



Norfolk County Council

Your views on our proposal to save money by reducing weed spraying activities on the highway

Overview

Norfolk County Council will set a new budget on 21st February 2023.

In the consultation we are asking you for your views on proposals to reduce the frequency of weed control from two treatments per year to one treatment per year. This proposal would save us £130,000 in 2023/24.

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.

We are consulting through:

- This online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy
- Our Norfolk Residents' Panel

We are consulting from **21st October 2022 to 16th December 2022**. Please note that if we receive any consultation responses after the **16th December 2022**, 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 to help them come to a decision.

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.

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

The questions start on page 5 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 budget 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 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.

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 sets out the Council's five, interlinked, priorities: a vibrant and sustainable economy; better opportunities for children and young people; healthy, fulfilling and independent lives; strong, engaged and inclusive communities; and a greener, more resilient future. We're proud to provide the valuable services that our residents need and deserve.

However, we continue to face significant challenges which includes higher costs and demand for services, this was the case even before the recent rise in inflation and cost of living. There were two phases to our budget planning; phase one included initial proposals [to save £13 million](#), these were considered by councillors on 4th July and phase 2 savings were considered by councillors on 3rd October, when an additional £19.5 million in savings were presented to councillors. Together, this brings the [total savings to £32.5 million](#).

As we continue with huge uncertainty around our finances Norfolk County Council is continuing to work to bridge the gap in our budget with a target of £60 million.

In this consultation we are asking for your views on our proposal to reduce the frequency of weed control from two treatments per year to one treatment per year. This proposal would save us £130,000 in 2023/24.

Our current service

Norfolk County Council has a legal duty to maintain our highways and this includes roads, footpaths and verges, making them safe for road users. We meet this duty through a wide range of maintenance activities including weed control.

We spray weeds on adopted roads (public highways) and pavements, and also deal with ragwort, thistles, nettles, brambles and giant hogweed on the highway. Weed control normally starts in May or June with a second treatment in July or August.

We treat weeds with an environmentally friendly weed killer, which works on contact with weeds and is harmless to humans and animals. It is approved for use by the European Union and the HSE Chemicals Regulation Directorate. The weed killer used is no stronger than products sold at DIY stores.

Our proposal

Across Norfolk, our contractors treat the network of adopted roads (public highways) and pavements twice, based on a schedule of sites where weed growth is an issue. We are proposing to save money by reducing the number of weed control treatments from two across the county, to one.

This proposal would save us £130,000 in 2023/24.

Who would be affected by our proposal and how

Reducing the frequency of weed control may result in adopted roads (public highways) and pavements looking less visually pleasing. Some weeds spread quickly and can cause damage to hard surfaces which is costly to repair.

We do not anticipate a reduction in weed control having any direct adverse safety impacts for communities.

Tell us your views

We would like to hear your views on our proposals.

1. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to reduce the frequency of weed control?

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. How, if at all, do you think our proposal might affect you?

Please write in the box below:

About you

To make sure we are learning from a wide range of people – we'd 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 tick (✓) one answer only:

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

2. **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 below:

3. **How did you hear about this consultation?** Please tick (✓) one answer only:

- 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

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

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

If you prefer to self-describe please specify in the box below:

5. **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

6. **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

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

Please tick (✓) all answers that apply

Blind or partially sighted

D/deaf or hard of hearing

Limiting health condition e.g. heart disease, asthma, strokes, osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) etc.

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

Other, please write in the box below:

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

Asian or Asian British

Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, please describe in the box below:

Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African

Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background, please describe in the box below:

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed or multiple ground, please describe in the box below:

White

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Roma

Other White background, please describe in the box below:

Another ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group please describe in the box below:

Prefer not to say

9. Which District /Borough /City do you live in? Please tick (✓) one answer

Breckland

Broadland

Great Yarmouth

King's Lynn and West Norfolk

North Norfolk

Norwich

South Norfolk

10. Do you have caring responsibilities? Please tick (✓) one answer

No

Yes – for children with additional needs

Yes – for older family members

Yes, other. Please write here:

11. Which of the following best describes you? Please tick (✓) one answer only:

- Employed (full time)
- Employed (part time)
- Self employed
- Unemployed
- Student
- Looking after the family home
- Long term sick
- Retired

12. What is your first language?

- English

Other, please write in the box below:

How we will make our decision and report back to you

We will take a report about the findings of this consultation to the Council Cabinet in January 2023. We will set a new budget on 21st February.

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 of 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 savings.

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 email us at 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.