

Cheltenham Borough Council

Council – 17 November 2025

2025 Independent Resident Survey Results

Accountable member:

Cllr Rowena Hay, Leader of the Council

Accountable officer:

Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

Residents' surveys are frequently carried out by local councils to collect statistically robust views from a representative sample of residents. The last resident survey was undertaken in 2022. In line with the 2022 recommendation to repeat the survey in three years' time, the Leader of the Council requested an independent resident survey be carried out in summer 2025 with the aim of understanding residents' views on several topics related to the council and the local area to inform future service delivery and to benchmark against previous surveys.

Overall, council performance is consistent with or above the national average when benchmarked against the LGA Polling Survey. Some resident perceptions have declined since the previous survey in 2022 but align with or exceed the 2019 survey.

With local government reorganisation taking place, the resident survey is timely in giving members an up-to-date local understanding about resident views on Cheltenham Borough, the importance of identity and what they think about services.

Recommendations:

1. Council acknowledges the 2025 Resident Survey results and the insights they provide for future service delivery.
 2. The results are used to inform future delivery of council services.
 3. The results from the survey are communicated to the council's partners with lead responsibilities for areas where further improvement has been identified.
 4. The survey is repeated in three years' time.
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1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

Signed off by: Jon Whitlock, Head of Finance, jon.whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

Signed off by: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

2. Environmental and climate change implications

The survey results identified that the majority of respondents have made changes in the last three years to tackle climate change, however four in ten respondents (40%) said that they had not made any. This provides insight on the gap which needs to be addressed within the borough to mitigate climate change and influence future work.

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.3 Corporate Plan Priorities

The resident survey results will be used to inform service delivery and will contribute to all the Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Securing our future
- Quality homes, safe and strong communities
- Reducing carbon, achieving council net zero, creating biodiversity
- Reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes
- Taking care of your money

1.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

The resident survey was a representative sample of the population as set out in research methodology in the report at Appendix 3.

1.5 Performance management – monitoring and review

The survey will be repeated in three years' time to measure the impact of service delivery on resident satisfaction levels.

2 Background

- 2.1 Residents' surveys are frequently carried out by local councils to collect statistically robust views from a representative sample of residents. The last resident survey was undertaken in 2022.
- 2.2 In line with the 2022 recommendation to repeat the survey in three years' time, the Leader of the Council requested an independent resident survey be carried out in summer 2025 with the aim of understanding residents' views on several topics related to the council and the local area to help inform future service delivery and to benchmark against previous surveys.
- 2.3 Enventure Research Ltd were commissioned to undertake the survey on behalf of the Council.

3 Survey methodology and response rate

- 3.1 A questionnaire was co-designed by the Council and Enventure Research. To allow comparisons to be made against previous survey findings, some questions from the 2022 and 2019 surveys were included, as well as questions from the LGA 'Are You Being Served?' national polling survey to allow for benchmarking on a national scale.
- 3.2 A representative telephone survey was conducted with residents of Cheltenham aged 16 and above. Quotas for the survey were set on age, gender and ward, to provide a sample that was broadly representative of Cheltenham residents. In addition, some interviews were undertaken face-to-face at various locations to ensure hard to reach residents were included. The representative sample size provided an accuracy of +/-2.9% at the 95% confidence interval.
- 3.3 An open access online version of the same questionnaire was also made available, to provide all residents with the opportunity to take part.
- 3.4 A total of 1,100 telephone and face-to-face interviews were completed, and the online survey received 426 responses.

3.5 The report at Appendix 3 provides a detailed explanation of the methodology.

4 Key Findings

4.1 High-level results from the representative sample of residents surveyed are briefly summarised below. The full detailed report, results and analysis is set out in Appendix 3.

4.2 Benchmarking against LGA Polling Survey

- The council's performance is consistent with or above the national average.
- Overall resident satisfaction with their local area as a place to live is at 82%.
- Satisfaction with the way the council runs things and agreement that the council provides value for money has remained consistent with the 2022 survey and is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of those who think the council keeps residents well-informed about the services and benefits it provides has decreased but is consistent with the national average.

4.3 Local area

- Perceptions of living in Cheltenham remain positive, but some decreases have been recorded since 2022. The perception that living in Cheltenham provides the opportunity to grow a career has increased from 29% in 2019 to 49% in 2025, but there is room for further improvement in this area and around improving opportunities for young people.
- The majority of residents believe their local area has not changed much in the past year, but a quarter think it has got worse.
- When asked what one change they would want local councils to make to improve their experience as a Cheltenham resident, the most common response was improvements to road and pavement maintenance. A cleaner, better maintained local area with less litter was also mentioned by residents.
- Satisfaction with town centre amenities is high and 85% of respondents are satisfied with events, but perceptions of Cheltenham in the evening are less positive than the daytime. Respondents were also dissatisfied with the range of shops, driven largely by the closing of shops and a desire to see a greater variety of shops.

4.4 Environment

- The majority of residents have made changes in the last three years to

tackle climate change, however four in ten have not.

- Opinion was split on how easy or difficult it is to book a slot to visit a Household Recycling Centre run by Gloucestershire County Council. Reopening Swindon Road household recycling centre (HRC) and better HRC access was also mentioned by some respondents when they were asked about the one change they would like local councils to make to improve their experience as a Cheltenham resident.

4.5 Developing Cheltenham

- Around 70% of respondents agree that there is a need for more affordable homes to buy and rent in Cheltenham, but only 36% of residents are willing to accept some new homes being built on green space.
- Awareness of the Golden Valley development has increased by 10% since 2022, but residents are more likely to disagree than agree that it is for people like them.

4.6 The Council

- Many residents are unaware of how much of their council tax is allocated to the Council and over half believe any increase should be in line with inflation.
- Whilst residents feel it is most important for the council to have a digital presence, the majority also feel it is important for the council to maintain a physical presence in the town centre.

4.7 Local representation

- Most residents feel a strong sense of belonging to their local area and would say they live in Cheltenham if speaking to someone from elsewhere in the UK. Most residents also feel it is important that they are represented by a local council and local councillors.

5 **Conclusions**

- 5.1 The representative survey results show that council performance is consistent with or above the national average when benchmarked against the LGA Polling Survey, but some resident perceptions have decreased since the 2022 survey.
- 5.2 The online survey results, although not the focus of this covering report, largely mirror the views of representative respondents to a greater or lesser degree. Online survey respondents did, however, tend to hold more negative views than representative survey respondents with regard to the local area and the council.

- 5.3 The survey results need to be considered in the wider context of both the financial climate the council has been operating in over the last few years and residents' experience of the cost-of-living crisis. The council has faced financial pressures in almost all areas. As well as having ambitious savings targets, the cost of delivering services has been rising and the council's government funding has been cut year-on-year. The cost-of-living crisis also continues to grow and supporting a growing number of residents affected by this crisis remains a challenge.
- 5.4 Against this challenging backdrop, overall, the council continues to perform well but there are also clear areas for improvement.

6 Responding to the survey

- 6.1 Cheltenham residents feel a strong sense of belonging to their local area and having a local council and local councillors is important to them. As local government reorganisation progresses, it will be important to recognise and take account of this.
- 6.2 Awareness of the Golden Valley Development has increased since the last survey, but more can be done to engage with different local audiences to demonstrate the relevance of the development to them and how it could benefit them.
- 6.3 The Growth Plan for Gloucestershire, which is in the final stages, will bring together public sector partners, businesses, education providers, the voluntary sector and local communities to create opportunities for Cheltenham residents.
- 6.4 The council continues to work with partners on issues relating to the town centre. This includes Gloucestershire County Council on matters relating to the public realm and Cheltenham BID and others on activities such as the vacant unit action plan, reducing anti-social behaviour and generally improving the Cheltenham experience.
- 6.5 The possibility of reopening the Swindon Road Household Recycling Centre (HRC) came up in the survey. Gloucestershire County Council is currently undertaking a review of all household recycling centres, and this means a decision won't be taken until this review has been completed.
- 6.6 Most residents feel it is important the council maintains a physical presence in the town centre, and this will be incorporated into planning the council's move to an alternative location upon completion of the sale of the Municipal Offices.
- 6.7 Residents again raised the maintenance of roads and pavements as an area of concern, and these survey findings will be shared with Gloucestershire County Council as the body responsible for improvements in this area.

- 6.8 The full report provides valuable insight and the survey results will be shared with all the council's service areas to inform future service delivery.

7 Reasons for recommendations

- 7.1 It is important the council acknowledges the views of Cheltenham residents and ensures these views are used to inform delivery of council services so that those services meet the needs and expectations of residents.
- 7.2 Some of the views expressed in the survey are not within the remit of the council to address and so the results will be shared with those partners that hold lead responsibilities for some of the areas where further improvement has been identified.
- 7.3 Repeating the survey in three years' time will enable the council to measure the impact of service delivery on resident satisfaction levels.

8 Consultation and feedback

- 8.1 This report presents the results of a consultation with residents that gathered views on a number of topics and which will be used to inform service delivery.

9 Key risks

- 9.1 If the council does not take account of the views expressed in the independent resident survey, then future service delivery may not meet the needs or expectations of residents.

Report author:

Gill May, Organisational Performance Lead, gill.may@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

1. Risk Assessment
2. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening
3. Resident Survey 2025 Report by Enventure Research Ltd

Background information:

Independent resident surveys 2022 and 2019.

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	If the council does not take account of the views expressed in the independent resident survey then future service delivery may not meet the needs or expectations of residents	Leadership team	1	2	2	Reduce	Share survey results with all service areas.	Gill May	18/11/25

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Gill May	Service Area: Corporate Services
Title: Organisational Performance Lead	Date of assessment: 27/10/25
Signature: G S May	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Other

If other, please specify: Results of an independent resident survey

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

N/A

Is this new or existing?

Other

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

To conduct an independent resident survey.

Objectives:

To understand residents' views on several topics related to the council and the local area to help inform future service delivery.

Outcomes:

Resident survey was undertaken in summer 2025.

Benefits:	To inform future service delivery.
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e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	No
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	No impact expected
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
The Resident Survey 2025 Report presents the findings of an independent resident survey undertaken during the summer. The report has no impact in itself, but the results will be used to inform future service delivery.	

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	