

## You said, we did – York and North Yorkshire Devolution Consultation

How we consulted you about devolution.

In 2022, we asked you about your views on the scheme for devolution, which included the formation of a combined authority for York and North Yorkshire to be led by an elected mayor. The final consultation response showed the majority of respondents were in favour of the scheme. The [final report](#) on the consultation response is available to view.

The consultation response was submitted, along with the scheme, to the Secretary of State in February 2023. In October 2023, the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order was laid before Parliament for MPs to consider and debate.

The order is a legal document which sets out the powers available to the incoming mayor and combined authority to deliver the content of the devolution deal. Should MPs approve the order, the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority will be created and launched early in 2024. Mayoral elections will take place in May 2024.

This ‘You said, we did’ document reviews the key issues you raised through the consultation and how we have responded to them through the process so far.

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Themes of the consultation	Topics covered
1. General (repeated concerns/ issues raised across responses to consultation survey questions).	Bureaucracy, transparency, strength of proposals, local and regional voice, local government reorganisation
2. Governance	Accountability, representation, decision making
3. Finance	Taxes, value for money, funding
4. Net Zero, Climate Change and Natural Capital	Climate change, investment, cross-cutting outcomes, deliverability
5. Transport	Local transport, strategic planning, cross-cutting outcomes
6. Housing and regeneration	Affordable Housing, energy efficient housing, locality

7. Skills and Employment	Vocational training, green skills, local need
8. Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner functions	Joined up working, efficiency, accountability

**1. General Themes: Bureaucracy, transparency, strength of proposals, local and regional voice, local government reorganisation**

You said	We did
I'm concerned about devolution bringing increased bureaucracy.	Whilst the arrangements do require the formation of a new Combined Authority (CA), the functions of the CA are already administered in a variety of places. The CA will mean that the necessary work to discharge powers and deliver funding is brought closer to us, rather than being done at a distance. Both constituent councils have expressed a desire to have an efficient CA to minimise any bureaucratic overheads.
The scheme isn't sufficiently defined to enable my decision making.	The statutory process requires consultation to be undertaken after the Governance Review and Scheme have been published. Inevitably, there remains a lot of detail to be worked through in the remaining months before the planned formation of the Combined Authority (CA). Decisions required in the planning of the CA will be taken publicly by the Councils and through the Joint Committee, ensuring the process is transparent.
The devolution proposals don't go far enough. There's not enough investment in the devolution deal to make any significant change.	Whilst the investment included as part of the devolution deal is significant, we recognise that this will not solve every challenge that York and North Yorkshire faces. The initial funding is seen as just that; the Combined Authority will be much better positioned to receive further investment, either through bidding into Government funds or being directly awarded funding, as continues to be seen in other combined authority areas.
Devolution presents an opportunity for York and North Yorkshire to have more of a national and international voice.	With a more direct line into central Government, and York and North Yorkshire's world class assets, the Mayor is likely to have a higher profile and more influential voice on the national and international stage.
The scale of the region is too big to address all of the diversity in the region.	The geography is large and diverse. However, in comparison to Government in Westminster overseeing the whole country, decision making will be much closer to the communities the decisions relate to.
I'm worried about my local/ rural area	The Mayor is elected to serve all residents of York and North Yorkshire. Similarly, the councillors who are members of the Combined Authority (CA) will be

having a voice in the MCA.	representing all residents in their council areas. In all discussions with Government and in the planning of the CA, the diversity across our areas has been at the forefront of conversations.
I don't think North Yorkshire Council will represent my local area	Whilst this relates to local government reorganisation, rather than devolution, information is available <a href="#">here</a> which outlines the approach to make North Yorkshire Council the most local, large council in England.

### Governance: Accountability, representation, decision making

You said	We did
I'm concerned about the democratic accountability of the Mayoral Combined Authority with only 5 individuals	The arrangements seek to strike a balance between breadth of accountability and efficiency. In most Combined Authorities (CA), each council has one member on the CA, who represent the whole of that council area. As there are just 2 councils in the proposed York and North Yorkshire CA, it is planned that alongside the Mayor there will be two members from each council to broaden the membership. All the voting members are elected to serve the communities of York and North Yorkshire.
This devolution deal represents too much power in the hands of one person (the Mayor).	The model of devolution that is being pursued requires a single accountable leader. Under the Government's Levelling Up white paper, in order to receive the maximum investment and powers, including the £540m Mayoral Investment Fund, there must be a mayor. Within the scope of existing devolution policies, the choice was, therefore, whether to accept a mayoral model and receive significant funding and powers or adopt a non-mayoral model with limited funding and powers.
This could lead to political tensions. We could end up with a Mayor that doesn't represent me politically.	In an election, it is always possible that the successful candidate does not represent the political views of all the electorate. Differences of opinion between political parties is natural, but the devolution process so far has seen members of all parties across York and North Yorkshire work positively to try to achieve the best for the areas.
How will you ensure a broad range of voices are represented in the Combined Authority?	There has been a recognition throughout the process that the area is diverse, and the needs of local areas need to be fully understood. It will be a priority for each of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA) members. Typically, CAs have put in place mechanisms to allow direct input from members of the public (including being able to speak at meetings, direct surgeries with the Mayor and through online engagement platforms.) There will also

	be a Business Committee that will represent the business voice within the CA.
I'm concerned about the influence of the non-elected Local Enterprise Partnership board within the Combined Authority.	Government policy is to ensure that there is a strong business voice within Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) and Combined Authorities (CA). This helps to ensure the CA understand local business need and can shape policies appropriately in response. The LEP board will be reflected as a Business Committee within the CA. The Business Committee will make recommendations to the CA. It will be for the elected, voting members of the Combined Authority to take decisions on the use of resources, based on this advice. The Business Committee chair will be a non-voting member of the Combined Authority.

### Funding and finance: Taxes, value for money, funding

You said	We did
Finance functions enhance local accountability.	The governance arrangements clearly set out the accountability for budgets and who will decide them.
Devolution can offer access to additional funding.	It is apparent from other areas that Combined Authorities (CA) have been able to access additional funding. In some cases, CAs have been awarded funding whilst non-CA areas have had to bid competitively for it.
How will you ensure equal distribution of funds?	The use of funds will be agreed by the Combined Authority, in relation to the strategies and ambitions it develops. The plans underpinning those strategies will identify the needs of all places across the York and North Yorkshire area. This doesn't guarantee that every area gets the same amount of investment, but rather that the needs of each area, in relation to the agreed strategies, are met.
Finance and funding need to be a strategic enabler of the Mayor.	The powers of the Mayor and the Combined Authority to raise funding for York and North Yorkshire is a key aspect of the devolution deal. The greater powers received will allow larger investment decisions to be taken closer to home, providing the opportunity to address challenges that matter to the people of York and North Yorkshire.
How will you evidence value for money?	The Combined Authority (CA) will be covered by the Government's recently published "English Devolution Accountability Framework". This considers accountability to in terms of 1) local scrutiny and checks and balances, 2) accountability to the public, and 3) accountability to government. Value for money is a consideration in all of these.

	<p>This will be underpinned by provisions in the CA constitution relating to finance and procurement procedures.</p> <p>Funding will, generally, be dependent on business cases which will follow the Government's Green Book methodology, considered to be good practice.</p> <p>The CA will have a scrutiny committee which allows a cross-party panel of elected members to scrutinise decisions and hold decision makers to account.</p> <p>The Office of Local Government will shortly be publishing a set of outcomes and metrics which will allow comparison between CAs, allowing judgement on value for money.</p>
I'm very concerned about the Mayor's powers to raise council tax and set a business tax.	These powers are important in giving the future option to raise funding where it is required to support the priorities of residents. It does, not, however, mean that it will be used. In fact, most Combined Authority areas have not used these powers to date.
Overheads for the Combined Authority need to be kept to a minimum.	This is recognised by both constituent councils and echoed in much of the consultation feedback. The design of the new Combined Authority is intended to be effective, with roles focussing on securing investment for the area and delivering with that investment for the residents of York and North Yorkshire.

### **Net Zero, Climate Change and Natural Capital: Climate change, investment, cross-cutting outcomes, deliverability**

You said	We did
Action to mitigate climate change must be a priority. How will devolution make a difference?	In the devolution deal, the Government recognised "the potential contribution it can make to national net zero goals". The investment included in the devolution deal will start to support local low carbon schemes, and the ability of a Mayor to work directly on this agenda is something the region has not previously had.
The Mayor and Combined Authority play a crucial role in getting us to net zero and must not stand in the way.	With both councils committed to achieving net zero, it is likely that the Combined Authority will recognise the need for its leadership on this critical topic.

We need to invest in renewable energy.	Both councils and the LEP were already on Local Area Energy Plans, and the findings of these plans have been taken into account in the assessment of bids to the £7m Net Zero fund.
The link between transport and net zero is crucial.	The need for carbon reduction and low carbon transport options will be recognised within the Combined Authority's Strategic Transport Plans.
Social inequity can be addressed through climate actions.	This is well understood, along with the counterfactual that vulnerable communities could be hardest hit by climate change without mitigations.
Is North Yorkshire's commitment to net zero matched nationally?	<p>York and North Yorkshire plans to become the UK's first carbon negative region by 2040. It has adopted the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative. The Routemap provides an ambitious pathway for local authorities, businesses, charities, academia and communities to come together to reach net zero by 2035 and net negative by 2040.</p> <p>Nationally, the government has committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Because of differences in the regional characteristics, it is necessary for every area to accelerate plans as swiftly as possible. We believe York and North Yorkshire has huge potential to play its part in supporting the UK to reach net zero.</p>

### Transport:

You said	We did
The transport arrangements need to focus on local/ rural transport solutions and current transport systems aren't working.	<p>The Combined Authority (CA) will have the opportunity to plan for and invest in supporting transport solutions for all areas of the York and North Yorkshire. The diversity of need is recognised, and the Strategic Transport Plan will be drafted to ensure the connectivity of communities is prioritised.</p> <p>There remain significant challenges in supporting a transport network across such a diverse area. The CA will be lobbying hard to ensure York and North Yorkshire get a fair share of national investment to improve connectivity.</p>
Transport solutions need to support net zero.	The need for, and benefits of, low carbon transport are recognised. Initiatives such as the shift to electric vehicles need the support of government investment, via the

	Combined Authority (CA) to ensure people can access the necessary charging points. Both councils already have EV charging strategies making headway in their deployment and we expect the CA to build upon this further.
Specific roads in my local area need improvement.	The Strategic Transport plan will set the strategy under which more local planning will take place, to ensure local needs are fully understood and prioritised.
Transport needs joined up working with bodies such as Transport for the North.	The Combined Authority (CA), with the Mayor, will be well positioned to work with other bodies, such as Transport for the North, National Highways and Great British Railways. The devolution deal provides for the CA to work in partnership to influence future road and rail programmes.
The size of the geography means that strategic transport planning is essential and can be an economic enabler.	Yes, the ability of the York and North Yorkshire Strategic Transport Plan to look across the needs and assets of the whole area will be a strength. Over such a scale, supporting people to travel in support of work and leisure is key.
Active transport should be a priority.	Both councils see Active Travel as key to their local transport plans, and it is expected the York and North Yorkshire Strategic Transport Plan builds upon this.

**Housing and regeneration: Affordable Housing, energy efficient housing, locality**

You said	We did
Brownfield sites must be used for house building, not greenfield sites.	The devolution deal included Brownfield Funding to support the building of affordable homes on brownfield and appropriate rural locations. Brownfield sites often provide more direct connectivity to existing transport and utility networks, and to community facilities.
Affordable and energy efficient homes must be a priority.	This is recognised within the current Brownfield Housing funding.
Second homes need more regulation.	This could be an area the Combined Authority would wish to consider once it is established, working with both councils which have already started to take steps in this area.
There must be a placed base approach, drawing on local knowledge to	The need to make the most of local intelligence is something which has come through the consultation extremely strongly. Both councils are individually committed to this approach and we expect the Combined

adequate facilities and infrastructure.	Authority to consider how it can support working in this way.
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### Skills and Employment: Devolved Adult Education Budget

You said	We did
Structured and strategic investment in education and skills is essential the economy to prosper.	The devolution of the Adult Education Budget provides a route to influence how skills provision can link the needs of our regional economy. There are significant sectors with huge growth potential, and we need to ensure that we are training people appropriately to fill these gaps. Providing a wide range of opportunities which support local economic growth benefits to a wide range of people will be at the heart of the Combined Authority's skills approach.
We need to increase green skills in the area.	This is recognised within the existing York and North Yorkshire skills strategy, which we expect to be updated and contribute to the Combined Authority's work on support skills provision in the future.
We need to harness the skills and ambitions of young people in the region.	Similarly, this is recognised in the existing York and North Yorkshire Skills Strategy, as one of the key priorities. The priorities are that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every student is connected to a local business who informs high quality careers advice and offers work experience.</li> <li>• Every school has high quality careers leadership linked to local labour market intelligence.</li> <li>• Young people are able to access local high quality technical skills provision.</li> </ul> <p>We would expect the Combined Authority to build upon these priorities.</p>
We need to increase vocational routes into employment.	Technical skills are recognised as being critical for the transition to a low carbon economy. Employers need people with vocational skills, and the sub-region is already working on how to expand the opportunities for people to progress through these routes.
National solutions are required to improve the skills landscape.	We believe that the Combined Authority with an elected mayor will be better positioned to influence national policy on skills. They will be a high-profile advocate for the needs of York and North Yorkshire.
Skills should be devolution dealt with by the unitary authorities, not the Combined Authority.	Unitary authorities will continue to have the same role that they currently do. The devolution of the Adult Education Budget moves it from the Education & Skills Funding Agency, a national body, to the Combined Authority (CA) at a York and North Yorkshire level, so decisions will be taken more locally. Councils, as members



	of the CA, will be able to influence skills plans and are key to their delivery.
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**Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Functions:**

You said	We did
Bringing the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner into the Combined Authority will improve local accountability and support a holistic overview and support services to join up.	There is clear potential to look across the broader aims of public protection and health and wellbeing, bringing to bear the influence that the Combined Authority can have over a wide range of factors to support people living safe and happy lives.
This move will allow for rationalisation and reduced costs.	Over time, potential for efficiencies will be considered. The safe transfer of services to the Combined Authority will be the first priority, and, once elected, the Mayor is likely to consider how the services can be best supported over the medium term.
The current arrangements are working fine, why do we have to change things?	The continuity of services is key, so the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner functions will be transferred initially in a such a way as to preserve the governance and structural arrangements. The Combined Authority may choose to look at revisions to this model in the future, but the safe transition of functions is the primary objective at this point.