



# Norfolk County Council

Your views on our proposal to save money by reducing the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office

## Introduction

Norfolk County Council will set a new budget on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023.

In this consultation we are asking for your views on reducing the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office.

We want to find out what people think about our proposed increase in council tax.

## Why we are consulting

We are consulting through:

- This online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy
- Letter to key partners and stakeholders
- Letter to members of the Norfolk Residents' Panel

We are consulting from **21<sup>st</sup> October to 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022**. Please note that if we receive any consultation responses after this date, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to take them into account.

We will feed back the findings from our consultation to our county councillors as part of the evidence they will use to help them come to a decision about our budget proposals.

**If you need a copy of this consultation document in a different format please email [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk), call 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.**

## Overview

Norfolk County Council is committed to making Norfolk a county where businesses, organisations and communities continue to thrive together. Our [Better Together, For Norfolk](#) strategy sets out the Council's five, interlinked, priorities: a vibrant and sustainable economy; better opportunities for children and young people; healthy, fulfilling and independent lives; strong, engaged and inclusive communities; and a greener, more resilient future.

We also continue to face very significant challenges and uncertainty as we continue to work to bridge a £60 million budget gap - which will be increased further by inflation and cost of living. Initial proposals [to save £13 million](#) as part of a £60 million target for next year were considered by councillors on 4th July. In September additional savings were identified, which took the [total savings to £32.5 million](#) - these will be considered by councillors on 3rd October.

As a part of these savings, we are proposing to reduce the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office. **This proposal would save us £22,000 in 2023/24.**

The consultation should take between 10-15 minutes to complete.

The questions start on page 5 of this document.

## **Personal information, confidentiality and data protection**

We will use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our budget proposals.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), the Data Protection Act 2018 and Norfolk County Council's data protection policy and guidelines. This means that Norfolk County Council will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation. You can find a copy of our privacy statement at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/privacy>

We won't identify individuals when reporting back our findings and under our record management policy we will keep this information for five years. We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You can choose not to take part in the consultation, to stop responding at any time, or to ignore any personal questions that you do not want to answer.

## **Our current service**

The Norfolk Record Office (NRO) collects and preserves unique archives relating to the history of Norfolk and makes them accessible to people in the county and across the world. Our team conserve documents, run education programmes, provide research advice and act as a first point of contact for people who are new to using the archives. As well as providing access to records used in historical research, the NRO acts a place of record for information relating to government, administration and citizenship.

One of the services that the NRO offers is a public searchroom where people can access the collection. This is open to anyone and is free of charge (many of the documents held by the NRO are covered by legislation and the public have a right of access to them).

As well as accessing original documents produced from the strongrooms, the public can use microfilms, online and printed sources. An essential part of the service offered is face-to-face advice; without this people who use the service would have great difficulty navigating their way through the enormous amount of information available. An archivist and two or three members of support staff are needed to operate the searchroom.

Currently, the NRO opens Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 5pm - totalling 28 hours per week.

## **Previous consultations**

In 2018, we asked for your views about reducing the number of hours that the searchroom would be open from 41.5 hours a week to between 28 and 30 hours a week. Around 43% of people that responded to our consultation said they either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with our proposal. Since that consultation, the searchroom at the NRO has been open for 28 hours a week.

## **Our proposal**

Norfolk County Council is proposing to change the opening hours of the NRO. Currently, the NRO opens from Tuesday to Friday, from 10am to 5pm – a total of 28 hours each week.

Our proposal is to close the NRO to the public on a Friday, but to extend the opening hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, by opening half an hour earlier.

This means the NRO's new opening hours would be from Tuesday to Thursday, from 9.30am to 5pm. If our proposals are approved, the NRO will be open for 22.5 hours each week in the future.

*Please note that the opening hours at the King's Lynn Borough Archive would be unchanged. This consultation only applies to the Norfolk Record Office.*

## **What we have considered when developing our proposal**

We have analysed the days and times that people tend to visit the NRO's searchroom. We collected this information between 13 April 2021 (when we reopened with reduced hours after the Covid-19 lockdown) and September this year.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Percentage of all visitors, on these days, to the searchroom</b>
<b>Tue</b>	29
<b>Wed</b>	25
<b>Thu</b>	24
<b>Fri</b>	22

We considered opening later in the day, however we found that most visitors arrive before 11am, therefore this wouldn't be suitable. It is worth noting the data below contains times that the searchroom closed at lunchtime during the pandemic, however it still shows that the most popular visiting times were during the morning period.

<b>Time of Arrival</b>	<b>Percentage of all visitors, at these times, to the searchroom</b>
<b>Before 10am</b>	4
<b>10am - 10.59am</b>	50
<b>11am - 11.59am</b>	5
<b>12.00pm - 12.59pm</b>	2
<b>1pm- 1.59pm</b>	6
<b>2pm – 2.59pm</b>	29
<b>3pm- 3.59pm</b>	2
<b>4pm- 4.59pm</b>	1

We do not propose closing at lunchtime as this has proven inconvenient for many of our users.

This proposal would save us £22000 in 2023/24.

Tell us your views

We would like to hear your views on our proposals

1. **How often do you use the Norfolk Record Office?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Hardly ever
- Never

2. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

3. Please tell us more about why you chose that answer, using the box below:

**About you**

To make sure we are learning from a wide range of people – we’d like to ask some questions about you. These are optional questions (so you may choose not to give this information), but this information is helpful to understand who is responding to our consultations.

1. **Are you responding as...?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

- An individual / member of the public
- On behalf of a voluntary or community group
- On behalf of a statutory organisation
- On behalf of a business
- A Norfolk County Councillor
- A district or borough councillor
- A town or parish councillor
- A Norfolk County Council employee
- An employee of a recycling centre in Norfolk

**2. If you are responding on behalf of another organisation, what is the name of the organisation, group or business?**

Please write your answer in the box:

**3. How did you hear about this consultation? Please select one of the following:**

Local media (e.g newspaper, radio)

From a social media post (e.g Facebook)

From a friend

From a group I belong to

From my place of work or education

The Norfolk Residents' Panel

District Council web page

Norfolk County Council web page

My Parish Council

From an email I received

**4. Are you...? Please tick (✓) one answer only:**

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

If you prefer to self-describe please specify here:

**5. How old are you?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75-84

85 or older

Prefer not to say



**6. Do you have any long-term illness, disability or health problem that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Please tick (✓) one answer only:**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**7. If yes which of the following best describes your condition or disability? Please tick (✓) all answers that apply**

- Blind or partially sighted
- D/deaf or hard of hearing
- Limiting health condition e.g. heart disease, asthma, strokes, osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) etc.
- Learning Disabilities
- Neurodiversity e.g. autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia
- Mental health conditions – e.g. depression, schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorders, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder
- Physical disability e.g. limb disorder, amputee, wheelchair user, cerebral palsy, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy
- Other, please write here

**8. How would you describe your ethnic background? Please tick (✓) one answer only:**

**Asian or Asian British**

- Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, please describe here:

**Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African**

Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background, please describe here

**Mixed or multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed or multiple ground, please describe here

**White**

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Roma

Other White background, please describe here:

**Another ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group please describe here

Prefer not to say

**9. Which District / Borough /City do you live in? Please tick (✓) one answer**

Breckland

Broadland

Great Yarmouth

King's Lynn and West Norfolk

North Norfolk

Norwich

South Norfolk

**10. Do you have caring responsibilities? Please tick (✓) one answer**

No

Yes – for children with additional needs

Yes – for older family members

Yes, other. Please write here

**11. Which of the following best describes you?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

Employed (full time)

Employed (part time)

Self employed

Unemployed

Student

Looking after the family home

Long term sick

Retired

**12. What is your first language?**

English

Other, please write here:

We will take a report about the findings of this consultation to the Council Cabinet in January 2023. We will set a new budget on 21st February.

Our county councillors will consider the consultation responses we receive very carefully. In particular, they will take into account:

- The impact of any proposal on individuals, groups of communities and in particular on people identified as having 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. As well as this equality impact assessment, councillors will consider the impact of proposals on rural areas.
- The views of people and stakeholders consulted.
- The evidence of need and what is proven to work effectively and well.
- The financial and legal positions and any constraints at the time.
- Any potential alternative options, models or ideas for making savings.

You can send back a paper feedback form to: Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor – south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH. However, if you want to help the council save money, please use a stamp and send to this address: Stakeholder and Consultation Team, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor – south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, NR1 2DH. You may wish to keep a copy of your response to our consultation for your own records. Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please email us at [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk) or contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.