

The Council Transformation and Savings Programme

Now in their ninth year of national austerity measures, all local authorities are continuing to experience new levels of 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 more than £81m savings up to 2018/19. 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 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 £21.7m by 2021/22 with an additional £10m 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 £8.3m in 2019/20.

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 (£4.5m or 3.6% of department budget)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Environment & Community Services (£1.7m or 3.9% of department budget)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Chief Executive & Corporate Resources and Central Items (£2.0m or 4.5% 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 2019/20

In February 2018 the council approved its 2018/19 revenue budget confirming a general council tax increase of 2.99% along with a 3% precept for adult social care. It also approved outline budgets for the following three years (up to 2021) to help it plan for the future.

The council's proposed outline budget for 2019/20 includes a provisional 2.99% increase in general council budget tax and 0% increase to the adult social care precept, which would raise £4.1m, but still leave a budget gap of nearly £4m, even after the proposed savings are made. The council's current intention is to deploy one-off reserves to meet the gap.

The council's preferred option is a 2.99% increase (Option A), as this will lead to the least reduction in spending on services. This is on the basis that additional savings of over £1m 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 2019/20:

Option A: To increase council tax in 2019/20 by 2.99%

This would be an increase of £43.09 per year (or £3.59 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £4.1million.

Option B: To increase council tax in 2019/20 by 1.99%

This would be an increase of £28.41 per year (or £2.37 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £2.7 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 £4.1m more than those which have already been identified.

Q7 Which of the following options would you prefer?

- Option A: increase council tax by 2.99%
- Option B: increase council tax by 1,99%
- Option C: freeze council tax at the current level
- No preference
- Don't know

Q8 To what extent would you agree or disagree with a council tax increase of 2.99% if it was ring-fenced for a specific service such as social care, rather than for all services?

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

Q9 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 2.99%?

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

Q10 Please use this space to make any other comments about the budget and council savings plan:

Changes to the Council Tax Reduction 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.

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

Recommendation 1: Bring the self-employment minimum income level in line with Universal Credit.

Reason: South Gloucestershire Council's current council tax reduction scheme assumes an income of £150/week for self-employed customers who have made no profit in the previous year of trading. Under Universal Credit a similar minimum income level is assumed, however the amount assumed is calculated on individual circumstances and may vary either side of £150 per week. We want to simplify and standardise our scheme so that it is consistent with Universal Credit. To do this we propose using the same self-employment income figure as Universal Credit. Where the customer is not in receipt of Universal credit we would continue to apply SGC's minimum income level of £150/week

Q11 Which option do you most strongly support for customers in receipt of Universal Credit?

- Keep different minimum income levels for council tax reduction and Universal Credit
- Bring self-employment minimum income level in line with Universal Credit
- No preference
- Don't know

Recommendation 2: Review the timescales in which a customer can claim a reduction.

Reason: At the moment there is no option to backdate a new claim. With the move to Universal Credit, customers may be delayed in making a claim to the Council if they don't know that they need to claim this separately to Universal Credit. To support residents, we would like to give discretion so that claims which may be made late due to the separate Universal Credit claims process, can be backdated for up to six weeks. This backdate option would be also be available to other working age customers to ensure fairness and consistency within the scheme

Q12 Which option do you most strongly support?

- Keep scheme with no option to backdate a claim
- Allow up to six weeks to backdate a new claim
- 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.

Q13 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

Q14 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

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

Q15 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

Q16 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

Q17 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"/>

Q18 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

Q19 Are you responding as?

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

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

Q20 Please tell us your full postcode i.e. BS* ***

This section is really important as it helps us to understand 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.

Q21 Are you?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

Q22 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

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

Buddhist

Jewish

Any other religion (please state below)

Christian

Muslim

No religion

Hindu

Sikh

Prefer not to say

Q26 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

Q27 Please tell us your ethnic origin

Arab

Mixed/multiple ethnic group - Other

Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi

Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Asian

Asian/Asian British - Chinese

Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black African

Asian/Asian British - Indian

Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black Caribbean

Asian/Asian British - Other

White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Asian/Asian British - Pakistani

White - Other

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African

White Irish

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean

Other

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other

Prefer not to say

Gypsy or Traveller

If other, please specify

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

Please return your completed survey by **14th December 2018** by posting it to: Freepost Plus RTXL-YHGY-GSYS, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF

Any personal information that you have supplied will be held by South Gloucestershire Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act. This information will only be used as part of this exercise and personal information will not be published or passed onto any other organisation.