

Let's Talk Money 23 - 23.10.23 to 18.12.23

Comms brief and toolkit for Parish and Town Councils

Introduction

Let's Talk North Yorkshire is North Yorkshire Council's biggest ever countywide conversation.

Let's Talk is helping us to reach a broad and diverse range of groups and communities, giving us a better understanding of how residents feel about their local areas and priorities.

As a council we are building 'local' into how services are designed and delivered and Let's Talk is used to inform the council's decisions, policies and services moving forward.

From Monday 23 October, Let's Talk Money is the next conversation we will be having with residents. This is our annual statutory consultation with the public and stakeholders to help inform the council's budget for next year and council plan for 2024-2028.

The online survey is here [Have Your Say Today - Let's Talk North Yorkshire - Commonplace](#) and there are several other ways to take part.

We would like to invite you to respond to the consultation on behalf of your parish or town council (details of how to do this can be found in this document) and we would also appreciate your help in sharing the consultation information with your communities.

To help with sharing the information, this toolkit contains:

- Background
- Appendix 1 – press release published on 23.10.23
- Appendix 2 - Frequently Asked Questions

For action:

- Example words to use in email / newsletter / website content

- Example words to use on social media



Background

North Yorkshire Council now provides all of your local services from rubbish collection and recycling to public health and education, roads, transport and leisure services as well as support for businesses.

Like all councils, and many residents, we are facing major financial challenges from the cost-of-living crisis and inflation. We are also experiencing a big increase in demand for services like adult social care and children and young people with special educational needs.

By bringing eight councils together to form one new one earlier this year, we are better placed to face the future. By April 2024 we predict we will have saved £5 million a year just by coming together, and there are lots more opportunities to save money that we are already working on.

Despite the tough financial climate we are ambitious for you and the thousands of businesses that call North Yorkshire home.

We have already developed a strong economic strategy which will drive clean growth here and provide better opportunities for employment and skills.

We are bidding for a Local Visitor Economy Partnership which will ensure we make the most of our natural assets and cultural offer, raise the profile of our fantastic places to boost the visitor economy and, of course, our unique food and drink offer.

We are also ensuring the Government understands what we need here through our devolution deal and establishing a mayoral-led combined authority. We will not rest until we have the best opportunities possible for you and this county.

There's no doubt there are some huge challenges ahead but we want to work with you to face them. If we all work together we can build a stronger North Yorkshire. Please help us by having a say in this survey on how we prioritise the money we have available.

We set out the council's priorities in our plan which can be found on our website and we will use your feedback to inform the next Council Plan for 2024-2028 as well as our budget for 2024-25.

Words for use in email / community newsletter to share with your networks and communities

- For use from 23 October to 18 December

Please share your views with North Yorkshire Council to help shape their budget

North Yorkshire Council is continuing their biggest countywide conversation, Let's Talk, to understand your priorities and how you are feeling about a range of topics, and to gather intelligence to inform decision making and policies.

Let's Talk Money is their annual budget consultation.

This is your chance to have your say on plans to save millions of pounds and ensure services are delivered as effectively as possible for thousands of households and businesses in North Yorkshire.

As part of that conversation, the council wants to find out what you think and pinpoint the key priorities for their budget for the next financial year.

There are several ways you can take part in Let's Talk Money:

You can fill in an online survey here [Have Your Say Today - Let's Talk North Yorkshire - Commonplace](#) – the survey is on Commonplace, which is a safe and easy-to-use online tool used to engage with communities, by over 250 organisations including neighbouring councils in Leeds and West Yorkshire.

If you would prefer, you can pick up a paper copy from your local library, leisure centre or [main local office](#) and return it in the envelope provided.

You can also email letstalk@northyorks.gov.uk or call **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'Lets Talk' when prompted) to request a survey.

You can write to:

Let's Talk
North Yorkshire Council
County Hall
Northallerton
DL7 8AD

Accessible formats of the survey are available on request. Please share your views with us and tell your colleagues, friends and family to do the same. The survey closes on 18 December 2023.

Words to use on your own social media channels

WhatsApp messages

For use from 23 October to 18 December 2023

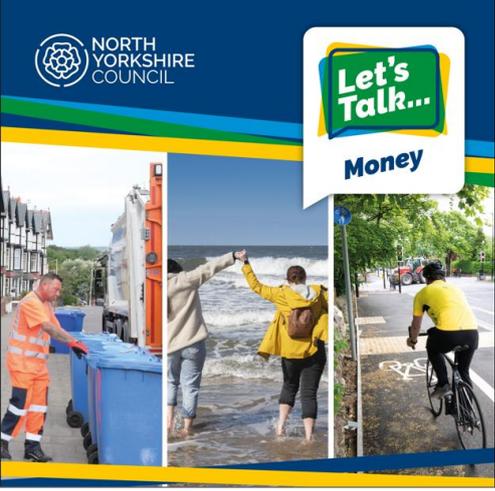
You may be part of a community WhatsApp group, or perhaps just want to encourage your communities, family and friends to take part in Let's Talk. Please see below suggested copy:

North Yorkshire Council wants to hear your views on the key priorities for their budget for the next financial year. Fill in the survey before 18 December at <https://letstalkny.commonplace.is/>

Social media messages

Social media messages for use on your own channels:

<p>Social media posts to use on your channels to publicise the launch of the Let's Talk Money survey are below.</p>	
	<p>Facebook version</p> <p>Let's Talk Money - @northyorksc wants to hear your views on the key priorities for their budget for the next financial year.</p> <p>Fill in the survey here before 18 December: https://letstalkny.commonplace.is</p> <p>-----</p> <p>X (formerly Twitter) version:</p> <p>Let'sTalk money</p> <p>@northyorksc wants to hear your views on the key priorities for their budget for the next financial year.</p> <p>Fill in the survey at https://letstalkny.commonplace.is/</p>
	<p>Instagram version</p> <p>@northyorksc has launched Let's Talk Money and wants to hear your views on the key priorities for their budget for the next financial year.</p>

	<p>Fill in the survey before 18 December here: https://letstalkny.commonplace.is/</p>
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We are trying to track our activity to ensure we are targeting the right audiences, so there is a tracking link embedded in the link to the survey in each of the above messages.

For this to work, please copy the text and link, and drop it into your social directly without making any changes to the link. Thank you!

Bookmarks, paper surveys and posters

We also have a small stock of paper surveys, bookmarks and posters. Please email letstalk@northyorks.gov.uk to request.

Thank you for your helping to share our campaign

If you have any questions, please email Letstalk@northyorks.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – Press release

23.10.23

News

Residents urged to give feedback on council budget priorities

Residents are being asked to have their say on plans to save millions of pounds and ensure services are delivered as effectively as possible for thousands of households and businesses in North Yorkshire.

A countywide consultation is being launched to glean the public's views and pinpoint the key priorities for North Yorkshire Council's budget for the next financial year.

The council is facing major financial challenges which are mirrored across the public sector nationally but work that is already under way has brought about significant benefits for the county's 615,000 residents and 32,000 businesses.

Millions of pounds in taxpayers' money is expected to be saved in the first year of North Yorkshire Council as services are brought together to realise the benefits of the biggest overhaul of local democracy in nearly 50 years.

However, the benefits which have been brought about by merging eight councils into one authority are being tempered by the major financial challenges ahead and the ongoing global economic uncertainty.

Residents are now being encouraged to have their say on the council's priorities by taking part in the Let's Talk Money survey. Feedback received will inform decisions on the 2024/25 budget and the Council Plan covering 2024 to 2028.

North Yorkshire Council's leader, Cllr Carl Les, said: "Like all councils, and many residents and businesses, we face major financial challenges due to the cost of living crisis, high rates of inflation and a huge demand for critical services, such as support for children and young people with special educational needs and adult social care.

"However, despite the tough financial climate we are ambitious for our residents and the thousands of businesses that call North Yorkshire home.

"There's no doubt we face huge challenges, but if we all work together we can build a stronger North Yorkshire. We are inviting you to help us by having your say in our survey about how we should spend the money we have available."

In its first months, the council has already developed a strong economic strategy to drive clean growth and improve opportunities for employment and skills.

With City of York Council, it has secured a devolution deal with the Government, which, subject to final approval by Parliament, will create a York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to drive regeneration and investment.

The deputy leader and executive member for finance and resources, Cllr Gareth Dadd, said: “We are making sure the Government understands what we need through our devolution deal and establishing a mayoral-led combined authority. We will not rest in our efforts to provide the best opportunities possible for this county.

“By bringing together the eight former county, borough and district councils to form North Yorkshire Council, we have put ourselves in a better position to face the future. In fact, by April next year we predict we will have saved £5 million a year just by coming together, and we are working on many more opportunities.”

A deficit in the council’s budget which is predicted to be £25 million for this financial year is being covered through the one-off use of reserves, after some additional savings have also been made. In the longer term, the financial gap is expected to widen and will need to be met by additional savings.

A masterplan is now being pulled together to maximise millions of pounds in savings across North Yorkshire Council to help counter the unprecedented financial challenges. The plan to introduce the savings needs to be set out by February next year to ensure that the new authority does not have to continue to rely on cash reserves to balance its books and, at the same time, provide financial support to the most vulnerable in society.

During the second year of the new council’s operation, it is estimated that there will be a further shortfall of £30 million, with another annual deficit of £45 million predicted in the third year. Unless savings can be found, a total of £105 million will be needed to be used from the council’s reserves over the next three years.

The shortfall in the council’s budget has been caused by a series of factors, such as the high rate of inflation, issues surrounding supply chains and rising staffing costs as well as the aftershock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the opportunity to streamline the way in which key services ranging from waste and recycling to education, highways and planning are delivered to businesses and residents in North Yorkshire is seen as essential to helping to tackle the growing demands on the new council’s finances.

By joining up services and maximising spending power, North Yorkshire Council is set to recoup between £30 million and £70 million, which will become annual savings. The scale of the new council’s operations will see it have an overall spend of about £1.2 billion, including £343 million on schools.

The council’s priorities are set out in its Council Plan, which can be read at www.northyorks.gov.uk/councilplan

The Let’s Talk Money survey can be completed at www.northyorks.gov.uk/LetsTalkNY online.

Paper copies are available from the county’s libraries, leisure centres and main local offices. Paper copies and copies in accessible formats can also be requested by emailing LetsTalk@northyorks.gov.uk, calling 0300 1312131 or writing to Let’s Talk, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD.

The survey will close on Monday, December 18.

Feedback and the results of the consultation will be included in the budget report that will go to the council's executive on January 23, 2024, and to the full council on February 21, 2024, for a final decision.

Ends

Notes to editors

For further information, please contact the communications team via email at media@northyorks.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

Frequently Asked Questions from residents

Why are you asking me to fill in another survey?

We are continuing North Yorkshire's biggest countywide conversation with you to understand how you feel about a range of topics.

This is just the start of the conversation, and we hope that you will continue to share your views with us. In return we are committed to listening and to doing everything we can to advocate for North Yorkshire and deliver the best possible opportunities for people and communities here.

Why do I need to give you my email address?

Paper survey: We want to reassure you that the answers you've given have been uploaded to our consultation platform, so you'll receive an email confirmation once that's complete. If you don't want to provide it, or don't have, an email address, that's not a problem – you just won't receive this extra confirmation.

Commonplace survey: If you complete the survey online, you'll receive an email asking you to confirm your contribution. This ensures you approve it and verifies that you are a human!

You can also sign up to receive updates on Let's Talk, and find out when other surveys are available, as we would like to continue the conversations with our residents.

If I sign up to hear about other consultations/updates, can I unsubscribe later?

Any email you receive from Commonplace about Let's Talk will contain an Unsubscribe link.

What is Commonplace?

Commonplace is a safe and easy-to-use tool used by over 250 organisations to engage with communities, including neighbouring councils in Leeds and West Yorkshire.

Is Commonplace Accessible?

Commonplace recognises the importance of ensuring their platform is accessible to as many users as possible. Their inbuilt Accessibility Tool allows users to:

Change colours, contrast levels (use our high contrast toggle at the top of this page) and fonts.

Zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen.

Navigate most of the website using just a keyboard.

Navigate most of the website using speech recognition software

Listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver).

Can I access Commonplace in another language?

The Commonplace site is in English, however if you use Google Chrome as your Internet browser, you can install the Google Translate Extension. This enables you to translate the site into your preferred language.

How do I find out updates following the Let's Talk engagement and consultation surveys?

Visit the Commonplace site <https://letstalkny.commonplace.is/> where we will post regular updates about the engagement and consultation exercises that have taken place. You can complete our 'Let's Talk Money' survey, then sign up to be notified about our other surveys when they launch, as well as other news relating to Let's Talk.

How can I ask people to take part in the surveys?

You can share this link <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/LetsTalkNY> with them, which directs them to the Commonplace site. Alternative ways to take part are also listed on the site.

Where can I find information about conversations happening in my local area?

Visit our Commonplace hub via <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/LetsTalkNY> for an up-to-date list or email letstalk@northyorks.gov.uk