

The Council Transformation and Savings Programme

Whilst recent funding announcements in the government's Spending Round for 2020/21 have been positive for the council, all local authorities continue to experience constraints on spending, alongside increasing demand for some of their services. To balance the books local authorities must continue to review what they do and how they do it.

South Gloucestershire Council has a successful track record of delivering nearly £87m of savings up to 2019/20. Through early planning and carrying out a range of efficiency measures, the council has protected frontline services and minimised the impact of spending reductions. Given the learning and experience the council has gained over many years, the council intends to follow the same procedures for the additional savings required over the next few years.

To reduce the continually increasing gap between our available resources and our expenditure, we need to make further reductions in spending. We have identified a provisional savings target of £15m by 2021/22 with an additional £11.9m of savings potentially required in 2022/23.

Savings of this level would involve continued changes to our role and the services we provide. We are becoming a smaller council, and we continue to review our priorities to make sure our more limited resources are focused on our 'core' activities

The next year

Meeting our proposed plan of continued savings would require finding potential savings of £7.8m in 2020/21.

Q2 Looking at the information in the consultation document, how do you feel about the proposed amount of savings by department?

	Far too little	Slightly too little	About right	Slightly too much	Far too much	Don't know
Children, Adults & Health (£4.4m or 3.4% of department budget)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Environment & Community Services (£3.1m or 7.4% of department budget)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Chief Executive & Corporate Resources and Central Items (£0.2m or 1.2% of department budget)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Q3 If you have any comments on the proposed savings by department please let us know:

Q4 To help us plan for the future, please tell us what impact - if any - the council's reductions in spending over the last eight years have had on you, your local community or the services you receive? Please be as specific as possible.

The next 5 - 10 years

Q5 In the next 5 - 10 years, the council will continue to find ways to make services more affordable to run. How strongly do you agree or disagree with using the following approaches?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree or disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Targeting resources on the most vulnerable and people most in need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing the quality of some services provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing fees and charges for some services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making more services available online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using digital technology more widely to support the delivery of services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making more efficient use of council assets such as land and buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scaling back or stop providing some services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stopping provision of some discretionary services to protect services to older people and the vulnerable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing working practices to make better use of technology and more efficient ways of working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working in partnership and sharing services with other councils and public sector agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transferring services to other organisations like commercial companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transferring services to other organisations like community groups, social enterprises and town and parish councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging more people to volunteer their time to become involved in the delivery of services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6 Which of the following areas would you choose as the three highest priorities for investment in the next 10 years?

	Highest Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining safe, strong and clean communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing inequality and deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting assessed social care needs for children and adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protecting the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing infrastructure (e.g. roads, rail, broadband)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Council tax options for 2020/21

In February 2019 the council approved its 2019/20 revenue budget confirming a general council tax increase of 2.99% along with a 0% precept for adult social care. It also approved outline budgets for the following three years (up to 2022/23) to help it plan for the future.

The council's proposed outline budget for 2020/21 includes a provisional 1.99% increase in general council budget tax and 2% increase to the adult social care precept, which combined would raise £5.7m and is in line with current proposed government limits.

The council's preferred option is a 1.99% increase in general council tax and 2% adult social care precept (Option A), as this will lead to the least reduction in spending on services.

This is on the basis that additional savings of around £1.4m per 1% of council tax will need to be found each year an increase is *not* made over and above the savings that the council is already working to deliver.

Please note: the council has no control over the council tax collected on behalf of the Police, Fire Service, or parish and town councils. Each of these bodies will make their own independent decisions.

The council would like your views on the level of council tax the council should consider for 2020/21:

Option A: To increase council tax in 2020/21 by 3.99% (1.99% general council tax and 2% adult social care precept)

This would be an increase of £59.22 per year (or £4.94 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £5.7million.

Option B: To increase council tax in 2020/21 by 3.00% (1.00% general council tax and 2% adult social care precept)

This would be an increase of £44.52 per year (or £3.71 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £4.3 million.

Option C: To freeze council tax in 2019/20 at the current level

While the council is committed to protecting frontline services as much as possible, if council tax is not increased, this would mean further reductions to council services because the current level of service would no longer be affordable. The council would need to make additional savings of around £5.7m on top of the £7.8m which have already been identified.

Q7 Which of the following options would you prefer?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option A: increase council tax by 3.99% | <input type="checkbox"/> No preference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option B: increase council tax by 3.00% | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option C: freeze council tax at the current level | |

Q8 To what extent would you agree or disagree with a general council tax increase of 1.99% if it was ring-fenced for a specific service, rather than for all services?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q9 If you would prefer the council tax increase to be ring-fenced for a specific service, which service would you want this funding to go towards?

Q10 The government currently sets limits to the annual increases in both general council tax and the adult social care precept. Should government relax the current annual council tax increase thresholds, to what extent would you support or oppose a council tax rise greater than 3.99%?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose

Q11 Please use this space to make any other comments about the budget and council savings plan:

Changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) scheme

South Gloucestershire Council became responsible for its local council tax reduction scheme (formerly known as "*council tax benefit*") from 2013, and we are now consulting on two possible changes in light of the wider roll out of Universal Credit across the region and the increase in government compensation schemes.

Both of these options only affect the scheme for working age individuals. There are no proposed changes for those of pension age.

Recommendation 1: Disregard as capital any payment made to a customer/partner under a government compensation scheme

Reason: Under the current LCTR rules, any compensation given by the government under a specific scheme e.g. Windrush or Grenfell compensation scheme, would be included as capital in the assessment of LCTR.

However the government will be making changes to the national pensioner age LCTR scheme for 2020/21 to disregard any such payments from benefit calculations. Therefore we propose to do the same for the working age scheme

Q12 Which option do you most strongly support?

- Disregard any amount received from a government compensation scheme
- Keep the current scheme and take into account all compensation payments as capital
- No preference
- Don't know

Recommendation 2: Treatment of Universal Credit (UC) payment

Reason: Under the current Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme, a customer's income is deemed to be their full Universal Credit (UC) award plus any other income they or their partner receive. Both elements are included in the calculation for determining how much council tax reduction they are entitled to.

A full award of UC qualifies for the maximum council tax relief (80% relief). This can mean that customers with a UC award of less than the full amount may *not* qualify for help towards their Council Tax.

The customers who are most affected have a UC award due to either their disabled status or the medical issues of a person or child for whom they are caring. Customers who currently receive rent support as part of their UC award, where previously they would have been receiving it through Housing Benefit, are having to use this money to pay for their Council Tax as well as rent.

However we propose changing this so that the Council would not count UC income as part of the weekly income that is eligible for CTR. See an example below:

Mr A's income includes £382 UC per week to help his payments towards rent and livings costs + £48 child benefit per week. This would have meant he received the maximum Council Tax Relief of 80% under the old scheme.

But under the current system he would no longer qualify for any CTR because his income exceeds £300 per week. This would be a loss of £1,791 per year.

With the proposed change, the Council would ignore his UC income and just look at the £48 child benefit per week, meaning he would be awarded the maximum of 80% CTR, and there would be no change to his household budget.

Q13 Which option do you most strongly support for customers in receipt of Universal Credit?

- Do not include Universal Credit as an income when assessing someone's LCTR entitlement
- Keep the current scheme and take into account all of the Universal Credit as an income
- No preference
- Don't know

What do you think of your local area and the council?

Throughout this survey we ask you to think about "your local area". When answering, please consider your local area to be the area within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from your home.

Q14 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q15 Over the past 2 years, do you feel that South Gloucestershire has become a better place to live, is the same or is worse?

- Better
- The same
- Worse
- Don't know

Q16 If you said that South Gloucestershire has become either better or worse in the last two years please tell us what you feel has changed:

Your local area receives services from South Gloucestershire Council, such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

In considering the next questions, please think about the range of services South Gloucestershire Council provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all the services South Gloucestershire Council provides to the community. We would like your general opinion

Q17 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way South Gloucestershire Council runs things?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q18 To what extent do you agree or disagree that South Gloucestershire Council provides value for money?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q19 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about South Gloucestershire Council?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The council keeps me informed about the services it provides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The council keeps me informed about any proposals for change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can influence decisions affecting my local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q20 To what extent do you think South Gloucestershire Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all
- Don't know

About you

Q21 Are you responding as?

- A local resident
- A voluntary, community sector organisation
- A parish or town council
- Other

If 'other' please specify or if you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us its name.

Q22 Please tell us your full postcode i.e. BS* ***

This section is really important as it is a requirement for the Council to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duty by understanding more about the people who use council services and may be affected by any changes to the council's budget. Any responses to these questions will remain confidential, individuals will not be identified and personal details will not be published.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, you do not need to answer these questions.

Q23 Are you?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q24 How old are you?

- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 75
- Over 75
- Prefer not to say

Q25 Do you consider yourself to be disabled? (please tick all that apply)

- No
- Prefer not to say
- Yes - Physical impairment
- Yes - Sensory impairment
- Yes - Mental health condition
- Yes - Learning disability/ difficulty or cognitive impairment
- Yes - Long standing illness or health condition
- Yes - Other (please state below)

Q26 Which council tax band are you in? (if you are not sure a rough guess is fine)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> E | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B | <input type="checkbox"/> F | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C | <input type="checkbox"/> G | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D | <input type="checkbox"/> H | |

If other, please specify

Q27 Please tell us your ethnic origin

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Other | <input type="checkbox"/> White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> White - Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African | <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Traveller | |

If other, please specify

Q28 Sexual Orientation:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Gay woman/ lesbian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gay man | <input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

Q29 Do you identify as transgender?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|

Q30 Religion/ belief

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other religion (please state below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim | <input type="checkbox"/> No religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

Thank you for taking the time to tell us your views.

Please return your completed survey by **13th December 2019** by posting it to: Freepost Plus RTXL-YHGY-GSYS, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF

Information provided will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. Our privacy notice, which explains how we will process your personal information, how long we will retain it and your rights as a data subject, is available at:

"<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/data-protection-and-freedom-of-information/privacy-statement>"