

Executive response to OSC task group on the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS)

1 December 2025

In April 2025 the council introduced the new Council Tax Support Scheme, aimed at being fairer and providing our most vulnerable households with 100% support. As part of this decision, I welcomed the formation of an OSC task group to review the implementation of the scheme and monitor its impact.

Following consideration of evidence from officers, the OSC task group made the following recommendations:

- For households where both partners receive a PIP, to exclude 50% of PIP from the calculation of liability to pay council tax.
- For households with four or more children, the first income band is increased from the current £250 to a proposed £300. This would provide support at 100% for vulnerable households or up to 80% for non-vulnerable.
- The additional £250k of the discretionary support scheme be extended beyond the two years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the task group for the work they have completed. I have carefully considered each proposal and will address each recommendation in turn.

The council automatically excludes 50% of PIP income of households where both partners receive PIP, through the discretionary support scheme (DSS). This approach ensures consistency for households while allowing the council to maintain flexibility in how support is delivered, so that assistance continues to reflect household need, and the principles of fairness and sustainability.

Whilst I recognise the additional costs that families with more than three children may face, at this time I do not feel it is appropriate to change the scheme. The DSS remains the more appropriate mechanism for assessing support for larger families, as it allows the council to consider individual household affordability in a more rounded way, rather than simply by applying a standard allowance based on the number of children. This ensures that support is targeted to those genuinely in financial hardship, as some households with four or more children may have higher overall incomes or savings. I would therefore continue to encourage any households that are struggling with their council tax to contact the council as soon as possible to discuss discretionary support.

The council will continue to review the DSS budget annually, to ensure it remains sufficient to meet demand under the current policy. The DSS is not a capped fund,

and the council is legally required to provide support to all households that qualify for assistance under the scheme. This means that eligible applications will always be honoured, regardless of the level of demand within any given year.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that I am committed to reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme annually, with particular importance next spring, when it has been in operation for a full year.

Peter Soulsby

City Mayor