

A unitary council for North Yorkshire

The case for change



Stronger
together

North Yorkshire is Stronger Together

Understanding our plans to improve your services, make savings and support an economic recovery in North Yorkshire.

Introduction

We think a single council in North Yorkshire – delivering all your local services – will make things easier for you, strengthen the services we know matter most to you and ensure we get the best value from every pound we spend.

We want a single, strong and sustainable council for you, your family, the businesses in your area and the place where you live.

At the moment, your local council services are delivered by different organisations. There are eight councils in North Yorkshire – seven district or borough councils and one county council. Here's how some services are split between these different councils.

- Where you live, your household waste will be collected by your district or borough council – but North Yorkshire County Council is in charge of disposing of this waste.
- The streets in your community are cleaned by your district or borough council – but North Yorkshire County Council is in charge of looking after them.
- Some of your family or friends may benefit from home adaptations made by your district or borough council – but North Yorkshire County Council delivers personal care services to help people live independently for longer in their communities.

By joining together, we think we can deliver even better services to you and the place where you live, for less money. These savings can be used to protect your services and ensure they are fit for the future for everyone in North Yorkshire.

We think we would be Stronger Together. This document gives you more information about our proposal.

Our vision for the future

The world looks very different now compared to twelve months ago. The Covid pandemic has been a real shock. We need to think differently about how we recover from this.

Working as one single council in North Yorkshire will put us in a better position to help our local economy, to support our businesses to create more jobs. It will also get rid of duplication and confusion.

North Yorkshire County Council already delivers really good services across the whole of North Yorkshire. But don't just take our word for it. Our children's services have been rated as 'outstanding' by the government. Other councils look at our adult support services because we have a strong reputation. We're seen as one of the best-performing councils in the country for important services like gritting in winter and highway repairs.

That's a pretty good starting point, and we think we could deliver all your services to the same high standard.

By joining together, we can take the best of how all council services are delivered and improve things for everyone living or working here in North Yorkshire.

We've got ambitious plans to make sure we remain local to you and the place where you live. Our market towns are the real heart of our communities. We want to set up 25 local community networks based on market town areas. Working in this way will give you a much bigger say about your local priorities.

These changes will also save us all money. This is money that can be re-invested in making your services even stronger and fit for purpose for the future.

That's why we think we're Stronger Together.

Our proposal isn't the only one on the table. Some of the other councils would prefer to split North Yorkshire in half and create two brand new authorities. We don't think that's best for you, for our businesses or for our future. People across the UK know about North Yorkshire and about the people who live here. We're famous for being who we are, what we do and where we live. Let's build on this for the future to help our economy bounce back from Covid. And let's do it together.

"You need a council which has the capacity to operate at scale and make powerful strategic decisions and which will have a national voice and standing. But alongside that you need focused and effective services which are very close to the community.

This is what we have been developing in Nidderdale with the county council's Stronger Communities services, and it is what could be developed still further if a case - such as the proposed new North Yorkshire Council with its strong localism agenda - goes ahead."

Helen Flynn, executive director of Nidderdale Plus

What Stronger Together looks like

North Yorkshire's existing two-tier system showing the different areas covered by the seven district councils. The same area is also covered by one county council.



Proposed single council for North Yorkshire.



“As a long-term investor in North Yorkshire and one of the biggest investors in the UK tourism industry, a single unitary council for North Yorkshire could be helpful because it will assist in unlocking new investment in jobs and infrastructure vital to the recovery and renewal of the county’s tourism industry.”

Barrie Robinson, Operations Director at Parkdean Resorts

Stronger Together for you

We want to keep things simple for you and the businesses in your area. We want to have better services. We want to save money. We'll deliver on these by being Stronger Together.

North Yorkshire is a big place, but that doesn't mean your services would be remote. We already deliver lots of services right across the county, like education, safeguarding, looking after older people and locally delivered highway services.

We would strengthen your voice and your say too. We would set up 25 local community networks based on your local market town and surrounding areas. In addition, to ensure you can access local advice and services in person and online, our proposal includes providing offices in every district alongside more than 30 'access points'. It also means we'll keep the local service hubs that are already in place across the county. Working in this way will mean that what matters most to you is the priority.

North Yorkshire folk are renowned for wanting a good deal. We think our proposal offers exactly that. One council will make things more efficient and better value for money. We estimate that this change could save £30m a year just by bringing together all eight councils. That money would start to be saved within just a few months. That rises to £252m after five years, if we're able to use the new council as a springboard for transforming services. That's money we can re-invest in making your services even better and keeping down costs. It's equal to £185 a year for every household in North Yorkshire.

No other bid can deliver the scale of savings in such a timeframe, while protecting nationally recognised services for North Yorkshire's most frail and vulnerable residents.

"I think for the delivery of most services – and crucially in getting devolution to North Yorkshire – a unitary authority would be better for all the services."

Sir Martin Narey, chair of the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area and former chief executive of charity Barnardos

Stronger Together for partners

We're not the only ones delivering services to you and the place where you live. For example, we need to deliver some social care support in partnership with the NHS, and we work with the police to support 'at risk' children and help them stay out of trouble. We think our proposal is best for the other organisations we work alongside.

Firstly, North Yorkshire County Council already delivers some of the best services in the country. We're involved in projects with others that are recognised nationally. Splitting up North Yorkshire – as some councils want to do – would mean un-picking the working arrangements that enable us to deliver to these high standards.

Secondly, it will be much easier for other organisations to build great working relationships with us. At the moment voluntary and community groups and other partners have to deal with two different councils. Our proposal means they would deal with one – and that will be easier to get results.

Our proposal also sets out how we'd work in partnership with your town or parish council. This will involve giving them more power to do some things, to be more responsive to the place where you live.

"We must look at ways to build upon the existing partnerships to prepare the county for the future. It's a future which will feature a rapidly-ageing population, which will have an increasing demand for ever-more complex care. This will require a strong, coherent authority to manage in partnership with care providers."

Chair of the Independent Chair Group – the industry body for the care sector - Mike Padgham



Stronger Together for businesses

It's tough for businesses. The Covid pandemic has had implications across the economy. We need to work with businesses to protect jobs and support new investment. Our proposal makes it much easier for businesses to get what they need to help North Yorkshire thrive.

At the moment businesses have to deal with different councils about different issues. Planning applications are decided by district or borough councils. Investment in skills and training, roads and infrastructure are dealt with by the county council. Wouldn't it be easier to have a single organisation dealing with all the things businesses need to thrive? We want to be able to link together all this to make sure schools and other community services, broadband and transport infrastructure are put in the right places.

We also want to keep North Yorkshire together and protect its worldwide reputation. Other options for changing local government here would break North Yorkshire in half.

A successful economy has benefits for everyone. Access to good training and jobs gives lots of opportunities for you and your family. Successful businesses help to drive new investment in the place where you live. Having good jobs helps support all our businesses, with more people spending money in our local area. That's why we want to make it as easy as possible to support the businesses who'll drive future investment and success for North Yorkshire.

"A single unitary authority for North Yorkshire will give the county the strongest possible voice and help create the conditions for economic growth."

Stuart Paver, co-owner of Yorkshire-based Pavers Shoes, a global footwear business with more than 235 stores across the world

Stronger Together for value

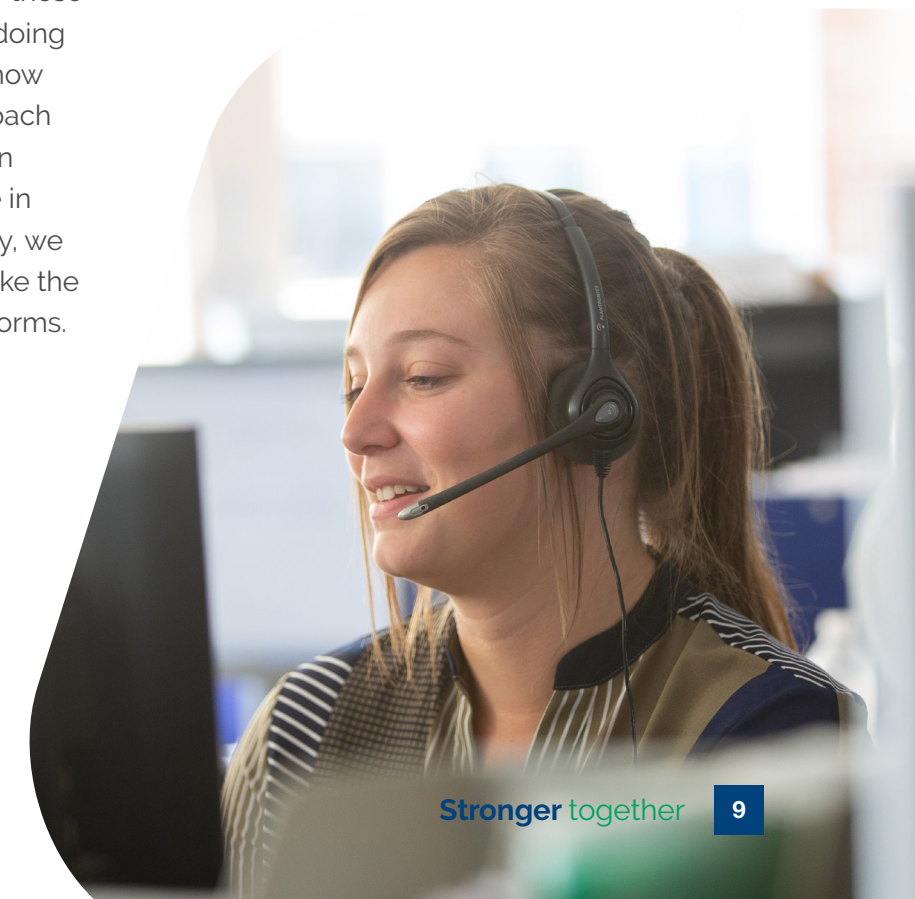
By joining together the existing councils and their services we believe we can save as much as £252m over five years. We've worked that out based on what's happened in other areas who've been through a similar change. Other people will have other figures for what they think they can save, but we believe that no other bid can deliver this scale of savings within this timeframe.

We've had many years of delivering savings and doing things more efficiently while also improving them. But the financial pressures remain. In particular, there is pressure to deliver social care services as more and more people need support. This will only get harder as our population continues to grow older. We want to carry on helping everyone to live healthier and more independent lives in their community – we know how important that is.

By making this change we can deliver another big chunk of savings that can be put back into better and stronger services and a bigger local say for you. It means we can invest in the things that matter most to you and the place where you live and work. We want to use these savings to deliver the balance between doing more for less and investing in what and how we're doing things. This is the right approach for our future. It means council services in North Yorkshire can be more sustainable in the long-term. If we're stronger financially, we can better support you in emergencies like the current pandemic and major floods or storms.

"I know from experience that when you merge similar organisations together, you share the best ideas, use the best people, deliver more innovation in your products and services and at the same time, buy your inputs at the lowest costs. You also remove duplication, making life easier for the consumer."

James Lambert OBE leads North Yorkshire's most valuable company, with more than 10,000 employees across the world. He's chairman of Inspired Pet Nutrition, the Thirsk-based manufacturer of the Waggy and Harringtons pet foods, and chairman of Burton's Biscuits, owner of some of Britain's best-loved biscuit brands.



Stronger Together for North Yorkshire

Lots of councils mean lots of councillors. Did you know there are currently more than 300 councillors in the county across our eight councils? Giving everyone a chance to be involved in decisions about what happens in their area is vital – whether that's through deciding on local councillors at elections or through direct involvement in decisions about the way priorities are delivered in local areas.

Our proposal changes the structure for local democracy. With one council we'll have one set of councillors who will be more accountable to you. We believe the number of representatives in our proposal is the right number for the area we cover.

But we want to go further and give you more opportunities to get involved. Our local community networks will be based around North Yorkshire's market towns. They'll bring together a range of organisations delivering services, alongside people and businesses in each area, to make sure the way services are delivered is right for each place.

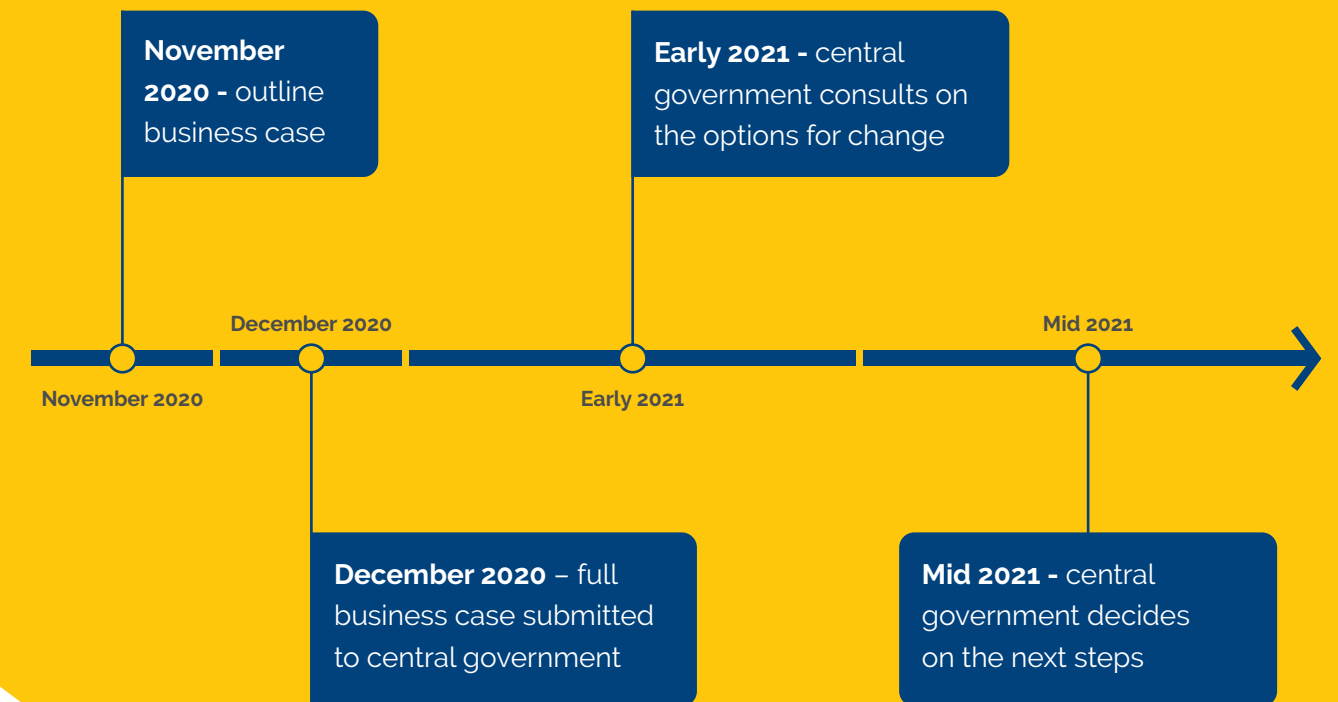
"I can see no sense [in splitting up existing arrangements], not least about expense in this situation, but very importantly in terms of the ongoing quality of service, particularly for vulnerable children and to vulnerable families."

Professor Maggie Atkinson, chair of the North Yorkshire Children's Safeguarding Board



Stronger Together timeline

Here's what we expect to happen next and when.



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