

North Yorkshire Council launch campaign: Parish and Town Councils Communications Pack March 2023

Thank you for helping us to create awareness of the new North Yorkshire Council. We're grateful for your support in maximising the reach of these messages through your own channels and platforms.

Overview of campaign

This communications pack provides you with a background to the launch of the new council – North Yorkshire Council. Within this pack you will find:

- Background
- Communications toolkit including:
 - External communications for newsletters, websites etc
 - WhatsApp messages
 - Appendix – Social media assets
 - Appendix – FAQs

We would appreciate your support in reaching your communities to ensure all residents understand the benefits of a unitary council and are reassured there will be business continuity.

If you need any further information or have a question, please contact Rebecca Proctor E: Rebecca.proctor@northyorks.gov.uk or Caroline Harrison-Jones, E: caroline.harrison-jones@northyorks.gov.uk .

Background

On 1 April, the county council and seven district and borough councils in North Yorkshire will become one – North Yorkshire Council.

North Yorkshire Council will be the geographically largest council in England. It is being built with local at its heart and aims to be the most local, large council in the country. Our staff who currently serve residents will continue to provide the services that they deliver now. A main office will be retained in each former district area and will be supported by a further 30 local customer access points in places people go, in the future. There will be one phone number and one website, making sure access to support and services will be easier whilst ending the current confusion that exists over which council does what.

By replacing eight councils with one, it gives North Yorkshire Council the best possible chance of protecting our valued services at a time of exceptional financial pressures and high demand. By joining up services and maximising our spending power, we will save between £30 million and £70

million which will then become annual savings. This money can be used to protect some of our most important local services at a critical time when everyone and every organisation is feeling the pressure.

North Yorkshire Council will drive for the best possible opportunities for residents and businesses, while protecting and enhancing our landscapes and heritage. Working with our six MPs, the Council will have a strong voice to ensure that national Government understands and acts on the issues that affect residents and businesses here.

By having one council we can join up and strengthen our county's cultural offer, lobby for a greater share of funding for arts and culture, and support a year-round visitor economy. It will have a clear economic strategy that plays to our strengths and supports environmentally friendly business growth.

Contacting North Yorkshire Council

How will we contact officers of the new council?

You should continue to contact council officers through their current email address e.g., firstname.surname@harrogate.gov.uk. From 1 April, any emails sent to these addresses will be automatically forwarded to a new @northyorks.gov.uk email address.

How will we contact Customer Services?

From 1 April 2023, the main customer phone number is 0300 131 2 131 and the web address is www.northyorks.gov.uk.

How will we contact Planning?

You should continue to use the contact details you have currently. There will be one website for the North Yorkshire Council which will contain information from the current county and district/borough councils on the services they manage, including Planning.

Parish Charter consultation

The development of a Parish Charter, defining the relationship between the new North Yorkshire Council and the parish sector as well as setting out how North Yorkshire Council and parishes will work together, is a priority for the new authority. A 12-week consultation launched on 18 January, and all parish clerks have been contacted to coordinate a single response from each parish council by 12 April 2023.

Visit <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/parish-charter-consultation> for more information on the consultation.

The Campaign – North Yorkshire Council

The communications plan launched on 23rd January, in line with the new council plan being considered at the Council Executive, and will run until June 2023. The campaign aims to:

- **Create awareness** of the new council and benefits of a unitary authority
- **Reassure residents** about business continuity for day one, to support trust and confidence
- **Inform audiences** about how to contact the new council
- Ensure residents and businesses have information they need relating to any **service change** linked to Easter weekend and beyond

Copy for websites/newsletters

- For use from 3 April
- Content links to www.northyorks.gov.uk
- QR codes can be supplied for printed material – please email Rebecca.proctor@northyorks.gov.uk

North Yorkshire Council launched on 1 April replacing the eight councils currently providing district and county level services.

You will be able to contact the new council by phone on **0300 131 2 131** or apply, book and pay for services online and report problems 24/7 by visiting www.northyorks.gov.uk.

The council is the geographically largest council in England. It has been built with local at its heart and aims to be the most local, large council in the country. The same staff will provide the services that they deliver now, and you can still access support and services via your local council building. This includes a main office in each former district area which will continue to give advice and face-to-face expertise. In addition to this, many areas also have a local office – often a library – where you can obtain advice and assistance to access council services, and this will not change.

By making this change now, it gives North Yorkshire Council the best possible chance of protecting valued services at a time of exceptional financial pressures and high demand. Joining up services will allow the council to maximise spending power, meaning there is potential savings of between £30 million and £70 million which will then become annual savings. This money can be used to protect important local services at a critical time when everyone and every organisation is feeling the pressure.

The council will have a clear economic growth strategy that plays to the county's strengths, such as green technologies and established industries like tourism, high-quality food and drink production, and agriculture. The new council will work at the heart of a mayoral-led combined authority, with the City of York, to promote the area as an outstanding location for inward investment and develop a seamless offer of business support. North Yorkshire Council will also work with the county's six MPs to ensure we have a strong and consistent voice so that the Government understands the issues that affect our businesses and economy, and helps us to act on them. To find out more, visit www.northyorks.gov.uk

WhatsApp messages

You may be a member of a local neighbourhood WhatsApp group, or perhaps just want to inform family and friends. Please see below suggested copy:

1. North Yorkshire Council launched on 1st April, replacing the 8 previous councils in the county. To find out more visit www.northyorks.gov.uk

Hard copy marketing material

We would appreciate your help in publicising the new customer phone number and website from day one (1 April). If you would like to display the below poster in your area, please contact Rebecca.proctor@northyorks.gov.uk or caroline.harrison-jones@northyorks.gov.uk with the amount you require and address to send them to.



One council for North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire Council has replaced the eight authorities that provided district and county level services to you.

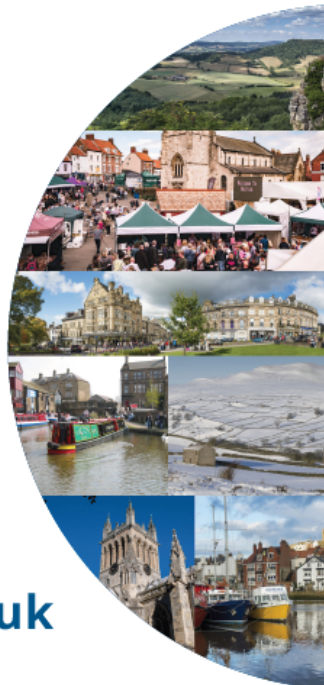
You will still be able to access support and services via a main office in each former district area.

Visit northyorks.gov.uk for our latest opening times.

T: **0300 131 2 131**

W: northyorks.gov.uk

Follow us [@northyorksc](https://www.instagram.com/northyorksc)



Appendix

Social media assets

If you have social media accounts for your parish council, below you will find a series of messages you may wish to post to inform residents about North Yorkshire Council.

- For use from 3 April
- We want to create awareness of the new council and the benefits this will bring



Key points throughout this phase:

- One council for North Yorkshire delivering all current district and county services
- Minimal change to support and services
- Inform residents of the council phone number and website
- #NorthYorkshireCouncil

You can download the social assets detailed via the following link:

<https://we.tl/t-WeClqYqMNY>

Please contact caroline.harrison-jones@northyorks.gov.uk if you have any issues accessing this.

Topic & image	Copy
<p>Contact details</p> 	<p>Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn: North Yorkshire Council has replaced the eight authorities which previously provided district and county level services. Follow @northyorksc for the latest news and updates from the new council.</p> <p>Visit www.northyorks.gov.uk to apply and pay for services, report issues and find information on a variety of topics, or call 0300 131 2 131.</p> <p>Twitter: @NorthYorksC has replaced the eight authorities which previously provided district and county level services. Visit www.northyorks.gov.uk to apply and pay for services, report issues and find information on a variety of topics, or call 0300 131 2 131.</p>
<p>One council</p> 	<p>Facebook/Instagram: The new North Yorkshire Council launched on 1 April, joining together the existing eight local councils and providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help tackle some of the biggest challenges faced across the county.</p> <p>You will still be able to access the same support and advice from local staff who live and work in the area, with an office in each former district area.</p> <p>Visit www.northyorks.gov.uk</p> <p>Twitter: North Yorkshire Council launched on 1 April, joining together the</p>

eight former councils. You will still be able to access the same support and advice from local staff who live and work in the area, with an office in each former district area. Visit www.northyorks.gov.uk

Streamlined approach



Facebook/Instagram:
North Yorkshire Council launched on 1 April, combining the eight existing county, district and borough councils in North Yorkshire.

Having one council will end confusion over which authority is responsible for which service, plus with one set of councillors who will be accountable for the whole county it will be clear to see who represents your local community.

Find out more at www.northyorks.gov.uk

Twitter:
North Yorkshire Council launched on 1 April, joining together eight existing councils. One council will end confusion over which authority is responsible for your services, plus there will be one set of councillors for the whole county. Read more www.northyorks.gov.uk

Economic growth



Facebook/Instagram:
North Yorkshire Council will have a clear economic growth strategy that plays to the county's strengths, like tourism, high-quality food and drink production, and agriculture. Working alongside the county's six MPs will ensure we have a strong and consistent voice so that the Government understands the issues that affect our businesses and economy, and helps us to act on them.

As part of the mayoral-led combined authority with City of York, the council will promote our county as an outstanding location for investment, and develop seamless business support.

Find out more at www.northyorks.gov.uk

Twitter:
North Yorkshire Council will have a clear economic growth strategy that plays to the county's strengths like tourism and agriculture, and will work alongside the county's MPs to ensure Government understands issues that affect our businesses. Visit www.northyorks.gov.uk

Reassurance customer messaging



Facebook/Instagram:

With the launch of North Yorkshire Council on 1 April, staff have been working together to establish how best services can be provided, while ensuring business continues as usual. This means you will see minimal change as services and staff are brought together in the background.

You will still be able to access the same support and advice from local staff who live and work in the area, with an office in each former district area which will be supported by a further 30 access points in the future.

Find out more about the new council at www.northyorks.gov.uk

Twitter:

With the launch of North Yorkshire Council on 1 April, staff have been working together to establish how best services can be provided, while ensuring business continues as usual with minimal change to services. Visit www.northyorks.gov.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

The new council will cover the largest geographical area of any authority in the country. How can you make sure that you still serve local communities properly?

The new council will have local at its heart, with staff continuing to live and work in the communities they serve. Access to support and services will be easier, via one telephone number, one website, one customer service team and one set of face-to-face customer access points in the future that are spread across the whole county. There will be a main office in each former district area, and are committed to expanding this network so there will be around 30 additional customer access points where you can get advice and support, either in or close to the area you live or work.

What will happen to the services I use every week, such as bin collections, schools, leisure centres and libraries?

You will not notice minimal changes in the spring to the council services that are being provided at the moment. Whether that is having your bins collected, visiting your local library or how your child is taught at school, these services will not change. Colleagues across the county council and the seven district and borough councils are working very closely together to make sure that all services are unaffected and continue for the public.

What will happen to my local council building?

Your local council building will continue to deliver services. This includes a main office in each former district which will continue to give advice and face to face expertise. In addition to this, many areas also have a local office – often a library – where they can also obtain advice and assistance to access council services, and this will not change. We are also committed to expanding this network so there will be a network of around 30 customer access sites where you can get advice and support, either in or close to the area you live or work, in the future.

How will I contact the new council?

Your new customer contact number is 0300 131 2 131 or you can visit our main customer access points, of which there is one in each former district area where you can seek face-to-face guidance. The opening times are as follows:

Day	Telephone	Main customer access points
Monday	9am to 5pm	9am to 4.30pm
Tuesday	9am to 5pm	9am to 4.30pm
Wednesday	9.30am* to 5pm	9.30am to 4.30pm
Thursday	9am to 5pm	9am to 4.30pm
Friday	9am to 4.30pm	9am to 4.30pm

The website address is www.northyorks.gov.uk.

We are also committed to expanding our network of access points so there will be a network of around 30 sites where you can get advice and support, either in or close to the area you live or work, in the future.

What is a community network?

Community networks are likely to look different in different places but will share some common principles such as being based in market towns and their natural hinterlands. They will be subject to consultation with local communities and will build on existing assets. It is expected that the nature and make up will evolve and flex over time to meet local needs and priorities. They will bring together a range of stakeholders that reflect that place and operate independently, having autonomy to elect their own Chair and agree their own priorities and plans. They will be able to influence strategic decisions that affects their communities and be supported to explore funding opportunities from a range of sources and opportunities to align partner investment in their communities.

How will the new council work with partners and parish and town councils?

The new council will work closely with town and parish councils, wider partners and communities to ensure that local priorities drive locally led decision-making and local action via community networks.

How will North Yorkshire Council save between £30 million and £70 million per year?

By joining up services and maximising spending power. These will be annual savings which can be used to help protect some of the most important local services at a critical time when everyone and every organisation is feeling the pressure from increased costs.

Why is my council tax bill going up when we are supposed to be seeing savings of up to £70 million a year with the launch of the new council?

The new council will give us the opportunity to save millions of pounds by streamlining operations currently overseen by the eight local authorities in North Yorkshire. However, there are really tough financial decisions ahead as we are facing the highest rates of inflation for more than 40 years nationally along with the cost-of-living crisis, which is affecting everyone. The new council will have an overall spending power of about £1.4 billion including £343 million on schools but rising costs and demand for services means it already faces a funding gap of £30 million this year alone. Council tax is now the most important source of funding for services in North Yorkshire, and each one percent increase would raise £4 million towards meeting rising costs and demand.

Why am I going to have to pay more council tax than my current bill when people living in other areas in North Yorkshire are going to be able to pay less?

The new council's launch means that all council taxpayers in North Yorkshire legally must be charged the same amount. The job of standardising all council tax bills across the seven districts in North Yorkshire is set to be phased in over the next two financial years, as some areas are paying higher rates than others. By making council tax bills the same, it will mean the fairest system for all taxpayers in the county. A cross-party working group formed of councillors from the county, district and borough councils recognised the financial demands that are being placed on households during the cost-of-living crisis. They agreed the fairest and most efficient way forward was for the harmonisation of council tax to take an average of all existing bills and implement the changes across two financial years.

The cost-of-living crisis is affecting everyone. Why do you need to create a new council when money could be spent on helping those most in need in North Yorkshire?

Everyone is feeling the effects of the rising cost of living, especially on food and other essential items. But the current structure with the county council and the seven district and borough authorities in North Yorkshire is not seen as a sustainable way to deliver important services in the long-term. By creating the new North Yorkshire Council, millions of pounds can be saved to help fund these services. Having one council will save between £30 million and £70 million a year. This is money that can be used to help to protect some of the most important local services at a critical time when everyone and every organisation is feeling the pressure from increased costs. There will be tough financial decisions ahead, but by making this change now, we are better placed to manage the impacts. We are also in a stronger position to work with partners like the health sector, police, fire, and community and voluntary sector to get the most from every North Yorkshire pound. We are also taking steps to help those most in need. Councillors have voted to back proposals which will provide up to 100 per cent reductions on council tax bills for households on the lowest incomes.

Why do we need to create a new council to get devolution – can't we just have devolution without merging the eight authorities into one?

We were told by the Government that the current structure of local government – with the county council and the seven district and borough authorities – had to be replaced with a unitary authority to secure a long-awaited devolution deal. This will make local democracy in the county much simpler, and end confusion over which council does what, and which councillor is responsible for which area. It also gives us the chance to streamline services and make millions of pounds of savings which will be used to finance key priorities of the new council. Having one council will save between £30 million and £70 million a year. City of York Council will continue as a separate unitary authority to run alongside the new North Yorkshire Council, which will launch on April 1, 2023.

What is devolution and what benefits would it bring for people living and working in North Yorkshire?

Devolution is a key policy of the Government, handing over decision-making powers to local political leaders and providing millions of pounds in funding to shape hugely important policies and projects at a regional level. A proposed 30-year devolution deal for York and North Yorkshire, with an investment fund of £540 million, is due to lead to benefits ranging from new and better-paid jobs and improved transport links to more affordable housing. The proposed deal was unveiled on 1 August, with the option to elect a regional mayor in May 2024, giving York and North Yorkshire a direct relationship with central Government. Staff will continue to be based locally to work with communities and ensure that their needs can be effectively served.