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Norfolk County Council’s consultation on reducing street lighting in Norfolk

## Overview

The Council faces difficult decisions to deliver on its ambitions for the people of Norfolk against a difficult economic climate and more than a decade of reduced funding. Each year, the Council reviews its budget and proposes the savings it will need to make for the following year to balance its budget.

We carried out our annual budget and council tax consultation for 2024/25 between October and December 2023. However, the Government’s autumn statement and provisional funding settlement, which followed our budget consultation, set out a worse funding position for local authorities than had previously been anticipated. As a result, the Council is approximately £4m worse off than it had expected to be.

For 2024/25 the Council has proposed £41.5m of new savings which may require further consultation. This is one of those consultations. The Council is doing its best to protect key services, but faced with rising costs, rising demand and under-funding, it must make difficult decisions to balance the books.

In this consultation we are asking for your views on our proposal to reduce street lighting in Norfolk by 1.35%, with the intention to achieve an overall 2% reduction. We plan to start this work in 2024-25, with the ambition to implement during that financial year.

We have identified locations for 1.35% of our 2% target, and the remaining 0.65% will be subject to further consultation or will proceed separately subject to consultation at all times with Norfolk Police.

We are proposing to switch off lights in spots where there will be minimal impact to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. These are locations where we would not install new street lighting today, as over time, design standards and policies have changed. This will help us to save money, reduce our carbon footprint, reduce energy consumption and light pollution, thereby delivering environmental benefits and contributing towards delivering Norfolk’s Climate Strategy.

## Why your views matter

We want to find out what people think about our proposal to reduce street lighting in Norfolk by 1.35%, with the intention to achieve an overall reduction of 2%.

We are consulting through:

- The online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy

- Email /Letter to key stakeholders and partners

- Email to members of the Norfolk Residents’ Panel

We are consulting from **15 February to midnight on 22 March 2024**. 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 savings 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.**

The consultation should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The questions start on page 12 of this document.

## Personal information, confidentiality and data protection

We will use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our savings 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 on the Norfolk County Council website.[[1]](#footnote-2)](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.

## Introduction

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](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/corporate/council-vision-and-strategy)[[2]](#footnote-3) sets out our ambitions to be one of the highest performing counties in the country, overseeing economic growth, creating jobs and opportunities for the people of Norfolk, while maintaining and cherishing our environment, countryside and heritage.

However, we, like other upper tier local authorities, continue to face very significant pressures arising from rising costs driven by inflation, growth in demand and the National Living Wage.

Although the Council’s budget increases each year with Council Tax, it is not enough to meet growing needs and costs.

The October 2023 Cabinet meeting considered 2024-25 savings proposals totalling £26.5 million. [The 2023 Cabinet meeting minutes are available on the Norfolk County Council website.](https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/2053/Committee/169/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx)[[3]](#footnote-4) They make a significant contribution towards our target of £41.5 million and will help the council to continue to deliver the key services for Norfolk’s residents, while balancing the books.

It is in these difficult times that the County Council cannot afford any complacency and, working with its partners, we consider how best to deploy our own limited resources to support the most vulnerable people and communities, whilst continuing to provide wider public services.

Our target to reduce street lighting in Norfolk by 2%, would contribute towards addressing the Council’s £41.5m budget deficit. Our street lights proposal could save up to £200,000 per annum. In addition,energy price rises over recent years have seen us spending more than we expected to run our street lights. This proposal would help reduce the impact of future price rises.As well as the financial benefits, the proposal would also deliver environmental benefits such as reducing our carbon footprint, reducing energy consumption and reducing light pollution.

Our proposals include areas which wouldn’t be lit under current policy or standards if they were constructed today and are concentrated on isolated pockets of lights away from residential areas or on the approach to more urban areas, where we foresee a minimum impact to residents, including to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. Being a predominantly rural county, many communities across Norfolk do not have any existing street lighting.

We want to hear your views on our proposals to help our elected councillors make the right, tough decisions, in agreeing a robust and sustainable budget for the year ahead.

## Our current approach

The council is responsible for almost 54,000 street lights across Norfolk (please note not all street lights across Norfolk are owned by the County Council). A consequence of the energy-crisis has seen our street lighting energy costs more than double. Currently, street lighting energy costs the Council approximately £4 million per year.

We have taken measures to reduce the cost and energy consumption of street lighting across Norfolk. This includes switching on slightly later and off slightly earlier, introducing more energy-efficient LED lighting and implementing dimming during times of reduced activity on the road network.

Following public consultation, we also introduced part-night lighting, with input from Norfolk Police, in 2010. This involved switching off some street lights across Norfolk, in low crime areas where there is limited through traffic, for part of the night (midnight to 5am).

These initiatives have provided significant cumulative environmental and financial savings of over 22,000 tonnes of carbon and around £15 million since 2008.

You can read more about street lighting in Norfolk at: [Street lighting - report a problem - Norfolk County Council](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/road-maintenance/street-lighting)[[4]](#footnote-5)

Further details about part-night lighting is provided at: [Part night street lighting - Norfolk County Council](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/road-maintenance/street-lighting/part-night-street-lighting)[[5]](#footnote-6)

## Our proposal

We understand and care about the significance of feeling safe and secure. We also know from previous consultations that residents care about reducing our impact on the environment through lessening our carbon footprint and limiting light pollution.

Our target is to make a 2% reduction in street lights across Norfolk, which would affect approximately 1,000 lights. This matters as it will allow us to keep the lights working in the areas where they are most needed for safety and remove street lighting that is potentially not required. Doing this could save the council approximately £200,000 per annum (based on current prices).

**This proposal is about the principle of reducing street lights across Norfolk. However, there is an opportunity to provide a comment at the end of this survey should you wish to provide feedback about a particular proposed location.**

Our proposals focus on areas where there will be minimal impact to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. Locations which are known to be more heavily used by pedestrians are unlikely to be affected.

We are predominantly focused on switching off lights in the following circumstances:

* Isolated pockets of lights away from densely populated urban areas\* (such as residential areas), and where there is a limited benefit to those lights remaining on.
* Areas where lights have been installed in the past but the reason for their installation is no longer applicable. For instance, where a concern with road safety is no longer evident due to changes to traffic flows or other highway improvements.
* Reducing the spread of lighting on the approach to more urban areas, such as between the city/town and its suburbs, and the countryside.

\*There may be some urban roads areas which are identified for review. We will consult in those locations or proceed separately subject to consultation with Norfolk Police.

**Potential impacts**

Expected positive environmental impacts of the proposals include reducing energy costs and consumption, reduced carbon emissions and [reduced light pollution which can benefit wildlife and human health, as reported in academic literature](#Ourproposal).[[6]](#footnote-7) It is estimated that our proposal could save approximately 76 tonnes of carbon per year for switching off 1,000 lights, so the proposal will significantly contribute towards the Norfolk Climate Strategy and action plans to achieve net zero. It is also worth considering that many communities across Norfolk do not have any existing street lighting assets.

In previous consultations and public engagement, concerns have been raised about the negative impact of reduced street lighting in relation to safety and crime.

Safety is, and always will be, a primary concern for the Council. Lights will only be turned off in locations where we are satisfied residents will not be put at risk. In addition, evidence indicates that reductions in street lighting are not linked to instances of crime.

A [study led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine](file://C:\Users\dean.hawkins\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\9VZ2221O\The%20effect%20of%20reduced%20street%20lighting%20on%20road%20casualties%20and%20crime%20in%20England%20and%20Wales:%20controlled%20interrupted%20time%20series%20analysis%20|%20Journal%20of%20Epidemiology%20&%20Community%20Health%20(bmj.com))[[7]](#footnote-8) found that reducing street lighting did not necessarily lead to an increase in crime or road traffic incidents, however we will be working with Norfolk Police after the consultation to ensure that any concerns raised are understood and fully reviewed on a site-by-site basis.

In certain situations, it might be necessary to modify the highway by enhancing elements such as the condition of road markings, signage, and road studs to comply with the standards for an unlit road. Any modifications will be minimal and assessed as part of the review of sites and therefore they are not included in the £200,000 savings proposal.

Our commitment includes a willingness to assess and potentially adjust our lighting regimes based on evidence as to how lighting could affect crime prevention or road safety. We will review the impacts by undertaking a risk-based assessment in accordance with national guidelines. We will consult the emergency services and the police to ensure that any change will not contribute to an increase in crime. We will do this by reviewing crime and safety statistics.

**Proposal locations**

In total there are 33 locations identified, and these are listed below. These have been identified using the rationale explained above. It is important to highlight that we have not determined the complete scope of street light switch-offs for each road or throughout the entire county. Seeking your input on this change will help inform this process.

These 33 locations make up 1.35% of our assessment and we intend to achieve an overall 2% reduction to achieve the savings target. Any additional areas deemed suitable for switch-off will either form part of further consultations or will proceed independently of this consultation process subject to consultation at all times with Norfolk Police.

If approved, the proposals will be risk assessed in collaboration with our Network Safety team and we will consult with Norfolk Police to ensure all areas are suitable for switch-off. If any roads fail the assessment, we will need to consider alternative options to meet the savings target. In most instances, these changes would not require physical interaction with street lights and could be controlled remotely. Some older non-LED lights will require physical disconnection.

| **Parish** | **Road Name** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bacton | B1159 Walcott Road (Coast Road) | Between Mill Lane and St Helens Road |
| Bawsey | Lynn road / Gayton Road | Between Mintlyn Wood Road and 110m East of Chilver House Lane |
| Caister & Great Yarmouth North | Caister Road / Yarmouth Road | Between Caister Bypass/ Yarmouth Road Roundabout and Fremantle Road |
| Caistor St Edmund | A140 Ipswich Road | Harford Bridge Roundabout and Mangreen Hall Lane |
| Cromer | A148 Holt Road | Lights from Stonehill Way to 150m south-west of Stonehill Way |
| Cromer | Overstrand Road | Lights from Northrepps Road junction to 170m east of Northrepps Road |
| Dereham | Shipdham Road | Between Herne Lane and Nidus Gardens |
| Dersingham | Lynn Road | Lights on southern approach to Dersingham |
| Heacham | A149 Lynn Road | Between Lamsey Lane and Broadway |
| Hunstanton | Church Road/Waterworks Road | Between A149 and Smugglers Close |
| Hunstanton | Church Road/Waterworks Road | Between A149 and Chapel Bank |
| King’s Lynn | Edward Benefer Way | Between Hamburg Way and Estuary Road |
| Loddon | A146 Loddon Bypass | Junction with Beccles Road |
| Newton Flotman/Tasburgh | A140 Ipswich Road / Norwich Road | Between Newton Flotman (near to Church Lane) and north of Hempnall Road roundabout |
| North Walsham | North Walsham By-Pass | Between Little London Road and Folgate Road |
| North Walsham | Cromer Road | Lights on western approach up to Greens Road |
| Ormesby | Scratby Road | Between Yarmouth Road Roundabout and 230m north-west of Station Road/California Road Junction |
| Ormesby | Station Road | Junction with Scratby Road |
| Ormesby | California Road | Junction with Scratby Road |
| Postwick | Peachmann Way | Between Broadland Way Roundabout and Cranley Road Roundabout |
| Spooner Row/Suton, Wymondham | London Road | Between Station Road and Eleven Mile Lane |
| Stalham | Yarmouth Road (A149) | From Lower Staithe Road to the last street light beyond The Staithe Road |
| Thorpe | Plumstead Road East | Between South Hill Road and Green Lane North |
| Thorpe St Andrew | Dussindale Drive | Between Fiennes Road and Plumstead Road East |
| Thurton | Norwich Road | Between the Avenues and Vale Road |
| Thurton | Norwich Road | Lights approaching from Norwich |
| Tottenhill/Wormegay | A10 | Between Hardwick Roundabout and A134 Roundabout |
| Trowse | Kirby Road | Between A146 Loddon Road and The Drive |
| Walsoken | Lynn Road | Between Old Lynn Road junction and Lynn Road Roundabout |
| Watton | Norwich Road | From Hendon Avenue to Summer Lane |
| West Runton | A149 | From Boulevard Road to Rosebery Road |
| Wymondham | London Road | From new roundabout to last column beyond Morley Lane |
| Yarmouth South/Bradwell | Beaufort Way | Between Hodds Lane roundabout and Wiltshire Drive roundabout |

## Our questions

## We are seeking your views on the overall principle of a reduction in street lighting. Should you have comments about specific proposed locations please provide them in response to the open question.

1. **How far would you agree or disagree with our proposal to reduce street lighting by 2%? Please choose one answer only from the list below:**

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don’t know

1. **Please tell us more about why you chose that answer and whether you have any other comments on the proposals, using the box below:**

Please write your comments here:

1. **Are there any other locations where you think lighting could be considered for switching off?**

Please write your comments here:

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

We will take a report about the findings of this consultation to Cabinet for decision in June 2024.

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.

# About you

To make sure we are learning from a wide range of people – we would 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.

1. **Are you responding as...?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

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

If you are responding on behalf of another organisation, what is the name of the organisation, group, or business?

Please write your answer here:

1. **How did you hear about this consultation?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

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

By post

1. **Are you...?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

If you prefer to self-describe, please specify here:

1. **How old are you?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below*:*

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75-84

85+

Prefer not to say

1. **Do you have any long-term illness, disability or health problem that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

1. **If yes which of the following best describes your condition or disability?**

Please select **all** answers that apply:

Blind or partially sighted

Deaf or hard of hearing

Limiting health condition *e.g. heart disease, asthma, stroke, osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and magic encephalomyelitis (ME)*

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*

If you have another type of disability not listed above, please write here:

Prefer not to say

1. **How would you describe your ethnic background?**  Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

**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 group, 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

1. **Which district/borough/city do you live in?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Breckland

Broadland

Great Yarmouth

Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

North Norfolk

Norwich

South Norfolk

1. **Do you have caring responsibilities?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below*:*

No

Yes – for children with additional needs

Yes – for older family members/ Adults

Yes - Parent Carer

Yes – for a disabled adult(s)

Yes, other. Please write here:

1. **Which of the following best describes you?** Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Employed (full time)

Employed (part time)

Self-employed

Unemployed

Student

Looking after the family home

Long term sick

Retired

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

English

Other, please write here:

**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/savingsproposals](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.norfolk.gov.uk%2Fsavingsproposals&data=05%7C02%7Csamantha.brown%40norfolk.gov.uk%7C2a76c0bbb6894343060408dc2cb0b4ee%7C1419177e57e04f0faff0fd61b549d10e%7C0%7C0%7C638434384682244722%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bNdDCtAoPjNOcwJ58Fz3CA5%2FsQBE1VGgibpsZJ7ARSo%3D&reserved=0)

**You can email return your feedback form to:** [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk)

**You can send back a paper feedback form to:**

STREET LIGHT CONSULTATION 2024/25

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.

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1. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/privacy [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/corporate/council-vision-and-strategy [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/2053/Committee/169/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/road-maintenance/street-lighting> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/road-maintenance/street-lighting/part-night-street-lighting> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. http://academic.oup.com/icb/article/61/3/1160/6206372 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. https://jech.bmj.com/content/69/11/1118.short?g=w\_jech\_ahead\_tab [↑](#footnote-ref-8)