



Norfolk County Council

Your views on our proposals to save money by reducing summer opening hours at Norfolk's recycling centres and closing all recycling centres on Wednesdays

Introduction

Norfolk County Council will set a new budget on 21st February 2023.

In this consultation we are asking for your views on two proposals that would affect Norfolk's recycling centres.

- We are proposing to make summer and winter opening hours the same at all 20 recycling centres in Norfolk. This would mean centres would be open from 9am to 4pm on their scheduled opening days throughout the year. This proposal, if implemented, is expected to save around £70,000.
- Our second proposal is to close all recycling centres on Wednesdays. This saving, if implemented, would make an estimated saving of £200,000.

A Large Print and Easy Read version of this survey is available at the bottom of this page.

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 21st October to 16th 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, call 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

This consultation should take around 15-20 minutes to complete.

The questions begin on page 11.

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.

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.

In this consultation we are asking for your views on two propose that would affect Norfolk's recycling centres.

- We are proposing to make summer and winter opening hours the same at all 20 recycling centres in Norfolk. This would mean centres would be open from 9am to 4pm on their scheduled opening days throughout the year.
- Our second proposal is to close all recycling centres on Wednesdays.

Our current service

There are 20 recycling centres across Norfolk provided by Norfolk County Council which enable people to recycle and dispose of accepted household waste. All of these are included in this proposal.

- Ashill Recycling Centre
- Bergh Apton Part-time Recycling Centre
- Caister Recycling Centre
- Dereham Recycling Centre
- Docking Part time Recycling Centre
- Heacham Recycling Centre
- Hempton Recycling Centre
- King's Lynn Recycling Centre
- Mayton Wood Recycling Centre
- Morningthorpe Recycling Centre
- Norwich North Recycling Centre
- Norwich South Recycling Centre
- Sheringham Recycling Centre
- Snetterton Part-time Recycling Centre
- Strumpshaw Recycling Centre
- Thetford Recycling Centre
- Wells-next-the-Sea Part-time Recycling Centre
- Wereham Part-time Recycling Centre
- Worstead Recycling Centre
- Wymondham Part-time Recycling Centre

On their scheduled opening days, all of these recycling centres open from 9am to 5pm during the summer months (1 April to 30 September), and 9am to 4pm during the winter months (1 October to 31 March).

Of the 20 recycling centres, 14 open seven days a week and six are part-time. Part-time centres are open from Friday to Monday.

Previous consultations

We have consulted on the following proposals in the recent past (2017 and 2020) relating to recycling centres.

We asked: In 2017, we asked what you thought of our proposal to save £180,000 (which was subsequently updated to £500,000 a year) by changing our policy of allowing people to dispose of one bag or one item of DIY-type construction and demolition waste free of charge each week, and instead to charge for disposal of this type of material.

You said: We received 231 responses and you expressed concerns the proposal would lead to an increase in illegal dumping of waste resulting in additional costs. You had concerns over environmental impacts such as burning of waste, and alternative means of DIY-waste disposal. You also made observations on the affordability of the proposal for individuals, the definitions applicable to DIY-waste, and the possible impacts on Norfolk County Council's income generation and recycling targets.

We did: Following a decision by full council, Norfolk County Council extended charges to all DIY waste from 1 April 2018 by removing the concession that had allowed for one large item of construction and demolition waste, or a black bag of up to 80 litres of that type of waste each week, to be left for no charge at recycling centres. We extended the Pay As You Throw service from our larger sites to all 20 recycling centres to allow a local option for disposal of DIY waste. Prices were simplified and set to allow for easy disposal of small amounts of this type of waste. We heard your concerns about the effect the change might have on illegal fly-tipping, and in 2019 an anti-fly-tipping campaign was launched by all Norfolk's local authorities. We have continued to monitor incident numbers closely but the increase many were concerned about has not been seen.

We asked: In 2020, to save money in the 2021-22 financial year, we proposed reducing summer opening times by one hour at all recycling centres across Norfolk (excluding Mile Cross), making summer and winter opening times the same, meaning the recycling centres would be open from 9am to 4pm on their scheduled opening days.

You said: We received 225 responses and just over half of respondents told us they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal, citing, amongst other reasons, a possible knock-on effect being a rise in illegal fly-tipping, as well as the centre being more inaccessible for people to use, especially those who work during the day.

We did: Two years ago, when this proposal was first considered, the council decided not to proceed with the changing of recycling centre opening hours.

Our proposals

This year we are consulting on two budget proposals that will affect the recycling centres in Norfolk.

- Harmonising summer and winter opening hours at recycling centres to 9am to 4pm all year round

And

- Closing all recycling centres on Wednesdays

On the next pages you can read more about each proposal, you will then be given the opportunity to comment and tell us your views regarding these proposals.

What we have considered when developing our proposals

When developing these proposals, we have taken the following into account:

- We want to make sure there are recycling centres available to communities across Norfolk at suitable locations that are open at convenient times.
- We want to keep it simple to understand site opening hours across the year.
- A review of visitor numbers in September 2022 shows that around 7% of visits take place within the last hour of the day in the six months of summer (just under 44,000 visits). This is consistent with previous data collected the May 2022, when there were around 8% of visits taking place between 4pm and 5pm.
- We have considered how the proposal affects the smooth operation of recycling centres.
- We have considered how the proposal impacts staff working at recycling centres.
- We have looked at what other councils do elsewhere.
- We have considered whether this proposal could impact the amount of illegal fly-tipping.
- We have checked what services the law requires us to provide.

Additional information

Neighbouring authorities

A review of neighbouring authority recycling centre opening hours has been completed in September 2022. The table below shows the results of this analysis.

Please note that not all local authorities operate the same amount of recycling centres as Norfolk County Council does. The table below does not take such factors into account.

| Authority | Days open | Times (summer) | Times (winter) |
|------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| Suffolk | Thursday to Tuesday | 9am to 5pm | 9am to 4pm |
| Cambridgeshire | Daily | 8am to 5pm | 8am to 4pm |
| Lincolnshire | Friday to Tuesday | 8am to 4pm | 8am to 4pm |
| Leicestershire | Saturday to Wednesday | 9am to 5pm (until 7pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays) | 9am to 5pm (until 7pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays) |
| Northamptonshire | Friday to Tuesday | 10am to 6pm | 10-6pm |

Fly-tipping

Norfolk residents regularly share their concerns about fly tipping with us through social media, written enquiries and in our annual survey.

Reported incident numbers of fly-tipping in Norfolk were down by 4.5% to 10,761 in 2021/22.

The percentage of incidents that were recorded as being a small van-size or larger increased from 50% to around 58% in recent years, and at around 76% the number of incidents that related to materials that could have been accepted free of charge from a householder at a recycling centre (ie items such as garden waste, electrical items and white goods, items of household waste and black bag waste), was fairly stable.

Closing on a Wednesday could impact the availability of a trade waste service for customers mid-week.

Proposal 1: Harmonising summer and winter opening hours at recycling centres to 9am to 4pm all year round

Harmonising opening hours means making the opening hours in summer the same as those in winter. These proposals would therefore see sites close at 4pm all year round, rather than at 5pm in summer months (April to October).

The savings to be made on reducing one hour each day are expected to be around £70,000.

Why we've put forward this proposal

A review of visitor numbers in September 2022 shows that around 7% of visits take place within the last hour of the day in the six months of summer (just under 44,000 visits). This is consistent with previous data collected the May 2022 when there were around 8% of visits taking place between 4pm and 5pm.

Who would be affected by our proposal and how

Our proposal to change the opening hours may impact any recycling centre users who would have visited the 20 sites between 4pm and 5pm or on Wednesdays. Sites may be busier during the hours that they are open.

This proposal would also impact staff at the recycling centres who would be required to work fewer hours during the summer months, and hence would have a reduced basic salary compared to previous years. These staff may also see benefit in the consistent alignment of working hours all year round, but may find the sites to be busier in the hours they are open.

Tell us your views

The following questions are related to the proposal 'Harmonising summer and winter opening hours at recycling centres to 9am to 4pm all year round'.

1. **How often do you use your local recycling centre?** 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 harmonise summer and winter opening hours, meaning recycling centres would open from 9am to 4pm all year round?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

Strongly agree

Agree

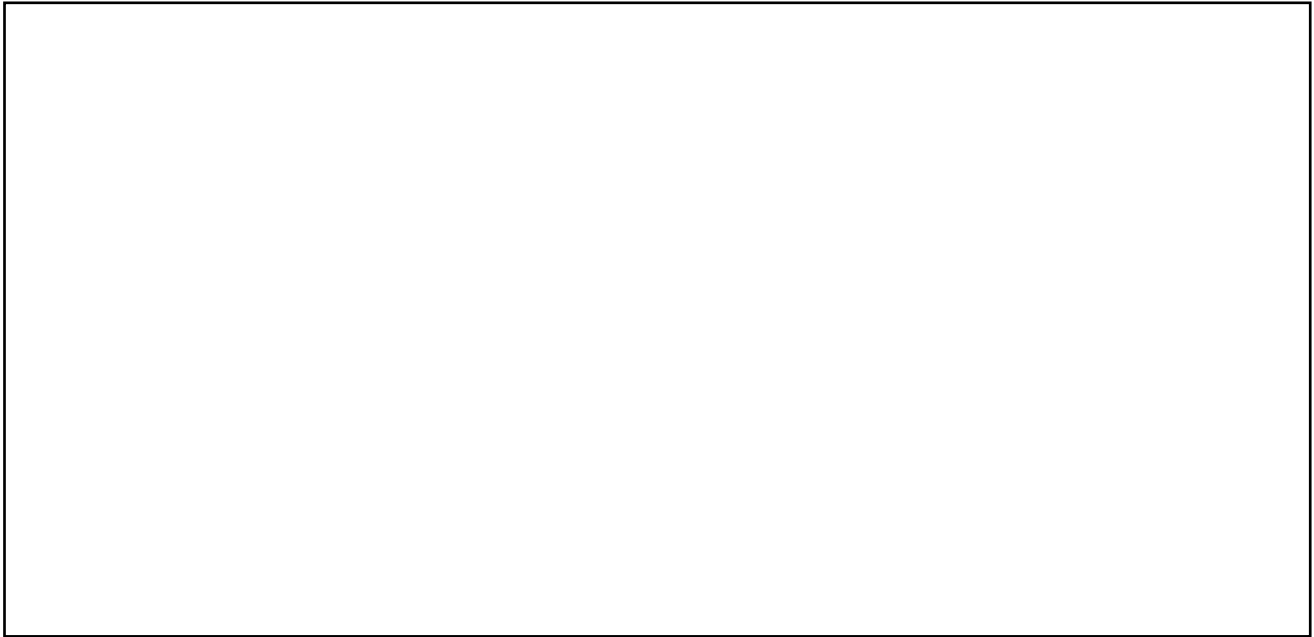
Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't Know

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

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide a written response to the question above.

Proposal 2: Closing all Norfolk recycling centres on Wednesdays

We are also proposing to close all 20 recycling centres on Wednesdays.

Currently 14 recycling centres open seven days a week (the remaining six sites are part-time - open on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday).

Closing the 14 full-time recycling centres on a Wednesday would make an estimated saving of £200,000.

Why we've put forward this proposal

Around 12% of visits take place on a Wednesday (130,000 visits) across Norfolk. This is generally one of the quietest days of the week, partly due to only 14 of 20 recycling centres being open, but it is still slightly quieter than Tuesday and Thursday. Closing on a Wednesday is in-line with Suffolk's recycling centre's operating hours. Choosing a different day of the week, could cause issues with cross (county) border waste and increased costs.

Who would be affected by our proposal and how

Closing on a Wednesday would impact users of the recycling centres, as well as users of the trade waste service, which is available at eight sites from Monday to Friday inclusive.

If all recycling centres close on a Wednesday it will result in all staff either changing their shift patterns and/or reducing their hours of work. If this proposal goes ahead, we will consult with staff to discuss the impact these changes could have.

Tell us your views

The following questions are related to the proposal 'Closing all Norfolk recycling centres on Wednesdays'.

4. How often do you use your local recycling centre on A Wednesday? Please tick (✓) one answer only:

Weekly

Monthly

A few times a year

Hardly ever

Never

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to harmonise summer and winter opening hours, meaning recycling centres would open from 9am to 4pm all year round? Please tick (✓) one answer only:

Strongly agree

Agree

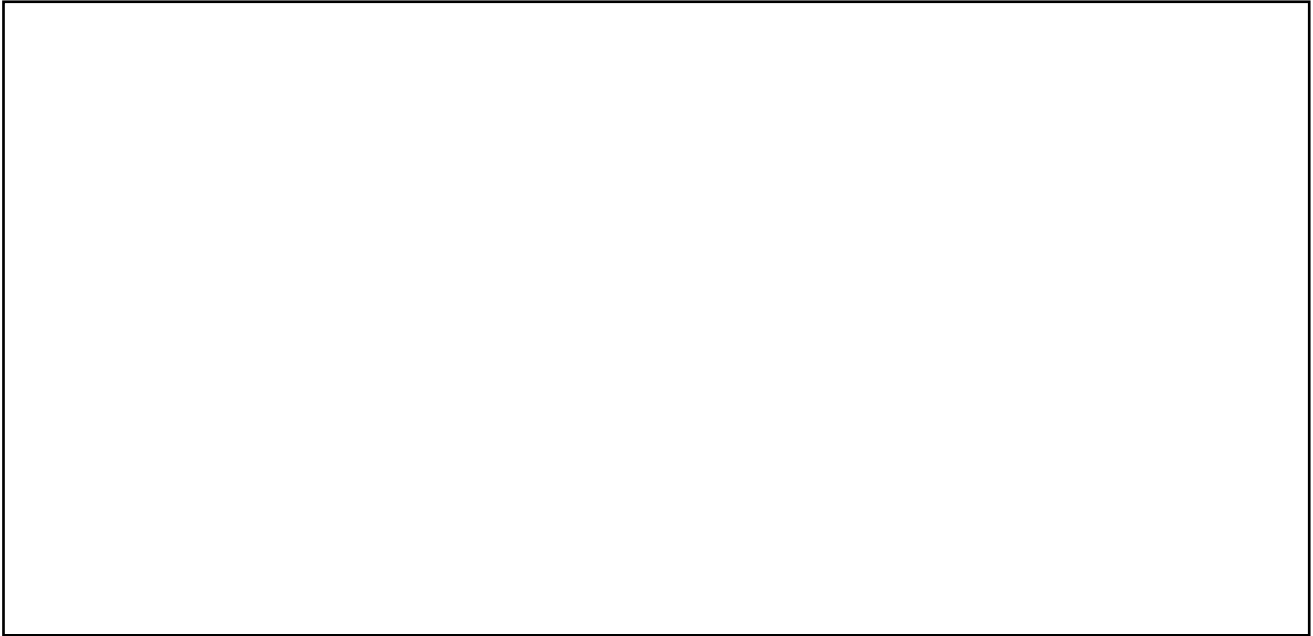
Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

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

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide a detailed explanation for their previous answer.

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.

7. 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

8. 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:

9. 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

10. 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:

11. 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

12. 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

13. 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 describe here

14. 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

15. Which District / Borough /City do you live in?

Please tick (✓) one answer

Breckland

Broadland

Great Yarmouth

Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

North Norfolk

Norwich

South Norfolk

16. 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

17. 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

18. 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 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.