

# North Yorkshire

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## Comment text:

Related subject: Malton and Norton

Good evening,

I am writing in relation to the ongoing North Yorkshire review.

Please find attached a submission from myself (Cllr Keane Duncan), Malton Town Council, Norton Town Council and Kevin Hollinrake MP.

If you are able to confirm receipt of the submission, this would be appreciated.

Many thanks,  
Keane

## Attached Documents:

- a-cross-party,-joint-submission-for-malton-and-norton.pdf

# A cross-party, joint submission for Malton and Norton

## 1. Introduction

This is a submission relating to the towns of Malton and Norton from Cllr Keane Duncan (North Yorkshire Council, Norton), Malton Town Council, Norton Town Council and Kevin Hollinrake MP (Thirsk & Malton). We stand united in support of this cross-party proposal for the twin communities we are proud to serve at town, unitary and parliamentary level.

We are proposing the creation of a two-member division joining the entire, undivided town areas of both Malton and Norton. It would contain 12,136 electors based on North Yorkshire Council's 2030 forecast.

Our proposal is limited to the Malton and Norton town areas only. It does not affect any neighbouring parishes.

We are aware of North Yorkshire Council's alternative submission proposing two, single-member divisions covering Malton and Norton, in an east and west formation. We reference this throughout our submission to illustrate the implications of a single-member formation for Malton and Norton generally.

We understand you are "minded to" accept North Yorkshire Council's request for 89 members. Our proposal does not seek to challenge this request and operates on this basis.

While North Yorkshire Council has requested a single-member review, we note in 3.15 of the Technical Guidance document that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is "not obliged to recommend a uniform pattern of single-member wards or divisions" and "seeking a single-member pattern does not override your statutory criteria".

We also reference an email sent on October 21 to Cllr Keane Duncan from Simon Ashby, Review Officer & Mapping Lead at LGBCE, stating "...it is important to note that we can move away from this in specific areas of North Yorkshire if we receive evidence persuading us that single-member divisions in a particular area would not be the best balance of our statutory criteria".

This submission provides evidence relating to your statutory criteria to justify a deviation from a single-member formation, namely that this would not reflect **community identity (section 3)** and would create obstacles to **effective and convenient local government (section 4)**.

Our submission also argues that a two-member division would deliver the added advantage of achieving better **electoral equality (section 2)** in the immediate term and by 2030.

We believe your statutory criteria can be better met by a two-member division, and therefore deviation from a single-member pattern is justified, and necessary, in the Malton and Norton area.

## **2. Electoral equality**

We note that when the number of electors per councillor in a division is within 10% of the average for the authority LGBCE refers to the division as having “good electoral equality”.

In the case of North Yorkshire, the average number of electors per councillor equates to 5,819 under the 2030 forecasts. The upper range is 6,401 and the lower range is 5,237. We fully accept and support the need to strive towards creation of this electoral equality so votes are as equal as possible. Our proposal, therefore, fully complies with this requirement.

Not only this, we argue that our proposal, for a two-member division, will create better electoral equality, not only by 2030, but in the immediate term too.

### **Context**

Under the 2030 electorate estimates supplied by North Yorkshire Council:

- there are a total of 5,205 electors projected for Malton (-10% of the average)
- and 6,931 electors projected for Norton (+19% of the average)

It means that the number of electors in Malton falls below the minimum to be considered to have good electoral equality, although only slightly.

The number of electors in the town area of Norton falls above the maximum to be considered to have good electoral equality, and by a significant degree.

Therefore, it is not possible under a single-member arrangement for Malton and Norton to be standalone divisions following their existing town boundaries and be considered to have good electoral equality.

### **Single-member formation**

A single-member arrangement in all cases necessitates the town area of Norton to be divided between divisions to ensure these contain the optimal number of electors. It cannot be avoided if good electoral equality is to be properly achieved. This could be approached in two ways:

- splitting Norton along the existing town wards, East and West, with rural parishes then added to each;
- splitting Norton in a more novel way, bringing Norton electors together with Malton electors to address Norton’s abundance of electors and Malton’s shortfall

A split between the established town East and West wards in Norton would divide the town broadly into two halves and necessitate the inclusion of a significant number of neighbouring parishes that are rural in nature. This would combine diverse urban and rural areas, each with their divergent issues. North Yorkshire Council’s Working Party sought to explicitly avoid this mix of areas in their proposals.

Meanwhile, under this proposal, the town area of Malton, which is currently unwarded, could in theory remain as an undivided whole. This would require electors from neighbouring parishes to be added to become compliant within 10% of the average.

The alternative way of achieving good electoral equality within a single-member pattern is via the exchange of electors between the towns of Malton and Norton. This would be more limited in impact,

containing this to the two town areas. North Yorkshire Council has confirmed the minimum number of electors required to be exchanged is 332, although this would only just secure compliance within 10% variance and therefore would not be ideal given the potential for electoral inequality to be compromised quickly.

The submission by North Yorkshire Council creates electoral equality by proposing such an exchange of electors between Malton and Norton, creating two compliant divisions by fusing together electors from each of the two towns: Malton Norton West (MNW) and Malton Norton East (MNE).

This creates two divisions with broadly equal numbers of electors by 2030, although MNW contains more electors than MNE. The inequality is not substantial, but there is an inequality nonetheless. The percentage variance from the average is 5.14% in MNW and 3.07% in MNE. To be exactly equal (6,069), 864 electors would need to be exchanged.

### ***Two-member formation***

Our alternative achieves the maximum possible electoral equality across all parts of the two town areas by 2030, with 12,136 electors in total, a 4.30% variance from the average.

The votes of every elector in the two towns carry equal weight under the two-member arrangement, while splitting the towns into two divisions inevitably means greater inequality in one of the two single-member divisions as a perfectly equal split of electors would be impossible to achieve and sustain practically.

More importantly, the two-member division gives the greatest possible protection from inequality in the immediate term and from future inequality arising from new development.

North Yorkshire Council forecasts housing development will generate an additional 19 electors in Malton and an additional 520 in Norton by 2030.

Not only is future development expected to be unevenly distributed between the towns, falling predominantly in Norton, it is expected to be unevenly distributed within Norton itself, falling predominantly in the east of Norton.

This predicted development has been factored into the 2030 electorate forecasts for MNW and MNE, meaning there is electoral inequality in the immediate term. While the expectation is for equality to be achieved by 2030, this immediate inequality is significant, with MNE having 897 fewer electors than MNW.

The new development forecast in MNE must come to fruition for this inequality to be rectified. There is uncertainty attached to this development and this risks poor electoral equality continuing in the longer term. To add particular emphasis to this point, the largest single expected development (located at Norton Lodge) has suffered significant delays, having been submitted to the council for consideration in August 2021 and a decision still to be made on the application.

What is more, there is wider uncertainty about where future development will take place in light of new, higher housing targets set by national government. Unexpected, or speculative, developments are likely as North Yorkshire does not have an adopted county-wide Local Plan. These would clearly risk creating

electoral inequality. This risk is heightened by creating two divisions across the towns, and this development then falling entirely or disproportionately in one of the divisions.

While the LGBCE has to rightly follow the best estimates of the local authority, and there will always be uncertainty, it would be clearly advantageous if immediate electoral inequality could be avoided and the impact of future development mitigated as far as possible.

We have sought information from North Yorkshire Council about the number of electors now (in 2024), and the number of electors expected in 2030, split according to the proposal for two single-member divisions and our alternative proposal for a two-member division. For reference, the total 2024 electorate is 483,576, giving an average of 5,433.

We have presented the information in the following table:

	<b><i>Two single-member divisions</i></b>		<b><i>Two-member division</i></b>
Division	Malton Norton West	Malton Norton East	Malton and Norton
Number of electors 2024	5,937	5,040	10,977
Variance 2024	<b>+9.28%</b>	<b>-7.23%</b>	<b>+1.02%</b>
Number of electors 2030	6,134	6,003	12,136
Variance 2030	<b>+5.14%</b>	<b>+3.07%</b>	<b>+4.30%</b>

The table shows that the initial variance created is close to the upper limit of 10% in the case of MNW. It also shows that combining Malton and Norton into a two-member division limits this short-term inequality significantly.

It also shows the two-member arrangement would achieve a better level of equality in 2030. The added advantage of a two-member division is that it would also mutualise the impact of new development not coming to fruition as planned, arising unexpectedly or falling in a disproportionate way across the two towns, therefore mitigating against potential future electoral inequality as strongly as possible.

### ***3. Community identity***

We note 3.6 of the Technical Guidance refers to the “desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and which will not break local ties”. It adds: “Our aim is to identify clear and long-lasting boundaries for ward/division.” 4.43 of the Guidance states: “We will in these cases consider the nature of local ties or interactions between communities, as well as within them.”

In the case of Malton and Norton, the two towns feel a strong sense of individual identity. They are distinct towns, either side of the historic River Derwent, with independent town councils, but are nonetheless close neighbours, sharing issues, resources and facilities.

Our proposal seeks to reflect this identity. It protects each town from unnecessary and confusing internal division, ensuring they remain as standalone, indivisible and coherent communities in their own right.

At the same time, it joins these two, whole, twin towns into a single division to reflect their proximity, common issues and joint services. It hopes to foster deeper cooperation and build on the joint working that is already evident and becoming more important.

#### ***Divisions between the towns***

The River Derwent acts as the historical boundary between not only Malton and Norton, but the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. Malton and Norton were served by different county and district councils until reorganisation in 1974. This historical, longstanding divide means the River Derwent boundary has much stronger resonance with local people than a simple parish boundary.

Today, the River Derwent divides the jurisdictions of the two councils. What is more, the catchment areas for local primary and secondary schools continue to be demarked by the River Derwent. Malton and Norton have their own town centres either side of the river: the Market Place in Malton and Commercial Street in Norton.

There is a clear divide, historically and in modern day structures, that means dissecting the River Derwent with divisions that blend parts of Malton and Norton, divorcing some town electors from others, would compromise community identity. It is an arrangement without any precedence at town, district, county and unitary council level, before and after 1974. No council candidates have ever been elected to divisions that straddle the River Derwent.

The town boundaries remain the most easily identifiable and simple to understand, therefore protecting these is important to ensure community identity and interests can be properly reflected. This indivisibility of the individual towns is the first principle our submission is based upon.

#### ***Links between the towns***

While the two towns are independent with their own distinct identities, Malton and Norton are increasingly seen as collective communities. In practical terms, residents either side of the River Derwent share key resources and facilities. There are issues affecting both towns and collective action is under way to address them. Community groups and charities serve people across both towns and bring people together. They act as vital forums for community involvement and interaction.

It is this increasing feeling of unity and the very practical links between the towns is the second principle our submission is based upon.

Malton and Norton are small towns, with a combined population of around 14,000. Key health, transport, education and retail facilities are located in one town, or the other, but used by people resident on both sides of the River Derwent. We have compiled a table of shared facilities and resources located in Malton and Norton to illustrate these important, joint links:

	<b><i>Located in Malton</i></b>	<b><i>Located in Norton</i></b>
Health	Malton, Norton & District Hospital	<b>Derwent Practice</b> <b>Beecham Pharmacy</b>
Transport		<b>Malton Rail Station</b> <b>Malton Bus Station</b>
Charities	Ryedale Special Families Camphill Trust	<b>Next Steps</b> Ryedale Community Foodbank Ryedale Community Transport
Emergency services	<b>Malton Fire Station</b> Malton Police Station Malton Ambulance Station	
Supermarkets	<b>Morrisons</b>	<b>Asda</b> <b>Lidl</b>
Key services	North Yorkshire Council DWP, Job Centre Plus	
Arts and leisure	Malton Sports Centre Milton Rooms Kirkham Henry Performing Arts Centre Malton Library Malton & Norton RUFC Malton & Old Malton Cricket Club Brooklyn Football Club	<b>Derwent Swim &amp; Fitness Centre</b> <b>Norton &amp; Malton Skatepark</b> Norton Library (The Hive) Ryedale Community & Leisure Centre Dance Expression
Education	<b>Fire Station Pre-School</b> Malton School & Sixth Form Malton Primary School St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Norton College Norton Primary School Brooklyn Pre-School

While the River Derwent represents a clear, historical and physical barrier, it also represents a focal point for the two communities. The two road and pedestrian crossing points, County Bridge and Railway Bridge, are contained in close proximity, just 400m apart.

This 'river corridor' contains a concentration of key facilities, with the train station, bus station, GP surgery, fire station, leisure centre and three supermarkets located here. All are situated within 150m of the River Derwent and are listed in **bold** on the above table. This underlines the close geographical proximity of the towns and the importance of an arrangement that reflects this.

Despite their names, Malton Bus Station and Malton Rail Station are both located on the Norton side of the river. They are the only transport stations in the two towns and are used equally by people from Malton and Norton.

Health facilities are also shared. Derwent Practice is located near the bus and rail stations. It serves patients from the Malton and Norton area and was established following the amalgamation of separate

GP practices previously located in Malton and Norton. Malton, Norton and District Hospital is located in Malton, but is the only hospital facility in the towns and serves both, providing an Urgent Treatment Centre. Until 2010, the hospital contained a maternity unit, and thousands of Malton and Norton residents were born here since it opened in the 1970s.

There is one access point for North Yorkshire Council services, located in Ryedale House (Malton). This is also a hub for other services. Malton Police Station is contained in the building, along with Malton Jobcentre Plus. This was previously located in Norton, but relocated to Malton, again emphasising it serves both communities.

While both towns contain primary and secondary schools, with catchments demarked by the River Derwent, children from both towns are enrolled there. Furthermore, with a decision to close Norton College Sixth Form imminent, sole sixth form provision for 16-18 year-olds will be located at Malton School. This will see most post-16 students from the two towns attending one facility.

Arts, culture and leisure facilities provide further evidence of the strong links between the two towns. These are not only shared facilities, but forums that foster joint community spirit. There is just a single council-operated leisure centre, Derwent Swim & Fitness Centre, located in Norton. The centre hosts swimming lessons for children and keep fit classes for adults.

Malton Sports Centre, located in Malton, serves residents of both towns, offering the most extensive sports grounds. Brooklyn Football Club, based in Norton until 2012, now operates from this centre. Malton and Norton Rugby Union Football Club, located in Old Malton, serves both towns, as does nearby Malton & Old Malton Cricket Club. These clubs contain young people from both Malton and Norton playing together in their respective teams. Ryedale Community and Leisure Centre, located in Norton, provides an indoor bowling club used by residents from both Norton and Malton.

The skatepark, located in Norton, and playparks in Riverside Way and Rainbow Lane, are locations where children from both towns meet together. What is more, the skatepark is jointly funded by both town councils, showcasing its status as a joint facility.

The largest public hall, the Milton Rooms, is located Malton, but was built “for the use of Malton and Norton residents”, according to its website. Again, both town councils have contributed financially to its operation. Malton & Norton Musical Theatre has held annual performances there for 75 years. Kirkham Henry Performing Arts Centre is another popular resource, bringing together creative young people from both towns.

Next Steps, a well-being hub in Norton, has confirmed it serves people from both towns: 60% Norton, 30% Malton, 10% surrounding villages. Ryedale Foodbank, based in Norton, also serves both communities, with statistics from last month showing 48 vouchers were issued for Malton and 41 for Norton.

We have requested further supporting information from a range of other community organisations, which should support the case we are making about the interaction they foster between the towns. We hope to share this with LGBCE in the next round of consultation.



In addition to sharing facilities, the people of the two towns also share issues and concerns. The town councils and North Yorkshire Council recognise the need for a common and unified approach to addressing these joint issues.

There is close working between the two town councils, arising in part from three councillors (a quarter of the membership) being elected to sit on both authorities. This has become deeper and formalised in recent years, with the establishment of the Malton & Norton Area Partnership, a forum “to promote the interests of the two towns and the surrounding parishes”.

A joint Malton and Norton Neighbourhood Plan was approved in November 2024 following a referendum across both towns. The Plan establishes “a vision for the two towns and help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs”. The Plan states in its introduction: “The history and development of Malton and Norton are inseparable.”

It represents extensive work by a steering group including “representatives from the whole community of Malton and Norton”. Several focus groups, including residents, businesses, community groups, schools and churches, drawn from across both towns, helped inform the plan’s vision.

The Plan underlines issues of common concern shared between the two towns, such as transport connectivity, the environment and housing. It also evidences the linked economy of the two towns across key sectors such as retail, horseracing, tourism and food production. The successful referendum gives precedence to a ballot of electors across both towns.

North Yorkshire Council operates a number of joint Malton and Norton policies and plans. Flooding is a major issue affecting both towns, with significant floods damaging property in 1999, 2000 and 2015. Action has been collective, with recent improvements under the Malton, Norton and Old Malton Flood Alleviation Plan. Immediate response to flooding incidents is also handled across both towns, via a joint multiagency pumping plan for Malton and Norton.

What is more, the issues of air quality and traffic congestion in the vicinity of County Bridge resulted in the commissioning of the Malton and Norton Infrastructure and Connectivity Improvements Study. A working group involving both North Yorkshire councillors and representatives of the town councils was established to guide the way forward, with an action plan agreed covering both sides of the river.

There is clear, successful cooperation between the two towns already. Joint plans and policies exist. There is an eagerness for closer cooperation from all levels of representation (town, unitary and parliamentary), and for the new North Yorkshire divisions to aid this objective.

### ***Single-member formation***

As already explained, the restrictions imposed by single-member formation forces the division of the town areas that local people identify with strongly.

Merging parts of Malton and Norton together is the way to limit the impact to neighbouring parish areas and was therefore the preferred option selected by North Yorkshire Council’s Working Party to achieve a single-member formation. While their submission for two, single-member divisions includes just one potential split, and this could be varied, it serves as an illustration of the disruption any dissection of the River Derwent creates.

There will be many ways to draw the divide, with the resultant division of streets in some proposals more logical than others. In all cases, however, we feel that any divide of one, or both, of the town areas cannot reflect the strong community affiliation people feel to their individual town. Nor can it reflect the increasingly strong links people feel between the towns.

In the case of a small minority of one town being divorced by the majority, we contend that this will create a feeling of detachment from their town. This is illustrated in a particularly acute way by the North Yorkshire Council proposal.

A minimal exchange of electors from Norton to Malton to achieve electoral balance was ruled out by the Working Party, with the Executive report stating:

*“The main challenge within this area was the imbalance between the Norton and Malton Divisions. It was determined that it was not desirable to select some of Norton to move to the Malton Division as this does not reflect the identity of the two places. The proposal therefore separates the area north to south with two divisions covering both towns equally.”*

We can understand the Working Party’s reasoning. However, in seeking to avoid such an arrangement, the opposite effect has been achieved, whereby a small minority of Malton has been selected to be featured in a division made up predominantly of Norton electors. MNE contains 9% of electors from Malton and 92% of electors from Norton.

MNW contains around 25% electors from Norton and 75% from Malton, so is a better mix, but Malton electors remain dominant, meaning the ambition of creating “two divisions covering both towns equally” has not been achieved, despite the Working Party’s best efforts and consideration of various draft options. This illustrates the difficulties arising from such a split.

This table shows the split of electors between the two towns under the various models:

	<b>Two single-member divisions</b>		<b>Two-member division</b>
Division	Malton Norton West	Malton Norton East	Malton and Norton
Malton electors	4689 (76.4%)	517 (8.6%)	5,205 (42.9%)
Norton electors	1,446 (23.6%)	5,486 (91.4%)	6,931 (57.1%)

While the NYC boundaries would not change the town boundaries, the NYC proposal has nonetheless given rise to a significant confusion and angst locally. We can report from our engagement with the public so far a feeling that electors in the minority sections of each division have “moved into Malton” or “moved into Norton”. MNE is seen as the “Norton division” and MNW is seen as the “Malton division”, due to the disparity of electors this has created.

NYC’s submission illustrates the effects of dividing the communities particularly acutely. In terms of MNE, most of the Malton electors are concentrated in Old Malton, which is very much a standalone community in its own right. While contained in the Malton town area, it is demarked by entry/exit signage. It is a settlement with a village feel, with predominantly historic, stone buildings throughout, standing in contrast to Malton’s predominantly brick architecture.

Old Malton is separated from the vast majority of the division's population in Norton. It requires a 1.6km journey from Old Malton to reach Norton. There are no electors located along 700m of this route. Old Malton is isolated, and effectively detached, from the remainder of the division, meaning it's inclusion in a division with the vast majority of Norton compromises community identity. The hamlets of Wykeham and Esperskyes, located at the northeastern extremity of the division, are 5.5km from County Bridge, the sole point linking to Norton.

There is little obvious way to avoid this clash of communities either side of the River Derwent under any single-member formation given physical constraints that the river and its limited crossing points create. Including Old Malton in a division with the whole of the two towns would be much more coherent than including it with just selected parts of each town.

What is more, there are just 190 electors from the Malton town area itself contained in the proposed MNE. These are made up of residents from a small number of streets: Sheepfoot Hill, Church Hill, one side of Castlegate and one side of Old Maltongate. These streets are effectively orphaned given access runs entirely along the division boundary itself.

The arrangement also divides electors on several streets in Norton, in a novel way that does not resemble the long-established town wards. Langton Road and St Nicholas Street are split between MNE and MNW, with near neighbours electing different councillors. These are not major thoroughfares, but streets residential in character where there are inevitably strong associations between neighbours. St Nicholas Street, for example, has historic issues with flooding that have created a shared sense of solidarity. Meanwhile, Norton Primary School's two sites, in Wood Street and Langton Road, would fall either side of the proposed divide.

While these are specific issues arising from the NYC submission, it is hard to see how any division of the towns could be achieved in a logical pattern that reflects community identity. Any single-member formation would inevitably result in splitting the many community facilities that are shared between both towns and that foster a joint community identity. By necessity of the need to ensure all parts of a division connect, it splits the key 'river corridor' referred to above, as the bridges are the only links between the towns.

This means that medical, retail, education and emergency services facilities shared between the two towns, particularly those around the River Derwent, would be located either side of a new dividing line in a way that will feel very alien and arbitrary to local people.

### ***Two-member formation***

A single-member formation, in whatever way it is achieved, will break up one or more of the towns, while a two-member formation would allow Malton and Norton town areas to remain undivided. These town boundaries are the most established and easy identifiable for local people. They have their own independent identity, with each represented by its own town council.

We feel it is imperative that LGBCE deviates from the single-member pattern in the Malton and Norton area to avoid splitting the towns and dissecting the River Derwent, which is not only a historical boundary, but a physical barrier with limited crossing points than makes logical division tricky.

A two-member formation will avoid breaking local ties and the affinity local people feel for their own town, while uniting both towns in a way that reflects the cross-community use of facilities and resources that is supported by a significant body of evidence we have included in this submission. It will allow further cooperation on the shared issues identified and build on the foundations of cooperation that are under way.

We ask you to consider the evidence we have submitted in support of local ties *within* the two towns, as well as *between* the town towns. We feel it is essential that you reflect this in your recommendation, keeping the individual towns as whole units, and uniting both together into a single division electing two councillors.

#### ***4. Effective and convenient local government***

We note, and agree, with the view expressed by LGBCE in previous reviews that dividing a parish between fewer divisions is better for the effective and convenient local government of electors in those divisions.

While a single-member arrangement requires division of the towns, our submission for a two-member formation ensures Malton and Norton can remain as whole units. A single-member arrangement will also require changes to town council warding arrangements. A two-member formation will avoid this and ensure the most straight-forward relationship between unitary and town council boundaries. We argue this is the best basis for effective and convenient local government.

We argue that dividing the towns and blending parts of Malton and Norton together will generate confusion, dilute accountability and make it more difficult for the public and organisations to identify who they need to engage with on issues. A two-member formation allows the public across the towns to elect representatives who have a mandate from the whole two towns. This will enhance joint working between Malton and Norton that is already in existence.

##### ***Single-member formation***

Division of the town areas along new boundaries, unrecognised and alien to local people in Malton and Norton, will inevitably generate confusion amongst local people. This will be particularly acute given these boundaries are not only new, but cross the River Derwent, combining parts of each town together in an arrangement without precedence at any level of local government.

In addition, we believe a single-member formation will create practical constraints that serve as barriers to effective and convenient local government. The River Derwent, running through the entirety of both towns, makes division of the towns particularly difficult.

There are just two road and pedestrian crossing points between the two towns, County Bridge and Railway Bridge. Both are located roughly 400m apart in a heavily constrained and congested corridor. In the case of MNE, it would mean that the only link between the Malton and Norton parts of the division would be via County Bridge, a single, constrained crossing point. Flooding frequently necessitates the closure of this bridge to both traffic and pedestrians.

The arrangement is further complicated by the existence of one-way systems on three roads, Norton Road, Wells Lane and Church Hill, four-way traffic lights at Butcher Corner and a 'no right turn' junction at the junction of Railway Street and Yorkersgate. Arrangements that dissect this already constrained corridor, with concentrations of population detached from one another, mean internal links are tenuous and less than ideal. It results in divisions that are barely coherent, which is not the best basis for effective and convenient local government.

A further ramification of creating single member divisions that divide the town areas of Malton and Norton removes coterminosity with the town council boundaries and wards. It would necessitate the warding of Malton for the first time, changing the long-established method of electing all 12 town councillors at large, across the whole town. In Norton, it would require the re-warding of the town, altering its long-established arrangement of two broadly-equal divisions (East and West) with each electing six councillors.

We have produced this table to illustrate the disruption single-member divisions would create to the existing town council arrangements:

	<b><i>Two single-member divisions</i></b>		<b><i>Two-member division</i></b>
	Malton Norton West	Malton Norton East	Malton and Norton
<b>Malton</b>	At least one new ward created	One small Malton ward of c.500 electors created	<b>No change.</b> Unwarded as now
<b>Norton</b>	A smaller West ward created	A larger East ward, or multiple new wards, covering the East	<b>No change.</b> East and West wards, as now

Such significant changes to the town council arrangements at the same time as changes to the North Yorkshire Council division will only serve to compound public confusion.

They would also create disruption and extra work that is unnecessary, when a two-member formation can deliver good electoral equality without requiring changes at town council level.

We argue in the case of Malton that the town ward that would result from the formation of MNE would be potentially unworkable given it could contain only a maximum of 517 electors, as these are the total number of Malton electors in MNE. This is around 10% of the total number of electors expected in Malton by 2030.

We argue this ward would also be illogical in its formation, with little commonality when divorced from the remainder of the town. The standalone town ward dissects the town area, spanning from the centre at a busy crossroads junction known locally as Butcher Corner to the outer perimeter beyond Howe Farm. It groups electors contained in two concentrations of population falling a significant distance apart. It is a 700m by road from the last elector in Old Maltongate, Malton to the next elector in Town Street, Old Malton.

### ***Two-member formation***

A two-member arrangement would allow every elector in Malton and Norton to choose between the same candidates for North Yorkshire Council, and vote in the same way as before for their respective town council. While Malton and Norton would be fused for the purposes of North Yorkshire Council elections, they would be fused in their entirety. This is a much simpler arrangement for electors to understand and avoids any feeling of detachment from their town.

The town councillors would like to relay their concerns that dividing the towns between North Yorkshire councillors could give rise to practical problems and undermine the joint working that has proven key in recent years. Each town council has one point of liaison at present, with issues being able to be raised and feedback given via their sole North Yorkshire councillor. Splitting the towns frustrates this clear link between town council and its North Yorkshire councillor. It becomes more difficult to determine which councillor to liaise or consult with, for example in reference to planning or grant applications that may fall in or effect a particular part of the town area. This will be the same for local residents, organisations and businesses too.

It was also felt that having one councillor covering the majority of one town, and a minority of another, could lead to the perception that the councillor for MNE is in fact the councillor for Norton, and the councillor for MNW is in fact the councillor for Malton. It is feared that such an arrangement could see a

representative sidelined or bypassed inadvertently. As mentioned, MNE only contains 9% of electors from Malton, with 92% from Norton. Another arrangement could change seek to achieve better balance, with more Malton electors, but this would have the counter effect of requiring Norton electors to move into MNW to achieve the balance.

It is felt that having two councillors, elected by the whole of their town's electors, means it is clear to the public and each town council that they should seek to involve both councillors in matters without giving rise to geographical restrictions.

Of course, the LGBCE must be convinced that a two-member division would itself create obstacles to effective and convenient local government.

A two-member division in a rural part of North Yorkshire, spanning a vast geography and many parish councils, could prove very demanding. This was part of the rationale NYC used to lead to its conclusion that a single-member review should be requested. However, we argue that a two-member division covering a town area like Malton and Norton is manageable.

The two-member division is significantly smaller geographically than many other North Yorkshire divisions are now, and will be following this review process. Malton and Norton's population is concentrated in built-up streets and there are just a few outlying farms that make up each town area.

The two-member proposal also necessitates liaison with the same number of town/parish councils as the single-member proposal. In both the single and two-member formations, elected councillors would need to work with both Malton and Norton Town Councils. We argue that it would be much more effective and convenient if this dialogue was in relation to the whole towns, rather than just parts of the town. In the case of MNE, this is a very small minority of population indeed. There would be no extra demand on the councillors' time in this regard, and work could be shared as required between the two representatives as they would both cover the same geography, rather than parts of it.

## 5. Conclusion

We ask the LGBCE to consider the strong evidence we have compiled in support of our submission for a two-member division. It is a cross-party effort to achieve the best possible arrangement for the Malton and Norton communities we proudly serve at town, unitary and parliamentary level.

We argue that the LGBCE should deviate from a single-member formation in the Malton and Norton area given such an arrangement would not reflect community identity and would create obstacles to the effective and convenient local government. We argue that a two-member division covering both towns is essential to ensure the best balance of your statutory criteria.

**Electoral equality:** The single-member formation would achieve good electoral equality by 2030, but there would be significant electoral equality created in the immediate term. A two-member formation would achieve the greatest possible electoral equality now, and by 2030 too, with the impacts of future development mitigated as best as possible. Our proposal creates the closest variance, of just over 1% in 2024 and 4% by 2030.

**Community identity:** A single-member formation, however it is achieved, would necessitate in all cases the division of long-standing and easily recognisable town boundaries to achieve good electoral equality by 2030. It would either require the combination of rural and urban communities with different needs, with significant impacts on neighbouring divisions, or the dissection of the historic River Derwent. It would be an arrangement that is without precedence and therefore alien to local people.

A two-member formation would allow both Malton and Norton town areas to remain undivided, with their established boundaries protected entirely. Not only would this allow the towns to remain whole, it would unite the towns together, better reflecting their physical proximity, common issues and joint services. It would avoid splitting the community facilities that are so essential to both towns and reflect the common sense of community they foster. Such a formation, therefore, reflects the links *within* each of the two towns as independent entities and *between* the two towns as close neighbours.

**Effective and convenient local government:** A single-member formation will divide the town areas in some way. This would in all cases represent change, and potential confusion for local people. It could require warding or re-warding of the town council areas. It gives rise to awkward, unworkable and geographically incoherent units, with areas of population likely to feel detached from the wider division they form part of. This is an altogether poor basis for effective and convenient local government.

The two-member division would have much better internal coherence, giving the most straightforward arrangement. What is more, a two-member formation would cover a limited geography and not generate an unreasonable workload. It would allow the sharing of work as required and encourage further joint cooperation between the towns. We feel it would give the best foundations for local representation.