

North Yorkshire Councillor report – January 2026

Firstly, I would like to wish all members and residents a happy new year, I trust the Christmas holiday period has provided much needed relief to end a challenging 2025.

I look forward to continuing to be your North Yorkshire Council representative and pledge my continued commitment in representing and serving our communities and their interests.

First affordable homes set to be funded by council tax premium

The first wave of affordable housing that will be funded by a new council tax premium on second homes have been identified. North Yorkshire Council became one of the first authorities in the UK to introduce a 100 per cent premium for council tax bills on second homes in April last year.

The new scheme effectively doubled council tax bills for second homeowners and is due to raise more than £10 million each year. That money will be used to help to address the critical need for affordable housing across the county.

The introduction of the council tax premium aims to bring second homes back into use for local families in some of the county's most desirable locations.

It is hoped that some second homes owners may decide to put their properties back on the market when faced with the council tax premium to provide the opportunity for local people to purchase them. But for those properties that remain as second homes, the council tax premium will generate millions of pounds in funding for key housing projects – with more than 500 extra affordable homes to be developed over the next four years as a result.

The first project to benefit from the funding has now been identified. A planning application has been submitted for a site in Hunmanby, and should it be successful, the new funding will be allocated to the Northallerton-based housing association, Broadacres, to build a total of 15 affordable homes.

The council tax premium was introduced with the intention of encouraging second homes to be brought back into occupation across our communities, given there are more than 9,000 people on housing waiting lists across North Yorkshire and over 8,200 second homes.

Additional funding generated from the council tax premium will be used to tackle a range of housing issues that we are facing, including the building of new affordable homes, securing additional temporary accommodation and supported housing. This will see £12 million committed to the affordable housing delivery fund and a further £4 million to the rural housing delivery fund over the next four years. Because while approximately 800 new affordable homes have been developed each year across North Yorkshire over the past decade, supply still doesn't meet demand.

As well as supporting the building of hundreds of new homes through the affordable housing delivery fund and rural housing delivery fund, money generated from the council tax premium is also set to support other council priorities. A total of £2 million is set to be used for schemes including regeneration projects and £4 million would be set aside to develop a 20-bed supported housing scheme on the coast for people with complex needs who have a history of rough sleeping. A further £12 million is due to be used to develop a commissioning framework for supported housing.

The council is also set to work alongside the Government's housing agency, Homes England, and the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to maximise the use of available grants and to deliver shared objectives to introduce more affordable housing.

Recruitment drive launches to entice new talent this New Year

Inspiring people to make their next career move in 2026 is the focus of a major recruitment campaign highlighting attractive job opportunities in North Yorkshire. For the second year, North Yorkshire Council is partnering with the Local Government Association to promote the Make a Difference, Work for your Local Council campaign.

The national campaign shines a light on the difference that people make in the communities they serve, and the variety of careers, flexible working, and development opportunities on offer.

North Yorkshire Council delivers essential and wide-ranging services across England's largest county. Among the rewarding roles that you could find yourself in at the council include supporting children who have special educational needs to help them to fulfil their full potential close to their homes.

You could also find a job to help support the 3,500 people in residential or nursing care, or perhaps a role working in one of the council's 16 leisure and wellbeing hubs would appeal. There is also the possibility of working in the council's cultural and arts service in community museums and libraries, or venues such as the

Scarborough Open Air Theatre. This year, it staged performances from music stars including Will Smith, Gary Barlow and The Corrs.

The wide-ranging roles include plumbers, joiners and electricians working in properties, as well as engineers and planners that help shape and improve the infrastructure of towns and villages.

Staff are employed to improve the environment in roles that collect, reduce and recycle waste, and deliver initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint or support businesses to grow as a trading standards or economic development career. The national campaign features the council's technology service, highlighting the diverse job opportunities in this field.

In addition to frontline service roles, there are careers in finance, technology, human resources, legal, procurement and business administration. More than 3,700 vacancies have been advertised in the past year to more than 1,000 different job roles. There are an average of 310 roles advertised monthly and there are about 130 different jobs to apply for that change daily.

More than nine in 10 councils across the country are experiencing staff recruitment and retention difficulties as demand for services continues to rise.

All jobs and career opportunities at North Yorkshire Council can be viewed at www.northyorks.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers

The rewards and benefits are listed on

www.northyorks.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/total-rewards and a comprehensive brochure on the careers on offer is available at www.northyorks.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/working-us

The Local Government Association has also launched a dedicated campaign website at www.localcounciljobs.gov.uk

Finance – Local Government settlement 2026-29

As I have mentioned in previous reports, the financial settlement from Central Government last year represented the most aggressive I have known during my fifteen years as a Councillor. Indeed the impact on the new North Yorkshire Councils ability to deliver services was only saved from further reductions by a combination of historically prudent fiscal policy and the financial benefits of LGR.

As has been suspected for a while now, the latest settlement which is for the upcoming 3 years. Which while it is better to have that clarity from a budget setting prospective, the actual numbers are far more disappointing.

Put simply, we have once again been hit by yet another financial hammer blow from Government, that lays a challenge that can not just be met by a silver bullet of reserves and efficiencies, but will once again require detailed analysis of our spending and service commitments.

The graphic below shows the cumulative impact of last years Rural settlement grant funding cut, the increased employment costs from National Insurance rates and the latest Fair funding programme. Which in simple terms equates to a drop in income of £42.5 M/year.



Aggregate Losses 2025/26 – 2026/27

| | £M | £M |
|------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| Loss due to Fair Funding 2.0 | 19.6 | 2026/27 |
| Loss of Rural Services Grant | 14.3 | 2025/26 |
| | 33.9 | Rural council loss |
| Net Loss on Employers NI | 8.6 | Further loss but national issue |
| Total | 42.5 | |

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While there is a suggestion from Government that we will have increased Core spending power (CSP) during this parliament of £101M (14%), that is somewhat misleading because it relies entirely on the assumption of a 4.99% Council tax increase every year. There is also an assumption of average growth in the Council tax base (number of houses) based on the last four years figures, but this is artificially exaggerated due to the one-off jump due to the second homes premium.

As our finance team can better assess and understand the full implications of these funding changes, I will bring back to you a more detailed assessment.

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