



Your views on our proposal to change the construction and demolition waste concession at recycling centres

Overview

Norfolk County Council plays a huge part in people's lives – ensuring children and young people have the best start in life, protecting vulnerable people, maintaining a safe road system and helping to create a thriving economy. We'll continue to spend over a billion pounds every year providing public services that you, your family and friends use every day.

Norfolk is facing some big challenges though. Our population is growing, people are generally living longer and the type of services that people need is changing. And as you know, the cost of living is going up. As things become more expensive we also have higher costs, and the amount of money we have coming in isn't keeping up. At the same time the grant that central government gives us has fallen by £189 million since 2011 and is expected to fall to zero by 2021.

Even though we are proposing to increase council tax next year, the amount of money we hope to raise wouldn't be enough to balance our budget. This means we have to make some difficult decisions about how we spend your money.

Since 2011 we have saved £334 million. However, we now need to save a further £125 million by 2021.

We have therefore been looking at many options for saving money including on our recycling services.

Currently any Norfolk resident is allowed to take the equivalent of one 80 litre sack (the size of a standard black bin bag), or one large item of DIY type construction and demolition waste to the recycling centre every week. This includes materials such as rubble, plasterboard and flat glass and items such as fence panels, doors, fitted units and bathroom suites - basically fixtures and fittings to a house.

At the moment we choose to provide this service. However, under the law we don't have to provide a free service for disposing of this kind of waste.

In order to make savings we are therefore proposing to change our policy of allowing people to dispose of one bag or one item of DIY type construction and demolition waste free of charge. We are proposing to charge for this type of material. If our proposal went ahead we estimate it would save us at least £180,000 in 2018/19.

Why we are consulting

We want to find out what people think about our proposal and how it might affect them if it went ahead. Your views will help us to decide whether we should change the construction and demolition waste concession at recycling centres.

We are consulting through:

- Our online consultation – visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget to complete this consultation online.
- This paper copy of our consultation.

We are consulting from 6 November 2017 to 2 January 2018. 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 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.

Background information

We have had a policy on restricting the amount of DIY type construction and demolition waste people can dispose of since 2001. This is called our construction and demolition waste concession, also known as our DIY concession.

DIY type construction and demolition waste includes materials such as rubble, plasterboard and flat glass and items such as fence panels, doors, fitted units and bathroom suites - basically fixtures and fittings to a house.

Under current government legislation this type of material is classed as 'construction and demolition' waste and falls under the category of industrial waste. By law, councils do not have to accept industrial waste at their recycling centres.

Our county councillors reviewed our recycling centre services in 2015. At that time our Members agreed to:

- Make three sites at Ashill, Heacham and Morningthorpe part time.
- Reduce summer opening hours by one hour (closing at 5pm) with the exception of Mile Cross.
- Increase the charge we made for tyres.
- Close Docking Recycling Centre.
- Agree a new distance service standard with the aim that more than 90% of residents are within a 20 minute drive of a recycling centre where economically practicable.

County councillors later decided to reopen Docking Recycling Centre and to continue to run Ashill, Heacham and Morningthorpe as full time sites.

As part of their review in 2015 county councillors agreed to maintain the existing policy on disposing of DIY type construction and demolition waste.

What happens now

Currently householders can dispose of the equivalent of one 80 litre sack (the size of a standard black bin bag) or one large item of DIY type construction and demolition waste per household every week for free. For example one door, a bath tub, a toilet or one fence panel, or the equivalent of one 80 litre sack of tiles, bricks, or soil/turf.

People can dispose of any larger amounts using our Pay As You Throw service available at any of our eight main 'plus' sites across the county at Caister, Dereham, Hempton, Ketteringham, King's Lynn, Mayton Wood, Mile Cross and Thetford.

We calculate prices based on the costs of dealing with the material and amount of waste people bring. Householders pay less if they separate their waste – this is because separated materials are charged at a lower rate than mixed loads as they cost less to deal with. Each load is assessed by site staff and rates are non-negotiable.

Currently the costs of disposing of a large item or the equivalent of an 80 litre sack using our Pay As You Throw service are:

- Unsorted/non-recyclable DIY type construction and demolition waste - £7.20
- Flat glass - £5.20 (not recyclable at Mile Cross Recycling Centre)
- Rubble - £4.70
- Plasterboard - £7.60 (£12.60 at Mile Cross Recycling Centre)
- Timber - £6.40
- Scrap metal - £6.00.

We do not accept asbestos construction and demolition waste at any of our recycling centres, for example asbestos sheets from a shed roof. This is because it is hazardous waste.

What we have taken into account when developing our proposal

When developing our proposal we have taken the following into account.

- We prefer to save money by changing our policies rather than by reducing opening hours or closing a recycling centre.
- We want to make sure that there are recycling services available to people across Norfolk that are open at convenient times at a suitable number of sites.
- Recycling policies need to be easy to understand and for people to use. Some people find our current policy difficult to understand. In 2014/15 there were 3,237 contacts with the County Council regarding the recycling centre service of which 68% were regarding our policy on disposing of DIY type construction and demolition waste.
- We therefore need to avoid confusing anyone with what you can and cannot take to our recycling centres by making our policies as easy to understand as possible. When people find our policy confusing it can cause problems and disagreements at our recycling centres.
- We have looked at what services the law tells us we have to provide. Under current government legislation, construction and demolition waste falls under the category of industrial waste and, by law, we do not have to accept industrial waste at our recycling centres.
- We have looked at how we can reduce the amount of trade waste that comes to our recycling centres free of charge. Our recycling centres are for household waste. However, we believe that some traders try and dispose of some of their trade waste free of charge by using our DIY concession for construction and demolition waste.

- We have considered how our policy affects the smooth operation of our recycling centres. Our staff have to make decisions about what waste to accept as part of our policy. Disagreements about what people can and can't dispose of free of charge can cause conflict, disruption and delays for other users at a site.
- We have looked at what other councils do.
- We have looked at the waste that we accept free of charge under our current policy. The majority of the waste is rubble and timber with much smaller amounts of plasterboard and flat glass.
- One of the materials that causes disagreements at our recycling centres is timber. Some wood, for example broom handles, broken ladders and old wicker chairs are clearly household waste so householders can dispose of as much of this from their own houses as they like free of charge. However, under our concession we consider things like fencing panels, skirting board, sheds and kitchen units to be construction and demolition waste, so people can only dispose of one large item or the equivalent of an 80 litre sack of this type of material for free. When wood is chopped into bits it is very hard for site staff to tell if it is household waste or construction waste and this can lead to disagreements and conflict.
- We could look to extend our Pay As You Throw service to other sites to make it easier for residents to dispose of additional construction and demolition waste.

Our proposal – who would be affected and how

We are proposing to change our policy so that people would no longer be able to dispose of DIY type construction and demolition waste free of charge.

At our eight main 'plus' sites, we will accept DIY waste under our Pay As You Throw service, and the existing charges for this will continue.

At the moment each household can dispose of one large item or the equivalent of an 80 litre sack amount of construction and demolition waste a week for free. If our proposal went ahead people would have to pay to dispose of this waste.

Currently the costs of disposing of an additional large item or the equivalent of an 80 litre sack amount of material using our Pay As Your Throw service are:

- Unsorted/non-recyclable DIY waste - £7.20
- Flat glass - £5.20 (not recyclable at Mile Cross Recycling Centre)

- Rubble - £4.70
- Plasterboard - £7.60 (£12.60 at Mile Cross Recycling Centre)
- Timber - £6.40
- Scrap metal - £6.00.

At the moment there are only eight main 'plus' sites that offer the Pay As You Throw service. However, if our proposal went ahead we would look at the option of extending this Pay As You Through service to all recycling centres ensuring that the charges for any roll out would cover the costs across all the sites.

When would our policy change?

If our proposal went ahead we would aim to change our policy from April 2018. We would publicise the date of any change widely and give clear information about what our recycling centres accept for free, what we charge for and how much the charges would be.

More information to help inform your views

This proposal helps to meet our main objectives of saving money on our recycling services whilst keeping recycling centres open and without reducing opening hours.

The other main advantage of this option is that the policy would be straight forward, would also be easy to communicate and easy for people to remember. However, with this option we may still experience some disagreements at site over whether an item or material is wood from household waste that can be disposed of for free (for example a freestanding cupboard) or construction waste related timber (for example a fitted kitchen unit) that people would have to pay to dispose of.

This option would mean we would probably see a reduction in materials coming to the sites which could make our operations smoother at peak times. It would also reduce the potential for commercial waste to come in to the sites free of charge.

When we make changes to our recycling services landowners and others sometimes raise concerns that this might lead to an increase in the illegal dumping of waste, also known as fly-tipping. Norfolk data from incidents on public land show that only around 4.1% of incidents of illegally dumped waste relate to construction or demolition waste such as rubble. The majority of incidents of illegally dumped waste relate to household waste that local councils will either collect for a fee or that the County Council accepts from householders for free at our recycling centres, such as sofas, white goods and other electrical items and garden waste or bags of waste just put out on the street.

Evidence from previous changes to our recycling centre service, such as making sites part time, has not shown an increase in illegal dumping of waste. Dealing with the clearance of such fly-tipping on public land is the responsibility of the district, city and borough councils in Norfolk and the County Council is responsible for arranging and picking up the cost of disposal.

A change to our construction and demolition waste policy could also potentially increase the possibility of people putting these types of waste into their household rubbish bins. It would currently cost us on average around £108 a tonne to dispose of any extra waste this causes in addition to the costs of collection.

Your views on our proposal and the impact it might have

1. What do you think about our proposal to change the construction and demolition waste concession at recycling centres? What impact, if any, do you think that the proposal might have on you? Please write in below:

Please write in the box below:

About you

Personal information, confidentiality and data protection

We use this information to see how representative the feedback is of Norfolk's population. We also use it to see if any particular groups of people are especially affected by our proposals.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

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. 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, including any personal information. 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 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

2. Are you responding as...?

Please select one answer

- 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

3. 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:

4. Are you...?

Please select one answer

Male

Female

Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

Prefer not to say

If you prefer to self-describe please specify here:

5. How old are you?

Please select one answer

Under 18

55-64

18-24

65-74

25-34

75-84

35-44

85 or older

45-54

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 select one answer

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

7. How would you describe your ethnic background?

Please select one answer

White British

White Irish

White other

Mixed

Asian or Asian British

Black or Black British

Chinese

Prefer not to say

Other ethnic background - please describe below

8. What is your first language?

Please write your answer in the box:

9. 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 about the findings to this consultation to our Environment, Development and Transport Committee on 19 January 2018. The report will feed back what people have told us about the potential impact of our proposal. The feedback will also be reported at Full Council on 12 February 2018. Members will use this as part of the evidence they take into account when making a decision about what savings to make.

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.

You can fill in our online feedback form at: 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 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 contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

November 2017