

mini essentials

December 2007

Dear colleagues

Below you'll find this month's edition of mini essentials, updating you on the Assembly's activities. Please feel free to share with colleagues.

Seasonal greetings to all mini essentials readers from everyone at the Assembly,
The Assembly team

Yorkshire and Humber Plan Latest

Regional leaders are to lobby government to extend its timescales for increasing Yorkshire and Humber's housing numbers.

And they are proposing a new policy to ensure the supply and delivery of new homes is managed in a way which addresses other key regional objectives such as urban regeneration and sustainable development.

Members of the Assembly met earlier this month to agree their response to the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy, the document which will help shape the future of the region on issues such as transport, housing, leisure, economic development and the environment.

Once completed, the RSS, titled the Yorkshire and Humber Plan, will set the framework to guide and direct where and how development and investment takes place across the region. Under new planning law, it will form part of the "development plan" for each local authority and be taken into account in determining planning applications.

In response to the Government's suggested increases in housing numbers to 22,000 a year, the Assembly wants the step-up to take place from 2011, rather than 2008.

Other key points agreed include:

- Concerns be expressed to Government over the required investment needed in infrastructure, to meet the demand and ensure delivery of sustainable growth;
- Priority be given to re-using brownfield sites, rather than greenfield sites, for development;
- To press for the Government to re-instate climate change and microgeneration targets in the RSS.

Local authorities, the region's MPs, business organisations and a host of other sectors have been involved in helping draw up the draft Plan.

For more details on the Yorkshire and Humber Plan please contact Richard Wood on 01924 331555; email richard.wood@yhassembly.gov.uk

Meeting the Climate Change Challenge

The Scrutiny Board has agreed that the Assembly's next scrutiny review will be 'Meeting the Climate Change Challenge'. The review will begin in January 2008, and will be focussed on activities in the region that support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions target in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). Statistics, data and other background documents are now being collated for the Scrutiny Board to help them identify the key lines of enquiry for the review.

Over the next three months, the Scrutiny Board will be meeting with Government agencies, Yorkshire Forward, partners and businesses, to understand how the region is tackling climate change, and what else needs to be done to meet the RES target. The Scrutiny Board would like to hear your views on Climate Change, and there are a number of ways that you can get involved:

- Write to the Scrutiny Team at 18 King Street, Wakefield, WF1 2SQ or email us at scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk
- Come to the Public Discussion on 18 March 2008, and pose your questions on Climate Change to the Yorkshire Forward Scrutiny Panel
- Participate in one of our Focus Group meetings, and discuss your views with the Scrutiny Board and others

For more in-depth information on our previous scrutiny enquiries, and the review on 'Meeting the Climate Change Challenge' or contact the Scrutiny Team on 01924 331555; email scrutiny@yhassembly.gov.uk. More details will be available on the Assembly's website in January.

Yorkshire and Humber Microgeneration Awards 2008

Entries are now being invited for the second Yorkshire and Humber Microgeneration Awards, presented by BBC Look North weatherman Paul Hudson on 6 March 2008.

The Awards, organised by the Assembly and Microgeneration Yorkshire will take place in Sheffield and will honour best practice renewable energy projects and initiatives throughout Yorkshire and Humber.

Awards categories are: Best Home Installation; Best Public Sector Installation; Best Community Installation; Best Commercial Installation; Best Development; Best Business Initiative and Best Policy/Policy Tool.

The closing date for entries is Friday 18th January. For more details contact Nicola Pugh at Microgeneration Yorkshire on 0113 237 8462; email nicola@my-energy.org.uk or visit the Microgeneration Yorkshire website at www.my-energy.org.uk where you can download more details and an application form.

Yorkshire and Humber Affordable Warmth Conference

Over 65 delegates attended the Yorkshire and Humber Affordable Warmth Conference on Wednesday 12 December at Sheffield City Hall.

The conference, "Keeping the Local / Regional Dialogue Strong", included speakers Paul Johnstone of the Regional Public Health Group and Isobel Mills from Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber, and saw the launch of the Yorkshire Futures led regional evidence base report, "The Cold, Hard Facts". The report aims provides a baseline to monitor regional performance in tackling fuel poverty and aid the targeting of resources.

For more details, or for a copy of the report, please contact Fay McCulloch on 01924 331586; email fay.mcculloch@yhassembly.gov.uk

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People Brave the Planning System

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People from across Yorkshire and Humber came together to work through a new guide to the planning system at the Assembly's Planning for Gypsy and Travellers - Information Event in Bradford on 28 November.

Over 200 guides were distributed on the day, which gave communities an opportunity to discuss and clarify their planning issues with the Assembly's housing and planning teams and volunteers from Yorkshire Planning Aid. The event and guide have now attracted interest from a range of public service providers, including local authorities, who work with the communities on a daily basis. Work is now being planned for information provision for public service providers working with Gypsy and Travellers in the New Year.

For more information contact James Paton on 07917 554906; email james.paton@yhassembly.gov.uk or for a copy of the pack, contact Amanda R Johnson on 01924 331 564; email amanda.johnson@yhassembly.gov.uk

Local Authority Emissions

The Assembly is committed to working with Local Authorities to support them in monitoring and measuring emissions as part of the new Local Government performance framework to deliver carbon reduction outcomes.

As part of this commitment, AEA Energy and Environment have been appointed and prepared a discussion paper to evaluate the two proposed indicators of CO₂ emissions for Local Authorities and consider options for reporting on these; assess the potential for alternative methods of calculating emissions and recommend further action to be taken in the region to engage Local Authorities in this aspect of the new Local Government performance framework. The draft discussion paper is currently the subject of consultation and it is anticipated that the final version will be available early in the New Year.

If you have any queries about this please contact Martyn Roberts on 01924 331577; email martyn.roberts@yhassembly.gov.uk

Low Carbon and Sustainable Transport Systems

A report earlier this year concluded that the region is not on course to deliver existing targets on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which are substantially lower than those that are likely to be included in the forthcoming Climate Change Bill. The research also detailed some of the changes in transport behaviours that are indicative of the scale of change that is likely to be required to deliver significant reductions.

Consequently, JMP Consulting in conjunction with the Stockholm Environment Institute were commissioned to provide the Regional Transport and Sustainable Development Boards with advice as to what practical steps could be taken within the region to achieve the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from transport.

This project has made substantial progress and the key findings of the research were presented to the Sustainable Development Board on 20 December 2007. The study shows that even with extensive implementation of measures that have a far greater focus on reducing carbon dioxide than at present (including road user charging), then carbon dioxide emissions from transport would not fall below current levels.

The final report should be produced by early February 2008. For more details contact Stuart Clewlow on 01924 331595; email stuart.clewlow@yhassembly.gov.uk

Regional Adaptation Study

The Assembly report on "Evaluating the Contribution that Key Regional Strategies Make Towards Addressing Climate Change", concluded that current regional strategies have a fairly fragmented approach to addressing the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change particularly over the longer term. Policy measures are mainly focused on building adaptive capacity and less so on delivering adaptation actions.

To address this, the Sustainable Development Board has initiated an ambitious piece of work, involving a wide range of regional partners, to develop the data required to facilitate coherent and focused action on climate change adaptation across the region.

The primary project aims are likely to be to assess the probable climate impacts across the region to 2050, identify what should be done to adapt to these impacts, provide recommendations on the way forward, and identify which organisations are best placed to take the lead in delivering the required actions.

A small working group, comprising representatives from the Assembly and regional partners, has been established to take this work forward and the Sustainable Development Board has endorsed the proposal to undertake a scoping study to inform the development of a full Regional Adaptation Study.

For more information contact Martyn Roberts on 01924 331577; email martyn.roberts@yhassembly.gov.uk

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