South Gloucestershire budget consultation 2027/28

Our budget: becoming a better, more effective council.

Like councils across the country, we face rising costs, growing demand for essential services and funding that has not kept pace. We want your help in deciding how we respond to our ongoing financial challenges.

We have worked hard to improve services and become more efficient, but we now need to go further. This is an opportunity to become a better, more effective council: using technology, simplifying how we work, supporting people earlier and learning from what works elsewhere. Our priority remains to protect people with the greatest needs, improve outcomes for residents and make every pound work as effectively as possible.

You can find out more about our financial position, including where our money comes from and where we spend it from our Commonplace site: https://councilbudget2728.commonplace.is/ or from the consultation team at consultation@southglos.gov.uk. Please read through this information before responding to this survey.

This survey asks about council spending, council tax and the adult social care precept, and areas where we could work differently. Your feedback will help us understand what matters.

Please return this survey to: South Gloucestershire Council, Insight and Engagement Team, PO Box 1953, Bristol, BS37 0DE, or any South Gloucestershire library or One Stop Shop.

Please return by 20 December 2026.

Section 1: Understanding the budget

Q1 Firstly, please tell us in what capacity you are providing feedback. (Please select one or more options).

- ☐ I live here
- ☐ I work here
- ☐ I study here
- ☐ I run a business here
- ☐ I am a member of a town or parish council
- ☐ I am an elected representative
- ☐ I represent a community group or voluntary sector organisation
- ☐ I am a member of council staff

Q2 Every year, the council has to decide how to spend the money it has. How well do you feel you understand how that budget is set? (Please select one option)

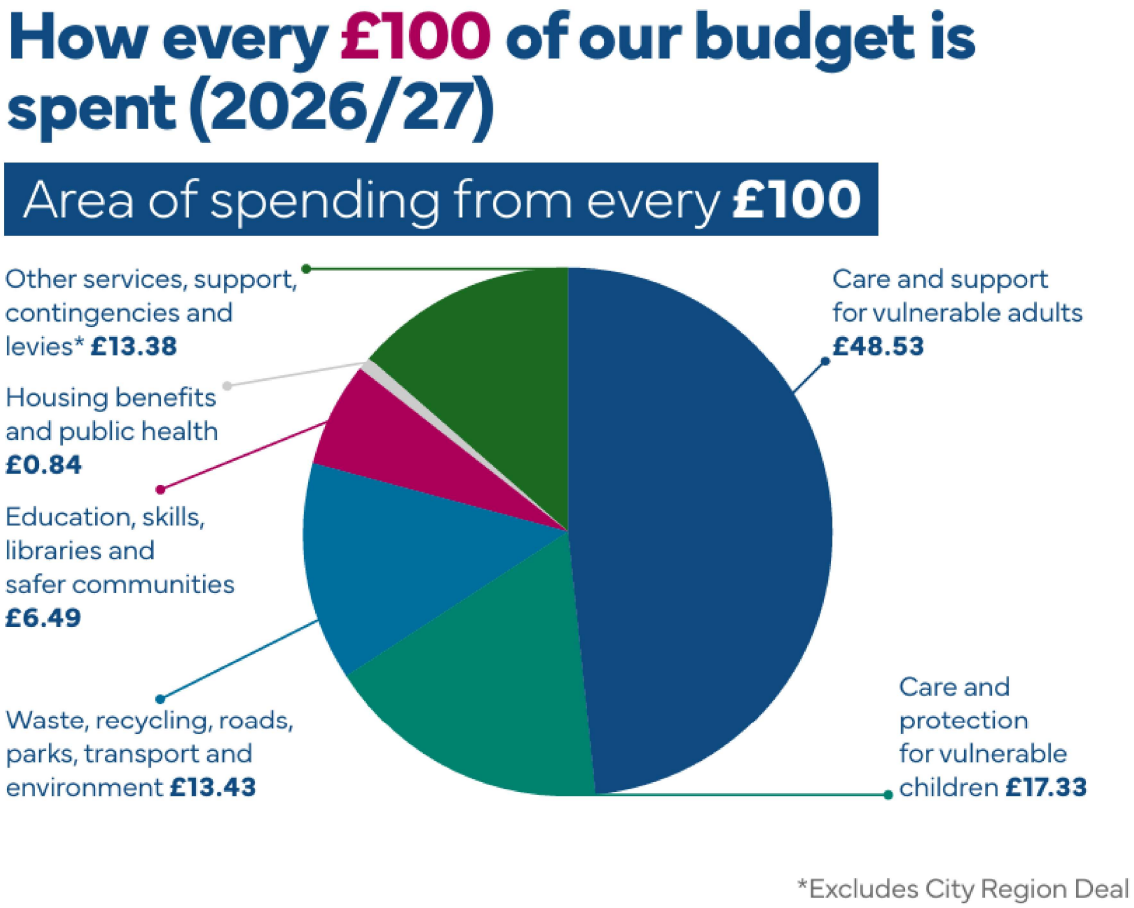
- ☐ I understand it well
- ☐ I understand some of it
- ☐ I only understand it a little
- ☐ I don't understand it at all

Q3 What information, if any, do you think is useful for residents to know about the council's budget? (Select one or more options)

- ☐ Nothing - I don't think residents need this information
- ☐ Where the council's money comes from
- ☐ How the council spends its money
- ☐ What services the council must legally provide
- ☐ What is causing financial pressures
- ☐ How the council is finding ways to save money
- ☐ How budget decisions are made
- ☐ Examples of the difficult choices the council has to make when money is limited?

Section 2: How would you prioritise our budget?

Deciding how to allocate the council's budget means balancing many different services and priorities. The chart below shows how every £100 of our budget is currently spent.



We would like to understand how you would prioritise that £100. In the question below, there is only £100 available; increasing spending in one area means reducing it somewhere else - try to ensure the options you select add up to £100. We are also legally required to provide services in each of these areas, so none of the areas can be allocated zero funding.
This will help us understand both the services you would prioritise and the areas where you think less could be spent.

Q4 How would you allocate £100 of our budget?

	£0 - £10	£11 - 20	£21 - 30	£31 - £40	£41 - £50	£51+	Don't know
Supporting vulnerable adults	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Supporting vulnerable children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Waste, recycling, roads, parks, transport and environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Education, skills, libraries and safer communities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Housing benefits and public health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how we allocate our budget?

Section 3: Council tax and the adult social care precept

We are seeking your views on our proposed council tax increase for 2027/28.

The Government's funding system assumes that councils will increase council tax by the maximum amount allowed without holding a local vote. Our budget has been planned on this basis. If we increase council tax by less than this amount, the Government will not provide any extra funding to make up the shortfall, meaning we will have less money to spend on local services.

We are proposing an overall increase of 4.99%, comprising:
•2.99% for general council tax; and
•2.00% for the adult social care precept, to support the growing cost and demand for adult social care services.

Despite the proposed increase, council tax income alone will not be sufficient to balance our budget. We will therefore continue to transform how services are delivered, focusing on improving outcomes for residents, increasing efficiency, making better use of technology and resources, and ensuring services remain sustainable and affordable for the future.

We recognise that increasing council tax has a direct impact on household finances. We therefore want to understand residents' views on potential increases as part of this consultation. We have measures in place to support residents experiencing financial hardship, including the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which provides assistance with council tax liability for eligible low-income households, and the Crisis and Resilience Fund, which can offer additional support to residents facing exceptional financial difficulties.

Q6 Please use the box below to tell us how our proposed increase to council tax might impact you:

Section 4: The areas we would like your views

We need to make changes to become a better, more effective council and make our services financially sustainable for the future. We have identified ten areas where we think we can work differently, improve outcomes for residents and make every pound work as effectively as possible, while protecting people with the greatest needs.

These include opportunities to:
•Make council services and processes simpler and more efficient;
•Make better use of technology and resources;
•Provide support earlier and help people remain independent;
•Review how services are bought and delivered;
•Learn from councils achieving similar or better outcomes at lower cost;
•Work differently with communities, partners and other organisations.

The following sections explain each area in more detail; please click on the arrows to expand each section and learn more.

Please tell us what you think, how any changes could affect you or others, what could work better, and any ideas or alternatives you would like us to consider.

The ten areas of focus

Area 1: Making services and the council more efficient

We are looking for ways to improve how you access our services while also reducing the cost of delivering them. This includes making services simpler and easier to use, reducing unnecessary administration, improving the use of technology and finding more efficient ways of working. The aim is to improve residents' experiences while directing more resources towards frontline services.

Ideas under consideration include:

•Improving online and digital services simplifying customer journeys and making it easier for people to get things done first time;
•Ensuring systems and processes work better together, reducing duplication and unnecessary administration;
•Finding more efficient ways to work across departments and teams;
•Making better use of technology to deliver services and improve productivity.

Q7 Please tell us your views on area of focus 1, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 2: Making better use of council assets

We are further exploring opportunities to make better use of the buildings, land, vehicles and financial resources owned or managed by the council. The aim is to reduce ongoing costs, generate savings and ensure public assets deliver the greatest possible benefit for residents and communities.

Ideas under consideration include:

•Reviewing how council buildings and office space are used and whether they are still needed;
•Exploring opportunities for local community organisations to take on the management of community spaces and facilities;
•Making sure land, buildings and other assets are providing value for residents;
•Reviewing how council vehicles and equipment are used to identify efficiencies;
•Reducing energy use and running costs across council-owned buildings and facilities;
•Managing investments and financial resources effectively to support council priorities;
•Exploring opportunities to invest now to reduce costs in future years.

Q8 Please tell us your views on area of focus 2, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 3: Ensuring better value for money

We are exploring more opportunities to ensure council services provide the best possible value for residents and taxpayers. We will learn from other councils if they are able to deliver similar services at lower cost. We will redesign services if this maintains service levels at lower cost. We will review the way we buy goods and services to find the best providers and suppliers while maintaining outcomes. We will consider whether there are different ways of delivering services, opportunities to reduce costs, and ways to make better use of resources so that funding can be focused on the services that matter most.

Q9 Please tell us your views on area of focus 3, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 4: Reviewing local services

We will consider how local road, grounds maintenance and street services could be delivered more efficiently, including potential changes to service levels and local delivery arrangements.

Ideas under consideration include:

•Ensuring local road, grounds maintenance and street services continue to provide good value for money. This includes exploring how highway maintenance, grounds maintenance, cleaning services and grit bins are delivered, and whether there are alternative ways of providing services while maintaining outcomes for residents;
•Keeping all Household Waste and Recycling Centres open and exploring opportunities to ensure they continue to provide good value for money and meet the needs of residents. This includes reviewing current opening hours, patterns of usage and operating costs to understand whether services could be delivered more efficiently while maintaining access for residents. Any changes would seek to balance convenience, demand and affordability as part of the council's wider approach to financial sustainability.

Q10 Please tell us your views on area of focus 4, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 5: Promoting independence and prevention in adult social care

We will explore ways to reduce demand for higher-cost care and support by helping people remain independent for longer.

Ideas under consideration include:

•Expanding the use of equipment and technology that help people remain safe and independent at home;
•Embarking on a falls prevention and practical support programme targeted at older and vulnerable people. By reducing the number and severity of falls, it is expected to reduce the need for costly care and support following a fall;
•Sourcing and providing more suitable local housing for adults;
•Simplifying the process of setting up and managing direct payments (cash payments the council makes to people with eligible social care needs), allowing them to arrange and purchase their own care and support and making it easier for people to access and use this option

Q11 Please tell us your views on area of focus 5, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 6: Delivering adult social care more efficiently

We will improve the ways in which care and support services for adults are commissioned, delivered and purchased.

Ideas under consideration include:
•Identifying further opportunities to provide high-quality care and support for working-age adults in a more cost-effective way. This may include making better use of existing services, improving contract arrangements and choosing options that help people stay independent for longer.
•Seeking improved procurement arrangements for live-in care, which is provided when an adult's needs require a carer to live with them. This would enable access to pre-approved providers, offering better value for money. This aims to strengthen consistency and quality of service, supporting people's independence or delivering cost-effective provision where live-in care is the most appropriate option.

Q12 Please tell us your views on area of focus 6, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 7: Ensuring fair and sustainble funding for adult social care

We will review our funding arrangements to ensure they are applied consistently. We will further ensure that the council pays only for the support it is responsible for funding.

Ideas under consideration include:
•Identifying areas where charging arrangements for services are not being applied fairly and consistently. This may result in charges being introduced or applied more consistently, where appropriate, while ensuring any changes remain lawful and proportionate. Charges for adult social care are statutorily regulated and significantly means-tested, which means that lower income clients are usually protected from any charging changes that may be applied.

Q13 Please tell us your views on area of focus 7, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 8: Providing earlier support to children, young people and families

We will explore how earlier support and intervention can help children, young people and families get the right help sooner and prevent needs from escalating. This includes helping children remain safely with their families where possible and supporting children and young people with additional needs. The aim is to improve outcomes, promote independence and reduce the need for more intensive support later.

Ideas under consideration include:
•Providing intensive, practical support to families facing complex difficulties so that children can safely remain with, or return to, their family network wherever possible;
•Ensuring appropriate access to short breaks and other financial support for children with disabilities and their families;
•Providing earlier intervention for children and young people with mental health, learning or developmental needs in schools and care settings Better understanding the journey of care users, so that we can identify where earlier support, investment and interventions are likely to achieve better outcomes;
•Providing better early intervention for children and young people with mental health needs or additional learning and developmental needs.

Q14 Please tell us your views on area of focus 8, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 9: Providing care, accommodation and support for children and young people more effectively

We will explore how care, accommodation and support for children in care, care leavers and young people with complex needs can be delivered more effectively and sustainably. This includes improving accommodation and care arrangements, planning earlier for future needs and strengthening joint working and funding with partners. The aim is to improve outcomes while reducing reliance on higher-cost care and support where appropriate.

Ideas under consideration include:

•Reviewing care arrangements, increasing the use of local and family-based options, reducing reliance on costly external provision;
•Improving future planning to better predict and cater for future needs;
•Sourcing better suited supported accommodation options for 16- and 17-year-old young people in care;
•Planning earlier for future accommodation, staffing and support needs of care leavers to avoid costly reactive interventions;
•Supporting care leavers - young care recipients as they transition to adulthood - to develop their independence by helping them access the benefits they are entitled to;
•Seeking out alternative accommodation providers that could deliver cost savings when providing accommodation to children and young people seeking asylum.

Q15 Please tell us your views on area of focus 9, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Area 10: Reviewing transport arrangements so they are sustainable and affordable

We are exploring opportunities to make transport arranged or funded by the council better value for money, so that it remains sustainable . This includes looking at how transport support is provided, how journeys are planned and whether there are different ways of meeting people's transport needs:

•Reviewing support provided for children and young people travelling to school;
•Looking at how transport is used and whether journeys can be planned and delivered more efficiently;
•Exploring different ways of meeting transport needs while continuing to support those who rely on these services;
•Considering opportunities to promote independent and sustainable travel where appropriate;
•Ensuring transport arrangements provide value for money while meeting legal and service requirements.

Q16 Please tell us your views on area of focus 10, including any impacts on you or others, and any suggestions or alternatives.

Section 5: Cumulative impact

In the last eleven years, the council has delivered a wide-ranging programme of savings. Wherever possible, we've tried to do this in ways which minimise the impact on our residents and communities. However, the scale of the cuts has meant that we haven't always been able to maintain service delivery to the same level. We'd like to know what impact you think this has had for you and people like you.

Q17 Thinking about how we deliver council services, do you think the following aspects have improved, stayed the same, or got worse?

	Much worse	Slightly worse	No change	Slightly better	Much better	Not applicable to me
Availability/accessibility of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Responsiveness to requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cost of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q18 And what has been the impact over the past five years for you and your community?

	Much worse	Slightly worse	No change	Slightly better	Much better	Not applicable to me
Condition of roads and paths	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cleanliness of streets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maintenance of parks and open spaces	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community cohesion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Levels of crime and antisocial behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of getting around	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Efficient running of the planning system (individual requests for planning permission)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improving outcomes for people facing poverty and financial hardship	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social care support for the elderly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Children's social care	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching and education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of support to the voluntary and community sector	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q19 If you have any other comments on the budget please tell us here:

Section 6: About You

This section is really important. It's vital that we understand the experiences of a wide range of respondents in order to ensure that everyone is treated fairly. By understanding more about what people from diverse backgrounds tell us, we can ensure we act appropriately to meet needs.

All questions are optional and any responses to these questions will remain confidential. Individuals will not be identified and personal details will not be published.

Q20 Please tell us your postcode:

This is used for analysis purposes only.

Q21 What is your age?

- ☐ 18 or under
- ☐ 19 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 39
- ☐ 40 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 59
- ☐ 60 to 69
- ☐ 70 to 79
- ☐ 80 or over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q22 Are you?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Intersex
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q23 Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Prefer not to say
- [ ] Yes - Physical impairment, such as difficulty using arms or mobility issues which may mean using a wheelchair or crutches
- [ ] Yes - Sensory impairment, such as being blind/having a serious visual impairment or being deaf/have a hearing impairment
- [ ] Yes - Mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or schizophrenia
- [ ] Yes - Learning disability/difficulty (such as Down's Syndrome, dyslexia, dyspraxia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism spectrum condition)
- [ ] Yes - Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- [ ] Yes - Other (please state)

If other, please state

Q24 Please tell us your ethnic origin

- [ ] Arab/Arab British
- [ ] Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi
- [ ] Asian/Asian British - Chinese
- [ ] Asian/Asian British - Indian
- [ ] Asian/Asian British - Other
- [ ] Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
- [ ] Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African
- [ ] Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
- [ ] Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other
- [ ] Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- [ ] Mixed/multiple ethnic group - Other
- [ ] Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Asian
- [ ] Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black African
- [ ] Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black Caribbean
- [ ] White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- [ ] White - Other (please state)
- [ ] White Irish
- [ ] White - Roma
- [ ] Other ethnic group
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q25 Which of the following best describes your usual employment status?

- [ ] Employed full-time
- [ ] Employed part-time
- [ ] Self-employed full-time
- [ ] Self-employed part-time
- [ ] Unemployed
- [ ] Student
- [ ] Looking after the family or home
- [ ] Long-term sick
- [ ] Temporary sick
- [ ] Retired
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q26 Which of the following best describes your household's current financial situation?

- [ ] Living very comfortably
- [ ] Living quite comfortably
- [ ] Neither comfortable nor finding it difficult
- [ ] Finding it quite difficult
- [ ] Finding it very difficult
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q27 Which of the following forms of financial support do you currently receive or are in the process of applying for?

- [ ] Income Support
- [ ] Housing Benefit
- [ ] Employment Support Allowance
- [ ] Working Tax Credit
- [ ] Pension Credit
- [ ] Universal Credit
- [ ] Job Seekers Allowance
- [ ] Council Tax Reduction
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q28 Which council tax band are you in?

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

Q29 Do you currently pay a lower level of council tax as part of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q30 Which of the following best describes your household?

- [ ] Single adult living alone
- [ ] Single parent household
- [ ] Couple living together
- [ ] Couple with dependent children
- [ ] Couple with adult children
- [ ] Multi-generational household (e.g. parents, children and grandparents)
- [ ] Shared accomodation with other adults where finances are kept seperate
- [ ] Other household arrangement
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q31 Do you have caring responsibilities (other than for your own children)?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] Prefer not to say

If other, please state:

Q32 What is your religion/belief?

- [ ] Buddhist
- [ ] Christian
- [ ] Hindu
- [ ] Jewish
- [ ] Muslim
- [ ] Sikh
- [ ] Any other religion
- [ ] No religion
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q33 Please tell us your sexual orientation?

- [ ] Straight or Heterosexual
- [ ] Gay or Lesbian
- [ ] Bisexual
- [ ] Pansexual / Omnisexual
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q34 Do you identify as a transgender person?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q35 Are you currently, or have you previously, served in the UK Armed Forces?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes, I am currently/have previously served in the regular UK Armed Forces

Please return your completed questionnaire to South Gloucestershire Council, Insight and Engagement Team, PO Box 1953, Bristol, BS37 0DE, or hand in your paper copy to any South Gloucestershire Council library or One Stop Shop

Any personal information that you have supplied will be held by South Gloucestershire Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations (UKGDPR) 2021. This information will only be used as part of this exercise and personal information will not be published or passed onto any other organisation. Your personal information collected as part of this survey will be kept for two years to help us improve services before being securely destroyed.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 www.southglos.gov.uk/privacy-notice