

Is there a strategy for the central South?

Seminar 2: 'Spaces for business, spaces for people' – briefing paper

Executive summary

This paper provides a summary of research on strategies prepared by local authorities and other bodies. Its focus is on planning, housing and sustainability.

It concludes that, on planning, there are good examples of cross-boundary co-operation, notably the work of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PUSH). However, local authorities are, perhaps unsurprisingly, most responsive to local need, and tend to focus on their own jurisdictions. That tends to mean that Local Plans are shaped principally by local needs and requirements, and are prepared under rules which do not encourage a sub-regional or regional perspective.

Local authorities are encouraged to take a broader perspective when assessing the need for new homes and planning their delivery. Evidence is gathered across a wider housing market area. However, often planning and delivery are seen primarily as local tasks, and collaboration is sporadic.

There is more collaboration on aspects of sustainability: the natural environment, energy and efforts to tackle climate change. However, once again that does not always lead to a more strategic perspective on how to approach these issues.

Background

The summary below begins with a review of two tiers of 'planning': the corporate vision or strategy which tries to give a sense of an organisation's purpose and direction, and the statutory Local Plan which provides a framework for physical development. These are the places to look for evidence of an overarching sense of joined-up planning across organisations and adjacent geographies. Following this, the paper goes on to review the evidence for cross-boundary dialogue or collaboration on housing and sustainability.

While all of the organisations whose published plans were reviewed prepare statements of their wider vision, statutory responsibilities for planning and housing lie with district and unitary councils. However, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) appreciate the relevance of both topics to delivery of their economic aspirations, and will highlight this in their own plans. County Councils similarly appreciate their wider strategic relevance and seek to support Local Plan preparation.

A list of documents reviewed is at Appendix 1.

1.1 Visions and Strategies

At the top of the hierarchy of plans are the corporate documents prepared by organisations to set out their wider organisational vision, capture their sense of purpose and offer their aspirations for the future. They range from the Corporate or City Strategies of local councils to Strategic Economic Plans of LEPs or the 'regional strategies' of organisations (usually local council-led) such as Transport for the South East.

Councils' strategies for their area often paint exciting, aspirational visions of the future, usually as a springboard for more detailed project or service planning, and the best can provide a real sense of the future for a community. However, their vision tends to be shaped by their own administrative boundaries, and it is rare that they set the organisation in a wider geographic context

"Southampton – a city of opportunity where everyone thrives." SCC Strategy 2016-2020

"The overarching vision of Winchester City Council is to combine a blend of innovation, aspiration and pragmatism when delivering local services, looking beyond the traditional ways of doing things." – Winchester City Council Strategy 2018-2020

This narrow focus is perhaps unsurprising since local councils will see themselves as directly accountable to local electors. They will not see their prime role as to look beyond their boundaries in discharging their responsibilities - indeed their neighbours may not welcome such interest. Perhaps for this reason, most councils will tend to focus on their own administrative area.

There are common challenges which local councils face, although rarely do their strategic plans acknowledge that neighbours face the same issues:

- Housing costs
- Broadband connectivity
- Congestion
- Skills (for market entrants, technical skills)
- Protecting the rural environment
- Graduate retention/keeping young people
- Ageing population

In practice, these issues may be addressed through joint working at a county, LEP or other partnership level, for example:

- Joint work by HCC and WCC on the Winchester Movement Strategy
- HCC working with five district councils and two National Parks on rural affordable housing (see below)

However, most such collaborative initiatives are operational and localised rather than strategic. Generally the principle of subsidiarity is held onto tightly: on transport, for example, a district may set priorities for local improvements, and leave more strategic work to the county; their respective strategies or plans will reflect their own focus.

LEPs, in their Strategic Economic Plans, can exhibit the same emphasis on boundaries:

“Our vision is for the Enterprise M3 area to be ‘the premier location in the country for enterprise and economic growth, balanced with an excellent environment and quality of life.’ – EM3 SEP

However, they do articulate the need to actually work across those boundaries:

“We have been in active discussion with Enterprise M3 LEP, Dorset LEP and Heart of the South West LEP...” – Solent LEP

“We recognise that there is a pressing need to work across LEP boundaries around some interventions in order to work together on key sector strengths, jointly promote and lobby on common issues and collaborate to achieve strong value for public money.” – EM3 LEP

“These two core infrastructure proposals [airport and port enhancement] are geographically located in the Bournemouth-Poole conurbation and close to the Solent economy.” – Dorset LEP

There is limited published evidence that such joint working takes place, and most dialogue across boundaries appears to be about specific projects or issues rather than on wider strategic matters.

1.2 Visions and strategies: analysis

The net result of the various council and LEP plans and strategies is a variety of aspirations, priorities and targets which are sometimes common to neighbouring councils or LEPs, and may be shared between county and district councils. However, that consistency is limited and not apparent on all topics. Nor is it always a product of a shared discussion.

The challenge for all organisations whose plans were reviewed is the balance they need to strike between bottom-up, locally-generated needs and priorities and the policy direction shaped by government directive. The latter may come through the priorities set in Whitehall for national funding programmes, or from agencies such as Homes England or Highways England, who are driven by national targets (the same top-down approach to priority setting is also evident on economic matters – as discussed at the first seminar in this series on “*The Economic Challenge*”).

In addition, local political priorities will shape visions and strategies, and these are necessarily constrained by administrative boundaries: councillors have little desire to ‘trespass’ on their neighbours’ territory, and resist attempts by their neighbours to do the same. County and district councillors can show the same resistance to engaging

with matters they see as the responsibility of the other tier of local government. As a result, many politicians will deliberately limit their horizons to their own jurisdictions and direct responsibilities.

2. Planning

2.1 Local Plans

Local Planning Authorities – district or unitary Councils – have a statutory responsibility to prepare a ‘Local Plan’. The Local Plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Local plans are subject to public consultation and provide the framework for development across England.

Local Plans are prepared in response to evidence which illustrates the local area’s need for housing, facilities and infrastructure necessary to meet future demand. That demand is guided in part by the local planning authority’s own policies on economic development, transport or environmental protection, as well as demographic projections and national policy considerations.

Plans are generally built bottom-up on the basis of local circumstances and policies. The planning authority must determine what it thinks will drive growth and change, and make the case to a Planning Inspector that their draft Plan meets relevant statutory requirements. The authority will commission significant amounts of research on a range of topics to inform and provide an evidence base for their policies. Those commissioning that research will guide its geographic scope. They will also draw on the plans of other bodies, notably county councils and LEPs.

However, planning is in essence based on statute and robust government guidance. The system does not require the planning authority to take a broad sub-regional or regional perspective, although Inspectors will look for evidence that a Local Plan acknowledges the wider geographical context where it may be relevant – for example on housing (see section 3). But it is primarily for individual planning authorities to decide what matters to them.

Most planning authorities will acknowledge the impact of their neighbours on their ambitions:

“The Local Plan needs to take account of the wider challenges, issues and opportunities affecting neighbouring areas as well as the wider region. This includes such issues as the impact of commuting on the area’s strategic transport network and other cross boundary issues such as ensuring the quality of the area’s rivers ... [and] the need to ensure that the borough remains well-connected, with good access by road and rail across the region and to the main airports and ports” (Basingstoke & Deane BC)

The Rushmoor Local Plan policies have been prepared in the context of other local strategies, including those prepared by Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) and other partners (for example, the Enterprise M3 Local Economic

Partnership (LEP) and Hampshire County Council).” Rushmoor Borough Council

“Although physically separated from the mainland, the Island influences and is influenced by the wider sub-regional, regional, national and international context” – Isle of Wight Core Strategy 2012

However, that wider perspective rarely extends beyond their immediate neighbours, and is usually only offered by way of context for the Plan. It is rare that policies will take direct account of a wider housing or economic need beyond their boundaries. That may in part be a reflection of the intense political scrutiny a Plan faces, which engenders a reluctance to do anything which is not seen as meeting a local need or aspiration. That combines with the reluctance of local politicians to look beyond what they see as their democratic boundaries to limit the reach of Local Plans.

2.2 Sub-regional planning

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) was established in 2003 as a strategic economic partnership, originally comprising 11 local councils. From 2006 PUSH took a leading role in planning for the delivery of new homes across South Hampshire.

Today PUSH brings together local authorities to take a broader perspective on a range of key topics, working alongside the Solent LEP. The Partnership recognises the value of that wider overview:

“PUSH’s overarching ambition is to work with partners to facilitate and support the growth of the local economy and improve the quality of life of local residents.” – PUSH Business Plan 2016-18

“...economic development, skills and housing issues cut across boundaries of local planning authorities and as such we continue to strive towards improving the overall performance of the South Hampshire and Isle of Wight economy, enhancing employment opportunities by improving skills levels and enabling affordable family homes and good quality jobs for all.” – PUSH Chair (from website)

PUSH’s 2016 Spatial Position Statement gives a clear sense of the importance of co-ordinated planning to meet the Partnership’s economic and other objectives, saying:

“...it [PUSH] provides a framework for, and means of, coordinating decisions about long-term development and infrastructure across the sub-region.”

But there are tensions between the member councils over the status of PUSH, and so they are careful not to tread on the decision-making toes of councils:

“The Position Statement is not a ‘statutory’ development plan, against which planning applications will be determined ... it cannot allocate land for development as it will not be part of the statutory development plan. Specific development proposals will therefore be considered further and tested by individual local authorities through the development of their local plans.”

This limits their ability to take a fresh, sub-regional perspective rather than simply co-ordinate local work. In consequence, therefore, PUSH tends to reflect local housing targets rather than drive them.

PUSH's reach is limited to the 12 councils providing services in south Hampshire, and its plans or strategies rarely extend beyond those boundaries (although they have on occasion endorsed some key elements of regional infrastructure, such as Junction 9 of the M3 and the Hindhead Tunnel, for example).

2.3 Employment land

Planning for the provision of employment land to meet future needs is a key part of the Local Plan. Most Local Plans will draw on evidence from commissioned research which focuses on need within the area in question, e.g. Winchester's Employment Land Study (2016), which draws on locally-based projections of employment growth.

Those areas within PUSH take a sub-regional perspective, with projected need being based on sub-regional studies – PUSH aim to 'provide a coordinated framework for employment land'. Others also take a broader perspective: for example, Christchurch BC's Local Plan Review (2018) recognises the role development at Bournemouth Airport (which lies within their jurisdiction) plays in serving the sub-regional economy (although at the time this review was being written plans for the new BCP Council were well advanced, which no doubt helped encouraged this broader perspective).

Dorset also saw collaboration to prepare the Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Workplace Strategy (2012), which provides a basis for LPAs to identify employment land needs.

2.4 Planning: analysis

Planning for the allocation of land for housing, employment and other uses is essentially a bottom-up, local process. Allocations are based on evidence from studies which build on locally-identified need. However, many of these studies will at least consider the broader sub-regional or regional circumstances which set the context for local decisions: these vary from examining circumstances in neighbouring administrations to examining the influence of nearby conurbations, or even of major cities such as London.

Planning is also an intensely political process, driven by local politicians who want Local Plans to respond to needs of the community they represent, and who jealously guard those Plans from too much outside influence – in part because they do not see themselves as having any mandate to seek to influence decisions beyond their borders.

Collaboration does occur: indeed, planning authorities are required to co-operate with their neighbours. Such co-operation rarely takes any structured form, however, and usually consists only of a dialogue between council officers. PUSH stands out as the one regional example of formal co-operation to paint a broader picture of housing, employment and other needs.

The end result is policies which are designed first and foremost to meet local needs and priorities. Where those policies are influenced by the situation beyond the planning authority's boundary, there is no consistent picture of a defined sub-region or region which needs to be taken into account. The work of PUSH is the only significant local exception, providing a sub-regional perspective for local planning authorities to build on.

3.1 Housing

Housing provision is driven by targets for delivery of new homes laid out in Local Plans. These targets are set at district or unitary council level, and are built up on the basis of government-specified methodology, which is based on national household growth projections adjusted to take account of affordability. This mechanistic approach is softened slightly by requiring local councils to take into account the impact of 'Strategic Market Housing Areas' (SHMAs) on targets – essentially a mechanism for looking at wider housing need across a broader geography.

The Government's guidance to local planning authorities, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), states:

“Local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries.”

Those assessments draw on contextual data, such as 'travel to work' areas (TWAs), which reflect the functional relationships between places where people work and live, and migration patterns. However, the resulting areas rarely relate to recognisable administrative or strategic geographies. Figure 1 below show sub-regional HMAs for the SE and SW – there are clear overlaps and no consistency with local authority, LEP or other boundaries.

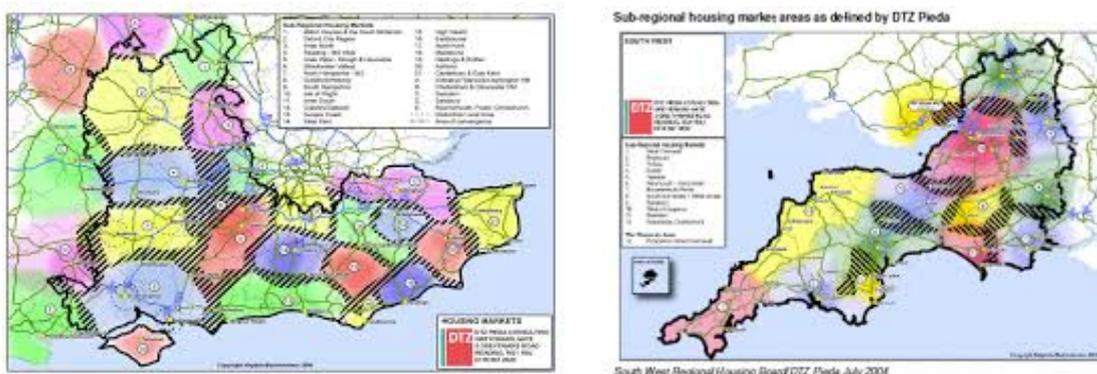


Figure 1: Strategic Housing Market Areas for the South East and South West

Targets are also shaped by the NPPF's duty to co-operate, essentially a mechanism for re-allocating provision for needs which one local authority cannot fulfil to a neighbour. Sub-regional partnerships such as PUSH can facilitate that co-operation:

the PUSH position statement says that it “*satisfies the duty placed upon local planning authorities to co-operate by co-ordinating the assessment of local housing need*”.

Councils will work together to assess need: Woking, Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils, for example, collaborated to prepare the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment – although data from such a study will then be considered separately by each of the commissioning councils. Collaborative research will, for some, provide a strategic overview, while for others it simply offers a cost-effective way of undertaking an analysis of local need.

However, the overall approach to determining housing need is essentially a bottom-up, local process, with targets driven by the availability of sites to meet need. Collaborative arrangements such as PUSH can help ensure planning for the housing necessary to support growth across a functional economic area (which is usually larger than a district or unitary council, and often differs from a county’s geography). An SHMA has a similar role, helping to set housing in a broader strategic context, although it is notable how often a council concludes something broadly akin to (Basingstoke & Deane’s assertion that “*the borough’s housing market is significantly self-contained.*”

At the operational, rather than strategic, level there are examples of collaboration. One particularly effective partnership – the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH) – brings together five district councils, Hampshire County Council and two National Parks to take a wider view on the subject of affordable housing in rural communities (notably across several SHMAs).

LEPs, although they do not have responsibility for housing, recognise that homes of the appropriate quality are vital to the economy. There is also evidence they do take a more strategic view:

“Recognising that housing markets do not have discrete boundaries, we are also in discussion with neighbouring LEPs about our plans.” – EM3 LEP

LEPs’ Strategic Economic Plans do comment on the economic importance of providing adequate housing across their geographies, and all LEPs will contribute to local debates about housing need, although there is no published evidence of any inter-LEP dialogue.

3.2 Housing delivery

Almost all of the central South’s local councils fail to deliver the total number of new homes their Local Plans estimate are necessary to meet assessed need: an average taken over the past five years to 2017/18 shows that 8,950 houses were delivered annually against a requirement of 11,000 (Figure 2).

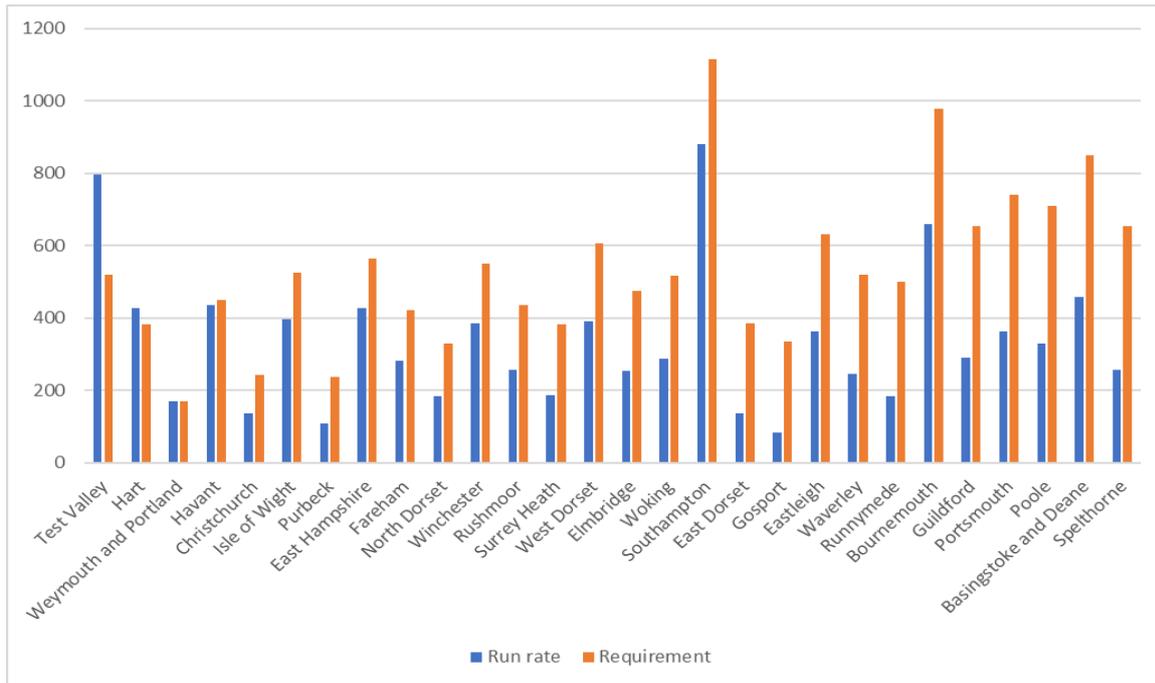


Figure 2: housing delivery rate ('run-rate') against assessed need ('requirement') for LPA in the central South (based on average of 5 years data to 2017/18)

There are many reasons for under-delivery, from delays in the planning process to slow progress by developers in building on sites once they have received planning permission. The government has sought to improve the rate of delivery, recognising that a failure to meet assessed need can have a negative economic and social impacts

Local planning authorities have a duty to co-operate in preparing their Local Plans (see 2.4), and this can be particularly important in determining housing allocations: if one authority is unable to find space to deliver the houses they assess are needed then they should approach neighbours to see if those houses can be accommodated in their area. Planning Inspectors examine whether this duty has been complied with.

On occasion the dialogue with neighbours can be positive, but because of the sensitivity most communities have to new housing, it is often less constructive. Aside from the work done by PUSH to examine sub-regional need and allocations (which does demonstrate to Inspectors the co-operation required) there is no evidence of a strategic dialogue between councils to resolve the challenge of meeting sub-regional or regional need.

While some councils are defensive and seek to resist what they see as excessive development, others take a more proactive approach to driving forward delivery. Eastleigh Borough Council, for example, seeks to “Ensure delivery of housing of all tenures” and to “Work jointly with other agencies to ensure that those people in need of care and support have suitable housing”. Others have ambitious programmes for building new homes. However, these initiatives are limited to the boroughs or districts in question, with no mechanisms for sharing innovative ideas and approaches across a wider area.

3.3 Housing: analysis

The provision of housing is a politically sensitive subject. Most elected members will seek to satisfy local need, but are wary of catering for those moving into an area, often believing that such demand will never be satisfied and lead to unacceptably high levels of development.

However, the process for determining housing need does attempt to take account of need generated by movement patterns: the flow of commuters across boundaries or inward/outward migration from those moving from or to other areas. The analysis is subject to local judgement, and the arguments around the extent to which that externally-generated need should be met are also shaped by local politicians.

LEPs should play an important role in assessing housing need, given how an adequate supply of suitable housing is vital for local economic success. They also play a key part in facilitating delivery, being responsible for funding infrastructure which can unlock major sites. As such, they may offer a template on which to take a more strategic overview of need and delivery.

With, once again, the exception of the work done by PUSH, there is little evidence that housing need is considered at a sub-regional or regional level, or that the failure to deliver sufficient numbers is seen as anything other than a local problem.

4.1 Sustainability: natural environment

Most public authorities share a broad commitment to protecting and enhancing the local environment, however they define it - protecting the natural environment, reducing pollution or managing natural resource use more effectively, for example. That will affect all aspects of how they work, including their planning policies and operational practices.

For much of the central South, the quality of the natural environment is key to its identity and character. Councils' corporate plans include a commitment to protecting their natural environment:

"We are committed to...protecting and enhancing our unique environment" – Winchester City Council: Council Strategy 2018-20

"We live in an area characterised by natural beauty and diversity, and we need to ensure that the decisions we make today will not have an adverse effect on future generations." - Christchurch & East Dorset Partnership Corporate Plan 2016-20

Local Plans contain a variety of policies designed to protect the environment, and in particular include policies which aim to protect and enhance 'green infrastructure' - the natural and managed green spaces, features and water bodies that together make up a multi-functional network or grid across rural and urban areas. This infrastructure plays a crucial role in enhancing landscapes, providing connected spaces for wildlife, managing natural resources sustainably and facilitating adaptation to climate change.

Nature does not recognise administrative boundaries, and much of the evidence used by councils to support their planning policies is based on wider habitats or ecosystems. As a result, neighbouring councils will tend to adopt consistent approaches to the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and natural habitat.

PUSH has taken an active role in co-ordinating policies on environmental sustainability and green infrastructure across Urban South Hampshire. Their Sustainability Common Policy Framework, Sustainability Guidance and Green Infrastructure Strategy provide a common template for policies which have been adopted across south Hampshire.

There are notable partnerships, made up of local councils and others, which adopt a shared vision for the management of the natural environment - for example the Dorset AONB Partnership, and the Solent Forum. These bodies co-ordinate policies for managing distinctive habitats which extend beyond the boundaries of local administrations – figure 3 shows, by way of example, some of the key designations affecting the west of our study area.



Figure 3: environmental designations in part of the central South

There are two National Parks in the central South - New Forest and South Downs. Each has responsibility for managing distinctive natural habitats, working alongside local authorities, LEPs and others. The Parks' responsibilities and powers do not extend beyond their statutorily-defined boundaries.

Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) have been or are being formed on county templates to co-ordinate policies and practices on the natural environment. These bodies vary in their impact, but do contribute to coherent sub-region thinking. The Hampshire LNP, for example, has supported work to build an ecological network map for the county and its coastal cities, allowing a more integrated approach to managing and developing green infrastructure. Other initiatives, for example the Green Halo Partnership, are building a broader community of partners to shape environmental policy.

There is no shared strategy for managing the natural environment across the central South, although distinctive habitats within the region do benefit from co-ordinated management. Councils share evidence, leading to a consistent policy framework, although once again that will only cover part of the region.

4.2 Sustainability: climate change

Local authorities across the central South recognise the challenge that climate change presents to our communities. Their Local Plans contain policies supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and, in some instances, reductions in vehicle usage. Hampshire County Council's Transport Plan recognises the need to tackle the impact of vehicle emissions on the climate:

“There is also a need to be constantly mindful of the impact that meeting all of our transport needs can have on the environment, both in terms of carbon emissions and adaptation to climate change.” – Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2011-31

Councils share the same aspirations to reduce carbon emissions by (*inter alia*), increased use of renewables, as do LEPs. Local Plans have a similar suite of policies to try to address climate change, but (with the exception of PUSH) there is no evidence of a wider strategy in joining up thinking and planning.

There are examples of innovative approaches at a local level: for example Bournemouth Borough Council signed the United Nations Climate Summit's *Compact of Mayors*, a coalition of city leaders from across the world pledging to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Eastleigh Borough Council is taking steps to address emissions associated with food.

There is also some localised partnership working: for example Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole (as separate local authorities) prepared joint Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategies to support efforts to tackle climate change. Hampshire County Council has sought to develop a county-wide consensus on measures to address this shared problem, working with a range of stakeholders. However, where they are seen, such joint initiatives usually focus on policy rather than practical delivery, which is left to local action.

Most councils focus on their own efforts to tackle climate change, whether through energy use, vehicle emissions or by behavioural change. Given the clarity of the shared objective, and commonality of options they have for guiding change, it is perhaps surprising that there is not more collaboration across a wider geography.

4.3 Sustainability: analysis

Sustainability of the natural environment is an area where the central South is rich in collaborative arrangements. That may be driven by a shared interest in a landscape of habitat which stretches across boundaries, or, as is the case with energy, government policy direction and the incentives to collaboration that provides. As a consequence, shared visions and objectives guide much of what stakeholders seek to achieve. They also feature in local planning documents: the policies and interventions shaped in partnership are often delivered through local planning policies.

The picture on climate change is different. While there is a widespread commitment to tackling this major challenge, and many objectives in common, collaborative working is patchy and there is no evidence of a wider strategic approach.

5. Conclusions

Local councils, LEPs and other bodies invest a lot of effort in preparing strategic documents that set a vision and direction for the organisation - sometimes because they are required by Government or statute to do so, and sometimes because they see it as best practice.

Only occasionally does that sense of vision reach beyond the geographic boundaries of the organisation. That narrow perspective may reflect a sense of political constraint, a wariness of stepping over boundaries into others' territory. So while there is a lot of dialogue and practical collaboration between organisations, there is little sense that there is a shared strategic perspective.

The same is true for councils' Local Plans. While they are informed by evidence which reflects wider circumstances beyond their boundaries, most of those Plans tend to address only local needs for housing, environmental protection, economic space or community facilities.

That limited planning perspective is reflected in the narrowness of vision and planning on housing. Again, the focus is generally on need within the boundaries of the planning authority itself, rather than drawing on wider economic or social considerations for the sub-region or region, however that may be defined.

PUSH offers a forum for councils and others to think collectively about housing or economic need, and to integrate their research and planning in a more effective way than councils do when acting alone. Their work enables council, LEPs and other partners to take a more rounded look at key issues and develop an assessment of shared priorities and interdependencies.

There is greater consistency and more evidence of collaborative working on plans and policies to protect the natural environment. Acknowledging that nature does not recognise boundaries, local councils seek to have consistent policies, and there are partnerships which work across boundaries - albeit on the basis of a willingness to collaborate, rather than on a shared assessment of an appropriate environmental geography.

Our overall conclusion is that while there is a significant amount of collaboration involving two or three parties, usually local authorities and often across tiers, this is usually focused on operational matters. There are few examples of wider strategic collaboration on issues such as provision of adequate housing or suitable employment land, or environmental sustainability, which may benefit from a wider, 'helicopter' perspective.

A non-statutory collaborative mechanism, such as the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, may facilitate that perspective, acting as a forum for shaping local policies in a way that can assist in achieving broader, shared ambitions. That would pave the way to shaping a regional strategy for the central South.

6. Planning, housing and sustainability: can we identify a region?

There is no family of documents which identify housing, economic or other need across the wider geography of the central South. The nearest we have are those prepared by PUSH, and these are limited to the administrative boundaries of PUSH's member councils.

As a result, it is difficult to articulate and so resolve issues which go beyond administrative boundaries: for example, whether housing allocations within the Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole, Southampton or Portsmouth travel-to-work areas will meet need, or what is the demand for employment land along key transport corridors. Nor do we have the forum for dialogue to facilitate that wider strategic discussion.

If there is value in understanding the needs of our area from a wider perspective than those of individual local authorities, then the question becomes 'what is the appropriate geography on which to plan for housing or employment land, to manage our natural environment, or plan to tackle major challenges such as climate change?'

Our first seminar in this series, '*The Economic Challenge*', identified several different 'regions' that could be the basis of a regional strategy. These are not proposals for local authority or LEP reorganisation. It is simply assumed that the existing organisations would cooperate by describing and promoting the region in a consistent and coherent way. That seminar considered six options:

1. **Small areas/sub-regions** – smaller and discrete areas: for example, individual cities (BCP, Southampton, Portsmouth, Winchester and their hinterlands), and areas of high economic importance (such as north-east Hampshire and Surrey). A variation on this approach would focus Southampton and Portsmouth city regions (as reflected by PUSH).
2. **Coast and hinterland** - the coastal strip (Poole to Portsmouth) and its surrounding strong TWAs (reaching into mid-Hampshire and mid-Dorset)
3. **LEP boundaries** - the existing LEP boundaries, with local authorities orientating their own material to reflect these boundaries
4. **Local authority boundaries** - upper-tier local authority boundaries, (Dorset & BCP; Hampshire, IoW, Southampton and Portsmouth) with LEPs reflecting this geography in their own material

5. **The study area** - the three LEPs and their associated local authorities as one region

6. **The wider south/south east** - the larger region covered by Innovation South and (broadly) the former South East Plan.

Appendix 2 considers how each of these options might provide a relevant template for planning, housing or sustainability.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

LEPs

Enterprise M3: SEP (2104-20)

Dorset LEP: Strategic Economic Plan – Transforming Dorset (2015-21)

Solent LEP: Strategic Economic Plan (2014-20)

PUSH

Spatial Position Statement (2016)

South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

Sustainability Common Policy Framework

Sustainable Development SPD Resource Document (2009)

Local councils

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council: Local Plan (2011-29)

- Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2018)
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2014)

Bournemouth Borough Council: Climate Change Strategy

Christchurch & East Dorset Partnership: Corporate Plan 2016-20

Christchurch BC: Local Plan Review Option Consultation (2018)

Eastleigh Borough Council: Tackling Climate Change – A Strategy 2011-20

Eastleigh Borough Council: Housing Strategy 2012-17

Hampshire County Council: Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2011-31

Isle of Wight Council: Core Strategy (2012)

Portsmouth City Council: Local Housing Needs and Targets

North Dorset: Local Plan (2016)

Rushmoor Borough Council: Rushmoor Local Plan 2014-32

Southampton City Council: Local Plan - Core Strategy (2015)

Surrey Heath BC: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2012)

Winchester City Council: Corporate Strategy 2018-20

Winchester City Council: Local Plan

- Part 1: Joint Core Strategy

Woking Borough Council: Woking Development Document – Woking Core Strategy (2012)

Others

Homes England Strategic Plan 2018-23

Dorset AONB: Management Plan

Solent Forum: Business Plan

West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015)

Appendix 2: Options for a regional strategy – do they make for effective action on planning, housing or sustainability?

Option Topic	Smaller areas/sub-region	Coast and hinterland	LEP Boundaries	Local authority boundaries	Study area	Wider south/south-east
Planning	Too small to capture important connections between areas	Effective in capturing travel-to-work areas and other key linkages, provided 'hinterland' is defined correctly	May not map well onto inter-connected communities - boundaries often artificial	Administrative areas may be too constrained to reflect reality of links between communities, notably cities and their hinterland	Large area reflects several distinct areas, with some connectivity	Too large and diverse to provide a sound basis for planning, even at a strategic level
Housing	Too small to reflect Housing Market Areas	Effective if defined to reflect shared Housing Market Areas	May not capture distinction between Housing Market Areas	May not capture distinction between Housing Market Areas	Will reflect several distinct Housing Market Areas, dilutes strategic perspective	Will reflect several distinct Housing Market Areas, dilutes strategic perspective
Sustainability	Too small to capture importance of shared action, e.g. on specific ecosystems	May not capture distinct ecosystems or habitats effectively, although a better basis for joined-up action on major challenges	May not capture distinct ecosystems or habitats effectively, although a better basis for joined-up action on major challenges	Unlikely to capture distinct ecosystems or habitats, too small as a basis for action on major challenges	Captures a diversity of habitats, although some extend beyond boundaries (e.g. South Downs). Can have an impact in facilitating collective action on major challenges	Likely to capture too many distinct ecosystems or habitats to facilitate effective action. Can have an impact in facilitating collective action on major challenges