South Gloucestershire Council

Briefing note

13 October 2023

South Gloucestershire Council

Delivering for you

Background: The need to reduce costs of street lighting

Street lighting helps us feel safe, but it also consumes significant energy, generating emissions of CO_2 and other harmful gases. 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 have increased substantially.

With the financial pressures the council faces, we must look at opportunities to reduce what we spend to minimise council tax increases. We continue to prioritise saving money and increasing what we earn in ways which do not impact on services, but with the money local authorities receive from central government having been cut every year since 2010, this now increasingly means considering how we can provide the most valued aspects of services as cost-effectively as possible.

We conducted a consultation at the end of 2022 as part of our annual budget setting process asking people to consider relative support for a range of different measures designed to save the council money. One of the measures considered was to turn down the lights during the late-night period from 11pm until 6am when we see lowest levels of vehicles and pedestrians using roads and pavements. 76% of respondents expressed support for doing this, making it the most 'popular' of all 26 specific proposals offered during the consultation.

Before we progress this, we are checking in again with local people to give you a chance to comment on how we are proposing to implement the change. Please share your feedback via the consultation.

Why does the council need to save money?

Like councils up and down the country, over recent years, our finances have been stretched by rising costs and reduced funding, giving us less freedom to prioritise spending as we – and you – might like us to. Our forward planning has left us in a comparatively robust position in the short term, but we need to deliver significant savings over the coming years to enable us to continue to balance the books. We have looked for savings across all the services we deliver.