

Notice of meeting of

Urgency Committee

To: Councillors Steve Galloway (Chair), Merrett, Potter, Reid and Waller

Date: Wednesday, 28 February 2007

Time: 12.15 pm

Venue: The Guildhall

AGENDA

1. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point, members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on this agenda.

2. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following:

Exempt minute 16 under Agenda Item 3 (Minutes) on the grounds that it contains information relating to an individual. This information is classed as exempt under paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

3. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Urgency Committee held on 19 December 2006.

4. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Committee's remit can do so. The deadline for registering is Tuesday 27 February 2007, at 5.00 pm.

5. Leeds City Region Leaders' Board (Pages 5 - 18)

This report seeks consideration of a recommendation from the Executive that City of York Council enter into an Agreement to establish a Joint Committee to be known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board and appointment of the Leader to represent the Council on the Board and the Deputy Leader as the substitute member.

6. Science City York Limited: Membership of Company and Nomination of Representative (Pages 19 - 22)

This report seeks agreement to the City of York Council becoming a member of Science City York Limited and appointment of a Council representative to the company.

7. Sub-regional Approach to Strategic Housing (Pages 23 - 30)

This report advises on recent developments designed to enhance joint working on strategic housing issues across the sub-region and seeks approval of City of York Council participation in the proposed sub-regional partnership and governance framework and for the Executive Member for Housing to represent the Council on the partnership.

8. Any Other Matters which the Chair decides are urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Name: Simon Copley

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551078
- E-mail – simon.copley@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

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City of York Council

Minutes

MEETING	URGENCY COMMITTEE
DATE	19 DECEMBER 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (CHAIR), POTTER, REID AND MACDONALD (AS SUBSTITUTE FOR WALLER)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS MERRETT AND WALLER

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following:

Agenda Item 5 (Retirement) (minute 20 refers) on the grounds that it contained information relating to an individual. This information was classed as exempt under paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Urgency Committee, held on 5 September 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

20. RETIREMENT

(See also Exempt Minute 20)

Members received a report which asked them to consider a recommendation to bring forward the early retirement of a Council Officer by two and a half months.

The application had not been brought to the Urgency Committee as an urgent matter but because it was the only Member body, except for Full Council, with the authority to consider it.

RESOLVED: (i) That recommendations at paragraph 24 of the report be approved;

(ii) That an Appointments Committee be created for three Chief Officer posts, with the following membership:

Liberal Democrat – Councillor Steve Galloway
Councillor Runciman

Labour - Councillor Merrett

Substitute: Councillor Potter

REASON: In the interests of service effectiveness.

COUNCILLOR S F GALLOWAY

Chair

The meeting started at 12.00 pm and finished at 12.15 pm.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Urgency Committee

28 February 2007

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

LEEDS CITY REGION LEADERS' BOARD

Summary

1. The Urgency Committee is asked to consider a recommendation from the Executive that City of York Council enter into an Agreement to establish a Joint Committee to be known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board ("the Board") and to nominate the Leader to represent the Council on the Board and the Deputy Leader as the substitute member.

Background

- 2.1 On 13 February 2007 the Executive considered approved a report from the Head of Civic Democratic and Legal Services recommending that the City of York Council (CYC) enter into an Agreement to establish a Joint Committee to be known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board. The report setting out full details of the proposals and the issues for consideration by members is attached at Annex A.
- 2.2 The first meeting of the Board is to take place on 1st April 2007 therefore the recommendation from the Executive and the appointment to the Board must be considered and determined before the next Full Council meeting on 12th April to enable CYC to participate.

Consultation

3. This is as set out in the attached report at Annex A.

Options

4. The Urgency Committee can either:
 - a) Approved the recommendation to participate in the Board and appoint a representative to the Board.
 - b) Defer the decision to the next Full Council meeting on 12th April.
 - c) Not approve the recommendation to participate in the Board and not appoint a representative to the Board.

Analysis

5. If the Urgency Committee is minded to approved option 4 a then CYC will be able to participate in the Board from the first meeting. Option 4 b would mean the Council could not participate in the Board until after the matter was considered by Full Council on 12th April and could not therefore participate in the first meeting. Option 4 c would mean that the Council would not participate in the Board at all.

Corporate Priorities

6. These are as per the attached report at Annex A.

Implications

7. The implications are as per the attached report at Annex A.

Risk Management

8. The risk management issues are as per the report at Annex A.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to approve recommendation 4 a above and appoint the Leader as the Council's representative on the Board and the Deputy Leader as the substitute.

Reason: To enable the Council to play an active part in the development of the City Region agenda and to attend and participate in the first meeting of the Board on 1st April 2007

Contact Details

Author:

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic &
Legal Services
Chief Executive's Department
Tel. No 01904 551004

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services

Report Approved

Date 19/2/07

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A – Report to Executive on 13th February 2007 entitled “Leeds City Region Leaders’ Board.”



Executive

13 February 2007

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

LEEDS CITY REGION LEADERS' BOARD

Summary

1. The Executive is asked to consider recommending to Council that the City of York Council enter into an Agreement to establish a Joint Committee to be known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board.

Background

- 2.1 The Leeds City Region is the area covered by the five West Yorkshire Districts – Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield; Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York in North Yorkshire; and Barnsley in South Yorkshire. This area has a culturally and ethnically diverse population of nearly 2.8 million of which 1.4 million are economically active; is home to over 70,000 businesses; sits astride nationally strategic east–west and north–south transport corridors; and has a mix of rural and urban environments and areas of outstanding countryside.
- 2.2 The political Leaders of the 11 Partner Councils (which include North Yorkshire County Council, who have strategic responsibility in three of the districts) made a collective commitment some months ago to work together for the benefit of the City Region and to deliver sustainable economic growth and improved competitiveness. (Considered by City of York Council Urgency Committee on 17 July 2006.) To that end a city region concordat was agreed setting out the mission to “work together differently: to develop an internationally recognised city region; to raise our economic performance; to spread prosperity across the whole of our city region, and to promote a better quality of life for all those who live and work here”.
- 2.3 To enable the ambitions of the city region (set out in the Leeds City Region Development Programme (CRDP), which includes a long-term Vision for Transport) to be pursued, formal governance arrangements are required. Accordingly, the city region Leaders agreed on 11 September 2006 to develop a formal structure.
- 2.4 The new governance proposals are set within the context of a number of key principles, namely :

- The city region agenda should focus entirely on furthering the economic competitiveness of the area, and therefore governance proposals should be constructed solely around economic related matters, based on the CRDP and the long-term Vision for Transport;
- Proposals should focus on identifying what needs to be done/can be done better at a city region level and should not seek to duplicate the existing role/responsibilities of constituent authorities; proposals should also be complimentary to the roles of Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly;
- The new partnership body should be capable of engaging effectively with Government and Regional Bodies on issues such as regional funding allocations;

3. The Agreement

- 3.1 A copy of the Agreement to establish the Joint Committee (known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board) is attached at Annex 1, the details of which have been agreed by City Region Leaders.
- 3.2 The Agreement provides a framework for the Board's operation. Detailed Standing Orders and other documentation dealing with operational matters will be formulated by the Board itself.

Voting Arrangements

- 3.3 The Board will be constituted on a 1 Member, 1 vote arrangement. Decisions will, therefore, be determined by a majority of the representatives present at any meeting.

Local Authority Obligations

- 3.4 Each Partner Authority will appoint their Leader to represent the Authority on the Board. In the event that a Leader cannot attend a meeting of the Board a senior member, such as a Deputy Leader or Executive Member will be allowed to substitute.
- 3.5 Although the Agreement provides for the Board to discharge the function of promoting the improvement of economic well being in the City Region this will not preclude or constrain member authorities from promoting economic well being in their own areas even where this entails the adoption of a position at variance with that of the City Region.

Panels

- 3.6 Whilst the Board will be empowered to appoint and delegate powers to sub-committees and officers, Leaders are of the view that all executive decision-making should be reside with the Board at first instance. Accordingly, it is likely that the Board will appoint theme-based Working Groups (to be referred to as Panels) to oversee specific city region work.

- 3.9 The Panels will be chaired by a member of the Board and will primarily comprise of Board Members/Member representatives, although senior representatives of relevant organisations may be invited to join them. The Panels will be able to establish multi-agency task groups to support them and the Board.

Review

- 3.8 The operation of the Agreement will be reviewed by the Board after twelve months and annually thereafter.

Support Services Authority

- 3.9 Leeds City Council will be the initial support services authority for the Board, continuing the existing City Region support arrangements.
- 3.10 The new arrangements for the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board are proposed to take effect on 1 April 2007. The first meeting of the Board will take place on 2 April 2007.

Consultation

4. All participating Partner Councils have been consulted on the proposed terms of the Agreement and the governance arrangements. All Partner Councils are in agreement with the proposals.

Options

5. The Executive can either recommend to Full Council that City of York Council enter into the Agreement as detailed in this report or may choose not to participate.

Analysis

6. Members are referred to the detail contained in the report to Urgency Committee on the 17 July 2006, which sets out the background to City Regions and the benefits of developing the City Region concept.

Corporate Priorities

7. The proposals detailed in this report assist in strengthening and diversifying York's economy and to improve the employment opportunities for residents by collaborating with Regional and Sub-Regional Partners in providing a complimentary approach to infrastructure provision, including new and improved transport/communication links, to generate new business activity.

8. Implications

- Financial

It is not envisaged that any additional resources would be required in the next financial year 2007/08, as ongoing arrangements can continue to be utilised. The Board will consider the longer-term resource requirements and it has been agreed that any future Council contributions should be in proportion to respective population levels as set out in the Agreement attached at annex 1.

- Legal

The Council has powers under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000 to participate in a joint committee. These powers are recognised in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution which specifically authorises the establishment of joint committees with one or more local authorities.

The legal implications have been considered and legal officers are satisfied that the Agreement is one which the Council can enter into.

There are no Human Resources, Equalities, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property or Other Implications.

Risk Management

9. There are no specific risks with the proposals contained in this report. The development of the Agreement and the activities of the Board will be kept under review.

Recommendations

10. The Executive are asked to recommend to Full Council that they approved the terms of the Agreement attached.

Reason: To enable the Council to play an active part in the development of the City Region agenda.

Contact Details

Author:

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic and
Legal Services
Chief Executive's Department
Tel No. 01904 551004

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Report Approved

Date 23 January 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

N/a

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Report to Urgency Committee on 17 July 2006 entitled 'Leeds City Region'

Annexes

Annex 1 - A copy of the Agreement to establish the Joint Committee (known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board)

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Annex 1

THIS AGREEMENT is dated the day of 2007 and provides
for an agreement BETWEEN

- 1) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 2) City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
- 3) Borough Council of Calderdale
- 4) Craven District Council
- 5) Harrogate Borough Council
- 6) Kirklees Metropolitan Council
- 7) Leeds City Council
- 8) North Yorkshire County Council
- 9) Selby District Council
- 10) City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
- 11) City of York Council

(The parties are hereinafter referred to collectively as “the Councils”)

WHEREAS

The Councils have agreed to establish a joint committee with a view to the promotion of economic growth, competitiveness and well being within the geographic area covered collectively by the Councils listed above (“the City Region”). In relation to North Yorkshire, this only applies to the geographical areas covered by Craven District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, and Selby District Council.

THIS AGREEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:-

1. (a) In exercise of their powers under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, Part II of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other powers enabling them in that behalf, the Councils shall participate in a joint committee to be known as "The Leeds City Region Leaders' Board" (hereinafter referred to as "the Board") which shall be constituted and which shall conduct its business in accordance with the Procedure Rules / Regulations approved by the Support Services Authority as provided for in clause 4 and accepted by the Board.

(b) Each Council shall appoint one member of the Board who shall be its Leader for the time being.

2. (a) The Board is empowered to discharge on behalf of the Councils the function of doing anything it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic well being of the City Region together with such additional functions as the respective Councils may determine from time to time ALL WHICH said functions are hereinafter referred to as "the functions".

(b) The Board is empowered to arrange for the discharge of the functions or any of them by any Sub-Committee, including the determination of the composition and terms of reference of any Sub-Committee, or by an officer of the Councils so appointed and subsections (2) and (5) of Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 shall apply in relation to the functions of the Board as it applies in relation to the functions of the Councils PROVIDED that

any such Sub-Committee may only be appointed in accordance with Procedure Rules as already referred to in clause 1(a).

(c) The Board is empowered to set up such working parties (hereinafter referred to as Panels) for the purpose of providing advice to the Board on any matter and such Panels shall report direct to the Board and shall not have power to exercise on behalf of the Board any authority.

(d) A Panel shall comprise members of the Board or their representatives, and other such senior representatives of other organisations as may be co-opted onto the Panels by Agreement of the Board. A Panel may set up multi-agency task groups to advise the Panels and the Board.

3. Staff required for the purposes of carrying out the functions of the Board shall be employed by the Support Services Authority or seconded thereto as provided for in clause 4, subject to the requirements of the Board.

4. (a) Support Services as determined by the Board shall be provided by one of the Councils in accordance with arrangements agreed by the Councils.

(b) At the time of the making of this Agreement the Support Services Authority is Leeds City Council.

(c) If any conflict of interest shall arise in terms of the provision of support services by the Support Services Authority it shall be open to the Board to make alternative arrangements with one of the other Councils.

5. Until such time thereafter as the Councils may determine otherwise all revenue costs necessarily incurred by the Board in discharging the functions shall be shared by the Councils in the following percentage proportions:-

Leeds	25.9%
Bradford	16.9%
Kirklees	14.1%
Wakefield	11.4%
Barnsley	7.9%
Calderdale	7.0%
York	6.6%
Harrogate	2.7%
Selby	1.4%
Craven	1.0%
North Yorkshire	5.1%

6. The Support Services Authority will cooperate with each Council by providing relevant information on request relating to the provision of support services.
7. (a) This Agreement shall come into force on the 1st day of April 2007 and shall continue in force until one year's notice in writing is given by any of the Councils to the Chief Executive of the Support Services Authority for the time being and to the Chief Executive of each Council expiring on the 31st day of

March in any subsequent year of the intention of that Council to withdraw from this Agreement.

(b) Upon receipt of such a notice from a Council to withdraw from this Agreement, the Councils shall determine terms for the withdrawal of that Council from this Agreement or for the termination of this Agreement and more particularly in relation to how future obligations and liabilities of the Board ascertainable prior to the withdrawal or termination shall be met by the Councils

(c) Subject to clause 8, notwithstanding the withdrawal of a Council from the Agreement, the Agreement will continue in respect of the other Councils.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause 7 hereof, if all the Councils remaining in membership of the Board at any particular time so agree, this Agreement may be determined or varied on the 31st day of March in any year upon terms agreed by all the Councils. In agreeing to determine the Agreement ,the Councils shall agree the terms for doing so including how obligations and liabilities of the Board ascertainable prior to the termination or subsequently arising shall be met by the Councils

IN WITNESS whereof the Councils have

SIGNED

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Meeting of the Executive28th February 2007

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Science City York Limited: Membership of Company and Nomination of Representative**Summary**

1. The City Council is a partner, along with the University of York, and with Yorkshire Forward, in Science City York (SCY), a programme to expand the number of knowledge-led competitive businesses within York. At present SCY is an unincorporated partnership. The Council has agreed in principle to the creation of a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) to take over the management of SCY, and to the creation of a new post of Chief Executive for SCY. A CLG is in the process of being registered and the Urgency Committee is now asked to agree to the City of York Council becoming a member of that company, and to nominate someone to represent the City Council on the CLG. The decision is required urgently so that the company is in a position to appoint a chief executive after the 6th March.

Background

2. The City Council and its stakeholder partners, the University of York and Yorkshire Forward, have for some months been discussing the future direction and governance of Science City York. They have agreed that, in order to enable SCY to widen the scope of its activities, and to have greater impact, management should be transferred to a Company Limited by Guarantee. This was approved by the Executive Member on 11th September 2006. A CLG is a form of private company, without shareholders, and owned by members. Any profits or financial surpluses made by the company are not distributed to shareholders, but retained within the company, and available to support its activities.
3. The Council also agreed to support the creation of a new post of Chief Executive of the SCY CLG. Yorkshire Forward has offered grant funding to fully cover the cost of this post for three years. The City Council is managing the recruitment process on behalf of the partners. Final interviews have been arranged for the 6th March.

Consultation

3. The proposals to establish the CLG, and to recruit a Chief Executive, have been discussed between the stakeholders; within the wider Science City partnership; and have been reported to the Economic Development

Partnership Board, and to the Executive. The stakeholders have further discussed the more detailed proposals in this report.

Options

4. Members are asked to agree to the Council becoming a member of the SCY CLG, together with the University of York. This will enable the company to be formally established, and to employ the Chief Executive, who will be appointed after interviews on the 6th March.

Analysis

5. Members have already agreed to the setting up of a CLG to manage SCY in the longer term. This will give the legal, financial and management flexibility to enable SCY to develop in the ways required to maintain the competitiveness of York as a location for knowledge-led businesses. Detailed discussions will be required between stakeholders and partners to define and agree the governance arrangements for the company in the longer term. The advice of the new Chief Executive will be important in taking forward these discussions.
6. However, the recruitment and employment of the chief executive will be considerably facilitated if he or she are employed directly by the SCY CLG from the beginning of their appointment, rather than rely upon a period of temporary employment by one of the stakeholders, which introduces uncertainty into the contractual arrangement. A Science City York company is, therefore, currently being formally registered. This will enable the chief executive appointment to be offered by the company after the 6th March.
7. The proposal is that the Science City CLG will be owned and directed by the two York stakeholders: City of York Council and University of York. Members are, therefore, requested to agree to the City Council becoming a member of the company. In the immediate term the sole function of the company will be to employ the Chief Executive. Management of the wider Science City programme will remain with the Stakeholder Group until such time as decisions are reached on the future activities of the company, and the required governance protocols are agreed and put into place.
8. As well as approving membership of the company members are asked to nominate the representative of the City Council who will become a director of the company.
9. These decisions are needed urgently so that the company can be properly established in time to offer a contract of employment to the Chief Executive, after interviews on the 6th March.

Corporate Priorities

6. The importance of Science City York in achieving the Council's objectives for the modernising of the city's economy is included within the Thriving City theme; in Corporate objective 3 "Strengthening York's Economy"; as one of the thirteen corporate priorities; and in the approved 2006/07 Economic development programme.

Implications

- **Financial** The full costs of setting up the Company Limited by Guarantee, and of employing the Chief Executive are covered by approved grant from Yorkshire Forward. No other additional costs are expected.
- **Human Resources (HR)** The detailed HR implications will be determined as part of the discussions to define and agree the governance arrangements for the CLG. Nevertheless, the proposal in paragraph six that the Chief executive of SCY be employed by the CLG is consistent with advice given earlier to the Chief Executive on this matter.
- **Equalities** The recruitment process organised for the Chief Executive post has been consistent with equal opportunity principles.
- **Legal** The legal implications will be determined as part of the discussions to define and agree the governance arrangements for the company in the longer term. These discussions will be undertaken in consultation with the Head of Civic, Democratic, and Legal Services. If there are any proposals which would have significant legal implications for the Council these will be the subject of a further report to members.
- **Crime and Disorder** There are no implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** There are no implications.
- **Property** There are no implications.
- **Other**

Risk Management

8. There are no significant financial risks to the City Council in this first stage activity of the new SCY CLG in employing the Chief Executive. The longer-term financial risks will be considered as part of the discussions to define and agree the governance arrangements for the company in the longer term.

Recommendations

9. 1) To approve City Council membership of Science City York Limited, a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Reason: To enable the company to be established in order to employ the Chief Executive.
- 2) To nominate the person to represent the City Council on the company.

Contact Details

Author:

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Director of City Strategy
01904 551330

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Woolley
Director of City Strategy

Report Approved ✓ **Date** 19th February 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial – Simon Wiles, Director of Resources 01904 551100

Legal – Suzan Hemingway, Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services 01904 551004

Human Resources – Janet Neeve, HR Business Partner 01904 551661

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all* **All** ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: None



Meeting of the Urgency Committee

28th February 2007

Report of the Head of Housing Services

Sub-regional Approach to Strategic Housing

Summary

1. To advise the Urgency Committee on recent developments designed to enhance joint working on strategic housing issues across the sub-region and how this work will complement the work ongoing within the authority to meet the corporate priority to improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city. To propose that the Urgency Committee approve that City of York participate in the proposed sub-regional partnership and governance framework and that the Executive Member for Housing represent the Council on the partnership.
2. This report needs to be considered by Urgency Committee due to the first meeting of the proposed Sub-regional Strategic Housing Board being before the next full council meeting. The reason for the meeting being held before the next full council is the timescale placed on the sub-regional investment round for 2008-11.

Background

Recent developments

3. During September and October 2006 the Audit Commission carried out an affordable housing review of the district authorities within North Yorkshire. Whilst York were not directly involved, we participated through providing information and attended a number of workshops which were held on the 4th and 11th October. The review included "light touch" visits to each local authority (not York) and meetings with key stakeholders.
4. A report has been produced by the Audit Commission suggesting a number of interim recommendations aimed at improving joint working.
5. The Audit Commission's interim recommendations can be summarised as follows :
 - That each authority takes responsibility for one of six broad subject areas for maximising the provision of or reducing the demand for affordable housing

- That the lead / coordinating authority should consult other authorities and develop an improvement plan for that subject area
 - That the plans should have SMART targets relating to how key issues will be tackled in order to improve strategic housing services in line with Audit Commission key lines of enquiry
 - That the draft plans should be submitted to the Audit Commission by 31st December 2006
6. The six broad subject areas put forward by the Audit Commission where better joint working could bring benefits are summarised below:
- The strategic housing role;
 - Local Development Framework and making the best use of planning tools;
 - Land assembly and the work of rural housing enablers;
 - Joint working and enabling the provision of more affordable housing;
 - Making best use of private sector housing;
 - Homelessness.
7. The workshop attendees on 11th October, some of whom were elected Members from the district authorities made the following response to the Audit Commission's interim recommendations:
- That they agreed to the principle of local authority themed "champions" and improved joint working;
 - That a special meeting of the North Yorkshire Chief Housing Officers Group would be convened to agree which local authorities would lead on which subject areas;
 - Requested that the Audit Commission provide initial advice on key weaknesses so that the action plans could address those weaknesses;
 - That the role of the City of York Council be clarified as it had not participated in the mainstream review process;
 - That Political sign up would be needed to progress with the proposed approach.
8. A special meeting of the North Yorkshire Chief Housing Officers Group it was agreed to reduced the suggested subject areas from 6 to 5. The lead local authorities were agreed as follows:
- The strategic housing role and joint working – to be jointly led by **York and Richmondshire**;
 - Using the LDF process and making the best use of planning tools to enable the provision of more affordable housing – to be led jointly by **Hambleton and Selby**;
 - Land assembly and the work of rural housing enablers – to be jointly led by **Harrogate and Scarborough**;
 - Making the best use of private sector housing – to be led by **Craven with support from Selby**;
 - Homelessness – to be led by **Ryedale with support from the North Yorkshire Homeless Forum**.

Sub-regional Governance Framework

9. Over recent years the importance of the sub-region, in housing terms, has become more prominent. Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) have, over the last 18 months, encouraged local authorities to work more sub-regionally. The logic behind adopting a sub-regional approach is that, especially in housing terms, housing markets spread wider than local authority boundaries and that through joint working, as a sub-region, we will be better able to meet the housing needs and better placed to access regional funding.
10. Funding for private sector housing and Housing Corporation bids for Social Housing Grant now have to be submitted, and are assessed, on a sub-regional basis. Initial guidance from GOYH indicates that the Regional Housing Board (RHB) wishes sub-regional partnerships to take responsibility for investment programmes. North Yorkshire does not have in place a sub-regional partnership that can deliver or the governance framework to sign off sub-regional funding bids.
11. The lack of governance arrangements has caused concern for some time and decisions made at the sub regional level have lacked a proper political mandate. The sub regional investment bidding process for 2006/8, for example, required by the GOYH, highlighted these concerns whereby a bid for the whole of the sub region for housing resources was officer led with no formal political sign off. This could become a real issue in the future if tensions develop around which parts of the County get what resources.
12. Governance arrangements could be significantly improved by using existing arrangements to enhance the role of elected members in shaping and making strategic housing decisions. The North Yorkshire Housing Forum, already well established and chaired by an elected member, could form a Strategic Housing Board comprising one elected member, supported by the lead officer, from each of the eight local authorities one from the county council and one from each of the national park authorities.
13. This Sub-regional Strategic Housing Board would use the North Yorkshire Housing Forum as it's main consultative body / sounding board. It would determine it's own terms of reference and suggestions are made later in the report in this respect.
14. It is proposed that the strategic housing board would sit as a sub group of the Association of North Yorkshire Councils with the elected Chair / Vice Chair reporting to the Association as and when required. Representatives from all local authorities in the sub-region attend the Association of North Yorkshire Councils. This arrangement would avoid further governance duplication by utilising an existing decision making structure via the Association of North Yorkshire Councils but would also achieve an appropriate housing focus by comprising the elected housing leads from each local authority..
15. The broad remit of the Board would include:
 - Approving sub regional housing investment bids;

- Monitoring sub regional housing investment plans;
 - Considering moves towards a sub regional “umbrella” Housing Strategy;
 - Approving sub regional research projects and other associated initiatives
 - Maintaining and developing key linkages with regional decision making bodies
16. The Strategic Housing Board would, in conjunction with the Association of North Yorkshire Councils agree it’s terms of reference. However a set of draft terms of reference for considerations has been drawn up by the North Yorkshire Chief Housing Officer:
- To provide a single and politically accountable “housing voice” for North Yorkshire;
 - To sign off key sub regional documents and initiatives, ensuring that such key documents have a proper political mandate;
 - Consult key stakeholders on sub regional housing issues and initiatives;
 - Co-ordinate sub regional responses to Government Bodies on housing issues, including the Regional Assembly, Regional Housing Board, Housing Corporation and Government Office;
 - Provide a forum for lead housing members to network on particular housing issues;
 - To inform and influence debate on housing policy issues at the sub-regional, regional and national levels.
17. It is also proposed that for the sub-regional board to reach a decision it has to be a unanimous decision.

Consultation

18. These issues have been discussed by chief housing officers from across North Yorkshire.

Options

19. Option 1 – To sign up to a sub-regional partnership for strategic housing .
20. Option 2 – To maintain the status quo.

Analysis

Option 1

21. There are a number of advantages to a sub-regional approach to strategic housing. Funding for private sector housing and Social Housing Grant is already allocated on a sub-regional basis, adopting a sub-regional partnership would provide us with the governance framework through which sub-regional housing issues could be agreed at the sub-regional level and investment bids can be signed off. It would better place North Yorkshire when competing for funding on a regional basis as well as recognising the fact that housing markets do not reflect local authority boundaries. It also has the potential to raise the profile of

the sub-region, improve the sharing of best practice and in the long term, subject to further member approval, create opportunities for efficiencies through sharing resources.

22. It could be argued that the adoption of a sub-regional approach is the first step towards a sub-regional housing strategy. However, this report is not proposing a move to a sub-regional strategy, although the potential for this will be considered by the strategic housing board and any proposals would be subject to further member agreement.
23. However, the adoption of a sub-regional housing strategy approach does not have to mean that each local authority would lose its ability to determine what actions are best for its own area, blur the political boundaries or ultimately lose its own identity. This is not in any authorities best interests. Through informal discussions with colleagues in district authorities, individual identity and the ability to control ones own destiny is as important to them as it is to York and there is no desire to lose this. If a sub-regional housing strategy was proposed, critical to ensure that a local authorities individuality is not lost would be the approach taken and the format of any new sub-regional strategies. Whilst not being in a position to determine what any sub-regional housing strategy may look like, it is likely that it would be set out on a spatial basis at the sub-regional level, i.e. urban, rural and coastal with individual local authority action plans underneath which would complement the wider sub-regional issues whilst at the same time, reflect local issues. This approach would ensure that each local authority retains it's own action plan and as a result of being on a spatial basis, the urban theme would create opportunities for closer links to the Leeds City Region.
24. It is proposed that a Sub-regional Strategic Housing Board be established as a sub-group of the Association of North Yorkshire Councils made up of the Executive Member for Housing from each local authority supported by the lead housing officer.
25. To enable the Sub-regional Strategic Housing Board to function in a timely and effective manner without each executive member having to refer back to their executive or cabinet, it is proposed that the Executive Member for Housing is authorised in consultation with the Director of Housing & Adult Social Services to make decisions on sub-regional housing issues at the partnership meetings. The Executive Member would report back to the Executive on a quarterly basis following the Sub-regional Strategic Housing Board meetings.

Option 2

26. It is not a statutory requirement to have a sub-regional housing partnership, however GOYH are strongly encouraging local authorities to develop a sub-regional approach. However, this in itself is not a reason to adopt a sub-regional approach. If this option is chosen, it may prevent the whole sub-regional agenda moving forward, or at least, if adopted by the district authorities, leave York on the outside of any sub-regional developments. It may also affect future assessments in relation to funding bids and our overall CPA rating.

Corporate Priorities

27. The development of a sub-regional approach to strategic housing issues will support the priorities outlined in the improvement priority

“Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city”

Implications

28. Implications arising from this report are:

- **Financial** – There are no direct financial implications
- **Human Resources (HR)** There are no HR implications
- **Equalities** – There are no equalities implications
- **Legal** – The Executive can authorise an Executive Member in Consultation with chief officer, to take decisions on behalf of the council. .
- **Crime and Disorder** There are no crime and disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications
- **Property** There are no property implications
- **Other** – There are no other implications

Risk Management

29. The risks associated with not improving governance arrangements are:

- Our sub region falls behind other sub regions in terms of coordinating strategic housing initiatives with a possible adverse impact on future bidding rounds;
- Joint working and investment plans across the sub region will continue to have little or no democratic legitimacy;
- Elected members lose an opportunity to participate fully in the fast evolving regional and sub regional housing agenda.

30. The risks associated with adopting the new governance arrangements are:

- Lack of political consensus on the Strategic Housing Board causing problems in signing off key documents, bids and initiatives. This would be unlikely due to common housing issues and priorities shared across the sub region;
- Member capacity issues i.e. “another Committee to sit on...”

Recommendations

31. The Urgency Committee is asked to:

- Agree option 1 to participate in a Sub-regional partnership for strategic housing and to appoint the Executive Member for Housing as the Council's representative on the partnership;
- Authorise the Executive Member for Housing in consultation with the Director of Housing & Adult Social Services to represent and take decisions relating to sub-regional housing issues at the partnership meetings on behalf of the City of York Council.

Reason: To develop a governance framework through which sub-regional housing issues could be agreed, investment bids, can be signed off, to better place North Yorkshire when competing for funding on a regional basis as well as raising the profile of York within the sub-region and the sub-region as a whole and improve the sharing of best practice.

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Report Approved Date 20th February 2007

Bill Hodson
Director of Housing & Adult Social Services

Report Approved Date 20th February 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s) List information for all

Legal
Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Legal & Democratic Services

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

North Yorkshire (Districts) Affordable Housing Review

Annexes:

None.

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