

Portfolio Holder Report – Council 19 February 2014

By Cllr Tony Briggs – Leader & Finance Portfolio Holder

1. Finance Portfolio work

The main work in my role as Finance Portfolio Holder is the preparation of the 2014/15 budget, including the financial strategy, pricing strategy and treasury strategy. This was approved by Cabinet on 4 February and the key item on this agenda tonight.

2. On 7 January I attended the Shared Chief Executives' meeting in London.

Subjects discussed were

- Transformation Grant Fund case studies (all)
- LGA Annual Conference Planning (all)
- Lobbying messages and opportunities (Charlie Adan to lead)
- One minute showcase – opportunity for each district to showcase (all)

3. Local Government Association Peer Challenge

On 14th- 16th January Havant Borough Council welcomed a peer review team comprising of Council Leaders, a Chief Executive and Private Sector experts to undertake a review of our organisation. This involved testing the strength of our partnerships and the robust nature of our vision and strategies and how we embed these within our culture and communities.

Over the three days of the review the peer team facilitated focus groups, interviews and telephone calls with staff, councillors, partners and residents. Thank you to those of you who took part in the review, and for welcoming the peer review team to Havant.

The Cabinet and the Management Team attended an initial feedback presentation from the peer review team. And we are expecting a detailed feedback letter outlining the findings by the end of this month. Once received the report will be shared with all councillors and staff. An action plan, in consultation with staff and councillors will be developed to ensure we take on board the knowledge and feedback from the peer review team.

I also participated with the Chief Executive in the Hampshire County Council Peer Challenge in January. This was specifically reviewing Community work undertaken by the County Council. Thanks to the in-house team in Community Services who organised a very effective day for the Chief Executive of Staffordshire, County Leaders and the LGA who visited us and toured the borough.

4. On 20 January The Chief Executive and had an introductory meeting with Chief Inspector Rob Mitchell the replacement local police chief. CI Mitchell outlined the challenges for the Hampshire Constabulary over the coming year and how he hopes to address these within his own patch working with us. Primarily the challenges centre around financial cuts which may have an impact on services.

5. Economic Development work

As Leader I take a keen interest and role in driving economic growth in our borough. This includes working at a sub-regional level on a number of economic based boards and partnerships. My work with these has included:

- Attending "Bridging the Gap" panel meeting in Portsmouth (9th January)
- Solent LEP Meeting, Fareham (17th January)
- PUSH Joint Committee with Hampshire Leaders, Fareham (28th January) Topics covered included:

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

This piece of work was undertaken to update the housing projections for the PUSH area. Whilst a statistical piece of evidence it does not form policy for any council. The material will contribute to our own policy development in our local plan as well as the PUSH spatial strategy going forward (see 6 below)

Solent LEP Strategic Economic Plan

All 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships in the country are expected to produce a longer-term Economic Plan for their area. The Solent LEP is currently working on this. Ministers are particularly interested to know why productivity in Solent area is relatively low and want a stronger emphasis on skills. The next stage is to ensure that the Plan reflects deliverable priorities. Business cases on particular projects will be required by government. All local authorities that form the PUSH partnership, are working with the Businesses on the LEP to develop this plan.

Inward Investment

PUSH is working on a cohesive Inward Investment plan in order to remedy a current weakness in the region. The County Council have resourced a team to take a lead in this work and as a district we contribute to this through our own local team working closely and ensuring complimentary tasks take place.

Cultural Destination Fund

PUSH have submitted a bid to Arts Council and Visit England. We are awaiting a response. The borough would hope to benefit from any successful bid.

Creative Economy

As a borough we are focussing on key strength sectors in our region. PUSH are placing a strong emphasis on the Creative Economy as an important area for business growth and a distinctive sector, with direct and indirect economic value.. In Havant we have a modest, but strong industry mainly through small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for example, software, e-publishing, visual/performing arts, advertising, publishing. PUSH is working in partnership with four local universities (6000 creative graduates per year). Other key facts about the work in this sector:

- The creative economy is an important driver of innovation in other industries e.g. design sector within marine industry.
- A Creative Network Conference is scheduled in our region on 27 February in Southampton.
- PUSH has invested in creative workspaces and incubators.

- Creatives are attracted by 'place' and a sense of vibrancy/things going on these companies link to a sense of place and identity. To this end it is important to invest in projects that create a sense of place.
- The creative industry is good at bringing women, people with disabilities into productive employment.
- TfSHIoW/SLTB & Solent Transport (5th February) - I am a representative for Hampshire Leaders on this panel. I work with the LEP on behalf of the local authorities to ensure a cohesive approach to transport infrastructure using the finances available.

6. Detailed Information on the PUSH Strategic Housing Market Assessment
National planning policies have been changing over the last few years and in March 2013 the Government revoked the South East Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012, requires local planning authorities to collaborate with one another in planning to meet future development needs. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) has a long history and strong track record of joint working and this study will assist all eleven of the Hampshire local authorities to facilitate joint decision making in taking forward strategic planning in a sustainable manner.

To support on-going work on local plans, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) commissioned the preparation of this new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). It will also provide an input to the review of the South Hampshire Strategy that will provide an agreed framework for development to 2036. The review of the Spatial Strategy will also take into account the Solent LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, which will be completed in March 2014. In preparing this Plan, the LEP have commissioned modelling of their preferred scenario for economic growth in the Solent area. When completed, the intention is that this will inform an assessment of the implications for housing need across the Solent of the LEP's preferred rate of economic growth. When this modelling work is complete, it is intended to publish an Annex to this document which will update relevant findings to take into account the LEP's preferred economic growth scenario. The Partnership intends to update elements of the assessment as appropriate to take into account new evidence.

The PUSH SHMA provides projections of housing need to 2036 in two housing market areas, focused on Portsmouth and Southampton respectively. It responds to Government policy that local planning authorities should work together to undertake such assessments of their housing needs, and should plan to meet them in full across each housing market area where this is consistent with achieving sustainable development.

Government has set the bar high. Every local planning authority is required to demonstrate how it will meet an appropriate share of the need identified and to plan positively for the delivery of sufficient new homes to support future prosperity in its area.

The SHMA is, however, not policy in itself and does not set targets for how much or what types of homes each of the eleven partner authorities should plan for. The SHMA is just part of the evidence base that will help the PUSH local planning authorities in their review of the spatial strategy for the area to 2036. The SHMA acts as a building block for further work which will necessarily take into account housing

demand and deliverability, land availability and supply considerations as well as the feasibility of delivering infrastructure to support housing development. The review of the PUSH Spatial Strategy will take account of the capacity of different areas to accommodate development and the most sustainable locations for new homes in each of the two housing market areas. There is much work to do yet to consider these issues further.

The partner authorities will now seek to bring together the evidence in the SHMA with a range of other factors to consider what level of development should be planned for across the PUSH area and in its different parts. This will involve detailed joint work to assess the availability of land that can sustainably accommodate development, environmental constraints and impacts, economic development and employment analysis, along with infrastructure capacity and consideration of what new infrastructure might be needed. Public consultation will also be undertaken to consider the level of development that can be accommodated in different areas. Inevitably, the local planning authorities are at different stages of this process in looking at these issues in preparing new plans for development in their areas. This work will be brought together through the review of the South Hampshire Strategy to determine the joint strategy for future development – for homes, jobs and infrastructure – to 2036.