

Market Towns Initiative and
Renaissance Market Towns
Programme

Scrutiny
Enquiry 5

Acknowledgements

The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly would like to express thanks to all organisations and individuals that contributed to this scrutiny review, particularly the members of the Assembly and Yorkshire Forward panels and those who were interviewed and gave evidence at the stakeholder hearing.

Foreword

This review has looked at a topic that is very important to the region's renaissance - the regeneration of market towns and the effectiveness of two programmes, the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. The review has considered several aspects of these programmes in detail, including the appropriateness of the programmes to deliver the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy, how well the programmes are managed and evaluated and whether they can make a lasting difference to the towns involved.

The Panel members and I witnessed first hand the commitment and determination of people and organisations in the region to support the renaissance of market towns. The review, from the very start, attracted considerable interest from stakeholders in the region, many of whom have strong views about the regeneration of market towns and two programmes being reviewed.

It is vital that we remember that the purpose of scrutiny is to help all regional partners refine and improve their performance. We all have an interest in this - local authorities, businesses, government, the voluntary sector and, indeed, everyone who lives and works in the region. We all share a single vision - to see Yorkshire and Humber become a region, "where the economic, environmental and social well-being of all our region and its people advances rapidly and sustainably". The main intention of this report to be as constructive as possible and to help us work together to deliver this vision.

I should like to thank everybody who has contributed to this final report - my fellow panel members and Assembly officers for putting in so much hard work, all of those who were interviewed and submitted written evidence and staff at Yorkshire forward that went to great lengths to provide detailed information and documentation on the two programmes.

The challenge now for the region is how we build upon the report's findings in order to bring about sustainable futures for our market towns and rural communities.

Cate Hammond

CPRE, Chair of the Scrutiny Panel

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Executive Summary

This report brings together the findings and recommendations from the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly's scrutiny review into the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. The review was undertaken between December 2003 and March 2004 by a Panel made up of members of the Assembly and the Assembly's Commissions.

The review has considered the effectiveness of the implementation of the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme in Yorkshire and Humber and their contributions to achieving the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy.

The main conclusions of the Panel are summarised below.

The Panel welcomes and fully supports Yorkshire Forward's strategic approach to the regeneration of market towns. The Panel also applauds Yorkshire Forward's commitment to bringing about a long-term, significant and sustainable improvement in the economic prosperity of market towns in the region through the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

The Panel also recognises that the Market Towns Initiative has encouraged a number of towns to develop strong partnerships and implement projects that are already helping to revitalise the towns.

The Panel considers that there has been insufficient on-going, formative evaluation of the Market Towns initiative and that learning from this Initiative has not been used to inform the Renaissance Market Towns programme. The evaluation that took place during the scrutiny review identified that some aspects of the Initiative, such as a dedicated project officer, the need to build upon an existing robust partnership and the availability of a small grant scheme, were key to the success of individual Market Towns Initiative projects and should be considered in the development of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

The Panel also considers that there is a lack of clarity as to what happens to the towns involved in the Market Towns initiative after their three years of funding (this is particularly acute for the towns in Round 1 when funding ends this year) and to the towns involved in Renaissance Market Towns following the Master Planning and Action Planning stages. Community members in towns and local authority staff and elected members are unclear about how the Market Towns Initiative action plans will be developed and the projects specified in them will be implemented and funded.

The Panel has some concerns about the ways in which the Renaissance Market Towns Programme has been developed and implemented. The Panel is particularly concerned about the lack of specified programme outcomes, the rigour and thoroughness of the process, and how effectively the programme addresses the rural context.

The Panel has made a series of recommendations to address its concerns; these are set out in section 3 of the report. Most of the Panel recommendations refer to improvements to the Renaissance

Market Towns Programme model and suggest that the process is reviewed to ensure that:

- it delivers outcomes that contribute to the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and improve the economy and quality of life in the towns taking part;
- decision-making is open, transparent, evidence-based and informed by relevant learning, and
- stakeholders are engaged and their respective roles made clear to them at the start of the process.

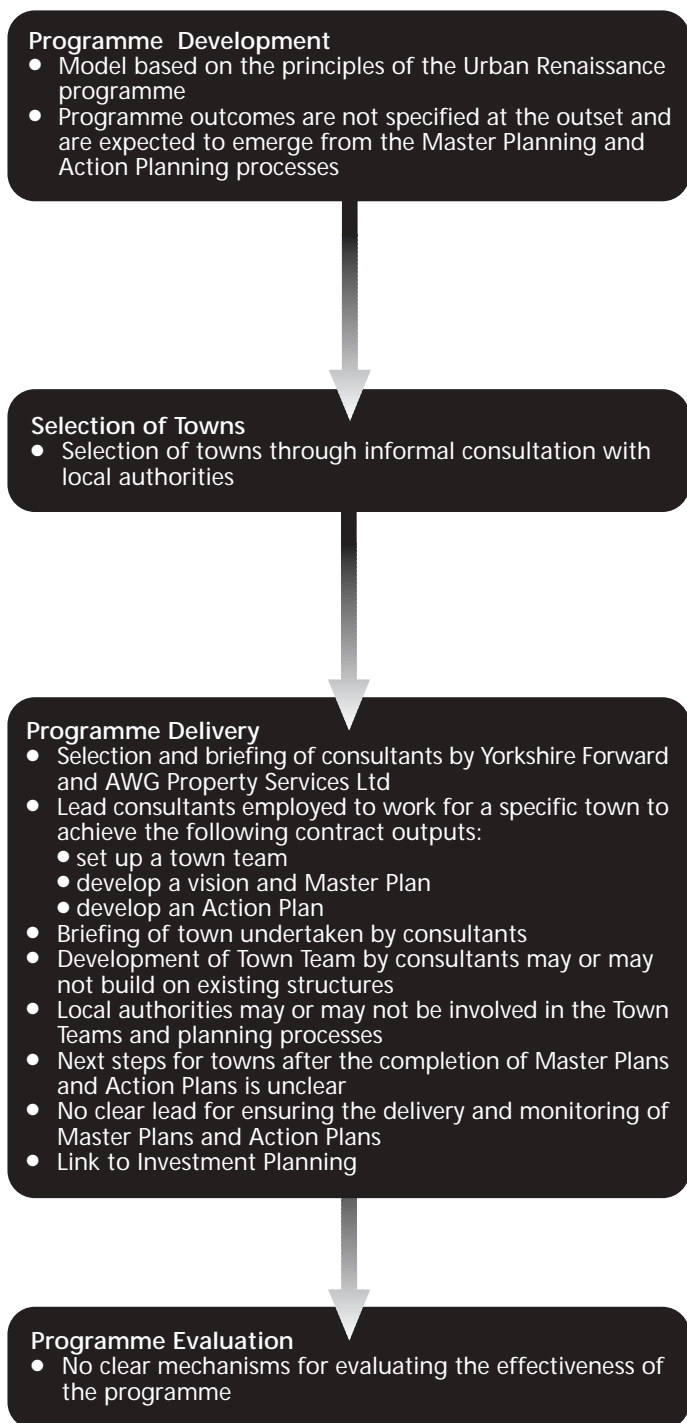
The diagram overleaf illustrates the current process adopted by Yorkshire Forward (in black) and the enhancements to the process recommended by the Panel (in colour).

Renaissance Market Towns Programme

Summary of Recommendations

Existing Process

Recommended Enhancements



Another purpose of this review was to consider a learning point that could be applied to all regional schemes that involve local level activities as well the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns programme. The learning point was:

To establish best practice in ensuring that local initiatives involve the local community but can also deliver the objectives of regional strategies.

The main conclusions for this learning point are that in developing a regional programme, which depends upon local delivery, it is vitally important to have clarity of purpose and a clear link between the overall programme outcomes and the achievement of Regional Economic Strategy targets and the benefits. Consideration should be given to how the benefits achieved locally can be aggregated to achieve regional economic outcomes.

From a strategic perspective, the following areas should be clearly defined:

- The rationale for the programme;
- The overall programme outcomes and how these will deliver Regional Economic Strategy targets;
- The key elements of the programme and how these will be addressed in the sub-regional investment planning process and delivered locally.

From an operational perspective, the following areas should also be considered and set out explicitly at the start of a programme:

- How will project and contract management be effectively addressed;
- Clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders involved in the development and delivery of the programme;
- Clearly defining who/which agency will be responsible for undertaking the delivery of the programme at a local level;
- Clearly defining who/which agency will be responsible for ensuring the programme is successfully implemented.

The full conclusions for the learning point are set out in section 4 of the report.

1. Introduction

This report brings together the findings and recommendations from the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly's scrutiny review into the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. The review was undertaken between December 2003 and March 2004 by a Panel made up of members of the Assembly and the Assembly's Commissions.

The review has considered the effectiveness of the implementation of the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme in Yorkshire and Humber and their contributions to achieving the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy.

1.1 Context

The recently revised Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber (2003) identifies support for developing Master Plans for towns (urban) and market towns (rural) as one of the region's top ten priority actions between 2003-2006. Within the Regional Economic Strategy this is described as:

'Restore civic pride and economic dynamism in town centres by involving local people in designing and implementing Master Plans in over 20 towns and market towns'

The Regional Economic Strategy also identifies market towns as the drivers of rural renaissance, with a focus on ensuring that rural communities are not only attractive places to live, and often visit, but also that they attract jobs and investment.

2. Findings

2.1 Overview

The Panel welcomes and fully supports Yorkshire Forward's strategic approach to the regeneration of market towns. The panel also applauds Yorkshire Forward's commitment to bringing about a long-term, significant and sustainable improvement in the economic prosperity of market towns in the region through the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

The Panel also recognises that the Market Towns Initiative has encouraged a number of towns to develop strong partnerships and implement projects that are already helping to revitalise their towns.

However, the Panel has some concerns about the ways in which the Market Towns Initiative and, in particular, the Renaissance Market Towns Programme have been developed and implemented. The Panel is concerned about the lack of specified outcomes for the Renaissance Market Towns programme, the rigour and thoroughness of the process, how effectively the programme addresses the rural context and how learning from other initiatives has been applied.

In addition, the Panel considers that there is a lack of clarity as to what happens to the towns involved in the Market Towns Initiative after their three years of funding ends and to the towns involved in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme following the Master Planning and Action Planning stages. People involved in partnerships and Town Teams and local authority officers and members are unclear about how the Market Towns Initiative action plans and the Renaissance Market Towns Master Plans and Action Plans will be developed and how the projects specified in them will be implemented and funded.

2.2 Presentation of Findings and Recommendations

The findings from the written evidence, desk research, interviews and hearings have highlighted a number of issues. Some of these issues are common to both programmes. The following section identifies the key findings and, where appropriate, highlights practical examples to demonstrate the issues concerned and sets out recommendations to address them.

The findings are organised according to the four areas discussed at the Yorkshire Forward hearing, under the following headings and sub-headings:

- **Programme design and development: Why have the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme been selected to pursue the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy?**
 - The decision to move from the Market Towns Initiative to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme
 - The use of the Urban Renaissance Programme as a model for rural regeneration

- **Programme implementation: How has the Renaissance Market Towns Programme been developed and delivered?**
 - Engaging Lead Agencies
 - The Countryside Agency
 - Local Authorities
 - Town Selection
 - Engaging rural communities
 - Support provided to market towns
- **Programme outcomes: What are the outcomes from the Renaissance Market Towns programme?**
- **The programme legacy: What is the legacy of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and how will the work be sustained in the future?**

2.3 Programme design and development

The Regional Economic Strategy asks for ‘specific actions’ in market towns. Yorkshire Forward has addressed this commitment through the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

The Market Towns Initiative required each town to develop an action plan that identifies and delivers a range of projects that regenerate the market town and the surrounding hinterland. The town received funding of £340,000 to support the implementation of these specific projects.

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme is a strategic approach encouraging aspiration and the delivery of long-term regeneration within a market town. The consultancy support to assist a market town to develop a vision, Master Plan and Action Plan is funded by Yorkshire Forward. Projects within the Action Plans will be submitted for funding as part of the Investment Planning Process.

‘There is a need for market towns to have a clear vision of their economic future and an understanding of their potential to diversify into new economic roles’.

Renaissance Market Towns Prospectus - Yorkshire Forward

The strategic approach of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme is fully supported by the Panel as the right way forward for the region.

More information about the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme is included in section 4 of this report.

2.3.1 The move from the Market Towns Initiative to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme

Evidence from towns involved in the Market Towns Initiative indicates that some schemes were very successful, such as Thirsk and Todmorden, whilst others were less so. Evaluation by the Panel of the

evidence provided by interviewees from local authorities and communities involved in the initiatives suggests that there are several factors that contributed to success. These include the dedicated market town manager and the opportunity to have funding to support small-scale projects that could be used to secure further public and private sector funding. In addition, where an existing partnership was already in place, the Market Town Initiative was more effectively implemented within the given timeframes.

Despite this initial success, local authorities are unclear about what will happen to the partnerships and action plans once their three years of funding ends. This issue is particularly acute for towns in the first round of the Market Towns Initiative, which finished in March 2004. Some communication between Yorkshire Forward and local authorities has taken place but there is still uncertainty about their role and Yorkshire Forward's future role.

Local authorities have acted as the Accountable Bodies for the majority of Round 2 town partnerships. The local authority has also often provided monitoring support and project management skills to the partnership. Local authority officers have expressed concern that once the initiative is completed, the local authority structure will become responsible for the future support of the partnership and for funding the maintenance of projects brought forward by the Market Towns Initiative. This assumption that activity will be mainstreamed by local authorities was not made explicit during discussions and at the start of the programme within each town.

At the Public Hearing, when the Panel questioned members of the Board of Yorkshire Forward and senior personnel, it was indicated that there would be no additional direct support available from Yorkshire Forward following the end of the Market Towns Initiative. Yorkshire Forward Officers have confirmed that meetings and involvement with action plans will be continued, although more precise arrangements are not yet clear.

Several partnerships have made it clear that they wish to continue regenerating their towns; some have local authority support and others are developing a variety of mechanisms to take work forward.

Malton and Norton has a non Yorkshire Forward Market Towns Initiative Manager and buy-in from the Local Authority; they have spent all available funding on a wide range of projects and are developing a strategy as a Development Trust.

Thirsk has a strong Local Strategic Partnership working on the Market Towns Initiative and has identified a broad range of projects. The Partnership Chair is from the private sector and options for succession are already being examined.

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme was implemented before the first round of the Market Towns Initiative was complete and before any on-going, formative evaluation of the Initiative had been undertaken. At the start of the Market Towns Initiative process, there was joint agreement between Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency to undertake an evaluation of the scheme after the completion of Round 1. This evaluation has now been initiated.

2.3.1.1 Panel Conclusions

The Panel is concerned that Yorkshire Forward has not worked with partners to clarify what will happen to the towns after the Initiative finishes and what, if any, support will be available to carry on the work of partnerships. These partnerships, as a result of the support already invested in them, are in a strong position to bring about further regeneration to their towns and deliver further economic outputs in support of the Regional Economic Strategy. In order to make the most of these opportunities, the partnerships will need some continued support and investment from Yorkshire Forward.

The Panel considers it important that Yorkshire Forward continues to support the towns in the Market Towns Initiative. This should include an evaluation of the potential benefits of further investment in these partnerships and their action plans, including any link to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. This, in turn, should influence the Investment Planning process.

The Panel considers that when the decision was taken to discontinue the Market Towns Initiative and introduce the Renaissance Towns Programme it would have been better practice had the decision about when to evaluate the Initiative been re-assessed. Learning from this scheme would then have informed the development of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

2.3.1.2 Recommendations

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Consider incorporating successful features from the Market Towns Initiative into the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including:

- Provision of a dedicated project officer;
- Building upon an existing robust partnership, whenever one exists, and
- Provision of a small grant scheme.

Work with local authorities and other partners to clarify how the work in the Market Towns Initiative towns will be taken forward after the end of their period of funding under the Initiative.

2.3.2 The use of the Urban Renaissance Programme as a model for the Rural Renaissance Programme

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme is based upon Yorkshire Forward's Urban Renaissance Programme, which is already being rolled out within the region in areas such as Barnsley and Scarborough.

The Urban Renaissance Programme model includes the use of a panel of expert consultants to assist

with visioning, Master Planning and Action Planning. This same approach has been applied to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

Rural areas are very different to urban areas. At the Public Hearing, Yorkshire Forward suggested that the main distinction between rural and urban areas was a matter of scale and size. The Panel considers that the differences are more complex than this. Whilst rural areas and market towns have similar problems to urban areas, such as access, the creation of jobs, improvements in services and employment, the context and the solutions to these issues and the resources available to deal with them are very different.

A key difference is the local authority structure in rural areas. This may contain parish, town, district and, in the case of North Yorkshire, county council levels. The way in which local authority services are delivered in rural areas is also different and smaller district councils in rural areas have significantly fewer resources available to support and develop market towns.

The relationship between the town and the rural hinterland is also a key factor when considering how a town functions and what its future direction and potential could be.

In Settle, a council officer described how their lead consultant wanted to create open spaces within the town through the Master Planning process. This did not recognise that the town is surrounded by National Park land providing a very large area of open space.

2.3.2.1 Panel conclusions

The Panel has found that the Urban Renaissance approach has not been evaluated to determine its appropriateness for use in market towns.

The Panel welcomes Yorkshire Forward's approach not to compartmentalise the regeneration of rural areas and market towns, but the Panel is concerned that the application of the Urban Renaissance model may not have been sufficiently developed for application to rural communities. The approach needs to be enhanced to reflect both the similarities and the differences between rural and urban communities.

The Panel has found that using consultants who specialise in urban design may not be the most appropriate approach as they may not necessarily appreciate the distinction between urban and rural areas and the different approaches required.

2.3.2.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Consider to what extent the Urban Renaissance approach addresses rural issues and needs to be developed further and, in particular, whether consultants supporting towns fully understand the approach and skills required.

2.4 Programme Implementation

2.4.1 Town Selection

Towns were selected for the Market Towns Initiative based on the need to provide a mix of different sizes and types of towns (population/coastal, rural, heritage, etc) from the four sub-regions to test the pilot programme.

Approximately 80 towns were identified that met the criteria of being service centres to surrounding villages and requiring regeneration. The final selection of towns was made following discussions with Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber and the local authorities concerned.

The Countryside Agency and Yorkshire Forward established a rationale for the selection of towns for the Market Towns Initiative. However, the Panel found, several towns were not necessarily aware of these selection criteria.

Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency made decisions jointly. Whilst eighteen towns were initially selected for the Market Towns Initiative pilot, this was later reduced to twelve when Yorkshire Forward decided to finish the Market Towns Initiative and move to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

Yorkshire Forward describe the selection of towns for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme as non-competitive with towns coming forward through the sub-regional Action Planning process or through a pro-active approach from Yorkshire Forward. Yorkshire Forward anticipates supporting between 6 and 8 towns or groups of towns each year.

Evidence from Yorkshire Forward and interviewees from a number of towns suggests a lack of clarity about how towns are currently selected for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. There are no criteria to evaluate need for intervention or the potential for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme to make a sustainable difference to the town and its hinterland and contribute to the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy objectives.

In some instances, communities and local authorities are not clear how or why a town has been selected for the Renaissance Market Town Programme.

A local, Settle Councillor commented that:

“the town is too small to be involved in the programme and has undertaken significant work considering its future prior to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. The Master Plan has made very little difference to what had already been identified.”

Some towns have been clustered together for the purposes of the programme. Yorkshire Forward suggests that this is because it may not be cost effective to engage a town in the programme in isolation and it may be necessary to look at the linkages and functioning of a group of towns as an

economic entity. The Upper Calder Valley clustering of Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd, Todmorden, Sowerby Bridge and Walsden provides an example where clustering together a number of towns has been very successful.

Initially members of the Town Teams and local authority staff in the Upper Calder Valley had some reservations as they felt they might be competing for limited resources. However, the clustering process has been beneficial in providing a common approach that has allowed each town to retain its individual identity whilst supporting a valley-wide regeneration approach.

Other clusters such as the Helmsley, Kirbymoorside and Pickering cluster and the Richmond and Catterick Garrison cluster have been selected on the basis of geographic location, proximity, and a common theme - such as transport. However, the Panel found, the members of the Town Teams and local authority staff were not always clear on why they were being clustered together and did not recognise the similarities between themselves.

2.4.1.1 Panel conclusions

The Panel is aware that the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and Yorkshire Forward are working together to establish a categorisation of settlements in the region (to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy) that might aid market town selection. The Panel believes that Yorkshire Forward still needs to consider how they will evaluate the 'need' for intervention and the potential to contribute to Regional Economic Strategy objectives.

The Investment Planning process, particularly the evidence provided by Strategic Economic Assessments, offers the opportunity to develop a more systematic selection process. This will also help to ensure that local authorities are involved in identifying the town and developing a case for intervention and are involved in the process from the beginning.

2.4.1.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Review the selection process for entry into the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and establish clear criteria for selection. These should be based on priorities identified through Strategic Economic Assessments in the Sub Regional Investment Plans, an evaluation of need (drawing on the expertise of all tiers of local authorities and the Countryside Agency), the potential for the programme to bring added value to the town and its hinterland and the likely contribution to the delivery of Regional Economic Strategy objectives.

2.4.2 Engaging Lead Agencies

Various key agencies, in addition to Yorkshire Forward, have played and/or continue to play important roles in the implementation of the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including the Countryside Agency and local authorities.

2.4.2.1 Yorkshire Forward Officers

Members of the community and local authority officers that were interviewed for this review praised the work of the current Yorkshire Forward officers providing support to the market towns. They recognised that at times their resources were stretched, however they felt the quality of the support provided and the nature of the relationship with the towns was useful and improving over time.

2.4.2.2 The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency was heavily involved in the Market Towns Initiative, particularly Round 1. Its involvement included providing expert advice as well as financial and practical support to market towns involved in the programme.

Comments from people who gave evidence about the Countryside Agency's role in the Market Towns Initiative included:

'The Countryside Agency were well organised and had criteria in place: this included Service Centres, community involvement, acceptance that environmental issues are important to the viability and vibrancy of small towns and that issues specific to each area should be the key priorities of each individual town.'

The Countryside Agency is currently not directly involved in the development or delivery of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. Evidence to the Panel revealed that the Countryside Agency was not consulted in the decision to end the Market Towns Initiative or asked to advise on the development and implementation of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

The Countryside Agency is, however, represented on the Renaissance Market Towns Sounding Board. This group of stakeholders provides guidance to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme team.

2.4.2.3 The role of the local authorities in the Master Planning process

The Regional Economic Strategy describes local authorities and Yorkshire Forward as 'joint leads' for the regeneration of market towns. Evidence suggests, however, that local authorities at all levels are uncertain about their role in relation to both the Market Towns Initiative (as discussed in section 2.3.1. of this report) and the Renaissance Market Towns programme.

In the Upper Calder Valley, the Panel identified that Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council has been an active partner in the development of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme from the beginning and the experience has been beneficial for the process.

Evidence from several towns suggests that in some instances local authority officers and/or elected members have not fully been involved in the Programme from the beginning. In some cases this meant that they had very limited input into the visioning, Master Planning and Action Planning

processes resulting in a lack of ownership and linkages/alignment with the council's plans and strategies as well as a lack of political support from elected members for the Master Plans and Action Plans.

This lack of involvement has also meant that the Master and Action Planning processes have sometimes not referenced existing local authority economic or demographic research or local strategic documents. In addition, the community planning process has run in parallel to the visioning process rather than exploring the linkages between the two processes.

In Skipton and Settle, local authority officers and elected members considered they had been sidelined by the consultants because they were seen as a hindrance to the creative visioning process led by the consultant and the Town Team.

This view was also expressed by a lead consultant at the public hearing: elected members in Skipton were described as *'part of the problem rather than part of the solution'*.

For towns in North Yorkshire, the County Council has not been involved in the visioning even though it is a key service provider. This issue was also raised by local authorities in relation to the Market Towns Initiative, and learning from this process would have been beneficial to the development of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

2.4.2.4 Local authority role in the delivery of the Master Plan

Yorkshire Forward made it clear at the Public Hearing that Local Authorities would have a lead role in delivering key elements of the Master Plans and Action Plans developed by the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

This is not always understood by local authorities and this is likely to cause complications in the transition from planning to implementation. Where the local authority has not been an active partner in the visioning and planning processes, it may not be able to support the priorities identified in the Master and Action Plans.

Local Authorities' officers are concerned that they will be held responsible for the delivery of the Master Plans and Action Plans. Were the situation to arise that progress is not made in implementing these plans, this would have a negative effect on their credibility. The local authorities are also concerned that they may not have sufficient resources to support the delivery of the plans.

Yorkshire Forward recognises that local authorities could decide not to support the Master and Action Plans and in that case no potential projects could move forward. Yorkshire Forward does not want this to happen and is recognising that local authorities need to be fully involved in the process from the start to avoid this eventuality.

Yorkshire Forward, at the Public Hearing, also stated that it would be more likely to support projects

arising from the Master and Action Planning processes if local authorities or other organisations were willing to provide match funding or assets.

A 'sponsors group contract' has been developed for use with market towns joining the programme in 2004/5. The contract sets out the roles and responsibilities of the partners involved, including Yorkshire Forward, local authorities and the lead consultants. The contracts do not require formal adoption by partners. Evidence suggests that very few officers and elected members from local authorities involved in the programme are aware of the contracts and those that are aware of them view them only as reference documents.

2.4.2.5 Panel conclusions

The Panel is concerned that currently the Countryside Agency and its expertise in rural affairs is not contributing to or involved in the development or the direct delivery of the programme.

Given the Countryside Agency's remit and role as one of the lead partners in delivering Objective 5h(iii) in the Regional Economic Strategy, the Panel is not clear why its rural expertise was not drawn upon to inform the development and delivery of the Renaissance Market Towns programme and to establish links with other rural initiatives.

The Panel recognises that Yorkshire Forward is working to ensure that the local authority officers and elected members are involved in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme from the beginning to ensure ownership. However, the Panel considers that there is insufficient clarity over what 'joint leads' with regard to responsibility for a deliverable in the Regional Economic Strategy means in practice. The existing process, including the new contracts, does not ensure effective communication between Yorkshire Forward, local authorities, consultants and Town Teams and does not make it clear from the outset what the responsibilities of each partner are in the development and delivery of the Master Plans and Action Plans.

2.4.2.6 Recommendations

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Design and communicate protocols and processes to describe the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including local authorities, consultants and Town Teams. The new contracts could be used as a basis for the protocols.

Directly involve (over and above their seat on the Sounding Board) the Countryside Agency and all relevant bodies involved in the regeneration of rural areas (such as the Rural Community Councils) in the further development, delivery and evaluation of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. In the case of the Countryside Agency this should include explicit links with the Agency's lead role in delivering Objective 5h(iii) of the Regional Economic Strategy with regard to the links between towns and the rural hinterland.

Engage local authorities (officers and elected members) in the Master Planning and Action Planning processes from the outset to ensure they have the opportunity to feed into and fully support the plans. (This will also help to ensure that the Master and Action Plans are realistic, likely to be implemented and linked with other strategies and projects.)

Clarify and explicitly agree with local authorities (officers and elected members) and other partners who will ensure the delivery of the Master Plans and Action Plans and what resources will be available to facilitate implementation.

2.4.3 Support provided to market towns

The support provided to towns through the Market Towns Initiative and Renaissance Market Towns Programme differs considerably.

In the Market Towns Initiative, towns were provided with funding (£340,000) for project implementation, guidance from the Countryside Agency and Yorkshire Forward and a dedicated project officer to support the partnership. During Round 1, there were issues regarding the time partnerships had to wait for their officer to be in post. Generally, however, towns welcomed the Market Towns Initiative package of support.

A town commented:

Where the Programme Managers were in place at an early stage, they have significantly helped drive the programme forward within the town. Their support has been invaluable.

The support provided through the Renaissance Market Towns Programme is very different. Towns are allocated a lead consultant who works with the town to help them to set up a Town Team and to develop a vision, Master Plan and Action Plan.

From information provided by Yorkshire Forward, it is evident that several towns in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme have received substantial financial investment over the last twelve months.

This funding has been used to pay for the consultancy support provided and in some cases for project implementation costs. Generally towns have had no knowledge of how much funding has been made available to their town to cover consultancy costs. The Panel notes that there is also a great deal of variation between the amounts provided to each town.

The following table summarises information from Yorkshire Forward on the spending for each town/cluster:

Renaissance Market Towns Programme Funding

Town	Funding for Consultancy	Total funding inc subregional support/ capital projects etc
Settle	£112,531	£257,531
Skipton	£179,975	£253,975
Upper Calder Valley	£383,640	£2,240,823
Bedale	£99,808	£299,080
Northallerton	£137,982	£137,982
Helmsley, Kirbymoorside, Pickering	£116,289	£325,289
Richmond and Catterick	£60,000	£208,5000

2.4.3.1 Panel conclusions

The Panel was clear about the level of investment supporting the Market Towns Initiative and recognises that there has been substantial investment in consultancy support for each town under the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. However, in the latter case, it is concerned that this has not been linked to any economic or quality of life outcomes.

2.4.3.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Review the allocation of resources to each town taking part in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, both financial and in terms of consultancy support, to ensure these are commensurate with need and opportunity in the town and represent value for money in terms of their potential contribution to achieving Regional Economic Strategy objectives.

2.4.4 Consultancy Support

Through the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, a town is allocated a lead consultant to help the town develop a vision, a Master Plan and an Action Plan. Specialist consultants are also brought in to undertake project development such as feasibility studies.

AWG Property Services has been appointed by Yorkshire Forward to manage and support the consultancy expertise required for the programme. AWG manage the panel of 35 consultants who

support the towns participating in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. The management company is also responsible for issuing tenders and managing day-to-day issues with the consultants, including processing claims and invoices.

AWG is responsible for working with Yorkshire Forward in appointing consultants to towns and for briefing consultants on the overall purpose of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and their roles and responsibilities. The Panel found that none of the towns interviewed had any input into the selection process of their lead consultant and interviewees from many towns felt their consultant was imposed and '*parachuted into the town*'.

In the Upper Calder Valley the work of the lead consultant, their approach and professionalism was praised by local authority officers and community representatives. The Panel has found that in other towns the experience has not been so positive. A number of interviewees commented that the consultants are often seen by the community as the public face of Yorkshire Forward and the sole interface between Yorkshire Forward and the town.

A number of town representatives from Skipton and Settle commented on the fact that their lead consultants had limited local knowledge of the town, background, history, partnership structures, rural issues, the local authority structures and work that may already be in progress. This has meant that in some instances the consultants are not adequately equipped to approach and deal with very complex partnership relationships that often exist.

A number of community members and local authority officers from towns feel that Yorkshire Forward did not prepare them adequately for the arrival of the consultants and the commencement of the programme. On occasion there were some preliminary discussions with the town or district councils concerned, however, this did not give the people in the towns and local authority officers a clear understanding of their own role and remit, the role of the lead consultant, reporting lines or how they would work with existing partnerships or democratic structures already in place.

When interviewed by the Panel one of the lead consultants described how he felt like '*the Chief Executive of the town*' during the Master Planning process. Evidence suggests that the consultants also have a fairly free rein to implement the programme. This has caused different interpretations of the programme and on occasion a lack of clarity regarding its purpose and rationale.

2.4.4.1 Panel conclusions

The Panel considers that it is necessary to ensure that consultants are made aware of the context of the town, the local authority structure and the issues facing the community. This would improve the briefing process provided to the consultancy team and ensure they are aware of specific town issues before they make contact with the town and start the renaissance process.

The Panel concludes that a substantial proportion of people involved in Town Teams in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme feels that they have little input, ownership or control over the consultants who are allocated to the town.

2.4.4.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Review the process of selecting and briefing consultants. In particular, more emphasis should be placed on selecting consultants with partnership skills and rural specialisms and they should be fully briefed on all the relevant background (socio-economic data, current spatial and regeneration plans, both local and sub-regional, and existing partnerships and local authority structures) before introduction to the town. All tiers of Local Authority should be involved in the selection and briefing of consultants for a particular town.

2.4.5 The Role of the Town Team

A key aspect of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme is the establishment of an effective Town Team with the skills and knowledge to deliver an agreed town 'action plan' (Yorkshire Forward).

Yorkshire Forward has stated that it is committed to ensuring that a skilful and representative 'Town Team' is in place to champion and co-ordinate Renaissance Market Towns Programme delivery at a local level, and that 'various approaches can be adopted for developing Town Teams'.

Yorkshire Forward suggested at the public hearing that the Town Team will not necessarily be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Master Plan and Action Plan and that this responsibility will probably rest with the local authority.

Different consultants have used a variety of methods to identify community members who form the Town Team. Some have encouraged '*the movers and shakers*' to become involved; some have not.

Evidence also suggests that the Town Team may not include appropriate representation from the rural hinterlands or parish councils.

2.4.5.1 Panel conclusions

The Panel considers that the approach taken by the consultants may mean that the Town Team is not representative of the community and does not include the hard to reach and excluded groups.

The Panel welcomes the idea of bringing together a fresh group of people to generate ideas for the visioning and Master Planning process. The Panel considers, though, that lead consultants have misinterpreted the flexibility of this approach and this has led to a lack of consistency in how Town Teams are set up and a lack of clarity regarding their role, remit, and how they relate to existing democratic structures. This ambiguity has caused considerable conflict in a number of towns. The Panel acknowledges that Yorkshire Forward is working to improve the Town Team process and how it links with existing structures. The Panel is concerned, however, that there is no evidence to suggest that the Town Team approach has been developed using learning from other partnership

initiatives, such as SRB partnerships, Health Action Zones or Local Strategic Partnerships. This may have helped avoid the local partnership problems that have arisen.

The Panel is also concerned that there appears to be an assumption that the only way to change the towns is to bring in expertise from outside as this is seen to be lacking in existing local authority structures and the community. In addition, the Panel questions whether sufficient emphasis has been placed on developing the skills and expertise in people in the towns who are part of the Town Teams.

2.4.5.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Wherever possible, utilise existing structures/partnerships for developing the Town Team activity, possibly creating a new sub-group of the partnership to carry out the visioning process. In particular the Panel considers it essential that Town Teams:

- Are representative of the community and include hard-to-reach groups and representatives from the hinterland;
- Have a clear remit to work pro-actively with existing structures and organisations, especially those that are likely to have lead responsibilities in the implementation phase;
- Are adequately resourced and supported - both locally and by Yorkshire Forward officers, and
- Are clear about their role at each stage of planning and delivery.

2.4.6 The evaluation of Master Plans and Action Plans

The lead consultant is responsible for ensuring that the towns develop a robust Master Plan and an Action Plan. In order for these plans to be implemented they must link to a number of other strategic documents and regional processes that are already in place, which include for example:

- Formerly Sub-regional action plans - soon to be replaced by the sub-regional Investment Planning process
- Community investment planning process
- Community plans and strategies
- Local land use development plans
- Regional Sustainable Development Framework

The lead consultant is responsible for ensuring that links are to be established between the Master Plan and Action Plan and the strategic documents and processes identified above.

2.4.6.1 Panel conclusions

The Panel is unclear as to how the Master Plans and Action Plans are evaluated by Yorkshire Forward.

Currently there is limited evidence to demonstrate that Yorkshire Forward systematically evaluates the quality or appropriateness of the Plans and whether they join up with other local initiatives or delivery plans that are already in place.

During the Public Hearing, Yorkshire Forward suggested that the Renaissance Market Towns Programme Sounding Board could be used as a quality control mechanism and review Master Plans.

The Panel note that this role is not currently set out in the terms of reference of the Sounding Board and needs to be carefully considered.

2.4.6.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Develop a rigorous and robust appraisal process, that includes sustainability appraisal, for all Master Plans and Action Plans drawing on the expertise of the Countryside Agency and Local Authorities. In addition to demonstrating the potential for a step change in the town, all Master Plans and Action Plans should show clear linkages to Regional Economic Strategy objectives and to the Sub Regional Investment Plans, as well as to local Community Strategies, Community Investment Plans and relevant spatial, transport, etc., plans.

2.5 Programme Outcomes

2.5.1 Market Towns Initiative and Renaissance Market Towns Programme Outcomes

The Market Towns Initiative, particularly Round 2, encouraged towns to develop projects that would achieve economic outcomes.

These included:

- Access/transport
- Civic pride
- Working with rural communities
- Jobs created, businesses created etc.

Outcomes and targets for the Market Towns Initiative (Round 2) were linked to Yorkshire Forward tier 3 targets. A number of town partnerships, however, found it difficult to develop relevant projects in line with the Round 2 economic indicators, as the first round of towns had broader scope and flexibility in supporting projects. In most towns this meant that action plans needed to be revised to reflect and include only those projects that would achieve clear economic outcomes.

The Market Towns Initiative timeframes within which a town partnership had to undertake a health-check, establish an action plan and then deliver the projects made it difficult for those towns which did not have an established partnership. Much time was spent on establishing and developing the

partnerships and this then provided very limited timescales in which to spend monies before the end of the programme on relevant and well thought through projects. It was in part this situation that encouraged Yorkshire Forward to end the Market Towns Initiative programme after Round 2.

The Market Towns Initiative has achieved economic activity in line with Regional Economic Strategy outcomes. For example, Whitby and Thirsk have produced a significant number of projects and economic outcomes as the partnerships are well established and the Market Town Managers are in place to provide support and provide additional skills to the partnership. Projects include the East Thirsk Resource Centre providing learning and training opportunities for local residents.

Whilst the Renaissance Market Towns Programme is at an early stage of implementation and, at the time of the review, has not directly achieved any measurable economic outcomes, it is also not clear how the programme's success will be measured in economic or other quality of life terms in the future.

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme focuses on developing towns as service centres and building the hard infrastructure that will deliver future targets and economic outcomes through delivery plans.

The Panel has found no evidence of what the future economic or quality of life outcomes would be for the Renaissance Market Town programme.

2.5.1.1 Panel conclusions

In relation to the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, at this time the Panel considers there is a gap between the visioning process and the delivery of the Master Plan and Action Plan. The town is only supported through the visioning and the development of their Master Plan and Action Plan, but following this it is not clear for the towns concerned what the next stages are and how they will be supported to deliver the Master and Action Plans.

Whilst this gap remains the Panel is not confident that projects resulting from the Master Planning process will be implemented and that the subsequent 'step change' for the towns will occur.

The Panel also considers that economic and quality of life outcomes should be specified at the start of the process and these should relate to the 'need' and opportunity within the town and its hinterland and the reasons why a town has been selected to be part of the programme. Setting desired outcomes at the start of the process will help to ensure that support provided through the programme is commensurate with need and potential benefits and provides a means of evaluating the success of the programme.

2.5.1.2 Recommendation

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Develop clear and transparent project and programme outcomes for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme at regional, sub-regional, towns and rural hinterland level. The Panel recognises and supports the fact that many outcomes of importance to towns will be linked to quality of life and not all will deliver direct economic returns, but consider that Master Plans and Action Plans should show what they will contribute to the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy in return for the investment in the programme.

2.6 The Renaissance Market Towns Programme Legacy

2.6.1 Renaissance Market Towns Programme

Several Town Teams involved in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme have developed their Master Plans and are currently working with consultants who are carrying out studies to identify land and property that could be utilised to fund the implementation of projects in the Master Plans.

Evidence suggests that the members of the Town Teams and local authority staff and elected members have limited understanding of what will happen after the consultants finish their work, who will be responsible for the implementation of projects, and how the transition between planning and implementation will be managed to ensure that the involvement of the community is not lost.

There is no funding available to support and implement these projects or to ensure the investment already spent on the town by Yorkshire Forward through the consultant's work results in implementation and significant changes to the town.

Members of the Town Teams and local authority staff and elected members have expressed their concerns, following engagement of the community in the visioning process, about the risk of not maintaining pace and momentum of the work. The process has raised community expectations and now they want to see visible results.

As the table on page 22 shows, there is considerable variation in the level of support provided to the different towns in the programme, and this imbalance in resources therefore causes a differential impact on their ability to move forward.

Yorkshire Forward suggested that the local authority would be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Master and Action Plans. The Panel has found that local authorities are not clear about what will be expected of them in the future, in terms of resources required to support the Town Team, overseeing the delivery of the plans, and capacity and resources for match funding of projects identified in the plans.

However, areas such as housing and transport will require consideration by local authorities and links to regional strategies such as the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy through to Community Development Plans. The Panel considers that more time is required to work out how these linkages can be made so that the Master and Action Plans do not exist as purely wish lists.

2.6.1.1 Panel conclusions

Currently there is very limited understanding of what will happen after the planning stages of the process are completed. The subsequent stages that will result in the delivery of the plans need to be specified and worked up by Yorkshire Forward and incorporated into the programme process.

The Panel agrees that the Investment Planning Process should be the primary means of attracting investment for delivery of Master and Action Plans, but feels that Yorkshire Forward needs to agree and then brief all parties as to how this will work in practice. The Panel also considers there needs to be greater clarity about the extent to which funding in the future from Yorkshire Forward for market towns will only be through the Investment Planning Process or other funding streams.

The Panel found that local authorities also have major concerns that if the programme does not deliver the anticipated results, the local authority rather than Yorkshire Forward will be held responsible by the community.

There needs to be a clear process between developing the vision and the delivery of projects which is not simply predicated on local authorities taking responsibility for ensuring delivery after the Master Plan and Action Plan have been completed.

The Panel is concerned that, following the Master and Action Planning processes, no one will be responsible for involving the community and Town Team in the implementation of the vision. The Panel asks Yorkshire Forward to consider how this will be managed.

Yorkshire Forward may need to concentrate its resources on fewer towns, but ensure those towns are able to implement their plans effectively by developing appropriate projects and establishing funding packages that link with the Investment Planning process, rather than ceasing direct support to towns once the vision is in place.

2.6.1.2 Recommendations

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

Establish a clear and well-understood mechanism for implementing Master Plans and Action Plans in order to maintain momentum and manage community expectations. This should clarify how the programme will be supported through the Investment Planning Process: the Panel suggests that Yorkshire Forward should work with partners to identify some ring-fenced funding for the implementation of small projects which may not otherwise be a priority.

Review the Yorkshire Forward contribution to the programme in terms of improving their presence on the ground and providing management and leadership, quality assurance and co-ordination to the programme.

3. Recommendations

The Panel recommends that Yorkshire Forward should:

- 3.1.1 Consider incorporating successful features from the Market Towns Initiative into the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including:
 - Provision of a dedicated project officer;
 - Building upon an existing robust partnership, whenever one exists, and
 - Provision of a small grant scheme.
- 3.1.2 Work with local authorities and other partners to clarify how the work in the Market Towns Initiative towns will be taken forward after the end of their period of funding under the Initiative.
- 3.1.3 Consider to what extent the Urban Renaissance approach addresses rural issues and needs to be developed further and, in particular, whether consultants supporting towns fully understand the approach and skills required.
- 3.1.4 Review the selection process for entry into the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and establish clear criteria for selection. These should be based on priorities identified through Strategic Economic Assessments in the Sub Regional Investment Plans, an evaluation of need (drawing on the expertise of all tiers of local authorities and the Countryside Agency), the potential for the programme to bring added value to the town and its hinterland and the likely contribution to the delivery of Regional Economic Strategy objectives.
- 3.1.5 Design and communicate protocols and processes to describe the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including local authorities, consultants and Town Teams. The new contracts could be used as a basis for the protocols.

Directly involve (over and above their seat on the Sounding Board) the Countryside Agency and all relevant bodies involved in the regeneration of rural areas (such as the Rural Community Councils) in the further development, delivery and evaluation of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. In the case of the Countryside Agency this should include explicit links with the Agency's lead role in delivering Objective 5h(iii) of the Regional Economic Strategy with regard to the links between towns and the rural hinterland.

Engage Local Authorities (officers and elected members) in the Master Planning and Action Planning processes from the outset to ensure they have the opportunity to feed into and fully support the plan. (This will also help to ensure that the Master Plans and Action Plans are realistic, likely to be implemented and linked with other strategies and projects).

Clarify and explicitly agree with Local Authorities (officers and elected members) and other

partners who will ensure the implementation of the Master Plans and Action Plans and what resources will be available to facilitate implementation.

- 3.1.6 Review the allocation of resources to each town taking part in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, both financial and in terms of consultancy support, to ensure these are commensurate with need and opportunity in the town and represent value for money in terms of their potential contribution to achieving the Regional Economic Strategy objectives.
- 3.1.7 Review the process of selecting and briefing consultants. In particular, more emphasis should be placed on selecting consultants with partnership skills and rural specialisms, and they should be fully briefed on all the relevant background (socio-economic data, current spatial and regeneration plans, both local and sub-regional, and existing partnership and local authority structures) before introduction to the town. All tiers of local authority should be involved in the selection and briefing of consultants for a particular town.
- 3.1.8 Wherever possible, utilise existing structures/partnerships for developing the Town Team activity, possibly creating a new sub-group of the partnership to carry out the visioning process. In particular the Panel considers it essential that Town Teams:
- Are representative of the community and include hard to reach groups and representatives from the hinterland;
 - Have a clear remit to work pro-actively with existing structures and organisations, especially those that are likely to have lead responsibilities in the implementation phase;
 - Are adequately resourced and supported - both locally and by Yorkshire Forward officers, and
 - Are clear about their role at each stage of planning and delivery.
- 3.1.9 Develop a rigorous and robust appraisal process, that includes sustainability appraisal, for all Master Plans and Action Plans drawing on the expertise of the Countryside Agency and Local Authorities. In addition to demonstrating the potential for a step change in the town, all Master Plans and Action Plans should show clear linkages to Regional Economic Strategy objectives and to the Sub Regional Investment Plans, as well as to local Community Strategies, Community Investment Plans and relevant spatial, transport, etc., plans.
- 3.1.10 Develop clear and transparent project and programme outcomes for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme at regional, sub-regional, towns and rural hinterland level. The Panel recognises and supports the fact that many outcomes of importance to towns will be linked to quality of life and not all will deliver direct economic returns, but consider that Master Plans and Action Plans should show what they will contribute to the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy in return for the investment in the programme.
- 3.1.11 Establish a clear and well-understood mechanism for implementing Master Plans and Action Plans in order to maintain momentum and manage community expectations. This should clarify how the programme will be supported through the Investment Planning Process: the

Panel suggests that Yorkshire Forward should work with partners to identify some ring-fenced funding for the implementation of small projects which may not otherwise be a priority.

- 3.1.12 Review the Yorkshire Forward contribution to the programme in terms of improving their presence on the ground and providing management and leadership, quality assurance and co-ordination to the programme.

4. Yorkshire Forward Action Plan in Response to the 5th Scrutiny Report: Market Towns July 2004

Transition from MTI to RMT	Recommendations	Actions	Timescale
	<p>1.0 Consider incorporating successful features from the Market Towns Initiative into the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including:</p> <p>1.1 Provision of a dedicated project officer;</p> <p>1.2 Building upon an existing robust partnership, whenever one exists;</p> <p>1.3 Provision of a small grant scheme.</p> <p>2.0 Work with local authorities and other partners to clarify how the work in the Market Towns Initiative towns will be taken forward after the end of their period of funding under the Initiative.</p>	<p>1.0 Review of Round 1 MTI Towns has been commissioned by YF & the Countryside Agency. Lessons learned & recommendations from this will be incorporated into the roll out of the RMT programme</p> <p>1.1 Proposal for a dedicated project officer to be considered where appropriate through the SRIP process</p> <p>1.2 Where existing partnerships exist, they are already built upon, i.e. Northallerton, Bedale, Pickering CIP Groups, Howdenshire Forward, Richmond & Swale Valley Community Partnership. Earlier engagement with Towns for 2004/5 has enabled earlier identification of partnerships in these towns.</p> <p>1.3 Plan for a Small Grant scheme to be introduced April 2005, to work with the appropriate Local Authority to be the Accountable body for this, to be funded through SRIPs.</p> <p>2.0 MTI Managers tasked to develop succession strategies for Round 2 MTI Towns and developing links to the LSPs. MTI Managers inputting into the SRIPs. MTI Executive is setting up regular meetings with MTI Partnership Chairs to discuss emerging issues for succession.</p>	<p>1.0 Review started April 2004, to be completed end of June 2004. Recommendations to be considered July-August 2004.</p> <p>1.1 Submission currently being made for posts through SRIP process.</p> <p>1.2 Ongoing</p> <p>1.3 April 2005</p> <p>2.0 April 2004 onwards</p>

	Recommendations	Actions	Timescale
<p>RMT Panel and Town selection</p>	<p>3.0 Consider to what extent the Urban Renaissance approach addresses rural issues and needs to be developed further and, in particular, whether consultants supporting towns fully understand the approach and skills required.</p>	<p>3.0 Principles from the urban renaissance programme were used to inform the RMT process, but an approach has been developed specifically for the market towns in the region. Expertise on the panel includes farming and agricultural/rural business, tourism, digital technologies. Sponsors group meetings are held monthly, RMT knowledge events are run throughout the year for RMT panel members and lead consultants now meet on a bi-monthly basis. Yorkshire Forward will continue to review membership of the panel on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>3.0 Ongoing</p>
	<p>3.1 Review the selection process for entry into the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and establish clear criteria for selection. These should be based on priorities identified through Strategic Economic Assessments in the Sub Regional Investment Plans, an evaluation of need (drawing on the expertise of all tiers of local authorities and the Countryside Agency), the potential for the programme to bring added value to the town and its hinterland, and the likely contribution to the delivery of Regional Economic Strategy objectives.</p>	<p>3.1 Currently work is being developed to research and prioritise the towns that have been defined as being eligible to be part of the RMT programme through the RAYH Regional Settlement Strategy work. This will make clear links to the RES objectives</p>	<p>4.0 To start June 2004, to be completed September 2004</p>
	<p>3.2 Design and communicate protocols and processes to describe the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, including local authorities, consultants and Town Teams. The new contracts could be used as a basis for the protocols.</p>	<p>3.2 Working agreements have been developed for all RMT town 2004/5 and this has been communicated to all the embryonic Town Teams.</p>	<p>5.0 Ongoing</p>

	Recommendations	Actions	Timescale
<p>Strategic role of partner organisations</p>	<p>4.0 Directly involve (over and above their seat on the Sounding Board) the Countryside Agency and all relevant bodies involved in the regeneration of rural areas (such as the Rural Community Councils) in the further development, delivery and evaluation of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. In the case of the Countryside Agency this should include explicit links with the Agency's lead role in delivering Objective 5h(iii) of the Regional Economic Strategy with regard to the links between towns and the rural hinterland.</p>	<p>4.0 Key Regional and sub regional agencies attended a seminar on 8th June 2004 to see how we can align existing and future programmes for the market towns and their hinterlands in the region and how agencies can work together more effectively. This includes the Rural Community Councils and the Countryside Agency</p>	<p>6.0 June 2004 onwards</p>
<p>Involvement of Local Authorities in RMT</p>	<p>5.0 Engage Local Authorities (officers and elected members) in the Master Planning and Action Planning processes from the outset to ensure they have the opportunity to feed into and fully support the plan. (This will also help to ensure that the Master Plans and Action Plans are realistic, likely to be implemented and linked with other strategies and projects.)</p> <p>5.1 Clarify and explicitly agree with Local Authorities (officers and elected members) and other partners who will ensure the implementation of the Master Plans and Action Plans and what resources will be available to facilitate implementation.</p>	<p>5.0 A pre-requisite before engaging in market towns is to have the clear support from the Local Authorities. For 2004/5 Towns, this has been supplemented by briefings for Members. Local Authority officers and Members are encouraged to be part of the Town Team and each Local Authority has been asked to cascade information to all relevant departments to ensure that the appropriate officers are engaged in the process..</p> <p>5.1 As the RMT delivery plan is developed, this clearly identifies who is responsible for delivering which elements of the vision and Masterplan. The delivery plan also identifies what resources are needed and the steps that are needed to secure them.</p>	<p>7.0 Ongoing</p> <p>8.0 Ongoing</p>

Review of processes	Recommendations	Actions	Timescale
	<p>6.0 Review the allocation of resources to each town taking part in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, both financial and in terms of consultancy support, to ensure these are commensurate with need and opportunity in the town and represent value for money in terms of their potential contribution to achieving the Regional Economic Strategy objectives.</p> <p>6.1 Review the process of selecting and briefing consultants. In particular, more emphasis should be placed on selecting consultants with partnership skills and rural specialisms, and they should be fully briefed on all the relevant background (socio-economic data, current spatial and regeneration plans, both local and sub-regional, and existing partnership and local authority structures) before introduction to the town. All tiers of local authority should be involved in the selection and briefing of consultants for a particular town.</p>	<p>6.0 Resources allocated to each town have been reviewed and will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis</p> <p>6.1 RMT panel members have been recruited for their specialisms in market towns and rural areas. Socio-economic studies have been completed for each of the 2004/5 RMT Towns. This together with early sponsors group meetings, (comprising every level of Local Authority, Lead consultants and Yorkshire Forward staff) have identified existing and emerging plans that the Lead consultants need to have regard to through the RMT process. All tiers of Local Authority and the embryonic Town Teams have been involved in interviewing and selecting lead consultants for each RMT Town. 2004/5 Town Teams in Skipton, Settle and Richmond and Catterick Garrison were involved in the selection of consultants in late 2003/4</p>	<p>9.0 Ongoing</p> <p>10.0 Ongoing</p>

	Recommendations	Actions	Timescale
<p>Town Team activity</p>	<p>7.0 Wherever possible, utilise existing structures/partnerships for developing the Town Team activity, possibly creating a new sub-group of the partnership to carry out the visioning process. In particular the Panel considers it essential that Town Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are representative of the community and include hard to reach groups and representatives from the hinterland; Have a clear remit to work pro-actively with existing structures and organisations, especially those that are likely to have lead responsibilities in the implementation phase; Are adequately resourced and supported - both locally and by Yorkshire Forward officers; Are clear about their role at each stage of planning and delivery. 	<p>7.0 Where robust partnerships already exist, then these are built upon, i.e. Northallerton, Bedale and Pickering CIP Groups, Richmond and Swale Valley Community Partnership and in the case of Helmsley, the Town Team is a sub group of the Town Council. In RMT towns for 2004/5 in Knaresborough and Boroughbridge, the Town Teams will be formed from the existing CIP Partnerships and Town Councils and in Howdenshire, Howdenshire Forward, a community partnership, is the foundation for the Town Team. No partnerships in Isle of Axholme and Colne Valley have come forward to become the Town Team, although existing bodies have been contacted to join the Town team.</p>	<p>11.0 Ongoing</p>
<p>Appraisal</p>	<p>8.0 Develop a rigorous and robust appraisal process, that includes sustainability appraisal, for all Master Plans and Action Plans drawing on the expertise of the Countryside Agency and Local Authorities. In addition to demonstrating the potential for a step change in the town, all Master Plans and Action Plans should show clear linkages to Regional Economic Strategy objectives and to the Sub Regional Investment Plans, as well as to local Community Strategies, Community Investment Plans and relevant spatial, transport, etc., plans.</p>	<p>8.0 The Terms of Reference for the RMT Regional Sounding Board are being reviewed. Appraisals of the Master Plans and Delivery Plans can become part of this. In addition, sustainability appraisal will be undertaken for all Master Plans and Delivery Plans. All RMT Towns in 2004/5 will have regard to the RES, Community Plans, relevant spatial strategies and LSPs.</p>	<p>12.0 January 2005 onwards</p>

Resources and implementation	Recommendations	Actions	Timescale
	<p>9.0 Develop clear and transparent project and programme outcomes for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme at regional, sub-regional, towns and rural hinterland level. The Panel recognises and supports the fact that many outcomes of importance to towns will be linked to quality of life and not all will deliver direct economic returns, but consider that Master Plans and Action Plans should show what they will contribute to the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy in return for the investment in the programme.</p> <p>9.1 Establish a clear and well-understood mechanism for implementing Master Plans and Action Plans in order to maintain momentum and manage community expectations. This should clarify how the programme will be supported through the Investment Planning Process: the Panel suggests that Yorkshire Forward should work with partners to identify some ring-fenced funding for the implementation of small projects which may not otherwise be a priority.</p> <p>9.2 Review the Yorkshire Forward contribution to the programme in terms of improving their presence on the ground and providing management and leadership, quality assurance and co-ordination to the programme.</p>	<p>9.0 Research to be undertaken by YF Research & Information Team will identify key outcomes for RMT Towns, as part of the work in prioritising towns for inclusion in the RMT programme</p> <p>9.1 Guidance to be written by YF to outline how Masterplans and Delivery Plans will be implemented at a strategic level, such as the SRIPs. Individual delivery plans will have specific delivery mechanism for specific projects. See Action 1.3 for small project fund delivery.</p> <p>9.2 YF to review officer support for the RMT programme to improve presence on the ground, management and leadership. YF and external staff with particular expertise have been identified to quality assure RMT panel briefs and reports.</p>	<p>13.0 June - August 2004</p> <p>14.0 August 2004</p> <p>15.0 August 2004</p>

5. Regional Learning

Another purpose of this review was to consider a general learning point that could be applied not only to the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, but also to other regional schemes that involve local level activities. The learning point was:

To establish best practice in ensuring that local initiatives involve the local community but can also deliver the objectives of regional strategies.

The main conclusions for this learning point are that in developing a regional programme, which depends upon local delivery, it is vitally important to have clarity of purpose and a clear link between the overall programme outcomes and the achievement of Regional Economic Strategy targets and the benefits. Consideration should be given to how the benefits achieved locally can be aggregated to achieve Regional economic outcomes.

From a strategic perspective, the following areas should be clearly defined:

- The rationale for the programme;
- The overall programme outcomes and how these will deliver RES targets, and
- The key elements of the programme and how these will be delivered locally.

From an operational perspective, the following areas should also be considered and set out explicitly at the start of a programme:

- How will project and contract management will be effectively addressed
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders involved in the development and delivery of the programme
- Clearly defining who/which agency will be responsible for undertaking the delivery of the programme at a local level
- Clearly defining who/which agency will be responsible for ensuring the programme is successfully implemented

Partnerships:

There needs to be a greater understanding of the role of partnerships at a local level and an appreciation of the value partnerships can bring if properly engaged. Where partnerships are an intrinsic part of the programme delivery, as with the Market Towns Initiative and Renaissance Market Towns Programme, full consideration should be given to their role and responsibilities and how the programme engages with existing partnership bodies.

Learning from successful partnership models should be drawn upon to ensure the partnership processes are robust and well thought through.

Governance:

There is a need to ensure that principles of good governance are supported at a regional level and to consider how Yorkshire Forward enables other agencies to follow these principles. This would help to ensure transparency in decision-making and provide clear accountability for all stakeholders involved.

Evaluation and learning:

When developing a new programme or amending an existing programme learning should be gathered from relevant programmes to help to identify the need for the programme and shape and characteristics of the programme.

Rather than waiting to the end of a programme, formative learning and evaluation should be gathered on an ongoing basis to identify what is working, what is less successful and what is required in the future - this should form part of the programme management processes.

Joint Lead Partner role:

Several of the deliverables in the Regional Economic Strategy are allocated to Joint Lead Partners. There is a need to ensure that the bodies and agencies in this position are aware of what 'joint lead' means in practice, including their accountability, separately and jointly, for actions and programmes that are designed to deliver the particular Regional Economic Strategy objective.

6. Annex 1

6.1 Scrutiny process

6.1.1 Role of Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

A key role of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly is to scrutinise the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and in particular the contribution of Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency, for Yorkshire and Humber in the delivery.

6.1.2 The Scrutiny Process

The Assembly undertakes a series of scrutiny reviews every year. Each scrutiny review examines in detail one part of the Regional Economic Strategy, prepares a report setting out what has worked well and what has not and makes recommendations that will help the region improve its performance.

This scrutiny process ensures:

- Key decisions taken in the region genuinely reflect and promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the region and its communities;
- Provide regional accountability for the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and Yorkshire Forward's part in this, and
- Provide the region with robust information in order to review, amend and adjust strategies and activities and ensure continuous improvement and the achievement of regional goals.

6.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel

6.1.3.1 The Scrutiny Panel appointment

Scrutiny Reviews are led by a panel of volunteers drawn from the Assembly's approved list of scrutineers. The Panel is made up from two full members of the Assembly or Local Authority elected members representing his/her nominated council leader and four members of the Commissions. One of the full members of the Assembly is the nominated chair of the Scrutiny Panel.

6.1.3.2 The role of the Scrutiny Panel

The Panel undertakes the following activities:

- Collation and analysis of information and research into the scrutiny area
- Formal Hearings with witnesses and Yorkshire Forward Board members
- Publication of a report of the enquiry and recommendations

6.1.3.3 *The membership of the Scrutiny Panel*

The Panel was made up of the following members:

- Cate Hammond - Panel Chair (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England)
- Cllr Simon Cooke (Bradford Metropolitan District Council)
- Brigid Kane (South Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority)
- Michael Noble (Yorkshire Universities)
- Cllr Caroline Seymour (North Yorkshire County Council)
- Mary Wright (Arts Council England - Yorkshire)

6.2 Purpose of the review

The overall aim of the review was to consider and compare the effectiveness of the implementation of the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme and their contribution to achieving the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy.

6.2.1 Areas of investigation

The inquiry has considered in detail four towns that are taking part in the Market Towns Initiative (two from Round 1 - Malton/Norton and Todmorden and two from Round 2 - Whitby and Thirsk) and all the towns taking part in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. Through desk research, the receipt of twenty six pieces of written evidence and sixty interviews with stakeholders, the enquiry has assessed and evaluated a number of areas including:

- The management processes in place to ensure the effective delivery of the programmes;
- The appropriateness of the programmes to deliver the goals of the Regional Economic Strategy;
- How the programmes are evaluated and how learning is used to develop the programmes, and
- The sustainability of the programme - how the long-term development of the towns is supported by the Programmes.

6.2.2 Regional Learning and Added Value

The review has also considered the general learning point: To establish best practice in ensuring that local initiatives involve the local community but can also deliver the objectives of regional strategies.

7. Background

Market towns are important places in rural areas, not only for people living in the town but also for visitors and people in nearby rural areas. In recent decades several market towns have declined as the functions they serve have been affected by industrial and agricultural changes such as the development of out-of-town shopping centres and the decline of traditional sectors and markets.

Over the last three years several initiatives have been introduced to regenerate market towns in an attempt to define the future role of the market town and develop a long-term economic future for towns. These approaches include the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme.

7.1 Market Towns Initiative

The Market Towns Initiative was launched as a pilot in Yorkshire and Humber in June 2000 as a partnership between Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency. The programme has been implemented across twelve towns in two rounds, and is delivered through a range of local partnerships.

7.1.1 The project aim

The aim of the Market Towns Initiative was to identify 18 towns across the region with which to work. The initiative was a pilot, with the aim of looking at how to revitalise small towns in the countryside in preparation for a wider rollout across the region. The overarching aim of the initiative was to reinforce the role of the market towns as local capitals for residents, businesses, rural communities and the countryside.

7.1.2 Town selection

Towns selection was not a competitive process. The pilot recruited a wide range of different types of towns so the programme could be tested in a number of different geographical contexts.

7.1.2.1 Round 1 - August 2000

Six towns were selected for the first round:

Town	Local authority area	Sub region
Malton/Norton	Ryedale	York and North Yorkshire
Thorne	Doncaster	South Yorkshire
Todmorden	Calderdale	West Yorkshire
Brigg	North Lincolnshire	Humber
Hornsea	East Riding of Yorkshire	Humber

7.1.3 Support Package - Round 1

Each town in the first round was allocated £170,000 from Countryside Agency and £170,000 from Yorkshire Forward. Towns were encouraged to build upon existing Partnerships and were given nine months to produce a comprehensive Action Plan for their town that mapped out the expenditure provided by the 2 Agencies and additionally supported by others, over the next three years. The range of projects funded under Round 1 was very broad due to the wide remit of both agencies.

7.1.4 Agency Support

For each market town, Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency agreed which would act as the local co-ordinator and principal interface for the town. The Agency not leading designated a support officer acting in a shadow role to assist the town.

7.1.5 The Partnership

A Partnership from the town took overall responsibility for the preparation of the Action Plan and overseeing implementation. The Partnership needed to be fully representative of the community and could be built on an existing group within the town.

7.1.6 Rural White Paper - November 2000

The Government's Rural White Paper (November 2000) highlighted the growing concern for the future of market towns. This led to the formation of the Countryside Agency's National Market Towns Initiative, which aimed to bring a new lease of life to market towns. The paper also highlighted the strengthened role and responsibility of the RDA to address rural issues.

Following the White Paper, the majority of future funding for the Market Towns Initiative was allocated to the Regional Development Agencies, whilst the Countryside Agency's role was confirmed as leading on national research and other key rural initiatives.

Yorkshire Forward, therefore, took on the leading role in the Market Towns Initiative and refocused the Programme's activities in line with economic outputs in advance of the Single Pot. This change in focus meant a significant difference between the support provided and what were deemed to be eligible projects between the first and second rounds of the initiative.

7.1.7 Market Towns - Round 2

The second round of market towns included:

Town	Local authority area	Sub region
Otley	Leeds	West Yorkshire
Penistone	Barnsley	South Yorkshire
Pateley Bridge	Harrogate	York and North Yorkshire
Market Weighton	East Riding of Yorkshire	Humber
Whitby	Scarborough	York and North Yorkshire
Thirsk	Hambleton	York and North Yorkshire

7.1.8 Funding and Support

The second round towns received an allocation of £340,000 from Yorkshire Forward only. The projects chosen had to achieve economic outcomes. There was, therefore, a much clearer definition of eligible projects. They needed to achieve:

- Jobs safeguarded
- Jobs created
- Business supported
- Skills developed
- Training provided

The Countryside Agency rolled out the Market Towns Initiative nationally and developed a tool kit to help towns to identify key priorities. This included a Health Check activity to be undertaken before an action plan was developed to help each partnership build on understanding of its town’s strengths, weakness and future opportunities.

7.1.9 Programme Development

Halfway through the second round of the initiative, Yorkshire Forward decided to replace the programme with a different approach to market town regeneration - the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. This programme was based upon the Urban Renaissance Programme already being used to regenerate a number of large towns and cities across the region.

7.2 Renaissance Market Towns Programme

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme was formally launched by Yorkshire Forward in August 2002 at the Great Yorkshire Show.

7.2.1 Programme Aim

The Renaissance Market Towns Programme is a 10-year programme, which will support sustainable small towns in the region. Market towns, the Regional Economic Strategy suggests, must provide access to high quality services and facilities and employment opportunities. Yorkshire Forward estimates that there are around 100 small towns in the region that could be eligible.

The programme focus is on improving the economic potential of the market town through the following objectives:

- Boosting the economic performance of small towns in line with the Regional Economic Strategy (RES);
- Enabling small towns to act as 'local capitals' for their rural catchment;
- Assisting market towns to achieve ambitious but achievable visions or charters that are then translated into Master Plans and Action Plans, and
- Establishing Town Teams to deliver the Action Plans

7.2.1.1 Lessons from the Market Towns Initiative

Yorkshire Forward suggests that the lessons from the Market Towns Initiative have identified the need for towns to consider:

- How to define the economic role and function for the market town and to consider links to a larger town, city or rural hinterland;
- The need for initiatives that promote sustained economic growth in the rural areas of the region
- Creating the right conditions for local business to be attracted to the town is key, and
- Improving the attractiveness and quality of life to encourage and retain economic activity is important

7.2.2 Programme Support

The towns do not receive direct funding to support the delivery of projects; instead the focus is on support to provide expertise to develop a vision, Master Plan and Action Plan identifying the future role of the town and how it might be developed.

The support to the town, described by Yorkshire Forward, includes fully-funded specialist advisory support from an appointed panel of experts (consultants) to:

- assess the economic needs and priorities of the town;
- assist in establishing a Town Team;
- support the Town Team in developing a vision for the longer-term economic future of the town and its hinterland, a Master Plan for the urban centre and the wider town;
- the development of an Action Plan including the identification of a portfolio of projects;

- provide support for the local costs of co-ordination and in driving the initiative on behalf of the Town Teams;
- build capacity of the Town Team to enable them to manage the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, and
- provide advice on accessing funding

7.2.3 Panel of Experts

The panel of experts (consultants) provide technical support for the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. These consultants are matched to participating towns according to needs by AWG Property Services.

7.2.4 Programme of work

The programme of work for towns participating in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme includes the following activities:

- Town Team building and consultation;
- Visioning and Master Planning development;
- Action Planning and project prioritisation, and
- Agreeing key milestones and timeframes for achievement

7.2.5 Programme outputs

The outputs for the programme must include (as defined by Yorkshire Forward)

- A fully operational and sustainable Town Team;
- An agreed vision, Master Plan and Action Plan for the town, and
- A portfolio of prioritised projects with defined delivery mechanisms

7.2.6 Selection of Towns

Yorkshire Forward states that there is no competitive process for town selection. Towns may be identified through the sub-regional action planning process, or alternatively may make a proactive approach. All towns need to be able to provide a clear indication and case for being included within the programme.

7.2.7 Town Profile

Towns included in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme should serve rural hinterlands with a population of 5000 - 20,000. The town should act as a service centre or local capital for such rural catchment. The market town does not have to have an agricultural market.

7.2.8 Renaissance Market Towns Programme rollout

The following towns have been included in the Renaissance Market Towns Programme rollout:

Timing	Town/Cluster	Local authority area	Sub region
January 2003	Upper Calder Valley (Cluster)	Calderdale	West Yorkshire
April 2003	Settle	Craven	York and North Yorkshire
April 2003	Skipton	Craven	York and North Yorkshire
July 2003	Bedale/Northallerton	Hambleton	York and North Yorkshire
August 2003	Pickering, Helmsley, Kirbymoorside (Cluster)	Ryedale	York and North Yorkshire
October 2003	Richmond and Catterick Garrison (Cluster)	Richmondshire	North Yorkshire

7.3 Role of Yorkshire Forward

Yorkshire Forward has a different role in the delivery of the different support mechanisms for the market towns. In the Market Towns Initiative, Yorkshire Forward was involved in the support and assistance provided to the town. In the Renaissance Market Towns Programme, Yorkshire Forward has taken a more remote role, mainly of coordination, with support out-sourced to teams of consultants.

7.3.1 Market Towns Initiative

During the first round of the Market Towns Initiative Yorkshire Forward worked in partnership with the Countryside Agency. Both agencies provided support to the towns and funded the town equally.

In the second round, Yorkshire Forward led the initiative and was responsible for providing all funding to the towns. Yorkshire Forward provided a management role and was also heavily involved in the local delivery at town level as it employed a number of Market Town Managers/Coordinators to support the local partnerships that had been established.

7.3.2 Renaissance Market Towns Programme

Yorkshire Forward has assumed a very different role and relationship in this programme. Following the 'hands on role' undertaken in the Market Towns Initiative, Yorkshire Forward decided to take a strategic role of co-ordination and monitoring and outsourced the delivery of the programme and the support provided to the towns to teams of consultants.

Support is provided to towns by an appointed lead consultant, nominated from a panel of experts (consultants) that is managed by AWG Property Services. Yorkshire Forward makes the final decision

about which lead consultant to appoint. The lead consultant provides the interface between Yorkshire Forward and the Town Team and the local authority. The consultants report directly to Yorkshire Forward. Yorkshire Forward manages the programme through a Renaissance Market Towns Manager and a support team, located centrally.

8. Scrutiny Process

The scrutiny process has consisted of a number of key stages to enable the Scrutiny Panel to understand fully how and why the market town programmes are being implemented, to understand the issues arising and reach recommendations to help the programmes develop and more fully meet the needs of the market towns and the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy.

8.1 Scrutiny Stages

The Scrutiny process has involved a number of stages:

8.1.1 Written evidence collection

Twenty-six stakeholders at a regional, sub-regional and local level have provided written evidence regarding their views on the scrutiny enquiry areas of investigation.

8.1.2 Desk research

Yorkshire Forward has provided all relevant documentation relating to the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme. This has included Action Plans and Health Checks, Visions and Master Plans, meeting notes and project plans.

8.1.3 Local interviews

Sixty interviews have been undertaken at a number of Market Towns across the region. Interviews were completed with local stakeholders, Local Authority Officers and Councillors, Partnerships, Town Teams, consultants and Yorkshire Forward Officers to gather information on the implementation of the programmes that included what has worked well and what has proved less successful.

Several members of the Scrutiny Panel have observed the interviews completed in selected market towns.

8.1.4 Stakeholder Hearing

The stakeholder hearing was held to enable the Scrutiny Panel to question witnesses and to gather further evidence.

The Panel interviewed the following groups:

- Local authority representatives (officers) - Market Towns Initiative
- Community representatives (including elected members) - Market Towns Initiative
- Local authority representatives (officers) - Renaissance Market Towns Programme
- Community representatives (including elected members) - Renaissance Market Towns Programme

- Countryside Agency staff involved in the delivery of the Market Towns Initiative
- Consultants employed in the delivery of the Renaissance Market Towns Programme

8.1.5 Yorkshire Forward Hearing

A Public Hearing with the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly Scrutiny Panel and a Yorkshire Forward Panel consisting of officers and Board members provided an opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to question the Yorkshire Forward panel and gather its views on a number of issues identified through the evidence collection process.

The Hearing focused upon the following four key areas:

- Why have the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme been selected to pursue the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy?
- What are the outcomes and learning from the two programmes?
- How have the Market Towns Initiative and the Renaissance Market Towns Programme been developed and delivered?
- What is the legacy of the two programmes and how will the work be sustained in the future?

At the Hearing the panel also considered the general learning point of how regional strategies are delivered at a local level.

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