

The Isle of Wight and South Hampshire Agreement

Memorandum of Understanding between the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight Council

4 July 2012

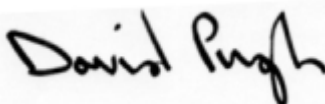
Signed by and duly authorised for and behalf of:

Partnership for Urban south Hampshire:



Clr Seán Woodward Chairman of PUSH

Isle of Wight Council



Clr David Pugh, Leader of the Isle of Wight Council



This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) exists between PUSH and the Isle of Wight Council in good faith. It is not a legal document and is non-binding.

1. BACKGROUND

The world has fundamentally changed and local businesses and government are facing increasing competition for investment, whilst public funding for supporting business and economic growth has been reduced. The major imperative is the scale of the economic challenge as evidence suggests that the economy has contracted by 11% since 2007. This has had an impact on public spending and individual wealth, and as a result growth is the overwhelming priority for Central Government. The spending challenge extends beyond the current spending review period, and therefore public funding settlements are expected to remain challenging. The agenda on local growth is critical and will be;

- Locally led through partnerships
- Centred on natural economic areas that transcend administrative boundaries.

Central Government recognise that LEP's are well placed in understanding the local challenges in securing economic prosperity and within localised decision making; they want LEP's to play a Central role. It is acknowledged that there is a pressure on partnership resources and as the Solent LEP moves from start up to implementation, pooling resources and talent is critical. LEP's are now seen by Government as a Body that should seek to pool funds. Within the Solent area, the LEP needs to work in partnership with all the Local Authorities to ensure that there is a joined up approach – the LEP directing its efforts to facilitate growth, with the Local Authorities focussing on developing an environment that welcomes and facilitates this growth. Clearly the existence of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Isle of Wight and PUSH initially covering Inward Investment, Employment and Skills and in the medium term the Low Carbon Agenda and work on European funding will be of great assistance

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) acknowledges the imperative need for the parties involved to work together to support the Solent LEP and their vision to create an environment that will better facilitate economic growth and private sector investment in the Solent area, allow businesses to grow, become more profitable, greener and enable new businesses to form and prosper.

Given the level of growth and development planned for the Solent the parties will work together in an integrated and collaborative way to develop solutions to enable the delivery of economic growth, primarily in the areas of Inward Investment and Employment and Skills where the parties are already working together on both the Inward Investment Board and the Employment and Skills Board.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the MoU is set out how the parties will work together to deliver a shared vision (initially in the areas of Inward Investment, Employment and Skills and in the medium term on the Low Carbon Agenda and work on European funding).

This MoU is therefore an agreed statement of intention between equal partners based on trust, and a commitment to work towards achievement of commonly agreed objectives. Any concerns between partners about the actions or lack of action of others will, in the first instance, be communicated directly to the partners concerned without publicity.

3. ROLES

Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)

PUSH is a voluntary partnership of ten local authorities in South Hampshire dedicated to sustainable, economic- led growth, and improving prosperity and quality of life for everyone who lives, works and spends their leisure time in South Hampshire.

The governing body for PUSH is a Joint Committee of the ten local authorities whose areas lie wholly or partly within the PUSH area. It meets approximately bi-monthly with the Environment Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency and a representative from the Solent LEP attending as observers.

The key objectives for PUSH are promoting economic success, providing homes for sustainable communities, enhancing community cohesion and reducing inequalities, investing in infrastructure and sustainable solutions, promoting a better quality of life and tackling climate change.

The Isle of Wight Council

The Isle of Wight Council is both a unitary and county authority covering the whole of the Isle of Wight.

The Isle of Wight Council's vision is to see high quality, cost effective public services provided to the local taxpayer and in doing so, improve the quality of life enjoyed by all Island residents, businesses and visitors.

The local authority does not see itself as the sole provider of such services and recognises that its role is increasingly moving to one of being a commissioner and enabler of much of this provision. In its aspiration to see the highest possible quality of services made available to Island residents as efficiently and effectively as possible, the Isle of Wight Council will consistently consider what model of service delivery is most likely to achieve the best results. The long-term interests of the Island and its residents will continue to be the key determining factor in making any such decisions.

Working with partners is crucial in delivering our services, as we collectively seek to make best use of our shared, increasingly limited resources. We must recognise that, with our partner organisations, we have complementary, but distinct roles to play.

The Isle of Wight Council's priorities are:

- Regeneration and the Economy
- Raising Educational Standards
- Delivery of the Highways PFI Scheme
- Keeping Children Safe
- Supporting Older and Vulnerable Residents
- Housing and Homelessness
- Waste Strategy / Procurement
- Delivery of Budget Savings Through Changed Service Provision

4. JOINT WORKING PRINCIPLES

All parties recognise that the LEP and LA partners should be increasingly looking at ways of maximising their resources in pursuit of the GVA growth target and the job creation target established in the outline proposal submitted to Government in September 2010. Further thought should be given to the pooling of talent and expertise in the areas of Inward Investment and Employment and Skills. Approaches need to be developed to ensure that there is a joined-up approach, with Solent LEP directing its efforts to facilitate growth and Local Authorities focussing on developing an environment that welcomes and supports this growth. The circumstances where such approaches may be suggested are specified in APPENDIX 1 and 2 of this MoU. This will enable joint working which:

- goes beyond the norm, adding value to the working relationship through the outcomes that result
- commits all parties to joint working between local authorities and the government agencies in the areas of Inward Investment and Employment and Skills, but without compromising legal standards or each others responsibilities and/or statutory duties.

5. MANAGING THE MOU

To provide a platform for regular communication all parties will identify lead contacts who will be responsible for relationships with the IOW and PUSH Inward Investment and Employment and Skills work. For the first year the MoU will be reviewed 6 monthly after which it will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX 1: Inward Investment

Introduction

The combined inward investment service, managed by Southampton City Council on the behalf of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) is now active and working effectively as a single gateway for inward investment enquiries.

The Solent LEP has agreed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) for the promotion and attraction of foreign direct investment into the LEP area and for the LEP to deliver effective end to end support to prospective and potential investors. This support is being provided by local authorities within the PUSH and the Isle of Wight areas through the single gateway.

The Solent LEP intends to deliver inward investment activity across the whole of its area. This includes the Isle of Wight and they will provide support for and be an active participant in the service by the secondment of officer time into the inward investment service, which shall be re positioned as the Solent Inward Investment Service, reflecting the alignment with the Solent LEP geography and the inclusion and contribution of the Isle of Wight

The Proposal

Isle of Wight Council will second officer time to the combined inward investment service, managed by Southampton City Council, and support inward investment activity across the LEP area. The work of the employee will include:-

- Identifying inward investment assets across the LEP area and promoting their availability and use to current and potential investors.
- Liaising with current and potential investors across the LEP area (including but not exclusively Isle of Wight businesses) about their development needs, providing information advice and guidance about available opportunities.
- Maintaining a database of investment needs and opportunities across the LEP area (ensuring the Isle of Wight is properly represented within the database) in order to inform decisions of the LEP and the two councils.
- Supporting integration of IOW inward investment communications into the Solent strategy and infrastructure including the development of a new front-end website 'invest-in-isleofwight.co.uk'
- Providing support to the implementation of the MoU with UKTI
- Contributing to development of the 'Solent Proposition' which seeks to raise the profile of and actively promote the Solent area to potential investors with a focus on key sectors of excellence
- Providing input to the ongoing development of the Solent single gateway and inward investment service

Practically

The Inward Investment Service will be primarily promoted through a single web based data base identifying all of the assets for the Solent Region. A shared database already exists for assets in Portsmouth and Southampton. There will be a need to quickly populate the database with Isle of Wight assets.

Access to the data base will be by 3 different "front ends"; invest-in-southampton.co.uk; invest-in-portsmouth.co.uk; and invest-in-isleofwight.co.uk. The Isle of Wight front end will need to be developed as part of this project.

The inward investment team once finally established will undertake promotional and marketing activities on behalf of the LEP area in order to raise awareness of its overall inward investment offer.

Final discussion, decisions and negotiations about an Inward Investment opportunity in a particular area will be down to the appropriate local authority in conjunction with the inward investment team.

The initial secondment will be for a 12 month period with a review after 6 months period and will be reviewed at that time before both parties consider continuing with it.

Governance

The Terms of Reference and membership of the PUSH Inward Investment Board has been reviewed and two members of the LEP (Ernie Battey and Philippe Jouy) have joined the Board and provision is in place for the Isle of Wight to join the Board.

The board will be responsible for agreeing and monitoring the work programme of the inward investment service and acting to support the work in building relationships with present and potential investors. They are also responsible for overseeing the MoU with UKTI on behalf of the LEP.

APPENDIX 2: Employment and Skills

Introduction

The Employment and Skills Board (ESB) established by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) in 2009 is a model is supported by the LEP.

The Solent LEP has established a Solent wide Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) and work is underway to roll out the Solent Talent Bank (an employer-led initiative that will transform growth in the Solent Region and in the period to December 2014 will roll out 25 Employment and Skills Plans (ESP's) across the Solent) The support for this is being provided by local authorities within the PUSH area.

The Solent LEP intends to deliver this activity across the whole of its area. This includes the Isle of Wight and they will provide support for and be an active participant on the ESB by the secondment of officer time into the work of the Board which shall be re positioned as the Solent ESB, reflecting the alignment with the Solent LEP geography and the inclusion and contribution of the Isle of Wight.

The Proposal

Isle of Wight Council will work with PUSH and support employment and skills activity across the LEP area. This will include continuing to :

- Provide liaison and support to existing Isle of Wight businesses about opportunities for their growth and skills development.
- Support the integration of IOW employment and skills communications into the Solent strategy and infrastructure.
- Provide leadership and co-ordination for the Isle of Wight on employment and skills, acting as a link between the ESB on the Island and the Solent Board.

Practically

The Employment and Skills Board has always focused on the needs of the sub-regional economy and the skills of the resident workforce, and our aim is to achieve sustainable economic growth by anticipating and meeting the employment and skills needs of employers within the Solent Region and by developing and retaining the talents of people to work within their local economy. The ESB will continue to provide a strong and well established vehicle for the Solent LEP, local authorities and other partners to work together/collaborate on joint strategy and policy development for employment and skills. A work plan for 2012/13 has been agreed and this reflects the new role of the Employment and Skills Board as the delivery arm of the Solent LEP, leading on the 'Skills for Growth' key priority

The initial secondment will be for a 12 month period with a review after 6 months period and will be reviewed at that time before both parties consider continuing with it.

Governance

The Terms of Reference and membership of the PUSH ESB Board has been reviewed and a member of the LEP (Chris Allington) is a member of the ESB and the Isle of Wight already attend the Board and contribute to the work taking place

The board will be responsible for agreeing and monitoring the work programme for employment and skills and acting to support the work in building relationships with present and potential employers, skills providers and key agencies supporting this area of work.

Final draft