

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK

16 APRIL 2010

LGYH Leaders' Board - Report of County Councillor John Watson OBE

1. The next meeting of the LGY&H Leaders' board is being held on Thursday 25 March. By coincidence, that is the same date as the deadline for this report and therefore I cannot report upon the meeting itself.
2. I should mention, though, that the pre-meeting papers run to 132 pages – which equates to 8.7 hours of presumed reading time. The meeting itself is scheduled to last for just 2.0 hours. I doubt whether anyone in attendance will actually have spent the required time upon the pre-reading.
3. Main topics on the agenda concern the current financial climate for the funding of Local Government nationally, the “priorities, strategic issues and lobbying update” of LGY&H itself and a discussion of future regional working arrangements. Under this latter item there is expected to be a discussion led by Arup upon future strategic planning arrangements for the region.
4. A very significant part of the work of the Leaders' Board concerns its involvement in both the Joint Regional Board (i.e. joint with Yorkshire Forward) and the Regional Transport Advisory Board (the RTAB). Decisions taken by the RTAB are crucial in deciding which transport schemes, notably road schemes, should proceed and in what order. This task has been made all the more necessary because of the uneven nature of spending on road capital schemes over the next ten years. Anticipated fall-outs over this prioritisation did not really occur and at its recent meeting in Hull the RTAB proved able to resolve the issues without too much acrimony.
5. The Joint Regional Board is not exactly “joint” (both sides have their respective pre-meetings, for example) but nonetheless is able to endorse decisions by both Yorkshire Forward and the RTAB and thus ensure a greater likelihood of their acceptance by the Government.
6. There is a general feeling that with all the new apparatus of the Leeds City Region, the Hull and Humber Ports City Region, the Sheffield City Region, the sub-regional partnerships of LGY&H itself, the local strategic partnerships, Yorkshire Forward, the “RIEP” and several other such organisations we probably have too much governance of this nature in the region. There also seems to be a general expectation that following the General Election, whatever its result, there will need to be a general clearing away of several such bodies.

JOHN WATSON

22 March 2010