

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2007

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. This Committee has met once since the last full Council meeting and the main areas of work that I would like to highlight are set out below.

### **Committee Meeting 18 January 2008**

2. A paper was presented to the Committee outlining the current economic crisis surrounding livestock farming. The recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease and bluetongue virus had a major impact on livestock trade resulting in a reduction in prices for livestock and this coupled, with rising prices of animal feed and fuel, has pushed many North Yorkshire livestock farmers into economic crisis. The paper stimulated much debate and it was agreed that a further meeting should be arranged to focus specifically on this topic to which a number of external speakers would be invited. The purpose of this is to gain more insight into the issues faced and to consider what, if any, action the County Council can take to provide support.
3. This meeting has now been arranged for 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007 with invitations extended to local representatives of the NFU, CLA, Farm Crisis Network, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and Rural Development Officers from the Churches Regional Commission. As this topic will be of interest to both the Environment and Heritage and the Safe and Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Committees invitations have been extended to members of these committees who wish to attend.
4. An update was given on the current position of the designation of LEADER areas in North Yorkshire and it was noted that of the original 10 expressions of interest across the region, 6 had been invited to progress to stage 2 of the process. The areas relevant for North Yorkshire are: Yorkshire dales; North Yorkshire Moors, Coast and Hills, Coast, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways. Submissions for stage 2 have to be submitted by end of July 2008 and Local Development Strategies will be prepared for each Leader area.

**Scrutiny Project: Supporting the Rural Economy and Diversification in Agriculture**

3. Work on this project is continuing and as part of this we have recently visited Paddock House Farm, near Wetherby, to look at the growing of willow short rotation coppice which provides heating and power from renewable resources to fuel the farm and business centre. During this visit we were also shown around a training centre facility at the farm which provides education for disaffected young people from the Leeds area. We were interested to learn about this initiative and were also directed to further information about the National Care Farm Initiative within the UK. This is seen as a potential growth area for the future providing opportunities for farmers and the health and social care sector.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN SAVAGE**  
**Chairman – Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**County Hall**  
**Northallerton**

**11 February 2008**