

**Letter from Dean Harper, UNISON Regional Organiser, to Chief Executives at:  
Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough  
Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Richmondshire District Council,  
Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council and Selby District  
Council**

I am writing on behalf of UNISON members who work for the eight district and county councils in North Yorkshire, to ask that you work with the other Chief Executives to agree transitional arrangements regarding vacancies that arise between now and the new council coming into effect.

As you will be aware, our priority is to work with you and the other councils to help realise our objectives which are to:

- Protect jobs and avoid redundancies
- Level-up terms, conditions and pay
- Minimise disruption to residents and staff

UNISON believes that there is an urgent need to have an agreement in place across all the councils setting out how vacancies will be filled.

Clearly, there will be a need to recruit to frontline roles between now and April 2023 to ensure that service delivery and standards are maintained. However, there are some services and roles that will be duplicated once the councils come together. It seems to us that to fill these posts externally at this stage would be unfair on existing staff but also on external applicants. External appointments would increase the redundancy risk for existing staff, and would mean that those external appointees would be put through the uncertainty of a reorganisation soon after taking up their new post.

We believe it would be helpful to have an agreement in place that takes advantage of the opportunities that LGR presents, such as the larger talent pool that becomes available by bringing together the eight councils. Between now and April 2023, we suggest that vacancies in roles and services that are duplicated should be ring-fenced to internal applicants from the existing councils. Appointments could be made through permanent transfers, secondments, or job share arrangements. In some cases this would then provide options for other colleagues to 'act up', providing useful training and career development opportunities.

Such an approach would not only help to safeguard the jobs of existing staff, but would also:

- reduce costs, as savings would be made in the recruitment and induction process;
- reward staff for their continuing loyalty and reassure them that they continue to be a valuable asset and one that the new council wishes to retain;
- demonstrate to staff that there is a genuine desire across the councils to work together to ease the transition and to look after the current staff cohort who

have worked throughout the pandemic to deliver excellent services to the residents of North Yorkshire;

- provide opportunities for training, career progression and development; and
- minimise disruption to residents and staff,

whilst ensuring that service levels and quality are maintained.

To be absolutely clear, UNISON is seeking an urgent agreement that until such time as the new arrangements take effect there are no external appointments to any role except where it is absolutely clear that there are no suitable staff amongst the from within the eight existing councils.

I hope that you will be able to work with your colleagues across the other councils to implement such a strategy. In the meantime I look forward to working with you and our local UNISON representatives to deliver a smooth transition to the new council.

Yours sincerely

Dean Harper, UNISON Regional Organiser

8 September 2021