

## **Appendix C: Slough Borough Council: Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Consultation**

We would like to hear your views on our proposal to change Slough Borough Council's Council Tax Support scheme from 2025/26.

Since 2013, the council has provided a Council Tax Support scheme that helps working age households on low incomes with up to 100% of their Council Tax costs.

The cost of this support is now £11.5 million and is expected to keep rising. We're looking at ways we could reduce the money the council spends on Council Tax Support – we want to ensure it continues to be viable and affordable in future. These proposed changes, if implemented, would save the council £1.739 million. Taking no action could put the council in financial difficulty and affect its ability to provide services.

Depending on the feedback we receive, changes may differ from those set out below.

We will make our decision in January 2025, and we will publish this on our website.

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will give you more information about the proposals and how they may affect you or people living in your area.

The consultation closes on 29 December 2024.

If you'd like some help completing the survey, come to one of our drop in events advertised on the main page of this consultation on our website.

### **Data Protection**

The council does not collect personal information in this survey which means the information you provide is anonymous. We do not ask for your name, address, email address, telephone number, full post code or any other information that would allow us to identify you. The information you choose to give us in the equalities questions is also anonymous so we cannot identify you from it. To help us keep this survey anonymous and protect your privacy, please do not include any personal information in the free text boxes. For example names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers or any other information that could identify you or others.

Please be assured all your answers will be stored in accordance with our responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018.

You can read more about Slough's privacy statement here:

<https://www.slough.gov.uk/privacy>

1. Are you responding as a (Please tick):

- Slough Resident
- Slough Business
- Slough Resident and Business
- Work in Slough
- Public Sector Organisation
- Voluntary or Community Organisation

### **A little bit about you**

2. Who lives in your household? (Please tick all that apply)

- Me
- My partner
- Child/children (only those you receive child benefit for)
- Non-dependants
- Other

3. What is your employment status? (Please tick all that apply)

- I am in work
- My partner is in work
- I am self employed
- My partner is self employed
- Prefer not to say
- I am not in work

4. Do you pay Council Tax?

- Yes
- No

5. Do you receive Council Tax Support?

- Yes
- No

6. Do you, your partner, child or children receive any of the following benefits? (Please tick all that apply)

- Disability Living Allowance (any components)
- Employment Support Allowance (Support group)
- Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)
- Awarded the Limited Capability for Work and Work related Activity (LCWRA) component within your Universal Credit (also known as Health Allowance)
- A disability banding reduction granted for the property you live in
- Registered blind
- None of these

### The consultation questions

Set out below are questions relating to some principles around Council Tax Support and some proposals to make changes to Slough Borough Council's Council Tax Support scheme. We are considering applying all of the proposals to the scheme together but would like your views on each part of the proposed changes and the principles.

7. The council should reduce the rate of Council Tax Support for households as below:

	Current	Proposed	
Income Bands	Discount off CT	Discount off CT	Earnings threshold
	liability	liability	(weekly)
1	100.00%	70.00%	Not working
-	-	-	-
1	75.00%	50.00%	Earnings <£115.38
2	60.00%	40.00%	£115.39 - £184.61
3	40.00%	30.00%	£184.62 - £253.84
4	30.00%	20.00%	£253.85-£323.07
5	20.00%	10.00%	£323.08-£392.30
6	10.00%	5.00%	£392.31-£461.53
7	0.00%	0.00%	£461.54 and above

Do you agree?

Tell us if you

- Definitely agree  Somewhat agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Somewhat disagree  Definitely disagree

8. Please tell us why you have answered in this way.

9. What do you think the impact may be on your household if we did this?

Statement 1

Very positive    Fairly positive    No effect    Fairly negative    Very negative

10. Please tell us why you have answered in this way.

11. Do you think that Council Tax Support should be awarded where the Department for Works and Pensions has notified us that a customer has made a Universal Credit claim, reducing the need for a separate application for Council Tax Support to be completed?

Do you agree?

Tell us if you

Definitely agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Definitely disagree

12. Please tell us why you have answered in this way.

13. Do you think that backdating for working age customers should be extended from 1 month to 3 months if continuous good cause for failing to apply sooner can be shown.

Do you agree?

Tell us if you

Definitely agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Definitely disagree

14. Please tell us why you have answered in this way.

15. Do you think that i(n exceptional circumstances the Council can treat the application as being made at any time back to the beginning of the financial year in which the application is made. Exceptional circumstances would be Universal Credit delays or failures by the local authority to act when notified by The DWP that a customer is receiving Universal Credit).

Do you agree?

Tell us if you

Definitely agree  Somewhat agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Somewhat disagree  Definitely disagree

16. Please tell us why you have answered in this way.

### Support to help with the impact of the changes

The council is proposing ways in which we can support those households most affected by these proposals if implemented and we welcome any further ideas you have.

17. If the changes are introduced, the council should allocate a hardship fund of £175,000 to help those most affected for the first year.

To what extent do you agree with this?

Definitely agree  Somewhat agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Somewhat disagree  Definitely disagree

18. If these changes are implemented, the council should provide additional financial advice to help those affected.

To what extent do you agree with this?

Definitely agree  Somewhat agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Somewhat disagree  Definitely disagree

19. Do you have any further comments on the options proposed above?

20. If the proposals are agreed, and the support options above are implemented, are there any groups of people that you think the council should particularly provide support for?

21. Are there any other things you think the council could do to reduce the impact on affected households of these proposed changes to Council Tax Support?

22. Are there any other comments you wish to make about the proposed changes or is there anything else you would like to tell us?

23. Can you tell us how you found out about this consultation? (Please tick all that apply)

- I received a letter from the council
- The organisation I represent was notified by the council
- Social media
- Poster/leaflet
- Press release
- Someone told me
- Other

#### Equalities Monitoring

The following questions are anonymised. We ask them to find out if we are hearing from a full cross-section of Slough's diverse population and how the proposals might impact our communities.

Please note you do not have to answer these questions, they are completely optional. You can answer some, none or all of them.

24. **Age** – Please indicate your age group

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 – 74
- 75 – 84
- 85+
- Prefer not to say

25. 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?

- No
- Prefer no to say
- Yes, affecting hearing
- Yes, a learning disability
- Yes, affecting mobility
- Yes, affecting vision
- Yes, mental ill-health
- Yes, another form of disability

26. Do you have **caring** responsibilities?

- Primary carer of a child (under 18)
- Primary carer of a disabled child /ren (under 18)
- Primary carer of a disabled adult (18 and over)
- Primary carer of an older person
- Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)
- Carer (other)
- Prefer not to say
- None of the above

27. **Ethnic origin** – What is your ethnic origin?

- Prefer not to say
- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black African
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Asian
- Any other multi mixed background
- Asian or Asian British Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British Indian
- Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi

- Any other Asian background
- Black African
- British Caribbean
- Black British
- Any other Black background

28. **Pregnancy or Maternity** – Have you been pregnant and/or on maternity leave during the past 2 years?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer no to say

29. **Religion and belief** – What best describes your religion/belief?

- No religion or belief
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own identity, please write in.....

30. **Sex** – Are you?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

31. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



32. Sexual orientation – What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual

Gay

Lesbian

Bisexual

Asexual

Pansexual

Undecided

Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own identity, please write in.....

### **Next steps....**

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

The consultation closes at midnight on 29 December 2024.

We will listen carefully to what you tell us and take the responses into consideration when making a final decision on the 2025/26 scheme.

A report with the final proposals for the scheme will be taken to the Cabinet meeting on 20 January 2025, with a recommendation to full Council on 23 January 2025.

Following the decision, the full results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

Any new scheme will start on 1 April 2025. The Council will consider the impact of the scheme annually and consult again if it thinks further changes need to be made.