

Briefing

Yorkshire & the Humber

regionalforum

voice of the voluntary & community sector

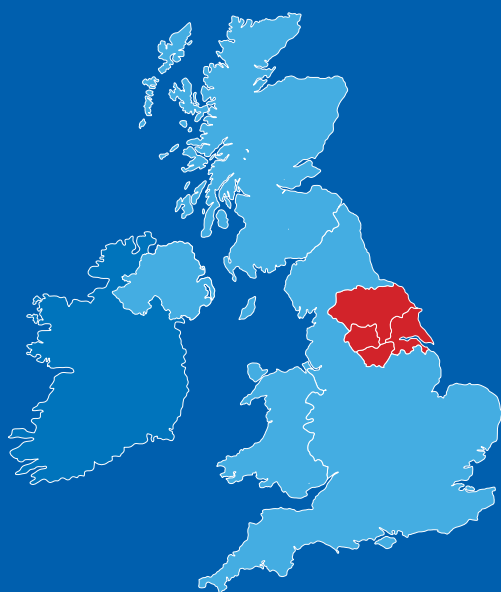


City regions in Yorkshire and the Humber

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Summary

This briefing explains the concept and rationale which underlie city regions and how they are developing in Yorkshire and the Humber. It considers why they are important and what the implications are for the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

Background

Local government policy since the Second World War often features changes to boundaries and functions: city regions are one of the latest.

The Northern Way - the collaboration between the regional development agencies in the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East - identifies eight city regions across the north. They are part of the endeavour to grow the economy in the north.

What are city regions?

City regions (also known in this region as 'functional sub regions') are groups of neighbouring local authorities working together. The thinking is that the way the real economy works - for example travel to work patterns, transport links and knowledge transfer - crosses local authority boundaries. By organising across these boundaries, decisions and outcomes for issues including housing and regeneration, skills, transport and the economy will be improved. By having strong relationships between a key city and its 'hinterland' productivity and economic growth are boosted. Examples of where this works well have been drawn from European and American city regions.

What are the city regions in Yorkshire and the Humber?

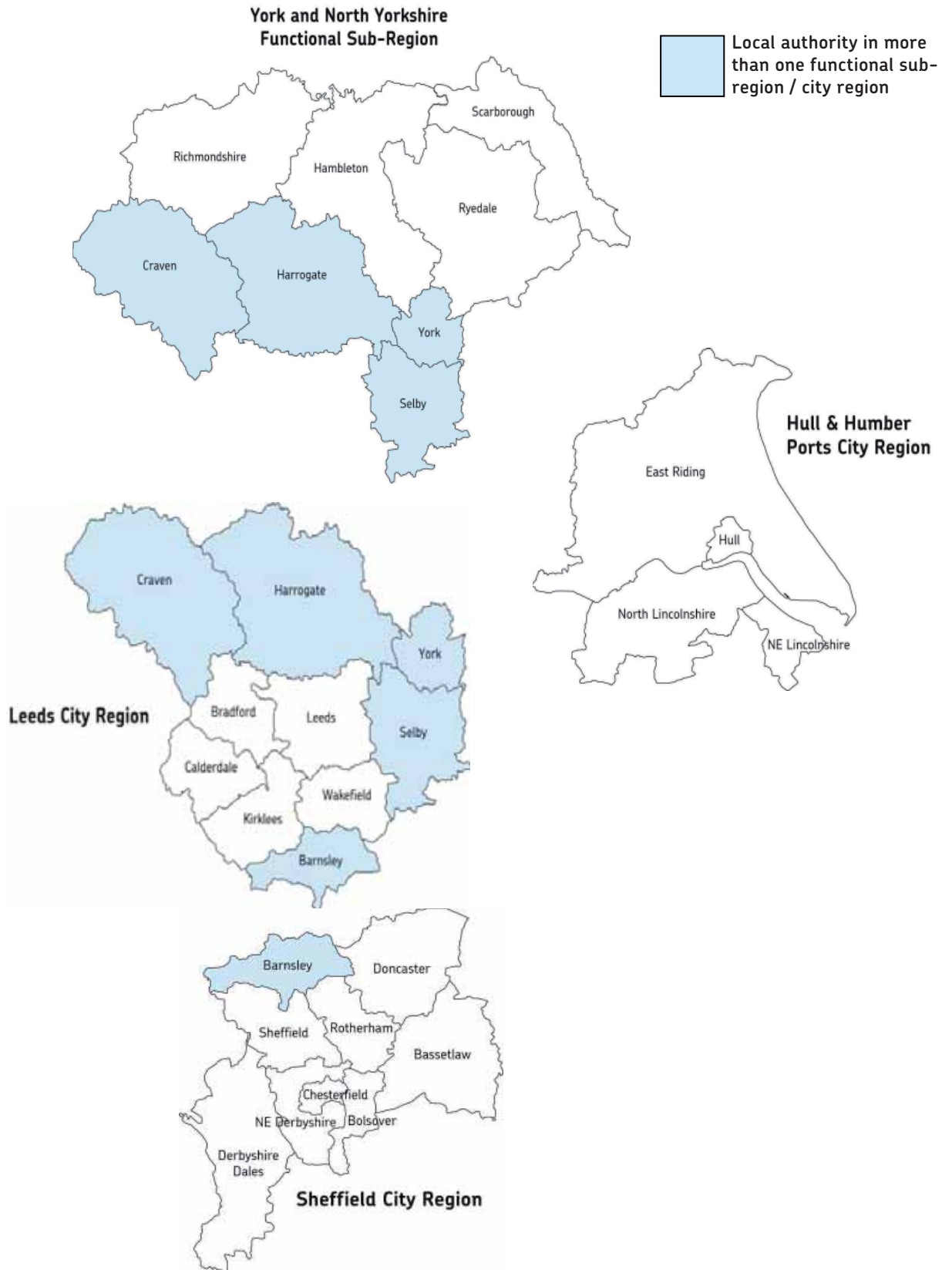
There are three city regions in Yorkshire and the Humber: Hull and the Humber Ports, Leeds and Sheffield. York and North Yorkshire is a functional sub region. Each of these comprises a number of local authorities, and several local authorities are in more than one city region. (See maps, page 3). The former sub regions (South Yorkshire, the Humber and West Yorkshire) no longer operate for the purpose of economic planning.

The process

Over the last four years the northern city regions have strengthened their governance and decision-making structures. They have boards, made up of the leaders of the local authorities in their area, and small secretariats. Through 'Multiple Area Agreements' these new cross local authority partnerships are being recognised by Government.

In 2009 the Government announced that Leeds and Greater Manchester had pilot status. This means that these city regions will agree priorities with Government on things like adult skills funding, investment and employment programmes. They will gain powers devolved from Whitehall for key decision-making including resource allocation. Each city region has a development plan.

Map of city regions in Yorkshire and the Humber



Why do city regions matter?

This new way of planning the development of economies has the potential to impact on issues such as jobs and housing which directly affect people and communities. They create a new level of decision-making, above the local, so there are implications for involvement and engagement of local people. City regions may also reduce 'silo' working and use resources more efficiently, because they operate at an appropriate spatial level - in a similar way to the intention of Total Place. (See Regional Forum briefing, January 2010). City regions could enable energy and vision to shape a better future determined by local leaders.

What commentators are saying:

- City regions have been welcomed as a sensible spatial level at which to plan and operate.
- The model of city regions is predicated on growth and that this is not sustainable.
- The lack of a popular mandate for a different way of decision-making is a democratic deficit though city regions believe that their local authority boards are more democratic than quangos.
- Many people may struggle to identify with more remote decision-making structures.
- There are some concerns that small towns and rural areas will be neglected.

Conclusions

- City regions are increasingly a major development in how decisions are made for and about communities
- It will be important that the VCS understands and engages with city regions.
- There will be the potential for the VCS and for the communities we work with to contribute to the development of city regions in areas such as skills or community economic initiatives.

What happens next?

- The Regional Forum is in touch with city regions about the contribution of the VCS, and we will continue to seek to influence the way that city regions develop.
- The Regional Forum will publish further information through briefings and other channels, as appropriate.

Getting more information



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Regional Review 19.1, Autumn 2009 (Yorkshire Futures) www.yorkshirefutures.com/articles/regional-review



www.thenorthernway.co.uk
www.leedscityregion.gov.uk
www.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk
www.humberep.co.uk
www.ynypu.org.uk

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We use our briefings to summarise important developments and their implications, including proposals for new structures or legislation. They are designed to promote debate, put forward an argument, elicit response and encourage action, as appropriate.

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