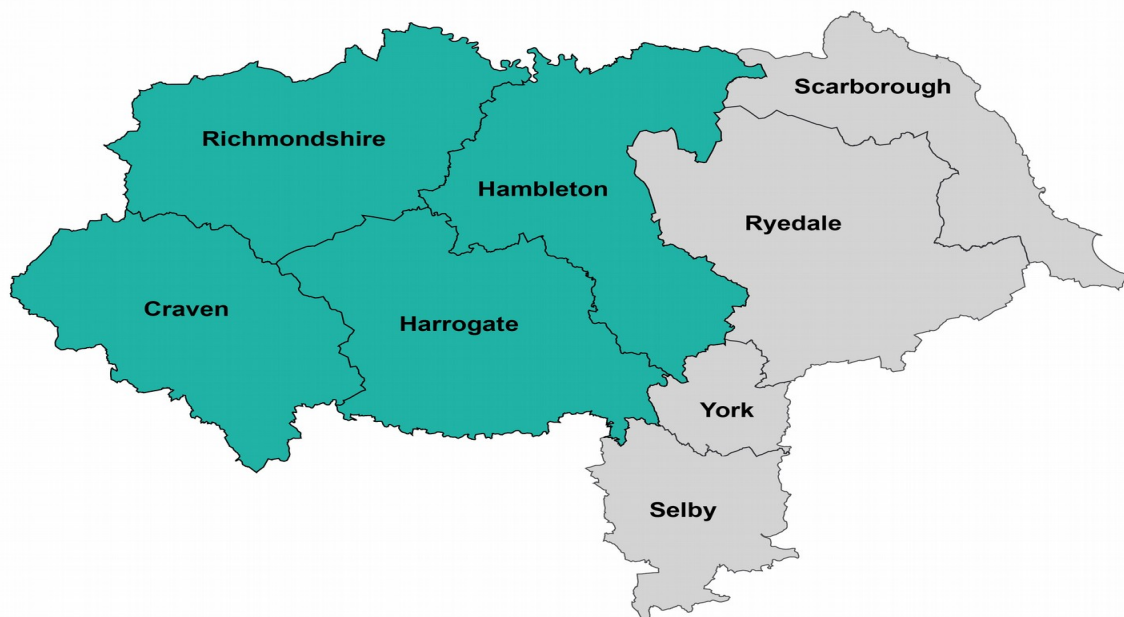




Dear Council Clerk,

As you may well be aware, before Christmas, the six district and borough councils of Craven, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough and Selby, submitted a full business case for local government reorganisation to Government.

Our proposal is for an 'East & West' model, which would see Craven, Harrogate, Richmondshire and Hambleton join together to form a unitary council in the West, and Selby, City of York, Ryedale and Scarborough join together to form a unitary council in the East.



Government Consultation

The Government has indicated that it is still intending to consult on proposals for reorganisation; this consultation is likely to take place in the next few weeks.

It is likely that key stakeholder organisations and local authorities will be asked for their opinions on two models:

- The East & West model, which would create two balanced unitary authorities, with a population of 465,000 in the East, and 363,000 in the West.
- North Yorkshire County Council's proposals for a unitary authority to cover the whole of North Yorkshire, representing 600,000 people and 3,000 square miles, leaving the City of York as a small unitary authority representing around 200,000 people.

Any local organisation, business or member of the public will also be able to respond to the consultation.

We believe our proposal is better for businesses, residents and communities. Many organisations across North Yorkshire and York have been supportive of the East & West model and we would like to thank all those who have written letters giving their views on the model.

Our detailed proposal can be found at www.get-change-right.com - here you will find more information about what our model means for businesses across North Yorkshire and York.

Why East & West is best for democracy and decision-making

Town and Parish Councils

Town and parish councils will have a strong voice into new Locality Committees (see below for how these will work). You will help to shape local action plans, and make sure they meet local needs.

If they want to, town and parish councils will have the option to take on responsibility for local assets and services.

As part of our consultation process, we asked town and parish councils which services they might wish to take on; the top five services were street cleaning, street naming, tourism services, health and wellbeing initiatives, and library services.

Our research confirmed that whilst there is limited appetite for taking on assets, there is stronger support for delivering some services. The research also confirmed that each town and parish council is different, so we will take an individual and flexible approach so that each council can choose what is right for them.

Democratic representation

Our proposal recommends between 154 and 197 councillors across the two unitary authorities. Each councillor would represent between 3,000 and 4,000 electors, which fits comfortably with recent recommendations by the Local Boundary Commission for England.

Locality Committees

Each councillor will serve on a Locality Committee for their area, working with representatives from town and parish councils, and connected communities.

Each unitary will have a minimum of four Locality Committees initially – likely to reflect the current district and City of York boundaries. That means there will be a committee for Ryedale, made up of elected councillors from Ryedale focussing on the issues that matter to Ryedale.

The Locality Committee will have the authority and budget to make decisions at a local level (e.g. local planning, licensing, highways), so decision-making is kept as close as possible to communities, and is responsive to local needs.

Your views are important

We hope that you will take part in this important consultation when it is launched by Government. Local government reorganisation will affect the lives of all our residents; it's crucial that we get change right.

I would encourage you to meet as a council to discuss this important matter and make your views known. If you wish to contact me with your comments, please email cllr.keane.duncan@ryedale.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Keane Duncan, Leader of Ryedale District Council

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