



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

October 2017



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1. Executive summary

In April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by a new local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme. The Government required councils to protect pensioners so that they would receive the same level of support as they did under Council Tax Benefit. This means that LCTS has applied only to working age people.

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

Following the success of the 2016 consultation on the 2017-18 scheme, information about the LCTS setting process and the survey was distributed to every household in the district as an insert into the Council's magazine *Uttlesford Life*. As part of the authority's continuing drive towards channel shift, the 2017 survey was also available through an online questionnaire which was publicised on the website. A small number of additional copies of *Uttlesford Life* were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district to ensure that all residents would have a chance to take part even if they had lost their original issue of the magazine. A copy of the survey was not, this year, included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently. The results are detailed below.

Local Council Tax Support - have your say

Introduction

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and each year the council must consult on the proposed scheme for the following year.

The results of this consultation will be presented to councillors in the autumn with the final scheme for 2018/19 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2018.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system and is designed to help more people into work while supporting the most vulnerable. Since the start of the scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 36% from 1,222 to 785 at the end of the financial year 2017.

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

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

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online.

Visit www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS

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?	No 846 (91.86%)
	Yes 75 (8.14%)
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

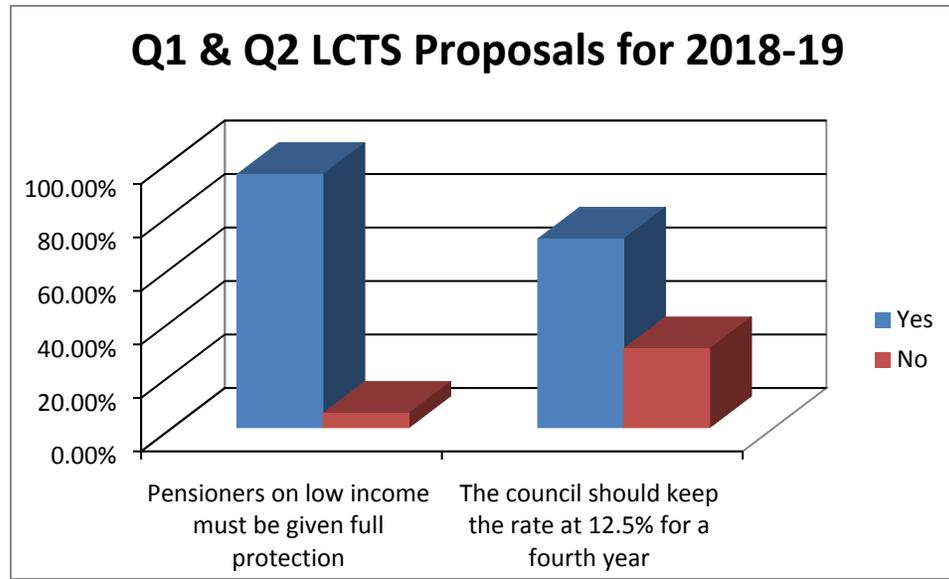
The results for each of the different consultation streams – paper and online surveys – are reported below as a single merged dataset.

LCTS substantive questions

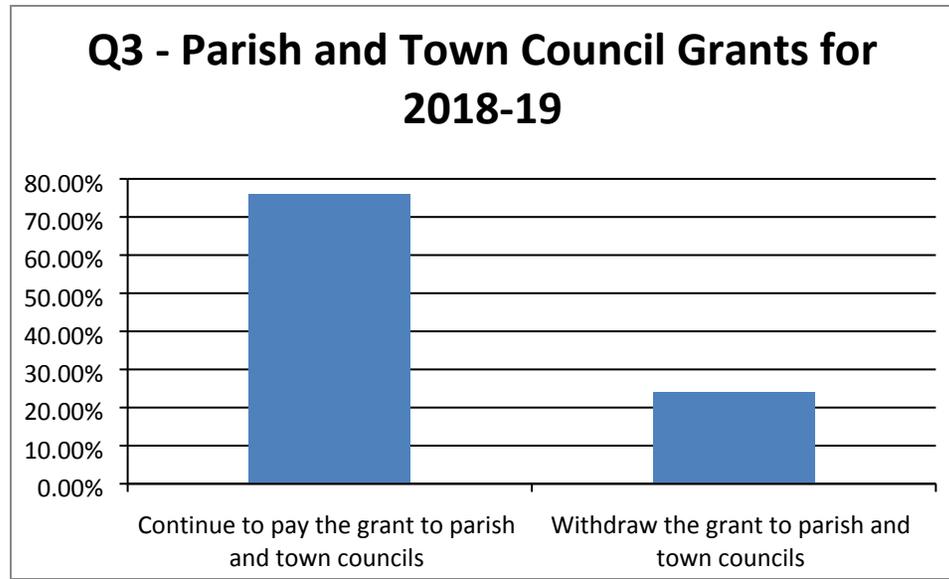
This analysis comments on the responses received across both consultation channels. A further section then makes reference to the previous consultation and identifies trends. Results are broadly in line with the views of residents as reported in previous years, principally research undertaken with stakeholders 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%)	

4. Appendices

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

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Universal Credit
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Changes of Circumstance - Benefits
Benefit Fraud

Uttlesford Local Council Tax

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has proposed scheme for the following year scheme for 2018/19 being agreed in D

Take part in the Uttlesford

Paper copies of the survey can be found

If you need an extra paper copy of the survey, please contact our service desk at Dunmow Library and the phone number 01286 510510 or emailing consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

The consultation closes at 5pm on Monday 12th June 2018

Local Council Tax Support

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

You can apply if you own your home, rent, or are a tenant of a council or housing association.

Uttlesford Local Council Tax - have your say!

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

Do you agree with this?

Yes No

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

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

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

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

Should the council keep the rate at 12.5%?

Yes No

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Local Council Tax Support - have your say

Introduction

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) has replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and each year the council must consult on the proposed scheme for the following year.

The results of this consultation will be presented to councillors in the autumn with the final scheme for 2018/19 being agreed in December, to start on 1 April 2018.

The LCTS scheme forms part of a wider reform of the welfare system and is designed to help more people into work while supporting the most vulnerable. Since the start of the scheme in 2013 the number of working age people in receipt of LCTS in Uttlesford has dropped by 36% from 1,222 to 785 at the end of the financial year 2017.

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

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

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online.

Visit www.uttlesford.gov.uk/LCTS

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.

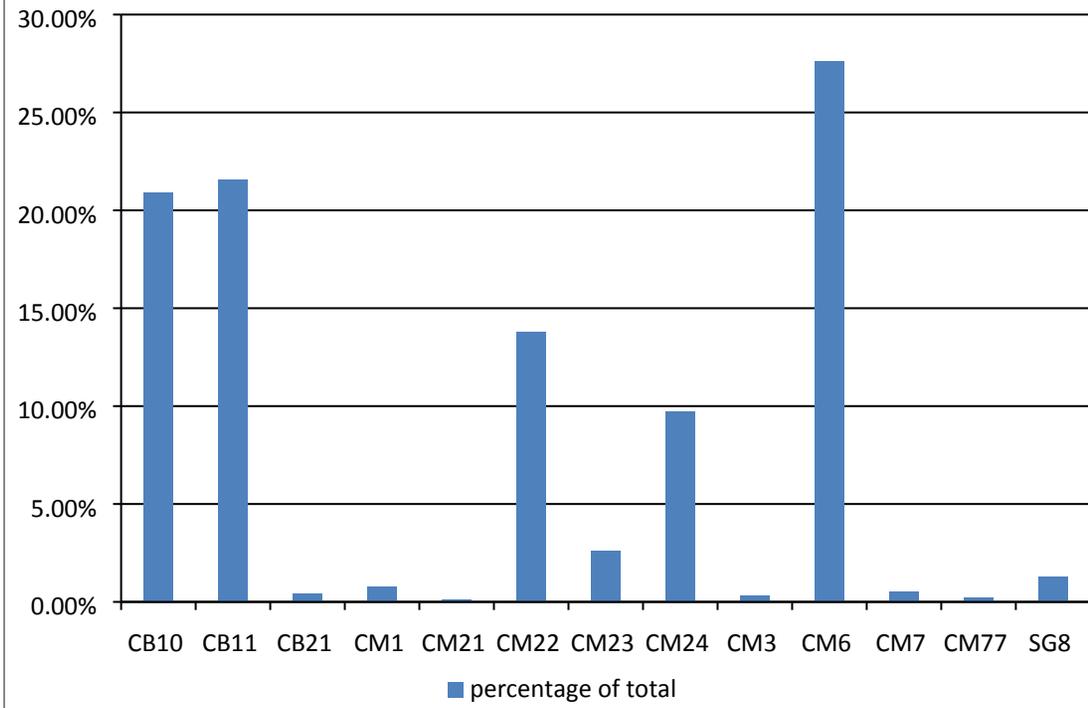
4.2 Profiling

4.2.1 Profiling - Geographical distribution

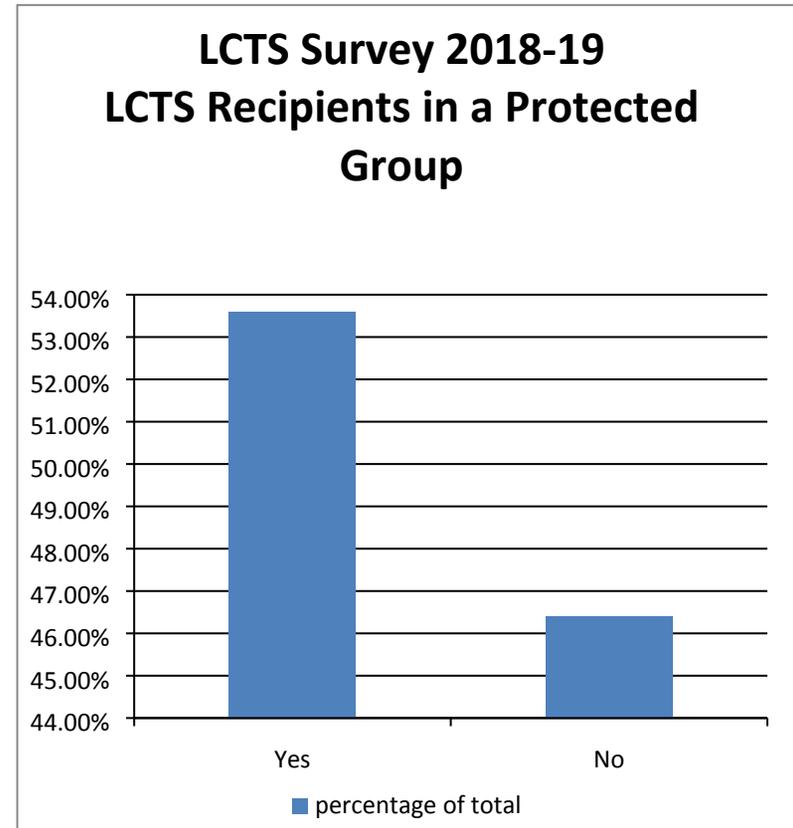
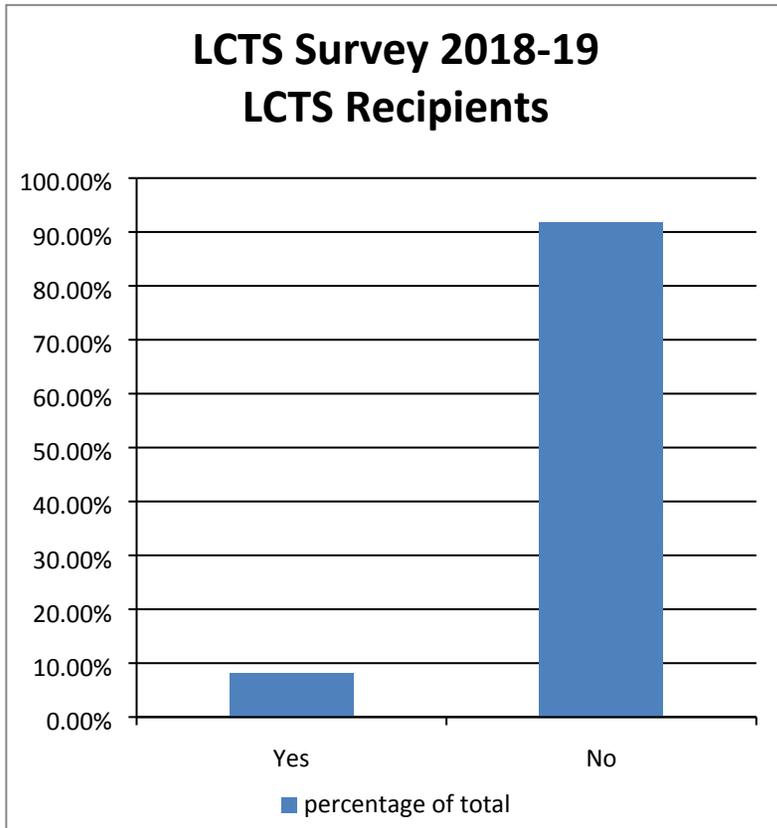
(Data highlighted in red shows areas of highest response – Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted postcodes)

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%

LCTS Responses by Postcode for 2017-18



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 elderly 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 the sender.

Dena Ludford
Clerk to Thaxted Parish Council