



Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 21st November, 2017

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: Committee Room - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden,
Essex CB11 4ER

Chairman: Councillor A Dean

Members: Councillors H Asker, G Barker (Vice-Chair), R Chambers, P Davies,
M Felton, S Harris, G LeCount, M Lemon, B Light and E Oliver

Substitutes: Councillors A Gerard, A Mills, G Sell and L Wells

Public Speaking

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

AGENDA PART 1

Open to Public and Press

1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meetings on 25 and 26 September 2017

1 - 18

To consider the minutes of the meetings held on 25 and 26
September 2017.

3 Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee

To consider any responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee.

4 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision

To consider any matter referred for call in.

5 Invited reports from the Executive

To consider any invited reports from the Executive.

6 Status Report - November 2017 19 - 20

To consider the Status Report for November 2017.

7 Scrutiny Work Programme 2017-18 21 - 22

To consider the Scrutiny Work Programme for November 2017.

8 Budget Review and Consultation Outcomes 2018-19 23 - 106

To consider the budget review and consultation outcomes 2018-2019

9 2018/19 Local Council Tax Support Scheme and Consultation Responses 107 - 154

To consider the 2018/19 Local Council Tax Support Scheme and consultation responses.

10 Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers to be Urgent

To consider any items which 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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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 25 September 2017

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)
Councillors H Asker, R Chambers, P Davies, M Felton, G
LeCount, M Lemon, B Light and L Wells (substituting for S
Harris)

Also present: Councillors R Freeman, A Gerard, S Howell (Executive
member for Finance and Administration), P Lees and H
Rolfe (Leader of the Council)

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services),
S Pugh (Head of Legal Services), P Snow (Democratic and
Electoral Services Manager) and A Webb (Director -
Finance and Corporate Services).

SC8 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mrs S Tilstone and Mr R Tongue made separate public statements as
residents of De Vigier Avenue about the Cabinet's decision to dispose of
land originally set aside for use as public open space. Mr Tongue is
chairman of the De Vigier Avenue residents' association. Their
statements are set out in full in the appendix to these minutes.

Councillors asked a number of questions in clarification of points raised
by Mrs Tilstone.

Mrs Tilstone said that the Walden Local had claimed there was no rat
problem but this was not true. However, the problem had improved since
her neighbours had moved because there was now less bird feed left on
the ground. She confirmed that she did not want the wood to be cut
down but wished it to be managed so that pigeons and rats could be
controlled.

SC9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillor S Harris.

SC10 CALL-IN OF DECISION TO DISPOSE OF LAND AT DE VIGIER AVENUE SAFFRON WALDEN

The Chairman explained that the meeting was being held to consider the
call-in request made by Councillors Asker, LeCount and Light of the
Cabinet's decision to dispose of land at De Vigier Avenue, Saffron
Walden.

He referred members to a flow chart tabled at the meeting explaining the
options open to the Committee in considering the call-in request.

The Chairman invited Councillor R Freeman to make a statement as one
of the two ward members for De Vigier Avenue.

Councillor Freeman asked members to reflect on the reasons for holding this meeting. Call-in was part of the democratic process of enabling checks and balances.

There were two factors he asked members to consider. First, there was the ecology of the site. The triangle of land forming part of phase 6 of the adjacent Ridgeons development site was home to many species of bat as detailed in the commissioned ecology report. There were also many species of reptile not identified in the report. The findings of the ecological reports justified taking a more careful look at the future uses of the land before anything was agreed.

The second factor was the question of morality. Councillors had a robust moral compass but this had now been skewed. The land was given over to the care of the Council 29 years ago but the Council had done nothing with it. The land was valuable as a building site able to accommodate between 10-14 houses and might be worth at least £1m. However, this sum would not be used for the benefit of the residents of De Vigier Avenue.

The problem with rats would vanish when the development took place. However, because something could be done there was no reason why it must be done. For these reasons the Council did not have a strong moral compass.

Councillor Dean referred to the original S106 covenant. He asked whether any part of the covenant inhibited the Council's actions now.

The Head of Legal Services said the Council was a beneficiary of promises made when the land was transferred. When transferred, the land had statutory protection under the Open Spaces Act 1906. However, the statutory procedure followed by the Council of advertising the intention to dispose of the land, and its consideration of objections, meant that the statutory protection would be overridden.

Councillor Chambers asked the Chairman to allow the Cabinet member to speak first. The Chairman agreed to this request.

Councillor Howell then spoke as the Cabinet member responsible for the disposal of the land at De Vigier Avenue. He said that he had proposed to

Cabinet disposal of this land and this had been agreed. He had been a member of Saffron Walden Town Council for eight years and had had contacts with local residents about the land concerned.

The intention had been that the land would be transferred to the Town Council for use as allotments. A major difficulty was that access to the site could only be gained between numbers 16 and 18 De Vigier Avenue. It was also clear the land developer had not left the land in a good level condition. The site had been used as a spoil heap and the Town Council had refused to accept the proposed transfer of responsibility.

At this distance in time it was not possible to say why Uttlesford had not enforced the obligations on the developer to transfer the land in a suitable condition for open space use. Various attempts to make the land

available for open space use were unsuccessful. Plans to turn it into an area for play equipment were abandoned.

There was never any intention that the land would be used as open space for the benefit of De Vigier Avenue residents. The land was intended to be an area of benefit for Saffron Walden in general, rather than specifically for the residents of De Vigier Avenue. The land had negligible value as a wildlife site but there was a potential value for the wider community.

Councillor Howell said he did recognise the duty to protect roosting sites for bats but there were no bats roosting on this site. The ground opened onto open countryside and had no particular value as either open space or as a wildlife site.

He confirmed the advice from the Head of Legal Services that the covenant in the planning agreement under which the land was transferred did not apply to the Council. The land had been transferred by the developer but it had not been put to its intended use. It was therefore entirely right to review the appropriate land use. He had listened to the objections raised. He would not respond to the comments made by Councillor Freeman about morality and did not question the value of checks and balances.

The Council had the right to dispose of the land and had taken an informed decision which would be of greater benefit to the wider community.

The Chairman asked whether the Cabinet had considered possible better uses for the land with public open space as the starting point.

Councillor Howell said that a recording of the Cabinet meeting had not made. His memory was that alternative land uses had been discussed at the meeting.

The intention now was for the Ridgeons site to accommodate 160 houses of which 40 would be affordable and there would be provision for a football pitch and additional open space land. There would be an assurance to preserve the tree line. The overall package would be to the greater advantage of all residents in Saffron Walden.

Councillor Asker said she would make no apology for the call-in as the decision made was fundamentally wrong. There had been no conversation with ward councillors at either district or town council level.

The S106 agreement had been made in 1984. It was a matter of integrity for the Council to ensure compliance with such agreements. Ward councillors were now different. The Council must be held responsible for upholding S106 agreements. The land had been fenced off with a gated entrance. This was the Council's fault and not the Town Council's or the residents. It was possible for the access to be improved by maintaining the driveway.

The Town Council had offered to take responsibility for maintaining the land as public open space for a nominal sum. She had established that 80% of houses in Uttlesford lacked open space requirements to acceptable standards.

In referring to wildlife on the site, Councillor Asker said that no badgers or greater crested newts were known to be present but there had been enjoyment of wildlife by the residents. No alternative solutions for the land had been discussed by the Cabinet.

Councillor Howell had said the land was a valuable asset to the Council but no monetary value had been mentioned. There was a shortage of green open spaces in Uttlesford and this must be considered.

Councillor Dean asked whether Councillor Asker was speaking on behalf of the town council. She replied that she was acting as a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

He then asked what the town council was seeking to achieve. The land had been available in the 1980s and had not been taken on. Was the original intention to use the site as open space or to leave in a wild state?

Councillor Freeman then said the culture of the town council had been not to take things on but this had changed. There was a groundworks team able to maintain open space areas. The land under discussion would be used predominantly for the benefit of the town.

Councillor Dean asked whether the open space would be maintained in the present location or elsewhere.

Councillor Freeman said that, together with Councillor Asker, he would ensure that developer obligations were met. He was less interested in trading this particular site for somewhere else.

Councillor Felton asked for information about when the Town Council had first expressed an interest in managing this land.

Councillor Asker conceded this was a recent interest as the matter had come to light following contacts from local residents and a petition sent to the Council. The building at Ridgeons had now been removed and replaced but the phase 6 land under discussion was still not included in development plans. For these reasons the town council had offered to take it on.

Councillor Rolfe was then invited to speak as Leader of the Council. He said he had been involved in discussions for a number of years and had visited Mr Tongue. The options were to either create an open space area or for the land to be developed. The views of residents were mixed and some wanted to leave the land as it was. However, the land was impenetrable woodland so he was not sure that residents necessarily wanted an open space area.

The Council would always take section 106 agreements seriously. The provision of community facilities at Tudor Park had been taken up by the Chief Executive. He was also keen to address issues at Ashdon Road, and hoped to secure the provision of another zebra crossing, which he thought would be a significant benefit to local residents.

The open space land at the Ridgeons site faced open fields. He expected the outcome of this development to benefit Saffron Walden as well as the wider community.

Councillor Dean said that what Councillor Rolfe had said amounted to a partial commitment to invest some of the revenue from the sale of the land into community facilities.

The Leader said that he had a personal desire to see this happen. He could offer no guarantees and it would depend upon the outcome of negotiations with the land owner.

Councillor Chambers said that he well understood the passion to achieve the best outcome for Saffron Walden which he shared. He had a personal passion to look after the countryside and the district generally as it was a beautiful and unspoilt place in which to live.

The particular land in question had been used a spoil heap filled with clay and rubbish from the land developed at De Vigier Avenue. It was true that nothing had been done to manage the land as intended. However, there were bats and greater crested newts in all parts of the district and they would survive whatever happened to the land at De Vigier Avenue. For example, motorway verges were often rich in wildlife.

The Council was acting legally and correctly. If no provision had been made for open space on the Ridgeons land it would be different but suitable provision was being made. He supported what Councillor Howell was putting forward and this would result in money being diverted for the benefit of the district.

Councillor Chambers then proposed to do nothing further and to take no further action in respect of the call-in. The motion was seconded by Councillor Felton.

Councillor Light then asked to raise a number of points mentioned in the debate. She said that the MKA Ecology report had stated there was significant scope for biodiversity enhancements but this had been ignored. A new zebra crossing would be no substitute for the loss of the open space land.

It was wilfully negligent not to take enforcement action. She considered this could be done with no limit of time. She therefore disputed that the decision taken had been reasonable. On the contrary, it was unreasonable as it failed to meet the principles laid down. There was no mandate to take such a decision. The expedient course of action was to ensure that no further green spaces were lost.

The covenant had not been met. This was an indication of bad faith as the decision affected the residents and the value of their properties.

Councillor Light proposed that the decision to dispose of the land should be sent back to the Cabinet with a recommendation the land should be improved as a wildlife site.

Councillor Dean asked the Head of Legal Services whether the further motion proposed could be put to the vote. He advised that there was no reason why an alternative proposition could not be considered.

Councillor Dean then said that, in his view, there was a political dimension to the decision which should be considered separately. However, it was important for the Committee to establish whether the right procedures had been followed.

The Head of Legal Services advised members there was nothing to suggest the decision taken was unlawful and he was satisfied the right procedures had been followed.

Councillor Dean then asked members to agree that the proper procedures had been taken. He then put this proposal to the meeting and it was agreed by seven votes in favour to one against.

When the debate resumed, Councillor Asker said the decision was not about building houses. Rather it was about the wildlife value of the site which had laid undisturbed for a long time. She had abstained on the vote about procedure. She did not agree the correct procedure had been followed as there were other solutions.

Councillor Dean said it was possible to argue with the substance of the decision but it had now been confirmed as procedurally correct.

Councillor LeCount asked about the size of the land and whether the moneys achieved would represent best value for the local residents.

Councillor Rolfe said the land measured 0.52 of a hectare. Any discussions about the value of the land were in commercial confidence. The decision to sell the land was not political but was part of the Council's responsibility for good administration and for making the best use of assets.

Councillor Davies asked about restrictions on development and referred to the minutes of town council meetings. The land could either be offered for disposal or managed as public open space land within the overall site. It had been fenced off for 30 years and there were difficult access problems. He felt the land should be used for the best overall benefit of the whole district.

In speaking again, Councillor Light expressed agreement that the land should be used for the benefit of residents and the town. There was a social, not just an economic, value and the quality of life should be considered. She urged that residents should be asked to give feedback about their preferred outcome.

Councillor Light then proposed that the land should be left in its present state but then improved for use as public open space. She was used to a great deal of open space as a former resident in London and this was a good model to be followed.

Councillor Dean said, if it was members' wish to do so, he was willing to add advice to the Cabinet from this committee that the Council should seek to maximise the benefit to local residents as well as to the wider community by investing capital receipts in social housing and in protecting the green barrier between the new development and De Vigier Avenue.

Councillor Chambers pointed out that no decision had yet been made about the future use of the site. Releasing the land would benefit the residents of Uttlesford as social housing would be provided in due course and there would be improvements throughout the district. Uttlesford could not be compared to London. The decision to dispose of the land for housing use was the right decision for the district.

Councillor Rolfe clarified that there was as yet no master plan for the whole site. The sale of the land at De Vigier Avenue would free up more space for the whole development. This ultimately benefitted the district. A sum in the region of £1.3m would have a number of benefits including for education, sport and broadband speed.

Councillor Dean then put the original motion to the vote which was agreed by majority. The effect of the vote was to take no further action on the call-in of the Cabinet's decision to approve the disposal of the land for planning purposes which would now come into effect.

The Committee also voted to approve submitting advice to the Cabinet about the need to achieve maximum benefits from the sale of the land by investing capital receipts and to ensure a barrier was maintained between the new development and De Vigier Avenue.

RESOLVED that no further action be taken in respect of the Cabinet's decision to approve the disposal of land at De Vigier Avenue, Saffron Walden for planning purposes.

The meeting ended at 9.05pm.

Appendix to the Scrutiny Committee Minutes of 25
September 2017

Statement made by Mrs S Tilstone

I moved to 24 de vigier ave in may 2014 and within two months saw rats run along my fence and garden.

A group of people had congregated on the green opposite to sign a petition of which neither myself or my neighbour at no 26 had been invited, we were the people most affected by the wood as we actually lived directly in front of it

Contrary to the papers claim that there was no rat problem, i contacted the environmental health as the rats were hanging off the trees, on the fences and going across gardens getting under sheds and decking. i sent emails and photographs to the council

As a new resident i contacted cllr esker who as a new mayor was on holiday, she said she would come and see me but did not and i was forced to contact cllr rolfe

I have kept a taped recording from cllr rolfe saying they were dealing with the problem and that a neighbour had been shooting the rats, in fact shooting thirty of them. my neighbour said they were bagging them up and disposing of them in the dustbin

The council sent out the pest control people who baited

the area with traps placed where they were allowed and without bait.

The council also ordered people to clear waste dumped and stop putting out feed and they cut back the overhanging trees etc

I was so distraught at it all i put my house up for sale after only one year but removed it when my immediate neighbours moved away

the problem was greatly improved with my new neighbour and when faced with rats in her garden last year we asked to join this residents association, to be told that it did not really exist other than a couple of people

those that had signed the petition originally had in fact only been asked for that purpose and had had no other contact

The situation has definitely improved this year as there have been no sightings of the rats but i would like assurance that if this wood is left alone it will continue to be cut right back and baited from our property

It must not be left dormant for another thirty years to

get even more overgrown and unmanageable and the maintaining must be carried out by people who are authorised not by residents

The rat problem will grow as they will not only go into our estate but into the new one at ridgeons

If it is to be built on then the builder should make it a more pleasant open space for all to enjoy

I am not against the survival of the woodland but against the claims that there were no problems

Statement by Mr R Tongue

The decision you will be looking at tonight should have been decided on whether the land "is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held"; i.e. as Public Open Space. This does not mean the same thing as deciding whether the land is redundant as public open space. It is, in simple terms, a decision whether the broad public interest is in keeping the land as Public Open Space or in appropriating it for planning purposes as a prelude to its disposal. Part of Mr Howells own brief to the Cabinet.

The residents feel that the public interest is to keep as open space, it was sectioned 106 exactly for that purpose, that UDC's decision is not based on local public interest but on monetary gain, that Mr Howell's arguments for disposal are flawed and biased to obtain this monetary gain regardless of anything else. That UDC had every intention right from the start in 2014 to dispose of this regardless of residents views.

We have read the only now provide to us Surveys, although dated June 2017 and under took on one day in April as stated. Surveying on one day of the year is not an acceptable method by any means.

Its stated in them:

Outline planning permission has been granted for the phased re-development of the site to provide residential and commercial properties. The development of the wider site is underway with the construction of a new Ridgeons store complete and clearance work beginning in other areas. This report refers to Phases 1c, 1d, 3, 5 and 6 which concern residential development.

Phase 6 on the Outline Planning granted is at the very back of Ridgeons on the other side of the site to the Open space in question, The Public Open Space was not part of any outline planing granted, Where is the Outline Planning permission granted if this company are referring to the Public Open space as being phase 6. It is clear to us that this Company has under taken surveys of the Public Open Space having been told this was part of the Out line planning given, miss informed either by UDC or Ridgeons as they do not say whom.

It is also noted that no survey has been carried out for what is under the top soil of this land with regard to hazardous substances which was a concern of the residents from the very start in 2014. something we were informed had been done and nothing found by Cllr Rolfe, IF this has been done where are the results of this.

We consider this Cabinet has failed in its obligations to enable a true decision to be made on this Public Open Space and ask you tonight to refer it back to them.

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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 26 SEPTEMBER 2017**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)
Councillors H Asker, R Chambers, M Felton, G LeCount, M
Lemon, B Light, A Mills (substituting - G Barker), E Oliver

Officers in attendance: P Evans (Leisure and Performance Manager), B
Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director -
Public Services), S Pugh (Interim Head of Legal Services), M
Watts (Environmental Health Manager - Protection) and A Webb
(Director - Finance and Corporate Services).

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

SC11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SC12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2017 were received and signed by
the Chairman as a correct record.

SC13 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Members received the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director - Public Services said
the Planning Advisory Service would be consulted before the Cabinet Local
Plan meeting scheduled for the 19 December 2017.

Councillor Light asked if the grant contribution towards Harlow College's
training and skills facility at Stansted Airport had been valued. The Director -
Public Services said the grant could be up to £300,000 but negotiations were
ongoing with contractors so a definitive value could not be given at this stage.

SC14 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members received the Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18.

Councillor Light asked if the Committee could look at the Cabinet system, as
proposed in the potential items to add section. The Chairman said Members
could request a report exploring alternatives to the Cabinet system and the

structure of governance at other local authorities. Members agreed for a 'scoping' report to be added to the Work Programme.

The Chairman said there was uncertainty regarding the issue of affordable housing provision, particularly with regards to the distinction between 'social' and 'affordable' housing. Councillor Chambers said something needed to be done to inform both Councillors and members of the public as the Local Plan was coming to a critical juncture. The Director - Finance and Corporate Services said he would aim to get a report ready for the next Scrutiny meeting on 21 November 2017.

SC15

PAVEMENT PARKING

The Chairman welcomed the Acting Inspector of the Community Policing Team (Uttlesford and Braintree Districts) to the Committee.

The Chairman asked the Acting Inspector what powers the police had if they came across a vehicle obstructing the pavement, specifically if it prevented a wheel-chair user or push chair from getting past. The Acting Inspector said the police did have powers but in the majority of cases it would be the local authority who took enforcement action. He added that pavement parking was resource intensive and a low level issue, and therefore was not a high police priority. In practice, the police would take each case on its own basis and if possible, deal with such issues on an informal level. However, if they came across a significant obstruction, or one that endangered public safety, they would take action and remove the vehicle.

Councillor LeCount asked what the maximum fine for parking on the pavement was and how many people were fined in Essex last year. The Acting Inspector said he did not know the maximum penalty but would find out. He added that in 99% of cases the Police would take a common sense approach and ask drivers to move on before issuing a penalty.

In response to a question from Councillor Felton, the Acting Inspector said Essex Parking Partnership were empowered to take action against pavement parking and could issue penalties without involving the police.

Councillor Chambers said the police needed to be more proactive when dealing with inconsiderate drivers. Whilst he appreciated the lack of resources at the police's disposal, a clamp down would act as a deterrent and drivers would think twice before obstructing the pavement. Councillor LeCount said this was a social issue and a 'Name and Shame' campaign would be a sufficient deterrent for the majority of drivers. The Director – Finance and Corporate Services said the Communities Team was considering an initiative related to pavement parking as part of the wider 'Pride of Place' project. The Chairman requested a progress update from the Communities Team in six months' time.

Councillor Asker said the issue was not simple for many residents, such as in the case of Church Street, Saffron Walden. Residents there parked on the pavement in the evening so road traffic could run freely without obstruction.

The Chairman thanked the Acting Inspector for attending the meeting.

SC16

AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Chairman explained the background to the revised Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). It had originally been passed in September 2016 but had been referred back to Cabinet with recommendations for improvement by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Environmental Health Manager (Protection) presented the report on the revised AQAP, which he said had taken on the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee. The revised Plan included a position statement; prioritisation of actions; quantification of cost; and confirmation that the plan met Defra guidelines. Various schemes would be implemented and were incorporated in the Plan, which would be revised on an annual basis to evaluate the success of these measures.

The Chairman thanked the Environmental Health Manager (Protection) and the Specialist Environmental Officer (Protection) for the revised Plan and said all of his initial concerns had been addressed, and more.

Councillor Asker asked why testing had not been carried out on the junction between Bridge Street and Castle Street. The Environmental Health Manager (Protection) said testing had been carried out there but monitoring stations could be redeployed. If Members had particular places in mind that were of concern, they should let him know and testing could be carried out.

In reply to a question from Councillor LeCount, the Environmental Health Manager (Protection) said the AQAP was a statutory duty and would be sent to Essex County Council as the local highways authority. When asked what their response had been to the air quality monitoring data of last year, the Director – Public Services said it was not the data that the highways authority was obliged to respond to, but the AQAP itself.

Councillor Light said she was concerned with the proposals set out in the Plan. Whilst she agreed with the measures proposed, such as incentivising low-level emission vehicles, improvements to public transport and delivery time restrictions on HGVs in the town, she wanted to know how these proposals would be progressed into action. The Environmental Health Manager (Protection) said once the Plan had been approved by Cabinet, the Plan would be adhered to and the policies outlined put into effect. If the Council could not improve air quality in the designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) then Defra would step in and impose more stringent measures.

RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet that the Air Quality Action Plan be adopted

SC17

STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY

Councillor Asker said she was pleased with the revised policy and that it was a good thing if parishes and town councils had a greater say in the street naming process. The Chairman said his only concern was that a street could not be named after a living person. The Interim Head of Legal Services said this was a matter of policy because a number of people who had streets named after them had since fallen from grace. Councillor Felton expressed her thanks for the improvements and said there was an important purpose behind this policy; a resident in Felsted had died when emergency services could not find the unnamed street on which they lived.

RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet the revised Street Name and Numbering Policy

SC18 **REVIEW OF ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY**

The Interim Head of Legal Services presented the report reviewing the Council's Enforcement Strategy.

Members were asked to comment on the following draft enforcement policies:

- Corporate enforcement
- Planning enforcement
- Fixed penalty enforcement
- Premises licensing
- Council tax, business rates and local council tax support anti-fraud policy

The Interim Head of Legal Services said the policies had been informed by the recommendations of the Enforcement Task Force. Whilst there was sufficient flexibility to prosecute individuals, the policies were aimed at educating, deterring and informing the public with regards to enforcement issues. The policies were going to Cabinet on 18 October and he asked Members to contact him if there were any particular issues that they wished to comment on.

RESOLVED for Members to contact the Interim Head of Legal Services to comment on the draft enforcement policies and on actions taken to meet the Enforcement Task Force's recommendations

SC19 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman raised his concern over a lack of response from the Army and the Executive, with regards to his questions relating to the running track at Carver Barracks. He said, as a member of the relevant task group, he had submitted a number of requests for information relating to public usage of the facilities and had received only a limited response. He said he was particularly concerned that questions had been 'filtered through a central point', as highlighted by the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 7 September. He

said as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee he was obliged to ask questions and thought it was worrying that his enquiries had not been acknowledged. He added that he had emailed Councillor Rolfe for an explanation, but had yet to receive a reply.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.

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Scrutiny Items – Nov 2017 Status Report

Item	Status with Scrutiny	Latest note	Status
Call-In	Scrutiny Chairman commissioned a review to formalise submission of Call-Ins.	The Chairman has discussed with officers improvements that could be made, both in terms of the call-in procedure and the structure of meetings. Officers are currently investigating best practice and will update the committee as soon as possible.	Open
Scrutiny Training	This has arisen from the Scrutiny Review 2016/17	The Chairman has requested scrutiny training for members of the committee; Officers are currently investigating the best providers and will update the committee in due course.	Open

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Work Programme 2017/18

Date	20 June	19 Sept	21 Nov	6 Feb	27 Mar	1 May
Standard agenda items	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee	Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee
	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision
	Invited reports from the Executive					
	Cabinet Forward Plan					
	Scrutiny Work Programme					
Page 21 Agenda items	Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) Proposals 2018/19	Day Centres	Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) Proposals 2018/19	2018/19 Budget	Cabinet System Scoping Report	
	Budget and LCTS Consultation	Enforcement Strategy and service plans pre-Cabinet review	Budget Overview 2018/19		Pride of Place project update	
	Local Plan scoping document	Street Naming and Numbering pre-Cabinet review			Affordable Housing	
		Revised MTFS			Scrutiny 2017/18 Review	
	Pavement Parking – invitation to senior police officer to discuss					

Potential items to add

- Business continuity/resilience planning
- Cabinet System
- Affordable housing provision
- Evaluation of controls in place regarding information provided by developers
- Planning appeals
- Methods used to assess sustainability in planning applications
- Possibilities around enhancing the council's recycling and waste collection scheme
- The Council tax arrears collection process

Agenda Item 8

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 21 November 2017

8

Title: Budget overview and Consultation Outcomes
2018/19

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Howell

Key decision: No

Summary

1. At its meeting on 6 February 2018, the Scrutiny Committee will be invited to comment on detailed proposals for the 2018/19 budget, ahead of consideration by the Cabinet on 15 February and determination by the Full Council on 22 February.
2. This report provides an overview of the budget setting process, including any funding implications and the documentation that will be coming forward for review.
3. The Scrutiny Committee's role is to provide an independent review of the budget process and consultation outcomes for consideration by Cabinet. This is ordinarily an apolitical process; alternative budget proposals from Opposition Members should be formulated away from the Scrutiny process and presented to Cabinet and Full Council at the appropriate time.
4. The report includes the results of the recent budget consultation.

Recommendation

5. No recommendations; this report is for information only and for members to note.

Financial Implications

6. None.

Impact

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

Background

Budget Setting Process and Timetable

7. The 2018/19 budget relates to the financial year that will run from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. The Full Council meeting on 22 February will set the budget, taking into account recommendations from the Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to review the budget proposals before the Cabinet determines its recommendations.
8. This report will cover the following key areas as we have them at the moment:
 - Budget timetable
 - Budget papers for consideration by Members
 - 4 year settlement
 - New Homes Bonus
 - Business Rates Retention
 - Budget consultation outcomes
9. The following are the key activities carried out in order to set the budget:

September 2017	Budget consultation with Public and Local Businesses carried out
November 2017	Briefing for Scrutiny Committee (this report)
Late November 2017	Financial forecasts updated Financial Outlook and Budget Consultation outcomes presented to the Cabinet taking into consideration any guidance from this Scrutiny meeting
December 2017	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement released by DCLG
January 2018	Confirmation of Local Government Finance Settlement Finalisation of budget proposals
February 2018	Formal consideration of budget proposals by Members; Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council
March 2018	Council Tax bills issued
1 April 2018	Financial year commences

Budget papers for consideration by Members

10. Below is a summary of the separate components of the budget papers and the key factors and considerations within each.

11. Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

- By law, the Council must set its General Fund budget and Council Tax having given due regard to advice from its Section 151, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves.
- The report will summarise the key risks in the Council budget, and the assumptions that are most volatile. This will be translated into advice about the minimum safe level of contingency reserves that should be maintained, and whether other reserves are needed to meet expected pressures in the coming years.
- The Secretary of State has powers to intervene if the CFO's advice is disregarded by Members, in the event of inappropriately low levels of reserves being maintained.

12. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

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

Key factors to budget setting:

- Future year's income, expenditure and central funding are estimates based on latest and most accurate information or predictions.

13. General Fund Budget and Council Tax

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

Key factors for budget setting:

- To ensure that the budget is consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the CFO's advice on the level of reserves within the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves report.

- To ensure that the budget supports the Corporate Priorities and the consultation responses have been taken into account.

14. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- Income and expenditure budget for council housing only, which by law are kept in a ring-fenced account, separate from other council services.
- Expenditure on council housing is funded by rents and service charges payable by council tenants.
- HRA finances underwent substantial reform on 1 April 2012. Negative housing subsidy was abolished, replaced by the Council having to take on a share of the national housing debt.
- The first five years of the loan were on an interest only basis; this was to allow for investment and development of the housing stock. 2018/19 will be the second year of the principal loan repayment.
- The HRA has a 30-year business plan which sets out plans to maintain and improve housing stock and provide services to tenants, and plans for funding new council houses. The business plan allocates the revenue headroom and ensures that the debt is repaid within the 30-year period.
- HRA budgets are discussed by the Tenants Forum and Housing Board prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Key factor for budget setting:

- A review of the business plan and the options for refinancing of the current loan portfolio of £88.407m which is being repaid over a 30 year period is being carried out by our treasury management consultants, Arlingclose Ltd.

15. Capital Programme

- Capital expenditure is the spending on schemes or assets that have long term value to the Council and the community. Examples include council housing, vehicles, IT systems, building improvements, or grants to outside bodies and individuals such as disabled adaptations.
- Capital expenditure is financed by contributions from the HRA or General Fund, capital receipts (sale of Council assets), external funding such as S106 contributions or government grant, or by borrowing.
- The Capital Programme sets out capital expenditure plans for the next 5 years, together with details of how this is to be financed.

Key factors of budget setting

- The capital programme is in line with the corporate priorities and the service delivery requirements.
- Identifying the most cost effective funding of the capital programme, whether internal borrowing, revenue contributions, grant funding or external borrowing.

16. Treasury Management Strategy

- Significant cash flows in and out of the council's bank accounts, including monies collected for other organisations. Inevitably, the council holds large cash balances throughout the year.
- In addition, the Council holds financial reserves, including its own balances, and S106 funds.
- Treasury management is the process by which these cash flows and balances are managed.
- The Council is required to approve a Treasury Management strategy that ensures appropriate risk management including a safe approach to investing surplus funds and borrowing to cover in year shortfalls.
- Treasury management strategy also governs how long term borrowing is used to fund capital expenditure.
- The strategy is accompanied by mandatory "prudential indicators" which are technical measures of the affordability and sustainability of the Council's borrowings and investments.
- The Council is advised in its treasury management activity by leading independent experts, Arlingclose Ltd.

Key factors of budget setting

- To ensure security of funds, sufficient liquidity to enable commitments to be met, and capacity to earn income on the balances held and minimise interest on balances borrowed.

17. Scrutiny Committee Members are invited to familiarise themselves with the Council's existing Budget Book that can be found on the Council's website at: www.uttlesford.gov.uk/finance

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

Finance Update

19. The Council's budget is supported by the following income/funding streams;

- Business Rates Income
- New Homes Bonus
- Council Tax
- Rural Services Delivery Grant
- Service Generated Income through our schedule of 'fees and charges'

Four Year Settlement

20. The 2016/17 settlement gave councils the opportunity to enter into a four year funding agreement, which would give greater certainty on future funding by giving settlement figures up to and including the financial year 2019/20.

21. It was proposed that unless there are any exceptional circumstances these funding commitments would not be altered.

22. Uttlesford took this opportunity along with 97% of other councils to sign up for the four year agreement and it included Revenue Support Grant, Rural Services Delivery Grant and the Business Rates baseline and top up/tariffs

Business Rates Income

23. The Business Rates Retention Scheme is currently administered on 50% being retained within the local area, on a 40:10 split with Essex County Council (9%) and Essex Fire Authority (1%).
24. The current scheme allows for Local Authorities to retain 50% of all growth within the district. The growth is calculated as total income collected above our baseline need and we are then required to pay a levy charge on the growth of 50% to central government.
25. Uttlesford are currently a member of the Essex Business Rates Pool, members of a pool combine their funding under the business rate scheme, effectively adding their numbers together for all elements of the funding calculation, such as the tariff and top-ups. The benefit to be gained is that collectively, it produces a lower percentage levy charge and this allows us to benefit further from the growth income.
26. In September 2017 central government announced that they were inviting further applications for authorities to become pilot areas for 100% business rates retention. The preferred criteria for applications are;
- Two tier Areas
 - Functional Economic Areas
 - Promote Financial Stability
 - Evidence of how the growth will be reinvested
27. An application was submitted on 27 October 2017 which included all Essex Authorities, plus County and Fire but excluded Thurrock. A full report was submitted to Cabinet in October and can be viewed via the following link;
[100% Business Rates Pilot Cabinet October 17](#)
28. If the Essex wide bid is successful this would enable 100% of growth income to be retained within the local area.
29. If the bid is unsuccessful the authorities participating in the pilot bid we will form a new pool, which still allows for a benefit in our levy payment albeit at a lower value.
30. The announcement of which areas have been successful in becoming a pilot will be announced as part of the provisional settlement in early December.

New Homes Bonus

31. In 2017/18 government amended the New Homes Bonus scheme, by introducing a 'deadweight factor' of 0.4% (this is deemed as natural growth) and change of scheme from 6 years to 4 years, with 2017/18 being a transitional year of a 5 year scheme.
32. Further consultation is being carried out for 2018/19 funding allocations and this includes the continuation of the deadweight factor at 0.4%. Plus a proposal to

withhold or reduce payments for properties where planning permission is granted on appeal.

Budget Consultation

33. The council carried out two consultations one for Residents and one for Local Businesses on their views for the budget priorities for the 2018/19 financial year.
34. The full budget consultation reports are attached as follows
Residents – Appendix A
Local Business – Appendix B
35. The resident's consultation generated 1,779 (an increase of 164% compared to last year) responses and 21 (a decrease of 74% compared to last year) Local Businesses responded.
36. The following consultative methods were employed for the residents survey;
 - Telephone survey (503 responses) undertaken by a professional market research company, NWA Social and Market Research Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council
 - Open public consultation. (1,145 responses)
 - The survey was distributed to every household in the district as an insert into the Council's magazine *Uttlesford Life*. A small number of additional copies of *Uttlesford Life* were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district
 - The survey was also promoted on the council's website from 4 to 25 September via an interactive form
 - The budget questions were also included as part of Uttlesford Voices 15 (151 responses), the half yearly consultation questionnaire sent out to 500 members of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel.
37. The following consultative methods were employed for the local Businesses survey;
 - Open public consultation. The survey was promoted by email to all enterprises registered on the Uttlesford Business Directory and was available from the Uttlesford District Council website
 - The survey was also publicised to all businesses registered to receive the council's dedicated business e-newsletter
 - The budget questions were also made available as a printed survey if requested. However, no paper questionnaires were requested.

38. The tables below represent the priorities of each of the consultations; this shows that both residents and businesses are aligned in what they feel the council should focus on.

Key Services Priorities		
	Residents	Businesses
Emptying your bins and running the recycling service	1 st Priority (94.44%)	1 st Priority (90.48%)
Emptying bins for some businesses (paid for service)	N/A	2 nd Priority (84.62%)
Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (it was indicated that Town/Parishes are responsible for public litter bins)	2 nd Priority (87.67%)	= 3 rd Priority (83.33%)
Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	3 rd Priority (86.30%)	
Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	N/A	
Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	Lowest Priority (63.09%)	Lowest Priority (57.14%)
Other Services Priorities		
	Residents	Businesses
Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	1 st Priority (90.31%)	1 st Priority (88.10%)
Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying Council Tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	2 nd Priority (86.94%)	N/A
Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	N/A	= 2 nd Priority (83.33%)
Collecting Council Tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates	3 rd Priority (83.07%)	= 2 nd Priority (83.33%)
Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	Lowest Priority (60.45%)	Lowest Priority (56.41%)

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
None – this is a report for members to note			

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Council Spending

A report on public surveys about council spending priorities for the year 2018-19

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October 2017





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Profiling

How rating scores are calculated

Open text responses

1. Executive summary

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

Following the success of the 2015 and 2016 surveys, the 2017 consultation again concentrated on asking for residents' views on the prerogatives for the future resourcing of specific service areas. As in 2016, consultees were asked their views regarding the level of Council Tax that Uttlesford District Council should be levying in the coming year.

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Council spending – have your say

Introduction

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

This survey gives you the opportunity to have your say on what the Uttlesford District Council's spending priorities should be for the forthcoming financial year.

Residents are also asked to consider if there should be changes to the amount the district council receives from your Council Tax.

The results of this consultation will help to inform the budget for April 2018 to March 2019.

Please complete this questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box(es) for each question and return in the prepaid envelope provided by 5pm Monday 25 September 2017.

If your envelope is missing, please contact the council by phone on 01799 510510 or email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. It will only be used by Uttlesford District Council and the main findings from the survey will be published on the council website, however, your own views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

The survey is also open to every resident online at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/budgetconsultation.



Please turn over

Results summary

This 2017 consultation will inform the setting of the council's budget for the financial year April 2018 – March 2019. The results for each of the different consultation streams – telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel survey – are being reported as a capsulization of these three consultative strands. This provides a headline view of the spending priorities for the forthcoming financial year as identified by the majority of those who responded to the survey.

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

A rating system¹ is an appropriate analysis tool for the Council Spending Survey since the same area of spending might have been chosen by different respondents at a different level of priority; more weight is thus given to that selection if it is selected as the "Highest Priority" than if the same spending area is still chosen as priority, but at a lower level. Consequently, a fair analysis is achieved by allocating 3 points to each vote for the 'High Priority', 2 points to each vote for the 'Medium Priority' and 1 point to each vote for the 'Low Priority'. Those offering a 'No Opinion' have been attributed a zero score value reflecting their neutral response to the question.

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

¹ See Appendix 4.3 for an explanation of rating system calculations

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

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

Results priorities

Key Services

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

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
Ranked priority	Emptying your bins and running the recycling service - (94.44%)
	Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas) - (87.67%)
	Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located - (86.30%)

Headline	Spending Area – ranked by the least respondents
Ranked priority	Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees - (63.09 %)

Other Services

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

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
Ranked priority	<p>Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe - (90.31%)</p> <p>Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying Council Tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping - (86.94%)</p> <p>Collecting Council Tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates - (83.07%)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked by the least respondents
Ranked priority	Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues - (60.45%)

Council tax

Q3 *Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2018 to March 2019), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (consultees were then invited to select one option only)*

Headline	Council tax priority
Response	Keep the amount of Council Tax the same – (59.66%)

Results priority analysis

Previous surveys conducted in 2013 and in 2014 were conducted using the priorities promulgated by the council's long term strategy as promoted in the Corporate Plan. The 2015 consultation adopted a new format with wider ranging questions designed to more accurately gauge public opinion with the 2016 survey building on this new format. Whilst not directly comparable, the 2017 consultation in part revisits the majority of the elements of the 2016 survey in order to ascertain if there has been any move in public opinion.

Key services top three priorities:

The headline results from the current piece of market research demonstrate that across the three consultative streams, respondents manifested a marked preference for supporting spending on 'Emptying your bins and running the recycling service' and 'Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins', which scored 94.44% and 87.67% respectively. Respondents thus considered these to be the top two priorities. As one of the principal universal services provided to residents the collection of waste and recycling represents a consistent concern amongst all consultees. This is very much in line with the results of the 2016 budget survey where 93.88% of people supported waste services as the primary direction of travel for the council's budgetary provision.

'Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located' was selected by just a slightly smaller majority of consultees. As the third highest priority, scoring 87.67% in the current survey, compared with 88.36% in 2016, this service has maintained a persistent trend in feedback from budget consultations over the years and should now be considered especially topical given the ongoing work being carried out on the council's emerging Local Plan.

It should be noted however, that in 2016, the top scoring priority was 'Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins' which, for the current survey, is divided across the two potential priorities coming out in positions 1 and 2. For this reason, the second priority chosen in 2016 "Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people" did not make the top three but achieved fourth position in the current (2017) survey.

Across all the key services 'Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees' polled the least consistent backing with a ranked score of 63.09%.

Other services top three priorities:

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

Within the basket of 'other' services residents considered that 'Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe' should be worthy of future resourcing. This was supported by a 90.31% majority and demonstrates public approbation for a continuation of the current strong partnership working that is being forged between Uttlesford District Council and local police. In the 2016 Budget survey this was similarly ranked as the highest priority by those who answered the question. The secondary priority; 'Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping' was selected by 86.94% of people and again reflects a continuing concern with ensuring levels of probity are maintained in the district.

The third priority chosen from this second group of services is 'Collecting Council Tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates'. This achieved a rated score of 83.07%, which represents a rise of over two percent on the approval rating for this same service since the 2016 survey.

For consultees, 'Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues' was the least popular service, only gaining a 60.45% support rating.

Council tax spending direction:

Consultees were also asked to indicate their preference regarding the future setting of Council Tax for the forthcoming budget period. In the 2017 survey nearly six out of ten (59.66%) of those who expressed a view were of the opinion that there should be no change in the amount of Council Tax levied by Uttlesford District Council. This is a slightly higher level of support for this course of action in comparison with 2016 when 55.54% supported a freeze in Council Tax. Less than a quarter of respondees (23.18%) supported an increase in Council Tax in the forthcoming year.

2. Purpose methodology

The council is obliged to consult with the residents of the district when setting the budget for the forthcoming year and the results of this consultation will inform the decisions made by officers and councillors when setting spending for the year April 2018 to March 2019.

This is the seventh year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run. For a number of years the consultation had been run via a single survey distributed to every household in the district via the council's community newsletter, *Uttlesford Life*. In a departure from the previous format, for the 2015 and 2016 budget surveys a multi-directional approach was taken comprising a telephone survey of over 500 residents as well as online and paper questionnaires. A copy of the survey was also included in the summer Citizens Panel consultation. For 2017, this approach was expanded to once again include the survey within *Uttlesford Life*, this time as a dedicated pull-out, four page survey.

The consultation was run over the period 4 to 25 September 2017. Respondents were asked to select their highest, mid-range and lowest spending priorities from a list of 11 key services and 12 other service options covering the full range of the council's activities. They were also offered the opportunity to indicate a preference for raising, reducing or maintaining the current level of Council tax levied by Uttlesford District Council. For profiling purposes they were also invited to include postcode, gender and age data.

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

- Telephone survey undertaken by a professional market research company, NWA Social and Market Research Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council. This resulted in 503 responses.
- Open public consultation. The survey was distributed to every household in the district as an insert into the Council's magazine *Uttlesford Life*. 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. The survey was also promoted on the council's website from 4 to 25 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform. This resulted in 1145 responses.

- The budget questions were also included as part of Uttlesford Voices 15, the half yearly consultation questionnaire sent out to 500 members of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel. This resulted in 151 responses

General promotion was carried out with direct mailings to the members of the Citizens Panel, a press release, exposure via the council's social media channels and prominent banners on the council's website. Following on from the successful consultation exercise run in 2015 and 2016 for the council's Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) survey, this Council Spending Survey (for the 2018-19 Budget) was included as one of two centre page inserts in the Summer edition of the Council's widely distributed community newsletter, *Uttlesford Life*. This newsletter is delivered to every household in the district and, as in previous years also contained the latest LCTS Survey, seeking resident feedback on LCTS Scheme for 2018-19.

It should be remembered that not all respondents chose to answer all of the questions. Participants in the survey were invited to submit additional comments. A total of 332 comments were received and a small number of residents opted to submit a statement rather than selecting any of the stated spending options.

By the close of the consultation period a total 1799 responses had been received. In spite of slightly reduced submissions from the telephone survey and the Citizens Panel consultation, this represents a considerable increase in response compared with the Council Spending survey carried out in 2016, due primarily to the much wider distribution of the paper survey via *Uttlesford Life*.

3. Survey results, detailed findings

Survey results across all streams

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

Key Services

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

Service	Priority Score (percentage)
1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	78.75%
2. Emptying your bins and running the recycling service	94.44%
3. Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	71.57%
4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden , Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	87.67%
5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	83.89%
6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	86.30%

7. Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	63.09%
8. Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	86.19%
9. Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation	81.52%
10. Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	74.12%
11. Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	73.69%

Other Services

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

Service	Priority Score (percentage)
1. Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford	69.64%
2. Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	77.13%
3. Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	90.31%

4. Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	73.32%
5. Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	73.03%
6. Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	86.94%
7. Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	61.31%
8. Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	72.82%
9. Collecting Council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government	83.07%
10. Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and Issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	75.80%
11. Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	60.75%
12. Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	68.55%

Council tax

Q3 *Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2018 to March 2019), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (consultees were then invited to select one option only)*

Headline	Percentage
Increase the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	23.18%
Keep the amount of council tax the same	59.66%
Reduce the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	13.24%
No opinion	3.92%

Results analysis across all streams

This analysis comments on the difference in responses between the 2017 survey and those achieved in 2016. It should be remembered that questions asked in 2016 (for the budget 2017-18), although very similar, were not identical to those asked in 2017 (for the budget 2018-19). The two main groups of services remained the same as in 2016; however, features of the priority relating to the waste and recycling services and the emptying of public litter and dog bins in 2016, were divided across two priority options in 2017, thereby inhibiting a direct comparison of responses.

Results returned for the current survey are broadly in line with those of the previous year with no discernible large scale movement in opinion. In the 'key' services category - those areas which the council considers to constitute its primary duties – levels of support and, consequently, concern to maintain funding levels, are relatively unchanged from 2016. This is true for services covering the various features involving the collection of domestic waste which were selected by respondents as

first and second priorities for the district. The next highest priority was, as in the previous year, attributed to supporting the planned development of the district.

Most 'key' areas saw a very slight decline in support, with the exception of the priorities relating to street services and the waste and recycling service which each saw a rise in their rated approval score. Two specific services, though, saw significant declines in support; these being 'Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use' (down from 80.64% in 2016 to 74.12% in 2017) and the lowest scoring priority for both years 'Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees', scoring 63.09% in 2017, down 8.59% from the 2016 survey.

Within the basket of 'other' services 'Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe' retained its position as the headline result from the current survey (90.31%), albeit scoring slightly lower than in 2016. Similarly, 'Enforcement work including prosecuting people for major planning breaches, not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping' maintained second place but with an increased approval rating of 86.94% - up 1.58% from the 2016 survey. The previous year's third highest priority 'Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol', dropped to fourth position in this year's survey. 'Collecting Council Tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates', however, achieved third position in the 2017 survey, gaining an additional 2% approval rating.

Analysis of the results indicates that, this year, the majority of respondents think that only a small number of services are of higher importance as against the wider range of services supported in previous years. This is demonstrated by an increase in respondents selecting either 'medium' or 'low' priority for most services compared with the survey twelve months earlier.

In April 2017, the Council tax Requirement set by Uttlesford District Council was increased by 2.0%. In the September 2017 questionnaire (for the 2018-19 budget), as in previous years, residents were asked for their opinions on the future direction

of council tax changing in the district. The majority response was to 'Keep the amount of council tax the same' (59.66%), although 23.18% of those responding elected to 'increase the amount of council tax it (Uttlesford District Council) charges'.

Comparative data across 2016 and 2017 surveys

Note: Some questions were asked in both years but appeared in different priorities.

* See Appendix 4 for an explanation of rating system calculations

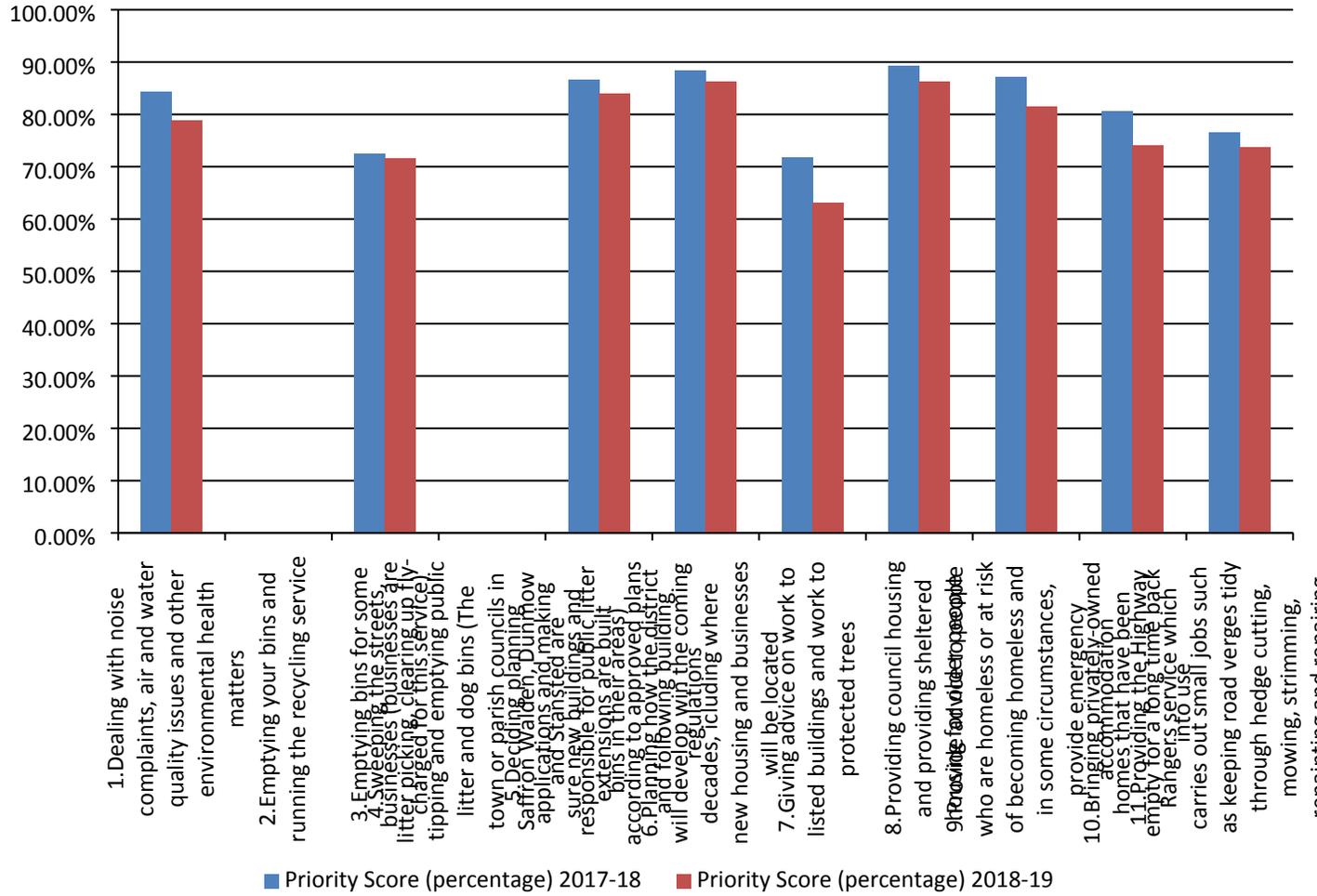
Q1 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.

Services ordered as per 2017 consultation	Total Rated score* for 2016 survey (2017-18 budget)	Total Rated score* for 2017 survey (2018-19 budget)	Trend
Group1			
1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	84.23%	78.75%	
2. Emptying your bins and running the recycling service	93.88%	94.44%	 See * comment below
3. Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	72.44%	77.57%	

4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	87.44%	87.67%	 See * comment below
5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	86.61%	83.89%	
6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	88.36%	86.30%	
7. Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	71.68%	63.09%	
8. Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	89.26%	86.19%	
9. Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation	87.21%	81.52%	
10. Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	80.64%	74.12%	
11. Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	76.50%	73.69%	

**For the Council Spending 2017 survey, Priority option 4 included features (namely “emptying public litter and dog bins”) which in the previous year’s survey had been included in Priority option 2.*

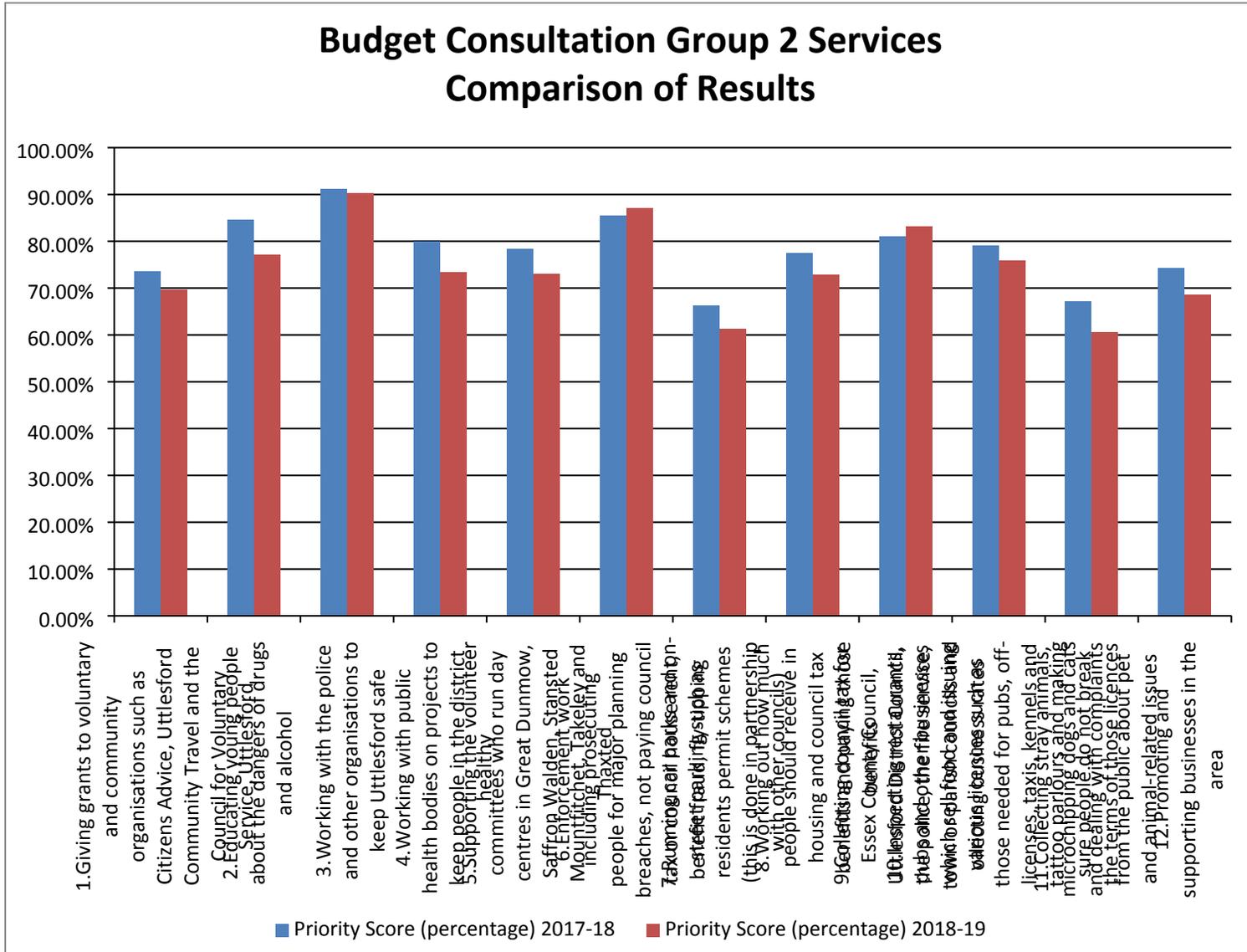
Budget Consultation Group 1 Services Comparison of Results



Services ordered as per 2017 consultation	Total Rated score* for 2016 survey (2017-18 budget)	Total Rated score* for 2017 survey (2018-19 budget)	Trend
Group 2			
1. Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as Citizens Advice, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service, Uttlesford	73.48%	69.64%	
2. Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	84.53%	77.13%	
3. Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	91.03%	90.31%	
4. Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	79.98%	73.32%	
5. Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	78.33%	73.03%	
6. Enforcement work including prosecuting people for major planning breaches, not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	85.36%	86.94%	
7. Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	66.16%	61.31%	

8. Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	77.42%	72.82%	
9. Collecting council tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates	81.03%	83.07%	
10. Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	79.10%	75.80%	
11. Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	67.07%	60.45%	
12. Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	74.27%	68.55%	

The declining trend in scores for the majority of the services listed in the questionnaire demonstrates that fewer participants selected these services as High Priority.



Q3 Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2018 to March 2019), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (consultees were then invited to select one option only)

Headline	Total percentage score for 2016 survey (2017-18 budget)	Total percentage score for 2017 survey (2018-19 budget)	Trend
Increase the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	27.40%	23.18%	
Keep the amount of council tax the same	55.54%	59.66%	
Reduce the amount of council tax Uttlesford District Council charges	14.07%	13.24%	
No opinion	2.99%	3.92%	

4. Appendices –Tables and charts

4.1 Questionnaire

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

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Section 1 - Council Spending - have your say!

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

This section of our survey gives you the opportunity to have your say on what the Uttlesford District Council's spending priorities should be for the forthcoming year.

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

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

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No opinion
1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Emptying your bins and running the recycling service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Emptying bins for some businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter and dog bins in their areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Uttlesford

Council spending – have your say

Introduction

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

This survey gives you the opportunity to have your say on what the Uttlesford District Council's spending priorities should be for the forthcoming financial year.

Residents are also asked to consider if there should be changes to the amount the district council receives from your Council Tax.

The results of this consultation will help to inform the budget for April 2018 to March 2019.

Please complete this questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box(es) for each question and return in the prepaid envelope provided by 5pm Monday 25 September 2017.

If your envelope is missing, please contact the council by phone on 01799 510510 or email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. It will only be used by Uttlesford District Council and the main findings from the survey will be published on the council website, however, your own views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

The survey is also open to every resident online at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/budgetconsultation.



Please turn over

Council Services

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

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

Service

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

Other Services

2. Below is a list of further services provided by Uttlesford District Council.

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

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

Council Tax 2018-19

Just under 9% of the Council Tax you pay goes to Uttlesford District Council. About 72% goes to Essex County Council, with the rest going to the police, the fire authority and your town or parish council.

Q3 Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, for next year (April 2018 to March 2019), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (please select one option):

- Increase the amount of Council Tax it charges
- Keep the amount of Council Tax the same
- Reduce the amount of Council Tax it charges
- No opinion

Q4 If you have any other comments you wish to add regarding council spending for the period April 2018 to March 2019, please use the box below:

About you

It is hoped that a cross-section of Uttlesford residents will participate in this survey. It would greatly assist us in collating the responses in this questionnaire if you would answer the questions below. You can choose not to answer these questions, however, all the answers in this section are anonymous and it is not possible for us to identify individuals from their response.

Q5 Please enter your postcode here:

Q6 What is your gender? Male Female

Q7 What is your age? 16-19 20-24 25-34 35-44
45-54 55-64 65+

Next steps

This consultation will close at 5pm on Monday 25 September 2017.

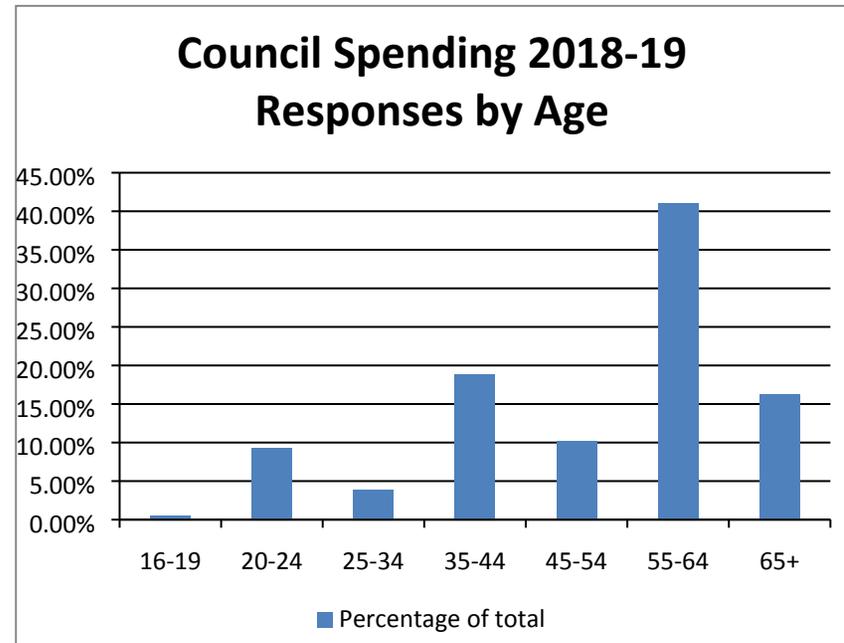
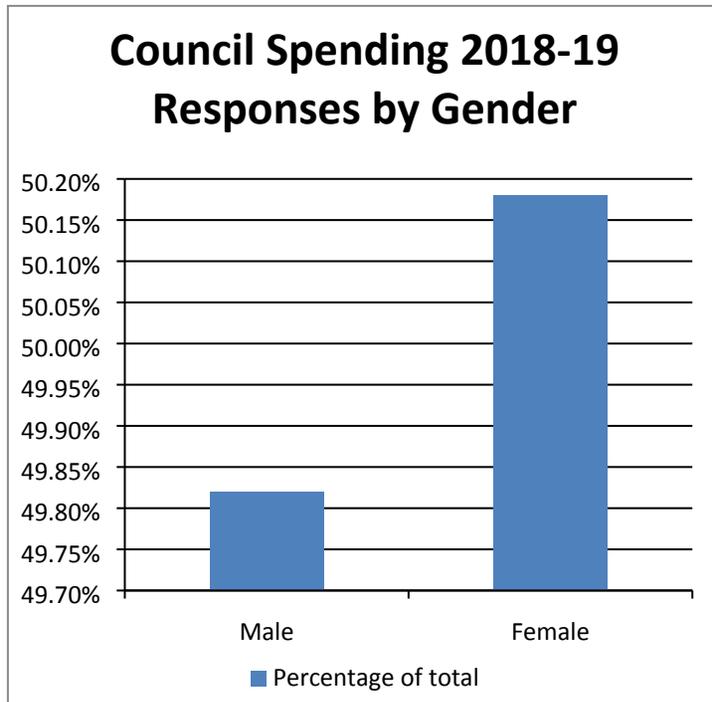
The budget for 2018/19 will be agreed by Uttlesford District Council's Full Council on 22 February 2018. This will be after consideration by the Scrutiny Committee on 21 November and Cabinet on 30 November.

4.2 Profiling

Data for the profile of participants is based on the results from the three different streams of the consultation where the respondents had agreed to supply gender, age and postcode information.

Gender

Male	49.82%
Female	50.18%



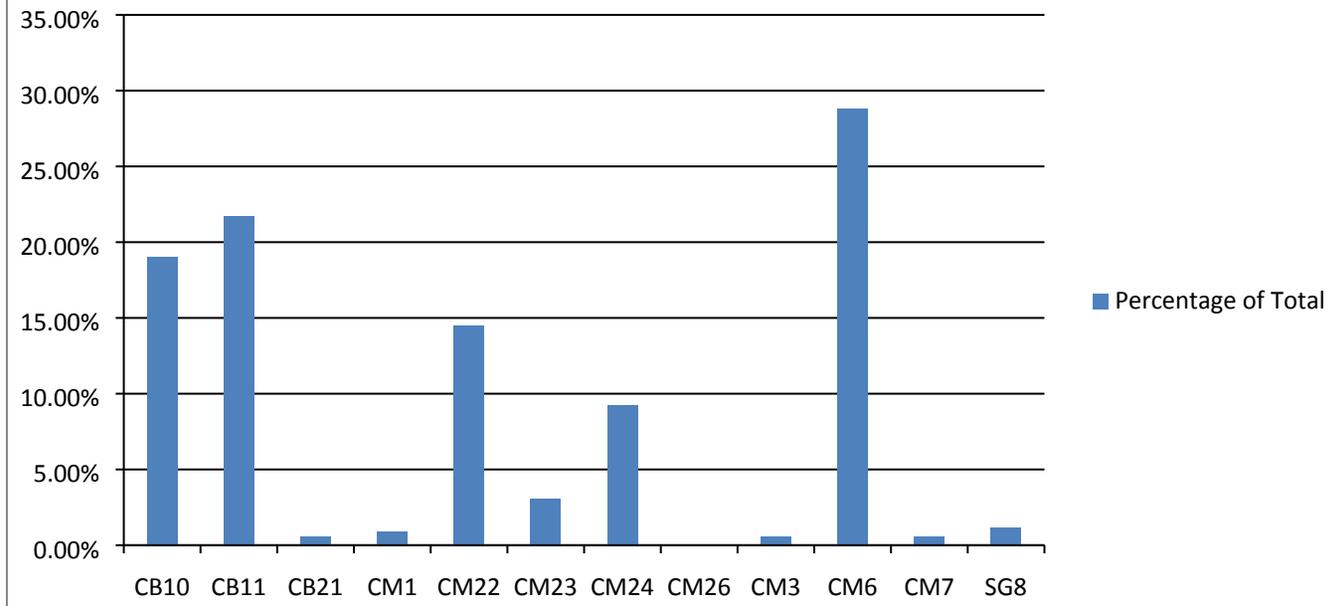
Age

16-19 years	0.52%
20-24 years	9.30%
25-34 years	3.87%
35-44 years	18.82%
45-54 years	10.22%
55-64 years	40.99%
65+	16.28%

Post Codes

CB10	19.00%
CB11	21.71%
CB21	0.59%
CM1	0.88%
CM22	14.47%
CM23	3.06%
CM24	9.24%
CM26	0.06%
CM3	0.53%
CM6	28.82%
CM7	0.53%
SG8	1.12%

Council Spending 2018-19 Results Submitted by Postcode



4.3 How rating scores are calculated

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

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

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

For example:

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

796 respondents selected this as 'high priority' = $(+3) \times 796 = 2388$

716 selected 'medium priority' = $(+2) \times 716 = 1432$

182 selected 'low priority' = $(+1) \times 182 = 182$

24 had 'no opinion' = $0 \times 24 = 0$

So, the overall rating for this priority

$$1098 + 718 + 72 + 0 = 4002$$

To achieve a maximum 100%, all respondents with an opinion would need to have selected a priority as 'high priority' resulting in a rating score of $(+3) \times (\text{number of respondents})$ i.e. $(+3) \times (796 + 716 + 182)$ or 5082

The overall priority score, expressed as a percentage, for "Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues" is therefore $4002/5082 = 78.75\%$

4.4 Open text responses

333 comments were received. Some literal comments have not been included due to their inappropriate nature (e.g. abusive language)

Council Spending Survey 2017 (for Budget 2018-19) – Literal Responses

Paper (Uttlesford Life) Responses

Reduce number of appeals on Planning Applications

Planning is quite ghastly the whole district is being ruined by greedy landlords and developers. Consultation is useless it is all under weigh.

Services number 2. Surely dealing with this problem is the job of parents at home, or if in case it is the job of social workers or other adults such as relatives responsible of person age younger than 18 years?

If we wish to maintain good local services we have to be prepared to pay for them or District and Parish level.

Make decisions about the Local Plan upon evidence and not Political Expediency.

Section 1 / 3 Businesses should be paying the true cost for providing the service plus a further percentage (say 10% - 15%) so that it generates additional funds.

I consider the provision of service 8 (Council Housing) to be vital and would fully support grater expenditure on acquiring more Council houses and protecting them from the right to buy. I would support a Local Authority bond issue for the purpose.

Keep up your good work. Eliminate wasted effort and treat time wasters with disregard.

Central government policy is making more people destitute and homeless, so local provision and CAB advice is vital. Day centres etc should be statutory and not reliant on charity provision.

Poor maintenance of roadside hedges and trees should pay local farmers to maintain them.

You must insist that the Essex CC provides a new secondary school in Saffron Walden.

To get thing right first time and not waste money on housing to do things such as the plan more than once.

Use the extra money on the Police Force.

As housing and road usage will increase, funding should be allocated to an in-depth analysis and proposal for by-pass round the town and direct M11 link at Newport. BE BOLD! Look at the benefits - more businesses, less congestion.

Please ensure that Uttlesford gets it proper share of the 72% that Essex CC takes. We feel that North West Essex is ignored - particularly highways and Police.

It would be good if ECC would maintain their roads.

Council tax relief for vacant and unfurnished property and property being refurbished should be standardised at 6 months this maximum per year in all cases. 200% council tax after 6 months introduced for all unoccupied habitable properties.

Removing all unnecessary and out of date road side sign and charging to put up roadside signs especially by house builders.

You should be looking at doing things smarter make savings to reinvest in services.

Get a workable local housing plan completed no to garden villages - they will not solve the problem.
2.2 Down to school, 2.3 Down to Police, 2.4 NHS responsible.
I don't mind paying for important service to make Uttlesford well managed, but I want assurances that the council is working as efficiently as possible and providing best value.
Increase from £16,000 to at least £20.00 so people on pensions with payed in extra pension do not lose out every time or disregard extra pension they put money aside to live on but do not get any benefit for the small amount they saved over the years.
Use resources to avoid having to carry out some of these tasks e.g. tackle those who cause litter, help Police reduce vandalism.
Police Stations should not have been closed (particularly the new one south of Dunmow, recently purpose built) and phone number (and PCSO's) should not have been cut.
Reluctantly with increased number of people living here in Uttlesford - It must increase. (A US student at London School of Economics sent a well-reasoned letter in claiming LSE was NOT SPENDING money!). Uttlesford seems well managed - litter and pot holes in roads better than most plus lack of time, thought and care in making sure all roads get proper cycle land provisions. Your COUNTERPARTS IN FRANCE DO THIS MUCH BETTER! (Know it is not entirely down to you).
We are very pleased with the services provided by Uttlesford and would prefer a small increase in tax rather than any reduction in the standard of services.
It is imperative you pay enough for better than adequate emergency services everything is going up, so must council tax - but use the money wisely!
Footpaths, roads, potholes are continuously neglected. This needs to change, especially with the number of new homes, which will increase revenue. The no money excuse is wearing thin.
The Councils can only work with the monies available but is dependent upon people ability to pay but will have to accept that they get what they pay for.
Local authority employees enjoy retirement pension based on final salary and year's service. This falls on the tax payer, it is essential that the local authority keeps this in mind and exercises financial prudence.
More efficient use of funds - roads and pavements are very poorly maintained. Very important - ensure that developers carry out their section 106 obligations BEFORE considering further applications from them and if they don't get courts to obtain funds from them to complete the work.
Act with other departments and repair pot holes on the in the town.
Make Council house residents and rented houses residents keep there gardens and houses in good order.
There is no speed limit on Hawkins Hill Lt. Sampford. Traffic races at excess speed we need to extend the 40 MPH from Great Sampford to the top of Hawkins Hill.
The spend in the Planning Dept is wasted money. The Dept has approved numerous applications on the east side of the town and is totally oblivious to the traffic problems its decisions are creating.
With all the increased housing in the area congestion and pollution is becoming intolerable. This needs to be addressed and a ring

road planned in.
What is the 72% which goes to Essex sent on? A breakdown of this would be beneficial.
State of roads is poor. Holes get painted round but rarely seem to be filled.
I don't mind paying Council Tax. If only we had the Police walking the street in Saffron Walden instead of having to ring Braintree every time.
Bring back the exercises for stroke patients which was marvellous.
Reduce Councillors expenses.
The Police levy in the 2018/19 charges should be reduced to reflect the low level of Policing that's provided for Saffron Walden.
Planning and loads are very important and difficult issues as Arkesden opposes the dies of light industrial premises, and Saffron Walden increasingly groans with traffic.
Spend more - keeping roads clean - weed killer - not a 3rd world district!
The money paid to Police Force is a waste as we get a terrible service now they are going to run the fire brigade after messing up the Police it's a joke.
I would support more visible on the street Policing and follow up its repeated crime. More proactive policing is a deterrent to criminal behaviour and I would also like to see a police presence as a part of school education.
Keep same providing necessary works are undertaken promptly e.g. Litter around airport, enforcing enforcement notices, repairing road surfaces.
Spending money on street parking when the houses have 120' of rear gardens and allowing parking on grass verges area Gilbey Cottages Elsenham.
Consult more closely with villages about planning.
Give notice to Essex Highways to repair pot holes ASAP before mortal accidents happens our country lanes are worse than 1/3 world! It is a question of life or death in many Uttlesford lanes. Someone need to change this urgent safety issue. Before it is too late.
I must point out that for a band D house the Council Tax is £38.40 per week that is as much as most people would say they can afford.
The council should stop wasting money and work smarter to keep costs down!
Ensure there is a reliable system for collecting missed bins. Despite assurance they are never collected until the scheduled collection 2 weeks later.
More resources put into stopping dog fouling in housing areas, more frequent grass cutting in housing areas. Vegetation on footpaths cut back 3 times per year.
Penalties for fly tipping and benefit fraud should be for the maximum allowed. These are serious crimes.
Employ skilled and experienced legal and surveyors to prevent the chaos of Stansted library happening again EVER!
The Council basically does a good 'job'. I just wish that any new housing developments were made to consider wider problems for roads and infrastructure - Than just those close to any development.

Road maintenance needs to improve! Too much short term work without council checks being made. Better thinking is needed.
Must have a vision for the future within the abysmal local plan come out recently which was irrelevant.
Paying enforcement officers to enforce Planning conditions when those officers refuse to do so is a waste of tax payers money.
Every effort should be made to cut and sustain downward costs in running the District Council.
Council not taking responsibility for Boundaries around Banks Court CM6 1UD such as fencing falling down which is Health and Safety.
Better bus service than we have got.
People over 75 years are being penalised by high council tax, who are on fixed pension income to pay increase council tax they need some relief.
Grants our never used wisely when small local resident have the power, such as Hatfield Heath and forget what the eye - cannot see - cleaning and removing over hanging oak trees, leafs and weeds etc. etc. near Doctors (side paths).
I feel I get so little for my council tax no bus no street lights dustbins every two weeks roads need repairing.
Poor services from Essex CC
Don't sell council houses. No more building houses. This is a small market town with narrow streets it can't take the traffic.
Green waste collection services should occur in parallel with weekly bin collections.
Council needs to look into building a new road running outside the Saffron Walden town this is due to large amount of traffic causes vibrations to most listed buildings near the main street.
Council tax keeps going up, yet services remain either the same or worse. Cromwell road is full dog excrements and cats in the neighbourhood are out of control. Cromwell road near Winstanley Rd road bumps do not prevent chavs from driving their cars at speed. The house opposite the NISA is owned by former mayor it I disgusting and drive must be forced to be cleaned! No wonder why it doesn't sell!
I feel we do not get value for money from the Police!
Some items under 1q and 2 seem to me to be the prime responsibility of health authorities Police Authorities and the County Council. Perhaps Uttlesford should concentrate on its statutory duties.
Crime has increased, more should be spent on prevention. Clearing litter is high priority.
Council tax been increased for the last 3 years, its time to froze that!!
Councils should provide basic services. They should aim to reduce unnecessary spending. We only ever hear of increased in council tax. I would like to see a plan on how to reduce it. What things do you do now which we can do without? Uttlesford life magazine would be a good start.
I believe green waste should be collected free of charge from your house as it is in neighbouring districts where they pay cheaper council tax.
Council tax bands should be reviewed, many homes appear to be in wrong band. Valuations on which categorisation is based are out of date. Homes worth significantly more than mine appear to be in a lower band!

I think the plans for the Chesterford Business Park is excellent, outside the box thinking, and a good way for the council to diversify its income. Council tax has been held at reasonable levels, which reflects the lack of growth in salaries in the Private sector.
Only increase if Police and general services such as highways rangers and grass cutting etc. get this cash. We should be collecting business waste (at a charge) only if cost effective to do so i.e. to create efficiencies to existing service generate revenue not as a service subsidised by c.tax.
Happy to pay more as it helps our neighbours and us to live and be happier
Permit a 1% increase in Council tax over last years plus inflation
On the whole this is a pretty affluent area and I believe many residents would be willing to pay more for better services but there needs to be transparency about where our money goes and better governance from UDC over ECC spending (if this is possible).
An increase in Council Tax at or slightly above inflation is reasonable
Council Tax, being a tax on property, is in the round a fair tax, taxing those who can afford it. In a general taxation policy, it should be increased, giving local councils more discretion.
Nearly all of the services listed are statutory services. It is therefore pointless ranking them and I can't see what UDC could gain from the results. The tax question is pointless without listing benefit from increases and losses from reductions.
More money needs spending on the roads in our area. Also bring down the cost of shop rent etc so we can new shop and outlets in the area which will also bring more jobs to the area.
Re: question 3 above. Increase Council Tax by RPI
We have cut enough in the last 10 years. It's time to protect the residents from more cuts.
Planning in Uttlesford appears to be in the process of turning Saffron Walden from a quiet market town to a messy commuter sprawl. Inadequate schools (oversubscribed) no adequate bus services and a complete lack of enough social places, pubs or community halls makes it undesirable to live in. Never mind the inevitable flooding developments produce.
I feel that ranking services in some sort of order of priority would give a clearer picture of my personal views rather than ticking these priority boxes which seem to push everything towards medium/high priority. I feel the tax should increase by inflation and no more, with services and their value continually reviewed to ensure their appropriateness and good value.
We allow thousands of new homes without considering the roads! We pay our benefits without thorough checks! When 'fraud' is reported we are stonewalled - no visual checks are carried out. Two fraud investigators would pay their way and more each year! The drug issue has increased since the police vanished in Saffron Walden.
More accountability, get the basics right and maintain the standard before moving on to the extras that look good on the website or the CVs.
Of course you have to prioritise.
1, 6 (ringed) This is important only if the decisions will not be overridden by central government. If they will override decisions, the services should be given a low priority instead of medium.
The council should stop the noise coming from the outbound flight path of Stansted Airport which is causing sleep deprivation to

many villages and local residents. You are responsible for noise!!!
Publish full results of this survey!
There is little point in spending effort in Planning if decisions made are not enforced.
Don't waste good money on stupid questionnaires like this.
The council appears to be very good at collecting money, running the biggest and best building in Uttlesford. But does little to help the most vulnerable in this district. This questionnaire misses the whole point of social welfare.
Lots of additional revenue is now generated from all the new housing in town. Let people know how much that come to and where the extra rev is being spent as its considerable and no benefit is seen?
Increase CT in line with inflation.
If you increase the amount, you have to give a better services, how much would go to the council, how much to the government.
Imbed efficiency in the way UDC works and also a performance related pay culture to its staff.
No wifi or broadband in our village, hard for school kids to do homework or people working from home to work. Need more investment in this area. Also road speed limits need to be 20mph in villages.
The council should concentrate on its core services waste management, cleansing, planning, enhancing the environment, housing.
Keep working on operating efficiently, improving efficiency of the council.
More visible police presence. Remove annoying 'litter police' from Bishop's Stortford. They cause bad feeling.
Reduce the amount spent on members of the council who ignore democracy and insist on ruining Saffron Walden by approving the development of poor quality and unimaginative new builds. Stop increasing traffic onto the town. Get rid of the worst council leader the UDC has ever had.
Keep the street lights on at night, doing the towns safer.
There should be more police around the area of Elsenham at night time and in the day time.
I would like to see drains cleared more regular to reduce constant flooding in this area, also priorities to residents who have lived here 20+ years over people that just turn up and expect housing (and given to them + freebies).
Providing the above isn't going into the pockets of councillors and is used for services.
Uttlesford gives good value but need to protect the most vulnerable.
Repair potholes, particularly those on High St/George St junction and the railway bridge on South Road.
If only 9% of council tax goes to UDC and the residents wish better services they have to accept the increased costs this would entail.
If we want to have "it", we must be prepared to pay for it - but does the council have the will and ability to deliver?
It is important that UDC does its best to maintain services. If that means an increase in Council Tax then provided the money is well spent that is a good thing. Some good services already lost (eg Pest Control).
If council tax needs to increase (a little) in order to cover a shortfall so we can keep Uttlesford clean, safe and healthy then so be it. We must not abandon those in need of help.

Services have been cut to the bone - there is virtually no room for further efficiencies. The Council needs to recognise we have an aging population whose numbers are increasing and therefore funds need to be raised to help their most vulnerable citizens. The voluntary sector is already bearing the brunt of recent cuts. It is a vital section. However, the council should ensure it does not duplicate some of the services the voluntary sector provides but should value them and support them adequately. We are a rich community and should help our neighbours.
Speed limits ignored. Crossing road dangerous. Speed checks far too obvious. Spend council tax on speed cameras. This is the only solution.
Local police is needed in the villages.
Changes to the Council tax banding system. The current system needs more bands so that expensive properties contribute proportionately more to the tax.
Any increase would have to be based on sensible spending - certainly not an excuse to raise already inflated senior officer salaries.
Highway Rangers is excellent, doing work for local parishes. Good for the council - a visible action for the public to observe.
Sorry - lots of high priorities! Make parking free - then people won't be tempted to park badly. Or at least do first half hour free.
It is about time that road surfaces in our area are brought up to standard. Debden Road from Walden to Debden is shocking and between Debden and Newport (just before you turn left to Widdington) is a disgrace and has been bad for months (probably years)! Not everybody has a 4x4 that can bounce over the potholes. Where are your priorities?
I have not had a proper pay rise for 7 years so I will be disappointed if C Tax goes up.
Spend more on litter collection/prevention.
Spend enough to do the job.
UDC spends a substantial sum on leaflets telling us how wonderful UDC is and how lucky we are to live in such a nice area - yet the evidence of our own eyes as far as Dunmow is concerned is to the contrary. Planning has been a fiasco for years with the delays to the LDP opening the door to developers and speculators. Footpaths and pavements are left to become overgrown and we have to drive 12 miles to the nearest council recycling tip. If I had more room I could cite many more examples!
To employ someone to collect the works road signs that are left behind in our country lanes and hedgerows.
Spending on repairs of pavements.
Why does 72% go to Essex County Council?
Everyone should pay Council Tax. If everyone paid a reasonable amount Council Tax could be reduced for those who pay the most.
Need more shops in Dunmow as at the moment people have to go out of town for certain shops ie banks, soon Post Office, in Dunmow too many food and takeaways, hairdressers, estate agents, not enough proper shops.
The road through Hatfield Heath should have police speed checks on a regular basis. There is a school there and crossing the road is dangerous due to the speed of vehicles. Needs urgent attention.
Why does cost more to pay the Police Tax than for Uttlesford DC?
Dealing with police so we feel safe if needed them to attend.

If they gave people one more month to pay say in 12 months instead of 10 months may give opeople a chance on low wages.
Not enough is spent on the police - local crime in CM24 is more prevalent/on the increase - burglaries, raids on supermarkets, truant behaviour by the youth on public/residential space. The police are not visible in CM24.
Why don't you tell us what you think?
More should go to policing.
We want our Saffron Walden Police Station back. No 1 priority!
Stop selling off council houses. Do not create the new town which will mean HUGE Highways expenditure and pollution. Remember who is paying the rates now.
It is important I feel to support more the police and fire services for they are there for our safety. "They risk their lives" daily. Yet seem to receive less help?
Provide more for public safety, enforcement of public offences, the public environment, the police and fire services.
All pensioners should pay a reduced rate whilst so called people on special reduced rates should be checked more closely to stop fraud.
Stop ALL house building until provisions have been made for rail and road access, local employment, medical and schooling for the existing population! Be more proactive in stopping overlying of villages/towns!
I leave it to you. You do a good job.
Give proper support to the Building Control function which used to be one of the best in the country.
Grass needs cutting on regular basis. Road sweeping having lived here for 17 years I've never seen a road sweeper in this turning.
Supporting local businesses will increase prosperity and economic well-being in Uttlesford and bring increased revenue for the council eventually.
Priority be given with tree maintenance on villages top branches especially (including council land) over hanging roads, too many street lights don't work and signage too. If a school bus is damaged and children get injured - watch out.
Lower senior executive pay - less management stop wasting money with hairbrained local plans. Ensure all services and infrastructure including health facilities are in place BEFORE large developments.
We feel that service charges should be looked at for Sheltered Housing that do not have the Warden call, these are quite high for what we receive and gone up steeply.
Lobby central government concerning the overpopulation of this area, Uttlesford is shouldering far too much of the country's housing demand - we don't have the resources for this number of new houses.
You are doing a good job and I support you. Continue at the same level.
Reduce % paid to Essex County Council and increase % paid to Saffron Walden Town Council etc with no overall increase for council tax payers.
The biggest issue UI notice in Thaxted is the sped care travel at. I live near the petrol station and late at night especially, cars wheel spin out and drive down the hill at ridiculous speeds. Young parents come out of the houses close to the road with babies and dogs.

A speed camera is a huge must for Thaxted now!!
As a single person on a fair wage I struggle with my bills. To reduce your costs on things like litter pick, how about school talks on this matter.
I don't feel it would be productive to charge residents more in tax, this just puts extra pressure on households. The onus should be on finding more efficient ways of running services which will save the council money which could then be invested elsewhere. There is a need for constant reinvention and innovation of the way the council does things.
If used to actually improve the services we get.
It's clear that more needs to be done for less - it is possible! Please look at back office functions and ensuring processes are as effective and efficient as possible before cutting services. Eg this questionnaire could have been shared digitally rather than paying for printing, postage and inputting!
More info and understanding needed. Flyers helpful; but needs to out there more more in your face so people can understand the facts and make less assumptions. I have answered this survey to the best of my ability because it's important. I do however feel I need to be more informed to make a better judgement and for the survey/my responses to be of more use. Poor info in = poor info out = more money wasted.
A number of the services stated overleaf could have received a more commercial input eg - promoting local business. The council should focus on getting the basics right first eg roads, tax calculation, benefit fraud etc.
More decent shops like pound shop etc.
I think the Council Tax is too high for services homeowners actually benefit from. Our road surfaces are appalling around Henham and Elsenham and need repair before winter. Drains need clearing also as we are frequently flooded.
Increase rates for owners of business buildings in the area and make sure they don't pass the increase on to their tenants.
Inflation is rising. You should therefore increase CT in line with inflation to avoid cuts to services.
If we want better services we have to pay more money.
If 72% goes to Essex where's the questionnaire relating to that. Particularly safe driving on country road, speed limits un rural villages and local policing, fly tipping, hare coursing.
Happy to pay more tax for better services.
Focus on those who abuse the system - travellers for example! Why should I pay more CT to cover them?
Potholes!! Roads awful!
Planning - whilst high priority don't think Uttlesford does this well - no thought seems to be given to putting in infrastructure (rds, schools GPs etc) BEFORE houses are built. The state of the rds in Saffron Walden are shameful and are testament to the fact that too many houses/cars on poor and small roads that are not maintained. Our Council tax goes to Essex via Uttlesford so what is Uttlesford doing to pressure Essex on rd maintenance. Some has been done but far too many issues/holes remain. New tyres and car damage is costing residents. Marking holes not good enough and when it rains you can't see them. JUST FIX THE ROADS!
Forest Hall Park in Stansted needs more double yellow lines, along bends especially on Walson Way and beginning of Bentley Drive.

ROADS and TRAFFIC POLLUTION in particular is a growing and urgent issue to address. People do not object to house building but the impacts need better and urgent solutions.
Come up with a realistic Local Plan, stop panic granting of every planning application and allowing building of houses in inappropriate locations.
Your questions are loaded and therefore people might agree with one selection out of all of them distorting what people truly want - stop making sure what you want is what people pick.
Highways Rangers service needs improving - road signs obscured by trees and hedges and hedgerows/verges not managed as well as they used to be. Use resources to prevent large scale building changing the character of Dunmow. Too few support services/infrastructure to support housing plans.
Schools equipment and education should be top priority.
Make some council job voluntary and lower council tax for all if services exist via charity or CAB.
I have moved from Thurrock to Uttlesford and found the Council Tax more expensive. To collect garden waste is extra and refuse only collected every 2 weeks!
I wish Uttlesford could receive a greater proportion of the total Council Tax take. I generally think Uttlesford's services provide far better value for money and accountability and quality than Essex County Council.
Stop building houses we do not have infrastructure in place to cope!!!!
Higher proportion of tax to go to Uttlesford D Council
Education, health, housing are and should be the core issues. Without them there will be no life.
Litter picking - if we are paying why are we asked to do it? Dumping on the druce - not cleared - over 1 year. Rangers - never seen. How about them clearing footpaths. Footpath - new path going up the hill and around ben d(Clavering) we get very little in Clavering for our money - playground! Street light! Police to monitor outside school. It is dangerous!
It is the mark of a civilised society that we look after our old, sick and vulnerable - once we stop doing this we become barbarians.
More police on foot in the town at night
More and more houses, therefore more and more Council Tax being collected. But less and less being done. How can you even think of increasing the Council Tax. We re4allty need a rebate because so many services are being cut.
A grant for adapting homes (private and council) for protection against "electrosmog" which is an increasing problem with the "superfast Essex" scheme.
Newly moved to area from Kent so too early to make any comments but think it's a great idea that you send out this survey, never happened at my old council.
I have a neighbour who puts 2 black bins and 2 recycling bins out each time and he is a builder so the council is disposing his building waste at the council's expense - he has also increased the width of his house since the council pasted the building regulations so he should be on a higher Council Tax rate.
1. The council should fine drivers for stopping in the High Street (that includes on the road or on the pavement) to deliver or collect

goods or to get money out of the cash point. 2. Resolving the issue of pot holes should still be on the list of priorities. 3. House builders and estate agents should be forced to fund community projects to (at least) match funds raised by Tesco customers by the carrier bag tax. 4. Some of the houses being built in existing residential areas don't fit in and the council should take a lot more care over planning permission. 5. The issue of aircraft noise should also still be on the list of priorities. 6. Community policing should also be a priority. 7. Educating young people on the dangers of knife crime.
Affordable housing - council to build or insist/enforce developers to build them.
Work smarter. Demonstrate value for money. Publicise changes made to demonstrate the above. Cut out waste - reduce communities.
I would love to see the recycling changed as to same as Epping Forest.
Council Tax was increased this year and yet services such as bin collections have deteriorated. Why?
Providing affordable place to live for the elderly who are living in a privately own home. Bungalow that come up for sale, are brought by builders, pulled down and a 5 bed house built.
Because of the period of austerity imposed by central government it seems sadly it will be necessary to increase council tax to maintain/improve services.
Run the council spending in house frugally instead of chipping away at community services/support.
Some funds need to be set aside to clean up graffiti in Saffron Walden. Policing needs to be increased in the town.
Thank you for what you do.
Too much money is waste on mused refuse bins on broken kitchen caddies and non essential work on council houses.
I think this survey is ridiculous - as recipients could say everything is high priority (or low!) and it will still leave the council to decide, as it should do since we elected it. Just an attempt to make people feel involved.
Collect refuse when you are supposed to. Fill pot holes.
Maintaining local and "round the town" bus services and to surgeries, hospitals, shopping centres. Essential for young, poorer families and to aid elderly to maintain contact with communities.
Provide parking (designated) for OAPs especially when located near houses with 2/3 vehicles with no driveways.
It is of vital importance that Uttlesford maintain the quality of life for residents by addressing the issues quoted. If this means an increase in Council tax and a reduction in benefit 'so be it'.
Congratulations, on the whole, for a job well done. Always hope for people who are honest and care about the jobs they do, as much as I care about they who do them. Thank you.
The young people that have grown up in the surrounding villages are still living with a great deal of parents, because there are no affordable homes being built? Which I understand should have been the top priority! Family homes with 4-5 bedrooms going up continuously! Where's the logic?? Also please, where are the road sweepers. Blocked drains, fallen branches, it's a disgrace.
Maximum increase of 10%.
Not only should local/district bus services be subsidised, these subsidies must not be removed. They should be increased. The bus

service to and from Audley End Station and other railway stations really out to be considerably improved. As should the Cambridge/Saffron Walden Citi T service.
We think on the whole that the council does well.
I am willing to pay higher taxes for the benefit of the local community and those most in need. HOWEVER there is no evidence currently that Uttlesford are competent enough to do this without appropriate intervention eg drawing up a Local Plan to prevent random development, closing police stations in the local communities (selling off the land).
The priority expenditure for UDC should be obtaining skilled, intelligent and forward looking planning staff to ensure that housing needs are met in a manner that improves the quality of life for future citizens.
Attention should be paid to providing council housing.
Our policing in the town is almost non-existent. We live in fear of needing to call them as a) we might nit be considered a priority and b) they are not based here anymore.
Pavements very dangerous especially by bus stops. Who is responsible for cleaning bus shelters? Full of weeds.
My husband and I have moved to Newport, been here nearly TWO years. No one has mentioned what's going on in the village, and how to find out, also I wish UDC would put up more dog bins.
We need more council houses, bungalows in rural villages. Affordable for young and old, to keep them in the villages for the local people.
Seek to increase productivity from all employees.
I support an increase un CT, if more resources are put to social housing, benefits administration and environmental regulation.
If we need services, we have to pay for them.
Ensure cost-effective use of council income.
Increase spending on arts education.
I can accept a MODEST increase in order to keep services.
I think that Uttlesford DC should receive a larger percentage of our Council Tax - Essex seems to have the 'lion's share' but does less and less for it. UDC gives high value for what it receives.
I do feel UDC should have made more effort to pressurise Essex CC Educational Dept to buy Friends School. Cheaper than new schools. Insufficient school places in S/W.
Always put people first!
More care should be taken in Saffron Walden to retain the atmosphere of the town. Less charity shops and more individual type shops would improve this.
Amounts awarded to voluntary/charity organisations should be carefully monitored as indeed should all expenditure. There is too much waste of much needed money.
Re planning for new developments - ie Woodlands Park - where is affordable housing for low income people, the parking for visitors is non-existent. People insist on parking in the main roads, We should have lay-bys provided instead of the grass verges which need

mowing, as they have in Spain in the urbanisations.
Please make sure mistakes are not made so council tax money is not wasted. Uttlesford has done this in the past especially on planning. Saffron Walden and area is being spoilt by over development.
Spend more on litter/waste collection.
The highways rangers seen unavailable to Little Dunmow. We have work parties to tidy some areas but there is a pavement that is now so overgrown and dangerous - have asked Highways to clear for 4 years. It's on a very busy road.
I think your survey covers all leading questions concerning council tax spending and I have answered them honestly and truthfully.
Restate what does in the green lidded bin as so many bins contain bits of plastic, so many bins are over full with the lids not shut.
The dept 'Health and Wellbeing' within the council has with the financial assistance of IPS supported the Saffron Walden Stroke Club to provide exercise for stroke victims at the Butler Leisure Centre, plus funds for cardiac, easy breathing physios. We are hoping this will continue for our community in 2019.
Increase frequency of public transport!
1) Use all possible means to ensure Walden School is kept for education - the county made a mint from selling the police station - press them for help over Walden School. Maybe fine temporary loans to the Walden School staff. 2) Keep working on the uneven pavements please.
Because of all the house extensions the rateable value of houses should be reassessed to make the household tax fairer.
Although I am elderly and disabled, I do believe we could all pay a little more to keep our part of the country safe, tidy, caring and beautiful.
Potholes
No more money spent on consultations carried out by external companies/organisations . Increase efficiency of council departments so money is not wasted anymore.
Adaptions for disabled people to remain in their own houses. Cheaper than rehoming.
The LHA needs to be raised. It is ridiculously low.
Poor survey. With the additional house building in the area (hence increased income) the council should be able to maintain council tax at current. I'm a pensioner with no increase in company pension since 2008 plus reduced income on any savings.
Increase council tax to support mentoring and encouragement of young people.
In an ideal world any increase in council tax should be for the benefit of Uttlesford residents. Hearing of other parts of the country and refused collection in my opinion Uttlesford has a really good system.
Living on a 'new' estate we are paying high council tax but receiving poor services with regard to maintenance and litter issues; it's like we don't exist - the estate looks a mess but we are still paying the same as everyone else. It's about time we got our moneys work please!
The District Council should receive more than 9% of council tax. Other services, particularly 2:2, 2:4 and 2:11 might be better/more efficiently done by a separate company, not the council, or the NHS.

Typical FAQ. Not relevant to reality. Ask the residents, don't pay for FAQ. Future new builds and all built in last 10 years to pay double council tax.
None - attend to the issues ticked as high priority first.
Litter (and fly tipping of any kind). Bearing in mind legitimate builders have to pay to dispose of materials legally i.e at Thaxted Road municipal 'dump', Saffron Walden (re: recycling centre)
I would be more than happy to pay more council tax if it were directed to essential services i.e. fire, police, looking after elderly population.
None
Money should be spent on youth work and facilities for the young otherwise a discontented youth population could lead to anti social behaviour
Generally I am very satisfied with the way our money seems to be spent. Essentially, all the activities listed in the questionnaire are important.
I would encourage consideration of things like speed cameras to generate funds!
Working with police is important but there aren't enough of them.
Why do taxpayers have to pay for cleaning up after illegal encampments by travellers. They should be fined before being evicted. Why is this allowed, where are the police? The temporary closure of the cemetery is a prime example of the inconvenience they cause to law abiding citizens of the town.
Overlap with Essex CC should be reduced.
Try stopping wasting money, mend roads and pavements, impose charges on developers, listen to those who pay your wages rather than kowtowing to fascists in Westminster.
Allocate more or enough finance so that the bins can be collected on time on their due day, collection service should pay a fine for failure to comply.
The District Council should be very clear what it is responsible for and what it is not. It should encourage oethr groups to help deliver some services.
Uttlesford needs to spend more, much more, to keep public services in good shape and order. It can tax the many rich residents and get business tax register (NNDR list) up to date.
Minimise the duplication of function of Essex County Council and Essex Police; pay moer heed to the views of the parish councils throughout the district.
Why do you pay all rent and council tax for people like me who are on guarantee credit? I am willing to pay some rent, but get told it is all or nothing. I only get the state pension so need some help.
Please listen to what the local communities say about their villages and seek their advice.
We should pay less to ECC - we get much better services from UDC.
I think council tax should be increased for households with higher value properties.

This form is almost structured to encourage 'high priority answers'.
I don't like at all the push towards the Gt Chesterford 'village'. You spend money promoting a new housing area on the north border of Uttlesford which will not benefit Uttlesford residents.
Reduce payments to councillors. UDC should stop funding the LSCC quango. Reduce expenses payments/allowances to councillors and staff.
We need more police on the streets - especially in the town and around industrial areas - and not in cars. On foot and in pairs sometimes several pairs would be far more preventative of crime.
I believe council are publishing their efforts, but this must increase and suggest is passed through the local parish councils who can add to their news. There has to be an increase in pride.
Who is responsible for the steps up to Tesco, Safron Walden? They are never cleaned, broken tiles. A danger.
If we are all in it together counillors' should reduce their expenses by 50%.
Instead of spending money refurbishing the exterior of the council offices in Saffron Walden, why not spend it on the B1039 past Wendons Ambo where the road is a disgrace. Also get Police to supervise lunatic cyclists on this road every weekend.
Reduce the % going to Police and use that to fund a specific Police presence in Saffron Walden.
We've already been called about this. On top of that you keep posting these which must cost more money then guess delivery it as an open paperwork. What a waste of money to post. Plus I now am condoning it by using the postage to send it back. Ahh!!
Web (Uttlesford Life) Responses
The council tax should be increased to assist the services designated as a high priority. Most of the increase should go to Essex police force if possible as they are underpaid and undermanned.
It is difficult to answer this question as I do not know how efficiently the money is spent in each area. 72% of money going to Essex County Council seems a lot and has this been assessed. Living on the fringe of Essex and Hertfordshire we sometimes feel we miss out on services
Work to improve bus services to villages. It is not easy to get to Thaxted, Saffron Walden etc. from Stebbing. Make swimming affordable. Make the Felsted Councillors represent Stebbing. Stop destroying villages.
Any increase in council tax should not exceed the inflation rate.
Any increase in council tax should be no more than inflation + 0.5%
The council should increase the council tax to a level where it can fairly support all of its activities.
Keep increasing in line with inflation
Reduce council tax until UDC demonstrates transparency and accountability to all its residents. Then increase council tax to deliver
Increase may be needed to address the extra pressure from financial austerity from central government. It is essential to maintain all council services at present level otherwise important services and community support could be eroded.
It is of huge concern to me regarding the widening of the m11 motorway between junction 8 and 9 stansted to saffron walden. Also 8

and 6 stansted to the m25. This should be an urgent matter for Uttlesford district council as it is becoming increasingly dangerous to drive on the road. It is really struggling with the weight of traffic using it now and bad accidents happen weekly! The amount of lorries is alarming and for it to be only 2 lanes is ridiculous as when lorries pass each other traffic slows considerably as they are slow moving to over take. I travel towards Cambridge everyday for work and my journey is taking more time and becoming dangerous everyday. As a law abiding tax paying citizen of Uttlesford I suggest that Uttlesford district council take a strong and serious review of this main road network. If no immediate decision on widening is made then consider sanctions on HGV's as the amount using the m11 and all roads as a matter of fact is just becoming ridiculous and unsafe! Thank you
Build more social housing either on behalf of the council or increasing the proportion in private developments
Protect the vulnerable. Then, ensure the Uttlesford population can go about their lives in a safe environment that is clean, welcoming and legal.
A 72%/9% split in favour of ECC over UDC does not seem equitable.
The Council needs to support victims of flytipping and help them with disposal of flytipping on private land. If they do not do so then the countryside will be ruined. The council should accept flytipping at its tips.
1. Many roads are in a very poor and dangerous state. It is important that UDC raises enough money to repair and maintain the roads. It is essential that any extra money raised specifically for this through Council tax is spent on this work and not syphoned off to other projects. 2. The sale of council houses previously has resulted in a considerable shortfall in public housing for the many unable to afford to buy their own property. By raising extra revenue UDC could either purchase empty properties and renovate them to a high standard and maintain them for rental public housing. Or build new housing to be rented out for public use BUT not for sale. 3. By increasing Council Tax, monies should also be allotted to local cultural, social and educational projects for all ages. Thus improving the welfare, health and quality of life for residents of UDC. Longer term these would help to reduce crime, encourage self development and would have a positive impact on the local population.
Invest on public transportation, with focus on better and more frequent bus service. Create more cycle-paths. Subsidise recycling at local supermarket stores, such as the Tesco in Radwinter Rd, Saffron Walden. Along with new massive house developments, plan additional road infrastructure, schools and health centres.
It would be appreciated if planning would insist on roads and services BEFORE new housing permission is granted. You are turning Saffron Walden in to a gridlocked town with insufficient road, School, Doctor and petrol services, with increasing damage to vehicles through potholes (Highway rangers are a joke) and health by queues of vehicles at a standstill emitting harmful particulates.
Roads, Roads, Roads. More roads to cater for increased traffic. (Little Walden road is patently unsuitable to become a busy route to Cambridge) Maintained roads. Why is it that we can all see what repairs are needed, but the Highway Rangers seem oblivious?
I would like to see pot holes being repaired in a timely manner and a more durable repair carried out instead of shoddy patching up which will cost more in the long term.
We should pay for the Police and if that means we need to increase the council tax then so be it
The community needs vibrant public services and residents should be prepared to help finance this. This culture should be promoted.

If there were an increase in council tax charges, I would hope that there were improvements to protections to the local environment and better enforcement of planning controls. It would be helpful to understand the direct impact of any increase to ensure that it has been spent across all priority areas.

Uttlesford Voices (UV15) Paper Responses

The council needs to search out efficiency savings and cut out wasted expenditure. This wasted money can be put to good use on other projects. The Council needs to be much more commercially aware and employ people and procedures that understand about money management.

We desperately need more black waste bins. They are full after several days and then litter is thrown around verges.

Those of us with a garden waste bin have to pay also for provision of a weekly skip provided by UDC. That is we are effectively pay twice for the same service and supporting residents who won't pay for a garden green bin (village councils take note!)

Services such as Police (and Pest Control!) need to be reinforced as so much housing development is being allowed - so we need to pay for that.

Road repairs should be carried out more promptly via Highways.

Spend more on repairing potholes, gutters etc.

Any additional spending requirements should be funded by Central Government

A lot of people struggle with the Council Tax it would give people to pay for it March to Feb giving them a choice to pay And no pressure on them.

Personally I do not think it matters how the public reply or request. It's a limited few that make the decisions and most of them are out of touch with reality.

(Increase Council Tax) by a small amount.

The Parish Council should have more support from Uttlesford. The village of Stansted and others are really suffering from the building sites currently being developed. With the water mains replacement and Manuden traffic damaging trees and verges on the diversion and the heavy traffic through the village - the residents are being put to a great deal of disruption and delays.

I am very much in favour of paying more tax if it enables the council to employ more people and re-instate the cut services.

Just that its' unreasonable to expect to maintain standards for a rising population without extra funds (And we can't expect central government to help)

Uttlesford Voices (UV15) Online Responses

More should go to Uttlesford and less to Essex County Council

Planning Officers should live in the area as the work should not be sub-contracted to people who do not know the area. The Council should BUY the old Friends School and use it as a Sixth Form College. Council Tax is by far my biggest bill. We have no mains drainage, and no street lighting, and poor broadband, AND potholed roads ! BUT we do need infrastructure to improve and we need

more good schools for our children, and somewhere for them to live when they grow up.
The more money you receive the better service you can provide, however I understand that you have reserves that you could be using.
I think that Uttlesford District Council should receive a higher percentage than 9% , at least 15%.
should be more investment in the roads there are lots of breaks and holes in Great Dunmow area special in town centre.
Local plan looks to be sensible this time
What is very upsetting is the way utility companies dig their trenches through newly surfaced roads and create havoc along the verges. It seems to be a waste of taxpayers money to maintain / refurbish our existing services to then have them destroyed by a third party. There appears to be no recourse to make the utility companies return to repair their inadequate reinstatements, sometimes a few years after the event. Why can't the various authorities co-ordinate these actions between themselves?
While I appreciate Council Tax is necessary to provide services. Personally the only service I get for my Council Tax is refuse collection. The present refuse service is good but not particularly good value for money for me personally so I would not wish for an increase.
Allow increases to reflect inflation
We need good services and we should not be afraid to ask people to pay for them.
I think sending should be redistributed away from Saffron Walden which I believe benefits more than the surrounding towns and villages.
Bearing in mind Uttlesford has had a huge amount of houses being built , which will provide more money heading back to Uttlesford District council in taxes, surely there is no need to raise any more funds they just need to be divided better.
Telephone Survey (NWA) did not give option for comments



Uttlesford District Council

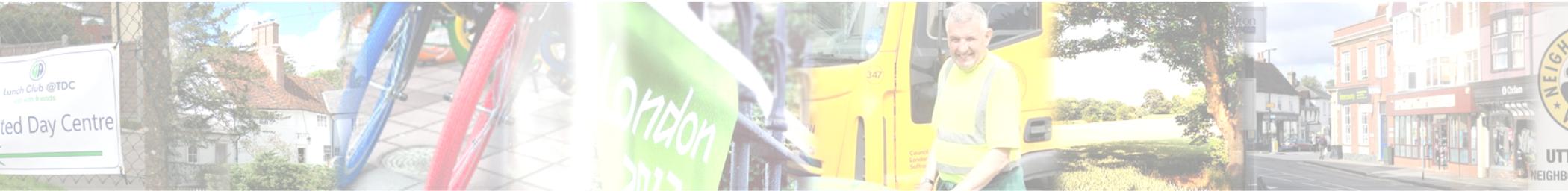
Council Spending

A report on the survey of businesses about council spending priorities for the year 2018-19

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October 2017





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1. Executive summary

This is the second year that a dedicated consultation asking for businesses' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run. It should be noted that until 2016 only business networking groups had been contacted as distinct from individual businesses. This approach, it is hoped, will provide a better overview of opinion from the business community in the district.

The survey was promoted by email to all enterprises registered on the Uttlesford Business Directory. Consultees were able to respond via an online form using the Snap 11 consultation platform.

The questions in the business consultation followed the same principal lines as the residents' survey which was carried out concurrently. In this businesses were asked for their views on the prerogatives for the future resourcing of specific service areas. They were not, though, asked to comment on the level of Council tax that Uttlesford District Council should be levying in the coming year as this is only applicable to residents within the district. An additional option was provided to permit consultees to leave general comments about the council's spending priorities for 2018-19.

Council Spending - have your say!
Uttlesford Survey of Businesses 2017

Section 1 - Council Spending - have your say!

Council Spending - have your say!
Uttlesford Survey of Businesses
September 2017

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

As a local business this survey gives you the opportunity to have your say on what the Uttlesford District Council's spending priorities should be for the forthcoming financial year. The results of this consultation will help to inform the budget for April 2018 to March 2019.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. It will only be used by Uttlesford District Council and the main findings from the survey will be published on the council website. However, your own views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

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

Monday 25 September 2017 at 5pm

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language or have any questions or queries about this questionnaire, please contact:
 Louise Milns or Bruce Tice at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510381 or 510670.
 Alternatively you can email: consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk
 The survey may also be completed online at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/budgetforbusinesses

District Council provides to the public relating to Planning, Housing and the local	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No opinion
...er quality issues and other environmental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...ervice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...sses are charged for this service)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...g up fly-tipping and emptying public litter (Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...sure new buildings and extensions are ng building regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...e coming decades, including where new	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...nd work to protected trees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...eltered housing for older people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... or at risk of becoming homeless and in accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results summary

Together with the residents' survey this 2017 business consultation will inform the setting of the council's budget for the financial year April 2018 – March 2019. The results provide a headline view of the spending priorities for the forthcoming financial year as identified by the majority of those who responded to the survey.

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

A rating system¹ is an appropriate analysis tool for the Council Spending Survey since the same area of spending might have been chosen by different respondents at a different level of priority; more weight is thus given to that selection if it is selected as the "Highest Priority" than if the same spending area is still chosen as priority, but at a lower level. Consequently, a fair analysis is achieved by allocating 3 points to each vote for the 'High Priority', 2 points to each vote for the 'Medium Priority' and 1 point to each vote for the 'Low Priority'. Those offering a 'No Opinion' has been attributed a zero score value reflecting their neutral response to the question.

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

¹ See Section 4.3 for an explanation of rating system calculations

services separately. A final and distinct question sought respondents’ general comments on how the district council might apportion its spending in the forthcoming financial year.

The results of the online survey are given below:

Results priorities

Key Services

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

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
Ranked priority	<p>Emptying bins and running the recycling service - (90.48%)</p> <p>Emptying bins for some businesses (businesses are charged for this service) - (84.62%)</p> <p>Joint 3rd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas) (83.33%) - Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations (83.33%) - Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located- (83.33%)

Headline	Spending Area – ranked by the least respondents
Ranked priority	Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees - (57.14 %)

Other Services

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

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
Ranked priority	<p>Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe - (88.10%)</p> <p>Joint 2nd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collecting Council Tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates (83.33%) - Promoting and supporting businesses in the area – (83.33%)

Headline	Spending Area – ranked by the least respondents
Ranked priority	Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues - (56.41%)

Any other comments

Five comments were received and are reported below..

Q3. Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, [do] you have any other comments you wish to add regarding council spending for the period April 2018 to March 2019?

Promoting Uttlesford as the key place to come for business is important and vital for future business development. We have Cambridge Business Development Corridor and Stansted Airport with our grasp to bring outstanding businesses, and hence outstanding business opportunity and employment, to our district. I don't see or feel Uttlesford does promote the area for business. It doesn't promote housing for business nor provide low rents for council housing to ensure large-scale businesses feel they have the opportunity to develop and expand into Uttlesford. We have high-net worth housing and opportunities, great. But where is the supporting workers and infrastructure to ensure that the district is just a commuter belt into Cambridge and London. We don't even get the benefits from Stansted Airport, as most employees live in Braintree or Bishop's Stortford. Promote Uttlesford as the best location for business and we could really have benefits for the whole community
Reducing waste and unnecessary spending to control rate increases
To encourage the visitors to beautiful Uttlesford to keep coming back to keep shopping and sight seeing, the towns and villages should be kept clean, inviting and safe.
Providing an acceptable level of broadband - some parts of the district have minimal [less than 1mb] provision
A small issue - more time and attention is needed on the Saffron Walden castle site to help realise the full potential of the site

Results priority analysis

This is the second year that the council has specifically sought the views of businesses in order to help inform how it will set the budget in the forthcoming year. Whilst not identical, the 2017 consultation in part revisits the majority of the elements of the 2016 survey in order to ascertain if there has been any move in opinion by the Uttlesford business community. It should be noted however, that the 2017 survey had a considerably lower response rate; 21 responses compared with 80 in 2016, despite wide distribution of the questionnaire.

Key services top three priorities:

Businesses were asked to identify the priority - 'high', 'medium' or 'low' - that they might ascribe to each of a basket of 11 service areas operated by the council. The headline results from the current piece of market research demonstrate that respondents manifested a marked preference for supporting spending on 'Emptying your bins and running the recycling service' and 'Emptying bins for some businesses', which scored 90.48% and 84.62% respectively. Respondents thus considered these to be the top two priorities. As one of the principal universal services provided to residents and some businesses (where businesses are charged for the service) the collection of waste and recycling represents a consistent concern amongst all consultees. The level of approval for spending on waste services has increased since the 2016 survey in which the priorities relating to waste services had occupied the second and third place.

In the current year's survey, taking third place, three priority areas scored equally using the system of rated scores, namely:

- Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)

- Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations
- Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located

However, as in the 2016 survey, at the other end of the scale and across all the key services 'Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees' polled the least consistent backing with a ranked score of 57.14%.

Other services top three priorities:

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

Many of these 'other' services are delivered by the council in partnership with other bodies such as the police, public health teams and the North Essex Parking Partnership.

From the 12 services identified in this part of the consultation businesses indicated that they considered 'Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe' should be the most worthy of future resourcing. This was supported by an 88.10% majority and was similarly ranked by respondents to the 2016 survey. The second priority "Promoting and supporting businesses in the area" again matched its 2016 ranking but in 2017 was equalled in its rating score by "Collecting Council Tax for Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and collecting business rates". Each priority scored an approval rating of 83.33% and thereby shared second place.

Unchanged in the perception of respondees since the 2016 survey, 'Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues' was the least popular service, only gaining a 56.41%% support rating in 2017.

Any other comments

Consultees were also asked to include any appropriate comments to support their choices made in the service prioritisation section.

Feedback here was typically eclectic ranging from support for developing suitable housing within the district:
"I don't see or feel Uttlesford does promote the area for business. It doesn't promote housing for business nor provide low rents for council housing to ensure large-scale businesses feel they have the opportunity to develop and expand into Uttlesford" to encouraging tourism:"...encourage the visitors to beautiful Uttlesford to keep coming back, to keep shopping and sightseeing, the towns and villages should be kept clean, inviting and safe."

2. Purpose methodology

The council is obliged to consult with the residents of the district when setting the budget for the forthcoming year. As part of the 2017 consultation local businesses were also encouraged to feedback via a dedicated survey so as to provide a better overview of opinion across all users of the authority's services. The results of this consultation will inform the decisions made by officers and councillors when setting spending for the year April 2018 to March 2019.

This is the second year that a consultation asking for businesses' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run, whereas before 2016 only business networking groups had been contacted as distinct from individual businesses. This approach provides a better overview of opinion from the business community in the district.

For 2017 a link to the online survey was sent to the 823 businesses registered on the Uttlesford Business Directory. The 21 returns represent a relatively low level of response compared with 80 submissions in 2016.

The consultation was run over the period 4 to 25 September 2017. Respondents were asked to select their highest, mid-range and lowest spending priorities from a list of 11 key services and 12 other service options covering the full range of the council's activities. They were also offered the opportunity to provide additional comments on how the council might allocate funding during the forthcoming year. For profiling purposes they were also invited to include a postcode.

The following consultative method was employed.

- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted by email to all enterprises registered on the Uttlesford Business Directory and was available from the Uttlesford District Council website. Consultees were able to respond

via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform. This resulted in 21 responses.

- The survey was also publicised to all businesses registered to receive the council's dedicated business e-newsletter
- The budget questions were also made available as a printed survey if requested. However, no paper questionnaires were requested by the businesses contacted and therefore no paper submissions have been recorded for the 2017 survey

It should be remembered that not all respondents chose to answer all of the questions. A number of supplementary comments were received and are reported. By the close of the consultation period a total of 21 online responses were received.

3. Survey results, detailed findings

Survey results

No paper responses were received. Full results from the online submissions are reported below.

Key Services

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

Service	Priority Score (percentage)
1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	58.33%
2. Emptying bins and running the recycling service	90.48%
3. Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	84.62%
4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	83.33%
5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	83.33%
6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	83.33%
7. Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	57.14%
8. Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	82.05%
9. Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation	73.81%
10. Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	61.11%
11. Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping	71.43%

road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	
---	--

Other Services

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

Service	Priority Score (percentage)
1. Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford	71.43%
2. Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	78.57%
3. Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	88.10%
4. Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	69.23%
5. Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	64.29%
6. Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	80.95%
7. Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	69.05%
8. Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	61.54%
9. Collecting Council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government	83.33%
10. Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and Issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	80.95%

11. Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	56.41%
12. Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	83.33%

Comparative data across 2017 residents' and businesses' surveys

Note: Businesses were not asked to comment on the priority for setting Council Tax.

* See Section 4 for an explanation of rating system calculations

Results in **red** indicate top three priorities in the service area. Those in **black** indicate the least popular priority in that service area.

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

Service	Total Rated score* for 2017 residents' survey (2018-19 budget)	Total Rated score* for 2017 businesses' survey (2018-19budget)
1. Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health matters	78.75%	58.33%
2. Emptying bins and running the recycling service	94.44%	90.48%
3. Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	71.57%	84.62%
4. Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and	87.67%	83.33%

Appendix B

Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)		
5. Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	83.89%	83.33%
6. Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	86.30%	83.33%
7. Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	63.09%	57.14%
8. Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	86.19%	82.05%
9. Provide advice to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances, provide emergency accommodation	81.52%	73.81%
10. Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	74.12%	61.11%
11. Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	73.69%	71.43%

Other Services

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

Service	Total Rated score* for 2017 residents' survey (2018-19 budget)	Total Rated score* for 2017 businesses' survey (2018-19 budget)
1. Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford	69.64%	71.43%
2. Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	77.13%	78.57%
3. Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	90.31%	88.10%
4. Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	73.32%	69.23%
5. Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	73.03%	64.29%
6. Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	86.94%	80.95%
7. Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	61.31%	69.05%
8. Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	72.82%	61.54%
9. Collecting Council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business	83.07%	83.33%

Appendix B

rates on behalf of the government		
10. Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and Issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	75.80%	80.95%
11. Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	60.75%	56.41%
12. Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	68.55%	83.33%

4. Appendices

4.1 Questionnaire

Although no paper responses were received, paper questionnaires were prepared and followed an identical format to the online survey.

Council Spending - have your say!
Uttlesford Survey of Businesses 2017

Section 1 - Council Spending - have your say!

Q1 **Below is a list of key services Uttlesford District Council provides to the public relating to the environment.**
 As a business, for each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority. (Please select one option for each service).

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

Council Spending - have your say!
Uttlesford Survey of Businesses
September 2017

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

As a local business this survey gives you the opportunity to have your say on what the Uttlesford District Council's spending priorities should be for the forthcoming financial year. The results of this consultation will help to inform the budget for April 2018 to March 2019.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. It will only be used by Uttlesford District Council and the main findings from the survey will be published on the council website. However, your own views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

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

Monday 25 September 2017 at 5pm

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language or have any questions or queries about this questionnaire, please contact:
 Louise Milns or Bruce Tice at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510381 or 510670.

Alternatively you can email: consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

The survey may also be completed online at
www.uttlesford.gov.uk/budgetforbusinesses




Council Spending - have your say!
Uttesford Survey of Businesses

September 2017

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Section 1 - Council Spending - have your say!

Q1 Below is a list of key services Uttesford District Council provides to the public relating to Planning, Housing and the local environment.
 For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.
 (Please select one option for each service).

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

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

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

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

Q3 Thinking about how you answered the previous questions, if you have any other comments you wish to add regarding council spending for the the period April 2018 to March 2019, please use the box below:

About you:

It is hoped that a cross-section of Uttlesford businesses will participate in this survey. It would greatly assist us in collating the responses in this questionnaire if you would answer the question below.

You can choose not to answer this question, however, all the responses in this section are anonymous and it is not possible for us to identify individuals from their response.

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

Next steps

This consultation will close at 5pm on

Monday 25 September 2017

The budget for 2018/19 will be agreed by Uttlesford District Council's Full Council on 22 February 2018.

This will be after consideration by the Scrutiny Committee on 21 November and Cabinet on 30 November.

Thank you for taking part in our survey.

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

4.2 Profiling

Postcodes of respondees

Note: Not all respondees chose to enter postcode data

CB10 1AR
CB10 1EQ
CB10 1HB
CB10 2AB
CB11
CB11 3BQ
CB11 4RT
CM24 8BE
CM6 1AE
CM6 1GR

4.3 How rating scores are calculated

Rating is a system recommended by Snap, the company who provide the consultation system used to collate and make the analysis of the 2018-19 Budget Consultation results.

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

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

For example:

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

1 respondent selected this as 'high priority' = $(+3) \times 1 = 3$

7 selected 'medium priority' = $(+2) \times 7 = 14$

4 selected 'low priority' = $(+1) \times 4 = 4$

1 had 'no opinion' = $0 \times 1 = 0$

So, the overall rating for this priority

$3 + 14 + 4 + 0 = 21$

To achieve a maximum 100%, all respondents with an opinion would need to have selected a priority as 'high priority' resulting in a rating score of $(+3) \times (\text{number of respondents})$ i.e. $(+3) \times (1 + 7 + 4)$ or 36

The overall priority score, expressed as a percentage, for "Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues" is therefore $21/36 = 58.33\%$

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Agenda Item 9

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 21 November 2017

9

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

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Howell

Key decision: No

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. This report enables Scrutiny Committee to review the outcome of the consultation and comment on detailed proposals for consideration by the Cabinet on 30 November and Full Council on 7 December

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Members provide feedback on the outcome of the consultation for inclusion in the final 2018/19 LCTS Scheme proposal to be presented to Cabinet.

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%
	3,739	3,504		3,253		3,184		

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.

Average total					
Percentage Contribution	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.

<u>LCTS Parish Grant - 2017/18</u>			
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		
Total Grant paid			<u>76,802</u>

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 inc. Parish Grant	UDC Share exc. Parish Grant
LCTS Discounts	3,119	2,682	437	437
Major Preceptors - Sharing Agreement (16%)	0	222	(222)	(222)
Net of LCTS Scheme & Discounts	3,119	2,904	215	215
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)
Total Net Cost	3,211	2,950	261	184

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 115

October 2017



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Survey trends 2017/18 versus 2018/19 schemes across all streams

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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

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:	976 (98.19%)
Total number of web submissions:	18 (1.81%)
Total number of submissions:	994 (100%)

Headline question	Result counts (percentage)
<p>Q1 The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. Uttlesford's current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income. Do you agree with this?</p>	<p>Yes 868 (94.66%)</p> <p>No 49 (5.34%)</p>
<p>Q2 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>Yes 677 (70.52%)</p> <p>No 283 (29.48%)</p>
<p>Q3 In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area. The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax. 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>Continue to pay the grant to parish and town councils 732 (76.01%)</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)
Q4 Further comments made regarding the LCTS scheme	131 comments received
Postcodes data entered	914
Are you in receipt of LCTS?	<p>No 846 (91.86%)</p> <p>Yes 75 (8.14%)</p>
If yes (in receipt of LCTS), are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	Yes 67 (53.60%)

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

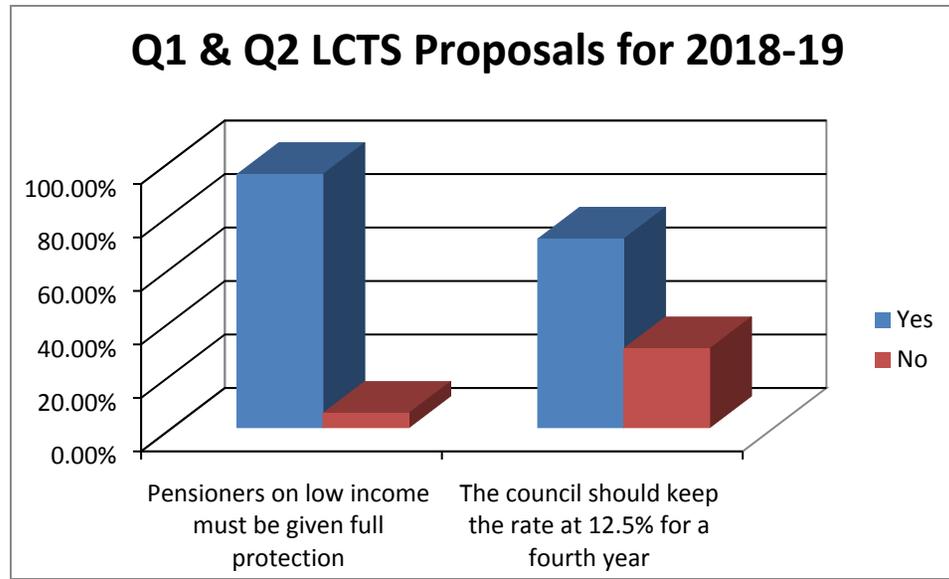
The results for each of the different consultation streams – paper and online surveys – are reported below as a single merged dataset.

LCTS substantive questions

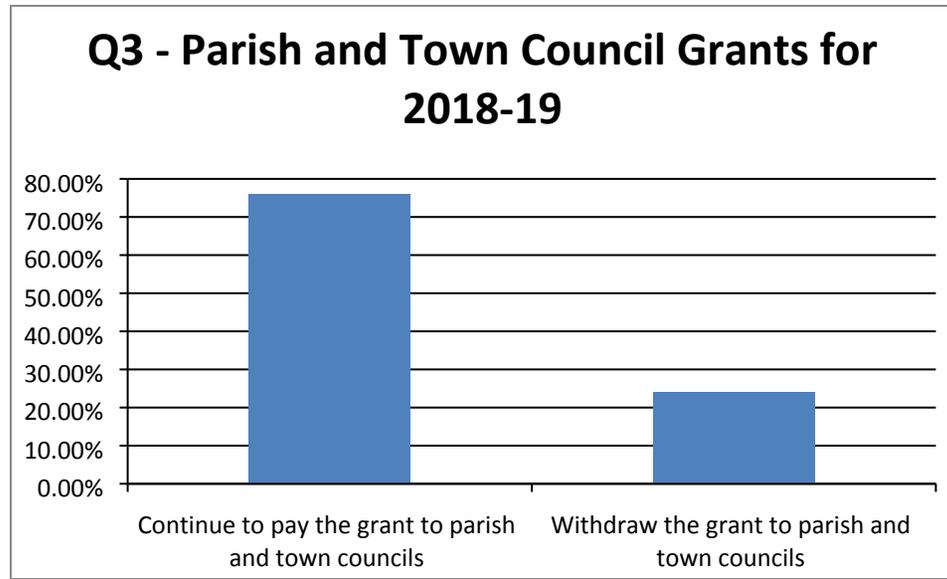
This analysis comments on the responses received across both consultation channels. A further section then makes reference to the previous consultation and identifies trends. Results are broadly in line with the views of residents as reported in previous years, principally research undertaken with stakeholders 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)		
Q1 The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of this scheme. Uttlesford's current scheme also protects disabled people on a low income and carers on a low income.	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>Q2 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>Q3 In simple terms, parish and town councils set their budgets by deciding how much money they need to run their services and then dividing that amount by the number of homes in their area.</p> <p>The LCTS scheme reduces the amount of money the parish will receive as some households will not pay full Council Tax.</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>Q4 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%) Yes 92 (7.9%)	No 846 (91.9%) Yes 75 (8.1%)	
If you in receipt of LCTS are you in a protected group (pensioner/disabled/carer)?	Yes 75 (80.6%) No 18 (19.4%)	Yes 67 (53.6%) No 58 (46.4%)	

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

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.

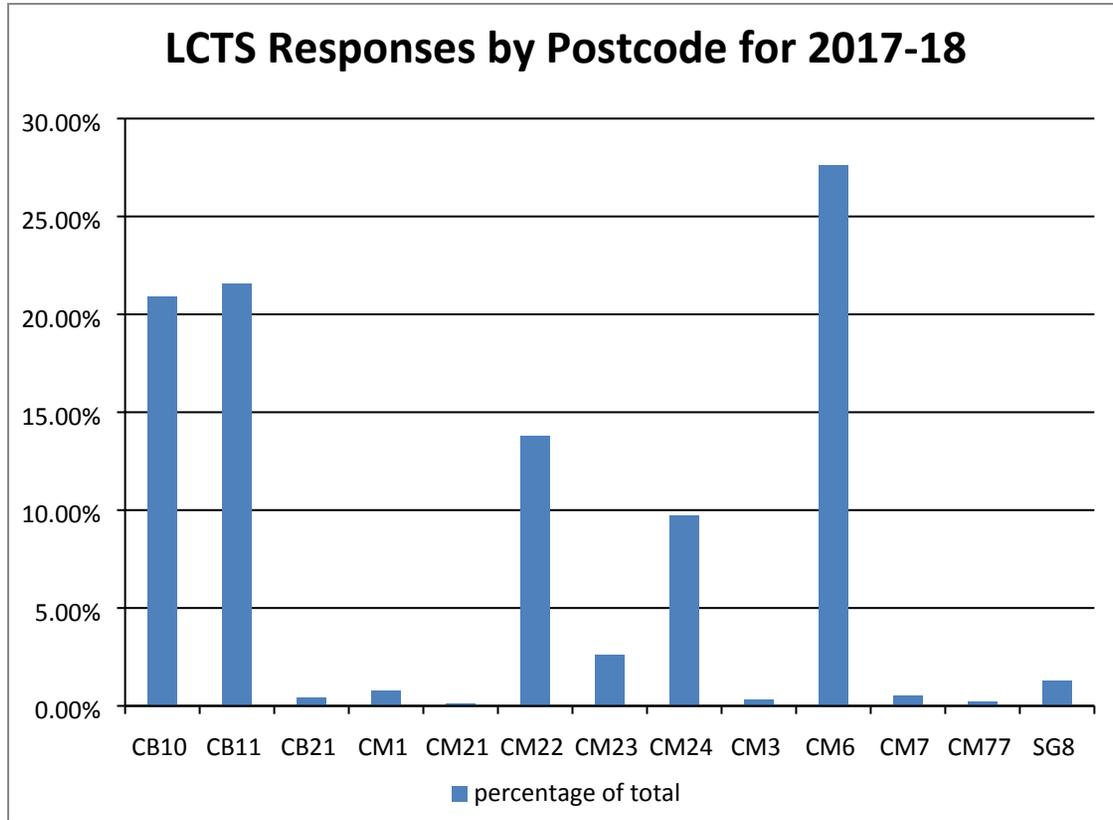
The table overleaf shows how much grant each town/parish council receives this year.

4.2 Profiling

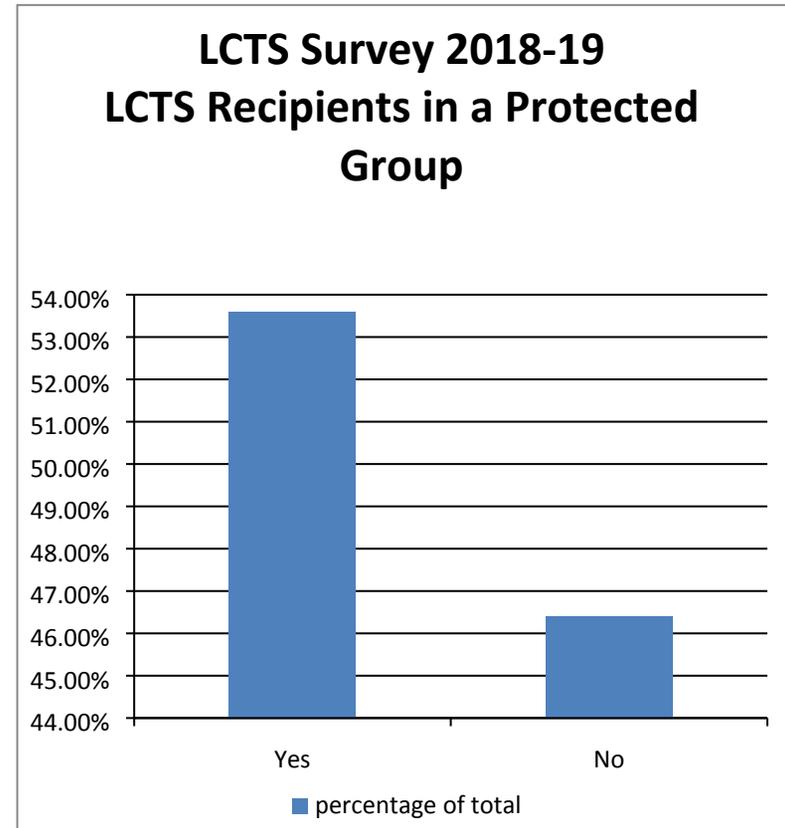
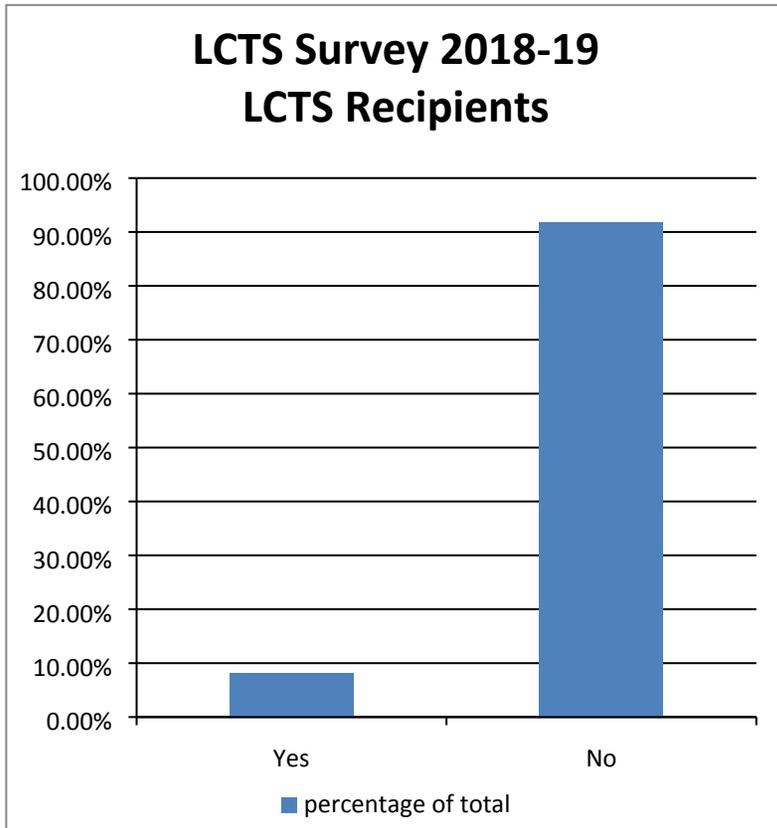
4.2.1 Profiling - Geographical distribution

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

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



4.2.2 Profiling – Recipients of LCTS



Uttlesford Life Paper Responses
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 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 their going 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 job 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? Questions 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]
Uttlesford Life Online Responses
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
web: www.thaxted.co.uk

27th October 2017

Emailed to consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

And to Angela Knight at 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 Dena Ludford.

Dena Ludford
Clerk to Thaxted Parish Council

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