

Yorkshire and Humber Strategy - Spatial Planning Workstream Current Issues/recent proceedings in the North Yorkshire and York Sub Region MARCH 2010

This note provides an update of the key issues arising from the North Yorkshire and York (NY&Y) Spatial Planning Technical Officers Group (TOG) and the first meeting of the NY&Y Spatial Planning Board. An update of progress on the Key Lines of Enquiry and the NY&Y Spatial Planning Assessment is set out. The main issues of the emerging new housing methodology, the regional econometric model work and an emerging York Sub Area Study are addressed.

Technical Officers' Group

There have been several well attended TOG meeting's since our last update, including a special meeting of the group to discuss how to ensure joined up thinking across the workstreams. The key issues discussed by the TOG are set out below.

North Yorkshire and York Spatial Planning Board

The first meeting of the NY&Y Spatial Planning Board took place on 11 February 2010 and was well attended by Members and supporting Officers. At the meeting, Members were informed of the regional and sub-regional governance structures in place to deliver the emerging Yorkshire and Humber Strategy. The Terms of Reference for both the NY&Y Spatial Planning Board and the TOG were agreed by Members. It was agreed that Councillor Ann Reid would Chair future Board meetings. The Board were informed of the progress to date on the sub-regional spatial planning assessment, with a particular focus on discussions regarding housing. A date for the next NY&Y Spatial Planning Board meeting will be identified once the Regional Spatial Planning Board announce the dates of their future meetings.

North Yorkshire and York Spatial Planning Assessment

An update on each of the Key Lines of Enquiry, which will form the basis of the sub-regional spatial planning assessment for NY&Y is summarised below:

- Transport – Regional Land Use and Accessibility Study underway exploring public transport services and accessibility of land use opportunities. It is likely to be completed in April 2010.
- Green Infrastructure – Natural England work mapping key aspects of Green Infrastructure is complete and will form the basis of this part of the assessment
- Physical and Social Infrastructure – Region wide report is complete, further work needed on place based perspective
- Housing – see below
- Employment – Local Economic Assessment for NY&Y is in draft
- Flood Risk and Water Management – Draft region wide flood risk appraisal prepared. Sub-regional water cycle study has been commissioned (NY&Y have contributed £5,000 Resource Improvement and Efficiency Project (RiEP) monies), likely completion is April 2010
- Renewable Energy – Undertaking first DECC funded region wide renewable energy and low carbon energy study. Initial outputs at the end of March will feed into assessment
- Minerals – Discussion paper being prepared by consultants to identify gaps and likely issues will be available in March

- Waste - Discussion paper being prepared by consultants to identify gaps and likely issues will be available in March
- Roles of Places – Findings from the other key lines of enquiry will be drawn together to consider the implications of the future roles and functions of places

The preparation of the emerging Yorkshire and Humber Strategy has covered a lot of information in a short space of time. Officers have raised concerns this does not leave enough time for Officers to read/digest/input the information and for Members of the NY&Y Spatial Planning Board to do the same.

Housing

A joint workshop took place on 19 February 2010 for Members from both the Housing and Regeneration Board and the Spatial Planning Board to explore the scale and distribution of housing in developing a new approach to housing in the new strategy. Prior to this a technical session was held for officers. The NY&Y TOG have the following comments to make with regard to housing:

- There is some concern that housing numbers are being driven from the 'top down' despite the emphasis on co-production and building up the evidence from the local level in the original project plan for the new strategy;
- Whilst the new approach to housing, focussing on the relationship between existing stock and new additions, is welcomed, there is uncertainty over how much housing is needed given the impact of recession on current evidence. Furthermore, it is important that housing evidence be considered in conjunction with other topic areas, particularly employment, transport and infrastructure in its widest sense;
- Alongside migration and household formation, other demographic changes should also be considered such as the issue of an ageing population;
- Employment figures as part of the Regional Econometric Modelling are questioned;
- There has been no reference to the effect looking at housing figures again will have on the preparation of existing Local Development Frameworks, this is particularly important if increases in housing requirements are likely;
- In developing scenarios it is important to reflect functional realities on the ground, not just Local Authority or sub-area boundaries. Furthermore, it is important that the various scenarios reflect the issues faced and be vision led;
- It is noted that none of the 3 scenarios (in para 8 of Agenda Item 6) include explicit reference to potential green and other infrastructure constraints to housing development. Whilst this is understandable as the driver for these scenarios is on need, demand and opportunity, Officers seek reassurance that these constraints, which are significant in several of the sub-region's Districts, will be an important part of the decision making on the choices and options for housing growth in the region; and
- The policy of relative constraint is a key element of the current RSS which should continue.

Regional Econometric Model

Concerns were raised at a recent TOG meeting regarding how the figures in the Regional Economic Model (REM) have been calculated. A special meeting of the TOG took place, attended by Jonathan French from the York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit giving Officers the opportunity to explore the work emerging on

economic development and discuss the REM figures in more detail. It was clarified that the REM figures reflect the recession and do not take into account transformation projects and other policy interventions. It was also established there will be an opportunity to factor these into ongoing work.

York Sub Area Study

Utilising RiEP monies, as part of the evidence base for the NY&Y spatial planning assessment the Technical Officers Group are in the process of commissioning a comprehensive York Sub Area Study. The Study will explore the functional relationships within the York Sub Area (as established at Policy Y1 in the current Regional Spatial Strategy), particularly focusing on economic, housing, and transport relationships, alongside the sustainable development implications of these relationships with regard to future growth scenarios and spatial development patterns.

Officers consider there to be a pressing need to understand the overall development demands of York and the settlements within the wider sub area, looking beyond administrative boundaries of individual Local Authorities. Given that the approach to the emerging Yorkshire and Humber Strategy focuses much more on the sub-regional and local level, adopting a bottom-up approach the York Sub Area Study is being commissioned to ensure that on the ground realities of the functionality of York and its wider sub area are captured to better inform policy formation.

This technical study will contribute to better understanding and assessing the nature, extent, impact and spatial inter-relationships of the York Sub Area within the wider North Yorkshire and York sub-region and adjoining sub-regions, namely the Leeds City Region and Hull and Humber Ports City Region.

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