

Budget Consultation for 2021/22

Norfolk County Council is committed to making Norfolk a county where businesses, organisations and communities continue to thrive together, even as we address the impact of COVID-19. We will do this by tackling the challenges that face us and moving forward together to create ever better places to work and live.

The business plan we launched in 2019, **Together, for Norfolk**, is now well embedded in all that we do in planning to grow our economy, manage development and achieve better futures and outcomes for everyone who lives and works here.

We continue to provide vital services to give children and young people the best start in life, support vulnerable and older people, maintain our highways and transport network, provide library, waste disposal and fire services and work in partnership to grow the economy.

We are currently delivering these services in a financial climate of almost unprecedented risk and uncertainty, both from the perspective of people who use our services, and those who provide them. The Council must now plan for the 'triple whammy' impacts of rising budget pressures, uncertainty over Government funding and the financial challenges associated with COVID-19.

Making decisions about how we spend your money is never easy and many of the additional costs, lost income and undeliverable savings in the current year will have a significant impact on our 2021-22 finances. It remains critical to develop balanced, sustainable budget proposals which will enable the Council to continue to deliver the essential services which are relied on by all Norfolk's people, businesses and visitors (who help boost our economy).

There are statutory services we need to protect and a limited choice of where savings can be made. We have already saved £436m between 2011 and 2020, but even by increasing council tax by the amount we're allowed to without a local referendum and a proposal to raise the £8.5 million by increasing the Adult Social Care precept, we won't balance our budget next year. This means we must find an additional £26m of savings in 2021-22 and may possibly need to save more depending on the level of Government support received.

We are putting every effort into listening to our residents to ensure we know what services you value most. By developing our budget proposals in line with residents' priorities, coupled with our strategy of changing services to make them more efficient, we aim to make most of the savings we need by cutting running costs and with the least possible impact on frontline services.

I wanted to alert you to the webpage where we published our budget consultation on 26th October. You can find out more at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget and have your say using our online feedback form. Using our online feedback ensures we have a clear record of your response and that your views are accurately recorded.

We appreciate that some residents may not have online access and people who are unable to respond online can send us their views in writing to:

Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

Residents can request our budget consultation document in other formats, including paper form, by calling 0344 800 8020 or emailing haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk. We will make all materials as accessible as possible.

Our consultation closes at midnight on 14th December 2020. 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.

I hope this update is helpful to you in giving your organisation the time to plan how to make your views known and to schedule any agenda items or special meetings that you may need to put in place.

If you have any questions about the process for consultation, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Christine Mawson, Stakeholder and Consultation Manager, Email: christine.mawson@norfolk.gov.uk or telephone 01603 224485.

Yours sincerely

Simon

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