

Gloucester City Council 2021-2024 Council Plan Consultation Results and Findings

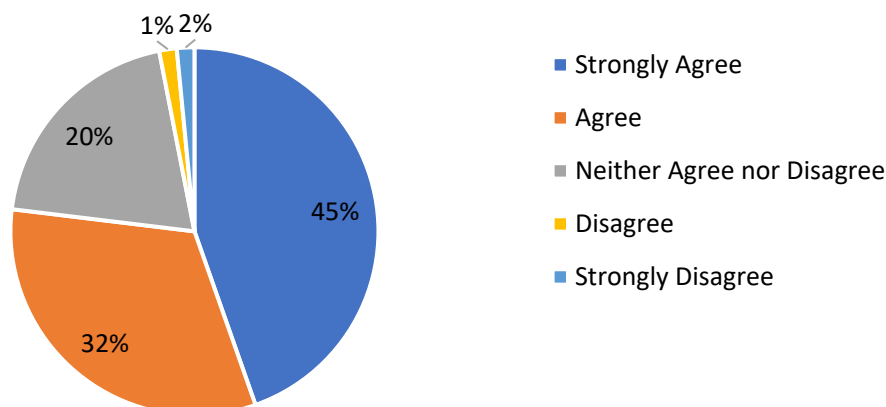
1. Introduction

The public consultation for the Gloucester City Council 2021-2024 Council Plan ran for 6 weeks from the 23rd September until the 4th November 2021. The Consultation asked Gloucester's residents and businesses alike to share their opinions and comments, and provide suggestions, on the Council's draft Council Plan. In total, the consultation collected 67 responses. This report highlights the key findings and themes that were pulled out during this consultation process.

2. Headline Statistics

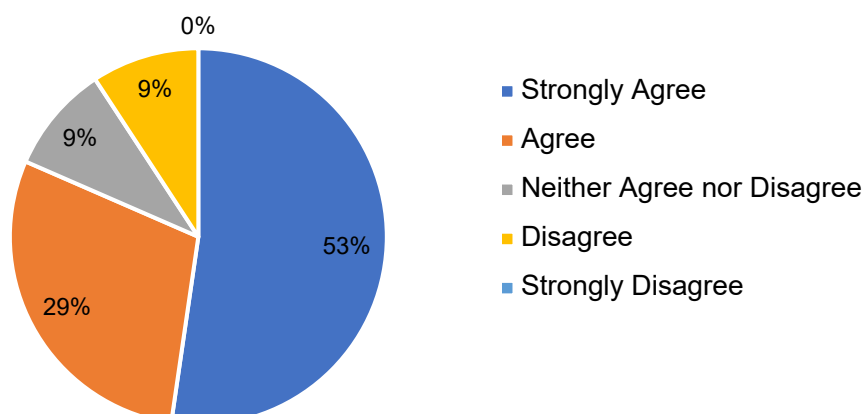
It was found that a very strong majority of those who responded agree with the themes and priorities the Council has set out. The below graphs illustrate this. 77% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with Gloucester's proposed vision – “*Building a greener, fairer, better Gloucester*”.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed vision for Gloucester City Council - ‘**Building a greener, fairer, better Gloucester**’?



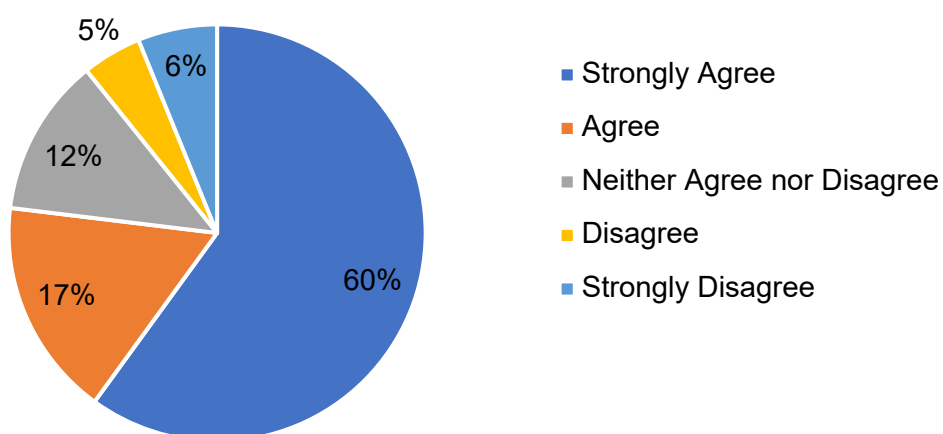
Furthermore, when asked whether addressing inequalities and taking action on climate change in Gloucester should be areas of focus for the council, a strong majority of respondents agreed with both of these proposed cross cutting themes throughout the Council Plan. With 82% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that addressing inequalities should be a priority, and 77% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed priority of taking action on climate change, there is a clear directive from Gloucester's communities that these two topics are top priorities. The graphs below display these findings.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that **tackling inequalities** should be central to the council's vision?



As seen in the graph above, tackling inequalities has strong support from Gloucester's communities, with 82% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, only 9% neutral and 9% disagreeing with this proposed cross cutting theme. Interestingly, it is noted that 0% of respondents strongly disagreed with this cross-cutting theme.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that **taking action on climate change** should be central to the council's vision?

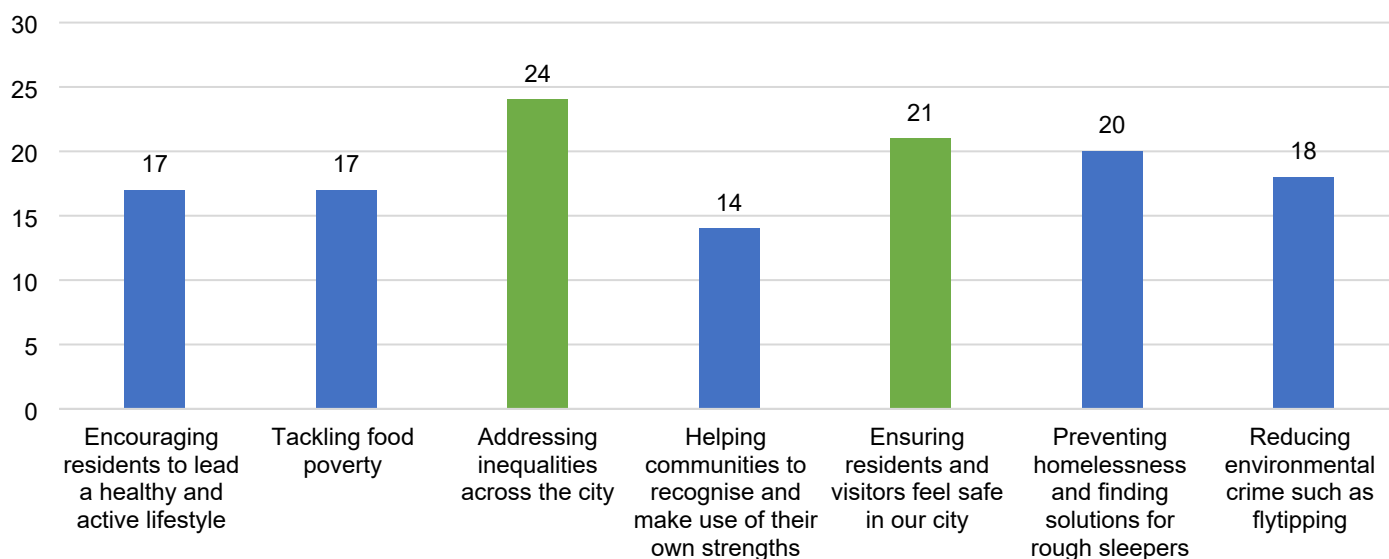


The graph above again displays the strong view that tackling action on climate change should be a cross cutting theme in the Council Plan. 77% of respondents agree or strongly agree, with only 5% disagreeing and 6% of those who responded strongly disagreeing.

2.3 Analysis of the Top Priorities of Gloucester's Residents

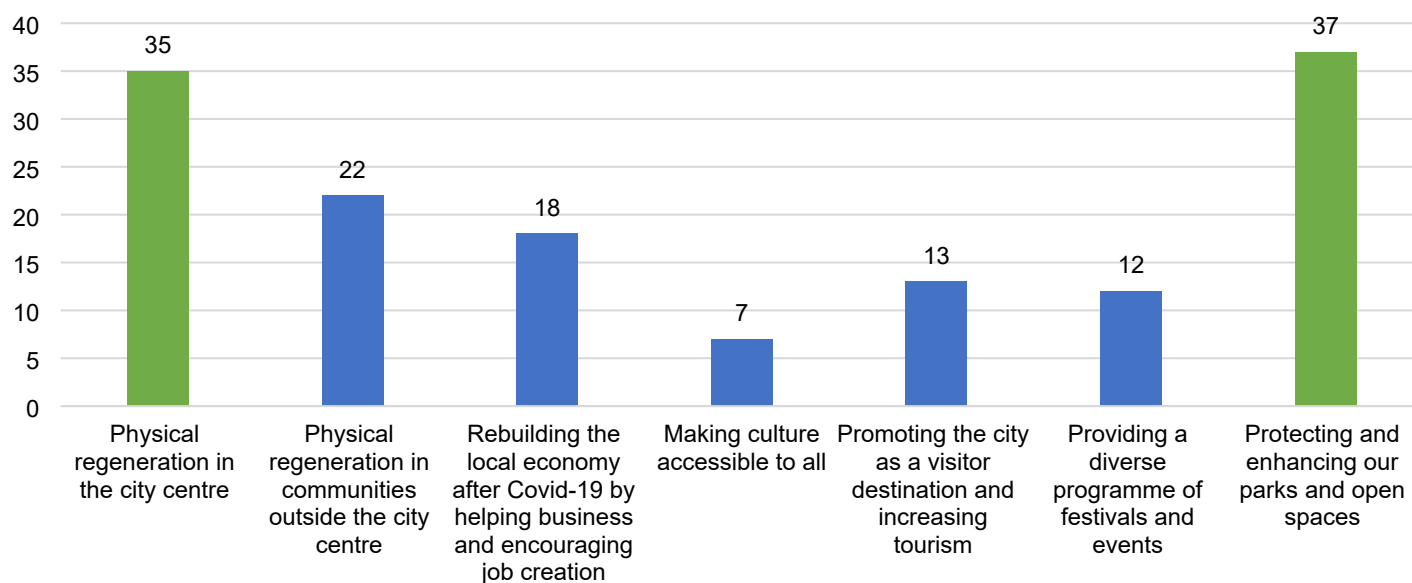
During the consultation we asked respondents to choose their top two themes from those set out for each of the three priorities in the draft Council Plan. The results are as follows.

Priority 1: Building greener, healthier, and more inclusive communities, Top two themes



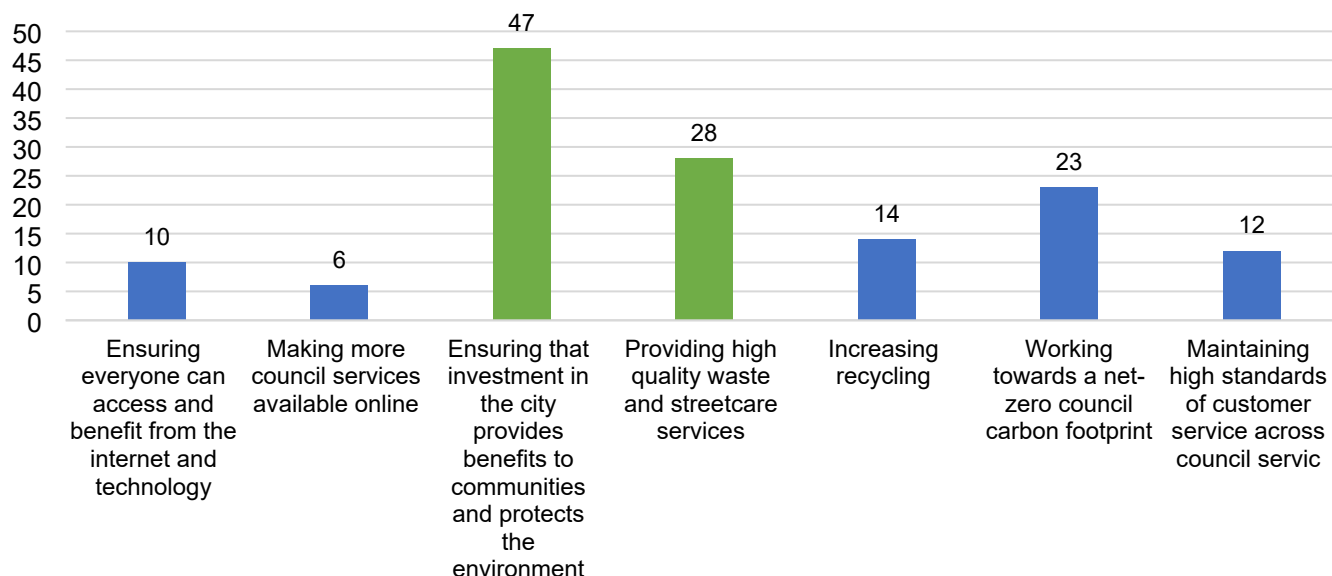
As seen above, beyond the two cross cutting themes, addressing inequalities has been chosen to be an increased area of focus in priority one, alongside ensuring that residents and visitors feel safe in Gloucester. These top themes should be reflected in the actions that form priority one of the Council Plan. However, it is important to note that no one single theme has an overarching or strong majority in priority one, suggesting respondents rate the themes as relatively equal in their importance.

Priority 2: Building a sustainable city of diverse culture and opportunity Top two themes



As seen in the graph above, respondents highlighted two themes above all others in priority two. The two themes that resonated most strongly were physical regeneration in the city centre, and protecting and enhancing our parks and open spaces. This links with many of the objectives already outlined in the Council Plan, and more widely the projects already underway across the city, such as King's Quarter regeneration and the Forum.

Priority 3: Building a socially responsible and empowering council
Top two themes



The graph for priority three clearly outlines the themes which Gloucester's communities want the Council to focus on. Similar to priority one, priority three reconfirms that Gloucester's residents believe the council should focus on ensuring investment in the city provides benefits to both the community and the environment, echoing the cross-cutting themes proposed. Furthermore, the themes highlighted for priority three demonstrate the desire of residents to have improved waste and street care services - work to address this theme has already begun and is well underway with a new contract being signed with Ubico to provide these services.

3. Qualitative Feedback

3.1 Cross-Cutting Themes

When asked for feedback on the two cross cutting themes, 40% respondents mentioned climate change in their responses. There were numerous comments questioning the legitimacy of climate change, and why Gloucester needs to address it. However, the majority of individuals commenting connected climate change and inequalities together and the need to address both issues at once, as both climate change and inequalities affect each other. Respondents also highlighted the need to be clear on how the Council measures inequalities, and how we know if we are improving or falling behind on these metrics.

3.1 Priority One: Building greener, healthier, and more inclusive communities

When respondents were asked for any comments on the themes in priority one, there were various comments suggesting the need to improve both the safety of Gloucester's open spaces, as well as how these open spaces are cared for. There is a clear desire for Gloucester's public spaces to be cleaner, and better looked after, while also ensuring they are safer for individuals. Some respondents suggested better neighbourhood policing, with a stronger police presence and increased CCTV. This aligns with the results seen when respondents were asked to select their top two themes within this priority - with 'Ensuring residents and visitors feel safe in our city' being highlighted as one of the top two themes. There was also a call for greater biodiversity in our parks and open spaces, along with green infrastructure and transportation throughout Gloucester – echoing our cross-cutting theme to take action on climate change.

3.2 Priority Two: Building a sustainable city of diverse culture and opportunity

For this priority, 19% of respondents referenced communities in their free text responses. This included references to the need to ensure the Council works with grassroots organisations already embedded in local communities, enabling diverse communities to get involved and showcase different cultures, and working to ensure local community activities take place beyond the city centre – along with facilitating greater transportation connections to allow enhanced access to cultural events in the city centre. There were also calls for public art and enabling local artists to express their creativity throughout the city, demonstrating Gloucester's cultural diversity in practice through art, music and food. Numerous respondents also highlighted their desire to see Gloucester become less car dependent – with infrastructure and transport connections that do not prioritise cars. These responses can help inform the actions we take to implement the Council Plan, and some actions (such as around transportation) require partnership working with the County Council and others, helping us to achieve a greener city and county.

3.3 Priority Three: Building a socially responsible and empowering council

Multiple references were made by respondents regarding the need to ensure communities are on board with local investment plans, and have a say over what happens in their local areas. One respondent spoke to the need to ensure that investment in the city provides benefits to communities and protects the environment, while another highlighted the importance of investment being fairly applied across the city, with certain areas requiring enhanced funding and investment. Other comments spoke to the need to reduce red tape, enhance customer service provision, develop community hubs and ensure that Council services are as accessible as possible. However, it is important to note that 'Making more council services available online' received the lowest proportion of votes when respondents were asked to select their top two themes within this priority, suggesting this is not a major priority on the whole. Ultimately, numerous free text responses emphasised the desire for communities to play a leading role, alongside the Council, in enhancing and improving Gloucester for everyone.

4. Conclusions

Overall, it appears that those who responded are supportive of the vision, priorities and themes set out in the draft Council Plan. While some responses were negative, such as those who expressed the belief we are placing too great an emphasis on climate change, most of the comments received were constructive and sought to help shape the actions which the Council will take to fulfil the priorities, themes and vision outlined. The free text responses offered a wealth of suggestions which we can build on and use as inspiration for the actions that will form the substantive basis of the Council Plan, in terms of our SMART goals.