



Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: 15 January 2009

Report of: **Stuart Jarvis Managing Director and Mel McKeown, PUSH
Communications Advisor**

Subject: **PUSH Communication Strategy**

SUMMARY

PUSH has begun to attract a significant amount of attention in terms of profile with national government, regional bodies, local partners and other interested parties and, largely due to the finalisation of the SE Plan, with some local community groups. However PUSH's ambitious, economic led, conditional managed growth strategy, and its campaigning for Infrastructure funding, have not been underpinned by an active and comprehensive communications strategy. This has led to gaps in communication, along with a lack of understanding from a range of audiences on PUSH's approach, objectives, priorities and desired outcomes. There is a need therefore to rapidly boost communication activity (both internal and external) and cohesion for PUSH. This report seeks to address these issues and recommend a way forward through an interim Communications Strategy and Action Plan.

The Joint Committee is RECOMMENDED to:-

1. AGREE the approach set out in the report, and adopt it as an interim Communication Strategy for PUSH;
2. APPROVE the Action Plan set out at APPENDIX Two as a basis for Communications Activity in the short and medium term; and
3. AGREE that this area be kept under regular review, that the key messages and PUSH Vision should be considered at a future PUSH Leaders and Chief Executives workshop, and that progress on Communications be periodically reported to the Joint Committee in future.

Introduction and Background

1. In October 2006 PUSH was granted New Growth Point status by the Department for Communities and Local Government. In July 2008 the South Hampshire MAA was signed, one of only seven such agreements in the Country, and the only one in the South East region. Also in July, the South East Plan Modifications were published, leaving the South Hampshire proposals largely, and uniquely amongst the sub-regions, unaltered. PUSH has therefore begun to attract a significant amount of attention in terms of profile with national government, regional bodies, local partners and other interested parties and, largely due to the finalisation of the SE Plan, with some local community groups. However PUSH's ambitious, economic led, conditional managed growth strategy, and its campaigning for Infrastructure funding, have not been underpinned by an active and comprehensive communications strategy.
2. This has led to gaps in communication, along with a lack of understanding from a range of audiences on PUSH's approach, objectives, priorities and desired outcomes. There is a need therefore to rapidly boost communication activity (both internal and external) and cohesion for PUSH. Therefore, this strategy seeks to establish:
 - i) Communication principles;
 - ii) Communication objectives;
 - iii) PUSH partners and other interested parties (audiences);
 - iv) PUSH key messages and vision;
 - v) Internal and external communication;
 - vi) The PUSH brand and branding; and
 - vii) Communication action plans for 2009

PUSH Communication Principles

3. It is proposed that the following principles should be adopted and should underpin all future PUSH communications:
 - i) Our communication will be open, honest and trustworthy;
 - ii) We will strive to avoid jargon, acronyms and local government language;
 - iii) We will establish and use the most appropriate communication tools to reach our audiences;
 - iv) We will always provide a feedback method when communicating messages to our audiences;

- v) Our material will be written in plain English, sensitively designed and well produced;
- vi) We will strive to achieve value for money in all our communication activities; and
- vii) We will strive to ensure information provided is accurate, up to date, and accessible.

PUSH Communication Objectives

4. PUSH Communication objectives are to:

- Act as a common, 'sub-regional voice' for the 11 authorities of South Hampshire;
- Develop understanding of the role of PUSH in the development of South Hampshire;
- Increase the effectiveness of PUSH's campaigning and lobbying role with central Government, its agencies and with regional bodies; and
- Promote South Hampshire to Government, the public, and potential inward investors.

PUSH Partners and Other Interested Parties (audiences)

Internal

- 5. PUSH has not communicated consistently well with those officers and members of the partner authorities who are not specifically involved in PUSH work. It is therefore important that awareness and understanding of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire is better developed within the partner authorities.
- 6. This can only be achieved with the support of the communications teams within each of the partner authorities, along with the support of those officers already working on projects, who should act as ambassadors for PUSH.

External

- 7. A mapping exercise for external partners and other interested parties was carried out with the aim of identifying those to whom:-
 - 1) PUSH key messages need to be addressed; and
 - 2) South Hampshire key messages need to be addressed.
- 8. The identified audiences fall into four broad groups:-

- Government/statutory organisations – **PUSH key messages;**
- Residents/local groups – **South Hampshire key messages;**
- Business and inward investment – **South Hampshire key messages; and**
- General interest – media, landowners, transport providers – **PUSH key messages**

Key Messages

9. Having identified two main groupings, PUSH should establish key messages for each. Initial draft key messages have been developed as a starting point. These are as follows:

Key messages for Partnership for Urban South Hampshire:

- PUSH will facilitate measured growth in South Hampshire;
- South Hampshire's growth must be economically led;
- Growth is conditional on Infrastructure provision;
- South Hampshire's development is in safe hands; and
- PUSH needs your support to achieve this.

Key messages for South Hampshire:

- The Government has set a requirement for 80,000 new homes and 2,000,000 sq metres of employment floorspace in South Hampshire by 2026;
 - Through the efforts of PUSH, South Hampshire's growth will be sustainable, well planned and locally managed;
 - South Hampshire makes business sense; and
 - South Hampshire offers great opportunities for business, with good skills, facilities, a first class environment and an excellent quality of life.
10. The key messages and the groups to whom they should be addressed can be seen on the following page.

External Partners and Other Interest groups	Key messages
<p>Government/statutory organisations</p> <p>Media/landowners/transport providers</p>	<p><i>PUSH key messages</i> <i>PUSH will facilitate measured growth in South Hampshire</i></p> <p><i>South Hampshire's growth must be economically led</i></p> <p><i>Growth is conditional on provision of Infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>South Hampshire's development is in safe hands</i></p> <p><i>PUSH needs your support to achieve this</i></p>
<p>Key Groups</p> <p>Residents/local groups</p> <p>Business partners/inward investors</p>	<p><i>South Hampshire key messages</i></p> <p><i>The Government has set a requirement for 80,000 new homes and 2,000,000 sq metres of employment floorspace in South Hampshire by 2026</i></p> <p><i>Through the efforts of PUSH, South Hampshire's growth will be well planned</i></p> <p><i>South Hampshire makes business sense</i></p> <p><i>South Hampshire offers great opportunities for business, with good skills, facilities, a first class environment and an excellent quality of life</i></p>

PUSH Vision

11. PUSH needs to consolidate a short vision for the South Hampshire region. The existing vision statement (attached at annex 1), which was developed as part of the process of establishing PUSH, will now be reviewed as a communication priority early in 2009.

Internal Communication

12. There is a need to ensure all partners have a clear and common understanding of the role of PUSH. This will enable them to help communicate the PUSH and South Hampshire messages to the partners with whom they also work. Officers and members engaged with PUSH can, in many situations, act as ambassadors for PUSH. However we need to work to ensure that there is a common level of awareness and understanding of the key messages and the most appropriate communication tools to enable this to be fully effective.
13. The internal communication objectives for PUSH are:-
 - To create understanding of the role, vision, and objectives of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire within the partner organisations; and
 - To support officers and members to act as ambassadors for PUSH in their work with statutory, voluntary and private sector partners.
14. Improving internal communication for PUSH will also only be successful with involvement, support and understanding of the communications teams of all the PUSH partners.
15. A list of actions to improve communications for PUSH is identified in annex 2 of this strategy.

External Communication

16. The mapping exercise identified at least 30 interest groups with whom PUSH needs to communicate, using the key messages of South Hampshire or PUSH. This list will continue to grow as the work of PUSH enters a more dynamic delivery phase. As a result the list will need an annual review.
17. There is an urgent need for PUSH to develop a range of external communication tools to enable effective communication for both the South Hampshire and PUSH key messages.
18. To ensure cost and time effective communication, PUSH will look to work very closely with the partners communications teams, particularly those within each of the 11 partner authorities. This will enable PUSH messages to be delivered using existing, well-established channels rather than creating another layer of communication. It will also serve to reinforce the involvement of all of the partners.
19. A list of actions to improve communications for PUSH is set out in annex 2.

The PUSH Brand

20. A brand is more than how an organisation presents its publicity/ information material. It is also about the role, and the 'raison d'etre' of the organisation.
21. PUSH has a number of roles, such as:-
 - *A lobbying/campaigning organisation created to ensure the voices of the 11 South Hampshire partner authorities are heard in Government*
 - *A body to facilitate improvements to the South Hampshire economy through skills and workforce development, business support, positive planning policies, development of sites and premises and promotion of inward investment*
 - *A partnership created to ensure that the future of South Hampshire is viewed strategically and managed and led locally*
22. The 'raison d'etre' for PUSH can be summarised as:-
 - A group created from a mutual need to work together for the benefit of existing and future residents of South Hampshire
 - A body which offers a strategic response to the Government and Regional Agencies plans and proposals for the future development of South Hampshire

PUSH Branding

23. PUSH has a logo, which is currently being used on the website:-
 - www.push.gov.uk , and on most publicity material.
24. A branded look incorporating this logo now needs to be developed for PUSH. This can then be carried across all PUSH material, from reports to key project information sheets, from media releases to the website and on funding bid documents.
25. Detailed actions around the development and roll out of a branded look for PUSH will be found in Annex 2.

Conclusion

26. There is much to be done and achieve in order to enable effective internal and external communication for PUSH. This will demand a commitment from a communications professional, along with the support of the PUSH team, the key officers and members involved in PUSH, and the communications teams at the partner authorities. This report sets out some initial thoughts and principles, together with an action plan which will provide a framework for the first steps in developing more effective PUSH communications.

27. **The Joint Committee is therefore recommended to:-**

AGREE the approach set out in the report, and adopt it as an interim Communication Strategy for PUSH;

APPROVE the Action Plan set out at APPENDIX Two as a basis for Communications Activity in the short and medium term;

AGREE that this area be kept under regular review, that the key messages and PUSH Vision should be considered at a future PUSH Leaders and Chief Executives workshop, and that progress on Communications be periodically reported to the Joint Committee in future.

Background Papers:

Enquiries:

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PUSH Vision

Views of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire

The statement below sets out the Partnership's vision and aspirations for the future planning of urban South Hampshire.

1. We believe that urban South Hampshire has immense natural advantages and a bright future. It has an environment that is the envy of many parts of England, with easy access to rural hinterlands and miles of beautiful coastline. It has a vibrant economy, world class higher education institutions, and excellent transport links, by air, road, rail and sea. Historically it has been England's sea gateway to the continent, the Americas and beyond and it still plays this role today. Most of all, it is a place where businesses want to invest and where people want to live.
2. Growth has occurred on a massive scale over the last 40 years. South Hampshire is now the largest urban area in the south of England outside London. This growth has created a complex urban area focussed on two major cities and a series of adjacent complementary settlements, which now form an almost continuous conurbation adjacent to the Solent coastline. The complexities of our local government arrangements, with two Unitary cities, four District Councils and a County Council has meant that it has been more difficult to achieve a coordinated approach to the strategic planning of the area. It is to achieve that unified voice that PUSH was established.
3. It is our view that further growth in the area is to be welcomed. We must plan for sustainable development and change in a way which will maximise the benefit to the area and its people. Such an approach must acknowledge the differences and particular needs of the various locations that make up South Hampshire, while at the same time recognising the complementary and common interests which the whole area shares as a continuous urban area with a common future.
4. Economic growth will bring many benefits to the area. It will bring more investment, more jobs, more people to enrich communities and more services to meet their demands. The challenge we face is how to create regeneration through growth: to build the necessary infrastructure, tackle the problems the area faces, maintain its superb environment and enhance its prosperity and well-being. We need to be able to meet this challenge in order to move confidently towards status as a growth area and eventually create a world class city region.
5. The following issues are key to our approach to growth:-

- A better transport infrastructure, with an emphasis on better choice and availability in public transport, which allows people to move more efficiently and safely within the region.
 - Complementary and parallel investment in utilities, services and facilities to maintain and enhance the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors.
 - Enhancing the advantages of particular localities within the area (motorway corridor, town or city centre, waterfront or suburb) as a focus for appropriate employment and business development that will enhance prosperity.
 - Facilitating and encouraging inward investment, whilst recognising that indigenous growth will be the main driver of the area's economic future, building on its strengths in research and innovation, and its emerging business clusters.
 - Ensuring that economic growth benefits all sections of the community and that there is investment in skills to enable people to participate in local employment growth and opportunities.
 - Regenerating older urban areas to enhance their particular historic and environmental qualities, and to further develop the social and cultural infrastructure to support them.
 - Ensuring that housing development focuses on the changing needs of a changing population, including smaller housing units and more affordable housing.
 - Respecting the environment, safeguarding bio-diversity and areas of high ecological importance, and providing access to recreational and countryside areas.
6. Development that is sustainable needs to respect the balance between housing and employment, be of the highest quality, be supported by appropriate infrastructure, and have the least possible impact on greenfield sites and high quality spaces within and between settlements. It needs to be supported by investment in facilities, services and skills.
7. New development should be carefully targeted to locations where it would benefit the sub-region, through associated transport improvements for example, or helping to reduce social deprivation. The overall focus should be on the regeneration and renaissance of the two cities and older urban areas, embracing mixed use development and very high densities in appropriate locations. Development elsewhere must show it would complement and not conflict with that aim.
8. We believe the case for a sub-regional strategy covering South Hampshire is overwhelming and indisputable. For such a strategy to be successful, a real commitment will be required from the Government to provide substantial funding for key transport infrastructure enhancements, particularly to improve access into Portsmouth and Southampton from other parts of the sub-region. Subject to that commitment, we support the designation of the Urban South

Hampshire sub-region as a "Strategic Development Area" in the South East Plan.

9. The future for South Hampshire is bright. We want to see it become a world-class city region in the South of England. We are committed to meeting the challenges of sustainable growth and we call on the Government to make the necessary investments to ensure that we can achieve our aims.

PUSH Communication Action Plan for 2009

Communication objectives

- Act as one 'super-voice' for the 11 authorities of South Hampshire
- Develop understanding of the role of PUSH in the development of South Hampshire
- Increase the level of support for the lobbying role of PUSH to central Government
- Promote the South Hampshire region to Government, the public, and potential inward investors

External groups

The identified external audiences fall into four broad groups:

- 1) Government/statutory organisations – **PUSH key messages**
- 2) Residents/local groups – **South Hampshire key messages**
- 3) Business/education and inward investment – **South Hampshire key messages**
- 4) General interest – media, landowners, transport providers – **PUSH key messages**

Action	Details	Timeframe	Lead officer	Target groups
Agree key messages (PUSH & South Hampshire) and vision for PUSH	Vision and key messages need to be agreed to enable improvements to communication to be made (both internally and externally)	Jan 2009	PUSH team - led by Stuart Jarvis	1,2,3,4 + internal
Build relationship with all communications teams at partner authorities	Visit communications teams at each partner authority to deliver key messages and vision and present communications strategy. In addition, establish what internal and	Jan/Feb/Mar 2009	Mel McKeown	Internal

	external communication channels they use to reach their residents, partner agencies and businesses and explore opportunities to 'piggy-back' key messages and vision for South Hampshire and PUSH			
Write brief article for internal magazines/intranet of each partner authority	Seek agreement for PUSH article to be included in internal communication channels To be timed around launch of re-developed PUSH website	Mar 2009 Apr/May 2009	Mel McKeown (approval from Stuart Jarvis)	Internal
Develop additional internal communication material & circulate to partner authorities	PUSH Q&A sheet Information/briefing sheets on PUSH projects	Start Mar/Apr 2009 Complete Sept 09	Mel McKeown (in conjunction with key PUSH officers)	Internal
Create corporate style guide for PUSH	Establish the following for PUSH documents etc: 1) Use of PUSH logo 2) Branded look 3) Typeface etc. Circulate to comms teams in PUSH authorities	Mar/Apr 2009 April 2009	Mel McKeown	Internal + 1,2,3 & 4

Action	Details	Timeframe	Lead officer	Target groups
Develop branded look for all PUSH material	Approach Southampton City Council Graphic Design department to build on existing PUSH branded material	Jan/Feb 2009	Mel McKeown	1,2,3 & 4
Re-develop www.push.gov.uk	Work with Hampshire County Council web team to improve navigation, capability and useability of site Ensure new branded look is incorporated on website	Jan-March 2009	Neil Tuck	1,2,3 & 4
Commission and produce PUSH DVD	The DVD will serve two main aims: 4) Act as a promotional tool for inward investment 5) Explain the role and 'raison d'etre' of PUSH	Jan-March 2009	Project management by Claire Robson (Harbour Economic Development Forum) Approval by Stuart Jarvis/Dawn Baxendale	1,2,3 & 4 Main focus 2 & 3

Action	Details	Timeframe	Lead officer	Target groups
DVD to be used on re-developed PUSH website	Sections of DVD to be used on www.push.gov.uk	From Apr 2009	Neil Tuck/Mel McKeown to work with HCC	1,2,3 & 4
Develop media strategy for PUSH	Media protocols established. Need to develop media logging/monitoring, media contacts, key events calendar	Mar/Apr 2009	Mel McKeown	Internal + 1,2,3 & 4
Write standard PUSH articles for local authority magazines	Work with communications teams at partner authorities to ensure they feature at least one PUSH article in their residents' magazines in 2009	Jan-Mar 2009 Article to appear before end of 2009	Mel McKeown	2 & 3
Produce further executive summaries of reports	Work with external company to produce summaries, based on agreed priority list	Start Mar/Apr 2009 Complete end Dec 2009	Mel McKeown	1,2,3 & 4
Create E-Newsletter distribution list	Work with HCC to ensure capability for e-Newsletter is built into www.push.gov.uk	Mar/Apr 2009	Mel McKeown	1,3 & some groups within 4
Produce first PUSH E-Newsletter (for partners & statutory bodies)	Regular E-Newsletter to ensure partners and related organisations are kept up to date with PUSH progress and delivery	First E-Newsletter June/July 2009 Second E-Newsletter Sept/Oct 2009	Mel McKeown	1,3 & some groups within 4

Action	Details	Timeframe	Lead officer	Target groups
Introduce key projects information/briefing sheets	These web-based information sheets will complement the executive summaries on top issues such as Hedge End & Fareham SDAs and Riverside	June 2009 – December 2009	Mel McKeown to work with PUSH team and key officers for each briefing sheet	2,3 & 4