

Your views on reducing how much we spend on non-safety critical highway maintenance

Respondent information

Respondent Numbers

There were **102** responses received for this proposal. Of these, the majority (**76** or **74%**) replied as individuals.

Responding as:			
An individual / member of the public	76	74%	83%
A family	9	9%	
On behalf of a voluntary or community group	1	1%	3%
On behalf of a statutory organisation	2	2%	
On behalf of a business	0	0%	
A Norfolk County Councillor	1	1%	12%
A district or borough councillor	0	0%	
A town or parish councillor	9	9%	
A Norfolk County Council employee	2	2%	
Not Answered	2	2%	2%
TOTAL	102	100%	100%

How we received the response

Email	6	6%
Consultation paper feedback form	1	1%
Online submission	94	93%
Total	102	100%

Responses by groups, organisations and businesses

Two respondents told us they were responding on behalf of a statutory organisation. The organisations are Shipdham Parish Council and Snettisham Parish Council. The statutory organisations expressed the following views:

- The proposal is not supported as it would result in more poor roads which could create safety hazards for road users.
- The proposal is storing up problems for the future and is a false economy.
- Cosmetic maintenance had not been applied for some years.
- Essential maintenance, such as pot hole repairing, needs to be addressed.
- One parish council stated that they absorbed the financial burden of some maintenance works i.e. grass cutting and would welcome further acknowledgement and support from Norfolk County Council in the future.

Nine respondents told us they were responding as town or parish councillors, although eight did not name the council. The only named council is Rollesby Parish Council. Town and parish councillors expressed the following views:

- Signs need to be visible and are in place for road safety.
- Town and parish councils may be interested in providing some cosmetic maintenance services and reporting systems.
- Non-critical maintenance services are already at a minimum and below a level that is acceptable.

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
Roads would become unsafe to travel on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many felt that the proposal would increase risks and hazards to road users. • People felt maintenance was an important feature of road safety. 	36	<p>“Reductions in highway maintenance can have a detrimental effect on safety for all road users”</p> <p>“There is considerable debate regarding road safety yet you propose to contribute to the worsening of road conditions.”</p> <p>“My concern would be that the safety of the road was maintained, e.g. repairing pot holes”</p> <p>“Safety must not be compromised, road signs do need cleaning, bridges need checking and repairing (but not painting).”</p> <p>“I am not in favour of your proposals. Reductions in highway maintenance can have a detrimental effect on safety for all road users.”</p> <p>“The impact would be more damage to vehicles and more accidents.”</p>
Roads were already in a poor condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several felt that the roads were already in a poor state of repair due to lack of routine maintenance and this proposal could make road conditions worse. 	30	<p>“Lack of routine maintenance has led to many Norfolk roads being substandard.”</p> <p>“Highways are already in a poor state of repair in many cases.”</p> <p>“Already in the area I live there is an ever growing list of maintenance issues.”</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few people said there had been no road maintenance in their areas for several years. • One person said that spending less on Norfolk’s roads would make very little difference. Another acknowledged this policy had already been put in place and, as a result, the roads were poor. 		<p>“There has been no maintenance of the roads where I live for many years. We live in muck, mud and debris from the so called road which can honestly be described as tracks.”</p> <p>“This policy has already been implemented and the roads in Norfolk are already a disgrace.”</p> <p>“West Norfolk already has some of the worst rural roads in the county. Repairs have been ‘bodged’ for decades and in some cases tar and chipping coats are all that has been carried out in the last 40 years”.</p>
<p>General support for the proposal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people expressed general support for the proposal but with caveats. In particular, safety not being compromised. • Others agreed with the proposal without proviso. 	<p>15</p> <p>3</p>	<p>“I think its fine to do the changes you describe provided they don’t impact on public safety.”</p> <p>“Fine by me – much more sensible than reducing gritting”</p> <p>“Applied with common sense and flexibility to respond to specific circumstances rather than a ‘one size fits all’ approach would be fine.”</p> <p>“It is never satisfactory to reduce highway maintenance. However in the present climate it is accepted.”</p> <p>“If the work is genuinely non safety critical then I have no problem with this proposal.”</p> <p>“I agree with your proposal, we have to save money.</p>

			<p>"I agree that non-safety critical work should be reduced so that council money can target more important areas, like care for the elderly</p> <p>"I agree with your proposal. We have to save money."</p>
<p>Cosmetic or low maintenance could be managed by parish councils or community groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some suggested that town and parish councils could be interested in providing some cosmetic maintenance services. • One person suggested parish councils could provide a reporting system for maintenance requirements. 	<p>11</p>	<p>"Perhaps local parish councils could pick up the cost for more cosmetic work"</p> <p>"Management could be delegated to parish councils if some cash was also handed over"</p> <p>"Asking parish councils to report on infringements maybe by use of an online proforma to make it easy for clerks to report"</p> <p>"Can't you work with community groups or businesses to paint bridges etc?"</p> <p>...smaller non-essential tasks could be provided more cheaply and more effectively by involving Town and Parish Councils more. If NCC provided grants for these councils to do this type of work I feel sure that those councils that took on the work could do so more effectively."</p> <p>"Within small villages you should encourage parish councils to employ village 'caretakers' who can for example clean their own road signs and do some of the work rangers do."</p>

<p>Our proposal could create more maintenance work in the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some thought that our proposal might lead to greater maintenance problems in the future. 	<p>10</p>	<p>“By not maintaining roads at a correct level you’ll only defer larger more expensive payments till later.”</p> <p>“Concerned that the proposal is inappropriately focused on the short term (i.e. save now, pay later). Money saved in the short term may result in higher costs in the future.”</p> <p>“Norfolk’s roads are, on the whole, in reasonable condition. The people concerned do a good job. However, reducing maintenance is the start of the slippery slope towards awful roads and more cost in the future.”</p> <p>“This makes it appear that we are storing up a large amount of trouble for the future and that we will end up with a larger and more intractable bill for road works to put this neglect right.”</p>
<p>Rural areas may be more affected by this proposal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some expressed concerns that those living in villages and rural communities would be more affected compared to those living in towns. 	<p>9</p>	<p>“Living in Norfolk’s rural landscape involves using roads as there is no real alternative to travel. Therefore it is unrealistic to consider cuts of any sort.”</p> <p>“Living in rural area non-cleaning of a gulleys and non-maintenance of roads is not on. Yet again, rural areas suffer.”</p>
<p>Our proposed savings had not been thought through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People thought any money saved in the short term may result in higher costs in the future. 	<p>8</p>	<p>“Silly. Another penny pinching move that will cost more than the saving in just additional claims to the council for damaged vehicles or unsafe road conditions.”</p>

			<p>“You cannot keep cutting the budget and expect everything to continue as normal. The roads are a very poor standard and when we (parish council) ask for repairs they take forever and are always a quick fix with no thought going on in the process of the long term deterioration of the roads as they are fixed for the short term, this is a false economy in the long run.”</p>
Road signs need to be cleaned so drivers could see them and stay safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People raised specific concerns about cleaning of road signs. 	8	<p>“Road sign cleaning is an important feature of road safety and the frequency of cleaning should not be changed.”</p> <p>“I frequently drive around Norfolk to reach the start of country walks. As long as signs remain visible I don’t think that there will be any impact on me.”</p> <p>“I contend that obscured road signs – whether as a result of vegetation or lack of cleaning - are a safety hazard.”</p>
Overgrown verges on roads could obscure visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgrown verges were a concern for some. 	7	<p>“Leaving verges to grown and encroach on footpaths presents a danger to wheelchair/scooter users and parents with children in prams and pushchairs.”</p> <p>“Tracks are dangerous to walk and drive on as visibility is impaired because of overgrown hedges and grass banks.”</p> <p>“I would oppose failure to repair verges where these are acting as pedestrian refuges 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, 62 of which potentially related to road maintenance. Respondents told us that this proposal could make the roads more hazardous (34 mentions), and that they felt road maintenance was an essential service (24 mentions). They also told us that they thought our proposal was short term thinking and would cost more in the long run (10 mentions), that roads were already in a poor condition (8 mentions) and that they felt that our proposal would be storing up more problems for the future (7).

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