



# **Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee**

**Date:** 04 June 2019

**Report of:** David Williams, Chief Executive, Portsmouth CC and Gosport BC

**Subject:** REVIEW OF PUSH AND BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20

## **SUMMARY**

This report identifies several issues for consideration by the Joint Committee and seeks approval to a Business Plan for 2019-20.

This item was added to the Forward Plan under the urgency provision following notification to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee: -

- a) NOTES the report; and provides preliminary guidance on the responses to consultation and the summary of benefits of PUSH membership issues highlighted for consideration with a view to their adoption through a governance review; and
- b) APPROVES the Business Plan for 2019-2020 (section 2) with a view to developing a 5-year Business Plan, taking account of the outcome of the governance review, for the period of 2020/21 - 2024/25.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This report identified a number of issues for consideration by the Joint Committee and also seeks approval to a Business Plan for 2019-20.

## **BACKGROUND**

2. PUSH was formed in 2003 to deliver economic regeneration of core urban areas of Solent, focused on the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. It initially comprised the two unitary authorities, the County Council and four of the District Councils. This expanded in 2004 to the eleven Councils in recognition of the value that can be gained in working collaboratively towards growing our local economy.
3. Since then the membership of PUSH has altered slightly and is now made of twelve South Hampshire local authorities comprising the unitary authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton and Isle of Wight; Hampshire County Council and district authorities of Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Test Valley, New Forest and Winchester.
4. Other changes have taken place since the creation of PUSH that directly impact upon its original purpose. Most notably, in 2010 the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was formed after the abolition of the regional development agencies, and there have been major changes to the planning regime including the abolition of the South East Regional Plan together with changes to the Local Plan system.
5. The LEP, as a locally-owned partnership between businesses and local authorities, now plays the central role in determining local economic priorities and undertakes activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. The recent review of the Solent LEP boundary and LEP governance arrangements are further changes that have occurred. It is therefore considered an opportune time to review both the current arrangements for the PUSH Business Plan and the Review of Arrangements.

### **Issues to Consider**

**Members' views are sought on the following issues:**

#### **General – Purpose, Geography and Membership**

6. Since 2003 there have been many structural changes outside of PUSH that have impacted upon PUSH's own responsibilities and arrangements. This includes the abolition of regional government and the South East Regional Spatial Plan, the creation of Solent LEP and the National Parks, as well as recent changes to LEP geography.
7. The abolition of GOSE and the change in the Local Plan regime highlighted the benefits of PUSH as it was able to immediately provide a mechanism for local planning authorities to work together to deal with strategic planning of the area. At the time the Partnership was seen as a national trail blazer. PUSH has continued to provide an established framework for the member local planning authorities, together with HCC and Solent Transport, working collaboratively to address strategic planning and infrastructure work. Benefits have been derived from collaborative working on shared evidence and issues to support both the

8. Local Plan making process and the Development Management planning function of individual district authorities (Appendix A sets out some of those benefits).
9. In the future, there is the likelihood of more change at national and/or regional level.
10. However, none of this has changed the primary role of PUSH, which is to provide a partnership of local authorities that support long term, managed and conditional economic growth and regeneration and delivers housing, together with the infrastructure, facilities and services necessary to achieve it.

***CONSIDERATION: Should PUSH continue with its key objectives, being a clear focus on planning, housing delivery, infrastructure and the contribution to sustainable growth of the area of South Hampshire & IoW?***

11. There is however, a case to consider changes to the current arrangements that better reflects the position of local authorities and other organisations that make up the partnership in 2019.

**Business Plan and Commissioning**

12. The priorities of PUSH have changed since the creation of Solent LEP in 2010. This leads the PUSH Business Plan being responsible for a smaller workload. This has been reflected by earlier actions e.g. reducing the level of support with the narrower scope and role of Chief Executive not being filled since June 2016.
13. Changes to the Local Plan process and geography make it more appropriate for project work to be commissioned and paid for by individual authorities that are taking part in the joint work. For example, the latest planning infrastructure work does not necessarily reflect the PUSH membership and the Bird Aware Solent includes local authorities that are not within Hampshire.
14. Responding constitutionally to the specific geography of these pieces of work or to change to other organisations' geography, which are not within PUSH's direct control, could become a regular occurrence and confusing. The most critical factor is that the fundamental make-up of partner local authorities in South Hampshire has not changed since 2003 (except for the creation of the National Parks who have Statutory Planning responsibilities).
15. The existence of PUSH has provided evidence that there is benefit in having a vehicle and governance arrangement in place to enable local authorities to respond quickly to the rapidly changing environment. However, in partnership working terms, a more flexible approach to how work is undertaken and paid for, may be of greater benefit to delivering South Hampshire outcomes which is addressed below.

***CONSIDERATIONS:***

- 1. To maintain a membership of PUSH which reflects South Hampshire local authority geography.***
- 2. To invite the two National Parks to join.***
- 3. To consider the draft Business Plan set out within this report.***

**Funding and Subscription**

16. It is considered appropriate that all existing PUSH members make a contribution to maintain a minimum administration (covering meeting cost, programme office, legal

and financial advice). This is £75,400 per annum. The February Joint Committee agreed a subscription contribution of £64,500 and also agreed that other funding for 2019-20 (for the work on the panels) would come from unallocated balances (including carry forwards from 2018-19). In future it is suggested that project work should be funded by those local authorities participating within any work undertaken.

On this basis, indicative membership contributions, for future years, to cover administration could be as follows:

<b>Contributions to PUSH JC</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2019-20 (agreed at Feb JC)</b>	<b>2020/21 indicative</b>
Southampton City Council	£23,496 *	£7,800	£9,000
Portsmouth City Council	£35,932	£11,900	£13,500
Hampshire County Council	£52,952	£17,500	£19,500
Eastleigh Borough Council	£11,347	£3,700	£4,500
Fareham Borough Council	£11,347	£3,700	£4,500
Gosport Borough Council	£7,565	£2,500	£3,000
Havant Borough Council	£11,347	£3,700	£4,500
Test Valley Borough Council	£3,782	£1,200	£1,500
Winchester City Council	£1,891	£600	£750
East Hampshire District Council	£1,891	£600	£750
New Forest District Council	£7,565	£2,500	£3,000
Isle of Wight Council	£26,476	£8,800	£10,500
Sub-Total	£195,591	£64,500	£75,000
* Excluding 'staff in kind' contributions			

Should the National Parks be invited to join, their subscription would be £750 each.

**CONSIDERATION:** *For future years to implement subscriptions that cover administrative costs only with Business Plan project work funded according to organisation participation.*

#### **Joint committee Meetings**

17. There are currently six meetings a year. However, there has not been a need to hold all the meetings with a number cancelled, probably reflecting the reduced PUSH Business Plan workload.

**CONSIDERATION:** *Reduce the number of Joint Committee Meetings to 4 per annum?*

#### **Use of veto**

18. Currently Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council have a veto on any decisions of the Joint Committee. This was part of the Joint Agreement 2015.

19. The aim of the Joint Committee is always to make consensual decisions without votes. It is recommended that this veto is unnecessary and should be removed.

This avoids creating different classes of membership as well as removing the requirement for those authorities to be present at the Joint Committee.

***CONSIDERATION: Remove the right of veto of any authority?***

**Scrutiny**

20. Currently a PUSH Overview and Scrutiny meeting takes place after the Joint Committee. The agenda for this meeting mirrors that of the Joint Committee and notes the items that have previously been decided at Joint Committee. Attendance is usually around of 4-6 members and items are sometimes considered several months after the Joint Committee Meeting.
21. Apart from noting reports, the Committee occasionally makes a comment back to Joint Committee and this is included in the PUSH Coordinators Report. The effectiveness of the arrangements has been discussed recently at a scrutiny meeting. The only significant benefit that scrutiny Members in attendance identified was the ability to find out what was happening and for them to be able to ask questions that could be reported back to them.
22. Discussions with the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services at Fareham BC have suggested that it would be possible to completely change the scrutiny arrangements. Possible changes could include:
  1. Changing the times of the meetings
  2. Allowing people to dial in to meetings via a conference call phone
  3. Cancel all scheduled meetings and allowing Members to "call in" specific Joint Committee items and arrange an ad-hoc discussion (physical or via call) about that specific item. This would have the benefit of allowing the Scrutiny meeting to only focus on what matters to them and would allow for a more timely discussion. If this is deemed a sensible way forward, a discussion would need to be had with the new Scrutiny Chair in the new municipal year.

***CONSIDERATION: Implement option 3.***

**Relationship to Solent LEP Leaders' Forum**

23. All Local Authorities within the Solent LEP geography, and those on the edge of the geography, have the opportunity to engage with the Solent LEP's agenda at the recently formed Leaders' Forum. The Forum's purpose is to be a specific opportunity for all local authorities and the Solent LEP to have a dialogue. These are early days in the new Solent LEP geography, but the Leaders' Forum and the PUSH Joint Committee are seen to have different purposes. Over time, the Leaders' Forum might develop to play a more significant role in shaping and co-ordinating the interdependent remits of the LEP & PUSH & Solent Transport.

***CONSIDERATION: No action.***

**Section 2 - PUSH Business Plan: 2019-20**

**Foreword from the PUSH Chairman**

24. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) operates in a changing environment. PUSH needs to work with a wide range of other agencies to help deliver sustainable growth in the South Hampshire and Isle of Wight area. Whilst a number of organisations now have prime responsibility for the policy agenda that

historically was part of the remit of PUSH, there is still an important influencing and engagement role for PUSH. We have the prime responsibility collectively to deliver the housing that our communities need, but we have to do this in a sustainable way that helps protect our vitally important natural environment. We also need to make sure that we balance the need to provide housing against the need for employment land and that we protect some of the unique assets of the area such as our valuable deep-water frontages. These support the role of the area as a world leader in the marine and maritime sector and the role our ports play in the global trading economy supporting the goals of the 2050 Maritime Strategy.

25. When we published our previous business plan it was based on the assumption that the Government were going to approve the setting up of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Solent area which would deliver a devolution deal for the Solent area. The Government decided not to take this forward at that time<sup>1</sup> and therefore there is no other mechanism to bring together authorities to work together to deliver our ambitions for the area. It is now more important than ever that PUSH provides a mechanism to bring partners together to take forward sustainable regeneration and development in South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. PUSH brings together the leaders of all the Local Authorities in the area to have meaningful discussions on issues of strategic importance and enables collective decisions to be made on issues which benefit from joint working. With the new revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the need to prepare a Statements of Common Ground, it is more important than ever that PUSH helps drive forward this collective work.
26. The Government recently announced that the geography of the Solent LEP will change. The boundary of the Solent LEP now includes the whole of the New Forest District Council geography and none of Test Valley, Winchester or East Hampshire. This means that the geography of PUSH is now different to the LEP geography. Whilst this is not an issue of itself, the exact nature of what this means will need to be bed in and so this business plan has been prepared to cover a 12 month period. A medium term business plan will be prepared from the 2020 municipal year that reflects the changing relationship with the new LEP geographies and the choice individual councils may make about their relationship with PUSH.

## **Vision and role of PUSH**

27. PUSH was formed to deliver regeneration of the core urban areas of the Solent, focused on the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. This was in response to economic underperformance; poor productivity; and poor infrastructure. The adjoining older urban areas, as well as those on the Isle of Wight are also very much at the heart of this urban renaissance strategy and PUSH believes that the strong functional and physical links between the core urban areas, towns and the semi-rural and rural hinterland must form the basis for the proper planning of the Solent area.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Peters and Naomi Larsson, The Municipal Journal (25<sup>th</sup> April 2019) pg. 1. Devolution Minister Jake berry admitted the Governments repeatedly-delayed devolution framework this will not be published until after Brexit. A Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said: 'The Government remains committed to setting out our approach to devolution and providing clarity for local areas. We will look to publish our approach as soon as possible'.

28. PUSH has pursued an economic regeneration/urban renaissance-driven strategy. PUSH believes that a balanced approach, with economic, social and environmental sustainability at its heart, is the responsible and appropriate way to plan for the future of south Hampshire and the Isle of Wight with an inclusive and integrated spatial strategy delivering sustainable communities into the future. Clearly, aspects of this are now dependent influencing, and informing, partner organisations such as the LEP and Solent Transport.
29. PUSH accepts and embraces managed and sustainable growth as a policy instrument to help lift deprived communities and households out of poverty and deprivation, whilst providing a foundation for the long term security of the quality of life of all the people of the area. This is dependent on economic prosperity, adequate provision of, and access to, housing to provide strong, vibrant and healthy communities and protection of our natural assets.
30. The PUSH 2016 Spatial Position Statement was completed in line with the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was supported by a series of papers and evidence. It established and distributed the objectively assessed housing needs for PUSH authorities up until 2034, together with employment land to match projected economic growth across the South East. The need for new homes was influenced by PUSH's Objectively Assessed Housing Need Update (April 2016) which analyses demographic and migration trends to establish the overall need for new homes across South Hampshire. The Spatial Position Statement focused development on urban areas first, and is then distributed according to environmental, transport and other infrastructure factors. The 7th June 2016 PUSH Joint Committee noted the completion and approved the 2016 Spatial Position Statement. Furthermore, it was for each PUSH authority to implement the Spatial Position Statement through their respective Local Plan, as the local planning authority.
31. At the 15th October 2018 PUSH Joint Committee, following the publication of the 2018 NPPF and relevant Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), it was agreed that PUSH authorities should work together under the Duty to Co-operate to seek to produce a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG). In addition, the Joint Committee also gave authority for PUSH authorities to explore the production of an Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP).
32. The key role for PUSH in the current sub-regional framework can now be summarised as follows:
- Productivity and quality of life
  - Providing the planning and environmental policy input to a triumvirate of sub-regional leadership organisations alongside the Solent LEP and Solent Transport
  - Working together to form an evidence base to support Local Plan work
  - Encouraging conditional, managed growth through the adoption of a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach to land release and plan review, with development conditional on timely and adequate infrastructure provision;
  - Working with others to understand the infrastructure needed to support growth and to secure necessary and timely enhancements to infrastructure (covering transport, energy, flood protection, air quality, water supply and waste water treatment, social and community facilities, education and healthcare provision and green infrastructure) to support and enable new development and addressing existing infrastructure deficits;

- Adopting an evidence base to support a strong policy protection for strategic gaps, designated nature conservation and protected landscapes, and areas of high quality built environment;
- Achieving the highest environmental standards for new development particularly in terms of resource conservation and reduction of environmental impact, by the application of consistent standards and policy approaches in partner authorities' local development documents covering the PUSH area;
- Delivering enhancements to the green infrastructure and high quality design in the built environment to consolidate and improve the environment and quality of life of the sub region and to promote urban renaissance;
- Promoting locally-led and democratically accountable leadership, management and delivery of the vision and spatial planning for the sub region and securing the participation and engagement of communities, and which recognises the key role of the private sector in delivering growth.
- Working with partner agencies to lobby on behalf of the South Hampshire & Isle of Wight area and also to influence local agencies so that they help achieve the aims of PUSH.

## Priorities

33. In order to deliver this vision, the overall priorities for PUSH are to:

- Provide democratic leadership for South Hampshire & the Isle of Wight.
  - PUSH is a formal Joint Committee that allows for democratic debate on issues affecting the sub-region and democratic legitimacy to sub-regional decisions. It is complementary to the decision making of individual local authorities and provides input and collective decisions to issues that impact on the sub-region
- Ensuring sustainable development in South Hampshire & the Isle of Wight
  - Delivering housing but protecting the unique characteristics of the area and ensuring that it remains an attractive place to live and work. PUSH is aware that there is a need to provide significant numbers of new houses in the area for our local communities, but this has to be done in a way that is not detrimental to our environment now or in the future. PUSH provides the overall governance for Bird Aware Solent. Bird Aware Solent supports the recreational mitigation that is in place to support coastal housing development. PUSH also works with government agencies to ensure that our development meets environmental requirements and that other organisations such as utility companies do what they need to do
  - Delivering employment space and support specific sectors to increase productivity and support economic growth within the sub-region

- Voice for South Hampshire & IoW
  - As previously explained PUSH is part of a triumvirate of key strategic organisations (with the LEP and Solent Transport) that manage the policy agenda in the sub-region. Collectively we need to work better together to lobby the Government, working with local MPs, to make sure we obtain the funding we need to meet our needs. There is a large infrastructure deficit in the South Hampshire and Isle of Wight area and we need to do more to understand the deficiencies and the impact that is having on growth and use the evidence to help get the funding that we need. Initiatives such as the Hampshire Housing Deal will help and PUSH can support the lobbying for this and similar initiatives, including through the provision of an appropriate evidence base. Collectively we have a stronger voice.
- Simplifying interfaces
  - PUSH brings together key organisations at both a political and managerial level. This aids joint working and also supports the plan making of PUSH member councils. PUSH also provide the mechanism for organisations to engage with the local democratic voice collectively in the sub-region. PUSH can simplify interfaces with, and for, other organisations and can therefore have more influence.

34. PUSH also provides a mechanism to link with bodies and policy initiatives outside of the PUSH geography, but which are still relevant to PUSH. An example of this would be the Green Halo Partnership

35. These priorities are evidenced through the following objectives for the PUSH Panels for 2019-20

## **Specific objectives and activity**

### *Planning & Infrastructure*

#### Supporting sustainable housing development

- Duty to Cooperate / Statement of Common Ground
  - Recruit a Project Manager to drive forward the work associated with preparing the Statement of Common Ground
  - Agree the evidence base that will be required to support planned housing and employment growth development in South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
  - Commission the work required to produce this evidence base including looking at how to take forward the South Hampshire Green Belt policy initiative
  - Prepare the draft Statement of Common Ground
- Identify how PUSH can support accelerated housing delivery such as through modular housing development in the PUSH area

#### Infrastructure and resources

- Commission the work required to produce an Infrastructure Investment Plan for South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight linking in with the work of HIPOG that is producing the Infrastructure Plan for the whole of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- Where appropriate, support the development of the Hampshire Housing Deal with Government
- The Air Quality sub-group to investigate the production of an Air Quality SPD for the PUSH area and if necessary ensure the appropriate processes are in place for formal approval of the SPD
- The Water Quality Group to identify how to deal with the nitrate neutrality issue and if necessary accelerate the production of the Water Quality Strategy and potential strategic mitigation solutions

36. The February Joint Committee agreed an interim revenue allocation of £20,000 alongside any carry forward to support the Planning and Infrastructure work. In addition, it has been agreed that the work on the Statement of Common Ground and Infrastructure Plan will be funded through direct contributions from individual authorities.

#### *Culture, Creative Industries and the Built Environment*

- Creative business support
  - Extend the creative industries business support programme from the Southampton area so that it includes the Isle of Wight and the Portsmouth area and use the agreed PUSH funding to bring in matched funding to develop the programme
  - Promote good quality urban design with the production of a series of design bulletins and hold a design awards, if necessary holding it in conjunction with an existing award ceremony
  - Support Creative Network South and other creative networks within the PUSH area
  - Engage with the Solent LEP to understand how PUSH can complement the LEPs activity in this area

37. The February Joint Committee agreed an interim revenue allocation of £33,000 alongside a carry forward of £10,000 to support this work and funding bids that will be made.

#### *The Solent environment*

- Provide the overall governance for Bird Aware Solent including the approval of the new Service Level Agreement to provide the ranger service.
- Approve the Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan and identify how to take forward the Strategic Green Infrastructure Proposals including how to fund them
- Protecting existing open space and habitats and recognition of the role of assets beyond the boundary of PUSH (links to evidence base for Statement of Common Ground including on Green Belt)

- Engage with other agencies to understand how PUSH can support the Government's new 25 Year Environment Plan
- Subject to alignment with the LEP emerging Energy Strategy, fund the innovative energy storage projects that have previously been agreed and see how else PUSH can support the LEP's Energy Strategy
- Possible role around an Energy Company for PUSH

38. To date the PUSH Joint Committee has not agreed any additional funding for this work. Some activity will be undertaken through work on the Planning and Infrastructure theme e.g. Green Belt, some through alternative resources e.g. Bird Aware. The Joint Committee had previously agreed to fund two innovative Energy Storage Projects (£30k in total) subject to their alignment with the LEPs Energy Strategy. This is due to be published imminently and the funding for this has been carried forward. £10,000 has also been carried forward to support the Low Carbon Economy Project over the next two years.

#### *Promoting the PUSH area*

- Work with other sub-regional bodies (for example the Solent LEP and Solent Transport) to develop a lobbying strategy for the South Hampshire and Isle of Wight area
- Lobby for the PUSH area to be able to access the replacement of EU funding to meet our specific needs (the UK Shared Prosperity Fund)
- Identify how PUSH can support the activity of other bodies such as Solent LEP for the LIS and Solent Transport
- Develop the role and effectiveness of the newly formed leaders group to shape and lobby for the sub regional agenda

39. This activity will be supported through existing resources and if necessary a proposal for funding will be developed as part of the Lobbying Strategy.

#### *Other activity*

- Review the PUSH Joint Agreement (with the recognition that the Current Joint Agreement is based on the link to the Solent Growth Forum that no longer exists). Look to see how the Joint Agreement can be modernised and made to be more in keeping with best practice in Governance and how PUSH can interface with the new Solent Leaders' Forum
- Clarify funding and membership for PUSH give the changes to the NPPF and the LEP boundary
- Develop and agree a medium term business plan from 2020/21 - 2024/25
- Inform and input to the Local Industrial Strategy
- Seek to support the 2050 Maritime Strategy through land use policies

This activity will be supported through existing resources.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee:

- a) NOTES the report; and provides preliminary guidance on the responses to consultation and the summary of benefits of PUSH membership issues highlighted for consideration with a view to their adoption through a governance review; and
- b) APPROVES the Business Plan for 2019-2020 (section 2) with a view to developing a 5-year Business Plan, taking account of the outcome of the governance review, for the period of 2020/21 - 2024/25.

**Background Papers:** None

**Reference Papers:** None

## **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact David Williams, Chief Executive, Portsmouth CC and Gosport BC

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