

# **Yorkshire and Humber's Modernising Rural Delivery – A Regional Rural Framework Introductory briefing**

## **1) Background**

"The customer is the key", that's the message being given out in the Government's new Rural Strategy for England. In conjunction with the new strategy, Government has asked each region to set out what they understand as the rural priorities for their region and how best to address these to achieve sustainable rural development.

A review of current rural policy and delivery systems confirmed that these are too complicated and confusing for the customer. It is recommended that, to provide a more streamlined service, there needs to be more devolved responsibilities at the regional and local level.

The Rural Strategy for England introduces a streamlining of rural policy making and delivery mechanisms. A merger of the landscape, recreation and access functions of the Countryside Agency, the environmental functions of Defra's Rural Development Service (RDS) with the work of English Nature will form a new Integrated Agency concentrating on environmental programmes. The Countryside Agency's socio-economic remit (and eventually that of the RDS) is to become the responsibility of Yorkshire Forward. Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber (GOYH) will, in future, manage the Countryside Agency's work with the voluntary and community sector.

## **2) A Yorkshire and Humber Rural Framework**

One of the key recommendations of the Rural Strategy is that priority setting and delivery responsibilities need to be handled much closer to the customer. Defra therefore have commissioned Government Offices (in this case GOYH) to take the lead in developing a plan that sets out the priorities and delivery mechanisms for sustainable rural development in Yorkshire and Humber. This plan will be called the Yorkshire and Humber Rural Framework.

Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber is working with Yorkshire Forward (YF), Yorkshire and Humber Assembly (YHA), the Integrated Agency (IA) bodies and other key local and sub-regional

partners (such as local authorities and community groups) to develop this regional Rural Framework.

The framework will aim to:

- Be a focal point for the region's evidence based rural priorities, in the context of the region's strategic framework, Advancing Together
- Propose and develop new delivery structures and mechanisms that are customer focussed and flexible
- Demonstrate clear sustainable development outcomes from a rural perspective in delivering against national and regional targets
- Influence the delivery of rural priorities within other national and regional funding

It will benefit the region by providing:

- A better deal for the customer - more simplified service delivery by organisations, partnerships and groups
- A clear set of priorities for rural delivery in Yorkshire and Humber that can be used to gain a greater share of national and regional funding for the region's rural areas
- An improved rural evidence base
- A path through the mass of regional strategies and plans identifying what impact or influence they have on rural parts of the region.
- Ensuring that partners in Yorkshire and Humber are working together to achieve Sustainable Development outcomes

To ensure this is achieved the framework needs to demonstrate;

- An agreed set of regional rural priorities
- Clear and robust sources of supporting rural evidence
- Evidence of partner engagement and 'buy in'
- Recommended delivery mechanisms to enact priorities
- A timetable for implementation
- Strategic fit with the Rural Strategy 2004, 'Advancing Together' and delivery of Government PSA targets

Defra has requested that a draft rural framework identifying the emerging rural priorities and potential future delivery mechanisms be submitted by the end of 2004.

Co-ordinating all rural activity cannot be done easily or immediately and some areas will take priority. The first version of the Framework will represent the start of a process that goes beyond 2004.

### **3) The Plan**

#### **3.1) Communications**

Customers and partners will be fully involved in the development of the Framework. A communication plan has been developed to provide a way by which partners can be informed, updated and fully engaged in the Framework's development.

This briefing is the first in a series. Other communication will be carried out through further briefings and events, on a one to one basis, and occasionally through the press.

You can also find copies of all briefings, and other information on <http://www.goyh.gov.uk/yhruralframework/>. The website will be regularly updated with information as it becomes available.

Throughout this process, the Yorkshire and Humber Rural Affairs Forum (YHRAF) will have a valuable role to play as an expert group on the region's rural issues. The YHRAF will disseminate information and act as a sounding board.

#### **3.2) Identifying Priorities**

To generate a list of the region's rural priorities, our first task is to identify specific rural objectives already in existence within current regional plans and strategies. These priorities will be tested against a rural evidence base that is currently being developed. This is to establish whether these priorities give an accurate picture of current rural issues and needs. This exercise will help to identify gaps in rural priorities in existing strategies and also in the data we have available.

#### **3.3) Delivering Priorities**

Once we have established our region's priorities, the next step is to look at how these priorities should be addressed in a sustainable way. Although there is no new funding available, the intention is to examine how we can maximise the benefit provided by existing funds.

The first stage will be to investigate how rural socio-economic activity, programmes from the Countryside Agency (and eventually that of the Rural Development Service of Defra) are to be delivered in future. This is a priority, as the responsibility for these will be

transfer to Yorkshire Forward in April 2005. However, developing the socio-economic delivery mechanisms should be viewed as the first step in the development of fully integrated delivery mechanisms. Once the first stage has been completed, attention will turn to integrating the socio-economic delivery mechanisms with other crucial elements of rural delivery. This will involve further development of the voluntary and community sector approaches and the effective engagement of the environment sector to ensure sustainable development is delivered in the region.

Consultants will be commissioned by the Framework's Steering Group, initially to map current socio-economic delivery mechanisms. They will consult with organisations that currently use public funds to deliver to rural customers (such as not-for-profit groups and businesses), and organisations with the potential to deliver to these customers in future. The consultation will canvass views on how best to devolve delivery to sub-regional or local level, building on existing arrangements where possible. This consultation exercise will be carried out during autumn 2004 and will be managed by Tim Frenneaux of Yorkshire Forward.

### 3.4) Timescales

By the end of 2004, the draft rural framework will be submitted to Defra. Below is the timetable the steering group have set to deliver this request.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Key messages</b>	<b>Consultation to partners</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Detailed information regarding background to framework, process and timescale	Mid Oct
<b>Priority Collation and introduction of consultants</b>	Generate a list of <u>draft</u> regional rural priorities as a starting point, using existing regional strategies.  Introduce consultants and highlight their area of work	End Oct  End Oct
<b>Discussion Priority list and Delivery</b>	Consultation on draft priority list and discussions into how these might be delivered	Nov
<b>Agreeing draft Framework</b>	Endorsement of draft framework by YHRAF, YHA, YF and signed off by steering group and GOYH	Dec

### 3.5) What next, Jan 2005 onwards?

Once the draft framework is approved in principle by Government, more detail will be added to the framework. Details on these next steps will be supplied as soon as possible.

### 3.6) Management

#### Steering Group Membership

A steering group has been set up to develop the draft regional framework, as well as oversee the implementation of the consultation and the communications plan. The members are:  
(Terms of Reference are available on the website)

Liz Kerry (Chair)	Chief Executive	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly/ ALA
Jan Anderson	Environment Director	Yorkshire Forward
Frank Broughton	Acting Regional Manager	Defra, Rural Development Service
Felicity Everiss	Regional Director	GOYH
Dorothy Fairburn	Regional Director	CLA
Martyn Howat	Regional Director	English Nature
Gordon Kingston	Rural Director	GOYH
Chris Martin	Director of Planning	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly/ ALA
Ian Strong	Director	Yorkshire RCC
Hazel Thomas	Regional Director	Countryside Agency
Jeremy Walker	Chief Executive	North Yorkshire County Council
Andy Wilson	Chief Executive	North York Moors Nat. Park

#### Working Group Membership

A working group has also been set up to carry out key tasks in developing the framework. The members are as follows:

David Wilford	Team Manager	GOYH
Tim Ashelford	Senior Advisor	GOYH
Lisa Smith	Advisor	GOYH / CA & link to new Integrated Agency
Tim Frenneaux	Modernising Rural Delivery Manager	Yorkshire Forward
Kelly Jevons	Policy Officer	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly / ALA

#### **4) How to get involved**

We would value your comments and views on the framework development. If you have queries or would like to be on the mailing list for briefings, please contact:

David Wilford,

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