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Chief Executive

A **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** of the Borough of Castle Point will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kiln Road, Thundersley, on **WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2017** at **7.30 p.m.**, and all Members of the Council, listed below, are hereby summoned to attend to transact the undermentioned business.

Councillors B.S. Wood,(The Worshipful the Mayor), A.C.Walter,(Deputy Mayor), A.J. Acott, J. Anderson, A.J.Bayley, D.A. Blackwell, B. Campagna, S. Cole, D.T. Cross, W.J.C. Dick, Mrs B. Egan, E. Egan, Mrs W. Goodwin,P.C. Greig, S.Hart, N.R. Harvey, R.C. Howard, J. Hudson, R. Hurrell, G.I. Isaacs, Mrs.J.King, N.E.Ladzrie, C.A. MacLean, P.J. May, C.E. Mumford, B.A. Palmer, J.A.Payne, Mrs. J. Payne, A. Partridge, C.G. Riley, Mrs C.J Sach, W.K.Sharp, A.G. Sheldon, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, A. Taylor, P.E.Varker, Mrs L. Wass, Mrs G. Watson and N. Watson.

Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

(Business to be taken in public)

Before commencing the business of the meeting, prayers will be offered by the Chaplain.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Members' Interests

3. Minutes

To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Ordinary Council held on 27th September 2017.

4. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor will report at the meeting.

5. Questions from members of the public of which Notice has been received

A question has been received and is attached.

- 6. Questions from Members of the Council of which Notice has been received**
Questions have been received are attached
- 7. To deal with any business from the last Council Meeting**
There is none.
- 8. Any explanations for urgent decisions taken by Cabinet**
There are none.
- 9. Consideration of recommendations from Cabinet:**
At the Cabinet meeting on 15.11.2017, Cabinet referred recommendations on which a report is attached concerning the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme for 2018/19.
- 10. Any References from the Scrutiny/Policy and Scrutiny or Regulatory Committees**
There are none.
- 11. Castle Point Brownfield Land Register 2017**
The Council is asked to consider the attached report.
- 12. Local Plan – Notification from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**
A report is to follow.
- 13. Report from the Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member**
The Leader is to report at the meeting.
- 14. Notices of Motion**
These are attached.
- 15. Petitions submitted by Members of the Council of which Notice has been given.**
No Notice has been received.



ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES

MINUTES of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Castle Point held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kiln Road, Thundersley on 27th September 2017.

PRESENT: Councillors B.S. Wood (The Worshipful the Mayor), A.C.Walter, (Deputy Mayor), A.J. Acott, J. Anderson, A.J.Bayley, D.A. Blackwell, B. Campagna, D.T. Cross, W.J.C. Dick, Mrs B.Egan, E. Egan, P.C. Greig, S.Hart, N.R. Harvey, R.C. Howard, J. Hudson, R. Hurrell, Mrs.J.King, N.E.Ladzrie, C.A. MacLean, P.J. May C.E. Mumford, A. Partridge, J.A.Payne, Mrs. J. Payne, A.G. Sheldon, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, A. Taylor, P.E.Varker, Mrs G. Watson and N. Watson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: S.P.Cole, Mrs W. Goodwin, G.I. Isaacs, B.A. Palmer, C.G. Riley, Mrs C.J Sach, W.K.Sharp and Mrs L. Wass.

26. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Campagna declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute 38a as a member of Canvey Baywatch.

Councillor May declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute 38a as a member of Canvey Baywatch and in respect of Minute 38 as a member of Essex County Council

Councillors Mrs Egan, Blackwell and Sheldon each declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute 38 as a Member of Essex County Council.

Councillor E. Egan declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute 38 by reason of his wife's membership of Essex County Council.

27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council held on 26th July 2017 were taken as read and approved as a correct. The Mayor signed the Minutes.

28. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on various events and activities he had attended over the summer including a presentation to Lord Petre to mark his retirement as Lord Lieutenant of Essex; Stibbards 150th Anniversary Event and the passing out parade of Police Cadets.

The Mayor thanked the Canvey Railway Club for running a Charity Day to raise funds for the Mayor's Chosen Charities.

The Mayor encouraged attendance at the Firework Spectacular which was to take place at Waterside Farm on Saturday 4 November 2017 and the Remembrance Sunday Services taking place in the Borough on Sunday 12th November 2017.

29. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED

There were none.

30. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED

Councillor Campagna had given notice of the following:

1. Would the Cabinet Member for Environment please apologise to the residents and day trippers to Canvey seafront for failing to repair the public toilets in time for the August Bank Holiday. Does he not think it is unacceptable that this should happen on a busy bank holiday?

Councillor Skipp Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure replied explaining the reason for the unfortunate occurrence which meant that the toilet block at the Labworth car park was unavailable and arrangements in place to prevent this.

Councillor Skipp expressed regret that this issue had been allowed to detract from what was an excellent event attended by so many and he took the opportunity to thank Canvey Rotary for organising this.

Councillor Skipp referred to the excellent facilities on Canvey Seafront and highlighted the work of the volunteers of Canvey Baywatch and the Friends of Concord Beach. He thanked them for their contribution to the enjoyment that visitors to Canvey Seafront experienced.

Councillor Skipp concluded by thanking the traders and local businesses who had made their facilities available for visitors to the area on that weekend.

30a. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED

Councillor Neville Watson had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Waste, Flooding and Water Management:

2. Can the Cabinet Member for Waste, Flooding and Water Management, please inform Canvey residents was the bid in 2015 to the Government from our MP and this Council for £24 million to solve Canvey Islands drainage problems fake news ? Also the latest bid by the MP and

Benfleet councillors to the Government for £24million to solve the drainage problems also being fake news or have we bid for £50 million?

Councillor Howard Cabinet Member for Street Scene, Waste, Floods and Water Management replied drawing attention to the progress that had been made by all those responsible in resolving the flooding issues affecting the Borough but in particular Canvey Island.

Councillor Howard highlighted the work being progressed through the Multi – Agency Partnership which included Essex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, Essex County Council as Highway Authority, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Castle Point Borough Council.

Each partner had worked very hard to deliver the action plan set out in the Six Point Plan including:

- A detailed computer model of the existing drainage system including the Canvey Lake
- A better understanding of how the lake forms part of the critical drainage infrastructure and what needs to be done to improve it still further
- Repaired numerous defects on the existing drainage system caused by utility companies and others
- Installed property level flood protection to numerous properties
- Installed weed screens and webcams to May Avenue pumping station
- Refurbished other critical pumping stations
- Identified a number of capital schemes to improve the highway drainage system
- Set out our £24.5m Six Point Plan to three Ministers responsible for flooding matters

The partnership was not waiting for money to be allocated whilst Ministers considered our case but was getting on with matters to reduce the risk of flooding.

In total the partnership had spent, or was planning to spend shortly, nearly £6 million since the flood of 2014.

Councillor Howard concluded that there is more to be done but great progress was being made.

30b. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED

Councillor Greig had given notice of the following questions to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure:

3. Could the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, Please inform the Council as to what has happened with the disabled parking survey as promised by the Member?
4. Could the Cabinet Member please also bring us up to date as to the men's changing rooms at Waterside Farm sports centre where the ceiling was leaking badly?

Councillor Skipp Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure replied.

Arrangements were being made to provide Councillor Grieg with details of the numbers of disabled parking bays available throughout all Council car parks. With regard to the Waterside Farm Leisure Centre liaison had taken place with the British Parking Association with regard to disabled parking provision to obtain Disabled Parking Accreditation for this car park. Three additional disabled bays had been provided in order to meet the accreditation criteria and a date for the site inspection was awaited. Councillors would be kept informed.

With regard to the leak from the ceiling in the men's changing rooms at Waterside Farm Sports Centre. Councillor Skipp explained that investigations had been undertaken to trace the source of the leak and repairs had been carried out.

30c. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED

Councillor Blackwell had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Waste, Flooding and Water Management:

5. Can the Cabinet Member for Flooding and Waste, please confirm that Canvey Island is a Designated Critical drainage area as stated by Essex County Councils flood investigation?

Councillor Howard Cabinet Member for Street Scene, Waste, Floods and Water Management replied setting out the position:

As with many other low-lying coastal communities, Canvey Island falls within a Flood Risk Zone 3. It is also described as a Critical Drainage Area in the Surface Water Management Plan for South Essex. However the island is protected by unique, well-maintained and high-quality sea defences providing protection to the community.

Councillor Howard referred to his response to the earlier question regarding flooding matters, excellent progress was being made by the Council and its partners to address surface water drainage issues on Canvey Island and indeed elsewhere in the Borough where surface water drainage problems have been experienced.

31. TO DEAL WITH ANY BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

There was none.

32. ANY EXPLANATIONS FOR URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET

There were none.

33. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET:

There were none

34. ANY REFERENCES FROM THE SCRUTINY, POLICY & SCRUTINY OR REGULATORY COMMITTEES

There were none

35. FINANCIAL RESULTS AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016/17

The Council considered a report containing the financial out-turn results and audited Statement of Accounts for approval by Council.

The Statement of Accounts must be prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and proper accounting requirements, as set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17, and the associated Guidance notes for Practitioners. The accounts had been completed to meet the compressed deadlines which would have effect from July 2018.

The accounts had been audited by the Council's External Auditors Ernst and Young and had been available for public inspection.

In order to ensure that the accounts were subject to robust scrutiny additional guidance had been produced. Annexe A contained a summary of the 2016/17 financial results for the Council's three main funds: the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme. Annexe B contained supporting information for the benefit of Members including explanations of changes to the format of the financial statements and an analysis of figures and disclosures presented in the accounts. A summary of the Accounts was also before the Council. A separate report to Audit Committee in June 2017 and Cabinet in July 2017 had summarised the Council's Treasury Management activity for 2016/17.

The Head of Resources presented the accounts and informed the Council that the Auditors had issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements. In moving approval of the accounts Councillor Stanley Deputy Leader of the Council drew attention to the outturn figures which demonstrated close financial control. In commenting on the Accounts he highlighted the Council spending in maintaining and delivering Council services, the use of reserves and future financial pressures to be faced by the Council. Councillor Stanley acknowledged and thanked the Head of Resources and officers for their work.

The Council examined the audited accounts. At the conclusion Councillor Stanley responded to questions and observation from Councillors.

The Council concurred with the view that the overall financial results for 2016/17 generally indicated sound budgeting and good budgetary control.

Resolved:

That following scrutiny:

1. The financial results for 2016/17 and explanations of budget variances and significant items were noted.

2. To approve the audited Statement of Accounts which were signed by the Mayor.

36. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE AND ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

At the meeting of Ordinary Council on 29.3.2017 Council had supported a Motion seeking a 'review of this Council's system of governance and to diligently explore alternative systems available to local councils.'

A report was before the Council setting out the Council's system of governance and alternative systems for review.

Following Localism Act 2011 there were three forms of arrangements

- Executive (two models)
 - Mayor and Cabinet (this would require a referendum)
 - Leader and Cabinet
- Committee
- Other arrangements requiring regulations to be made by the Secretary of State (no regulations have been made)

Castle Point Council's arrangements were described in the report.

Castle Point Borough Council has a Leader and Cabinet Executive comprising of nine members.

The Overview and Scrutiny arrangements are undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee and three Policy and Scrutiny Committees: Environment; Wellbeing and Place and Communities.(On occasion in dealing with key policy matters these committees combined).There is a separate Audit Committee reflecting best practice and there are three Regulatory Committees: Development Control Committee; Licensing Committee and Review Committee.

In order to assist the Council a comparison of the key features of the Executive and Committee system and the resources required to support the systems was set out in the report. The cost of resourcing a committee system would increase operational costs significantly.

A commentary was provided

Full Council retained control of all major decisions. Significant policy and budgeting setting decisions must still be taken by all Members in Council and cannot be taken by the Cabinet. Cabinet allows fast and efficient decision making for routine Council business. All key decisions taken by Cabinet are included in advance in the Forward Plan which is published, open and transparent.

All Members receive Cabinet papers and can attend and participate in meetings of the Cabinet. The Cabinet had recently extended the opportunity for Members to attend Cabinet meeting and ask question of Cabinet members on matters within their responsibilities to improve communication.

Decisions were subject to scrutiny and the Call in procedure. All Non-Executive members had the opportunity to be involved in forming policy through the work of the Policy & Scrutiny Committees.

The Committee system increased bureaucracy and cost and reduced the efficiency of decision making. Given the current pressures on Council budgets the cost of moving to a committee system would need to be found from existing resources.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and moved the recommendation which was seconded. Debate took place. In summing up at the conclusion of the debate the Deputy Leader acknowledged Members comments regarding lack of involvement in Cabinet decisions. However he pointed out that major Council decisions were reserved to full Council and all Members had the opportunity to take part. The Cabinet for the most part dealt with routine matters.

Councillors had the opportunity to contribute to the policy decisions through the Policy and Scrutiny Committee which were politically balanced and the use of these committees would increase.

The need to make Cabinet meetings more open had been recognised the opportunity to question Cabinet Member had been extended and suggestions as to how participation could be improved were invited. The Deputy Leader reassured the Council that all decisions made by Cabinet were made in public.

A vote was taken.

Resolved:

To note the report and maintain the current system of Governance.

37. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

There was none.

38. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Varker had given notice of the following:

‘That Castle Point Council urges Essex County Council to take measures and steps to put forward an application for a Green Flag Park Award for Hadleigh Country Park for 2018.’

The Motion was moved and seconded. Debate took place at the conclusion a vote was taken which was CARRIED (Nem Con) and RESOLVED accordingly.

38a. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Varker had given notice of the following:

The Officers of Castle Point Council are requested to investigate the criteria and feasibility for applying for a Blue Flag Beach Award for Thorney Bay Beach and Concord Beach for 2018 and report back on their findings.'

The Motion was moved and seconded by Councillor Hart. During discussion it was suggested that the proposition should be referred to a Policy & Scrutiny Committee for examination. A vote was taken which was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY and RESOLVED accordingly.

38b. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Mrs Watson had given notice of the following:

'I call upon Castle Point Council that before any important documents are published from this Council to the public, that all Councillors should be given a presentation first as it is only right that we should be informed of the intentions of this Council.'

The Motion was moved and seconded by Councillor Greig. A vote was taken which was CARRIED and RESOLVED accordingly.

38c. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Neville Watson had given notice of the following:

'I call upon Castle Point Council to bring back the funding to the Community Forums for the residents to help enhance their areas '

The Motion was Moved, Seconded and ADJOURNED without debate to enable Cabinet to consider whether it wished to report on the matter Council Procedure Rule 13 Motions on Expenditure applied.

38d. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Blackwell had given notice of the following:

'We call upon Castle Point Council's Majority Group, that in the interests of democracy to ask the Cabinet Members to bring a report of their actions to full Council and allow members to ask questions'

The Motion was moved and seconded by Councillor Mrs Watson. Debate took place during which it was suggested that the Motion was unnecessary as there was provision in the Council's Procedure Rules to be asked in Council of Cabinet Members. There was also the ability to question Cabinet Members both formally and informally at Cabinet meetings.

At the conclusion a vote was taken which was CARRIED and RESOLVED accordingly.

39. PETITIONS

There were none.

Mayor

ORDINARY COUNCIL

6th December 2017

Subject: Questions from members of the Public

1. Purpose of Report

Mr Moeller, a local resident has given notice under Council Procedure Rule 8.3 of the following question to the Leader of the Council.

‘Following the recently published investigation report into the behaviour of Councillor Bill Sharp and as a local resident who has been adversely affected by a poor planning decision, I would like to ask the Leader of the Council what action is being taken to implement the recommendations made by the report writer?’

ORDINARY COUNCIL

6th December 2017

Subject: Questions from Members

1. Purpose of Report

To present to Council Notice of Questions from Members received for consideration at this meeting.

Councillor Campagna has given notice of the following question:

'Will the Leader of the Council please explain to the residents of Canvey Island, why they were not told that the £1.5 million to refurbish the paddocks was over a 20 year period as planned maintenance?'

Councillor Campagna has given notice of the following question:

'Will the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities explain how Castle Point Council is using powers available under the Crime and Policing Act 2014 to curb anti - social behaviour and crime in Castle Point?'

ORDINARY COUNCIL

6th December 2017

**Subject: Consideration of Recommendations from Cabinet:
Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme for 2018/19**

Cabinet Member: Councillor Stanley – Finance, Policy & Resources

1. Purpose of Report

To present recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 15.11.2017 in respect of:

- The results of consultation on proposed changes for the 2018/19 scheme.
- Recommended changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2018/19.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

This report is linked to the Council's priority of Efficient and Effective Customer Focused Services. Sound and strategic financial management is essential in order to ensure that resources are available to support the Council's priorities and maintain or improve services.

3. Recommendations from Cabinet:

1. To note the consultation results, Impacts of Scheme Options, and Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment appended to this report.
2. That there are no changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2018/19.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 The Council is required to approve future year's Local Council Tax Support schemes annually before 31st January, regardless of whether there are proposals to change the scheme or not.

- 4.2 It is also an annual requirement to consult with residents and other interested parties in relation to the scheme and at its meeting in July, Cabinet noted proposed arrangements for consultation for next year's scheme.

5. Consultation responses

- 5.1 The consultation period ran for 6 weeks, from 14th August 2017 and 24th September 2017.
- 5.2 To increase awareness and encourage participation during the consultation period the following activities were undertaken;
- 5,000 information leaflets were included with all Council Tax and Benefit documentation issued.
 - 6 Tweets were issued.
 - Information was published on the 'Latest News' box on the CPBC website homepage and also on every Council Tax and Benefit webpage.
 - Hard copy forms and envelopes and ballot boxes were made available at each of the four local Libraries and at the Council Offices.
- 5.3 Partners, via the Benefit Information Network group and Local Strategic Partnership group, were also notified and asked to raise awareness amongst their customers.
- 5.4 During the consultation period one ballot box was removed 4 days before the end of the consultation period. Customers were however still able to complete and return hard copy responses via prepaid envelopes which remained on display throughout and the box was reinstated for an additional 1 week as well. This did not therefore fetter the consultation process for those who wished to take part.
- 5.5 The consultation contained questions about;
- Whether the Council should keep the current scheme?
 - Whether the Council should reduce the maximum award percentage cap?
 - Whether the Council should introduce a minimum award amount?
 - Whether the Council should consider three alternative proposals, rather than change the current scheme?
- 5.6 521 people accessed the consultation form; 19 via paper format, 502 via the online format. Of these, 73 people went on to respond to either some or all of the questions. This compares with only 170 people who accessed the consultation last year, of which 66 responded fully.
- 5.7 Essex County Council, Essex Police and Essex Fire have been consulted via the Pan Essex Group which is an officer led working group consisting of representatives from all Essex authorities and pre-cepting organisations.
- 5.8 A detailed summary of the consultation results is set out at Appendix A of this report.

6. Proposed Changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19

6.1 The following elements are already incorporated into the 2017/18 scheme for Castle Point:

- 1 As directed by central government, all pensioners are treated as protected, meaning that the financial impact of changes falls on working age households only.
- 2 The scheme is means tested, using many of the principles of the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, which enables specific protections to be applied to vulnerable groups, households with children, and households with disabilities.
- 3 The scheme incentivises work by disregarding £25 per week of earned income.
- 4 Child Benefit is counted in full as income when calculating entitlement.
- 5 Claims for Local Council Tax Support cannot be back dated.
- 6 As far as possible the scheme allows for expected growth in demand and is easy to claim and administer.
- 7 Second Adult Rebate, previously available under Council Tax Benefit, is not part of the scheme for working age claimants.
- 8 The savings limit is £6,000, meaning that claimants with capital exceeding this value are not entitled to Local Council Tax Support.
- 9 Non-Dependant deductions, previously applicable under Council Tax Benefit, are not included in the scheme for working age claimants.
- 10 In conjunction with the Council's 'Local War Pensioner' scheme, income received in respect of War Pensions for disablement or bereavement is fully disregarded when calculating entitlement.
- 11 Support is capped at Council Tax band D and at 70% of Council Tax liability for working age claimants, meaning all working age Council Tax Payers are required to pay a minimum of 30% of their weekly council tax bill and those living in properties banded E to H will be assessed as though they are living in a Band D property.
- 12 Underlying Entitlement, previously awarded when an overpayment occurred under Council Tax Benefit, is not applicable in the scheme for work age claimants.
- 13 The Family Premium, previously awarded under Council Tax Benefit, no longer applies to new working age claims made from 1st April 2017 onwards.

- 14 The period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Local Council Tax Support is limited to a maximum of 4 weeks (subject to specific exceptions).
- 15 The Severe Disability Premium, previously awarded under Council Tax Benefit, no longer applies from 1st April 2017 onwards where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them.
- 16 From 1st April 2017 the Work Related Activity Component is no longer included when calculating entitlement for new applicants who receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and who fall within the Work Related Activity Group.
- 17 From 6th April 2017 the number of Dependant Child Applicable Amounts used when calculating entitlement is limited to a maximum of two (subject to specific exceptions).

6.2 It is recommended that the scheme for 2018/19 should not be changed.

7. Corporate Implications

a. Financial Implications

Funding

- 7.1 The reduced tax yield arising directly from the council tax support scheme discount was originally compensated for by a government grant. With the exception of the Town Council, each precepting organisation received their equivalent grant directly and it was specifically identified within the overall finance settlement. An amount was paid over from this Council to the Town Council based on an estimate of the amount relating to them. From 2015/16 the grant has not been specified separately and the scale of reductions applied to Revenue Support Grant (RSG) means that local authorities are now required to fund this scheme entirely from their own resources.
- 7.2 Despite significant reductions in government funding and other cost pressures the Council has maintained the scheme at broadly its original level.
- 7.3 The overall impact on the Council Tax Base for each financial year since introduction of the scheme is shown in the table below:

	Outturn £000s	Projected £000s
2013/14	5,798	
2014/15	5,282	
2015/16	4,874	
2016/17	4,804	
2017/18		4,840

- 7.4 The number of discounts awarded under the local scheme has steadily reduced throughout the period since the scheme was launched in April 2013. Caseload will be influenced by changes in the local economy.

Collection

- 7.5 On introduction, the scheme resulted in a number of residents receiving full or partial Council Tax bills for the first time and, as expected, some residents have had difficulty in making payment. The Council has seen a reduction in the overall council tax collection rate, and an increase in the number of payment arrangements which extend payment into subsequent financial years.
- 7.6 Financial implications over and above the target cost of the scheme, positive or negative, would be shared with the major precepting organisations.

Council Tax Reserve

- 7.7 The Council has preserved an amount of £100k in an earmarked reserve from scheme underspends in previous years.

b. Legal Implications

- 7.8 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 made provision for local authorities to implement a council tax reduction scheme based on financial need criteria. This legislation also placed responsibility on the billing authority before introducing or implementing changes to their scheme to undertake consultation on the various options enabling consultees to express meaningful views on the proposals. These views have been considered by the local authority before making a final decision.

c. Human resources/equality/human rights

- 7.9 A stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed changes has been completed. A copy is attached at Appendix C of this report.

d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

- 7.10 The local scheme needs to be finalised by 31st January 2018. The new scheme must be operational from 1st April 2018

Key project milestones are as follows:

Milestone	Timeframe	Purpose
Formal Public/Stakeholder Consultation	Aug 17 – Sept 17	Pre-cepting organisations & Residents
Grant Published	Nov 17 – Dec 17	
Cabinet Report	15.11.2017	Consultation outcome

Report to Council	6.12.2017	Proposed scheme to be recommended to Council
2018/19 Scheme in place	31.01.2018	Final scheme approval
2018/19 Scheme in operation	01.04.2018	Adoption and Implementation
		Operation

Appendix A Consultation Summary Report

Appendix B Impacts of 2018/19 Scheme Options

Appendix C Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

8. Background Papers:

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19 update – report to Cabinet 19th July 2017

Report Author:

Eddie Mosuro – Revenues & Benefits Transformation Manager




Castle Point Borough Council
2018/19 Proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme
Consultation Summary Report

In total 521 people accessed the consultation form, with 19 residents doing so by paper, and 502 doing so online. Of these, 73 people went on to respond to either some or all of the questions.

Consultation Results




Q1:

I have read the background information about the Local Council Tax Support scheme:

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		70	96%
No		1	1%
Don't Know		2	3%
Total Respondents		73	100%
(skipped this question)			448

Q2:

Should the Council keep the current Local Council Tax Support scheme? (Not changing the scheme means we will continue to administer the scheme and calculate support as we do currently).

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		31	60%
No		16	30%
Don't know		5	10%
Total Respondents		52	100%
(skipped this question)			469

Q3:




Please use the space below to make any comments you have about Option 1 (no change):

8 comments were recorded (513 skipped the question):

- 1 commented that working age households should get 75% support as they are generally worse off than pensioners and support should be equal for all.
- 1 commented that it was unfair that those who are able to work but don't sometimes get more support than those who can and do.
- 1 agreed that this was the second-best option, after eliminating very low levels of support to reduce administrative costs.
- 1 agreed with Option 1 stating that it was comforting to know that there is a safety net for the vulnerable and unfortunate people who find themselves in financial difficulties but expressing concern that it was difficult to recognize the needy from the abusers of these systems.
- 4 generally provided adverse or miscellaneous feedback with no reference to the consultation (Which are available on request)




Q4:

Should the Council reduce the maximum award percentage cap? Currently the maximum award is capped at 70%, meaning work age claimants have to pay at least 30% of their Council Tax liability themselves. This option predominantly reduces the financial burden of the scheme.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		15	33%
No		25	56%
Don't know		5	11%
Total Respondents		45	100%
(skipped this question)			476

Q5:

If you ticked 'yes', what level should the cap be reduced to?

	Response Total	Response Percent
68% 	1	5%
66%	0	0%
65% 	10	56%
Another % 	7	39%
Total Respondents	18	100%
(skipped this question)		503

Q6:

Please use the space below to make any comments you have about Option 2 (Reducing the maximum award %).

8 responses were recorded (513 skipped the question):

- 1 opposed the fact that residents were being consulted on the scheme stating that the council was being optimistic to believe that the average survey respondent, without additional information and experience, could make a useful judgement as to the most appropriate level of support and suggesting that the % should be decided through cost/impact analysis which the council itself is the only body capable of undertaking.
- 1 commented that Council Tax is already more expensive than other neighboring boroughs and did not feel that bills for the Tax Payer should be raised further.
- 1 commented that this option would only assist in the short term and that the Council would still need to raise Council Tax as the value of money falls, suggesting the Council should fight harder for funds instead.
- 5 generally provided adverse or miscellaneous feedback with no reference to the consultation (Which are available on request)

Q7:

Should the Council introduce a minimum award amount? There is no minimum award amount in the current scheme so some people receive support of 1p per week. If a minimum award amount is introduced this means that working age people will not receive any support where their weekly entitlement is lower than the minimum award figure. This option predominantly reduces the administrative burden of the scheme.

APPENDIX A

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		16	37%
No		20	47%
Don't know		7	16%
Total Respondents		43	100%
(skipped this question)			478

Q8:

If you ticked 'yes', what level should the minimum award be set at?

		Response Total	Response Percent
50p per week		4	21%
£1.00 per week		6	31%
£2.00 per week		2	11%
Another amount Per week		7	37%
Total Respondents		19	100%
(skipped this question)			502

Q9:

Please use the space below to make any comments you have about option 3
(Introducing a minimum award amount):

16 responses were recorded, with 505 skipping the question;

- 1 commented that a 1p award is an administrative nightmare.
- 1 stated that the administrative cost of supporting someone by 1p per week is the same as the administrative cost of supporting someone by £50 per week, whereas the benefit to the recipient is clearly very different and stated that a detailed policy decision like this should not be decided by the public.
- 4 generally supported this option stating that it was common sense and that most people could burden the extra cost.
- 1 generally supported this option but stated that no figures were provided to enable respondents to see how it might impact residents.
- 9 generally provided adverse or miscellaneous feedback with no reference to the consultation (Which are available on request)

Q10:

Should the Council choose any of the following alternative proposals to deliver savings to enable us to maintain the current scheme? If the Council keeps the current scheme, it is expected to become increasingly more complex and expensive to administer. This is because it will not align with Housing Benefit which is also administered by the Council. If this happens we will need to find savings from other services to help meet the increase in costs. The following alternative proposals could deliver savings. Please select one response for each alternative proposal:

	Yes	No	Don't know	Response Total
Increase the level of Council Tax	15% (6)	75% (30)	10% (4)	40
Find savings from cutting other Council Services	29.73% (11)	54.05% (20)	16.22% (6)	37
Use the Council's savings	65.79% (25)	23.68% (9)	10.53% (4)	38
Total Respondents				45
(skipped this question)				476

Q11:

If the Council were to choose these other options to make savings, what would be your order of preference? Please rank in order of preference by picking from 1 – 3 in the boxes below, with 1 being the option that you most prefer and 3 being the option you least prefer.

	1	2	3	Response Total
Increase the level of Council Tax	20.51% (8)	10.26% (4)	69.23% (27)	39
Find savings from cutting other Council Services	13.51% (5)	37.84% (14)	48.65% (18)	37
Use the Council's savings	68.29% (28)	24.39% (10)	7.32% (3)	41
Total Respondents				43
(skipped this question)				478

Q12:

Please use this space to make any comments you have about Option 4 (Alternative Proposals)

15 responded (506 skipped the question):

- 4 generally opposed increasing the Council Tax stating that it was high enough already and higher than neighbouring boroughs, and that more effort should be put into collecting council tax from those who owe it.
- 1 supported increasing Council Tax, but in accordance with inflation only

- 1 supported increasing Council Tax saying it was the least worst option because the burden would fall fairly on all residents rather than disproportionately on the least well off but went on to also say that introducing a minimum award would enable the council to realise both scheme and administrative savings.
- 1 generally opposed cutting other services stating they were already near breaking point and that this would have the greatest impact on those who most need support.
- 1 generally supported cutting services by reducing staff and selling off unused council assets.
- 2 stated that the council's reserves should be an emergency provision for major one-off events and that using these to fund Council tax support each year would diminish the reserves to nothing and leave the Council unable to respond to emergencies.
- 7 generally provided adverse or miscellaneous feedback with no reference to the consultation (Which are available on request)

Q13.

Please use the space below to tell us of any other options, which have not yet been mentioned, that you would like the Council to consider:

9 responded (512 skipped the question):

- 1 suggested reducing Council spend on statues and expenses.
- 1 suggested the Council holds fund raising events.
- 1 suggested closing the Council Offices.
- 6 generally provided adverse or miscellaneous feedback with no reference to the consultation (Which are available on request)

Q14.

Please use the space below if you have any other comments or questions regarding the Local Council Tax Support scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere:

9 responded (512 skipped the question):

- 1 commented that not all residents would be aware of the survey if they do not transact regularly with the Council and suggested it should be publicised with their annual Council Tax Bill to all residents instead.
- 8 generally provided adverse or miscellaneous feedback with no reference to the consultation (Which are available on request)

Q15.

Are you, or someone in your household, getting Local Council Tax Support?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		7	16%
No		33	79%
Don't know		2	5%
Total Respondents		42	100%
(skipped this question)			479

Q16.

What is your sex?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Male		21	52%
Female		17	42%
Prefer not to say		2	6%
Total Respondents		40	100%
(skipped this question)			471




Q17.

What age are you?

		Response Total	Response Percent
18-24		3	8%
25-34		4	11%
35-44		9	24%
45-54		3	8%
55-64		10	25%
65-74		2	5%
75-84		4	11%
85+		2	5%
Prefer not to say		1	3%
Total Respondents		38	100%
(skipped this question)			483








Q18.

Disability: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		10	30%
No		17	52%
Don't know		0	0%
Prefer not to say		6	18%
Total Respondents		33	100%
(skipped this question)			488

Q19.

Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?

		Response Total	Response Percent
White British		28	76%
Other White		0	0%
White Irish		2	6%
White & Black Caribbean		1	3%
White & Black African		1	3%
White & Asian		1	3%
Any Other Mixed background		0	0%
Indian		0	0%
Pakistani		1	3%
Bangladeshi		0	0%
Any Other Asian background		0	0%
Caribbean		0	0%
African		0	0%
Any Other Black background		0	0%
Chinese		0	0%
Arab		0	0%
Prefer not to say		2	6%
Other, please specify		0	0%
Total Respondents		36	100%
(skipped this question)			485

Impacts of Proposed 2018/19 LCTS Scheme

Residents were consulted on:

- whether the Council should keep the current scheme
- whether the Council should reduce the minimum award percentage cap
- whether the Council should introduce a minimum award amount
- whether the Council should consider three alternative proposals, rather than change the current scheme.

It is difficult to fully assess the impact of these changes but the following tables attempt to outline key information about the existing working age LCTS caseload, and demonstrate the anticipated effect each change may have.

Table 1: General Population Data for Castle Point Borough Council

This table shows key working age population data for Castle Point, taken from the 2011 Census. This data is derived from 'Total Population' and 'Out-of-Work' data sets.

Population data (Census 2011)	Total Population (18 – 64)	Disability* (All ages)	Carer* (All Ages)	Female (18 – 64)	Male (18 - 64)	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number	89,200	530	680	45,800	43,400	7,000	9,000	9,800	13,000	11,500
Proportion of total WA population	100%	0.59%	0.76%	51.3%	48.7%	7.8%	10.19%	10.99%	14.57%	12.89%

* Disability & Carers details are not split by age range in the Census data so the figures shown represent all responses recorded in these categories, not just working age.

Table 2: Working Age LCTS Caseload Data for Castle Point Borough Council

This table shows the proportionate split between the same key data sets within the current Working Age LCTS claim database and compares the variance between this and the data in Table 1. LCTS caseload data extracted at **30.9.17**.

Working Age LCTS Scheme 2017/18	All Claimants	Disability	Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	2227	205	51	1520	707	70	464	444	610	639
Proportion of claimants	100%	9.20%	2.29%	68.25%	31.75%	3.14%	20.84%	19.94%	27.39%	28.69%
Average benefit paid (£ per week)	£13.63	£13.37	£13.18	£13.72	£13.64	£12.24	£12.98	£13.55	£14.05	£14.15
Difference to Census Data	-	+8.61%	+1.53%	+16.95%	-16.95%	-4.66%	10.65%	8.95%	12.82%	15.80%

Comparing Tables 1 and 2 shows, in terms of EQIA protected characteristics, that;

Disability

- Working age people with disabilities make up a significantly higher proportion of the current LCTS caseload (at 9.20%) compared to those in the borough's general population (0.59%).
- The proportion of the LCTS caseload that has disabilities has doubled since last year, when this only accounted for 4.57% of the total caseload.

Carers

- Working Age Carers make up a marginally higher proportion of the current LCTS caseload (at 1.53%), compared to those in the borough's general population (0.76%).
- The proportion of the LCTS caseload that are carers has only marginally increased compared to last year.

Age

In general, there is a higher proportionate LCTS caseload amongst those aged 25 to 64, and a lower proportionate caseload

amongst those aged 18 to 24, compared to the general population. Additionally, those aged 55-64 currently receive the highest weekly amount and those aged 18-24 receive the lowest weekly amount, on average.

Gender

Females continue to make up a higher proportion of the caseload at 68.25%, compared than that of the general population.

Although, there is a difference between the average amount females and males receive per week, this is solely due to factors that directly determine the calculation of LCTS (i.e. family make up, income, capital etc.), as opposed to being directly determined by gender.

Race

This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of LCTS.

Other protected characteristics

Information is not collected from claimants in relation to the following characteristics as it is not relevant to the calculation of LCTS:

- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Option 1: Keep the current scheme

This option has no impact on existing or new claimants.

Option 2: Reduce the maximum award percentage cap

The maximum award percentage cap is currently set at 70%.

Appendix B

Residents were given options to reduce this to; 68%, 66%, 65%, or another percentage of their choice.

The most popular % chosen was **65%**.

The following table shows how this would impact some case types, assuming the current Council Tax levels still apply:

Case Type	Band	17/18 Council Tax Bill (before LCTS)	Main Income	Weekly LCTS award (at 70%)	Net Council Tax to Pay	Weekly LCTS award (at 65%)	Net Council Tax to Pay	Extra To Pay per annum
Single Person with no children or non-dependants	B – Canvey Island	£964.69 (with 25% discount)	Employment Support Allowance	£12.95	£288.60	£12.03	£336.44	£47.84
Couple with 3 children and 1 non-dependant	C - Benfleet	£1,451.68 (Full Charge)	Income Support	£19.73	£439.92	£18.32	£513.24	£73.32
Lone Parent with 2 children and no non-dependants	B – Canvey Island	£964.69 (with 25% discount)	Self Employed Earnings	£5.49	£676.52	£4.57	£724.36	£47.84

If adopted:

- this change would apply to all new and existing claims from 1st April 2018.
- there would be no transitional protection for existing claimants
- it would have proportionate negative financial impact on all existing and new claims.
- this change would reduce the financial burden for the Local Authority.
- this change would not have any impact (negative or positive) on the administrative burden of the scheme.

Option 3: Introduce a minimum award amount

The current scheme does not have a minimum award value – this means claimants can qualify for as little as 1p per week.

Residents were given options to set the minimum award level at; 50p, £1.00, £2.00, or ‘another amount per week’.

The most popular level chosen was ‘another amount per week’.

Respondents were not asked to identify what ‘other amount’ they had in mind, however currently there are only **12** LCTS claims with awards of less than £1 per week (which was the 2nd most popular response).

If adopted;

- this change would apply to all new and existing claims from 1st April 2018
- there would be no transitional protection for existing claimants
- based on current LCTS caseload (12 cases), it would have minimal negative financial impact on existing claims
- this change would also therefore have minimal positive impact to the financial burden for the Local Authority.
- this change would also therefore have minimal positive impact on the administrative burden of the scheme.



Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018-19

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Nov 2017

Strategy and Policy EqIA

All strategies and policies must be initially screened for their positive and negative equality impacts.

This initial screening will determine whether or not it is necessary to carry out a full EqIA for the strategy or policy.

This template has been designed to help you initially screen your strategy or policy and, if necessary, undertake a full EqIA .

Title of strategy or policy:	Local Council Tax Support Scheme
Person undertaking EqIA:	Eddie Mosuro
Head of Service:	Craig Watts
Department:	Housing & Communities
Date EqIA completed:	9.10.17

Strategy and policy overview

Strategy and policy overview	
What is the strategy or policy intending to achieve?	To fulfil the Local Authorities legal obligation under the Localism Act to provide a Localised Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from 1.4.18.
What are the summary aims and objectives of the strategy or policy?	<p>Since 1st April 2013, the Council has maintained a Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme. This replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme, which ended on 31st March 2013. LCTS helps provide support to council taxpayers who have a low income. It supports the taxpayers by providing a reduction in the actual amount in Council Tax payable.</p> <p>The Council has the ability to determine the level of support given to working age applicants only. The scheme for pension age applicants is determined by Central Government and therefore the ability of the Council to vary that part of the scheme is limited and can only enhance the national scheme in any event.</p> <p>When LCTS was first introduced, Central Government provided a specified level of grant, which was approximately 10% lower than the amounts previously given (pre 1st April 2013). This has now been replaced by a general duty to provide a scheme and funding is not separately identified within the grants given to the Council.</p> <p>After the original consultation, the Council decided to introduce an LCTS scheme that differed from the original Council Tax Benefit in that instead of granting a maximum level of support of 100% it would limit the maximum support to 70%.</p>

<p>Who will benefit from implementing the strategy or policy?</p> <p>What are the links to the Council's corporate priorities?</p> <p>What are the links to other Council strategies and policies?</p>	<p>Changes since 2013 Since the introduction of LCTS, the overall scheme adopted by the Council has remained broadly the same, with only applicable amounts for Pension Age and Working Age people being up-rated annually in line with Central Government.</p> <p>Some technical changes were introduced in 2017/18 to mirror changes being made within Housing Benefit legislation.</p> <p>The Proposed Scheme for 2018/19 In July 2017 the Council approved a public consultation, which took place during August and September 2017, to gather views as to whether the current scheme should be changed. A summary of the results of the consultation are provided together with this Equality Impact Assessment. The Council is minded not to make changes to the working age scheme for 2018/19.</p> <p>The scheme benefits those on low incomes by providing them with support to pay their Council Tax. In particular it provides full protection to Pensioners (as prescribed within the requirements of the Localism Act) and includes locally determined protections for vulnerable groups and incentives to encourage people into work.</p> <p>This Policy supports the Council's corporate priority of 'Efficient & Effective Customer Focussed Services' by ensuring the Council is 'fit for purpose by meeting national and local requirements to agreed timescales and to optimum performance standards'.</p> <p>Corporate Debt Recovery Policy Exceptional Hardship Policy Homelessness Strategy Action Plan</p>
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What are the links to other community strategies and policies?

National Strategy for tackling child poverty under the Coalition Government:
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208061>

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 introduces 2 specific statutory duties on public bodies such as local authorities:

- **Socio-economic duty:**
 - Have due regard when making strategic decisions to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage
- **Single (integrated) equality duty:**
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation or any other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all of the different equality strands and refers to them as “**protected characteristics**”:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Initial screening

This initial screening template will determine whether or not the strategy or policy requires a full EqlA

If any of the answers to the 6 screening questions is “yes”, then a full EqlA will be required.

Initial screening		
Does the strategy or policy aim to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage?	Yes / No	The Policy fundamentally aims to provide financial assistance in meeting Council Tax costs for those disadvantaged by socio-economic factors.
Does the strategy or policy aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?	Yes / No	The scheme is prescribed for pension age people, however the scheme for working age people is less prescribed. Guidance has been given on treatment of vulnerable groups and work incentives. The design of the working age scheme has sought to eliminate discrimination.
Does the strategy or policy aim to advance equality of opportunity?	Yes / No	The Policy fundamentally aims to provide support with Council Tax for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged whilst also encouraging people into work. It has been recognised that in this regard opportunities for some groups may not be equal and therefore the Policy has been designed to provide protection for those groups where advancement of equal opportunity would be restricted.

Initial screening (continued)		
Does the strategy or policy aim to foster good community relations?	Yes / No	No evidence available – not applicable.
Does the strategy or policy have the potential to make a negative contribution to equality?	Yes / No	The scheme may fundamentally make a negative contribution to equality for certain groups – children, families, lone parents etc.
Does the strategy or policy make a positive contribution to equality?	Yes / No	Pension age people are specifically protected under Government Regulations.
Initial screening outcome	Full EqlA is required	

Full assessment

Information gathering	
What quantitative and qualitative information is there?	<p>Information detailing the current working age caseload against Census data and the impacts cross certain groups are set out here:</p> <p>Appendix B - Impact of Proposed 2018-19 LCTS Scheme V1 FINAL.docx</p>
What additional information is required?	No further information is required.
What are the outcomes of any internal and/or external consultation with stakeholders?	<p>Consultation was undertaken between 14.8.17 and 24.9.17.</p> <p>The consultation included key questions about;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the Council should keep the current scheme • whether the Council should reduce the minimum award percentage cap • whether the Council should introduce a minimum award amount • whether the Council should consider three alternative proposals, rather than change the current scheme. <p>521 people accessed the consultation form, 73 of these went on to either fully or partially answer the questions.</p> <p>The form contained a diversity data section, however this was optional. Based on the responses received the mix of respondents is believed to be broadly representative of the wider Castle Point community.</p> <p>The majority of respondents did not agree with any of the proposed changes</p>

<p>What further consultation is required?</p>	<p>Respondents were invited to make 'free text' comments.</p> <p>Most of the 'free text' comments elaborated on the reasons for their responses to the options presented.</p> <p>There is no requirement to conduct further consultation.</p> <p>Members are required to consider the Consultation results, Impact report, and this EQIA when deciding on the final scheme for 2018/19.</p>
<p>What examples are there of existing good practice?</p>	<p>Some elements of the current working age scheme (i.e. Band restriction, % liability reduction, removal of Second Adult Rebate) have been agreed as part of the overarching Pan Essex scheme.</p> <p>Other current scheme elements have been designed to meet specific needs within Castle Point.</p> <p>All of the technical changes introduced in the 2017/18 scheme mirror changes which have been introduced as part of Central Governments wider Welfare Reforms</p> <p>Guidance provided by DCLG, outlining good practice with regards to treatment of vulnerable groups;</p> <p>(http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/lscvulnerablepeople)</p> <p>and incentives to work;</p> <p>(http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/lscworkincentives),</p> <p>were considered when designing the scheme.</p> <p>The Local Government Finance Bill: Localizing Support for Council Tax – Updated Impact Assessment is also available here:</p>

	http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/lqfblocalisingcounciltax Each Local Authority is required to adopt their 2018/19 scheme by 31.1.18.
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Making a judgement	
How will the strategy or policy eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?	<p>Higher Rate Disability Benefits will continue to be disregarded thereby protecting those with specific long term conditions.</p> <p>People with disabilities will continue to receive additional premiums as part of the calculation of their award and also may receive additional financial support through the Exceptional Hardship Fund.</p> <p>Without these elements the policy could potentially be discriminatory to those who fall within the 'disability' characteristic group.</p> <p>No other impacts on protected groups has been identified.</p>
How will the strategy or policy advance equality of opportunity?	<p>The Policy is compliant with prescribed Regulations that protect Pension Age people. This advances equality of opportunity for those who fall within the 'age' characteristic group (specifically those of Pension age) who would otherwise be disadvantaged by the schemes fundamental incentives to work.</p>

Appendix C

	<p>Parents will continue to receive a Dependant's Applicable Amount (limited to a maximum of two children in line with other Welfare Reforms) and working parents will continue to receive an earnings disregard, as part of the calculation of their award.</p> <p>Higher Rate Disability Benefits will continue to be disregarded thereby protecting those with specific long term conditions.</p> <p>People with disabilities will continue to receive additional premiums as part of the calculation of their award and may also receive additional financial support through the Exceptional Hardship Fund.</p> <p>This advances equality of opportunity for those who fall within the 'disability' characteristic group who would otherwise be disadvantaged and may have less opportunity to improve their financial circumstances through work.</p> <p>No other impacts on protected groups have been identified.</p>
How will the strategy or policy foster good community relations?	No impacts on protected groups identified – not applicable.
<p>Does the strategy or policy have the potential to make a negative contribution to equality?</p> <p>If so, which groups with "protected characteristics" will be affected and what are the reasons?</p>	<p>Working Age people aged over 18 will be required to pay more than those of Pension Age.</p> <p>People with disabilities who are below pensionable age will need to pay more than those above pension age. This is due to the Prescribed Regulations which automatically protect people of Pension Age.</p> <p>The locally funded nature of the scheme that applies to those of working age, compared to the Prescribed Regulations that</p>

Appendix C

	<p>apply to those of pension age, means it is not financially viable to completely protect all protected characteristic groups from the full effects of this scheme.</p>
<p>What can be done to address any contribution to inequality caused by the strategy or policy?</p>	<p>Working Age people aged over 18 will be required to pay more:</p> <p>The Council actively supports customers with information and advice on income maximisation, financial capability, and debt management. The Flat Rate earnings disregard has been maintained in the scheme design to incentivise work.</p> <p>People with disabilities who are below pensionable age will need to pay more:</p> <p>Higher Rate Disability Benefits will continue to be disregarded thereby protecting those with specific long term conditions.</p> <p>A discretionary Exceptional Hardship Fund is available to provide additional financial assistance to those who are particularly vulnerable and suffering exceptional financial hardship.</p>
<p>What can be done to assist understanding of the strategy or policy?</p>	<p>Details of the scheme will be publicised on the council website www.castlepoint.gov.uk , and will be provided in hard copy and alternative formats (i.e. Braille, Large Print, Audio) on request.</p> <p>An on-line 'Calculator' is available to assist those who want to find out if they would be entitled to LCTS.</p> <p>First Contact customer service staff are available to explain the scheme to any individuals or organisations who require assistance.</p>

Appendix C

	Members of the Benefit Information Network group are notified annually of the consultation process and are briefed annually on the scheme adopted each year.
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Action plan					
Equality objective	Action(s)	Lead responsibility	Resources	Timescale(s)	Outcome(s)
Assist understanding of the Policy	Refresh website and hard copy information once 2018/19 Final Scheme formally adopted.	First Contact Manager	Staff time & printing costs	Jan – Mar 2018	All affected groups fully aware of the Policy and how it will affect them.
Assist understanding of the Policy	Engage with local advice and support groups through the Benefit Information Network Group.	Benefit Manager	Staff time	Jan – Mar 2018	All local advice and support groups fully aware of the policy and how it will affect their customers.
Advancing equality of opportunity	Proactively identify suitable cases for Exceptional Hardship awards using internal knowledge of debts identified in 2017/18.	Revenues Manager	Staff time, provision of discretionary funding pot	Jan 2018 – Mar 2019	Reduce impact of the scheme on those suffering exceptional financial hardship.
Advancing equality of opportunity	Maintain a range of support services and referral arrangements to	Revenues Manager & Benefit Manager	Staff time, funding pot for services, additional staff resource	Jan 2018 – Mar 2019	Customers adequately supported and equipped with skills

Appendix C

	provide effective assistance with financial capability, budgeting, and/or debt management advice.				to manage financial impact.
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ORDINARY COUNCIL

6th December 2017

Subject: Castle Point Brownfield Land Register 2017

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 At the meeting of the Council on 26th July 2017, it was resolved:

“Toagree that the Group Leaders establish a cross-party Member Working Group to assist with the preparation of and consultation on the Brownfield Register prior to its publication.”

1.2 This report provides the Council with a summary of the work undertaken following that resolution and recommends that Part 1 of the Castle Point Brownfield Land Register be published. It also explains why there no sites to be carried forward into Part 2 of the Register which would then have benefited from “Permission in Principle”.

2. Links to Council’s Priorities and Objectives

2.1 The matters described in this report are directly linked to the Council’s “Transforming our Community” priority – incorporating objectives for putting the right planning framework in place to create a sustainable future.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Council is recommended to:

Note Part 1 of the Castle Point Brownfield Land Register 2017, and to agree its publication in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017: and

Note that no sites will be carried forward into Part 2 of the Register at this time.

4. Background

- 4.1 In April 2017, the Government published the Brownfield Land Register and Permission in Principle Regulations. These require the Council to publish a Brownfield Land Register. The Register must contain two parts; Part 1 shall contain a list of previously developed sites and where residential development is considered suitable, available and achievable, and this must be published by 31st December 2017. Part 2 shall be a subset of Part 1 and may list those where the Council has decided to allocate the land for residential development ("Permission in Principle").
- 4.2 Since the creation of Part 2 of the Register may not be an executive function, the Cabinet recommended that Council establish a Member Working Party to assist with the preparation of the Castle Point Register.

5. Summary of work undertaken

- 5.1 All Members of the Council received a Briefing Note on the Brownfield Land Register and Permission in Principle Regulations with related guidance and advice in September 2017. The Members Working Group was convened in November 2017 and received a detailed briefing on the legal background to the Register, the work required and carried out in order to prepare and complete Part 1, and the informal position of key statutory consultees, precluding further work on Part 2. This is described in more detail below.
- 5.2 The evidence used to start the preparation of the Register was contained in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2017. Each of the 418 sites listed in the SHLAA was examined, and those not meeting the recognised planning definition of "previously developed land" were excluded. The remaining sites were then tested to see whether they were "suitable, available and achievable", again in accordance with recognised planning definitions in the regulations. In all 55 sites were found to meet these definitions at that stage.
- 5.3 In order to test current availability, however, further work was required. First land ownership details were confirmed by reference to the original SHLAA submission or planning applications, and other ownership details were sourced from the Land Registry. Land owners/agents were then contacted to clarify if their site was still considered as available for residential development and if there were any objections to the site being recorded on Part 1 of the Register. As a result of these contacts, there are 20 sites meeting the definitions in the regulations which can be published in Part 1 of the Castle Point Brownfield Land

Register 2017. The Register must be published in a prescribed electronic form, as required by regulations, but an extract is attached to this report as the Appendix.

- 5.4 Part 2 of the Register may contain sites where the Council agrees that “Permission in Principle” should be given. However a decision on whether to grant “Permission in Principle” to a site must be made in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national guidance, which indicate otherwise.
- 5.5 If the Council intended to grant a “Permission in Principle” by incorporating a site into Part 2, it must also carry out consultation, notification and publicity in accordance with regulations.
- 5.6 However informal discussions reveal that Natural England is raising concerns across Essex in relation to the cumulative impacts of population growth on recreation within and near to internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance. The Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA is such a site. It is therefore necessary to determine if and how the Council could go about addressing any such concerns in relation to this matter before proceeding with any site for consideration as part of the Part 2 of the Register.
- 5.7 Furthermore, Canvey Island is within Flood Risk Zone 3a, and as such planning applications for residential development normally require a Flood Risk Assessment. Advice is awaited from the Environment Agency as to if and how the Council could go about addressing this requirement before proceeding to consider any sites on Canvey Island for inclusion on the Part 2 of the Register.

6. Corporate Implications

a. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. All work so far undertaken has been carried out using existing approved budgets.
- 6.2 However if consultation on sites for potential inclusion on Part 2 of the Register were to proceed, there are likely to be unbudgeted costs associated with this. A Government grant of £14,600 was received late in the last financial year (2016/17) for Brownfield Register and “Permission in Principle” work. This grant has not yet been allocated and could therefore be applied to fund the consultation costs.

b. Legal Implications

- 6.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report, although Council is reminded that consideration of sites for potential inclusion on Part 2 of the Register must be in accordance with the development plan and other material considerations, as with any other planning decision.

c. Human Resources & Equality Implications

- 6.4 There are no direct implications of this kind arising from the recommendations in this report.

d. Timescale for implementation & risk factors

- 6.5 Part 1 of the Castle Point Brownfield Land Register must be published by 31st December 2017. Failure to complete the Register by that date would mean that the Council had not completed its legal duty.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Member Working Group has assisted the Council in preparing and publishing Part 1 of the Castle Point Brownfield Register 2017 by the appointed date.

Background Papers

Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017
Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017

Report Author: Steve Rogers, Local Plan & Regeneration Adviser

SiteReference	SiteNameAddress	MinNetDwellings	AlternativeReference	AlternativeReference
CP0001	"Land at Foksville Road, Canvey Island."	10	CTC/015	16/0987/OUT
CP0002	"Vallee Casa, 62 Hill Road, Benfleet."	5	FB02 - Site 14	
CP0003	"166-168 Kiln Road, Benfleet, SS7 1SU."	2	17/0948/FUL	CPT/486/09/OUT
CP0004	"1a Clarence Road, South Benfleet, Benfleet SS7 1DE."	1	17/00524/FUL	
CP0005	"Job Centre, 140 Furtherwick Road, Canvey Island."	15	CTC/012	
CP0006	"84 Vicarage Hill, Benfleet SS7 1PE."	2	15/0501/FUL	
CP0007	"240-244 High Road, Benfleet."	19	2007/18	15/0710/FUL
CP0008	"Site adjacent to Pauls Court, Meppel Avenue, Canvey Island."	5	15/0250/FUL	
CP0009	"271 Rayleigh Road, Thundersley, Benfleet SS7 3XF."	16	16/0418FUL	
CP0010	"20 Haresland Close, Hadleigh, SS7 2UT."	3	2012/1	
CP0011	"109 Long Road, Canvey Island"	7	15/0595/FUL	
CP0012	"The Island Site, High Street / London Road, Hadleigh"	54	2013/8	
CP0013	"88 High Street, Hadleigh"	4	16/0729/FUL	16/0527/CPA
CP0014	"Admiral Jellico Public House, 283 High Street, Canvey Island"	15	2007/152	
CP0015	"Outpatients centre, Long Road, Canvey Island"	10	2007/164	
CP0016	"343 Rayleigh Road, Thundersley"	10	2007/40	
CP0017	"125-127 High Street, Canvey Island"	14	CPT/490/13/FUL	CTC/019
CP0018	"4-12 Park Chase, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2BZ."	21	CPT/327/11/FUL	CPT/193/07/FUL
CP0019	"Prout Industrial Estate, Point Road, Canvey Island."	27	ELR02 Site 1	
CP0020	"Benfleet Tavern Public House, High Road, Benfleet."	14	2007/15	

ORDINARY COUNCIL

6th December 2017

Subject: Notices of Motion

1. Purpose of Report

To present to Council Notices of Motion received for consideration at this meeting.

1. Councillor Dick has given notice of the following:

Throughout the Borough there are many areas of greensward that have been used by the public for casual recreational use throughout the years.

It is felt that the view of the public is that these areas should be protected for posterity. Therefore, it is proposed that these areas should be considered as "Village Greens".

This Council is requested to use its good offices, where possible, to assist residents who wish to pursue "Village Green" status for such areas of land in close proximity to their properties.

Further, local ward councillors to assist residents obtain the necessary evidence needed to qualify for "Village Green" status, and further to collate this evidence for presentation to the appropriate body when completed.

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Mumford.

2. Councillor Howard has given notice of the following:

'This Council calls upon the owners of the site known as Thorney Bay to keep an area, with the potential to accommodate the extension of Roscommon way, as indicated in the outline planning application approved by Castle Point council.

To further, enter into urgent negotiations with Essex County Council, the highway authority, to pass ownership of this designated land into the county council ownership for the construction of this much needed road extension to take much needed pressure of Long Road Canvey.'

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Dick.

3. Councillor Neville Watson has given notice of the following:

'We call upon the Leader of Castle Point Borough Council to apologise to the residents of Castle Point for wasting nearly £1 million pounds of tax payers' money on two failed Local Plans'

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Taylor.

4. Councillor Blackwell has given notice of the following:

'We call upon Castle Point Borough Council to adopt the public law partnerships guidelines for Members when using social media.'

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Mrs Grace Watson.
