

# Viewpoint

**W**elcome to the fifth edition of the South Gloucestershire Viewpoint newsletter. We would like to thank you for taking the time to help us ensure that our services meet the needs of our local communities.

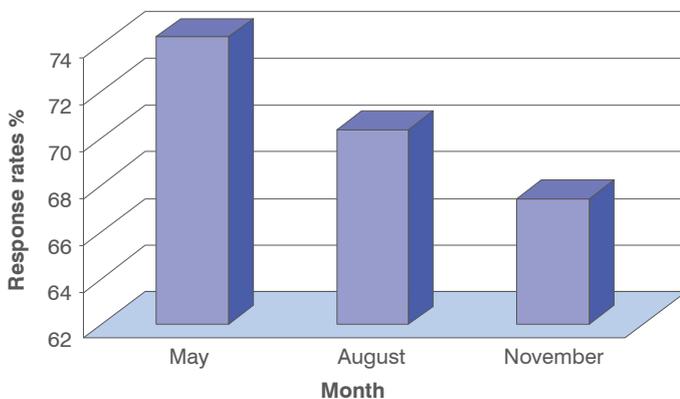
We hope you enjoy being part of the viewpoint citizens panel. If you have any questions, suggestions or ideas about the Viewpoint Citizens Panel please contact:

- Penny Adams at South Gloucestershire Council on ☎ 01454 865990  
✉ [consultation@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@southglos.gov.uk) or
- Steve Handley at BMG Research on ☎ 0121 333 6006

## SURVEY RESPONSES

During 2012 we sent out three Viewpoint surveys asking for your views on a variety of council services. The excellent response rate helps us to understand your views and opinions. This influences our decision making and helps us to continuously improve services to meet local needs.

### Response Rates to 2012 Viewpoint Surveys



## May survey feedback

### Police and Crime Commissioners (May)

The Avon & Somerset Police Authority asked some questions to understand the level of awareness and interest in the change to police governance amongst a cross section of residents in South Gloucestershire.



*Sue Mountstevens, Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset Constabulary*

Respondents were asked how they would like to be consulted over key decisions or issues made by a Police Crime Commissioner (PCC). Postal surveys and online surveys were the preferred methods for being consulted with 37% each.

The results of the survey helped Avon and Somerset Police Authority prepare for the introduction of the PCC in November. South Gloucestershire had the highest percentage turnout in the country for the elections last November, and the results of the survey have helped to understand how people would like the PCC to communicate with them.

Find out more about the work of the PCC at: [www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk)

## Adult health and social care

In May 2009, we included questions relating to the development of adult health and social care services to find out the level to which residents are aware of, feel involved in and are able to influence the development of health and social services. These questions were repeated in the May 2012 survey enabling us to make comparisons on how well we are performing.

When asked how informed people feel about adult social care services available from South Gloucestershire Council in 2012, 17% feel they were informed compared to 33% in 2009. The most significant drop within age groups is from the over 65's, where 27% felt informed in 2012 compared to 36% in 2009.

How informed do you feel about adult social care services available from South Gloucestershire Council?

	Total	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 64	65+
2012	17%	12%	12%	21%	27%
2009	33%	14%	11%	23%	36%

This information will help us with the planning and commissioning of services and to further develop our communication, engagement and publicity with local people.

## Consultation and engagement

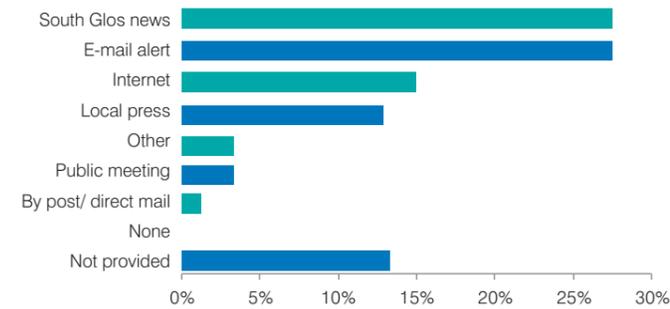
We regularly consult residents about the services we provide and issues that affect the area, for example planning, roads, schools or the budget. We want to make sure that our consultations are accessible and are reaching the right people.

When asked if they thought their views were listened to, three in 10 (31%) of those who had taken part in consultation said yes, while a slightly larger proportion 36% thought their views were not listened to. Nearly one third (29%) answered 'don't know'.

The most popular methods for finding out about available methods of consultation were through the South Gloucestershire News, email and the internet. However 48% of those participating in non-Viewpoint consultation are not aware of what has happened as a result of their feedback. The results have been used to inform how we publicise consultations, feedback results and make best use of technology and we are continually working to improve the

website and the availability of consultations via the most popular methods.

### The most popular methods for finding out about consultations



For more information about current consultations please visit: [www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation)

## August survey feedback

### Improving our communication

Panel members were asked questions around how they would like us to communicate with them and how they would like to contact us.

We were pleased to see that residents value our council newsletter South Gloucestershire News for providing news on our priorities, performance and events. The council website is now the main way for residents to find information on our services. This is vitally important if we are going to succeed in our move to providing information digitally by default and communicating primarily through online methods.

We are currently undertaking work to improve our website and have recently ensured it is easy to use from mobile devices. We have also improved the search facility to ensure that residents can find things more easily. In addition, we are working on digital inclusion and assisted digital initiatives to help ensure that all residents and businesses in South Gloucestershire can benefit from and have access to, these technologies.

The survey answers to those questions around how to save the council money have led to changes. All forms are now only printed in black and white. We are also changing the way many documents and leaflets are distributed and print

to a print on request service. We are currently reviewing the amount of materials that are produced in printed format, reducing the amount of paper used and saving money. You can sign up to the council's facebook and twitter page for the latest news:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/sglocouncil](http://www.facebook.com/sglocouncil)

Twitter: [@southglocouncil](https://twitter.com/southglocouncil)

## Equalities

In April 2012, the council adopted a single equalities plan setting out how we will meet our new equalities duties over the next 4 years. One of the objectives is ensuring fair treatment for all people by council services. This includes perceptions of how well the council treats the diverse range of residents in South Gloucestershire as well as to what extent decision-making processes are perceived to be fair.

Panel members were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that 'the council makes fair decisions'. One third (33%) agreed with this statement, 13% disagreed, 40% neither agreed nor disagreed and 10% were unable to say.

The council considers our work in this area as an essential part of ensuring that we offer inclusive services that meet the needs of all residents. We are continually working to improve equalities across the district. For example we have supported and funded the development of a new South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network in March 2013.

You can view the Annual Equalities report which is available at: [www.southglos.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/equalities)

## November survey feedback

### Circadian Trust, Leisure and Sports facilities

Circadian Trust is an independent, charitable company that works in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council. It operates eight Active leisure and sports facilities across South Gloucestershire.

In winter 2012, along with an independent consultation, Circadian Trust asked some questions to find out the level of awareness of their leisure facilities and views on their pricing. The results were closely tied and so a combined approach was taken and the following changes are being introduced over the next two years:

- All prices will increase by 1% above the retail price index for the next 2 years
- Age related and student concessionary discounts will be changed a 35% discount
- Means tested and registered disabled concessionaires will still be entitled to the highest discount level of 50%

People between the age of 60 and 65 who are currently in receipt of the concessionary rate will still be eligible for this rate. The increase in concessionary age will be in line with the raising of the State Pension age and the Trust will still run classes for over 60s.

Further information about leisure services in South Gloucestershire is available from: [www.southglos.gov.uk/leisurecentres](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisurecentres)

## Views on the council and the local area

We asked how engaged you are in your local communities. Only one in five people felt they could influence decisions in their local area. To try and better understand the reasons for this we have organised a review of local engagement mechanisms and decision-making, and we have a celebration of volunteers planned for September 2013 to make people feel valued for their contribution to their community.

## Antisocial behaviour

When asked to consider how much of a problem six anti-social behaviour issues are in the local area, the majority of residents feel each is either not a very big problem or are not a problem at all. Groups hanging around the streets were rated as a problem by around a quarter of respondents. South Gloucestershire Council has set up a new grants programme to encourage young people to participate in positive activities across the area.

We also asked some questions about perceptions of safety in the local area. Where concerns were raised in the Viewpoint Survey about people's feelings of safety, we have worked closely in conjunction with the police to target the 'hotspot' areas of most concern and bring in licensing restrictions where licensed premises are causing a problem. For example the Portcullis Hotel in Chipping Sodbury with positive action has seen a decrease in antisocial behaviour.

## Budget and council tax consultation

Each year we consult on our budget and council tax proposals. We sent you a summary of the council's financial performance and proposed tax strategy in winter 2012 and asked you some questions to gage your opinions on the council's budget.

The budget related responses were used to inform the decisions taken on the final budget including agreeing a Council Tax freeze for the third year running. Members also considered the responses on relative service priorities. The views expressed will influence early thinking about future savings the council will need to make.

From a Corporate Finance perspective, the Viewpoint Panel survey views are a very useful element of the statutory requirement to consult on the budget and provide evidence of opinion on crucial matters such as support for a Council Tax rise or a Council Tax freeze.

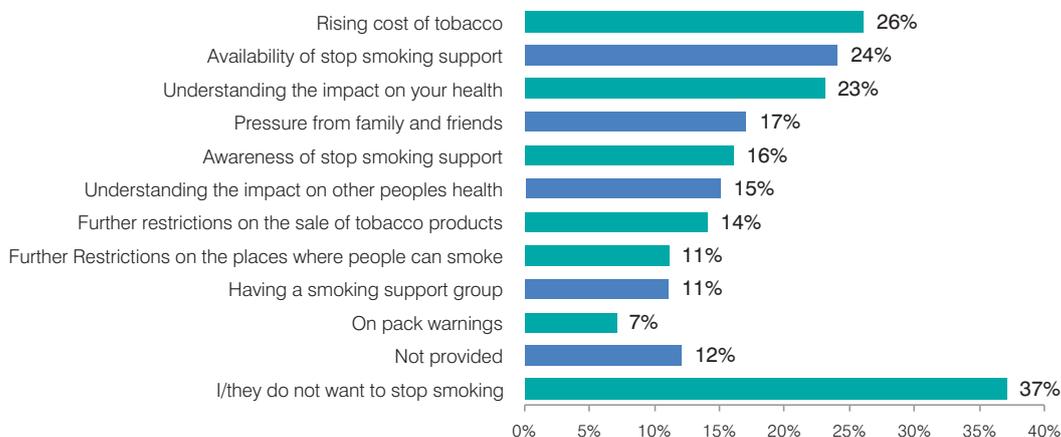
## Smoking

In winter 2012 we asked some questions around smoking to better understand smoking patterns and target campaigns in areas where smoking rates are at their highest. One of the questions asked was around what interventions do respondents think would help them or the person who smokes to stop. The most prominent response was that raising the cost of tobacco would help them or their family member to stop smoking at 26%. The availability of stop smoking services 24% and understanding the impact on your health 23% were also considered as important interventions which would assist in stopping smoking.

The information will be used to help guide the work of the alliance to ensure that smokefree legislation is upheld, knowledge of the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke reach the most vulnerable communities and that those individuals who wish to stop smoking have access to services that support their goals.

Further information about smoking cessation services are available from: [www.southglos.gov.uk/smokefree](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/smokefree)

## Which of the following do you think would help you/them to stop smoking



If you would like this information in a different format or language, please contact: ☎ 01454 868009