

**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER RURAL PRACTITIONERS GROUP
14 JUNE 2007**

Selecting members for the regional RDPE business improvement panel

Introduction

As discussed at previous RPG meetings, Yorkshire Forward is constructing a panel to take final decisions on applications for funding from the RDPE (see annex 1 for structure diagram)

This paper presents a proposal for how groups aligned to the RPG and the RDPE can nominate representatives to sit on this panel.

Context

Previously, the ERDP panel comprised representatives from the Rural Development Service (RDS) (chair plus one other) and GOYH's EU team, with Yorkshire Forward's Rural Team joining in 2006. Decisions on applications for funding under £15,000 were taken on a fast-track basis by the RDS Director.

As the RDPE needs to be better integrated with other public sector activity, and meet the differing needs of businesses across the region Yorkshire Forward are seeking to develop a 5 member panel, which includes representation from across the region and across the sectors covered by the RDPE.

The role of the panel

The RDPE regional business improvement panel will take decisions on applications for RDPE support, received through the Rural Business Improvement Grant scheme and the commissioning process. These grants will each be in excess of £25,000. Decisions on smaller applications through the Rural Business Start Up programme will be taken by a delegated individual, to be determined through discussion with Business Link. Decisions on the Skills programme will be taken by the regional skills panel.

Decisions will be taken based on an appraisal of the project carried out by the Rural Business Facilitators.

The panel will be responsible for approving any transfers of funds from one measure to another. They will also be responsible for receiving monitoring reports, both on the overall progress of the socio-economic element of the programme, and on the progress of specific projects. Based on these, the panel will play a key role on revising/refining/developing the RDPE during its life.

Governance

The panel would be a sub-group of the RPG. The entire RPG would still receive annual monitoring reports.

Nominations of panel members

Yorkshire Forward will be inviting nominations for panel members through the 6 organisations who can influence the RDPE (sub-regional partnerships, Framework for Change and Forestry Strategy Steering Group) and through the RPG. Each organisation will be invited to nominate 2 people to sit on the Panel. These people will not be representing their sector, sub-region or partnership area per se. That is,

they should not look favourably on certain applications solely because they are related to their sub-region or sector, nor are they taking decisions on behalf of the partnership. The nomination process is designed to ensure a broad cross section of experience and perspectives on the decision making panel.

Nominees to the panel should:

- Be senior members of staff within their employing organisation.
- Have excellent knowledge of their sub-region/sector
- Have a good strategic understanding of rural economic development.
- Have a good understanding of the relationship between economic activity and social and environmental issues.
- Have experience of business support and economic development
- Be aware of the broad suite of other sources of support for rural businesses and rural development

Relevant sectors include:

- Food and drink
- Land based sector
- Tourism
- Creative industries
- Social enterprise
- Environmental technology
- Businesses providing services to rural communities

The appraisal of projects (which will be carried out by the RDPE Rural Business Facilitators) will consider social and economic issues.

Panel members will be selected from the nominees by Yorkshire Forward, so as to provide the required cross section of experience and perspectives.

Commitment required

The panel will meet 4 times a year, meetings are likely to take most of the day. There will also be a requirement to review the relevant paperwork.

There will also be additional requirements to contribute time to the programme, for initial training and ongoing familiarisation sessions.

Timescales

Nominations for the panel should be received by Yorkshire Forward before 27th July

August 2007 – First panel meeting & training session

October 2007 – Second panel meeting

Making a nomination

Given the timescales we anticipate that this process will be carried out virtually, with nominating organisations making an initial open call for nominees, and then agreeing the 2 nominees for submission.

Future conflicts of interest should be avoided where possible. Panel members will not be able to contribute to decision making about applications where there is a conflict of interest.

Yorkshire Forward will select panel members from the nominees on the basis of who can add most value to the panel, whilst ensuring an appropriate range of experience and perspectives and minimizing potential conflicts of interest.

Recommendations

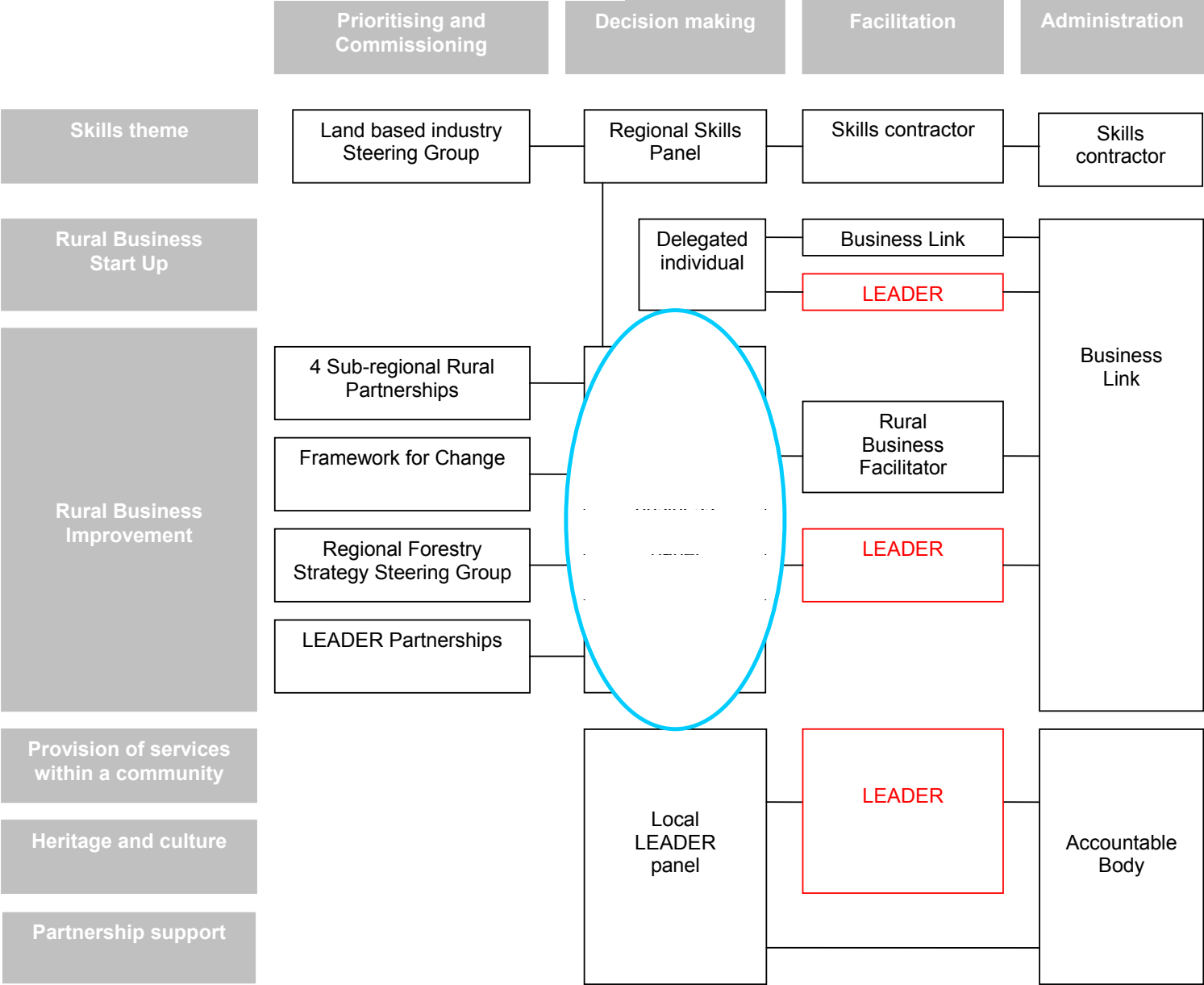
That the RPG endorses this approach for nomination to the RDPE regional rural business improvement panel

That the RPG seeks 2 nominees from its membership.

That the RPG endorses this approach to the sub-regional rural partnerships and industry bodies, and asks them to seek nominees to represent their sub-region/sector.

Tim Frenneaux
Rural Strategy Manager
Yorkshire Forward
7th June 07

Annex1: RDPE delivery structures (relevant panel highlighted)



Annex 2: RDPE Regional Rural Business Improvement Panel nomination forms

Please ensure your nominee's are happy to be nominated, have the appropriate experience and can contribute the time required.

Nominating organisation	
Nominee no 1	
Name	
Employing organisation	
Position in employing organisation	
Sector/sub-region represented	
Brief job description	
Why has the organisation suggested this nominee? for completion by the nominating organisation	
How does the nominee feel they can add value to the panel? for completion by the nominee	

Nominating organisation	
Nominee no 2	
Name	
Organisation	
Position in employing organisation	
Sector/sub-region represented	
Brief job description	
Why has the organisation suggested this nominee? for completion by the nominating organisation	
How does the nominee feel they can add value to the panel? for completion by the nominee	

Please return nominations, by the 27th July, to:
Liz Scott
Yorkshire Forward
Elizabeth.Scott@yorkshire-forward.com
2 Victoria Place
Leeds
LS11 5AE