

York & North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority OPFCC Communications Strategy

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Overview

This document outlines the OPFCC communications and engagement strategy for the transition to the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). The aim of this document is to explain in simple terms how we intend to communicate the ongoing transition to a range of internal and external audiences.

This document is accurate as of 17/07/2023. At time of writing, the Statutory Instrument (parliamentary legislation confirming the MCA's coverage and responsibilities) has yet to be published. Also yet to be confirmed is the new authority's governance structure, and the interim branding used in communications up to the creation of the MCA in May 2024.

As such, specific communications requirements may change as the transition to the MCA continues throughout 2023/24.

Communication Aims

The overarching aims of our communications strategy

The main aims of our communications outputs can be summarised as;

- Internal staff should be aware of how the new MCA will affect them operationally, how oversight of their activities may change and which staff members will become part of the new authority. Staff at these organisations must be kept up to date with any changes to their working practices, and reassured about anything that isn't changing, such as Terms and Conditions (T&Cs).
- Ensure that the public in York and North Yorkshire are aware of the MCA transition, which of their services are changing and which will remain broadly the same. As the May 2024 election approaches, the public should also be made aware of what precisely the new Mayor will be responsible for, and how they can find information and ask questions about the new authority.
- External partners such as funding recipients and commissioning partners must be kept informed about how the new MCA will affect them, primarily in terms of service monitoring and funding applications, as well as the status of any ongoing commissioning agreements.

Our vision for the overall communications strategy is that it will deliver timely, accurate and well-targeted information across our various internal and external audiences. The MCA transition process is complex and can be open to interpretation, but our strategy is intended not only to answer existing questions, but also to identify new ones as they arise. Content will be created and approved alongside stakeholders, working from a detailed shared communications plan.

Overall, communications relating to the MCA must be well-planned and documented, with communications teams from each organisation kept aware of any relevant outputs. There must also be space to be reactive to changes in the MCA transition timeline, media interest, and frequently asked questions.

Stakeholder Communications

The relevant audiences/stakeholders for our communications strategy



The Office of the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) is primarily responsible for providing independent oversight of North Yorkshire Police and Fire Services, led by publicly-elected Commissioner Zoë Metcalfe. The powers of the Commissioner will be transferred to the new Mayor of the Combined Authority upon their election in 2024. The office currently employs 37 people in addition to five vacancies, who will also transfer to the new Authority. **Relevant communications will be sent out to OPFCC staff via email.**



The North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) will become part of the new MCA when the mayor is elected. As such, FRS staff will need to be kept up to date with any changes (as well as non-changes) to their current working practices, areas of responsibility and T&Cs. **This will primarily be communicated to staff via existing internal channels, intranet pages and newsletters.**



North Yorkshire Police (NYP) are responsible for policing across both York and North Yorkshire. They will be independent of the new authority, but still overseen by the new Mayor/Deputy Mayor. The precise governance structure for the MCA is yet to be agreed, but important information for NYP staff as it relates to T&Cs, oversight and any structural changes will be **communicated to staff through the NYP existing internal communications channels, such as intranet pages and newsletter articles.**



Enable North Yorkshire (EnableNY) provides key support to the OPFCC, NYP and FRS in the form of financial, estates, human resources, business design and assurance services. Staff working for the organisation operate under T&Cs aligned with either NYP or FRS, with NYP-aligned staff remaining outside the MCA upon the Mayor's election and FRS-aligned staff joining the new authority. EnableNY staff must therefore be kept fully informed about which members will be moving across to the MCA, as well as the details of future service provision.



The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Unison are the two largest trade unions representing staff members from stakeholder organisations. **Trade unions will be kept up to date with regular communications and briefings on any issues directly affecting their members, such as T&Cs.**



North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council are the two local authorities who have signed the statutory agreement to form the MCA. As a result, residents of the two councils will be responsible for electing the new Mayor in May 2024. **Residents will need to be kept informed about the timeline of the MCA transition, as well as how local services will continue to be provided once the new Combined Authority is in place.**

Mayoral candidates are those individuals who intent to seek office as the new Mayor of the Combined Authority. As political appointees, they will be subject to a selection process specific to the party they choose to represent, but all will need to be provided with relevant information about the new MCA, such as the confirmed powers of the Mayor and the current status of the organisations they seek to oversee.

Commissioning Partners/Funding Recipients will need to be kept informed about how the new MCA will allocate funding, monitor and commission services and maintain support for existing projects.

Interim Branding

How the MCA will present itself prior to official implementation

Upon being elected, the new Mayor will have the power to implement branding changes to both the MCA and its sub-brands, as well as deciding upon the structure and resourcing of its communications team.

In the interim period, the OPFCC will be working alongside the North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (NYLEP) and other partners to establish interim branding (including new logos, taglines and social media channels). These will not only serve to provide information about the transition to the public, but can also form the basis of the branding/social media presence of the new MCA.

Forward Planning

How communications will be planned and informed up to May 2024

The MCA planning process is still ongoing, with many details including statutory requirements and governance structure still to be agreed. As such, specific communications are subject to change. In order to facilitate this, communications will be built around an Umbrella Communications Plan.

This plan will serve as a living document for stakeholders, listing the progress and channels of specific planned communications, who is responsible for producing them and their specific target audience. As well as this, the document will also provide an up to date timeline of the MCA transition and key communications contacts for each stakeholder. Any additional resources and branding will also be included in the plan.

Communications will be primarily informed by key dates in the MCA timeline. As well as this, the team are in the process of setting up a dedicated email inbox for staff across key organisations to send in questions about the transition. The team will keep a record of these questions, with the most pressing or frequently asked being used to inform future communications updates and ensure that internal and external audiences receive regular updates about how the MCA transition is progressing.

