

Appendix B – Proposed response to North Yorkshire Proposal

Consultation Question	
<p>1) Is the councils' proposal likely to improve local government and service delivery across each area? Specifically, is it likely to improve council services, give greater value for money, generate savings, provide stronger strategic and local leadership, and create more sustainable structures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This proposal does not provide the best fit against the government criteria for the future of local government in York and North Yorkshire in the long term, neither does it enable us to build back better following Covid in the shorter term. • In particular it does not provide for two balanced unitary authorities – instead it would create a county unitary with a population of c618,000, leaving the City of York as a much smaller unitary with a population of c210,000. • By only focussing on the North Yorkshire County Council geography and ignoring York, this proposal is <u>not</u> likely to improve service delivery across each area. • This proposal produces a local government structure with less connection with local communities and the local economy. Our engagement has told us that many people want to retain “local” councils. • The proposal would not tackle concerns over York’s future sustainability as a small unitary or, that already has financial challenges. • The proposal will not provide two balanced unitary authorities with a governance structure for a fairer, stronger combined authority under a future elected mayor, which will be will crucial for delivering effective devolution. • Local leadership will be reduced by fewer councillors representing more people and therefore diluting the voice of the electorate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NYCC’s proposed ratio is 5,266 electors per councillor – this is greater than the population of most North Yorkshire towns, and would reduce their voice within such a large authority. ○ Despite 73.1% of the population living in rural and rural related areas, the proposal would see the 3rd highest councillor-electors ratio in the country, behind the large cities of Leeds and Birmingham. North Yorkshire is significantly more sparsely populated with a population density of only 0.77 persons per hectare compared with 14.38 and 42.64 persons per hectare for Leeds and Birmingham respectively.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By not including York in reorganisation, it means that opportunities for savings in York will not be achieved and opportunities to increase strategic capacity and sustained improvement would not occur. • Fewer people will benefit from the move to unitary authorities than would benefit under the East & West model. • It is preferable to have two balanced authorities, operating with and complementing each other, at the government's preferred scale and united by a balanced Combined Authority. • The NYCC case for change states that "smaller authorities do not have the necessary scale to deliver, commission or procure services and supplies cost effectively". However the NYCC proposal leaves one authority with 97% of land mass and 75% of the population. The alternative creates two large and balanced unitary authorities which would both be of the necessary scale to deliver, commission or procure services and supplies cost effectively, both serving populations within the government's preferred scale. • This proposal misses the opportunity for two 'right sized' authorities to work together as equal partners, to learn from each other and share resources, skills and services in order to ensure excellent services and opportunities across both areas. This is far more difficult when a partnership is so one sided.
2) Where it is proposed that services will be delivered on a different geographic footprint to currently, or through some form of joint arrangements is this likely to improve those services? Such services may for example be children's services, waste collection and disposal, adult health and social care, planning, and transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to get change right for York and North Yorkshire. It is important that decisions are made based on the most effective long-term sustainable structures that will improve outcomes for local people, rather than whichever is the quickest to implement. • This proposal does not include opportunities available for York's service and sustainable growth in the short to long term. • The proposal does not provide the best opportunity to improve adult and children's services in York by merging them with the award winning County services and providing York with access to greater capacity, resources and opportunities to improve. The proposal is likely to continue to see pressure on York's children's services and make them less sustainable in the longer term. • The York geography is too small to be efficient and needs to be considered as part of a larger unitary plan. By not including York, the proposal further constrains the city's ability to improve. • This proposal will be detrimental to planning – the proposed geography is too large to have a cohesive local

	<p>plan and will therefore negatively affect the wider geography. York has not managed to agree a Local Plan. Two suitably sized authorities would solve this issue for the whole area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic functions which will be carried out by a new Combined Authority will be heavily unbalanced, resulting in decisions favouring North Yorkshire. The East & West model would bring parity. • District council functions are currently delivered locally, taking into account the individual requirements of the area. Under this proposal these functions would be treated broad-brush over an area too vast, with little regard for local circumstances. The service needs of a coastal town are far removed from the needs of a Dales village or Harrogate with its strategic links to the Leeds City Region. • Existing imbalances highlighted in this response will be exacerbated over time as a result of failing to address York's geographic and financial restrictions. We feel the only way to effectively address these is the inclusion of York as part of an East Unitary Authority.
3) Is the councils' proposal also likely to impact local public services delivered by others, such as police, fire and rescue, and health services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers such as health authorities cover York and North Yorkshire in a fairly patchwork manner, and so, as is reflected in the responses, there is support for a model moving to two unitary authorities rather than direct support for the North Yorkshire model. • There is support for "unitary government" from public sector partners in both bids. Much of the support expressed is for the principle of unitary rather than a specific bid, as there will be two unitary authorities in both models. • The Combined Authority in this model would be hugely imbalanced. With no parity, there is a danger that the sub-regional and regional strategic needs of York will not get the voice they need as they could effectively be voted down on all decisions. • This proposal does not maximise the regional significance York currently has or the potential it has to be central to plans as part of a larger authority. • The lack of parity would mean that any future Combined Authority would not effectively reflect the needs of the whole York and North Yorkshire geography and as a result would weaken strategic leadership in the sub-region.
4) Do you support the proposal from the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered all of the options available to find the best model for the future of Local Government in York and North Yorkshire, this option was independently appraised but was not chosen because it did not

councils?	<p>score high enough when considering the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensuring both authorities have the scale and capacity to invest in improved service delivery; ○ reflecting functional geographic footprints with clear potential for strong, inclusive and clean growth; ○ establishing intelligent footprints which maintain the benefits of localism in democratic representation and service delivery; ○ unlocking the potential of York or allow it to address key challenges around housing delivery, capacity or improve children's services; ○ setting up the Combined Authority for success with two equal partners, working together to bring balance, equity and fairness to the delivery of devolution.
5) Do the unitary councils proposed by the councils represent a credible geography?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At over 805,000 hectares in size, we believe the scale is too large to represent a credible geography or be beneficial to service provision. The geography is of unprecedented scale, almost 300,000 hectares larger than the current largest unitary authority geography and only 63k hectares smaller than the two largest combined. It is larger than Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Herefordshire and Oxfordshire combined. The East & West proposal would introduce two authorities at a size proven to be viable, improving council services and giving greater value for money. • The geography within this proposal does not have a strong identity, it is made up of lots of smaller, non-complementary, often competing identities e.g., coast, Dales, Moors, major town, rural hinterland. • The East to West road network and connectivity is poor – it takes almost 3 hours to drive from the East to the West of the County (Bentham to Scarborough). It also takes approximately 3 hours to cross the district from East to West by rail. This means the communities the proposal aims to represent are separated, both in terms of the distance, but also the issues they face and the economies on which they depend. • The proposal for local Government in York and North Yorkshire would result in 97% of the land in NYCC unitary authority compared to 3% of the land being covered by City of York Council. • The proposed population is above the maximum recommended limit and is projected to grow to 650,000 by 2042 – this would also leave York still well below the recommended limit by 2042 at around 216,000.

<p>6) Do you have any other comments with regards to the proposed reorganisation of local government in each area?</p>	<p>Both bids are made up of two authorities with the same external boundaries. An East & West option is equal in population and size of economy that provides a sound and sustainable basis for the future. The North Yorkshire/York model is unbalanced and represents a more 'quick fix' approach. The East & West model would require a greater level of change in the short term but would provide the sustainable footing of two 'optimum sized' authorities that are large enough to deliver efficiencies and innovation to provide excellent services, a strong local voice and play to the unique strengths of the fantastic assets and communities they represent. These authorities will be in place for this generation and the next and we recognise the need to get change right.</p>
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