

Questions and answers

Localism in Highways and Street Scene services Version 0.2 – May 2014

Policy and consultation

1. Why are you making these changes?

There are two key reasons for these changes.

First, we are committed to the national Localism initiative and want to involve our communities more closely in the services they receive. You can find out more about our approach to Localism [here](#). Our Localism Framework highlights our ambition to put people at the heart of public services, devolving responsibility for services as much as possible to the local level and involving other organisations, groups and individuals in service delivery. The changes to highway and street scene services help realise this ambition.

Second, like all local authorities we are having to change the way we work as we adapt to a significant reduction in funding associated with the national austerity programme. To help deliver a balanced budget we have already delivered savings of approximately £43m and by 2020 we will need to save a further £40m. To do this we will need to adopt new ways of working and involve our communities more closely in service delivery. We will also need to reduce, or stop providing some services altogether. The changes to highway and street scene services reflect this approach.

2. What consultation did you carry out before making these changes?

We invited comments on the proposed changes for 24 weeks from 11 April until 13 September 2013. Consultation information was sent to Parish and Town councils, Safer, Stronger community groups, South Gloucestershire Council councillors, local voluntary and community sector organisations and other interested parties (including Friends groups and other environmental groups).

Copies of the consultation document (including questionnaire) were also made available from all libraries and One Stop Shops as well as other public locations.

As part of the consultation we also welcomed comments made online and by letter, email, fax and over the phone and these contact methods were promoted on consultation literature.

The consultation was supported by a dedicated consultation website and an online questionnaire. We also promoted the consultation through the local media and on the council's website and social media channels.

You can read the committee report discussing the streetcare localism proposals [here](#) and the consultation report [here](#). Members of the council's Communities Committee formally gave approval to implement the changes on 6 November 2013. You can read the Committee report reviewing the outcomes of the consultation [here](#).

3. Is this a pilot scheme or a permanent service change?

It is a permanent service change, effective from 1 April 2014.

Core Standard and enhanced services

4. How did you decide what should be included in the Core Standard?

The Core Standard includes all of the highway and street scene services we are legally obliged to provide as a local authority.

5. How can I influence or get involved in delivering enhanced services in my area?

Any community groups or organisations could get involved in the delivery of enhanced services as part of this initiative and we are happy to discuss proposals and ideas where appropriate - please refer to the contact details at the end of this document to find out how to get in touch with us. You should also speak to your Parish or Town Council since these organisations are leading most of the activity at a parish level. You can find out contact details for your Parish or Town Council at www.southglos.gov.uk/streetscene

A number of people already cut grass areas outside their homes. If you wish to do the same, you can apply for a 'License to Maintain' via the contact details below.

You can also find out more about our approach to localism [here](#).

6. How can I find out what enhanced services are being provided in my area?

There is a full list of services within each area at www.southglos.gov.uk/streetscene

7. Why is/isn't my Parish or Town Council providing enhanced services?

Approaches to the provision of enhanced services vary from area to area. This reflects local needs and priorities and is the outcome of democratic decision-making at the local parish level.

8. What is happening in areas without a Parish or Town Council (unparished areas?)

These areas will all receive the Core Standard.

Finance, council tax and parish precept

9. How much will this save the council?

This project forms part of the council's Transformation Programme which is scheduled to deliver about £43m of savings by 2014/15, as part of our response to the decrease in local authority funding associated with the national austerity programme. The project will contribute to these overall savings with targeted savings of £0.5m across Street Scene services within the Environment and Community Services Department from 2014/15

10. Will my council tax be reduced?

The changes will help us respond to a decrease in the funding we receive from government, as part of our contribution to the national austerity programme. They are not intended to help reduce council tax levels. It is worth noting however that due in part to the success of our transformation programme savings to date, the council has been able to freeze council tax levels in recent years.

11. How will the enhanced services be paid for?

Where Parish or Town Councils have elected to provide enhanced services, in consultation with their residents, these will typically be funded through the parish precept.

Responsibility for services

12. Who is responsible for all these different services?

This project will see a range of organisations involved in delivering highways and street scene services and legal liability for some services will change as a result. South Gloucestershire Council retains all responsibility for Core Standard services but responsibility for enhanced services, especially those provided by a third-party contractor, is likely to rest with your Parish or Town Council.

Dog waste

13. Aren't you legally responsible for providing dog waste bins?

We are not legally required to provide dog waste bins. Dog waste can be disposed of in domestic black bins or litter bins and does not have to be separated from other waste. Some Parish and Town Councils have opted to continue providing some dog waste bins as an enhanced service but this is at their own initiative and expense.

14. Won't people just dump their dog waste if they can't find a dog waste bin?

We have conducted a public information campaign to remind people of the importance of being a responsible dog owner and of cleaning up after their pet. We prefer to educate people about the importance of responsible dog ownership, but we will also enforce anti-fouling rules if necessary. You can find out more about our approach to dog fouling [here](#).

15. What have you done to notify guide dog users of these changes?

We have carried out a mailshot to visually impaired residents and guide dog owners to notify them of the changes. We have also contacted representatives of guide dog owners, eg RNIB, to notify them of the changes.

Contact details

16. Who should I contact about highway and street scene services now?

In the first instance, please contact us and we will help identify who is responsible for the services your query concerns. You can get in touch:

Online at www.southglos.gov.uk/streetscene,

By email at StreetCare@southglos.gov.uk,

By telephone on 01454 868 000

By post to:

Department for Environment and Community Services
PO Box 299
Civic Centre
High Street
Kingswood
Bristol
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