

## **Appendix 1**

# **Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 Boston Borough Council Consultation Report Published**

**“You Said, We Listened”**



## **Introduction to this consultation**

1. This report contains the responses we received for the Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 consultation which took place between 23rd September 2025 and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025.
2. Respondents were informed that from April 2025, the Council had offered a scheme that provided up to 100% of Council Tax Support for working age households with children and up to 85% for households without children. However, for 2026/27 the Council was facing considerable financial challenges to produce a balanced budget for 2026/27, as was required by law. At the same time, it recognised how important Council Tax Support was for some households in the community.
3. The exercise was performed to gain the views of residents on the proposed modifications to the Council Tax Support Scheme for the 2026/27 financial year.

## **Methodology**

4. The consultation, which was available in both hard copy and online, was promoted in a number of ways.
  - A media release was circulated announcing the proposals for the Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27. The media release also provided residents with details of the consultation exercise being undertaken and details of how to complete or request a paper copy of the consultation.
  - A letter was forwarded to precepting Authorities on 29th September 2025, inviting them to give their views on the proposals for 2026/27.
  - Social media; Facebook and Twitter were also used to inform residents that the consultation exercise was being undertaken.
  - A homepage banner was placed on Boston Borough Council's website to draw attention to the consultation.
  - An email was sent to specific groups that represent those individuals with the characteristics identified in the Equality Act. A few of these are listed below:
    - Lincs Care Leavers
    - Disability Lincs
    - Victim Support in Lincolnshire
    - Age UK Boston & South Holland
    - Alzheimer's Society
    - Deaf Association
    - British Heart Foundation
    - Lincs YMCA
    - ME Lincs
    - Citizens' Advice mid Lincs
    - Boston Salvation Army
    - Boston United Disabled Football Club
    - Edan Lincs (Domestic Abuse)
    - Lincolnshire Rural Support Network
  - The questionnaire was also made available for people to complete on Boston Borough Council's website.

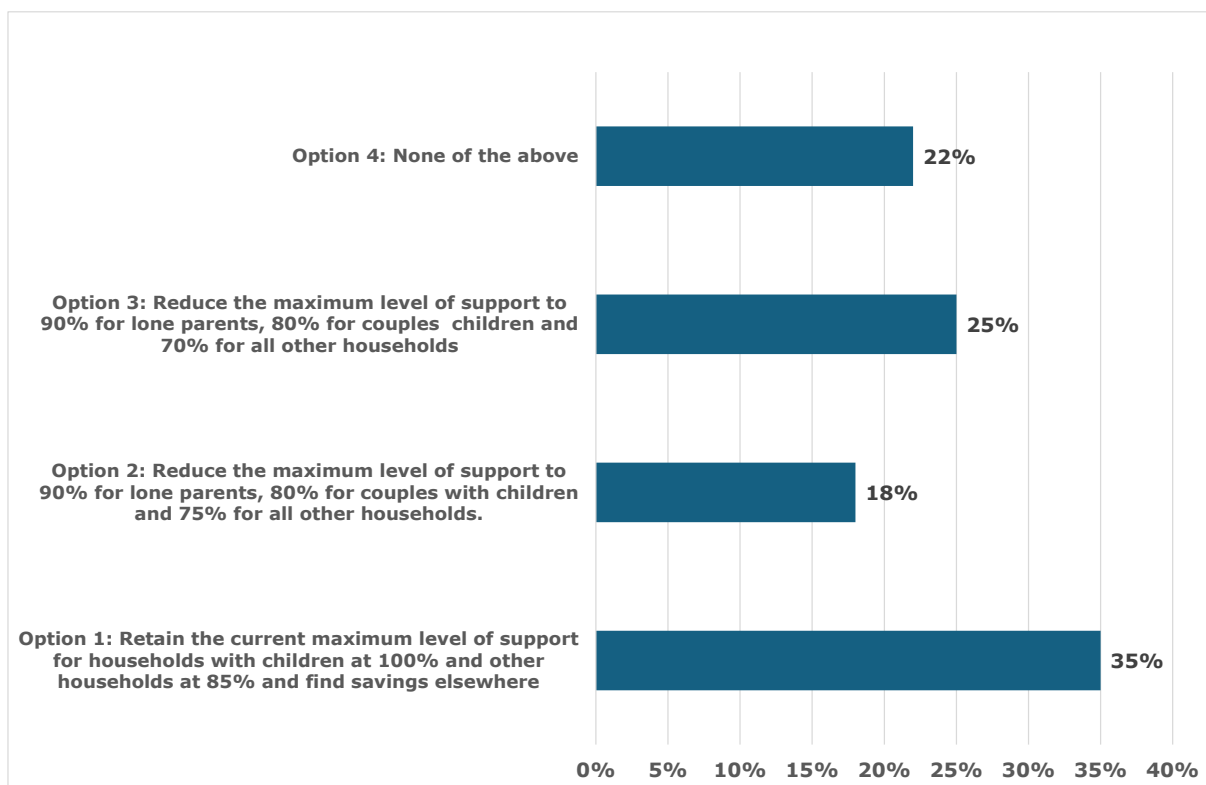
5. It should be noted that base data has been rounded to the nearest number (so may add up to between 99% and 101%. No comparisons have been made with the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2024 as the questions in the consultation have been revised.

### **Response Rate**

6. 65 electronic responses were received.
7. In addition, written responses were received from Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner. Their responses are detailed at numbers 10 and 11 in this report.

### **Results and Analysis**

8. All respondents were given a list of four options and were asked which option they thought the Council should pursue. The chart below shows that
  - 35% of all respondents thought the Council should pursue 'Option 1 – retain the current maximum level of support for households at 85% and find savings elsewhere'
  - 18% of all respondents thought the Council should pursue 'Option 2 – Reduce the maximum level of support to 90% for lone parents, 80% for couples with children and 75% for all other households'
  - 25% of all respondents thought the Council should pursue 'Option 3 – reduce the maximum level of support to 90% for lone parents, 80% for couples and 70% for all other households'
  - 22% of all respondents thought the Council should pursue 'none of the above'



9. All respondents were given the opportunity to make comments if they wanted to. A number of comments were made about households on benefits receiving financial support from other areas which gave them more income than those that were just above the threshold or working households. One respondent said that these households on benefits were in receipt of more than the national minimum wage. Another respondent felt that all Boston residents should be treated equally including pensioners and a further respondent considered that households with no children were being punished by the proposals. There was a request for support to be made available for vulnerable people to complete paper application forms as some could not complete them online. Another request was made for the application process to be made easier. One respondent said that the proposed changes would not save the Council money as people would not be able to pay their Council Tax. A full list of comments are included below
- Please make support available for vulnerable people to request support and help with forms in person at municipal buildings rather than stating they must use the telephone or online as many are unable to do so and this contributes to exclusion and unnecessary hardship. The public may need further information on this topic in order to make an informed contribution to this discussion.
  - Low income families already receive additional support payments in many areas including universal credit - free prescriptions support with uniforms, school meals, school trips, school equipment, free half term clubs including lunches ,free breakfast clubs - dental, additional support with heating, travel - all adding to often more than working families who are just above the threshold to receive any of these meaning the working families who are unable to claim are often worse off than those who do, seems unfair if

families receiving benefits already are then having reductions in their council tax. This would be more beneficial for pensioners as their income is a lot lower than those who are able to claim universal credit.

- If you have to the last one but as most of these will be receiving other benefits, think they should stop smoking drinking eating, take away tattoos etc save enough to pay full amount then
- Unless it's going to increase the cost for the rest of us who also struggle to make ends meet but never qualify for anything!! The more you increase costs for those NOT on benefits the more people you are pushing into crisis. Those of working age that do not work should only get things for free if they can prove that they cannot get work and if they turn anything down or put in no effort to gain and keep employment then I don't see why the rest of us should pay it for them. My druggie neighbour who does nothing is one of those I openly object to having everything for nothing while we struggle.
- You seem to have failed to mention where the savings will come from 'elsewhere'. How are the public expected to make an informed decision without all the information. There also doesn't appear to be a link for an Equality Impact Assessment. Has one been carried out for this consultation?
- Council tax support should be substantially lower than this. Too much support is given, which disincentivises work, and the people who have to pay for this are paying far too much. More consideration needs to be given for those who do pay, rather than endlessly giving to those who don't work.
- It is not fair that other people are supporting people with children everybody is struggling so a fair option is to use that to reduce other people's tax, is reduced, being a lone parent should not mean extra help, in most cases there is another parent who should help.
- The earnings need a disregard limit.
- A large amount of families are living hand to mouth extra fee could cause serious issues and possible death
- We've just come through 14 years of conservative government cutting everything but their own wages and benefits (expenses are rich, people benefits). Maybe investigate pension fraud, or where the money for repairing roads went? Never go after the children or weakest members of society. Every government is judged by them treat their most vulnerable.
- Remove support for all except pensioners, disabled and lone parents. The rest can work and pay their bills like everyone else.
- I really appreciate the support you have given my family this year with the 100% support for Council Tax. Being a single dad with three very young children every penny helps especially how quick basic daily essentials are going up. Please try and keep the 100% support as it helps so many, and it can make such a difference. Well Done BBC.
- Many of those on the welfare system will access other benefits and have financial support in lots of areas. While others above the welfare threshold do not, if the pensioners on their pensions are not entitled in less than half of what the welfare state is providing the low-income families why should the low-income families be entitled
- As I'm on UC and only get just over £600 after rent and some people on ESA get over nine hundred and pay less Council Tax none of them or I have

children at home. So, feel the system should be the same for all including pensioner's

- All options available are discriminatory policies and manipulative in nature towards those who choose to not have children or are unable to have children. All Boston residents should be treated equally, and all of these options seems to disregard too easily that! People with children have greater access to benefits such as child allowance as well as things such as free school meals and subsidised childcare in many cases making them no worse off than their childfree peers and therefore should not be given any preferential treatment - or as it appears in all of these policies people being penalised for not having children in their household! Potentially encouraging families to have children in their households despite already struggling, as seems to be clear in these scenarios, is a dangerous and short-sighted approach for any public body to even consider implementing. Has the council made sufficient exploration of relevant details to seemingly punish those households without children because it appeared to be a series of 'ideas' which have been thought up in isolation from any facts about how children affect household incomes. Any discriminatory policy made by a Council along these lines should be strongly reconsidered. In these times of hardship all expenses of course need to be evaluated to ensure their value for money - but discriminating against households without children in this way seems like a short term, knee-jerk reaction which leaves not only the council open to substantial and valid criticism, but also all members who make up the council also. Continuing with any of these schemes should weigh heavily on all members conscience because to many observers these options all strike notes of discrimination. Quite frankly I am personally disappointed that any member has allowed these options to go to a public consultation without questioning the validity of the options.
- All those on welfare support and unemployment benefits are receiving more than the national minimum wage. Also, many other discounts, like free school meals, free school uniforms, free prescriptions, free TV licence, warm home discount, and there are more. A pensioner on £12k a year gets nothing. If the government wants to get people back into work, then it has to be worthwhile. Discounts and handouts will not encourage a return to employment.
- Make them all pay the same as working people that way the Government will get more in work
- I find it discriminatory towards single, or childless couples. The Council Tax is a heavy burden, as a single, childless person who can only work part-time due to disability I cannot get any support, which does not create a fair system.
- I believe in maximum support for the poor, needy and vulnerable.
- Charging people on low incomes amounts of Council Tax they cannot afford to pay is not a saving to the Council. You won't be able to collect it without expending pretty much the same or more resource. All you will achieve is making poor taxpayers poorer
- I don't see why I have to work hard , while others who live in social housing on my estate, are anti-social , manage to get their hair and nails done , but expect me to suffer less services because they can't be bothered to work , or

they expect additional reductions- reduce for all or none - especially if you aren't including pensioners

- Could the application process be made easier for people wishing to apply, with less paperwork, in order to achieve maximum essential service and uptake of the scheme whilst at a lower admin cost ?
- I do not believe 100% support level is viable.
- Don't change any think
- This is an opportunity for the Council to make real savings for other important schemes.
- It needs a complete review. There are far too many families fiddling the system!
- Reduce it so it's more equal to all others that aren't on benefits. Most people I know on benefits whether that be disability or child allowance are better off than us that work full time and are entitled to no benefits or no help to reduce their bills.
- Increase the amount of financial support for working adults living alone. Only having one income coming into the house is really difficult to pay rent, mortgage, and all bills. Especially when you are trying to afford a car to enable us to get to work. Couples with or without children have the potential to double their income if they both worked.

### **Responses from precepting authorities**

10. A response was received from the Office of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner stating that they were supportive of proposals which provided comparability of Council Tax Support Schemes for Lincolnshire residents, particularly given the proposals for Local Government reorganisation currently under consideration.
11. A response was also received from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) confirming that as a major preceptor, they would support an option which did not look to increase the cost of the scheme, as this reduced the Council Tax collected to pay for local services. They went on to say that whilst 'option 2 and 3' looked to reduce the cost of the scheme, it would be helpful to understand the modelling around those options, and what impact they may have on the collection fund, if support was being reduced.

### **Contact:**

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