

# Rural Matters

July 2006

Newsletter of the Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum



Welcome to the **July** 2006 issue of Rural Matters, this has now become the newsletter for the Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Y&H RAF) following from its previous guise as the Modernising Rural Delivery update for the region. The purpose of the Y&H RAF is to ensure that the rural customer has an influence on rural policy-making and delivery and consists of a wide and representative range of rural people, communities and businesses.

## NEWS

### First Meeting of the Enlarged Y&H Rural Affairs Forum

The first meeting of the 'enlarged' Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (RAF) was held on 5th July at Askham Bryan College near York.

Following recommendations in the Rural Delivery Review and Rural Strategy 2004, proposed membership has more than doubled to take into account the need to establish greater customer linkages. Around 60 organisations were represented on the day, including many new members.

The following presentations were given: (available [RAF webpage](#))

**'The RAF and Rural Policy'** David Fraser, Sustainability & Rural Affairs Director, Government Office for Yorkshire & The Humber

**'Launch of Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Framework'** Hazel Thomas, Regional Director, The Countryside Agency

**'Rural Development Programme for England 2007-13 Delivery by Yorkshire Forward'** Andy Tordoff, Head of Rural Renaissance & Tourism, Yorkshire Forward.

**'Development of the RDPE Regional Implementation Plan'** Ian Smith, Senior Advisor Rural Affairs Team, GOYH

**'The Yorkshire and Humber Plan'** Rob Murfin, Policy Manager for Planning, Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

**'The Affordable Rural Housing Commission Report'** Peter Bradley, Affordable Rural Housing Commissioner

Following the presentations came a couple of lively Question & Answer sessions, particularly regarding the issue of affordable rural housing and whether there should be a united RAF view at the Regional Spatial Strategy's Examination in Public (RSS EiP).

The meeting also saw the launch of The Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Framework, where copies, hot off the press, were available to members.

The 10 Framework priorities provide a major focus for the RAF. To enable us to take this forward in the best possible way, we need to understand members views, interests, expertise and their representative networks. If you did not get the chance to complete the questionnaire in your pack on the day then please complete this one and return to the email address overleaf: [Y&H RAF Membership Questionnaire](#) (press ctrl to link)

We are also keen to hear from anyone who feels their organisation should have been invited, would like further information or has any feedback following this meeting for future consideration.

#### **KEY ACTIONS & AGREEMENTS:** (press ctrl to access links)

- 1) To circulate a copy of the regional RDPE spending priorities spreadsheet to members (done and available on webpage)
- 2) Any organisation who has not been selected as a participant at the RSS EiP in September, but wishes to put forward a view, can contact Stephen Fox, joint policy co-ordinator for the region's Rural Community Councils ([Stephen.fox@williamhouse.co.uk](mailto:Stephen.fox@williamhouse.co.uk) or 07722 127494) to discuss whether it can be considered within their representation by **21st July 2006**.
- 3) Chair, John Napier, to put forward a Y&H RAF view on affordable rural housing into the RSS following RAF agreement.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 7th November, venue TBA

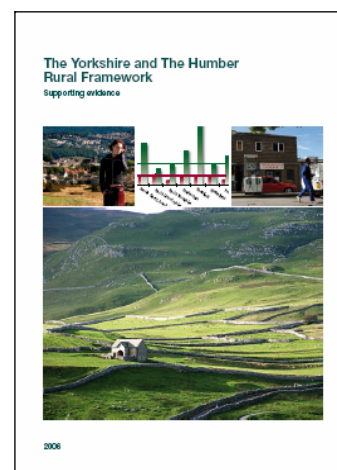
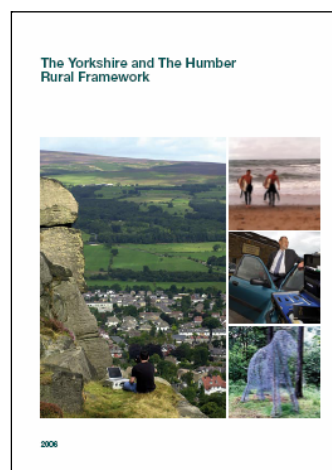
**CONTACT EMAIL:** [yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk)

**LINKS:** [RAF webpage](#)

Where you will find all related papers to the 5th July meeting, including Q&A discussions and all of the presentations and information regarding membership, events and notices.

### Y&H Rural Framework Launch

The Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Framework final consultation closed for comment on 22nd March 2006. In addition to other feedback from previous consultations, over 30 responses were received from partners in the region. (cont overleaf)



Contact: **David Wilford**, Rural Strategy Team.

Telephone: 0113 283 5434 Email: [goyh.yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:goyh.yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk)

Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber, City House, New Station Street, Leeds LS1 4US

cont...

We would like to thank all those organisations that used this opportunity to provide final feedback.

The *Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Framework* was endorsed by the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly on 25th May 2006 and the final document is now available online along with a separate accompanying *Supporting Evidence* document.

These are on the GOYH website: [Rural Framework](#)  
Hard copies are available on request by email to: [yhrf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:yhrf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk).

The key strength of the YHRF is that it has been produced in partnership with many other organisations across the region including local authorities, Yorkshire Forward, Natural England organisations and the National Park Authorities (the full list of 40+ organisations involved is available on page 18 of the Framework).

We encourage you all to use its priorities, evidence, governance and action plan to contribute to its vision of a vibrant and sustainable future for rural Yorkshire and The Humber.

## Rural Observatory Update

The Rural Observatory had its first meeting on 22 May 2006. This group is chaired and led by GOYH with members from a range of partner organisations across the region. The meeting included a workshop to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current Y&H Rural Evidence Base. The outcome of this exercise has helped to develop a work-plan leading up to the next Rural Evidence Base Report 2006 which will be available later this year. *cont*

If you would like to find out more about the Rural Observatory, please visit the new website which we are currently developing: <http://rural.yorkshirefutures.com/> or if you have any queries on rural evidence please email: [ruralobservatory@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ruralobservatory@goyh.gsi.gov.uk)

## Transfer of work to Yorkshire Forward towards RDPE 2007-13

A further update has recently been circulated on the transfer of role and activity from the Rural Development Service to Yorkshire Forward of in preparation for the Rural Development Programme for England 2007-13. This was sent by Tim Frenneaux, Yorkshire Forward's Rural Strategy Manager, and included:

- **Q&A paper on the RDPE transfer process**  
Information on late applications, enquiries about the recently closed Project Based Schemes and potential customers hoping to apply to under the new programme.
- **Yorkshire Forward RDPE Expression of Interest form**  
To ensure that projects have the potential to receive support during the transition from the Project Based Schemes to their successors in the Rural Development Plan for England.
- **Several Job Adverts relating to the new work** (although closing dates have now passed)

If you have not received this update, or require further information on any of this, please contact:

[Tim.Frenneaux@Yorkshire-Forward.com](mailto:Tim.Frenneaux@Yorkshire-Forward.com) or 0113 3949777

## Engaging with the Rural Voluntary Sector

by **Claire Steel, Rural Policy Officer,**  
**National Council for Voluntary Organisations**

Last year the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) published *Regional Structures: Rural Issues*, which focussed on the experience voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in rural areas had of regionalisation. The report outlined our research findings and made recommendations to help the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and regional public sector bodies develop more effective working relationships.

There are reasons for both sides to want to improve this relationship: the view and opinions of VCOs in rural areas bring a different and valuable perspective and should be taken into consideration by regional public sector bodies as they develop their policies and programmes.

At the same time, VCOs will benefit from engaging with the regional agenda – they will benefit from better access to information, new funding opportunities and more influence on the provision of services in the region. All of which contributes to better outcomes for people in the region.

However there are barriers to this engagement. Primarily many VCOs lack the resources, both financial and in terms of time, to engage effectively. Regional public sector bodies need to consider whether they should provide resources or other support to expand the capacity of the sector to engage with them. For their part rural VCOs should try to take a more strategic approach to how they work with regional public sector bodies by working out the costs and benefits to inform their decisions about how best their input can be made.

Our research also found that the complexity of the regional agenda was a barrier to engagement. The multiplicity of institutional structures and processes is so confusing that many VCOs simply decided not to get involved. Such disengagement cannot be good for effective regional governance. Regional public sector bodies need to work out ways with the VCS of streamlining strategies and structures and making the systems easier to understand.

There is a clear role for infrastructure bodies to help bridge the gap between frontline VCOs and regional bodies. Infrastructure organisations, such as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), Rural Community Councils (RCCs) and Regional Voluntary Sector Networks (RVSNS), are key infrastructure organisations that should provide a link to regional organisations.

The Yorkshire and Humber Rural Affairs Forum has taken a lead to do just this, ensuring that the rural voluntary sector in their region is represented on the forum and its views are taken into account. We hope that the Forum can use its influence to encourage other regional public sector bodies to engage with the rural voluntary sector too.

To discuss these issues or to request a free copy of the report please contact Claire Steel ([claire.steel@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:claire.steel@ncvo-vol.org.uk)) or 020 7520 2559).

