

Statement of Common Ground
Portsmouth City Council & Network Rail

November 2024



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a jointly agreed statement between Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and Network Rail. It sets out the position and understanding with respect to key strategic issues between the City Council and Network Rail. It is not binding on either party but sets out a clear and positive direction to inform ongoing strategy and plan making. It should be noted that this is a bilateral agreement between these two organisations only.
- 1.2 This SCG has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the section of the Planning Practice Guidance on Maintaining Effective Cooperation. It has also followed guidance prepared by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on this matter. It has been prepared in parallel with the Submission Local Plan (Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). This Plan, upon adoption, will supersede the existing Portsmouth Local Plan (2012). The new Local Plan will cover the period to 2040 and sets out the vision, objectives and policies to guide future development in the City over the plan period.

Relation between Portsmouth City Council and the Statutory undertaker

- 1.3 Network Rail owns, operates, maintains and develops Britain's railway. Network Rail is responsible for ensuring that the railway is safe and reliable.

Planning Policy and national legislation (Transport)

- 1.4 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states "Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking), and make sufficient provision for [...] infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)".
- 1.5 Paragraph 108 of the NPPF states: "Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
 - b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
 - c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
 - d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and
 - e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places."
- 1.6 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states "The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on

locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making."

1.7 Paragraph 110 states that "Planning policies should [...]

b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;

c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;"

Portsmouth Context

1.8 Network Rail is a statutory undertaker responsible for maintaining, operating and developing the main railway network and its associated estate. Their aim is to protect and enhance the railway infrastructure.

1.9 Network Rail is a statutory consultee for any planning applications proposing development likely to result in a material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic using a level crossing over a railway.

1.10 Portsmouth has strong rail links with London, Southampton and both the south east and south west coastal routes. It has five train stations:

- **Portsmouth & Southsea station** is just a short walk from city centre shops and business, the Guildhall and the council's Civic Offices.
- **Portsmouth Harbour station** is a short walk from a range of attractions, including the shops and restaurants at Gunwharf Quays, Spinnaker Tower, and the Historic Dockyard. Portsmouth Harbour station is also close to the ferry connections to the Isle of Wight and Gosport.
- **Hilsea station** serves the north side of Portsea Island.
- **Fratton station** is close to Portsmouth's Football ground - Fratton Park - and within easy reach of thousands of homes and businesses in Southsea and Fratton.
- **Cosham station** is located off of Portsea Island and is a short distance from QA Hospital.

2. Key strategic matters

2.1 This section sets out where agreement has been reached on strategic matters, or where further work to reach common ground is required. It should be noted that all the figures where included relate to the plan period for the Portsmouth Local Plan of 2020-2040.

Future Growth

Housing Need	Housing Supply	Unmet need
17,980 (899 dpa)	13,603 (680 dpa)	4,376 (219)

Employment Need	Employment Supply	Unmet need
42,500	Office 77,099	0
96,300	B2/ B8 / R&D 79,784	16,516

Network Rail Representations

2.2 The key policies relating to Transport and Infrastructure within the Portsmouth Local Plan are PLP47 and PLP50 respectively. Network Rail support both policies and only proposed minor modifications to Policy PLP47.

2.3 Network Rail provided several representations in support of other policies in the Local Plan including Core Policy PLP1: Design, Core Policy PLP2: Climate Emergency, Policy PLP21: Residential Density, PLP30: Cultural and Visitor Economy and Policy PLP31: Flooding. PCC have carefully considered all proposed amendments and included them in the Schedule of Additional Modifications that will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate on submission. Further detail is provided at Appendix 1.

2.4 There are several strategic and allocated sites identified for development in the Local Plan which are in close proximity to train stations.

2.5 PCC and Network Rail both agree that Portsmouth & Southsea Station is a key part of the City Centre regeneration. PCC will work closely with Network Rail throughout the redevelopment of the City Centre to ensure necessary station improvements are delivered.

2.6 Network Rail support the allocation of Fratton Park and the Pompey Centre and consider the location to be sustainable for growth. The policy includes alterations to the station in order to deliver an appropriate and accessible off-road route for pedestrians and cyclists to access the site, including Fratton Park. PCC will work closely with Network Rail and all other stakeholders in the delivery of this route.

2.7 Network Rail also support Policy PLP12 (St John's College) and Policy PLP15 (Somers Orchard) of the Local Plan.

2.8 Where proposed amendments to the plan have been proposed by Network Rail, these have been carefully considered and included within the plan where necessary.

Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) / Infrastructure Delivery Plan

2.9 PCC will continue to work collaboratively with the other PfSH authorities and partners including Network Rail to support and deliver key strategic infrastructure including those detailed within the Solent Connectivity Study (2020).

2.10 PCC have worked closely with Network Rail in the production of their Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which includes reference to the Solent Connectivity Study. PCC will continue to engage with Network Rail through any updates to the IDP.

3. Signatories

3.1 Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.

3.2 Both parties agree that they have engaged positively on an ongoing basis and that on this basis the Duty to Cooperate has been met.

3.3 Both parties agree that there are no substantial areas of disagreement between the parties relating to the emerging Portsmouth Local Plan and will both continue to work proactively on the key strategic cross boundary issues identified in this SCG.

Signed:	Signed:
	
Name:	Name:
Lucy Howard	Oliver Owen
Position:	Position:
Head of Planning Policy	Town Planning & Heritage Manager (Southern)
Portsmouth City Council	Network Rail
Date: 13-12-24	Date: 12/12/2024

Appendix 1 - Network Rail Regulation 19 Representations

Local Plan Policy	Network Rail Representation	PCC response/proposed amendment
Chapter 1: Introduction	Network Rail suggest the following wording: Transport Model (SRTM) was used to inform and evidence the Portsmouth Local Plan. Network Rail have produced a Solent Connectivity Study in 2020 which emphasises the opportunities to significantly improve connectivity by rail within Portsmouth and the wider PfSH area. This, and future studies, will be key pieces of evidence to inform the Local Plan and guide investment decisions within PfSH and Portsmouth for transport enhancements.	No change necessary as the SRTM is referenced in chapter 3. Reference the Solent Connectivity Study in chapter 3 and add to the CDL.
PLP6: Portsmouth City Centre	Network Rail request that capacity at the station should be considered as and when nearby development comes forward to ensure the station remains fit for purpose Network Rail suggest that Proposals around the Station should also contribute towards improving accessibility and improvements at the station to mitigate the impact of additional users.	Point 5: Development within the Station Road Regeneration Area (as shown in figure 4.5) will be permitted where they provide a significant contribution to the City's housing and other needs by providing good quality, high density and tall buildings. Proposals impacting the area around Portsmouth and Southsea Train station should contribute to improved connectivity and street scene within the City Centre, without unacceptable harm to the historic environment. <u>Proposals in this area should consider the capacity of Portsmouth and Southsea Station and mitigate the impact of additional users.</u> Proposals in this area should create a gateway to the City linking the commercial core around Commercial Road to the Cultural and Civic Centre focused on Guildhall Square and Guildhall Walk. Para - 4.116 This area is key for the implementation of sustainable transport measures and promoting modal shift in the City Centre. The area in front of the Station has the potential to act as a significant gateway to the City, and proposals that enhance the setting of the station and improve the street scene / landscaping of the area will be welcomed. The Station building is listed, however, its quality has been impacted by later additions and poor maintenance, leading to it feeling unkept and unwelcoming. Enhancements to the Station building in order to improve its role as

		a gateway, and its legibility, permeability and accessibility for users will be encouraged. <u>Station improvements to enhance the facilities and accessibility for users will also be sought.</u> Commercial uses in the Station will be supported.
PLP7: Fratton Park & the Pompey Centre	Network Rail suggested amended policy wording to criteria 2 that new development should consider impact on the rail station and its capacity alongside station improvements to mitigate additional use.	Proposed amendments from Network Rail have been considered and added in part. PCC have reworded to remove reference to 'station improvements' beyond capacity issues. Although, have made reference to the routes to the station that will need improving.
PLP12: St John's College	Network Rail are supportive of the implementation of sustainable travel measures, they consider there should be a focus on convenient access between the site and Portsmouth and Southsea rail station.	LPA response: this matter has already been addressed in the consideration of the now-determined planning application 23/01089/FUL, including by various conditions and the legal agreement. This matter has already been addressed in the consideration of the now-determined planning application 23/01089/FUL, with a relevant condition attached (Condition 7).
PLP15: Somers Orchard	Network Rail consider a Travel Plan and Transport Assessment should be submitted to assess the potential transport impacts of the development, and propose mitigation and identify opportunities for sustainable transport initiatives, focussed on providing access to/from Portsmouth and Southsea rail station.	This matter has already been addressed as requested, in the two Somers Orchard planning applications (23/01574/FUL and 23/01575/FUL) which the Planning Committee formally resolved to approve on 21/8/24. Compliance with the Travel Plans will be secured by Conditions 17 and 16 respectfully.
PLP23: Estate Renewal	Network Rail suggest the following wording be included in the policy: <u>Submission of a Travel Plan and Transport Assessment to assess the potential transport impacts of the development, acts and implications, propose mitigation measures and identify opportunities to implement effective sustainable transport initiatives</u>	Submission of a travel plan and transport assessment as part of an application is already covered by Policy PLP47. Therefore, it is not required to include the wording proposed for Policy PLP23.
PLP30: Cultural and Visitor Economy	Network Rail suggested amendments to the wording of policy criterion 5 to include specific reference to improve access and connections to and between cultural facilities and visitor attractions and the City, town centres and public transport hubs, especially rail stations, and enhancement through active travel.	Proposed amendments by Network Rail are considered acceptable and have been added to the policy criterion 5.

PLP47: Movement and Transport	Network Rail proposed wording: arising from the development itself and/or the cumulative effects of development, through the provision of, or contributions towards, necessary and relevant transport improvements including capacity and junction improvements, <i>railway and station improvements</i> and air pollution reduction measures.	PCC are unable to include the proposed wording relating to contribution to station improvements. There is a lack of specificity relating to station improvements. It is recognised that railway and station infrastructure must be considered differently at a local level. Unlike road users including bus and cycle services, for which infrastructure and subsidy falls to the Local Highway Authority to deliver, rail services are delivered using central government funding supplemented by commercial ticket sales. The supporting text at paragraph 10.29 relates to criterion 6 of the policy which discusses Highway Improvements. Paragraph 10.20 of the Local Plan does however encourage improvements to sustainable transport methods which includes rail.
Other evidence base	Network Rail suggested amendments to the IDP section 3.10 Rail Services regarding future needs to deliver growth from the Local Plan for Fratton Station.	Amendments requested by Network Rail are agreed and have been added to the Interim version of the IDP.