North Yorkshire Councillor report – November 2026

Primary school admissions for September 2027 are now open

Parents and carers with children due to start primary school in North Yorkshire in September next year can apply for their places now. Applications for children born between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023, must be submitted by January 15, 2027, and it is advised to list up to five schools in order of preference.

This year a record 96 per cent of families in North Yorkshire secured their first choice of primary school - an increase from 95 per cent last year.

Parents are asked to take into account North Yorkshire Council's home to school travel policy when making their school choices, particularly considering the main eligibility criteria that transport is provided to the nearest suitable school with available places to their home address where it is over the statutory walking distance.

Parents are also reminded that the catchment school for admissions may not be their nearest suitable school for travel purposes. You can see the eligibility criteria for home to school travel and also use the online tool to find your nearest school to your home address at https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/HomeToSchool

Allocated school places will be announced on National Offer Day, which is on April 16, 2027.

More details about primary school admissions can be found at https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/primaryadmissions

Work starts on first schemes funded by second homes premium

Construction has started on the first affordable homes to be funded through a council tax premium on second homes. North Yorkshire Council is supporting Broadacres Housing Association to build 26 affordable homes across two sites in Hunmanby and Shipton by Beningbrough, near York.

Funding from the second homes premium has helped unlock the schemes, alongside significant investment from Broadacres and Homes England. The council became one of the first authorities in the UK to introduce the 100 per cent premium on council tax bills for second homes in April 2025 to help address the need for more affordable housing across the county, particularly in coastal and rural areas.

The premium effectively doubled council tax bills for second homeowners in a bid to bring more homes back into use for local families, while generating up to £10 million

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a year to support affordable housing and other key projects. Work is now underway on the first developments to benefit from almost £900,000 raised through the premium.

A total of 15 affordable homes will be built on land south of Sands Lane in Hunmanby, with one, two and three-bedroom properties to be available for social rent and shared ownership. The homes will be prioritised for people with a local connection to the area. A further 11 affordable homes have been earmarked for land at Station Lane in Shipton by Beningbrough. The development will provide four three-bedroom, five two-bedroom and two one-bedroom properties, available through social rent or shared ownership for people with a connection to the village and surrounding area.

All the homes are set to be completed by the autumn of 2027 and will include energy-efficient features and low-carbon heating.

Meeting the demand for affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing North Yorkshire. When the second homes premium was introduced, it came with a commitment that the funding would be reinvested to provide more social and supported housing for local people, with an emphasis on social rent. We are the only council in England to ring-fence this money and reinvest it exclusively in housing-related projects.

These are the first homes to be funded through the scheme, without which, would not have been possible. Money raised through the second homes premium is also supporting a number of other council priorities, including housing schemes and regeneration projects.

Plans for new multi-billion pound approach to care services

Care services to help people to live independently in their communities could be transformed under proposals for new multi-billion pound frameworks to deliver support across North Yorkshire amid dramatic increases in demand. The planned overhaul would involve introducing four new care and support frameworks to help to provide high quality and sustainable adult social care services.

Among the greatest pressures on North Yorkshire Council’s budget is the need to provide vital support for people across the county, with 34 per cent of the authority’s £1.4 billion annual budget being spent on adult social care. The combined estimated value of the proposed new arrangements over a seven-year period would be £3.5 billion, including services commissioned on behalf of NHS partners and then recharged to the health service.

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The council currently commissions adult social care services through the approved provider list which was introduced in November 2022. The proposal is to replace the current adult social care approved provider list, which is due to expire in 2027, with the four separate frameworks. Under the proposals, the new frameworks would cover community support, skills and independence as well as care homes, home-based support and supported living.

There is a growing need for care support for working age adults in North Yorkshire, although the county's older demographic is also placing services under increasing pressure. North Yorkshire has one of the oldest populations in the country, and one in three people will be aged over 65 by 2043. More age-related health issues such as dementia, falls, and long-term conditions are expected to emerge as the county's population lives longer.

The proposed changes follow a review of the current arrangements, which found they had successfully improved market oversight, the accountability of providers and financial control since being introduced in 2022. The review also identified opportunities to improve the design of the support on offer, pricing arrangements and oversight of contracts to ensure services remain responsive to changing needs, market conditions and future demand.

The new approach would allow the council to tailor commissioning arrangements to the specific needs of each service area, recognising the different delivery models, workforce and regulatory requirements and market conditions involved across adult social care. The four frameworks would be introduced through a phased programme, with community support, skills and independence expected to launch first, followed by care homes and home-based support.

Further work is planned on the proposed supported living model, allowing the council to test new approaches, engage with providers and respond to emerging regulations. If the plans are approved by the executive, existing supported living arrangements would continue during this period to ensure continuity of care.

The proposed new frameworks are aimed at helping to deliver clearer service standards and expectations, while supporting personalised care and improving quality, accountability and safeguarding.

They are also aimed at strengthening oversight of performance of providers, supporting sustainable care markets across North Yorkshire and encouraging opportunities for local, specialist and voluntary sector providers.

The plans support North Yorkshire Council's ambitions to help people live longer, healthier and more independent lives, while ensuring public resources are used effectively and sustainably.

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The council has engaged with care providers, people who use services, carers, NHS partners and representative organisations to help shape the proposals for the new arrangements.

The Executive report produced for the October 27th meeting can be viewed or downloaded as a PDF here: Care and Support Frameworks report

Council strategy aims to give every child the best start in life

Following approval by the NYC Executive committee, children and young people across North Yorkshire are set to benefit from a renewed focus on prevention, inclusion, belonging and family support through a new strategy that will be considered by councillors.

The plan, “Little Steps to Big Futures: With You. Your Place. When it Matters”, sets out North Yorkshire Council's vision for the next three years to improve outcomes for children and young people by reshaping how support is delivered across the county. At its heart, the proposed strategy focuses on providing help earlier, strengthening family and community support and ensuring more children can thrive within their families, communities and local schools.

Central to this ambition is helping children and young people develop a strong sense of belonging, connection and identity within the places where they live, learn and grow. It reflects a commitment to working with children, families, schools and partners to provide the right support at the right time, helping to prevent needs from escalating and enabling children and young people to achieve their full potential.

The proposed strategy has been informed by local data, insight and engagement. While many children and young people in North Yorkshire enjoy positive outcomes, some continue to face challenges linked to poverty, health and wellbeing, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), discrimination, and the particular challenges that can arise in a large rural county.

The strategy is built around five priorities:

- Helping families earlier.
- Promoting inclusion, belonging and learning.
- Strengthening families and support networks.
- Improving stability for vulnerable children and young people.
- Helping young people develop the skills and confidence needed for adulthood.

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North Yorkshire Council's executive member for children and families, Cllr Janet Sanderson, said: “Every child deserves the opportunity to enjoy a happy, healthy and fulfilling childhood, regardless of their background or circumstances.

The strategy also positions the council to respond positively to national reforms across children's social care, safeguarding and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It sets out how existing services and resources will increasingly focus on early intervention, inclusion and partnership working, ensuring support is responsive to the needs of children and families while delivering better outcomes.

A key focus of the strategy is strengthening joined-up working across services, schools and communities so that families can access support sooner and more easily when challenges arise. By building stronger connections between services and local networks, the approach aims to provide support closer to home, strengthen children's sense of belonging within their local communities, and reduce the need for more intensive interventions later.

The Executive report can be viewed or downloaded as a PDF here: New children and young people strategy

New enforcement tools proposed for illegal vapes and tobacco

New and innovative approaches to tackling illegal tobacco and vape sales could be adopted under proposals designed to protect consumers across North Yorkshire.

The revised policy for the county’s trading standards team, would reflect significant changes in national legislation and the need for new approaches to address the growing range of threats to residents and legitimate businesses.

Following approval by the Executive committee, an updated framework will help the council’s officers respond more effectively to issues ranging from underage tobacco and vape sales to online scams and rogue traders. The policy will introduce the use of fixed penalty notices for certain offences under the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026, alongside existing enforcement options, including prosecution, where businesses deliberately break the law, particularly when selling tobacco or vape products to children.

It also formally recognises innovative work carried out by the National Trading Standards e-Crime Team, which is jointly hosted in North Yorkshire with City of York Council. The team works with online platforms and service providers to remove misleading websites and content that can leave consumers out of pocket. This approach is helping tackle websites operating from overseas that falsely present themselves as legitimate UK businesses, often selling poor quality or misdescribed goods or failing to deliver products altogether.

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The proposed policy comes at a time when trading standards services across the country are tackling an increasingly complex range of issues. National figures show that more than 1.19 million illegal vapes were seized in England during 2023 and 2024, while almost a quarter of test purchases resulted in vapes being sold unlawfully to children.

The proposed revised policy also aligns with the council's wider enforcement strategy and supports priorities to keep people safe, healthy and living well while helping communities and businesses to thrive.

The Executive report can be viewed or downloaded as a PDF here: Trading Standards Enforcement Policy.

Mini tractors gear up for winter debut to boost snow response

Mini tractors are being deployed to clear snow in North Yorkshire's towns this winter to boost resilience against the most challenging conditions.

For most of the year, the red compact machines will be used by North Yorkshire Council's parks and countryside team for tasks including trimming flowerbeds and hedges, as well as carrying fencing supplies. They can also be fitted with snow-clearing attachments to support the winter maintenance teams when severe weather strikes, helping to deliver a cost-effective service.

The mini tractors will be stationed in Harrogate, Richmond and Scarborough, but will target the worst affected parts of the county when snow hits. This will include footways and other areas where access is restricted.

- The council operates 70 gritters, works with more than 100 farming contractors and has several snowploughs and snowblowers available.
- North Yorkshire's roads span the equivalent distance from Northallerton to Toyko, and more than 2,700 miles of the network is gritted during the annual winter maintenance programme.
- Around 50,000 tonnes of salt is in storage with about 5,000 salt bins and heaps across the county.

Advanced weather forecasting and road temperature monitoring helps to make informed decisions about when and where to treat roads. Gritting crews are on call 24 hours a day throughout the winter season.

Residents can view active gritters and the priority gritting routes on the council's online map at www.northyorks.gov.uk/winter-maintenance-policy

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Libraries offer light therapy kits to boost mood this winter

Residents across North Yorkshire are now able to borrow light therapy kits from their local library this winter as part of a pioneering initiative designed to help people manage the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). 150 Wintering Well kits are available to loan after funding was secured from Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants programme. They are designed to support people during the winter months when reduced daylight can affect mood and energy levels.

The kits were developed with Economic and Social Research Council funding by researchers from the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, in consultation with people who experience symptoms of SAD. Following two years of a successful trial in Scotland, North Yorkshire libraries are the first in England to offer access to the kits this year as part of a wider roll-out across the UK's four nations.

A total of 16 library services across Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales will offer the chance to borrow hundreds of Wintering Well Boxes over the winter months. Each kit contains a therapeutic light lamp and a guidebook with tips on simple indoor and outdoor activities that can help support a new healthy winter routine, as well as signposting to a free online course.

According to figures from the Royal College of Psychiatry, more than a million people in the UK are estimated to live with SAD during the winter months as a result of reduced access to natural light.

For more information on the Wintering Well project, visit www.northyorks.gov.uk/wintering-well

For more information about how to keep well and warm during winter visit www.northyorks.gov.uk/winterhealth

This includes guidance for preparing for cold weather, travelling safely, staying warm and safe, getting vaccinated, choosing the right healthcare, looking after your mental health and supporting other people around you.

Residents encouraged to help influence county-wide local plan

Communities are being encouraged to have their say on North Yorkshire's first county-wide local plan which will help shape how the area grows and develops over the next 20 years.

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North Yorkshire Council is launching a six-week scoping consultation which marks a key stage in preparing the authority's new local plan under the Government's updated national plan-making system. The consultation invites views on what the local plan should contain and how the council should engage with residents, businesses and organisations throughout its development.

The single countywide strategy will replace the adopted local plans that currently cover the former district and borough council areas of Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough and Selby. The new local plan will provide a single blueprint for how North Yorkshire grows and develops up to 2045, guiding decisions on planning applications across the council area. It will also help determine where new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure should be located, while setting out how important landscapes, heritage assets and environmental features should be protected and enhanced.

As the plan is still at a very early stage, the council is asking residents, businesses, community groups and other organisations to help shape its direction by sharing their views through the consultation. This consultation is the first of three formal opportunities for people to influence the plan before it is adopted, alongside a series of mandatory checkpoints known as gateways, which are designed to identify and resolve potential issues at key stages of the process.

The consultation is the first under the Government's new national plan-making system, which came into force in March this year and replaced planning regulations introduced in 2012. The new system places a greater emphasis on digital plan-making, including the use of standardised data, user-friendly online tools and searchable electronic documents.

Earlier work undertaken by the council will continue to inform the process. In 2025, residents and organisations took part in a "first conversation" consultation on issues and options for the county's first local plan. While the council is required to begin again under the new national system, the feedback received through that engagement remains important and will help shape the new strategy.

Following the closure of this consultation, which runs until Monday, December 7, the council will publish a summary of the responses received. The feedback will help inform the next stage of preparing the plan. The council is expected to go through the first gateway in April 2027, and it is hoped that the local plan will be adopted by the end of 2029.

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For more information about the local plan, full details of the consultation and how to take part, visit North Yorkshire Council's website at www.northyorks.gov.uk/localplan.

Government approves North Yorkshire's Local Area SEND reform plan

North Yorkshire's Local Area SEND reform plan has been approved by the Department for Education, which is focussed on earlier support, stronger inclusion and improved access to local services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Local Area SEND Partnership was required by the DfE to prepare and submit the plan. It was developed by bringing together views from parents, carers and young people and schools, health and council services.

The plan is North Yorkshire's response to the Government's SEND reforms. It sets out clear actions reflecting the county's needs, priorities and geography, recognising that improving support for children with SEND is a shared responsibility across partner organisations.

It also sets out a three-year programme of system changes and the intention of the plan, underpinned by national reform, is to provide earlier access to support so that more children can thrive in local schools and settings.

The reform plan focuses on:

- Stronger inclusion in mainstream education.
- Expanding specialist help and advice to local schools.
- Strengthening the local area partnership.

A key element of the programme will be the delivery of the county's "Experts at Hand" model providing schools with faster access to specialist advice and support from professionals including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and specialist teachers.

The aim is to identify needs earlier and support more children in our local schools and settings, strengthening access to specialist practitioners including educational psychologists and therapists as well as embedding the use of our Inclusive Mainstream Toolkit that has been coproduced with our Parent Carer Forum.

Other exciting developments include rapidly expanding specialist bases in mainstream schools and broadening the alternative provision offer to provide better outreach support and places for primary-aged children.

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