

Item 4

The Future of the West Yorkshire Research Group

Discussion Paper

Introduction

1. In March 2007, the Yorkshire Forward Board made the decision to move towards city region-based investment planning. As a result of this, the West Yorkshire Economic Partnership is currently winding down and the Leeds City Region partnership structures continue to develop. The West Yorkshire Research Group was established to support the investment planning activity of the West Yorkshire Economic Partnership and this change has a direct knock-on effect for the group.
2. Supportive feedback has been received from Yorkshire Forward and the Leeds City Region secretariat about the possibility of developing the existing West Yorkshire Research Group into a more city region-aligned structure. With this in mind, the group held further discussions about its future in its meeting on 29th August 2007. It was agreed that in considering how the group develops in future, it would be useful to reflect back on key achievements and pick out some learning points from the work to date. There are some initial thoughts and ideas presented in this brief paper and feedback on these points and the questions raised are welcomed from group members and wider partners.

Rationale for developing into a 'Leeds City Region Research Group'

3. Since its inception in April 2004, the West Yorkshire Research Group has successfully established itself as a network of research and economic development practitioners who have collectively strengthened the sub-regional evidence base to underpin investment planning activity.
4. The group combined its varied expertise and local knowledge to produce the Progress in West Yorkshire reports in collaboration with Yorkshire Futures. The group has been particularly proactive in attending and contributing at key conferences and events around Progress in West Yorkshire, the West Yorkshire Strategic Economic Assessment (SEA) and other regional events with a research focus, such as Progress in the Region launch events and the launch of the ONS Regional Presence in May 2006.
5. The group pioneered the development of the innovative West Yorkshire Research Matrix aimed at maximising the use of existing knowledge and encouraging evidence-based policy development. Yorkshire Futures then developed the tool into the What Works Database – now the main regional resource for locating research, case studies and evaluation records on the Yorkshire Futures website.
6. The group was responsible for overseeing the delivery of the £240,000 Yorkshire Forward-funded West Yorkshire Research Programme and secured match funding contributions of £90,000 over the course of the project. This involved commissioning research to fill gaps in the SEA and support the investment planning process. The group drew up and agreed a set of protocols to guide the selection of research projects

and the management of competitive tendering and delivery. This included forming bespoke project steering groups drawing on research group input and external expertise with a Lead Partner driving the direction of the project supported by the West Yorkshire Research Co-ordinator. This model has proved very successful and received excellent feedback from Yorkshire Forward.

7. All of the reports produced have been made available on the Yorkshire Futures website and have been disseminated electronically to key stakeholders. The majority of reports have gone on to inform project and high profile policy development and some have been widely referenced and even replicated in other areas. There was no budget available to enable the production of hard copy reports or the hosting of larger dissemination events and conferences and this has possibly resulted in the under-utilisation of some reports
8. The group has been considering the implications of city regions for some time and invited a Leeds City Region secretariat representative onto the group in 2006. Where appropriate, a city region dimension has been incorporated into research specifications to complement the West Yorkshire focus and on one occasion match funding was secured from the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly to support this. Two of these projects led to further focused studies commissioned by the Leeds City Region secretariat to inform the second iteration of the CRDP.
9. The group is currently working with Yorkshire Forward and Jobcentre Plus to deliver a Leeds City Region study into worklessness. The findings will underpin strategic discussions about how these challenges might be addressed at a city region level. The recent secondment of the West Yorkshire Research Co-ordinator to the Yorkshire Futures core team in a City-Regional Research and Intelligence Manager role has also brought benefits to the group by strengthening the links with the wider regional intelligence network and the other sub and city regions.
10. The group agreed in its meeting on 29th August that it should look to build on these achievements and explore ways of aligning the current group to fit the emerging Leeds City Region partnership structure. It was recognised that this would be a gradual process and would require more detailed thinking around the future role of the group and its membership.

- **What other key achievements or learning points have emerged from the group's activity to date?**
- **Is there support for the above rationale to develop the West Yorkshire group into a Leeds City Region group?**

Future role of the group

11. The Leeds City Region has identified clear priorities in the CRDP focusing on addressing the underlying inhibitors to economic growth, such as transport, skills and labour market, business and housing around which theme-based working groups or 'panels' are being established. The Terms of Reference of the Leaders' Board touches on the commissioning and publication of research on city region matters as a key activity. The document also states that the Panels will consider relevant research findings and input to the review and delivery of the CRDP.

12. At a city region level, there seems to be a preference for supporting more focused, manageable groups, including around research, probably with a commissioning role to support the themed panels. There are therefore some arguments for establishing a smaller 'Leeds City Region' research group, perhaps operating as a cross-cutting group across a number of subject areas. It was agreed that a clear Terms of Reference would be important for activity of this type.
13. The West Yorkshire Research Group has a lot of commissioning experience highlighted above, but also fulfils a broader function of information-sharing, encouraging debate and raising awareness of research-related activity. This function is more in line with the work of the York and North Yorkshire Data and Intelligence Partnership, which has gained significant momentum over the last year developing a well-attended seminar programme and co-ordinating joint sub-regional responses to consultation exercises. This broader function also allows for activity to focus on a more diverse range of issues and themes than those relevant at a city region level. It was also suggested that a wider network could support the professional development of group members.
14. Alongside a smaller Leeds City Region group, there would also seem to be some scope for maintaining the more flexible wider networks, continuing to operate as WY or NY-based groups as required, joining up or working within these areas where there are common interests or a clear rationale.
15. There will inevitably be resource implications for supporting either or both of the above structures and there may not be the capacity or rationale to arrange regular meetings for different groups operating at different levels. Instead a more virtual wider network could be developed possibly making use of existing tools to facilitate some of this work, e.g. the Yorkshire Future online forums. Partners will need to consider in more detail the possibility of a post with responsibility for co-ordinating some of the above activity.

- **How relevant and useful are each of the two approaches outlined above?**
- **What other functions or roles might a 'Leeds City Region Research Group' undertake to add value to local or organisational level activity?**

Future membership of the group

16. The current membership of the West Yorkshire Research Group broadly reflects the make-up of the original West Yorkshire Economic Partnership Board and Executive Group. It is public sector-focused and the more active membership includes representatives from the five district local authorities, Chambers of Commerce, the West Yorkshire Enterprise Partnership, the Learning and Skills Council, the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, METRO, the Leeds City Region secretariat, Yorkshire Forward and Yorkshire Futures.
17. Given the overlap of the Leeds City Region area with parts of both the North Yorkshire and South Yorkshire sub-regions, there is clearly a need for developing stronger linkages with the North Yorkshire sub-region generally (in particular the four districts within the Leeds City Region) and also with Barnsley in South Yorkshire. It would seem sensible in the short to medium term to invite representatives from the York and North Yorkshire Data and Intelligence Partnership and Barnsley to join the West

Yorkshire meetings and be involved in shaping any developments over the next few months.

18. The wider networks discussed above could more easily involve representatives covering a range of geographic, thematic and sectoral interests. The York and North Yorkshire Data and Intelligence Partnership also has private sector representation, which may be something to consider at a West Yorkshire/Leeds City Region level.
19. The membership of a smaller Leeds City Region commissioning group could be drawn from the wider networks but centre on representatives from the key city region priority themes and spatial areas.

- **How well might the two approaches set out above bring together the partnerships necessary for delivering effective research?**

Ellen Graham

Item 6

YNYDIP Research Seminar

What does the Future hold for York and North Yorkshire?

Wednesday 24th October 2007, Bedern Hall

The latest research seminar organised by YNYDIP was held last week at Bedern Hall, York.

Around 40 partners mainly from across the sub region attended the morning event.

Speakers included Victoria Gell from Yorkshire Forward, Chris Henshall from the University of York, Rhona Pringle from Yorkshire Forward and Doug Kendall from Scarborough Borough Council. David Andrews attended to introduce the importance of research and intelligence to the future.

General feedback was that the seminar was very interesting and thought provoking, and that the speakers that were selected gave a good representation of the different aspects of the sub region and the mixture of perspectives gave a good overview of possible future scenarios.

Victoria Gell – Forecasting Overview for North Yorkshire

Victoria gave an overview of the sub region's economy using the Regional Econometric Model (REM). She picked out three issues that were reflective of measuring the performance of the economy; GVA, Industry Output and Employment, and compared the current data with forecasted data for 2015.

In terms of GVA, North Yorkshire is expected to grow from a current GVA of £13.08 (16.1% of the region's £81.2 billion GVA) to £15.96. This growth will be in line with the region and the UK. In terms of district proportions of North Yorkshire GVA, this will remain broadly the same.

In terms of industry output and key growth sectors, the proportion of the economy made up by Business Services, Health, Transport and Communications will all grow by 2015. The proportions for Education, Public Admin, Food, Drink and Tobacco and Agriculture will see a reduction, however this does not necessarily mean there will be a decline.

Employment growth is forecast to be above the region and the UK. Full Time Equivalent employees in 2007 in North Yorkshire is estimated to be 356,250, growing by 3.6% to 368,950 in 2015. Yorkshire and Humber is forecast to grow by 2.7% and the UK by 2.8%. Looking at a district level, the proportions making up North Yorkshire's FTEs will remain broadly the same.

Chris Henshall – Science City York and the Future of York

Chris spoke about the future of York from a university perspective. He outlined the background of York as a decline of traditional industries (railway, confectionary) and a growth in service industries (tourism and financial) and high tech industries (Science City York type businesses).

Chris outlined the current progress of Science City York and the achievements to date; namely 87 new businesses and 2700 new jobs since 1998, 3 strong clusters (Bioscience and health, IT & digital and Creative), and that Science and Technology jobs now account for 10% of the York and North Yorkshire workforce (equal to tourism).

Future implications of SCY is to embrace all knowledge based sectors, reach and retain focus on York whilst developing links with Leeds City Region and work more closely with the private sector.

Chris explained that the University of York expansions will result in a 65 hectare, £500+ million project over 10-15 years and include 2 or 3 new departments.

The economic impact of this now is 3,500 jobs in the University and Science Park and 5,300 including indirect jobs. The impact for the future is 8,000 jobs in the University and Science Park and 11,300 jobs and £185m pa income with indirect jobs and multiplier effects.

Rhona Pringle – Market Towns of the Future

Rhona outlined a recent report published by Yorkshire Forward on the possible future scenarios of Market Towns. The report uses data from real towns to develop scenarios to test outcomes of different approaches. The report is aimed at 2 audiences; key decision makers and the local people (local businesses etc) and is designed to encourage debate and discussion rather than give significant answers to how the future might look.

The report outlines 7 scenarios and Rhona focussed on 2; New meadow (Sprawling Rural Suburb) and New Dale (New Market Town)

Rhona outline 7 challenges for the future;

- Governance – Policy and Delivery
- Governance – Participative Democracy
- Governance – Individual Responsibility
- Governance – Town and Country Planning
- Demographics
- Economy
- Climate Change

Doug Kendall – Scarborough: A Renaissance Town

Doug outlined a number of projects which are currently underway or have recently been finished including Scarborough Spa, Wood End Creative Industries Centre, Scarborough Business Park, Rotunda and The Sands.

Outputs include 234 new jobs in 2 years, 86 hectare of land for industrial use, indirectly accommodating 322 jobs and 36 new starter units for creative industries.

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November 2007