

Item 12 – South Gloucestershire Council Special Expenses Update

Summary from F&GP meeting 27.07.2026 - Min 566

To NOTE update on South Gloucestershire Council Special Expenses/ Local Choice Policy and agree recommendation to Full Council for 2027/28 financial year

Noted South Gloucestershire Council Local Choice and Special Expenses Policy was approved by Cabinet 13th July 2026 ([decision and supporting papers](#)). From April 2027 – April 2030 responsibility for services covered by the Policy (currently delivered by SGC and paid for via a Special Expenses charge to residents) will be transferred to town and parish councils by agreement. In this parish, the service to be transferred is maintenance of some small areas of open space in Coalpit Heath (approx cost £1,577.05 p.a. based on current figures).

After transfer, service delivery costs will be funded from precepts. Delivery of local choice services by town and parish councils may be via self-delivery, appointed contractor, or purchasing a managed service from SGC. Asset transfer at a later date is an option in relation to some services e.g. parks, but unlikely to be of interest to this council.

If there is no agreement to transfer a service by April 2030, there will be a consultation after which the service will cease or move to statutory minimum provision.

Implementation information will be distributed to town/parish councils in September 2026. In autumn 2026 Full Council will be asked to approve (i) opting in to the service transfer, (ii) the timetable for doing so, and (iii) which service delivery method to use. No decision required at this stage.

Latest update from Clerk – 09/09/2026

Implementation information has been received and reviewed by the Clerk. It appears to be incomplete. A one:one call with a member of the SGC project team will take place on 10/09/2026 to clarify outstanding details.

IF WCHPC decides to join the 1st wave for service transfer* of grass-cutting, hedge and shrub services on SGC-owned small open spaces in the parish (i.e. from 1st April 2027), SGC is offering a discounted cost of **£1,525** for a managed service. The deadline to express an interest in Wave 1 is 30.09.2026. It is unclear if WCHPC could pull out after this date.

This is discounted from the actual indicative cost of £1,695, which will be charged to parishioners if WCHPC does not join wave 1.

At the time of writing the Clerk is seeking clarity over whether the above cost includes all tree services for the large mature oak on open space off Oakwood Gardens, that is included in the service transfer. Clarity is also being sought re liability and insurance for this tree. The implementation information notes that tree services (surveys and specialist tree work) ARE NOT included in the above price. If this is correct, these would need to be funded as an additional cost from the precept.

This is not acceptable and would require WCHPC to delay service transfer and not join the 1st wave. If tree services are included then joining the 1st wave should be possible (subject to the Clerk checking all land included for any other anomalies).

The Council is asked to decide if it wishes to join the 1st wave for service transfer and use the SGC managed service (subject the resolving the issues identified above).

*NOTE the timetable is for SERVICE TRANSFER ONLY, not ASSET TRANSFER. I.e. the Parish Council will pay SGC to maintain the public open space land that SGC owns in the parish via the precept, rather than residents being charged directly.