Appendix 1

Your views on proposals that would see service changes and a reduction in searchroom hours at Norfolk Record Office

Respondent information

Respondent Numbers

There were 98 responses received for this proposal. Of these, 86 people replied as individuals.

Responding as:		
An individual / member of the public	**86**	**88**
A family	2	
On behalf of a voluntary or community group	2	5
On behalf of a statutory organisation	3	
On behalf of a business	0	
A Norfolk County Councillor	0	3
A district or borough councillor	0	
A town or parish councillor	1	
A Norfolk County Council employee	2	
Not Answered	2	2
Total	**98**	**98**

Of the 98 responses received, the majority (93) were online submissions to the consultation.

How we received the responses	
Online submission	93
Email	2
Consultation paper feedback form	2
Letter	1
Total	**98**

Responses by groups, organisations and businesses

Five respondents told us they were responding on *behalf* of a group, organisation or business. The organisations cited were:

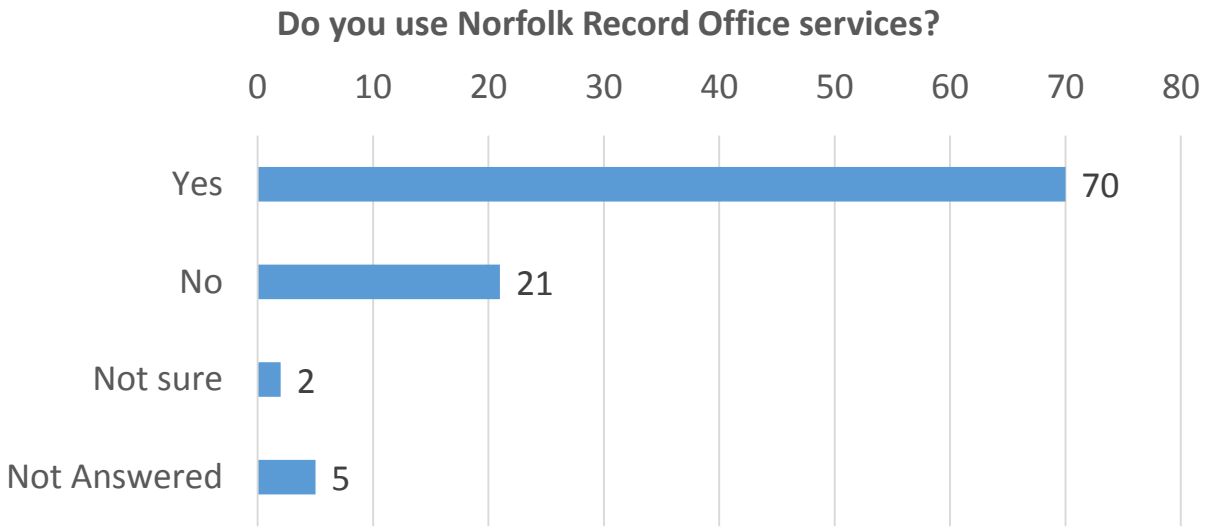
- Chedgrave Parish Council
- Cromer Town Council
- Norfolk Family History Society

- The Norfolk Record Society
- South Norfolk Council

Relationships

Q1 We asked people whether they currently used the Norfolk Record Office and 93 respondents answered this question. Of those responding:

- 70 currently use Norfolk Record Office services
- 21 don't currently use Norfolk Record Office services
- 2 were not sure whether they currently use Norfolk Record Office services

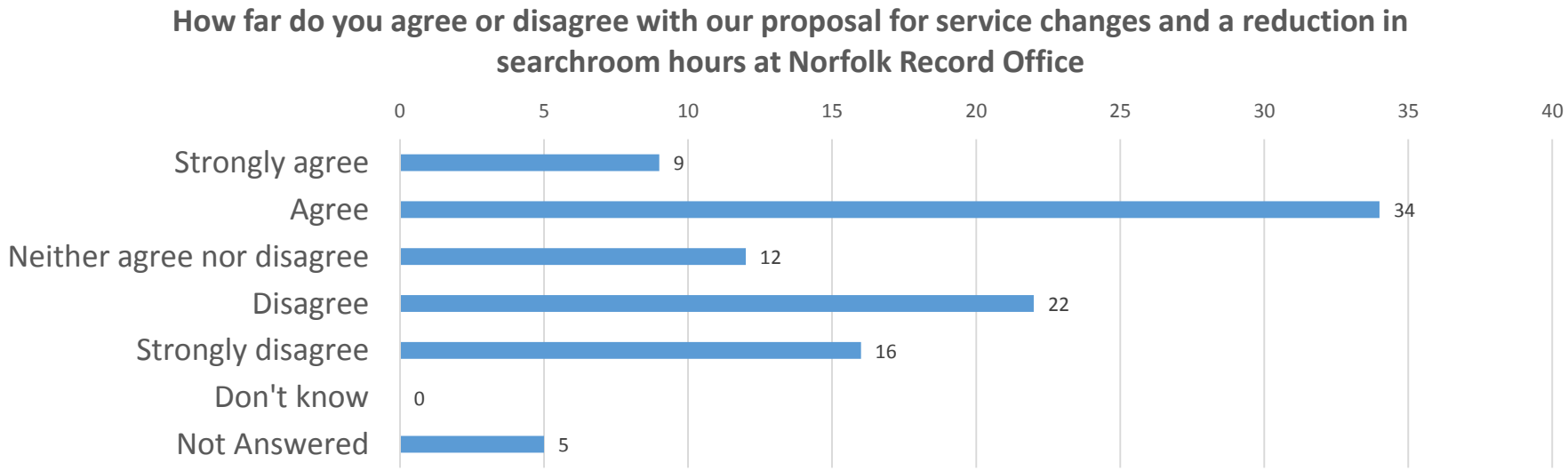


Summary of findings

Q2: How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal for service changes and a reduction in searchroom hours at Norfolk Record Office?

We asked how far people agree or disagree with our proposal and 93 people responded to this question. Of these:

- 9 said they strongly agree
- 34 said they agree
- 12 said they neither agree nor disagree
- 22 said that they disagree and
- 16 said that they strongly disagree



We included an open text box so that people could tell us the reason behind their answer and how, if at all, the proposal would affect them.

Of those strongly agreeing (9) or agreeing (34) with the proposal, people said that the proposal would not affect them, that it was reasonable and a good use of resources. Some said that although they agreed with the proposal around the opening hours they did not agree with the other parts of the proposal, such as a reduction in outreach or acquisition work.

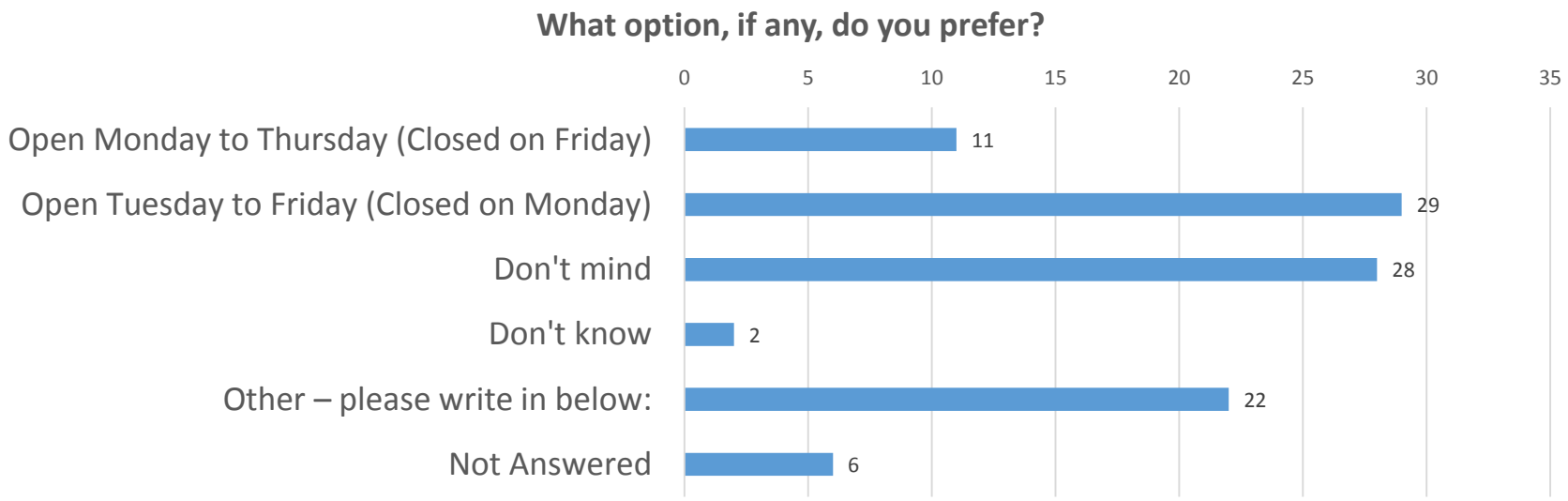
Of those disagreeing (22) or strongly disagreeing (16) with the proposal, people said that they felt the proposal would make it harder for employed people to access the searchroom. People also questioned the thinking behind the proposal, for example that the saving it would achieve wasn't worth the disruption or the proposal would not achieve the cost savings we suggest. Another key issue was that people felt concern that the proposal would restrict access to records and that our heritage needs to be preserved. As above, where some people agreed with the potential change to hours there was a call to maintain, or extend, outreach, acquisition and support from archivists / trained staff.

The remainder of the responses said that they neither agree nor disagree (12) or did not answer this question (5). Those that said that they neither agree nor disagree did so for a number reasons. Some said they agree with the proposed hours but not with any reduction in conservation or outreach. Others said that although they understood the need for the proposals and the proposals did not affect them personally they were concerned about the impact on others, in particular access for students.

Q4: As part of our proposal we are considering reducing the number of hours that the searchroom would be open. Currently the Norfolk Record Office is open Monday to Friday. If our proposal went ahead we would need to decide which hours to open. Which option of any, would you prefer?

We asked people which option, if any, they would prefer, and 92 people responded. Of these:

- 11 preferred the NRO to open Monday to Thursday (Closed on Friday)
- 29 preferred the NRO to open Tuesday to Friday (Closed on Monday)
- 28 did not mind
- 2 did not know
- 22 suggested alternatives



We included an open text box so that people could tell us the reason behind their answer.

Open Monday to Open Thursday (Closed on Friday) – the most frequent reasons people cited for those selecting this preference (11) were that it would allow people to continue their work after the weekend, that it was the least worst option and that it suited them personally.

Open Tuesday to Friday (Closed on Monday) – the most frequent reasons people cited for those selecting this preference (29) were that this option was better for people travelling to use the searchroom, that it was better not to have a gap during the middle of the week, that it was in line with other heritage centres that traditionally don't open on a Monday and that it suited them personally.

Don't mind – the most frequent reasons for people saying that they don't mind which option (28) were that they were retired or that the proposal did not directly affect them.

Twenty-two people selected 'other'. Of these, the most frequent comments were calls to either maintain the current hours or to increase them. People also offered alternative proposals, including opening Monday-Friday but starting at 10m, opening Saturday, opening Wednesday-Saturday, opening Monday-Wednesday and Thursday-Saturday.

Analysis and comments

Table 1: Analysis of main comments by people who agree/strongly agree with the proposal in Q2 How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal for service changes and a reduction in searchroom hours at Norfolk Record Office?

Table 2: Analysis of main comments by people who disagree/strongly disagree with the proposal in Q2 How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal for service changes and a reduction in searchroom hours at Norfolk Record Office?

Table 3: Analysis of all comments related to Q4 As part of our proposal we are considering reducing the number of hours that the searchroom would be open. Currently the Norfolk Record Office is open Monday to Friday. If our proposal went ahead we would need to decide which hours to open. Which option of any, would you prefer?

Table 4: Other issues raised to be taken into consideration when making a decision

Table 1: Analysis of main comments by people who agree/strongly agree with the proposal in Q2 How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal for service changes and a reduction in searchroom hours at Norfolk Record Office?

Overall theme	Issues raised	Number of times mentioned	Quotes
Comments / observations that generally support the proposals	Where people were generally supportive of the proposals several expressed their view that the proposals were reasonable.	7	“Reduction is reasonable & wouldn't be likely to affect my use of NRO” “Still open a good number of hours and on line availability. At a time when essential services are under threat it is hard to justify the costs of the current extended opening hours.”

	Others felt that search room was currently underused.	3	“Realistic and pragmatic.” “NRO is a wonderful resource but judging from my own experience and the above stats it is substantially underused” “The service appears to be underused”
Impact of proposal on individuals	A number of those expressing agreement to the proposal stated that it did not currently affect them.	7	“Like many users my family history research brings me to the search room very intermittently - most days for a couple of weeks, then maybe not at all for a few months, while I digest my findings and then seek other avenues to explore. I would still be able to work like this under your new opening hour proposals.” “feel that the proposed hours are sufficient and suitable for those wanting to access the information. will not directly affect me, but may in future?” “I would still be able to work like this under your new opening hour proposals. I do not use the Thursday late openings, which seem not to have a big uptake.”
Need for the proposal	Several said that they understood the need for the proposal.	6	“Not just because of austerity, but also the changing nature of research which is increasing use of digital access, the closure times to the search-room make sense”

			“I can see why you need to reduce hours and so would support the shorter hours.” “I am an NRO employee. I would prefer that the service remain as it is but I understand the need to reduce costs.”
	Some also talked about their regret or sadness that the proposal had been put forward.	4	“The move to online services is common to many resource centres and it does have a knock on effect to times of opening and staff requirements so these changes are probably inevitable though sad to see.” “I am very sorry these changes are being thrust upon you by the reduction in budget, and I have ticked 'Agree' only in the hope these changes will preserve an OUTSTANDING service.”
Enable the service to continue and / or preserve the key role of Norfolk Record Office	Several people said that they were supportive of the proposal if it enabled the service overall to continue.	6	“Although I will probably be using the records office in the future, the proposals seem a very sensible way of continuing to provide an adequate service for what is obviously a minority interest” “To avoid affecting other aspects of the work of The Record Office the reduction of searchroom hours would be the least damaging”

	Some people referenced their comments to what they perceived the key role of the Norfolk Record Office to be.	3	“Any reduction in archive work is regrettable but if opening at 10am and closing one day means cuts to the core work of saving, listing and conserving documents can be avoided then so be it. Without the core functions, there is no service.” “If it is certain that funds have to be reduced then it is reasonable that public access time should be reduced a little in order to help maintain an acceptable emphasis on what I see as the primary function of the NRO : to maintain the inflow and conservation of documents.”
Concerns related to other proposed service changes	Several people stated that although they agreed with the proposed reduction in hours they did not agree with other proposed service changes relating to outreach, volunteer support and conservation/acquisition.	4	“I agree to the reduction in search room hours, but I do not agree to all the proposed service changes. I want to see MORE digitisation and conservation, not less. That is the role and responsibility of a records office.” “I note the fleeting mention of reduction in actual conservation activities with great alarm. This is NOT about search room access” “ …concerns - - the reduction of educational and outreach services. Implanting research activities in the young generation is key to later usage, and for adults who might not otherwise use the facility. Interacting with the actual documents creates lasting memories.”

Table 2: Analysis of main comments by people who disagree/strongly disagree with the proposal in Q2 How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal for service changes and a reduction in searchroom hours at Norfolk Record Office?			
Overall theme	**Issues raised**	**Number of responses**	**Quotes**
Impact of proposal on individuals	People explained how they would be directly affected by the proposal.	7	"As a historian whose studies are dependant on examining original documents, I would find a four rather than five day week considerably affect my work." "For one, fewer hours means I'm less able to attend the NRO full stop." "I like going early in the morning and having a good three hours work time before midday- mornings are easier for me than afternoons as I have to be home due to childcare"
Impact of proposal on different types of users	Several respondents expressed concerns that the proposal would impact working people.	7	"People have to work, reduced access times reduce the population of people able to use the service, not everyone wants or is able to use online services" "For those who work it is almost impossible to access the search room as it is not open at weekends."

			“Although I am now retired and able to access the Record Office more flexibly, when I was working, the extra days opening was a bonus and I used to go for an hour at the end of several days. This will still impact those who work.”
Comments suggesting that the thinking behind the proposals is flawed	Several people felt that our proposal would not achieve the outcome that we desired or that the evidence we put forward did not support our proposal.	7	“Your findings make it clear that the focus is more on original documents, yet you propose to reduce access to these. This is illogical.” “The savings that can be made by this action are too small to warrant the time spent consulting and actioning them. These are niche services but very important to those who use them. I would expect that changes and efficiencies could be made elsewhere in the service that would not lead to the reduction in opening times” “I don't mind a reduction in searches on hours but don't think your analysis really indicates only having a late opening of once a month. An service out of working hours helps the service be fairer to all age groups, also many people in norwich may leave work at 4/4.30 so be able to quest items before 5pm but not have time to work on them before closing.”
	A few people stated they thought our proposals went against the original funding basis.	3	“The proposed cuts are a denial of the premises on which the publicly funded new record office was founded when it opened in 2003.”

Concerns around access	There were concerns that the proposals would restrict access to important records.	5	“It will restrict my access to the historical sources and the knowledgeable and helpful staff” “Reducing access to the county's history is not acceptable” “…reduced access times reduce the population of people able to use the service …”
Concerns related to other proposed service changes	Some people stated that although they agreed with the proposed reduction in hours they did not agree with other proposed service changes relating to outreach, volunteer support and conservation/acquisition. There were calls to maintain: Outreach work Acquisition	4 4 3	“The public opening hours changes make sense on the figures given, but the cutting of education & outreach seems odd - if people are unaware of the Record Office & how accessible & friendly it is then useage will drop further. The cutting of item acquisition also seems wrong” “Your outreach work is also invaluable.” “I do disagree strongly with any change of focus which has an adverse effect on volunteering, educational events and public engagement events which should be at the core of the service.” “Resource needs to be given to processing new acquisitions, they are often being donated I'm good faith by the public and a lack of staff will result in huge backlogs, lack of access and lack of care. Problems will get worse in the future and many important records will be lost”

	Volunteer support	2	"As well as using the Records office, I am a volunteer and it is volunteers who are helping to make online searches of documents possible. If you reduce the support to volunteers or the volunteer numbers then this would reduce the amount of documents which can be indexed and online for searches"
Concerns about staffing reductions	People also commented on staff reductions.	5	"The removal of front line staff would have an adverse effect on those users who require a level of expertise that often only they can provide. The Record Office is not just an assembly of records, in order to use it without wasting many hours investigating unproductive sources, the level advice and assistance on hand is key" "Your staff are as valuable as the records you hold." "The archivist are crucial in supporting researchers."
Other concerns / comments	Individuals expressed other concerns about the proposal. These included: - The proposal would deter people from research and/or reduce the numbers using the service - Restricting the hours would mean that the searchroom might be busier when it was open.	 3 2	 "It will result in fewer people using the Record Office." "I trust that if the reduced hours mean search facilities and readers are busy so not available this will be reviewed. I would be very annoyed to arrive only to be told sorry we are too busy!"

	- That the proposed change to hours was too large	2	"This is a massive change in the service which would be very unsuitable for my needs as a student. Reducing the open hours from 42 to 28 is an unacceptably large cut."

Table 3: Analysis of all comments related to Q4 As part of our proposal we are considering reducing the number of hours that the searchroom would be open. Currently the Norfolk Record Office is open Monday to Friday. If our proposal went ahead we would need to decide which hours to open. Which option of any, would you prefer?

Overall theme	Issues raised	Number of responses	Quotes
Reasons behind a preference for opening Tuesday to Friday	Those favouring this option did so for a variety of reasons.		
	Some felt that this option would be better for those needing to travel to visit the NRO searchroom.	5	"If people are traveling to use the resource for more than one day then encouraging them to come Tues-Fri means they could still access the Heritage Centre on a Saturday, where as arriving on the Sunday for Monday means there is less for them to do/see" "Record offices open on a Friday can enable weekend visitors to use their services, ie travel to Norwich on a Thursday night, use NRO on Friday. Mondays less useful as one needs to travel home Monday night in order to work on Tuesday!" "For community members, on some bus routes across Norfolk, there are more bus services on a Friday rather than Monday - so a greater accessibility reason for a Friday opening."

	People also cited that this option suited them personally.	5	“Being retired I can choose when I come into Norwich but for me Friday is a more convenient day than Monday.” “If I come to the RO I might stay in Norwich overnight to maximise my use of the searchroom on two consecutive days so a late evening opening followed by an early opening time would suit people like me”
	Others stated that they would prefer the NRO to be open on consecutive days.	3	“it is recognised that opening consecutive days is better than having a break mid-week.” “If there has to be a reduction, better not to be mid-week”
	Two respondents pointed out that there were several Mondays in the year that the NRO was already closed due to bank holidays.	2	“…probably closing Mondays would have less of an impact as several are Bank Holidays anyway.”
	Others pointed out that Monday closing was in line with practice elsewhere in the heritage sector.	2	“People are used to museums and other heritage being closed Mondays.”

	Other reasons mentioned only once included: - that this option would be more suitable for academics - and that it was the least worst option.	 1 1	 “Some of your users will be academics. Conferences tend to take place at the end of the week or over the weekend. Many visiting academics will therefore use the Record Office on a Friday rather than a Monday.” “The least worst option available, taking into account the bank holiday Mondays when the NRO is already going to be closed.”
Reasons behind a preference for opening Monday to Thursday	People offered a variety of reasons for selecting this option, including: Allowed continuity from the weekend People also cited personal preferences Other reasons mentioned only once included: - that this option would be better for staff - that it was the least worst option.	 2 2 1 1	 “Continuity for researchers who have been investigating online sources at weekends.” “Since the room cannot be open at the weekend, I can make better use of MY time if I can attached Friday to the weekend for other purposes” “I think staff would prefer a Friday off instead of Mondays as it makes a nice long weekend break” “The lesser of the evils.”

Calls to maintain or increase existing opening hours	Some people stated that they wanted us to maintain the opening hours as they currently are.	11	“Keep the same as now” “Do not reduce hours” “prefer no closure” “remain as Monday to Friday”
	There were also calls to keep the late-night opening in some form	9	“The retention of the late night service is important” “Keep Thursday lates - you can also hold talks and education after work hours so those of us who work full time can go” “I think the late opening session allows those with daytime commitments the opportunity to access the searchroom and also a longer session for those that can only manage to travel to Norwich once a week.”
	A few called for hours to be increased	3	“Availability of the search room is essential, and indeed should be extended to weekends.” “My journey includes both, buses and trains, from my home in Essex and I would propose an increase in hours for the searchroom to be open.”
Alternative suggestions	People put forward alternative opening hours.	8	“Scrap a weekday, perhaps Thursday, and open all day on Saturday.” “It should be open daily but from 10 instead of 9. This will create a saving but not exclude anyone.”

			"Reduced hours five day working."
	In particular, Saturday opening was mentioned.	4	"Should open Saturdays so as to be more accessible to the working population" "You should include Saturday opening so that those who work in the week and pay for the service through their taxes can actually use the service."

Table 4: Other issues raised to be taken into consideration when making a decision

Overall theme	Issues raised	Number of responses	Quotes
Other issues raised to be taken into consideration when making a decision	Some respondents said we needed to take the availability of car-parking into account when deciding which day to open.	5	"One of the issues surrounding the RO, if coming any distance, is car parking availability. If I arrive shortly after 9.00 a.m. I don't have too long to wait before it opens. There also tends to be more car parking spaces." "One problem is parking at County Hall, possibly of tailoring opening times to times when parking is lighter?"
	The need to promote any new opening times.	4	"Publicising the open hours would be essential, i.e. a telephone recorded message, or even make visiting the searchroom by appointment only."

	The need to promote the service	4	"So long as it is well advertised it does not make any difference" "The NRO needs to be doing more to increase its profile with the general public, not less."
Ideas	Some people suggested alternative ways to save money / maintain the existing service. These included: - Charging for the service	4	"Maybe a small charge could be levied for those that visit the record office, say £5 an entry, very little to pay to access the wealth of documents available."

Other information

Other information relevant to the consultation
Organisations responding expressed the following views not captured elsewhere in this summary: - One organisation offered to work with the Norfolk Record Office to help produce new databases that enabled more records to be accessed online, by harnessing the power of their volunteers. They also offered potential help with preserving /conserving any family history documents. - That current online resources are not adequate, and that many of the records, such as medieval and early modern manuscripts are not available online at all. - That scholars coming to Norwich from other parts of the UK and from abroad would be disadvantaged by the proposals.

- That photography permits are too expensive for many students who need to consult original materials.

- That organisations have deposited material at the NRO with the expectation that these would be available for viewing at convenient times.

- Suggestions received as alternatives to reduced hours included analysis of users from the signing-in register, approaching universities for contributions in order that their students could continue to use the facilities and asking organisations to make contribution for the sake keeping of their records in perpetuity.

- That the proposal would reduce community cohesion as it would reduce community understanding of our shared heritage.

- One organisation asked that the Norfolk Record Office continue to generate income from the sale of micro films and fiche.

We received two comments that related to the way we undertook this consultation.

“I object to question 2, which is badly written. I agree to the reduction in search room hours, but I do not agree to all the proposed service changes.”

“But there is no option to raise Council Tax by sufficient to balance your budget, this implies you have decided BEFORE the consultation!”

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