



Partnership for Urban South Hampshire

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26 June 2007

Dear Sir

**South Hampshire Strategic Employment Zone
Area Action Plan – Issues and Options**

I am writing in my capacity as Chairman of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) in response to proposals contained in the above consultation. The comments set out in this letter represent the provisional views of PUSH and are subject to confirmation by PUSH Leaders at our next meeting on 23 July 2007.

PUSH would like thank Eastleigh Borough Council for inviting comments on the Area Action Plan. The Partnership supports the vision for the Employment Zone to 2026, which describes the Zone as the strategic employment site for South Hampshire. Whilst the vision acknowledges the Zone's importance within the wider economic strategy for the sub-region, the Partnership would like this to be developed further in the Plan.

There is a need to show how the development of the Zone will support the overall strategy for the sub-region, in particular, how it will complement the regeneration of Southampton and Portsmouth. The Action Plan should also highlight the infrastructure improvements required in South Hampshire and elsewhere (e.g. improvements to A34/M3 junction 9) to enable the area to maximise its role as the strategic employment zone, including the links needed to enable the Zone to offer employment prospects for those in the sub-region, particularly the more deprived areas. Skills and training will also be a big factor in the success of any adopted

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development scheme for the Zone and the Borough Council, working with PUSH and other partners, will need to ensure that South Hampshire residents benefit from the arising job opportunities. Some commuting is inevitable and opportunities for maximising sustainable travel patterns also need further investigation.

I should like to turn now to the six development options presented in the consultation. The Partnership's development preference is for Option 1 (employment uses) as this will make the greatest contribution to the economic growth aspirations set out in the Draft South East Plan for South Hampshire.

PUSH supports the aspiration to develop the Zone primarily as a business park or science park. This will help facilitate the step change in delivering a knowledge economy to support PUSH's GVA growth targets. To this end there should be additional emphasis on attracting high value added firms and the tertiary education/research sector.

The Partnership also believes that the Zone should plan to accommodate some B8 (warehousing) in addition to the dominant B1 and B2 uses. The proposals only make reference to this use in the Airport Public Safety Zone. Recently completed research into employment land provision in South Hampshire confirms that there is a considerable deficit in the provision of warehousing to 2026 in the south-west of the sub-region compared to the requirement in the draft South East Plan (Policy SH6). The Zone is a prime site to contribute to this provision, particularly given its excellent access to the motorway, rail and air network. I would stress that this suggestion is for only a small part of the Zone to be allocated for B8 uses.

PUSH would support some 'housing enabling' uses for the Zone, as set out in Options 2 and 3, where this can be justified as being necessary to bring forward the employment development within the timescales envisaged. The amount of new residential development permitted should be limited to that necessary to underpin the new infrastructure required for the Zone. A significant loss of employment land should be resisted as it would inevitably result in the need to identify and allocate additional land for employment elsewhere.

PUSH opposes the 'retail enabling' Option 4. There will clearly be a need for further retail development in South Hampshire. Application of the sequential test should mean that Southampton and Portsmouth city centres, together with the main town centres (including Eastleigh) are the preferred locations for this form of development. Only when it has been demonstrated that these locations cannot accommodate new retail development should consideration be given to alternatives elsewhere in South Hampshire (including the Zone).

PUSH also opposes the 'leisure enabling' Option 5. Only when it has been demonstrated that there are no suitable alternatives elsewhere in the Borough (and elsewhere for major proposals) should consideration be given to permitting leisure uses in the Zone.

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It should come as no surprise to learn that PUSH is opposed to Option 6 (regeneration without Chickenhall Lane Link Road), as this will fail to realise the full potential of the area and lead to the release of land elsewhere in the sub-region. PUSH supports the development of the Chickenhall Lane Link Road, owing to its importance in bringing forward the whole Zone. The financing and construction of the Chickenhall Lane Link Road is fundamental to the development of the SHSEZ and close attention needs to be given to the prospects for timely funding and implementation. This includes the possibility of phased construction and the establishment of a realistic delivery mechanism for the scheme.

The other transport objectives contained in the AAP, such as securing environmental and air quality benefits, improving accessibility through the provision of direct links for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists, and allowing for the future provision of the Eastleigh Rail Chord are all supported.

I hope that you find the above comments helpful and constructive. The Partnership is keen to see the vision the Borough Council has for this area realised as soon as possible. The size and location of the Zone makes it a rare site, capable of providing a significant amount of employment floorspace adjacent to excellent road, rail and air services, and also Eastleigh town centre. As a largely brownfield site its development will also help reduce the need for greenfield land releases elsewhere in South Hampshire.

Given the importance of the Zone to meeting employment floorspace requirements (a key driver to help achieve the economic growth target for South Hampshire) PUSH is disappointed that it will take almost a further two and a half years before the Area Action Plan is adopted by the Council. The Partnership would wish to encourage the Borough Council to investigate ways to reduce this timetable. To this end PUSH is willing to explore with the Borough Council whether it can assist in any way to speed up the planning process and reduce the time to adoption.

I will write again after the PUSH Leaders meeting on 23 July 2007 with any additional comments they wish to make.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seán Woodward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Councillor Seán Woodward
Chairman**