

Local Government Review (LGR) Partner Update

March 2023

Dear partners,

In just a few days we will launch North Yorkshire Council, so I wanted to share some important information with you and to reassure you that it's very much business as usual for us here. Despite being on the cusp of completing the most significant overhaul of local government here since 1974, you should notice minimal change over the transition stage. That's the hope! Bins will still be emptied, leisure centres and libraries will open, roads will be fixed, streetlights will be turned on etc. You will still be able to use the contact details you have and speak to the people you usually speak to. All telephone numbers will continue to work, emails are being automatically forwarded and so on. There is much more below, but I wanted to make this point with clarity at the start. Below are some key updates from a number of the workstreams forging the foundations of the new council, which I hope are helpful.

Customer Workstream - North Yorkshire Council will implement a 'one front door' approach from day one. This means access to our services will be easier while we provide the right experience by using the right contact methods for differing scenarios.

As a partner, you will continue to have direct contact with colleagues. This will be done via direct dial and email addresses, which will be provided to you. Any legacy phone numbers and email addresses, however, will continue to work.

The council's new customer number is **0300 131 2 131**. This number will go live on 1 April but will not be manned until day three – Monday 3 April – instead it will revert to the normal out-of-hours service.

The phone lines and main customer access points will be open at the following times/days:

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

*Please note the later opening every Wednesday to provide training time for customer service teams

Outside of this time, a customer out-of-hours service will be available via this phone number for those who need to access urgent help for social care, housing, registrar, Ryecare and trading standards. We will also have a situation message which can be turned on if required.

There will be times customers need a direct contact. For example, if colleagues are supporting a specific enquiry or accessing a service. Post day one, a team email or direct dial hunt group number will be provided. This means customers will get a response even if members of the team are away from the office.

The customer service team will be led by Margaret Wallace and will sit in Gary Fielding's Resources directorate.

Economic Development - Businesses will still be able to access all the support, advice and services they currently do, and via the same contacts. The new council is committed to working extremely closely with York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and City of York Council to promote our region and its inward investment opportunities. We will also be seeking to strengthen our cultural offer, campaigning for a greater share of funding for arts and culture here and supporting a year-round visitor economy. Economic development is led by Dave Caulfield and sits in the Community Development directorate.

North Yorkshire Council Tourism Review - In November last year, the Government and Visit England set out their plans to redesign destination management organisations (DMOs). There is also an agreement among the Yorkshire leaders that it would be beneficial to retain a Yorkshire-wide DMO strategy through formal collaboration at a sub-regional level. To support this and a strong local visitor economy, we are preparing to bid to become what's called a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP). There may be four, or five, of these which eventually form a Yorkshire-wide approach. These LVEPs must be strong private/public sector partnerships and will need to follow the new national process to be eligible for any government funding.

In preparation for this, all eight councils involved in the LGR process and partners at the North York Moors and Dales National Parks and Visit England are pooling their knowledge and expertise to undertake a review and ensure that we have the strongest possible proposal.

The proposal here is for a single LVEP promoting the whole of North Yorkshire but which recognises and retains the value and unique offers we have in the county like coast, dales, and market towns.

We are currently in the process of appointing consultants who will undertake some very limited task and finish work with us and our stakeholders to help develop a new Destination Development Plan. We will be engaging with business networks and the broad leisure, culture and visitor economy sectors right across the county in the coming months to ensure a strong partnership approach is in place moving forward.

We are ambitious for the county and want to be ready to put forward our application to become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership as soon as appropriate.

Culture, Leisure and Sport - Over the past 15 months, the Culture, Leisure and Sport workstream has worked to bring together the teams across leisure centres, sports development, libraries, arts and culture, museums, heritage and archives to create a single new Culture and Leisure service for North Yorkshire Council. The service will be part of the Community Development directorate, led by Corporate Director Nic Harne, with Jo Ireland heading up Culture and Leisure as the new Assistant Director.

As well as preparing for day one of the new council, officers have been working on key issues across culture and leisure. These include working closely with other teams across the council on the devolution deal for North Yorkshire and York, which will have a strong emphasis on the role that arts, culture and heritage play in both the county's economy and in the development of our market towns. A major review of leisure services is about to get under way. This will look to create a single leisure service for North Yorkshire by 2027. It will set out how that service will be provided and funded, what it will focus on and how it will make the most of leisure centres, as well as other community venues and the county's open spaces. More immediately, the leisure sector is facing significant challenges as a result of Covid-19 and steps are being taken to address rising costs and to boost recruitment and to ensure service continuity.

Working with customers, community organisations and regional/national leadership bodies is an important part of this work. The new service will work closely with grassroots organisations and with partners such as Arts Council England, Sport England, North Yorkshire Sport, Historic England and the National Heritage Lottery Fund to make sure we realise the potential that bringing together eight councils has for culture and leisure in the county.

Planning – Elected members have agreed that there will be one overarching strategic committee and six committees aligned to the MP constituency-focused area committees. Work to set up each committee is under way. At the moment the policy basis will be the existing district plans, however, the council is in the process of embarking on the development of a new local plan for the whole county within a five-year period. The Assistant Director for Planning is Trevor Watson and the area sits in Community Development.

Service changes due to the Easter Bank Holiday - North Yorkshire Council launches at the start of the traditional Easter holiday period but the Bank Holidays will mean only minimal changes to council services.

There are minor changes to waste collection services for some of our residents, with household bin collections moving forward or back by a day in different areas of the county. However, many other services will continue to operate as usual, including household waste recycling centres (HWRCs).

Although phone lines and non-essential services will be closed on Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday, out-of-hours support for services such as emergency housing repairs or homelessness support remains available as usual.

The council's online services are open and can be accessed 24 hours a day. Further information and a full breakdown of service changes can be found on the North Yorkshire County Council website [Spring holidays service changes | North Yorkshire County Council](#)

Entering a new era

As a valued partner, I want to thank you for the support you have afforded all eight councils over the period of planning for the new council. It's a huge change programme and your help and understanding have been invaluable. I very much look forward to North Yorkshire Council's team building on our strong partnerships after 1 April, but we recognise that any transformation of this scale will inevitably have some snagging issues. We want to resolve these quickly to support partners, customers, residents and staff. Please help us. If you become aware of anything, please let us know by contacting the person you would normally get in touch with

Many thanks and best wishes

Richard

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Flinton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Flinton

Chief Executive, North Yorkshire Council

