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Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: **18th March 2008**

Report of: **Richard Longman, PUSH Project Director**

Subject: **PUSH Projects: Progress Report**

SUMMARY

The Appendix to this paper provides a brief summary of progress on each of the projects currently being carried out by or on behalf of PUSH. It also offers a forecast of outturn expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Joint Committee NOTES this progress report and its Appendix

INTRODUCTION

1. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire programme of work in 2007/8 includes around 20 formal projects as well as numerous other informal collaborations to support delivery of sustained economic-led growth in the sub-region. Some 14 of these are supported by £3.645 million of funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government's New Growth Point programme. These include a number of studies and strategies, some of which are specified as conditions of New Growth Point partnership with Government. The outputs from the studies are crucial to informing PUSH's forward work programme and Business Plan, as well as actions by individual authorities and other agencies.

PROGRESS SUMMARIES

2. The attached [Appendix](#) details progress on the 14 New Growth Point projects funded in 2007/8, based on information provided by the project lead officers. (Four projects also received advance allocations to allow commencement in 2006/7.)
3. For most of the New Growth Point projects, full spend is forecast to be achieved; the main exception is the **Skills Strategy**. The Adult Learning & Skills Component has been commissioned and completed; the Retail Skills and Construction Skills aspects of the strategy encountered commissioning problems and delivery before 31st March became unachievable. This has resulted in underspend of £80,000. A request was made to DCLG to transfer the funds to another project, to offset increased costs associated with the purchase of mitigation land for the South Hampshire Strategic Employment Zone (SHSEZ). However, this request has been declined.
4. The completion of the **purchase of the land at SHSEZ** is anticipated by the 31st March. Due to the increased costs associated with the purchase of the preferred site, and DCLG's refusal to permit transfer of revenue underspend to capital, Eastleigh Borough Council and Hampshire County Council are between them finding other resources to finance the acquisition.
5. The **Hedge End transportation package** has been remodelled to compensate for the fact that the bus passenger counting system cannot be delivered as part of the current package of work. Additional elements have been identified for delivery in 07/08, including a further 6 new high quality bus shelters that include real time information screens, help points and lighting and other improvements to bus stops serving the Hedge End area. With these adjustments the project should achieve its full budget allocation this financial year.
6. Some minor underspend is anticipated in relation to the **access studies** being conducted at the Drivers Wharf and Royal Pier sites and the **Integrated Water Management Study**, due to specification adjustments and reduced consultancy fees respectively.

ISSUES & IMPLICATIONS

7. With the exception of the Skills Strategy, we expect to utilise our allocations

from DCLG fully. It is regrettable that the unused allocation on the Skills Strategy could not be re-assigned to another project. However, the funding agreement for the Skills Strategy is based on the first element of the scheme only (for the £20,000 grant claimed). Adjustments to the final grant claim figures are inevitable. But on the basis of the information provided, our overall forecast outturn will be around £3,435,805. This is just under £100,000 (or 2.7%) short of our original allocation, and just over £18,000 (0.5%) short of the grant figures set in funding agreements.

8. DCLG have emphasised that there is no end-year flexibility to enable under- or over-spends to be carried over into 2008/9. We are therefore exerting best efforts with project managers to ensure that grant-aided works are completed by 31st March 2008.

CONCLUSION

9. The Committee is invited to note this report and Appendix.

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| Approved by the Monitoring Officer | Mark Heath | Date: | |
| Approved by the Finance Officer | Tom Niedrum | Date: | 06/03/08 |

Because this predates the new accountable body arrangements, all spend and claims is accounted for by the respective lead authority and so cannot be validated by the Finance Officer.

Background Papers:

Reference Papers: NGP Update Appendix

Enquiries:

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