Open Government Action Plan 2: Open Call for Ideas 2024

Summary of Findings (March 2025)

OGP LOCAL **GLASGOW**

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Introduction

This report provides a summary of the main findings from the Open Call for Ideas to inform the development of Glasgow's second Open Government Action Plan.

Glasgow has been a member of the Open Government Partnership since 2020, and the values of openness, transparency, accountability and participation are core to our membership. Having delivered our first Open Government Action Plan for Glasgow, we are now developing our next Plan to cover 2025-2027.

Within our first Open Government Action Plan for Glasgow, we committed to actions to increase public participation, explore a digital engagement platform, created an open data hub, and build communications on open government. The Open Call for Ideas wanted to hear ideas and priorities to help decide what should be included in our next Action Plan. We asked organisations and communities to share ideas, views and suggestions about improving how we work in Glasgow City Council, and with our Community Planning Partners, so that we are all able to understand the work of local government, to influence it effectively, and be able to hold local government to account.

Background

The Open Call was carried out between 9th August and 26th September 2024. The consultation was distributed to a range of stakeholders and organisations and was made available to the public on the Council's Consultation Hub.

It was promoted on the Council's website and through social media channels and direct SmartSurvey links sent to Community Councils, Area Partnerships, and to Glasgow's Open Government Steering Group members.

In total, there were **111** responses received.

This report contains several tables, where percentages may not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories or multiple answers.

Open Government in Glasgow

Question 1: Were you aware that Glasgow was a member of the Open Government Partnership?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	16	15%
No	83	80%
Don't Know/No Opinion	5	5%

BASE: 104

A significant majority of respondents (80%) were not aware that Glasgow was a member of the Open Government Partnership, only 15% were aware of Glasgow's membership.

Question 2: How much, if anything, do you feel you know about Open Government in Glasgow?

	Number	Percentage
A great deal	2	13%
A fair amount	7	44%
Not very much	7	44%
Nothing at all	-	-
Don't Know/No Opinion	-	-

BASE: 16

Of the respondents that were aware of Glasgow's membership of the Open Government Partnership, just over half of respondents (57%) stated they knew a great deal or a fair amount about open government. The remaining 44% of respondents knew not very much about open government in Glasgow.

Open Government Themes for 2024-2027

Question 3: **Which themes do you feel should be prioritised for inclusion within our next Open Government Action Plan for Glasgow – which would be most important to you?**

Please rank the following themes from 1 being most important to 6 being the least.

	Total Score*	Overall Rank
Poverty and Inequalities	364	1
Public Participation and Democracy	353	2
Financial Transparency	274	3
Climate Change	220	4
Youth Participation	197	5
Digital and Data	188	6

* Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts.

Respondents ranked the theme of Poverty and Inequalities as the most important to them for inclusion in the next Open Government Action Plan for Glasgow (ranked first with a score of 364), this was closely followed by Public Participation and Democracy as a priority theme (ranked second with a score of 353).

Financial Transparency was seen as an important theme with a score of 274 and ranked in third position. Climate Change, Youth Participation, and Digital and Data were ranked in fourth, fifth and sixth positions respectively.

Question 4: Please use the space below to tell us about any areas the Council, and our Community Planning Partners, should focus on over the next four years – to deliver improvement in understanding the work of local public services, to be able to influence services and decisions effectively, and be able to hold us to account.

This could be any priorities or issues you think should be reflected in the Plan, any improvements or changes that should be addressed, or any new priorities or opportunities we should include in the Plan.

Respondents provided a large range of views on the focus for the Open Government Action Plan over the next four years, many of which are focussed on improvements in understanding the work of local public services and being able to influence services and decisions effectively. Open Government values and principles have been reflected by respondents - public participation, accountability and transparency, accessibility and access to services, and trust in government. In addition, respondents have highlighted key open government policy themes such as financial transparency, climate change, young people, and health – however they have also raised a number of more specific Council Service comments and suggestions which run throughout the qualitative responses.

Public Participation and Democracy

Effective citizen participation in decision making was highlighted by respondents, with participatory democracy requiring power sharing, more consultation and speaking to people about changes to their area. It was important that '*all citizens have a right to be heard, not just those who shout the loudest*'. Respondents felt that the Council does not sufficiently consult with residents, and that the quality and use of consultation findings to inform service delivery and decisions could be improved.

> '*A key priority has got to be citizen engagement to raise the importance of 'citizen voice' in the Plan and expectation about its impact. This should recognise that diverse communities of place and identity will have different priorities and should be engaged on matters that matter most to them.*'

Respondents noted the importance of co-creation and partnership working, as having a co-produced plan is important to ensuring it makes a real difference. It was suggested that greater collaboration with Community Councils, Housing Associations and community groups would provide greater access to communities.

Several respondents raised the issue of contact with the Council and being able to speak to someone – it was felt that the lack of ability to do this was hindering public participation and transparency.

The other improvements and opportunities mentioned by respondents included: a potential role for public voting, the need for community funds allocated to local groups to demonstrate action and commitment; placing greater emphasis on civic education in schools to foster responsibility; and ensuring communications with citizens is easily understood and accessible and appropriate.

Trust in Local Government

Respondents identified themes within their submission which have the potential to build trust in Local Government and public service, these included listening to citizens, putting the basic needs of citizens first, delivering what we promise, building confidence in local politicians, and proactive management.

A number of respondents noted that the Council do not listen, and that they need to start heeding public opinion – including consultation comments being listened to and acted on.

Several respondents asked that the Council refocus on improving basic services and putting the basic needs of citizens first.

> '…focusing on what people really want – a pleasant, clean, safe, attractive place to live, work and visit.'

It was mentioned that public services have deteriorated significantly over the last 15 years, and people need to see these public services improve before they will be prepared to spend time discussing strategic issues.

Finally, respondents highlighted that trust and respect in politicians is at a record low, and maintenance of standards in representation was critical. Some suggested priorities were to:

- be honest and transparent at all times;
- avoid vanity projects - which distance citizens from public policy and trust is lost; and
- ethics and rights based activity must be central to planning, to build trust and confidence in public administration.

Transport and Travel

Whilst respondents provided a range of views on service delivery, there were a number of public participation, transparency and accountability, and accessibility issues raised in relation to transport and travel. Respondents highlighted issues with and the potential for improved public transport – this included, making public transport accessible and affordable, public ownership of buses in Glasgow, aligning public transport providers to deliver a unified service, and improvements to subway, train links and cycle lanes.

Several respondents questioned the number/need for cycle lanes in the city, and the potential for a public vote. Respondents felt that consultation comments were not listened to and acted on in relation to cycle lanes, and resident complaints do not result in revised proposals. Consulting residents on changes in their areas was important, as on occasion changes were imposed with no benefit to residents, an example of parking restrictions was cited.

Other issues given in relation to transport and travel were inequity in the location of bike sheds across the city, and the geographical restriction and charging levels of taxis.

Poverty and Inequalities

Identified as the most important theme for inclusion in the next Open Government Action Plan, respondents have also identified Poverty and Inequalities as an area to focus on over the next four years. Comments related to inequalities, poverty and deprivation.

Tackling poverty was identified as a priority, described by a respondent as the '*biggest cause of social inequality*'. Respondents mentioned inequity in access to public services, that services should be available to all citizens equally and not concentrated in certain areas. Other issues raised included tackling food poverty across all ages, promoting financial inclusion, listening to citizens with disabilities, and encouraging cultural events to bring people together and strengthen community ties.

Accessibility and Access to Public Services

It was suggested that more could be done to improve access to public services – several respondents felt that this issue was about the ability to contact services and being available to talk to people. The emphasis on online service transactions was not considered to promote transparency and inclusiveness.

Another issue raised was equal access to local public services, one respondent noting that people live in communities and neighbourhoods not Wards, and that disparity of service within areas should be considered.

Health and Social Care

Respondents identified drugs and substance misuse as the focus for health improvement, including: treating substance misuse as a health issue and not a crime; concerns over the impact of drugs use and related antisocial behaviour on young people; safe consumption to reduce drug deaths; more information on work placements and opportunities for those recovering from addiction; and involving those with lived experiences.

Transparency and Accountability

Respondents noted several priorities and improvements related to transparency and accountability. Firstly it was felt that it was important to meaningfully hold government to account, and that this was difficult as an individual attempting to question poor performance or lack of implementation.

It was suggested that there should be a clear commitment from all Council Departments on service queries handling and procedures, including target timescales, contact points, escalation procedures, and a publicly published register.

The issue of transparency and accountability around Elected Members fulfilling their duties was raised – establishing a monitoring system to indicate how Councillors are serving their local communities.

Accountability for public money was also raised, including demonstrating value for money, meeting key performance targets, resolving customer complaints, and accountability for poor practices and standards. A stronger role for Glasgow City Council in the scrutiny of organisations was suggested.

Finally, consultation findings being listened to and acted upon was highlighted as important to transparency – otherwise public services are seen to force through policy proposals regardless of resident's views.

Financial Transparency and Budgets

Respondents asked that public services are transparent about '*where the money goes*', and evidence is published to ensure public funds are spent efficiently.

Several respondents raised Glasgow City Council's use of consultants; being transparent about how the Council employs consultants, on what issues, and the outcomes required. This also related to comments made around how third party procured work is quality checked on completion.

It was suggested that it may be helpful for Glasgow to consider Social Value in any/all public spending and procurement – to demonstrate benefits to residents. Respondents were unaware if this was implemented or effective in initiatives within the city.

Respondents recognised the need for community funds – local funds which can be used for improvements resulting from community discussions and voting or allocated to local groups to demonstrate action and commitment.

Young People

Respondents made two key points in relation to open government policy theme. Firstly, around helping young people to be interested and engaged in their environment and listening to them about what is important to their generation. A second linked issue on citizen engagement being a priority for the Open Government Action Plan, and raising the importance of the 'citizen voice' starting with examining the extent of young voices in city strategies which affect them.

Education and Childcare

Respondents suggested the focus should be on closing the attainment gap and increasing Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. Civic education in schools was highlighted to help foster a sense of responsibility amongst students, and creating opportunities for parents and teachers to collaborate more closely.

It was suggested that there was a disparity in Education and Childcare Services depending on where you live and which Local Authority area you fall within – with Glasgow City Council offering less flexibility and support than neighbouring authorities.

Improved Public Services

Respondents provided a wide range of views on public service issues, priorities, and improvements, which were not open government related. These responses did prioritise improved public services, and as stated by one respondent show '*evidence of public policy and services as more responsive, innovative and effective.*'

The service issues raised within Question 4 included: environment, road repairs, improved neighbourhoods, housing, climate change, public safety, city centre issues, economy, recycling, and investing in the Third Sector.

Question 5: If you have an idea, proposal or reform you would like to submit for the second Open Government Action Plan for Glasgow, please share it here.

Respondents provided a range of ideas and improvements for the second Open Government Action Plan relating to public participation, transparency, financial transparency and budgets, and accessibility. In addition, a number of Council Service comments and priorities were identified, these are discussed further in Question 6.

Public Participation and Democracy

Citizen participation in decision making was highlighted by respondents, with participatory democracy requiring power sharing, better support for citizens and excluded groups to participate in planning city strategies and public services, a knowledge of how the Council works and its structures, continued use of Citizens Assemblies, and a role for 'citizen internships'.

Respondents mentioned a potential role for public voting, allowing public voting on all proposals that impact the citizens of the city and improvements in local spaces – this included the use of technology allowing residents to cast their votes.

> *'Direct democracy; the technology exists for residents to easily and securely cast their vote on a range of issues. This would enfranchise residents, involve them and mobilise them into action'*

Respondents recognised the need for community funds – local funds which can be used for improvements resulting from community discussions and voting or allocated to local groups to demonstrate action and commitment.

It was proposed that further support be given to Community Councils – valuing the role of volunteers.

Overall, '*a basic strategy that's co-produced/designed with citizens to address matters of importance is surely a must'*.

Transparency and Accountability

There were several proposals and suggestions for improvement made relating to transparency:

- public performance reporting on project costs, progress reporting, and completion timescales;
- lay members appointed to Operational Scrutiny Committees as expert advisors;

- a clear commitment to service queries handling and procedures, including target timescales, contact points, escalation procedures, and publicly published status logs; and
- discussion on community assets ownership and responding to community needs.

Financial Transparency and Budgets

A number of suggestions were made on budgets and resources, including investing in the Third Sector to enable third sector organisations to work alongside public services, and making resources available for meaningful change with the most vulnerable people of Glasgow.

Another suggestion related to the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund – showing the progress on how the NIFF is spent, including the costs and timescales for project completions.

Council Services

Respondents provided a large range of views on different aspects of Council services. These were not necessarily open government proposals or reforms, but priority service areas for respondents. These are summarised below, and discussed further in Question 6.

It was suggested that addressing inequalities in health and wealth should be a golden thread running throughout the Open Government Plan.

Specific service issues raised within this section included:

- Environment – cleaning up communities, street cleaning, park maintenance, parking and environmental health enforcement, bin replacement, and firework zones improvements.
- Transport – making public transport accessible and affordable, improved public transport, reducing cycle lanes, and fixing potholes.
- Climate Change - the Low Emission Zone is discriminatory and should be ended.
- Economy – investing in infrastructure to support the defence supply chain, and introducing a Universal Basic Income.
- Council Tax – reforming Council Tax.
- Public safety – addressing street hazards faced by people with a disability.
- City Centre – more seating areas, and public toilets in the city centre.

The role of local politicians was highlighted in achieving joined up working for and with the citizens who elect them.

> '…people elect local politicians to deal with local issues, so focus on delivering the basics, education, refuse collection, litter, and potholes'

Question 6: You may not have a proposal at this stage, but are there public services which you would like us to focus on – which services do you think it is important that we progress openness, transparency, and inclusion with?

Respondents proposed a range of service areas as a focus for the next Open Government Action Plan – these were service areas where transparency and participation were thought to be important, but respondents also emphasised improved service delivery within these themes.

The specific public services raised when asked about services important to progress openness, transparency and inclusion were:

- Environment – the need to look after the environment, and for green spaces in neighbourhoods, as this was important for health and wellbeing. Respondents felt there should be a focus on improving basic maintenance of our open space and streets to *'tidy up the city'* and restore pride – this included street cleaning, grass cutting, bin collections, removal of brown bin charges, addressing littering and enforcement against fly tipping, lighting, park maintenance and upgrades, It was suggested that more community clean-up initiatives be facilitated, public toilet provision should be improved, and that residents take responsibility for their environment.

- Health and Social Care – the key service issues raised were recovery communities and drug deaths (safe consumption and rehabilitation), addressing health inequalities, and the NHS. Other issues mention were citizens with chronic health problems, social care, banning vapes, and more healthy living and wellbeing classes.

- Transport – most respondents stated transport/public transport as an important issue, with more specific comments made on reducing cycle lanes, roads, funding and transparency of bus services, and openness in how consultation findings shape proposals on new cycle lanes.

- Financial Transparency – a number of comments were made in relation to financial services on being transparent about where public money goes (such as the Low Emission Zone fines), donations, transparency of funding and accountability in public transport (with specific reference to funding bus companies and subsidising bus routes, and being open about the long term security of community facilities (libraries and swimming pools)which are repeatedly at threat of closure.

- Roads – these included issues of parking enforcement out-with the city centre, road repairs, and more road resurfacing instead of quick fixes.

- Climate Change – suggested that a priority should be to become carbon neutral in everything we do, and that relevant authorities

should strongly encourage the community to focus on climate change.

- Economy and Employability – respondents noted two issues within the employability theme, promoting paid work placements and Job Centres, and within the economy mentioned the rising number of students within communities.

- Children and Young People – early intervention was considered an important feature to the Plan, from education and childcare to more facilities for young children and teenagers.

- Third Sector Investment – the important role of the Third Sector as a vital frontline service provider was highlighted, with respondents suggesting that investment in the Third Sector should fully reflect this role alongside public services. It was also stated that more transparency/recognition around the value and impact of Third Sector organisations was required.

- Housing – the suggested areas for a focus within housing were more social housing, and private rental market issues.

- Community Consultation – a few respondents emphasised the importance of speaking to people and consultation. It was suggested that community consultation and resident information updates should be improved.

Other public service areas/issues which respondents mentioned were: financial inclusion (supporting households struggling to pay bills and childcare), protecting Glasgow's heritage and listed buildings, community learning and development, and planning for the future (the impact of Artificial Intelligence and public service provision 10/20/30 years in the future).

Moving Forward

Question 7: Would you be interested in learning more about Open Government in Glasgow

	Number	Percentage
Yes	37	56%
No	15	23%
Don't Know/No Opinion	14	21%

BASE: 66

Over half of respondents (56%) were interested in learning more about Open Government in Glasgow, with around and a quarter (23%) not interested in learning more about Open Government in Glasgow. The remaining 21% either didn't know or had no opinion.

Question 8: Would you be interested in participating in our Open Government workshops in Autumn 2024, to help shape Glasgow's next Open Government Action Plan?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	31	48%
No	18	28%
Don't Know/No Opinion	16	25%

BASE: 65

Almost half of respondents (48%) were interested in participating in workshops to help shape Glasgow's next Open Government Action Plan. A further one-quarter (25%) of respondents had no opinion about participating further, while almost a third (28%) of respondents had no interest in participating further in workshops.

About You

Question 9: Who are you responding as…………

	Number	Percentage
An individual	52	79%
On behalf of/or member of a community organisation	5	8%
On behalf of/or member of a voluntary organisation	6	9%
A business	0	0%
Academic Sector	0	0%
Other	3	5%

BASE: 66

A significant majority of respondents were responding to the Open Call for Ideas as an individual (79%), 9% responding from the voluntary sector, 8% from the community sector, and 5% from other.

Others included a community council and a Tenants Association Group.