

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW - NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL SIZE – Submission of Number of Councillors for 2027 Onwards

The Liberal Democrats and Liberal Group on North Yorkshire Council (NYC) submit an alternative proposal to the number of Councillors put forward by NYC.

Our Group were represented on The Boundary Review working group established by NYC, which considered a range of options concerning the potential number of elected representatives.

We believe the analysis undertaken by Council officers for the working group to be sound, but that the options, conclusions and the final recommendation of the group are not consistent with the evidence presented.

We believe that the NYC proposal to reduce the existing number of Councillors from 90 to 89 from 2027 does not adequately reflect the geographical size of North Yorkshire, its rurality nor the number of electors per Councillor. NYC is the largest Unitary Council in England, the second largest geographically in the whole of the United Kingdom and is mainly rural in nature. The current number of electors per Councillor reflects a positive variance against other Councils of just over 10% and the projected population growth of 6% between now and 2030 is likely to retain this discrepancy. The extent of committee, locality engagement and representation workload, replacing the work of 311 Councillors across the previous eight authorities, also merits a modest increase in Councillors to serve the area.

Without a modest increase, the geographical size of super sparse divisions makes it difficult for Councillors to cover the rural spread and locality arrangements to keep the Council local and to reflect its ambition to be the most local large Unitary in England.

We also believe that whilst most Councillors do not have significant work or carer responsibilities, this situation would be hard baked into the Council's representation without a modest increase in the number of Councillors, making it even more difficult for people with other responsibilities to begin working as a Councillor.

If the Commission accepts 89 members for North Yorkshire it will result in one of the highest number of electors per Councillor on a Unitary Council in the whole of the U.K., making it more difficult for Council members to serve when considering the geographical, representative and inclusivity factors. To address these deficiencies and to be more comparable with other Councils, we believe that North Yorkshire should have around 97 elected representatives, which whilst still retaining a slightly higher-than-average number of voters per Councillor compared with elsewhere, would ensure that Councillors would continue to undertake their duties without the growing pressures and poorer representation likely with 89 Councillors.

We therefore recommend that 97 councillors should represent the residents of North Yorkshire on NYC for 2027 onwards.


Bryn Griffiths (Leader of the NYC Liberal Democrats & Liberal Group)