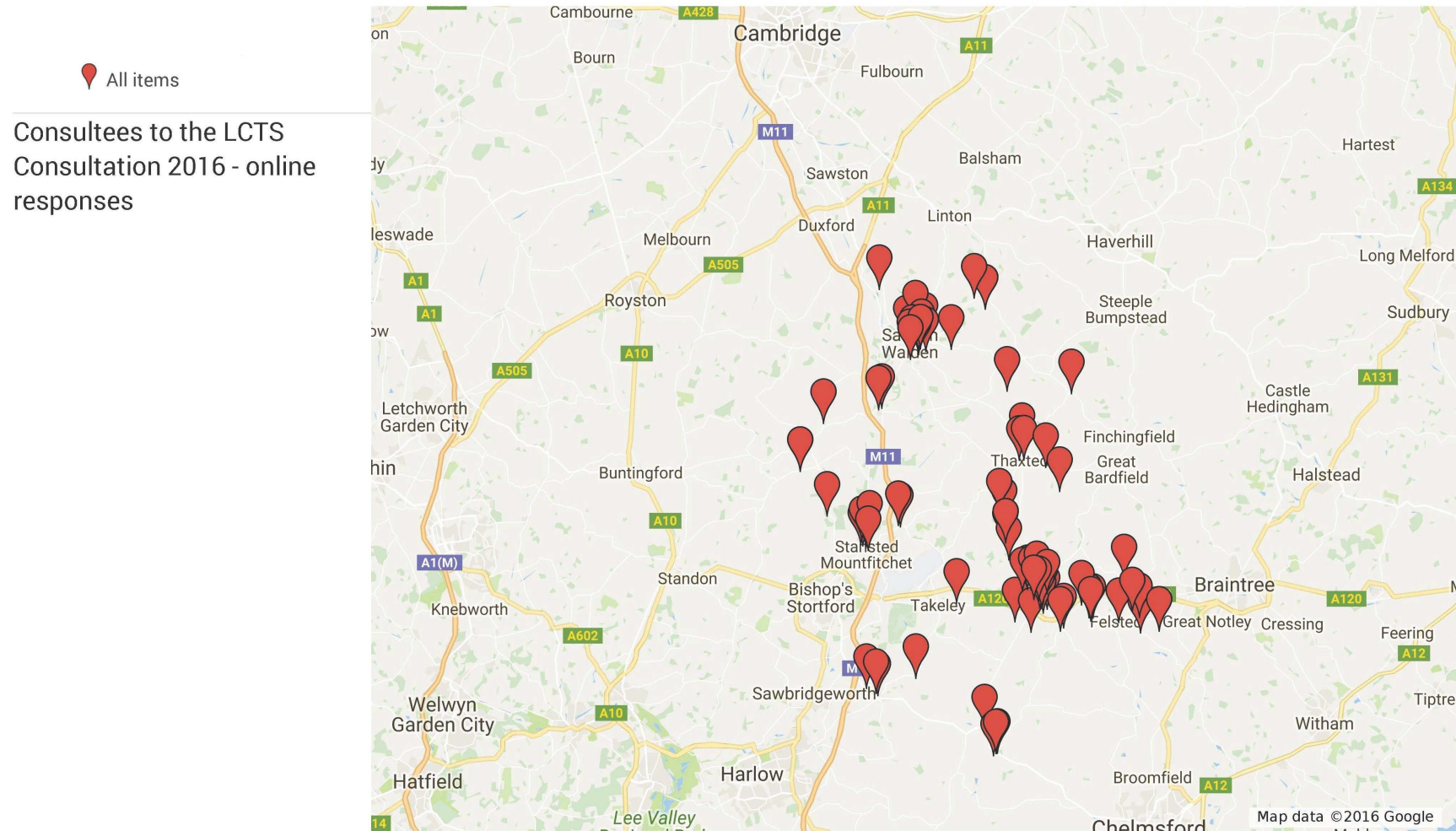
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CM6 3EH	CM6 3EH	CM6 3EJ	CM6 3EP	CM6 3EP	CM6 3ET	CM6 3EZ	CM6 3FL
CM6 3FR	CM6 3FU	CM6 3GB	CM6 3GB	CM6 3GF	CM6 3GL	CM6 3GR	CM6 3HQ
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CM77 6SP	Hatfield Broad Oak	Saffron Walden	SG8 8QJ	SG8 8QL	SG8 8QN	SG8 8QN	SG8 8QX
SG8 8RB	SG8 8RP						

Geographical distribution – online survey returns

LCTS Consultation 2016



Consultees to the LCTS Consultation 2016 - online responses

CB10 1BH	CB10 1DQ	CB10 1EY	CB10 1EY	CB10 2AL	CB10 2GF	CB10 2LQ	CB10 2SE
CB10 2XJ	CB101TS	CB102HZ	CB11	CB11 3AR	CB11 3BW	CB11 3ER	CB11 3GP
CB11 3QD	CB11 3QT	CB11 3WH	CB11 4AQ	CB11 4QU	CB110 1AT	CB113AF	CB114DH
CM22 6EL	CM22 6LP	CM22 7DH	CM22 7DL	CM22 7HX	CM227ER	CM23 1AX	CM23 1AX
CM23 1DL	CM24 8AN	CM24 8AX	CM24 8GA	CM24 8JF	CM24 8LQ	CM24 8PB	CM6 1AP
CM6 1AS	CM6 1BS	CM6 1BS	CM6 1DW	CM6 1EP	CM6 1GA	CM6 1HG	CM6 1JE
CM6 1JN	CM6 1JQ	CM6 1LY	CM6 1PH	CM6 1QH	CM6 1QT	CM6 1QW	CM6 1TP
CM6 1XQ	CM6 1XW	CM6 1YQ	CM6 1ZH	CM6 2AB	CM6 2EA	CM6 2ED	CM6 2FJ
CM6 2HQ	CM6 2HR	CM6 2JG	CM6 2LD	CM6 2LJ	CM6 3FZ	CM6 3GL	CM6 3HT
CM6 3JF	CM6 3NA	CM6 3NQ	CM6 3PZ	CM6 3QH	CM6 3TE	CM6 3TT	CM61BH
CM61ED	CM61QU	CM62HQ	CM63DP	CM63EF	CM63GB	CM63JF	

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 1 December 2016

7ii

Title: Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Susan Barker

Key decision: No

Summary

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a right for communities to draw up neighbourhood plans. Great Dunmow Town Council, with support and advice from the District Council, has produced a neighbourhood plan which has subsequently undergone a successful examination and referendum. This report considers whether the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan should be made (the Neighbourhood Plan legislation's term for adopted) by the District Council as part of the statutory development plan.
2. A neighbourhood plan, once 'made', forms part of the statutory development plan and sits alongside the Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005. Should planning permission be sought in areas covered by an adopted neighbourhood plan, the application must be determined in accordance with both the neighbourhood plan and the Local Plan.

Recommendations

3. To recommend to Council that the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan is formally 'made' as part of the statutory development plan for the District.

Financial Implications

4. The examination and referendum were initially funded by Uttlesford District Council at a cost of approximately £6,750 and £8,500 respectively. UDC will be able to claim up to £20,000 funding from DCLG which will cover the cost of the examination and the referendum.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	The plan has undergone significant
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	community involvement in its preparation
Community Safety	The plan deals with community safety
Equalities	The plan consulted with every resident
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	The plan deals with sustainability of town
Ward-specific impacts	Great Dunmow North and South
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. The parish of Great Dunmow was designated a neighbourhood plan area in October 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan group then gathered evidence and undertook significant consultation. Pre-Submission consultation under regulation 14 was undertaken between 19th September and 31st October 2015.
8. The Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for Examination in April 2016. The examination was conducted via written representations as the examiner decided that a public hearing would not be required. The examiner's report, detailing recommendations was received in June 2016. On the 15 September, Cabinet accepted and endorsed the proposed changes to the Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Examiner's report and supported the Plan to go forward to referendum.
9. A referendum was held in Great Dunmow parish on Thursday 3 November 2016 posing the following question to eligible voters:

Do you want Uttlesford District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Great Dunmow to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?
10. 21% of registered electors recorded votes, 1562 votes were cast of which 1451 were in favour of 'yes' and 111 votes in favour of 'No'. It was therefore declared that more than half of those voting had voted in favour of the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan.
11. In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, following the outcome of the referendum it is now for the District Council to 'make' the neighbourhood plan so that it formally becomes part of the development plan for Uttlesford District.

12. Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) sets out the requirement for a local planning authority when it comes to making a neighbourhood plan. It is stated that,

“(4) A local planning authority to whom a proposal for the making of a neighbourhood development plan has been made-

(a) must make a neighbourhood development plan to which the proposal relates if in each applicable referendum under that Schedule (as so applied) more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan, and

(b) if paragraph (a) applies, must make the plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held.

(6) The authority are not to be subject to the duty under subsection (4)(a) if they consider that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention of the rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).”

13. As a result of the outcome from the referendum and in accordance with the aforementioned legislation the Council is legally required to bring the plan into force following the successful referendum, it is recommended that the plan is formally made by the Council to become part of the development plan for the district and to help determine planning applications in the parish.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Neighbourhood Plan is not made	1. Little – members have approved the proposed changes to the Plan following the examination.	The Council will be in breach of its statutory duty under the Town and County Planning Act 1990.	As the legislation concerning the recommendation is quite explicit there is no way of mitigating this risk.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 1st December 2016

7iii

Title: Corporate Plan 2017 - 2021

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Howard Rolfe

Key decision: No

Summary

1. The Corporate Plan is a key document that sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the next four years. However, it is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and deliverable.
2. This report sets out the core contents; the format will be finalised once approved but its simplicity will be retained by presenting it on a single page.
3. It is important to recognise that the Corporate Plan forms part of a wider strategic planning framework, which directs how and where Council resources are allocated. The delivery plan that sets out the outputs, outcomes and performance measures will be included in the budget report, due to be considered by Council in February 2017, to ensure that resources follow the priorities.

Recommendations

4. That the draft Corporate Plan for 2017-21 be recommended to Council for approval.

Financial Implications

5. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications resulting from the delivery plan will be identified in the budget.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

Communication/Consultation	The plan is derived from ongoing community and budget consultation activities.
Community Safety	Community safety is more clearly identified

	as a corporate priority; specific actions and projects will be identified in the delivery plan and service plans.
Equalities	Any equalities implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery plan and service plans. The corporate plan can be made available in Braille, larger print or translated on request
Health and Safety	Any health and safety implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There are no human rights implications. Any legal implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans.
Sustainability	Any sustainability implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans.
Ward-specific impacts	Any ward-specific impacts resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the service delivery and service plans.
Workforce/Workplace	A strong vision that creates a sense of purpose is key to engaging staff more effectively in their work. Clarity and focus enables staff to be more confident in delivery of services, guides decision making and assists staff (as well as Members and the public) to identify good performance as they are clearer on what success looks like. Any workforce implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans

Situation

- The Council has for many years followed the good practice of setting out its priorities in the form of a Corporate Plan. Since 2007, much of the focus has, by necessity, been to ensure that the Council's finances were restored to good order. Whilst it is essential that the Council continues its efforts in maintaining a financially sound position, it is considered to be an opportune time for the Council to prioritise its Community Leadership role

8. Community Leadership is widely used to describe the key and unique value that councils can bring to their localities. As the only over-arching locally elected body, councils have a uniquely democratic role within the locality. The Council is well placed to perform a more visible Community Leadership role, focusing on bringing partners together, joining up local services, exercising influence in developing a shared local agenda, engaging with residents and creating a vision for our locality. This is in addition to its more traditional role of meeting its statutory requirements and as a provider of good quality services.
9. The role of Community Leadership is also essential when the rapidly changing nature of the public sector is considered, brought on by significant reductions in central government funding, increasing demand in services, a greater reliance on digital delivery. The Council is uniquely placed to maintain an overview on how these changes impact on the residents, businesses and the community of Uttlesford.
10. In addition, individuals, families and communities experience much more complex issues that cannot be tackled by individual parts of the public sector. Again, the Council is well placed to exercise its Community Leadership role by bringing statutory partners and the voluntary and community sectors together to provide more holistic, and wherever possible, earlier interventions and support.

Vision

11. To this end a vision is proposed within the Corporate Plan: **Working together for the well-being of our communities and to protect and enhance the unique character of the District.**
12. Implicit in this vision is the community leadership role that the council will need to play if progress is to be made towards this vision for the District.

Priorities

13. The Corporate Plan builds on the direction set in previous corporate plans but is intended to provide greater focus on the priorities. The addition of the narrative is intended to ensure that the public, members, staff and partners are clear what the issues and challenges are that drive the priorities, which therefore informs an assessment of what actions are most likely to deliver greatest progress on those priorities.
14. Underpinning the Corporate Plan will be a delivery plan for 2017/18 that sets out the more significant actions/projects (outputs), expected outcomes and performance measures by which success will be measured. The delivery plan has to be completed alongside the budget for 2017/18 to ensure that resources follow priorities; the delivery plan will therefore be included in the budget report considered by Council in February 2017.
15. However, it should be recognised that all of the Council's activities should be contributing to one or more of the priorities and it is not desirable or practicable to set out in a delivery plan all operational activities that contribute to the priorities.

However, the performance indicators for the relevant service areas will be mapped to the priorities to enable Members, the public and staff to recognise the role and importance of these operational activities.

16. The order of the priorities listed below should not be seen as having any particular significance; they are in many respects inter-connected and over emphasis on one may be to the detriment of another.

Promote thriving, safe and healthy communities: Uttlesford is one of the most affluent areas in the country with a strong sense of community and low levels of crime, where most residents enjoy generally good health. But in some communities (including newly forming ones) and for some residents, there are early signs of a reversal of these positive trends. The Council, with its partners, wants to act early to support communities and individuals to live well; Live Well will be the coordinating campaign for the Uttlesford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its work groups to promote all aspects of health, wellbeing, security and safeguarding. Housing is essential to enabling our residents to live well and we will strive to ensure everyone has access to a safe, secure, warm and affordable home. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Encouraging the production of Neighbourhood plans
- Improving community engagement
- Encouraging young people to live well through volunteering, engaging in civic life and being active
- Promoting garden city development for new settlement(s)
- Working through the LSP to promote Live Well; the Community Safety Partnership and the Community Safety Hub
- Increasing the number of council owned homes
- Promoting better standards in private rented housing.
- Supporting people to remain living in their own homes

Protect and enhance heritage and character: The combination of over 3800 listed building, historic towns, traditional villages and open countryside make Uttlesford a great place to live, work and visit. It is also one of the fastest growing places due to its location, which presents opportunities and challenges to protect and enhance its essential character for present and future generations. Too often our beautiful place is blighted by fly tipping, litter and untidy open space. Together with residents, communities and businesses, we want to ensure that Uttlesford always looks its best to encourage more people and businesses to visit or locate here. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Producing and adopting a Local Plan
- Promoting Pride in Uttlesford
- Working with others to increase access to the heritage and history of the District
- Encouraging positive planning that values heritage and promotes growth
- Opposing a 2nd runway at Stansted airport

Support sustainable business growth: Uttlesford benefits from very low levels of unemployment but key to this is a diverse and growing economy. Located between London and Cambridge and with Stansted airport in our district, we want to attract and retain businesses that provide good jobs for local people. Digital connectivity is essential for businesses and their customers, which is why we are investing directly to improve broadband access. The retail sector everywhere faces particular challenges but our town centres provide local services for our residents and are important to our tourism offer; we all need to do what we can to maintain and improve their vitality. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Promoting broadband and mobile telephony to support businesses and home working
- Promoting town centres
- Promoting economic benefits of Stansted Airport,
- Encouraging more people to visit Uttlesford
- Supporting business parks and business communities on industrial estates and support for the SE Cambs Science Cluster
- Using the Local Plan to identify sites for commercial development
- Encouraging the establishment of a higher education offer in Uttlesford

Maintain a financially sound and effective Council: The way in which the Council funds its activities has and continues to undergo significant change. Grants from government will end in 2018 and so the Council will be reliant on income from council tax, business rates, new homes bonus and the income we can generate directly through investments. Key to this is also that we spend wisely and ensure our services are as effective as possible. Good customer service is essential to enable us to get it right first time. We also need our residents to help us for example, by recycling as much waste material as possible and paying their bills online to reduce transaction costs. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Setting a MTFS that balances prudent use of investment, reserves and capital
- Maximising the use of our assets, including utilising the available space within the council offices
- Reviewing all services to ensure efficiency and effectiveness
- Developing a commercial strategy for the council, including trading Aspire
- Enabling enhanced self-service through the council website
- Working in partnership to deliver good services and reduce costs

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Council fails to deliver on its priorities	1	3	Greater clarity and explanatory narrative enables staff to understand the priorities more clearly; a delivery plan with outputs and outcomes will be produced alongside the budget to ensure that adequate resources are allocated; activities will feature in service and individual performance plans

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 8 December 2016

11i

Title: Appointment of External Auditor

Author: Angela Knight – Assistant Director –
Resources

Item for **decision**

Summary

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 brought to a close the Audit Commission and established transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local government and NHS bodies in England.

In response to the consultation on the new appointment arrangement, the LGA successfully lobbied for Councils to be able to 'Opt in' to a Sector Led Body appointed by the Secretary of State. Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) were successful in securing the procurement framework as the Appointing Person.

The transitional arrangements for local government bodies ceases after the 2017/18 audit and under the new arrangements of the act authorities are required to either;

1. 'Opt in' to a Sector Led Body, Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA).
2. To establish an auditor panel and conduct our own procurement exercise.
3. Explore the establishment of local joint procurement arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

It is likely that a sector wide procurement conducted by PSAA will produce better outcomes for the Council on both quality and cost than any procurement we undertook ourselves or with a limited number of partners.

Use of the PSAA will also be less resource intensive than establishing an auditor panel and conducting our own procurement.

Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 requires that a decision to opt in must be made by Full Council.

Recommendations

- That the Council 'opts in' to the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors.

Financial Implications

If PSAA is not used additional resource will be needed to establish an auditor panel and conduct our own procurement. Until either option for procurement is completed it would not be possible to ascertain additional financial implications for audit fees for 2018/19, although it is anticipated that any increase will be minimised through using PSAA.

Background Papers

- [Procurement and Appointment of Auditors](#)
- [PSAA Prospectus and FAQ](#)

Impact

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

1. As part of closing the Audit Commission the Government novated external audit contracts to PSAA on 1 April 2015. The audits were due to expire following conclusion of the audits of the 2016/17 accounts, but could be extended for a period of up to three years by PSAA, subject to approval from the Department for Communities and Local Government.
2. In October 2015 the Secretary of State confirmed that the transitional provisions would be amended to allow an extension of the contracts for a period of one year. This meant that for the audit of the 2018/19 accounts it would be necessary for authorities to either undertake their own procurement or to opt in to the appointed person regime.
3. There was a degree of uncertainty around the appointed person regime until July 2016 when PSAA were specified by the Secretary of State as an appointing person under regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person)

Regulations 2015. The appointing person is sometimes referred to as the sector led body and PSAA has wide support across most of local government. PSAA was originally established to operate the transitional arrangements following the closure of the Audit Commission and is a company owned by the Local Government Association's Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

4. The date by which authorities will need to opt in to the appointing person arrangements is not yet finalised. However, it is anticipated that invitations to opt in will be issued in December 2016.
5. The main advantages of using PSAA are set out in its prospectus (link provided under background papers) and are copied below; these can also be viewed as the disadvantages if the Council was to decide to undertake its own procurement under either option 2 or 3.
 - Assure timely auditor appointments
 - Manage independence of auditors
 - Secure highly competitive prices
 - Save on procurement costs
 - Save time and effort needed on auditor panels
 - Focus on audit quality
 - Operate on a not for profit basis and distribute any surplus funds to scheme members

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Successful appointment not achieved to timescales	Low	High	Early consideration of preferred option/approach

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 8 December 2016

11ii

Title: 2018 Review of Parliamentary Boundaries

**Author: Peter Snow, Democratic and Electoral
Services Manager, 01799 510430**

Item for decision

Summary

1. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has published its initial proposals for new constituency boundaries. The twelve week consultation period closes on 5 December 2016 and we are invited to comment on the proposals insofar as they affect the Uttlesford district.

Recommendations

2. The Electoral Working Group recommends to Full Council that the proposals for new constituency boundaries in Essex are welcomed and a suitable response is sent to the BCE's consultation. [Note: the consultation closes on 5 December so that an interim response will be sent by this date subject to confirmation by Council.]

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Documents already published on the BCE website.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The consultation is being undertaken by the BCE
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. A review of Parliamentary boundaries is being undertaken by the BCE in accordance with rules set by Parliament in 2011. The rules require the BCE to make recommendations for new constituency boundaries in September 2018. They will result in a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 501. Each constituency, based on the number of registered electors in December 2015, must have an electorate between a range of 71,031 and 78,507 electors.
7. The proposals are published individually for each of the nine regions of England. For the Eastern region the impact is that 57 constituencies have been allocated which is a reduction of one from the current number. For Essex, the number of constituencies is reduced from 18 to 17.
8. The specific proposal for the Saffron Walden constituency (including the whole of Uttlesford) is that it is proposed to import four wards of Braintree constituency (all in Braintree district) in exchange for the existing four wards from the City of Chelmsford which are proposed to be moved to the Brentwood and Ongar constituency instead. This proposal can be illustrated as follows:
 - Bumpstead ward, 2,285 electors
 - Rayne ward, 2,203 electors
 - Three Fields ward, 4,480 electors
 - Yeldham ward, 2,110 electors
 - All Uttlesford district wards, 61,702
 - Saffron Walden constituency, total electorate = 72,780
9. As stated above, the Chelmsford wards of Boreham and The Leighs (4,691), Broomfield and The Walthams (6,367), Chelmsford Rural West (2,181), and Writtle (4,151) will be moved to the proposed Brentwood and Ongar constituency.
10. Given that the size of the Uttlesford district is too small to form a constituency without the addition of wards from an adjoining district, the best possible outcome seems to be that Uttlesford is retained intact without being divided between two or more constituencies, as would have been the case had the previous review of boundaries gone ahead. Exchanging wards from Braintree for wards of Chelmsford City does seem a satisfactory outcome and does

retain the community of parishes in Uttlesford within a single seat that will continue to be represented by one M.P.

11. In terms of the administration of elections, this is more straightforward if electors are being imported into the constituency being administered rather than simultaneously being imported and exported as this involves a flow of data between more than two local authorities and introduces complications involving the use of polling stations, the recruitment, appointment and training of polling staff, and becomes especially complicated if other elections are being combined on the same day as a Parliamentary election, particularly if those polls involve the election of councillors in adjoining local authorities.
12. Transport links between the Braintree wards to the east of Uttlesford and Saffron Walden are undoubtedly inferior to links with the Chelmsford City wards that presently form part of the Saffron Walden constituency. However, in all other respects the mainly rural and dispersed Braintree wards appear to have more commonality of interest with the general character of the Uttlesford district. If the proposals are confirmed it will restore the link between the Uttlesford wards and at least some of the area intended to be transferred to the new constituency that applied prior to the pre 2010 boundary changes.
13. The Council is being recommended to submit a representation to the BCE endorsing the proposed constituency changes insofar as they affect the Uttlesford district and the Saffron Walden constituency.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1 The BCE's proposals have been published and there is a period of consultation in progress so that everyone wishing to comment is able to do so.	The consultation period will ensure that all comments will be considered.	The impact will be fairly minimal in terms of preparing for and administering Parliamentary elections as liaison will continue to be required with one adjoining local authority.	Good liaison will be needed with electoral officers at Braintree District Council.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Council

Agenda Item

Date: 8 December 2016

11iii

Title: Reports from the Constitution Working Group

Author: Simon Pugh, Interim Head of Legal Services

Item for decision:
yes

Summary

1. The Constitution Working Group considered reports on the following topics at its meeting on 27 September 2016. The reports are attached to this covering report and cover the following:
 - The deletion from agendas for meetings of the standard item called “Matters Arising: To consider matters arising from the minutes.”
 - The addition of a provision to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules to allow a scrutiny committee meeting to be cancelled following withdrawal of a call-in request.
 - The inclusion in the Constitution of powers for the Monitoring Officer to make routine changes to keep the Constitution up to date.

The officer recommendations in the three reports were approved by the Working Group.

Recommendations

2. That the head of business: “deal with any matters arising from those minutes” in paragraph 1.1.4 (page (4)-5) and in paragraph 2.3 (page (4)-7) of the Council Procedure Rules is deleted.
3. That a new paragraph 9.13 be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in paragraph 10 of the report to the Constitution Working Group on withdrawal of call-in requests.
4. That the changes to the Constitution set out in the Appendix of the report to the Constitution Working Group on updating the Constitution are approved..

Financial Implications

5. None.

Background Papers

6. The three reports mentioned to the Constitution Working Group meeting on 27 September. These are available on the Council’s website.

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	The reports have been considered by the Constitution Working Group.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal implications are dealt with in the body of the appended reports.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

8. The issues are set out in the reports to the Constitution Working Group, which are attached to this report.
9. When the Constitution Working Group considered the “matters arising” issue, officers were asked to compile a note setting out ways in which members could raise queries on the progress of matters. A note is annexed to this report setting out a variety of ways in which this might be done.

Risk Analysis

10. This is considered separately in the three reports annexed.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Note to Council: Monitoring Progress in Implementing Decisions.

Appendix 2: Report to Constitution Working Party – “Matters Arising” Agenda Item

Appendix 3: Report to Constitution Working Party – Scrutiny Committee: Withdrawal of call-in requests

Appendix 4: Report to Constitution Working Party – Updating the Constitution

Appendix 1

Monitoring Progress in Implementing Decisions.

The Constitution Working Group is recommending that the standard “Matters Arising” item is removed from Council and Committee agendas. Concern was expressed, however, on how queries about progress on minuted items could be raised. The issue is a wider one, as members may wish to ask about progress on matters other than those that fall within “matters arising” from the minutes of the last meeting.

There are various steps that can be taken:

1. Informal

1.1 At the most simple, members can contact the relevant Assistant Director or Director to ask about progress or to raise issues or concerns.

1.2 Similarly, members can contact the lead Cabinet member or Committee Chair to ask about the implementation of decisions.

2. Formal

2.1 As part of making a decision, members can plan for how they can monitor its implementation; e.g. by including as part of the resolution a request for an update report to be brought to the committee, either at key stages or at specified times.

2.2 Members can ask for an update report to be included in the Members’ Bulletin by contacting the Democratic Services team.

2.3 Members can ask questions at Council meetings. There is a standing item on Council agendas that, for a period not exceeding 15 minutes, allows for the leader, members of the executive and Chairmen of committees to receive questions from members, to permit the Leader, members of the executive or Chairmen to reply and for the questioner to ask a supplementary question but without any debate on the issues raised.

2.4 Members are entitled to give notice of motions for consideration by Council. This will lead (with limited exceptions for matters previously considered) to the inclusion of an item on the agenda and the opportunity for debate.

2.5 The “notice of motion” procedure may be applied to committee meetings, other than meetings of the Cabinet. Less formally, members may request the inclusion of an item on a committee agenda, which may be more appropriate where they want a formal update or want to raise an issue.

- 2.6 The agenda for Cabinet meetings provides for the meeting “to receive questions or statements from non-executive members on matters included on the agenda”.
- 2.7 The rules for meetings of the Cabinet also provide that any member of the Council may ask the Leader to put an item on the agenda of an executive meeting for consideration, and if the leader agrees the item will be considered at the next available meeting of the executive. However, there may only be up to three such items per executive meeting.
- 2.8 Any member of an overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he/she wishes an item relevant to the functions of the committee or sub-committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the committee or sub-committee. Although this power is limited to members of the committee, it would be open to any member of the Council to approach a member of a scrutiny committee and to ask them to raise an issue.
- 2.9 Working groups are less formally constituted and are not governed by procedural rules in the same way that the Council, committees and Cabinet are. If a member wants to raise an issue with a working group, they can approach the Chairman either directly or through an officer and request the inclusion of an item on a working group agenda.

Simon Pugh
Interim Head of Legal Services
21 November 2016

Appendix 2

Committee: Constitution Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 27 September 2016

4

Title: "Matters Arising" Agenda Item

Author: Interim Head of Legal Services

Item for decision

Summary

1. It has been the practice to include on agendas for meetings an item called "Matters Arising: To consider matters arising from the minutes." This report proposes the deletion of this as a standard agenda item for the reasons set out below.

Recommendations

2. Recommend to Council the deletion of the head of business: "deal with any matters arising from those minutes" in paragraph 1.1.4 (page (4)-5) and in paragraph 2.3 (page (4)-7) of the Council Procedure Rules.

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. List of Councils in Essex with annotations regarding use of "matters arising".

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	None.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal implications are dealt with in the body of the report.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None

Workforce/Workplace	None
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Situation

6. Agendas for meetings of the full Council and for Committee and Cabinet meetings routinely include as an item of business: “Matters Arising: To consider matters arising from the minutes.” This is provided for in the Constitution for annual and ordinary meetings of the Council. The provision is not applied by the Constitution to meetings of committees or of the Cabinet but is routinely included on the agenda.
7. The “Matters Arising” item can provide a helpful opportunity for members to obtain a progress report but it also carries risks. The authoritative work on Council procedures, *“Knowles on Local Authority Meetings”*, comments:

“One of the potential problems arising out of confirmation of minutes is the temptation for members to raise issues apart from simply confirming the minutes as a correct record. At its worst this can lead to an attempt to change a decision taken at the previous meeting and any such discussion should be ruled out of order by the chairman. Some authorities are known to provide an item on the agenda “Matters arising from the minutes” to allow, for example, members to be advised of the current position of items discussed at the previous meeting. However, this is not regarded as good practice and, unless the subject to be raised is related to a matter specifically referred to in the agenda, may infringe the statutory restriction that only business specified in the notice can be dealt with [section 110B, Local Government Act, 1072]. The model standing order provides the following:

“Signing the Minutes. The Chairman will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The chairman will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.” “

8. Section 110B referred to in paragraph 7 states:
 - (4) An item of business may not be considered at a meeting of a principal council unless either—
 - (a) a copy of the agenda including the item (or a copy of the item) is open to inspection by members of the public in pursuance of subsection (1) above for at least five clear days before the meeting or, where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, from the time the meeting is convened; or
 - (b) by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the minutes, the chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

One of the principles behind this is that the agenda should contain sufficient information to allow members of the public (and councillors) to decide whether

they should attend. It also allows for publication of reports and access to background papers in advance of the meeting.

9. There are arguments in favour of the “matters arising” item. It can provide, as mentioned, a helpful opportunity for members to obtain a progress report on items in the minutes. On the other hand, it cannot be used to revisit decisions already made and can be a distraction from the main focus of meetings and can prolong them. Any decisions made under “matters arising” are likely to be unlawful and, as “*Knowles on Local Authority Meetings*” points out, may infringe the statutory restriction that only business specified in the agenda can be dealt with. On balance, the officer recommendation is to delete this as an agenda item. If members have concerns about a specific matter, it is better to include it as a free-standing item on the agenda for a meeting.
10. Uttlesford DC is, according to research by officers, the only district council in Essex to include a “matters arising” item on its agendas. The County Council also does not have “matters arising” as an agenda item.

Risk Analysis

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
If “matters arising” is included as an agenda item, there is a possibility of legal challenge. (2)	Unlikely in the case of general discussion. More likely if decisions are made under “matters arising”.	Minimal in the case of general discussion. Could be significant if decisions are made under “matters arising”.	The principal mitigating action would be to remove the “matters arising” item from agendas. If members reject the recommendation, then a clear understanding that substantive decisions cannot be made under “matters arising” will reduce the risk.

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 3

Committee: Constitution Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 27 September 2016

5

Title: Scrutiny Committee: Withdrawal of call-in requests

Author: Interim Head of Legal Services

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report follows consideration

Recommendations

11. Recommend to Council the inclusion of a new paragraph 9.13 in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in paragraph 10 of this report.

Financial Implications

12. None

Background Papers

13. None. The report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September is appended to this report.

Impact

- 14.

Communication/Consultation	None.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal implications are dealt with in the body of the report.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

15. The purpose of this report is to propose changes to the Constitution to allow for the cancellation of a scrutiny committee meeting if members who “called in” the item subsequently conclude that call-in is not necessary. Members may decide they do not wish to pursue call-in if, for instance, they are offered assurance or explanation regarding the effect of the decision in question. Call-in may also not be necessary if assurances are given that the decision will be reconsidered by the Cabinet before its implementation.

16. The issue was considered by the Constitution Working Group at its meeting on 21 July 2016. It made this recommendation:

RECOMMENDED to Council that wording (to be drafted) be added to the Call-in procedure part of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules to enable Scrutiny Committee meetings to be cancelled, with the agreement of the lead officer and Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, when the Executive had agreed to take a decision back for reconsideration.

17. This report proposes wording, as recommended by CWG, but goes slightly wider than recommended, as it provides for meetings to be cancelled for additional reasons to that mentioned in the recommendation.

18. A report was submitted by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September. The Scrutiny Committee voted to support the CWG recommendation, although some concern was expressed regarding transparency. The recommended wording seeks to address this.

19. Scrutiny Committee members asked to see this report at the same time as its circulation to CWG. Any comments made will be passed to CWG when it meets. There was also a suggestion from the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee that a wider review of the scrutiny process is needed. This can be pursued, if members wish, separately.

20. Members are recommended to add the following paragraph 9.13 (at page 4-64) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules:

A call-in request under para 9.3 may be withdrawn at any time up until the Scrutiny Committee meets to consider the decision called in. If a request for call-in is withdrawn by all members who made it, then subject to the agreement of the Chairman, a Scrutiny Committee to consider the decision shall either not be summoned or shall be cancelled. For the avoidance of doubt, the meeting shall go ahead if the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee decides that this is in the public interest. Information about any call-in requests that are withdrawn under this provision shall be included on the agenda for a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Risk Analysis

21.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<p>(2) That a meeting of a Scrutiny Committee is convened in circumstances in which it is not necessary.</p> <p>(2) That implementation of a decision by the Cabinet is delayed unnecessarily.</p>	<p>Unlikely to occur frequently but likely to occur occasionally.</p>	<p>Unnecessary cost of calling a meeting, use of resources and member and officer time. Could be some impact if implementation of decisions is delayed.</p>	<p>This report proposes a way of mitigating this risk, whilst allowing the Chairman to rule that a meeting should go ahead. Concerns about transparency re addressed by the proposal that information is given to the Scrutiny Committee when call-in requests are withdrawn.</p>

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 4

Committee: Constitution Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 27 September 2016

6

Title: Updating the Constitution

Author: Interim Head of Legal Services

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report seeks approval for the Monitoring Officer to make routine changes to the Constitution to keep it up to date.

Recommendations

2. To recommend to Council the changes to the Constitution as set out in the Appendix to allow the Monitoring Officer to keep the Constitution updated.

Financial Implications

3. None.

Background Papers

4. There are no background papers.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There is a risk of challenge to Council decisions if the Constitution is not kept up to date.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. Article 15.2 of the Constitution sets out the procedure for making changes. (Page (2)-46.) It states:

Changes to the constitution may only be made by the Full Council after consideration of the proposal by the Constitution Working Group.

7. Whilst this is appropriate for substantive changes to the Constitution, there is a level of routine updating that is needed on a regular basis and which, in the officers' view, does not require approval by full Council and consideration by the Constitution Working Group. Officers have in mind specifically the following:

- Amending references to posts in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, where responsibilities and/or post titles change in the light of restructuring;
- Updating the Scheme of Delegation to reflect changes to delegations made by regulatory committees or by the Cabinet or Leader;
- Updating the responsibilities of members of the Cabinet, as determined by the Leader;
- Updating references to legislation where an Act of Parliament is replaced by another Act in substantially similar terms or reflecting changes in the law which are required by new legislation which the Council has no choice but to make;
- Drafting changes to the Constitution where these correct obvious errors or better give effect to the clear intention of the constitution.

It is arguable that at least some of these changes could be made by officers on an administrative basis without express provision in the Constitution. However, setting out clear powers to keep the Constitution up to date would avoid doubt and encourage regular review.

8. More significant changes to the Constitution would still require Council approval on the recommendation of the Constitution Working Group.

Risk Analysis

9.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Council's constitution is not kept up to date.	2. Not maintaining the Constitution could result in uncertainty about responsibility for functions, with a	[Click here]	[Click here]

	possible risk of legal challenge, a lack of full transparency, and potential confusion.		
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix:

Proposed Amendments to Article 15.2 of the Constitution. (Page (2)-46)

15.2 Changes to the Constitution

- 15.2.1 Subject to Article 15.2.3, changes to the constitution may only be made by the Full Council after consideration of the proposal by the Constitution Working Group.
- 15.2.2 In the event that the Council considers amending the constitution to provide for a mayor and cabinet form of executive it must take reasonable steps to consult with local electors and other interested persons in the area when drawing up proposals and must hold a binding referendum
- 15.2.3 The Monitoring Officer may approve drafting changes in these circumstances:
 - To update the Council’s scheme of delegation where responsibility for a function the subject of delegated powers is moved from one officer to another; for instance, following a departmental restructuring or to reflect changes in job titles or the management structure.
 - To reflect changes to delegations to officers made by regulatory committees or by the Cabinet.
 - To reflect changes in responsibilities of members of the Cabinet, as determined by the Leader.
 - To update references in the Constitution to legislation where an Act of Parliament is replaced by another Act in substantially similar terms or to reflect changes which are required by new legislation which the Council has no choice but to make.
 - To correct obvious errors or to better give effect to the clear intention of the Constitution.

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 8 December 2016

11iv

Title: Youth Engagement Report

Author: John Starr, Community Development Officer
(Drugs and Alcohol), 01799 510559

Item for decision:
yes

Summary

1. The Youth Engagement Working Group was formed to consider how the Council can better engage with young people in Uttlesford. This report proposes setting up a Youth Council in two phases and seeks approval for the first phase.

Recommendations

2. That the Council forms an Uttlesford Youth Council on the basis outlined in the report with a view to considering more detailed recommendations for its operation in three months' time.

Financial Implications

3. Finance for the 3 month exploratory period has been guaranteed by the Youth Initiatives working group which at its meeting of Thursday 24 November unanimously voted to endorse the formation of an Uttlesford Youth Council and allocated a sum of £2,000 to cover costs during the exploratory period.

Officer time to support this project will be approximately 1 day a week.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Extensive consultation with local schools and other groups
Community Safety	Safe working practices will be adopted
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	See comments under community safety
Human Rights/Legal	These aspects will be addressed in final

Implications	proposals for how the Youth Council would work.
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	Some impact on one officer

Situation

- 6 Councillors visited three secondary schools, Saffron Walden County High, Helena Romanes School Dunmow and Joyce Frankland Academy Newport [Further meetings are planned at The Walden School, Forest Hall School Stansted and Felsted School].
- 7 Meetings were organised with school council members at each venue through the teacher responsible. In total approximately 50 young people from all year groups [ages 12 – 17] attended the meetings and took part in question and answer sessions with the councillors. Additionally councillors also met with candidates for the Essex Youth Assembly [Election to be held week beginning 21st November] and held discussions with youth workers from Essex Youth Service. The Youth Engagement Working Group has concluded, through information gathered at the meetings and feedback received from young people, that there is a clear desire for further and more formal engagement between the young people of the school councils and the District Council.
- 8 The Youth Engagement Working Group proposes that the Council forms an Uttlesford Youth Council, Initially made up of 2 or 3 representatives from each of the secondary schools and up to 5 young people not in school the Youth Council will work with the Youth Engagement Working Group to develop a structure both for how the Youth Council will function and how it will interface with the Council. After a period of 3 months a further more detailed recommendation will be submitted.
- 9 Issues to be considered moving forward include:

Safeguarding – Adopting safe working practice

Age - What is the most appropriate age range for youth councillors?

Non Political - Youth Council must be non political, public resources cannot be used to support or promote political views.

Selection – How will the young people be selected or [ideally] elected to the council? How can those young people not in school be included?

Mechanics – How will it be structured? How often will it meet? Where will the meetings take place? How can social media and technology be integrated into the process? How will it interface with town and parish councils?

How will it work with the Young Essex Assembly?

Back Office –What will be the required level of officer support?

Finance – What will be the ongoing cost?

Terms of Reference – Must have a clear remit and terms of engagement with council.

Partnership – Work in partnership with Essex Youth Service and the Uttlesford Youth Initiatives working group.

Risk Analysis

10

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1 that young people are not given the opportunity to participate	1 Unlikely given the extensive consultation undertaken	1 That the voice of young people is not heard	1 Engaging with young people in the district and providing the support needed to maintain the youth council

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: FULL COUNCIL

Agenda Item

Date: 8 DECEMBER 2016

12

Title: APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

**Author: Dawn French, Chief Executive, 01799
510400**

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report sets out proposed interim arrangements following the retirement of the previous Monitoring Officer, Christine Oliva.

Recommendations

2. That the council appoints Mr Simon Pugh, Interim Head of Legal Services, as Monitoring Officer for the council and gives him delegated power to grant dispensations under s.33 Local Government Act 2011 to district, parish and town councillors who have disclosable pecuniary interests to speak and/or vote on issues relating to such interests and to grant dispensations under the Code of Conduct to district, parish and town councillors with other pecuniary interests to speak and/or vote on issues relating to such interests..

Financial Implications

3. None arising from this report.

Background Papers

4. High Court Judgment in *Pinfold North Ltd v Humberside Fire Authority* [2010] EWHC 2944.

Impact

5

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The council has a statutory duty to designate one of its officers as the Monitoring Officer.
Sustainability	None

Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. Section 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires each local authority (other than parish and town councils) to designate one of its officers (the monitoring officer) as being responsible for performing the duties imposed by section 5 and section 5A of the Act. In addition, the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to maintain registers of interests for his or her district council and for the parish and town councils within the district and to approve the non-registration of any sensitive interests.
7. The Assistant Chief Executive – Legal, who was the council’s monitoring officer, retired on 5 August 2016. In anticipation of his retirement, Council designated Christine Oliva as monitoring officer at its meeting on 26 July 2016. Christine Oliva herself retired at the end of September and it is therefore necessary once more to designate a replacement.
8. The non-legal duties formerly the responsibility of the Assistant Chief Executive –Legal have been reassigned and an interim Head of Legal Services, Simon Pugh, has been appointed pending recruitment of a permanent member of staff. Council is recommended to designate Simon Pugh as its monitoring officer. Mr Pugh is a solicitor. He has more than 37 years’ experience as a local government lawyer and was Head of Legal Services at Cambridge City Council for more than 25 years. He was Cambridge City Council’s Monitoring Officer from 2010 to 2016 and was its deputy Monitoring Officer from 1990 to 2010.
9. As an interim Head of Legal Services, Mr Pugh is not an employee of Uttlesford District Council but there is legal authority from the High Court that this is not a bar to appointment.

Risk Analysis

10.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The council does not appoint a Monitoring Officer	1, members are expected to observe their statutory duty	4, the responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer include reporting any illegal activity on the part of the council, its cabinet or officers. This involves monitoring the	A suitable officer is designated as Monitoring Officer for the council.

		activities of the council, cabinet and officers by scrutinising reports and decisions. The council risks reputational damage if this function is not performed.	
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: FULL COUNCIL

Agenda Item

Date: 8 DECEMBER 2016

**Title: PROPOSED CHANGES TO DELEGATIONS
TO THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE -
LEGAL**

13

**Author: Simon Pugh, Interim Head of Legal
Services, 01799 510416**

Item for decision

Summary

1. The Council's Scheme of Delegation contained in the Constitution delegates various powers to the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal. The holder of this post left the Council at the beginning of August and recent re-organisation has resulted in the interim appointment of a Head of Legal Services.

Recommendations

2. That the delegated powers of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal are assigned in accordance with the appendix to this report.
3. That the Council acknowledges that officers to whom powers are delegated may, in turn, authorise other officers to exercise powers on their behalf.

Financial Implications

4. None arising from this report.

Background Papers

5. None.

Impact

6

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	It is important that the Council has a clear and up to date scheme of delegation.

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. The Council's Scheme of Delegation contained in the Constitution delegates various powers to the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal. The holder of this post left the Council at the beginning of August and recent re-organisation has resulted in the deletion of the ACE – Legal post.
8. These changes were anticipated by a decision of full Council on 28 July 2016. Council resolved:
 - That the powers delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal by the council's Scheme of Delegation be delegated to Mrs Oliva.
9. Mrs Oliva has left the Council and the scheme of delegation needs to be brought up to date. The other factor is the transfer of licensing responsibilities to the Assistant Director, Housing and Health. requiring delegated powers vested in her need to be placed elsewhere. In addition, the Council resolution of 28 July only covers delegation of Council functions.
10. In practice, functions delegated to a senior officer will frequently be carried out by more junior officers within the service for which they are responsible. For avoidance of any doubt, the recommendation asks Council to acknowledge this.
11. A separate report to Council with recommendations from the Constitution Working Group recommends that officers be given authority to update the Scheme of Delegation to reflect, amongst other things, changes to organisational structure.

Risk Analysis

10.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
A greater risk of challenges to officer decisions if the council does not have a clear and up to date scheme of delegation.	2. Procedural challenges are always a possibility, whether or not well-founded.	3. A successful challenge to an officer decision could undermine actions taken. Challenges, even if unsuccessful, can be expensive to defend.	Keeping the Council's scheme of delegation up to date.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix:

Power	Responsibility
1. Authorise the institution, defence, withdrawal or compromise of any claims or legal proceedings, civil or criminal including any appeals	Head of Legal Services
2. Authorise officers of the Council to appear on behalf of the Council before courts and tribunals	Head of Legal Services
3. Grant applications for licenses and for registration of premises, persons and vehicles and the amendment or transfer of such licenses or registrations where such applications meet policy guidelines adopted by the Council or the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
4. Determine whether representations made in respect of licensing matters or applications for reviews of licences are valid or may be rejected as being vexatious, frivolous or repetitious	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
5. Refusal of licenses and registrations where such applications do not meet policy guidelines adopted by the Council or the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
6. Issue of statutory notices and certificates	Assistant Director, Housing and Health and Head of Legal Services
7. Issue of statutory notices, registrations and	Assistant Director, Housing

certificates in respect of charitable collections and gaming	and Health
8. To suspend licenses issued under Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for a period not exceeding 2 weeks where there has been a breach of condition or an alleged offence where in the view of the Head of Legal Services a prosecution would not be appropriate	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
9. To suspend licenses under s.61 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) immediately if in his or her opinion it is in the interests of public safety that the suspension should have immediate effect such suspension to last until the day after the next meeting of the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
10. Subject to the provision of a satisfactory statutory declaration to grant an application for a licence where the Council requires a criminal record check where the applicant is in possession of a check to the level required by the Council which is not more than 18 months old and to revoke any licence if a false declaration is made.	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
11. To grant licences in cases where a driver has a pending prosecution for a motoring offence which is in the opinion of the Head of Legal Services is unlikely to attract 6 points or more on the drivers licence	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
12. Subject to the provision of a satisfactory statutory declaration to grant an application for renewal of a licence granted by the Council where the Council requires a criminal record check but a check to the level required by the Council is not immediately available and to revoke any licence if a false declaration is made.	Assistant Director, Housing and Health
13. To grant applications for consent to place tables and chairs and other items on pedestrian areas of the highway subject to conditions where such applications fall within the policy previously adopted by the Licensing Committee or any amendment or amendments thereto made by the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee and to refuse applications which do not fall within that policy	Assistant Director, Housing and Health