

Joint Media Release



Anchoring Growth: An economic assessment of the Solent area

Centre for Cities have today published an independent report which looks at how the Solent LEP and PUSH can support economic growth in light of the emerging City Deal negotiations and their commitment to develop a new strategic plan for local growth for the Solent area.

Compiled by Centre for Cities, the report reflects on the successes and strong history of partnership working in the Solent area recognising however, that more needs to be done in these challenging economic times if the area is to 'punch above its economic weight' and succeed in its ambition to safeguard and create more jobs and homes.

The two cities of Southampton and Portsmouth are showcased in the report as being vital economic hubs necessary to enabling prosperity of the Solent economy as a whole, particularly as the two cities combined provide nearly 40 percent of high skilled jobs in the local area.

A number of key findings and recommendations are presented in the report, including the need for strategies to support a sustained economic recovery in the Solent to be based on the area's real assets and strengths. The Solent's maritime sector is internationally significant and has been identified as a key growth sector in the sub region. The sector is already supported by the area's global connections, through two ports and an airport, and four universities.

Whilst the Solent economy has seen relatively strong growth over the past decade, this has not been accompanied by large increases in private sector employment. As a result, the area is currently more dependent on large employers and the public sector than the wider South East, making it vulnerable to business failure and public sector cuts.

Five local growth priorities were published in Solent LEP: A Strategy for Growth and today's report encourages partners to establish a new partnership protocol with national agencies based on a commitment to respond to these local growth priorities.

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Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Leader of Portsmouth City Council, said:

“We are in a unique position in the Solent as we have two cities working together for the benefit of the entire sub-region. The waterfront location of both Portsmouth and Southampton provides an opportunity for us to build on our internationally recognised strengths in advanced manufacturing and marine industries, and I look forward to continuing to work with Southampton to ensure growth can be unlocked in both our cities.”

Councillor Jacqui Rayment, Leader of Southampton City Council, said:

“When you look at either Southampton or Portsmouth, the marine industry has a huge impact on our economy; from major employers through to their SME supply chains and employees. It is vital that we do not allow growth to be delayed at such a crucial time and today’s report emphasises that fact. It is our job to ensure Ministers are aware of the economic evidence in this report when selecting their second wave of City Deals.”

Doug Morrison, Chairman of the Solent LEP, said:

“The LEP welcomes the recognition of the Solent’s nationally significant maritime sector in today’s report. We have already identified this as a key growth sector for the sub region in our business plan and will be working with our local partners, under the City Deal and through our new strategic plan for growth, to develop relationships with key agencies such as the MOD [Ministry of Defence] to ensure we unlock the huge potential of the Solent maritime sector and deliver much needed private sector jobs for the area.”

Councillor Seán Woodward, Chairman of PUSH, said:

“PUSH welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Centre for Cities report, as it provides key partners with the economic platform from which to deliver sustainable growth and prosperity. The report recognises the strong collaborative framework which has existed since PUSH was first formed in 2003 and the important statutory role it continues to play in spatial planning and the need to ensure there is an adequate supply of land for employment and housing development.”

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Notes for editors

A copy of the full report *Anchoring Growth: An Economic Assessment of the Solent Area* is available for download at the following link

www.centreforcities.org/assets/files/2013/13-05-07-Solent.pdf

PUSH

1. PUSH is a partnership of ten local authorities including unitary authorities of Portsmouth, Southampton; Hampshire County Council and the district authorities of Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Test Valley and Winchester.
2. PUSH in collaboration with local partners and government agencies continues to work to deliver sustainable, economic-led growth and regeneration to create a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable South Hampshire, which offers a better quality of life for all who live, work and spend their leisure time in the sub region.
3. For more Information on the Centre For Cities Report and about PUSH please visit the PUSH website at www.push.gov.uk

Solent LEP: A Strategy for Growth

Solent LEP: A Strategy for Growth identifies 5 key economic priorities for the Solent area: Enterprise, Infrastructure, Inward Investment, Skills and Strategic Sectors.

The full growth strategy can be downloaded now at:

www.solentlep.org.uk/uploads/documents/A_Strategy_for_Growth.pdf

For further information

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