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Mr Adrian Webb,
Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Uttlesford District Council,
London Road,
SAFFRON WALDEN
CB11 4ER

30th November 2017

Dear Adrian,

Withdrawal of Localising Council Tax Support for Town and Parish Councils

The loss to Saffron Walden Town Council of the withdrawal of the LCTS for the financial year 2018-19 represents the equivalent of 2.7% of the Precept for our tax payers. This is money that the Council must find by cutting other projects to the detriment of the people of Saffron Walden. This is particularly the case with the threat hanging over us that Precept increases may be capped at 2%.

Uttlesford District Council apparently entered in to a "consultation" on the withdrawal of these funds. The Council wishes to express its dissatisfaction with this process as we would have expected, as an interested party, to be directly consulted. Including a flyer in Essex Life magazine, which does not come to us, cannot be considered a proper consultation.

Rt Hon. Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, in his speech to the National Association of Local Councils in October made a number of salient points:

"I know that not enough cash from the principal support grant is finding its way down to your level. And that's just not right.

Principal authorities should be devolving responsibilities to local councils because you are best placed to deliver more tailored services...

...not so that they can save a few pounds and get important work done on the cheap.

They certainly shouldn't be using parish precepts as a means of avoiding their own cap on council tax increases."

"The government has previously issued guidance to billing authorities on this, making clear that they should work with parish and town councils to pass down appropriate levels of funding.

But from my conversations with you, it's clear that too many top-tier councils aren't following that guidance closely enough.

So let me promise you all today that I'll be exploring ways in which I can strengthen the requirement for principal authorities to pass a share of local council tax support to their towns and parishes.

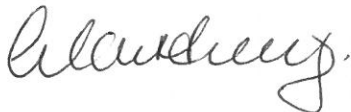
It's the least you deserve.

As you do more for your residents, so their interest in your work is likely to increase."

“Ask most British people where they live and they won’t name their principal local authority area. They’ll tell you about their town, their village, their neighbourhood. Local identity isn’t about lines on a map, it’s about community. People are more attached to their town or village than to their district or borough.”

In the light of these comments the District Council’s decision is lamentable and Saffron Walden Town Council wishes to protest in the strongest terms against it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Courtney'.

Lisa Courtney (Mrs)

Town Clerk Saffron Walden

cc. Cllr Howard Rolfe

cc. Mrs Kemi Badenoch, MP for Saffron Walden