



# **Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee**

Date: **24 November 2009**

Report of: **Julian Lomas, Interim Managing Director**

Subject: **Multi Area Agreement Stocktake and Refresh**

## **SUMMARY**

At its May and July meeting the Joint Committee approved the approach to the stocktake and refresh of the South Hampshire Agreement (the MAA). Since then the stocktake has been completed and a report prepared on the findings of the stocktake. Steady progress has also been made in discussions with Government departments and agencies on the priority outcome areas PUSH is seeking to add into the refreshed MAA. The purpose of this report is to present to members the findings of the stocktake and to update members on progress and issues arising from discussion on the priority outcomes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Joint Committee:-

1. RECEIVES and ACCEPTS the stocktake report and its key messages; and
2. NOTES the progress update on discussions on the priority outcomes for inclusion in the refreshed MAA

## INTRODUCTION

1. At previous meetings the Joint Committee has resolved to participate as a 'national pathfinder' to develop an MAA Stocktake methodology and best practice in partnership with CLG. The Joint Committee has also previously agreed to focus on adding a limited number of new outcomes to the MAA (in addition to updating the targets and content of the current Agreement to reflect changed circumstances since it was signed in July 2008. The priority outcomes the Joint Committee agreed to pursue for inclusion in the MAA are:
  - Green infrastructure and the natural environment
  - Economic development: joint investment planning with SEEDA, LSC/SFA and Job Centre Plus
  - Public Transport
  - HCA Single Conversation: joint investment planning with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
  - External funding/better use of assets

## STOCKTAKE

2. The full report on the findings of the stocktake for the South Hampshire Agreement is attached at [Appendix 1](#). The report was prepared following a questionnaire survey of regional and sub-regional partners, a survey of Government departments and a review of performance data and progress reporting on MAA enabling measures.
3. Overall the findings of the report are encouraging: there is a consensus that the MAA is having a positive impact on partnership working and, through that, on outcomes although there are, as would be expected after such a short period since the agreement was signed, area for further work and improvement.
4. In summary the strengths identified in the report area:
  - (a) The strength of relationships between partners in South Hampshire.
  - (b) PUSH has a sound strategy and has aligned priorities well with its partners.
  - (c) Securing additional resources form Government.
  - (d) Responsiveness to the impacts of the recession with performance indicators appearing to show that South Hampshire, while still being severely affected, has been more resilient than many other areas.
  - (e) Performance against targets other than those rendered unrealistic by the impacts of the recession.
5. Areas for improvement identified in the report are:
  - (a) A clear need for better alignment between partners of spending and investment.
  - (b) The need to ensure the emphasis continues to shift to delivery rather than planning.

- (c) Further devolution of responsibilities/power from central government is required and the need for better engagement of some Government departments.
6. Progress on agreeing enabling measures identified in the MAA has been patchy with some examples of rapid and positive progress and others where progress has been disappointing (for a variety of reasons including changing circumstances).
  7. These findings provide a useful basis for discussion on the MAA refresh, in particular strengthening the PUSH case for robust joint investment frameworks with HCA, SEEDA, LSC/SFA and Job Centre Plus and the need for shared priorities with environmental agencies. The findings also give a clear message to Government departments that greater engagement and devolution by them is required and to PUSH to ensure that discussions on refreshing the MAA are delivery and outcome focused.
  8. We are also discussing with CLG whether and how to give a higher national profile to the report and the methodology given that it was conducted as a national pathfinder.

## REFRESH

9. Progress on discussions on the priority outcomes has been patchy with significant progress in some area but limited progress in others - a brief summary on progress on each priority outcome is provided below. In addition, the timescale for agreeing the refreshed MAA (new outcomes to include and updating existing outcomes) appears now to be more relaxed. In some ways this is helpful in allowing more time to secure more specific enabling measures although PUSH should avoid letting the discussion go on too much beyond Christmas.
  - Green infrastructure and natural environment: discussion with the Environment Agency and Natural England continue to be positive and productive. We are close to agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PUSH which, importantly states clearly the need for flexible and creative approaches to meet the requirements of the South East Plan including an approach that achieves environmental gain overall, but accepts what might be a compromise in certain areas as a consequence. More work is required on the action plan to accompany the MoU and also to gain engagement and buy in from Whitehall Departments.
  - Economic development: initial discussion with partners on joint investment planning have been positive and it has been agreed that a joint investment framework will cover three areas – skills and employment, sectors (innovation, enterprise and inward investment) and employment land (which will require strong links to the HCA joint investment framework). These discussion will also address the rationalisation, form and levels of the economic development targets currently in the MAA, not least to reflect changed economic circumstances (however it is likely that some new target levels will have to be agreed at a later date when there is evidence to support them from the refreshed evidence base work now underway).

- Public transport: discussions on this outcomes have become more tightly focused on securing a broad MoU with Network Rail, bus operators and DfT to deliver common objectives and shared priorities on public transport in South Hampshire. It has become clear that achieving the second outcomes previously agreed by members (a package of measures to support modal shift and enhanced bus based public transport is not available (hence the broader than originally conceived MoU now proposed. TfSH and GOSE are now working on a draft MoU as the basis for further discussions.
- HCA Single Conversation: an initial meeting has taken place with HCA and a work programme for the Single Conversation has been agreed, leading to the conclusion of a Local Investment Agreement and associated Local Investment Plan by the end of March 2010. These will be 3-5 year documents focussing mainly on the period from April 2011 onwards, and therefore, it is envisaged they will be a key input to the forthcoming Spending Review. An intermediate milestone will be the adoption of investment priorities by the Joint Committee at your meeting in January 2010. Encouragingly, HCA readily accept that the starting point for developing these documents will be the PUSH Business Plan and that the investment priorities will therefore flow from the priorities in the Business Plan. It is anticipated that the MAA refresh (which, of course, will be concluded before the Single Conversation) will include: a clear statement of shared vision, objectives and priorities (drawn from the PUSH Business Plan); agreement on the broad shape and content of the Local Investment Plan; and Agreement and possibly also a number of enabling measures to support delivery of these.
- External funding: initial discussion have take place with Treasury Officials. The likely outcome from these discussions at this stage, however, is unlikely to be much more than a commitment to continue dialogue and develop options.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Joint Committee:

1. RECEIVES and ACCEPTS the stocktake report and its key messages;
2. NOTES the progress update on discussions on the priority outcomes for inclusion in the refreshed MAA

**Background Papers:** None

## **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Julian Lomas (Interim PUSH Managing Director)

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