

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: 6 NOVEMBER 2008

ACTION

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were **noted**. A full attendance list is attached at **Annex A**.

A number of membership issues were **noted**:

- Helen Groves from the Regional Forum is the new substitute SEE Partner representative on the Regional Executive Board.
- Gary Topp, who has been a Regional Executive Board Member in the past, has now stepped down as an Assembly Member due to the closure of Yorkshire Culture.
- Penny Hemming, CBI representative on the Assembly, has announced that she will be retiring at the end of this year. Andrew Palmer will be replacing Penny as Regional Director Designate at the CBI. Future representation at the Assembly and Regional Executive Board will be confirmed later in the year. Penny was thanked for her contribution to the Regional Executive Board.

2. Minutes for Approval

The minutes of the Regional Executive Board meeting held on 4 September were **agreed** as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Sub National Review and Transition Arrangements – Summary of Progress

Members were updated on recent progress with the Government's Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR). It was noted that the publication of the Government's response to the SNR

consultation was still awaited and that this was now expected in mid-November.

Members were also advised that a number of committees had recently been established to address the impact of the 'credit crunch' - the Regional Economic Council, the Council of Regional Ministers and the National Economic Council – all of which were tasked with easing the current financial crisis.

Members were also asked to note an additional report on transition arrangements for the Assembly's staff team. It was reported that Local Authority Leaders (at the meeting of the Local Government Yorkshire & Humber (LGYH) Leaders' Board on 30 October) had agreed to recommend to the Executive Board that from 1 April 2009 the LGYH Leaders' Board and Chief Executive should take responsibility for directing the activities of the Assembly staff team. Members were also advised that the arrangements for this would be developed as part of the new Business Plan for 2009–2010 and that the Business Plan should be developed under the leadership of LGYH, on behalf of the Leaders' Board, in consultation with Assembly staff.

Members **endorsed** the recommendations in the report.

Members were advised that these were transitional proposals for one year and would not prejudice any new permanent arrangements from 1 April 2010, that would need to be developed once the Government's position on taking forward SNR were clear.

Members **noted** these updates.

5. RSS Update

Members were advised of progress with the review of the RSS, the focus of which is on ensuring the Region has a long-term, sustainable strategy for the development of new homes up to 2026 and beyond. It will test a range of views to determine what the appropriate level of building should be to meet the Region's needs. The update provides an opportunity to better co-ordinate development with infrastructure investment and to link with work on longer-term development visions at city region and local level.

Over the last four months earlier consultation with local authorities and other organisations has brought forward

initial views on a range of proposed approaches to accommodating future growth. An 'evidence base' has also been prepared – drawing on evidence from local authorities and others - to identify more specific development opportunities and constraints.

The next stage is further 'informal' consultation with regional stakeholders to seek views on a range of 'options' for 'how much' and 'what ways' and 'where' development might be accommodated long-term. Consultation will run until 30 January and include a series of public consultation events.

The following queries and concerns were raised by Members:

- Is this update a statutory requirement and does the Assembly have to do this? It was noted that the Assembly had been asked by Government to look again at providing a long-term approach to meeting revised housing requirements and to test national advice.
- What can local authorities expect to gain from this update? Members were advised that the update will add value to the work that local authorities and sub regions are also doing in thinking about longer-term development and planning related infrastructure.
- Members would like more time to reflect on the issues raised. It was suggested that feedback from the consultation would be brought back for further consideration by the Board before moving to the next stage.

Members **agreed** the next steps in the Update, subject to a further report-back to the Board after the consultation stage.

6. Update on Economic Crisis and the National/Regional Response – Simon Foy, Yorkshire Forward

Members were given an update on the impact of the current economic crisis in our Region and also the measures that Yorkshire Forward is putting in place to deal with this alongside national Government.

Simon made the following points about the situation in Yorkshire and the Humber:

- There has been a clear deterioration in the region's economy since the summer and growth has decreased from 1.8% at the start of this year to practically zero

- now. Only 1% growth is expected, at best, for next year.
- It is important to realise that this is an ever-changing situation and just this afternoon the Bank of England has cut its base rate by 1.5% and it is hoped this will boost consumer confidence and have a positive effect on inter-bank lending rates.
 - Businesses are suffering due to the increase in the price of raw materials and commodities and are unable to pass on savings to customers. Many are also having to rely on backlogs of orders rather than generating any new business.
 - Until recently export markets were holding up, although this is now starting to erode.
 - Payment demands are becoming much tighter now, which is reducing access to working capital – this is having the biggest impact on small and medium businesses.
 - Employment rates have risen slightly in this region though they are not meeting the national average. The labour market is still bearing up well also.
 - There are still some mixed messages – businesses are reporting that they cannot afford to employ apprentice workers whilst the Learning and Skills Council maintains that apprenticeships remain popular.

In terms of the response by Yorkshire Forward Simon made the following points:

- Intelligence is being shared with partners and other agencies in the Region to ensure best practice is followed.
- A ten-day payment scheme has been introduced for small and medium businesses to improve their access to capital.
- Business support is being re-prioritised and small and medium enterprises are being given advice about how to respond to the situation.
- Business start-ups are being encouraged and supported as this is seen as viable alternative to those being made redundant due to this situation.
- Redundancy support packages are being worked up.
- Within YF work areas are being restructured to offer maximum capacity in business support.
- There is support for credit unions in the region to help cut down on the amount of doorstep lending.
- Grants have been expanded across the whole region and investment criteria have been reviewed to help speed up

the process of distributing this money.

- Work is being done to help the property market, for instance offering assistance with planning permission etc.
- Meetings are being held with regional banks and building societies to ensure continued investment and support.
- A Financial Business Service Sector Taskforce has been established with the involvement of the Regional Minister, Rosie Winterton MP. This is helping to promote regional banks and support their business.

The following points were made about the national situation:

- The pre-budget report is due next week.
- A number of national and regional councils have recently been established, the National Economic Council, the Council of Regional Ministers and the Regional Economic Council. In addition to this regional ministers are setting up their own groups to coordinate action at a regional and local level with agencies in the region.

In summary Simon noted that the impact of the current economic downturn has not affected our region as much as some other parts of the UK and that Yorkshire and the Humber are still bearing up quite well. It was also noted that it was important to stay positive and have a 'credible optimism' about the situation.

Members raised the following points in discussion:

- What tangible outcomes can be expected from the councils and groups mentioned above? It was noted that these were tasked with developing and delivering new initiatives such as the ten-day payment scheme and driving forward new investment.
- There is some concern over the level of input that local councils will have into these groups and how much they will benefit from the proposed initiatives. It was noted that local councils are represented on these groups and will have chance to feed into the decision-making processes.
- There needs to be more involvement of the business sector to ensure their views and opinions are taken into account – they are best placed to come up with solutions to the problems they face. Members were advised that this was being taken into account.
- Concern was raised over the encouragement of start-up businesses in the current climate. It was noted that it

was important to think long-term and ensure enterprise is not overlooked. It was also important to note that many new businesses have been set up in times of economic uncertainty and have proved successful.

- It is important to note that initiatives are being developed and promoted within local councils – for example a recent scheme introduced by Wakefield MDC to help small businesses with mortgage rates.

This update was **noted** by Members. There was also a reminder about an Economic Development Conference being held on 5 December at which John Healey would be speaking.

7. Report Back from the Boards

The Report Back from the Assembly's Functional Boards was **noted** by Members.

8. Olympics 2012 Update – Presentation by Martin Havenhand, Yorkshire Committee for the 2012 Games

Members were given a brief update on the activities concerning the delivery of Yorkshire Gold, the strategy for driving forward the region's opportunities, involvement and legacy relating to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

A range of events/projects aimed at building up momentum for the games were mentioned including the Kirklees Youth Games (which attracted involvement from 20,000 youngsters), development of a swimming and diving centre in Leeds, the bid for the world mountain biking championships in North Yorkshire and a programme of sport for diverse groups in Bradford.

Further work was discussed around helping to attract national teams to training facilities in the Region, along with a review of progress post the 2008 Beijing Games to take forward lessons learned. Members were also advised that one of the other key areas of work was to build a legacy following the 2012 games to ensure the region benefits in years to come, as well as from the events themselves.

Members raised the following points in discussion:

- Will there be specific chaplaincy support to account for

the many different nationalities and faiths that will be represented at the games? It was noted that support would be available within local communities but that the Committee would welcome any further ideas on this outside of this meeting.

- It is important to note that there is interest in involvement in the games across the Region, not just in cities – this needs to be taken into consideration.
- It would be useful for local councils to receive direct communication from the Committee in future. This was noted.

This update was **noted** by Members.

9. Information Items

- Regional Funding Advice 2008 – Info Note 2

Members requested that an options paper be brought to the next meeting setting out thoughts on investment into the Functional Boards.

- New Arrangements for Cultural Organisations in the Region

This was **noted**.

10. Any Other Business

Members asked that a letter of congratulation be written and forwarded to Barack Obama, following his victory in the US elections.

Date of Next Meeting: 8 January 2009

Emma King

Emma King

Emma King, Business Services Officer
November 2008

Annex A

Attendees

Cllr Peter Box	Chair
Cllr Carl Minns	Hull and Humber Ports City Region Partnership
Cllr Stephen Parnaby	Humber Local Authority Partnership
Cllr Arthur Barker	North Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership and Chair LGYH
Cllr Kris Hopkins	Regional Housing Board
Cllr John Weighell	Rural Local Authorities
Bill Adams	SEE Partner Group
Naheed Arshad Mather	SEE Partner Group
Patricia Farrell	SEE Partner Group
Penny Hemming	SEE Partner Group
Cllr Terry Sharman	South Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership (Sub)
Cllr Robert Light	West Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership

Observers

Margaret Jackson	Government Office
Simon Foy	Yorkshire Forward

Visitors

Maureen Taylor	Government Office
Martin Havenhand	Yorkshire Committee for the 2012 Games

Staff

Sue Jeffrey
Chris Martin
Jenny Poxon
Rob Warm
Mark Shaw
Iain Lovell
Emma King

Apologies

Paul Jagger
Felicity Everiss
Cllr Andrew Carter
Paul Rogerson
Cate Hammond
Cllr Mark Kirk
Michael Noble
Cllr Paul Scriven
Cllr Roger Stone
Tom Riordan

Deputy Chair
Government Office (Observer)
Leeds City Region Partnership
Regional Chief Executives Group (Observer)
Regional Planning Board
Regional Transport Board
SEE Partner Group
Sheffield City Region Partnership
South Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership
Yorkshire Forward (Observer)