

Rural Matters

Modernising Rural Delivery in Yorkshire and The Humber

Yorkshire & The Humber Rural Framework

February 05



Rural life contributes enormously to the productivity and quality of Yorkshire and The Humber. Our rural economy, the people who live and work here and the effect this has on the successfulness of our region matters.

The Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Framework (YHRF) is about delivering better service for the rural customer, making access to funds easier and building on work that's already started to help rural areas fulfil their potential in a successful sustainable region.

The Framework will identify priority issues for rural parts of our region, recognising that sustainable rural solutions are often different to those in urban areas and that urban and rural are inextricably linked. It will also outline how the delivery of activity in rural parts of the region will be improved. This is the second briefing on the progress of the Framework.

NEWS

We are working to develop a 'fully operational' Framework by 31 March 2006. We have already met an intermediate deadline of 31 December 2004, providing Defra with a progress report and action plan as requested.

We are now waiting for feedback on this from Defra ministers, policy experts and national stakeholders eg. Local Government Association (LGA). This will inform the way we plan to tackle the next stages.

Our December report is on the Framework's website. **This is purely a progress statement, and inevitably some details featured will change as the Framework develops.**

The report describes why a regional rural framework is being developed, what progress has been made and provides a development plan. It emphasises the need for further consultation on setting regional rural priorities, in particular identifying the important sub-regional and local issues and shaping future delivery mechanisms for the region, so that funding and resources can be allocated effectively. Watch out for consultation opportunities!!

It is anticipated that, as the Framework develops, we will use the information within it to influence regional and sub-regional strategy reviews. With this evidence we can ensure rural issues are properly considered.

For more information log onto www.goyh.gov.uk/yhruralframework

PROGRESS

Identifying Rural Priorities

By identifying regional rural priorities, we can ensure that delivery makes a real difference, with rural resources and activity being effectively targeted.

We've already mapped and analysed the rural content in 33 current regional and sub-regional strategies to identify around 400 existing rural objectives. These have been summarised into a first 'cut' of twelve priority themes. These priority themes have been identified using current strategies and there may be gaps. These provide a starting point for discussion. We can now check whether these priorities are accurate and show the true needs of the region.

This has been discussed at events over the last few months, with early feedback on the website. The next three months are crucial in the assessment of this 1st cut, and to develop the '2nd cut' of priorities we need our sub-regional and local partners to tell us what they think.

A vital evidence base

This is developing well, with help from colleagues at Defra, Government Office YH, Yorkshire Futures, The Countryside Agency, Yorkshire Forward and the Office for National Statistics. Information is being gathered on the performance of rural areas for each of the Region's High Level Indicators. These indicators are used to monitor the Region's progress towards the Advancing Together vision. Much of the information is available at district level, where the Countryside Agency's Tarling definition of urban, accessible rural and remote rural districts is being used. Where information is available at a more local level, e.g. ward, the Government's new rural urban definition could be applied to the data.

Already clear and interesting patterns are emerging:

- ❑ **An ageing rural population structure compared with urban areas**
- ❑ **High suicide rate in some remote rural districts**
- ❑ **Widespread rural affordable housing & homelessness problems**
- ❑ **Two of the region's fifteen character areas have experienced marked changes in landscape quality which are inconsistent with character**
- ❑ **A high (unfavourable) Index of Multiple Deprivation in some rural communities, especially those along the East Coast and in former coal mining villages of West and South Yorkshire.**

Improving delivery

Another key element of the Framework is ensuring that there are appropriate delivery mechanisms to address the priorities.

The transfer of resources and responsibility for rural socio-economic activity from the Countryside Agency to Yorkshire Forward in April 2005 provides an opportunity to look again at what delivery mechanisms are in place, how these might be improved to conform to the principles of Modernising Rural Development (MRD) (ie customer focussed, devolved, efficient and effective, strategy led & delivering sustainable development). The development of socio-economic delivery mechanisms is the first step to addressing all aspects of rural delivery in a way that conforms to MRD principles.

Deloitte Consulting were appointed to carry out initial information gathering on socio-economic activity. This informed the December submission to DEFRA as well as Yorkshire Forward's planning. This research has been useful in stimulating the Steering Group's thinking about how future delivery will take place. There needs to be further work with partners to develop this, so that rural delivery mechanisms are in place by April 2006.

Funding transferred from the Countryside Agency to Yorkshire Forward for socio-economic activity as of April 2005 will be channelled through the Yorkshire Forward's Investment Planning process. We're looking at how the Investment Planning process will address the region's rural priorities as well as how it can ensure that the real needs of rural customers come first. Yorkshire Forward will honour all the Countryside Agency's legacy commitments which run until March 2006.

*****MOVING FORWARD *****

Partners and stakeholders need to be fully involved in the next stages of this pioneering work. It's also important that the 'customer', the beneficiaries of public funds on the ground, also know about this. **We need your help. Through your partnerships and networks, please pass on information about the Framework's development, and ensure any local issues and priorities are fed back into this development.**

Information and comments can be fed back on the website and there will be various opportunities over the coming months for this to be fed in. Up to date details of consultation news will be publicised as soon as these are available and a monthly 'latest information' bulletin will be circulated by email and on the web.

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