

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 MAY 2007

COMMUNITY SERVICES

**STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY
COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Executive member Councillor John Fort and Gordon Gresty, Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services, represented the County Council at the third and final URBAL Conference in Ghent on 22 – 23 March 2007. The URBAL development project promotes integrated management of relationships between urban and rural areas. It is part of an EU funded programme to promote collaboration between member states. North Yorkshire County Council is the UK's representative in the project, which has resulted in joint working with The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Norway and Sweden. The focus of NYCC's project was the promotion of local produce by bringing urban residents and rural producers of food and drink together to increase their market opportunities. This was supported by EU and NYCC funding. Successful festivals were organised at Skipton and Castle Howard, as well as support for a number of smaller rural shows. Both Skipton and Castle Howard are being taken forward by the private sector. As members will be aware, the nature of EU funding is changing radically. After the new programme finishes in 2013 there will be no geographically targeted EU funding available in North Yorkshire. Increasingly, therefore, if North Yorkshire is to benefit from EU support for businesses in the future, it will need to focus on this type of funding based on collaboration between member states.

County Councillor Chris Metcalfe
12 February 2007