

Yorkshire Food, Farming and Rural Network

is based at the home of The Yorkshire Agricultural Society, Regional Agricultural Centre,
Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, HG2 8NZ

Terms of Reference V1.5

1. Aim

- (i) To enable farming, rural businesses and rural communities to become more sustainable socially, economically and environmentally.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Network is:

- To champion farming and rural issues and collaboratively develop solutions to problems and promote opportunities;
- To provide a collective regional voice of local farming and rural stakeholders;
- To create a two-way channel of communication, into and from rural stakeholders and delivery organisations;
- To influence the local and national agenda in respect of farming and rural issues affecting Yorkshire;
- To provide a key source of advice on issues, concerns and good practice to both Defra, the Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and others as necessary; and
- To provide relevant evidence and intelligence to empower it's Chair to have effective one-to-one dialogue with the Defra Minister and other ministers as appropriate.

3. Role

3.1 Communication and Sector Engagement

- Establishing a wider 'forum' of stakeholders across the Network area to include the farming and food sectors; rural community, environmental and business interests.
- Facilitating a virtual 'forum' to enable stakeholder engagement. All meeting minutes, event details, press releases and other relevant information will be freely available online.
- Facilitating the communication of clear messages, to and from local rural stakeholders, Defra and other relevant government departments and agencies.

- Promoting good practice examples and learning constructively from challenges from across the Network area and beyond.

3.2 Leadership and Representation

- Informing and advising Defra, the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), other public sector organisations and government departments about farming and rural issues in Yorkshire.
- Acting as a point of contact providing feedback to Defra on the local impact of significant and/or fast paced events (e.g. extreme weather conditions, animal disease outbreak) so that the right kind of assistance can be provided. (This is intended to complement rather than duplicate any actions which are being co-ordinated by local resilience fora.)
- Working with other partnerships across wider geographic boundaries where there is a common agenda.

3.3 Policy and Programme Support

- Seek to develop a consensus across the Network Executive on policy issues and advise Defra, DCLG, other government agencies and LEPs on rural views on emerging policies and programmes.
- Assist the development of local priorities and delivery methods for RDPE resources to ensure that the area maximises potential from RDPE and other rural support initiatives.

4. Geographical Coverage

The geographical coverage of the Network is Yorkshire.

5. Activities

5.1 Communication and Sector Engagement

- The Network Executive will identify priority issues to tackle. The issues will be detailed in the business plan.
- The Network Executive will be expected to use their existing contacts and networks activity of the Network.
- Varying forms of activities, task and finish groups and other methods of engagement will be considered based on opportunity and need, linked to the priorities established by the Network Executive.
- The Network Executive will communicate regularly with the Defra secretariat team as the key point of contact for the Defra Policy Unit and Rural Development Teams, and as appropriate, Defra Ministers in order to make necessary representation and to receive feedback on how the input of the Network is making a difference.

5.2 Leadership and Representation

- The Network Executive will seek to meet with Defra Ministers and other relevant Ministers as appropriate to deliver its advocacy and feedback role.
- The Network Executive will support visits of Defra and other Ministers to the Network area.
- The Chair of the Network will meet with the Defra Minister at least bi-annually and will have direct contact with the Minister as necessary.
- The Chair of the Network will attend at least two meetings per year with the Chairs of other Rural and Farming Networks.

5.3 Policy and Programme Support

- The Network Executive will focus on a limited and focused set of activities which add value to the mainstream work of agencies and partnerships in the area and where there is expectation that the Network can make a difference.
- The Network Executive will seek to shape the development and delivery of RDPE and other rural support programmes and will maintain close links with relevant delivery bodies to monitor the impact of the programmes and the delivery of desired outcomes.

6. Membership and Governance

6.1 Network Executive

A Network Executive will be established to oversee the work of the Network. The make-up of the Executive will reflect the issues being tackled. The Network Executive will be representative of rural stakeholders in keeping with the Defra guidance on membership of Rural and Farming Networks. There will be no delegation of attendance, unless agreed with the Chair.

The Network Executive shall be made up of senior representatives from any public and private organisations in the Yorkshire region within the scope of our farming and rural communities who is:

- Responsible for providing a platform between its member organisations and with Government agencies.
- Able to collaborate, influence and ensure that the region's agricultural priorities are at the forefront of leading policy makers and strategists.
- Disseminate information, best practice and knowledge exchange to the farming community and its networks.
- Able to use their expertise to shape future agricultural policies in the region.
- Champion the thriving rural economy of Yorkshire locally, nationally and regionally through their existing networks.

Voting at Network Executive meetings shall be by a show of hands. If there is a tied vote then the Chair shall have a second vote.

The Network Executive Membership will consist of:

Land Based Industry Organisations and Partnerships

Country Land and Business Association	(1)
National Farmers Union	(1)
Yorkshire Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs/Future Farmers of Yorkshire	(1)
Yorkshire Agricultural Society	(1)

Local Authorities / Rural Partnerships

East Riding of Yorkshire Council / East Yorkshire Rural Partnership	(1)
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	(1)
ESIF Leeds City Region and York, North Yorks and East Riding	(1)

Environment

Natural England	(1)
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Business Interests

Federation of Small Businesses	(1)
McCain Foods	(1)
Farmer	(1)
Rural business person	(1)

Rural Community

Yorkshire Rural Support Network	(1)
Rural Action Yorkshire	(1)

Research and Education Bodies

InnovateUK (TSB)	(1)
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Other Government Partners

Defra RDPE	(1)
LEADER (South Pennines, Tees Valley & Mowbray, Sheffield, Northern Governance)	(4)

Other senior representatives can be nominated/invited to join the Network Board at the agreement and discretion of the Executive.

6.2 Management, Chair & Vice Chair

Appointments for the Chair and Vice Chair will be formally advertised across the region. The Network Executive will have an opportunity to nominate candidates as part of this process. Candidates will be shortlisted and interviewed by a selection panel drawn from the Yorkshire Food Farming and Rural Network's Executive. The

Chair will be appointed at the following meeting of the Executive and will serve for a term of two years (in parallel with the YAS secretariat provision).

The Network Executive shall be administered by three officers of the Management Committee: The Chair, The Vice-Chair and The Coordinator.

The Management Committee may co-opt onto their Committee, up to three individuals, in an advisory and non-voting capacity that it feels will help to fulfil the aim of the Group.

The Management Committee shall meet at least once a year or as needed.

At least two Management Committee members must be present for a Management Committee meeting to take place.

Membership of the Network Executive may be terminated for good reason by the Management Committee: Provided that the member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Management Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

The Management Committee may appoint any other member of the Executive to become a member of the Management Committee to fill a vacancy, provided that the maximum prescribed number is not exceeded.

6.3 The Duties of the Officers

The duties of the Chair shall be to:

- Chair meetings of the Committee and the Group
- represent the Group at functions/meetings as required
- act as the spokesperson of the Group when necessary.

The duties of the Vice Chair shall be to:

- to deputise for the Chair as required

The duties of the Coordinator shall be to:

- help deliver the strategy and aims of the Network as agreed by the Management Committee
- support liaison with Government and the LEPs
- keep a membership list
- prepare in consultation with the Chairperson the agenda for meetings of the Committee and the Group
- take and keep minutes of all meetings
- collect and circulate any relevant information within the Group
- supervise the financial affairs of the Group
- keep proper accounts that show all monies received and paid out by the Group
- act as initial point of contact for people interested in the work of the Network

6.4 Meeting Arrangements

Network Executive Meetings

- Four meetings of the Network Executive to be held annually as needed.
- All notification of meeting and meeting papers will be circulated to members by email.

Special General Meetings

A Special General Meeting may be called by the Management Committee or a group of up to 6 members to discuss an urgent matter. The Coordinator shall give all members fourteen days' notice of any Special General Meeting together with notice of the business to be discussed.

7. Resources

The Network will seek to secure resources to:

- Undertake its roles as set out at section 3, detailed above.
- To deliver chosen programmes and activities.

8. Review

The Terms of Reference and operations of the Network will be reviewed annually. The annual review will consider any amendments and revisions needed to improve the:

- Terms of reference
- Purposes and roles of the Network
- Membership and performance of the Network
- Communication and engagement
- Policy and activity programme
- Secretariat arrangements

In addition the Network may be reviewed as a result of guidance or requests received from the Defra Minister.

9. Alterations to the Terms of Reference

Any changes to this Terms of Reference must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting at any of the quarterly meetings.

10. Dissolution

The Network may be wound up at any time if agreed by two-thirds of those members present and voting at any bi-annual meeting. In the event of winding up any assets remaining after all debts have been paid shall be given to another Network with a similar aim.

Glossary

Management Committee	The Network Executive shall be administered by three officers of the Management Committee: The Chair, The Vice-Chair and The Coordinator.
Network Executive	The Network Executive will be made up of senior representatives from public and private organisations and rural stakeholders in keeping with the Defra guidance on membership of Rural and Farming Networks. This is a closed Executive. New members can be invited/ nominated and agreed by the discretion of the Executive.
The Network (wider membership or links)	Includes members of the Network Executive and the wider network of contacts established by the Network Executive to distribute information.