

Yorkshire and Humber Assembly Integrated Regional Framework

Comments from members of the Regional Forum

Introduction

This paper is written as a response to the consultation process on the development of the Integrated Regional Framework (the Framework).

It is a response submitted by the Regional Forum on behalf of the voluntary and community sector, based on discussions and presentations given at an event held in August 2007. The event was jointly hosted by the Regional Forum and the Yorkshire and Humber Environment Forum and attendees were drawn from a range of voluntary and community sector organisations, representing diverse interests.

The Broad Response

There was a strong welcome for the Framework and for the inclusive approach to its development.

Attendees welcomed the approach to integrate current strategic frameworks to guide sustainable development. A single top strategy offers a cohesive approach to regional development and should focus on the “big picture” for the region and not be hampered with excessive detail. In addition, a single strategy has the capacity to align and draw together the region’s different strategies and inform decisions about spending and priorities on a common and agreed basis.

An approach placing equal emphasis on people, the economy and the environment was well received. A bias towards prioritising economic growth is in danger of being at the expense of human and environmental capital. Generally, what is good for the environment will also benefit people and will create sustainable economic development.

It was felt by many that the Framework was “the right thing at the right time” and an opportunity for the voluntary and community sector to contribute its expertise especially about the landmark issues.

The Framework must emphasise its ‘people’ focus, the reduction of inequality in the region and raising aspirations and it should be based on partnership, and structures that are both manageable and accountable.

Although regional governance is changing it is still vital that partners play a central role in creating and managing the Framework and its successor strategies.

Question One

Do you agree with the role of the Integrated Regional Framework as described in Section One of the document?

The consensus of opinion was that there is a need for agencies to work more closely together to deliver positive progress in the region. Clearer links need to be made between regional policy and policies developed in the voluntary and community sector - or at least reference into the document. There is also the need for an alignment of the strategies produced. The Framework should be structured as an inclusive approach to sustainable development, which focuses on delivering benefits for all people living in this region.

Attendees welcomed the intention that the Framework is the basis for regional debate and for direction setting across sectoral and geographical boundaries

Integrating policies at different levels is an important aim but much more work needs to be done about *how* regional strategies are manifested and delivered at other levels.

There is a lack of clarity as to how any policy integration will take place, what the mechanisms for such integration will be and how independent do separate policies remain. On the other hand, the Framework needs to guard against diluting the independence of some policies and, weakening their effectiveness, for example rural areas have specific needs.

There needs to be a clear regional commitment, demonstrated through the Framework, to assess all policies to ensure there is targeted action to tackle the disconnection and disadvantage that remains in the region.

The inclusive approach should focus on making links between urban and rural initiatives as well as acknowledging different approaches can be required in particular settings.

In tackling the landmark issues, the Framework states that it will be locationally specific. Whilst geographical situation is important, some communities of interest such as disability networks or faith communities often do not organise themselves exclusively on the basis of geography. Furthermore, there are more people with specific needs migrating to the region and not linked together by location. Issues of migration and immigration require greater acknowledgement because of their impact on regional concerns such as housing and employment. Such considerations need to be incorporated into any analysis of regional progress. There are implications here for the way data is collected so that a different sort of intelligence from the ground is set alongside more traditional forms of collection.

Further clarity is required on how practically the Framework will be implemented and how it will inform any roll-out of, for example, community based programmes. Issues were raised as to the accountability of the Framework and how it could be ensured that it will be adopted regionwide.

Question Three

What do you think the new vision should include?

There was strong agreement that the vision proposed in the discussion paper does need further work and improvement. The new starting point of people was well received but it was felt that the main message of the vision still focused more on the economy and the environment. One suggestion was that the phrase “as we develop our economy” could be moved to be the ending not in the middle.

Does this vision sufficiently represent what we want to achieve for the region? The broad view was that it does not, nor is it particularly meaningful to people and it would appear difficult to monitor and measure.

The vision should have a main focus on people as they are central to the region and its future development. It needs to identify with what is distinctive and special about the region - the region incorporates a great diversity of communities and its natural environment includes national parks, coastline and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. There is also a great vibrancy and variety to civil society and a wide range of educational opportunities. It also needs to be inspirational and to aim to raise people’s aspirations for their future.

It was felt that the word “pride” should be avoided as it is unreasonable to expect people to feel proud of living in a disadvantaged, crime ridden area. The vision should encompass an aspiration, which is achievable but not dogmatic in what it expects people to do. It should also reflect the right of an individual to be heard.

Question Four

Do the issues highlighted in Section Four seem to be the right ‘landmark’ issues?

Do you have specific examples where one or more of these issues are particularly significant?

There was a real welcome for the honesty of the landmark issues and acknowledgement of how much is to be done. There was a broad consensus of agreement with the landmark issues as identified in the Framework document.

The main suggestions for change related to ‘Violent Crime’ being changed to ‘Perception of Crime’ and that ‘Social Cohesion’ should be included as an additional landmark issue. It was also commented that in determining these issues there is a need for better and focused research of the specific needs of different sectors of the region’s population for example older people or rural communities.

As important as these landmark issues are separately, their inherent links need to be articulated and brought out more strongly so that integrated, connected and targeted efforts might be made to tackle them. Adopting such an approach would lead to multiple benefits being gained for the region through one particular course of action. It is important to remember that disadvantage rarely shows itself as an isolated

instance and that many people and communities suffer from multiple barriers to inclusion and multiple deprivation.

If these landmark issues are the key areas where regional progress is being slowed down, then all regional policies need to clearly identify how their actions will directly contribute to addressing these issues. The landmark issues should be adopted as “gateway criteria” against which any regional policy should have to pass before being adopted. It is a form of “policy proofing” to ensure a consistent approach to tackling the issues, which are holding back regional progress. In adopting such an approach, it is important to have a strategy for dealing with policies, which do not follow the required format. Policies which do not meet the “gateway criteria” or which are not consistent with the Framework should either (a) not be adopted or (b) be altered to address the necessary issues.

In terms of inequality, a number of points were made including:

- the focus on measuring GVA may mean that it appears that in these terms the region is progressing whilst at the same time in reality *exclusion and inequality is growing*. This contradiction requires active and targeted intervention in programmes.
- economic growth alone without the development of social capital will not create a sustainable economy;
- as well as focusing on what’s missing, an approach that aims to develop and encourage the contribution that all people can make would be useful.

(The Regional Forum has submitted a response to the Framework focused on addressing inclusion issues in our region. The submission is appended to this response on page 6.)

There needs to be some identification within the Framework document of how the strategic analysis of inequality and exclusion will be translated into practical programme design, management and delivery. Too many strategies and policies acknowledge these issues but fail to set specific targets to meet them.

Aligning Strategies and Funding – Monitoring, Reporting Progress and Developing the Framework

Question Twenty-One

Do you agree with the approach to appraisal as described?

Question Twenty-Three

Do you agree with the proposal to have three levels of indicators?

Overall do you think the indicators will do the job described?

There was an acceptance that an appraisal system that worked as a sustainability appraisal and alignment tool for policies and programmes so that they address landmark issues more effectively was a good idea. The important elements within this system would be the indicators and these indicators need to be evidence based. It is also important to consider national indicators, which are already in use and to make sure any regional indicators align with national ones to give a fuller picture of progress.

An economic development focus alone does not deliver sustainable development for the region. Economic, environmental and social implications need an equal weighting of consideration and monitoring if real regional progress is to be achieved. There should be a link between *the theory* that equity, economic inclusion and environmental conservation create sustainable economic development and the *practice* seen in some policies. Such a link is not yet being made as some current policies focus only on narrowly defined economic growth activities. This Framework – and its review cycle – is an opportunity to address the current failure to create this linkage and to correct its associated reliance on “trickle down” to reach the disadvantaged. This may well be an argument that the region puts to Government.

The indicators currently suggested do not take sufficient account of the specific issues relating to rural communities. Ethnicity monitoring should be included in the indicators to enable efficient resource allocation.

There is a methodology issue in relation to the indicators and the types of information collected. Both quantitative and qualitative data will need to be collected in order to gain a true picture of regional progress. There was concern expressed that the indicators proposed focus too much on collecting quantitative data, which mirrors and supports a pure economic development focus. To measure the real impact of regional policies on tackling disadvantage and disconnection, there needs to be a systematic collection of qualitative information relating, for example, to ‘communities of interest’ such as BME groups, older people, and Gypsies & Travellers.

Regional Forum
on behalf of the voluntary and community sector
August 2007

Building Social Inclusion, Social Capital and a Strong Economy for Yorkshire & the Humber

- a contribution to the Integrated Regional Framework

1. Introduction

This paper is written as a positive and constructive contribution to regional working and focuses on the development of the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF).

It is a Regional Forum response, drawn from discussions and debate between voluntary and community sector members of the Regional Assembly's Regional Inclusion Framework Task & Finish Group.

The Regional Forum is committed to the contribution the voluntary and community sector can make to improve the quality of life for all people in Yorkshire and the Humber. We hope that this paper will stimulate thinking, identifying ways in which the region can more effectively deliver sustainable social, economic and environmental inclusion.

This paper:

- illustrates the rationale and benefits of social inclusion to the region
- offers a set of principles which we believe should be reflected in both the IRF and the Regional Inclusion Framework (RIF)
- makes observations on current economic approaches and the growing divide and disconnection between the socially included and excluded
- emphasises the importance of synergy between needs and outcomes, across strategies, frameworks and programmes and between structures
- proposes the development of a check list for inclusion against which strategies, frameworks, programmes and projects can be tested, using national principles for sustainable engagement and landmark issues identified in the draft IRF to do so
- sets out some key approaches and recommendations to build a region and an economy which is socially inclusive

2. Background

The drivers against which this paper has been prepared include:

- (i) Government's recent Sub-National Review agenda and proposals for the strengthening of Regional Development Agencies, a more restricted focus on economic regeneration, increased responsibilities for Local Authorities and the demise, in 2010, of Regional Assemblies
- (ii) the development of the Regional Inclusion Framework, publication of 'Yorkshire Promise' and a future focus on the IRF
- (iii) publication by Government of its Third Sector Review¹ which focuses on enabling and protecting the roles of voice and campaigning, strengthening

¹ The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: final report, HM Treasury & Cabinet Office, 25th July 2007

communities, transforming public services, encouraging social enterprise and supporting a thriving and healthy third sector.

“ ...I am more convinced than ever of the sector’s essential role in helping to make social change happen in our society. Above all, government needs to be a better partner; respecting the third sector’s ability to make a difference but never abdicating our responsibilities to fund public services, striving for long-term funding and always respecting the sectors right to criticise and campaign. That is the best route to a thriving third sector and a fairer society.

Ed Miliband, Minister for the Cabinet Office, 25th July 2007

3. Social Inclusion – Some Key Messages

- The problem of exclusion results neither solely nor primarily from the failing of individuals or communities but from the economic, social and technological changes happening throughout society
- Exclusion can take many forms from the marginalisation of the long term unemployed, homelessness, educational difficulties, rural isolation, indebtedness, ill health and discrimination against particular communities
- Exclusion is expensive: it often results in crime, skills deficiencies, ill health and individual and social breakdown and these have a slow down effect on the economy. In addition, exclusion threatens not just those who are excluded but the well being of everyone. It limits social and economic progress
- In order to support inclusion we must ensure that it is possible to connect opportunities created by change to everyone
- In order to support inclusion we must remember that individuals will often need to overcome multiple barriers that vary according to circumstance
- Social inclusion is a pre-requisite for social justice and a fair society. It is also a pre-requisite for a sustainable economy.
- Social inclusion is about access to services and choice for communities, groups and individuals in society
- Social inclusion brings the benefit of economic growth to everyone in the region
- Social inclusion is about quality of life, not just of the excluded, but of **all** people and communities

4. Key Principles

Building a fully inclusive region based on economic, social and environmental inclusion should be based on a core set of principles to be reflected in the IRF. We propose that these should be as follows:

- (i) making social, economic and environmental inclusion a mainstream part of all regional strategies, frameworks and programmes
- (ii) channelling the benefits of public and private investment to the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities
- (iii) engaging all stakeholders in Yorkshire and the Humber in alliances and partnerships promoting regeneration, enabling communities to be key players in social, economic and environmental inclusion
- (iv) ensuring the empowerment and engagement of users and communities (of geography and interests eg young people, older people, BME).

- (vi) building the skills and capacity of individuals and communities to contribute to sustainable economic growth that leads to inclusive communities which value citizen equality, sustainable neighbourhoods and therefore to a dynamic civil society

5. An Approach to the Economy

The model applied to build economic growth in the region has a critical relationship to social inclusion. With limited funds available, inclusion has been dislocated from economic investment in the application of resources.

- As a result investment has focussed on areas of growth and opportunity in the belief that clusters of successful businesses will stimulate a reverse of the market failure that blights parts of the region.
- Consequently, disadvantage and disconnection has hardened in many communities already disadvantaged over many years

The growing inequality gap in the region identified by the Regional Assembly as one of their Landmark Issues has the potential to threaten the well being of everyone and to severely limit the economic and social progress of the region. It is happening despite much energy and resources committed to tackling exclusion.

- Exclusion from participation in the economy weakens the regional economy whereas social inclusion brings the benefit of economic growth to everyone in the region. The current approach to economic growth is in danger of living off, rather than creating social capital and is not sustainable in the long term.
- In the light of this, the approach taken here sees social inclusion and economic development as partners not rivals. It seeks to promote the idea that sustainable economic development requires a direct connection between economic, social and environmental action.

The current evidence suggests that a growing economy or increasing GVA does not necessarily result in more inclusion-in fact the opposite is happening. New jobs may not reach disadvantaged groups. Two-speed cities may experience economic growth cheek by jowl with excluded communities. The problems of social exclusion do not simply go away as the economy grows. Active and focussed intervention is needed to stop a spiral of decline.

- By connecting excluded people to mainstream economic opportunities they can become net contributors to the region's development- through becoming producers of goods and services and through their spending power within the local economy.

Some particular points arise out of the analysis noted above and these are:

The model of increasing GVA as an indicator of progress may be too narrow;

- A model that acknowledges the increase in GVA as a result of social inclusion activity provides an essential dimension to tackling economic exclusion – one example is The Price of Exclusion (2007, Community Service Volunteers/ KPMG) and
- Targeting and measuring the growth of social capital is also important and this could include things like participation rates through volunteering; improving confidence; reducing racial and other forms of harassment.

Many organisations and public bodies are committed to reducing exclusion. We think that the region needs a wider range of approaches to do this effectively. The architecture of programmes needs to include strategies and targets to address exclusion; VCS partners should be involved in design and implementation as well as, potentially, delivery of such programmes. We think that creating space for the needs and voices of users and excluded communities to shape programmes is critical here.

- Whilst many programmes and analyses recognise the fact of exclusion their subsequent activity may be constrained by policy and practice imperatives that arise from organisational structures –such as reducing the number of contract managers-rather than a needs driven approach.
- Research shows that exclusion is manifested in relatively small geographic areas and in specific communities of interest. However, increasingly programmes seem to want big impact delivered by single providers. We believe that this approach mistakes bureaucratic efficiency for effectiveness at the point of delivery. Using smaller, community based providers is the better mechanism. This may mean that intermediary structures are required to broker the transactions between small providers and programme commissioners/procurers.

Programmes, therefore, need to support a range of sustainable social and economic development tools and to recognise that all sectors contribute to this.

- The multiple barriers to inclusion mean that the delivery of activity needs to be done by agencies that can join up services, close to users not by agencies who provide one single service;
- Third Sector organisations have proved themselves adept at solutions to many intractable problems and their service provision as well as their contribution to civil renewal and citizen engagement is in danger of being lost in the face of new funding and contracting regimes. This would be detrimental to the region's progress.

6. Approaches & Recommendations

In this section we set out three key approaches and recommendations to build a region and an economy which is socially inclusive:

(i) Linking Needs to Outcomes & Impact

The identification and assessment of needs must shape and inform strategies, frameworks and programmes, all of which should have synergy one with the other in challenging disadvantage and disconnection. Programmes and projects are concerned with the implementation of identified priorities whilst outcomes measure the resultant positive economic, social and environmental changes in the quality of peoples lives.

The Development Cycle set out in Appendix 1 to this paper illustrates the importance of a holistic approach to inclusion, recognising that external drivers will have significant impact.

(ii) 'Social Inclusion' proofing

We believe that Strategies and programmes require 'social inclusion proofing', with enforceable targets and measurable long term qualitative impacts and outcomes.

To help achieve this we propose a ‘gateway’ in the form of a checklist through which all strategies and programmes should pass

This checklist would use the key national principles for sustainable development including:

- Ensuring a *Strong, Healthy and Just Society*
- *Achieving a Sustainable Economy*
- *Firm Foundations*

and ‘landmark issues’ such as *Transport, Climate Change, Housing, Public Health, Widening Gaps and Inequalities, Skills and Crime*) reflected in the draft IRF.

Set against the checklist this approach, recognising the key priorities supported by regional stakeholders, will identify both evidence set out in existing strategies such as the RES and from other sources, together with solutions based on existing good practice ie ‘what works’. This could be developed in the form of a matrix the framework for which is set out below.

Theme	Inclusion Checklist	Evidence & Evidence Gaps	What Works/Good Practice
Ensuring a Strong, Healthy & Just Society			
Widening Gaps & inequalities			
Public Health			
Housing			
Crime			
Achieving a Sustainable Economy			
Skills			
Transport			

The Regional Forum together with other stakeholders is committed to undertake further work on this proposal to support the development of and IRF and its subsequent implementation

(iii) Developing Joint Work

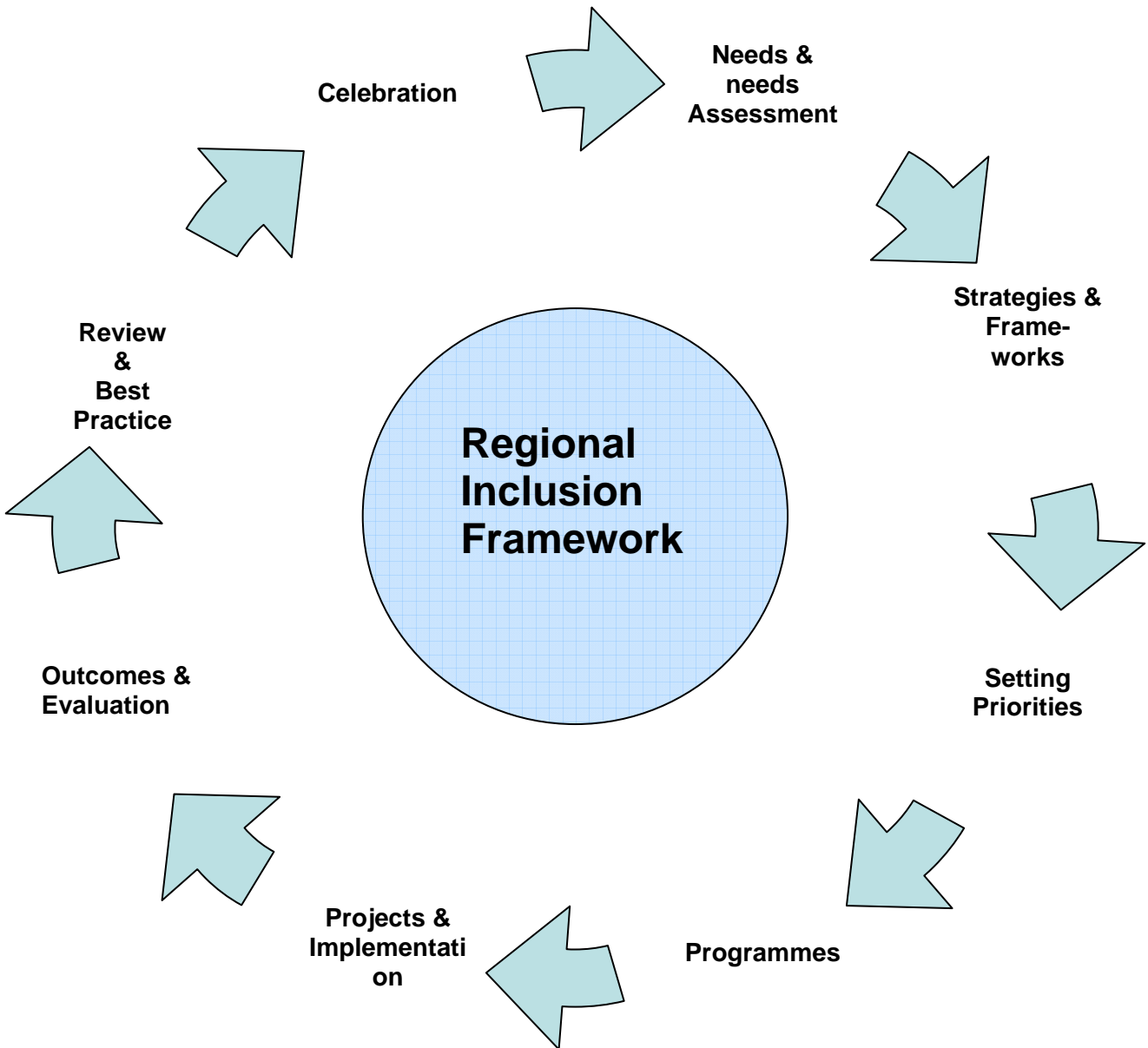
Though submitted as a contribution to the formal consultation process for the IRF the paper is seen by the Regional Forum and its partners as the start of amore extensive engagement in influencing regional agendas and stakeholders and the importance of social inclusion to the economic health and wealth of the region.

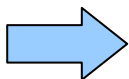
The Regional Forum and its members wish to:

- work with the Regional Assembly, Yorkshire Forward and other regional stakeholders to take forward thinking on both the Framework and its subsequent implementation.
- draw in the assistance of other think tanks eg New Economics Foundation, Demos to develop further thinking around approaches which build social and environmental inclusion as an integral part of economic investment.
- work with other stakeholders to develop a social inclusion proofing framework equipped to test both strategies and programmes and to ensure measurable impacts and outcomes

APPENDIX 1

THE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE



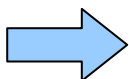


Needs & Needs Assessment

Research and analysis, both regionally and nationally, provides evidence of needs, disadvantage and disconnection (and its impacts on community cohesion, economic performance and quality of life) and identifies critical gaps Appendix 1 of this Paper provide key examples.

Additionally the draft Integrated Regional Strategy identifies the following 'Landmark issues' for the region:

Widening Gaps and Inequalities, Transport, Climate Change/Energy, Housing Markets and Affordability, Public Health and Obesity, Higher Level Skills and Business Innovation, Violent Crime.



Strategies & Frameworks & Programmes

The following key regional strategies and frameworks (among others), in some cases derived from national government policy, identify and set out a number of inclusion statements which support the principle of inclusion.

Regional Strategies

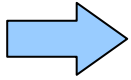
Regional Economic Strategy; Regional Spatial Strategy (Housing, Transport, Planning); Regional Voluntary Sector infrastructure Strategy; Regional Cultural Strategy.

Regional Frameworks

Regional Strategic Framework (Advancing Together); Regional Sustainable Development Framework; Regional Social Economy Framework; the Yorkshire & Humber Rural Framework; Regional Inclusion Framework (Draft) Integrated Regional Framework (Draft); Regional Framework for Health

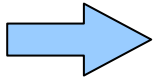
Regional Programmes

Change Up (Consortia Projects Programme)
ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes 2007 - 2013
LSC Y&H Regional Commissioning Plan).
Local Area Agreements



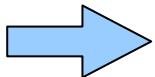
Projects & implementation

Projects operated by the public, private and voluntary and community sectors provide the delivery vehicles for priorities determined by regional (and national) strategies, frameworks and programmes.



Outcomes & Evaluation

A focus on outcomes and the importance of evaluation reinforces the importance of developing a common impact assessment framework across programmes and project based on social, economic and environmental inclusion (inclusion proofing)



Review, Best Practice & Celebration

A systematic review of best practice and models which deliver inclusion are important in reviewing and informing what works, identifying gaps and new needs. Measuring and celebrating successes and importance in developing and reinforcing a positive culture of engagement and participation.