Our ten areas of focus

South Gloucestershire Council
Delivering with you

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.

The following sections explain each area in more detail.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

AREA 7: ENSURING FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING OF 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.

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.

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.

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.