



## Public Document Pack

# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

## Council

**Date:** Thursday, 7th December, 2017  
**Time:** 7.30 pm  
**Venue:** Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden,  
CB11 4ER

**Chairman:** Councillor G Sell  
**Members:** Councillors A Anjum, K Artus, H Asker, G Barker, S Barker,  
R Chambers, J Davey, P Davies, A Dean, P Fairhurst, T Farthing,  
M Felton, M Foley, J Freeman, R Freeman, A Gerard, T Goddard,  
J Gordon, N Hargreaves, S Harris, E Hicks, S Howell, D Jones,  
T Knight, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge,  
J Loughlin, A Mills, S Morris, E Oliver, V Ranger, J Redfern, H Rolfe,  
H Ryles and L Wells (Vice-Chair)

### Public Speaking

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

## AGENDA PART 1

### Open to Public and Press

#### **1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

To receive any apologies and declarations of interest.

#### **2 Minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2017**

5 - 12

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017.

### **3 Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman.

### **4 Reports from the Leader and Members of the Executive**

To receive matters of report from the Leader and members of the Executive.

### **5 Questions to the Leader, Members of the Executive and Committee Chairmen (up to 15 minutes)**

To receive questions from members for the Executive and committee chairmen.

### **6 Matters received about joint arrangements and external organisations**

To consider matters concerning joint arrangements and external organisations.

### **7 Local Council Tax Support Scheme and Consultation 2018/19** 13 - 60

To consider a recommendation from the Cabinet meeting on 30 November 2017 to agree the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19.

### **8 Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018** 61 - 64

To consider a recommendation from the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee meeting on 16 November 2017 to agree a response to the Boundary Commission for England's proposals for revised Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.

### **9 The Future of Essex** 65 - 68

To consider a report outlining the principles contained in "The Future of Essex" report.

### **10 Any other urgent items**

To consider any items the Chairman considers to be urgent.

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

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## **COUNCIL MEETING held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 10 OCTOBER 2017**

Present: Councillor G Sell – Chairman  
Councillors A Anjum, G Barker, R Chambers, J Davey, P Davies, A Dean, P Fairhurst, T Farthing, M Foley, R Freeman, A Gerard, J Gordon, N Hargreaves, S Harris, E Hicks, S Howell, D Jones, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, A Mills, S Morris, E Oliver, V Ranger, H Rolfe, H Ryles and L Wells.

Officers in attendance:

D French (Chief Executive), R Dobson (Principal Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), R Harborough (Director of Public Services), S Pugh (Head of Legal Services), J Starr (Community Officer - Drugs and Alcohol) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services).

Also present: Oliver Woor, Isabella Writtle and Charles Yallup.

C39

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Artus, Asker, S Barker, Felton, Goddard, Knight and Redfern.

The Chairman welcomed all those present. He said despite political disagreement, he encouraged all members to “play to the ball”, and to adhere to an objective standard of debate in what was a public arena.

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Mr John Hockley made a statement, a summary of which is appended to these minutes.

In response to Mr Hockley, Councillor Ranger said Mr and Mrs Hockley had his full sympathy, although the responsibility for resolution of this problem lay with Essex County Council, and Veolia. He would give any support he could.

Councillor Rolfe also offered his sympathy and said he would arrange to visit Mr and Mrs Hockley's home, with Councillor Ranger.

C40

### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2017 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

At Minute 32, paragraphs 22 and 23, to substitute Councillor Lodge's name instead of that of Councillor Loughlin, to read:

"Before the substantive motion was put to the vote there was further discussion during which Councillor *Lodge* made the point that *he* was strongly in favour of the project in principle but the report left a great deal to be desired. *He* asked whether, in the event the Army left Carver Barracks altogether, it would be possible to renegotiate the retention of community use.

Councillor *Lodge* then said the debate had given *him* further confidence in the project and *he* would support it."

At Minute C32, paragraph 6, to add after the sentence: "There would be an initial meeting tomorrow to clarify the heads of terms", the following words:

*"and paragraph 3 of the recommendation would be amended to state that delegation is given to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Head of Legal, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships and the Chair of Scrutiny, with Councillors Knight and Artus, to agree the terms of the grant."*

At Minute C33, in the penultimate paragraph, to add the words:

*"Councillor Gerard abstaining."*

C41

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman gave a report on his recent attendance at various civic events. He said he had spoken with many interesting people, whom he would not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. He was aware of lively interest in issues surrounding local plans across the other local authorities he had visited.

The Chairman said he had attended a flag-raising ceremony, to recognise the immense contribution given by the 37,000 Merchant Navy personnel who had lost their lives in the Second World War. He had attended the Essex Heritage Trust at Stowe Marys, where the only aerodrome in Essex was situated, housing WW1 planes. He had attended the Jack Petchey Young People's achievements awards, as well as others such as the High Sheriff's Justice Service, and Maldon Garden Party.

Forthcoming events the Chairman said he wished to highlight were the Chairman's Carol Service in St John's Church in Stansted, on 5 December 2017; the civic dinner on 16 February 2018, at which a briefing on Chesterford Research Park would be given; and in March on a date to be arranged, an event at Saffron Walden Museum.

C42

## **REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Leader thanked the Chairman for his report, adding that he was flying the flag effectively for the district.

The Leader referred to significant items due to come to the meeting of Cabinet in October. The items included proposals to give £300,000 to Harlow College's training and skills resource at Stansted Airport, which would be the District's first tertiary education facility, about which it could be proud.

Further items coming forward included the policy on street naming and land West of Braintree, and the consultation on planning for the right homes in the right places. It was most councils' view that the Government should set out from the start how many houses were needed, rather than councils having to "second guess", and the Government had now expressed this intention as a formula. Whilst the model was not quite right, the Council was progressing its response to the consultation.

The Leader then said he had attended the Conservative Party Conference, where there had been a uniform feeling on housing that there was a national shortage, becoming a crisis. He spoke about the issues caused by the lack of housing. This council wanted to play a part in the Government's initiatives, and would be speaking to the Minister. It was disappointing therefore to find campaign material in his village vehemently opposing development, and he questioned this disconnect expressed by what was a caring community, between need and taking measures to address it.

The Leader reminded members Dr Hugh Ellis had given an informative and inspiring presentation to them on garden communities. It was beholden on members to get the message about inspiring development across to their communities. The Planning Policy Working Group would hear next week about the Regulation 18 consultation response.

Councillor Rolfe reminded members of the Local Strategic Partnership assembly taking place on 9 November, on the themes of loneliness and social isolation. He said depression was a leading cause of disability and ill health worldwide, and loneliness was a key factor. He was therefore delighted the assembly would focus on how to tackle loneliness.

The Chairman said he endorsed the Leader's comments. He represented the Council on the Uttlesford Community Transport Forum, which played an important part in supporting those who would otherwise face isolation, and he was aware of the significant role in combating loneliness played by the Day Centres.

Councillor Ranger then reported on his portfolio. He said the housing teams' multi agency trailer had been on the road, and updates were available on Facebook. Officers were supporting the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group in its Winter Warmer advice, which included a hot meal and a booklet of information, for which he thanked Lucy Fish, the officer responsible.

Councillor Morris had approached him regarding a proposal to close the streets of Saffron Walden for a cycle race, the *Saffron Walden Grand Prix*, in August

2018. British Cycling were supporting the venture, and he encouraged Dunmow and Stansted to arrange similar events in their areas. Trim trails were being established and officers had surveyed three areas in the district, in conjunction with the Young Foundation, to find out whether people felt connected. On 15 October in Takeley an event was taking place, and he encouraged members to take the message to their town and parish councils to bring evidence of people who felt that all was not right in their world. The aim was to set up self-help groups. As the Council moved to provide new communities it should support a solution for existing families. Today was World Mental Health Day, and he implored all to look out for those slipping through the net.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Ranger for his report. On the subject of new ventures which provided opportunities for participation in activities locally, he said he had been made aware that a boxing gym had recently been established in Clavering.

C43

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

Councillor Loughlin said she wished to encourage people to have the flu jab, not only for their own benefit, but to avoid passing it on to those who might be more vulnerable.

Councillor Ranger said he endorsed this sentiment fully, although was himself suffering from symptoms following the injection.

Councillor Loughlin assured members there was no risk of catching flu from the inoculation, so any symptoms would be no more than unfortunate coincidence.

C44

#### **UTTLESFORD YOUTH COUNCIL**

At the Chairman's suggestion, the item on the Uttlesford Youth Council was heard next.

Councillor Lemon, in his capacity as Chairman of the Public Engagement Working Group, presented a report seeking the Council's agreement to fund the annual cost of the Youth Council, and to endorse its constitution. He said he was delighted to welcome Isabella Writtle, Charles Yallup and Oliver Woor to the meeting. With the permission of the Chairman, he invited them to address Council.

Isabella Writtle said the Youth Council was a great opportunity to represent the young people of the district. The Youth Council had at the moment had many different working groups, of which the most important to her were the Community and Mental Health working group, because they let young people know their existence was recognised and that they could join, and gave them power to say something about their lives. Mental health, as Councillor Rolfe had said, was a

leading problem for young people. The idea was to focus on what young people were struggling with, as if they could talk about it, that was ideal.

The Chairman thanked Isabella Writtle for her address. He said it took a bit of nerve for a young person to speak to a meeting of Full Council. He endorsed her concern about mental health, and added he was aware, as his son was now an undergraduate, of the extra investment universities were having to make in provision of more counselling services.

Councillor Lemon said the Uttlesford Youth Council were a vibrant group. They were picking subjects which were meaningful. The Youth Council had 22 members from five schools, and was looking to get members from other organisations. It had met seven times since March.

Councillor Lemon said the Youth Council's constitution currently provided for yearly elections, with the next one in November, but feedback was indicating that the interval between elections could change to two-yearly after November. If so, a further report would be brought to Council to recognise an amendment to the Youth Council's constitution. He proposed the motion.

Councillor Fairhurst seconded the motion.

The Leader said he fully endorsed the proposals. He asked what measures might be taken to reach beyond schools, but recognised the venture was an iterative exercise. He was happy to endorse the Youth Council's constitution.

The Chairman said he too felt it would be commendable to involve a spread of young people, not just those taking A levels.

Councillor Lemon said it was important to recognise too that the Youth Council was an independent council.

Councillor Gordon said in relation to including young people outside schools that in Takeley he was aware many children attended schools and clubs outside the district, in Hertfordshire.

Councillor Lemon said the Youth Council were aware of this factor, as part of their considerations.

Councillor Chambers asked Councillor Lemon, through the Chairman, and the Youth Council representatives, if, as the oldest member of the Council, he could come and listen to what the Youth Council were saying. He congratulated Isabella Writtle for speaking.

The Chairman said he echoed that request, and that if members of the Youth Council wished it, he would be happy to come to a meeting or event, to provide advice "from the back seat".

Councillor Lemon said he had been to meetings of the Youth Council, and whilst he knew the Youth Council would welcome members, he wished to make the

point that if councillors attended, they should not tell the young people what to do.

Councillor Light said she had been privileged to work with the Youth Council from the start. She had been impressed by the calibre of the young people, who had themselves formulated the Youth Council constitution. She asked the Chairman whether the other young representatives present could be invited to speak.

The Chairman acknowledged the point made earlier, that many young people in the district went to school elsewhere. He encouraged members to promote the Youth Council as a voice for young people, and would do so himself, as he was on the board of Foresthall School.

Charles Yallup addressed members. He thanked the Council for supporting young people in setting up a Youth Council, as he was thrilled to have been involved. Young people were keen to experiment with this forum. He felt honoured to have this opportunity to engage with the Council, and looked forward to working with members.

On being put the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED to

(a) agree to funding as set out in the Financial Implications;

(b) endorse the Youth Council constitution as appended and to recognise it in the Uttlesford District Council constitution including to access to Council meetings.

C45

## **REVISED STATEMENT OF LICENSING ACT POLICY**

Councillor Chambers presented a recommendation from the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee to approve the adoption of the revised statement of Licensing Act policy. He said the policy was reviewed as required by law every five years, taking into account changes in legislation and guidance issues by the Secretary of State. The Committee had examined carefully the draft policy document, now before members, and had engaged in the required consultation for 12 weeks. He was disappointed to report that only one response had been received to that consultation. The Committee had written to thank the business which had responded. He proposed the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Gordon.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED to adopt the proposed new Statement of Licensing Act Policy, to come into effect on 1 December 2017.

## REVISION TO THE CONSTITUTION: DEFINITION OF 'KEY DECISION'

Councillor Oliver presented a recommendation from the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee, on a proposed change to the Council's constitution, to provide a clearer definition of "key decision".

Councillor Oliver said discussion at a meeting of the Committee had highlighted consideration of the figures proposed in relation to financial value of decisions. In comparison to the benchmark figures set by other councils for the purpose of defining a key decision, the amounts proposed for the definition for this Council were higher. However, the information from officers indicated that the figures from other authorities had not been recently reviewed, and accordingly the Committee had been satisfied with the the figures proposed.

The Committee had also considered whether the figure relating to land value, of £500,000, was set at the right level, but had concluded this was appropriate, as it was not possible to buy land for less.

Councillor Oliver proposed the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Jones.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried, with three abstentions.

RESOLVED that the Council amend the Constitution by replacing the current definition of a key decision with the definition set out below:

A "key decision" means a decision by or on behalf of the Leader or Cabinet (including decisions by officers acting under delegated powers) which meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. The decision is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or making savings in excess of £100,000, subject to the following:
  - Decisions on the acquisition or disposal of land or of an interest in land will be key decisions if their value exceeds £500,000.
  - The following are not key decisions:
    - Loans or borrowing decisions made in accordance with the Treasury Management Policy.
    - Decisions relating to the engagement of staff unless falling within paragraph 4.
    - Contract awards or renewals for vehicles, plant, machinery, goods, supplies and services where budget provision has been made and the award or renewal is within budget.
    - Contract awards where the decision to let the contract has already been treated as a key decision.
2. The decision is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in Uttlesford.

3. The decision relates to the adoption or revision of plans and policies which would have a significant impact on the way in which the Council carries out its statutory functions.

4. The decision relates to consideration by the Cabinet of proposals which would have a significant impact on the provision of services to the public or on the operational management of the Council.

*In considering whether a decision is likely to be significant, a decision-maker will need to consider the strategic nature of the decision and whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the Council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.*

The meeting ended at 8.25pm.

## **Public Speaking**

### **Statement of Mr Hockley**

My wife and I live in front of the waste transfer station in Great Dunmow. There has been a foul odour since the site opened; one year ago Essex County Council investigated the smell, but the problem has continued. My wife and I want to retire, but the smell is so bad we can't bear to be in the house during the day. Will someone please tell us what we are supposed to do? Do we need to working until we die? We can't even have visitors whilst the dump is operating. We would appreciate someone coming to tell us what we should expect to happen in the future.

**Committee:** Full Council

**Date:** 7 December  
2017

**Title:** 2018/19 Local Council Tax Support Scheme and  
Consultation Responses

**Portfolio  
Holder:** Councillor Simon Howell

**Key decision:** Yes

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## Summary

1. There is a requirement to annually review the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme, and propose changes to the scheme for the following financial year. The decisions made, even if no change is proposed, must then be consulted upon before a decision is taken on the final scheme for the following financial year.
2. A consultation was carried out from the 1 to 25 September on the Cabinet's proposals for the 2018/19 LCTS scheme.
3. The Cabinet agreed their draft proposals for the 2018/19 LCTS Scheme at the 10 July Cabinet and these proposals along with the consultation responses were reviewed by Scrutiny at their meeting on the 21 November.
4. The Cabinet will review the draft proposals alongside the consultation responses and comments from Scrutiny at their meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, should a decision be made to amend the scheme proposals from the recommendations below a supplementary paper will be presented to Full Council.

## Recommendations

1. That the Council approve the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2018/19 as recommended at Cabinet on 30 November 2017 and set out in this report.
  - i. The 2018/19 LCTS scheme is set on the same basis as the 2017/18 scheme and therefore the contribution rate is frozen for the fourth consecutive year.
  - ii. The Council continues to protect Vulnerable and Disabled Residents and Carer's on a low income.
  - iii. The discretionary subsidy grant for Town & Parish councils is withdrawn.

## Financial Implications

2. Detailed in the main body of this report.

## Background Papers

3. None.

## Impact

Communication/Consultation	Proposals to be subject to public consultation and discussions with major preceptors
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	An equalities impact assessment has been completed
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Compliance with relevant legislation.
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

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

4. LCTS replaced Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from 1 April 2013. The Council has adopted a scheme which has the following key elements:
  - a) Pensioners on low income protected from adverse changes (as required by Government)
  - b) Disabled people, carers and blind people on a low income receive discretionary protection from adverse changes
  - c) Working age people previously on full CTB pay no more than 12.5% of the council tax bill
  - d) £25 per week of earned wages income disregarded from assessment (to provide a work incentive)
  - e) Child Benefit and Child Maintenance disregarded from assessment (to minimise exacerbation of child poverty, or accusations of same)
  - f) Hardship Policy to enable additional support for genuine extreme hardship cases
  - g) A discretionary subsidy grant was provided to Town and Parish Councils to neutralise the financial effects against their individual taxbase.
  
5. In 2017/18 it was agreed that the LCTS scheme would adopt the following principals in line with Housing Benefit legislation;
  - 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 reduced from 13 weeks to 4 weeks whilst still being able to claim benefits

### Contribution Rates across Essex

- 6. The council has the lowest percentage liability cap within Essex.

	Contribution Rate (%)				
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Basildon	15	25	25	25	25
Braintree	20	20	20	20	24
Brentwood	20	20	20	20	20
Castle Point	30	30	30	30	30
Chelmsford	20	23	23	23	23
Colchester	20	20	20	20	20
Epping Forest	20	20	20	25	25
Harlow	24	24	24	26	24
Maldon	20	20	20	20	20
Rochford	20	20	20	20	28
Southend-on-Sea	25	25	25	25	25
Tendring	15	15	20	20	20
Thurrock	25	25	25	25	25
Uttlesford	8.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5

### Caseload

- 7. The following table details the caseload as at 31 March for each year and shows a significant drop in the number of Working Age claimants through the life of the scheme, although there is an increase in the number of vulnerable and disabled claimants.
- 8. Whilst the decrease in working age claimants is positive it does mean any future changes to the scheme are directly impacting on a much smaller group of people. In addition, as the group is smaller the revenue raised from increasing the contribution rate has also decreased.

LCTS Caseload								
	2013/14 Caseload	2014/15 Caseload	2014/15 % change	2015/16 Caseload	2015/16 % change	2016/17 Caseload	2016/17 % change	Total % change all years
Pensionable Age	2,014	1,901	-6%	1,811	-5%	1,740	-4%	-14%
Vulnerable/Disabled	503	631	25%	658	4%	659	0%	31%
Working Age	1,222	972	-20%	784	-19%	785	0%	-36%
	<b>3,739</b>	<b>3,504</b>		<b>3,253</b>		<b>3,184</b>		

The drop in pensioner may be a consequence of the change in retirement age from 65 to 66

## Increasing the Contribution Rate

9. If the contribution cap is increased from 12.5% the scheme would generate more income. However as the Working Age group is reducing in size the amount of additional income per percentage point is also decreasing.
10. For each increase of 2.5% in the contribution rate it would generate an additional council tax potential income of £27,071 across the major preceptors of which the council would retain £4,061.
11. The impact of each 2.5% increase on a Working Age claimant who receives the maximum amount of LCTS would be an additional 66p per week to pay, adding up to £34 for a full year.
12. The current collection rate being achieved is in excess of 95%, due to the potential implications of the rollout of universal credit we have adjusted this to 90% for 2018/19.
13. The risk if the contribution rate is increased we could experience a decline in the collection rate.
14. The financial gain and the claimant impact are detailed in the table below, the costings are based on all working age claimants paying the full contribution, as it is impossible to identify and calculate precise figures as the contribution level varies dependant on the claimant's circumstances.

Percentage Contribution	Average total liability income due (£)	90% Collection Rate (£)	Increase @ 2.5% increments (£)	Cost per year to claimant (£)	Cost per week per claimant (£)
12.50%	150,397	135,357			
15%	180,477	162,429	27,071	34	0.66
17.50%	210,556	189,500	54,143	69	1.33
20%	240,635	216,572	81,214	103	1.99

## Funding for Town/Parish Councils

15. A key feature of the LCTS scheme is that the LCTS discounts reduce the taxbase, and therefore affect council tax calculations, including the headline Band D figure.
16. For 2013/14 UDC decided that the most appropriate course of action was to distribute funds to Town & Parish councils in such a way as to ensure that they are neither advantaged or disadvantaged by the LCTS taxbase adjustments.
17. The funding of the discretionary subsidy grant to Parish and Town Councils has continued for subsequent years up to and including 2016/17. The grant was reduced by 50% in 2017/18 to reflect the cut in RSG funding.
18. The withdrawal of RSG in 2018/19 means the council will bear the full financial burden of the LCTS scheme including the element for Parish and Town Councils.
19. The following table shows the approach other Local Authorities (where this information is available) are taking with regard to the payment of grant funding to Parish/Town Councils for the LCTS schemes.

Local Authority	Grant for Parish/Town Councils
Basildon	100% funded (no plans to change)
Brentwood	100% funded (no plans to change)
Castle Point	Decreased grant in line with RSG funding reductions
Chelmsford	Decreased grant in line with RSG funding reductions
Colchester	Decreased grant in line with RSG funding reductions
Epping Forest	Decreased grant in line with RSG funding reductions
Harlow	No Parishes
Maldon	Withdrew grant from 2016/17
Rochford	Decreased grant in line with RSG funding reductions
Southend	Decreased grant in line with RSG funding reductions
Thurrock	No Parishes

20. The table below details the amount of grant received by Parish and Town Councils in 2017/18.

<b>LCTS Parish Grant - 2017/18</b>			
Arkesden	29	Leaden Roding	215
Ashdon	243	Lindsell	0
Aythorpe Roding	21	Little Bardfield	100
Barnston	576	Little Canfield	306
Berden	144	Little Chesterford	18
Birchanger	500	Little Dunmow	279
Broxted	338	Little Easton	359
Chickney	0	Little Hallingbury	639
Chrishall	218	Littlebury	452
Clavering	294	Manuden	114
Debden	229	Margaret Roding	163
Elmdon and Wenden Lofts	191	Newport	1,616
Elsenham	1,444	Quendon and Rickli	514
Farnham	145	Radwinter	293
Felsted	1,690	Saffron Walden	27,803
Flitch Green	301	The Sampfords	195
Great Canfield	12	Sewards End	75
Great Chesterford	1,082	Stansted	5,979
Great Dunmow	18,298	Stebbing	749
Great Easton and Tilty	298	Strethall	0
Great Hallingbury	195	Takeley	3,615
Hadstock	167	Thaxted	3,837
Hatfield broad Oak	769	Ugley	106
Hatfield Heath	737	Wendens Ambo	145
Hempstead	146	White Roding	94
Henham	443	Wicken Bonhunt	43
High Easter	108	Widdington	213
High Roding	0	Wimbish	227
Langley	35		
<b>Total Grant paid</b>			<b>76,802</b>

### Income Sharing Agreement

21. An Essex wide income sharing agreement was entered into with all billing authorities and major preceptors at the time of implementation of the new LCTS scheme.
22. The main principles of the agreement are to ensure a joint approach in maximising income collection, reduce fraud and ensure compliance.
23. By working proactively on fraud this ensures that our Taxbase is maintained at the maximum level generating extra revenue for both the major preceptors and billing authorities.
24. Preceptors receive a share of all income generated for Council Tax and this is allocated through the Collection Fund at year end.

25. The increased income generated specifically from these activities and internal decisions by UDC each year is monitored and the preceptors have agreed to share their element of the extra income with the Local Authorities.
26. Two posts are being funded through this agreement from to work directly on all areas of fraud and compliance within Council Tax.
27. We are currently working with Essex County and other Local Authorities on the 'Next Steps for the Sharing Agreement'. Due to the success of this agreement for all parties it is anticipated that this will continue.
28. The income generated directly from this work will also be shared as per the agreement.
29. As part of the scheme the major preceptors (County, Fire and Police) provide funding of £34,000 per annum to employ an officer to ensure the efficient administration of the LCTS scheme. The officer also works with those people affected by the scheme to provide support in managing their payments and thereby avoid costly recovery action being taken.
30. Essex County Council contributes £7,000 per annum towards the running of the hardship scheme which has a £15,000 annual budget (£8,000 UDC element).

### Cost of LCTS scheme

31. The core funding of UDC's share has been paid through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which has been reducing for the last few years as it is being replaced by New Homes Bonus and Business Rates Retention. In 2018/19 the council will no longer receive RSG.
32. It is estimated that for 2018/19 with the withdrawal of the remaining 50% of the Town and Parish grant funding this will reduce the cost of the scheme by £76,802, from £261,000 to £184,000. This is illustrated in the table below.

£ '000	LCTS Expenditure	County, Fire and Police Share	UDC Share	UDC Share
			inc. Parish Grant	exc. Parish Grant
LCTS Discounts	3,119	2,682	437	437
Major Preceptors - Sharing Agreement (16%)	0	222	(222)	(222)
<b>Net of LCTS Scheme &amp; Discounts</b>	<b>3,119</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>215</b>
UDC Funding of Parish/Town Councils	77	0	77	0
Major Preceptor LCTS Funding (Admin & Recovery)	0	34	(34)	(34)
LCTS Hardship Scheme	15	7	8	8
ECC Funding of Hardship Scheme	0	5	(5)	(5)
<b>Total Net Cost</b>	<b>3,211</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>184</b>

### Consultation responses

33. The consultation on the LCTS scheme ran from 1 to 25 September and received a total of 994 responses; the full report is attached as Appendix A.
34. The consultation methods employed were;
  - Pull-out, four page survey distributed with *Uttlesford Life*. 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.  
(976 responses were received)

- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the Council's website from 4 to 25 September via an interactive form.  
(18 responses were received)

35. A summary of the responses received are shown in the following table;

	2018/19		2017/18	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
To maintain the contribution rate at 12.5%	70.5%	29.5%	71.6%	28.1%
To continue to protect disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income	94.7%	5.3%	93.5%	6.5%
To withdraw the discretionary subsidy grant given to Town and Parish Councils	24.0%	76.0%	63.8%	36.2%

36. Responses to maintaining the contribution rate at 12.5% and continuing to apply protection to the disabled and their carers has remained consistent with the previous year's consultation.

37. There has been a significant swing in the responses to the withdrawal of the grant funding to Town and Parish Councils.

38. In the 2017/18 consultation the majority of responses were in favour of a reduction in the Town and Parish Grant funding, but for 2018/19 the majority are against the removal of the remaining 50%.

### Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Assumptions about costs and income levels are incorrect	2 (a high degree of variability and estimation is involved)	2 (adverse or favourable cost affecting the council budget/collection fund)	Monitor trends closely and review scheme each year to make necessary adjustments.

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.

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**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 2018-19**

Page 21

**October 2017**



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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.

This is the sixth 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 2016 consultation on the 2017-18 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 2017 survey was also available through an online questionnaire which was publicised on the website. A small number of additional copies of *Uttlesford Life* were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district to ensure that all residents would have a chance to take part even if they had lost their original issue of the magazine. A copy of the survey was not, this year, included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently. The results are detailed below.

## Local Council Tax Support - have your say

### 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 2018/19 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2018.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system and is designed 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 36% from 1,222 to 785 at the end of the financial year 2017.

The scheme is administered by local councils, who have some discretion over how LCTS is set.

Every resident in Uttlesford has the chance to have their say on the proposed scheme for 2018/19. Please take a few minutes to complete this form and send it back to us in the envelope provided by 5pm Monday 25 September 2017.

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.



Please turn over

## Results summary

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

The Uttlesford District Council LCTS scheme is the most generous in Essex providing additional protection and support for vulnerable working age people. Questions in the 2017 survey sought the views of residents and stakeholder groups as to whether this stance is generally supported and should be continued into the 2018/19 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 and in 2017/18 this support was reduced to 50%. For the financial year 2018-19 it is proposed to withdraw the grants altogether; it would be then 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. The survey sought 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 (format copied from 2017-18 report with revised data)

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
Total number of Paper submissions:	<b>976 (98.19%)</b>
Total number of web submissions:	<b>18 (1.81%)</b>
Total number of submissions:	<b>994 (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. Do you agree with this?</p>	<p><b>Yes 868 (94.66%)</b></p> <p>No 49 (5.34%)</p>
<p><b>Q2</b> For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £34 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £261,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £4,061. Do you agree that the council should keep the rate at 12.5% for a fourth year?</p>	<p><b>Yes 677 (70.52%)</b></p> <p>No 283 (29.48%)</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. The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. Uttlesford District Council previously provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. However, this year (2017/18) the grants were reduced by 50% in light of a reduction in</p>	<p><b>Continue to pay the grant to parish and town councils</b> <b>732 (76.01%)</b></p> <p>Withdraw the grant to parish and town councils 231 (23.99%)</p>

Headline question	Result counts (percentage)
<p>government funding for district councils. It is proposed for next year (2018/19) to withdraw these grants altogether.</p> <p>If Uttlesford District Council was to remove the grant to parishes, the total cost of the scheme would be £184,000.</p> <p>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 grant to parish and town councils</p> <p>Withdraw the grant to parish and town councils</p>	

Overall Submissions	Result counts (percentage)
<b>Q4</b> Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme	131 comments received
Postcodes data entered	914
Are you in receipt of LCTS?	<p><b>No 846 (91.86%)</b></p> <p>Yes 75 (8.14%)</p>
If yes (in receipt of LCTS), are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	<b>Yes 67 (53.60%)</b>

Overall Submissions	Result counts (percentage)
	No 58 (46.40%)

## 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 and the 2016 survey for the 2017-18 scheme adopted a new format with wider ranging questions designed to more accurately gauge public opinion. Whilst not directly comparable, the 2017 consultation for the 2018-19 scheme in part revisits a number of elements of the 2015 and 2016 surveys, 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 94.66% 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, 2016/17

and 2017/18 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 £261,000. Just over seven in ten respondents residents (70.52%%) indicted 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. For the 2017/18 scheme the support grant was reduced by 50%. In 2018/19 it is proposed to withdraw the grant scheme altogether. 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. Whilst the majority view was for Uttlesford District Council to continue to support the town/parish councils, nearly a quarter of respondents (23.99%) indicated that they would be happy to see the grant withdrawn.

Consultees were given the chance to further expand on their responses in an open text box. These additional comments are reported verbatim as part of Appendix 4.4.

## 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. For 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 2018 to March 2019

Following on from the successful consultation exercise run in 2015 and 2016, the LCTS survey for the 2018-19 scheme was included as one of two centre page inserts in the Summer edition of the Council's widely distributed community newsletter, *Uttlesford Life*, which is delivered to every household in the district. As well as the LCTS Survey, a questionnaire seeking resident feedback on Council Spending Priorities for 2018-19 was inserted in each copy.

The LCTS consultation was run over the period 4 to 25 September 2017. Respondents were asked to indicate their support for the scheme as it currently stands and their views on the proposed withdrawal of grants to the parish/town councils. Respondents were also given the opportunity to make additional comments about the issues raised in the questionnaire. 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.

- 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.

**976 responses were received**

- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the Council's website from 4 to 25 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform.

**18 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, 976 paper responses had been received and a further 18 online submissions were registered. This represents a 17.58% decrease in overall submissions on the previous year. However, the inclusion of the Council Spending questionnaire within the same issue of *Uttlesford Life*, for which there were over 1000 responses, may have resulted in some residents choosing not to respond to both surveys.

## 3. Survey results, detailed findings

### Survey results across all streams

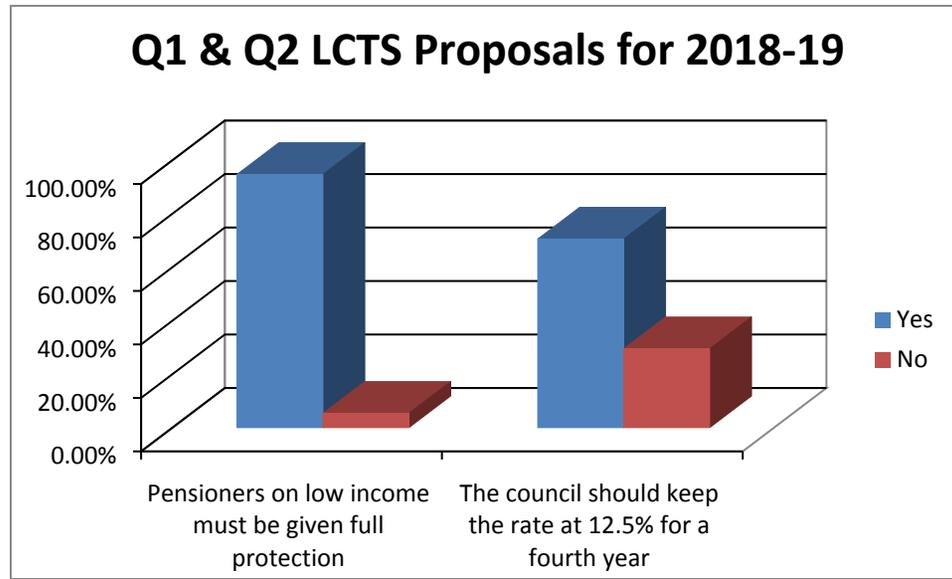
The results for each of the different consultation streams – paper and online surveys – are reported below as a single merged dataset.

#### LCTS substantive questions

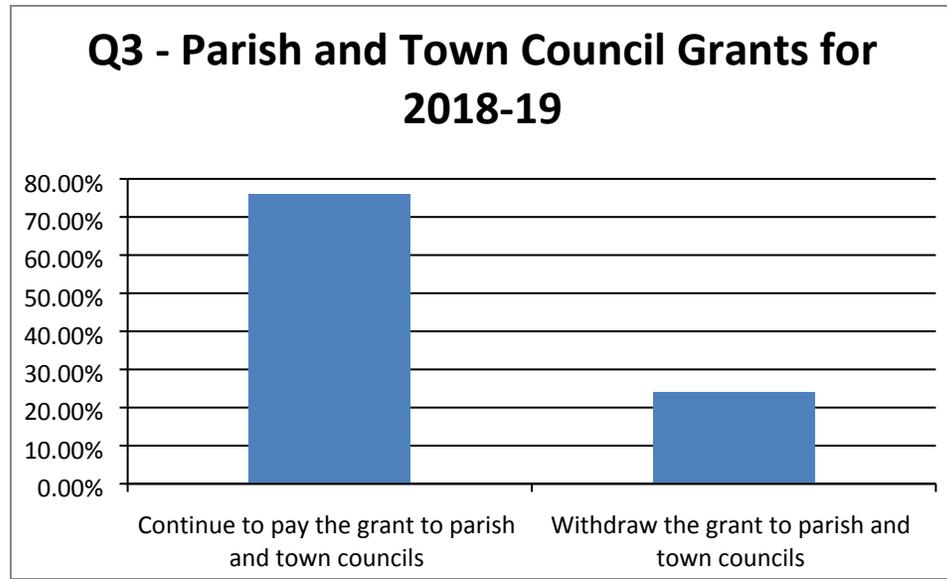
This analysis comments on the responses received across both consultation channels. A further section then makes reference to the previous consultation and identifies trends. Results are broadly in line with the views of residents as reported in previous years, principally research undertaken with stakeholders and the Uttlesford Citizens Panel to inform the 2014/15 scheme and the district wide consultations for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 schemes.

Q1 Protecting pensioners and disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income saw 94.66% support with only a 5.34% 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.

Q2 Maintaining the level at which non-vulnerable LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay Council Tax at 12.5% for the year 2018-19 was supported by 70.52% of respondees. The questionnaire did not provide an opportunity to provide a literal comment for specific questions; however, the invitation to comment in Question 4 on any of the LCTS issues prompted a number of wide ranging responses on this subject. As many as 30 comments were received expressing the importance of supporting vulnerable people in the district, e.g. “We live in a very affluent area and those who are financially able should, through their council tax contribute more in support of those who are less fortunate.” Conversely a further 14 comments suggested Uttlesford LCTS recipients should pay a rate more in line with other Essex councils.



Q3 Supporting parish and town councils to ensure that they do not lose money was backed by 76.01% of those that answered this question. However, just under a quarter of those answering this question supported the complete withdrawal of the grant by Uttlesford District Council. Comments received in the open text area in Question 4 of the survey ranged from "It's not costing much to maintain the LCTS or Parish Grants so, why change it?" to "Parish Councils should set their precept and charge directly. Provides clarity to where money is going."



Q4 Respondees were invited to make any additional observations on the scheme and 131 people chose to take up this option offering a range of opinions.

The majority of comments (54 in total) received related to the financial aspects of the LCTS Scheme. A few of these expressed support for re-assigning funds to maintain vital services while 14 responses were received which supported the view that the percentage paid by LCTS recipients should be more in line with other Essex councils.

Visible value for money was emphasised in other comments: "People need to see their money being spent wisely and on the priorities as seen by the resident's point of view. If this was the experience I personally would support a need for an increase but not just "more in the pot and no visible improvement"".

The topic which received the second highest number of literal responses was support for vulnerable people in the district (30 comments touched on this topic). Comments received included “It is the duty of any civilised community to protect the most vulnerable” and a personal expression of appreciation: “I have always been grateful for the LCTS being set at the level it is in Uttlesford. In this rural area life can be expensive for impoverished people, with high transport costs and services scattered in different places...”.

### **Postcodes**

Of the 994 responses received, 913 chose to enter their postcode providing a comprehensive dataset to identify areas of high or low response across the district.

### **LCTS Recipients**

Helping to provide a profile of the survey respondents were asked if they are currently in receipt of LCTS. Of the 921 respondents who answered the question 75 (8.14%) indicated that they receive this benefit. Of those, 67 noted that they considered themselves to be in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer). As a group these respondents represent just 7.27% of the 921 people who answered these specific profiling questions.

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

A comparison is made between the results of consultation run in 2016 for the 2017/18 scheme and that run in 2017 for the 2018/19 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 decreased by 17.6%, from 1206 submissions in 2016 to 994 returns in 2017. This decline in response may be the consequence of including the Council Spending questionnaire and the LCTS

Survey within the same issue of *Uttlesford Life* and some residents choosing not to respond to both surveys. Nevertheless, paper submissions remain the preferred route for the majority of consultees, with online responses this year only accounting for 1.8% of the total. This is nearly 5% fewer online responses than in 2016 and 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 specific groups such as pensioners from the implications of the scheme remains high, increasing 1.2% from 93.5% to 94.7%. In the open text box in which respondents had the opportunity to comment on issues relating to the scheme, 30 comments were received expressing this support. 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 the 2015, 2016 and 2017 surveys. Approval levels for this course of action are still high but have slipped by 7.4% in the past 2 years, down from 77.9% (in 2015) to 70.5% (2017 survey).

Approval for continued support for the town/parish element of the LCTS scheme has increased over the past twelve months, from 63.8% in 2016 to 76.0% in the current survey. However, just under a quarter of those answering this question supported the complete withdrawal of the grant. 12 of the literal comments received made reference to this issue.

With regard to the basic profiling carried out in the survey, the general geographical spread of those responding is much the same as in 2016. There was also, as in the previous two surveys, an opportunity for consultees to indicate if they are in receipt of LCTS. A very similar proportion, 91.9% (compared with 92.1% in the 2016 survey) noted that they are claiming the benefit, and a slightly higher proportion (7.3% of those who answered) consider themselves to be in a protected group.

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
	2017/18 scheme	2018/19 scheme and trend	
Total number of paper submissions:	1115 (92.45%)	976 (98.19%)	
Total number of web submissions:	91 (7.55%)	18 (1.81%)	
Total number of submissions:	1206 (100%)	994 (100%)	
Headline question	Result counts (percentage)		
<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.	Yes 1098 (93.5%)	Yes 868 (94.7%)	
Do you agree with this?	No 76 (6.5%)	No 49 (5.34%)	

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
<p><b>Q2</b> For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £34 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £261,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £4,061.</p> <p>Should the council keep the rate at 12.5%?</p>	<p>Yes 824 (71.6%)</p> <p>No 326 (28.1%)</p>	<p>Yes 677 (70.5%)</p> <p>No 283 (29.5%)</p>	<p></p> <p></p>

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
<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.</p> <p>Uttlesford District Council previously provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference.</p> <p>However, this year ( 2017/18) the grants were reduced by 50% in light of a reduction in government funding for district councils. It is proposed for next year (2018/19) to withdraw these grants altogether.</p> <p>If Uttlesford District Council was</p>	<p>Continue to pay the full grant 729 (63.8%)</p> <p>Reduce the grant by 50% 413 (36.2%)</p>	<p>Continue to pay the grant to parish and town councils 732 (76.0%)</p> <p>Withdraw the grant to parish and town councils 231 (24.0%)</p>	<p></p> <p></p>

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
<p>to remove the grant to parishes, the total cost of the scheme would be £184,000. 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:  Continue to pay the grant to parish and town councils?  Withdraw the grant to parish and town councils?</p>			
<p><b>Q4</b> Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme</p>	<p>96 comments received</p>	<p>131 comments received</p>	

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)	Result counts (percentage)	Trend
Postcodes data entered	1177	913	
Are you in receipt of LCTS?	No 1079 (92.1%)	No 846 (91.9%)	
	Yes 92 (7.9%)	Yes 75 (8.1%)	
If you in receipt of LCTS are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	Yes 75 (80.6%)	Yes 67 (53.6%)	
	No 18 (19.4%)	No 58 (46.4%)	

# 4. Appendices

## 4.1 Questionnaire Survey forms for the paper and online consultation followed an identical format.

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### Uttlesford District Council

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- Resident
- Council Tax & Benefits
- Benefits
- Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Online Benefit Calculators
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA)
- Changes of Circumstance - Benefits
- Benefit Fraud

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

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has a proposed scheme for the following year's scheme for 2018/19 being agreed in December.

**Take part in the Uttlesford Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) consultation**

Paper copies of the survey can be found at Dunmow Library and the Council Tax Office.

If you need an extra paper copy of the survey, please contact the Council Tax Office on 01206 510510 or emailing [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk).

**The consultation closes at 5pm on Monday 12th November 2018.**

#### Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has been agreed with their Council Tax bill.

You can apply if you own your home, rent, or are a pensioner on a low income.

### Uttlesford Local Council Tax - have your say!

**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

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

[Click here for more information on how Uttlesford's rate compares with other Essex councils.](#) (PDF opening in new window)

For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £34 of Council Tax each year.

The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £261,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £4,061.

**Should the council keep the rate at 12.5%?**

Yes  No

●●●○○○○○○○○

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## Local Council Tax Support - have your say

### 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 2018/19 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2018.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system and is designed 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 36% from 1,222 to 785 at the end of the financial year 2017.

The scheme is administered by local councils, who have some discretion over how LCTS is set.

Every resident in Uttlesford has the chance to have their say on the proposed scheme for 2018/19. Please take a few minutes to complete this form and send it back to us in the envelope provided by 5pm Monday 25 September 2017.

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.



Please turn over

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

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

	The minimum % Council Tax an LCTS recipient paid in 2015/16	The minimum % Council Tax an LCTS recipient paid in 2016/17	The minimum % Council Tax an LCTS recipient is paying in 2017/18 (this year)
Basildon	25	25	25
Braintree	20	20	24
Brentwood	20	20	20
Castle Point	30	30	30
Chelmsford	23	23	23
Colchester	20	20	20
Epping Forest	20	25	25
Harlow	24	26	24
Maldon	20	20	20
Rochford	20	20	28
Southend-on-Sea	25	25	25
Tendring	20	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 £34 of Council Tax each year.

The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £261,000. For each 2.5% increase the cost of the scheme for Uttlesford District Council would reduce by approximately £4,061.

Should the council keep the rate at 12.5%? Yes  No

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. Uttlesford District Council previously provided grants to parish and town councils to make up the difference. However, this year (2017/18) the grants were reduced by 50% in light of a reduction in government funding for district councils. It is proposed for next year (2018/19) to withdraw these grants altogether.

If Uttlesford District Council was to remove the grant to parishes, the total cost of the scheme would be £184,000.

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.

The table overleaf shows how much grant each town/parish council receives this year.

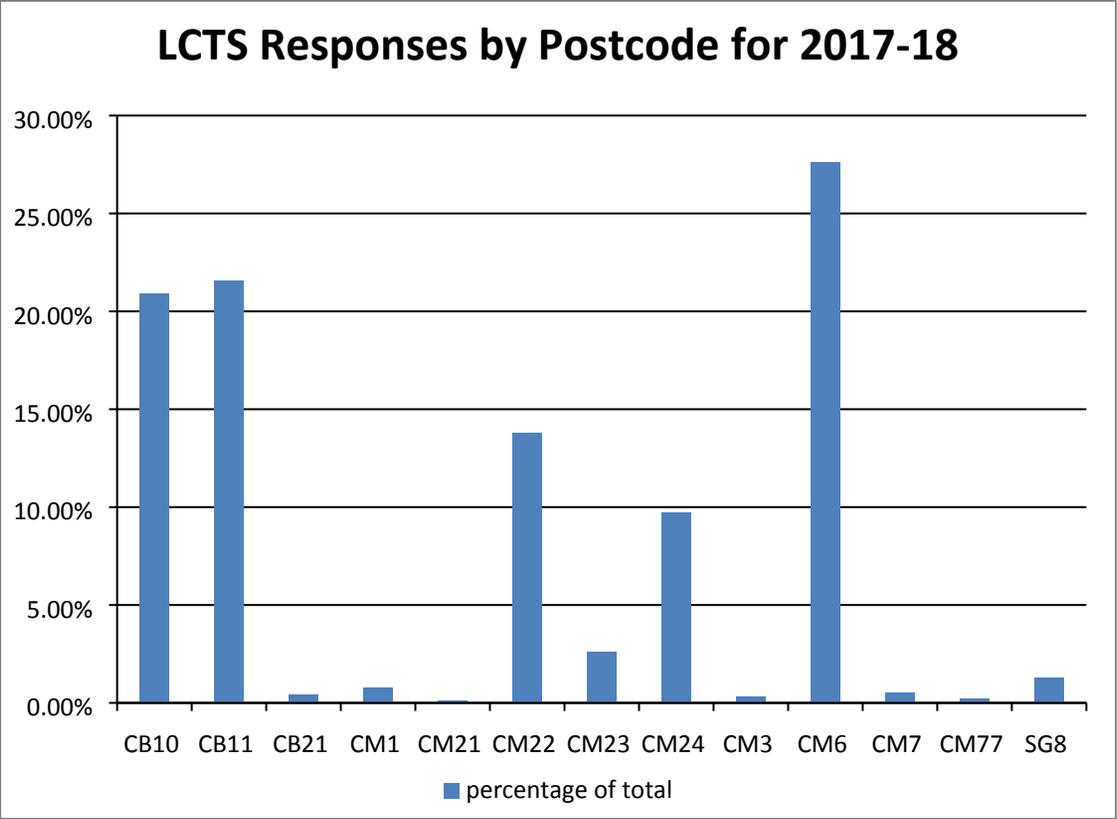


## 4.2 Profiling

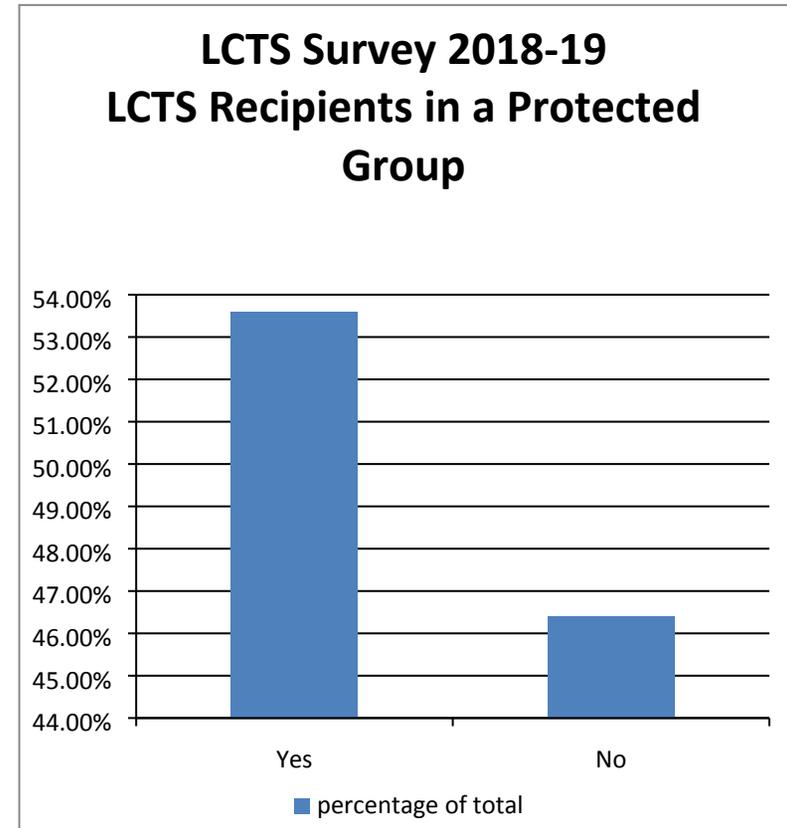
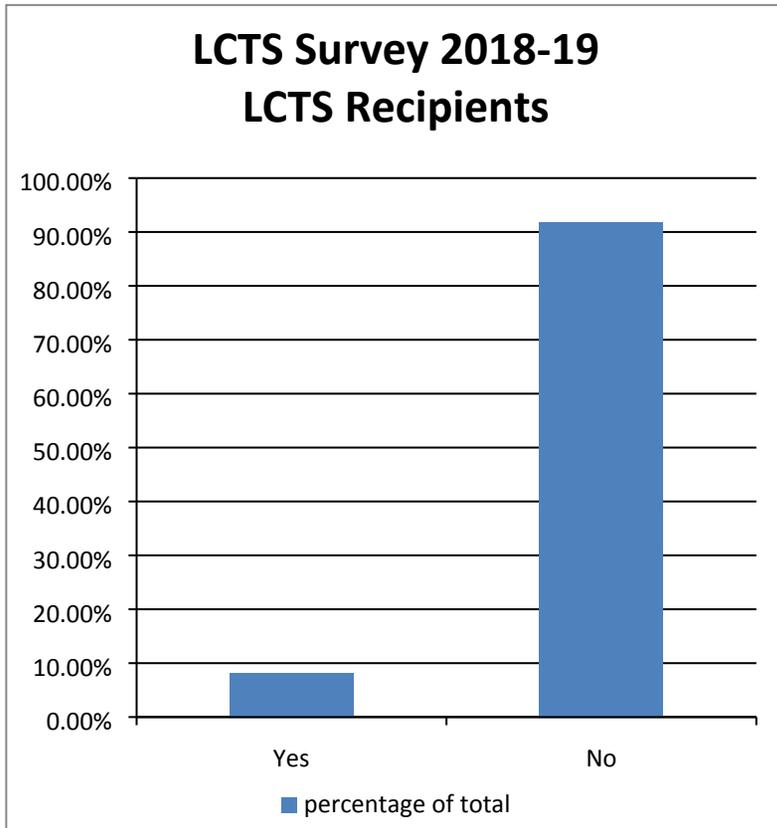
### 4.2.1 Profiling - Geographical distribution

(Data highlighted in red shows areas of highest response – Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted postcodes)

CB10	<b>20.92%</b>
CB11	<b>21.58%</b>
CB21	0.44%
CM1	0.77%
CM21	0.11%
CM22	<b>13.80%</b>
CM23	2.63%
CM24	<b>9.75%</b>
CM3	0.33%
CM6	<b>27.60%</b>
CM7	0.55%
CM77	0.22%
SG8	1.31%



## 4.2.2 Profiling – Recipients of LCTS





<b>Uttlesford Life Paper Responses</b>
It's not costing much to maintain the LCTS or Parish Grants so, why change it?
Maybe install Speed humps on Mountfitchet Estate to stop the cars and buses from speeding.
Agreeing details in December is fine if things stay the same. IF changes are made to the rate, or to take certain people out of protection altogether, this doesn't really allow people enough time to change their circumstances to suddenly pay say £17 per month out of their benefits.
No more new houses for Elsenham apart from new school more parking for our Doctors surgery.
Uttlesford District Council needs to be more efficient with their finances. There is a need to be more careful with the monies not just cutting services but carefully managing resources.
UDC should proudly continue to help poorest in society to live in a decent way.
It is crucially important to support the vulnerable, especially unpaid carers, who save the tax payer £132 billion each year. Withdrawing this subsidy would do more harm than good. Just shove the problem elsewhere, probably the NHS.
On the whole this is a pretty affluent area and I believe residents are happy for these less well-off to be given assistance provided the money is seen to be going to just causes and is distributed fairly with zero tolerance of benefit fraud.
I think with regards to planning applications the views of the residents are not really taken into consideration that if plans for a housing application (large scale) are put in then it will eventually get the go ahead regardless of grid lock already in the town. The proposed one way system round the town is absolutely ludicrous. Diverting traffic to already gridlocked areas at peak time?? Nonsense, and totally irresponsible.
Sadly snob outlooks will never make Uttlesford a caring Council. No effort is made to de stigmatise social housing and rental costs. I am not in social housing or have benefits paid to me but see how matters are reported. Housing estates being built are not given enough pressure to build starter homes. Uttlesford is not good value for tax being paid.
To truly help more people into work the LCTS scheme should be extended to cover more low income categories, not just limited to disabled and carers. I have replied to general council tax budget questionnaire saying UDC should charge more Council Tax - I recognise that increasing protection costs more money.
Getting more people back into some form of work is key. This will help reduce the burden to the Council.
Just want people who really need it get it.
Because of the prolonged period of austerity and cuts to welfare system overall I believe it is essential to maintain the LCTS for vulnerable and disabled people, or those in low wages. I appreciate that Uttlesford is fortunate in its populations financial wellbeing on the whole, but there will always be members of the community who will need extra support and help.

I should like to see more discipline about parking on or across pavements. Pavements are for people walking not for car parking.
We agree with helping those who need it!
Could you for see that when the bin refuse collections are carried out that broken glass in the main roads is cleaned up as I'm sure the refuse drivers carry a brush of some kind on the vehicles.
Spend more on litter collection/prevention.
On balance the Council (UDC) seems to generally to do a good job. You are however, too bureaucratic especially on planning. It is sensible to seek planning consultation when almost all the possible land is already being built on - hideously. Please remember that for many of us computers are a last resort. Give us telephone contacts please.
Get the local people who are out of work to do work in there village or parishes to help keep them tidy, ie churches, special constables, make use of people. Need more bus services out in villages to help the old.
Why would the total cost of the scheme be £184,000 if UDC removed the grant to Parishes?
The Council should continue to support the old and the vulnerable so they do not have to choose between heating and eating.
The saving from changing the LCTS is tiny and pointless - much more hassle to change than just keep running. RE the grant - removing it is just pushing costs on to other organisations. It is an exceptionally lazy way to make savings. Either make real savings or increase council tax instead.
This is not a simple issue to understand. Uttlesford can be congratulated for asking these questions and simplifying the issues. It is still hard to understand. Far from the couple of minutes you say it takes to complete the form?
I have always been grateful for the LCTS being set at the level it is in Uttlesford. In this rural area life can be expensive for impoverished people, with high transport costs and services scattered in different places. It might not be possible to continue living here if the LCTS were to be cut, in addition to astronomical rents not covered by housing benefit which does not keep pace, and other benefits which are not updated in line with food inflation, and income from low paid jobs not keeping pace either. Please continue to support diversity in the makeup of Uttlesford, and don't price out those who are not property rich, but who contribute in many other ways.
House needed for young local people affordable housing needed. New schools, surgeries. Responsibility to stop East Town.... It's huge! Need to have smaller developments around Uttlesford.
Whether the council or parish pay surely the tax payer will pay in the end.
I am educated and was professional in my working life, but I fail to understand the meaning of LCTS as described on 3 pages back! Help more people into work? How? Help the most vulnerable? How? Meaning less?? Sorry, disabled fingers

- Can't write very neatly.
The Council should provide more social housing for low income families/people. Empty houses can be rented out. Pot holes and road surfaces need repairing. Parking on high street in Newport needs addressing. People who live on the High St and do not have drive ways need proper parking spaces so their cars do not get vandalised.
It is the duty of any civilised community to protect the most vulnerable.
Reading the costs you have supplied makes me realise what an impossible task you have. However as a woman of close to 80 yrs living on a limited and fixed income the thought of increase to CTax in addition to all the other increases is frightening. I think that the dignity of older people should be preserved where possible - the loss of income can amount to real problems like not eating or heating the home properly. Central Govt. is largely responsible for the austerity you and all of us face. You are doing your best - but try to think in terms of the individuals and people - young and old and the impact your decisions have.
Should the LCTS scheme also be means tested?
1.Why waste money on Town Hall which is hardly ever used. 2.Bring back Police. 3.Uneven pavements a disgrace many accidents occur. 4.More Doctors surgeries.
How about you survey all the people in receipt of council tax benefit and see what they say? And please ignore tory rantings of puffed up, wealthy land owners who have never worried where the next meal is coming from.
We must support those who need it, for if we do not it creates poverty and crime. Why make others suffer for the sake of other services which could be summed down.
The payment of LCTS needs to be combined with all other benefits provided with a 'maximum amount' - otherwise the incentive to work is reduced.
Ashdon Parish Council has no value in this village they offer no support on Applications. They are rigid in their views and so am I glad to see movement of Councillors so new opinions and options can be considered for PARKING YOUNGER GENERATION AFFORDABLE HOMES
Some of the services you mention are not negotiable. Uttlesford has to assess and pay benefits. As will be many of the public health requirements and planning.
I can understand why you need to consult BUT it is not so simple.....what would be the actual effect on UDC if they kept PC grants? What would it be used for? What are the advantages/disadvantages
Parish Councils should set their precept and charge directly. Provides clarity to where money is going. LCTS should be within the range of other Essex Councils.
It seems that Uttlesford is very low compared to others. Should be consistent.

Every house should pay full council tax and then reductions determined in accordance with Council Policy.
LCTS appears to be extremely generous in Uttlesford relative to other councils in Essex.
Uttlesford rate needs to go up to continue providing services.
Make better use of Public buildings. Care in supporting M.H - huge drain on other services. Opportunities for good road networks. Improve general transport options to and from Saffron Walden. Develop roads before houses develop.
Felsted is a very upmarket area with lots of expensive properties, I don't think it would hurt them too much if they were asked to pay a bit more, to keep the main services going i.e. Refuse collections clearing up after travellers, fly tipping helping to re-house the homeless and the most vulnerable in our society. We live in a beautiful part of the country so we should all do our bit to keep it that way, we are very fortunate we don't have the problems that happen in other parts of the world i.e. weather, war, civil unrest etc.
The increase LCTS has to pay not exceed 2.5%. Parish / Town Councils who receive less than £1000 should NOT receive any grant.
U.D.C may need to increase council tax, but should not be given carte blanche but limited to 2 or 3% only.
This is a confusing document. It presumes that you understand LCTS and National Council Tax Benefit. I am a Tax Payer, who has not ever been in receipt of benefits, but I am soon to be retired. I believe in fairness for all.
This questionnaire is very hard to understand.
How much is it costing for these forms posting and collating money can be better spent - condition on roads!!!
20mph speed limits should be enforced by discreet observation cameras. This is important for safety - cyclist should not ride on pavements.
In the last 10yrs we have cut enough, to make savings. It's time to protect where we are to keep area nice and help all residents.
Pathways have grass coming through, this needs attending to urgently as this can cause someone especially elder people to lose their footing. Stop cars parking 2 wheels on pavements 2 on road making it very difficult to get through with walking frames etc. Have to go on road to get past.
Is the council really going to make decision based on this survey? What is the cost of it? Councillors have been elected to make decisions. If we don't like them, we don't vote for them next time.
Too many homes and affordable housing are being built all over the place, you will have everywhere as an over run and over spill, it ruins it all.
The Police are receiving funding through Council Tax paid however there is little Police presence and or signs of follow-up. Sadly petty crime can escalate and in time S. Walden and surrounding areas could become known as an easy target

<p>area. So, why are we funding the Police when we are not seeing / experiencing the benefits of the Financial Backing?</p>
<p>My personal priorities for the District are around housing and environment. With high house prices and rents compared to wage levels, and static local housing allowances, the issues are acute for people in poverty particularly those in private rented housing. In my experience in the voluntary sector those who are worst off are single people of working age who have mental or physical health problems and single parents of late teenaged children, for whom the income shock of losing child-related benefits is often combined with low paid part-time work. UDC staff do valiantly in difficult circumstances but more resources for social housing and benefits are needed.</p>
<p>My parish council does nothing why do we even give them money. What is it for? Scrap Parish Councils and Town Councils there is no need for any of them.</p>
<p>I believe that people on LCTS should be given as much help as possible, as most people that are on LCTS do not have a choice i.e. such as the elderly and the disabled people because their problems are because they are getting to old or because they are too ill to work, and they are the people who suffer the most such as they don't put their heating on when it is cold because they can't afford the high bills. They also don't eat properly because they can't afford to. We should be helping our own people in the county first and then help all the outsiders.</p>
<p>Verge cutting has almost ceased throughout the summer leading to dangerous conditions for motorists. Inform all local residents prior to planning permission is granted or to the sale of any green belt ground. It's too late when the contractors move in!</p>
<p>We are wasting money with people that never contribute for society, even pensioners should pay their taxes, if we continue to help only pensioners our area in the future will be full of old people because our young people are going to live somewhere else.</p>
<p>We have enough good volunteering programmes to stop tax payers money being spent in this way. Parish Councils could apply for charitable grants or fund raise - councillors could lead on this. It would be fairer to lower council tax for all and make some council jobs voluntary.</p>
<p>The minimum LCTS amount should be raised to 25%. It is wrong that Uttlesford is so out of step with all other Essex Councils. We simply cannot afford such over-generous subsidies.</p>
<p>Ensure that those who should be paying the full amount of Council Tax do in fact do so.</p>
<p>This questionnaire is very confusing and unclear - perhaps this was intentional to produce biased results. I have added asterisks to two figures which do not align with no clear narrative. Burying the total cost of the LCTS mid-way through the questions seems an odd approach - surely this should form the introduction? Question 1 also fails to provide enough detail on the current Uttlesford scheme to make a valid judgement does the low income calculation include other benefits?</p>

Very poorly worded questionnaire!
I believe LCTS should be fully means-tested.
We live in a very affluent area and those who are financially able should, through their council tax contribute more in support of those who are less fortunate.
Q.2 A small increase of 2.5% seems to be reasonable. If the increase was to be more than this then I believe this could have quite a big impact on some LCTS recipients. Q.3 I would propose a reduction in the grant given rather than a total withdrawal.
As before, why is UDC so different to all other Councils?
Should not be so far below all other Essex Councils. Some increase would be fair.
12.5% should increase by at least 10% to 22.5%.
So how much did this consultation cost? £76,802? LCTS?
The LCTS scheme should apply to pensioners, disabled and carers only. This might encourage others on benefits to understand priorities and budget accordingly.
2. LCTS recipients should pay a comparable amount as other Council recipients.
Please remember many people work full time and do not get any help, people must be encouraged to support themselves if they can. Its ok for the rich in our area but not god for those who are just above the HELP requirements. Let's be fair to all. Any increase hits this group the HARDEST!
I don't think comparing the grants to different parishes is particularly helpful as they are all different sizes. What would be more helpful is to identify average % spend in each service.
As extra buildings are added to figures it would seem appropriate to monitor and increase the percentages accordingly. A small percentage increase annually is more acceptable than an increase in Council Tax in certain years only.
Low income single parent families i.e. under £20k income with children should receive a discount - not just 25% off as a 'single person' as such poor income it's a struggle to pay 75% of council tax bill - should be more realistic to pay for these families i.e. 50% as children / household then reduction pushed into poverty / struggling with al bills / utilities to pay!
Since the current irresponsible central government has not pushed e.g. Amazon and UK dependency tax havens i.e. tax owed to us all or raised taxes for the top 1-5%, the local councils MUST get more money from us.
People need to see their money being spent wisely and on the priorities as seen by the resident's point of view. If this was the experience I personally would support a need for an increase but not just "more in the pot and no visible improvement".
If there is a financial problem stop producing the full colour 'Uttlesford Life'. No one reads it and it is a waste of money and

too self-aggrandizing.
There are many wealthy pensioners in Uttlesford do they all need LCTS - perhaps an income threshold should be applied. I don't think you have worded this very clearly - some people won't understand this budget for LCTS.
The roads are never swept (disgraceful) Front gardens allowed to have greenery overhanging dangerously onto pavement owners should have a notice to keep hedges clear as other councils do.
LCTS in Uttlesford should be the same levels as other low areas in Essex - i.e. 20%
Do not understand why Uttlesfords rate is so much lower than other areas. 12 ½% is very low compared to others and should be increased - others have increased their rate. 25% would be a better rate compared to others.
The reason why people are in straightened circumstances. If people made insufficient provision for their old age yet had a good income whilst in work they should be considered partly responsible. However those who incapacity or misfortune should still be supported.
I think Council Tax is way too high for some families. Being a single mother on a low income the council tax is the largest monthly bill I have. I think some households should pay more accessed on household income.
Encourage more support from families and less reliance on the state.
I don't know why the number of LCTS recipients has decreased. If it's because the need has decreased that fine but if it is because the council are grabbing money from people then it's not.
Spend more on litter/waste collection.
Thank you for what you do I imagine you could do more with sufficient funds.....
To make sure that all claimants qualify.
It seems fair to protect those on low incomes from taxes when better off households can cover the difference.
I don't know why you've produced the high priority/low priority list of your services. You should be giving ALL the services high priority. That's what you're there for. I am very disappointed that you keep on allowing more building in overcrowded Saffron Walden: the pollution from all the cars is killing us.
The villages listen to their residents more than Uttlesford ever do. The system is not policed effectively with cheats taking what they do not deserve with little risk of being caught! The council needs a real proactive investigative team on the ground not just looking at paper in an office! New estates need dog warden visits and bins i.e. Franklin Drive Elsenham has dog fouling on the external paths ALREADY!
Everyone who is able should contribute to the support of people who are impoverished, disabled or involved in caring for a vulnerable person. Collective contribution is the mark of a civilised society. Too much collective support has already been lost in pursuit of a neo-liberal and market-obsessed ideology.

If all government grants cease a major review will be necessary - including reassessment of applications - before local grants can be decided.
The poor, old and ill need to be protected.
It is obvious that anything I say will be ignored so I will use this space to tell you I wish nothing but ill to the Tory Party setbacks. I well celebrated on June 9th, I hope the Brexit negotiations end in total failure - I will celebrate again.
As you point out, statistically LCTS is reducing as low-income pensioners numbers reduce through death. I've always been concerned that processing LCTS applications has been through (to eliminate false claims).
We do not approve of the introduction of LCTS to replace the national council tax benefit scheme. Therefore this whole questionnaire is built on a premise with which we don't agree.
If necessary, I am prepared to pay an extra 2 ½% to help councils do their job.
Although saying no to keeping the rate at 12.5% I believe it shouldn't go up by more than 5%. UDC is already the most generous of all the Councils. By increasing LCTS by no more that 5% would still leave it with the most generous LCTS in the whole of Essex.
The sums should be: 1. Savings in Administrative costs. 2. Small sums, relative, low impact. 3. Reinvest the money and admin savings in a high priority area which will increase spend / reduce costs - smarter working. Look outside the book for ways to deliver the same.
I have answered Q3 on the understanding that the Parish Grant covers the same needs as the LCTS.
Pleased Uttlesford does offer more support to people who need it.
Parish Council do not seem to listen to its Parishioners!! Only what suits them.
A pointless survey. You, the party in control should charge and distribute these taxes, in line with the pledges made in your manifesto. Public opinions on these matters should be sought by your political party. Then you develop policies that you think will win the democratic vote. Then you IMPLEMENT those policies. Waiting until you have power to ask our views suggests that you had not a clue what to do once you obtained power. Get a grip.
Response to Q2 seems to be at variance with q3. If "no" to q1 then do not need to answer Q2 and Q3. Do not understand implications of Q3 presume if council does not pay to Parish/Town Councils they will just increase their precept. We will still have to pay one way or another!
Our bin men are the best. Supermarket the worst. We need a Sainsburys or Aldi anything.
So many of these questions are using ones common sense, and for some are difficult to answer "yes" or "no". So many of the questions are taught by parents in the home i.e. dropping litter why are we are such a 'dirty nation'? Why are other nations - Germany, Switzerland so clean? No littler on streets there.

Could the council reduce the rate of grant to parish and town councils if they have considerable reserves?
Stop wasting money on Re badging supports and payments.
The council tax collected for Saffron Walden alone is going up and up and up so when dividing the amount needed by the number of houses then the amounts should be reducing per household. Is that not right?
Getting rid of pothole in Saffron streets
My daughter in law is bipolar and has just spent more than a month in hospital after an episode which put her 3 year old at risk. All professionals were stretched she has no support at all and felt this contributed to her very expensive stay in hospital - do you help the most vulnerable? No you don't, are you saving money? No you are not, your costing the NHS huge amounts of money. My daughter in law lives in Suffolk but I can't imagine Essex being any better).
We live on less than £20K pensions for 2 of us total. Our local tax is way higher than we can afford. We don't get any help from you because of your rates.
Should continue to give council tax help to people receiving maximum L.H.A. This form arrived very late for me to fill in.
A poor survey, poorly explained and much of what they should be doing in the normal course of their work.
You need to help people and not fund useless Parish Councils which are barely democratic especially in Little Bardfield.
Uttlesford should increase % of LCTS to match other areas in Essex, it is more difficult to be 'poor' in an affluent area!
The LCTS in Uttlesford is having impressive results keep it going.
Do you think it is fair that people with low savings get free care and accommodation in care homes etc. When people who have worked hard and saved for their retirement have to pay extortionate fee's for the same privilege. Nobody who receives benefit is encouraged to save or spend the money wisely. In fact the less you have in savings the more you are looked after.
I don't understand the full implications so I cannot comment.
Do you have any sway at all on providing a faster broadband service?
The figures for Q3 in the table are not clear.
Did not receive this till after 25th September 2017
Q2. This is a misleading question. If I tick 'No' then it could be presumed that I am happy for the percentage to be increased, when I want it to be decreased. Can you please remedy this?
A priority for me would be an improvement of the roads, I've lived in many places but the roads around Henham are the worst I have ever experienced. Also the amount of road closures, either con-currently or sequentially is beyond belief - surely these closures could be better managed/co-ordinated.
Support yes but taking advantage NO. MORE POLICE, LESS CHAVS!! CLAMP DOWN ON CHAVS DRIVING

RECKLESSLY. CLEAN CROMWELL ROAD [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
<b>Uttlesford Life Online Responses</b>
Should be increased to at least 20% to keep it line with other councils
Its not costing much to maintain the LCTS or Parish Grants so, why change it?
Maybe install Speed humps on Mountfitchet Estate to stop the cars and buses from speeding.

## 4.4 Letters submitted by town and parish councils

Letter received from Thaxted Parish Council:



## THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Community Information Centre  
7 Town Street  
Thaxted  
Dunmow  
Essex CM6 2LD

tel: 01371 831952  
email: [clerk@thaxted.co.uk](mailto:clerk@thaxted.co.uk)  
web: [www.thaxted.co.uk](http://www.thaxted.co.uk)

27<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Emailed to [consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk)

And to Angela Knight at [aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk)

To Whom it may concern.

I write on behalf of Thaxted Parish Council regarding the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. We note that a public consultation on the draft proposals has now been undertaken part of which included:

- i) That the discretionary subsidy grant for town and parish councils, which was subsequently reduced by 50% in 2017/18, is to be completely withdrawn in 2018/19.

Having previously written to council member voicing our concerns, Thaxted Parish Council would like to reiterate its position.

Thaxted Parish Council asks you to note its objection to the proposal to remove the subsidy grant from the parish council, 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-supportscheme> and is also further enclosed for your convenience.

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.

The loss of any funding will have a detrimental effect on Thaxted Parish Council continuing to provide and improve services to the residents and at a time when the Council is still settling its finances after taking on several services that have been devolved from Uttlesford District Council to us such as the Public Toilets and car Park.

The Parish Council therefore wishes to register its fierce objection to the withdrawal of this much needed grant to both town and parish councils. Please therefore consider this letter a formal response to the LCTS consultation process.

I would also note that the consultation process for this matter, in terms of communication was incredibly poor, placement of matters of such importance to local council would be deemed as necessary and worthy for discussion at Full council meetings, the website advertising and a pamphlet questionnaire arriving at some (not all) CIC centers, is not, in Thaxted Parish Councils opinion an acceptable form of advertising the consultation Process. We therefore trust that this letter is included as part of the consultation and we look forward to hearing further from you in connection to this matter, and to be kept abreast of any developments or proposed changes to the scheme.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Dena Ludford  
Clerk to Thaxted Parish Council

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**Committee:** Full Council

**Date:** 7 December  
2017

**Title:** Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018

**Author:** Peter Snow, Democratic and Electoral  
Services Manager, 01799 510430

Item for decision:  
yes

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## Summary

1. Revised proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England were published by the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) on 17 October 2017. The eight-week consultation period runs until 11 December. The BCE will send their recommendation to Parliament in September 2018. If then implemented, the new boundaries will come into force at the following general election (in 2022?).
2. The proposals affecting Uttlesford are set out in the paper covering the Eastern region and are described in more detail in the situation section of the report. The Governance, Audit and Performance Committee is recommending the Council to support what is being proposed for the revised Saffron Walden constituency.

## Recommendations

3. Submit a formal representation to the BCE supporting the revised proposals for the Saffron Walden constituency.

## Financial Implications

4. None.

## Background Papers

5. The only papers referred to by the author in the preparation of this report are already published on the BCE's website.

## Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation is already carried out by the BCE
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal	No specific implications other than those

Implications	relating to the administration of elections
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

## Situation

7. The BCE is conducting a periodic review of all Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The review is being carried out on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament. These rules involve a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 501.
8. This is the second stage of consultation as the initial proposals were published in September 2016. As far as Saffron Walden is concerned, the second stage proposals are unchanged from those published originally which the Council supported. There are some changes elsewhere in Essex.
9. The impact of the enforced change in the Eastern region is a reduction of one seat from 58 to 57. Within the Eastern region, Essex is being treated as a sub-region in its own right entitled to 17 constituencies giving an average constituency electorate of 74,976. At present, Essex has an allocation of 18 constituencies so the reduction of one does result in some significant boundary changes.
10. The effect of the rules governing the periodic review is that all constituencies must include at least 71,031 electors and no more than 78,507.
11. The proposed Saffron Walden constituency includes the whole of the Uttlesford district, together with four wards from the Braintree district. These four wards (listed below) replace the four wards of Chelmsford City included in the existing constituency. Most of the territory included in the Braintree district wards proposed for inclusion in Saffron Walden was part of the former Saffron Walden constituency until 2010.
12. The proposed constituency is made up as follows:
  - All wards of Uttlesford district – 61,702 electors
  - Bumpstead ward of Braintree district – 2,285 electors
  - Rayne ward of Braintree district – 2,203 electors
  - Three Fields ward of Braintree district – 4,480 electors
  - Yeldham ward of Braintree district – 2,110 electors
  - Constituency electorate – 72,780 electors

13. The four Braintree wards listed above replace Broomfield and The Walthams (6,367 electors) and Chelmsford Rural West (2,181) which are being dispersed to Brentwood and Ongar constituency; Writtle (4,151) moved to Billericay constituency; and Boreham and The Leighs (4,691) moved to Witham and Maldon.
14. In considering the Council's response to the consultation, the most important factors seem to be the community of interest shared by the wards included in the proposed seat, and the effective administration of Parliamentary elections based on the proposed boundary.
15. In terms purely of administration it is a big advantage for the whole of Uttlesford to be included within a single constituency. It is also good in terms of social cohesion and means that we have to liaise with only one MP in making representations to the Government, or in dealing with constituents. As there are not enough electors in Uttlesford to form a single constituency, at least 10,000 electors must be imported from elsewhere to form a constituency of the required size.
16. The 17,390 electors in the four Chelmsford City wards have been exchanged for 11,078 electors from Braintree. In terms of community of interest, the replacement wards do seem to fit quite closely with the generally rural makeup of Uttlesford. A further advantage is that many electors in the four wards concerned will have some memory of voting in the Saffron Walden constituency prior to 2010.
17. It seems true to say that many electors in the four Chelmsford City wards have not adjusted to being moved to vote in the Saffron Walden constituency and may feel more at home in a new constituency area. Having said that, none of the Chelmsford City electors concerned will be included in a Chelmsford based seat and it is likely their distribution between three different new seats will continue to cause some confusion.
18. The new constituency boundary abuts the town of Braintree but the composition of the area is essentially rural. The existing seat boundary extends as far as Broomfield which effectively forms part of the urban extension of Chelmsford.
19. In considering this matter, the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee agreed that the exchange of Saffron Walden constituency wards between Chelmsford and Braintree will be a satisfactory arrangement making for a better overall fit with the Uttlesford district. Members are invited to consider supporting that decision.

**Risk Analysis**

20.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1 – no risks are foreseen	1 – this is the second stage of consultation	1 – there will be some community impact	1 – ensure that a full response to the consultation is made

- 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.

# Agenda Item 9

**Committee:** Council

**Date:** 7 December  
2017

**Title:** The Future of Essex

**Report Author:** Dawn French, Chief Executive

**Item for decision:**  
No

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## Summary

1. Together with a wide range of Essex partners from the public and voluntary sectors, Uttlesford has contributed to 'the Future of Essex' which aims to set out the kind of Essex we want to live in, to channel the change forces positively wherever possible and ensure Essex benefits from the opportunities such change presents.
2. 'The Future of Essex' contains seven ambitions which provide all those with an interest and stake in Essex a framework within which to target our individual and collaborative work activities.

## Recommendations

3. That Council notes 'The Future of Essex' and supports the principles contained within it.

## Financial Implications

4. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## Background Papers

5. None.

## Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	The Essex Plan was produced following an extensive consultation process.
Community Safety	Community safety is integral to the vision and ambitions with the Essex Plan
Equalities	Equality is integral to the vision and ambitions with the Essex Plan
Health and Safety	There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Sustainability	Sustainability is explicitly referenced in one of the ambitions contained with the Essex Plan
Ward-specific impacts	There are no ward specific impacts
Workforce/Workplace	The Future of Essex will be used as a reference document by staff and examples of good practice, particularly in collaborative working, will be shared by and with staff.

## Situation

7. 'The Future of Essex' resulted from partnership working across the county, initially driven by the Essex Partnership Board. The aim was to seek to capture the essence of the diverse geography known as Essex and agree what needs to be progressed to ensure that residents and communities enjoy the best quality of life and businesses (new and existing) can prosper for the benefit of our residents. It is attached at Appendix A.
8. The purpose of 'The Future of Essex' is to provide a vision and framework of ambitions within which public sector agencies, voluntary and not for profit organisations, communities, businesses, etc. can collaborate in addressing the long term needs of residents and businesses.
9. It was produced following extensive consultation with residents, businesses, community and voluntary organisations as well as interviews with public sector 'leaders' from all parts of the county.
10. Seven shared ambitions are outlined that aim to guide the county's evolution to 2035. They are:
  - Unite behind a sense of identity
  - Enjoy life long into old age
  - Provide an equal foundation for every child
  - Strengthen communities through participation
  - Develop our county sustainably
  - Connect us to each other and the world
  - Share prosperity with everyone
11. The Future of Essex is not a top down directive; it does not place any responsibility or requirements on the council or any other organisation, community or individual. It does not require any additional resources. It is intended to identify and share the long term needs of Essex and to motivate everyone with an interest to think about what is currently being delivered and how working more collaboratively and/or better, might be achieved. In essence it is encouraging a new approach to system-wide challenges that no single organisation can address alone.

12. The collaborative approach advocated by the Future of Essex is entirely consistent with Uttlesford District Council's vision of working together for the well-being of our community and to protect and enhance the unique character of the district. The seven ambitions are also entirely consistent with the council's priorities.
13. By identifying and aligning the work already planned and/or underway to deliver the Council's visions to the Future of Essex, a coherent narrative for local people can be created to show how different levels of local government and wider public services are working together towards a common set of aims.

### Next steps

14. In future, the work of the council will be referenced, where appropriate, to the ambitions within the Future of Essex. Together with other councils and public sector organisations, this will give greater visibility of local priorities and activities on a county wide basis, to enable stronger collaboration between those areas undertaking similar work and dealing with similar issues. This will also facilitate shared learning and a stronger network between officers and members with common aims and remits. This in and of itself has the potential to realise greater value through improved outcomes - the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
15. The work being undertaken by UDC together with partners around social isolation is a good local example of this. This collaborative work is being undertaken with the Young Foundation and is piloting a different approach to working with communities. Other local authorities may be undertaking similar work or be facing the same issues and by aligning this to the Future of Essex ambitions, others will be able to follow the best practice that emerges, saving time and cost and further improving outcomes.

### Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
If the council does not reflect the Future of Essex document in its communication, opportunities for sharing best practice and working collaboratively may be missed	Significant	Some	Adopt the Future of Essex plan as a reference to enable visibility of the work of the council and that of others in support the Council's vision and priorities that are consistent with the Future of Essex vision

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.