

**73/06 - ECONOMIC HEALTH OF DISTRICT'S MARKET TOWNS:** The Assistant Economic Development Officer delivered a presentation in relation to the regeneration initiatives currently being developed in the District's four market towns. She advised that within the Regeneration Team there were three officers, the Partnership Development Officer, the Principal Projects Officer and the Assistant Economic Development Officer, each with specific responsibilities in the relation to the market towns. She outlined the current position regarding the sub-regional investment plan and detailed the roles and the current key projects carried out by the partnerships, namely, Renaissance Knaresborough, Yore Vision, Nidderdale Plus Partnership and Ripon City Partnership.

Questions were then invited. One Member expressed concern that, apart from the Ripon City Partnership, the other Partnerships were lacking involvement by provision for young people and that they should be encouraged to become involved in the process. He also commented that there was a lack of hotel accommodation in the District, in particular in Boroughbridge and Aldborough. The Head of Property and Economic Development acknowledged the point regarding the involvement of young people and, in relation to the lack of hotel accommodation, added that action was being taken to address this, however, there were no quick and easy answers. One Member commented upon the number of empty shops in Knaresborough and it was noted that, although numbers in Knaresborough and Ripon had slightly increased, the District, as a whole, had seen a reduction. He also advised that, as a whole, high street retailing was experiencing a downward trend mainly due to the increased use of the internet to buy online. A discussion ensued regarding the provision of a medium sized supermarket in Knaresborough and the potential use of York Place Car Park for this purpose with replacement car parking provided on the Cattle Market site. Concern was also raised at the lack of communication between some of the Partnerships and the Town/City Councils and that the situation needed to be addressed. The Assistant Economic Development Officer **agreed** to liaise with the Partnerships so that appropriate literature be sent to the various City/Town/ Councils, such as the Sub-Regional Investment Plan Steering Group progress report, which list all key projects the partnerships were developing.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their attendance.

(6.40 pm - 7.25 pm)