



Uttlesford District Council October 2018

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) and Empty Homes Survey

A summary report on a survey of town and parish councils within the Uttlesford district about Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) provision and the Council Tax premium charged for empty homes for the financial year 2019-2020.

This survey took the form of an online questionnaire and was sent as a link to the parish and town clerks within the Uttlesford district, as well as to Essex County Council and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. A total of four submissions were received.

These questions also appeared in the Council Spending questionnaire which was distributed district wide in July 2018 as an insert in the Summer Edition of the council's newsletter *Uttlesford Life*. Responses from the district residents are reported separately.

A total of four responses were received.

Results

Questionnaire Responses

Headline question	Result counts (percentage)
Q3a The Government has said pensioners on low income must be given full protection from the implications of the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) 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: 4 responses (100%) No: 0 responses (0.00%)
Q3b In the past few years the level that working age recipients in Uttlesford contribute towards their Council Tax bill has been set at 12.5%. This is the lowest contribution of any council in Essex. For each 2.5% of increase the LCTS recipient(s) will need to pay, on average, an additional £38 of Council Tax each year. The cost to the council of keeping the rate at 12.5% would be approximately £204,000. For each 2.5% increase recipients have to pay, the cost of the scheme for the council would reduce by approximately £3,958. Should the council keep the rate at 12.5%?	Yes: 0 responses (0.00%) No: 4 responses (100%)
Q3c Since 1 April 2013, councils have been allowed to charge a 50% premium on properties that have been empty and unfurnished for two years or more. The purpose of this is to bring empty homes back into use and help address the housing shortfall. Uttlesford District Council already charges the maximum premium allowed.	Yes: 1 response (25%) No: 3 responses (75%)

Headline question	Result counts (percentage)
<p>From 1 April 2019, councils will be allowed to increase the premium to 100% – this means homeowners will be paying double Council Tax on a property if it is left empty after two years rather than one and a half times Council Tax as they have to at the moment.</p> <p>Should the council increase the premium on properties that have been empty and unfurnished for 2 years or more to 100% of the council tax?</p>	

Saffron Walden Town Council declined to complete the online questionnaire but submitted an emailed comment as shown below.

“A response was considered at the Town Council’s Full Council meeting on 10th September 2018 and is recorded under Minute Reference FC481-18. At this meeting it was agreed that the Council was unable to complete the on-line survey and the Town Council’s response to this consultation is as follows:

“Resolved: No response to individual questions but to note that UDC retains all of the LCTS monies and no longer passes any to town or parish councils” “