

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our briefing for district council members on 3 August. A number of questions were submitted in advance, and at the meeting. These are summarised below.

What happens next? What consultation will there be?

- Q. What is the process for consultation with District Councils? Will it be the same for all the councils? Who will be involved?**
- A. Each council will continue to be responsible for its own workforce until the new council becomes operational in April 2023, so each is responsible for consulting their own staff. However, already we know that all the councils are working together to undertake joint consultation. NYCC have already set up various working groups and have invited the district councils to be involved. However the consultation is arranged, UNISON as the recognised trade union at all the councils will have to be involved formally.
- Q. Can agreement be reached that information about meetings will be shared with staff in a timely way so that staff can have input?**
- A. We will be formally involved in the consultations and negotiations, and we will provide regular updates to members. In addition we will encourage all our employers to keep staff updated.
- Q. When will the new structure be announced, and will this be open for consultation?**
- Q. Will staff be involved in decisions about LGR or will it just be councillors and management?**
- A. The first phase of the new structure will simply be to elect the councillors and appoint the Chief Executive. The exact process for this will depend on what details come in the official Order which will be approved by parliament later this year. We expect that, below senior management, existing structures will transfer to the new council. It is after the new council is up and running that we expect consultations to take place gradually about changes to the structures that were inherited by the new council. Normal policies and processes will apply as with any restructure or reorganisation; such as formal consultation with staff and UNISON.
- Q. Why is NYCC publishing articles on their website suggesting it will be a take-over? Why are Selby not publishing anything online?**
- Q. If NYCC is to be a 'continuing authority' how is it not a take-over?**
- A. We cannot answer for NYCC or SDC, but our understanding is that it is not a 'takeover', as the new council will have fresh elections and will appoint a new Chief Executive. From our perspective, we prefer the continuing council model as this simply means that district council staff can transfer on their current terms & conditions.

Q. Local press reported that there was a difference of opinion between the different North Yorkshire Unison branches. Can you tell us how you are going to work together to ensure that Unison across North Yorkshire protects jobs?

A. Each UNISON branch sets its own policies and position, based on the views of its members. Ever since LGR was first suggested we have been working with our colleagues at Harrogate, Scarborough, Ryedale and Craven to ensure our three key objectives are prioritised. Some branches preferred the East/West model, some preferred the NYCC model. However, what is important now is that we are continuing to work together to make sure the interests of our members are front and centre. The Secretaries of all the branches have already met after the announcement and we will meet regularly. We now have one voice in defending and enhancing your terms and conditions.

Q. Will staff move over or will there be any restructures or redundancies before the completion of LGR?

A. There cannot be any restructures or redundancies in advance of LGR just because LGR is happening. However, the existing councils will need to continue providing services and operating as normal. So, if any council needed to make legitimate changes to its services and structures then it could do so but would have to comply with its existing policies and procedures about consultation, negotiation and redundancy payments.

Q. Why was the North Yorkshire proposal successful over the East/West proposal?

A. The government made a statement setting out why it felt that the NYCC proposal more closely matched its objectives. You can read the government's decision [here](#).

Is my job safe? What about redundancies?

Q. How many jobs are due to go when the reorganisation happens?

Q. Will we have to reapply for our jobs?

A. The NYCC proposal was based on all staff moving across to the new council, with a gradual process of harmonisation. Clearly there will be some roles that are duplicated, but most are not. The NYCC proposal was very much based on any reduction in posts being gradual and through vacancies, retirement, etc. Nobody should have to reapply for their jobs as a result of LGR. Any future changes would have to be subject to consultation as happens now.

Q. Will there be opportunities for voluntary redundancy before the new council comes into effect?

- A. We think this is unlikely. The NYCC proposal is based on all except very senior roles transferring automatically to the new council so there will not be a need for any redundancies as a result of LGR. Later, as services are brought together there might be a need to reduce posts but the expectation is that this will be done through vacancies and retirements. However, we would always argue at that point for voluntary redundancy to be offered if 'natural' reductions are not sufficient.

Will my pay change? What about job evaluation?

Q. Will pay grades for the same jobs become equal across the Unitary?

Q. Will there be a review to align all roles within the new unitary, including pay?

Q. District councils pay different rates for jobs with identical job titles. Will you be lobbying the district councils to level up prior to April 2023?

A. We have always argued it is unfair that individual councils can pay different rates for the same job, but as we do not have nationally agreed benchmarks this has been inevitable. Although it is unlikely any progress will be made on this before 2023, one inevitability of LGR is that the new council will eventually have to pay equal pay for work of equal value across all posts.

Q. Will there be any pay protection if your pay is less due to TUPE?

A. Each council will have its own existing agreements on pay protection, these agreements will transfer over with your employment. In the future it is likely that the new council will want to negotiate a standard pay protection agreement, but we would be involved and would consult with you about any new agreement.

Will my work base change? Will we all have to move to Northallerton?

Q. Will SDC offices go when the reorganisation happens?

Q. Once in the unitary would you have to travel to the office/location that they stipulate for that job? For example, could they centralise services in one location?

Q. Will there be local hubs for people to go to an office? What will happen to the existing council offices? Could they be used as hubs?

A. Of course the new council will look at property and will be able to make savings by closing offices where there is duplication, for example in towns where there are both district and county councils offices. However, services will still be delivered locally and the NYCC proposal was built around

increasing local hubs. We would expect the new council to dispose of older property and bring services together in each location where possible. However, staff would continue to be based in the towns and villages where they are currently based.

The NYCC proposal was not based on staff being moved to new locations, and we expect there to be greater opportunities to work more locally and to make use of the range of offices and workplaces that would be available under the new council.

What about other terms and conditions? Continuous service? Pensions?

Q. Will our service be carried over to the new council?

Q. I have been told that, as a new council, our long service, holiday entitlement and continuous service for pensions will be reset. Can this be clarified please?

A. This is categorically not true. You will transfer to the new council and take with you all previous and continuous local government service.

Q. Will our pensions carry on as normal?

A. In short, yes. All the affected councils are part of the North Yorkshire pension scheme. Although the money in the 'pot' is accounted for based on the employer, your pension benefits will not be affected.

Q. Are NYCC terms better than the district councils?

A. Yes and no! There are 8 existing councils, all with slightly different terms and conditions. All councils are part of the National Joint Council, so minimum standards are set by the Green Book, and all follow the national pay awards. Some councils have higher annual leave than others, some pay higher allowances for overtime and weekend working, some pay higher mileage rates than others.

At the point of transfer you will carry forward your own terms and conditions, but over time there will have to be consultation and negotiation to agree one set of terms and conditions for the new council. We will be the statutory consultee, which is why it is really important we have as many members as possible where you work so our voice is as strong as possible to realise our objective of levelling-up terms and conditions. We will want to take the best from each council, but it is inevitable that there will have to be compromise. At that point we will need to know from you where those compromises should be made.

Some services are privatised and out-sourced at different councils. What will happen to them?

- Q. Are there any plans on how property services will transfer across? Will it be that a new joint company will be set up like NYCC have with the highways?**
- A. Ultimately, this would be a decision for the new council. These decisions happen already as some services are out-sourced or privatised now. For example, refuse services at Selby DC are privatised but not at Harrogate BC. NYCC has recently taken back its highways services from the private sector into a wholly-owned council company. As contracts come up for renewal it is likely that the new council will want to harmonise across the county. However, we will be involved in the consultation and will always argue for services to either remain, or be brought back into the council. We would oppose any future plans to out-source services that are currently delivered directly by the council.