**Let’s Talk: Devolution Briefing Note**

Devolution represents a huge opportunity to make a difference to hundreds of thousands of people who live and work in North Yorkshire, and bring real benefits for the big issues that matter to them.

Whether that is new and better paid jobs, more affordable housing or placing ourselves at the forefront of a revolution in environmentally-friendly business, the chance of more decision-making powers and millions of pounds in funding will help this to be achieved.

A proposed deal agreed with the Government was announced on the annual Yorkshire Day on August 1 this year, and now the next big step in the journey to devolution is taking place.

A consultation is being launched for the public to have their say on what they believe are the priorities for devolution, and to gather views on how the proposed deal is to be implemented.

While the consultation will not change the actual detail of the proposed deal, it is vital that people give their opinions to help ensure that the life-changing opportunities from devolution are achieved.

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 on a regional level.

The deal for York and North Yorkshire would see the introduction of an influential mayor who would become a figurehead for the region and forge close links with the Government.

The new mayor, who would be elected in May 2024 if the proposed deal comes to fruition, would lead a new powerful combined authority that would oversee strategic projects ranging from major transport improvements and boosting skills and education to providing more affordable housing.

The planned 30-year agreement includes an investment fund of more than £540 million for York and North Yorkshire. Coupled with other funding secured from the Government, the proposed deal represents a total of £750 million.

While there is additional funding for specific projects ranging from housing-building to transport improvements as well as more powers to boost education and skills, the investment fund is seen as one of the key elements of any devolution agreement as it provides flexibility to target money to specific schemes on a far more local level.

The consultation with the public, which begins on Friday, October 21, and runs until Friday, December 16, will provide an important chance to gather views on what priorities should be focused on through devolution.

The consultation will involve face-to-face events across all seven district areas in North Yorkshire, and will also employ the media to convey the importance of the conversation, which falls under the Let’s Talk banner.

A press release is being issued for publication on the day of the consultation’s launch, and editorial pages in weekly newspaper titles across North Yorkshire, as well as The Yorkshire Post, will highlight the Devolution survey to the public.

There will also be video content for digital advertising and promotion on radio, in tandem with extensive engagement with businesses and business networks, supported by the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The consultation will also be promoted through the county council’s website and social media channels, and leaflets will be available in public buildings, such as libraries. Partner agencies and organisations are also being invited to promote the consultation via toolkits.

The results of the consultation will be reviewed and, if agreed by councillors, will be submitted to the Government in the early part of next year.

The Government will then draft the necessary legislation, which should pass into law in the autumn of 2023.

The combined authority would then be created, ready to elect a Mayor in May 2024.

To secure a devolution deal, the Government has stipulated that a key requirement for North Yorkshire is for the current two-tier system of local government, with the county council and seven district/borough councils, to be replaced by a single unitary authority.

City of York Council will continue as a unitary authority to run in tandem with the new North Yorkshire Council, which will launch on April 1 next year.

**We are now asking people to have their say on the proposed deal. The consultation will run from Friday October 21 until Friday, December 16, and details can be accessed at** [**www.ynydevolution.com**](http://www.ynydevolution.com) **online.**

### What do we want to achieve?

* Carry out a full consultation to provide data that will help the councils to decide if any amendments are needed to the Scheme (which is included in the council papers) to ensure the proposed governance is appropriate for York and North Yorkshire.
* Ensure that anyone who wishes to express a view has had the chance to do so.
* Drive people to a dedicated website to allow consistent and efficient collection of response.
* Maximise the value of consultation and engagement and avoid disparate re-targeting of groups.
* Provide dedicated face-to-face events to encourage responses.
* Highlight key messages through clear communications both digitally and non-digitally.

**How?**

Communications are planned to promote the consultation across all standard channels. A press release will be issued on October 21 when the consultation goes live on [www.ynydevolution.com](http://www.ynydevolution.com). This will be followed by communications across monthly press publications, radio ads, as well as social media.

The Devolution consultation falls under of the wider umbrella of Let’s Talk North Yorkshire. It uses similar branding and style to form familiarity and understanding with audiences. This consultation is a statutory requirement and communication is essential to allow anybody who wishes an opportunity to respond.

Throughout the consultation period, a digital campaign will run, highlighting key messages and promoting the link to the website. Printed communications material will also be available in key locations, highlighting how to get hold of print and accessible versions, as well as the online content.

There are also a small number of scheduled drop-in and online events during the course of the consultation. There will be a drop-in session in each area of the county to provide more information and the chance for people to talk directly about the proposals.

We recognise that many residents who wish to respond will prefer to do so digitally. However, this will not apply to everyone, so we are using a range of channels, as mentioned above, as well as a variety of alternative formats. The consultation materials, survey and flyer have been produced in Braille and the following languages: Arabic, Kurdish, Pashto, Romanian, Russian, Polish, Dari, Ukrainian, Bengali, Farsi.

If anybody would like a paper copy of the survey and information about devolution in York and North Yorkshire, they can call into their local library, contact their local district or borough council or call the county council’s customer helpline on 01609 780780. You can also email: **enquiries@ynydevolution.com**

**Considering the responses:**Analysis of the resulting data will be carried out by the Consultation Institute, providing a degree of independence. A consultation summary will be reported to executive and full council in the New Year, when a decision will be taken on any amendments needed to the scheme and whether to submit the consultation results to the Government.

### How you can help: There is a toolkit that we can share with you. Included is a schedule of activity so that you can see what is going on in your area. We would welcome your support.