



Briefings to Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings December 2021 Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
What happens to my local councillor?	The county and district councils continue as sovereign bodies until 31 March 2023. The 90 councillors elected on 5 May 2022 will serve for five years and be the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• county council to 31 March 2023, and• shadow unitary council to 31 March 2023, and• unitary council from 1 April 2023 to May 2027 After that, the next elections will be May 2027, and then every four years.
Will this mean less representation for my local area?	While there will be fewer councillors overall, all councillors will be responsible for all council services rather than the current split arrangements. This will make representation simpler and more joined-up.

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Is there any way that elections to the new council could involve proportional representation?	No, that is not the way local government elections operate in England.
How can area committees be democratic?	Each area committee will be made up of the democratically elected councillors for the area (around 15 for each area) and are clearly accountable to the public. Town and parish councils, members of the public and others will be able to attend the meetings, ask questions and present petitions.
Isn't area committees just a new name for the district and borough councils?	The geography is different as are the functions. Area committees will not deliver services. They will be in place to support appropriate local level decision making.
How do you envisage the community networks working with the area committees?	Area committees will have statutory decision-making powers. Community networks will support local social action. Local priorities and views will be supported via local community networks and area committees. Local priorities will be understood and acted upon wherever possible. The area committees will support the delivery of community network action plans and holding the council and its partners to account for the delivery of local priorities.
What will the new name be of the North Yorkshire Council?	The draft structural changes order from the government suggested the new council will be called North Yorkshire Council. We do not anticipate significant changes to the draft order, when the final order is put before parliament in the New Year.
How will the shadow authority demonstrate its independence from the existing county in decisions made between May 2022 and April 2023?	The members elected in May 2022 will serve for five years so that they can support the final 11 months of the current county council whilst looking ahead to ensure the new council is safe and legal from day 1. This will involve taking a variety of decisions on policy, process and appointments. The five year term is integral to ensuring a strong and effective transition.

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How will mineral and waste application decisions be made by the new authority?	While the detail of the decision making model will be for the new councillors to agree it is likely that the local area committees will work alongside a countywide committee to ensure that the local and wider position is fully understood. It could be that minerals and waste applications are considered by a countywide committee.
Can new Local Plans be adopted by existing district and borough councils between now and 1 April 2023, or do these decisions have to be deferred for the new authority?	All councils have the power to make their own decisions on these matters until 31 March 2023. All Local Plans, wider matters of economic development and community facilities are being considered via a joint working group involving all eight councils.
Will the new council require highways officers to engage more constructively with parish councils?	<p>Local priorities and views will be supported via local community networks and area committees, alongside the local service delivery model which will see staff and services remain in communities right across the county. This approach should build on relationships between communities and services and make sure that local priorities are understood and acted on wherever possible.</p> <p>The new council will have a clear focus on being countywide but local. We will ensure that there are clear routes for town and parish councils to communicate with the new council, including services such as highways.</p>
Will there be a newly formed more streamlined and proactive highways service?	The creation of the new council is a significant task. The focus for 1 April 2023 is ensuring service continuity and 'safe and legal' operations for vesting day. After that time services may be reviewed as part of the transformation programme in line with the priorities of the new council.
Will any property, assets or contracts be transferred to town	On 1 April 2023 the assets and liabilities of all eight councils transfer into the new single council. Any decisions regarding transfer of assets, property or contracts will be taken after this point.

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<p>and parish councils and how would this be funded?</p>	<p>Up until 1 April 2023, each of the eight councils is responsible for its own assets and can make decisions regarding transfer in line with the Local Government Reorganisation Finance Protocol.</p> <p>Where a business case to take on an additional service or asset is agreed and a decision to transfer follows, the budget and liability would also transfer with that service or asset from the new council to the relevant new organisation.</p> <p>It is highly unlikely that there will be any significant delivery of services by town and parish councils before 2024.</p>
<p>How do we register an interest in transfer of assets?</p>	<p>Wider conversations will follow the launch of the new council after 1 April 2023. Any town or parish council interested in opening informal conversations at an early stage can contact Neil Irving or Paul Shevlin to participate in the small pilot group referenced at the briefing events.</p>
<p>What happens to town and parish councils who are already delivering services? Will this continue and how will it be funded?</p>	<p>Where local arrangements are in place these will continue under the new council. At some point the new council will review arrangements but local priorities and local services will remain a priority.</p>
<p>If you don't envisage transfers before 2024, what about ultra-local and quirky services (e.g. deckchair hire)?</p>	<p>Wider conversations will follow the launch of the new council after 1 April 2023. Any town or parish council interested in opening informal conversations at an early stage in relation to ultra-local and/or quirky services can contact Neil Irving or Paul Shevlin.</p>
<p>Are you seeking sector support YLCA or NALC or SLCC in setting up parish councils for</p>	<p>We have had an initial discussion with YLCA (Yorkshire Local Councils Associations) about this and hope that they would link in NALC (National Association of Local Councils) or SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) at the appropriate points. No decision has been taken yet on</p>

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<p>Scarborough and Harrogate (both of which may choose whether to describe themselves as town councils in due course)?</p>	<p>starting the required community governance reviews. Currently these can only be undertaken by the respective borough councils, although it is anticipated that the shadow council will be able to undertake these from May 2022.</p>
<p>Will it be a level playing field when Scarborough and Harrogate form town councils. Are they in a position now to identify the services they are interesting in taking when they become parish councils?</p>	<p>There will be no advantage or disadvantage for Scarborough and Harrogate. There is a complex process to take place ahead of detailed decisions and discussions on asset and service transfer to any town and parish council.</p>
<p>Will there be a substantial increase in government funding and how will this be distributed?</p>	<p>The new council will have a key local role to play in addressing the national and regional challenges we face. It will need to drive economic recovery and growth, address inequality and the ‘levelling up’ agenda and use innovations and interventions to support the transformation on public services so they are fit for the future. It will need to do all of this within tight financial constraints; however, it will be better placed to manage these demands.</p> <p>However, a single unitary authority will be forecast to save a minimum of £31.9m a year as a result of the reorganisation of local government. This could rise to £51.1m - £68.5m each year depending on the approach to transforming local services.</p> <p>By ending the two-tier system of local government here in North Yorkshire the new council will also be able to drive forward the devolution of powers and money from Whitehall and pursue the benefits of a mayoral led combined authority with York.</p>

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Are staff being transferred across to unitary authority automatically or having to re-apply on merit?	All staff across all teams (with the exception of a very small number of the most senior managers) will be transferred and will not have to apply for their own roles. In the future some service areas may undergo transformation and review but this will not be before the new council launches.
What are the criteria for having customer access point?	The detail will be for the new council to decide after it is elected in May 2022, however it is likely that customer access points would be in the places where we know people go, to maximise their impact and effectiveness. Therefore market towns and other larger communities may well see customer access points in shared buildings like health, community or libraries, for example, to join up these public services so that they make sense to people and are easy to access.
If a physical presence is maintained in each area, won't this limit the cost savings?	<p>Independent expert financial analysis of the proposal has shown that a single unitary authority will save a minimum of £31.9m per annum as a result of reorganisation, rising to £51.1m - £68.5m each year when considering the opportunities it would also create for transforming local services. This will be vital to support frontline services.</p> <p>Also, by joining up face to face customer access points with other services, partner agencies and the voluntary sector we will be able to broaden access and improve the customer's experience without wasting money.</p>
How will you ensure that communities at the edge of the authority's geographical boundaries are not forgotten?	All communities will be covered by a community network and supported by an area committee. No community will be left out of these arrangements. Keeping services local is at the heart of the business case for local government reorganisation.
How is climate change being considered within the local government reorganisation programme?	An assessment on environmental impact is being designed into all 15 core work stream areas as part of the huge change programme we are all working on together. We are also bringing together the lead officers for climate change across the eight councils to look at the opportunities the new unitary council provides.

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<p>How can town and parish councils support economic development?</p> <p>How can local councils and the new unitary council go well beyond these traditional roles? For example, is it the role of local councils and the new unitary council to help existing local enterprises survive, foster new enterprises, arrange workforce development programs, promote research and development, and ensure that marginalized local communities have access to improved livelihoods?</p>	<p>A huge amount of work is ongoing ensuring that the new single council will deliver the very best for the people, businesses and communities across North Yorkshire. Supporting businesses to thrive, encouraging new investment and investing in skills has long been a priority for all areas and will continue to be so in the future. Exactly how that will be delivered is currently under consideration, a priority being to ensure joined up local access to help, advice and support.</p> <p>Currently business support to small and medium sized enterprises is primarily facilitated through the York and North Yorkshire Growth Hub www.ynygrowthhub.com and provides access to national, regional and local resources. The Growth Hub is delivered by the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership www.ynylep.com, a partnership between business and all the local authorities across York and North Yorkshire.</p> <p>As the proposals develop for the operating model of the new North Yorkshire Council we will ensure that local areas are actively engaged so that we are in the strongest possible position to drive post pandemic economic recovery.</p>
<p>What's happening about devolution?</p>	<p>The 'asks' for York and North Yorkshire submitted a year ago remain our 'asks' and we are currently awaiting the opportunity to discuss them in more detail with government. They are outlined at https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/devolution</p> <p>In support of progressing the strongest possible devolution deal, we have also responded to government's invite to prepare, by streamlining local government here. As a result, all eight councils are currently working collaboratively to build a single new council for North Yorkshire. Following the government's decision on local government reorganisation in July 2021, all eight local authorities wrote to the government reaffirming their joint commitment to devolution and with a request to progress negotiations.</p>

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How does this affect parish councils' relationship with national park authorities?	Local government reorganisation will not change the establishment, role or responsibilities of the national parks in the county; so there should be no change in parish councils' relationship with national park authorities.