

**MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING:
23 OCTOBER 2008**

Attendees

Cllr Arthur Barker
David Fraser
Cllr Bernard Regan
Cllr Andrew Waller
David Gibbs
Andy Wilson
Cllr Ken Sims
Debbie Rosen
Les Newby

Chair
Government Office (Observer)
Humber Local Authorities
North Yorkshire Local Authorities
SD Expert
SD Expert
West Yorkshire Local Authorities
Yorkshire Forward (Sub)
Yorkshire Futures

Visitors

Jamie Saunders
Tim Godson
Emma Bridge

Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Government Office
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Staff

Sue Jeffrey
Emma King
Iain Lovell
Andy Horrocks
Rob Murfin
Jatinder Singh Mehmi

Apologies

Tom Knowland
Cllr Ken Wyatt
Jayne Ashley
Martyn Roberts

SD Expert
South Yorkshire Local Authorities
UK SD Commission
YHA

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and the apologies were **noted**.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting – 7 August 2008

The minutes of the last meeting were **agreed** as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

The matters arising from the previous meeting were **noted**. Members were also advised that Andy Wilson has now given evidence at the Investment Planning Scrutiny Review.

4. Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) Progress and Transition Issues

The Chair introduced this item and gave Members an update on the current position of the Sub National Review.

Members were advised that the Regional Executive Board had endorsed the LGYH decision to have a target date of 1 April 2009 for transition to new arrangements. It was also noted that Pat McFadden, DBERR Minister speaking at an SNR conference the day before was encouraging regions to move forward with new arrangements rather than wait for formal legislation.

The Chair also noted that emphasis should be placed on working together as a region through the current financial downturn.

It was noted that no response had yet been received to the SNR consultation though it was thought that something would arrive before Christmas.

It was noted that in terms of sustainable development there is still very little being communicated about the new arrangements. Jayne Ashley speaking at a recent ERN meeting of SD leads said again that they continued to stress that sustainable development is included in new structures. A report setting out the National SD Commission position was soon to be published. It was **agreed** that this be circulated to Members.

Emma King

Members were also referred to the recent article by Chair, Cllr Arthur Barker published in the LGA magazine 'First'.

Members asked what specific support would be offered to small businesses in the new arrangements just announced by the RDA's. It was noted that there would be a package of initiatives designed to offer support to small businesses most in need and the Yorkshire Forward would be leading this work in the region.

The update was **noted** by Members.

5. Defra Sustainable Development Transition and Transformation Fund Update

Members were given an update on the Defra Sustainable Development Transition and Transformation Fund. It was noted that Assembly officers would be interviewing for consultancy support the following week and hoped to have the successful consultants in post by the end of October. There will then be a report back at the next Board meeting on 29 January. This will coincide with an interim report which will be sent to Defra at the end of January.

Members were advised that the two main focuses of this work will be how current and future activity on SD can inform the new Single Regional Strategy and the shape and function of a future sustainable development body. It was noted that part of the brief to potential consultants described the need to be flexible within the changing environment of the Assembly and its work.

Members asked for clarification on the following points:

- When will draft findings on a new sustainable development body be available? It was noted that the steering group is next due to meet on 14 January so would expect to feed back mid to late January on these findings. This would then need to be fed into the full SNR process. It was also noted that this is the only formal piece of work being done on sustainable development arrangements - all other work is focusing on the new thematic boards.
- What are the arrangements in other regions? It was noted that all regions are behaving differently and not all are involved in this work. Some plan to continue with

existing arrangements whilst others are starting with completely new structures. Members were advised that Government Office is doing some work to map these different structures.

- Has any thought been given to the definition of purpose of the new SD body? It was noted that the transformation and transition work will look at how this new body will work, how it will be funded, its membership and terms of reference etc. It will also focus on ensuring priority areas based on the ten regional challenges from the Integrated Regional Framework are met and look at possible challenge/advice roles for the new body.

Members **noted** this progress.

6. Building Sustainability into RFA2: The Integrated Regional Framework

Members were advised that the region is now developing the second round of Regional Funding Advice (RFA2) and that the Advice would need to address the SD challenges set out in the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF).

It was noted that the IRF includes as appraisal tool that could be applied to RFA2, although the approach needed to be flexible to fit in with the RFA2 process and timetable.

Members were reminded that input to this process is needed at all stages and it was recommended that a small group be set up to undertake this work.

Members raised the following points:

- The timescales involved in this work are tight – more time is needed to achieve a full response.
- The work needs to be focused on local priorities
- Acronyms in the document need explanation – at present it is not very user-friendly.

These points were **noted**.

The following Members **agreed** to undertake this work:

Local Authorities – Cllr Arthur Barker/Cllr Andrew Waller
Assembly – Andy Horrocks

SD Expert – David Gibbs
Government Office – representative to be confirmed.

7. Regional Climate Change Adaptation Study - Progress

Members were updated on the progress of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Study. It was noted that this was likely to be launched as part of Progress in the Region next year, with the help of Yorkshire Futures.

Members were advised that some research by Royal Haskoning - on adaptation issues on a sub regional basis – was available on request.

Members raised concern over the validity of this work and noted that it might be difficult to convince people that this level of climate change is occurring. It was noted however that this work has a long term focus.

Members also noted that it would be useful to circulate a summary sheet on this work as it has clear benefit for local authorities in terms of flood risk and therefore economic and housing issues.

Progress on this work was **noted** by Members.

8. Regional Climate Change Action Plan

This item was presented by Tim Godson of Government Office. Members were advised that Yorkshire and Humber was the first region to develop a document addressing and communicating climate change as an issue. It was noted that the document now needs to be brought up to date and the Climate Change Partnership has been tasked with doing this. Various meetings have been held to look at issues cross-sectorally which has proved useful and the draft document is now available on the Your Climate website for consultation (which ends on 7 November).

Members raised the following points for clarification:

- Where is the incentive to reduce local authority emissions to meet these targets when they will be penalised in the future? It was noted that the two targets are slightly different – the targets in this document relate to the emissions of the community as a whole.
- There is concern that the private sector is not included in

Emma King

the Built Environment priority area and it was noted that if private sector can be convinced to build to same standards of energy efficiency as public sector this will give them an edge on selling their properties.

- The Transport priority area only looks at domestic travel and not public/commercial transport even though there has been an increase in the pollution given off by older vehicles used in these sectors.
- It is essential that some tangible actions are pulled out of this work to ensure that strategies and policies are put into practice. It was noted that this is a five year plan and will need to be adapted as time goes on. It was also explained that Defra is investing time and money into shifting the thinking of the population to improve people's environmental conscience though this is traditionally better at a local level than regional.

Members **noted** this item and it was **agreed** that any further comments should be directed to Government Office via the Your Climate website (details to be circulated after the meeting). It was also **agreed** that an update on this work be provided to the next Sustainable Development Board meeting in January.

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9. Yorkshire Futures Research/Futures Toolkit

This item was presented by Les Newby of Yorkshire Futures. The presentation looks at possible trends and scenarios in the Yorkshire and Humber Region to 2030. It involves statistics on actual and projected household growth, GDP for major and emerging markets and health and life expectancy to demonstrate these trends and scenarios. One of the scenarios given is one of new financial prudence within the current driven by the current economic climate.

After the presentation Members raised the following observations:

- Are the inequalities mentioned still expected even in the light of new initiatives being put in place? It was noted that certain caveats need to be placed on this data for instance although unemployment is decreasing, the wealthier sectors of society are still moving forward faster than the less well off. There are also less average neighbourhoods now – they are either poor or affluent.
- How might political outcomes affect this data? It was noted that there are issues around involvement in

decision making processes and democracy and it is likely that political policies will have an affect on this.

This work was **noted** by Members.

10. Sustainability Appraisal of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan 2009 Update

Members were given an update on the Sustainability Appraisal of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan 2009 Update. It was explained that this is a statutory requirement of Regional Spatial Strategies and would help to reconcile different issues around house building targets and avoid mistakes being made. The appraisal is being handled internally at the Assembly though consultants are challenging the process.

Members were asked to be involved in ensuring the right challenges are being used and volunteers were sought to sound out the work being done. It was agreed to circulate this invitation by email.

Members asked for clarification over the use of empty houses to meet targets. It was noted that existing stock does not always meet the correct standards.

Members also asked if the impact of the ageing population on housing needs has been taken into consideration. It was noted that choice will need to be high on the agenda of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan and housing will need to be placed near good transport links and economy.

Members **noted** this update and **agreed** to think about volunteers for this work.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Date of Next Meeting: 29 January 2009

Emma King

Emma King, Business Services Officer
November 2008