

Amy Cogan Wares

Regional Development in Yorkshire and the Humber (F)

In the spring of 2010 the parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom gave the victory to the Conservative party, ending two terms of Labour governments, the founders of the RDAs.

Soon after the following article was published in the BBC news¹:

Yorkshire Forward development agency axed in Budget

Yorkshire Forward has 450 staff at five offices across the region.

The body charged with attracting investment to the Yorkshire and Humber region is to be abolished. Yorkshire Forward is among nine regional development agencies (RDAs) in England which will be replaced with Local Enterprise Partnerships. The government confirmed its intention as it unveiled its Budget on Tuesday. The process will begin with a white paper to be published later this year.

Yorkshire Forward, which has 450 staff, has not yet commented on the decision. The agency was set up in 1999 to further economic development and regeneration in the region and has an annual budget of £277m.

"I don't believe that is delivering the value that we need in our region, especially under these very difficult financial times that we face at the moment". Julian Sturdy York Outer MP

Rosie Winterton, Labour MP for Doncaster Central, said Yorkshire forward had been valuable. She said: "For every pound of public money that the RDA spent they created something like £4.50 in return for their local economy. "So it is wise investment but also you do need, when we are planning for growth in the future, to be able to have a regional vision of what is needed."

Julian Sturdy, Conservative MP for York Outer, said it was time for the agency to go. He said: *"You look at the budget and when 60% of Yorkshire Forward's budget*

¹ Published on 22 June 2010.

is spent on internal expenditure like quangos that Yorkshire Forward sets up I don't believe that is delivering the value that we need in our region, especially under these very difficult financial times that we face at the moment."

In the days leading up to the general election local business leaders called for Yorkshire Forward's future to be guaranteed. Former Northern Foods chairman Lord Haskins said: *"It's got us thinking about regional issues like transport, infrastructure etc and putting pressure on central government to do something about it."*