

Your views on reducing the number of roads we grit in winter

Respondent information

Respondent Numbers

There were **638** responses received for this proposal. Of these, the majority (70%) replied as individuals.

Responding as:			
An individual / member of the public	444	70%	93%
A family	147	23%	
On behalf of a voluntary or community group	3	0%	2%
On behalf of a statutory organisation	5	1%	
On behalf of a business	7	1%	
A Norfolk County Councillor	1	0%	4%
A district or borough councillor	1	0%	
A town or parish councillor	17	3%	
A Norfolk County Council employee	6	1%	
Not Answered	7	1%	1%
TOTAL	638	100%	100%

How we received the response

Email	16	3%
Consultation paper feedback form	1	0%
Online submission	621	97%
Total	638	100%

Responses by groups, organisations and businesses

Three respondents told us they were responding **on behalf of a voluntary or community group**. The group was Rainbow Community Choir Swaffham and Big Heart & Soul Choir in Castle Acre. Two groups did not give their names.

The voluntary and community groups expressed their views that:

- There would be more road accidents as a result of this proposal.
- People would feel isolated during icy weather conditions.
- Money saved through not increasing Members' allowances could be used to pay to grit the roads in Norfolk.

- The proposed saving could cause more road accidents and put further financial strain on the NHS.

Five respondents told us they were responding on a behalf of **statutory organisations**. These organisations are: Dereham Town Council, Shipdham Parish Council, Snettisham Parish Council, Stalham Town Council and Swanton Morley Parish Council. The statutory organisations expressed the following views:

- People felt that rural roads and those living in rural locations would be most affected.
- There would be more accidents if roads in villages and market towns were not gritted.
- People wanted to know more about how the review would be conducted and which roads would no longer be gritted.
- The proposal could cause more accidents and result in increased cost to our emergency services and hospitals.
- People would feel unable to go to work and this would have an impact on the local economy.

Seventeen respondents told us they were responding as town or parish councillors, although 14 did not name the council. The named councils were Rollesby Parish Council, Geldeston Parish Council and Gresham Parish Council. Town and parish councillors expressed the following views:

- Three said it was unsafe to not grit roads in Badersfield, Great Snoring, Marlingford and Colton, the A149, Ludham to Catfield and Gresham.
- Sixteen said they were concerned about roads becoming unsafe as a result of this proposal.
- One said this proposal was a false economy which makes accidents more likely with corresponding expense for other services.
- One asked how much it will cost to conduct the survey of the roads to prioritise gritting routes.

A response by Brandon Lewis MP was also received which recognised that there were financial pressures and savings need to be met but noted that services for local communities must be protected.

He asked us to reconsider this proposal given Norfolk is a rural community and often residents complained about how difficult it was travel around the county.

Summary of main themes

Overall theme	Issues raised	Number of times mentioned	Quotes
Less gritting means some roads would not be safe to drive on during adverse weather conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a great deal of concern that our proposal would mean some roads would not be safe to drive on during icy weather conditions. • People raised concerns about an increase in accidents. 	435	<p>“You already grit too few roads and you should not be putting people's lives at risk by cutting back on this. It affects me and every other road user, by reducing safety in the winter”</p> <p>“I fear that your proposal could mean ... consequent risks to the safety of people, especially school children. You would not wish to increase the risk of injury or death arising from road accidents through ice and snow.”</p> <p>“Reduced gritting will make my journeys dangerous.”</p> <p>“Opposed. Any reduction of gritting means more people having difficult and hazardous journeys.”</p> <p>“The roads are incredibly unsafe when not gritted and I ended up with another driver crashing into the back of my car at a junction on an icy, ungritted and busy road.”</p>
Road gritting should be a priority over members' expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents took the opportunity to express their view that gritting and road safety were a greater priority to them than Members' expenses. 	103	<p>“I think it is disgusting that you give yourself a pay rise. The roads in Norfolk remain a terrible state and are often unsafe due to potholes etc. Now you expect people to endanger their lives further by less gritting in winter.”</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt that money saved through not increasing councillors' allowances could be used to fund gritting the roads in Norfolk. 		<p>“Absolute disgrace. You are happy to give yourselves a large pay rise but make cutbacks everywhere. You are putting lives at risk making more work for the NHS clearing up your mess following accidents on the roads because you made cut backs”</p> <p>“Ridiculous. Increase my journey times and increase the risk of having an accident. Save money by not giving councillors an excessive pay rise in this time of austerity. They need to get in the real world where the rest of us are struggling against diminishing services and decreases in standards of living.”</p> <p>“I think it’s stupid especially as Norfolk councillors gave themselves an 11% pay rise that works out at £150,000 between them. My suggestion is stop the raise to the councillors and use the money save to grit the roads you want to cut.”</p>
<p>Rural roads and those living in rural locations would be most affected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents felt that those living in rural areas would be affected the most by this proposal. 	<p>97</p>	<p>“This proposal is liable to create even more problems for people to get about in the most rural areas of the county”</p> <p>“It could impact isolated rural communities and vulnerable people who rely on carers to visit them”</p> <p>“I am appalled by your suggestions. You will endanger the lives of people such as myself and many others who live in rural communities.”</p>

			<p>"I think it would result in far more accidents in rural areas if the roads are not gritted."</p> <p>"I think it's ridiculous. I live in a small village and already not enough roads are gritted and I can end up stuck down my road and can't get out at all."</p>
<p>More cost will be passed onto other public services responsible for people involved in road accidents on untreated roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people felt this proposal could lead to more accidents with further hospital admissions. • It was felt if there were would be more road accidents and this would put additional financial strain on an already stretched NHS. 	71	<p>"Accidents as a result of untreated roads would incur deaths and accidents which would have to be treated by a cash-strapped NHS."</p> <p>"High risks of accidents, more deaths, more pressures on emergency services, more people unable to work and children not being able to get to school."</p> <p>"Less gritting means more accidents means more pressure on hospitals who currently can't cope."</p> <p>"I think it will be false economy, it will just move the problem elsewhere placing additional demands on other public services budgets."</p>
<p>People would feel more isolated during winter weather</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People expressed concerns about not being able to get out and live their everyday lives. • Some also felt that it would be detrimental to the economy with people unable to reach their place of work. 	78	<p>"More roads not less need gritting. I would not be able to get out of my village."</p> <p>"No gritting will have an impact on everyday life. I live in a village this is home to a number of elderly residents who rely on their cars, yet many simply do not wish to drive in icy conditions. They cancel medical appointments, avoid shopping for food because they are terrified of driving on icy roads."</p>

			<p>“Reducing gritting in my village would see more accidents, more loss of work and isolate the area.”</p> <p>“The knock on effect of this could be significant, for example if a teacher cannot get to their place of work a school may close, leading to a parent not being able to attend work and so on...”</p>
Roads already in a poor condition / gritting poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People felt roads were poorly maintained, not fit for purpose and reducing gritting routes would make roads even more dangerous. • The gritting service is poor / not effective. • You could save money by gritting more effectively. 	46	<p>“We already suffer from poor roads leading to significant levels of punctures and other damage”</p> <p>“It is a really poor idea, the roads aren’t great at the best of times, why make the situation even worse?”</p> <p>“Roads are already poorly maintained and the gritting and clearance is patchy at the best of times”</p> <p>“I can often see gaps in the gritting, and other areas which have been absolutely coated with grit.”</p> <p>“Use more accurate prediction techniques or maybe reduce the quantity of grit you spread”</p>
More information required about the proposed gritting route and which roads would be affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People wanted to know more about how the review would be conducted and which roads would no longer be gritted. 	30	<p>“It depends on which roads, a reduction in treatment on rural roads could be dangerous”</p> <p>“I would need to understand which routes are no longer to be gritted to assess things properly further”</p>

			<p>“Difficult to say from your proposal as it does not show where you will no longer grit and make dangerous for road users”</p>
<p>Suggestions and ideas about how this proposal could be implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas put forward to this proposal included; advertising the roads deleted from the gritting route; optimising the amount of grit used; raising more council tax from new house builds to pay for this service. 	21	<p>“... the roads that are deleted from the routes need to be advertised locally so drivers who have relied on the service in the past are aware the roads may be slippery”</p> <p>“The increase in council tax from new homes will surely provide more income for gritting”</p> <p>“Many of the town-centre routes could perhaps be looked at to see if they’re really necessary and perhaps look at whether main routes through residential areas should be added”</p>
<p>Challenging whether this proposal had been thoroughly thought through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few wondered if this savings proposal was worth the risk to human life. • Other also wondered if the savings could be guaranteed and therefore not really viable. 	28	<p>“£200k seems a meagre saving to offset against such a great risk. I personally know the dangers of ungritted roads. Reprioritise by all means but please do not reduce.”</p> <p>“Surely the cost of gritting is more dependent on weather conditions than anything else and therefore any proposed savings are not guaranteed.”</p>
<p>Individuals should take more responsibility to drive safely during icy weather</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few people suggested that individuals should take it upon themselves to drive more carefully in icy conditions. 	10	<p>“In severe conditions we should rely on our own driving abilities and not expect to be pampered”</p> <p>“On modern tyres and ABS there is no need to grit if the speed is kept down as it should be on rural roads”</p>

Additional responses

List responses received in addition to the standard format (eg. petitions, postcard campaigns, letters) and summarise main points

Norfolk County Council Labour Group organised and promoted their own separate consultation. They described this consultation proposal “**Cuts to Road maintenance – making journeys more difficult and storing up problems for the future. Reducing Winter gritting increasing risks of accidents.**” Sixty nine (69) of the responses contained comments relating to these proposals, 56 of which potentially related to gritting. Respondents told us that this proposal would create unsafe driving conditions (35 mentions) and that gritting was an important and essential service (22 mentions). People also told us that they thought our proposal was short term thinking and would cost more in the long run (8 mentions) and that they felt the potential increase in accidents would result in more costs to the NHS (7 mentions).

Produced by Stakeholder and Consultation Team
ConsultationTeam@norfolk.gov.uk