
Yorkshire and Humber European Engagement Plan

Playing a strong and
positive role in Europe

European Strategy Team
Yorkshire Forward
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Foreword

Economic recovery and green economic growth for Yorkshire and Humber relies on our engagement with the European Union (EU). This is because Europe is the main destination for exports from this region, and EU regulation has significant impact on the regional economy. It is also because the EU offers us many opportunities to grow our trade, maintain our competitiveness and influence our future. Europe can support and add value to the Yorkshire and Humber ambition to develop a low carbon economy that has green economic growth, jobs and quality of life for all the regions people at its core.

Maintaining and improving the region's global competitiveness and the fight against climate change, (including secure and sustainable energy) are often quoted as the most demanding challenges facing the EU as a whole. These challenges are followed by, adapting to demographic trends, managing migration, reducing inequalities and disparities and the need for business support simplification to help private sector competitiveness. Yorkshire and Humber recognise these challenges and want to be at the forefront of addressing these major issues.

Set against these challenges it is essential that the region engages effectively with the European agenda in order to promote its interests, create opportunities and where possible influence EU decision makers. The region has considerable strengths on which we can build – the carbon capture and storage pilot, or the investment by the Smartwind consortium in a new wind farm off the Hornsea coast to name just two recent examples.

Following the change of Government, the need to make significant reductions in public spending has dominated the policy environment. What remains clear is that the region needs to continue to engage with the EU at all governance levels – locally, through the emerging Local Enterprise Partnerships, regionally and nationally.

Territorial Cohesion is a new area of EU competence written into the Treaty of Europe and delivered at a regional level. It would therefore be sensible to consider economic development activities at a regional level that align with EU economic development policy, avoid duplication and encourage partnership.

In the EU, the newly appointed college of EU Commissioners are putting in place their agendas for change, against the backdrop of adjustments required to implement the Treaty of Lisbon. Key European developments during 2010 include the 'EU 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth', the European Commission work plan for the current year and beyond, and the EU budget review.

The regions' work with the EU must be focused to maximise the impact we can have with limited and targeted local and regional resource. The European Strategy Team in Yorkshire Forward will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure we turn EU information into focused intelligence in the following priority areas:

- Economy, innovation and knowledge transfer;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation (including flooding); and,
- Community cohesion, migration and demographic change.

Activity to facilitate partnership working in and beyond Yorkshire and Humber will remain an essential element of the work the team undertakes, as will signposting stakeholders to relevant sources of advice on regulation.

This EU Engagement Plan can only be achieved through partnership and it is intended that this document will be shared with key stakeholders in the region. The plan might also helpfully act as a starting point for further discussion in terms of actions to be taken under each theme that key partners can contribute to and help achieve through their own actions.

Introduction

The European Strategy Team consists of two full time equivalent staff working on the European agenda, based at Yorkshire Forward's Leeds office. Headed by Malcolm Taylor (Assistant Director of Finance – Europe), the team manages the Yorkshire Europe office on behalf of the region. The office is based in Brussels and is the Yorkshire and Humber 'representation' to the EU.

The team also currently provides capacity building and awareness raising activity in the region for the range of EU funds that can support economic development.

The European Engagement Plan (EEP) is written under the following sections:

1. Economy, innovation and knowledge transfer;
2. Climate change mitigation and adaptation (including flooding);
3. Community cohesion, migration and demographic change;
4. Partnership working in and beyond Yorkshire and Humber;
5. EU regulation; and,
6. Europe 2020.

The same format has been applied to the first three sections of the EEP. For each priority area information is presented as follows: A brief though not comprehensive introduction to the policy background; examples of existing regional partnerships and profile; EU funding opportunities; and, European Strategy Team action.

Economy, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer

Policy background

The Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) provides the context in which to consider the opportunities for European engagement in economy, innovation and knowledge transfer. The RIS is constructed around four major themes: Growing the region's innovation culture; Developing a region-wide innovation environment; Targeted European engagement; and, Working together across the North.

At a national level, the New Industries New Jobs agenda further focuses European Engagement, and has highlighted regional strengths around particular sectors.

At a European level the Europe 2020 strategy has set out a series of flagship initiatives to hasten the exit from the economic crisis and create the building blocks for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. For innovation, the key flagship initiative is 'Innovation Union', which aims to re-focus R&D and innovation policy on the challenges facing our society, such as climate change, health and demographic change. This initiative aims to strengthen each link in the innovation chain, from 'blue sky' research to commercialisation.

Work has already begun to determine the shape of Framework Programme 8, and the key milestone for this year is the interim evaluation of FP7 due in October 2010.

By 2020 the 'Fifth Freedom' should be in place across the European Research Area (ERA). This means that researchers, knowledge and technology should circulate freely across national borders in the ERA, like a research version of the 'common market' for goods and services.

Conditions for businesses to innovate should also be improved by agreeing the single EU patent. Despite the existence of a European Patent Office, patent holders currently have to translate their patent into the language of each country they want their patent valid for.

Two other 'flagship initiatives' impact on the innovation agenda in Yorkshire and Humber. Through 'Youth on the Move', the EU intends to enhance its mobility, university and researchers' programmes also known as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundi, Tempus and Marie Curie. Lastly, 'A Digital Agenda for Europe' aims to speed up the roll-out of high speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms.

The Yorkshire and Humber EU Policy Calendar identifies what the potential implications of each European Commission proposal might be for the region in 2010:

http://www.yorkshireurope.be/EU_Policy_04.asp

Partnership examples:

A proposal including YF as a partner was submitted to the recent Regions of Knowledge call in 2010 on the subject of telehealth. The funding decision is expected by November 2010.

The Enterprise Europe Yorkshire network helps businesses connect, innovate and grow and is the key network that the European Commission use to support businesses to be active in the single market.

Profile

Being active in EU funded projects, networks and awards are key to raising a regions profile at EU level. In the past examples of profile include: the Centres for Industrial Collaboration winning the Regiostars award in 2007, and Scarborough's success winning the Grand Jury prize at the EU Enterprise Awards in 2009.

Funding

ERDF is the main EU funding stream for helping to redress regional imbalances. Funding priorities in Yorkshire and the Humber for the 2007-2013 programme include promoting innovation and R&D.

The Framework Programme 7 for Research and Development offers resources both for businesses and research institutions up to 2013. In addition to direct funding for research, elements of this programme are focused on innovation policy, and the free movement of researchers.

The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) offers a range of funding opportunities from bridging the gap between research and the market for environmentally friendly products and processes to supporting the Enterprise Europe Yorkshire network in our region.

The Guide 'Joining up ERDF with other EU funding opportunities (2010 - 2013)' provides further information for regional stakeholders in Yorkshire and Humber: http://www.yorkshireurope.be/EU_Funding_06.asp

European Strategy Team action

The European Strategy Team will continue to work with organisations such as Enterprise Europe Yorkshire (EEY) network and Yorkshire Universities in the region to build capacity for businesses and research institutions and to encourage their participation in these funding streams.

The European Strategy Team will work with the YF Innovation Team to continue to ensure information on the Framework 8 programme is disseminated appropriately as it becomes available.

The Autumn of 2010 will see a further strengthening of the importance of innovation with the Communication of the European Plan for Research and Innovation. This will build on the EU 2020 document published in March 2010.

The European Strategy Team will encourage the participation of organisations and individuals in our region on expert advisory groups, expert panels and evaluations of

EU projects or programmes in order to increase the capacity in our region to access these programmes and engage with EU policy.

Communication back to the region will be developed through the teams work with the YF Innovation Team to ensure intelligence is targeted to organisations and individuals in the region that have either the potential capacity or funding to act on the intelligence.

Work will continue internally with the YF Innovation Team to consider the implications of the EU 2020 strategy on the regions innovation agenda and the communication 'The EU plan for research and innovation' expected in the Autumn of 2010.

The European Strategy Team will also keep abreast of national developments on innovation and specifically the proposal to centralise activity.

Community Cohesion, Migration and Demographic Change

Policy background

The Yorkshire and Humber Refugee Integration Programme coordinates the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the region and is responsible for the implementation of the Refugee Integration Strategy for the region, 'Finding Sanctuary, Enriching Yorkshire and the Humber: Integration Strategy for Refugees and Asylum Seekers 2009 – 2011'.

All legal competencies remain at a national level and are dealt with centrally by the UK Border and Immigration Agency (UKBA). The UKBA Refugee Integration Strategy 'Moving on Together' is for those involved in planning policy, providing funding and delivering integration services benefiting refugees. UKBA is also responsible for the Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES).

At European level, the Stockholm Programme provides a framework for EU action on citizenship, justice, security, asylum and immigration and was adopted by the European Council in December 2009.

2010 is the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and will be followed by the European Year of Volunteering in 2011 and the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2012.

With regards to health policy, the European Health Strategy focuses on improving health in the EU and recognises the links between health and economic prosperity, – the strategic themes include Fostering Good Health in and Ageing Europe, Protecting Citizens from Health threats, and Dynamic Health Systems and New Technologies.

Demographic change and ageing in particular has been identified as a key future challenge for regions.

The EU 2020 'flagship initiative' relating to this priority area are 'an agenda for new skills and jobs', and 'a European platform against poverty'.

The Yorkshire and Humber EU Policy Calendar identifies what the potential implications of each European Commission proposal might be for the region in 2010:

http://www.yorkshireeurope.be/EU_Policy_04.asp

Partnerships and profile examples:

European Strategy Team is members of several free of charge networks including: the European Regional and Local Authorities for the Integration of Migrants (ERLAIM) network; the European Regional Health Authorities network (EUREGHA); the Public Health United Kingdom Brussels Office (UKBO) network; and, the Social Policy UKBO network. The networks hold regular meetings, seminars and workshops to share good practice and to liaise with EU institutions on legislative developments and funding opportunities.

The Diversity and Equality in European Cities' project (DIVE) aims to encourage cities to capitalise on the diversity of their population. The project focuses on policies for the promotion of diversity and equality in municipalities and looks at how cities can effectively implement these policies for diversity management and equal opportunities. Leeds City Council are project members.

The Building Healthy Communities Project has established a thematic network which aims to capitalise knowledge and practice on urban factors influencing health. Funded by URBACT II with Barnsley Metropolitan Council as partners, the project aims to increase awareness of the contributions that a 'healthy' urban policy can make to tackle challenges in health.

Funding

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the main EU funds to support new ways of extending employment opportunities and developing workforce skills. Although a national programme, the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Skills and Work Partnership regional ESF framework aims to deliver the Programme across two priorities:

- Priority 1 - to increase employment and reduce unemployment and inactivity,
- Priority 2 - to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce by improving the skills of those in the workforce.

Other funding opportunities include the Lifelong Learning Programme which supports education and training for all stages of lifelong learning; for activities at school, college, university, in the workplace and in the community. The programme is made up of several different sub-programmes offering a variety of opportunities. The Grundtvig sub-programme is particularly relevant as it focuses on adult learning and vulnerable social groups such as migrants.

The Youth in Action Programme aims to inspire a sense of active European citizenship and tolerance among young Europeans.

The Framework Programme 7 Health theme aims to improve the health of European citizens by increasing the competitiveness of European related industries and businesses, global health issues and epidemics, health promotion and prevention, diagnostic tools and technologies and sustainable and efficient healthcare systems.

URBACT is an exchange and learning programme for local and regional authorities encouraging sustainable development. One of URBACT II themes is Active Inclusion, focusing on ways that specific groups in society can be included in both the labour market and wider society.

The guide 'Joining up ERDF with other EU funding opportunities 2010-2013' provides further information for regional stakeholders:

http://www.yorkshireurope.be/EU_Funding_06.asp

European Strategy Team action

European Strategy Team will work with the Regional Migration Partnership to feed into relevant networks and capture any relevant opportunities. The team will participate in Brussels based networks where possible to exchange best practice and share intelligence with appropriate Yorkshire Forward teams, the Yorkshire Forward Police Seconded and relevant external regional contacts.

European Strategy Team will keep a watching brief on ESF and ensure intelligence is shared with the Skills and Economic Inclusion Teams in Yorkshire Forward, the ERDF Team and, where appropriate, LGYH to share with Local Authorities.

European Strategy Team will work closely with the LGYH Community Cohesion Officer and other relevant regional stakeholders to identify opportunities and profile the regions work.

Climate Change mitigation and adaptation (including flooding);

Policy background

The Yorkshire and Humber region is committed to being at the leading edge of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to do so at the same time as improving the growth of our regional economy. There is a clear target in the Regional Economic Strategy to reduce greenhouse gases emissions from the region by 20-25% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2016.

An ambitious EU target is set out in the Climate Change and renewable energy package, which commits national governments to curb their CO2 emissions by 20% by 2020.

The creation of a new Directorate General for Climate Change in the new European Commission and the appointment of a Commissioner for Climate Change demonstrate the strong commitment to this agenda at a European level.

The key challenges at an EU level are the need to increase productivity, maintain Europe's lead in the market for green technologies and boost resource efficiency throughout the economy whilst accelerating the reduction of greenhouse emissions.

Europe 2020 strategy includes a 'flagship initiative' to create a 'resource efficient Europe' to help double economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernize our transport sector and promote energy efficiency.

The most recent European Commission Communication 'Acting now to reinvigorate global action on climate change' published on 9th March 2010 sets out the next steps the European Commission will take on the climate change agenda, following the Copenhagen Climate Change summit in December 2009.

Partnerships and profile examples:

Partnerships in our region using EU funding for climate change mitigation, adaptation and flooding include:

The Pennine Water group, working with various Local Authorities in the region, has applied successfully for a series of three Interreg projects to tackle the issues surrounding flooding and planning in the region.

The FP7 Regions of Knowledge Recycling project WASTEKIT, involves a partnership between YF, Leeds University and Yorwaste working with other regional partnerships across the EU. The project aims to expand the ambitions of the regions involved in developing the contribution of waste management to regional economic development.

Profile

The EU offers Yorkshire and Humber many opportunities to build on significant regional successes. The Carbon Capture and Storage project in Hatfield, South

Yorkshire, has been successful in applying for EU funding from the European Economic Recovery Plan and created a good profile for the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Funding

ERDF is currently (until July 2010) consulting on modifications to the regional programme which will focus on adaptation to and mitigation of Climate Change

Interreg IV B and C both have environmental priorities that can support cross-sectoral partnerships in regions to work together.

Examples of some of the other funding streams that can support regional activity on climate change mitigation and adaptation and the flooding agenda are: the Interreg programmes; Life+; Civil protection; Framework Programme 7; Intelligent Energy Europe; Marco Polo; and the Eco Innovation part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

The guide 'Joining up ERDF with other EU funding opportunities 2010-2013' provides further information for regional stakeholders in the region:

http://www.yorkshireurope.be/EU_Funding_06.asp

European Strategy Team action

European Strategy Team will work with CO2 Sense to ensure we support their lead role in Carbon Capture Storage work and the delivery of their business plan. For example by maximising European opportunities provided through their involvement in EU expert work and the Intelligent Energy Programme.

Opportunities to profile the regions work will be sought through briefing the regions MEPs; Committee of Regions representatives (CoR); close working with Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber and the regions Local Authorities.

European Strategy Team will work with LGYH on the regions' active participation in CoR Open Days in October 2010 – high level Delegation. Work will continue with colleagues internally and externally to ensure our team supports and provides expertise in ensuring the high level Regional Delegation has the greatest impact and benefit back to the region.

Communication back to the region will be developed through the teams work with CO2 Sense and Yorkshire Forward's Strategy team to ensure intelligence is targeted to organisations and individuals in the region that either have the capacity or funding to act on the intelligence.

Partnership working in and beyond Yorkshire and Humber;

The European Strategy Team will continue to maximise opportunities to profile examples within the region of exemplar practice. The region is far too modest about what has been achieved since the regional economy depended on industries such as coal and steel. Yorkshire and Humber can learn a lot from EU counterparts, and also has a lot to offer other regions.

We will continue to build capacity in the region and encourage partnership working with regions across the EU to raise the profile of activity in Yorkshire and Humber.

We operate a call for proposals service both online on the YorkshireEurope website and also disseminate the most recent calls for proposals in a targeted way in the region. Similarly we operate a partner search service, linking the region to each of the EU representation offices in Brussels.

We will fully collaborate with LGYH and support wherever possible on the high level Regional Delegation for the Committee of the Regions Open Days 2010. We will work closely with LGYH to showcase regional good practice.

Through the Transnational European Funding Group we enable the sharing of experience and best practice between experienced and novice project managers to develop knowledge of European project development and dissemination of results and lessons learned. We build capacity to develop quality projects to harness EU funds in support of local and regional economic aims and objectives and we engage regional players to work with the EU to achieve local and regional economic aims and objectives. This may include consideration of key policy papers that might impact on the region through informing Post 2013 funding arrangements.

We will seek to build capacity through training and awareness raising seminars, to share best practice and to disseminate information, transfer knowledge and work together on issues we cannot solve simply at a regional level. The team will arrange events for regional stakeholders on for example, LIFE+, Interreg and URBACT.

We will continue to work to change behaviour in the region in terms of seeking appropriate EU funding to add value to existing activity or new activity that would not have otherwise achieved funding.

We will work to bring organisations together to influence EU policy in favour of the region, and also to ensure that strategies and policies take account of the EU.

We have developed an EU policy calendar that identifies the potential implications of European Commission proposals and what they might mean for the Yorkshire and Humber region, based on the European Commission 2010 work programme. For external stakeholders the EU Policy Calendar is themed across the three priority areas to fit with the current Regional Economic Strategy and the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber Regional Improvement and Efficiency Plan.

We will provide non financial support to internal and external stakeholders wanting to arrange delegations to Brussels where the visit has clear links back to the achievement of economic objectives.

Where required the team will provide expertise and comment on developing EU proposals coming from the region to ensure strategic fit specifically Interreg and Urbact applications.

We will continue to work with partners at local, regional, national and European level to promote the regions' interests and signpost to relevant sources of support and expertise.

Regulation

EU regulation impacts on all of our lives whether at home, at work or at play. Funded by Yorkshire Forward and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, the Enterprise Europe Yorkshire network provides a direct link to information on developing and existing EU legislation and regulation through their enquiries service.

Regionally, the Enterprise Europe Network connects the region and businesses to not only an EU wide network of potential business contacts, technology transfers and funding opportunities but also connects them to information on EU legislation and regulation.

The European Strategy Team will continue to work with the Enterprise Europe Yorkshire network to encourage the take up of their services by public and private sector organisations in the region, to avoid duplication and maximise impact.

Europe 2020 Strategy

The European Commission's proposal for replacing the Lisbon Strategy with the Europe 2020 strategy was published on the 3rd March 2010. The strategy has set out a series of flagship initiatives to hasten the exit from the economic crisis and create the building blocks for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The strategy focuses on developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, a more efficient, sustainable, greener and more competitive economy and a high employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The strategy will be implemented and monitored at a national level, as was the case with the Lisbon Strategy.

Conclusions

The region needs to engage effectively with the European agenda in order to maximise the impact EU investment has on local and regional economic development. Moreover engagement can demonstrate that the region is at the forefront of effective collaboration at the European level and help raise the profile of the Yorkshire and Humber region. The ever increasing pressure on public finances means that the need to explore and make connections between European Programmes and develop partnerships has never been greater.

The European Strategy Team cannot achieve the objectives in the European Engagement Plan in isolation. Partnership working is essential to achieve this regional ambition.