

## PROJECT TASK

1.0 The Rural Board for Yorkshire & the Humber has asked for an independent review of the YHRF and its associated structures. The Framework was developed as a 'living and dynamic' document with the expectation that the new ways of working (and associated structures) would adapt to take account of changing circumstances.

2.0 Rural Innovation were commissioned by GOYH (acting on behalf of the Rural Board) to carry out this review. Its purpose is to offer a high level appraisal of progress (*against the objectives of the Framework and its 'sponsors'*) to date, assess the scope for improvements (*to the document and / or the structures which it produced*) and determine whether the document should be changed / re-focussed in any way to reflect emerging national and regional priorities.

3.0 The challenge set in the brief prepared by GOYH is to

i). assess whether in the light of experience to date and foreseeable developments, the components of the YHRF as currently expressed adequately meet the purposes defined within it (and set out in paragraph 3.1 of the paper).

(ii). Specifically to assess whether:

a. new factors, eg the Government's Climate Change agenda, the City Regions concept, HM Treasury sub-national review, new style LAAs and any others, require revision to the YHRF and its delivery and governance structures, including sub-regional arrangements.

b. whether experience to date suggests the need for any improvements in the delivery and governance structures and their operation.

c. the Agenda for Action needs modification, for example to facilitate monitoring by the parties involved with minimal extra effort at both regional and sub-regional levels.

(iii) produce a written report covering the assessments in (i) and (ii) above with any recommendations for change or improvements.

4.0 The review has been carried out by the consultants in association with a Project Steering Group. Set up and lead by Government Office, the group included representatives of the Regional Assembly<sup>1</sup>, Natural England, Yorkshire Forward, the regional Network of Rural Community Councils and a Sub-Regional Rural Partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Assembly contributed towards the cost of the review

5.0 The consultants have been informed by consultations with members of the Rural Practitioners Group, the Rural Affairs Forum and practitioners involved in the development and shaping of the Rural Framework in 2004 (via Task & Finish Groups). Following presentations made at the September meetings of the Rural Practitioners Group and Rural Affairs Forum the Consultants received 20 written representations and spoke to an additional 11 consultees.

6.0 The findings and potential responses are based on the outcomes of feedback from practitioners and customers, and developed by our independent analysis. They are offered by the Consultant, however they have been discussed and tested with the Project Steering Group prior to the compilation of this final report.

## **REPORT STRUCTURE**

7.0 This report considers<sup>2</sup> the background to the Delivery Framework and then goes on to assess the impact of the Framework and its related structures in the region to date. The findings of this assessment are set out in a SWOT analysis. Within this analysis, the issues raised as 'Strengths' and 'Weaknesses' are informed by consultation responses. The 'Threats' and 'Opportunities' are analysis offered by the Consultant, discussed and supported as relevant, by the Steering Group.

8.0 The report then moves on<sup>3</sup> to consider the changing policy and strategic context (as outlined in the brief), addressing in particular the implications for rural stakeholders of the policy drivers and approach to service delivery set out in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

9.0 The report concludes with an analysis of its key findings<sup>4</sup>, and sets out a range of potential responses to the threats and opportunities identified. Recommendations relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Rural Board, Practitioners Group and Rural Affairs Forum are set out within a matrix offered as Annex Two.

## **BACKGROUND**

10.0 The Government's Rural Strategy 2004 (RS2004) set out three key priorities to create sustainable rural communities:

- Economic and social regeneration – supporting enterprise across rural England, but targeting greater resources at areas of greatest need.
- Social justice for all – tackling rural social exclusion wherever it occurs and providing fair access to services and opportunities for all rural people.
- Enhancing the value of our countryside – protecting the natural environment for this and future generations.

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraphs 18 - 41

<sup>3</sup> Paragraphs 42 - 49, supported by Annex One

<sup>4</sup> Paragraphs 5- - 56

11.0 The then Permanent Secretary of Defra, Sir Brian Bender, wrote to each Government Office and asked them to bring together agencies and organisations (including those representing the customer) to develop a Regional Rural Delivery Framework for their region.

12.0 RRDFs were intended to take forward the recommendations from Lord Haskin's review, Modernising Rural Delivery, and to help implement Government's response within the regions. They were charged with delivering a set of outcomes, designed to build on the national rural priorities defined in Rural Strategy 2004.

- To articulate clear priorities for rural delivery in each region, set within the national policy context but reflecting regional, sub-regional and local needs and opportunities;
- To simplify the way services are delivered to customers through improved working between delivery organisations;
- To secure greater coherence between rural policy and other regional strategies and delivery plans;
- To achieve better alignment of regional policy and delivery (*in respect of the national rural priorities*) with local priorities and actions.

13.0 The Rural Frameworks were therefore as much about the way that things are done (priorities set, policies aligned and service delivered) as about delivery per se.

14.0 The Yorkshire & Humber Rural Delivery Framework was developed within the region's strategic context, Advancing Together, and took due account of the 'family' of strategies and action plans which directed public policy and intervention.

15.0 The Yorkshire & Humber Rural Framework describes itself as;

'a plan that identifies and articulates the region's rural priorities based on sound rural evidence. It sets out how these priorities need to be addressed in the region, to ensure rural activity; delivery and funds are customer focused, responds to local needs and is directed by key strategies.

16.0 It goes on to define an overall aim as being to direct action that addresses the inefficiencies of current governance and delivery structures, ensuring that the region make the best use of available resources.

17.0 In order to take a first step towards achieving its aim, the Framework set up a new structure for regional rural governance, setting up and linking strategic (Rural Priority Board), practitioner (Rural Practitioners Steering Group) and customer groups (Rural Affairs Forum).

## **IMPACT**

18.0 Clearly there has been a relatively short time since the publication of the Framework for the new regional structures to bed in, and for the collective spirit and multi-agency co-operation developed during the creation of the document to bear fruit.

19.0 In essence, the job of the Framework was to take, communicate and apply the Government's response to Haskins in the regions, to bring stakeholders together to consider the areas that needed to be addressed to deliver against Government's rural priorities in their region, and to kick start a period of improved co-ordination and integrated activity.

### ***Has it achieved this?***

20.0 We have sought to assess the impact (of the Framework to date) through consultation, focusing on the experience and perceptions of practitioners, policy makers and customers. Essentially we have posed the following key questions in relation to the Framework:

- Has it been effective?
- Has it made any difference?
- If so how?
- What has worked well, what has failed?

21.0 A summary of the consultation responses received has been captured in the SWOT matrix. Our key conclusions arising from the consultation response on the impact of the framework are set out below:

### **Successes**

#### **Collective Development Process**

22.0 The process of developing the Framework, its openness and inclusiveness has been widely welcomed as beneficial to rural stakeholders across the region. The development of 10 shared priorities and supporting Agenda for Action has resulted in a common understanding of the regions rural issues. This has been of value to stakeholders and practitioners.

#### **Priorities**

23.0 There is a commonly held view that the regions priorities and evidence base have directly influenced / been used to target investment via the Yorkshire Forward PSA4 funding programme, the Rural Social and Community Programme and the emerging Rural Development Programme for England.

#### **Evidence**

24.0 The development and effective use of a significantly enhanced evidence base, both at regional and sub-regional level has been widely welcomed. There is strong

support for continued investment in this area, and recognition that information (evidence) is valuable and powerful – it represents hard currency and delivers a disproportionate ability to influence to policy makers, investors and service deliverers.

### **Shared Information**

25.0 The RPG and RAF are welcomed as fora where people can keep in touch / learn what is going on and access information more widely. It is hoped that the Board provides similar benefits for its members – it is certainly anticipated by consultees that this should be the case.

### **Sub Regional Structures**

26.0 The devolution of funding streams to sub-regional groups (partnerships), and the support for them offered via the Framework, has been widely welcomed. Sub-Regional Partnerships report that the role of programme manager has increased their exposure and influence within the sub-region, improving partnership working and integrating activity.

## **Failures**

### **Beyond Rural**

27.0 The Framework and related structures seem to have had very limited impact beyond the 'rural constituency'. There is no apparent evidence of improved / increased influence on policy or delivery across the region. None of the consultees (outside the Government Office) felt that the Framework had achieved any overt influence or impact on Local Authorities, LSPs, the RDA (beyond rural team), the Regional Assembly or departmental teams within Government Office. Consultees were not aware of any significant use or recognition of the rural priorities within Local Area Agreements or Community Strategies and did not feel that there was any evidence of additional activity being taken to address the regions rural priorities beyond application of 'rural' monies.

28.0 Investigation to corroborate these perceptions shows that in fact much work has been done 'behind the scenes' by GO locality relationship managers (using evidence and studies from the Rural Observatory) to persuade LSPs and Local Authorities to address the regions rural priorities within their LAAs and Community Strategies. The Framework is available for all partners to use; it is possible to conclude however that Government Office has used it most often, and perhaps most effectively.

29.0 This apparent mis-alignment of understanding and perceptions leads us to believe that the 'bi-lateral' nature of discussions between LSP and GO mean that this process is not particularly 'visible', or well understood amongst rural partners. It does seem probable however that there has been a fairly widespread failure by rural

stakeholders, particularly those involved in the Framework's structures, to actively engage beyond the rural 'constituency'.

30.0 This is a missed opportunity; Government Office can only achieve so much – should they be expected to act alone as 'rural gatekeepers'? In reality it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to do what they can to achieve proportionate impact from public policy and investment in rural areas. Influence from the regional level is important, but needs to be supported and leveraged by local activity.

31.0 This failure to engage 'beyond rural' does not appear to be due to any unwillingness, or even (in the collective sense at least) lack of capacity. There does however appear to be a limited understanding from many rural partners of the process and structures related to 'mainstream' policy and publicly funded service delivery. The Consultants were left with the sense that many 'rural' partners were happy to focus on delivery, with the expectation that resources to support their activity will continue to be made available. This may, to an extent, be true for the environmental sector, but *not* for those engaged in social, community or economic areas. If the region's rural areas are to receive their fair share of public investment and services in the future, this approach will need to change.

#### **Adoption of Other Agenda / Objectives**

32.0 The failure of the Framework and its structures to consider and take on board agenda and objectives 'beyond rural' was also cited as evidence of its failure to engage or have any impact beyond its 'own' constituency. Issues around the BME agenda, mainstream disadvantage and to an extent even housing were all cited as examples.

33.0 On the other hand, the Framework has been criticised for having too many priorities, and too generic an approach.

34.0 The original intent of the Framework was to identify and promote a common understanding of rural priorities at a regional level. No finer spatial grain was applied; instead it was intended, but perhaps not sufficiently clearly expressed, that partners in the sub-regions would decide which priorities were most appropriate to their locality, and would respond accordingly.

#### **Reducing Complexity around Interventions and Funding**

35.0 Respondents from the 'grass roots' do not appear to have noticed any improvement in this regard. In reality, public money comes with strings attached and it has not been possible, nor is it likely to be possible, for the Framework and its related structures to 'loosen these strings' beyond a certain point (which varies according to the requirements of each individual funder). The Rural Development Programme for England is a prime example of such a programme.

36.0 What the Framework can, and has done in response however, is to enable the involvement of the sub-regional partnerships in building programmes such as the

RDPE, and subsequently (it is hoped / planned) in decision making and commissioning. It will be important that every opportunity is taken to improve the integration of funding programmes (i.e. RDPE and ERDF) alongside 'mainstream' interventions, and so maximise their subsequent impact.

### **Sub Regional Adoption & Impact**

37.0 There is significant diversity across the region; experience cited in the North leads us to believe that partners there feel that they already mainstream rural effectively and so are suspicious of new structures. In the South consultees report that there appears to be limited interest in 'rural' as a policy driver within the senior management of the unitary authorities, and the limited scale of activity supported has made it very difficult for rural stakeholders to influence and change this mindset. In the West and the Humber, partners appear to have used elements of the Framework and its outcomes very effectively and have made real strides in improving their capacity to work effectively at sub-regional level.

38.0 It does appear however that there has been limited focus on promoting rural priorities within sub-regions (beyond PSA4 and RSCP programmes), as Sub-Regional Rural Partnerships have focused their (limited) capacity on programme delivery.

38.0 The future of sub-regional partnerships may rest on what 'job' they have to do next. Without a clear 'programme management' role they are likely to need continued investment / support from the region to maintain the commitment and enthusiasm of partners, and their influence locally.

39.0 Some form of rural leadership within sub (and city) regions is likely to become increasingly important in order to ensure that the potential offered by rural areas to contribute towards wider economic performance and quality of life, and the needs of local communities, are not overlooked.

### **Evidence**

40.0 Whilst it is apparent that good use has been made of the rural evidence base by Government Office locality managers to influence LAAs and Community Strategies, the take up by partners, such as the development of any wider 'translation' of this evidence into a 'story' which raises policy issues and demands a response, appears to have been more limited.

41.0 To date there appears to have been very little scenario planning or prediction / modelling the likely impact of policy. This would be valuable going forward.



### Impact Analysis – SWOT

| Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Weaknesses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process of developing the 10 regional priorities represented a huge step forward in agreeing a common agenda and addressing rural issues across the region</li> <li>• Structures have allowed organisations and RAF to influence form and proposed implementation of RDPE</li> <li>• RPG as a forum for sharing information and good practice</li> <li>• Radically improved rural evidence base; available and is being used by rural practitioners</li> <li>• Use of Framework’s priorities, supported by the evidence base to target funding (PSA4, RDPE)</li> <li>• Some evidence put forward of improved process efficiencies re funding programme management</li> <li>• The role of funding programme managers (PSA4/RSCP) has allowed sub-regional rural partnerships to strengthen their influence and improve the coordination of their activities</li> <li>• The status of the Framework as the key strategic document for the regions rural area is supported by its inclusion in the RES and Secretary of State (DCLG) requirement that the RSS incorporates its priorities.</li> <li>• The improved rural evidence base has been widely welcomed as has the role and work of the Rural Observatory.</li> <li>• Use of evidence and intelligence developed by the Rural Observatory to inform policy development (RES, Housing Strategy) and to assess &amp; review Local Area Agreements (within Government Office)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A perception of limited relevance / fit of structures for some sub-regions</li> <li>• Limited evidence of the Rural Board exerting any real influence to mainstream / raise awareness of rural issues (beyond the ‘Defra family’)</li> <li>• RPG very limited in its role; no effort to monitor impact, no proactive choice of issues to take to the Board, no strong views on key delivery issues (SFP, HLS)</li> <li>• No evidence of any overt influence on investment / intervention / service delivery decisions beyond the Defra family or specifically rural programmes (i.e. RDA Single Pot, LAAs and LSPs)</li> <li>• Cannot see any evidence of rural priorities impacting through LAA or Community Strategies, nor through corporate plans of mainstream service providers</li> <li>• Limited impact on investment and policy decisions taken by Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and even NE</li> <li>• No evidence of reduced complexity re access to funding from the customers point of view</li> <li>• Limited evidence of any real impact in streamlining activity and initiatives</li> <li>• Sub-regional capacity still very much in its infancy</li> <li>• Limited evidence that any one beyond the ‘Defra family’ has noticed, or taken account of, the improved evidence base</li> <li>• No response to a proposed approach to tackling the rural BME issues</li> <li>• Failure of RPG to act in any sort of ‘delivery’ role, and a sense that there is no real causal link to the Board</li> <li>• Lack of any real spatial analysis within Framework and the</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of a 'rurally savvy' GOYH (as a result of their engagement with Rural Board, RPG and RAF) as gatekeepers for LAAs and influencers of other Govt. departments</li> <li>• Use of the Rural Board to engage with, and influence Chief Executives and Leaders of Local Authorities &amp; Local Strategic Partnerships</li> <li>• The involvement or engagement of senior policy and LSP officers from Local Authorities</li> <li>• An increased involvement of Local Authority members within the RAF</li> <li>• Ensuring proportionate impact in rural areas from the Integrated Regional Strategy (an updated RDF is an obvious lobbying tool / evidence base)</li> <li>• Working with Yorkshire Forward to address the rural element of City Regions and to develop a cohesive approach / investment strategy for those areas of the region beyond existing City Regions</li> <li>• Improving 'rural' capacity at sub-regional / City Regional level in order to engage with higher tier LSPs within their territories</li> <li>• It will be important to connect investment and activity delivered via RDPE (via Leader Local Action Groups and regionally) and other funding sources targeted within LAAs</li> <li>• Use of the improved rural evidence base (regional and sub-regional) to support LSPs in developing new Sustainable Community Strategies and choosing / defining Improvement (and local priority) Targets within new Local Area Agreements</li> <li>• Use of the improved rural evidence base, and input from improved sub-regional (city regional) rural groups to support GOYH test /</li> </ul> | <p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder expectations around the ability of the regional rural structures to make a difference at local level, or to change the way Government policy is applied, leading to discontent and lack of support</li> <li>• The expectation (amongst partners) that the Framework and related structures can secure continuing 'rural' funding programmes.</li> <li>• Any failure / unwillingness by Natural England and the Forestry Commission to engage with Framework structures (at regional and sub-regional level) when making targeting and strategic delivery decisions around RDPE Axis 2</li> <li>• Disconnection / fundamental misalignment between a rural voice at regional level and the need to engage with key service planning fora (LSP / LAA) at LA territory level</li> <li>• City Regions – how they are developed, their approach to their rural elements, YF approach to areas beyond City Regions</li> <li>• The risk that Government's mainstreaming of rural as a policy driver will restrict the focus of the 'Defra family' to the land based sector and the natural environment, ignoring the imperative to secure proportionate impact in rural areas from public policy and interventions</li> <li>• The seemingly limited ability of the Framework structures to have any real impact or influence on other Government departments / service delivery organisations – the need to secure proportionate impact in rural areas of the region from the new PSAs introduced in CSR 2007?</li> <li>• The new Local Government Performance Review Framework –</li> </ul> |

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| <p>review emerging LAAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of the improved rural evidence base, and input from improved sub-regional (city regional) rural groups to support LSPs, monitor progress against their SCS and impact of LAAs</li><li>• Re-define and communicate the roles and objectives of the Rural Board, Practitioners Group and Rural Affairs Forum for the next three years (period covered by new PSAs introduced by CSR 2007)</li></ul> | <p>the need to apply the new National Indicator set in a way that ensures proportionate impact from public investment (and intervention) across the regions rural areas / communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uncertainties around the role of the Rural Affairs Forum(s) going forward</li><li>• The loss of role as funding programme managers post March 2009 will undermine the capacity of sub-regional rural partnerships, and materially reduce their influence</li><li>• A reduction in the level of support and leadership available from GOYH resulting from restructuring and re-tasking</li></ul> |
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## **CHANGING CONTEXT**

42.0 The GOYH brief identified a number of new factors which will affect and change the context for public sector intervention and service delivery and which therefore might lead to a need for revision to the YHRF and its delivery and governance structures, including sub-regional arrangements.

43.0 It highlighted the Government's Climate Change agenda, the City Regions concept, HM Treasury review on sub-national economic development and regeneration and new style LAAs. Also relevant are the Strong & Prosperous Communities White Paper, the Local Government Performance Framework and of course the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 announced on 9<sup>th</sup> October. On top of these published policy statements and initiatives the change in premiership has introduced a change in priorities and new ministerial teams into key departments.

44.0 All together this results in a considerable change in the context in which the Framework was developed. A detailed analysis of this changing context is offered in Annex One.

45.0 The clear conclusion from this analysis is that public policy drivers for rural areas now are very different to those which led to Lord Haskins review of rural delivery in the aftermath of the Foot & Mouth crisis. Government's focus on rural areas and communities as a 'special case' worthy of dedicated interventions has disappeared, replaced by a belief that key issues of concern for Government (social exclusion, community vitality, economic productivity, housing, sustainable development and climate change) affect people, places and businesses wherever they are situated.

46.0 New public policy drivers are emerging; continued devolution of power and resources to local areas, the increasing importance of communities and neighbourhood in service planning, local partnerships taking the lead in 'place shaping' and service delivery, the prospect of City Regions and multi-area agreements across local authority boundaries, the importance of natural resource protection and sustainable development to address climate change.

47.0 This new approach, styled by Defra as the 'mainstreaming' of rural, has been comprehensively enacted by the Comprehensive Spending Review announced on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Of the 30 PSAs introduced by the Comprehensive Spending Review, none relate specifically to rural England. Defra takes the lead on PSA 27 (Dangerous Climate Change) and PSA 29 (Healthy Natural Environment). The agenda within these two PSAs is clear, and covers much of the work of Natural England and the Environment Agency.

48.0 Beyond natural resource protection and climate change, publicly funded investment and interventions in rural areas will be increasingly reliant upon decisions

made within DCLG, RDAs and just as importantly, by Local Authorities and within Local Strategic Partnerships.

49.0 Those with an interest in public services and their impact on rural people, places and businesses will need to re-think the way that they engage with Government, RDAs and Local Authorities. Simply operating within a 'rural silo' will no longer be sufficient; rather it will be necessary to engage effectively with mainstream service deliverers via local government structures.

## **THE FRAMEWORK'S RELEVANCE GOING FORWARD**

50.0 The over-riding conclusion from consultation and related research is that the Framework (and related processes / structures) has had some positive outcomes within the 'rural constituency'. It has improved co-ordination, generated shared priorities and a much improved understanding of issues affecting rural Yorkshire & Humber. It has, and will continue to, improve the way that rural interventions are targeted and delivered.

51.0 The Framework has been less successful in unravelling the inherent complexities associated with much publicly funded intervention, and has frustrated some local practitioners who feel that improved local action is unlikely to be secured simply by enhanced co-ordination and sharing of information.

52.0 To date, the Framework appears to have had very limited impact beyond rural stakeholders; there is even some concern that (as a whole) it has yet to substantively influence the way that partners like Natural England and the Forestry Commission work within the region.

53.0 Essentially the Framework has addressed many of the issues raised around co-ordinating publicly funded grant programmes aimed at rural areas (and issues) but has had very limited (if any) impact on the way that mainstream public funds and services are applied in rural areas.

54.0 If the Framework and its related structures are to offer any value going forward, this omission will need to be addressed.

55.0 The new policy landscape (post Comprehensive Spending Review 2007) no longer provides for explicit rural interventions. Rather it takes a purely spatial approach to rurality, and expects that issues affecting rural people, businesses, settlements and landscapes will be addressed through mainstream service delivery and investment channels.

56.0 The implications for rural stakeholders, the role that they need the Framework (and related structures) to play and possible responses are offered below for the Board (and its advisors / partners) to consider.

Review of Yorkshire & Humber Rural Framework  
Findings and Recommendations

Rural Innovation  
October 2007

| Threats to and Opportunities for the Rural Framework                                                                                                          | Possible Rural Board Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Responsible                                                                                 |
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| 1. Expectations and mis-understanding from stakeholders around the role, and power, of the Framework and its related structures                               | 1.i. Clarify the role of the Framework and each element of its related structures (Board, RPG, RAF, SRRPs), using this review as the basis and picking up actions from the recommendations.<br>1.ii. Seek clarification from Defra around the future role of regional Rural Affairs Forum(s).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Rural Board<br><br>RAF                                                                      |
| 2. Expectations around future 'rural' funding streams                                                                                                         | 2.i. Provide clarity to practitioners (rural, local authority and VCS) about the RDPE programme; especially around the delivery of Axis 2<br>2.ii. Provide clarity (as soon as possible) about funding streams from Defra post CSR 2007<br>2.iii. Provide clarity around the role of the sub-regional rural partnerships in the management and targeting of any discrete rural funding post PSA4 programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | YF , NE / FC<br><br>GOYH<br><br>Yorkshire Forward                                           |
| 3. The misalignment of a 'rural voice' at regional level and the need to engage with key service planning fora (LSP / LAA) at Local Authority territory level | 3.i. Ensure that GOYH teams involved in 'signing off' LAAs are fully aware of the regions rural priorities and related agenda for action<br>3.ii. Secure a commitment from GOYH to task their officers engaged in signing off LAAs to challenge LSPs to demonstrate how they will ensure that their LAA delivers a proportionate impact in rural areas (by effectively addressing appropriate rural priorities)<br>3.iii. Use Local Authority members of the Board, RPG and RAF to maximise influence and impact in LSPs and the LAA development process<br>3.iii. Ensure that sub-regional rural partnerships have the capacity and responsibility (funding and service level agreements) to engage with LSPs within their territories in order to inform and influence the development of Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Local Area Agreements<br>3.iv. Commit to maintain the rural evidence base; ensure that it is compiled and presented at Local Authority level in order that it can be used as part of 3.iii. above<br>3.v. Use the Rural Evidence base at regional level as a means of | GOYH<br><br>GOYH<br><br>LA partners<br><br>Rural Board<br><br>Rural Board SSSPs<br><br>GOYH |

| Threats to and Opportunities for the Rural Framework                                                                      | Possible Rural Board Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Responsible                                                  |
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|                                                                                                                           | checking / testing the performance monitoring of LAAs<br>3.vi. Ensure that there is pro-active, targeted and effective engagement of Local Authorities (not via the 'rural' door) at the highest possible level on the Rural Board (CEOs and Leaders), RPG (Service Directors and Senior Policy Officers) and RAF (Portfolio Holders and Members).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | GOYH/YHA                                                     |
| 4. The development of City Regions as metro-centric concepts, focused on supporting the 'City' to deliver economic growth | 4.i. Secure a commitment from Yorkshire Forward to work with the sub-regional rural partnerships to improve their understanding of the 'value proposition' offered by the rural element of each City Region<br><br>4.ii Secure a commitment from Yorkshire Forward to work with sub-regional rural partnerships to develop a positive concept and investment strategy for those areas of the region currently not included in a City Region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yorkshire Forward<br><br>Yorkshire Forward                   |
| 5. The implications for rural investment and service delivery of the new set of PSAs introduced by CSR 2007.              | 5.i. Secure a commitment from departmental leads within Government Office to consider the rural dimension of each PSA with the Board<br>5.ii. Secure a commitment from each key service delivery partner (YF, NE, FC, SHA, BL, LSC, RHB etc) to effectively address the rural areas of the region during delivery of PSAs<br>5.iii. Establish an ongoing relationship between Rural Board and the Chief Executives of key regional agencies / groups (i.e. YF, NE, FC, SHA, BL, LSC, RHB etc) in order to retain leverage and scope for influence<br>5.iv Secure a commitment from lead delivery agencies (NE, FC, YF etc) to engage with LSPs and where possible align / link their investment and interventions (to deliver PSAs) to LAA outcomes and targets | GOYH<br><br>Rural Board<br><br>Rural Board<br><br>NE, FC, YF |
| 6. Introduction of the new Local Government                                                                               | 6.i. Secure a commitment from statutory organisations and agencies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | RB/GOYH                                                      |

| Threats to and Opportunities for the Rural Framework                                                                                                          | Possible Rural Board Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Responsible                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Performance Framework (200 national indicators) and the implications for rural investment and service delivery of the lack of any specific 'rural' indicators | <p>subject to Comprehensive Area Assessment to apply the full rural / urban definition, at the most appropriate spatial level, to the National Indicators in order to monitor the impact of their activity on rural people, businesses, settlements and landscapes.</p> <p>6.ii. Secure a commitment from the Regional Observatory to support this activity</p> <p>6.iii. Secure a commitment from the sub-regional rural partnerships to support statutory organisations, agencies and LSPs operating in their areas in the use of the rural / urban definition and interpretation of the results.</p> <p>6.iv. Secure a commitment from higher tier LSPs to monitor progress towards the vision set out in their Sustainable Community Strategy across all spatial areas, and at the appropriate levels of geography.</p> <p>6.v. Recommend to the Audit Commission that they attach material weight to the monitoring of impact across all spatial areas using the rural / urban definition.</p> | <p>Rural Board</p> <p>SRRPs</p> <p>GOYH</p> <p>GOYH/Defra</p> |
| 7. Ensuring proportionate (and appropriate) focus, and so consequent impact for rural areas from the regions first Integrated Regional Strategy (2010)        | <p>7.i. Produce a strategic Framework for publication at the optimum time to influence the first IRS setting out evidence based issues and priorities for the region's rural people, places and businesses and defining how the IRS should work to 'narrow the gap' and ensure proportionate impact from Government policy and intervention</p> <p>7.ii The Framework should be built, (amongst other things) on; this review, the evaluations of the YF PSA4 programme, the development of the RDPE in the region, the Humber Rural Delivery Pathfinder, updated evidential reports and a review of the impact of LAAs 2007 – 2009, the transitional year CPA reviews of the regions Local Authorities, the evidence and input of the four sub-regional rural partnerships.</p> <p>7.ii Use the updated Rural Framework as the key tool to lobby and make representations into the IRS process</p>                                                                                                 | <p>Rural Board</p> <p>Rural Board</p>                         |

| <b>Threats to and Opportunities for the Rural Framework</b>                                                          | <b>Possible Rural Board Response</b>                                                                                                                                   | <b>Responsible</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                        |                    |
| 8. Inability of GOYH to continue past levels of support and leadership to RF in the light of reduced staff resources | 8. Framework Partners to examine how shortfalls in GOYH contribution to RF and associated structures can be addressed through their individual or collective resources | RF partners        |
|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                        |                    |

## **ANNEX ONE – A CHANGING STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

### **A New Localism**

1.0 The concept of a new localism, a shift of power and responsibility from the centre to community and neighbourhood first introduced by David Milliband when at DCLG has not only survived the change in administration, but has prospered. The intent set out in the Strong and Communities White paper (around the need for policy makers and service delivery planners to affectively and accurately take account of the needs and issues of communities, highlighting the role of elected councillors and community champions and introducing the concept of local service charters and community calls to action) has been taken up within the new Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities PSA (28).

2.0 The Sustainable Community Strategy will become the leading strategic document at local authority level, setting out the context for the Local Development Framework (which should be the spatial enabler) and Local Area Agreement (which should be the means of contribute towards the objectives and vision of the SCS through targeted service delivery).

3.0 The new Local Government Performance Framework emphasises the primacy of the Local Area Agreement as the forum for service planning and delivery; requiring local partnerships to pick up to 35 Improvement Targets from DCLG's set of 200 National Indicators, and inviting them to add local indicators if they so wish.

4.0 Service provider organisations subject to central performance assessment will be *required* to contribute fully to LAAs, there will be a duty to engage and their customers perceptions and experience will be taken into account when reviewing the performance of the local authority and LAA in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment.

### **The Place Making Role of Local Authorities**

5.0 The 'place making' role of Local Authorities is pre-eminent through out the CSR, which substantively reinforces the policy intent set out in the 2006 Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper, and paves the way (PSA21) for community calls for action, local service standards and community engagement in service planning and delivery. How comfortably this rest with the financial settlement for Local Government, which provides for 1% per annum real growth, is uncertain.

6.0 The 'localism' agenda is followed through, with a clear focus on Local Strategic Partnerships and their Local Area Agreements as the primary forum for integrated service planning and delivery. The importance of the new LAA regime is supported with a third round of reward grant, and the implementation of delivery partners 'duty to engage'. The Local Government Departmental Settlement (D6) confirms the intention (first announced in the 2007 budget) to provide maximum flexibility for local funding allocation and targeting.

7.0 It sets out the intent to:

- Reduce the amount of specific and ring fenced grants
- Increase the volume of funds that flow through the single Revenue Support Grant and area based grants, to a figure in excess of £5 billion<sup>5</sup> by 2010- 2011.
- Focus the setting of outcome targets for (partnership) delivery against national priorities at local level – within LAAs. There are to be no mandatory targets for LAAs, nor for any other outcomes which local government is delivering alone, or in partnership.

### **Mainstreaming Rural**

8.0 The days of rurally specific programmes and funding are limited; the RDPE may well be all that is left. The approach from Government, clearly enacted by the Comprehensive Spending Review, is to mainstream rural issues across all service departments.

9.0 Of the 30 PSAs introduced by the Comprehensive Spending Review, none relate specifically to rural England. Defra takes the lead on PSA 27 (Dangerous Climate Change) and PSA 29 (Healthy Natural Environment). The agenda within these two PSAs is clear, and covers much of the work of Natural England and the Environment Agency.

10.0 Defra also has an interest in a number of other PSAs, notably relating to Economic Performance in the Regions (7), Housing (20) and Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities (21). It is far from clear however how that influence will be applied, and what it will mean in terms of outcomes for rural people, places and businesses. Defra's focus for the next three years is clearly set out in its Departmental Strategic Objectives; these lead with Climate Change (in an international and national context) and natural environmental protection; they also include Governmental responsibility for Sustainable Development. There is no mention of 'rural economies' although references to 'sustainable food and farming' and 'strong rural communities' are retained.

11.0 It is interesting, and a little worrying, that of three PSAs mentioned above where Defra shared ownership, only one (Housing) intends to apply the rural / urban definition to its performance indicators.

12.0 It is very hard to find any specific focus on rural issues in any of these new PSAs, beyond a welcome mention on the need to consider in more detail the impact of city regions on peripheral rural areas. The role of the Commission for Rural Communities in highlighting and focusing Government's attention on rural disadvantage is referred to in the Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities PSA.

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<sup>5</sup> We suspect that this may include £2 billion of DCLG monies for Neighbourhood Renewal

### **The Right Spatial Level for Intervention**

13.0 The regional tier will become increasingly strategic; responsible for applying government policy in, and to, the region. HMT's review of sub-national economic development and regeneration paves the way for:

- An Integrated Regional Strategy incorporating both RES and Regional Spatial Strategy (taking much greater account of housing and transport as economic drivers) set within an overarching sustainable development context.
- A reinforcement and extension of local authorities roles and responsibilities for economic development as the appropriate *accountable* body

14.0 The Comprehensive Spending Review introduces new powers for local authorities to invest in economic development (through money raised by business rate supplements). The Local Government Departmental Settlement (D6) confirms the findings of HM Treasury's Sub National Review (SNR) and trails its implementation.

15.0 An issues paper, published alongside the CSR *Building Better Incentives for Local Economic Growth* sets out the Government's intent. This paves the way for the RDAs to become the regional Planning body and to lead on the production of combined Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies – the Integrated Regional Strategy.

16.0 What this means in terms of investment and service delivery is addressed in PSA7, Improving the Economic Performance of the English Region. This PSA introduces a single regional economic performance target, and takes forward other elements of the SNR preparing the ground for Integrated Regional Strategies, Multi-Area Agreements, City Regions, Local Authority area Economic Strategies etc.

### **Climate Change as a Policy Driver**

17.0 Defra describes climate change as the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today.

*Tackling climate change and improving our environment is vital for our future. Tackling climate change has to be a priority – both in doing all we can to stop it happening and to adapt to its effects. And on this we have to work together – you and I, DEFRA and local authorities, businesses and consumers, government and people.*

*Hilary Benn, LGA Conference 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007*

18.0 The Government's draft Climate Change Bill (March 2007) is the first of its kind in any country. It sets out a framework for moving the UK to a low-carbon economy, demonstrating the UK's leadership as progress continues towards establishing a post-2012 global emissions agreement.

Key points of the draft bill include:

- A series of clear targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions - including making the UK's targets for a 60 per cent reduction by 2050 and a 26 to 32 per cent reduction by 2020 legally binding.
- A new system of legally binding five year "carbon budgets", set at least 15 years ahead, to provide clarity on the UK's pathway towards its key targets and increase the certainty that businesses and individuals need to invest in low-carbon technologies.
- A new statutory body, the *Committee on Climate Change*, to provide independent expert advice and guidance to Government on achieving its targets and staying within its carbon budgets.
- New powers to enable the Government to more easily implement policies to cut emissions.
- A new system of annual open and transparent reporting to Parliament. The Committee on Climate Change will provide an independent progress report to which the Government must respond. This will ensure the Government is held to account every year on its progress towards each five year carbon budget and the 2020 and 2050 targets.
- A requirement for Government to report at least every five years on current and predicted impacts of climate change and on its proposals and policy for adapting to climate change.

Consequently all future publicly funded interventions will be assessed against the Government's climate change objectives. Defra's departmental strategic objectives include a commitment towards an "economy and society resilient to environmental risk and adapted to the impacts of climate change", and DCLG's to "improve the supply, environmental performance and quality of housing".

Rural issues and activity will need to be set within this context – rural areas should consider how they can contribute to these objectives. All interventions and delivery should be framed within the need to minimise the impact of related activity on natural resources, and to develop an appropriate balance in the functionality of rural towns and villages.

The generic application of policy and targets aimed at reducing CO2 emissions are likely to have a disproportionate impact on rural areas. Partners will need to be alive to this risk, and ensure that they are effectively equipped to make appropriate arguments. They must also be prepared to be pro-active.

Rural areas have the potential to offer a lead to the region in the way that they operate. Opportunities to develop and trial exemplar good practice on sustainable land management, construction, production and development solutions which mitigate the impact on natural resources and utilise renewable energy sources should be maximised.

## ANNEX TWO

| Board                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Practitioner Group                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | RAF                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Promote rural interests within regional policy and strategic context in order to achieve the vision set out in the Rural Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Regions</li> <li>• Integrated Regional Strategy</li> </ul>                      | <p>(Pro-actively) introduce, review and consider policy and delivery issues that have an impact / influence the region’s rural people, businesses, places and landscapes in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all practitioners are well informed</li> <li>• Agree and implement any actions arising</li> <li>• Make recommendations / representations to the board in respect of any actions arising which require their involvement</li> </ul> | <p>Engage with rural communities, businesses, interest groups, VCS, delivery bodies etc in order to acquire and maintain intelligence about the ‘health’ of the rural areas of the region, and progress towards the vision for the region as set out in the Rural Framework.</p> |
| <p>Promote rural interests with Local Authority Chief Executives and Leaders</p>                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Respond to requests from the Rural Board for advice / technical support</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Engage with the Rural Board; challenge it and hold it to account around progress towards the vision for rural areas of the region (as set out in the Rural Framework)</p>                                                                                                     |
| <p>Promote rural interests with all Government departments (via GOYH departmental leads)</p>                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Promote rural issues with senior policy officers and practitioners across mainstream agencies and organisations (that have an impact / influence in rural areas)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Engage with the RPG; provide intelligence and feedback on customer experience and perceptions. Challenge delivery organisations and partnerships around their contribution to securing the vision for rural areas of the region (as set out in the Rural Framework)</p>       |
| <p>Promote maximum integration and communication between key agencies &amp; delivery structure via an effective RPG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RDA</li> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Forestry Commission</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> </ul> | <p>Engage with sub-regional rural partnerships and support their efforts to influence / inform partners and stakeholders in their sub-region.</p> <p>Support sub-regional rural partnerships in their efforts to influence and subsequently monitor LAAs</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Use Ministerial meetings to raise issues and evidence developed and defined by the RAF, RPG and Rural Board.</p> <p>Support the Board in its work by echoing its conclusions and views at national level.</p> <p>Report back to the RAF, RPG and Board on the</p>             |

| Board                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Practitioner Group                                                                                                                                                      | RAF                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YHRA</li> <li>• National Parks &amp; AONBs</li> <li>• Business Link</li> <li>• LSC</li> <li>• Sub Regional Rural Partnerships</li> <li>• English Heritage</li> <li>• CRC</li> <li>• etc</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                         | content and outcome of Ministerial meetings.                                                                              |
| Maintain, update and promote the region's rural evidence base (in a form that is relevant to Local Authorities & regional agencies)                                                                                                         | Monitor the region's rural evidence base; promote its use where-ever possible and ensure that necessary work is done (via the Board) to keep it up to date and relevant | Review the region's rural evidence base and 'reality test' it to ensure a good fit with local conditions and experience . |
| Task the RPG to investigate issues and provide policy / technical advice and support                                                                                                                                                        | Engage with the RAF in order to monitor impact and pick up grass roots issues                                                                                           | Ensure good representation and engagement with VCS                                                                        |
| Engage with the RAF in order to monitor impact and pick up grass roots issues                                                                                                                                                               | Include VCS representation (Regional Forum)                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                           |
| Engage with the VCS in order to monitor impact and pick up grass roots issues                                                                                                                                                               | Bring information on any research that has been commissioned / undertaken likely to be of interest to the RPG                                                           |                                                                                                                           |
| Provide advice on the shape, objectives and targeting of rural funding programmes                                                                                                                                                           | Review and 'test' (via peer review) the shape, objectives, delivery structures and targeting of rural funding programmes                                                | Review and test the 'usability' (customer focus and accessibility) of rural funding programmes                            |