



Get change right

... for business

Local government is changing.

**You can help to decide how this happens.
Find out more about what's proposed and how
to make it work best for your business.**

Why is local government changing?

At the moment, local government in our area is quite complex. There is a county council that provides some services, five district councils and two borough councils that provide other services, and a small unitary council (York) that provides all services within its boundaries.

The Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Simon Clarke MP, has told us that he wants local government in York and North Yorkshire to be reorganised and simplified. His vision is to see at least two unitary authorities (councils that provide all services) that would work together at a strategic level, as one combined authority under an elected mayor.

District Councils, Borough Councils and the unitary council of City of York, as they stand



If we do this, it will open the door for a possible devolution deal for our area. That would mean more powers to decide things at local level, and potentially £2.28 billion of investment into roads, housing and a greener economy. It would create opportunities for businesses in our area, leading to a stronger, more vibrant economy.

This is a big change that will affect the fortunes of thousands of businesses in our area – so the Leaders of the district and borough councils across North Yorkshire have come together to make sure that we get change right.

The proposed new mega-sized unitary council would cover all of North Yorkshire. It would come together with City of York in a combined authority under a mayor, creating an unbalanced arrangement.



We're listening...

The Leaders of the district and borough councils in North Yorkshire have come together to oppose creation of a North Yorkshire mega-size council, and create a more practical alternative bid, based on more workable geographies, and a grass-roots understanding of our businesses and economies.

Over the coming weeks we'll be reaching out to business leaders, to listen and consult. We want to understand what you think, so we can build a local government model with its roots in reality, that works best for business.

Why a mega-size council bid is bad for business

The County Council claims:

We will simplify structures into a single council

We say:

Creating a single mega-size council means creating a massive centralized bureaucracy covering a huge geographical area.

Leaving aside the years that unifying systems across such a huge area will take, such a structure will be too removed from local economies to understand their needs, and too large to respond with the nimble decision-making that businesses require if they are to thrive and drive our region's economy.

A more balanced model with smaller-sized councils would give you more direct contact, more influence and more responsiveness. That is better for business.

The County Council claims:

We will deliver savings of £25m a year

We say:

The mega-size council bid looks at how to streamline services across North Yorkshire only – it omits York. But why? Our bid will look at where we can improve efficiency across the whole of the York and North Yorkshire geography, including York. This is what the Minister wanted, and it is what is fair and right.

Because we are not shying away from including York in our thinking, our bid has the potential for greater savings to plough back into better public services and strategic projects that develop our economic strength as a region.

The County Council claims:

We will strengthen people's "say", have fewer councillors and represent the county at national level.

We say:

A mega-size council bid threatens the relationship of businesses with their council.

A local person will be one voice in 615,000 (the population area that the mega-size council will cover). A local business will be just one employer amongst a geography covering thousands.

Under this proposal, your "local" councillor will have to represent many thousands of people and hundreds of businesses – and as one voice in a huge single council, they will have less influence. This flies in the face of the latest independent research which shows that proximity is important. It allows councillors to understand the priorities and values of their local constituents.

We agree that our area should be represented at national level, and that will be the role of the elected mayor. Our model won't try to compete with the job of the mayor. That isn't the way to achieve lobbying power, especially with a government that strongly supports the mayoral role. We will make sure the elected mayor is properly connected to local businesses through strong, balanced unitary authorities that are the voice of their local economies and employers. We will make sure the mayor gets representation right.

In the county council's proposal, the mayoral combined authority will comprise a mega-size council for North Yorkshire and a minnow-size council for York. This is unbalanced, unfair, and will cause difficulties for the future mayor. Important decisions will get tied up in debate whilst services and businesses stagnate.

We will build a practical model of local government, with more balanced representation across the councils. That way the combined authority can focus on driving investment and growth, and the mayor can get on with their job.

What you should do next

We believe that creating a mega-size council would be a mistake.
If, like us, you agree that...

- Local business knowledge is important
- Local connections between businesses and the council should be maintained and strengthened
- Local employers should have influence on decisions that affect them, and proper representation in a new government structure

...then, now is the time to make your voice heard.

- Visit our website www.get-change-right.com to find out about how we are approaching local government reorganisation
- Sign up to one of our online engagement sessions, and help us shape our bid
- Give your comments via our online feedback form at www.get-change-right.com/consultations
- Write to your MP and let them know why you think a mega council would be a mistake. You'll find your MP's details on our website.

www.get-change-right.com

This information has been compiled by the Leaders of North Yorkshire's district and borough councils:

- Cllr Richard Foster of Craven District Council
- Cllr Richard Cooper of Harrogate Borough Council
- Cllr Mark Robson of Hambleton District Council
- Cllr Angie Dale of Richmondshire District Council
- Cllr Keane Duncan of Ryedale District Council
- Cllr Steve Siddons of Scarborough Borough Council
- Cllr Mark Crane of Selby District Council

They have launched a campaign: "Working together to get change right", to oppose a mega-sized council bid, and develop an alternative proposal based on workable geographies and a grass-roots understanding of local communities and economies.

