

EXAMINATION OF THE PORTSMOUTH LOCAL PLAN
STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND
Portsmouth City Council and Mr Anthony Denton / ENI Land Ltd

Subject	Development Management Policy PLP46: Local Green Spaces — the designation of Farlington Playing Field, St John's College Playing Fields and Farlington Triangle
Site	Thirty Two Acres, Eastern Road, Farlington, Portsmouth PO6 1UW
Matter	Matter 11: Greening the City policies
Representors	CAAD Ltd on behalf of Mr Anthony Denton — ID 61450, representation 47334
	Robert Tutton Town Planning Consultants Ltd on behalf of Mr Tony Denton / ENI Storage — ID 61449
Date	18 th September 2026

1. Purpose and status

- 1.1** This Statement of Common Ground is made between Portsmouth City Council ("the Council") and Mr Anthony Denton and ENI Land Ltd, freehold owner of Thirty Two Acres, Eastern Road, Farlington ("the Site"). It is prepared in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Inspectors' Guidance Note [ID02].
- 1.2** Its purpose is to narrow the issues before the Inspectors by recording those matters of fact which are agreed between the parties, and by defining the matters which remain in dispute. It is not binding on either party. It does not commit either party to any position on the merits beyond what is expressly stated.
- 1.3** References to "the Framework" are to the National Planning Policy Framework dated December 2024, in accordance with paragraph 4 of ID02. References to "the Background Paper" are to the Local Green Spaces Background Paper [TP13]. References to "the Plan" are to the Pre-Submission Portsmouth Local Plan Composite [KD03], whose policies are prefixed PLP. References to "the Core Strategy" are to the adopted Portsmouth Core Strategy (2012), whose policies are prefixed PCS. References prefixed MM are to the Council's schedule of suggested main modifications [PCC03], and references prefixed AM to its schedule of suggested additional modifications [PCC04].
- 1.4** This Statement addresses Matter 11 only. It does not address any other Matter, nor any planning application or appeal concerning the Site.
- 1.5** The representors' objection relates only to the land within the Site. No objection is taken to the designation of Farlington Playing Field or Farlington Triangle, and nothing in this Statement is to be read as disagreement with the assessment of those two areas or with their continued designation. Where the representors disagree with an answer recorded in the assessment, that disagreement is confined to its application to the Site.
- 1.6** A plan is appended to the representors' hearing statement showing the Site, the boundary of the designation, the features listed at paragraph 2.5 above, the boundary of site DF14 in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2025, and the boundary of Solent Waders and Brent Goose Core Area P08C. The parties may find it convenient to refer to that plan.

2. Matters agreed

The parties agree the following matters of fact.

The designation

- 2.1** Part 1 of Policy PLP46 of the Plan designates, as a single entry, "Farlington Playing Field, St John's College Playing Fields and Farlington Triangle, Drayton & Farlington".
- 2.2** That entry covers three separately named areas. Farlington Playing Field and Farlington Triangle are publicly accessible. The former St John's College Playing Fields is not.
- 2.3** Paragraph 9.119 of the Plan states that all of the Local Green Spaces designated through the Plan meet the criteria set out in the Framework, and refers to the Background Paper.

The Site

- 2.4** The following matters relating to the Site are agreed.

Matter	Agreed position
Area	Approximately 12.81 hectares
Tenure	Private freehold ownership
Public access	None. The Site is gated.
Public rights of way	None across the Site
Former occupier	St John's College, which ceased its use of the playing fields in May 2022

- 2.5** In addition to playing pitches, the Site contains the following developed features.

Feature	Description
Entrance hardstanding and yard	At the western entrance, with two storage buildings, an office container and storage containers
Redundant netball courts	Carrying storage containers and lockers, and used as a compulsory basic training site approved by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
Access road and parking	Running from the entrance along the northern boundary to the pavilion, with associated parking areas
South-east hardstanding	Approximately 4,307 square metres, disused since about 1999
Pavilion and changing rooms	Footprint of approximately 565 square metres, serving the playing pitches within the Site

- 2.6** Paragraph 2.5 and the table above record the physical features present on the land. They record no position on the planning status or lawfulness of any use of the Site. Those are matters for planning applications 25/00701/FUL, 25/00846/FUL and 25/01043/FUL, and for appeal APP/Z1775/C/25/3369774, and not for the examination.

The Council's evidence base

- 2.7** The assessment of this designation in the Local Green Spaces Background Paper [TP13], dated February 2026, consists of a single entry in the matrix at Appendix 1 to that document.
- 2.8** That entry records the following answers.

Criterion recorded in the matrix	Answer recorded	Representors' position
Is it an extensive tract of land?	No	Not agreed. Unsupported: no threshold was set — Issue 5 below
Is it in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?	Yes	Not disputed
Has the land been identified for development?	No	Not agreed. The land had been identified for development — Issue 2 below
Is the land already protected by any existing designations and/or extant local policies?	PCS13	Not disputed as recorded. No consideration of additional local benefit appears — Issue 3 below
Particular local significance (PLS) — beauty	No	Not disputed
PLS — historic significance	No	Not disputed
PLS — recreational value	Yes	Not agreed as applied to the Site — Issue 6 below
PLS — tranquillity	No	Not disputed
PLS — wildlife	Yes	Not agreed as applied to the hardstanding — Issue 7 below
Suitable for designation?	Yes	Not agreed as applied to the Site — Issues 1, 4 and 9 below

- 2.9 The parties agree only that the answers in the second column are those recorded in the entry. The third column records the representors' position and is not agreed by the Council. The representors take no issue with the answers as they may apply to Farlington Playing Field or Farlington Triangle.
- 2.10 The justification recorded in that entry is that the site meets the Framework criteria and is demonstrably special in terms of its recreational value and wildlife, especially given its role as a core area for Solent Waders and Brent Geese. Recreational value and wildlife are the only two limbs of particular local significance on which the entry relies.
- 2.11 The comments column of that entry, in the Council's words, reads as follows. It is reproduced as a record of what the entry says, and not as a description agreed by the representors of what is present on the Site. The football and cricket pitches and the clubhouse are attributed to Farlington Playing Field; St John's College Playing Fields is named without description.
- The site mainly consists of recreational grounds; it is home to Farlington Playing Field (football and cricket pitches, as well as a clubhouse), Southsea Nomads Rugby Club and St John's College Playing Fields. There is also a parcel of scrubland and a small woodland, both of which provide informal paths/trails. It is also popular amongst dog walkers.*
- 2.12 The same column also refers to traffic noise and to the wildlife designations affecting and adjoining the designated area. The matrix scores tranquillity as "no".
- 2.13 The Site abuts the main line railway to the north and the A27 to the south. Its northern boundary lies some 30 metres from a scrap metal yard, beyond which is a large industrial estate. A noise impact assessment prepared by Vine Acoustics in October 2025, submitted with planning application 25/01043/FUL, identifies the principal noise sources affecting the Site as the scrap metal yard, the railway line and the industrial estate to the north of it, the scrap yard being recorded as a continuous source.
- 2.14 The entry does not refer to the storage containers, storage lockers, storage buildings or office container; to the access road or the parking areas it serves; to the redundant netball courts; to the south-east hardstanding; or to the pavilion and changing rooms. It does not record the Site's ownership or access

position, that St John's College ceased its use of the land in May 2022, or that the lease of the rugby club it names expired on 1 September 2023.

- 2.15 Paragraph 3.2.2 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper [TP13] records that a threshold for what constitutes an extensive tract of land was discussed but that its implementation was considered not relevant to Portsmouth. Paragraph 3.2.3 records that a maximum distance for proximity was deemed not required for the context of Portsmouth.
- 2.16 Paragraph 3.2.4 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper states that some school playing fields have been included for assessment as they are used by the public outside of operational hours.
- 2.17 Paragraph 3.2.6 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper records that a criterion asking whether the land is already protected by any existing designations was added because Planning Practice Guidance advises that, if land is already protected by designation, consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by Local Green Space designation.
- 2.18 Paragraph 3.2.9 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper, under the heading "What if land has planning permission for development?", records: "PPG advises that LGS designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has been identified for development. LGS should have longevity throughout the local plan period and beyond."
- 2.19 Paragraph 3.2.10 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper records that accessibility was considered as a criterion and has not been selected as a deciding factor for designation.
- 2.20 Paragraph 3.2.12 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper records that site visits were carried out during summer to autumn 2023.
- 2.21 The entry for Fraser Range records that the site is within private ownership, that given the lack of access and its derelict nature there is an absence of recreational offering to the public, and that it has also been identified for development (19/00420/FUL). Fraser Range is not designated.
- 2.22 The entries for Rugby Camp Hilsea, East Lodge Recreation Ground, United Services Recreation Ground and Horsea Allotments each record recreational use, and none of those sites is designated. Kingston Park and Drayton Park are designated.
- 2.23 The entry for Portsdown Hill records the extensive tract of land question as "Yes?". Portsdown Hill is designated.

Other Council evidence

- 2.24 The Playing Pitch Strategy 2018–2034 [GC03] identifies St John's College (Farlington) at paragraph 3.116 among sites in the ownership of Education which are not available for community use, and at paragraph 4.27 of the same Strategy as unsecured use, unavailable for football and rugby.
- 2.25 Pre-application enquiry 24/00657/PAPA05, dated 23 July 2024, records the Council's position that the Site is not used towards the Council's pitch provision requirements, that its pitches have not been counted towards the city's total pitch provision, and that it was unclear what the community benefit of the pitches was, given that they are privately owned.
- 2.26 The Open Spaces Assessment 2020 Addendum [GC09] finds at paragraph 3.2 that provision of every type of public open space in the city will be in deficit by the end of the plan period, and quantifies those deficits at Table 6.
- 2.27 In February 2025 the Council and Sport England agreed a timetable for an updated Playing Pitch Strategy to be completed by late summer 2026 [SCG23]. In its response to the Inspectors' initial questions [PCC06] the Council confirmed that this will not be produced and that the update is only now being commissioned.

- 2.28 The Green Infrastructure background paper [TP03] treats "private open space" at paragraphs 3.2.28 and 3.2.29 as a distinct category which does not have quite the same breadth of benefits that publicly accessible spaces do, comprising among other things school grounds and private sports clubs.
- 2.29 The Glossary to the Plan defines open space as all open space of public value, including not just land but also areas of water, which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Planning history and current position

- 2.30 At the date of the Background Paper, three planning applications were pending determination in respect of the Site (25/00701/FUL, 25/00846/FUL and 25/01043/FUL) and an appeal against an enforcement notice (APP/Z1775/C/25/3369774) was undetermined. All three applications remain undetermined.
- 2.31 Appeal APP/Z1775/C/25/3369774 was received by the Planning Inspectorate on 23 July 2025 and remains undetermined. On 3 August 2026 the Planning Inspectorate advised the Council that the appeal lay behind 373 similar appeals awaiting decision and that no determination date could be given.
- 2.32 On 8 April 2025 the applicant returned the Council's call for new housing and employment sites, proposing that 4.22 hectares of the Site be released for employment development. The call closed on 24 April 2025. The land is entered in the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2025 as site DF14, Thirty Two Acres, Eastern Road, Drayton & Farlington, area 4.33 hectares, development type recorded as housing, classification Discounted at Stage 1. Page 6 of the HELAA, summarising Appendix 1C, records the reason: "Site DF14 has been deemed unsuitable as most of the site is a Core Area for Solent Waders and Brent Geese."
- 2.33 The lease of part of the Site to NRFC Leisure Limited, dated 25 October 2022, expired on 1 September 2023.
- 2.34 Hampshire County Council Ecology, consulted on application 24/00990/PLAREG, advised that the land in question lies immediately outside Solent Waders and Brent Goose Core Area P08C.
- 2.35 At paragraph 13 of appeal decision APP/Z1775/W/25/3371492, dated 9 January 2026, the Inspector found that both the Farlington playing fields and Thirty Two Acres make an important and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. At paragraph 2 of the decision the Inspector attached limited weight to Policies PLP25, PLP45 and PLP46 and did not consider them further.

Proposed modifications to other designations

- 2.36 In respect of a different Local Green Space — Portsdown Hill, and not the Site — the Council has proposed, in its schedule of suggested main modifications [PCC03], main modifications MM120 and MM225, which would amend Figure 9.1 of the Plan and the Policies Map [KD04a] respectively to redraw that designation's boundary, in each case to exclude land needed for essential water infrastructure buildings. MM121 would make a further amendment to Figure 9.1 of the Plan. No modification is proposed to the boundary of the designation covering the Site.
- 2.37 Main modifications are proposed in [PCC03] to Policies PLP38 to PLP43 and PLP45. No main modification is proposed to Policy PLP46. Additional modification AM154, in the Council's schedule of suggested additional modifications [PCC04], would amend paragraph 9.123 of the Plan, the supporting text to Policy PLP46.

3. Matters not agreed

The following matters remain in dispute and may affect the soundness of Development Management Policy PLP46: Local Green Spaces, Development Management Policy PLP45: Open Space and Strategic Policy PLP38: Green Infrastructure. No other policy of the Plan is in issue between the parties. Each matter is set out with the position of each party; the Council is invited to complete or correct its position where indicated.

Issue 1 — Whether the assessment of this designation is adequate

- 3.1 The representors' position is that the entry at Appendix 1 is not an assessment of the land within the Site against paragraphs 106 and 107 of the Framework. It describes features which are not on the Site — the scrubland, the woodland, the informal paths and trails and the dog walking, all of which lie on Farlington Playing Field and Farlington Triangle — and omits every developed feature which is on it, together with its ownership and access position. The Site is gated, has no public access and carries no public right of way, so the informal paths and trails and the dog walking on which the recreational conclusion in part rests cannot be on it. It records as an occupier a rugby club whose lease had expired two and a half years before the Background Paper was produced. The representors say that is the consequence of assessing three separate areas as a single entry, and that paragraph 9.119 of the Plan is unsupported in respect of the Site. The point taken is not that the assessment was brief: where the Council could not enter land it recorded the fact and did not designate, as the Horsea and the Longmeadow and Moneyfields Allotments entries show. It did not do so here.
- 3.2 The Council's position is that the designation meets the criteria in the Framework, as recorded in the entry at Appendix 1 and asserted at paragraph 9.119 of the Plan. [The Council is invited to set out what assessment was carried out of the land within the Site, whether the Site was entered during the site visits recorded at paragraph 3.2.12, and on what material other than the Appendix 1 entry it relies.]
- 3.3 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 2 — The recorded answer on whether the land had been identified for development

- 3.4 The representors' position is that the answer "no" recorded against this criterion was wrong when made and remains wrong. Three planning applications were pending and an enforcement appeal was undetermined at the date of the Background Paper, and all remain so; a deemed application for planning permission under section 177(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is before the Secretary of State; and the applicant had returned the Council's own call for sites proposing 4.22 hectares for employment development. The Council refused designation at Fraser Range on this ground on the strength of a single extant application.
- 3.5 The representors further note that the land was promoted through the Council's own call for sites, given a site reference and carried into the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment of October 2025 as site DF14. The representors say the criterion asks whether land has been identified for development, and that this land plainly had been, whatever view the Council took of its suitability in that assessment.
- 3.6 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council]. The representors invite the Council to explain the basis on which the answer to the development criterion was recorded and how it is reconciled with the treatment of Fraser Range.
- 3.7 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 3 — Whether any additional local benefit from designation was considered

- 3.8 The representors' position is that the entry records the land as already protected under Core Strategy Policy PCS13 as protected open space; that paragraph 3.2.6 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper records that this criterion was added because Planning Practice Guidance requires consideration of whether any additional local benefit would be gained by Local Green Space designation; and that neither the entry nor the Background Paper records that consideration having been undertaken, or identifies any additional local benefit which designation would bring. Core Strategy Policy PCS13 was applied to the Site in appeal decision APP/Z1775/W/25/3371492.
- 3.9 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council]. The representors invite the Council to identify what additional local benefit was considered to arise from designating this land, given that it is already protected.
- 3.10 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 4 — Consistency of treatment with comparable sites

3.11 The representors' position is that the Local Green Spaces Background Paper states at paragraph 3.2.10 that accessibility has not been selected as a deciding factor, but that in application restricted access appears in the reasoning for refusal at Fraser Range, East Lodge Recreation Ground, United Services Recreation Ground and Horsea Allotments, while the sites designated on recreational value alone, Kingston Park and Drayton Park, are publicly accessible. Rugby Camp Hilsea, recorded as a sports club ground with pitches, clubhouse and parking, bounded by a railway and an industrial estate and exposed to high levels of noise, with minimal pedestrian activity observed, was not designated. The representors say the Site shares those characteristics. It abuts the main line railway to the north and the A27 to the south, and lies some 30 metres from a scrap metal yard with a large industrial estate beyond it; the Council's own entry records traffic noise and scores tranquillity "no". The Site is in addition gated with no public access. The representors say the combination of railway, industrial estate and scrap yard is materially the same as the railway, industrial estate and builder's yard recorded at Rugby Camp, and that had this parcel been assessed on its own facts by the approach taken to Rugby Camp and to Fraser Range it would have fallen on the same side as those sites. The omission is therefore not immaterial: the grouping produced the different result.

3.12 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council]. The representors invite the Council to identify what distinguishes this designation from those sites.

3.13 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 5 — The criteria at paragraph 107 of the Framework

3.14 The representors' position is that two of the three criteria in paragraph 107 of the Framework were not applied on a site-specific basis: no threshold was set for what constitutes an extensive tract of land (paragraph 3.2.2 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper) and no maximum distance was applied for proximity (paragraph 3.2.3 of that document). The only entry in the matrix at Appendix 1 to that document engaging the extensive tract question is Portsdown Hill, recorded as "Yes?" and designated notwithstanding. A "no" was recorded for a designation combining three separately named areas, of which the Site alone extends to some 12.81 hectares.

3.15 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council].

3.16 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 6 — The basis on which recreational value was recorded

3.17 The representors' position is that paragraph 3.2.4 of the Local Green Spaces Background Paper states that school playing fields were included for assessment because they are used by the public outside of operational hours; that the college had closed in May 2022 so there were no operational hours; and that the Council's own evidence records the contrary. The Playing Pitch Strategy 2018–2034 [GC03] records the Site at paragraph 3.116 as not available for community use, and at paragraph 4.27 of that Strategy as unsecured use, unavailable for football and rugby. Pre-application enquiry 24/00657/PAPA05 of 23 July 2024 records that the Site is not used towards the Council's pitch provision requirements, that its pitches have not been counted towards the city's total provision, and that it was unclear what their community benefit was. Recreational value is one of only two limbs of particular local significance on which the entry in the matrix at Appendix 1 to the Background Paper relies.

3.18 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council].

3.19 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 7 — The wildlife limb

3.20 The representors' position is that the wildlife justification rests on the Site's role as a Solent Waders and Brent Goose core area. Core Area P08C has been drawn so as to exclude the developed land within the

Site: the entrance hardstanding and yard in Section A, the access road running from the entrance to the pavilion, the pavilion itself, and the south-east hardstanding in Section E are all outside it. The grass to the east remains within the core area, as does an area within Section A which is the subject of application 25/00846/FUL. Hampshire County Council Ecology advised to the same effect in respect of the land the subject of application 24/00990/PLAREG. The Council's own Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2025 records site DF14 as having 83.89 per cent overlap with the core area, leaving some 16 per cent outside it. The representors say the core area boundary therefore records the developed land which the Local Green Spaces Background Paper does not, and that the wildlife justification does not extend to the land to which objection is taken.

3.21 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council].

3.22 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 8 — What modification is required

3.23 The representors' primary case is that the defect is the absence of an assessment, and that the remedy is deletion of the grouped entry from Part 1 of Policy PLP46, with corresponding amendments to the Policies Map [KD04a] and to Figure 9.1 of the Plan, pending assessment of each of the three areas against paragraphs 106 and 107 of the Framework. That course requires no finding as to the character or value of any of the three areas, and would not prevent the Council designating any of them in a future plan on a proper evidential basis.

3.24 In the alternative, if a boundary is to be settled at examination, the representors seek amendment of the boundary of the designation, on the Policies Map [KD04a] and in Figure 9.1 of the Plan, to exclude Section A of the Site (approximately 2 acres at the western entrance) and Section E of the Site (approximately 2.5 acres in the south-east) as shown on drawing 23060/139 Rev A appended to the representors' hearing statement — together about 4.5 acres of the 12.81 hectare Site. The playing pitches, the pavilion and the access road serving them would remain designated, as would Farlington Playing Field and Farlington Triangle. The representors say that modification is of the same character, and would use the same mechanism, as MM120 and MM225 in the Council's schedule of suggested main modifications [PCC03].

3.25 Neither modification depends on the outcome of planning applications 25/00701/FUL, 25/00846/FUL and 25/01043/FUL, or of appeal APP/Z1775/C/25/3369774, and neither is sought in aid of them. The land at Sections A and E of the Site is developed land which the Local Green Spaces Background Paper does not identify or assess, and would remain so whatever became of the present uses upon it.

3.26 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council].

3.27 This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 9 — Whether Policy PLP46 is sound

3.28 The representors' position is that Policy PLP46 is not justified within paragraph 36(b) of the Framework in respect of this designation, for the reasons at Issues 1 to 7 of this Statement, and that the defect is capable of cure by main modification. The modification sought is confined to this entry: it requires no reconsideration of any other designation, and no view on the methodology beyond its application here. The Council's position is that the policy is sound. This remains a point of disagreement.

Issue 10 — Development Management Policy PLP45: Open Space

3.29 The representors' position is that Policy PLP45 is not based on robust and up-to-date assessments in accordance with paragraph 103 of the Framework, the principal evidence being a Playing Pitch Strategy which the Council has itself decided requires updating; that Table 9.1 secures no new provision of outdoor sports facilities, natural and semi-natural greenspace or allotments notwithstanding the deficits recorded in each at Table 6 of [GC09]; and that it is not clear how a decision maker applies Part 2 to land which is

not open space of public value within the Glossary definition. The representors support limbs (c) and (d) of Part 2 and take no point on limb (a).

3.30 The Council's position is [to be completed by the Council]. The parties note that Sport England objects to limb (d) of Part 2 as inconsistent with paragraph 103 of the Framework, and that the Council and Sport England record that as a continuing point of disagreement [SCG23].

3.31 This remains a point of disagreement.

4. Signatories

This Statement of Common Ground was sent to the Council's planning policy team on 8 September 2026, with a response requested by 18 September 2026. No response had been received at the date of filing.

Signed on behalf of Portsmouth City Council

Name: Position:

Signature: Date:

Signed on behalf of Mr Anthony Denton and ENI Land Ltd

Name: Anthony Denton Position: DIRECTOR + OWNER

Signature:  Date: 18 Sept 2026