



# Norfolk County Council

## Your views on our proposal to save money by reducing summer opening hours at Norfolk's recycling centres

### Overview

Norfolk County Council is committed to making Norfolk a county where businesses, organisations, individuals and communities continue to thrive together, even as we address the impact of COVID-19. We will do this by tackling the challenges that face us and moving forward together to create ever better places to work and live.

The business plan we launched in 2019, **Together, for Norfolk**, is now well embedded in all that we do in planning to grow our economy, manage development and achieve better futures and outcomes for everyone who lives and works here.

Despite the present challenges for us all, we continue to provide vital services to give children and young people the best start in life, support vulnerable and older people, maintain our highways and transport network, provide library, waste

disposal plus fire and rescue services and work in partnership to grow the economy. We continue to press the Government for fairer funding so that we can maintain the delivery of our services at the highest possible level. This is particularly important for our people services.

We are currently delivering these services in a financial climate of almost unprecedented risk and uncertainty, both from the perspective of people who use our services, and those who provide them. The Council must now plan for the 'triple whammy' impacts of rising budget pressures, uncertainty over Government funding, and the financial challenges associated with COVID-19.

Making decisions about how we spend your money is never easy, and many of the additional costs, lost income and undeliverable savings in the current year will have a significant impact on our 2021-22 finances. It remains critical to develop balanced, sustainable budget proposals which will enable the Council to continue to deliver the essential services which are relied on by all Norfolk's people, businesses and visitors (who help boost our economy).

There are statutory services we need to protect and a limited choice of where savings can be made. We have already saved £436m between 2011 and 2020. Even by increasing council tax by the amount we're allowed to without a local referendum, and

a proposal to raise £8.5 million by increasing the Adult Social Care precept, we won't balance our budget in 2021-22 unless we make an additional £26m of savings. This savings figure may possibly be higher depending on the level of Government support received.

We are putting every effort into listening to our residents to ensure we know what services you value most. By developing our budget proposals in line with residents' priorities, coupled with our strategy of changing services to make them more efficient, we aim to make most of the savings we need by cutting running costs, and with the least possible impact on frontline services.

**To contribute to the necessary savings, in addition to our other proposals, we are proposing to reduce summer opening times by one hour at all recycling centres across Norfolk (excluding Mile Cross Recycling Centre), so that summer and winter opening times are the same. This would see 19 sites operating for one hour less in the summer period, and as such the same hours in winter and summer months; opening at 9am and closing at 4pm on scheduled opening days throughout the whole year. Mile Cross Recycling Centre is not included in this proposal because it operates under a different contract, and would**

**remain on its current opening hours. This proposal would save us £70,000 in 2021-22.**

We now want to hear your views on this proposal to help our elected councillors in agreeing a balanced budget for 2021-22.

## **Why we are consulting**

We want to find out what people think about our proposal to reduce summer opening hours by one hour at the majority of recycling centres in Norfolk, and how it might affect people if it went ahead. We are consulting through:

- This online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy
- Letter to key partners and stakeholders

We are consulting from 26 October 2020 to 14 December 2020. Please note that if we receive any consultation responses after the closing 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 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.**

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

We will only use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our proposals that would result in service changes, such as this proposal to reduce summer opening hours for 19 recycling centres, such that they will be open 9am to 4pm all year round.

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.

## **Background**

### **What happens now?**

There are 20 recycling centres across Norfolk provided by Norfolk County Council. The following nineteen of these sites are operated under one arrangement and 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
- Ketteringham Recycling Centre
- King's Lynn Recycling Centre
- Mayton Wood Recycling Centre
- Morningthorpe 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

These 19 recycling centres are currently open 9am to 5pm during the summer months (1 April to 30 September), and 9am to 4pm in the winter months (1 October to 31 March) on their scheduled opening days, and are provided for the recycling and disposal of accepted household waste.

One site, the Mile Cross Recycling Centre in Norwich, is operated under a separate contract and is not included in this proposal.

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

When developing this proposal, 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 would prefer to save money by reducing opening hours rather than closing recycling centres.
- We want to keep it simple to understand site opening hours across the year.
- We know that around 5% of recycling centre visits in the summer take place within the last hour of the day.
- We have observed that visit patterns have changed since sites have reopened after COVID-19, and more visits are being made earlier in the day than previously.
- 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.

## Previous consultations

We have consulted on the following proposals in the recent past relating to recycling centres.

In September 2015 we consulted on our proposal to close the Docking Recycling Centre.

- *We asked:* What do you think about our proposal to close Docking Recycling Centre and save us around £70,000 per year.
- *You said:* We received 122 responses to our consultation. You didn't want Docking Recycling Centre to close as you were concerned about fly-tipping, travel time/cost to another site, service loss and an increase in pollution.
- *We did:* We briefly closed Docking Recycling Centre on 1 January 2016, and reopened the site again on 1 May 2016.

In November 2017 we consulted on our proposal to change the approach to charging for the disposal of DIY-type construction and demolition waste at recycling centres in Norfolk.

- *We asked:* What do you think 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, 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, 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 set to allow the disposal of small amounts of waste rather than by vehicle size. 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. This change has delivered the full £500,000 a year savings expected.

## **Our proposal**

We are proposing to reduce summer opening times by one hour at all recycling centres across Norfolk (excluding Mile Cross Recycling Centre which is operated under a separate contract and is not included in this proposal).

This would see 19 sites operating the same hours in winter and summer months, opening at 9am and closing at 4pm on all their scheduled opening days (including bank holidays but excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day when they are closed), whilst Mile Cross Recycling Centre would remain on its current opening hours. This proposal would save us £70,000 a year from 2021-22.

## **Who would be affected by our proposal and how**

Our proposal to reduce opening hours may impact any recycling centre user who would have visited any of the 19 sites between 4pm and 5pm during the summer months. These visitors would have to visit between 9am and 4pm instead. Our visitor data indicates that 5% of summer visits (around 27,000 visits) would be impacted, and need to be re-scheduled between 9am and 4pm, or an alternative solution found. The number of visits recorded between 4pm and 5pm has been further lowered significantly (although perhaps temporarily) due to visitor patterns changing since COVID-19, with a shift towards visits earlier in the day.

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. The staff may 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.

# Your views on our proposal and the impact it might have on you

## Have your say

1. What do you think of the proposal to reduce summer opening times by one hour at recycling centres across Norfolk? How, if at all, do you think our proposal might affect you? Please write in below:

2. Do you currently use a recycling centre? Please tick (✓) one only:

Yes

No

Not sure

**3. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce summer opening times by one hour at Norfolk's recycling centres (closing at 4pm rather than 5pm)? Please tick (✓) one answer only:**

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>

**4. Why do you say that?** Please briefly write in below, including how the proposal might affect you:

## About you

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

An individual / member of the public

A family

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

**6. 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:

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

Male

Female

Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

Prefer not to say

If you prefer to self-describe please specify here:

**8. 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



**9. 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

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

White British

White Irish

White other

Mixed / multiple ethnic group

Asian or Asian British

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

Prefer not to say

Other ethnic background - please describe below

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

Please write your answer in the box:

**12. What is the first part of your postcode? (e.g. NR4)**

Please write your answer in the box:

## **How we will make our decision and report back to you**

We will take a report on the findings of this consultation to our Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and we will make final decision about our budget on 22 February 2021. The report will feed back what people have told us about the potential impact of our proposals.

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 or 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 the savings.

**Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this and respond.**

**You can fill in our online feedback form at:**

**[www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget)**

**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 Norfolk County 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.



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.