

## **Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

### **Governance Arrangements and Budgetary Matters**

**Purpose of Paper** – to set the scene for discussion and decision on the following issues:

- Steering group membership selection
- Appointment of RAF Vice-Chair
- Financial support for the RAF

#### **1. Steering Group Membership Selection**

The new Chair and the current RAF Steering Group have agreed that the Steering Group membership should be reviewed both to get a better balance between practitioners and 'receivers' who can represent the 'customer' viewpoint, and to involve RAF membership in the selection process.

It is therefore proposed to invite nominations from RAF members from which the Chair will select up to 10 members based on what he sees as the best balance to assist him in planning and managing RAF business. The new Steering Group membership will be reviewed every two years with possible occasional co-option at the Chair's discretion. Nomination forms will be available on the YHRAF website and should be returned to [yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk) by 11<sup>th</sup> May. The aim is to have a new Steering Group in place by mid May.

**Recommendation:** Members are requested to endorse this proposal.

#### **2. Appointment of RAF Vice-Chair**

The current Steering Group also supports the value of having a Vice-Chair to assist and deputise for the Chair as necessary. Appointment would be for a 2 year period. Again, RAF members are invited to nominate candidates. The decision on selection would be taken, either:

- a) jointly by the Chair and the new Steering Group (SG) from the recently chosen SG membership; or
- b) by a selection panel drawn from a) who would decide from nominations received. This would allow for a wider choice should a Vice-Chair candidate not already be on the new Steering Group.

Nomination forms will be available on the YHRAF website and should be returned to [yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk) by 31<sup>th</sup> May.

**Recommendation:** Members are requested to:

- (i) endorse the desirability of appointing a Vice Chair;
- (ii) decide on which option for selection, a) or b) above, should apply.

### **3. Financial Support for the RAF**

At the last RAF meeting members will recall that, stimulated by John Napier's generous offer to make resources available to the RAF, the Secretariat was charged with investigating and reporting back what other offers of support might be available to help develop the independence and activity of the RAF.

Members were invited to contribute and the present situation is that John has formally confirmed that the Kelda Group is prepared to provide staff resources or a cash donation of £10,000 pa for the next two years and both Yorkshire Forward and Defra via the Government Office have agreed to match this cash offer. There have also been tentative offers of assistance in kind by way of staff time and facilities.

The Chair and Steering group have considered these offers and decided that the best way to proceed at this stage would be to establish an independent budget for RAF activity that would be controlled by the Chair but subject to endorsement by the Steering Group. Such a budget, currently amounting to some £30,000 p.a., provides an opportunity to expand RAF activity and would be used not only as previously to fund events and partnership working, but also to commission work, to outsource some administrative functions and/or to buy input from an independent coordinator – a facility that other RAFs have found valuable.

Detailed arrangements for operating along these lines have still to be worked out with funding partners to get the right balance between accountability, transparency and operational effectiveness. These arrangements will be brought back to the RAF but the purpose at this stage is to seek RAF endorsement of the principle of establishing an independent budget for RAF work along the lines set out above.

**Recommendation:** Members are requested to endorse the establishment of an independent budget for RAF work as described above.

### **RAF Secretariat**

GOYH  
19<sup>th</sup> April 2007