



Uttlesford District Council October 2020

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

A summary report on the survey about Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) provision in Uttlesford for the financial year 2021-2022.

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.

Uttlesford District Council has been consulting local residents regarding the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (the Scheme) since 2012 during which time the Scheme has undergone various changes. For the financial year 2021/2022, the council has proposed that the Scheme is set on the same basis as that for 2020/2021, namely:

- The contribution rate is frozen for the sixth consecutive year at 12.5%
- The council continues to protect vulnerable and disabled resident and carers on a low income

For the current consultation, there were no questions requiring a specific 'yes' or 'no' answer, as in previous years, but respondents were asked to consider the proposals and provide their views in an 'open text box'. The survey invited (but did not require) participants to provide their name and a contact email address. Participants were also asked to identify if their response was on behalf of an organisation (such as those mentioned as major preceptors above). The survey ran from 11 August to 18 September 2020.

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The online survey took the form of a simple web form on the Uttlesford District Council website which could be accessed via a direct link or from the website home page. Emails inviting participation in the survey were sent directly to Essex County Council, the PFCC and to all town and parish councils in the district on 11 August, with reminder emails sent in early September.

The survey was widely publicised to the citizens of Uttlesford were encouraged to take part with a press release which went to all local media and newspapers on 14 August and e-newsletters were sent to all of the subscribers on our mailing lists (in excess of 4700 contacts). The town and parish councils were also sent a letter and posters to be placed on parish notice boards, giving details of the survey and how to respond. In addition to this, the consultation was promoted on Facebook in mid-August and again within ten days of the close of the survey - the initial post reaching almost 10,500 people and had 490 engagements and 56 shares. Finally, for those who do not use digital services, we offered (details in the press releases and all publicity) to send out by post paper copies of the survey.

Results – Overall submissions

The LCTS scheme survey conducted in 2019 received a total of 156 responses. This year, however, in spite of this extensive publicity for the survey, the response rate was much lower with a total of 27 responses, as shown in the table below.

Overall submissions	Result counts (percentage)
Total number of paper forms returned:	0
Total number of web forms submitted:	27 (100%)
Total number of comments received:	25 (92.6%)
Number of responses on behalf of preceptors:	3*
Number of responses providing an email contact address:	15 (55.6%)

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*The survey was sent to Essex County Council, the PFCC and the town and parish councils in the district; a total of 54 email addresses. The response rate for this group was 5.56%.

Results – Submitted comments

Of the submitted comments, 16 (or 64% of all the comments received) either directly supported the proposals, or could clearly be interpreted as such.

The introduction to the survey asked participants not to comment on any other services the council provides; as such comments could not be taken into account as part of the consultation. However, where comments not related to the LCTS Scheme survey were received, these have been listed separately in this report.

All the comments provided as an expressed opinion regarding the proposals are listed below.

I agree with the decision
Yes
If this is the best affordable option I support it however I would urge the council to consider further support as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic and during this time of recession and low employment. I am classed as a “high earner” and I would rather pay up to 5% more so that someone less fortunate and privileged can pay £8.05 less. £8 to me is nothing but to someone it’s the difference between a few days groceries and hungry children. It’s radical but charities often partner with shopping sites to do a “round it up” scheme - could we do that with council tax to fund financial aid to those who need it most? We’ve an opportunity to ride on the coat tails of the community spirit we’ve seen in the pandemic...
Keep helping people who really need it

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Only give it if they have been living in the district for say three years before making the claim
In view of the current covid financial effects on us all, but in particular the vulnerable , I think the LCTS rate should be significantly increased from 12.5% .
I fully back the proposals to continue to provide help for the most vulnerable amongst us. In light of the current situation with Covid19, this help is more vital than ever.
The current level of subsidy should be maintained. If possible it should be increased
People's income has not kept pace with inflation. The community should be helping those less fortunate. As most of you support this government, I will not hold my breath.
Full support
In these tough times we should support people who have lost their jobs of who can not work. They should not have to pay anything at all until they are able to. This is the mark of a caring society.
I support council decision to offer council tax support to vulnerable and elderly residents in additions to pensioners on a low income.
Absolutely fine. Well done for keeping it the same .
It would be nice to have a lower council tax bill,when one person is not working,and only one person working for the couple,and to help them out. This is a very good idea,as some people in a couple,or,family who are out of work,and only one person working full time to help provide for the couple,or, the family,and to help them out with paying the council tax bill that they have to pay.
I agree that the LCTSS proposals for 2021/2022 should be on the same basis as 2020/2021, I thank UDC for doing this.

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Due to COVID-19 council tax should be paid by the government in full for the people who are on benefits and not working. Till they got a job obviously. But if this action is not possible than if the government is willing to slash the 12.50 % into half that's will be also good . So any supports from the government is gonna work in residence favours .

Why break a system that is working

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>. 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

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therefore consider this letter a formal response to the LCTS consultation process.

I am in favour of the Local Council Tax Scheme.

I support the scheme.

I support the proposal, and in view of Covid 19, I would also support a reduction in the contribution to 10%.

In my view working aged people on low income to pay zero Council tax.

All UDC documentation (including all consultation documentation) should be explicit about the particular cohorts of disabled people who are afforded Council Tax reductions AND ALL THOSE DISABLED PEOPLE COHORTS THAT ARE NOT.

Similarly that all UDC documentation is explicit that only some vulnerable people and carers on low income are protected.

SWTC supports the proposals of the 2021/22 LCTS scheme

I support the proposal to maintain the Support Scheme on the same basis as last year, which provides for a Contribution of 12.5% of the Council Tax bill, and adding that, in view of Covid 19, I would support a reduction in the Contribution to 10%.

Results – Additional comments received

Why have I been sent this? I am not disabled or claiming benefits I can answer it but you are asking the wrong questions. Many people have been affected by coronavirus and have lost their jobs and can not pay so you should be looking at how you can support them. Uttlesford just takes the money and does nothing aside from building everywhere. This is a wake up call you should be helping all people in the area and not just a few especially at this time