



PARTNERSHIP FOR URBAN SOUTH HAMPSHIRE
CONSULTATION RESPONSE
TO THE
DRAFT RES 2006 – 2016 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. This is a consultation response from the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) prepared on its behalf by the PUSH Economic Development Panel.

QUESTION 1: DO YOU AGREE WITH PROPOSED PRINCIPLES AND KEY ACTIONS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RES?

2. PUSH welcomes the proposed principles and key actions set out in the draft RES Implementation Plan. PUSH complements the RES plan through its improved alignment between partners and regional strategies. In addition, PUSH is committed to the South East Diamonds for Investment and Growth and this is a further indication of PUSH's important partnership role not only in the sub-region but also in a South East regional context. There is no mention of how the Diamonds fit into SEEDA's thinking about prioritisation for investment or their part in delivery of the actions of the Implementation Plan. If the RES is to be the main vehicle for implementing the Diamonds, the Implementation Plan needs to specify their role and how they will be developed and resourced.
3. In order for PUSH to incorporate and align its projects accordingly, it would be useful for the Implementation Plan to provide an indication of the priority actions and their level of importance. This information will also be useful to differentiate between mainstream and other programmes.
4. The Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (page 15) recently confirmed that central government will strengthen Local Authorities to have a fundamental role in leading economic development and neighbourhood renewal. Accordingly, Local Authorities are likely to have an important role in the delivery of the RES in terms of strategic leadership, facilitation, and brokerage and the delivery of key economic functions. Consequently, the role of Local Authorities is significantly underrepresented across the plan's actions. The partnership among Local Authorities is crucial for the delivery of PUSH, as although many decisions to influence growth in South Hampshire will be undertaken by businesses in the private sector, it is critical for public interventions to create the conditions to foster economic growth where possible.
5. PUSH supports the work between SEEDA and the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) on a single Implementation Plan for the RES and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Although the Assembly has established a joint working group with SEEDA to develop a single delivery plan, PUSH supports complete alignment between the RES and RSS.

6. With reference to Target 5 on enterprise, PUSH suggests it may be inaccurate to measure enterprise success purely on increasing the number of businesses. These could reflect an increase in significant numbers of non-essential services or low-tech firms which do not significantly contribute to either their local communities or the regional economy. It is suggested to include actions to promote business start-ups and in growth sectors or where supply chains are weak and/or need to be boosted to maximise economic gain.
7. With references to transport infrastructure and investment, PUSH notes there is insufficient emphasis on the requirement for increased infrastructure investment in all parts of the South East. It is therefore suggested to have an additional action for SEEDA to act as an advocate for the South East in pressing the case to Government for increased investment in all parts of the region. PUSH welcomes the idea of a Regional Infrastructure Fund (Transformational Action, page 89) as a potential source of additional infrastructure investment and supports SEEDA in testing and developing this concept. The Regional Infrastructure Fund should streamline funding for important infrastructure schemes regionally and sub-regionally, and SEEDA will need to ensure the mechanisms of the fund ease rather than add bureaucracy. It is suggested that the Regional Infrastructure Fund may be particularly appropriate for major schemes; however, it should not hinder local decision-making on more locally important schemes. This would also reflect the thrust of the Sub-national Review mentioned in paragraph 4 above.
8. In view of the recent Government changes on the creation of the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), there is an opportunity to incorporate a stronger focus on the Learning and Skills Council's role in shaping skills to meet the Region's needs. It is suggested that the plan is verified against the Learning and Skill Council's South East Commissioning Plan 2007/08 to ensure all key links are covered, particularly for Action 6.2 on Training Pools, Action 10.1 on Skills for Life Strategy Board in relation to the basic skills or skills for life, and the role and extent of the Train to Gain activity. The Learning and Skills Council's major capital investment plans to transform the Further Education sector should also be recognised.
9. PUSH concludes that new public sector interventions are required to substantially increase skill levels, notably at NVQ Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 and above. With reference to Action 6.3, PUSH wishes to raise concern about the absence of Learner Accounts and in particular the current exclusion of Level 3. Furthermore, the document reveals no indication that they are being implemented through the regions' Diamonds. It is noted there is limited coverage on meeting vocational needs and the role of apprenticeships for the actions under skills. For Action 6.4 on access to relevant learning opportunities, PUSH would like to seek clarification on whether the full extent of funding is recognised and suggests referring to the changes occurring under the Connexions provision. There is also a need to incorporate a greater recognition of informal learning in the plan.

10. With regard to the Sustainable Prosperity Principle 6, the latest study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates inequality and social tension are largely caused by economic inequalities and the gap between rich and poor is shown to be widening. Although community-led economic and health/welfare initiatives are included under the Integrated Policy and Services section, more is needed in this area specifically to help deprived Super Output Areas in addition to helping the most excluded groups in the region in order to reverse the trend. With reference to Principles 2, 3 and 4, whilst recognising there are key organisations (such as Envirobusiness and SECBE) that have a remit in the areas listed, SEEDA must ensure that these organisations work together with local expertise and delivery agents, such as Local Authorities and the Sustainable Business Partnerships. The Business Resource Efficiency action is an area where the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainable Business Partnership plays a key role and could possibly take the lead responsibility.
11. PUSH recognises the need for more acknowledgement of the voluntary and third sector in the plan, particularly in the areas of procurement and under Target 14 on Sustainable Communities. Furthermore, the social inclusion and cohesion agenda is underplayed and suggests that it is reinforced throughout the document.

QUESTION 2: WHAT CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO DELIVERING THE ACTIONS CONTAINED IN THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN?

12. As SEEDA is aware, the work of PUSH contributes towards the implementation of the RES actions in each of the three objectives of Global Competitiveness, Smart Growth, and Sustainable Prosperity. Commissioned by PUSH, DTZ outlined actions to be undertaken to support the aspirational economic growth in the Urban South Hampshire Sub-regional economy. These actions fall into the categories of (1) Enterprise, Innovation and Business Support; (2) Skills; and (3) Land, Property and Infrastructure. A sub-group was formed for each of these areas under the aegis of the Economic Development Panel. With a mix of public and private sector membership, the remit of each Sub-group is to identify and design activities to deliver the high level outcomes proposed by DTZ, identify gaps that require public intervention, develop appropriate sub-regional projects, and coordinate implementation with the relevant partners.
13. To be adopted in early 2008, PUSH is in the process of developing a Business Plan setting out how the PUSH Strategy will be delivered from 2008/9 onwards. It is noted the Implementation Plan does not mention the work already being carried out by PUSH and the structures in place together with the coordination of the Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the potential Multi Area Agreements (MAAs). It is important to ensure PUSH is represented appropriately under the lead roles and partners for the actions relevant to PUSH. For further information on PUSH's economic development objectives and projects, please refer to the contact details specified in the covering letter.

14. For elements on where the PUSH strategy may diverge from the RES, it is important to note that PUSH would require support from SEEDA. Delivering economic growth cannot solely rely on a top-down process. It also needs regional resources to deliver sub-regional and local strategies.

QUESTION 3: DO YOU AGREE THE PROPOSALS FOR CREATING A LIVING RES?

15. PUSH welcomes the proposal for creating a living RES as it must remain flexible and responsive to changing circumstances and unforeseen developments. PUSH supports the proposed annual cycle of reviewing the implementation of the RES across a series of indicators which is vital in maintaining the relevance and impact of the strategy. The monitoring and evaluation framework for PUSH could feed into the annual reviews of the RES. Widescale consultation with key partners is vital for the review process and this has to be methodical and inclusive to reflect the diverse issues the South East faces.
16. It is important for the Implementation Plan to become a single joint plan encompassing both the RES and RSS as soon as practically possible. Similarly, the proposed annual monitoring and review process of the RES objectives and targets should be combined with the RSS Annual Monitoring Report to become a single all-embracing review. Such a combined document would provide the necessary broader context for an assessment of SEEDA's own role in the sustainable development of the region.