



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

# *Creating Sustainable Communities*

In Yorkshire and The Humber



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# ODPM Strategic Plan: Yorkshire and The Humber

## Foreword by Felicity Everiss, Regional Director, Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber

I'm delighted to introduce this new publication which outlines much of the work being done to create sustainable communities in Yorkshire and The Humber by:

- ◆ Delivering a better balance between housing supply and demand.
- ◆ Ensuring people have decent places to live.
- ◆ Tackling disadvantage.
- ◆ Delivering better services through strong effective local government.
- ◆ Promoting the development of the region.

Working with our regional, local and neighbourhood partners we will tackle these issues so that, for example, 188,000 houses in the social sector will be made fit for 21st century life, and crime across the region will have fallen by a fifth by 2008.

European Structural Funds, alongside significant investment by the Government and Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency) and other partners including the private sector will help to create new jobs and support companies to grow. In South Yorkshire alone, the Objective 1 programme will have created around 25,000 jobs by the time it ends.

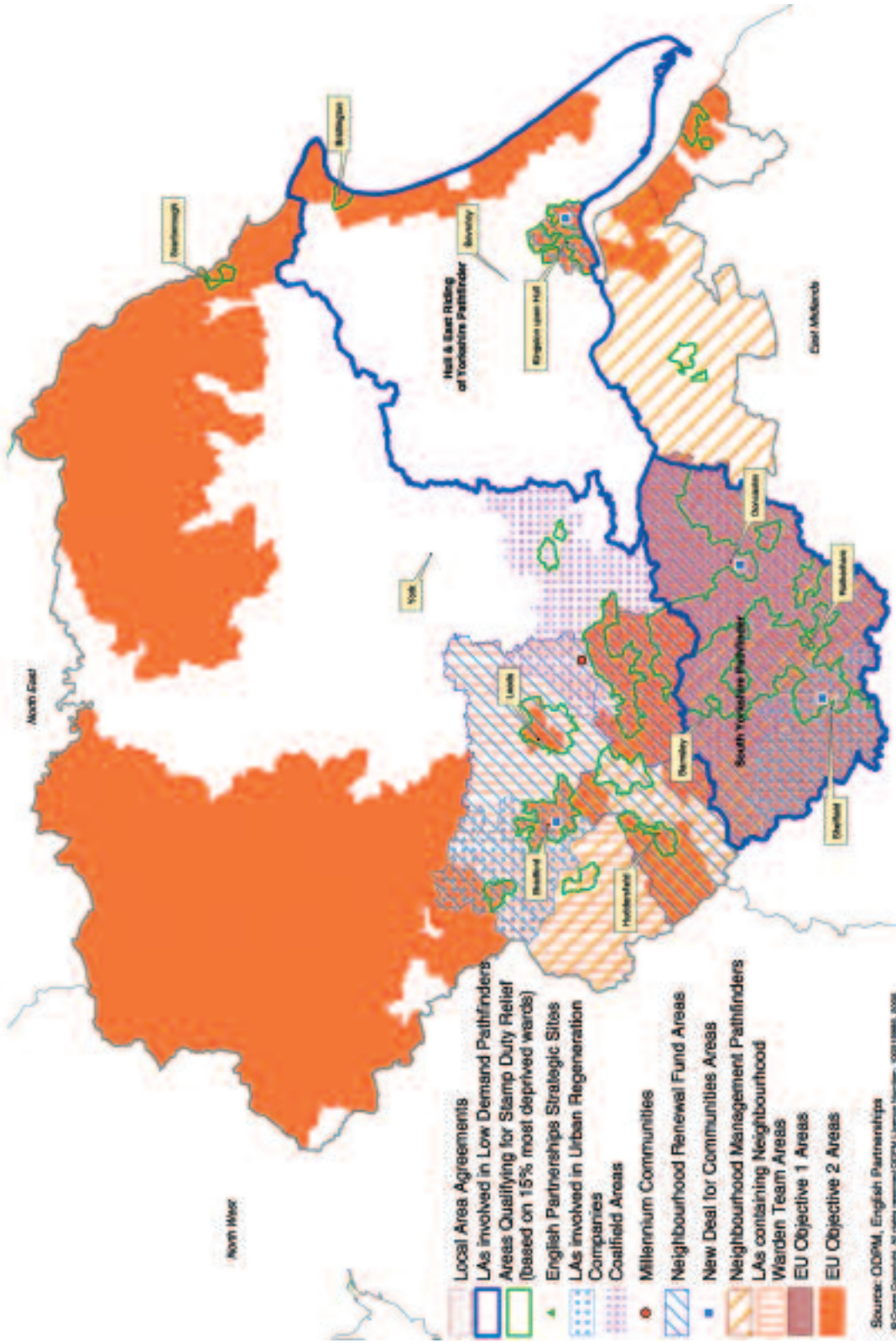
We have some challenges. Tackling individual and community disadvantage and inequalities will be a key focus of all our work with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Helping more young people make the most of their potential through learning and developing skills and achieving GCSEs, and fewer girls becoming mothers during their teens are two of the issues people in our neighbourhoods are working to tackle.

Community networks and voluntary organisations will play an important part in empowering local people and helping to achieve the agenda for sustainable communities in Yorkshire and The Humber.

This document is being published alongside the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's five-year strategies *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All* and *Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity*.

Together these publications mark a major step forward in our commitment to create safer, stronger, more successful places to live and work – here in Yorkshire and The Humber, and right across the country.

# Yorkshire and the Humber: Actions to Achieve and Maintain Sustainability, updated 2005



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## Our approach

In February 2003, the Government published the £38 billion *Sustainable Communities Plan*, the most comprehensive programme of investment in homes, neighbourhoods and the quality of life for decades.

One of the key principles behind the *Sustainable Communities Plan* is that different parts of the country face different problems.

We need new ways of working at the neighbourhood, local, sub-regional and regional levels in order to overcome decades of disinvestment and allow everyone, in all regions, to share in the nation's prosperity.

We can only do this if we allow for the unique circumstances of each region when we make decisions and spend money. It is clear from the lessons of the past that the old way of doing things – decisions imposed from Whitehall without full consideration of the regional or local context – no longer works.

The Government Offices, the voluntary Regional Assemblies, the Regional Development Agencies, the Learning and Skills Councils and other regionally-based organisations are working together to create sustainable communities, reflecting regional priorities.

Investing in housing is an important part of the sustainable communities programme:

- ◆ Building new homes where they are needed most.
- ◆ Renewing social housing where it has fallen into disrepair.
- ◆ Reviving housing markets in places where people no longer want to live.

But creating sustainable communities is about more than just housing. It is about:

- ◆ Increasing jobs and economic growth, promoting social justice and improving the quality of life.

- ◆ Encouraging people to get involved in the decisions which affect their community.
- ◆ Delivering better public services.
- ◆ Building schools, hospitals and transport as an integral part of development, not an afterthought.
- ◆ And improving the environment, for example by making streets, parks and squares cleaner, safer and greener, and building more environmentally friendly buildings.

## Making a difference

We have seen a lot of welcome progress in the two years since the *Sustainable Communities Plan* was published, building on the achievements since 1997. But there is still a lot to do.

Over the next five years, we will continue to make a substantial impact on delivering sustainable communities and building a more prosperous future for all the people of Yorkshire and The Humber. This report explains what we're doing to take our agenda forward over the next five years.

## The home you want, in the place you want it

To offer everyone, whether they are owner-occupiers, first time buyers, social tenants, key workers or people who rent privately the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, there will be:

- ◆ Over £1.2 billion investment through the Market Renewal programme to revive communities and failing housing markets across nine pathfinder areas in the North and Midlands, with £65m to tackle low demand in new areas.
- ◆ Completion of reforms of the planning system to strengthen the delivery of new homes and infrastructure nationwide.
- ◆ Action to deliver new homes in a responsible way while protecting and enhancing the environment: a new Green Belt Direction requiring certain proposals for development in the green belt to be referred to the Secretary of State.
- ◆ Help for over 80,000 first time buyers and key workers to get a foot on the property ladder, in part by using public land for new homes.
- ◆ An extension to Homebuy, to offer up to around 300,000 more social tenants the opportunity of home ownership.
- ◆ More choice for those who rent, including launching moveUK – a new scheme bringing together nationwide information about jobs and housing opportunities in one place, giving people a better quality of life in a new area.
- ◆ Extension of choice-based lettings to all local authorities by 2010, so that tenants can choose where they live instead of having a home allocated to them.
- ◆ More than doubling investment in social homes from 1997 levels, to £2 billion per year, delivering an extra 10,000 new social homes per year by 2008.

*Building more homes in the right places, at the right cost, to the right standards of quality and design*

The region has two of England's nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders to tackle the problems of collapsing housing markets – yet in some parts of North Yorkshire and the East Riding the average terraced house costs over six times average annual salary.

- ◆ Regional Housing, Economic and Spatial Strategies will be implemented to deliver better economic performance and more balanced housing markets.
- ◆ We will promote innovative approaches to tackling affordability in hotspots like the Golden Triangle of Harrogate, York and Leeds.
- ◆ Action with local authorities, the Housing Corporation, Yorkshire Forward and English Partnerships will tackle former coalfield areas like the Green Corridor of Barnsley, Doncaster and Wakefield.
- ◆ We will support local planning authorities in making the planning system work effectively.



### Connecting the City

Connecting the City is a major European funded project in the centre of Bradford that will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the city. The emphasis is on infrastructure, the alteration of road layouts and demolition of buildings to pave the way for commercial developments and investment opportunities. It will also create new public areas and streamline the flow of traffic. The emphasis on people rather than vehicles will give new life to the city centre. The project itself has forged new links between Bradford City Council, the URC and the private sector.

## Reforming the Planning System

- ◆ Local Planning Authorities in Yorkshire and The Humber will continue to share in the Planning Delivery Grant to recognise improved performance in the planning system, and to support our sustainable communities agenda.
- ◆ **Leeds city region** (which includes parts of 10 local authority areas), and **South Yorkshire** sub-regional strategies are being prepared to feed into the Regional Spatial Strategy and inform Local Development Frameworks. This will help achieve more balanced housing markets and a better balance between homes and jobs in the region.
- ◆ **Harrogate** Borough Council adopted new Local Plan policies in May 2004 to increase the supply of affordable homes. The policies set out lower size thresholds on sites required to provide affordable housing and increase the percentage of units to be provided.
- ◆ **The Hull and East Riding** sub-regional planning strategy will be taken forward through the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks to help deliver urban renaissance and more balanced housing markets across the two districts to complement the work of Hull Urban Regeneration Company and Gateway.

### *Investing to improve the existing social housing stock*

While most people in the region are well housed, there are still too many people living in cold, damp homes.

A disproportionate number of low income and vulnerable households live in poor housing, affecting health and social well-being – often in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

But new investment solutions, working alongside major programmes of regeneration and renewal, are helping to deliver decent homes in places where people want to live.

- ◆ Non-decent social homes reduced by over 100,000 since 1997.

- ◆ Long-term investment solutions for 63,000 non-decent homes (half the region's stock).
- ◆ £6m Regional Housing Board investment promoting new approaches to private sector renewal, including Private Sector Loans Fund.
- ◆ The region will share in over £2.5 billion for Arms-Length Management Organisations and £1.2 billion for Housing Private Finance Initiative schemes nationally over the three Spending Review years. This is part of the Government's commitment to bring all social housing into a decent condition by 2010.
- ◆ We will continue to work intensively with the four local authorities most at risk of not meeting the decent homes target to secure places on the 2005 ALMO programme, and on the 2005 Stock Transfer Programme.
- ◆ We will work with partners to develop new region-wide affordable warmth programmes by April 2006 to help deliver decent private sector homes and tackle fuel poverty.

*Reviving communities where the demand for housing has collapsed or has been seriously undermined*

Changing economic fortunes, population migration and changes in people's choices and aspirations have led to an increasingly complex housing market in Yorkshire and The Humber.

Many areas have high levels of housing demand with a growing need for affordable homes. While some areas like Harrogate report huge house price rises, by contrast, many areas in the former coalfields and industrial heartlands grapple with low or fragile demand. And many major urban areas like Leeds and Bradford have vibrant housing markets next door to unpopular, declining ones.

It's a huge challenge. But strong partnerships and innovative approaches are making a real difference.



**Improving Homes in Kirklees**

Shelly Summers on the Fieldhead Estate, Birstall, was the 1000th tenant in Kirklees to have her property completed in the decent homes programmes. She received a new kitchen, central heating, loft insulation, new handrail, repairs to the footpath and new drainage and gutters. Mr and Mrs Rhodes from Thornhill received a new bathroom, kitchen, double glazing and roof repairs. A recent feature in the Yorkshire Evening Post quoted the couple as saying "Now it is far more cosy, more like a home. The place is 100% better".

- ◆ Funding to tackle the issue of low housing demand nationally has been trebled. In Yorkshire and The Humber this will allow us to increase action in Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas, and make a start on tackling low demand outside those areas.
- ◆ 520 homes were repaired, refurbished or demolished through the first year of the £71m South Yorkshire Pathfinder.
- ◆ £285m Regional Housing Board investments are delivering 2,700 affordable homes for rent or sale, with 262 in rural areas.
- ◆ The draft Regional Spatial Strategy and the new Local Development Frameworks are helping to tackle low demand and affordability issues.

### New jobs and economic growth

To strengthen regions to support skills, jobs, the economy and housing there will be:

- ◆ A strategic long-term approach to key issues such as skills, transport, planning and infrastructure, with greater alignment of priorities and spending, helping to increase the employment rate to 80%, including 900,000 more people in work in areas outside the Greater South East.
- ◆ An enhanced role for Regional Development Agencies, including the delivery of Business Link Services and R&D grants, and links with Regional Skills Partnerships.
- ◆ The development of RDA inter-regional growth strategies, including the Northern Way, the Midlands Way and the South West Integrated Growth Strategy.
- ◆ The Core Cities group working to develop policies for 'city-regions'.
- ◆ Development planning which meets the needs of businesses and householders, while protecting the environment.

After years of deep-rooted industrial decline, the region is beginning to report exciting economic success stories.

The Northern Way report commits the three Northern RDAs to building a more entrepreneurial North. To match the national average we need to create over 93,000 more VAT registered firms.

We also need to build stronger leadership skills and deliver economic growth, job quality and innovation.

- ◆ Already there's been considerable progress, thanks to the unprecedented period of economic stability and the lowest rates of inflation, interest rates and unemployment in decades.
- ◆ The regional growth rate for 2003-04 was 2.5% (1% above EU average). The European Funds programme has created 9,600 business start-ups, 510 high growth start-ups and nearly 21,000 new jobs. Investment through the South Yorkshire Objective 1 programme has created 11,500 jobs so far.
- ◆ Yorkshire Forward currently receives an above average share of funding for the Regional Development Agencies. During 2003-04 it levered £75.5m of private investment into deprived areas. Across the region, Yorkshire Forward created 16,500 jobs and supported 47,000 learning opportunities.
- ◆ Over the next five years, we will work with our Northern Way partners to reduce the £29 billion gap in output between the North and the rest of the UK, for example by promoting improvements in skills, technology transfer and enterprise.
- ◆ We'll support partners as they implement City Region development programmes and the Northern Way Growth Strategy, building on the Leeds and Sheffield prospectuses.
- ◆ We'll develop Youthbuild to help young people into good jobs in the construction sector through our decent homes investment plans, following successes in Bradford, rural North Yorkshire and Leeds.
- ◆ We will help the region maximise the opportunity provided by locating the Northern Centre of Excellence in Leeds.

## Tackling deprivation and disadvantage

To tackle disadvantage so that people are not condemned to lives of poverty, poor services and disempowerment by accidents of birth or geography, there will be:

- ◆ Over £2.5 billion invested each year in practical work to transform many of the worst-off areas, better targeted on those that need it most.
- ◆ Faster progress in education, health, work and cutting crime in the most deprived areas and for the worst off people – narrowing the gap.
- ◆ Over £5 billion housing-related support for over 1.2 million vulnerable people to help them live independently and successfully.
- ◆ Action to tackle homelessness – with the aim of halving numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010.
- ◆ Better personalised public services which can meet individual needs better.
- ◆ Greater efforts to attract private sector investment to deprived areas.
- ◆ Effective provision for Gypsies and Travellers, while tackling unauthorised development.



### **Strengthening Links between Pathfinders and New Deal for Communities**

Enhanced co-operation between Pathfinders and NDCs – with reciprocal arrangements in place for Board membership, and shared master planning – is paying dividends. Burngreave NDC in Sheffield contributed £1m to achieve the advanced demolition of Woodside Flats. In the short term the reclaimed land has been brought back into use as a temporary resource for the community. In the longer term, the NDC retains a share in its redevelopment value for re-investment in the regeneration of the area.

To balance economic success with social justice we must bring hope back to neighbourhoods suffering from lower life expectancy, lower skills, lower education achievement and lower aspirations.

In Yorkshire and The Humber, the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest is narrowing. For example:

- ◆ The proportion of pupils achieving five A-C GCSEs in the poorest performing schools in Sheffield increased from 18% in 2000 to 26% in 2003.
- ◆ Percentage of people “very worried” about burglary fell from 19% to 14% between 2002-03 and 2003-04.

- ◆ Regenerative Police Initiative in Hull has reduced crime in targeted hotspots by 30%.
- ◆ The purchase and demolition of 194 abandoned and vandalised properties in Fitzwilliam Estate in Wakefield is making major contribution to renewal of the area.
- ◆ The number of people sleeping rough in the region has fallen by three-quarters since 1998.
- ◆ Homelessness acceptances have been reduced by nearly a sixth.

But there is still a lot to do – five districts in the region remain in the worst 10% measured by the Indices of Deprivation and six districts have incapacity benefit rates above the national average. In South Yorkshire the challenge is especially great. We are working with Jobcentre Plus and the Objective 1 programme to develop a team of personal advisers and health professionals to deliver support using existing community premises.

LSPs are playing a key role in local neighbourhood renewal strategies. Close partnership working between local authorities, residents and other stakeholders has also been helping to prevent homelessness and make communities safer.

- ◆ The recent Spending Review has continued the funding of the four New Deal for Communities schemes in the region. NDC funding for Yorkshire and The Humber this year is £27m, contributing to a total of £209m over a ten-year period. Because of activities around crime reduction in Bradford Trident, house values have risen 85% since 2000. Hull Preston Road has built two new playgrounds, a new village centre for public service providers and new retail activities.
- ◆ Yorkshire and The Humber receives an above average share of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund pot, with £63m this year, and £66m next year. Deprived areas in nine local authority districts in the region have benefited from the NRF.



#### **Secure by Design and Facelift**

Since February 2001 more than 1000 homes in the Bradford Trident NDC area have benefited from the provision of additional security equipment, such as window and door locks and chime alarms. A further 500 homes are scheduled to be improved over the next two years. Priority recipients of the service are repeat victims of burglary and those living in burglary 'hotspots'. The success of the project and other crime reduction initiatives has halved burglaries since September 2001. In a second NDC project, Facelift Plus, 130 houses have benefited from improvements that include stone cleaning, new front and rear garden walls and work to eaves. Some residents also took up the offer of the Matched Incentive Scheme that matched 50/50 expenditure on roofs, doors and central heating. Residential prices in the Bradford Trident area have risen by 36% between 2000 and 2003 against a fall of 15% between 1995 and 2000.

- ◆ There will also be continued funding for the five Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders in the region. In Kendray, Barnsley, the level of void properties has fallen to 8%. In Rotherham, a new social enterprise undertaking doorstep collections has created 14 new jobs. In Dewsbury the level of recorded crime fell by 40% in 2004.
- ◆ We will continue work to end the use of bed and breakfast for homeless families with children, sustain the reduction in rough sleeping and support the delivery of improved homelessness services that concentrate on prevention.
- ◆ We will strengthen links between neighbourhood renewal and skills by building on Testbed Learning Community experience in Barnsley and Calderdale.
- ◆ We will continue to improve the performance of the region's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, achieving almost 20% reduction in crime by 2008.

## Improving the quality of life – cleaner, safer, greener neighbourhoods

To make neighbourhoods cleaner, safer, and greener, creating communities all over the country that people are proud to be part of, there will be:

- ◆ Sustained investment to make all social homes decent by 2010, and to ensure that at least 70% of vulnerable households in the private sector have a decent home, with environmental improvements in local neighbourhoods.
- ◆ A cross-Government programme for improving local liveability in every community across the country, measured through a new liveability Public Service Agreement target, which says that there must be measurable improvements by 2008.
- ◆ Around £7 billion for local authorities to fund local environmental services over the next three years, with around £3 billion for highway maintenance and street lighting.
- ◆ Extra powers to deal with anti-social behaviour – litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting, noise and nuisance vehicles – through the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.
- ◆ Action to incentivise councils to take effective action to improve their environment, by giving this the weight it deserves in the measurement and assessment of council performance, and by providing reward grants for councils who exceed targets agreed with central Government in Local Public Service Agreements.
- ◆ The introduction of model bye-laws which can be used by communities to address problems of anti-social behaviour.
- ◆ A new Code for Sustainable Buildings, to promote excellence in new buildings for energy and water efficiency.
- ◆ A target to raise the average energy efficiency of the residential housing stock by 20% by 2010, compared with 2000.

Yorkshire and The Humber is a region of huge contrasts, combining outstanding landscapes and cities rich in cultural icons with coalfield areas scarred by contamination. While many of its five million people are concentrated in West Yorkshire's vibrant urban centres and around Hull, Sheffield, York and Doncaster, the region also has beautiful but remote rural and coastal communities.

- ◆ 16 Green Flag winners and three Liveability Pilots in Sheffield, Doncaster and North East Lincolnshire with £9.5m additional funding.
- ◆ 21 Neighbourhood Warden Schemes are increasing resident satisfaction, reducing fear of crime and improving the environment.
- ◆ Over the next five years, we will use our share of the new Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (£230m available nationally in 2005-06) to roll out further wardens' schemes in the region.
- ◆ Regionally produced targeting statements for DEFRA's new £9m Environmental Stewardship Scheme will help ensure it will enhance the region's environment and help sustain rural communities.
- ◆ Key partners will develop a Rural Framework which will help identify with local service deliverers better results on the ground and make access to funding and services easier for rural communities.
- ◆ Through a range of funding streams we will continue to seek opportunities to encourage the use of the arts, media and sport in helping disadvantaged young people. The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, after finding itself the target of increasing vandalism, used outreach workers to run workshops and summer courses for local young people. This led to a 70% reduction in vandalism.



#### **Goodwin Wardens**

The Goodwin Resource Centre at Hull is the base for an increasing number of warden schemes that will soon employ over 100 wardens. From an initial ODPM funded scheme at Thornton Street, schemes are now being implemented at Beverley Road, Orchard Park estate, Preston Road, North Hull, Anlaby Road and Fountain Road. Goodwin won the national "Scheme of the Year" in 2003-04. The Goodwin Centre has also been chosen to be one of 12 Warden Regional Resource Centres to act as a source of good practice. Responsibilities will include supporting the regional wardens' network, delivering core and manager training; NVQ assessment and promoting liveability issues.

## Better local government

To ensure that local government delivers excellent services and leads and enables community empowerment, there will be:

- ◆ Local Area Agreements to deliver better services based on shared priorities: 21 pilots under way and a further 40 agreements to follow.
- ◆ Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), engaging the private sector in projects to improve town centres.
- ◆ Clearer roles for councillors – with a strong, visible executive and roles for councillors as advocates of their local community.
- ◆ More opportunities for mayors for those that want them, particularly in our major cities, with greater power to make a real difference.
- ◆ A fair, transparent and sustainable local tax and finance system.
- ◆ A new housing role for local authorities, based on investing in new social homes; managing housing better; taking a more strategic approach to planning for homes, growth and infrastructure; and providing land for low cost homes.

Effective partnership working in the region, including the creative use of the capacity building funding, has resulted in a marked improvement in the performance of local authorities across services since 2002 (as shown in the Comprehensive Performance Assessments by the independent Audit Commission). Local authorities in the region are well placed to continue improving.

- ◆ Over the next five years, we will promote and advance the emerging local government strategy and strengthen the way that local and central government work together.
- ◆ This year Yorkshire and The Humber's 24 local councils and the police and fire authorities are receiving over £4.7 billion from the Government through the Local Authority Formula Grant.



**Wakefield MDC: A lesson in whole council improvement**

Wakefield MDC was released from ODPM supervision in May 2004 after climbing from poor to fair CPA in 15 months. In responding to the initial judgement, the council identified the right priorities, appointing dynamic senior managers with proven track records and focusing members on key strategic issues. Ministers described the council's progress as "remarkable". The council leader said: "It shows that by working with ODPM and having a clear focus and objectives we can achieve a tremendous amount in a short time".

- ◆ CPA results showed rapid improvement in 2004: half of councils in the region have moved up a category this year. The region has overtaken the national average in terms of the proportion of good or excellent single tier and county councils, with four councils now assessed as excellent.
- ◆ We aim to improve the CPA scores of all local authorities with no authorities to be categorised as weak or poor, and at least half to be excellent. And we'll use learning from the four Local Area Agreement pilots to improve services across the region.
- ◆ By working closely with the Local Government Leadership Centre, we'll help build capacity in communities and strengthen local leadership – building on the success of the Yorkshire and The Humber Local Government Improvement and Innovation Partnership.
- ◆ Four of the 21 Local Area Agreement pilots will be in the region – at Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster and Bradford. These councils will have more freedom to work in innovative ways to benefit their communities.
- ◆ Three rural unitary authorities, East Riding of Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire are working together in a Pathfinder Project to find new ways to deliver services in rural areas.
- ◆ We're going to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of local services by maximising the opportunities provided by e-government and fully exploiting the regional Centre of Procurement Excellence.

## More say for communities

To give people more of a say in the way places (both urban and rural) are run and help improve local services, there will be:

- ◆ Opportunities for all communities to have more control over their own neighbourhoods through a proposed Neighbourhoods Charter forming part of a national framework agreed with local government and others, which could include the ability for communities to own their own assets (for example, playgrounds or community centres), and to trigger action when things aren't right.
  - ◆ More responsive local services, with better links to local people, including schools, health services and the police.
  - ◆ Local councillors, who are drawn from a wider section of the community, as leaders and advocates for local communities, at the heart of arrangements for improving their neighbourhood.
  - ◆ More devolution of budgets and control to communities – which could involve small community funds held by councillors to make a difference in their neighbourhoods.
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- ◆ Youth Parliaments across the region and notably in Bradford and Calderdale are giving young people a strong voice in the provision of their services.
  - ◆ In Leeds, Kirklees and Barnsley, tenants' representatives on local housing boards are taking decisions that have a real impact on the regeneration of their estates.
  - ◆ In Sheffield, Neighbourhood Commissions have developed their own contributions to housing strategies, and solutions to neighbourhood issues.

## Working across the region

To ensure that decisions are taken at the right level to join together action for the benefit of all, there will be:

- ◆ New roles for Government Offices in delivering Government policy and bringing it together.
- ◆ Strengthened Government Offices in the lead on negotiating targets and priorities with local authorities through Local Area Agreements.
- ◆ Proposals to merge regional housing and planning bodies, bringing together responsibility for housing and planning strategies.
- ◆ Regional Emphasis Documents and regional funding allocations which give more regional influence over budgets.
- ◆ Regional Resilience Forum with agreed delivery plans to improve planning for emergencies.
- ◆ Regional co-ordination for those fire and rescue activities which need to be handled at a regional level.

### The Government Office Role

The Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber brings together the activities and interests of 10 Government Departments within a single organisation. It uses its policies, programmes and influence to enable communities to become better places in which to live, through the effective alignment and delivery of national, regional and local priorities. It also provides a regional perspective to inform the development and evaluation of Government policy.

The Government Office manages European funds as well as significant spending programmes on behalf of these Departments. It oversees budgets and contracts delegated to regional organisations, as well as carrying out regulatory functions and sponsoring the Yorkshire Forward RDA.

To achieve the greatest progress, we need to make the most of our assets and advantages. That means working at the right level – for example, bringing together services, funding and programmes which can be best co-ordinated across the whole region.

In recent years, strong partnerships and new ways of working have been created to maximise the effectiveness of initiatives at the regional level.

This has been seen in a wide range of activities from developing the Northern Way Growth Strategy to building better links between housing and planning.

The region's contribution to the Regional Emphasis Document and Regional Economic Performance Public Service Agreement, and the work of the Regional Transport Board, have all shown partnership working at its best and demonstrated how well the region can contribute to policy development.

- ◆ The Regional Transport Board is providing national policy advice on managing regional budgets.
- ◆ The Regional Resilience Forum and sub-groups are bringing together key players from local authorities, local police forces, health and emergency services, the military, media, transport and utility companies. We are helping the forum engage with stakeholders in the successful implementation of the Civil Contingencies Act.
- ◆ The Regional Health Partnership Board is improving health and well-being and reducing health inequalities.

## CONCLUSION

We are working with partners to make our vision of sustainable communities a reality – from local government to the private sector, from local community groups to regional agencies.

We believe that Yorkshire and The Humber has huge potential as well as a proud heritage – and we are making a long term commitment to improving the quality of life for all people in the region.

Our vision is to create sustainable communities in which people thrive and prosper – the homes they require, the security they want, the environment they deserve and the jobs they need.

