



Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: **29 July 2009**

Report of: **Anne-Marie Mountifield**

Subject: **Skills for Employability and Growth – A Strategy and Action Plan for PUSH**

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the Joint Committee on the work in relation to Employability and Skills and on the Draft final strategy and action plan. The Strategy was considered by the Economic Development Panel on 5 May 2009 and endorsed to come forward to the Joint Committee for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Joint Committee:-

1. APPROVES the Skills for Employability and Growth Strategy and action plan and the proposed strategic framework as a basis for identifying and implementing the actions required to deliver skills for employability and growth within the PUSH Business plan 2009-11 and the MAA targets.
2. AGREES the requirement to review the strategy and action plan in the light of the recession and changes in the wider economic context¹ to reflect the importance of focusing on economic inactivity, as unemployment continues to rise.
3. AGREES the requirement to review the strategy and action plan in the light of the recession and changes in the wider economic context² to reflect the importance of agreeing and confirming the Priority sectors where high value added growth is likely to occur.

¹ Embedded within the review of the Economic Development strategy

² Embedded within the review of the Economic Development strategy

BACKGROUND

1. In 2007 the PUSH Skills Sub Group commissioned SQW to prepare a Skills for Employability and Growth Strategy for the PUSH area. The development of the Strategy and action plan was subject to extensive consultation and discussion during 2008. A summary of the strategic aims and actions is attached at Annex 1. A final draft copy with the supporting data annexes is also included.
2. The PUSH strategy and action plan 'Skills for Employability and Growth' sets out a vision that by 2026 the PUSH area will be a highly productive and dynamic economy and a cohesive and prosperous society driven by a talented and growing workforce. Learning and skills development will play a driving role in increasing productivity and reducing economic inactivity by raising workforce skills. Key to the growth model is a commitment to the principle of Smart Growth, one of the three objectives in the Regional Economic Strategy. Smart Growth will be achieved by bringing more people into the workforce and through enhanced business productivity, securing higher levels of prosperity per head without increasing the ecological footprint. Improved skills – across the existing and potential workforce – are intrinsically important to both. There is therefore, a very strong emphasis on the need to integrate employment and skills to help people prepare for and face challenges in the labour market. This is particularly critical in the current economic climate where the sudden and dramatic downturn has given rise to an increase in redundancy notifications and a reduction in the number of new job vacancies. The resultant increase in claimant count, has in the short-term increased levels of economic inactivity in the PUSH area, the biggest casualty being manufacturing and retail.
3. The Strategy is underpinned by four inter-related Strategic Aims, underneath which are series of recommended transformational actions:
 - **Higher employment rates and economic activity** – provide the skills for sustainable employment in growth sectors
 - **Increasing the workforce productivity** – tackling the skills shortages and gaps in growth sectors
 - **Growing activity in high value added sectors** – releasing high value added potential
 - **Improving the skills infrastructure** – deliver world-class skills in a demand-led system

By raising the skills and employability of local people, particularly those not currently in employment, PUSH is seeking to ensure that the majority of new jobs created in the PUSH area over the next 20 years are secured by local residents, reducing the impact of growth on local infrastructure, enabling more sustainable growth for the sub-region and raising the quality of life in the area.

DELIVERY

4. The principle delivery vehicle for taking forward the actions necessary to deliver the Strategy is the shadow Employment and Skills Board for PUSH.
5. The role of the shadow Employment and Skills Board is to work with employers to ensure that employment and skills services meet their needs and, alongside other forms of business support, are contributing to the long term growth

aspirations of the economy and labour force. The initial remit of the Board is to achieve this vision in respect of adult employment, self employment and skills provision. The PUSH Strategy and action plan 'Skills for Employability and Growth' is integral to this.

6. Through the shadow Employment and Skills Board, PUSH has established a Multi Agency Task Force, which has the specific remit of implementing the Skills for Employability and Growth Strategy. The Task Force is the delivery arm of the PUSH Employment and Skills Board. It will undertake a programme of activities to drive forward the integration of Employment and Skills services.
7. It is accountable to the Employment and Skills Board through existing PUSH governance arrangements via the Economic Development Panel.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

That the Joint Committee:-

1. APPROVES the Skills for Employability and Growth Strategy and action plan and the proposed strategic framework as a basis for identifying and implementing the actions required to deliver skills for employability and growth within the PUSH Business plan 2009-11 and the MAA targets.
2. AGREES the requirement to review the strategy and action plan in the light of the recession and changes in the wider economic context³ to reflect the importance of focusing on economic inactivity, as unemployment continues to rise.
3. AGREES the requirement to review the strategy and action plan in the light of the recession and changes in the wider economic context⁴ to reflect the importance of agreeing and confirming the Priority sectors where high value added growth is likely to occur.insert text here

Background Papers: -

- a. Final draft 'Skills for Employability and Growth Strategy and action plan
- b. Data Annexes: review of the Skills base and supply of learning and skills March 2008

Enquiries:

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³ Embedded within the review of the Economic Development strategy

⁴ Embedded within the review of the Economic Development strategy
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Annex 1: PUSH Strategy ‘Skills for Employability and Growth’ – Strategic Aims and Transformational Actions

