

An update on North Yorkshire Council

Briefing note December 2022

With fewer than four months to go and as a valued partner, we would like to update you on the good progress we are making to ensure the smoothest possible transition from the current eight councils in North Yorkshire, to the new single North Yorkshire Council. North Yorkshire Council comes into being on 1 April next year and if you live in the county you will start to see and hear much more about it from late January onwards. An awareness campaign will help people to understand what's changing, why, and how to get in touch online, on the phone and face-to-face. There will be a single website, a single telephone number and a single set of social media feeds. This approach will make it easier for people to get in touch. There will also be a main office in every former district area, supported by around 30 additional customer access points across the county.

The 90 members elected by the public in May 2022 will continue to represent their divisions for a further four years from 1 April 2023. The Executive, working as a 'shadow executive' for the new council has already taken a number of **key decisions, some of which are summarised below:**

| Decision | Link |
|--|--|
| Agree the Devolution Deal and Commence Consultation | Issue details - Agree the Devolution Deal and commence consultation North Yorkshire County Council |
| Electric Vehicle Rollout Strategy – To Seek Approval to Open a Public Consultation | Issue details - Electric Vehicle Rollout Strategy North Yorkshire County Council |
| Council Tax Reduction Scheme | Issue details - Council Tax Reduction Scheme North Yorkshire County Council Issue details - Council Tax Reduction Scheme North Yorkshire County Council |
| Council Tax Harmonisation | Issue details - Council Tax Harmonisation North Yorkshire County Council |

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| Council Tax Premium on Second Homes | Issue details - Council Tax Discounts & Premiums - Second Homes North Yorkshire County Council |
| Taxi Licensing Paper | Issue details - Taxi Licensing Policy and Conditions North Yorkshire County Council |
| Proposal for Double Devolution/Process for the Consideration of Identifying Pilot Town/Parish councils | Issue details - Double Devolution - process for the consideration of identifying pilot town/parish Councils North Yorkshire County Council |
| Decision on whether to proceed with a Community Governance Review | Issue details - Community Governance Reviews relating to the unparished town centres in Harrogate and Scarborough North Yorkshire County Council |

Keeping things local – On top of the commitment to retain a main office in each former district area and to continue to have staff living and working in the communities they serve, you will see from the above list that we are also progressing our approach to locality. The Executive will consider the findings from the initial public consultation and next steps regarding the potential creation of town councils for Harrogate and Scarborough on 10 January. An invitation has been issued to recruit a small number of town and parish councils to work with us on a double devolution pilot scheme and we are progressing our approach to ‘Community Networks’. Around 30 Community Networks will bring together local councillors, public sector agencies, communities and businesses to get things done in their local area. A paper will go to the Executive in February.

The structure of the new council is taking shape, including the appointment to some of the most senior roles as detailed below.



Chief Executive for North Yorkshire Council – many of you will already be aware that I have been appointed to this role. I will be overseeing about 10,500 staff, excluding schools, and our new council will deliver the essential public services currently provided by the eight councils operating across England’s largest county. I will also be responsible for overseeing a budget of £1.4 billion. I was born in Scarborough and I have been the chief executive of North Yorkshire County Council since 2010, after joining the authority in 1987. During my extensive career at the county council, I have been employed as a trainee trading standards officer, the assistant head of trading standards and regulatory services, the assistant director for business and community services and the assistant chief executive for policy, performance and partnerships. My final role before becoming chief executive was as the corporate director of business and environmental services from 2008 to 2010.

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Gary Fielding – Corporate Director of Resources – Gary has been the county council’s corporate director for strategic resources for 10 years with responsibility for finance and discharge of the s151 officer role as well as being treasurer of the NY Pension Fund. He also has corporate responsibility for information technology, property, procurement and contract management as well as change management, customer services and commercial services.



Trudy Forster – Assistant Chief Executive HR and Business Support – Trudy has been the assistant director of HR for North Yorkshire County Council for five years, four of which were spent on secondment to City of York Council as head of HR and organisational development. Prior to that Trudy worked at Durham University for 12 years as assistant director of HR. She is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development.



Barry Khan – Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic Services – Barry has been the assistant chief executive for legal and democratic services for North Yorkshire County Council for eight years and a statutory monitoring officer for more than 19 years. He has extensive experience of implementing and maintaining a high standard of corporate governance across councils, including at a district and a unitary council level. Barry’s team has also been providing legal services to Ryedale and Selby district councils.



Rachel Joyce – Assistant Chief Executive for Local Engagement – Rachel is currently the director of corporate affairs for Harrogate Borough Council and has a broad portfolio including partnerships and locality working, policy and performance, community safety, communications and engagement, IT, emergency planning and business continuity, finance and legal. Rachel was also one of the lead officers behind the development and implementation of Durham’s successful Area Action Partnerships, which lead the county’s community engagement mechanisms.



Richard Webb – Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services – Richard has been corporate director for health and adult services in North Yorkshire since March 2014, with responsibility for public health and adult social care. Prior to that he has held director roles at Sheffield City Council and Telford and Wrekin Council and has also led on housing, culture and leisure, libraries, regulatory services, community safety and community development and cohesion. He is national co-chair of the County Councils Network’s Health and Social Care Forum. Richard started his career as an NHS management trainee at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and has also worked in the NHS and local government in Gateshead and Stockton-on-Tees. He lives in Harrogate.



Stuart Carlton – Corporate Director of Children and Young People’s Service – Stuart has been the corporate director for the Children and Young People’s Service in North Yorkshire for over five years now. The service is responsible for a wide range of education, inclusion, early help and social care services for children and young people. He has over 35 years’ experience of varied operational and strategic management across children’s services, for local authorities and national charities. He is also a board member for the Association of Directors of Children’s Services, currently holding the post of honorary treasurer.

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Karl Battersby – Corporate Director of Environment – Karl has worked in eight local authorities across his 28-year career in the public sector. With a background in planning and a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, he joined the county council in November 2020 and is currently the corporate director for business and environmental services. Prior to North Yorkshire, he held corporate director roles in three large unitary councils; Kirklees, Wigan and Rotherham. Karl chairs the Yorkshire and Humber ADEPT Board (Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport) and the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding and Hull Directors of Development.

An external recruitment process is currently under way to appoint a corporate director of community development. This role includes overseeing the planning, economic development, tourism, skills, arts and culture, leisure and housing functions.

Good progress is also being made on the appointment to the roles at assistant director level and we will be announcing who will take on these roles in the next week or so.

Listening to the communities we serve



While it will be the largest council geographically in England, North Yorkshire Council aims to be the most local. There is a clear commitment to work with town and parish councils, the community and voluntary sector, health and emergency services and other partners to maximise the value of every North Yorkshire pound and to support and empower communities to drive local action and local priorities.

The start of the conversation with communities about how they would like to work with the new council is also well under way. The Let's Talk exercise is a clear statement of intent that the new council is keen to listen to, and work with, the people and communities it serves at a very local level. The valuable feedback we take from Let's Talk will underpin a number of key policies and strategies and inform the development of our local approach. Some highlights from the activity to date are below.

Results as of 12 December –

- Over 7,500 people have completed the Let's Talk surveys
 - Let's Talk Local: 3,779 responses
 - Let's Talk Money: 2,381 responses
 - Let's Talk Devolution (North Yorkshire data only): 1,358 responses
- Over 2,500 new subscribers to the platform
- Achieved 143% of the target of 5,000 responses
- Over 200 face-to-face events held across North Yorkshire
- The Let's Talk engagement programme has been supported by staff from all eight councils.

Being inclusive This engagement campaign is far reaching and inclusive. Among the many settings we have taken the conversation are the Supermobile Library to access some the most rural areas, 'Learn to Swim' sessions and play and stay sessions to speak with parents, slipper socials, W.I. meetings, Park Runs, Veterans' Breakfasts; Dementia Friendly Meetings, Keyring Self

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Advocacy Meetings, Tadcrafters, foodbanks, Tara Park Traveller sites, Coventry University Scarborough Campus and a Fijian and Nepalese community event. We have also had the survey translated into Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, Thai, Urdu, Arabic and Fijian.

What happens next? The **Devolution consultation closes today (16 December)**, followed by **Local and Money, which both close on 23 December**. All data will be analysed by experienced consultation and data officers and a full technical report will be compiled.

The results will be available in early 2023. Thank you to everyone who has supported this engagement programme.

Cost of living support – We're delivering a cost of living campaign together with borough and district councils, community groups and other partners to help those in need with the cost of living crisis this winter. The aim is to raise awareness of all the support for residents during this period of heightened costs. We will be doing this by driving residents online to our [cost of living support page](#) on the county council website, and in person to community hubs and libraries. We will be using our social media channels and have information available at libraries, Citizens Advice North Yorkshire and a variety of community groups.

This includes advice on money, debt, benefit entitlement, free school meals and childcare costs as well as information about free wi-fi, digital support, travel and transport. The [cost of living page](#) also has information about energy saving, foodbanks and community-based support, including Warm Welcome Spaces and local schemes. If you would like to support the campaign you can do so by sharing our social media posts on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #costoflivingsupport. We also have printed leaflets available at County Hall for distribution, which you could take to share with residents in your local area. These are available from the communications team office. You can also request leaflets or social media content and assets by contacting media@northyorks.gov.uk

Household Support Fund – As well as the cost of living campaign we're also delivering a third phase of the Household Support Fund in partnership with borough and district councils, working together to help people across the county with essential living costs. For this third phase, the eligibility criteria has been updated based on guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions so that we can help people who missed out on other government support. Everyone who is eligible will get a single Household Support Fund e-voucher to pay for food and other essentials over the coming months.

People who were getting housing benefit on or between 26 August and 25 September 2022, but did not qualify for the second cost of living payment for people on low income benefits or tax credits, will receive a single e-voucher for £325. The second cost of living payment was paid in November to people getting Universal Credit, Income Support, Pension Credit, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit. Secondly, anyone getting the maximum discount to pay their council tax bill through the means-tested Council Tax Reduction Scheme as of 30 November 2022 will receive a single e-voucher for £85. We're working closely with borough and district councils to get e-voucher payments to people as quickly as possible and everyone who is eligible will receive a letter by 16 January 2023 letting them know how to claim.

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As well as the direct award set out above, £625,000 has been awarded to three key areas. The North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF), Warm and Well in North Yorkshire and 16 foodbanks or food projects. These can be accessed now by residents who may struggle to afford basic necessities. Find more information, including the updated eligibility criteria and the amounts people will receive, at <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/household-support-fund>. The web page will be updated in early January to include FAQs, a link to claim the e-voucher and our online eligibility checker. People who are less confident with technology will be able to talk to a member of the customer service centre team at the county council and all North Yorkshire libraries.

In the meantime, anyone who is struggling to pay for food, energy and other essentials will find information about support schemes and organisations which may be able to help on our cost of living support page mentioned above.

All partner webinar – More than 200 of you took the time to attend our all partner webinar in October and we are very grateful for your time. The questions raised and answers are published, along with a recording of the presentations here <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/all-partner-webinar>

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the support and strong partnership working you have afforded the county, district and borough councils over the years. We have very solid foundations to build on.

Looking ahead – This is an exciting and challenging time for North Yorkshire, with a potential devolution deal and a new single council. In making this big change to local government here and pursuing the benefits of Devolution alongside it, we will be better placed to tackle the big financial pressures we are facing. There will remain many challenges and tough decisions, but I very much hope we will continue to face these together.

Wishing you a happy festive period and peaceful New Year. I look forward to working with you and reporting further progress in 2023.

Best wishes,



Richard Flinton

Chief Executive, North Yorkshire County Council and

Chief Executive North Yorkshire Council (from 1 April 2023)