South Gloucestershire Budget Consultation 2026-27

Through this consultation, South Gloucestershire Council wants to provide local people with a clear understanding of the significant financial challenges we face, and the potential measures required to balance our budget.

While we are proposing new options for consideration as part of this budget consultation, we will continue to explore further opportunities to save money or generate additional income and will consult on these separately from the formal budget-setting process where needed.

The financial pressures mean we will have to do some unpopular things, and we will have less freedom to prioritise spending as we all might want to. However, we are committed to being a listening and empowering council, holding adult conversations with local people and other stakeholders about the challenges we face. And where there are genuine opportunities for you to influence decision-making, we want you to tell us what you think.

Please help us to understand what these proposals may mean for you so that we can take residents' needs and views into account when considering the way forward.

A detailed explanation of all these proposals is available at https://councilbudget2627.commonplace.is/, or available from the consultation team at consultation@southglos.gov.uk. Please read through the details of our proposals before responding to this survey.

Please respond to this survey by Sunday 21 December 2025.

Q1 Firstly, please tell us in what capacity you are providing feedback:

- [ ] Local resident
- [ ] Local business
- [ ] Member of a Town or Parish Council
- [ ] Representing a community group or voluntary sector organisation
- [ ] Member of council staff

Approach 1: Reviewing our internal costs

Our starting point as we face financial challenges is to consider what we are spending to ensure we are operating as efficiently as we can. Our staff know that they must treat every penny they spend at work as if it were their own and we have already delivered savings of over £90m in the last ten years.

Focus areas:
- To conduct a comprehensive review of all enabling functions of the organisation (finance, HR, IT, communications etc.) to identify opportunities to reduce duplication and create efficiencies.
- To identify and phase out old, inefficient technology systems and ensure that our ITD infrastructure is efficient and effective.

We are not currently consulting on any new proposals linked to this approach.

Approach 2: Finding the most efficient way to achieve the best outcomes

We constantly seek out best practice from across the public sector and more broadly to find new, cheaper and more effective ways to deliver services. Most of these changes are small and common sense and so can be implemented immediately, but we wanted to tell you about/get your feedback on more significant changes we are proposing.

Focus areas:
- Increasing local provision of specialist services (especially in education for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities) to increase options for families and reduce costs.
- Ensuring we’re paying the fair cost of care.
- Comparing the costs of direct provision of care versus commissioning to external providers.
- Focusing our flood prevention work in the areas of highest risk
- Partnering with a charitable or not for profit organisation to run Grimsbury Farm.
- Working with partners to use our joint buying power to secure the best prices.

Please use the space below to share any thoughts you have about these approaches.

We are especially interested in hearing from people who may have accessed council support about opportunities to deliver services more efficiently:

Q2

Approach 3: Investing in prevention to improve outcomes and reduce need for the most expensive support

Rationing services targeted at the most vulnerable in society often leads to poor outcomes for individuals and costs us all more over the long term. However, we've seen that we can reduce the need for many of our most expensive services - especially social care - if we concentrate support and resources on preventative measures.

Focus areas:
- We have identified opportunities to do more of this, benefiting individuals and the taxpayer:
- Offering information, guidance and support at an early stage to help people as they get older and frailer to continue living independently and safely in their own homes.
- Increasing provision of extra care housing, supported living and similar accommodation to allow people with additional needs to continue living independently.
- Identifying opportunities to better support people with dementia to maintain independence and delay need for expensive residential care.
- Taking a longer-term view with the children and young people we support so we can better plan future service need.

- Additional support for families with early years children (aged 0-4) who show clear signs of delayed development.
- Better signposting to support for families with children with autism or another similar neurodiversity.
- Proactively supporting struggling families, to reduce the number of young people being taken into care.
- Working with young people in residential care to help reunite them with their family or support them into foster care.
- Support for at risk groups and individuals to reduce levels of homelessness twinned with work to help homeless people out of temporary accommodation.

In the space below, please let us know about potential impacts of these changes.

Also please share any ideas you have about how the council can reduce the need for the most expensive support:

Q3

Approach 4: Raising money fairly

We also need to raise more money to help balance the budget.

Wherever possible, our focus is that those who are in a more fortunate position and can best afford it should be making the largest contribution. However, we are limited by what we can do locally, and we await an update from Central Government on the financial settlement for the year ahead, which will clarify our financial position.

Focus areas:
- Increasing Council Tax by 4.99% in line with the assumption Central Government makes to allocate funding to the council.
- Increasing the cost of the green waste subscription service to £75 per year for 2026/27 to allow us to continue to cover the costs of providing the service.
- Increasing the price of our community meals service to help cover the operating costs.
- Ensuring all South Gloucestershire's towns and parishes are fairly funded.

We are therefore proposing to increase taxes by 4.99%. We recognise the financial pressures local people face and we have measures in place to support those who genuinely cannot afford to pay Council Tax.

Q4 Do you receive (or are in the process of applying for) any form of financial support? (e.g. Income support, housing benefit, Universal Credit, pension credit)

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

Please use the box below to tell us how an increase to Council Tax of 4.99% might impact you:

Q5

Approach 5: Stopping, cutting back and prioritising services and support

Through our budget-setting process, we have looked at all possible options before cutting services. We are in a relatively stable financial position, but this has only been possible because we have taken difficult decisions early. Therefore, given the cost pressures and uncertainties around our future funding, we think we will need to continue this approach of planning ahead and make some cuts over coming months and years.

Focus areas:
- Ensure that those who receive adult social care support from the council are receiving care that is proportionate with their needs, scaling back care support where it helps individuals build and maintain independence.
- Consider options to stop subsidising the the HandyVan service.
- Consider options for our pest control service.
- Review the business case for delivering services on a commercial basis to schools

We know no-one wants to see the council cutting back services. We believe the above measures will help us meet our financial challenges in a way which minimises impact for residents.

In the box below, please help us to understand what these proposals may mean for you so that we can take residents' needs and views into account when considering the way forward:

Q6

The cumulative impact of cuts

In the last ten years, the council has delivered cuts and savings of over £90m. Wherever possible, we've tried to do this in ways which improve our efficiency, minimising the impact on our residents and service users.

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.

Q7 Thinking about how we deliver council services, do you think the following aspects have improved, stayed the same, or got worse:

	Much better	Slightly better	No change	Slightly worse	Much worse
Availability/accessibility of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Responsiveness to requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cost of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q8 And what has been the impact over the past five years for you and your community?

	Much better	Slightly better	No change	Slightly worse	Much worse	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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Effective planning of building and new development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Any other comments

If you have any other comments on our budget proposals please tell us here:

Q9

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 equally. 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.

Q10 Please tell us your postcode (this is used for analysis purposes only)

Q11 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

Q12 Are you?

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

Q13 Please tell us your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Straight or Heterosexual
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ All other sexual orientations
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q14 Do you identify as a transgender person?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q15 Do you consider yourself to be disabled? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- ☐ 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)

Q16 Please tell us your ethnic origin:

- ☐ Arab/Arab British 01
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi 02
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Chinese 03
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Indian 04
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Other 05
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Pakistani 06
- ☐ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African 07
- ☐ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean 08
- ☐ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other 09
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller 10
- ☐ Mixed/multiple ethnic group - Other 11
- ☐ Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Asian 12
- ☐ Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black African 13
- ☐ Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black Caribbean 14
- ☐ White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British 15
- ☐ White - Other (please state) 16
- ☐ White Irish 17
- ☐ White - Roma 18
- ☐ Other ethnic group 19
- ☐ Prefer not to say 20

Q17 In the last month, which of the following were you doing for most of the time:

- [ ] Working as an employee
- [ ] Self-employed or freelance
- [ ] On maternity or paternity leave
- [ ] Doing any other kind of paid work
- [ ] Retired (whether receiving a pension or not)
- [ ] Studying
- [ ] Looking after home or family
- [ ] Long-term sick or disabled
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Other (please specify)

Q18 Which council tax band are you in?

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

Q19 Do you currently pay a lower level of council tax as part of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

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

Q20 Do you have any dependents living in your household in the following age groups?

- [ ] 0-10
- [ ] 11-17
- [ ] 18-21
- [ ] 22+
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q21 Do you have caring responsibilities (other than for your own children)

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

Q22 Are you currently, or have you previously, served in the UK Armed Forces?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes, I am currently serving/have previously served in the regular UK armed forces
- [ ] Yes, I am currently serving/have previously served in the reserve UK armed forces

Please return your completed questionnaire to South Gloucestershire Council, Insight and Engagement Team, SURVEY NAME, PO Box 1953, Bristol, BS37 0DE

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