

Consultation Methodology

The Stage 1 consultation commenced on 22 August 2022, initially it was programmed to run for a period of 6 weeks to 30 September. The decision was taken to extend the consultation period by 2 weeks to 14 October as a result of Royal mail strikes and the death of the Monarch during the period of consultation.

A page was set up on the Consultation area of the NYCC website where detailed information was provided on the reasons and scope for the CGR. More information was also given on parish councils and charter trustee areas. The webpage contained a link to an online survey.

An 8 page information pack was also prepared containing the same information as was on the webpage, as well as a copy of the survey in paper format.

A letter informing residents that a CGR was taking place and enclosing the information pack was posted to each of the 35,431 households on the electoral register in the unparished area of Harrogate. The letter explained the reasons for the review, and invited residents to have their say via the survey. The letter signposted residents to the consultation area of the NYCC website. A QR code was included on the letter to enable residents to access the survey directly from their mobile phones.

An option was provided to request hard copies via telephone or email for those residents who preferred to complete a paper copy of the survey or who did not have access to the internet.

Copies of the leaflet, paper survey and pre-paid return envelopes were made available at Harrogate Library, Bilton and Woodfield Library and the Civic Centre.

In addition to the letter to every household, key stakeholders were also emailed a link to the consultation webpage and invited to give their views. This included the following stakeholders:

- local MPs, the PFCC and councillors for the relevant area
- Parish councils adjoining the unparished area
- Harrogate Borough Council's consultation stakeholder list which included disability groups, business, charities, voluntary groups, local associations, business groups and local public services

The survey which was used for the Harrogate unparished area can be found in Appendix B. The survey invited residents to select a preferred option between retaining charter trustees or establishing a town council for the unparished area.

In addition to the 'all households' letter, NYCC and HBC social media feeds were used to raise awareness of the review prior to, and at commencement. This was supplemented by reminder posts during, and close to the end of the review. All social media posts were done with consistent messaging, signposting and branding to ensure a consistent approach throughout and avoid confusion.

A press release entitled "Residents set to be asked for views on creating town councils" was issued on 11 July 2022 leading to the review gaining coverage in the local press. A further press release entitled "Give your views on option to create new local voice for towns" was issued on 15 August 2022 to coincide with the start of the consultation.

Information was also included in the Harrogate Borough Council 'Residents' newsletter' circulated via email. Council staff were informed of the review during LGR webinars and invited to take part.

An 'easy read' version of the information leaflet was also produced and was available on request for residents with learning difficulties and the survey could also be made available in other formats on request.