

Rural Matters

Modernising Rural Delivery in Yorkshire and The Humber

March 05



Welcome to the second issue of Rural Matters, the monthly Modernising Rural Delivery update for the Yorkshire and The Humber (YH) region.

NEWS

Rural Affairs : Rural Transport

Yorkshire and The Humber's Rural Transport Partnerships (RTP) are hosting a one day conference on Tuesday 22nd March 2005. The conference will showcase the valuable work carried out by RTPs across the region over the past five years and will provide delegates with the opportunity to inform and influence Regional Transport Policy and emerging new rural delivery mechanisms.

The YH Rural Affairs Forum is supporting the conference and a Forum meeting will take place after the conference in York.

The Integrated Agency : Joint Working

Following the announcement in July 2004 that an Integrated Agency was to be created, the Regional Directors of the Countryside Agency, Rural Development Service and English Nature have been working together to develop a shared vision.

A regional Statement of Joint Working has been produced which sets out joint objectives and activities to ensure that the three organisations can effectively act together as "a purposeful and determined confederation of partners." (*Rural Strategy 2004*)

One of the key objectives is to develop an understanding and appreciation of each others aims, culture and ways of working. As part of this joint projects are already underway including the Craven Dales Project in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Humberhead Levels and Moors Project to regenerate and develop Thorne and Hatfield Moors.

A powerpoint presentation giving more information on the Joint Statement and the Integrated Agency Confederation is available on the Framework Website.

Countryside Agency staff transfer

From April 2005, much of the Countryside Agency's current socio-economic delivery functions will transfer to Regional Development Agencies (Yorkshire Forward) and Defra for delivery through Government Offices.

Several members of Countryside Agency staff will transfer to Yorkshire Forward to help deliver Yorkshire Forward's extended rural remit.

These staff have been through a selection process organised by the Countryside Agency and all have extensive experience of delivering socio-economic activity. The majority of transferring staff will be based in Yorkshire Forward sub-regional offices and will be helping delivery organisations understand and adapt to delivery according to the principles of Modernising Rural Delivery (MRD).

Andy Tordoff, Head of Rural Renaissance and Tourism at Yorkshire Forward said "We are really pleased to welcome the staff transferring from the Countryside Agency. They bring with them a wealth of skills and experience which will continue to be of benefit to the region's rural areas."

Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber (GOYH) is also pleased to welcome two new members of staff who are transferring from the Countryside Agency to take up posts in GOYH's Rural Communities Team from April 2005.

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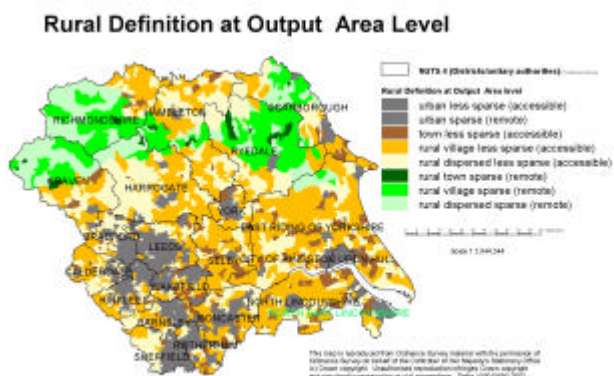
www.goyh.gov.uk/yhruralframework

Progress - YH Rural Framework

In response to the Government's Rural Strategy 2004, partners in the region are working together to develop a Rural Framework. The Framework will seek to prioritise and co-ordinate activity, funding and delivery of services for rural areas of the region. This will be assisted by the development of regional rural priorities, supported by a regional rural evidence base. The Framework will also give effect to the principles of 'modernising rural delivery' - namely more simplified and efficient delivery of services with a strengthened customer engagement in decision-making.

Rural Evidence - what's happening in rural areas?

A number of trends are emerging from the evidence work. Patterns are not uniform across rural parts of the region. In July 2004, the government published a new rural-urban definition, which identifies 6 rural and 2 urban type areas and is mapped out below for Y&H (see www.statistics.gov.uk for further information).



However for the purpose of this short article, it helps if the above classification is simplified into 3 broad types of rural areas for this region as follows:

- Firstly, in accessible rural areas, shown in orange/brown on the map, social and economic indicators are generally positive. These areas have a high quality environment and are seen as, and benefit from, a good quality of life. The population is rapidly expanding, mostly through migration of skilled workers from urban parts of the Region and outside the Region. Many of the residents of these areas commute into York and West Yorkshire for employment. However business survival rates within the accessible rural areas are lower than in adjacent urban areas. Affordable housing problems are widespread.
- The more remote rural areas, shown in green, again have a high quality environment including the Dales and North York Moors National Parks. The economy of these areas is more reliant than elsewhere on declining primary industry including agriculture. A poor infrastructure leaves many residents in these areas struggling to access a wide range of services. Remoteness also means these residents are unable to benefit from many of the new jobs being created in the Leeds City Region. Mental health problems are worse than in any other part of the Region and affordable housing is also an acute issue. Many of these issues are also repeated in coastal areas classed as accessible rural.
- Finally, Pennine West Yorkshire and the rural coalfield areas contain some of the worst deprivation levels in the Region, and at the same time have few environmental assets common to other rural areas in the Region.

What Next?

In April, GOYH and Yorkshire Futures will together be publishing a detailed report giving much more information about the Region's rural evidence base. This evidence will be used to help inform development of the Rural Framework. For more information please visit the Framework Website.

Identifying Rural Priorities – Update...

From our detailed look at existing strategies and plans, we have already identified a list of current rural priority 'themes'. Now we have begun the process of comparing these with the developing rural evidence base. This evidence checking process will help confirm the importance of existing priorities, and also suggest additional rural priorities not identified in current strategies.

It is essential that the Regional Rural Priorities are representative of local and sub-regional needs and issues. Very soon, a rural priorities 'consultation paper' will be sent out to all Local Strategic Partnerships and those Sub-regional partnerships with a rural interest. We are seeking partnership input in this initial 'testing' phase to validate or challenge our priorities list, with priorities identified in local or Sub Regional plans. These local or Sub Regional plans have themselves been developed following extensive local consultation.

Once agreed, Regional Rural Priorities will be used to influence regional strategies, plans, spending and delivery from Spring 2005 onwards. Further information will be made available on the Framework Website.

Getting the processes right to deliver socio-economic activity

The YHRF Steering Group have established a Task and Finish group to investigate and make recommendations on how the Yorkshire Forward led Investment Planning process can best support rural socio-economic activity. The group will consider how rural activity is currently supported and how this needs to develop as a result of Modernising Rural Delivery. The intention is to ensure that the process enables delivery organisations to play to their strengths and act as intermediaries between strategic funding organisations and rural customers.

Mapping groups and networks in YH

The YHRF Steering Group is starting work to review decision-making, targeting and consultation processes for the region's rural funding streams. This work will feed into the Rural Framework with the aim of simplifying rural service delivery, improving customer input, removing unnecessary bureaucracy and redirecting cost savings into project spend.