



## Yorkshire & Humber Regional Environment Forum

### Terms of Reference

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#### Background

The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Environment Forum (YHREF) was formed in 2001. Its aim was to coordinate and represent the views of a wide range of organisations for whom a key interest is in the enhancement of environmental conditions in the Yorkshire and Humber Region and in the social and economic value of such changes.

The need for such a Forum stemmed from:

- a need to develop a single shared broad based environmental agenda for the Region
- a recognition of the need for effective representation of environmental issues to the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly and other Regional policy and decision-making organisations
- the lack of a coherent Regional Environmental Strategy to guide and coordinate resources and activity across the region and to feed into the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) in order to integrate fully with the Regional Economic and Social agendas.

#### Vision

YHREF's purpose is to develop closer working relations between the environmental organisations, and provide a significant repository for environmental expertise within the Region. It is envisaged that YHREF will ultimately be acknowledged as the appropriate vehicle through which environmental advice can be provided to the key Regional policy and decision-makers. YHREF acts as an umbrella body but does not constrain the independent voice of individual organisations. YHREF is the region's strategic environmental partnership.

#### Aims

- 1) To develop a coherent environmental agenda for the Region.
- 2) To contribute to the integration of environmental, social and economic aspirations in the Region.
- 3) To influence the key policy and decision-making organisations of the Region.
- 4) To prepare, review and maintain a Regional Environmental Enhancement Strategy on behalf of the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly
- 5) To provide independent environmental representation on the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly.
- 6) To act as an expert advisory body on environmental issues to the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly the Regional Development Agency (Yorkshire Forward) and the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH), Sub Regional Partnerships and Local Authorities
- 7) To provide an environmental network for the dissemination and distribution of environmental reporting and communications

## **Membership**

Membership of YHREF is open to those organisations which :-

- have an environmental remit
- are prepared to work collaboratively and constructively
- are equipped to operate at regional level within Yorkshire and the Humber, or represent sub-regional or local interests that are relevant to the regional level
- are prepared to work on behalf of YHREF and commit officer or volunteer time to its development and activities

Wide membership is essential to ensure common ground across the Region's environment sector. It is essential that any Forum of this nature must seek to represent the broad spectrum of environmental opinion in the Region. Statutory bodies with a clear environmental remit (see category 1 below), environmental NGOs (see category 2 below) and representatives from the key organisations which the Forum is keen to influence (see category 3 below) are invited to participate. The 4th category covers private organisations operating within the environment sector as well as environmental projects and initiatives. YHREF welcomes new members from each of these areas. The present membership of YHREF is shown below:

### **Statutory Bodies**

English Heritage

Environment Agency

Forestry Commission

Local Authority Environment Representatives

East Riding Council

Kirklees Metropolitan Council

Leeds City Council

North Yorkshire County Council

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Natural England

North York Moors National Park Authority

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

### **NGOs**

BTCV

BITC

CPRE

EnCams

Friends of the Earth

Leeds Voice

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Groundwork Trust

National Trust

RSPB

Woodland Trust

WWF

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

### **Key Regional Policy Organisations**

Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber

Yorkshire & Humber Assembly

Yorkshire Forward

## **Other**

British Waterways

Recycling Action Yorkshire

The need for a wide membership has to be balanced against the need to maintain a management group small enough to facilitate decision-making and action. For this reason the YHREF Executive is limited to 8 members. All other meetings are open to the entire membership on a first come basis. In addition, all YHREF members are required to work and consult with a much wider constituency of other interested organisations. YHREF will prepare a Communication Strategy to facilitate this wider network.

Normally one person from each member organisation may attend formal YHREF meetings, and in the event of a ballot each organisation has one vote. For purposes of constituency, substitute representation is only encouraged when, in topic based meetings, a substitute can provide a higher level of expertise and input. Where an organisation has more than one person it considers could usefully attend, that person can be invited to join as an observer, with the YHREF's agreement.

## **The Environment**

Since the environment clearly means different things to different people it is felt necessary to define the core interests of the Forum. Issues of concern include (alphabetically) both problems and specific environmental assets.

- Air Quality
- Archaeology and the Built Heritage
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Green Belt
- Infrastructure and Transport
- Land use
- Landscape Quality
- Light Pollution
- Local Environmental Quality
- Noise Pollution
- Tranquillity
- Urban Greenspace
- Waste
- Water Quality and Quantity

YHREF will act as a key point of contact for environmental issues and will endeavour to maintain links with all other main environmental groups and fora. YHREF will not seek to duplicate work already in progress in the Region, though it may wish to comment on it.

## **Key Outputs**

YHREF's work programme is regularly updated to give a clear picture of current and anticipated workload according to an agreed timetable and budget forecast. The work programme is geared to producing the following key outputs:

- an agreed long term environmental agenda for the Region;
- an agreed Environmental Enhancement Strategy for the Region
- an agreed Communication Strategy to include provision of a YHREF website and arrangements to share knowledge with a wider network of organisations;

- minutes of meetings;
- agreed YHREF position statements on key issues;
- agreed publicity on key issues;
- agreed representation of YHREF on other key groups, working parties, committees, commissions or fora, in particular, the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly;

## **Meetings**

Meeting dates, times and venues are published in December for the following year and will include an AGM alongside a programme of topic specific meetings relating to the policy role of YHREF and the current work programme. An Executive Group meets monthly to manage YHREF business - including YHREF's employees - on behalf of YHREF.

## **Voting**

There is no formal voting system, though it may, from time to time, be necessary to use a ballot to appoint key roles within YHREF. Wherever possible, the group works by consensus and - if necessary - reports dissent from the majority position. The quorum attendance is 50%.

## **Operational Roles**

### *Chair*

The Chair of YHREF, will be appointed by consensus on an annual basis to avoid the dominance of any one organisation. The Chair facilitates YHREF's formal business and provides day-to-day operational guidance to the YHREF's employees on behalf of the Executive Group. A deputy will also be appointed on the same basis.

### *Assembly Representative*

A member of the YHREF will be appointed by consensus on an annual basis, to avoid the dominance of any one organisation, to represent the YHREF on the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly. This involves attending Assembly meetings, voicing agreed YHREF views within the Assembly agenda, proposing agenda items on behalf of the YHREF, and reporting back to the YHREF following each Yorkshire & Humber Assembly meeting. A deputy will also be appointed on the same basis.

### *Treasurer*

One YHREF member fulfils the role of YHREF Treasurer by agreement with their own organisation, to provide management of the YHREF's finances. This is currently provided by the Yorkshire & Humber Environment Trust and whilst the need to change the arrangement may arise the YHREF sees no merit in a regular review.

### *Executive Group*

The Executive Group comprises the YHREF Chair, Assembly Rep, Treasurer, and up to 5 other YHREF members appointed by consensus, plus any YHREF employees appropriate to the agreed business of each meeting.

### *Secretariat*

The YHREF's secretariat is currently provided by the Coordinator, who circulates agendas, takes and circulates minutes for YHREF and the Executive Group meetings.

### *YHREF Employees*

The YHREF is not a legal entity and cannot directly employ staff. This service is currently contracted to the Yorkshire & Humber Environment Trust.

*Representing the YHREF*

Any member of the YHREF may, with the Executive Group's agreement, represent the YHREF at external meetings and consultations, subject to the following conditions:

- they make clear that they are acting on behalf of the YHREF, and if doing so puts them at variance with the views of their own organisation they state this as appropriate;
- they ensure that their contribution is representative of the YHREF's consensus view, not just that of their own organisation;
- they undertake to report back to the YHREF as required.

Additionally, the YHREF may, with the Executive Group's agreement, invite other people from within member organisations to join a list of approved external representatives, subject to the same conditions as above.