

A RESPONSE TO THE SNR CONSULTATION FROM THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS IN YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Introduction

- These are the views of the 15 social, economic and environmental partners who are members of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly. The views have been developed in both formal and informal meetings since the publication of the SNR. They were finalised in a meeting on 4 June 2008 and in subsequent correspondence.
- Partners are drawn from these organisations – Association of Colleges, BME Regional Panel, CBI, Chambers of Commerce, Faiths Forum, Federation of Small Businesses, Health, Learning and Skills Councils, Local Councils Association, Regional Environment Forum, Regional Forum for Voluntary and Community Organisations, Rural Community Council, TUC, Yorkshire Culture, Yorkshire Universities.

A Missed Opportunity

- Whilst recognising that the Sub-National Review focuses on the future, we regret the emphasis within SNR on the movement of functions at regional level, rather than the devolution of significant new responsibilities to the regional level or a recognition of the role of central government departments and agencies in supporting the successful delivery of regional strategies.

The Collective Matters

- We believe that partners working together bring a strength and variety of views, which is more than the sum of its parts. Partners in Yorkshire and Humber have made a recognised contribution to regional policy in the past and will continue to do so in the future.
- We continue to maintain that SNR still does not recognise the enormous contribution that partners have made in the past in this region and ask that the role of partners in regional arrangements be strengthened in final guidance and legislation from Government.

Status

- We expect to have a full, meaningful and equal role in shaping, delivering and scrutinising regional policy and strategy in future arrangements. This is

something that should be a right, set out by government in statute, not something that may or may not be negotiated at a regional level.

- Consequently we ask that Government formalise, through legislation and guidance, an expectation of partnership working at a regional level, much as already exists at local level.

Diversity

- Partners bring a different range of voices to the table. Whatever new arrangements emerge within our region, and in others, this diversity must be retained. Losing it will result in less inclusive and less effective policymaking.

A Broad Regional Policy Framework

- We are concerned that SNR signals a policy framework with a very narrow focus on GVA and economic growth, but without wider awareness of the issues around inclusion and the environment. There need to be voices that can constructively challenge this focus. This is a role that we have traditionally played within our region, one that we would wish to continue, perhaps in new and different ways.

Continuity

- We are committed to continue meeting together to provide a regional focus for non-local authority voices in the region. This is not about maintaining the status quo. We accept that the future will be different, but believe it is essential to maintain an infrastructure in the short and medium term that will allow full and meaningful engagement during the transition to new arrangements.
- Engagement costs money. To maintain this infrastructure demands resources. Partners are looking at different options for resourcing a standalone partnership structure, including income generation and subscription models. However, we expect government to provide some resources to help support regional level partnerships as we move forward into the new arrangements. We are particularly keen not to lose contributions from those partners with fewer resources.

Conclusion

- As partners, we know we have much to offer the region in shaping, delivering and scrutinising regional policy and strategy. We want to play a full and active part, whilst recognising that future ways of working will be different. We look forward to the challenge and urge the government to formalise its requirements for regional level partnerships.

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