

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK

2 JULY 2010

LGYH LEADERS' BOARD

Report of Councillor Tom Fox (Scarborough Borough Council)

The Leaders' Board of Local Government Yorkshire and Humber met on 25 March and 27 May 2010.

In his last report to this meeting, Cllr Watson touched on some of the agenda items for the meeting of the 25 March but was unable to comment further as the meeting had to still take place.

This occasion was my first meeting as a member of the Leaders' Board so I was somewhat surprised to discover 5 out of the 8 full councillor members had sent their apologies with only one substitute member attending in their absence.

Alexandra Jones and Katy Morris from the Work Foundation presented their conclusions of research findings to date on the challenges being faced in the region through a reduction in public expenditure.

The presentation highlighted that the Yorkshire and Humber had, over the past 10 years, become more dependant on public sector employment through it growing at a faster rate compared to the national average making the region more vulnerable to public sector cuts than most others. Health and education were the largest growth areas.

During the discussions that followed, members requested the presenters include additional information in their final report, to include commuting patterns beyond local boundaries, varying local circumstances and their individual needs and prospects.

We were informed that the final report on this and business cases for local government in the region should be available in May (not seen yet) and that the work would underpin the work on influencing and lobbying and help inform and shape a vision of what the new public sector model in the region should look like.

The meeting also discussed developing a regional lobbying strategy on the benefits of the Humber as a location for offshore wind farm economic activity. I brought into the debate the discussions and activity already taking place within the Borough of Scarborough and in particular the Port of Whitby and it was agreed that the lobbying approach would also ensure engagement with Scarborough Borough Council and NYCC.

Discussion also took place on future regional working arrangements. The Board agreed to a SLA between LGYH and Yorkshire Forward to support the JRB, Transport Advisory Board/strategy development and Independent Sustainability Board.

The Board were also informed that LGYH had commissioned ARUP to undertake a project to consider the issues and scenarios for the future of strategic planning against the backdrop of uncertainty to its future and in the context of the transition to new regional governance arrangements and the emerging city regions.

The meeting of the 27 May commenced with a post election stock take.

A presentation was received from representatives of North Lincolnshire Council to the strategic issues emerging from the opportunities that may be presented by the wind farm industry and soliciting support to their cause, recognising that the benefits would be far reaching into the region. Support to the principle was given.

Discussion took place on 'place-based budgets' and the future governance of local public services, an update was given on some key areas of work taking place within LGYH and elsewhere including considering the future options and scenarios for strategic spatial planning in the region, on exploring new models of governance over public services across the board and implications for joint regional arrangements on LEPs.

The Board gave support in principle (CLG funding issues aside) to a continued role for cross-boundary spatial planning in Y&H with the FSRs recognised as the primary building blocks and agreement to the fact that 'transitional' models are needed for the current strategic and housing functions in LGYH with the view that most of the work will take place at the FSR level and that FSRs (with LGYH/RIEPsupport) consider how such functions can best be delivered and resourced locally/sub-regionally over the longer term. (an 'away day' to be arranged with C/E's and Leaders creating a route map to the way forward!)

Some time was then given to the agenda for the AGM of LGYH on the 25 June and a draft of the Annual Report was considered.

TOM FOX

8 June 2010