

York and North Yorkshire RESEARCH FORUM

Meeting Papers

16th August 2006, 1.30 pm
St William's College, York

Agenda Item 3.a

Update on the Future Development of the Research Forum

At the last Research Forum meeting the re-launch of the Research Forum and revision of its membership was discussed. This paper briefly outlines the progress made since that meeting on membership and Terms of Reference.

Membership

At the last meeting it was agreed to widen the membership of the group. It is envisaged that the revised membership structure will provide sufficient expertise and knowledge across the six chapter topics in Progress in York and North Yorkshire, which is a key area of work for the Forum.

The table below summarises both new members and where there have been changes to organisation's representatives.

North Yorkshire County Council	New representatives to include Corporate Policy (Bill Cross and Johanne Allinson) and Planning Policy (Malcolm Spittle)
City of York Council	Contact within Corporate Policy to be followed up
North Yorkshire Cultural Officer's Group	Nominated Mark Kibblewhite from Scarborough Borough Council as their representative
Learning and Skills Council	John Walker is leaving the LSC, and the research function has been regionalised, therefore Beth Pawson will be the LSC North Yorkshire representative whilst Steve Crowther attends from the regional LSC research team
Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory	Margaret Wilkinson is to attend from YHPHO

Business Link York and North Yorkshire	Rob Chilton has left BLINK so replacement to be followed up
North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations	Charlotte Hursey has left Selby AVS. NYFVO has been approached for a representative who is likely to be the Deputy Chief Officer once appointed later this year.
Environment Agency	Contact to be followed up
Higher Education	Contacts to be followed up
Yorkshire Futures	Ben Smith has moved onto another role within Yorkshire Futures and Roli Kapur-Sharma takes over as the North Yorkshire representative for data and research.
York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit	Laura Oldridge replaces Sophie Thompson as Research Analyst and acts as the Secretariat to the Forum
Existing members which remain the same	
Yorkshire Tourist Board	David Andrews (Chair)
Safer City York	Ian Cunningham
Yorkshire Forward	Jane Snowball
Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber	Tim Ashelford
York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit	Laura Davis

There are two further groups which are not currently represented include:

- District Councils within North Yorkshire
 - It was previously discussed about linking in to the Local Authority Consultation Group.
 - Having representatives from each District Council could mean the size of the Forum becomes unwieldy
- Private Sector research companies
 - An approach has been made by a freelance consultant to Yorkshire Futures about becoming involved in the Research Forum.

The Forum is asked to consider how best to engage these groups as members.

Terms of Reference

Revised terms of reference were discussed at the last Research Forum meeting.

These are attached and will be discussed and considered for agreement in light of the new members of the group.

Main Roles of the Research Forum:

- To oversee the production of Progress in York and North Yorkshire.
- To co-ordinate research activities and identify good practice.
- To gather and disseminate research, information and data across agencies.
- To identify significant gaps in information and knowledge.
- To support the production of the Strategic Economic Assessment which directs the Sub Regional Investment Plan.

Membership of the Research Forum

- The membership of the Research Forum will be made up of senior research practitioners from the following organisations and interests:
 - Local Authorities
 - Community Safety
 - Voluntary Sector
 - Culture
 - Environment
 - Health
 - Learning and Skills Council
 - Yorkshire Forward
 - Yorkshire Futures
 - Business Link York and North Yorkshire
 - Yorkshire Tourist Board
 - Government Office Yorkshire and The Humber
 - York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit
 - Higher Education
 - Private Sector Representatives
- As the sub regional representative on the Regional Intelligence Network, David Andrews (Chief Executive from Yorkshire Tourist Board) acts the chair for the group.
- The York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit acts as secretariat for the Research Forum, the Research Analyst post is funded through Yorkshire Futures.

Agenda Item 3.b

Update on the Future Development of the Research Forum

At the last Forum meeting it was suggested that a re-vamp and re-launch of the Research Forum would be beneficial. This paper briefly discusses the name and profile for the Research Forum and developing prominence on the Internet.

Name and profile for the Research Forum

At the last meeting it was suggested that as part of the relaunch and revamp of the Research Forum, a new name might be considered and this could be part of a wider campaign to raise the profile of the Forum and its work.

In terms of a new name York and North Yorkshire Data and Intelligence Partnership (YNYDIP) has been suggested.

With regard to raising the Forum's profile, it is proposed to develop a suite of materials that explain more about the Forum e.g. a presentation package, a leaflet and overhauling the Research pages on the Partnership Unit's website.

Website

The Research Forum has dedicated web pages within York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit's website. There is potential to look at how it could be used more by partners as a source of information and research sharing as well as for advertising tenders for research projects.

There is also the possibility of having author rights for Yorkshire Futures website to increase the presence of the Forum.

Forum members are asked to consider and discuss these proposals.

Agenda Item 3.c

Yorkshire Futures 'What Works' Programme – Information for Partners

Background

Yorkshire Futures will be working to identify learning points and solutions that will help address regional issues.

The main addition will be the 'What Works' programme of evaluations, good practice, research findings and benchmarking activity. This comprehensive piece of work will involve communicating with key regional partners to encourage them to use Yorkshire Futures as a mechanism for sharing resources, identifying lessons learned from successful projects and highlighting solutions to potential problems. Partner buy-in and contributions is crucial to the success of this project.

Covering the full Yorkshire Futures economic, social and environmental remit where possible, the format for structuring data will be agreed by allocating appropriate themes/metadata tags (such as the Advancing Together themes, sector/industry themes and sub-regional geographies). These themes will then be used for each strand of the What Works project. It is proposed that there will be a rolling programme to allow focus on specific topics in turn, rather than try to do everything at once.

What Works programme

The revised RES (2006-2015) has a section on Monitoring, Review and Evaluation and specifically on Evidence, Evaluation and What Works that will be co-ordinated by Yorkshire Futures.

There are likely to be two main audiences. The first would be local/national Government who can use the findings to influence the Spending review as well as increasing efficiency, efficiency and best value for money. The second would be the practitioner level researchers and policy makers who have direct engagement with projects and initiatives.

Due to the enormity of this task, a small selection of themes for selected time periods seems a sensible approach. Initially, the What Works programme will be based on Enterprise, Skills and Cultural (especially sport's participation) themes. Other themes that could be considered include travel to work areas and business support. These themes will have an impact on inclusion, access to work, transport etc.

The following sections illustrate proposals for each area of development:

A. Good Practice

Current good practice case studies in miscellaneous formats will be allocated a AT theme as described above. New good practice will be collected in a structured template to ensure consistency. It is vital that regional partners contribute their case studies as Yorkshire Futures' role is to catalyse, collate and communicate case studies and not to write them. The core team will apply quality standards to make sure that case studies contain learning more than spin. This fits with a focus on good (not 'best') practice and learning from experience.

New good practice will be collected in a structured template to ensure a systematic approach. A series of case study headings is provided below.

Project Context:

- Project title
- Location
- Start/End date
- Lead organisation and case study author

Project details

- Background
- Costs and resources
- Aims and objectives
- Description
- Results (with specific dates)
- Good practice and lessons learnt (what works well and what should be avoided)
- References and links to policy implications
- Contact details

The crucial task is to review the good practice to make it meaningful and add value. This would involve extracting general conclusions that show how different areas of good practice compliment each other and overall lessons learned. This themed review could take place every quarter and could have summaries on the Yorkshire Futures website and newsletter.

B. Evaluations

Evaluations are an excellent way of identifying successful projects and highlighting good practice. Crucially, they also flag up issues that could be improved or avoided in the future. Yorkshire Futures is aware of the sensitivities that occur with certain evaluations but hope that all relevant project evaluations from regional and local

partners that are in the public domain can be added to and disseminated via the What Works database (see below).

The UK Evaluation Society - Yorkshire and Humber branch will be the principle strategic route for collating project evaluations from regional partners (this has already been agreed by the UKES Y&H).

C. Benchmarking

The region will benchmark its performance against regions or similar areas across the world that we can make comparisons against and learn from. These will be based on areas of a broadly similar scale to Yorkshire and Humber; which are making a similar economic journey as this region in terms of restructuring to become a 'Knowledge Economy'; and which are guided by a regional strategy and have a context of partnership delivery.

A two-stage approach will start with EU regions initially, with other countries such as USA, Japan and Australia being considered later in the project. Overall it is likely that we will identify 4-8 benchmark regions with 3-6 of these being European regions.

A project group of regional partners has been recently established to take this work forward.

D. Research Studies and Findings

This is a huge area. The focus will be on working with sub-regions and experts to identify recent studies with findings that can inform regional development, and to identify new or proposed studies to enable co-ordination. The same topic headings will be used as for case studies and evaluation.

Dissemination and the What Works Database

The partner who designed and built the current online 'West Yorkshire Research Matrix', has agreed that the sub-regional database will be amended and rolled out to the rest of the region. The WY Matrix will become the What Works Database (WWD) and will be available on the Yorkshire Futures website (www.yorkshirefutures.com) It will apply a consistent framework to What Works information, aiming to:

- Map research/What Works activity across the region on a number of policy areas.
- Raise awareness and reduce duplication of commissioned research/What Works projects.
- Reduce the number of Yorkshire Futures enquiries by signposting people to information sources and research reports.

How does it work?

The WWD is a comprehensive searchable database of records by key word, geography, theme, commissioning organisation and type of information (eg good practice). The WWD is a powerful tool that allows for searches across multiple fields at a range of geographical 'levels' and provides contact details for the organisation involved in the research/good practice/evaluation. For example, a user could search for employment good practice case studies in York.

The WWD is designed to raise awareness and reduce duplication of commissioned research projects and identify which approaches work best. The WWD is intended to serve as a key resource tool to assist in the development of more informed policy-making throughout the region and sub-regions. In particular, it will be used to provide underpinning evidence, understanding and insight for partners involved in the Investment Planning process. The WWD is a long-term project that will take at least two years to populate.

At present, the WWD is being developed and should be available online in autumn 2006.

Next steps

As mentioned, it is vital that regional, sub-regional and local partners support the What Works programme. Please contact the Yorkshire Futures team with any comments/questions and/or What Works contributions.

Ben Smith
Yorkshire Futures
August 2006

Agenda Item 3.d

Future Work Plan for the Research Forum

At the last Research Forum meeting the future developments of the Forum and its work were discussed. This paper briefly outlines progress made on future work and research plans.

Work Plan

As Progress in York and North Yorkshire is now to be published every three years, Yorkshire Futures have asked for a proposed work plan of the work which will take place over the next two years.

The deadline for this is September. Drafts should be submitted as soon as possible.

The work plan should include time allocated for;

- ◆ Research
- ◆ Good Practice
- ◆ Production of material/other documents
- ◆ Annual light update of PIYNY – nature of updates and how the updated document will be disseminated
- ◆ Production of a Sub Regional Rural Evidence Base
- ◆ Forum meetings
- ◆ Research seminars
- ◆ Yorkshire Futures What Works Agenda
- ◆ Updating and developing websites – YNYPU and Yorkshire Futures
- ◆ Research priorities – Audit of Research
- ◆ Any other work/research

Priorities for action will be;

- ◆ Audit of Research
- ◆ What Works Agenda
- ◆ Updating and developing websites
- ◆ Production of a Sub Regional Rural Evidence Base

The Forum is asked to discuss thoughts on developing the work plan and any other items which should be allocated time in the plan.

Research Audit

As discussed at the last Forum meeting, it was felt necessary for an audit of existing research across the sub region to take place in order to evaluate existing gaps in research. This will provide support

and strengthen the argument for any potential funding towards research which may be co-ordinated by the group.

The aim will be to gather information from as wide as possible and to ensure that the means to do so is circulated effectively.

Suggestions for collecting the information;

- ◆ EKOS – highlighting gaps in research for SEA
- ◆ Pro forma to be circulated via wider research network and to partners
 - Online?
 - Postal?

Overlapping with the research audit and possibly contributing to collecting the information, there have been discussions within Yorkshire Futures about developing the West Yorkshire Research Matrix into a regional model where York and North Yorkshire can input and search for sub regional research information.

This will require the active participation of Forum members and the wider Research Network to contribute to existing research, details about ongoing research and research to be commissioned.

Until this is further developed, it may be possible to collect and store this information on the Research pages of the Partnership Unit website.

Research could be collected simultaneously for the audit and the Research Database; however how the information is used will vary for both.

- ◆ The aim of the audit is to identify which areas are covered sufficiently by research and also where there are gaps
- ◆ The aim of the Research Database is to share research and plans for future research as widely as possible and to reduce replication

The Forum is asked to discuss ideas for collecting the research information for both the audit and the Research Database.

Research Forum Meetings and Seminars

A point has been raised by some research forum members that they would like to see a structured longer term plan for when future meetings and seminars will take place, and for what topics the seminars should be based around.

In the past the meetings have generally taken place quarterly, as have research seminars.

Forum members are asked to discuss other possible seminar topics and the frequency that seminars and meetings should take place.