

**REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**10 JANUARY 2008: 1.00PM – 3.00PM**

**YHA, 18 KING STREET, WAKEFIELD**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**1.05 – 2.00**

2. Minutes of the last meeting – 8 November 2007 Attached
3. Matters Arising Verbal
4. Budget and Business Plan for 2008/2009 Attached
5. Report Back from the Boards Attached

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**2.00 – 3.00**

6. Sub National Review - Update Attached
7. Yorkshire Forward Draft Corporate Plan 2008/11 – Consultation Draft Attached

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 13 March 2008**

**MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING:  
8 NOVEMBER 2007**

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and the apologies were noted (a full list of attendees and apologies can be found at **Annex A**).

The Chair informed members that Neil Irving would shortly be taking up a post with North Yorkshire County Council. It was **agreed** that the Chair would write to Neil congratulating him on his appointment and thanking him for his contribution to the Assembly.

**ACTION**

Nicola Baylis

**2. a) Minutes Of Last Meeting – 6 September 2007**

The minutes of the last meeting were **agreed**, subject to the following amendment:

Item 10 - Second bullet point should be amended to read *“A first class infrastructure is needed to accommodate housing and economic growth at these levels.”*

Emma King

**b) Notes of the Special Meeting with Caroline Flint MP  
– 4 October 2007**

The notes of the Special Meeting were **agreed** as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

The matters arising from the last meeting were **noted**.

**4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Update**

Members **noted** progress on the establishment of the ERDF Programme Committee (PMC)

It was confirmed that nominations had been sought from the Regional Executive Board for the Assembly representative on

the ERDF PMC. One nomination was received from Paul Jagger.

Members **agreed** that Paul would take up the appointment to the ERDF PMC.

## 5. Report Back from the Boards

Members **noted** the key issues from the functional, Sustainable Development and Scrutiny Boards.

## 6. Sub National Review – Update

*\*Cllr John Weighell declared an interest in this item as a member of the Yorkshire Forward Board.*

Members were updated on progress of the Sub National Review. It was **agreed** that three key issues should continue to be highlighted over the coming months:

- How will policy be created in the new structures?
- What will the role of SEE Partners be in the new arrangements?
- Clarity is required on scrutiny arrangements.

Members stressed the importance of ensuring the Assembly continues to work well during the transition period. The work of the Boards, in particular, was praised and it was agreed that clarification should be sought on how this work would continue under the new arrangements.

Yorkshire Forward were invited to give their views on the process. Don Stewart and Cllr John Weighell made the following points:

- The Yorkshire Forward Board have a strong view that we need to move forward in partnership and with the full involvement of local authorities and SEE Partners.
- The proposed Single Integrated Regional Framework (SIRS) is a real opportunity for the Region. Development of the SIRS should be done jointly with local authorities, with input from SEE partners.
- The review of the RES in 2008 is now unlikely to happen as the SIRS is due to be completed in 2011.
- We need to work together, in partnership, to identify the right model of governance for the Region and then inform Government.
- Need to ensure that scrutiny is measured but effective.

- Whatever the new arrangements may be, we need to ensure the arrangements are put in place quickly and with minimum disruption.

It was added that the Yorkshire Forward Board would be meeting with local authorities on 6 December 2007 to discuss these issues in more detail.

It was felt that Caroline Flint MP, as the Regional Minister, should be kept in touch with the Region's discussions on this issue. It was **agreed** that copies of future Regional Executive Board agendas, plus a short briefing note, should be sent to her as appropriate.

Emma King

## **7. Half Year Review of Business Plan and Budget 2007/08**

Members **endorsed** the half-year review of performance against the Business Plan and **noted** the half-year figures for the 2007/08 budget.

Patricia Farrell praised the recently produced information packs as both interesting and informative, and asked that Assembly staff involved in their production were thanked.

Patricia also expressed concern that the Assembly had very few staff from the BME community and asked what was being done to encourage BME applicants. Current activity was outlined including monitoring of applications and wide advertising of vacancies with Assembly networks, as well as in the trade and general press. It was noted however that more could be done in this regard.

## **8. Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan**

*\*Felicity Everiss declared an interest in this item.*

Members **noted** the progress with developing a response to the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan (RSS).

Members considered issues ahead of the Regional Planning Board and full Assembly meetings, which would respectively agree draft and final responses to the Proposed Changes.

In the discussion a number of key points were raised:

- Leeds City Region - very concerned about the proposed increase in housing numbers as the infrastructure is not in place to sustain this level of growth.
- Infrastructure and investment need to be available at the same time.
- Need to make the case for reintroducing the phasing of housing numbers.
- Why reduce the housing numbers in Hambleton, Craven and Ryedale and increase the numbers elsewhere – it does not make sense?
- Should the increase in housing numbers be dealt with as part of the review of RSS? This could also pick up ecotowns and growth points.
- Need to keep focus of development on windfall and brownfield sites rather than greenbelt land, as incursions into greenbelt land are a major concern.
- Housing affordability is a major issue in the Region - will increasing the quality of housing and sustainable construction adversely affect affordability?
- Transport links between city regions, and from rural areas and neighbouring regions to city regions need to be emphasised – shouldn't just focus on transport links within individual city regions.
- Hull and Humber Ports City Region needs better connectivity within it (eg North and South Bank connections).
- Need to push for 'plan', 'monitor', 'manage' to releasing land for development.
- Greenhouse Gas emissions and microgeneration targets in RSS are aspirational but should be kept in – removing them gives out the wrong message. However, we need to acknowledge that they need to be reviewed regularly.
- York should be reinstated as a key driver.
- Bradford needs greater recognition.

It was confirmed the comments would be fed into the Regional Planning Board at their meeting on 16 November 2007, where the Board would finalise the draft response.

This draft would then be presented to the full Assembly at their meeting on 6 December 2007 for agreement.

## **9. Draft Integrated Regional Framework**

Members were updated on the latest position regarding the preparation of the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF).

They then discussed the ten 'Regional Challenges' detailed in Annex A to the report. Key points raised during this discussion included:

Regional Challenge 4: Productivity and Innovation

- First bullet point should be emended to read 'To promote higher levels of research and development activity and investment *in the private sector* in the region.

Regional Challenge 5: Housing Markets and Affordability

- Second bullet point should be amended to read 'To improve the quality *and energy efficiency* of existing housing stock and make sure that new stock is of the highest standards in terms of *quality*, design, construction *and energy efficiency*.

Regional Challenge 6: Public Health and Obesity

- The first bullet point needs to be more specific.

Regional Challenge 7: Higher Level Skills and Education

- The title should change to 'Education and Skills'.
- The order of the bullets should change to reflect priority as follows: bullet 3, bullet 1 then bullet 2.

Regional Challenge 8: Violent Crime

- This whole section needs to be more specific.

Regional Challenge 10: Regional Growth

- The title should change to 'Sustainable Regional Growth'.
- The second bullet point should be amended to read 'To ensure that currently excluded communities and areas requiring regeneration benefit from *sustainable* growth and related investment.
- There needs to be more in this section on managing regional growth.

Members **agreed** the challenges subject to the changes above and **noted** the next steps in the process including that the draft plan would be submitted to DEFRA by the deadline of 21 December for comment.

## 10. Delivering the Climate Change Action Plan ("Your Climate") – Update

Members **noted** the position on delivering the Climate

Change Action Plan.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

- Biomass Update
- Biofuels Update

The information items were **noted**.

**Date of Next Meeting: 10 January 2008**

Nicola Baylis, Business Services Officer  
November 2007

## REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: 8 NOVEMBER 2007

### Attendees

Cllr Peter Box	Chair
Cllr Steve Galloway	Chair of Regional Planning Board
Cllr Mark Kirk	Chair of Regional Transport Board
Paul Jagger	Deputy Chair
Felicity Everiss	Government Office (Observer)
Cllr Andrew Carter	Leeds City Region Partnership
Cllr Arthur Barker	North Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership/Chair LGYH
Cllr John Weighell	Rural Local Authorities
Michael Noble	SEE Partners
Patricia Farrell	SEE Partners
Penny Hemming	SEE Partners
Cllr Roger Stone	South Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership
Don Stewart	Yorkshire Forward (Sub for Tom Riordan – Observer)

### Visitors

Patsy Kays	Hull City Council
Michelle Rhodes	Wakefield MDC

### Staff

Andy Horrocks	YHA
Iain Lovell	YHA
Jatinder Singh-Mehmi	YHA
Lyndsey Bunn	YHA
Mark Shaw	YHA
Nicola Baylis	YHA
Richard Wood	YHA
Rob Warm	YHA
Sue Jeffrey	YHA
James Paton	YHA

### Apologies

Cllr Kris Hopkins	Chair of Regional Housing Board
Cllr Carl Minns	Hull & Humber Ports City Region Partnership

Cllr Stephen Parnaby  
Paul Rogerson  
Gary Topp  
Neil Irving  
Chris Glen  
Cllr Jan Wilson  
Cllr Robert Light  
Tom Riordan  
Chris Martin

Humber Local Authority Partnership  
Regional Chief Executives Group (Observer)  
SEE Partners  
SEE Partners  
SEE Partners (Sub for Neil Irving)  
Sheffield City Region Partnership  
West Yorkshire Local Authority Partnership  
Yorkshire Forward  
YHA

**BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2008/09 – PRINCIPLES AND  
PRIORITIES**

**For Decision**

Members are asked:

- To consider and agree the Assembly's work priorities and budgetary principles for the next financial year 2008/09.
- To note the timetable and the next steps in the preparation of a business plan and budget for the Assembly for 2008/09.

**Background**

1. In February 2007 the Assembly agreed a three-year business plan and budget, setting out detailed plans and expenditure for 2007/08 and outline proposals for the years 2008/09 and 2009/10. However, since then the context within which the Assembly has to operate has changed significantly and this means taking a new approach to planning the detailed budget and business plan for 2008/09. In particular:
  - In July 2007 the Government announced the outcome of its Sub-National Review (SNR) under which Assemblies will not continue after 2010.
  - In November 2007 the Executive Board considered and agreed a report from ARUP setting out the work areas that should be pursued during the transition period. Government Office has not queried this list, although they have indicated that Government guidance is likely to be more specific and directive about the work the Assembly can undertake with its Government funding
  - In December 2007 the publication of a document on taking forward the SNR makes clear that our business plan has to be prepared in the context of 'transition' to new regional arrangements.
  - The expectation is that funding for Assemblies will continue during the transition period but at a reducing level.
2. Although this general context is clear, the detail has yet to emerge. In particular, we still await guidance on the amount of funding we will receive from Government and what we are expected to deliver for that funding. In addition, the delay in the consultation on implementing the SNR means that the details of the transition process are not yet defined. This makes the task of drawing up a business plan and budget for 2008/09 difficult.

## Background Assumptions

3. Despite the absence (as yet) of business planning guidance for Assemblies from Government it is possible to draw on a number of sources to establish principles and priorities:
  - The report on the outcome of the SNR itself (July 2007), together with the letter to Assemblies concerning SNR implementation (November 2007) and the document on taking forward the SNR published in December 2007 (and circulated previously to Members).
  - The ARUP report setting out work areas as previously agreed.
  - Informal advice from CLG and Government Office.
  - Announcements of Government policy positions (for example, in the Housing Green Paper and the announcements connected with the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review).
4. Drawing on these sources the following potential 'headlines' emerge upon which to begin to develop a business plan and budget:
  - Reduced funding – probably a 8-10% cash cut for 2008/09, with perhaps further reductions thereafter.
  - Assemblies will have a key role in the transition period, particularly ongoing work on Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and in taking forward early reviews of RSS in advance of a new single regional strategy.
  - Existing statutory powers remain in force in advance of changes to legislation - Assemblies remain 'Regional Planning Bodies' and existing RDA scrutiny and accountability arrangements remain in place.
  - The earliest that RDAs will be able to take on their new responsibilities (and start work on the single regional strategy) will be 2010.
  - Assemblies will be involved in work with RDAs and local authorities on a new, expanded round of regional funding allocations, with guidance to be published summer 2008 for completion by 2009.
  - Assemblies will work with RDAs and local authorities in developing the joint evidence bases and implementation plans for regional strategies.
  - The Government's stated goal for regional activity is *'to deliver economic growth and increased housing supply in a manner consistent with the Government's sustainable development and climate change agenda'*.

## Financial Resources

5. Attached at **Annex A** is a draft Assembly budget for 2008/09.

### *Income*

6. For initial planning purposes the assumption is that our grant from Government for 2008/09 will be £2.08 million (a 10% cash reduction on 2007/08). In addition LGYH have confirmed that local authority subscriptions

will continue at £222,000 in 2008/09 (the same as in 2007/08) although we are not clear at this stage what will be available in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

7. There are also two other separate sources of funding from for specific purposes. There is notionally £133,000 in 2008/09 to support work on housing through Regional Housing Board funding. There may also be additional funding from DEFRA for work on sustainable development, although this is unlikely to be confirmed until late January. Other funded activity hosted by the Assembly includes work on biodiversity (although this is likely to end during 2008/09) and the work of the Regional Housing Forum.
8. The costs of running the Region's European Office (Yorkshireurope) have been fully funded by Yorkshire Forward since 1 April 2006. Discussions are now underway with Yorkshire Forward to secure a transfer of the function to them with effect from 1 April 2008.

#### *Expenditure*

9. Expenditure assumptions at this stage reflect the emerging priorities set out in paragraph 13 below.
10. Expenditure on overheads assumes a general inflationary increase of 2%, including accommodation costs. Specific inflation rates have been used for energy. The salaries budget incorporates expected increments and it assumes that cost-of-living national salary increases will be 2.5%.

#### *Reserves*

11. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 the Assembly's general revenue reserves stood at £719,000. At present it is estimated that potential pension liabilities are £738,000 and potential redundancy liabilities £259,000 in the event that the Assembly is dissolved. It is prudent and recommended to Members that current reserves are maintained in order to be meet potential liabilities.

### **Developing a Business Plan for the Assembly for 2008/09**

#### The Regional Context and the Challenges Ahead

12. The change brought about by SNR means we are now planning for a transition in regional working and this has to be the dominant theme of the business plan to 2010/11. The general challenges that we have to address in relation to the transition are clear:
  - To **keep work going** and to ensure good practice and expertise is not lost (addressing the risks to disruption of work that ARUP's have identified for the Assembly).
  - To secure a shift in the way that business is done at the regional level, including taking account of (or anticipating) **future changes in regional responsibilities**.

- To **focus on 'statutory', Government and the Region's priorities** given reduced funding, particularly in years two and three as transition takes place.
- To **influence the final implementation of the SNR**, helping shape how the Region wishes to work in the future – and how the Assembly's work will be taken forward.
- To plan for an **orderly transfer of work** and staff to the new arrangements as the resources available to the Assembly decrease over transition period.
- To strengthen day-to-day **working relationships between the Assembly and Yorkshire Forward** in advance of the move to an integrated body to ease the transition to new arrangements, particularly in relation to staffing issues.
- To maintain the successful **partnership working** we have developed (including business, social and environmental partners) – because the reformed regional architecture will need to build on these.

### Emerging Priorities

13. On the basis of the above the following 'headline' business plan priorities have been developed for discussion:

### Corporate Activity

- **Ensure effective ongoing regional governance during the transition period, including supporting the work of Assembly Boards** (maintaining high quality advice and support for all Boards).
- **Maintain engagement and communication in relation to ongoing activity** (maintaining continued Member engagement in the Assembly Boards and current corporate communications activity – making sure that the Region continues to be aware of/ engaged in our work).
- **Further develop and support staff as the Assembly's key resource** (develop a comprehensive approach to staff development, training, performance and retention and transition - to ensure a high quality and motivated staff is available to the Assembly and retained for the region; make better use of staff skills to allow targeting of funding 'cuts' at reduced use of external consultancy).
- **Continue to secure efficiency savings in business 'running costs'** (e.g. reduce financial contributions to outside bodies/ groups/ forums; use of lower costs venues for meetings; strict cost controls on publications/events; apply best practice in use of resources etc.).
- Contribute to the **development of post SNR arrangements** and secure a successful transition (e.g. promoting joint team working with Yorkshire Forward).

## Planning Strategy/Planning Delivery and Conformity

- **Implementing and delivering RSS** (including an action plan and guides that help local authorities and others deliver; acting as a 'facilitator' or 'catalyst' to help collaborative working across boundaries; examining regional infrastructure needs; and joining up with work to deliver the Regional Housing Strategy and address housing affordability).
- **Early 'mini-Review' to develop the RSS** (as required by Housing Green Paper – focused on housing issues, levels of growth needed in the Region, the locations for growth and infrastructure requirements).
- **Measuring Progress** (monitor delivery of the RSS, publish Annual Monitoring Report, develop new monitoring framework and evidence base and move to integration of this work with monitoring by Yorkshire Futures).
- **Alignment** (including working with partners on the Northern Way and City Region Development Plans and ensuring conformity of local authority development plans so that there is alignment of spatial strategies).
- **Waste** (undertaking ongoing technical/ monitoring work; develop 'light touch' regional framework to add value to work in region).

## Transport

- **Delivering transport infrastructure** (getting agencies to deliver; working with partners to get greater resources for transport and to find different ways of funding/ implementing transport infrastructure).
- **Reviewing our transport funding priorities** (short-term review early 2008 and full review in 2009 – so advice to Ministers is in place to ensure the region benefits from Government investment).

## Strategy Integration, Regional Resource Allocation and Sustainable Development

- Contribute to **implementation of the Regional Climate Change Action Plan** (complete study to understand how the region might adapt to climate change; also focus on ensuring climate change issues are addressed in Assembly strategies and their implementation).
- Continue effective **sustainable development challenge function** (particularly focusing on our core activities).
- Finalise and launch the **Integrated Regional Framework** (then focus our work on IRF implementation areas for which we have responsibility).
- Discuss with partners how to take forward work on **energy and the regional energy forum** (given limitations on Assembly funding).
- Complete **biodiversity strategy** (launch strategy and focus implementation on areas that relate to the RSS).
- Participate in the next **Regional Funding Allocations** round.

## Scrutiny

- Focus on **two scrutiny reviews for 2008/09** (further develop relationships with local authorities, business sector and other partners).
- Contribute to the **development of new scrutiny and accountability arrangements**.

## Housing and Communities

- Ensuring **advice to Ministers on housing** investment is kept under review and up-to-date.
- **'Joining-up' Housing, Planning and Transport** (integrating work through focus on the mini-review of RSS).
- Develop and implement a **delivery plan for the Housing Strategy** (also linked to work on RSS implementation).
- **Action on Gypsies and Travellers** (managing advice to Ministers).
- **Research and Monitoring** (to support the Housing Board's priorities).
- Further discussion with regional partners about taking forward work on **improving the private sector housing stock** and on **supporting people** (to look at respective roles of Assemblies and other partners).
- **Implementation of the Affordable Warmth Action Plan** (and reporting to Regional Housing Board).
- **Managing a new relationship with the Regional Housing Forum**.

## **Next Steps**

- 14.** The views of Members on the above priorities will be used to develop a detailed budget and business plan for 2008/09, subject to confirmation of guidance and funding from Government. The business plan will include comprehensive activity tables setting out activity, outcomes and delivery targets, which will be used to enable Assembly performance to be monitored.
- 15.** An emerging draft plan will be circulated for comment to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Assembly and all Board Chairs by 15 November, so that a formal draft can subsequently be presented to a special meeting of the Executive Board to be held immediately before the next Assembly meeting on 7 February. Executive Board will be asked to endorse the draft Business Plan and also a draft budget for formal agreement at the Assembly meeting.
- 16.** Government Office have indicated that they are likely to require submission of the business plan to them by 25 January - this will be made with the proviso that it is conditional on Assembly agreement on 10 February.
- 17.** Final approval of the business plan and confirmation of funding from Government is likely to be achieved in March. Thereafter an executive summary of the business plan will be circulated to Members and partners.

## Source Papers

18. Past reports and relevant background documents are available as follows:

Report	Location
<p>YHA Meeting 15 February 2007 'Making a Difference': Business Plan and Budget 2007/08 – 2009/10.</p> <p>YHA Meeting 4 October 2007 Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) – Summary of Key Recommendations and Implementation.</p> <p>Regional Executive Board 8 November 2007, Sub-National Review Update.</p> <p>Letter from CLG to Assemblies, 'Sub-National Review Implementation' (28 November 2007).</p> <p>CLG and BERR, 'Taking Forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration' (December 2007).</p>	<p>All available from:</p> <p>Emma King Yorkshire and Humber Assembly 18 King Street Wakefield WF1 2SQ Tel: 01924 331590 E-mail: <a href="mailto:EmmaKing@YHAssembly.gopv.uk">EmmaKing@YHAssembly.gopv.uk</a></p>

Chris Martin, Executive Director,  
December 2007

**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSEMBLY**  
**BUDGET 2008/09 – INITIAL ESTIMATES**

	2007/08 £000	2008/09 £000
<b>Income</b>		
CLG Funding	2,339	2,082
Local Authority Subscriptions	222	222
Estimated Interest	65	65
Recharges to LGYH	33	35
Other Income (including Housing Supporting Delivery Funding)	225	150
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,884</b>	<b>2,554</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employee costs	1,686	1,815
Accommodation, Equipment and Administration Costs	314	328
Balance available to finance consultancy, events and publications	884	411
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,884</b>	<b>2,554</b>

**REPORT BACK FROM THE BOARDS**

**For Information**

Members are asked to note the key issues from the Functional, Sustainable Development and Scrutiny Boards since the last meeting on 8 November.

**Regional Housing Board**

1. The Regional Housing Board met on 7 December. The agenda included updates from the autumn lobbying event at the House of Commons, and updates on discussions around the implementation of the Sub-National Review. The agenda also dealt with next steps in the investment process, following submission of advice to Government on funding for the region. There was also a discussion about the emerging Housing Corporation programme and how the element of investment for building new affordable housing, will help deliver the Regional Housing Strategy. The Board also considered monitoring and delivery - how it wished to support delivery both regionally and through the sub-regional partnerships.
2. There was also formal sign off for the Housing Board's response to the Sustainable Development Board on the advice note that it produced on the way that housing activity could help deliver wider climate change objectives. This response set out the practical steps that the Board would take to ensure that its own work responded to the challenge of climate change in the region.
3. Finally, the Board agreed a proposal to drive forward the work of the Regional Loans Fund - which is the key vehicle for private sector stock improvements in the region. This work will include increased support for Local Authorities in delivering loans products to home owners in their local areas.

**Regional Planning Board**

4. The Regional Planning Board met on 11 December 2007. The meeting was an opportunity for the Board to be updated on the outcome of the discussions at the full Assembly meeting regarding the response to the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan (the RSS). Reports were also received that updated members on a number of key work areas.

5. The Board agreed a protocol for the Assembly in handling consultations from local authorities on Development Plan Documents and strategic planning applications and also agreed minor revisions to the criteria that identify which applications should be sent to the Assembly for comment. Both of these documents will now be circulated to local authorities. The Board agreed the next steps in the preparation of the Implementation Action Plan for the RSS, which will be a key item at the next Board meeting.
6. Members were asked to consider the implications of the Government's proposals for updating RSSs to ensure that they deliver the Government's housing agenda (the Housing Green Paper refers to the need for 'reviews' of RSS). Members agreed that the RSS needed to be 'continually developed' and that this should be the way that further work on the RSS is looked at, rather than imply a full review so shortly after we have completed work on our RSS. Work over the next year on this further development of the RSS should focus on the levels of growth needed in the region, the locations for this growth and the infrastructure needed to support this growth. The Board agreed the principles that should guide the project plan for this work, which will be a key item for discussion at the next Board meeting.
7. Members also had an opportunity to confirm their main business planning priorities for 2008/09 so that these could feed into the Assembly's Business Planning process in the New Year.

### **Regional Transport Board**

8. The Regional Transport Board met on 30 November. A key item on the agenda included a discussion of the Government's proposed changes to the Regional Transport Strategy elements of the RSS and the Board agreed to input its comments to the Assembly meeting, where a formal response to the proposed changes to RSS would be agreed. The Board also agreed proposals to prepare for a two-stage review of the Region's transport funding priorities – so that advice can be offered to Ministers to make sure that the Region secures maximum benefit from the available transport funding allocation. There would be an interim review concluding in April 2008 and a full review to end early in 2009.
9. The Board endorsed proposals by the Highways Agency to take forward work on two road improvements that are of key significance to the Humber Ports and the wider regional economy – these affect the A63 in Hull and improvements to the A160/A180 access to Immingham. A decision on a proposal from East Riding on the A164 Humber Bridge to Beverley was deferred for consideration as part of the interim review of funding priorities in April.
10. Lastly, the Board welcomed and endorsed a report on developing a regional public transport 'smartcard' and provided input to a major study (being

sponsored by the Sustainable Development Board – see paragraph 12 below) on achieving reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport.

## **Sustainable Development Board**

- 11.** The Sustainable Development Board meeting took place on the 20 December.
- 12.** JMP Consultants presented their interim findings from a study into what measures would be needed to achieve reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport (an earlier report had already been made to the Transport Board – see paragraph 10 above). The study has concentrated on what could be practically delivered through transport interventions by organisations within the region. It is clear that current policies will not lead to a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the transport sector.
- 13.** The research has looked at various transport interventions such as car sharing and changing modes of transport (cars to buses/trains etc.), road user charging, etc. Factors that can only be achieved through national interventions, such as improved fuel efficiency, were factored in as underlying trends. Underlying socio-economic trends, which can impact on mobility, were also factored into the analysis using software modelling tools. The impacts of the interventions were quantified in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person. The findings show that none of the scenarios would lead significant levels of emissions reductions compared to the 2001 baseline.
- 14.** The completed report, due out in early February 2008, will provide evidence to influence the work of the Sustainable Development Board, Regional Transport Board and inform the implementation of the Integrated Regional Framework. Given the significance of this work the Board considered that a joint seminar with the Transport Board might be appropriate to discuss the findings and also that a presentation should be made to the Executive Board.
- 15.** The Board also received a presentation from the North East's Climate Change Co-ordinator who outlined their work in producing a regional adaptation plan. The objectives of the study include assessing the likely climate change impacts across the region to 2050; identifying what should be done to adapt to these impacts and identifying organisations best placed to take a lead on delivering these actions identified. The Board endorsed the proposal to carry out a scoping study for Yorkshire and the Humber, including learning from the North East's experience, to inform the development of a full regional adaptation study in due course.
- 16.** Yorkshire Futures have completed research into inequalities within the region, which had been commissioned by the Sustainable Development Board. The work provides an evidence base to tackle the trend for widening inequalities. The research will also inform the development of the Integrated Regional Framework with the issue cutting across many of the regional

challenges, such as Diversity and Equality and Public Health and Obesity. A press launch is due to take place in January 2008, with the publication of the research, which will include summary document.

## **Scrutiny Board**

- 17.** The Scrutiny Board met on 28 November 2007 to discuss and agree the draft recommendations on the review into the region's rural economy. Following comments received as part of the review, members agreed ten recommendations, which will now go be included in the full draft report to be sent to Yorkshire Forward for checking. From there, the report will be presented to the next full Assembly meeting in February 2008.
- 18.** In addition, members agreed that 'Meeting the Climate Change Challenge' should the subject of the next Scrutiny Review, with a timetable beginning in January 2008.
- 19.** Scrutiny Board Chair Paul Jagger and Assembly officers are also due to attend the ERN Scrutiny Conference on 7 December 2007, where discussions are expected to include proposals for future regional and Parliamentary scrutiny work.

Emma King, Business Services Officer  
January 2008

**SUB NATIONAL REVIEW – UPDATE**

**For Discussion:**

Members are asked to consider and discuss the progress of current Sub National Review (SNR) activity.

**Introduction**

1. This report provides an update on SNR related activity since the last meeting of the Regional Executive Board in November 2007, when Members agreed the focus of future activity as follows:
  - Acting on issues arising from the risk assessment completed by ARUP;
  - Ongoing discussions to formulate proposals in response to the SNR with updates provided to future meetings of the Regional Executive Board;
  - Considering and responding to the Sub National Review Consultation paper when published; and
  - Delivering activity as required during the transition period

**Risk Assessment**

2. ARUP have completed work to map the potential risks to delivery resulting from the SNR. The main aims of the work were:
  - To help inform the region's thinking about what it wishes to retain in any new arrangements;
  - To give some initial thought to how different agencies want to collectively manage the transitional period; and
  - To help inform the thinking of member organisations, and other stakeholders, about what SNR may mean for them and how they respond to it.
3. The report was circulated to all Assembly Members in December. Further copies are available from [Nicola.Baylis@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:Nicola.Baylis@yhassembly.gov.uk) .

**Ongoing discussions in the region**

4. Thinking to progress SNR has continued. Below are listed the key meetings and decisions.

*SEE Partners/Yorkshire Forward – 22 November 2007*

5. SEE partners discussed with Tom Riordan (Chief Executive, Yorkshire Forward) the potential for SEE partner engagement with Yorkshire Forward in the development of the Integrated Regional Strategy and associated activity. All agreed the importance of the ongoing involvement of SEE partners and Yorkshire Forward confirmed that they would support activity in relation to the Regional Strategy.
6. The meeting noted however that the relationship with Yorkshire Forward would be just one part of future arrangements. Bi-lateral discussions would also need to be held with Local Government Yorkshire and Humber.
7. Individual SEE partner organisations also agreed to revisit how they would like to engage in the future. In particular to discuss within their organisations their role in a representative SEE partner body and the resources available to support any new arrangements.

*LGYH Executive and Local Authorities and YF Board – 6 December 2007*

8. The headlines from these meetings were discussed at the full Assembly on 6 December as follows:
  - Local Authority Leaders and Yorkshire Forward are committed to working together for the benefit of the region;
  - The LGYH Executive Board will be expanded to include representation from the City Regions and the Rural Sector (the Executive also includes a place for the Chair of the Assembly) to enable better liaison with Yorkshire Forward
  - LGYH and Yorkshire Forward Boards have agreed to meet regularly to facilitate ongoing discussion (the next meeting is planned for the Spring).

*Full Assembly – 6 December 2007*

9. It was noted that Local Authority members of the Assembly had discussed a range of SNR issues at meetings held earlier in the day (see para 8). Members highlighted the potential for the various discussions to become disconnected and it was agreed that efforts should be made to keep track of all debate and decisions.

**Meetings and activities of the English Regions Network (of assemblies)**

10. As reported to the last meeting, Parliament's Modernisation Committee is undertaking an inquiry looking at the possibility of establishing Regional Committees as heralded in the Governance of Britain Green Paper. ERN has made a submission to the Committee setting out the experience of assemblies in this area, in particular around developing regional scrutiny and accountability arrangements. (A copy of the submission is available from [Iain.Lovell@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:Iain.Lovell@yhassembly.gov.uk).) The Modernisation Committee is to start taking oral evidence shortly including from an ERN panel and Paul Jagger has

been invited to take part.

11. ERN has also submitted a paper to CLG and BERR on Involving Social, Economic and Environmental Representatives in Regional Level Working post 2010. This is available from [James.Paton@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:James.Paton@yhassembly.gov.uk)
12. ERN attended the National Sustainable Development Commission meeting for Regional Sustainable Development Champion Bodies that was also attended by Cllr Arthur Barker as Chair of the Sustainable Development Board. The National SD Commission remains concerned about the focus on economic development in SNR and in particular that it runs counter to other government policies such as the draft Climate Change Bill. The National SD Commission has indicated that it will work to reinforce the importance of SD Champion bodies (including our SD Board) and the need for these to receive national funding. They are also assessing the consistency of the SNR with the SD principles set out in the National Sustainable Development Strategy and will be using their networks to lobby government on this key issue.
13. ERN Chairs and Chief Executives continue to meet regularly with officials from CLG and BERR to discuss the development of SNR proposals. The next ministerial meeting scheduled is with Stephen Timms on 29th January 2008.

## Consultation

14. On Friday 21 December government published a short holding paper – *Taking Forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration*. This was circulated to all Assembly Members. In summary the paper reconfirmed the reforms set out in the SNR and outlined progress to date. The paper also sets out the next steps in relation to primary legislation, consultation and transition issues.
15. **Primary Legislation** will be required to:
  - Designate RDA's as regional planning bodies and set out the principles underpinning the Single Regional Strategy;
  - Facilitate delegation of funds from RDA's to sub regional bodies and Local Authorities;
  - Change RDA scrutiny and accountability arrangements;
  - Introduce the new local authority economic development duty; and
  - Establish statutory sub-regional economic development authorities.
16. The **consultation paper** (to be published early in 2008) will seek views including:
  - How the single regional strategy might be implemented and the creation of a local authority economic development duty.
  - The process for developing the strategy and principles for joint working between RDA, Local Authorities and other partners (business and third sector specifically mentioned) on the development of the strategy and the implementation plan (whilst still recognising the need for regional

flexibility).

- Options for how RDA's, Local Authorities and their Regional Partners should change to meet their new challenges
- How the second round of Regional Funding Allocations will be taken forward and what funding streams will be included.
- The role of the Homes and Communities Agency in delivering SNR reforms (Sir Bob Kerslake has recently been announced as the Chief Executive); and
- Options for the future of regional housing boards.

**17.** The paper touches briefly on **transition issues**. In particular assemblies will continue to:

- Work on regional spatial strategies including revisions to take account of new housing numbers. These are to be completed by 2011.
- Work with RDA's and Local Authorities to take forward the new expanded round of regional funding allocations.
- Work with RDA's and Local Authorities developing the joint evidence bases and implementation plans for regional strategies.

**18.** Finally the paper includes a list of SNR implementation Milestones that conclude with 2010 as the earliest date RDA's could take on their new responsibilities.

## **Business Planning and Transition Issues**

**19.** We have not yet received business planning guidance from Government but are preparing our business plan around the work areas agreed by Members at the meeting in November and information gleaned Government so far. Full details are set out at agenda item 4.

**20.** In relation to current transition activity we are already working closely with Yorkshire Forward and Local Authorities on many key issues. A particular example is transport where a virtual regional transport team made up of officers from the Assembly, Yorkshire Forward and Government Office has been established to support the Regional Transport Board. We anticipate similar arrangements to be developed in other areas over the coming months.

**21.** To date staff retention has not been an issue, although filling natural vacancies can be difficult. Recent examples include cover for two posts made vacant by maternity leave. We continue to look to Yorkshire Forward, Government Office, Local Authorities and other partners to help when such vacancies arise. It is only with support that we can ensure regional capacity is retained in key areas.

## **Source Papers**

Past reports on this subject are available as follows:

<b>Report</b>	<b>Location</b>
<p>YHA Meeting: 4 October 2007  Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) – Summary of Key Recommendations and Implementation</p> <p>Regional Executive Board: 8 November 2007  Sub-National Review - Update</p> <p>YHA Meeting: 6 December 2007 – Draft Minutes</p>	<p>All available from:  Emma King  Yorkshire and Humber Assembly  18 King Street  Wakefield  WF1 2SQ  Tel: 01924 331590  E-mail:  Emma.King@YHAssembly.gov.uk</p>

Sue Jeffrey, Executive Director  
January 2008

**YORKSHIRE FORWARD CORPORATE PLAN 2008/11 - CONSULTATION  
DRAFT**

**For Discussion:**

Members are asked:

- To receive a presentation from Yorkshire Forward on its draft Corporate Plan 2008/11.
- To consider and provide comment on the draft plan as the basis for the Assembly response

1. Yorkshire Forward is required by Government to produce a Corporate Plan covering the period 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2011. The Plan sets out Yorkshire Forward's contribution to delivering the Regional Economic Strategy. It also sets out their response to the Sub National review (SNR). Each year Yorkshire Forward consults the Assembly on its draft Corporate Plan.
2. The full Plan is available to download from [www.yorkshire-forward.com](http://www.yorkshire-forward.com). The Executive Summary is attached at **Annex A**. Issues Members may want to particularly consider are highlighted below.
3. There will be no RES review in 2008 as previously planned – rather work will commence on evidence gathering for the new regional strategy (expected to be in place by 2011).
4. The Plan proposes a new approach to investment of the Single Pot. It describes new 'policy product ranges' that will deliver five corporate objectives and direct over £300m investment each year. It also explains how 'geographic programmes' will provide a clear plan of what Yorkshire Forward is to deliver at a local level (via local authorities and other intermediaries).
5. Current arrangements for investment planning will continue for 2008/09, with the move to a City Region basis for the agreement of economic priorities happening from March 2009. 2008/09 will be used to consult on the split of resources. Currently this is by policy area (divided equally between business, inclusion and renaissance) and geographic area (divided by formula).
6. The Plan recognises that the Sub National Review means a much changed role for Yorkshire Forward and a new relationship with local government, which is outlined. Recognition is also given to the importance of maintaining the involvement of social, environmental and economic partners in the new arrangements.

7. The Plan says little about how Yorkshire Forward intends to deliver its new responsibilities post SNR and in particular makes no reference to the existing regional board structure as a mechanism for strategic decision making during the transition period (most notable in relation to transport).
8. Member's comments on these and other issues will be used as the basis of the Assembly response to the Corporate Plan. This response needs to be submitted by 21 February 2008.

Sue Jeffrey, Executive Director  
January 2008

## Yorkshire Forward, Corporate Plan 2008/11 Consultation Draft, December 2007

### Executive Summary

1. This Corporate Plan sets out how Yorkshire Forward will contribute to the region's economic goals set out in the Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber 2006-2015 (RES) during the 2008/11 planning period. The Plan also identifies how the Agency will respond to the changes in regional policy and responsibilities as a result of the Government's recent Sub Nation Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR). In developing this Corporate Plan we have reviewed our key policies and considered how we can strengthen the impact of our interventions by adopting a stronger programme approach to delivery. The Plan is intended to be clearer about what we are going to do and why (the Policy Product Ranges), and where they will have an impact (geographic programmes).

#### A. Purpose of Yorkshire Forward

2. Yorkshire Forward was set up in 1999 because the Yorkshire and Humber region had undergone major economic upheaval caused by the decline of traditional industry such as coal, steel, textiles, fishing and agriculture. We are one of nine English Regional Development Agencies, arms-length Government bodies charged with improving regional economies. Our role is to produce the RES – a 10-year blueprint to guide the work of public and private agencies to improve the regional economy. We receive Government and EU funds to deliver elements of this Strategy. We cannot deliver the Regional Economic Strategy alone and we will work with public, private and third sector agencies – Team Yorkshire and Humber - to deliver it with us.

#### B. Economic Challenge

3. Over the last seven years, the Yorkshire and Humber economy has recovered, posting consecutive years of growth above the EU average and even outpacing London at times. With five million people and a £80 billion economy, we are as big as Norway, Singapore or Ireland. Unemployment is close to a 30-year low and improvements have taken place in educational, competitiveness and social performance indicators. We are now a region of economic opportunity, rather than decline.
4. Big challenges remain. We need more people setting up successful businesses, improvements in basic and higher level skills, more investment in infrastructure and our new found prosperity to reach our most deprived communities. Tackling climate change and promoting diversity are no longer "nice to dos", they are "must dos" for businesses that want to compete in global markets. Competing successfully with the new economic powerhouses of China and India, as well as the established ones in the US and Europe demands an even greater collective effort by "Team Yorkshire and Humber" - the key public, private and third sector agencies seeking to improve our economy.
5. The region's economic vision as set out in the RES is to be by 2015:  
***"a great place to live, work and do business, that fully benefits from a prosperous and sustainable economy"***
6. The RES reflects our unique economic geography. The vision does not seek to copy London, rather to capitalise on our proximity less than two hours away from the World's financial capital and our lower cost and, arguably, higher quality of living. It recognises that a local approach to regional economic development is needed in a region that has half of England's largest ten urban areas, the least number of local authorities and a rural area the size of Northern Ireland.
7. There are new jobs in growing industries like digital media and the thriving financial services sector in the Leeds city region, where more than £3 billion of investment is

planned throughout Leeds itself and the cities of Bradford, Wakefield and York. Industries like engineering, chemicals and food are producing leaner manufacturing businesses that can compete on the world stage thanks to stronger links with our nine top class universities. The Sheffield city region is the UK's best performing European Objective One area, and accounts for a higher proportion of the UK's total steel production than it did in the 1960's and 70's. We have the first major commercial airport of its type to open in the UK for 50 years at Doncaster. More exports go to the world through the Hull and Humber Ports than any other UK port complex. And our renaissance programme is building strong market towns in rural areas in North Yorkshire, the East Riding and other areas and delivering bold new visions for towns like Barnsley, Grimsby, Rotherham, Scarborough and Huddersfield.

### C. Our Vision and Values: culture change

8. Our own vision is effectively that set out in the RES (see above), and in pursuing that vision we have an ambition for Yorkshire and Humber to be recognised as a world leader in our efforts to adapt our economy to the demands of tackling climate change. The region has a history and knowledge of dealing with the environmental effects of energy production and we want to help others learn from our experiences.
9. Five core values guide the way that we work and how we do business in effect setting a framework for the culture of the organisation:
  - We will achieve **value for money** for taxpayers;
  - We will be **open** about the way we invest and take decisions;
  - We will work as a **team (Team Yorkshire Forward)** and as part of a wider **Team Yorkshire and Humber** to deliver the RES;
  - We will seek **excellence** in the way we operate; and
  - We will strive to be an Agency that promotes **diversity** and celebrates difference.
10. The first letter of the values spell the word **VOTED**. This is to ensure that we and partners understand our role. No one has voted for us, so we have a duty to be open, achieve value for taxpayers' money and account for what we do. Equally, we are deliberately a business-led, nonpolitical, objective organisation with a long term strategy set up to take tough decisions to improve the Yorkshire and Humber economy. The core values exist to drive a culture change in Yorkshire Forward to equip the Agency to deal with our new role as set out by Government. Our latest internal and external surveys show that this culture change is well underway, but there is more work to do.

### D. Our Corporate Objectives

11. We have five Corporate Objectives to guide our people and over £300m a year of investment to help deliver the RES:

#### **Objective 1: Championing RES delivery**

12. Yorkshire Forward has a unique role as the lead agency in championing the delivery of the RES. We will do so by building strong evidence and regional ownership; influencing key policies and strategies in pursuit of RES goals; leading a partnership approach to prioritisation and investment; utilising our funds in progressing RES goals; and, responding to the implications of the Government's recent review of economic development. In particular, we intend to prepare, produce and sign-off the new Integrated Regional Strategy in a joint approach with local government. We will also ensure close involvement of business and other public sector leaders.

#### **Objective 2: Helping people to access good jobs, skills and transport**

13. This Corporate Objective aims to build 'enabling routes' to jobs. Our approach to **Skills** focuses on raising the aspirations of individuals, stimulating business demand for new skills and developing leadership and management skills. Our approach to **Transport** is characterised by developing evidence, influencing transport operators, working with partners to invest in practical transport improvements and achieving regional consensus

on transport priorities. Our priorities for **Economic Inclusion** are working with partners to increase the numbers of people in jobs, promoting economic development in the region's deprived communities, and responding to the changing labour market by promoting diversity equality for all.

### **Objective 3: Helping businesses to start-up, grow and compete through innovation**

13. This Corporate Objective aims to help our existing business base to compete in a global economy and to get more people to set up businesses. Our approach to **Competitiveness** is characterised by a dual focus on business improvement and innovation. **Enterprise and Access to Finance** has three elements, working to stimulate an enterprising culture in the region, a Business Start-Up Programme providing business support to individuals and SMEs and an Access to Finance Programme. In **International Business** we have three priorities; upping our game in Foreign Direct Investment, the promotion of overseas trade activity and Investor Development. Yorkshire Forward will take the lead in the region in promoting the economic case for diversity. We will work to shape business support so that it meets the needs of different minority groups and works to mainstream diversity. All of our investments will be geared to recognising that businesses create wealth and our role is to enable them to do so more effectively.

### **Objective 4: Regenerating cities, towns and rural communities**

14. The Regional Economic Strategy identifies Great Places as central to the economic prosperity of the region. This aims to utilise the full potential of the region's unique physical and environmental assets to achieve an integrated and sustainable economy. Our approach to **Urban Renaissance** is based on four elements - thinking places, designing places, making places and learning and growing places. Through **Rural Renaissance** we aim to strengthen and improve rural economic performance by focusing on enterprise, competitiveness, utilising unique assets and key sectors. Renaissance programmes are delivered in close partnership with Local Government. We aim to move the region towards a **Lower Carbon Economy** by a focus on environmental assets, sustainable consumption and production, taking a lead role on the economic elements of energy and climate change; and low carbon technologies. The role of Yorkshire Forward's **Property** function is principally that of a service to the Agency and partners to overcome market failure. The overarching aim of our work in **Marketing the Region through Tourism and Major Events** is to modernise the image of Yorkshire and Humber specifically to promote the region as a great place to live, work and do business – a strong tourist economy, underpinned by a high profile major event programme is at its core.

### **Objective 5: Improving Yorkshire Forward's capacity**

16. We are proud to be recognised as a strong performing RDA in the recent assessment exercise by the National Audit Office (NAO). We were the only RDA to achieve a top mark for our capacity, but recognise that we need to be better at setting priorities and executing the RES on the ground. The priority will be implementing the improvement plan agreed with the NAO and responding effectively to the Government's review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR). We also recognize the need to get more for less in an era of tightening public spending. Even though Yorkshire Forward is one of the leanest RDAs, we will, through a series of targeted reviews, recycle £30m of expenditure to the direct delivery of our policy priorities.

## **E. Geographic Programmes**

17. Following the development of our policy priorities, geographically focused programmes will be developed. We will work principally with Local Authorities to develop Geographic Programmes, swell as with other key partners such as Local Strategic Partnerships, the Universities, the LSC, Job Centre Plus and the Government Office to ensure that the Geographic Programmes are fully integrated with other investments. These Geographic Programmes will set out Yorkshire Forward's contribution to Local Area Agreements. They will draw heavily from the experience approach of our renaissance work and be based on agreed economic master plans. Each Geographic Programme will have three main elements which will:

- Set out the directly Yorkshire Forward funded elements of the Geographic Programme which will be delivered by the Local Authority;
- Set out the additional Yorkshire Forward contribution to the Geographic Programme delivered in the locality by intermediaries;
- Identify the strategic added value the Geographic Programme will deliver to address wider RES targets by influencing the investment and policy decisions of others through Key Account Management of major businesses, partners and public agencies.

## F. Resources

18. The Government's review of public expenditure reported during the autumn of 2007, as a result, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) settlement sets out a reduction for Yorkshire Forward of programme funding of £30m in real terms over three years and administration reductions of £0.462m/£0.923m/£0.923m over the Corporate Planning period 08/09 to 10/11. The CSR settlement also sets out additional roles for RDAs including Train to Gain brokerage and a more formal role in responding to economic shocks.
19. This Corporate Plan (see paragraphs 8.4 to 8.5) consults partners on whether to change the current policy split (1/3 / 1/3 / 1/3 business, inclusion and renaissance) and the geographic split (a formula giving 5-year allocations by sub-region based on a balance of indicators of economic need and opportunity). It proposes that these current arrangements are rolled forward for a final year before the start of city-region investment planning in 2009.

## G. Measuring Performance

20. The SNR will give us far more flexibility in setting our own outcome targets, but this will need to be balanced with the requirement to demonstrate how each of our objectives and interventions will contribute to an overarching economic growth objective. In addition, we will assess our performance against our core **values**, our goal to be an Agency that promotes **diversity** and celebrates difference, and our aim to embed the principles of **sustainable development** into all our interventions. The Plan includes an "ambition" for each Policy area, the progress against which will be assessed by an internationally renowned research institute in 2009.

## H. Accountability

21. Yorkshire Forward is a non-Departmental Public Body governed by a business-led Board of 15 and managed by a Chief Executive and Executive Team of five Directors. Financial accountability is ultimately to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and the Agency's Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer. The National Audit Office, our external auditor, conducts the independent assessment of our performance. Our work is scrutinized by the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and there are plans through the Sub-National Review to strengthen local Government and Parliamentary scrutiny of Yorkshire Forward. We welcome this additional scrutiny.