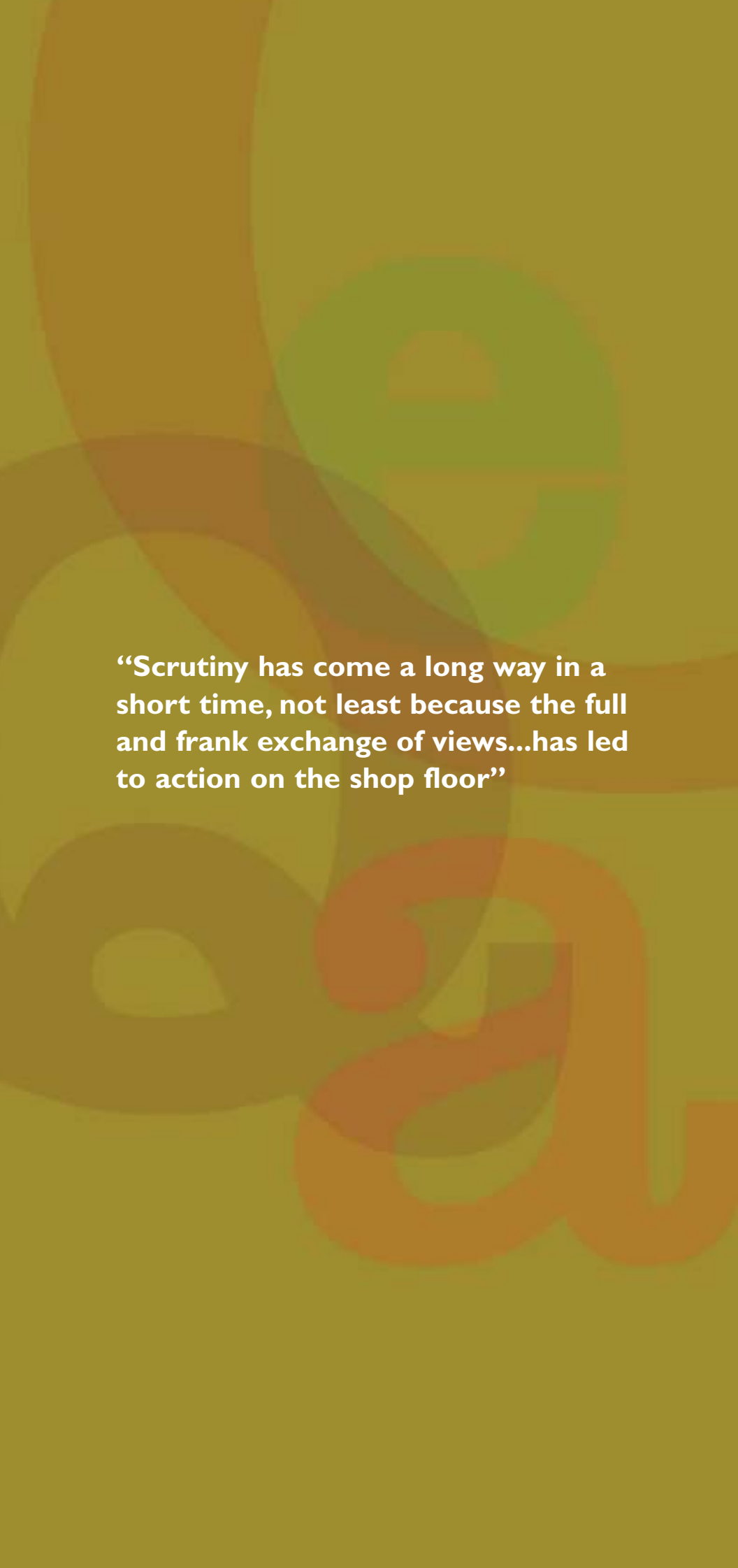


# SRIF HELPING YORKSHIRE

Helping improve  
economic performance  
in Yorkshire & Humber

YORKSHIRE  
**AND**  
HUMBER  
ASSEMBLY

The **Regional** Strategic Partnership



**“Scrutiny has come a long way in a short time, not least because the full and frank exchange of views...has led to action on the shop floor”**

# Performance and prosperity

Creating and encouraging better economic performance and prosperity is a key tool in building a brighter future for our region.

As well as having more National Park land, historic houses and castles than any other region and boasting spectacular scenery and coastline, we also have thriving cities, towns and villages.

Yorkshire and Humber is one of Europe's fastest growing regions, and home to more than a quarter of a million companies, many of them from overseas. Our economy ranks amongst the top third in the world.

But we need to ensure we make the most of the opportunities on offer - which is where scrutiny, the formal part of the relationship between the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and Yorkshire Forward, comes in.

In this publication you'll find details of how the Assembly carries out its statutory responsibility to scrutinise collective delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy, led by Yorkshire Forward.

It includes short summaries of each of the reviews already carried out, along with case studies showing examples of where the work has had real impact at ground level.

Regional scrutiny has come a long way in a short time, not least because the full and frank exchange of views between both organisations has led to action on the "shop floor", bringing real improvements in delivery - improvements such as initiatives to help more than 150 new and existing small businesses in the voluntary and community sector.

But we can't, and don't intend to, stand still. This year will see further scrutiny work to involve even more parts of the business and wider regional community, including on-line consultation and specific sector-based briefings, and we're also exploring links with our Parliamentarians.

We have a great regional economy: the challenge for us all in scrutiny and in general is to make it greater still.



Paul Jagger

**Chair, Yorkshire & Humber  
Scrutiny Board**



Terry Hodgkinson

**Chair, Yorkshire Forward**

# SCRUTINY

## A regional role, a local difference

'Scrutiny' describes how the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly works with Yorkshire Forward and partners to improve the region's economy through better delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

Yorkshire Forward is the Regional Development Agency charged by the Government with improving the Yorkshire and Humber economy. It invests £350 million a year in the region to create more businesses; increase the competitiveness of businesses; supply skilled people; provide good jobs; improve the transport and infrastructure whilst taking the environment into account; and create stronger cities, towns and rural areas.

The Assembly's role is to support Yorkshire Forward to make this happen by providing an independent view which asks: are we doing the right things, what impact are the activities having, and can we do things better?

### How scrutiny works

Two key issues vital to the growth of the region's economy are looked at each year. The Assembly and its partners identify the key issues in advance and the reviews are led by the Assembly's independent Scrutiny Board, a standing panel of eight full Assembly members.

The Scrutiny Board undertakes an in-depth review into the issue. This involves a number of activities:

- a statistical report is compiled detailing how Yorkshire and Humber is performing in comparison with other regions and differences within the region;
- consultants are commissioned to provide independent policy information and expertise;
- a series of interviews and focus groups are undertaken with key stakeholders in the region;
- the Scrutiny Board meets with the Yorkshire Forward Board in an open public discussion;
- the Scrutiny Board meets with the Yorkshire Forward Board in private; and
- interested parties are able to input into the work online via the Assembly's website.

The review culminates in a series of recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board for future action by Yorkshire Forward. A public report, which includes an action plan of improvements and developments agreed by Yorkshire Forward, is produced. The Scrutiny Board then meets with Yorkshire Forward on a six-monthly basis to ensure that these actions are being implemented. In addition, progress on the Scrutiny Action Plans is reported to the Yorkshire Forward Board every six months.

# SCRUTINY 1 TO 3 REVIEWES

## 1 New business start ups: the key to success

The first scrutiny looked how people are being supported to start new businesses through the development of the region's Business Birth Rate Strategy (BBRS). The report recommended better co-ordination of delivering aid to business start-ups, and also found that improved information would help ensure money targeted to create and develop new businesses had the greatest possible impact.

Actions that followed include:

- new projects to support businesses run by people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities; and
- initiatives to help more than 150 new and existing small businesses in the voluntary and community sector.

Yorkshire Forward, the Business Links and the local Learning and Skills Councils have since come together to develop 'Better Deal for Business' to achieve radical improvement in business support services.

*See overleaf for a more in-depth appraisal and study.*

## 2 Help for poorer communities

This review examined what contribution the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) has made in tackling social problems and inequality gaps in poorer areas. Measures recommended to ensure that economic success benefits the most deprived areas included:

- a shared vision setting out priorities to tackle social inclusion;
- an understanding of how economic activity has an impact on poorer communities;
- asking Yorkshire Forward to review how they communicate their role and best practice to local delivery organisations; and
- linking regional strategies to community plans through Local Strategic Partnerships.

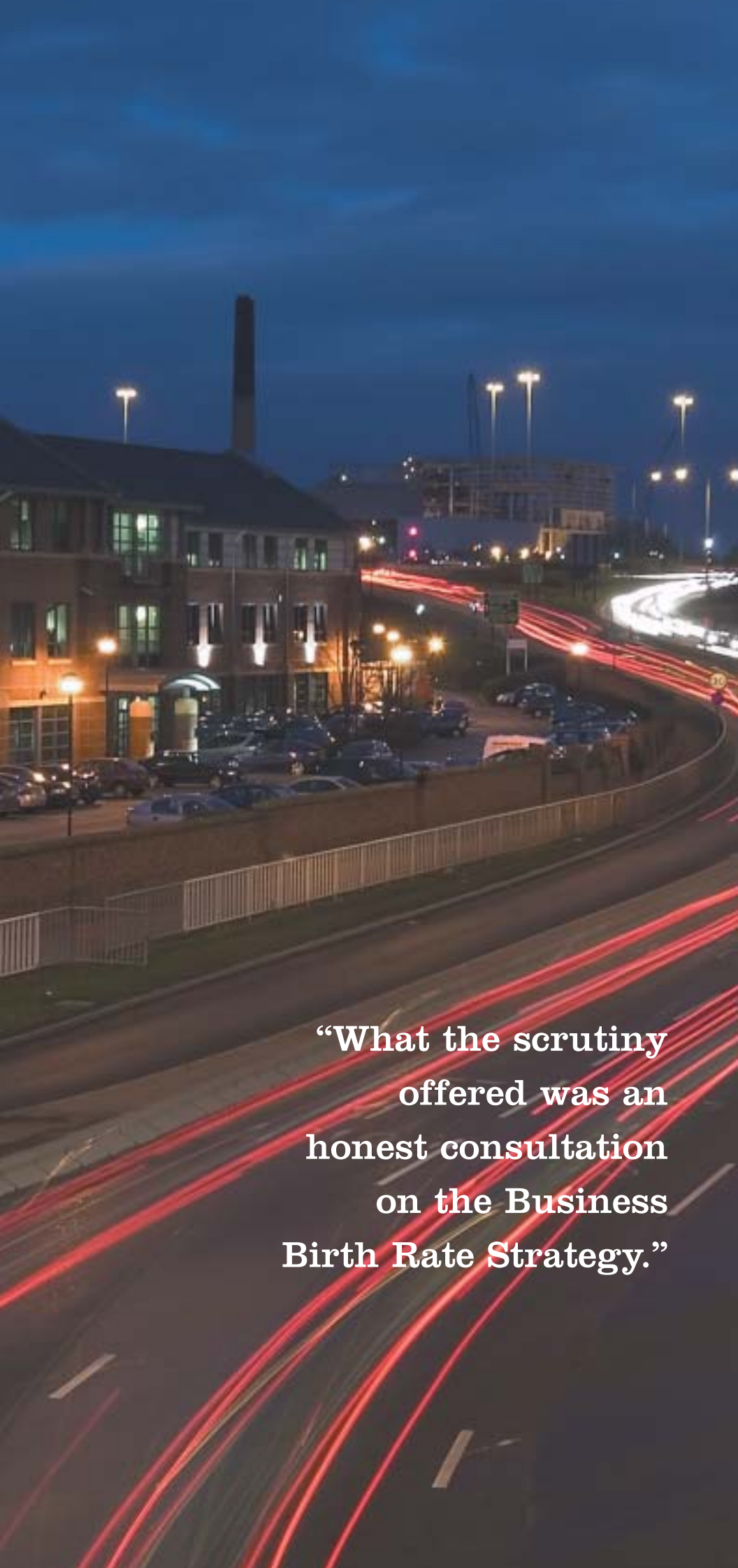
In response the Assembly, Yorkshire Forward and Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) agreed a joint vision contained in 'Part of the Picture', the first report into social inclusion in the region. Tackling inequality has now become a landmark issue for the region.

## 3 Public sector funding

This examined how public sector investment in health, education and other related areas supports the region's economy and how they could be linked together to make more of the money available. Representatives from health, education, European projects, business and the public sector gave evidence.

Recommendations pointed out that Yorkshire Forward should both welcome innovation in public sector investment; and alongside others, especially the Assembly and partners in health, move forward the future alignment of public sector investment in relation to health.

Much of this has since been addressed through the development of the Investment Planning process, which aims to align funding streams that contribute to economic development.

A nighttime photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a multi-lane highway curves to the right, with long, vibrant red light trails from taillights of cars moving away from the viewer. To the left of the highway is a brick building with several lit windows and a covered entrance. A parking lot with several cars is visible in front of the building. In the background, a tall, dark smokestack stands against the dark blue night sky, and other city buildings and streetlights are visible. The overall atmosphere is one of urban activity at night.

**“What the scrutiny  
offered was an  
honest consultation  
on the Business  
Birth Rate Strategy.”**

# An honest consultation

## Business Birth Rate Strategy - Autumn 2002

Yorkshire Forward published the Business Birth Rate Strategy (BBRS) 'Can Do - Will Do' in 2000, and launched the related Action Plan in June 2001. The strategy aimed to achieve higher business birth and survival rates to create a big improvement in the number of new, competitive and sustainable businesses in the region: the Action Plan set out the activities to deliver to strategy for the period 2002-04.

The scrutiny, which reported in November 2002, considered the development of the BBRS; the effectiveness of the implementation arrangements; the impact to date; the monitoring and review arrangements; and the influence of national policy.

The key aims of the BBRS, which are now embedded in Yorkshire Forward's work, were:

- bringing about long term cultural change to value entrepreneurs and enterprise;
- making the business support structure fit for purpose;
- developing entrepreneurial skill and business skills;
- improving access to finance; and
- generating and promoting high growth business.

These were revealed through the scrutiny review, which made a number of recommendations developing initiatives for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, better support for social and community enterprises, improving the services available to business start-ups and better monitoring of business start-up activity.

Yorkshire and Humber is the only region in the UK to show a consistent year on year improvement in entrepreneurial activity from 2002-2005 (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report 2005). However, despite this and the results of the scrutiny review, the business start up rate still lags behind the UK average.

The Regional Economic Strategy sets a target of increasing the start up rate, from 32 start ups per 1000 population to 40 start ups per 1000 population by 2015 (a 25% increase). This requires a net amount of 33,000 new VAT registered businesses being created. We currently have 130,950 businesses in the region, but to reach our target of 163,688 new VAT registered businesses by 2015, we need more start ups with higher survival rates, better business support and more investment in the region.

"What the scrutiny offered was an honest consultation on the Business Birth Rate Strategy, which was very useful at the time," said Alex McWhirter, Head of Enterprise at Yorkshire Forward.

"It gave us the opportunity to report back to the Assembly's Economy Commission on a regular basis, to bounce ideas off them, and to receive open and honest feedback about what we as Yorkshire Forward could be doing, and about what we could be doing in each of our organisations going forward."

The Business Birth Rate Strategy evolved into the Better Deal for Business; and, following the recent review of Business Support Services, will be changing again in the lead up to there being a single point of access to business support in April 2008.

## 4 The role of cities in the Region's economy

The role of the Region's five key cities (Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York) as drivers of economic growth was the subject of the fourth scrutiny which looked at how these cities develop the region's economic competitiveness, provide new jobs and act as a focus for investment.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- a need for investment planning to fund projects across sub-regional boundaries;
- agreement with local authorities and stakeholders in the cities on the precise role of Yorkshire Forward; and
- regional measurements for economic growth rather than relying on national indicators such as Gross Domestic Product.

Representatives of the cities worked with Yorkshire Forward, the Assembly and GOYH to agree an action plan which will boost the region's economy. The findings from this review have since been addressed as part of the city region development plans for Sheffield, Hull and Leeds.

## 5 Market towns

The Assembly's fifth scrutiny looked at how investment in market towns supports the RES, and whether - as well being popular places to live and visit - these towns attract jobs and investment.

While the panel supported Yorkshire Forward's strategic approach to the regeneration of market towns and its commitment to bring about sustainable economic prosperity, it also made a number of recommendations, including:

- more clarity around how action plans are developed, and projects implemented and funded; and
- programmes should specifically address the rural context of market towns.

The initial response included a greater focus on using existing partnerships for developing activity where possible; a series of seminars addressing the need to align programmes for market towns and their hinterlands; and how agencies can work together more effectively.

## 6 Clusters in the spotlight

Cluster policy supports related businesses which buy and sell from each other and share the same infrastructure, technology, potential customers and skill base. Yorkshire Forward have identified five key regional clusters as priority areas: advanced engineering and metals; bioscience; chemicals; digital industries; and food and drink.

This review focused on:

- how clusters have been identified and developed in the region; and
- the effectiveness of applying cluster policy in helping to achieve the ambitions of the RES.

The panel recommended that skills priorities for each of the clusters should feature in action plans; and that Yorkshire Forward must demonstrate how, through the Regional Skills Partnership, it helps deliver these.

Tangible results are that the Skills for Key Clusters Initiative has started, with an investment of £9m from Yorkshire Forward; and approval has been given to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) programme in schools.

# Real steps forward

## The Market Town Initiative and Renaissance Market Towns Scrutiny Review - Summer 2004

This August 2004 review examined a topic of great importance 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 (RMT) programme.

The RMT programme is a ten year plan launched in July 2002 to support sustainable rural towns in Yorkshire and Humber. It's aim is to ensure that the region's rural capitals such as Skipton, Northallerton and Howden have vibrant economies and good jobs for local people.

The review considered several aspects 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.

As a result, the RMT Framework was produced to ensure coordination and focus. This framework was successfully used by, and had a positive influence on, towns wishing to become involved.

Rhona Pringle, Yorkshire Forward's Renaissance Market Towns Manager, said: "We were already working on 13 of the 15 recommendations, so the outcomes of the review gave us the confidence that that we were heading in the right direction.

"We were happy for there to be a public examination of the work we were implementing, and the updates on the Action Plan that we provided to the Assembly's Economy Commission were particularly useful. When we met at the six-monthly group that monitors the Action Plan, we were able to address the issues they had."

As a result of the programme, there have been some real steps forward in many rural areas.

The Upper Calder Valley, covering Walsden, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd and Sowerby Bridge, was the first cluster of towns to be included in the Renaissance Market Towns programme early in 2003.

In Todmorden, Yorkshire Forward has funded an officer to progress the community's aspirations for Bramsche Square. It is hoped that it will be a multipurpose, vibrant public space that promotes different activities throughout the day and the evening each day of the week. Further, following the recent public realm improvements at Fielden Wharf, Yorkshire Forward supported the acquisition and subsequent demolition of a derelict building. This once eyesore building has been transformed into high quality open space, with landscaping works to improve views of the canal. Officially launched in April 2007, it has created an attractive amenity at this key gateway location.

Following the recent Seven Year Review of Yorkshire Forward, it was decided that there would be no new Renaissance Market Towns, but that the focus would be to prioritise Renaissance interventions and consider the approach beyond 2009/10.

Yorkshire Forward will focus on increasing the capacity of partners to deliver, as experience has shown that delivery is best undertaken at the local level.

## 7 Regional marketing and inward investment

The seventh scrutiny looked at how far regional marketing and inward investment contribute to achieving the aims set out in the RES.

Witnesses from business and public sector gave evidence, and while the Panel supported the strategic approach taken by Yorkshire Forward, it made a number of recommendations. These included:

- make it clear that 'Yorkshire Alive with Opportunity' is seen as the region's brand, rather than Yorkshire Forward's;
- re-evaluate all inward investment and marketing activity to ensure value for money. This has subsequently been addressed as part of Yorkshire Forward's seven year review.
- improve stakeholder understanding of the inward investment strategy and its links to sustainable development; and
- get regional partners to agree how best to measure performance.

## 8 Skills

The effectiveness of skills policy was the subject of the next scrutiny. Key recommendations were that Yorkshire Forward:

- should work with partners to agree changes to structures that are too complicated and lack focus;
- must find ways to involve businesses in identifying skills needs;
- should work with the Learning and Skills Council and others to identify additional support for people to gain further qualifications; and
- has to make sure that there are innovative vocational learning opportunities for 11-19 year olds not in mainstream education.

## 9 The Northern Way

The Northern Way is a collaborative project between the three northern Development Agencies - Yorkshire Forward, ONE NorthEast and the Northwest Development Agency - and aims to exploit economic and transport links to boost the North as a business force in Europe. It is backed by a £100m fund for practical action.

It came under the spotlight to ensure money spent on economic development was well targeted. Comments and information were sought on the three priority areas of the initiative: Connectivity, Innovation and the Marketing of the North to the World. The panel's recommendations included:

- the Northern Way should reduce the number of initiatives to avoid saturating the market;
- research should assess the capacity of the region's support for innovative businesses and demand for premises; and
- a regional communications strategy should be developed to describe how public, private and voluntary sector organisations are informed of progress.

# An impartial point of view

## Skills Scrutiny Review - Spring 2006

This March 2006 scrutiny considered the effectiveness of skills policy in the region. Making sure we have the right provision at all levels is key to our future economic success. Therefore, the agenda for higher-level skills is about the competitiveness of both businesses and the region: for lower level skills, it is about inclusion.

The review focussed on four areas:

- the structure for skills;
- delivering skills to individuals;
- meeting the needs of young people; and
- promoting diversity and creating a culture of learning.

The report recognised that there is a complex regional landscape in skills provision, but that Yorkshire Forward has a key strategic role to play, despite only contributing 4% of the total spend on skills. The report commended Yorkshire Forward on its partnership working on skills across the region.

However, it indicated that Yorkshire Forward needs to involve business more in identifying future skills needs. Key recommendations include examining the structures of skills strategy in the region; working more closely with the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and other partners to identify additional support for people with initial Level 2 qualifications; working more closely with the business community and other partners to provide innovative vocational learning opportunities for 11-19 year olds; increasing the understanding around access and achievement in skills; and instituting a set of criteria to measure the effectiveness of Yorkshire Forward's investment in establishing a learning culture.

Ruth Adams, Head of Skills at Yorkshire Forward, said: "It was really important for us to get an impartial point of view from our key partners to see if we were heading in the right direction on skills. It was also very beneficial as an evaluation exercise.

"The scrutiny was important as the process examines issues and produces a report for the public. This helped us look inward and affirmed some of our decisions, made us tweak some things to get them right and helped us communicate these to partners.

"There is certainly more public accountability as a result of the scrutiny."

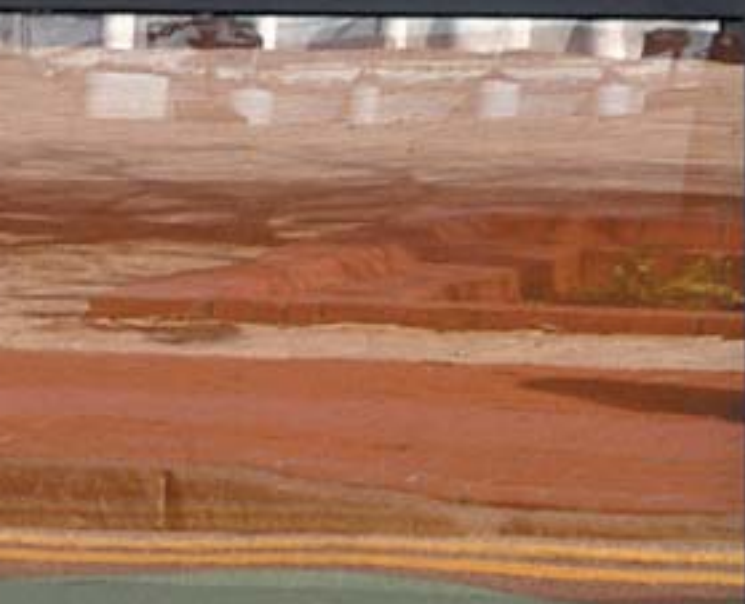
The skills review highlighted an excellent project at Lindholme Prison near Doncaster where Neil Kitchen, from Doncaster, has worked for Fosters Bakery in Barnsley for about a year and has impressed his bosses with the bakery skills he learned at Lindholme.

He said: "The training at Lindholme bakery changed me as a person. I didn't have any qualifications before I came to prison and now I've got NVQ level 1 and 2 in food and drink manufacturing. Being given the chance to train at Lindholme bakery has changed my perspective on life. I wasn't interested in bakery before but now I have a good attitude to work and am doing something I enjoy."

By his hard work on the production line, Neil quickly made a good impression with Managing Director John Foster, who said: "To have somebody already trained up to such a high standard is rare.

"Neil has come straight to us with good qualifications and has been trained by Tony Watts who is bakery manager at the prison - you don't get much better than that."

The aim of the bakery at Lindholme prison is to release prisoners into the region with qualifications that are recognised and in demand by the food and drink sector. This is essential to the skills projects that Yorkshire Forward invests in to benefit the region's economy in the longer term.



# SCRUTINY

## In context

In 1999, the government announced additional funding and greater flexibility for Regional Development Agencies, and demanded in return more accountability, giving that responsibility to the relevant regional assembly.

The importance of scrutiny lies mainly in complementing other audit, evaluation and monitoring frameworks, including the National Audit Office's programme of Independent Performance Assessment of RDAs.

It also recognises that while the scrutiny role should be the same in the eight English regions, each region has developed its own procedures for taking forward scrutiny to reflect the different opportunities and challenges facing them.

The key agreed principles and protocols for effective scrutiny state that reviews will:

- be timely, planned and programmed;
- be endorsed by partners;
- provide measurable and meaningful outcomes; and
- add value for both the Regional Development Agencies and Regional Assemblies from a regional perspective.

The Yorkshire and Humber scrutiny arrangements, like most of the others in England, are based on a 'select committee' enquiry model.

*For more details on scrutiny and how to get involved, contact Iain Lovell on 01924 331585, or e-mail [scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk)*



# The YHA Scrutiny Reviews and Panel Members

This is the full list of all scrutiny reviews and panel members undertaken by the Assembly up to publication of this document (Spring 2007). Many thanks to all those who gave their time to support our work.

## **1 Business Birth Rate Strategy**

Date: Autumn 2002

Chair: Maureen Foers MBE  
Members: Tony Cherry, Brigid Kane, Cllr Mark Kirk, Cllr Bob Tress

## **2 The Impact of the Regional Economic Strategy on Social Inclusion**

Date: Spring 2003

Chair: Cllr Terry Sharman  
Members: Cllr Dick Fordham, Cllr Ted Joce, Maggie Jones, Liz Wright

## **3 Public Sector Investment and the Achievement of Regional Economic Strategy Objectives**

Date: January 2004

Chair: Tony Cherry  
Members: Adrian Booth, Sarah Daniel, Cllr Ted Joce, Cllr Terry Sharman

## **4 Five Cities: Drivers of Economic Growth**

Date: June 2004

Chair: Gary Topp  
Members: Cllr Dick Fordham, Ian Hughes, Stefan Sykes, Liz Wright

## **5 Market Towns Initiative and Renaissance Market Towns Programme**

Date: August 2004

Chair: Cate Hammond  
Members: Cllr Simon Cooke, Brigid Kane, Michael Noble, Cllr Caroline Seymour, Mary Wright

## **6 Clusters Policy**

Date: January 2005

Chair: Cllr David Heather  
Members: Cllr Allan Jones, Mike Pearson, Cllr Iain St John, Cllr Bob Tress

## **7 Marketing and Inward Investment**

Date: June 2005

Chair: Cllr Heather Garnett  
Members: David Andrews, Graham Titchener, Andrew Wood

## **8 Skills Policy in Yorkshire & Humber**

Date: March 2006

Chair: Julian Cummins  
Members: Cllr Dick Fordham, Carl Leonard, Cllr Bob Miller, Cllr Terry Sharman, Cllr Natalie Warriner MBE

## **9 Northern Way Opportunities**

Date: June 2006

Chair: Paul Jagger MBE  
Members: Frank Carter, Cllr Philip Dobson, Cllr Shelagh Marshall, Professor Christopher Malcolm Taylor



For more details on scrutiny and how to get involved,  
contact:

Iain Lovell on 01924 331585  
e-mail [scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk)

or

Christine Hawkins at Yorkshire Forward on 0113 394 9607  
e-mail [Christine.Hawkins@Yorkshire-Forward.com](mailto:Christine.Hawkins@Yorkshire-Forward.com)



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The **Regional** Strategic Partnership

Yorkshire and Humber Assembly  
18 King Street  
Wakefield  
WF1 2SQ

Tel: 01924 331555  
Fax: 01924 331559  
e: [scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk)  
w: [www.yhassembly.gov.uk](http://www.yhassembly.gov.uk)

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