South Gloucestershire Council

Delivering for you

Late night street lighting

Consultation feedback report

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Executive summary

The consultation achieved 783 responses, including seven from local businesses.

Clear preferences were expressed by the survey respondents. 68.9% confirmed the findings of the previous consultation, supporting the proposals to dim the streetlights to save money and reduce environmental impact. Considering the best way to achieve this, there was also a strong preference to focus brightest lighting before 11pm at night and after 6am in the morning and therefore dim the lights most during the late-night period. Of the six options presented, this was the first preference for 57.6% of respondents and also scored comfortably highest when the top five preferences were weighted.

The highest proportion (42.9%) of respondents told us the proposals would have no impact for them. 18.6% of respondents felt the proposals would have a significant impact for them, though this included both positive and negative impacts. 57.4% of those who said the changes would have the greatest impact were opposed to the measures, typically on grounds of safety, whilst just under 40% of this segment highlighted positive impacts for them, including reducing glare or light pollution into their properties as well as benefits for wildlife.

The rationale for proposing this approach to reducing the costs of streetlighting is that it is expected to impact the fewest people, and this would appear to be borne out by the results of this consultation. However, it is important to consider what the impacts would be for the affected group.

Respondents are asked through the consultation to highlight potential impacts of the changes and concerns are raised about potential safety (and perception of safety). People who need to walk during this late night/early morning period comment on the value good lighting plays in making them feel safe and many oppose the measures because the dimming would make them feel more vulnerable. Safety and perception of safety is considered especially important for women, the visually impaired, road users, pedestrians and cyclists. However, the proposals are supported by all demographic groups and support is only lower amongst disabled people and the young.

Background

With the financial pressures the council is facing, it must look at opportunities to reduce spend to minimise council tax increases, including by providing the most valued aspects of services as cost-effectively as possible.

With energy prices having risen so rapidly over the last couple of years, the cost of keeping the lights shining bright all through the night has increased substantially. As part of the budget setting process for 2022/23, we put forward a proposal to cut street lighting to reduce spend.

In late 2022, we consulted on a range of cost-saving measures to consider relative support for different options. One of the measures considered was to turn down the lights during the late-night period from 11pm until 6am when we see the lowest levels of vehicles and pedestrians using roads and pavements. 76% of respondents expressed support for doing this, the highest level of all 26 specific proposals offered during the consultation. This savings proposal was agreed as part of the budget approved in February 2023. The

purpose of this consultation is to give residents the opportunity to comment and select their top preference for how the council plans to implement the change.

The consultation

The consultation ran from 18 October 2023 until 10 January 2024.

An online Common Place site was created to provide information about the proposals so that people could provide informed feedback. Respondents could comment either via an online survey on this site or by completing a paper survey response. The consultation was promoted widely on social media, in local newspapers and via the council's regular e-newsletters to residents. Officers also attended a series of local consultation events in the autumn and winter to talk to local people and answer their questions about the proposals.

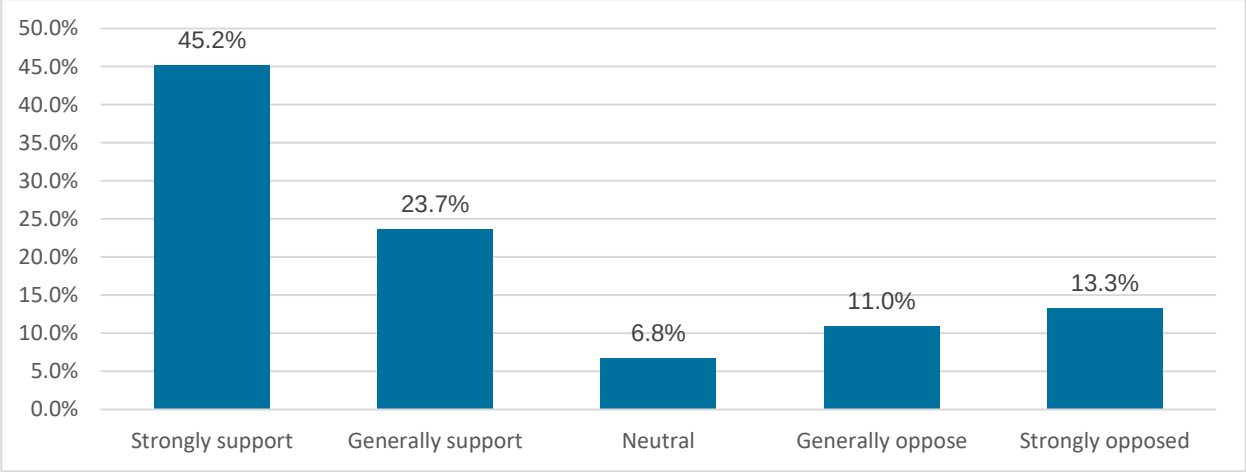
Survey analysis

Main findings

Support for dimming lights

The first question sought to confirm the results of the previous consultation. Feedback was consistent, with more people supportive of dimming the streetlights as a means of saving money than those who were against. 68.9% (425) of the 617 who answered the question said they supported the dimming of lights compared to 24.3% (150 people) who did not.

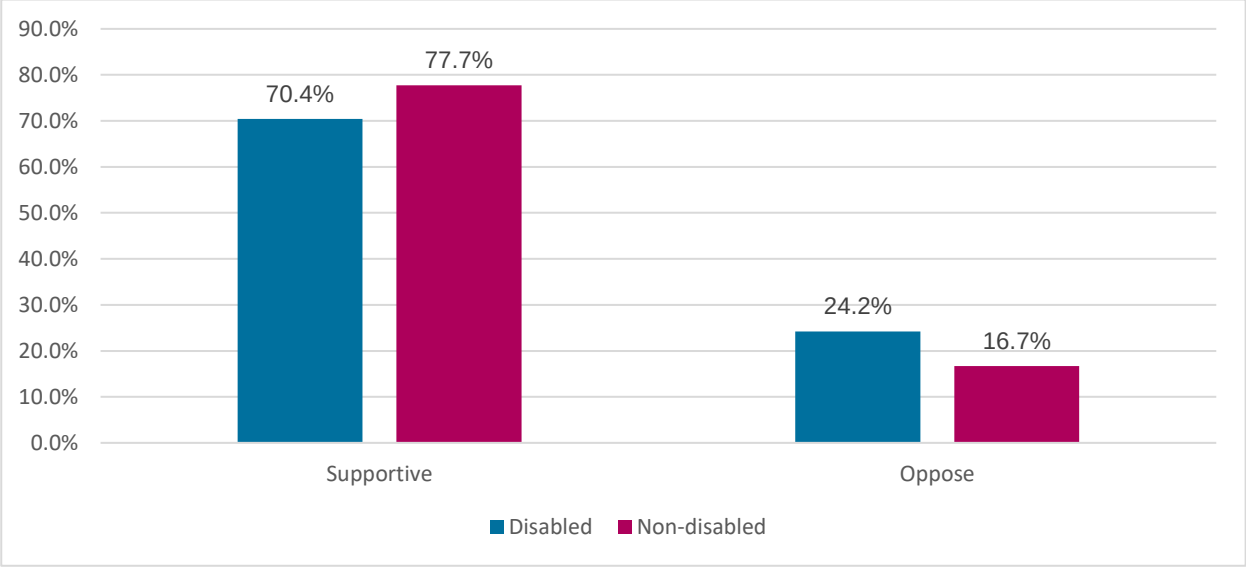
Chart 1: To what extent do you support dimming lights as a means of reducing our environmental footprint and reducing the costs of our service?



Base: n=613

When looking at responses from people with different protected characteristics, there was little variation. There were marginal differences between those who were disabled and those who were not, with disabled respondents showing slightly higher levels of opposition but with the majority still supportive.

Chart 2: How supportive respondents were of dimming streetlights by disabled/non-disabled respondents



Base: Disabled respondents (91) and non-disabled respondents (328)

There was also no significant difference between men and women with each reflecting the overall total on levels of support for the scheme, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Levels of support for the scheme by sex

	Total	Female	Male	Prefer not to say
Base	**462**	**237**	**191**	**33**
Supportive	**73.0%**	**73.8%**	**76.5%**	**45.5%**
Strongly support	**224**	111	101	12
	48.5%	46.8%	52.9%	36.4%
Generally support	**113**	64	45	3
	24.5%	27.0%	23.6%	9.1%
Neutral	**28**	17	9	2
	6.1%	7.2%	4.7%	6.1%
Generally oppose	**43**	17	16	10
	9.3%	7.2%	8.4%	30.3%
Strongly opposed	**54**	28	20	6
	11.7%	11.8%	10.5%	18.2%
Opposed		**19.0%**	**18.9%**	**48.5%**

Levels of support was also consistent across all the age categories.

Table 2: Levels of support by age

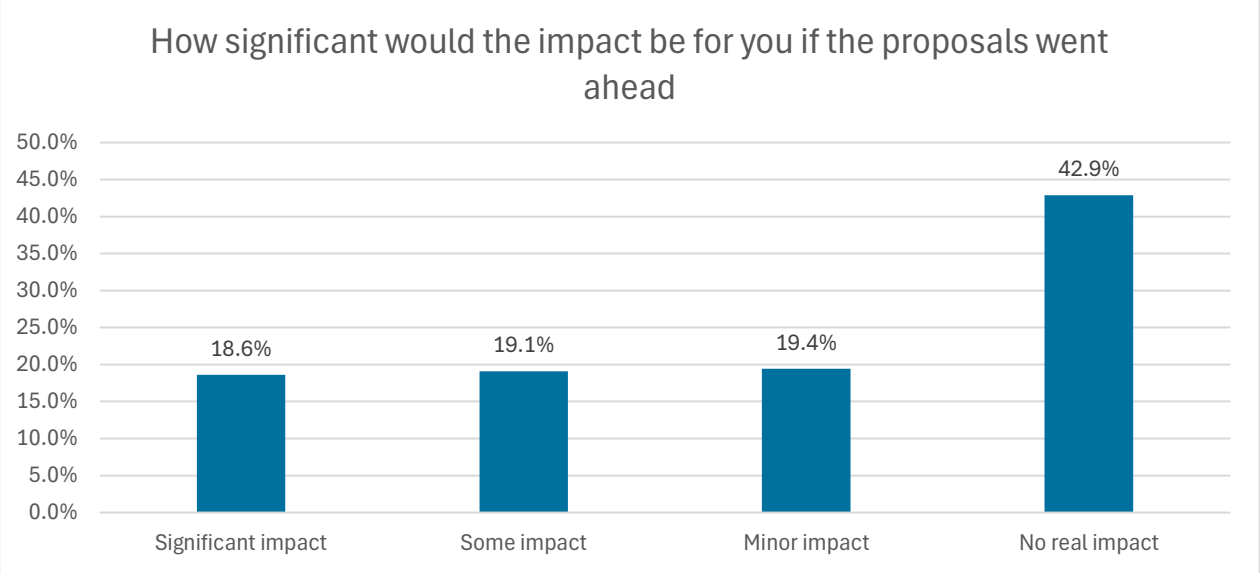
Respondents	Total	Age		
		Under 30	30 to 59	60 and over
Base	**491**	**29**	**299**	**163**
%Supportive	**72.5%**	69.0%	72.2%	73.6%
Strongly support	**47.5%**	51.7%	45.8%	49.7%
Generally support	**25.1%**	17.2%	26.4%	23.9%

Neutral	**6.1%**	6.9%	6.0%	6.1%
Generally oppose	**10.0%**	20.7%	9.7%	8.6%
Strongly opposed	**11.4%**	3.4%	12.0%	11.7%
% Opposed	**21.4%**	24.1%	21.7%	20.2%

Assessing potential impact of the proposals

Typically, the people who respond to consultations are those who would be most likely to be impacted by the changes and therefore have the most to win or lose. It is perhaps surprising therefore that a relatively small proportion of respondents (18.6%) felt the changes would have significant impact for them. Conversely, 42.9% of respondents told us the proposals would have no real impact and a further 19.4% said they would have only minor impact.

Chart 3: Potential impact of the proposals



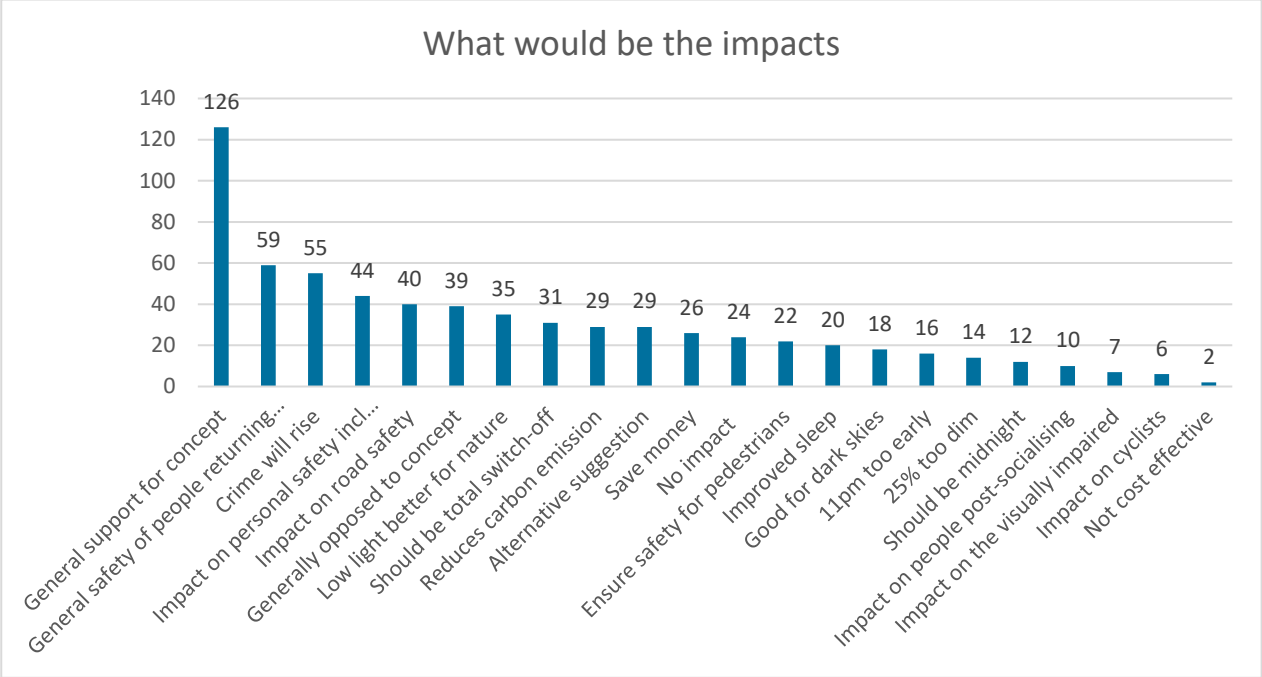
Whilst likely impact is perhaps limited to a relatively small group, it is important to understand what those impacts might be and who might be most impacted.

What would be the impacts

Commentary allowed respondents to tell us about the potential impacts of the proposals. Whilst the most common comment expressed general support for the proposals, people also highlighted a range of concerns, including:

- General safety for people socialising or returning home late,
- Perception that crime could rise following changes,
- Potential impact on personal safety – especially women,
- Impact on road safety,
- Impact for the visually impaired,
- Impact for pedestrians and cyclists.

Chart 4: Summary of comments about potential impacts



Comments about safety were received from those who are personally reliant on street lighting to make them feel safe when out and about at night and from those concerned about the perception of their own safety and the potential safety for others.

"It isn't very pleasant walking at night, to and from work as there isn't a bus service anymore now, it would be so much worse with dim lights. Safety first."

"I am a young woman who doesn't drive. My job means that I often come home late at night. I already feel unsafe walking along pavements. The idea of the brightness of the few streetlights there are being reduced terrifies me. By only reducing the brightness after 11pm you are basically imposing a curfew on women and girls.

Ultimately, either it is safe to dim the lights at all times or it is not. Women and girls travelling late at night should not have yet more pressure put on them to keep themselves safe simply to save the council money."

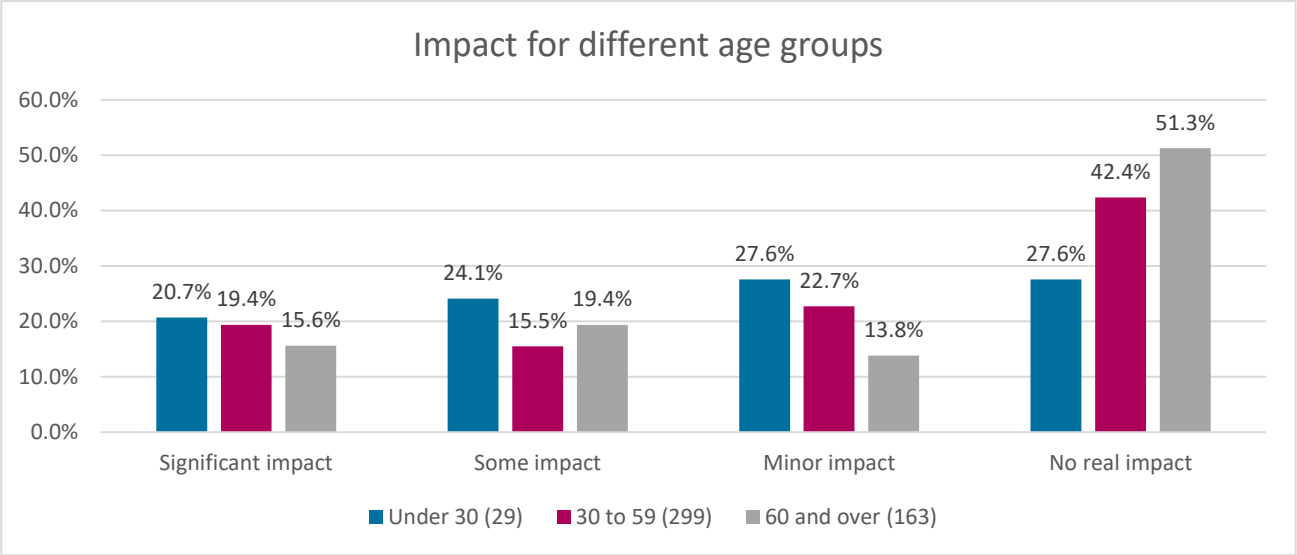
"I am a carer and can be called upon during the night. Dimmer street lighting would make it very difficult for me to get around when needed."

"I do not think it is safe to reduce lighting at all at night. Drive up Station Road, Yate in the evening and you can hardly see the pedestrians due to the current street lights."

Who might be impacted

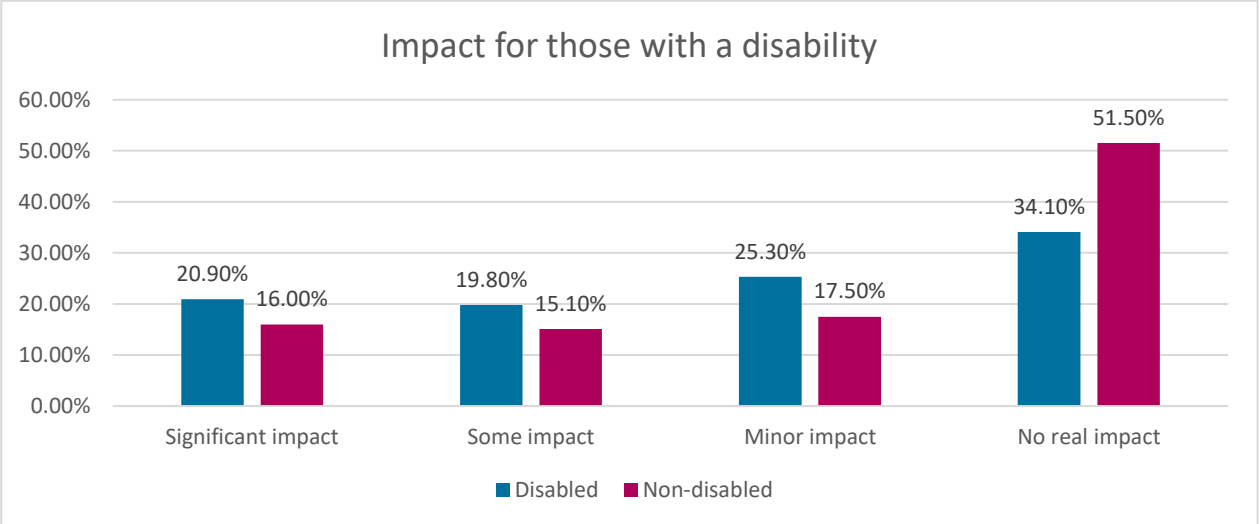
Whilst safety of women came across as an issue in the commentary, there was little difference between the proportion of men and women who said they would be impacted by the proposed changes.

Age, however, was a factor.



Younger age groups (especially those aged under 30) who responded were less likely to respond that they wouldn't be impacted, whilst those aged 60 and over were least likely to be impacted. It may be that this is because younger people are more likely to be out of their homes at the times (11pm – 6am) when under these proposals, the lights are proposed to be dimmed. Indeed, we received written representation from the South Gloucestershire Youth Board, highlighting the perspectives of young people they had spoken to about safety at night and the potential impact of dimming lights. The relatively low response rate to the survey from those aged under 30 makes it difficult to ascertain how many people are in this scenario.

People with a disability were also significantly less likely than those without a disability to say that the proposals would have no impact and a slightly higher proportion of disabled people said that the impact for them would be significant.



Reading the comments about potential impacts there were three respondents who mentioned the impact for those with visual impairments – two spoke from personal experience of already having issues with existing lighting levels.

"I believe this proposal will discriminate against the visibly impaired. There are so many parked cars in residential streets that poor lighting will cause drivers problems. Plus those on foot, especially those with poor vision, will struggle to navigate kerbs etc."

"I am visually impaired and already struggle to see during the winter months."

"I have sight problems and I already struggle to see clearly in the dark with the existing lighting."

Those who told us the proposals would have little or no impact on them were strongly supportive of the proposals.

Table 3: Support for the dimming of light by impact on respondents

Respondents	Total	Significant impact	Some impact	Minor impact	No real impact
Base	**593**	**108**	**115**	**116**	**254**
% Support	**68.6%**	39.8%	29.6%	75.0%	95.7%
Strongly support	**267**	38	16	29	184
	45.0%	35.2%	13.9%	25.0%	72.4%
Generally support	**140**	5	18	58	59
	23.6%	4.6%	15.7%	50.0%	23.2%
Neutral	**42**	3	19	11	9
	7.10%	2.8%	16.5%	9.5%	3.5%
Generally oppose	**66**	12	42	11	1
	11.1%	11.1%	36.5%	9.5%	0.4%
Strongly opposed	**78**	50	20	7	1
	13.2%	46.3%	17.4%	6.0%	0.4%
% Opposed	**24.3%**	57.4%	53.9%	15.5%	0.8%

The majority of those who said that there would be some or significant impact for them were opposed to the changes, but perhaps surprisingly 39.8% of respondents who stated that the dimming of streetlights would have a significant impact on them were supportive. The commentary provides explanation as to why some people who would be significantly impacted might be supportive of the measures. Key reasons included:

- Benefits for wildlife,
- Reduced light pollution due to streetlights located outside people's bedroom windows,

- Potential benefit for hobbies e.g. astronomy, star gazing.

"I have a streetlight not far from my bedroom window. Sometimes the light makes it hard to sleep."

"I am most concerned about the impact of streetlights on wildlife, especially bats, birds and insects. We have a biodiversity crisis on our hands and the LED lighting is making it worse."

"Great for my hobby of astronomy as it will reduce light pollution."

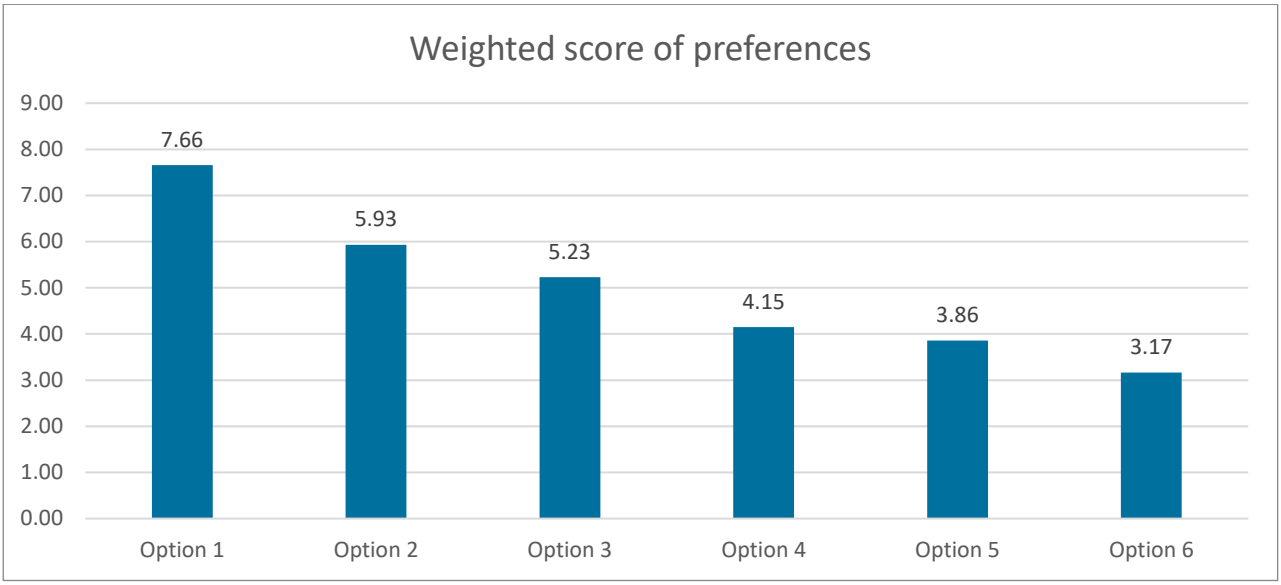
Preferred delivery option

Respondents were presented with a list of six options of different regimes for how the savings could be delivered and were asked to rank them in order of preference.

The options were:

1. Maintain current plan, focusing brightest lighting before 11pm at night and after 6am in the morning and dimming most during the late-night period
2. Bring forward the time at night (currently 11pm) when we switch lights to the lowest brightness level and reduce the level of dimming in the late-night period
3. Push back the time in the morning (currently 6am) when we switch from the lowest brightness to the brighter levels and reduce the level of dimming in the late-night period
4. Dim the lights more in the period between sunset and 11pm (we would also need to dim lights in the late-night period, but by a smaller amount and/or over a shorter period)
5. Dim the lights more in the period between 6am and sunrise (we would also need to dim lights in the late-night period, but by a smaller amount and/or over a shorter period)
6. Prioritise brighter lighting in some locations (we would need to dim lights in other areas by a greater amount and/or over a longer period)

To determine an order of preferences amongst respondents, a weighting has been applied to each preference score, with first preference scoring 10 points, second preference scoring 8 points, third preference 6 points, fourth preference 4 points, fifth preference 2 point and no points if an option was considered the lowest preference.



Option 1 (to focus brightest lighting before 11pm at night and after 6am in the morning and dimming most during the late-night period) was the first preference for 57.6% of respondents and also scored highest when the top five preferences were weighted.

Different demographic groups generally have very similar preferences for the different options. Every single group selected option 1 as their preferred proposal, though some groups expressed higher preference for different options than the overall averages, with option 6 (prioritise lighting in specific locations) scoring notably higher for disabled respondents and option 5 (dim the lights more in the morning) scoring higher for the young. The overall finding, however, remains that option 1 is the clear preference.

Preference for different proposals by gender

	Overall	Women		Men	
		Weighted score	% difference	Weighted score	% difference
Option 1	**7.66**	**7.46**	-2.6%	**7.64**	-0.2%
Option 2	5.93	5.76	-3.0%	5.91	-0.3%
Option 3	5.23	5.27	0.6%	5.04	-3.6%
Option 4	4.15	4.14	-0.2%	4.42	6.4%
Option 5	3.86	4.05	4.9%	3.84	-0.4%
Option 6	3.17	3.33	5.2%	3.14	-0.8%

Preference for different proposals of disabled respondents

	Overall	Disabled		Non-disabled	
		Weighted score	% difference	Weighted score	% difference
Option 1	**7.66**	**7.16**	-6.6%	**7.65**	-0.1%
Option 2	5.93	5.74	-3.3%	5.81	-2.0%
Option 3	5.23	4.79	-8.5%	5.18	-1.0%
Option 4	4.15	4.47	7.8%	4.14	-0.3%
Option 5	3.86	3.79	-1.8%	4.02	4.2%
Option 6	3.17	4.05	28.0%	3.20	0.9%

Preference for different proposals by age

	Overall	Under 35		35-64		65 and over	
		Weighted score	% difference	Weighted score	% difference	Weighted score	% difference
Option 1	**7.66**	**7.07**	-7.7%	**7.52**	-1.8%	**7.44**	-2.9%
Option 2	5.93	5.21	-12.1%	5.78	-2.6%	5.952	0.3%
Option 3	5.23	5.71	9.2%	5.25	0.3%	5.04	-3.7%
Option 4	4.15	3.93	-5.3%	4.31	3.9%	4.08	-1.7%
Option 5	3.86	4.71	22.2%	3.83	-0.7%	4.304	11.6%
Option 6	3.17	3.36	6.0%	3.31	4.7%	3.184	0.6%

Comparison is not possible for ethnicity due to the very low sample size of non-white British respondents.

Appendix 1: Profile of survey respondents

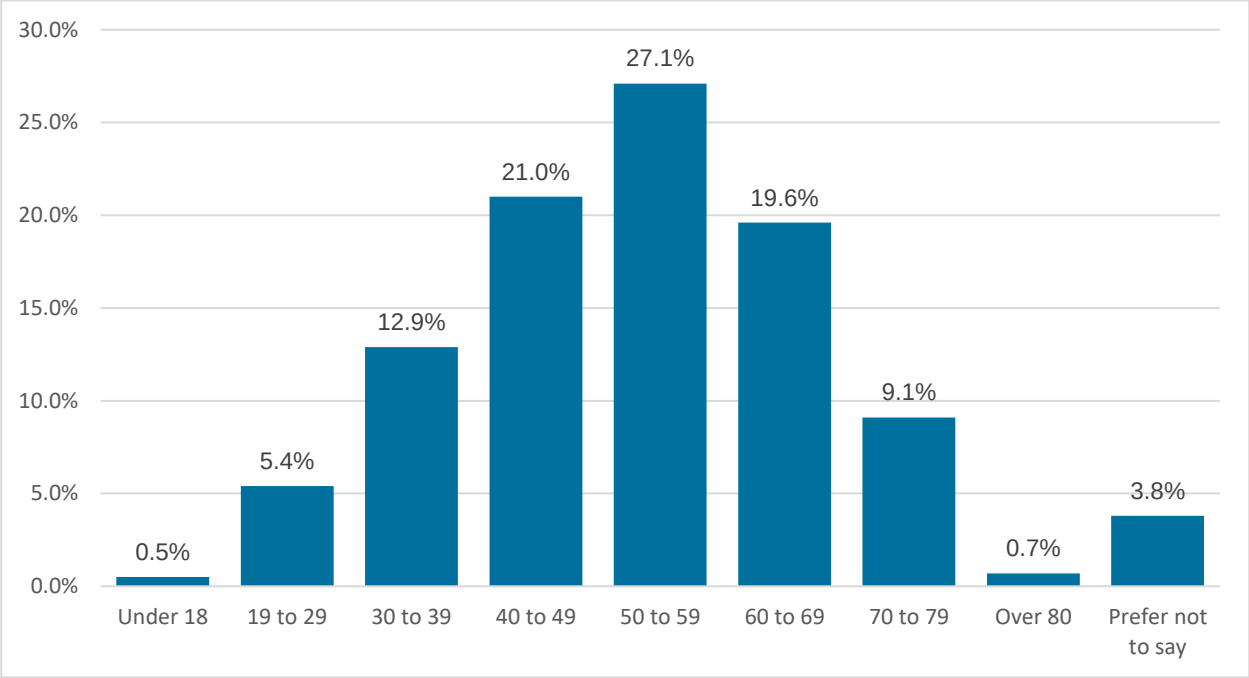
There were 742 respondents to the survey, including 734 respondents who were residents of South Gloucestershire, 7 local businesses, 4 from a community group and 11 local councillors (note that respondents could tick more than one option).

Sex

291 respondents were female (51.4%) compared to 234 males (41.3%) with 2 people stating 'other' and 39 (6.9%) who replied with 'prefer not to say'.

Age

Chart 3: Age of respondents



Base: Respondents who answered question on age: n=613

Table 4: Number of respondents by age

Under 18	19 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	Over 80	Prefer not to say
3	33	79	129	166	120	56	4	23

Disability

119 respondent (23.3%) out of the 510 people who answered the disability question, stated they had a disability. 30 of those who said they were disabled had a physical disability, 21 a sensory impairment, 20 a mental health condition, 6 a learning disability and 42 with a long-standing illness or health condition.

Ethnicity

Respondents were asked their ethnic group. A significant number of people (35%) chose not to answer this question. Of the 509 people who did answer, only 8 people (1.6%) were from a Black, Asian, minority or ethnic background. 25 people (4.9%) stated 'prefer not to say'.

Appendix 2: Additional submissions

South Gloucestershire Youth Board

We received a response from the South Gloucestershire Youth Board who were very much against reduced street lighting, especially around alleyways. The response included details of a Knife Crime Survey amongst young people and the impact of lighting in making people feel more safe. Submission details are below that includes a summary of the key points from the survey. It was also noted that with an increased drive from SGC to involve more voices in our decision making, that acknowledging and addressing this feedback was important to show that young people are being listened to.

Knife Crime – Lighting summary report

Street lighting and lighting in general, is one of the key themes reported by young people in the Knife Crime Survey. Young People told us that there are areas in South Gloucestershire that it could be made safer for young people with more lighting.

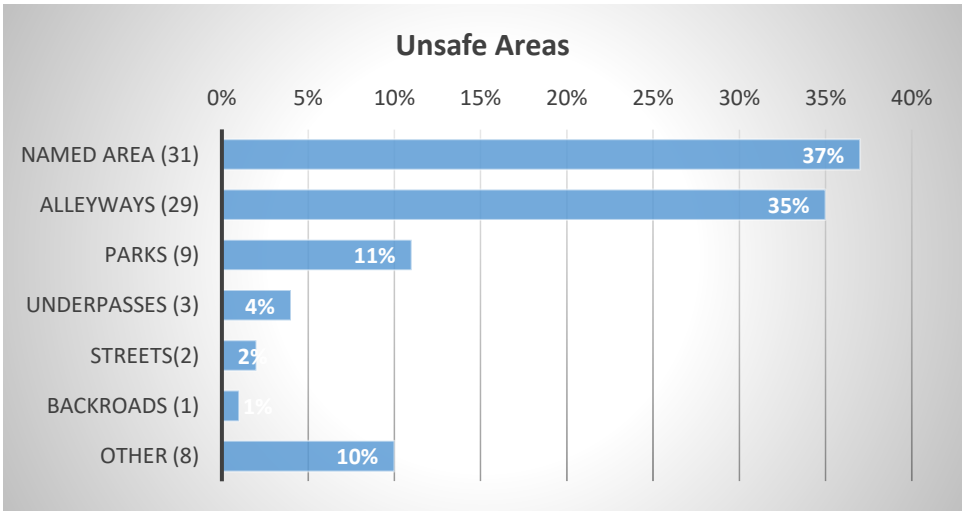
Any responses that identified Bristol areas have not been included in this report.

Young People were asked how we could make places identified safer for young people.

292 young people responded to the question with 139 (48%) of young people identifying lighting/more lighting in their responses.

We asked young people if there are any areas where they felt unsafe and why.

84 (60%) of the 139 young people that identified lighting, told us the areas and places where they feel unsafe – shown in the chart below.



Base (n=84)

Other:

- *Yate - because people go around and steal people's bags*
- *Everywhere - especially when there's not a main road nearby. People are unpredictable nowadays so that's scary, leaving me to always be on my guard*
- *I don't feel unsafe when outside as I don't get myself in stupid situations*
- *Anywhere at night because stalking and no lights around so no proof if anything happens*
- *Train station*
- *Behind Tesco*
- *Really dimly lit foot paths*
- *When some places there are no lighting*

The table below shows responses that indicate lighting within their responses and named areas.

Location	Areas that feel unsafe	How can we make it safer
Abbeywood	*Abbeywood shopping park at night*	*Needs more lighting and police*
Brimsham	*the railway bridge linking broad lane by Brimsham Green School*	*there's no lights so the whole path is just darkness at night and it's not visible from the main road so if anything were to happen it's not likely anyone will see and as far as I am aware there are no cameras - so again no way of anyone seeing anything that goes on*
	Brimsham Park	*Brimsham park needs lighting for night because it's pitch black*
Charlton Hayes	*Charlton Hayes and old Patchway because they're are sketchy people and lots of rape cases*	*More police presence, needs more lighting*
Conygre Road	*The area of road that goes by the 'McColl's' store, more specifically, the area of Conygre Road that joins Filton Avenue. At times, I feel that the [young] individuals there are rather intimidating, there is sometimes a sense that there are unsafe activities occurring within that area.*	*I think that that area just needs some more lighting.*
Cranleigh Court	*Cranleigh Court because there is a house with a confederate flag in the window*	*Needs more lighting*
	Cranleigh court	*more lighting*
Cycle Track	*Along the cycle path in yate at night(I have never walked there at night but my friends have).*	*More lighting, and cameras.*
	Yes, near the ridings in yate along the cycle track there is near to no lights.	*Needs more lights*
Dovedale	*Front grass by Dovedale houses, because you feel very exposed.*	*More lighting and CCTV Cameras*

Location	Areas that feel unsafe	How can we make it safer
Elm Park	*The pathway in Elm Park leading off Sheffield road is really dark in the evenings. Even just walking back from school when the evenings are dark, you can't really see where you are walking, and there are normally a group of people sat on the bench you want to avoid. And the underpass by king george. It's a bit sketchy and you can't see if anyone is under there until you walk through it.*	*More lighting*
	Elm Park/Millennium Green in the evening/night due to it being very dark and especially the alleyway between them is can be overgrown and there also tends to be particularly a lot of alcohol cans and cigarettes etc in the bushes which can be quite unsettling.	*The recently have been new gates put in which is definitely more assuring however more lighting would be great as well.*
Filton	*Roads leading to Filton Abbey Wood Station*	*More lighting around roads leading towards Filton Abbey Wood station*
	Filton	*Lighting throughout Filton is poor when it's dark which makes walking home late feel less safe than it could be.*
Gillingstool Primary	*At Gillingstool primary school under the subway near murco. It's really dark and there's lots of rubbish there that makes it look unsafe*	*Needs more light*
Harry Stoke	*Path linking Harry Stoke Road (mini-roundabout with hambrook lane) and Sloe Way*	*overgrown, no lighting. Anti Social behaviour*
Kingsgate Park	*Kingsgate park*	*more lighting*
Kingswood	*Kingswood park at night*	*cameras more lights*
Little Stoke	*Little stoke at night never know who is there sometimes people who carry*	*More lighting*
Mundy Playing Fields	*The Mundy playing fields at night and walking in the woods on your own.*	*add better lighting to prevent any crime and feel more safe*
	the mundys playing field at night	*add automatic lights at night*
Osprey	*Osprey*	*More lights at streamleaze and osprey*
Oldland Redfield Edge	*Redfield Edge*	*More light in back places like By Redfield edge youth club*
Olveston and Tockington	*Olveston and Tockington*	*More lighting in Olveston and Tockington*
Siston	*A big long path by siston brook*	*More lighting*

Location	Areas that feel unsafe	How can we make it safer
Southey Park	*Southey park, siston common - big groups of teenagers messing round with bikes for example, people feel uncomfortable walking past them*	*Overgrown, dark secluded areas do feel less safe and police presence around parks might help*
St Marys	*st marys because there are alot of people vaping and damaging things there and its next to a school.*	*probably because there is no vision from the back of the park and it gets dark there*
Streamleaze	*Streamleaze*	*More lights at streamleaze and osprey*
Thornbury	*The stream side area Thornbury. Often there is weird or 'yobs' walking down there doing stuff*	*More lighting more paths branching off so it's not just one big dark alleyway*
Yate Shopping Centre	*Yate shopping centre*	*More lighting*

Here are some of the comments young people made about unsafe places and making them safer:

Further Comments:

- More lighting in darker areas
- Lighter areas more streetlights more police presence when in dark areas
- Put more streetlights around
- Lots of paths in Yate need more light
- More lighting in alleys/parks if someone had to walk a dog in the night by themselves, they could be vulnerable
- Some roads need to have more lighting
- I'm not sure , add more lighting . Make people feel more safe.
- Lights in alleyways
- More streetlights around yate
- More lighting around, it quite dark.
- More lights so it's easier to see and clear paths
- More lighting while walking through parks when dark
- More lighting in those darker areas would help
- It's an alleyway so lighting
- A lot of areas need more lights.
- More lighting
- More street lights
- Lighting generally