



Our Ref: CL/EW

Your Ref:

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By email to all Parish Clerks – please forward to all Parish and Town Councillors

Dear Colleagues

Following the recent invitation from the Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to local authorities in North Yorkshire to submit proposals for local government reform, the County Council has published its proposal for a single unitary council to replace the County Council and the seven district councils.

We want to secure the strongest possible devolution deal for North Yorkshire and get rid of unnecessary waste in the existing two-tier system of local government. Our case for change has been developed in collaboration with the public, our partner agencies including town and parish councils and parish meetings, the county's businesses and the community and voluntary sector.

I am grateful for the constructive feedback during and following our webinar for parish and town councils and parish meetings on 19 August, and for over 20 representatives of councils and meetings who have participated in our working group. All of your contributions have helped us to develop our proposal.

Our proposal promises to deliver high-quality local services to every single person and business in North Yorkshire and to drive a revolution in empowering local communities. It would save at least £30m a year through cutting red tape and reducing unnecessary senior manager and elected member costs. Over five years it has the potential to transform public services and save £252m to plough back into local services.

This proposal provides a once in a generation opportunity to create a local government system that is stronger and simpler, local and effective, and efficient and sustainable, with:

- Local services and access – locally based staff and managers, main offices in every district area supported by over 30 local access points.

- Local accountability - 6 Area Committees, political accountability for the discharge of statutory functions and services at local level, including planning.
- Local action – local parish and town councils and parish meetings, partners and communities coming together in 25 new Community Networks to identify and deliver against locally priorities.
- Local empowerment – devolution of powers to town and parish councils to run assets and services where they want to do so and it offers value for money.

The new council for North Yorkshire would work with all parish and town councils and parish meetings, recognise their value, help with development when needed, and empower them to do more if they want to do so.

The new council would build a relationship based on respect. All town and parish councils and parish meetings have a right to be heard and their issues responded to. Technology can play a part in helping with this such as our parish portal, but personal relationships with nominated officers and clear lines of communications to key services would be a key feature for the new council.

Many town and parish councils see providing views, raising issues and getting things sorted as their main role, but others will want to do more. The new council would progress discussions with any town and parish council that wants to do more, for example, to deliver services or manage local assets, where this will offer value for money. The new council would initially work with a group of forerunner town and parish councils to develop the concept. Others would follow on as the approach developed. Frameworks to facilitate this approach and provide ongoing advice and support will be developed.

I enclose a summary of our proposal. The full proposal can read at <https://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=18&meetid=4459> and will be considered by the County Council's Executive on 3 November and full County Council on 4 November. The Government will assess the proposals it receives and consult the public on those that meet its criteria.

I believe this proposal represents a significant opportunity to sustain and improve local government. I look forward to continuing to work with town and parish councils to develop our proposals in the coming months.

Yours sincerely



Carl Les  
Leader of the Council