



# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

## Scrutiny

**Date:** Tuesday, 22 November 2016  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Venue:** Committee Room  
**Address:** Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

**Members:** Councillors H Asker, G Barker, R Chambers, P Davies, A Dean (Chairman), M Felton, , S Harris, B Light, E Oliver, G Sell

### 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
- 2.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 5 - 16
- 2.2 Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 26 September 2016 17 - 22
- 2.3 Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 4 October 2016 23 - 26
- 3 Matters Arising

4	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee (standing item)	
5	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	
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Telephone: 01799 510510

Fax: 01799 510550

Email: [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk)

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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 6 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)  
Councillors G Barker, R Chambers, M Felton, B Light, E Oliver  
and G Sell

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services), L  
Cleaver (Communications Manager), S Pugh (Interim Head of  
Legal Services), A Rees (Democratic and Electoral Services  
Officer) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate  
Services).

Also present: Councillor S Howell (Portfolio Holder for Finance and  
Administration).

**SC14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Asker, Harris and Jones.

**SC15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 June and 5 July 2016 were received  
and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following  
amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June:

- (i) Public Speaking – the substitution of the word “clerk” for “clerks” in the  
first sentence of the third paragraph.
- (ii) Public Speaking – The first sentence of the penultimate paragraph was  
amended to “The Chairman said that he felt the best way forward was for  
Members to put forward the points they felt should be considered.”

**SC16 MATTERS ARISING**

- (i) **SC2 – Call in of a Cabinet decision – Street Naming and Numbering  
Policy**

The Chairman asked officers to provide an update on the Policy. In response  
the Assistant Director Corporate Services provided an update from the Director  
of Public Services, explaining that the Council had reviewed Cambridge City  
Council’s policy which appeared to be a good example of its kind, although it  
would require adapting to reflect the parished nature of the district. Currently the  
Council did not have the capacity to take forward the review, but would do so in  
due course. In the meantime the old policy was being used.

- (ii) **SC6 – Any other items which the Chairman considers to be urgent**

The Chairman said that he had asked for the Cabinet Forward Plan to be dated when included on the agenda for the Committee. Although this had not happened for this meeting, he had spoken to the Principal Democratic and Electoral Services Officer who had agreed that future Forward Plans would be dated.

SC17

## **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Chairman asked whether any information could be provided about car parking incentives. In response, Councillor Barker explained that there had been a consultation with town and parish councils about free parking periods. These requests were currently being costed. He added that initial costing was in the tens of thousands of pounds.

Councillor Light noted the inclusion of a provisional item for devolution. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that an update on devolution would be provided at the Full Council meeting on 18 October.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services added that he believed that the second item for devolution was included on the Forward Plan as a holding item, in order to prevent devolution from falling off of the Forward Plan. He would seek clarification on this.

Members discussed devolution in more detail. Councillor Sell began by stating that he had been receiving mixed messages across the region about progress on devolution. Local authorities were divided on whether there should be an elected mayor.

Councillor Chambers said that if progress had been made then the Leader would outline this at the Full Council meeting on 18 October. He felt very strongly that the matter was decided by all Members and not just Cabinet.

Councillor Sell agreed with Councillor Chambers that Full Council should decide the matter. He noted that some of the impetus over the requirement to have an elected mayor as part of deal on devolution may have been lost as George Osborne MP was no longer Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Chairman said that Committee would play its part on the matter when a proposal was brought forward.

The Forward Plan was noted.

SC18

## **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman drew attention to the recently agreed Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 September to consider the Council's ongoing commitment to the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP).

In response to a question by Councillor Light, the Assistant Director Corporate Services explained that the Work Programme had normally only shown the items which would be considered at the next two meetings of the Committee, but the Work Programme for the entire municipal year could be included in Members wanted that.

The Chairman explained that he had received an email from the Chief Executive regarding the timetable for the emerging Local Plan. Full Council was due to consider the Local Plan on 1 November 2016, but the Chief Executive had suggested that the meeting was moved to 8 November. This would allow the Committee to consider the procedures and timetable of the Local Plan on 7 November.

Officers thought that it would be useful for the Committee to examine the process. The Chairman said that further down the line the Committee may be able to consult with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to ensure that the process had been carried out in the correct way. He added that the Committee would only look at the processes surrounding the Local Plan and not its content.

Councillor Barker questioned whether the Committee would be able to change the Local Plan if the Committee held a meeting a day before Full Council. He asked what would happen if the Committee were not satisfied that the correct procedures had been followed.

In response to Councillor Barker, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that the Committee would hopefully be able to reassure Full Council that the correct procedures had been followed. The Local Plan was a big issue and if there were to be identified a significant issue with the procedures which had been followed, then the Local Plan process would have to be delayed to rectify this.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that officers would prepare a separate report for the Committee to consider. He explained that 7 November had already been reserved as date if there was a call-in to the Committee and was the best way to include the Local Plan on the Committee's timetable.

Councillors Chambers said that part of the requirement of formulating a local plan was that it was done so in an open and transparent way. This had been achieved through the Planning Policy Working Group which met in a public forum. The timetable for the emerging plan had been in place for a while and should not be put back through unnecessary scrutiny.

The Chairman said that officers had considered the meeting to be of benefit. He suggested it was better that the Committee started to consider the Local Plan now whilst pointing out that there would be further opportunities as the process evolves.

The Chairman reminded Members that Full Council would only be approving the beginning of the public consultation and not the submission of the plan to the planning inspectorate.

Councillor Barker noted that as this was only around the consultation document there would be other times for other considerations by the Committee to be fed into the Local Plan Process.

In response to Members, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that meeting on 7 November was not established. It would be up to the Chairman to speak to the Chief Executive about whether the meeting would go ahead.

The Chairman asked that officers planned for potential extra meetings further in advance

The Work Programme was noted.

SC19

### **CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

The Committee considered a report on call-in procedures and the decision taken by the Constitution Working Group when it discussed the matter on 21 July 2016.

The Chairman explained that this followed the Committee's call-in of a Cabinet decision regarding the Street Naming and Numbering Policy. He explained that the County Council's procedures allowed a call-in to not proceed if the Member calling in the decision and members of the Cabinet agreed to reconsider the decision.

He said there would be some issues with this regarding transparency. More thought was needed on the matter and it would be helpful if the Committee looked at this at a later time.

The Interim Head of Legal Services suggested it would be sensible to have a mechanism in place to cancel call-ins provided that appropriate checks and balances were in place. It would be possible to include a mechanism which allowed the Chairman to prevent the call-in from being cancelled. He was conscious that the Committee and the Working Group avoided unnecessarily duplicating work.

Councillors Felton, Oliver and Light said that the matter should not be deferred and should be considered at the meeting.

The Interim Head of Legal Services said that he would be compiling a note to the Working Group on how the constitution would need to be changed. This could also be circulated to Members of the Committee for comment.

Councillor Barker said he agreed with having a system in place to cancel call-ins. He said there were two likely situations which would result in the



cancellation of a call-in. The first was where the Member who called-in the decision was reassured and the decision stood. This could be due to a misunderstanding of the decision. The second was where it was agreed that the decision would be reconsidered by Cabinet. After the matter was reconsidered, the Committee had the power to call-in the decision again.

Councillor Barker proposed that changes to the constitution were dealt with by the Constitution Working Group.

RESOLVED that the Interim Head of Legal Services would circulate the proposed amendments to the constitution to the Committee before they were considered by the Constitution Working Group.

SC20

## **ENFORCEMENT TASK GROUP REVIEW**

The Chairman invited Councillor Sell to present the report. Councillor Sell began by thanking the other Members of the Task Group, as well as the officers who had helped the Task Group with their research.

Members had noted that some information such as enforcement action taken in wards was no longer sent to them. He invited the other Members of the Committee to ask questions of the report.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services highlighted to the Committee that the loss of the monthly enforcement action report had been highlighted for some time and the Administration had committed money to enable the back scanning of files and other changes to happen. Alongside this changes to operating practices would enable the report to be reintroduced.

Councillor Felton noted that the County Council logged reports. She asked whether the Council's software was capable of providing the same functionality. In response, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that the IDOX software used by the Council was capable of this, but this function had not been utilised. Staff had now been trained to do this and were in the process of back-scanning. He added that the structure of the Enforcement team had been reviewed. The changes to the officer structure would be complete by 1 October.

Councillor Oliver asked when parishes and ward members would start to receive updates regarding enforcement action. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said he would check this information and email Members.

The Chairman noted that the trade considered that prosecutions have often been sought in the first instance, when other measures would have been sufficient. The taxi trade had also asked for greater education to be given about the conditions of licences.

Councillor Sell explained that Councillor Jones had been looking at the taxi trade as part of the Task Group's review and had some concerns about the way in which enforcement action was taken with regard to taxi drivers and operators.

Councillor Sell added that the taxi trade felt that the dialogue between the Council and the trade was one-sided.

*Councillor Chambers declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chairman of the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee. Councillors Barker declared a non-pecuniary interest as member of the same committee.*

Councillor Chambers said that he didn't wholly agree with the findings of the report. The Licensing and Environmental Health Committee was a regulatory committee that dealt with drivers and operators who had broken the law or the Council's policies. He was aware that some had considered the now retired Assistant Chief Executive – Legal to be too harsh. However, when the Licensing Committee considered drivers' and operators' licences, the Committee decided whether to take action and the report did not make recommendations about the course of action.

It was often possible to tell when someone appeared before the Licensing Committee whether they had made a genuine mistake, but in most cases the law had been broken. He was not opposed to the idea of forums. Operators were aware of the conditions of their licences, as well as those of drivers, and it was their responsibility to ensure their drivers understood the conditions upon their licences.

The Council should not look to slacken its rules regarding licensing as doing so would put the public's safety at risk. The Assistant Chief Executive – Legal had always made himself available to advise operators and he was sure that the Interim Head of Legal Services would do the same.

Councillor Chambers informed the Committee that Licensing Committee meeting which had been scheduled to take place on 14 September had been cancelled due to lack of business. If there was minimal business the forums could take place during scheduled Licensing Committee meetings.

Councillor Sell said that there was never any intention of undermining the public's safety. Holding forums would be a way of allowing the Council to take a more backseat role.

Councillor Barker said that licensing fell outside of the remit of Cabinet. The Council was tasked with enforcing licensing as a statutory function and it was important that there was not any slack when the Council enforced its Licensing Policy.

The Interim Head of Legal Services said that if the Committee were minded to look at setting up a forum this responsibility could be given to the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Barker proposed that the Committee did not recommend to Cabinet that it looked to relaunch forums and instead asked the Licensing Committee to look at the matter. Members agreed with Councillor Barker's proposal.

In response to a question by the Chairman about the extent to which the Task Group had looked at the Environment Agency, Councillor Sell said the Task Group had focussed on Essex Highways rather than the Environment Agency. In reply, the Chairman asked that the Environment Agency were included within the scope of any further work related to the enforcement review.

Councillor Sell said that he had spoken to the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal, who had said that he felt the workload surrounding enforcement had increased and that one extra full time equivalent member of staff was required in order to adequately deal with the workload. In response, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that the restructure of the enforcement department had effectively created an extra full time equivalent member of staff.

The Chairman invited Councillor Howell to speak as the Cabinet member responsible for enforcement. Councillor Howell began by stating that he welcomed the report, which he had found very useful. He was pleased that the reporting of enforcement action by ward would be returning as he had seen regaining it as a priority.

He was conscious that almost everyone abided by the rules and that there were only a few cases where the Council needed to use its statutory powers. There was a need to understand what was meant by expediency and to accept that in some instances planning enforcement cases had to be closed on those grounds. He accepted the first three recommendations as set out in the report.

The Chairman proposed that the first four actions as outlined in the report were recommended to Cabinet with reference to the Environment Agency also included in any further work associated with the review.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommended to Cabinet the following four actions:

1. Following the re-engineering of the Council's IDOX Software System, from 1 April 2017; the Corporate Enforcement Team introduce monthly Parish/Town Council and District Council updates on Planning Enforcement Cases (including status and numbers); and introduce a quarterly report to Planning Committee.
2. Introduction of a Customer Charter with standards for updating complainants on the progress of all enforcement activities in all areas of activity before 1 April 2017.
3. Review the Council's Enforcement Strategy; and the Review/Introduction of Enforcement Policies for all principal enforcement areas before 1 April 2017.

4. Introduction of Memorandum of Understanding between Essex Highways and Uttlesford District Council on Highway Enforcement Matters.

And that the following action was recommended to the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee:

1. Relaunch Forums for Taxi Drivers/Operators and other Non-Planning Enforcement Areas where appropriate before 1 April 2017.

SC21

## **EQUALITY SCHEME**

The Assistant Director Corporate Services presented the report which sought the Committee's comments on the draft Equality Scheme. He explained that a slight amendment was to be made on paragraph 4 of the Scheme on the appended report so that it stated that the needs of gypsy and traveller communities were met as part of the Local Plan process.

RESOLVED that the Equality Scheme was recommended to Cabinet for approval as set out in the appendix to the report subject to the following amendment to paragraph 4 of the Scheme; "We will ensure that the needs of the gypsy and traveller community are met as part of the Local Plan process."

SC22

## **QUIET LANES**

The Committee considered a report on the quiet lanes scheme. The Chairman said that the report had come about through feedback from parish councils about the scheme. He invited Members' comments on the report.

Councillor Chambers thanked the Communications Manager for her detailed report. However, he did not want the Committee to consider the matter any further as highways were the responsibility of Essex Highways.

The Chairman suggested that the report could feed into the local highways panel.

Councillor Barker questioned the effectiveness of the scheme. There was no evidence to suggest the quiet lanes reduced speed and acted in a traffic calming capacity. Councillor Oliver asked whether a budget existed for quiet lane schemes.

In response the Communications Manager explained that when quiet lane schemes had previously been considered by the Uttlesford Highways Panel other schemes had been prioritised. She also explained that she had contacted the Highways Liaison Officer at Essex Highways and had shared The Highways Liaison Officer's contact details with the town and parish councils.

It was agreed that the report would be sent to members and officers of the Uttlesford Highways Panel.

The Committee thanked the Communications Manager for all her work on quiet lanes.

The report was noted.

SC23

### **ESSEX HIGHWAYS (VERBAL REPORT)**

The Chairman invited Councillor Barker to present a verbal report on the relationship between Essex Highways and the Council. He began by explaining that he had spoken to the Director of Public Services and Councillor Ranger about Essex Highways' relationship with the Planning Committee. Both had said that they did not think that there was a real issue between the Planning Committee and Essex Highways.

Councillor Barker said that he had asked them whether any statistical information could be provided but both did not believe that this would be possible. Councillor Ranger had explained that there had been workshops with Essex Highways in the past. These had not happened since the local elections in May 2015, but would be taking place in the near future.

Councillor Barker told the Committee that it was difficult to pin specific instances where communication between Essex Highways and the Council had broken. He also explained that Essex Highways responded to planning consultations by way of report. The Council's planning officers then summarised this report in their report to the Planning Committee.

He informed the Committee that the Director of Public Services had suggested using the Assistant Director Planning's experience from his time at Brentwood Council to help further understand the Council's relationship. Councillor Barker then suggested that the Council's relationship with Essex Highways was further explored after the Local Plan.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that Councillor Davies had been tasked with focussing on communication with Essex Highways and highways maintenance issues.

Councillor Barker explained that Essex Highways had a website which maintenance issues could be reported. All ward members and town or parish councils were notified of any works which would be taking place in their area.

Councillor Light said that she could recall works that had taken place in Saffron Walden which she had not been notified of. In reply, Councillor Barker said that specific information about the works was required. This would allow the Committee to begin questioning Essex Highways to establish why councillors were not notified of the works.

Councillor Barker then spoke about the presentation Councillor Ranger had referred to in the previous meeting of the Committee. Councillor Barker said that he had not found the presentation particularly helpful. It did, however, explain that there was no funding available for VAS signs and that the process surrounding Highways Panels was due to be overhauled.

The Chairman said that he was pleased that formal workshops with Essex Highways had been revived. Any outstanding issues could be considered after the Committee had considered the Local Plan. Councillor Davies would be given an opportunity to provide an update at the next meeting.

The report was noted.

SC24

## **NEPP – SCOPING REPORT**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that Cabinet would be taking the decision as to whether the Council should commit to the partnership for a further four years. It was proposed that one of NEPP's group managers Richard Walker would give a presentation to the Committee followed by a question and answer session. The Committee would then be asked to decide whether or not the Council should remain in the partnership and make a recommendation to Cabinet.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services added that the decision which would be made at Cabinet was not to renegotiate terms, but to extend the agreement. He asked Members to provide areas which they wished to have more information on.

Councillor Felton asked for statistics to be provided which showed where the Partnership had been successful, where it had not been successful and what lessons had been learnt. Councillor Sell said that he agreed with the suggestions by Councillor Felton.

Councillor Barker produced a Scrutiny report from Braintree District Council which in 2015 had explored how NEPP worked.

It was agreed that Braintree would be asked if they would release the document to the Council.

Councillor Chambers said that it would be helpful to be given an estimate of the likely cost to the Council of leaving the Partnership. Councillor Sell suggested that the presentation should also look at ways in which the service could be improved.

Councillor Light said that she felt the terms of reference in the scoping report were biased in favour of the Council remaining in the Partnership. Although, there were some parts which she agreed with the terms of reference there was a need for the Partnership's decision making process to be re-evaluated. The process needed to be examined in order to ensure that town and parish

councils approved of schemes. It was also important to include the costs to the Council and residents in any consideration of the Partnership.

In response to a question by Councillor Barker, the Chairman explained that the purpose of the review was pre-scrutiny of the Cabinet decision. Then in reply to a question by Councillor Light, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that the Council had to make an expression of interest to remain in the Partnership by the end of October.

Councillor Howell explained that whilst he did not know for certain what decision Cabinet would make regarding the Partnership, he considered it likely that it would vote to continue as a part of the Partnership. He felt that it wasn't helpful to take a binary approach when considering the matter and it should instead be looked at in the context of which elements worked well and which areas of the Partnership could be improved upon.

The Committee agreed to Mr Walker to attend the Committee meeting on 26 September. It also agreed that the Chairman, Councillor Barker as Vice-Chairman and officers would further review the scope of the presentation.

RESOLVED that:

- Mr Walker would be invited to the Committee meeting on 26 September.
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman would consult with officers about the topics to be included in the presentation.

The meeting ended at 10pm.





**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 26 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)  
Councillors H Asker, G Barker, R Chambers, B Light, E Oliver and  
G Sell.

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services),  
M Cox (Democratic Services Officer) R Harborough (Director of  
Public Services) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate  
Services).

Also present: Councillor S Barker (Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services).

**SC25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davies, Felton and  
Harris.

Councillor Asker declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron  
Walden Town Council.

**SC26 NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP – EXTENSION OF THE JOINT  
COMMITTEE AGREEMENT**

**Presentation**

The Chairman welcomed from the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP),  
Richard Walker, Group Manager and Lisa Hinman, Central Area Manager.  
Richard Walker gave a presentation about the NEPP service to assist with the  
pre-scrutiny discussion on the decision to be taken by Cabinet on whether to  
commit to the partnership for a further four years.

Richard Walker explained the history of decriminalised parking in Essex and the  
subsequent development of the Parking Partnership. He explained that after  
decriminalisation, ECC had established 12 agencies in the districts to run  
parking enforcement. This arrangement had proved ineffective and had resulted  
in a growing deficit that had reached £900K countywide by 2011.

ECC had therefore cancelled the agencies and established the north and south  
parking partnerships to achieve operational and administrative efficiencies,  
reduce the deficit, and provide a surplus to invest back in enforcement and the  
making of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Other improvements sought were  
greater resilience, clarity of policy and consistency of approach.

The parking function covered two distinct elements

- Off- street parking - this was the responsibility of district authorities  
(UDC). The budget contribution was via a service level agreement.  
For UDC this was £154K

- On street parking - this was the responsibility of ECC as highway authority. The budget expands or contracts to suit income.

Each Partnership had a lead authority, which was Colchester for the NEPP, and Governance was by way of a Joint Committee comprising one Cabinet member from each authority together with a county member.

Richard Walker gave details of the areas of work covered by the NEPP and said that it had met its objectives to achieve an overall financial account to operate parking enforcement and the TRO function. The partnership now had zero deficit, and was looking to invest the surplus back into the service. He explained the challenges and plans for the future of the Partnership.

The member authorities were being asked to consider whether they wished to extend the agreement for a further 4 year term. The current term was 11 years, but as the decision to extend was to be made not less than 15 months before the end of the 7 year term a decision had to be taken by December 2016, when a new business plan and legal agreement would be put in place.

## Questions

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions, as follows

Q - Who do you consider to be the customer of the service? How do you find out the views of the general public, is there a problem with public perception?

A - Everyone who uses the service is a customer. The partnership is looking to be more outward looking and intends to arrange more focus groups and events.

A - There should however be caution when asking the views of the general public as there tends to be a binary response. People either think there is too much or too little enforcement, but rarely express satisfaction with the service.

Q - How many Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) are employed in Uttlesford?

A - There is always at least one CEO in the Uttlesford District, on average there will be two, one concentrating on Saffron Walden and one covering the rest of district. The teams work 4 days on and 4 days off, from 7am – 9pm or 7.30am – 7pm. These are long shifts, and there are a lot of hours to cover. It is often difficult to recruit to these posts as it and the nature of work requires a certain type of person.

Q - How many CEO's are employed by the partnership as a whole?

The partnership employs 51 FTEs. The number currently employed is in the 40's, recruitment takes place on an ongoing basis.

Q - How do the CEO's know which areas of the district to target? Do managers have detailed knowledge of the area?

A - The officers' understanding of the district is improving all the time. Detailed surveys are carried out for TRO's to ensure it is the right scheme for the

area. The NEPP has a number of officers with technical knowledge of the areas and CEOs develop their own personal knowledge on the ground.

Q - Why do officers often patrol in pairs and why do they enforce on bank holidays? As inappropriate parking is often the cause of traffic disruption, does the parking partnership work with ECC highways to help traffic flow in small towns?

A - The officers do not generally patrol in pairs but do so outside schools, when they are training or when there are safety concerns. On street parking can often be the cause of traffic flow problems, and the NEPP works with ECC to develop appropriate TROs.

Q - Do the district authorities advise the NEPP about changes to off street parking arrangement, for example during the recent works at the Lower street Stansted car park?

A - Yes, this information is passed to the NEPP although, the recent arrangement at the Lower Street Car park had been particularly confusing.

Q - Is there relevant data/ information available to assist with the setting of parking tariffs?

A - Yes the new meters uses SMART technology which can provide detailed usage information.

Q - Is there a heat map for the district?

A - Yes, the system can produce a detailed map of where the CEOs have visited and where tickets have been issued. This information can be overlaid to plan working patterns.

Q - Is there a problem with issuing visitor permits?

A - The NEPP is trying to encourage digital usage, although paper tickets are still available.

Q - Can action be taken to prevent people parking on the kerb?

A - The NEPP cannot enforce where there are no restrictions (ie yellow lines). If the parking causes an obstruction this is a matter for the police. However, before any restrictions are put in place, thought should be given to the knock on effect on surrounding areas. In cases where there is a wide pavement this does not necessarily cause a problem and can assist with speed reduction.

Q - We are not aware of who we should contact at the NEPP to report local issues?

A - Feedback from councillors with local knowledge is very important. I will circulate a who's who and contact numbers of relevant officers.

Q - Why have Epping decided to opt out of the partnership for off- street parking

A - Epping DC they think they can provide this service cheaper themselves.

Q - Who produces the accounts for the NEPP?

A - The Group Manager produces the accounts together with the accountant. The accounts are independently audited and are publically available.

Q - Should the accounts be presented to the UDC Audit Committee?

A - The partnership produces small bodies accounts which include a lot of detail. However, The Joint Committee has a detailed scrutiny of the accounts at its budget meeting.

Q - How much does UDC pay to NEPP for the off street service?

A - £154K to cover services required such as enforcement, machine maintenance, cash collection. The largest costs are staffing and fuel. This SLA is long standing and will need to be reviewed at some stage.

Q - If we leave the partnership, why would we have no influence on the on-street parking function?

A - On street parking is an ECC highway function.

Councillor G Barker thanked the officers for an interesting and informative presentation. Lisa Hinman asked she was keen to build up a relationship with district members and asked members to contact her with any questions or issues.

Richard Walker and Lisa Hinman then left the meeting.

## **Discussion**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Public Services, which contained information to assist with making the decision on whether to recommend that UDC signs up to the four year extension to the joint agreement.

It was noted that UDC currently paid NEPP £154,000 a year for services in respect of off street car park management. It made no financial contribution to on - street parking enforcement, although there were costs associated with the participation of members and officers in the partnership.

The report set out the advice from NEPP on the level of resource that UDC would require to manage its off street car parks itself. It concluded that there would be no financial savings, it was likely to increase revenue expenditure on this function without achieving any advantage.

The Chairman asked if anyone had put a case that it would be better for the Council to leave the Partnership.

Members of the group said that if there was currently a problem with recruiting CEOs, there was little realistic chance of UDC doing any better without the expertise and manpower. There would also be the additional start-up costs as well as the annual running costs. Officers advised that it would be possible for the council to take on this role but it would be a huge challenge and it would have to engage the help of consultants. Members agreed that it would be difficult for UDC to provide the service cheaper itself and therefore it would be ill-advised to leave the partnership.

However, there was some concern about whether the partnership was giving Uttlesford value for money, when it assigned only 1 or 2 CEO's to patrol the district. The committee thought there should be some improvements to the quality of service provided. One suggestion was whether Uttlesford could negotiate/pay for additional enforcement hours.

The Director of Public Services said the Cabinet would consider its initial response at its meeting on 12 October but the final decision would be made by the NEPP Joint Committee on 15 December 2016.

#### RESOLVED

- 1 To recommend that the Cabinet agree in principle that UDC commit to the NEPP for a further four years.
- 2 The Chairman to liaise with Cllr Asker and discuss with officers possible areas for improvement to the service and bring these back to the November meeting.

The meeting ended at 10pm.



**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 4 OCTOBER 2016**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)  
Councillors H Asker, G Barker, R Chambers, P Davies, M Felton  
and B Light.

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services),  
M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director of  
Public Services), A Lee-Moore (Specialist Environmental Officer)  
and M Watts (Principal Environmental Health Officer).

Also present: Councillors P Fairhurst, J Lodge and J Redfern.

**SC27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harris, Oliver and Sell.

Councillor Asker declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron  
Walden Town Council.

**SC28 CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION – AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**

The meeting had been called to consider the decision taken at the Cabinet  
meeting on 15 September to approve the Air Quality Action Plan.

*Paul Garland from sustainable Uttlesford spoke to the meeting. A summary of  
his statement is attached to these minutes.*

Councillor Dean had called in this decision for the following reasons.

- Overall the action plan as written is not adequately specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART).
- In particular, but not exclusively, item numbers 1, 7 & 8, which will support the delivery of the Local Plan and will have high or medium impacts on air pollution, do not provide enough detail to give the reader confidence that they will support some of the options that may be included in the Local Plan. They are unspecific.
- The action plan needs to support relevant options that may be chosen for the local plan to allow for the right decisions to be taken on those options. Delaying the formulation of specific actions until after the Local Plan site selection decisions have been taken based on inadequate evidence to support their delivery would be contrary to the ethos of the Local Plan process. Currently the action plan is not timely

Officers' had responded to these points in a document circulated to the committee, together with an updated Action Plan.

Councillor Dean said he had called in this decision because he had the same concerns as when the document had first been considered by the Scrutiny Committee. The plan failed to identify the most important areas to be addressed, to prioritise action and provide quantifiable measures for improvement and did not identify the resources to implement these measures.

He said the document failed to meet the Defra guidance on producing an AQAP. This recommended Local authorities to consider a package of measures, and to carry out an impact assessment to estimate the expected reduction. He said the council should focus on those measures that would bring the most significant changes.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said it was difficult to apply quantifiable targets to each air quality measure. The plan contained a combination of actions, which aimed to benefit the wider air quality area. It might be possible to measure specific outcomes where radical changes were proposed e.g. for a new bypass, but the improvement made in the smaller town centre area would not bring substantial change that could be easily measured.

It was explained that many of the proposed actions relied on input from external partners. Some of the measures were close, but the annual status report showed that all measures were within the limits. The task was to ensure the management of additional traffic and a key part of this work was to liaise with ECC to improve traffic flow.

Members of the committee questioned how the plan could improve air quality in Saffron Walden when the future new developments would bring an increase in the volume of traffic. Officers said there were other factors to consider including improved emission technology, new road infrastructure, new types of vehicles, and also junction improvements.

Members said it wasn't clear if the aim of the plan was to reduce AQ levels or just to ensure they didn't get any worse. They also asked how the information would help inform the new Local Plan in relation to the preferred location of new developments and the required mitigation.

The Director of Public Services said the overall purpose of the AQAP was to ensure that the air quality objectives were met in the Saffron Walden Air Quality area. This was a quantifiable and measurable objective. The monitoring system provided detailed information on an annual basis and reported progress throughout the year.

In relation to the Local Plan, when ECC had finalised the model for traffic flow for Saffron Walden, it would put this through an air quality model and look at the effect of various interventions.

Councillor Lodge spoke to the meeting. He said there had been occasions when the air quality measures had not been met and this was concerning as there were 500 homes to the west of the town yet to be developed. He said the plan was a good start to the process, but it included only qualitative measures with no numbers attached.



He said the plan fell short of the DEFRA Local Air Quality Management advice that it should include a clear indication of reductions expected over time, when this was likely to be achieved, the measures already taken and further measures to be met and within timescales. He felt there was more information that could be included and suggested that the plan should be delayed until this was available.

Officers said that it wasn't possible to have a quantifiable reduction for each measure. The modelling carried out by ECC had identified that the main pollutants in the town were caused by queuing traffic. The plan therefore aimed to reduce the reliance on cars and to increase traffic flow. Councillor Asker said the problem was the limited capacity of Saffron Walden's medieval narrow streets.

Other members said they had little confidence that the pollutants would improve in the light of new the developments proposed for Saffron Walden. There was also the question of whether budgets had been identified within UDC to implement the actions.

The Director of Public Services said the council would have to consider the extent it wished to prioritise measures through the budget preparation process. There would also be resources through planning obligations when the developments were implemented. The council would also look at the CIL option through the Local Plan process.

Members commented that it was difficult to prioritise schemes when the plan was neither itemised or costed. Officers replied that the updated table of actions gave more detail on the impact and relative cost of the measures. This was still an outline plan and any bid for a project would have to be properly costed.

Councillor Chambers said that the pollution levels in Saffron Walden were still reasonably low compared to other areas of the county. The problem was that Saffron Walden was an affluent area with relatively high car usage. It was agreed that driver education was important. The action plan included measures to encourage change in driver behaviour although this was difficult to quantify.

Other Members mentioned the future change in vehicle use/type of vehicles that was likely to reduce emissions over the next few years.

Councillor Barker said the document was more of a strategy than an action plan that set out aspirations of what the council would like to do without the necessary detailed of how this would be achieved. He said the Cabinet meeting on 15 September had asked officers to devise project plans for the actions, which was an indication that the Cabinet felt there was still work to be done.

Councillor Fairhurst spoke to the meeting. He said everyone agreed on the aim to control and reduce emissions but the plan should start with a base line number in order to judge improvements going forward. The Principal Environmental Health Officer said that through its air quality measurements the council did have quantifiable base level information for Saffron Walden.

Councillor Dean said the circulated update to the plan showed some improvement, but it could still be more detailed. Members agreed that the document, in its current form was not yet ready to be adopted. It was suggested that the action plan should include the following information

- A position statement
- Prioritise the actions.
- Quantification of costs
- Confirmation that the plan meets DEFRA guidelines

RESOLVED to refer the decision back to Cabinet, with a recommendation that improvements be made to the Saffron Walden AQAP before it was approved and submitted to DEFRA.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

### **Public Statement**

Paul Garland spoke on behalf of Sustainable Uttlesford. He said air quality was a serious issue in Saffron Walden. He was impressed with the outline policies in the draft plan. However, he felt these were only a series of aspirations and there was little chance of full implementation, when there were neither the available officers nor resources to make this happen.

There was an urgent need for a fully integrated and costed highway access and transport plan. This should be funded by developers and raised through CIL rather than a S106 obligation, so the funds were not confined to the locality. This was the only way to get the infrastructure to help prevent car journeys. The soft measures around changing lifestyle were also important but these also needed resources and dedicated officers to drive them forward.

## UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Local Plan	Cabinet	TBC	To approve the Local Plan consultation document	N	N	Cllr Barker	Roger Harborough – Director of Public Services
Aspire rentals	Cabinet	TBC	To consider initial proposals	N		Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Q2 Budget Monitoring 2016/17	Cabinet	1 Dec		N	N	Cllr Howell	Angela Knight – Assistant Director Finance
Treasury Management – Mid Year Outturn 2015/16	Cabinet	1 Dec		N	N	Cllr Howell	Angela Knight – Assistant Director Resources
Final LCTS Scheme 2017/18	Cabinet	1 Dec	To recommend to Council final LCTS scheme 2017/18	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
2017/18 Budget Strategy	Cabinet	1 Dec		N	N	Cllr Howell	Angela Knight – Assistant Director Finance

Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Enforcement	Cabinet	1 Dec	To consider the Cabinet's response to the recommendations from the Scrutiny review	N	N	Cllr Howell	Roger Harborough – Director of Public Services
Corporate Plan 2017/18	Cabinet	1 Dec		N	N	Cllr Rolfe	Dawn French – Chief Executive
Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan	Cabinet	1 Dec	To consider the outcome of the Referendum on the GDNP	N	N	Cllr Barker	Gordon Glenday – Assistant Director, Planning
Review of members' scheme of allowances 2016-17	Council	8 Dec	To consider recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel	N	N	To be presented by David Brunwin, Chairman of the IRP	Peter Snow – Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Final LCTS Scheme 2017/18	Council	8 Dec	To approve final LCTS scheme 2017/18	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
2018 Review of Parliamentary	Council	8 Dec	To receive recommendations from the Electoral Working Group to the proposals of the	N	N	Cllr Howell	Dawn French – Chief Executive

Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Boundaries			Boundary Commission for England to new Parliamentary constituencies				
Devolution Update	Council	8 Dec		N	N	Cllr Rolfe	Dawn French – Chief Executive
External Auditor appointment 2018/19	Council	8 Dec	To commence the process for appointing the External Auditors once the existing framework agreement ends at the end of 2017/18	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Investment Opportunity	Council	8 Dec	To seek agreement to loan money to Aspire to enter into an investment opportunity	N	Y	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan	Council	8 Dec		N	N	Cllr Barker	Gordon Glenday – Assistant Director Planning
Local Plan	Council	TBC	To approve the Local Plan consultation document			Cllr Barker	Roger Harborough – Director of Public Services
Appointment of Monitoring Officer	Council	TBC				Cllr Rolfe	Dawn French – Chief Executive

Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Receive report from working group for engagement with residents including young people	Council	TBC				Cllr Rolfe	Dawn French – Chief Executive
Constitutional amendments from CWG	Council	TBC				Cllr Rolfe	Dawn French – Chief Executive
Tenancy sustainability and vulnerable customers strategy	Cabinet	12 January 2017		N	N	Cllr Redfern	Roz Millership – Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services
Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy	Cabinet	12 January 2017		N	N	Cllr Redfern	Roz Millership – Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services
Budget Covering	Cabinet	16	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of

Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
report		February					Finance and Corporate Services
Robustness of estimates (including reserves strategy)	Cabinet	16 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Medium Tern Financial Strategy	Cabinet	16 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Treasury Management Strategy	Cabinet	16 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Capital programme 2017/18 – 2022/23	Cabinet	16 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
HRA 2017/18 –	Cabinet	16 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
General Fund and Council Tax 2017/18	Cabinet	16 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Budget approval	Council	23 February	2017/18 budget process	N	N	Cllr Howell	Adrian Webb – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Member public Engagement	Council,	4 April	Report form the CWG on the proposals for Member public engagement			Cllr Redfern	
2016/17 Community Governance Reviews	Council	TBC	To receive recommendations from the Electoral Working Group for community governance reviews	Y	N	Cllr Howell	Dawn French- Chief Executive
Local Plan	Cabinet/ Council	TBC	Further decisions will be required regarding the local plan but the timing may not align to existing meetings and may therefore necessitate			Cllr Barker	Roger Harborough – Director of Public Services



Item	Meeting	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key Decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
			additional meetings of Cabinet and Council				



## Work Programme 2016/17

Date	22 November	17 January	7 February	11 April
Standard agenda items	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee
	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision
	Invited reports from the Executive	Invited reports from the Executive	Invited reports from the Executive	Invited reports from the Executive
	Cabinet Forward Plan	Cabinet Forward Plan	Cabinet Forward Plan	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Scrutiny Work Programme	Scrutiny Work Programme	Scrutiny Work Programme	Scrutiny Work Programme
Agenda items	Budget Overview 2017/18	Planning Advisory Service review of Local Plan process (TBC)	Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan	2016/17 Scrutiny Review
	Local Council Tax Support Scheme		Budget 2017/18	Tenant Regulatory Panel – Introduction and Update
	North Essex Parking Partnership			
	PAS review of the Local Plan Process – terms of reference			

### Notes

This work programme runs to the end of the 2016/17 council year. Dates are not currently available for the 2017/18 year but will be for the 17 January committee meeting.



**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 22 November 2016  
**Title:** Budget 2017/18 Overview  
**Author:** Angela Knight  
Assistant Director - Resources

**Agenda Item**

**9**

Item for decision

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## Summary

1. At its meeting on 7 February 2017, the Scrutiny Committee will be invited to comment on detailed proposals for the 2017/18 budget, ahead of consideration by the Cabinet on 16 February and determination by the Full Council on 23 February.
2. This report provides an overview of the budget setting process and the documentation that will be coming forward for review.
3. The Scrutiny Committee's role is to provide an independent review of the proposals prior to consideration by Cabinet. This is ordinarily an apolitical process; alternative budget proposals from Opposition Members should be formulated away from the Scrutiny process and presented to Cabinet and Full Council at the appropriate time.
4. The report includes the results of the recent budget consultation and explains in more detail the Council's reliance on New Homes Bonus (NHB).
5. There is also a section on Business Rates retention and early thoughts on what the Autumn Statement may contain.

## Recommendations

6. It is recommended that
  - Members provide feedback on the outcome of the budget consultation, New Homes Bonus reliance and Business Rates retention for inclusion in the Cabinet report for the 2017/18 Budget Strategy.

## Financial Implications

7. None.

## Background Papers

8. None.

## Impact

Communication/Consultation	Public consultation and business ratepayers consultation is carried out as part of the budget process.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the budget process.
Health and Safety	None

Human Rights/Legal Implications	It is a legal requirement to produce a balanced budget.
Sustainability	Budgets must be drawn up in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Some budget proposals may affect staff e.g. efficiency savings requiring different ways of working.

### **Budget setting process and timetable**

9. The 2017/18 budget relates to the financial year that will run from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The Full Council meeting on 23 February will set the budget, taking into account recommendations from the Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to review the budget proposals before the Cabinet determines its recommendations.

10. It would be usual at this round of meetings for Scrutiny to be looking at the draft Budget Strategy for 2017/18 which would normally include the Medium term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Reserves Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy. However due to the Autumn Statement being made on 23 November and the likelihood of significant financial issues arising following the announcement, it has not been possible to prepare this document for this meeting.

11. This report will cover the following key areas as we have them at the moment

- Budget timetable and reports to expect
- Budget papers for consideration by Members
- Budget consultation outcomes
- 4 year settlement
- New Homes Bonus
- Business Rates Retention
- Autumn Statement

### **Budget timetable and reports to expect**

12. The following are the key steps taken to draw up the budget:

July 2016	Public consultation carried out
November 2016	Budget consultation with local businesses in progress
November 2016	Briefing for Scrutiny Committee (this report)

Late November 2016	Financial forecasts updated
December 2016	Financial Outlook and 2017/18 Budget Strategy approved by the Cabinet taking into consideration any guidance from this Scrutiny meeting  Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement released by DCLG
January 2017	Finalisation of budget proposals  Confirmation of Local Government Finance Settlement
February 2017	Formal consideration of budget proposals by Members; Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council
March 2017	Council Tax bills issued
1 April 2017	Financial year commences

### **Budget papers for consideration by Members**

13. Below is a summary of the separate components of the budget papers and suggestions for the types of issues the Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider. These suggestions are neither compulsory nor exhaustive.

### **14. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

#### **Summary**

- Deals with budgets for council housing only, which by law are kept in a separate ringfenced account, separate from other council services.
- Expenditure on council housing is funded by rents and service charges payable by council tenants.
- HRA finances underwent substantial reform on 1 April 2012. Negative housing subsidy was abolished, replaced by the Council having to take on a share of the national housing debt.
- 2017/18 will be the first year of the principal loan repayment.
- The HRA has a 30-year business plan which sets out plans to maintain and improve housing stock and provide services to tenants, and plans for funding new council houses. The business plan allocates the revenue headroom and ensures that the debt is repaid within the 30-year period.
- HRA budgets are discussed by the Tenants Forum and Housing Board prior to consideration by Cabinet.

#### **Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:**

- Do the proposals have the support of council tenants?
- Have the potential impacts of the Housing Bill been properly accounted for?

- Are there clear plans for the use of revenue headroom that deliver useful outcomes within reasonable timescales?

## 15. Treasury Management

### Summary

- Significant cash flows in and out of the council's bank accounts, including monies collected for other organisations. Inevitably, temporary cash surpluses arise and the council invests up to £200 million in a year.
- In addition, the Council holds financial reserves, including its own balances, and S106 funds.
- Treasury management is the process by which these cash flows and balances are managed. The prime objectives are to ensure security of funds, sufficient liquidity to enable commitments to be met, and capacity to earn income on the balances held.
- The Council is required to approve a Treasury Management strategy that ensures appropriate risk management including a safe approach to investing surplus funds.
- Treasury management strategy also governs how long term borrowing is used to fund capital expenditure.
- The strategy is accompanied by mandatory "prudential indicators" which are technical measures of the affordability and sustainability of the Council's borrowings and investments.
- The Council is advised in its treasury management activity by leading independent experts, Arlingclose Ltd.

### Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Is the strategy consistent with advice provided by Arlingclose?
- Does the strategy ensure that the Council's exposure to risk is appropriate and properly managed? Has the right balance been struck between safeguarding funds and earning a return?
- What do the prudential indicators say about the appropriateness of the Council's plans?

## 16. Capital Programme

### Summary

- Capital expenditure is the spending on schemes or assets that have long term value to the Council and the community. Examples include council housing, vehicles, IT systems, building improvements, or grants to outside bodies and individuals such as disabled adaptations.
- Capital expenditure is financed by contributions from the HRA or General Fund, capital receipts (sale of Council assets), external funding such as S106 contributions or government grant, or by borrowing.



- The Capital Programme sets out capital expenditure plans for the next 5 years, together with details of how this is to be financed.

**Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:**

- Do the proposed items in the Programme provide tangible outcomes and value for money?
- How do we ensure that capital grants given to outside bodies and individuals achieve the intended outcomes?
- Are the financing methods appropriate, and built into revenue budgets?

**17. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**

**Summary**

- The MTFS relates to the General Fund (all services except Council Housing) and sets out forecasts for the next five years.
- It includes estimates of income and expenditure, and quantifies the extent of any surpluses or deficits anticipated during the five year period.
- The MTFS sets out in outline the Council's strategy for addressing deficits, or using surpluses, in order to ensure that Corporate Plan priorities are underpinned by sound finances.
- The key reason for having an MTFS is to anticipate potential difficulties long before they arise and ensure that robust plans are in place to address them. This is of particular importance because of expected future cuts in Government funding of local government.

**Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:**

- Are the assumptions used to build the forecasts reasonable?
- What would happen if actual events differed from the assumptions?
- Does the Council have a robust plan for addressing any deficits forecasted?
- Are plans for the use of any surpluses prudent, sustainable and good value for money?

**18. Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves**

**Summary**

- By law, the Council must set its General Fund budget and Council Tax having given due regard to advice from its Section 151, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves.
- The report will summarise the key risks in the Council budget, and the assumptions that are most volatile. This will be translated into advice about the minimum safe level of contingency reserves that should be

maintained, and whether other reserves are needed to meet expected pressures in the coming years.

- The Secretary of State has powers to intervene if the CFO's advice is disregarded by Members, in the event of inappropriately low levels of reserves being maintained.

**Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:**

- Are the risks clearly explained?
- Is the advice about minimum safe contingency reserves proportionate to the risks involved?
- Is the level of reserves held by the Council appropriate?

## 19. General Fund Budget and Council Tax

### Summary

- The General Fund covers budgeted expenditure and income for all Council services except council housing.
- General Fund expenditure is funded in the main from fees & charges and Government grant. The balance is funded by Council Tax. By law the Council must set a balanced budget.
- The report will set out in detail proposed budgets for all General Fund services, proposed fees & charges, and a Council Tax resolution.

**Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:**

- Is the proposed budget consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the CFO's advice on the level of reserves that should be maintained?
- Is the budget consistent with the Budget Strategy approved by the Cabinet?
- Have consultation responses been properly taken into account?
- Does the budget support the Corporate Plan?
- Are proposed budget growth items (service investment) justified with clear outcomes that provide value for money?
- Are proposed budget reductions (efficiency savings or service reductions) reasonable and consequences properly thought out?
- Is the proposal regarding Council Tax reasonable?

20. Scrutiny Committee Members are invited to familiarise themselves with the Council's existing Budget Book that can be found on the Council's website at: [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/finance](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/finance) (see area second from bottom on the right of the webpage).

21. At all times Mr Adrian Webb, the Chief Finance Officer shall be pleased to meet with Members individually or in groups to discuss any aspect of the Council's finances.

### **Budget consultation outcomes**

22. Following the success and increased responses to the 2016/17 consultation the same approach has been taken with the format and presentation of questions in the 2017/18 consultation.

23. A total of 672 responses have been received (820 responses in 2016/17) and in all cases the same questions were asked.

24. The following three streams of communication were used to ensure that all areas of the district and community were able to access the consultation and maximise responses.

- Telephone survey undertaken by a professional market research company, NWA Social and Market Research Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council. This resulted in 512 responses.
- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the council's website from 7 to 26 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform. 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. This resulted in 14 responses (10 via the website and four via paper surveys)
- The budget questions were also included as part of Uttlesford Voices 13, the half yearly consultation questionnaire sent out to 400 members of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel. This resulted in 146 responses (overall submissions to the panel survey were higher but some members chose to not answer the budget consultation section)

25. General promotion was carried out with direct mailings to the members of the Citizens Panel, a press release, exposure via the council's social media channels and prominent banners on the council's website.

26. The overall opinion was that council tax should remain the same, although compared to last year's survey there was a higher level of support for an increase.

	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Keep Council Tax the same	55.54%	69.09%
Increase Council Tax	27.40%	18.90%
Decrease Council Tax	14.07%	12.02%

27. The key areas that the public would like the council to concentrate spending on are;

- Collecting bins
- Providing council and sheltered housing

- To work closely with the police
- To educate young people on the dangers of drugs and alcohol

28. The full analysis of the budget consultation is included as Appendix One. This report contains an executive summary, precis of the combined results of all the survey streams and detailed results from each of the telephone, public and panel consultations.

### **New Homes Bonus**

29. The New Homes Bonus scheme is a subsidy payable based on the number of new homes brought into use during a 12 month period.

30. The Government issued a consultation earlier in the year and the initial outcomes were expected in June 2016. The Government have delayed announcing the outcomes and although we do not have a definitive date, the expectation is that the outcomes of the consultation will be announced in the Autumn Statement on the 23 November 2016.

31. The Council has become reliant on New Homes Bonus since its introduction; this reliance is due mainly to the withdrawal of the Revenue Support Grant.

32. The Government has allocated a total national 'pot' of NHB funding of £0.66 billion for 2017/18, in previous years this 'pot' was £1.4 billion. Using the total national pot reduction as a guideline the MTFS includes our own expectation of funding reduced by the equivalent ratio.

33. The financial impact is dependent on the final outcomes of the consultation. This was estimated in the MTFS (as per the table in point 35) and presented to Cabinet in February 2016 as part of the budget setting process.

34. The other areas covered by this consultation that raise concerns for the council are;

- Change of scheme, moving from 6 years to 4 years
- No funding for the years where we have not submitted a local plan
- Planning Applications approved on appeal, where this happens there will be NO funding for these properties

35. Also presented to the February 2016 Cabinet meeting was a summary of the budget position, shown below. This highlights the council's reliance on the New Homes Bonus and how the potential reduction affects the council's financial outlook over the next 6 years.

36. If the proposal in the consultation relating to penalising authorities with no local plan is included in legislation then the recent decision to pause the local plan process may have a negative financial impact on the 2017/18 NHB allocation. The cost to the Council in 2017/18 could be in the range of £0.3m - £0.5m.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

	<b>2016/17 £'000</b>	<b>2017/18 £'000</b>	<b>2018/19 £'000</b>	<b>2019/20 £'000</b>	<b>2020/21 £'000</b>	<b>2021/22 £'000</b>
Gross service expenditure	33,696	32,648	30,115	26,732	23,405	21,486
Gross service income	(23,800)	(22,854)	(20,194)	(16,568)	(12,993)	(10,818)
Demand growth	0	50	100	150	200	250
<b>Net service expenditure</b>	<b>9,896</b>	<b>9,844</b>	<b>10,021</b>	<b>10,314</b>	<b>10,612</b>	<b>10,918</b>
Capital financing costs	2,498	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Pension fund – added years	92	502	527	552	577	602
Recharge to HRA	(1,666)	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)
Investment Income	(119)	(120)	(120)	(120)	(120)	(120)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>10,701</b>	<b>10,376</b>	<b>10,578</b>	<b>10,896</b>	<b>11,219</b>	<b>11,550</b>
Business Rates Retention	(2,689)	(5,000)	(2,528)	(2,482)	(2,434)	(2,434)
Collection Fund Balance	(152)	0	0	0	0	0
Formula Grant	(684)	(251)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(4,279)	(1,936)	(1,936)	(1,936)	(1,936)	(1,936)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(7,804)</b>	<b>(7,187)</b>	<b>(4,464)</b>	<b>(4,418)</b>	<b>(4,370)</b>	<b>(4,370)</b>
<b>NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2,897</b>	<b>3,189</b>	<b>6,114</b>	<b>6,478</b>	<b>6,849</b>	<b>7,180</b>
Movement in Reserves	1,931	(42)	(44)	(183)	(75)	0
<b>COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>4,828</b>	<b>3,147</b>	<b>6,070</b>	<b>6,295</b>	<b>6,774</b>	<b>7,180</b>
COUNCIL TAX INCOME	(4,828)	(5,058)	(5,299)	(5,552)	(5,817)	(6,094)
<b>In year surplus (-) / deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,911)</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>1,086</b>

## Business Rates Retention

37. In October 2015 it was announced that by 2020/21 councils would be able to retain 100% of Business Rates collected. Clearly with an international airport within its boundaries it seemed Uttlesford could benefit from this.

38. However at the time of the announcement the press release contained two interesting comments

- 'Local government will take on new responsibilities'
- 'Local government will of course also need to contribute to fiscal consolidation over this Parliament'

39. On 12 October 2015 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark, gave a written statement to the House of Commons in which some more 'hints' were given about the scheme. The key comments were:

- **“As well as phasing out the local government grant from Whitehall, these new powers will come with new responsibilities to ensure the reforms are fiscally neutral.”** We assume this fiscally neutral to the government. This confirms that local government will have to take on new burdens/ services, as well as losing grant funding, in return for 100% retention.
- **“Redistribution between councils will remain important, to reflect the different need of different authorities.”** This implies that top slicing of Business Rates will remain for those authorities like Uttlesford who collect high amounts of Business Rates.
- **“...we will consider the responsiveness of the system to future changes in relative needs and resources, whilst maintaining a strong incentive for authorities to grow their local economies.”** This may mean Uttlesford will not be able to keep Business Rates growth in its entirety.
- **“We will also consider how risk and business rates volatility can be better managed and how to protect authorities against significant falls in income.”** This means that a safety net arrangement will most likely be put in place.

40. The full statement can be found at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-10-12/HCWS221/>

41. On the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 the former Secretary of State gave a speech to the LGA that indicated 100% Business Rates could be implemented earlier than initially planned, possibly 2019/20.

42. Since the October 2015 statement was released Central Government has issued two Consultations relating to Business Rates.

- Self Sufficient Local Government – 100% Business Rates Retention
- Fair Funding Review – Call for Evidence on Needs and Redistribution

43. The council was included as part of the Essex wide response to the 100% Business Rates Consultation and Fair Funding review.

44. The council did however respond independently to one specific area of the consultation, this related to 'high risk hereditaments' being taken off the local list and included in the central list. The consultation included 'Airports' within these high risk areas.

45. The definition of an Airport was not made clear in the consultation; did this mean the whole airport site or just the terminal/s and runway?

46. In light of this ambiguity on Airports, the council responded to this specific question independently, the response is detailed below;

*'The central list was originally set up to manage those hereditaments that crossed local boundaries, and whose business rate income was not therefore directly attributable to one particular LA; rather than being linked to the underlying risk relating to that particular hereditament. The proposal set out in the consultation document would blur the distinction between what should be included on the local ratings lists versus what should be included on the central list. If this is the case clear criteria will need to be set so that there is a shared understanding of how these determinations are made.'*

*In principle all hereditaments within a LA boundary should be included within the local ratings list; with the safety net acting as a protection mechanism to prevent any individual LA suffering undue loss if income decreases as a result of businesses moving or closing.*

*The main area that could affect Uttlesford is Stansted Airport. The consultation does not define, and it is therefore not clear, what is meant by the term 'airport'. For a large airport such as Stansted there is far more airport related business than just the terminal and runway. Before any decision is made on airports and the local or central list a full definition of the term 'airport' must be published and if necessary an additional consultation should be undertaken.*

*As such, Uttlesford District Council is not able to provide a comprehensive answer to this question until we have more information about the operation and protection of the safety net as well as greater clarity about the criteria for airports to appear on the central list.'*

## **2017 Business Rates Revaluation**

47. DCLG has carried out a revaluation on the ratings list for 2017.
48. The revaluation has affected the rateable value of all non-domestic properties within the district; we are estimating an average increase of 6.1%. The final figures may differ slightly from this estimate.
49. Although we anticipate an increase in the region of 6.1% on rateable values, the indications are that the BR multiplier will be reduced by 1.7p, going from 48.4p to 46.7p. We are waiting for this to be confirmed.
50. The reduction in the multiplier could mean that our actual collectable business rates income could reduce by up to 9.1% overall.

## **Business Rates Appeals**

51. The outstanding appeals for Stansted Airport were settled in principle by the Valuation Office in October 2016. The appeal is backdated to 2010.
52. The appeal settlement was higher than anticipated, by both the council and our expert consultants (Analyse Local). The council holds a provision to offset the backdated payments. There is a shortfall in the provision and this will have an impact on the end of year surpluses within the collection fund.
53. The reduction in the rateable value of Stansted airport will reduce our net collectable income in future years; this is estimated at approximately £1.85 million. Please note this is the reduction for the whole collection fund, the councils share of this is 40%.

## **4 Year Settlement**

54. The Government issued an option to all Local Authorities in the 2016/17 Autumn Statement to opt in to a four year financial settlement. This offers Local Authorities assurances on the level of funding they will receive until the 100% Business Rates Retention is implemented.
55. This has a minimal effect for Uttlesford as the only grant we will receive after 2017/18, (2017/18 being the last year of Revenue Support Grant), is the Rural Services Delivery Grant.
56. Cabinet approved the proposal to opt in to the 4 year settlement at the September 2016 meeting.
57. The Local Government Finance Settlement 2017/18 - Technical consultation was published in September 2016 and covered the following key proposals;
  - Governments commitment to the multi-year settlement and options to expand this



- Council Tax referendum principles
  - Core principle of 2%
  - Continuation of Adult Social Care precept of 2%
  - Shire district councils and Police and Crime Commissioners will be allowed increases of less than 2% or up to and including £5, whichever is higher
  - Referendum principles are introduced for town and parish councils whose Band D precept is higher than that of the lowest charging district council for 2016/17 (£75.46), and which have a total precept for 2016/17 of at least £500,000, while taking account of transfers of responsibilities, and that consideration is given to the extension of referendums to all local precepting authorities.

### Autumn Statement

58. The Autumn Statement, which is also referred to as the Spending Review, will be announced on 23 November. Like many such announcements the details will emerge over the days/weeks following it.

59. The big questions for Uttlesford are;

- a) When will Business Rates Retention be introduced?
- b) Will the airport be kept on the local list?
- c) What additional responsibilities will UDC be expected to take on?
- d) What will the outcomes of the NHB consultation be; what impact will this have on the council's financial stability?

### 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



# Council Spending

A report on public surveys about council spending priorities for the year 2017-18

October 2016



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## 1. Executive summary

This is the sixth year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run. In order to obtain as wide a body of opinion as possible, a multi-directional approach has been taken comprising a telephone survey of over 500 residents, an online consultation and paper questionnaires available in key population centres. A copy of the survey was also included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire.

Following the success of the 2015 survey, the 2016 consultation again concentrated on asking for residents' views on the prerogatives for the future resourcing of specific service areas. An additional option was provided to permit consultees to comment on the level of Council tax that Uttlesford District Council should be levying in the coming year. An additional option was provided to permit consultees to comment on the level of Council tax that Uttlesford District Council should be levying in the coming year.



Dear Resident

Each year the council has to prepare its budget for the following financial year and decide how much should be spent on council services. These decisions cannot be made without the input of the district's residents.

This survey gives you the chance to have your say on what should be the priorities for Uttlesford District Council and how we should be spending your money in the forthcoming year. Residents are also asked to consider if there should be changes to the amount the district council receives from your council tax. The results of this consultation will help to inform the budget for April 2017 to March 2018, which councillors will be asked to approve in February 2017.

The questionnaire should only take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. All the information you provide will be kept entirely confidential. It will only be used by Uttlesford District Council and the main findings from the survey will be published on the council website. However, your own views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

**Please complete this questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box(es) for each question and return your completed questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided by:**

**Monday 26 September 2016 at 5pm**

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language or have any questions or queries about this questionnaire, please contact:  
Louise Mims or Bruce Tice at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510381 or 510670.  
Alternatively you can email: [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk)

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Telephone (01799) 510510 Fax (01799) 510550 Textphone Users 18001  
Email: [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk) Website [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

## Results summary

This 2016 consultation will inform the setting of the council's budget for the financial year April 2017 – March 2018. The results for each of the different consultation streams – telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel survey – are being reported as a capsulization of these three consultative strands. This provides a headline view of the spending priorities for the forthcoming financial year as identified by the majority of those who responded to the survey.

Responses have been analysed using a rating system which weights the options selected by residents. Rating is a system particularly recommended by Snap Surveys following the introduction of Version 11 of their software. This system is used to collate the majority of the council's general survey work throughout the year and was employed on the analysis of the current Council Spending Survey results.

A rating system<sup>1</sup> is an appropriate analysis tool for the Council Spending Survey since the same area of spending might have been chosen by different respondents at a different level of priority; more weight is thus given to that selection if it is selected as the "Highest Priority" than if the same spending area is still chosen as priority, but at a lower level. Consequently, a fair analysis is achieved by allocating 3 points to each vote for the 'High Priority', 2 points to each vote for the 'Medium Priority' and 1 point to each vote for the 'Low Priority'. Those offering a 'No Opinion' have been attributed a zero score value reflecting their neutral response to the question.

Uttlesford District Council administers a wide range of services. Many of these relating to Planning, Housing and the local environment must be provided either by the council itself or by another organisation. These may be considered as being 'key' services. There is also a portfolio of other services that are offered by the council to the benefit of the community. For the purposes of the consultation, residents were asked to comment on aggregations of 'key' services and 'other' services

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 4 for an explanation of rating system calculations

separately. A final and distinct question sought respondents' views on the level of Council tax charge that should be levied by the district council in the forthcoming financial year.

The coalesced results across the three survey strands - from the telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel - are given below:

## Results priorities

### Key Services

*Q1 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.*

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
Ranked priority	Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins - (93.88%)
	Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people - (89.26%)
	Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located - (88.36%)

Headline	Spending Area – ranked by the least respondents
Ranked priority	Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees - (71.68 %)

## Other Services

*Q2 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.*

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
Ranked priority	<p>Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe - (91.03%)</p> <p>Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping - (85.36%)</p> <p>Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol - (84.53%)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked by the least respondents
Ranked priority	<p>Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues - (67.07%)</p>



## Council tax

*Q3 Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2017 to March 2018), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (consultees were then invited to select one option only)*

Headline	Council tax priority
Response	Keep the amount of council tax the same – (55.54%)

## Results priority analysis

Previous surveys conducted in 2013 and in 2014 were conducted using the priorities promulgated by the council’s long term strategy as promoted in the Corporate Plan. The 2015 consultation adopted a new format with wider ranging questions designed to more accurately gauge public opinion. Whilst not directly comparable, the 2016 consultation in part revisits the majority of the elements of the 2015<sup>2</sup> survey in order to ascertain if there has been any move in public opinion.

### Key services top three priorities:

The headline results from the current piece of market research demonstrate that across the three consultative streams respondents manifested a marked preference for supporting spending on ‘Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins’ with 93.88 % considering this to be a priority. As one of the principal universal services provided to residents the collection of waste and recycling represents a consistent concern amongst all consultees. This is very much in line with the results of the 2015 budget survey where 93.76% of people supported waste services as the primary direction of travel for the council’s budgetary provision.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Council Spending. A report on public surveys about council spending priorities for the year 2016-17*, September 2015

Providing council housing and dedicated sheltered housing for older people formed the headline view for the second highest spending priority by 89.26% of those who answered the question. This result is perhaps indicative of dual concerns within the district where private sector housing is relatively expensive and an aging population is worried about the future provision of supported accommodation within the community. In 2015 this option did not make it into the 'top three' priorities although it did then score an 85.90% rating.

'Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located' was selected by just a very slightly smaller majority of consultees. At 88.36% it achieved a higher percentage score than in 2015 when it warranted 86.98% support. Again, this reflects a persistent trend in feedback from budget consultations over the years and must now be considered especially topical given the ongoing work being carried out on the council's emerging Local Plan.

In previous years respondents were also offered the option to select a 'Don't do' category of spending to expeditiously consider where the council might be curtailing resources. Whilst the current survey did not formally offer this opportunity it is possible to draw some general conclusions based on the ranked scores. Across all the key services 'Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees' polled the least consistent backing with a ranked score of 71.68%.

### Other services top three priorities:

There are a number of services which are provided by Uttlesford District Council for which there is no statutory requirement. These are offered for the better benefit of the local community.

Within the basket of 'other' services residents considered that 'Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe' should be worthy of future resourcing. This was supported by a 91.03% majority and demonstrates public approbation for a continuation of the current strong partnership working that is being forged between Uttlesford District Council and local police. In previous years this had been covered by the corporate objective towards "Reducing crime and antisocial

behaviours in partnership with the police and others”. In the 2015 budget survey this was ranked second as the highest priority by those who answered the question. The secondary priority; ‘Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping’ was selected by 85.36% of people and again reflects a continuing concern with ensuring levels of probity are maintained in the district. Likewise, in the area of community safety 84.53% of those asked backed the council’s work in “Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol” with such events as ‘Crucial Crew’ and ‘Motorwise’. This represents an almost three percent rise on the approval figure for this same service achieved in the 2015 survey. For consultees, ‘Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats ... and animal-related issues’ was the least popular service, only gaining a 67.07% support rating.

### Council tax spending direction:

Consultees were also asked to indicate their preference reading the future setting of Council tax for the forthcoming budget period. For the financial year 2017-18, just over half (55.54%) of those who expressed a view were of the opinion that there should be no change in the amount of Council tax levied by Uttlesford District Council. This is a somewhat reduced level of support for this course of action in comparison to last year when 69.09% supported a freeze in Council tax. By comparison almost three in ten (27.04%) people supported an increase in Council tax in the forthcoming year.

## 2. Purpose methodology

The council is obliged to consult with the residents of the district when setting the budget for the forthcoming year and the results of this consultation will inform the decisions made by officers and councillors when setting spending for the year April 2017 to March 2018.

This is the sixth year that a consultation asking for residents’ views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run. For a number of years the consultation had been run via a single survey distributed

via the council's community newsletter, *Uttlesford Life*. In a departure from the previous format, for the 2015 budget survey a multi-directional approach was taken comprising a telephone survey of over 500 residents, online and paper questionnaires. A copy of the survey was also included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire. Following the success of that approach this methodology has been applied again in the 2016 consultation.

The consultation was run over the period 7 to 26 September 2016. Respondents were asked to select their highest, mid-range and lowest spending priorities from a list of 11 key services and 12 other service options covering the full range of the council's activities. They were also offered the opportunity to indicate a preference for raising, reducing or maintaining the current level of Council tax levied by Uttlesford District Council. For profiling purposes they were also invited to include postcode, gender and age data.

The following consultative methods were employed. In all cases the same questions were asked:

- Telephone survey undertaken by a professional market research company, NWA Social and Market Research Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council. This resulted in 512 responses.
- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the council's website from 7 to 26 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform. 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. This resulted in 14 responses (10 via the website and four via paper surveys).
- The budget questions were also included as part of Uttlesford Voices 13, the half yearly consultation questionnaire sent out to 400 members of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel. This resulted in 146 responses (overall submissions to the panel survey were higher but some members chose to not answer the budget consultation section).

General promotion was carried out with direct mailings to the members of the Citizens Panel, a press release, exposure via the council's social media channels and prominent banners on the council's website. It should be remembered that not all respondents chose to answer all of the questions. No supplementary comments were received, unlike last year when a small number of residents opted to submit a statement rather than selecting any of the stated spending options.

By the close of the consultation period a total of 672 responses had been received. This represents a very good response only marginally down on the 2015 survey when 533 telephone responses; 79 submissions from the public and 208 surveys from members of the Citizens Panel came in.

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

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

The combined results for each of the different consultation streams – telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel survey – are reported in full below.

## Key Services

*Q1 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Priority Score (percentage)</b>
1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	84.23%
2. Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	93.88%
3. Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	72.44%
4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	87.44%
5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	86.61%
6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	88.36%
7. Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	71.68%
8. Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	89.26%
9. Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation	87.21%

10. Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	80.64%
11. Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	76.50%

### Other Services

*Q2 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Priority Score (percentage)</b>
1. Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford	73.48%
2. Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	84.53%
3. Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	91.03%
4. Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	79.98%
5. Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	78.33%
6. Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	85.36%

7. Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	66.16%
8. Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	77.42%
9. Collecting Council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government	81.03%
10. Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and Issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	79.10%
11. Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	67.07%
12. Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	74.27%

## Council tax

*Q3 Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2017 to March 2018), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (consultees were then invited to select one option only)*

Headline	Percentage
Increase the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	27.40%
Keep the amount of council tax the same	55.54%



Reduce the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	14.07%
No opinion	2.99%

## Results analysis across all streams

This analysis comments on the difference in responses to comparable questions in the 2016 survey against those achieved in 2015. It should be remembered that questions asked in 2015 (for the budget 2016-17) were not necessarily repeated in 2016 (for the budget 2017-18). Some questions were asked in both years but appeared in a different group.

Results returned for the current survey are broadly in line with those of the previous year with no discernible large scale movement in opinion. In the 'key' services category - those areas which the council considers to constitute its primary duties – levels of support and, ergo concern to maintain funding levels, are relatively unchanged from 2015. This is true for services providing for the collection of domestic waste and, secondarily, those supporting the planned development of the district. All 'key' areas, without exception, saw a rise in support – generally with respondents marking them as a 'high' or 'medium' priority. Two specific services, though saw the biggest leaps; these being 'Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters' up from 78.96% in 2015 to 84.23% in 2016 and 'Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees' which rose from 64.09% to 71.68%. Both seem to indicate a growing appreciation of the quality of the local environment and a desire to retain features which are important to the district.

Within the basket of 'other' services supporting a safe and well-managed community emerged as the headline result from the current survey. In 2015 'Helping older people to live independently' was a top runner here. A comparable service option was not offered this year though it should be noted that 'Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people'

came in as the second most popular priority in the 'key' services section. Almost all service areas again saw a rise in support. Only 'Collecting council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government' saw a marginal drop, down from 81.68% in 2015 to 81.03% in 2016. Conversely there were a few services that made some strong gains. Most notable is the growth in support for 'Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy' which rose over 9% - up from 70.35% to 79.98%. This may be seen as an endorsement of the recent awareness work that both the district and CCG have been carrying out. In another area, 'Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues' backing climbed from 60.29% to 67.07%.

Over the three years to 2015 Uttlesford District Council had consistently reduced its share of the council tax bill. In February 2016, members decided to increase the Council tax Requirement set by Uttlesford District Council by 1.0%.




As in previous years residents were asked for their opinions on the future direction of council tax changing in the district. Last year the public considered that Council tax should remain the same. Those respondents who replied to the 2016 consultation were again of the majority opinion that the Uttlesford District Council portion of the council tax should remain unchanged in the coming financial year, though the margin of support for this course of action was somewhat eroded over the result achieved in 2015. Then, almost seven in ten people (69.09%) opted for a freeze on council tax. By comparison, in 2016, just over half (55.54%) of the people who expressed an opinion considered this to be the right course of action for the future budgetary provision. The biggest swing of opinion was seen in favour of an increase in the amount of council tax the district charges - here rising from 18.90% to 27.40%.








## Comparative data across 2015 and 2016 surveys

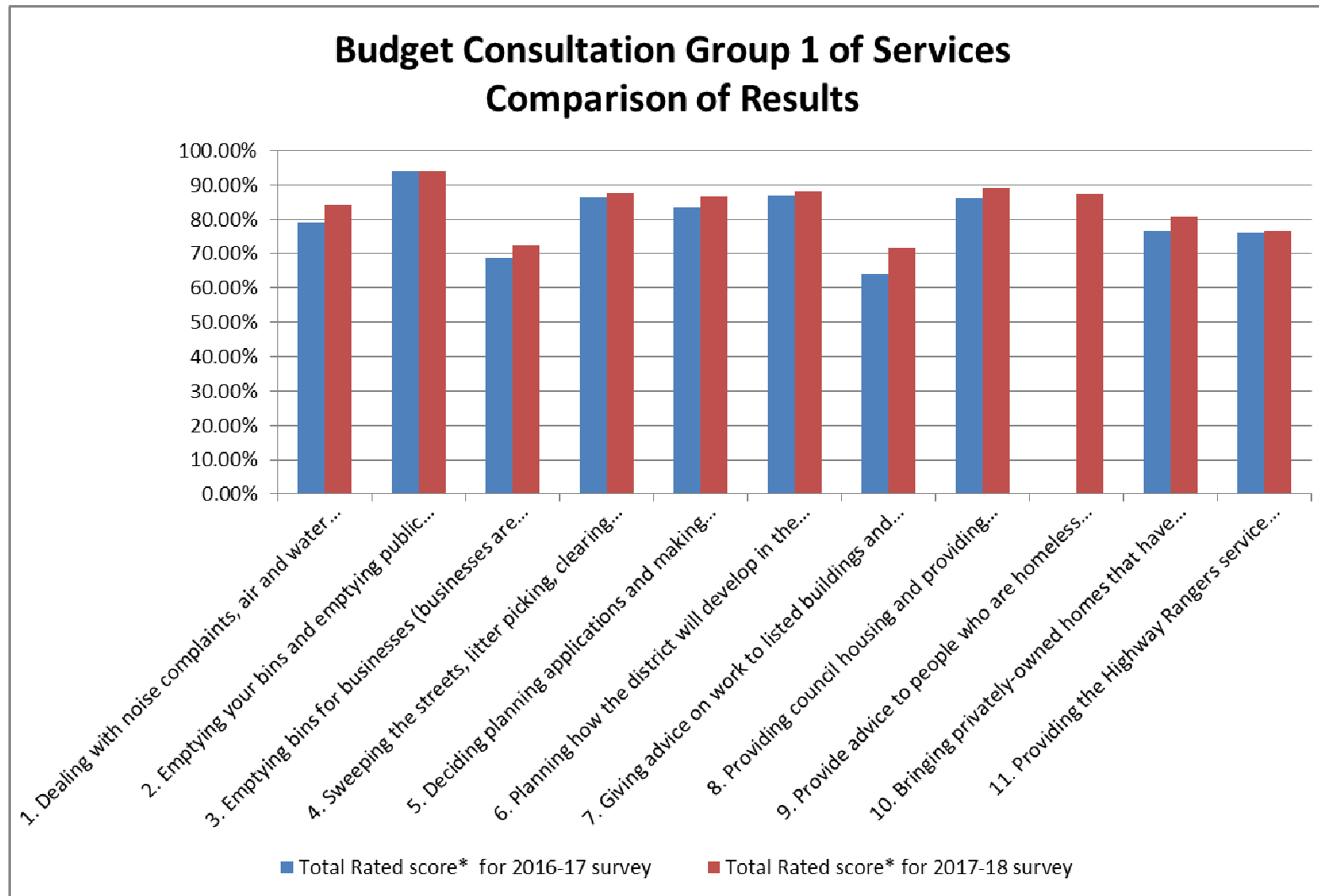
*Note: Questions asked in 2015 (for the budget 2016-17) were not necessarily repeated in 2016 (for the budget 2017-18). Some questions were asked in both years but appeared in a different group.*

\* See Appendix 4 for an explanation of rating system calculations







*Q1 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.*






Headline 2015 comparative questions	Services ordered as per 2016 consultation	Total Rated score* for 2015 survey (2016-17 budget)	Total Rated score* for 2016 survey (2017-18 budget)	Trend
	Group1			
Group 1 Question 1	1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	78.96%	84.23%	
Group 1 Question 2	2. Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	93.78%	93.88%	
Group 2 Question 11	3. Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	68.81%	72.44%	

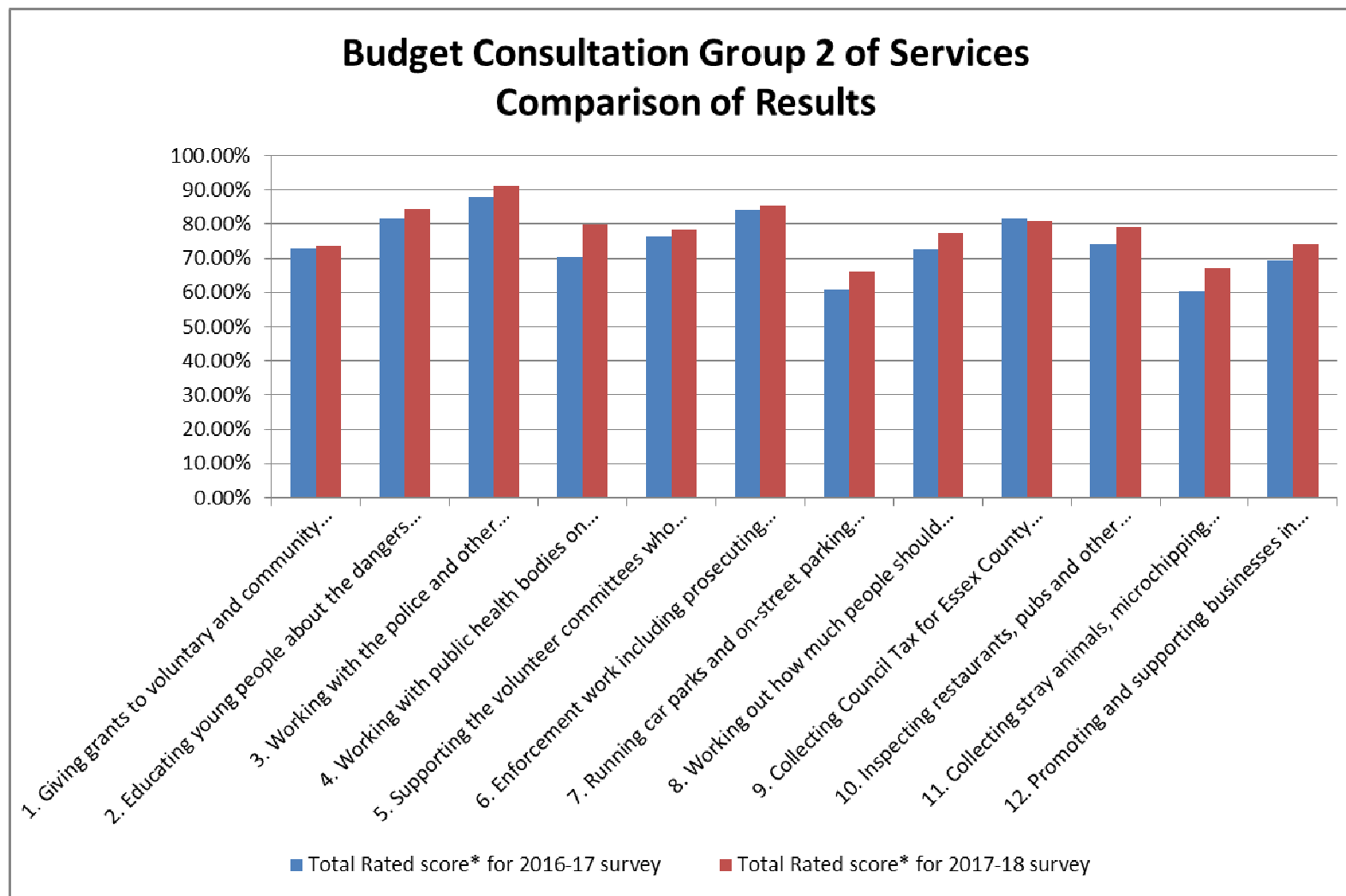
Group 1 Question 3	4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	86.47%	87.44%	
Group 1 Question 4	5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	83.58%	86.61%	
Group 1 Question 5	6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	86.94%	88.36%	
Group 2 Question 14	7. Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	64.09%	71.68%	
Group 1 Question 6	8. Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	85.90%	89.26%	
this question did not appear in the 2016-17 Survey	9. Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation		87.21%	Not applicable
Group 2 Question 10	10. Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	76.45%	80.64%	
Group 2 Question 12	11. Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	75.89%	76.50%	



Q2 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.





Headline 2015 comparative questions	Services ordered as per 2016 consultation	Total Rated score* for 2015 survey (2016-17 budget)	Total Rated score* for 2016 survey (2017-18 budget)	Trend
	Group 2			
Group 2 Question 1	1. Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford	73.00%	73.48%	
Group 2 Question 3	2. Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	81.58%	84.53%	
Group 2 Question 4	3. Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	88.01%	91.03%	
Group 2 Question 5	4. Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	70.35%	79.98%	
Group 2 Question 8	5. Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	76.44%	78.33%	
Group 1 Question 7	6. Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	83.99%	85.36%	

Group 1 Question 8	7. Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	60.63%	66.16%	
Group 1 Question 9	8. Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	72.46%	77.42%	
Group 1 Question 10	9. Collecting Council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government	81.68%	81.03%	
Group 1 Question 11	10. Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and Issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	74.33%	79.10%	
Group 2 Question 9	11. Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	60.29%	67.07%	
Group 2 Question 13	12. Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	69.42%	74.27%	





*Q3 Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2017 to March 2018), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (consultees were then invited to select one option only)*

<b>Headline</b>	<b>Total percentage score for 2015 survey (2016-17 budget)</b>	<b>Total percentage score for 2016 survey (2017-18 budget)</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Increase the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	18.90%	27.40%	
Keep the amount of council tax the same	69.09%	55.54%	
Reduce the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	12.02%	14.07%	
No opinion	-	2.99%	

## **4. Appendices**

### **4.1 Open text responses received**

There were no open text responses received as part of this consultation.

## 4.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire forms for the telephone, public and Citizens Panel followed an identical format.



### Section 1: Council Spending - have your say!

#### have your say!

top spending priorities should be during 2017-18.

as a budget to decide how to allocate money to the wide range of services that the council provides.

[Uttlesford residents' survey here](#) ►►

able from the Council Offices in Saffron Walden, the district council's customer service desk at Dunmow Information Centre, or residents can request a copy by calling 01799 510510 or emailing

in a telephone survey of 500 randomly-selected households across the district. A market research questionnaire, please contact the Consultation Team at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510510 or email [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk). The telephone budget survey on the Council's behalf. NWA abides by the Market Research Society Code of Practice. Information as part of the survey is confidential. There is a freephone telephone number of the Market Research Society on 0800 369999. For more information, please telephone 0500 396999, or you can contact the Consultation Team at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510510 or email [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk).

questionnaire, please contact the Consultation Team at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510510 or email [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk).

Each year the council has to prepare its budget for the following financial year and decide how much should be spent on council services. These decisions cannot be made without the input of the district's residents.

This section of our survey gives you the chance to have your say on what should be the priorities for Uttlesford District Council and what we should spend your council tax on. The results of this consultation will help design the budget for April 2017 to March 2018, which councillors will be asked to approve in February next year.

**Q2 Below is a list of key services Uttlesford District Council provides to the public relating to Planning, Housing and the local environment.**

For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority. (Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No Opinion
Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Dear Resident

Each year the council has to prepare its budget for the following financial year and decide how much should be spent on council services. These decisions cannot be made without the input of the district's residents.

This survey gives you the chance to have your say on what should be the priorities for Uttlesford District Council and how we should be spending your money in the forthcoming year. Residents are also asked to consider if there should be changes to the amount the district council receives from your council tax. The results of this consultation will help to inform the budget for April 2017 to March 2018, which councillors will be asked to approve in February 2017.

The questionnaire should only take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. All the information you provide will be kept entirely confidential. It will only be used by Uttlesford District Council and the main findings from the survey will be published on the council website. However, your own views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

**Please complete this questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box(es) for each question and return your completed questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided by:**

**Monday 26 September 2016 at 5pm**

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language or have any questions or queries about this questionnaire, please contact:  
 Louise Milns or Bruce Tice at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510381 or 510670.  
 Alternatively you can email: [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk)

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL  
 Telephone (01799) 510510 Fax (01799) 510550 Textphone Users 18001  
 Email: [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk) Website [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

## Section 1 - Council Spending - have your say!

Each year the council has to prepare its budget for the following financial year and decide how much should be spent on council services. These decisions cannot be made without the input of the district's residents.

This section of our survey gives you the chance to have your say on what should be the priorities for Uttlesford District Council and what we should spend your council tax on. The results of this consultation will help design the budget for April 2017 to March 2018, which councillors will be asked to approve in February next year.

### Q1 Below is a list of key services Uttlesford District Council provides to the public relating to Planning, Housing and the local environment.

For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.  
 (Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No opinion
Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q2 Below is a further list of services provided by the Council**

For each service please indicate whether you think it is a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.  
(Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No opinion
Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service, Uttlesford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q3 Council Tax 2017-18**

Nine per cent of the council tax you pay goes to Uttlesford District Council, with the rest going to Essex County Council (about 72 per cent), the police, the fire authority and your town or parish council.

In general, Government funding for district councils is reducing. In the next few years most of the money they get will be from two or three main sources. At the moment, the only one of these that can be controlled by individual councils is council tax.

Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2017 to March 2018), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (please select one option only):

- Increase the amount of council tax it charges
- Keep the amount of council tax the same
- Reduce the amount of council tax it charges
- No opinion

**About you:**

It is hoped that a cross-section of Uttlesford residents will participate in this survey. To determine how effectively we have reached different age groups, genders and wards within our district it would greatly assist us in collating the responses to this questionnaire if you would answer the following questions.

You can choose not to answer any questions in this section. However, all the answers to the survey and the 'About You' section are anonymous and it is not possible for us to identify individuals from their response..

Q4 Please enter your postcode (using upper case letters e.g. CB11 4ER)

Q5 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q6 What is your age?

- 16-19
- 20-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

**Thank you for taking part in our survey.**

**Now please return your questionnaire in the prepaid envelope by:**

**Monday 26 September 2016 at 5pm**

**If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us on 01799 510670**

## 4.3 Profiling

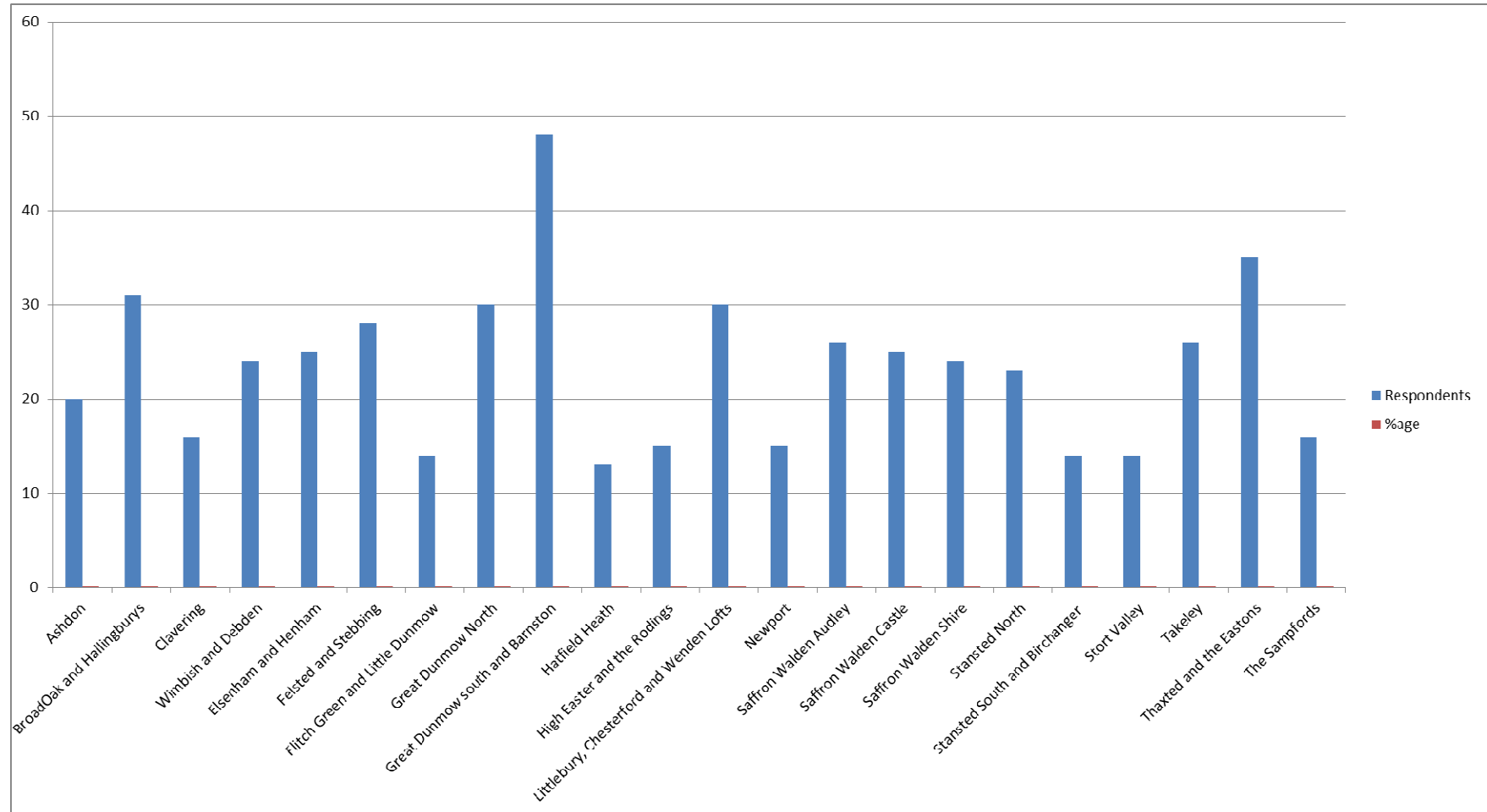
### Telephone survey

<b>Profile age</b>	<b>18-29 years</b>	<b>30-49 years</b>	<b>50-74 years</b>	<b>75 years and over</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Age (counts)	52	181	211	68	512
Age (percentages)	10.16%	35.35%	41.21%	13.28%	100.00%
Profile gender	Male	Female	Not given		
Gender (counts)	278	227	7		512
Gender (percentages)	54.30%	44.34%	1.37%		100.00%

## Telephone survey ward breakdown

<b>New Ward Boundaries</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>%age</b>
Ashdon	20	3.91%
Broad Oak and Hallingburys	31	6.05%
Clavering	16	3.13%
Wimbish and Debden	24	4.69%
Elsenham and Henham	25	4.88%
Felsted and Stebbing	28	5.47%
Fritch Green and Little Dunmow	14	2.73%
Great Dunmow North	30	5.86%
Great Dunmow south and Barnston	48	9.38%
Hatfield Heath	13	2.54%
High Easter and the Rodings	15	2.93%
Littlebury, Chesterford and Wenden Lofts	30	5.86%
Newport	15	2.93%
Saffron Walden Audley	26	5.08%
Saffron Walden Castle	25	4.88%
Saffron Walden Shire	24	4.69%
Stansted North	23	4.49%
Stansted South and Birchanger	14	2.73%
Stort Valley	14	2.73%
Takeley	26	5.08%
Thaxted and the Eastons	35	6.84%
The Sampfords	16	3.13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Telephone survey ward visual





## Citizens Panel

The Citizens panel is profiled so as to represent in microcosm then macrocosm of the district for all of the principal protected characteristics and as recorded by the Census 2011 and subsequent revised datasets.

## 4.4 How rating scores are calculated

Rating is a system recommended by Snap, the company who provide the consultation system used to collate and make the analysis of the 2017-2018 Budget Consultation results.

To establish the overall views of all those participating in this survey, priority selections made by respondents are given extra weight if chosen as a 'high priority' compared with those chosen as 'low priority'. This is called 'rating' and is achieved by attributing a weighted score (+3 for 'high priority', +2 for 'medium priority', +1 for 'low priority' and 0 for 'no opinion') to the number of responses received.

The overall score for each priority is therefore calculated to exclude all respondents who did not express an opinion.

For example:

Regarding priorities for Statutory Services, 'Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues':

366 respondents selected this as 'high priority' =  $(+3) \times 363 = 1098$

359 selected 'medium priority' =  $(+2) \times 359 = 718$

72 selected 'low priority' =  $(+1) \times 72 = 72$

14 had 'no opinion' =  $0 \times 14 = 0$

So, the overall rating for this priority

$$1098 + 718 + 72 + 0 = 1888$$

To achieve a maximum 100%, all respondents with an opinion would need to have selected a priority as 'high priority' resulting in a rating score of  $(+3) \times (\text{number of respondents})$  i.e.  $(+3) \times (366 + 359 + 72)$  or 2391

The overall priority score, expressed as a percentage, for "Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues" is therefore  $1888/2391 = 78.96\%$



**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 22 November 2016  
**Title:** Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)  
Consultation 2017/18  
**Author:** Angela Knight  
Assistant Director - Resources

Agenda Item

**10**

Item for decision

---

### Summary

1. 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
  - 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
2. Following the Cabinet decision the proposals were subject to consultation and this report enables Scrutiny Committee to review the outcome of the consultation and comment on detailed proposals for consideration by the Cabinet on 1 December and Full Council on 8 December.

### Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Members provide feedback on the outcome of the consultation for inclusion in the final 2017/18 LCTS Scheme proposal to go to Cabinet.

### Financial Implications

4. None.

### Background Papers

5. None.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	Public consultation is carried out as part of the LCTS process.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the process.

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

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The 2017/18 council tax discounts are set at the same rates as in the previous three years and these are set out below.

	<b>Discounts given 2013/14</b>	<b>Changes introduced as from 1 April 2014</b>
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**

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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**



## Contents

### 1. Executive summary

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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.



## 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:	<b>1115 (92.45%)</b>
Total number of web submissions:	<b>91 (7.55%)</b>
Total number of submissions:	<b>1206 (100%)</b>

Headline question	Result counts (percentage)
<p><b>Q1</b> The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. 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><b>Yes 1098 (93.5%)</b></p> <p>No 76 (6.5%)</p> <p>145 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q2</b> For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £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><b>Yes 824 (71.6%)</b></p> <p>No 326 (28.4%)</p> <p>247 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q3</b> 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><b>Continue to pay the full grant 729 (63.8%)</b></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><b>Q4.</b> 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><b>Yes 1066 (90%)</b> No 118 (10%)</p> <p><b>Yes 842 (71.4%)</b> No 338 (28.6%)</p> <p><b>Yes 712 (60.7%)</b></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><b>Yes 936 (78.8%)</b> No 251 (21.2%)</p> <p>Yes 502 (42.6%) <b>No 676 (57.4%)</b></p> <p><b>Yes 613 (59.3%)</b> No 421 (40.7%)</p> <p>206 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q5</b> Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme</p>	<p>96 comments received</p>
<p><b>Q6</b> Postcodes data entered</p>	<p>1177</p>
<p><b>Q7</b> Are you in receipt of LCTS?</p>	<p><b>No 1079 (92.1%)</b></p> <p>Yes 93 (7.9%)</p>

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
<b>Q8</b> If you in receipt of LCTS are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	<b>Yes 75 (80.6%)</b>  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 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.

### 3. Survey results, detailed findings

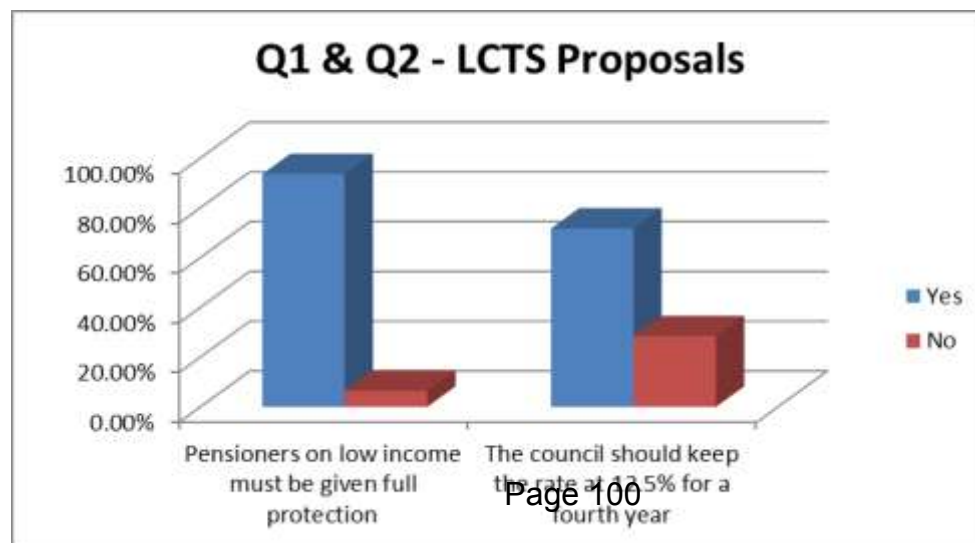
#### Survey results across all streams

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

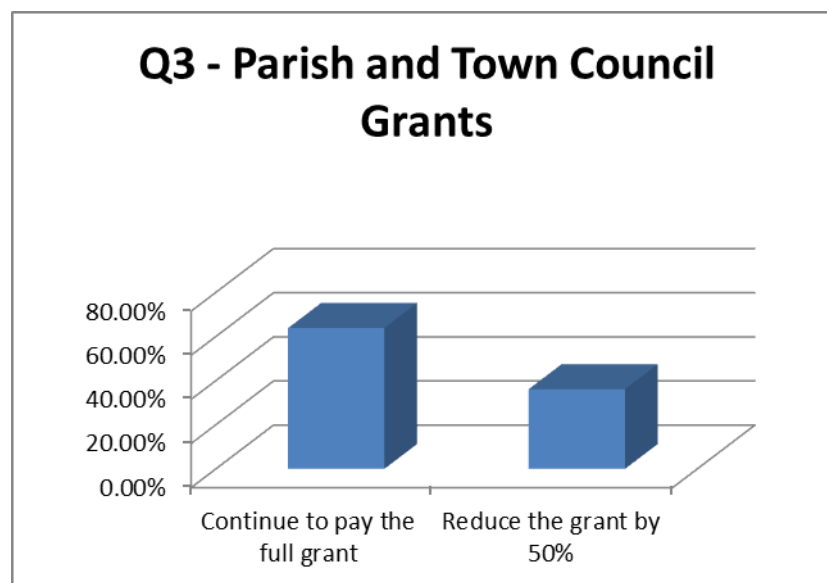
### LCTS substantive questions

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.

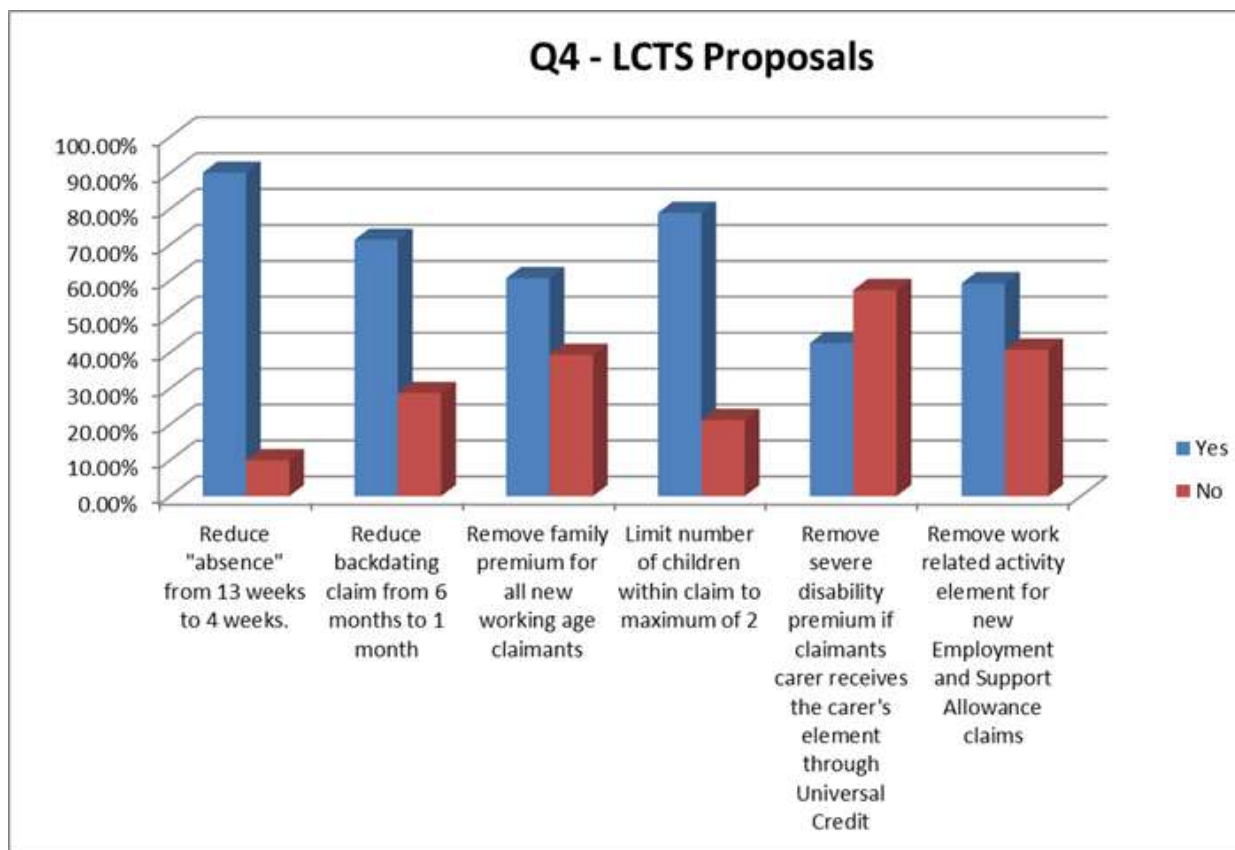


Q2 Maintaining the level at which non-vulnerable LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay Council Tax at 12.5% for a fourth year was supported by 71.6% of respondees. Those who answered this question were invited to supply additional comments on this aspect of the scheme with 247 people taking this opportunity 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 respondents 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/carers). 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)	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>			

<b>Q5</b> Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme	123 comments received	96 comments received	
<b>Q6</b> Postcodes data entered	1014	1177	
<b>Q7</b> Are you in receipt of LCTS?	<b>No 909 (90.3%)</b> Yes 98 (9.7%)	<b>No 1079 (92.1%)</b> Yes 92 (7.9%)	
<b>Q8</b> If you in receipt of LCTS are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	<b>Yes 83 (91.2%)</b> No 9 (9.9%)	<b>Yes 75 (80.6%)</b> 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 nor able to afford to smoke let alone have 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 pensions 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:

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

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

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

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

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

It is vital that this is continued.

In the end it all comes from us.

They should have their own grants etc.

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

The Councils should be responsible for their own losses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unfair

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

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

Not sure/don't know.

See Q.2 reasoning.

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

Parishes should be able to self finance their needs.

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

People should pay the difference themselves.

If the county council is prepared to find the shortfall of other Councils at a minimum of 20% why should Uttlesford be different?

The only losers are Uttlesford residents who should expect the same level of service as elsewhere - less money available must reflect in reduced services.

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

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

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

Each town or parish council should shoulder more responsibility to fund their spending.

A very small increase in highest band properties would easily collect the amount stated.

They should live within their means as all of us are always advised to.

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

If possible

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

Why can they not budget for it themselves?

Essex County Council should bear the cost.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This needs to be directed to the recipients to shoulder.

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

The charge to residents should increase.

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

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

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

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

See above.

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

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

But only if this is REALLY financially possible.

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

We'll be paying it either way.

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

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

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

It will hit people somewhere else.

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

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

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

Parishes/towns should have some impact on finances as district

I think the council tax is already enough, over £100pm from each household! Traffic congestion and road states are shocking.

The character of the town is being lost by putting as many houses as possible that look like ugly messes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

why should we

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

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

Stop the support

OR 100%

Saffron Walden Town Council wishes to note its absolute outrage and objection to the proposal to remove the subsidy grant from town and parish councils which is not in keeping with the general principle of the grant scheme given by Central Government to principle authorities. A copy of a letter from Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Local Government dated February 2015 can be found in the link as below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parish-funding-for-local-council-tax-support-scheme>

(DCLG letter Parish funding for Local Council Tax Support Scheme)

You will note from the letter the specific request from Kris Hopkins MP for the grant to be passed to town and parish councils, he further notes in his letter to Leaders of Billing Authorities that "it is essential they (town and parish councils) receive all the funds due to them in order to carry out

their activities”

The National Association for Local Councils (NALC) also notes the following on its website: “In 2013/14 and 2014/15 the Department for Communities and Local Government have paid Billing Authorities a combined total for each financial year of £3.3 billion to officially refer on to parish councils in their areas to minimise the reduction of parish precept revenue following the diminution of average council tax bases in parished areas over the last two years. Accordingly, In 2014/15 most Billing Authorities nationally passed on the Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) mitigation grant to parishes in their areas, but 15 did not. We lobbied the Government very hard to ensure that it put pressure on Billing Authorities to pass across to all parishes in their areas the maximum amount of LCTSS parish mitigation grant in 2015/16.” Should UDC choose not to honour the intent from DCLG, it is not only in clear breach of the guidance and request from DCLG but is also acting outside of the essence and intention of the whole Local Council Tax Support Scheme process of how grants received from Central Government should be forwarded to town and parish councils.

It is further noted within UDC Minutes of 3rd May 2016 that “The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that the 2015 consultation survey had revealed that 93.3% of responses had supported the protection of the parish council grant. However, they would not necessarily have been aware of the financial implications of this arrangement”

It is exceptionally clear and demonstrated from the results of the 2015 consultation that the public is content with the LCTS subsidy continuing to be forwarded to town and parish councils for its intended purpose. It is wrong and insulting to those who participated in the consultation to suppose that that they supported it because they were not fully informed or educated in its purpose; this is a derisory comment and should be disregarded.

The Town Council therefore wishes to register its fierce objection to the proposed 50% reduction in grant to town and parish councils. Please therefore consider this letter a formal response to the LCTS consultation process.

We look forward to hearing further from you in this matter and to be kept abreast of any developments or proposed changes to the scheme.

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 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 Uttlesfords 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 from 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 than 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.

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

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

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

2nd homes do not use facilities the same as first

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

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

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

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

Second homes should pay full council tax

They should still pay full tax.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10% discount to continue.

They don't use the resources so why pay.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Sometimes inherited and there can be many high costs to deep in repair/or suitable for rent (providing a house for a family).

Securing, for example, from vandals/squatters can cost home owners a great deal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A second home is not usually using as many services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Council tax could be increased for second home.

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

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

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

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

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

People with a second home should pay HIGHER council tax

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

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

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

All second home owners should pay "DOUBLE".

By definition a "second home" is not used all the time, so neither are the council's services. Owner should estimate how much home is used. Council could estimate bin empties. Then estimate discount.

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

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

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

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

Charge 2nd homes / empty homes no discount.

Second home owners should pay full rate.

Each house should pay the same.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A second home should not receive a discount

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

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

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

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

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

TEST

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

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

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

it will use less services

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 you won't take any \*\*\*\*\* notice, you'll already be made up your minds to put it into your personal SLUSH FUNDS

(f) I presume this means clients claiming LCTS would not need to actively seek 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 an "exceptional circumstances" option.

I understand that Uttlesford DC is an area of high employment and some affluence therefore it can continue to subsidise 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, 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 severe disabilities 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 some 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 world 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 harsh. 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 abroad! 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

If you have any further comments to make regarding the LC...

Apart from the desperate need for housing empty properties have a deteriorious effect on neighbourhoods

I think the amount of support available should be increased where individual circumstances may merit this additional assistance

You should review who is exempt from Council Tax . Whilst I agree with most there are certain individuals that should no longer be exempt e.g. Religious communities, USAF personnel and dependants and diplomats. They all earn a good wage.

It is very important to protect the frail or elderly who are poor and still living in their own home from council tax which in some cases is their biggest bill. To have to choose food or heat or council tax is undignified in a civilised rich western country.

A useful study!

. It should help ALL those on low incomes of less than £16,500K. Low income families who are working but own their own houses still need help!

Uttlesford is a wealthy area and we should be prepared to support those less fortunate and ensure that usable housing is not left empty in a period of shortage.

Uttlesford virtually full employment, affluent area. UDC should phase out discount support to all others than those with total or proven financial needs.

Any incentive is good to provide much needed homes.

On an urgent matter pensioners would appreciate details of honest work people & gardeners. I find it very difficult. Roof and hedge top of list (it was cut one month ago a now needs doing again!) Thank you.

Hit the rich not the poor or disabled Make a stand. Advise people who are a the pour disabled being hit - Disgrace conservative policy!!

Cuting grass round rout more not just twice a year not safety walk with children and fixed more

pothalls.

What about Pensioners in three bedroom houses and only using downstairs when there are family waiting for them

Low income but working is an important consideration - i wouldn't want this reduced

Seems quite complicated - but fair

As an elderly, low income, lady I find the scheme a godsend that enables be to live the rest of my life in a happy and safe 'sheltered' flat with the occasion treat - thank you.

My answers are in accord with improving work ethic and ensuring people one better off working when possible. Benefits should not otherwise be provided.

I think that the costs should be lowered for people over the age of 75. My wife and I are over 80 and and we need to have all the help/assistance we can get.

As a disabled pensioner I am relieved that I will receive some protection. I did work, very hard, for 40 years as a farm labourer but need some mercy in my current situation and in need of help at this time in my life, which the government should understand.

Re. 4d. Two years is a long time and, unless there are absolutely genuine reasons for the house to remain empty for two year, owners should be encouraged even further than at present, to bring it back into use.

We can only hope this new scheme is not as error-ridden or discourteously implemented as the previous 'benefit' one. The structure was extremely wasteful and punitive. Also, the credit card surcharge for payment is throughly outrageous.

i like the aim to not allow properties to remain empty as we need to use our existing housing stock rather than build more houses - so why then do you not do something about all the properties with agricultural ties that are empty. If the tie was removed from all these a lot more houses would be available.

Within the (ridiculous) parameters and budgets set by central government I think the council should protect the vulnerable, especially if they rely on welfare benefits, whilst encouraging best use of clement housing stock.

Arrears of tax is unacceptable. Either apply for court orders to lobby to change law for council to directly seize monies owed from sale of property. Talks less and do more.

Why was this pretty much only about property.

**GET EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO THE MARKET.**

In this area the scheme needs to focus on the target groups mentioned who must be protected. There are too many house owners etc in this affluent area who are exploiting the system.

n/c

Make some allowance for people trying to sell.

Landlords who make money buying and selling houses should pay maximum taxes and society should look after the vulnerable.

Those with enough money/extra properties should be subsidising those on low/no income who CANNOT (not choose not to) work.

You should protect and help the vulnerable people in real crisis.

Thank you!

Keep the activity of the council to a minimum so that extra bureaucracy is avoided.

Pay more attention to the section of society who needs help.

Does the drop in LC support mean that we have more people out of work? Need to survey those who have dropped out of school. Why is this?

Bring back national council tax benefit!

The quick and easy way to reduce housing shortages is to make use of the 300 000 + houses already built in the UK that are empty or not fully repaired. Kick start the process with incentives to get going and repair!

Empty business properties should also be taxed in this way. It is shocking to see so many old local pubs being intentionally vacant and left to rot, so that developers can knock them down and make vast profits. For example The Colts in Stansted.

A sliding scale for LCTS would be fairer. As a retired, married couple we pay full tax on our home, despite living on a modest income. Our house is a large one, because we have worked hard to make it so, yet our consumption of council services is very low. A balance should be struck.

There are too many empty homes/second homes this should be discouraged we are an over crowded island and need to stop building new homes when existing are empty or under used.

UDC have got it about right, well done.

The days of 'feather bedding' benefit claimants at the expense of property owners has surely to

cease with a so called conservative government.

It is clear that there is a need for this scheme and I suspect we have more people in the protected groups than most people assume. It is difficult to answer the questionnaire without more info about the alternatives or what else the money could be spent on.

What are you doing to actually get people to pay this (ie overdue amounts)

Consideration should be given to 100% discount for empty homes that are 'for sale' or in the process of being sold. Some circumstances should be assessed on a case by case basis.

Shame people should have to pay for Garden Waste. Don't think about Pensioners or disabled people. Also I don't think Pensioners should have to pay Council Tax

I am not familiar with LCTS. Last question below not sure how to answer. Do you have to be already designated by a professional to say you are in a protected group? I have put our status beside previous question. (2 pensioners / Poor health. I am carer for my husband)

It's difficult to believe that this is anonymous when you ask for a post code! Perhaps it would be just as useful if you asked for just the first part.

With more houses being built the LCTS should go down not increase, because you will be collecting more money from more people, so pooling of the rates. So in actual fact the rates should go down.

Would the council consider taking over empty houses to help their housing lists. (just a thought)

Recipients should

Vital that this is targeted to those who really need it - stringent eligibility rules must apply.

There should be a strong message that empty homes do not help anyone. En masse, they destroy communities, often fall into disrepair and could be used by those less fortunate who are desperate for housing.

Plus a rebate 25 % 2 years once in use.

No further comment.

Almost every article in 'Uttlesford Life' refers to an email address for further information!! What about we who have no computer??

Thanks for asking but I'm not sure many, including me, are well enough informed to make other than 'in principle' judgements.

I rent over 60 years old the rent keeps going up £25 every year their needs to more help for us because were does it end they the landlords are priceing us out I can't get a council house because they go to people with kids who haven't done a days work in their lives had child to get a council house and benefits.

People with more than one property (how many rooms do you need?) can better afford to pay, there should be no discounts!

Like all activities you should try to spend as little of other peoples money as possible.

We are happy to help people that can't help themselves but not people that won't help themselves. If you can afford a second home, you can afford council tax.

As a pensioner living alone on a low income the 25% discount for lone occupancy is not enough.....

If we are here and benefit from its balmy climate we should pay for it. They could always try Margate or Hastings.

Your authority needs to get unpaid tax paid - you need to charge tax when monthly payments are not made. Stop 6 and 12 month payments. Attention to LET properties, these should pay in advance as tenants leave without paying.

All empty home owners should be encouraged to rent them or sell them. Inthsi housing shortage staying empty only makes them deteriorate faster.

If an elderly person has to go into a carehome this should after the house being empty for up to a year - so it sells.

I think Uttlesford Council do a wonderful job. Thank you.

Would suggest looking at longerterm (5 to 10 years) and see where LCTS level needs to be. And base rates criteria on a level incline to that point. Easier for recipients to acclimatise to.

If a house lies empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years then the owner can afford to pay a maximum amount. Unless they are ill, work abroad or a legitimate reason then the house for them is just an investment.

Staff needed to make checks and not let owners keep get away with excuses for not paying what is due.

I think pensioners should not have to pay council tax if they only have a state pension.

It is very wrong to take extra tax from hard working people to subsidise people on benefits.

Looks like the council are making the right decisions.

Without the LCTS I would be in dire straits. It is a very worthwhile scheme. Regarding empty home - I really think the government's scheme of building no homes is wrong and with a million empty homes in the UK anything that helps to fill these is surely the best use of resources.

People purchase a second home or buy to rent to make money - IF THERE SO GREEDY they'd rather keep property empty till they rent out at above market rate - of course rates etc. increase People from abroad, who own property for investment / holiday homes, in UK should be charged more to subsidise LCTS.

Each time I complain some smartarse at UDC explains why I'm wrong! Sack the b\*\*\*\*\*d!

A more generous LCTS scheme would reduce arrears which incur transactional costs for the Council (chasing, court procedures), so may even save money.

I'm using this to bring forward about lack of potholes fixed in Saffron Walden. also the amount of houses being built is a joke. There's a lot more traffic . Thus people are becoming more aggressive with their driving. All accidents and deaths are on your hands!!

I am in the happy position of being able to afford my Council Tax. I wish to see those less fortunate than myself helped as much as possible please.

Charge or sue.

My husband and I are both approaching our 80s always worked hard never claimed anything, We just are out of the threshold of claiming help. It is a financial struggle to hold onto our home, but we love our home. So why should we expect people with second homes benefiting. Surely they should be the first to be able to afford council tax as others do. If you can't pay your way DO NOT EXPECT OTHERS TO ONLY if you are disabled.

What is happening to the buildings next to the hospital opposite Tesco which are abandoned and look ugly?

The LCTS should be kept to a minimum to avoid excessive expenditure by the council and increasing demands on council tax payers.

This questionnaire covers quite complex issue. It might have been helpful to know how many people receive this benefit. The principal of protection of those in need, living in an affluent area is correct.



Maintain strict control of LCT

We are told we need more housing, lets get what we have back on the market. I fail to understand why single occupancy receives a discount, they use the same services and should pay going rate.

I'm not sure how listed buildings are covered, (it at all), by this scheme but there must be some action/monetary sanction to protect such buildings from deliberate neglect by unscrupulous developers.

There are always exceptions or unforeseen circumstances and consequences. Therefore, whilst the cited criteria all appear reasonable and justifiable, there ought to be a review system available for claimed special cases. Perhaps it already exists.

Hard working people must be protected.

“Work ethic” is a doubtful concept. Karl Weber, who coined the term, did not do so appraisingly. He also described the capitalist “iron cage”. Work is a complex notion. André Gorz criticizes the ideology of work as supportive of inequality. Much of the best rewarded “work” is socially useless or even destructive.

Nice to be asked for an opinion.

In cases of real hardship and poverty help should be reviewed.

It would have helped with some of the questions if you'd told us what constitutes a 'low income'. Single occupancy houses should have more reduced rate. Not fair to punish people for living alone.

There should be more support for elderly applicants, who are often very anxious and confused about their entitlements.

Although I myself pay CT anyone who refused to do so has my full support. I give UDC what I must by law - beyond that, money or anything else, nothing whatsoever.

How about using some of these empty houses to house some of the refugees.

Who worded this document? The questions aren't good enough to elicit a response that can be properly assessed.

Cases of a single parent who goes out to work, but has to pay after school and holiday child care should be carefully considered. Some people are struggling with this.

If a house stands empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years then the owners should pay more

that 150% council tax.

I would not wish to see anyone who has to been residing in the UK for at least 5 years benefitting from this scheme.

2nd home discount should still apply to annex attached to a home...dependent on how this is viewed by the council.

Get homes (empty) back on the market a.s.a.p.

There are clear steps the council can take here to help the housing crisis while reducing cost of LCTS. So do it!

My husband, 81 years of age born at Ingleside Place in 1934 April 1st . 21 in 1939 his Dad was allocated a new council house at 10 Catons Lane Saffron Walden , Essex. No LCTS in 1939

TEST

As long as the people in need get the help I agree but safeguards must be in place to prevent any fraud

I benefited from the council tax reduction when my home was empty and undergoing major repairs so I know how welcome this reduction was when faced with the costs of refurbishment/repairs. The temporary reduction acts as an incentive to bring a home up to modern standards and is to be welcomed generally as a way of improving the housing stock of the nation/council.

The need for a support system suggests that the Council Tax scheme itself is flawed but this is a matter for Parliament and beyond the control of the council.

I am happy with the current scheme as long as LCTS is provided for those genuinely on low incomes. I would however like to see a reduction in the timescale for the empty homes premium to one year, this would benefit UDC in an increased income and be an incentive to owners of empty properties to put them back on the housing market.

Lower rates for single person living.

This survey limits the amount of text one can enter. Modern IT systems should be able to cope with more text than most of the public can be bothered to type in with negligible cost - being unable to complete a paragraph because a programmer decided that 400 characters was enough is unacceptable (and annoying). Either you want people's opinions, or you don't. Seems that you don't...

Please check this document for advise:

[http://npi.org.uk/files/9214/3386/4426/CTS\\_challenges\\_and\\_options\\_FINAL.pdf](http://npi.org.uk/files/9214/3386/4426/CTS_challenges_and_options_FINAL.pdf)

I am not in favour of promoting the 'work ethic' in cases where people are genuinely unable to work. Current policies seem uncomfortably close to Social Darwinism.

I believe this is a positive step forward, the people on lowest incomes should not be hit harder with these changes. People who leave houses empty and are in no rush to fill them because they know they have 6months - a year before they have to start paying should not be allowed to get away with this to the detriment of residents who pay their council tax every month/cannot afford to pay any/more.

Property that remains empty for long period of time soon become uninhabitable and therefore steps should be taken ensure the council is aware of the owned reasons for the property being empty and their intentions for the property. If the council is not satisfied with their explanation, steps should be taken for the compulsory purchase of the property.

The Conservatives at UDC need to get a grip of Town & Parish Councils abusing their grants while also increasing their share of Council Tax. The most cost effective resolution for residents in Saffron Walden is for the Town Council to become a unitary authority with UDC. Why are we paying out for two Council buildings, two sets of staff and so on when the public doesn't understand the difference?

It can be punitive against those with very low incomes. The Council Tax dept is atrocious and quite inept and unhelpful.

Questionnaire should have had a don't know option.

I hope you mean to reduce spending on this as much as possible

I don't think benefits claimants should be charged anything, particularly those with children

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) <<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’re 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.



### Utlesford 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 Utlesford 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**



### Utlesford 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](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online. Visit [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS)

This consultation is anonymous but collated results will be publicly available, including written answers. These will not be attributed to any individual but please do not include any personal or confidential information in your responses.

1. The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. 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:

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Please

2. The table below shows how Uttlesford's rate compares to other Essex councils. The lower the percentage, the less Council Tax on LCTS recipient is required to pay.

	The minimum % Council Tax on LCTS recipient paid in 2014/15	The minimum % Council Tax on LCTS recipient paid in 2015/16	The minimum % Council Tax on 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:

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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:

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Grant Payment (£)					
Parish/Town Council	100%	50%	Parish/Town Council	100%	50%
Arkesden	130	65	Leaden Roding	458	229
Ashdon	658	329	Limsell	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
Broxton	769	385	Little Easton	744	372
Chickney	0	0	Little Hallingbury	1,289	644
Chrishall	479	240	Littlebury	919	459
Clovering	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	Rodwinter	653	326
Felsted	3,321	1,661	Saffron Walden	56,194	28,097
Fitch Green	618	309	Sampford's, 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
Hanham	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
			<b>Total</b>	<b>154,303</b>	<b>77,151</b>

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
CB10	CB10	CB10 1AG	CB10 1AH	CB10 1AH	CB10 1AJ	CB10 1AJ	CB10 1AQ
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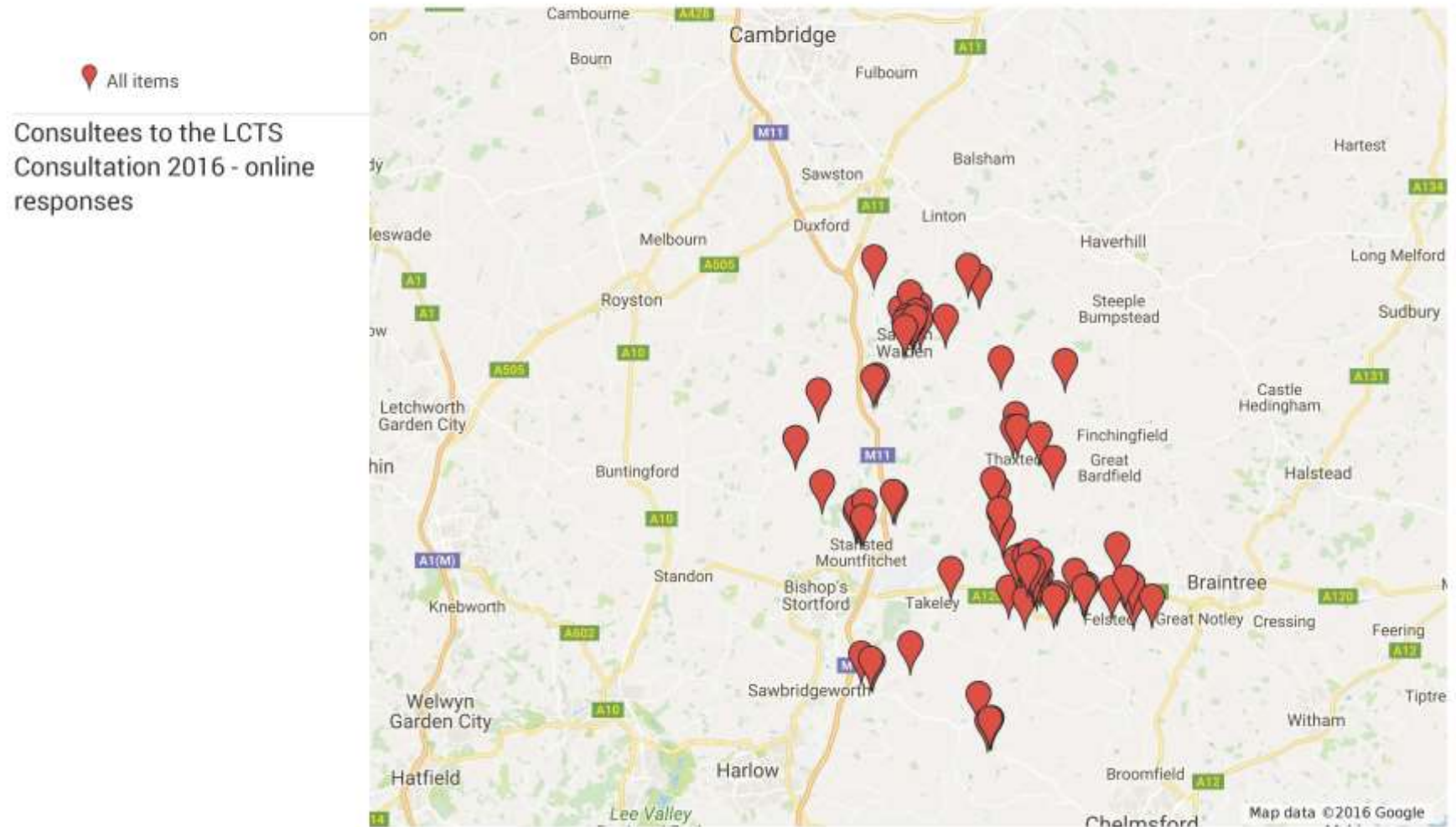
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CM6	CM6	CM6	CM6 1AA	CM6 1AF	CM6 1AH	CM6 1AS	CM6 1AS

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CM6 1BW	CM6 1BX	CM6 1BX	CM6 1BX	CM6 1BY	CM6 1BY	CM6 1BZ	CM6 1DL
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CM6 1EE	CM6 1EL	CM6 1EP	CM6 1EP	CM6 1ER	CM6 1ER	CM6 1ES	CM6 1ES
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CM6 1NF	CM6 1NJ	CM6 1NR	CM6 1OD	CM6 1PD	CM6 1PH	CM6 1PJ	CM6 1PL
CM6 1PL	CM6 1PL	CM6 1PT	CM6 1PW	CM6 1PX	CM6 1QA	CM6 1QB	CM6 1QD
CM6 1QD	CM6 1QZ	CM6 1RG	CM6 1RJ	CM6 1RJ	CM6 1RP	CM6 1RS	CM6 1RT
CM6 1RU	CM6 1RY	CM6 1SQ	CM6 1SY	CM6 1TD	CM6 1TD	CM6 1TF	CM6 1TR
CM6 1TR	CM6 1TR	CM6 1TY	CM6 1UD	CM6 1UD	CM6 1UD	CM6 1UG	CM6 1UH
CM6 1UH	CM6 1UL	CM6 1UN	CM6 1UQ	CM6 1US	CM6 1WJ	CM6 1WJ	CM6 1WL
CM6 1WL	CM6 1WP	CM6 1WS	CM6 1WX	CM6 1WZ	CM6 1XA	CM6 1XA	CM6 1XQ
CM6 1XQ	CM6 1XQ	CM6 1XQ	CM6 1XQ	CM6 1XQ	CM6 1XU	CM6 1XW	CM6 1XW
CM6 1XW	CM6 1XW	CM6 1XW	CM6 1XW	CM6 1XW	CM6 1YD	CM6 1YN	CM6 1YT
CM6 1YY	CM6 1ZG	CM6 1ZH	CM6 1ZT	CM6 2AA	CM6 2AA	CM6 2AE	CM6 2AG
CM6 2AG	CM6 2AN	CM6 2AQ	CM6 2AT	CM6 2AT	CM6 2AT	CM6 2AY	CM6 2AY
CM6 2AY	CM6 2BA	CM6 2BH	CM6 2BL	CM6 2BT	CM6 2BU	CM6 2BW	CM6 2DD
CM6 2DD	CM6 2DN	CM6 2DW	CM6 2DX	CM6 2EA	CM6 2EA	CM6 2EJ	CM6 2FH
CM6 2FH	CM6 2FH	CM6 2FL	CM6 2HA	CM6 2HE	CM6 2HR	CM6 2HR	CM6 2HR
CM6 2JB	CM6 2JJ	CM6 2JT	CM6 2JT	CM6 2JX	CM6 2JX	CM6 2JX	CM6 2LD
CM6 2LH	CM6 2LJ	CM6 2LJ	CM6 2LL	CM6 2LP	CM6 2LP	CM6 2LU	CM6 2ND
CM6 2ND	CM6 2NE	CM6 2NJ	CM6 2NN	CM6 2NR	CM6 2NU	CM6 2NX	CM6 2PB
CM6 2PF	CM6 2PQ	CM6 2PX	CM6 2PY	CM6 2PY	CM6 2QD	CM6 2QD	CM6 2QS
CM6 2QS	CM6 2QT	CM6 2QW	CM6 2QW	CM6 2QX	CM6 2QY	CM6 2QY	CM6 2QZ
CM6 2RA	CM6 2RJ	CM6 2RQ	CM6 2SE	CM6 2SE	CM6 2SQ	CM6 3AA	CM6 3AP
CM6 3AR	CM6 3AR	CM6 3AU	CM6 3AX	CM6 3AY	CM6 3AY	CM6 3AZ	CM6 3BD
CM6 3BE	CM6 3BH	CM6 3BQ	CM6 3DF	CM6 3DP	CM6 3DR	CM6 3DT	CM6 3DU
CM6 3DY	CM6 3DY	CM6 3EF	CM6 3EF	CM6 3EG	CM6 3EG	CM6 3EG	CM6 3EG

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
CM6 3HT	CM6 3HX	CM6 3HY	CM6 3JF	CM6 3LA	CM6 3LR	CM6 3LU	CM6 3NA
CM6 3NE	CM6 3NE	CM6 3NG	CM6 3NG	CM6 3NH	CM6 3NJ	CM6 3NN	CM6 3NN
CM6 3NP	CM6 3NP	CM6 3NQ	CM6 3NW	CM6 3NY	CM6 3PP	CM6 3PR	CM6 3PR
CM6 3PR	CM6 3QF	CM6 3QH	CM6 3QL	CM6 3QL	CM6 3QN	CM6 3QN	CM6 3QQ
CM6 3QR	CM6 3QR	CM6 3QS	CM6 3QU	CM6 3QU	CM6 3RA	CM6 3RG	CM6 3RP
CM6 3RW	CM6 3RZ	CM6 3SA	CM6 3SA	CM6 3SA	CM6 3SA	CM6 3SA	CM6 3SA
CM6 3SA	CM6 3SG	CM6 3SG	CM6 3SP	CM6 3SQ	CM6 3ST	CM6 3SU	CM6 3SW
CM6 3SX	CM6 3SX	CM6 3TE	CM6 3TE	CM6 3ZT	CM7 2FE	CM7 4TN	CM7 4TR
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



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:** Scrutiny

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 22 November 2016

**11**

**Title:** **North Essex Parking Partnership –  
Extension of the Joint Committee  
Agreement**

**Author:** **Victoria Taylor Business Improvement and  
Performance Officer, 01799510569** Item for discussion

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### Summary

1. At the meeting on 26 September the committee considered information presented to them by NEPP and by the Director of Public Services, which helped assist them to recommend that the Cabinet agree in principle to the four year extension to the joint agreement.

The committee also felt that there should be some improvements to the quality of service provided and decided that the Chairman Cllr Dean and Cllr Asker should liaise with officers to assess this further. This report contains their views.

### Recommendations

2. That the Scrutiny Committee review the report and the committee's views will be communicated to Cllr Susan Barker as the council's representative on NEPP and the Council's nominated lead officer Gordon Glenday, Assistant Director Planning.

### Financial Implications

3. None directly relating to this report.

### 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.

NEPP Extension Development Plan presentation and accompanying committee report.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	This report requires members to consider what potential improvements they wish to pass on to NEPP
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None

Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	NEPP operates under a Joint Committee Agreement between ECC as the highway authority and the north Essex authorities, with Colchester BC serving as the host authority. This superseded the previous arrangement whereby ECC delegated its on street traffic regulation powers to district and borough councils.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

## Situation

5. At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 September 2016 the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP), Richard Walker, Group Manager and Lisa Hinman, Central Area Manager gave a presentation about the NEPP service to assist with the pre-scrutiny discussion on the decision to be taken by Cabinet on whether to commit to the partnership for a further four years in an extension to the joint agreement.
6. In addition the committee considered a report by the Director of Public Services, which contained information to assist with making the decision.
7. Having considered the detailed information provided by NEPP and the Director of Public Services the Committee recommend that the Cabinet agree in principle that UDC commit to the NEPP for a further four years.
8. It was also decided that the Chairman Cllr Dean would liaise with Cllr Asker and discuss with officers possible areas for improvement to the service.
9. These investigations have now been completed and the following potential improvements are detailed in paragraphs 13 - 20 for Members to review.
10. As the decision to extend the partnership has already been taken by Cabinet, the most appropriate way for the committee's views to be taken forward is for them to be sent to the council's nominated lead officer Gordon Glenday, Assistant Director Planning. They can then be raised with NEPP as part of the ongoing partnership negotiations.



11. The committee's views will also be communicated to Cllr Susan Barker as the council's representative on NEPP.
12. Cllr Dean's comments are contained in paragraphs 13 to 17.
13. The partnership's accounts are not sufficiently transparent to the public and to this council. Nor are they scrutinised by the council's Performance and Audit Committee. It is recommended that UDC negotiates an arrangement with NEPP to make its accounts accessible via UDC's website and that the P&A committee receive a report at least once each year.
14. The council should review the standard of service it receives for off-street parking and the standard of service that the county council receives for on-street parking in Uttlesford. NEPP should be asked to provide data on the frequency and timing of patrols to assess whether this provides adequate deterrent against unauthorised parking. If the service is deemed inadequate, negotiations should take place to revise the service agreement. As part of the negotiations, use of the partnership's surplus funds should be considered to pay for a higher standard of service.
15. The council welcomes the partnership's recent initiative to increase elected members', parish/town councils' and the public's understanding of the service. The council should press for this to be continued and sustained through increased advice and publicity to increase all stakeholders' awareness of the services offered and how to use it. For instance, there should be advice on how residents can register private drives where blocking can result in penalties, how blocked dropped kerbs can result in penalties, and also where there are limitations, such as taking action against pavement blocking by parked vehicles. Performance data such as heat maps and associated data with explanations should be provided so that local consideration can be given to NEPP's service and what improvements may be requested.
16. NEPP should be asked to consider developing a mobile app so that the public can report parking problems simply and effectively.
17. The NEPP should be asked to work with the council to lobby central government to achieve legislative change so that the partnership can enforce in areas presently reserves for the police; e.g. blocked pavements without the need for yellow lining.
18. Cllr Asker's comments are contained in paragraphs 19 to 20
19. When NEPP are considering restricted parking zones, some planning or consultation should take place and involve those directly affected to ensure the restrictions are suitable and not over or under generous. Including accompanying

signage. It is wholly unfair to assume signs will be read and are 'clearly' placed for motorists to see.

20. NEPP informed the Committee there would always be at least one Civil Enforcement Officer in the Uttlesford District, on average there will be two, one concentrating on Saffron Walden and one covering the rest of district. They explained that it was often difficult to recruit and staff numbers were insufficient to cover sick leave, holidays etc. I believe there should be concentration on recruitment, training and loyalty of staff retention.

### **Risk Analysis**

There are no risks associated with this report.

**Committee:** Scrutiny

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 22 November 2016

**12**

**Title:** Planning Advisory Service Terms of Reference

**Author:** Richard Auty, Assistant Director Corporate Services

Item for information

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### Summary

1. The Planning Advisory Service has been engaged to review the Local Plan process. This report presents for members' information the terms of reference of that review.

### Recommendations

2. None

### Financial Implications

3. None

### Background Papers

4. None

### Impact

- 5.

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

6. In September, officers from Planning approached the Planning Advisory Service to request their services as a “critical friend” for the Local Plan process before moving to the Regulation 19 stage, where an authority publishes its draft local plan and invites representations as to its soundness.
7. At about the same time, the Chairman of Scrutiny requested officers approach PAS to review the process.
8. PAS began its work with the intention of reporting to Scrutiny Committee shortly before the draft local plan would have gone to Full Council in November; however, due to the pause in the local plan process PAS stopped its work temporarily.
9. In order to avoid any confusion or duplication of effort, officers in Planning are leading on the liaison with PAS for the review. Following discussion with Planning, PAS has recommenced work with the aim of reporting back to Scrutiny in early 2017.
10. Below, for the committee’s information, are the agreed terms of reference which PAS is working to:
  - I. Is the present Local Plan timetable suitable for completing a sound Local Plan?
  - II. Is evidence adequate and robust to ensure that decisions on site allocations would be sufficiently informed?
  - III. Are there gaps in the necessary evidence to make these decisions? What are the significant gaps?
  - IV. Is evidence impartial and even-handed?
  - V. Has the Duty to Cooperate requirements been carried out satisfactorily? Have relevant authorities in Cambridgeshire, Essex and Hertfordshire all been adequately involved, especially but not only those in UDC’s Strategic Housing Market Area?
  - VI. What would be the risks involved in extending the timetable for the work programme and delaying the submission date for the plan’s examination? What would be the risks in not extending the timetable if the plan is not yet ready for submission?

- VII. Has UDC has so far followed a sound process that is leading towards a sound Local Plan that has low risk of rejection at Examination in Public?
- VIII. In carrying out the work, PAS should have regard to the commentary and any associated report(s) on the Pre-submission Local Plan from Troy Consulting dated October 2016 and email correspondence from Braintree District Council on October 14th.
- IX. Are there any other issues to be advised which may pose significant risks to the plan being found sound at Examination?

