



## Now's the time to have your say on South Gloucestershire Council's budget and tax for 2022/23

South Gloucestershire Council is responsible for a range of services in your local area, such as refuse collection, education, social care services and road maintenance. The council tax paid by residents currently makes up around 23% of the Council's budget for these services, so we're keen to get your views on how we can make the best use of our budget and give you even better value for money.

Please return your completed survey by **Sunday 19th December**. Alternatively, you can do this survey online at: [www.southglos.gov.uk/budget](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/budget) until **9th January 2022**.



# Aligning resources to Council Plan priorities

All councils continue to experience constraints on spending, alongside increasing demand for some of their services. To balance the books councils must continue to review what they do and how they do it to secure ongoing efficiencies in how services are provided.

There remains uncertainty over the amount of funding we will have in future. Levels of funding from the Government have yet to be confirmed although a multi-year settlement is due in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget which will provide further clarity. The ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to make it hard to be sure how much funding we will receive in future years from income sources like Council Tax and Business Rates.

South Gloucestershire Council has a successful track-record of delivering savings and will have delivered over £102m by 2023/24 and in April 2021 commenced a programme to better align available resources and budgets with Council Plan priorities. This focused on planning ahead to tackle financial challenges, allowing time for more innovative and transformative measures that may take longer to implement whilst seeking to invest in our priorities.

As a priority the Council is focussing its investment over the next four years in delivering upon its commitment to achieving the best start in life for children and young people in the local area. To do this it is proposing to invest in areas that will support this aspiration to improve performance and support the workforce in our Children's Services.

At the same time, we continue to focus our resources on delivering support to those most in need and to helping people to help themselves; and in promoting sustainable inclusive communities, infrastructure and growth. All while ensuring that we continue to deliver value for money for local people.

# Maintaining standards of services whilst reducing costs

Balancing the need to be financially sustainable and deliver value for money to residents, the Council will continue to deliver efficiency savings year-on-year to manage growing cost pressures and maintain service levels. This will be dependent on the income received by the Council over the coming years which at this point remains uncertain.

In addition to £1.8m of savings currently in progress, the council has identified further £19.7m of savings over the next four years through considering how to deliver services at the same level for less cost. These have come about for several reasons as detailed below:

- Adapting to different ways of working, building on what the Council has learned by working flexibly over the past two years, for example remote working, reducing travel and reduced printing costs.
- By adopting new technologies and automating systems where this can improve the way we work and improve our online offer, for example, so that more residents can access the support they need at any time.
- Ensuring that where the Council levies fees and charges, those reflect the cost of delivering services and are set at a rate comparable with other local authorities, for example in the way we charge utilities companies to compensate for roadworks that cause disruption on commuter routes.
- Implementing improved cost recovery, where the Council can charge to cover the cost of providing some services, such as recovering our full overheads against pre-application planning fees on large developments.

The details of these proposals can all be seen here:

<https://council.southglos.gov.uk/documents/s129147/Appendix9>

and are summarised below:

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>m</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>m</b>
Different Ways of Working	£4.6	£9.3	£11.4	£13.5
New Technology & Automation	£0.2	£0.7	£1.1	£4.5
Fees & Charges	£0.8	£0.9	£1.0	£1.1
Cost Recovery	£0.5	£0.6	£0.6	£0.6
	<b>£6.1</b>	<b>£11.5</b>	<b>£14.1</b>	<b>£19.7</b>

# The next year

Our new proposed savings programme delivers £6.1m of savings in 2022/23 across services through a variety of efficiency drivers.

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

	Far too little	Slightly too little	About right	Slightly too much	Far too much	Don't know
Different ways of working to save £4.6m (75.4% of savings)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Introducing more new technology & automation to save £0.2m (3.3% of savings)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Increasing fees and charges to save £0.8m (13.1% of savings)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Increasing the recovery of our costs by £0.5m (8.2% of savings)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

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

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



# Council Tax options for 2022/23

In February 2021 the Council approved its 2021/22 revenue budget confirming a general council tax increase of 1.99% along with a 3% precept for adult social care. It also approved outline budgets for the following three years (up to 2024/25) to help it plan.

The Government will announce local government's council tax limits in the Autumn Budget at the end of October however both a general council tax increase and a social care precept is anticipated to provide financial support to adult social care whilst the newly announced Health & Social Care Levy is used across 2022/23 to 2024/25 to address the NHS elective surgeries backlog.

Accordingly, the Council's proposed option is a 1.99% increase in general council tax and 2% adult social care precept (Option A), should this flexibility be made available by government. This will lead to the least reduction in spending on services and support the planned investments in resident priorities.

Additional savings or investment reductions of around £1.5m per 1% of council tax will need to be found in each year that an increase is not made in addition to the savings that the council is already proposing 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 2022/23:

### **Option A: To increase council tax in 2022/23 by 3.99% (1.99% general council tax and 2% adult social care precept)**

This would be an increase of £64.65 per year (or £5.39 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £6 million.

### **Option B: To increase council tax in 2022/23 by 1.99% (1.99% general council tax and 0% adult social care precept)**

This would be an increase of £32.25 per year (or £2.69 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £3 million.

### **Option C: To freeze council tax in 2022/23 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 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 £6m in 2022/23 in addition to the £6.1m which have already been identified.

Q6 Which of the following options would you prefer?

- Option A: increase council tax by 3.99%
- Option B: increase council tax by 1.99%
- Option C: freeze council tax at the current level
- No preference
- Don't know

Q7 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

## We would like to understand how residents feel about the Council as an organisation, in order to make sure we're supporting communities in the right way

Q8 Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The Council can be relied on to consistently deliver services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council is clear and honest about what it does and why	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council contributes towards improving the local area and residents' wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council has the public's best interests at heart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council works collaboratively with other organisations and the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Any other comments about the budget and proposed plans to focus our resources on Council Plan priorities

Q9 Please use this space to make any other comments about the budget and proposed plans to focus our resources on Council Plan priorities:

## 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.

Q10 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

Q11 Over the past two 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

Q12 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 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.

Q13 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

Q14 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"/>

Q15 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

Q16 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.

Q17 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.

Q18 Are you?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q19 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

Q20 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)

If other, please specify below:

Q21 Which council tax band are you in? (if you are not sure a rough guess is fine)

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- G
- H
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Q22 Please tell us your ethnic origin

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

If other, please specify:

Q23 Sexual Orientation:

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/ lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q24 Do you identify as transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q25 Religion/ belief

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

If other, please specify

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

Please return your completed survey by **19th December 2021** by posting it to: Freepost SGC, South Gloucestershire Council, Insights and Engagement 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 [here](#).