

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive

10th February 2011

NYSP conference 2010 evaluation report and future planning for Wider Partnership communications

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members with a brief evaluation of the NYSP Wider Partnership conference, held on 8th November 2010.
- 1.2 To seek views and comments to help inform shaping of future communications with Wider Partnership members and whether this will continue to include an annual conference event.

2 NYSP conference 2010

- 2.1 The 2010 annual NYSP Wider Partnership conference took place on 8th November at the Pavilions of Harrogate. The conference was well attended, with around 200 delegates present, including marketplace stallholders.
- 2.2 Following suggestions from the NYSP Executive in June 2010, the conference was shaped around providing an opportunity for partners to discuss the headline messages from the October Spending Review and to consider how the issues and challenges might be tackled in partnership. It also provided an opportunity for delegates to input early thoughts into what the key priorities for North Yorkshire should be over the next few years.
- 2.3 The outcomes from these discussions have been reported back via the NYSP newsletter (Appendix 1) and the issues raised regarding priority-setting have already fed into and helped to inform Thematic Partnership discussions around the Sustainable Community Strategy (see Agenda Item xx).
- 2.4 As always, delegates were given the opportunity to provide their feedback on the event via an evaluation form. Only 24 people completed an evaluation form but the headline results (see Appendix 2) suggest that, broadly speaking, the event was well-received. General comments given included:
- Good networking opportunity;
 - Opportunity to participate in broad strategic thinking;
 - Good overview of what NYSP is about;
 - Get a shared snapshot of this changing landscape;
 - Excellent and informative speakers;
 - It helps me to feel involved and get a feel for current trends.
- 2.5 This year, we also asked delegates via the evaluation form for their views on the value of attending the NYSP conference and whether they had any suggestions for delivering this type of event in alternative ways in the future. Some of the comments received, both on the broader event and on future planning, are outlined below.

- I think we're ready for a different format, but I don't have any idea what it is;
- I left feeling as if I had not gained much and wondered how the group session would be used and to what effect. Is it time that the partnership re-invented itself to drive change and performance?
- For future events it would be better to focus on a narrower range of topics/issues with a view to developing some practical solutions (e.g. broadband provision in rural areas). This may be at the cost of a lower attendance but that may not be a bad thing if it improves the focus of the event and would also help reduce the costs.
- ...the money should be used better – the information that the conference delivers can be done in other ways.

Future opportunities for communications and networking

- 2.6 As is reflected by some of the above comments provided by delegates, the conference has proven to be a useful networking event for NYSP partners; an annual opportunity to engage with senior partners across a range of sectors on strategic issues and current topics. However, in the current climate, the comments also reflect that there is a need to focus delivery of such events on key outcomes required; to pare down development and delivery to something which will result in specific outcomes or solutions. The current conference model is costly to run and resource, particularly as there are no longer contributions provided by members of the NYSP Partnership and to continue with this model is therefore not viable.
- 2.7 If the Executive identify that continuing with a partnership event is important then there are alternative possibilities for delivery, such as seminar-style events for a limited number of relevant partners on a specific issue, as and when appropriate rather than one large event annually. This could also be held 'in-house' within a partner-owned venue. This type of model may, in the developing partnership structures, enable a forum once or twice a year of key partners on specific topics which progress a piece of partnership working. Form should follow function though and essentially, any future events, whatever the format adopted, should be modelled to meet the specific needs of the new partnership structures within the sub-region.
- 2.8 In relation to the conference then, Executive members are invited to consider:
- the value of a continuing to deliver an annual or occasional conference or seminar-style event and how important this is for partners (i.e. what are our aims/goals?);
 - whether the NYSP (or new partnership arrangements) needs to continue to build in such an event to its broader programme; and
 - if continuing to deliver an event of some kind is deemed to be important, whether there are alternative ways of achieving our broader aims around consultation, engagement and relationship-building with partners.

Broader communications with the Wider Partnership

- 2.9 The above issue about the annual conference ties in with the broader strategy for communicating and providing mechanisms for engagement with partners

across the Wider Partnership. Around 400 partners are currently on the Wider Partnership mailing list from across the public, business, voluntary and community sectors. For many of these partners, they have no specific link in to other areas of the NYSP structure so being part of the 'Wider Partnership' provides them with some linkage for engagement where needed and for getting a broader understanding of key strategy developments and information on NYSP-related initiatives. Outside of the annual conference, this broader communication strategy is achieved via quarterly newsletters to all partners (see example at Appendix 1). During the consultation in 2009/10 to scrap the NYSP Partnership group, it was identified by respondents that this form of regular communication would be useful.

- 2.10 At the very least the organisations currently on the Wider Partnership mailing list will need, and expect, to be consulted on the North Yorkshire Sustainable Community Strategy. In addition, with the appropriate inclusion of organisations active in York, they could be the basis of a good forum for consultation and briefing on behalf of all the sub-regional partnerships.
- 2.11 Executive members are invited to consider the ongoing needs and aims of our communications with Wider Partnership members and how we might ensure that the mechanisms we have with our wider net of partners in North Yorkshire is fitted for the ongoing purpose and structure of the NYSP (or new partnership arrangements).

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That members note the evaluation report on the 2010 NYSP conference.
- 3.2 That members provide views on suitable mechanisms for ongoing and future engagement with Wider Partnership members (including the current conference event and quarterly newsletters).

Diane Parsons
Policy, Performance and Partnerships
North Yorkshire County Council

26th January 2011

Appendix 1: NYSP Wider Partnership newsletter - December 2010

Appendix 2: NYSP conference 2010 – evaluation form results summary