



Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: 24th March 2015.

Report of: Graham Tuck, PUSH Spatial Strategy Project Manager.

Subject: Update on the progress of the PUSH Spatial Strategy 2016 to 2036.

At its March 2014 meeting, the Joint Committee authorised the appointment of a consultant to prepare the new PUSH Spatial Strategy 2016-2036.

The new Spatial Strategy will update the existing South Hampshire Spatial Strategy 2011-2026, taking account of subsequent changes. Specifically, it will respond to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the housing needs identified in the PUSH Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) January 2014, and the LEP's Solent Economic Plan. It will also extend the Spatial Strategy's timeframe from 2026 to 2036. This work will underpin the preparation of new Local Plans within the PUSH area.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of this work since the January 2015 Joint Committee and to explain what the public consultation in Summer 2015 will include. The report also reaffirms PUSH's support for the existing South Hampshire Strategy 2011-2026 until it is replaced by the new Spatial Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee:

- a) NOTES the progress being made on the South Hampshire Strategy 2016-2036 and the scope of the Summer 2015 consultation; and
- b) Continues to ENDORSE the existing South Hampshire Strategy 2011-2026, until it is replaced by the Spatial Strategy review.

SPATIAL STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT & SUMMER 2015 CONSULTATION

Overview

1. Work on the PUSH Spatial Strategy 2016-2036 began in May 2014 with the appointment of consultant GL Hearn.
2. The final Spatial Strategy will set out the approach for development, infrastructure and the environment across South Hampshire. It will be informed by a wide range of evidence, for example: on housing needs (SHMA); economic growth (Solent Economic Plan, Marine and Maritime Study, and potentially logistics and other studies); transport modelling; and environmental issues (green infrastructure / countryside, flood risk, recreational disturbance).
3. Work is progressing as scheduled and officers are confident that the Spatial Strategy will be ready for approval in early 2016.
4. The next key step is to undertake public consultation on the Spatial Strategy Options in the Summer of 2015. This is a key milestone identified in Table 1 below. The content and scope of the options consultation document will be informed by engagement and workshops with PUSH members in June 2015.
5. Approval of the PUSH Spatial Strategy Options document for public consultation will be sought from the Joint Committee in July 2015. The consultation will start in mid- July and last for 8 weeks to ensure it extends beyond the school holiday period.

Table 1: PUSH Spatial Strategy Project timetable

May-Jun 14	An initial 8 week period to complete the evidence review
Jun-Sep 14	An estimated 4 month period to align and update the evidence base.
Oct-Dec 14	Core work to develop options and undertake initial testing.
Jan-Feb 15	Officer and member workshops and engagement with statutory consultees.
Mar-May 15	Purdah period is recognised in the programme.
June 2015	Additional workshops (if required) to accommodate any changes amongst key members and sign off of the Spatial Strategy Options document for public consultation.
Jul-early Sept 15	Public consultation on the Options document.
Sep-Dec 15	Drafting the new Spatial Strategy.
Early 2016	Consultation on the Strategy, final amendments and adoption.

Content and Scope of the Summer 2015 Options Consultation document

6. The purpose of the consultation is to start to engage on a more formal basis on the Spatial Strategy. The consultation will cover local authority partners and other statutory agencies to meet the statutory 'duty to co-operate'. It will also cover engagement with the general public.
7. The consultation document will be 'broad brush' and strategic in nature. The document will:
 - Explain the need for the strategy: to plan jointly for major housing needs economic growth and infrastructure whilst protecting the environment.
 - Set out broad conceptual options for distributing development, which at this stage will not be location specific.
 - Explain the background to the Strategy: the need to accord with the NPPF, to extend the timeframe to 2036, to meet the development needs identified by the SHMA and emerging from the Solent LEP Strategy, and to fulfill the 'duty to co-operate'.
8. The consultation document will not discuss development targets for individual local authorities, and will not discuss specific locations. These details will emerge in Winter 2015 / 16 for further consideration. At this stage GL Hearn and planning officers are still at an early stage of assessing development capacities and constraints in different areas.
9. The Summer 2015 consultation will provide a good opportunity for statutory agencies and the public to start to become aware of and think through the issues set out above. This will enable them to feedback initial views and be involved in the preparation of the strategy in advance of key decisions being taken.
10. A consultation strategy will set out how the engagement will be undertaken by PUSH and individual Councils. It is intended to seek approval for this at the June Joint Committee. In broad terms it is intended that PUSH will facilitate sub region wide engagement (hosting documents on the PUSH web site, issuing press releases, contacting statutory agencies, etc). Each Council will need to decide the level of local engagement it will undertake in parallel.

STATUS OF THE SPATIAL STRATEGY 2012

11. The existing South Hampshire Strategy was approved in 2012 and looks forward to 2026. It establishes the residential and employment development targets for South Hampshire as a whole and each constituent district.

12. The Strategy no longer provides the 15 year time horizon for local plans preferred by the NPPF, and is not based on a full SHMA. However the Strategy continues to provide the minimum 10 year horizon, is based on a positive strategy for growth informed by economic forecasts, and plans for a rate of development which is only slightly lower than that identified by the subsequent SHMA.
13. The SHMA was completed in January 2014. In December 2014 Brandon Lewis MP, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, clarified the status of SHMAs. This was reported to the Joint Committee meeting in January 2015. To recap, the Minister confirmed that SHMAs provide important evidence and are a first step which should prompt local authorities to consider revising their housing requirements. However, the Minister confirmed that SHMAs are untested, are not a proxy for a final housing requirement and should not immediately or in themselves invalidate existing housing numbers. The Minister explains that Councils should consider SHMAs alongside any environmental and policy constraints and opportunities to co-operate with neighbouring authorities to meet needs over the wider housing market area. The Minister recognises that Councils should actively consider this evidence over a reasonable period of time.
14. The PUSH Spatial Strategy review is clearly meeting the requirement to consider the SHMA in the wider sub regional and policy context, and there is a published timetable for the completion of this work (March 2016). In the meantime the existing South Hampshire Strategy continues to represent an agreed strategy for distributing development needs in the light of all policy considerations. Therefore the existing South Hampshire Strategy 2011-2026 remains a sound basis for those Local Plans currently under preparation, until the Spatial Strategy review is completed in March 2016.

APPENDICES

None

ENQUIRES: For further information on this report please contact:

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