



Partnership for Urban South Hampshire

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Gary Jeffries
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10 October 2014

Dear Gary,

Re: PUSH response to the Solent LEP on hosting the Solent Growth Forum

Firstly, I wish to thank you and your Chief Executive, Anne Marie Mountifield for attending the PUSH Leaders Briefing at its meeting on 23 September, to update on the Local Growth Deal and related Solent LEP governance structures. Further to that meeting and the opportunity presented to PUSH to host the Solent Growth Forum (SGF), I thought it would be helpful to provide a written confirmation setting out PUSH's desire and intention to help move matters forward.

PUSH acknowledges the requirement placed on the Solent LEP in accordance with Government Guidance on Growth Deals, to evidence a strong commitment from all Local Authorities across the LEP area to enable:

- Collective decision making – which must be binding and sustainable across the LEP geography; and
- Collaboration – delivering a co-ordinated approach to economic development and regeneration, particularly in relation to spatial planning and housing
- Financial commitment – aligning and pooling local authority resources in support of the Solent LEP SEP, and
- Public participation and openness in decision making.

PUSH has to date played a key role in this regard working closely with the LEP through the work on the Housing market assessment and the spatial strategy and in relation to both aligning funding and making financial contributions to the work of the LEP. Providing a direct link between PUSH and the Growth Deal presents an opportunity to engage and align Local Authorities across the LEP area in

matters relating directly to the practical delivery of projects arising out of the Growth Deal.

At its meeting in September, PUSH Leaders were advised by the LEP on a number of issues that PUSH would need to resolve imminently as follows:

1. The existence of the veto is not appropriate given the objective and aims of the SGF to optimise and support delivery. In undertaking SGF business, PUSH would need to remove the veto and review its current membership to include other organisations as ex officio and in some instances full partners to ensure that the Partnership's decision making process was 'fit for purpose'. It is my understanding that the removal of the veto for SGF business would permit each Member organisation to have a single vote, with majority voting to prevail.

It is clear that the governance arrangements will need to be proportionate and suitable to the role of the body undertaking that role, whilst meeting the legal requirements of our respective bodies. To that end, may I propose that we ask Mark Heath from Southampton City Council, as the Legal Accountable Body for PUSH to work with his counterparts at Portsmouth City Council, as the LEP's accountable body alongside Anne-Marie and Gloria from the LEP and PUSH respectively with a view to drawing up suitable governance arrangements for us to consider.

2. In undertaking the SGF business, we would need to put in place arrangements for a broader membership (e.g. trade unions, voluntary and community sector), and the member representation would need to be independent of LEP Board members, to provide independence. That is, any member of PUSH for the time being appointed to the LEP Board will not be eligible to act as Chairman for that part of the business making recommendations to the LEP relating to SGF business and associated matters. As such the handling of this business would in key ways be distinct from that configured under the current PUSH joint agreement.
3. My capacity as Chairman for PUSH and as a P Director on the Solent LEP Board creates a risk of a non-pecuniary conflict arising, and in order to promote the desire by the LEP to ensure SGF business is discharged in a manner that is transparent and independent in its decision making, I support the proposed rule set out in paragraph 2.

PUSH remains committed to working in partnership with the LEP and through the partnership's offer to undertake SGF business, PUSH will work with the LEP to ensure that the governance arrangements that are drawn up are 'fit for purpose' and satisfy the legal position of both organisations.

PUSH therefore supports the requirement to review its current arrangement and in doing so has delegated responsibility to the PUSH Executive Director and Southampton City Council, as the Legal Accountable Body for PUSH to work with

their counterparts in the LEP including Portsmouth City Council, as the LEP's accountable body with a view to drawing up suitable governance arrangements.

In relation to issue three outlined above, PUSH has agreed to elect a new Chairman from a District Local Authority to Chair that part of any PUSH meetings that considers SGF business. Both the two Cities and Hampshire County Council are content with this decision. Please be advised therefore that while I remain a Solent LEP P Director I will not be putting myself forward as Chairman for this role for the reasons outlined above.

I hope therefore that PUSH's intentions as set out in this letter meet your expectations and that the LEP is able to accept PUSH's offer.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seán Woodward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Seán Woodward
Chairman of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire

c.c. David Williams - PUSH Chief Executive Lead
Anne Marie Mountifield - Chief Executive, Solent LEP
Mark Heath - Director of Corporate Services, Southampton City Council
Robert Parkin, Assistant City Solicitor, and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Gloria Ighodaro, Executive Director, PUSH