

## Slough Borough Council

**Report To:** Council

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Subject:** 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29

**Lead Member:** Councillor Smith – Leader of the Council  
Councillor Bedi – Lead Member for Finance, Children and Lifelong Learning

**Chief Officer:** Ian O'Donnell, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Resources (S151 Officer)

**Contact Officer:** Mark Hak-Sanders, Director Financial Management & Strategy  
Nick Penny, Director of Finance - Corporate and Commercial

**Ward(s):** All

**Exempt:** NO

**Appendices:** **Appendix A – Cabinet's response to Full Council's objections**  
**Appendix B - Budget Setting Advice Note from Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer**  
**Appendix C – Council Report of 26 February with appendices (26<sup>th</sup> February Full Council Report)**  
1 Council Tax Resolution  
2 Proposed Budget 2026/27 by Directorate  
3 Budget Proposals:  
    a. Growth  
    b. Savings  
4 Dedicated Schools Grant –  
    i. Schools Block Local Funding Formula  
    ii. Individual Schools Budget  
5 Capital Strategy 2026/27  
6 Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy  
7 Treasury Management Strategy  
8 Debt Repayment Strategy  
9 Budget Risks Register  
10 Reserves Strategy  
11 Fees and Charges  
12 Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment  
13 Capital Programme 2026/27 – 2030/31  
14 Report from Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee including Cabinet response

## 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Council to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2026/27. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council must make calculations in relation to its estimated income and expenditure in order to calculate its Council Tax and this must be done before 11 March 2026. The function of approving the Council Tax is reserved to Full Council and not capable of delegation.
- 1.2 Full Council is also required to approve the proposed revenue budget for the General Fund and the Capital Programme.
- 1.3 On 26 February 2026, Full Council rejected Cabinet's recommended budget. The Leader and Cabinet members reflected on the objections raised and at a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 Cabinet approved revised estimates and a response to Full Council's objections. These are set out in Appendix A.

### Recommendations:

Council is recommended to:

- a) Note the Cabinet's response to the objection of Full Council as appended at Appendix A.
- b) Note the s.25 Statement from the Council's s.151 officer at section 3 of the 26<sup>th</sup> February Full Council Report as set out in Appendix C.
- c) Approve the 2026/27 revenue budget on the basis of an increase in the general element of the council tax of 2.99% and an increase in the Adult Social Care Precept element of 2%, totalling 4.99%, set out in Appendix C 1 with the revised estimates as set out in Appendix A.
- d) Approve the council tax resolution for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix C 1 on the basis that it is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under s.52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and as permitted by the proposed 'The Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report 2026/27'.
- e) Approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as referenced in Sections 5 to 9 of Appendix C and set out in Appendix C 2 and 3 with the revised estimates as set out in Appendix A.
- f) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources (S151 officer) to place a notice in the local press of the amounts set under recommendation d within a period of 21 days following the Council's decision.
- g) Approve the General Fund capital programme for the financial years 2026/27 to 2030/31 totalling £179.516m as referenced in Section 13 of Appendix C including new additions totalling £32.726m, EFS totalling £65.332m and £20.000m of Transformation Investment as set out in Table 2 in the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix C 13.

- h) Approve the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as referenced in paragraph 13.16 and set out in Appendix C 6.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

The Council is obliged to set a balanced budget and approve the council tax resolution in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Full Council is required to approve the Council's Capital Programme and a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

Cabinet has considered the objections of Full Council and proposed revised estimates to the 2026/27 revenue budget as set out in Appendix A. In addition Cabinet has approved the Leader's response to Council's objections and Council is invited to note these in its reconsideration of the budget proposals.

### **Commissioner Review**

Commissioners note the Leader's response to the objections outlined at the Full Council Budget meeting on 26 February 2026 to Cabinet's recommended budget, and the amendments proposed by Cabinet to the 2026/27 budget. The amendments have been certified as legally and technically viable by the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 officer) and does not result in a change to the section 25 report set out in the report to Full Council on 26 February 2026.

The advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service to all elected members is appended to this report, setting out their clear collective and Individual duties in respect of the budget and the consequences if members choose not to approve the budget at the Full Council meeting on 5 March 2026. Members will of course have differing views about the budget and can debate accordingly. But members must collectively ensure that the Council will be in a position to meet its statutory requirement to set a lawful budget.

Commissioners are content for this report to be considered.

## **2. Introduction and Context**

- 2.1 On 26th February 2026, Full Council considered the 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29 which was proposed at a meeting of Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026.
- 2.2 Full Council did not approve the budget or the Council Tax for 2026/27. Instead it raised objections to Cabinet's recommended budget proposals and instructed the Leader to consider these objections. Cabinet considered these objections at a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 and has submitted a revision of the estimates in the revenue budget for 2026/27. Cabinet has also endorsed the Leader's response to the objection, setting out reasons why other changes have not been made.
- 2.3 The response from the Leader, including the resulting revisions to the budget estimates which maintain the overall balanced budget position, are set out in Appendix A. This was approved by Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The changes set out in Appendix A now form part of the proposed revenue budget and are incorporated in the revised recommendations to Full Council.

## **Options considered**

- 2.4 Full Council approve a budget for the purpose of setting the Council Tax. This must be agreed before 11 March 2026. Cabinet has taken account of Full Council's objections and proposed revisions in response to these. Full Council must approve the budget by simple majority. Amendments to the budget must be submitted in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Rules and certified by the s.151 Officer as financially robust. No amendments were submitted to the original budget proposals.
- 2.5 Appendix B sets out officer advice on the budget setting process, including the legal duty to set the Council Tax by means of calculating its estimated budget. This confirms there is no option to not set a budget or Council Tax.

## **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

### **3.1 Financial implications**

This is a financial report with implications set out above. The Chief Finance Officer has reviewed the proposed revisions and agreed that they are robust and deliverable and do not change his s.25 report as set out in the report to Full Council on 26 February 2026.

### **3.2 Legal implications**

- 4.2.1 The legal duty to set a budget is set out in Appendix B. The legal framework for budget setting is also set out in the report at Appendix C.
- 4.2.2 The Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules confirm that upon reconsideration of the budget proposals, Full Council may:
- (a) approve the proposals;
  - (b) make amendments or modify the proposals.

Cabinet has submitted revised proposals having considered Full Council's objections. Any other amendments needed to be submitted in accordance with the time scales set out in those rules and certified by the s.151 Officer as being reasonably calculated and sufficiently deliverable as to be robust and sustainable in the medium term and continue to ensure that reserves are maintained at an adequate level which protects the Council's financial standing. No amendments were submitted.

## **4. Background Papers**

None