



South Hampshire Authorities – Fulfilling the Duty to Co-operate

This note explains the joint working on spatial planning which has been undertaken by the South Hampshire authorities through PUSH. This joint working means that the PUSH authorities have fulfilled the statutory duty to cooperate with each other on strategic planning matters. The note may be used by individual authorities to demonstrate to planning inspectors that they have met the duty to cooperate.

The PUSH Local Planning Authorities consider that our regular, ongoing and successful collaboration on sub-regional planning matters makes a significant contribution to demonstrating the Duty to Co-operate in preparing Development Plan Documents as required by the Localism Act 2011. Jointly we commission the required evidence, consider the alternative methods of meeting the sub- regional development needs and then agree the best way forward.

Acting together the PUSH local authorities have:

- **Generated the policy approach, and supporting evidence, that was taken forward in the statutory South East Plan.**
- **Recently updated this approach for South Hampshire as a non-statutory strategy, including commissioning studies to provide the robust evidence base.**
- **Developed a protocol to be applied when PUSH makes comments on individual local authorities development plan documents**
- **Produced non – statutory strategic policy guidance to influence the preparation of development plan documents.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This note provides the evidence of the long history of sub-regional co-operation between the South Hampshire local planning authorities. It has been prepared jointly by senior planners in the PUSH authorities and has been endorsed by the PUSH Housing & Planning Delivery Panel.
- 1.2 The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire is a strategic partnership and deals with genuinely strategic/sub-regional matters, where it can add value to the efforts of the individual partners. PUSH was formed in 2003

and initially comprised of the two unitary authorities, the county council and four of the district councils. Membership expanded in 2004 to include all eleven councils that made up the area of South Hampshire in recognition of the value that can be gained in working collaboratively towards growing the local economy.

1.3 PUSH is governed by a Joint Committee comprising the Leaders of all the PUSH authorities. It is a formal joint committee established under the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000. Themed Delivery Panels, which are each chaired by an elected Councillor who also sit on the Joint Committee, are responsible for overseeing work on individual topics. The Delivery Panels are for:

- i. Economic Development;
- ii. Housing and Planning;
- iii. Sustainability and Community Infrastructure;
- iv. Quality Places;
- v. External Funding and Resources.

1.4 A number of technical officer groups meet regularly to support the Panels. At present these include the:

- i. Planning Officers Group;
- ii. Economic Development Officers Group;
- iii. Housing Officers Group.

'Task and Finish' Groups have also been formed to address specific issues.

1.5 This note sets out the evidence for the following:

- i. Strategic plans prepared;
- ii. Delivery of the South Hampshire Strategy;
- iii. Non – statutory strategic policy guidance prepared;
- iv. Working with other organisations.

1.6 The individual members of PUSH are listed at the end of the document and the address of the PUSH website is also supplied.

2.0 Strategic plans prepared

South Hampshire Strategy - Input to South East Plan

2.1 The then South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) commissioned the County and City Councils to provide advice on sub-regional aspects of the draft statutory South East Plan. It was agreed this advice should be provided for the area of South Hampshire under the banner of PUSH. The advice that PUSH submitted to SEERA in December 2006 was underpinned by a robust evidence base and a

spatial strategy that balanced economic growth, employment and housing needs, infrastructure requirements and protection of the environment.

- 2.2 The PUSH strategy was incorporated in full into the submitted South East Plan and was subject to public examination by an independent Panel in 2007. The Panel recommended the strategy should be included, largely unchanged, so the approach in this South Hampshire Strategy was carried forward into the South East Plan, which was adopted in 2009. PUSH prepared a number of more detailed non statutory policy frameworks to support these documents.

South Hampshire Strategy updated 2012

- 2.3 *“The need to prepare an updated spatial strategy for the PUSH area [therefore] derives from the continued shared approach and commitment of PUSH local authorities to ensure a prosperous and sustainable South Hampshire for everyone that live and work here. The refreshed strategy provides an up-to-date and robust strategic framework for local plan preparation and other decision-making by PUSH authorities and their partners. It is based on, and will help implement, the PUSH Economic Development Strategy. It aims to provide for the Economic Development Strategy’s forecast employment floorspace and housebuilding requirements which are the most up-to-date assessment of development requirements across South Hampshire as a whole. In combination, the document’s policies and proposals will help maximise economic growth, help bring about a renaissance of Portsmouth, Southampton and other urban areas, and help ensure affordable family home and good quality jobs for all.”*

(Extract from PUSH website, 2012)

- 2.4 This updated and jointly prepared non statutory sub – regional framework will be used to guide the preparation of development plan documents in each of the PUSH local planning authority areas. The strategy addresses key strategic issues such as:
- i. The provision of new housing, employment and major retail floorspace;
 - ii. The provision of transport and other infrastructure;
 - iii. Green infrastructure;
 - iv. Arts, culture and tourism;
 - v. Environmental sustainability.
- 2.5 The strategy is founded on sound evidence including demographic and economic projections prepared by independent and nationally-respected forecasters. It takes account of the findings of a sustainability review and a Habitat Regulations review. Its policies were refined through discussions with the Solent LEP and with key statutory agencies, and the document includes a supporting statement from the Solent LEP Board.

The Strategy was formally adopted by the PUSH Joint Committee, thus giving it status as a jointly-agreed strategy. The National Planning Policy Framework regards such jointly prepared strategies as a way to demonstrate effective cross-boundary cooperation on strategic planning issues.

Shared evidence base

- 2.6 The following evidence has been prepared:
- i. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2005 & 2006)
NB individual authorities prepare their own SHLAA;
 - ii. Economic Development Strategy updated 2010, together with supporting documents;
 - iii. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008).
- 2.7 Commissioned by the 11 PUSH planning authorities (separately from PUSH) to investigate the impact of development and associated recreational disturbance on wintering birds:
- i. Solent Disturbance & Mitigation project (in preparation).

3.0 Delivery of the South Hampshire Strategy

- 3.1 The PUSH planning authorities have developed a protocol for preparing and submitting comments on key draft Local Development Documents in order to ensure that PUSH objectives, priorities and aspirations are translated into policies and proposals in local planning documents.

4.0 Non – statutory strategic policy guidance prepared

- 4.1 Policy frameworks for guiding and supporting the development of Local Development Frameworks:
- i. Policy framework - The use of developer contributions to provide workforce training (2011);
 - ii. Policy framework for gaps (2008);
 - iii. Affordable housing policy framework (2008).

(Two additional frameworks were agreed in 2008 on employment floorspace and sustainability but these have now been superseded by the South Hampshire Strategy 2012).

- 4.2 Other strategies
- i. Energy and Climate Change strategy (2008);
 - ii. Sub – regional Housing Strategy (2007);
 - iii. Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009);
 - iv. Quality Places Design Charter;
 - v. Cultural Strategy (2008);
 - vi. South Hampshire Integrated Water Management Strategy (2009).

5.0 Working with other organisations

Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

- 5.1 The Solent LEP's Board of Directors are drawn from key members of the business, education and local authority sectors. The LEP's vision:
"is to create an environment which will better facilitate growth and private sector investment in the Solent area, allow business to grow, become more profitable, greener and enable new businesses to form and prosper"

(Extract from Solent LEP website)

The LEP aims to improve the co-ordination of private and public sector investment. Its 5 strategic priorities are: enterprise; infrastructure; inward investment; skills; and strategic sectors.

Visit: <http://www.solentlep.org.uk>

Transport for South Hampshire

- 5.2 Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) comprises the 3 transport authorities in the area and is PUSH's partner in delivering economic and housing growth in the sub-region and leads on addressing existing and future transport requirements. It is the over-arching strategy, bidding and delivery agent for sub-regional transport projects, programmes, policies and strategic operational matters. The transport partnership has its own business plan which includes a number of key proposals on which TfSH will be working with PUSH in order to implement the South Hampshire vision.

Visit: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tfsh>

Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission

- 5.3 Extract from the Natural England website:
*"The Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission are working together under the 'Single Voice' programme to improve the services we jointly provide to local government including input to the planning system and other local decision making fora.....
We have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with PUSH which summarises our key priorities and how we will work together on them. We provide better customer service by coordinating our efforts and resolving differences. We have developed and implemented a draft protocol for our interactions with PUSH and are developing it further to respond to planning consultations."*

Visit:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/whatwedo/partnership/casestudies/push.aspx

6.0 Members of PUSH

East Hampshire District Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, Havant Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Winchester City Council.

NB: New Forest District Council withdrew from PUSH in April 2011.

Senior planning officers from each local authority meet regularly as the PUSH Planning Officers Group to develop strategic policy, consider the need for joint evidence and advise the Housing & Planning Delivery Panel which is comprised of Councillors.

For further information please visit the PUSH website:

<http://www.push.gov.uk/index>