



Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **26 June 2019**

Report of: **Paddy May, PUSH Coordinator**

Subject: **PUSH CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

SUMMARY

The Coordinator's report provides an opportunity for issues which are significant, but do not justify a full report in their own right, to be brought to the attention of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for noting. The report is divided into Parts A and B.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTES:

- a) that the Joint Committee endorsed the Bird Aware Partnership's proposal to enter into a 5-year SLA with Hampshire County Council (HCC) for the continued provision of Rangers to support the work of the Partnership and the delivery of the Strategy;
- b) the matters for Information outlined in Part B of this report; and
- c) that the Joint Committee agreed that the Chairman of Joint Committee writes on behalf of PUSH to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline how we balance the need for housing and the need to protect the environment and to request consideration of respite from the Housing Delivery Test until this is resolved.

PART A

SLA INFORMATION

The Bird Aware Ranger team is provided to the Partnership by HCC under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The current SLA is due to expire on the 31st July and the Partnership has been reviewing options to continue to secure a quality Ranger service after this date.

The Project Board is of the opinion that to date HCC has provided a quality Ranger service, is fully integrated with the Partnership and has been constructive to work with. As the Rangers form a vital part of the delivery of the Strategy, it is considered imperative that their quality and working practices aren't jeopardised by any new agreement.

Working with the Procurement team at Portsmouth City Council (PCC), several options were considered. The Procurement team were able to advise that under the terms of the Public Contract Regulations (2015), it would be appropriate and lawful to enter into exclusive negotiations with HCC about future Ranger provision in accordance with Regulation 9.7 which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/102/regulation/12/made>

The Partnership also used PCC Procurement Team's advice and experience to request an open book breakdown of any costs HCC provided. This enabled the Procurement Team to benchmark their costs against other similar services. This allowed the Partnership to have assurance that, even though discussions were only taking place with HCC, there could be a high level of confidence that value for money was still being achieved. Within the Strategy, the cost of the Ranger service is listed as £272k per annum, at 2016 prices. This covers 5 full time Rangers and 2 Seasonal ones as well as the provision of branded vehicles for their use.

Following positive negotiations with HCC, they are now in a position to offer to continue undertaking the Ranger SLA for a period of 5 years (with an option to extend). Subject to Portfolio Member approval, they are willing to undertake this work for £287k per annum (and for the avoidance of doubt, there is no expectation from HCC to have an inflationary uplift during this period).

HCC are providing the service at cost with no uplift for corporate overhead and / or profit contribution. As the service has been in place for a number of years, and forms part of a wider service, there are minimal costs associated with mobilisation. In view of this it is highly unlikely that another provider could provide the service for a lower cost on the basis of a 5 year term without negatively impacting service levels when TUPE, OH/P, capital depreciation and mobilisation costs are taken into account. HCC also provides economies of scale open though the wider ranger provision in terms of management resource, premises, etc.

Therefore both the Procurement Team and Project Board would wish to accept the proposal from HCC as they believe this option offers a known reliability of service within a value for money framework.

PART B

1) Update from Planning and Infrastructure:

All the PUSH authorities have now confirmed that they intend to be part of the PUSH work going forward. For the part in/part out authorities both Test Valley and New Forest will include all their administrative area, East Hampshire and Winchester will only include the area covered by PUSH.

There has been agreement with HCC around the split of the work with HCC taking a lead on infrastructure work across the whole of Hampshire working through HIPOG. An offer of a Project Manager was made by HCC however, this could not be pursued as the officer proposed is no longer available.

To ensure that there is an agreed and shared approach to the work an officer Workshop has been held. There was discussions under 4 headings and consensus on what we were trying to achieve, the work that was required to establish a Statement of Common Ground. It has been agreed between the authorities that each authority would continue to the work based on population size.

As a Project Manager has not been found from existing Authorities a procurement process has now commenced. It will still take some time to get a dedicated resource in post, a working group has now been set up to progress work in the interim.

Bird Aware KPI's

The Bird Aware Solent Partnership had a busy second half of the Winter season, with the Ranger team (1 Lead Ranger, 2 permanent Rangers and 3 Seasonal Rangers) managing to complete the following in the period 1st January to 31st March 2019:

• Site Visits	333
• People interacted with on-site	5,284
• Events	19
• People interacted with at events	624

During the same period, the Brand and Communications Lead has also created several media opportunities and continued to grow our social media presence as follows:

- % growth of social media followers on each platform since the Oct - December 2018 update
 - Twitter – 123 – 12%
 - Facebook – 143 – 22%
 - Instagram – 79 – 29%

- Impressions (number of times seen on feeds) for each social media platform
 - Twitter – 274.8k
 - Facebook –46.8k
 - Instagram – 23k
- Press releases
 - 1 per month

Water Management

In the light of the latest advice from Natural England, following a recent Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruling, there is now an urgency to accelerate moving towards achieving nitrogen neutrality from new residential development, as was previously outlined as a future potential option in the South Hampshire Integrated Water Management Study.

How we best proceed with putting in place an agreed and robust PUSH-wide strategy as a solution, is being discussed through both the PUSH Water Quality Working Group and PUSH Planning Officers' Group, taking into account the work being undertaken towards developing a solution by individual PUSH local authorities.

Green Infrastructure

The Green Infrastructure implementation plan will be discussed at by the Joint Committee as its own item.

Air Quality

In October 2018 a report was taken to the PUSH Joint Committee that summarised the findings of the PUSH Air Quality Impact Assessment, conducted by Ricardo, and made recommendations for further work.

The report endorsed the approach of the PUSH authorities continuing to work together to address the issue of air quality, and also recommended the formation of a working group.

The working group has been established and includes representatives from the PUSH authorities, including Planning Officers, Transport Planners and Environmental Health Officers. To date they have considered potential approaches to delivering strategic improvements to air quality, in particular looking at the West Sussex Authorities' SPD as an example of good practice.

Work to date

Whilst the group have agreed that a shared SPD would help to achieve our strategic aims it is acknowledged that each of the PUSH authorities are at different stages

with their local plans, and formally adopting an SPD could be difficult for some authorities at this time.

The group are keen to act on the recommendations of the Ricardo work and have been working on some developing a list of 'minimum standard measures'. It was anticipated that these minimum standards should be applied through the development management process for authorities that already have the relevant policy hooks, or included in emerging local plans where such policies are being updated.

However, as the group have worked on developing the measures it has become clear that many of the proposed measures are already captured through other legislation and regulatory procedures, for example through the Building Control process or through Environmental Health requirements. As well as this, whilst some authorities in principle support the measures, many do not have the policy hooks in place in their adopted to local plans to enable them to seek delivery of the proposed measures.

Suggested Approach

After taking comments about other legislation and existing policy hooks into account the 'minimum standard measures' list had dwindled significantly. Instead the PUSH Planning Officers Group have suggested that the working group should again look more widely at the issue of air quality, for example considering the impact of junction improvements and traffic flow. Other issues such as public transport, pricing and service frequency and reliability of public transport are considered key issues when addressing air quality, therefore Richard Pemberton from Solent Transport will be invited to attend future meetings of the working group.

Next Steps

The group will reconsider the development of a joint SPD, in particular thinking about how such a document could add value to the processes / legislative requirements that are already in place.

It is suggested that the group should undertake a scoping exercise to discuss where a joint SPD could address existing gaps in policy/ legislation/ process, acknowledging the differing requirements for addressing air quality in urban and rural areas.

2) Update from Energy and Green Economy

The Solent LEP Energy Strategy will be published imminently after the European Elections. The PUSH Joint Committee agreed funding of £30,000 towards two energy storage research projects subject to these being in-line with the Solent LEP's Energy Strategy. Once the Energy Strategy is published, the PUS can be assessed and hopefully the agreed funding can be released.

3) Update from Culture, Creative Industries and the Built Environment

Solent Quality Place Awards

Seventeen Projects have been nominated for this year's Solent Quality Place Awards. Site visits will take place in June, and after the short list has been announced, it is anticipated that as before both the Echo and the News will promote a public vote for the people's choice award. The winners will be announced in September.

Creative Network South

Creative Network South has been invited to discuss with PWC the needs of the Creative and Digital Economy in advance of the preparation of the Local Industrial Strategy.

Nicky Curtis has been appointed as lead mentor for Creative Growth Southampton to provide business support to early stage creative businesses turning over less than £20k and working towards sustainability. In its first year over 20 businesses received mentoring support from Creative Growth Southampton and over 200 people attended the programme of training and networking events run by Solent University and Culture Southampton. Since Nick's appointment a further 10 businesses have enrolled for mentoring

Charles Freeman has met with Solent Growth Hub, Portsmouth City Council Isle of Wight Council and Southampton City Council to discuss support needs of creative businesses and options for extending creative growth Southampton approach so that specialist creative business support is accessible across all of South Hampshire. Initial discussions are also taking place with Arts Council England to explore possible funding opportunities.

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Background Papers:

- None

Reference Papers:

- None

Enquiries:

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