

**CONSULTATION ON SUB NATIONAL REVIEW
AND DRAFT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME**

**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER RURAL AFFAIRS FORUM
Kinsley and Fitzwilliam Community Resource Centre,
Pontefract, West Yorkshire**

17 June 2008

The Chair of the Rural Affairs Forum, Graham Ward, introduced the Regional Minister for Yorkshire and The Humber, the Rt Hon Rosie Winterton. The Minister expressed her desire to hear the views of forum members on two issues:

1. the sub national review (SNR), and
2. the draft legislative programme (DLP)

and outlined the strategic and political context of both consultations. She acknowledged that much emphasis is placed on economic regeneration in rural areas but wanted to also recognise the contribution rural areas make to the wider economy of the region as a whole.

Tim Frenneux (Yorkshire Forward) summarised the emerging joint response of Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency) and Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber to the SNR consultation.

Discussion on the sub national review

1. Chris Pilkington (Bradford Metropolitan District Council) expressed concern about the possible lack of independence of the proposed cross-cutting board concerned with sustainable development, inclusion and other issues.

The Minister suggested that this board could have an independent chair and a scrutiny role cross-cutting all the other boards.

2. Geraldine Carter (Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council Councillor) asked for recognition of the diversity of the region and expressed concern that high level discussions would not engage local people.

The Minister recognised that the sub national review is an over-arching view but stressed that it is regional and addresses the requirement to put local needs into strategy. Local councillors need to input to the leaders forum.

3. Dorothy Fairburn (Country Landowners Association) expressed concern that Yorkshire Forward will lose focus with extra responsibilities and possibly become more bureaucratic.

The Minister referred to the need to integrate transport and planning with economic development and agreed that there must not be more bureaucracy.

4. Sarah Tunicliffe (English Heritage) suggested that there needs to be broader sustainable development rather than just economic sustainability.

The Minister recognised the importance of the environment and said that the environment and the economy are linked. The national parks for example make a significant economic contribution through their tourism but if the environment is ignored those parks will no longer attract tourism.

5. Helen Wright (East Riding of Yorkshire Council) said some bureaucracy must be tolerated as there needs to be a structure for people to engage with.

6. Shelagh Marshall (North Yorkshire County Council Councillor) asked if the suggested regional select committee would consist only of MPs and if it would take over all regional scrutiny.

The Minister replied that those issues were still being discussed.

Discussion on the draft legislative programme

1. Chris Elton (Rural Community Councils) asked if it was the intention to hand power back to the people directly or through communities. He asked for recognition of the good practice already taking place through rural community organisations to be recognised. He suggested there is an opportunity to give power to parish councils but they need a means to feed into Local Authorities.

The Minister asked if the best practice that already exists should be more strongly addressed in legislation so that it becomes the way things should be done.

2. Howard Petch (Commission for Rural Communities) questioned some of the consequences of mainstreaming rural delivery and said care must be taken to avoid unintended consequences for rural communities.

The Minister replied that the consultation was part of that process.

3. Marianne Blauboer (National Trust) expressed concern that the environment has to speak economic language to be heard and asked if more could be done for the environment for its own sake.

The Minister referred to examples of that happening such as the Climate Change Bill and the Marine and Coastal Access Bill.

4. Stephen Fox (Regional Forum) asked for greater clarity on what returning power to the people means in terms of individuals and communities.

The Minister recognised the challenge of involving individuals and referred to the example of New Deal for the Communities. She suggested that members of the Rural Forum could ask the people they represent what they want.