

# Viewpoint Results

## Summary for the November 2014 survey

In November/December 2014, members of the Viewpoint panel were asked for their feedback on all of the council's services and the way the council uses its financial resources. The survey was sent to 1,729 panel members and received a response rate of 72%. The citizens panel aims to be as representative of the population of South Gloucestershire as possible and where this is not achieved any over- or under-representations are balanced by weighting the data. The main findings of the survey are summarised below.

### Council Savings Plan

All of the core activities were supported by the majority of respondents. The highest levels of agreement were found with maintaining safe and clean communities (86%), safeguarding vulnerable children and adults (80%) and improving educational outcomes (76%).

Of the efficiency and money saving approaches outlined, the most strongly supported were:

- Making more efficient use of council assets such as land and buildings (85%)
- Changing working practices to make better use of technology and more efficient ways of working (85%)
- Working in partnership and sharing services with other councils and public sector agencies (82%).

However, less than half of respondents agreed with the following approaches:

- Reducing the quality of some services provided (17%)
- Scaling back or stop providing some services (24%)
- Transferring services to other organisations like commercial companies (28%)
- Stopping provision of some discretionary services to protect services to older people and the vulnerable (33%)
- Increasing fees and charges for some services (33%).

### Council tax and value for money

Overall 44% of respondents were in favour of some level of council tax increase in 2015/16 and 41% preferred a council tax freeze. Thirty-eight percent stated a preference for a 2% increase in council tax in 2015/16.

Overall, 40% of respondents agreed that the council provides value for money, with 19% disagreeing.

### **Satisfaction with council services**

The following services received the highest satisfaction ratings from service users:

- Libraries: 83% (5% dissatisfied)
- Parks and open spaces: 83% (7% dissatisfied)
- Sport and leisure facilities: 78% (6% dissatisfied)

The highest levels of dissatisfaction were received for highways and roads (41%), local bus services (36%) and planning (31%).

### **Perceptions of the council and local area**

Overall, 77% of respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

When asked if the area had changed as a place to live over the previous two years, 58% felt that it had stayed the same, 13% thought it had got better and 21% felt that the area had got worse.

When asked how satisfied they are with the way that South Gloucestershire Council runs things, 54% stated that they were either very satisfied or quite satisfied.

Forty-six percent of respondents stated that they felt South Gloucestershire Council kept them informed about the services it provides and 26% disagreed.

Thirty-six percent of respondents stated that they felt South Gloucestershire Council kept them informed about proposals for change and 30% disagreed.

Thirty-six percent of respondents stated that they felt that the council acted on the concerns of local residents either a great deal or a fair amount.

Seventeen percent of respondents felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area and half of all respondents disagreed.

### **What next - How will we use the results?**

In addition to Viewpoint responses, 307 responses were received from members of the public following publication of the survey on the council website and a mailshot to a random sample of households. Combined results were shared with key decision makers in preparation for 18 February 2015 when the council will meet to set its budget for 2015/16.

The full report will be made available on [www.southglos.gov.uk/viewpoint](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/viewpoint) in February 2015.