

Statement of Common Ground

**Portsmouth City Council &
Fareham Borough Council**

February 2026



FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

This page is intentionally left blank

1. Introduction

What is a Statement of Common Ground?

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a jointly agreed statement between Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and Fareham Borough Council (FBC). It sets out the position and understanding with respect to key cross boundary strategic issues between the two authorities. 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 authorities only.

National Policy Context

- 1.2 PCC intends to submit their emerging Local Plans under the transitional arrangements for Local Plans set out in Annex 1 of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In order for a Local Plan to be found sound under the 2024 NPPF it needs to be 'justified' and thus 'based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground.' It is noted that the consultation draft NPPF published in December 2025 changes the tests of soundness. However, the wording of the new test of 'realistic' is identical to the 2024 definition of 'justified'.
- 1.3 The Written Ministerial Statement made in November 2025 notes that the new plan-making system provided by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 does not include the Duty to Cooperate. Instead, the new system will rely on revised national policy and the new tier of strategic planning to ensure effective co-operation between plan-making authorities. It also notes that the Regulations for the new system will 'save' the current plan-making system for a period to allow emerging plans, such as the Portsmouth Local Plan, to progress to examination by 31 December 2026.
- 1.4 The Statement sets out that the Government has decided not to 'save' the Duty. However, it goes on to say that local planning authorities should continue to collaborate across their boundaries, including on unmet development needs from neighbouring areas and that Planning Inspectors will continue to examine plans in line with the policies in the NPPF on 'maintaining effective co-operation'.
- 1.5 It has been prepared in reference to both the adopted Fareham Local Plan 2037 and Portsmouth Pre-Submission Local Plan under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012¹. PCC and FBC agree on the importance of continuing to work on strategic cross boundary issues in line with both existing and draft national policy.
- 1.6 The Fareham Local Plan 2037 was adopted in April 2023 and becomes five years old in April 2028. At the time of agreeing this SCG, FBC has not commenced work on a new Local Plan. Any new Local Plan for Fareham would be progressed under the new plan-making system.

What does this document include?

- 1.7 Section 1 introduces the Duty to Cooperate and sets the context for this SCG.

¹<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/regulation/19/made>

1.8 Section 2 outlines the strategic geographies of Portsmouth City and Fareham Borough

1.9 Section 3 sets out the key cross boundary strategic issues addressed by this SCG with an agreed position between the two Councils on each issue. Where relevant areas of disagreement are also set out.

2. Strategic Geography

2.1 This SCG relates to the cross boundary strategic matters between PCC and FBC as shown on the map below.

2.2 Portsmouth City lies adjacent to the Solent on the southern coast of England. The majority of the City's landmass is on Portsea Island and therefore it has a unique geographic location and relationship to the sea. The authority comprises approx. 40.1 square kilometres and is home to approximately 208,100 people, with a population density higher than some parts of London.

2.3 Fareham Borough covers 74.2 square kilometres and is home to approximately 117,000 people. The two authorities share a boundary where the urban areas of Portchester and Paulsgrove meet.

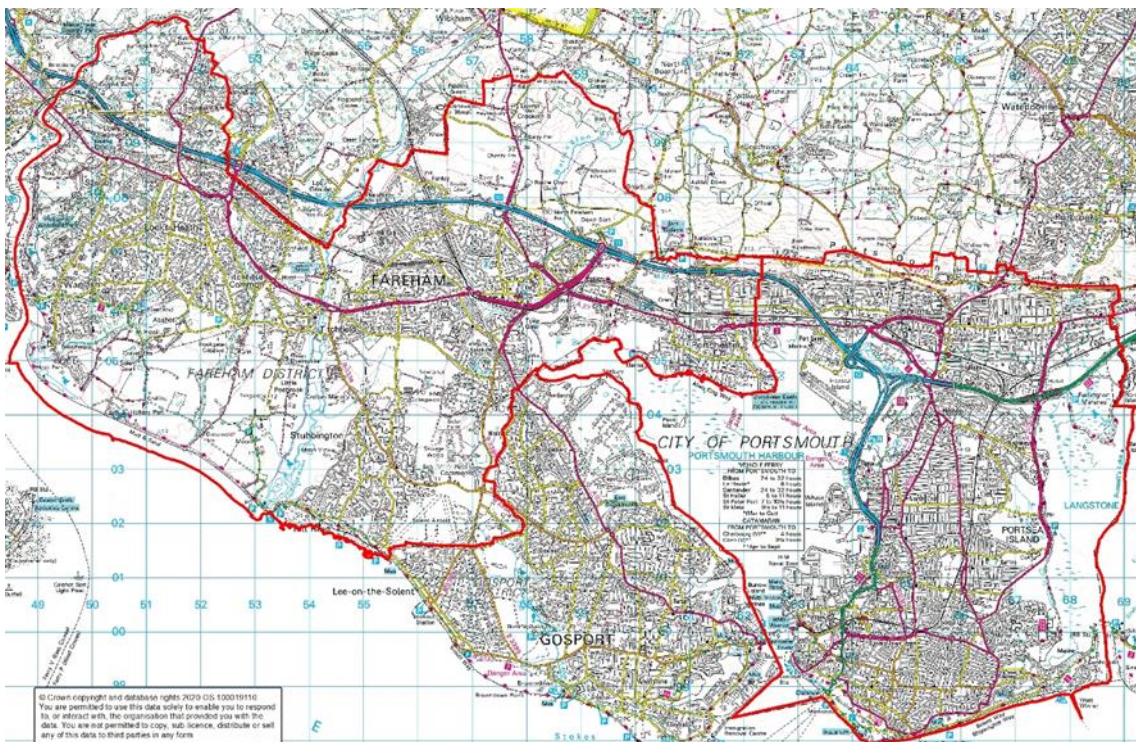


Figure 1: Fareham Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council administrative boundaries

Partnership for South Hampshire and South East Hampshire Joint working

- 2.4 PCC and FBC are active members of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH). It is a partnership of district and unitary authorities, together with Hampshire County Council and the New Forest National Park Authority, working together to support the sustainable growth of the South Hampshire sub-region. The area covered by PfSH and the authorities involved is shown in figure 2.
- 2.5 The Partnership has a strong track record in collaborative working to achieve common goals in South Hampshire. PfSH has successfully developed a number of innovative solutions to challenging issues and thus unlocked development in the sub-region whilst recognising its constraints. The PfSH Spatial Position Statement was approved by the Partnership's decision-making body, the Joint Committee, in December 2023. It aims to provide guiding principles for local plans to help deliver sustainable development within South Hampshire.
- 2.6 Following on from an advisory meeting with the Planning Inspectorate, PCC tabled an item for PfSH Planning Officers Group in September 2025 to ascertain the appropriate approach to monitoring / reviewing the PfSH SPS. The matter was discussed at PfSH Joint Committee who approved the following statement²:

PfSH approved a Spatial Position Statement in December 2023. It sets out strategic principles to guide development. It also sets out the balance between the need and supply of new dwellings across the sub region, identifying a shortfall in supply still to be planned for of 11,771 dwellings to 2036. It recognises that some authorities are at an early stage in plan preparation, and that as part of this plan making work additional sites will be identified to meet unmet needs. The Statement sets out a two stage process to addressing needs, first identifying the authorities which should be able to meet or exceed their needs, and second by identifying broad areas of search for growth to be considered further through local plans.

Since this Statement was approved, the Government's standard method for calculating housing need has changed from a population based to a housing stock based algorithm, and the affordability ratio has also changed. As a result the housing need figures for the PfSH area as a whole have increased.

The national proposals to reintroduce statutory strategic planning will require the preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy by the proposed Mayoral Combined Authority for Hampshire and the Solent. A key output of this work will be meeting housing need. In light of this, PfSH do not intend to update the Spatial Position Statement. However, in the meantime PfSH continue to discuss the latest position to inform the preparation of each authority's local plan in accordance with the 'duty to co-operate'. This is supplemented by the preparation of Statements of Common Ground between individual authorities and groups of authorities as relevant.

² <https://www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Full-Agenda-Pack-09-December-2025.pdf>

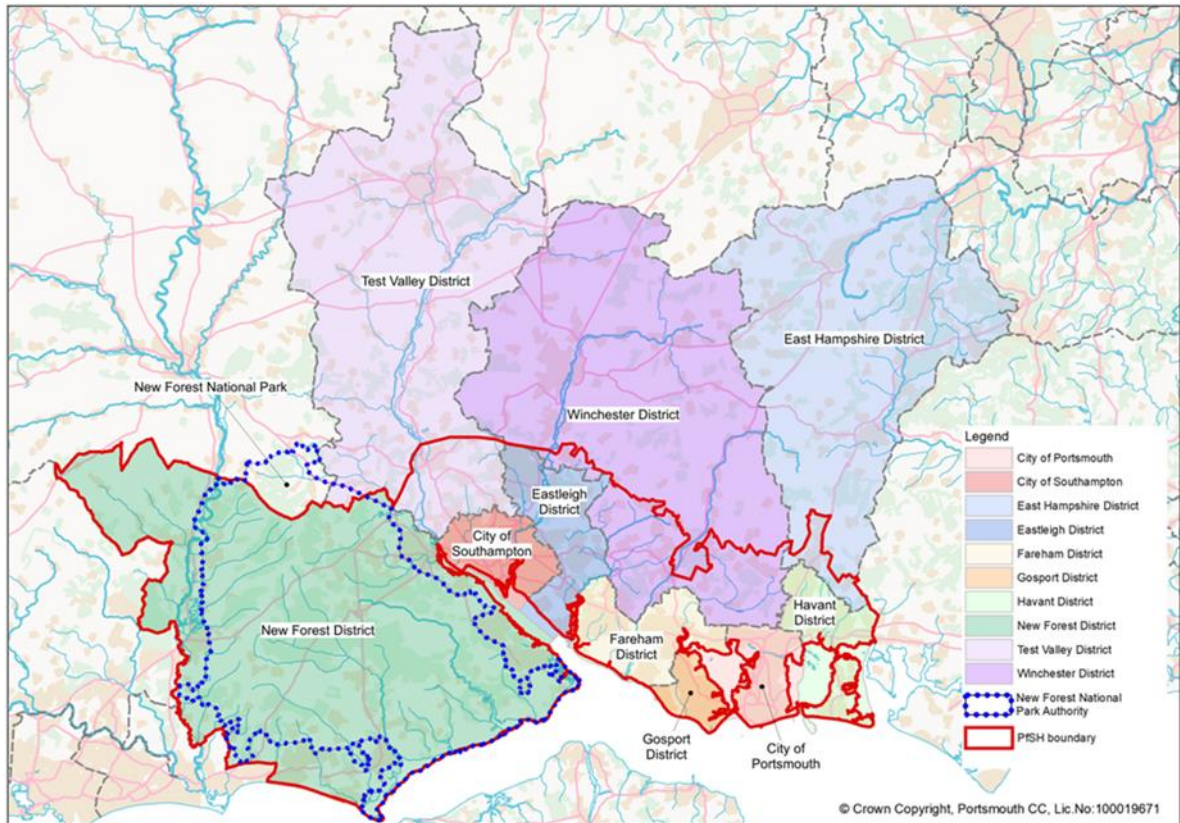


Figure 2: Map of the Partnership for South Hampshire sub-region

South East Hampshire

2.7 More recently, the two authorities have also taken part in collective discussions as part of a grouping of South East Hampshire authorities including Gosport and Havant Borough Councils. This collaborative working between the Borough and City Councils has allowed for the development of an up-to-date picture of the unmet development need situation in South East Hampshire. This joint working has resulted in agreement between the authorities to help accommodate each other's housing and employment land needs. This is to be addressed fully through a South East Hampshire Statement of Common Ground (expected March 2026). In addition, the South East Hampshire Authorities have agreed to further meetings and collaboration on key environmental issues including green infrastructure and environmental mitigation. A map of South East Hampshire is included in figure 3.

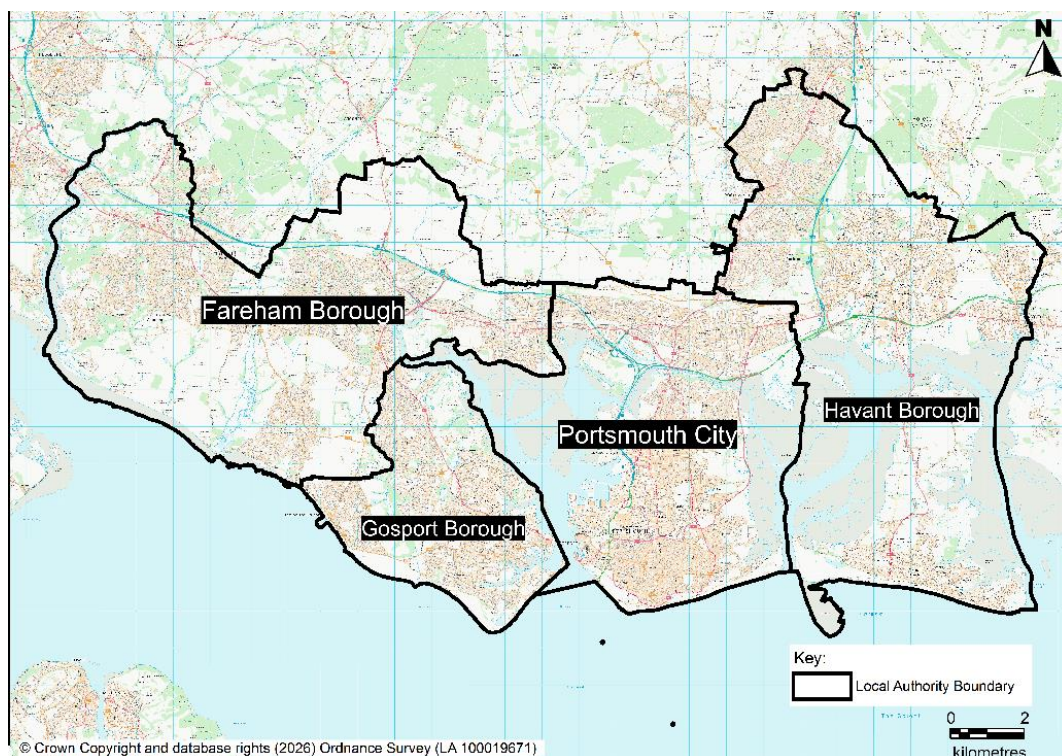


Figure 3: Map of the South East Hampshire Authorities

3. Key Cross boundary Strategic Matters

3.1 This section sets out where agreement has been reached on cross-border strategic matters, or where further work to reach common ground is required. It should be noted that all the figures relate to the plan period for the Portsmouth Local Plan of 2025-2040 and for the Fareham Local Plan period of 2021 to 2037.

Housing

3.2 The table below sets out the respective housing land supply positions of the two authorities as of February 2026.

LPA	Plan period		Housing need according to the standard method	Housing supply	Unmet need
Fareham Borough Council	2021-2037 (16 years)	Total	8,656	10,268	+900 ³
		Dwellings per annum	541	641	
Portsmouth City Council	2025-2040 (15 years)	Total	15,285	11,369	-3,916
		Dwellings per annum	1,019	758	-261

³ The 900 homes have been agreed to be provide to PCC (800) and wider SE Hants needs (100).

PCC position

- 3.3 Portsmouth City Council has recently consulted on its Pre-Submission Local Plan Addendum (November 2025 to January 2026) and anticipates that its Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in March 2026. The emerging Local Plan covers the period from 2025 to 2040.
- 3.4 Based upon the assessment carried out through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) the Portsmouth Local Plan has set a housing target for Portsmouth of 11,369 new homes from 2025 to 2040 or approximately 758 new homes per year. This figure is a 'capacity-based' target based on the level of housing that can be realistically achieved within the plan period having regard to Portsmouth's constraints, land availability and development capacity. Nevertheless, the Council has sought to leave 'no stone unturned' in robustly and positively identifying all sources of potential housing supply, whilst being pragmatic in its assessment of delivery from permitted sites and HELAA sites.
- 3.5 The City Council has an unmet housing need of 3,916 dwellings against its housing need. The City Council has corresponded with its immediate neighbours and those in the South East Hampshire (Portsmouth) Housing Market Area (Chichester District Council, Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council, South Downs National Park Authority and Winchester City Council) to ascertain if they are able to accommodate its unmet need. FBC confirmed through its adopted Local Plan that it would accommodate 800 dwellings of the City's unmet need (which the City Council welcomes). Winchester City Council has agreed to provide 30% of its unmet housing need allowance to Portsmouth through a joint agreement with Havant, Portsmouth and Winchester Councils (the exact number this equates to is being confirmed through the Winchester City Council examination). The City Council is also working proactively with Gosport, Fareham and Havant Borough Councils as part of the South East Hampshire group.

Fareham Borough Council position

- 3.6 The Local Plan 2037 delivers sufficient land to meet the housing need for the borough. The strategic housing provision, described in Strategic Policy H1 (Housing Provision) of the Local Plan 2037, is based on the standard methodology figure for the borough of 541 dwellings per annum. The level of housing provision in the Local Plan includes a contribution of 900 homes towards unmet need from neighbouring authorities, of which 800 is committed towards Portsmouth unmet need and 100 to wider unmet need in neighbouring authorities. Therefore, the overall growth level for the Borough until 2037 is 9,556 new dwellings.
- 3.7 The Local Plan demonstrates sufficient sites to provide 10,268 new dwellings across the borough from 2021 to 2037. This includes a contingency figure of 712 dwellings as a contingency for under delivery.

Agreed Position

- 3.8 FBC and PCC recognise the contribution that has been made by Fareham Borough Council in meeting the unmet need from Portsmouth. Fareham Borough Council is yet to commence a new Local Plan to replace the local Plan 2037 and so is not currently in a

position to accommodate any further unmet need in addition to that indicated in the 2037 plan.

Differences in position

3.9 None

Employment

3.10 The table below sets out the respective employment land supply positions of the two authorities as of February 2026⁴

LPA	Plan period		Employment need	Employment supply	Surplus/unmet need
Fareham Borough Council		Total	121,964	241,754	+119,790
		<i>m² per annum</i>	7,622	15,109	7,486
Portsmouth City Council	2025-2040 (15 years)	Total	107,485	138,746	+31,261
		<i>m² per annum</i>	7,166	9,250	2,084

PCC position

3.11 Much of the evidence on economic development that supports the Local Plan both in regard to the need and the supply of employment land is provided by the HEDNA. This analysed the outlook for employment growth up to 2040 in Portsmouth and the results of the analysis were used to inform the employment floorspace and land needs forecasts. Drawing the need (107,485m²) and supply (138,746m²) positions from the HEDNA and HELAA together there is a surplus of 31,261 m² of employment floorspace, which is entirely office floorspace. The City Council has formally offered this surplus to Havant Borough Council to help meet its unmet need under the Duty to Cooperate.

FBC position

3.12 The Fareham Local Plan 2037 allocates 199,490 sq.m of employment floorspace across the borough over the plan period in response to a requirement of 121,964 sq.m. The Local Plan 2037 allocates seven employment sites to meet that requirement in addition to the employment allocation at Welborne identified through the Welborne Plan. The development strategy contained within the Local Plan 2037 is for a mix of large and small sites to offer a degree of flexibility and choice in size, location, and availability of sites. In line with PfSH findings, and to provide the maximum amount of flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, all of the allocations are for general employment and not restricted to any particular use class. The Council also considers that the employment strategy contained within the Local Plan is consistent with the PfSH 'cities first' strategy.

⁴ The figures for FBC relate to the adopted Plan position.

Agreed Position

- 3.13 The two LPA's support each other's Local Plan employment strategy and agree that there is currently no identified unmet cross boundary employment need to be planned for either between the two authorities. Both Councils will continue to work with PFSH and the South East Hampshire Group of Authorities (also including Gosport Borough Council and Havant Borough Council) in regard to the employment needs of the wider Portsmouth Functional Economic Market Area. Detail on how the employment needs of the wider South East Hampshire functional economic market area are being addressed will be set out in full in the South East Hampshire Statement of Common Ground (expected March 2026).

Differences in position

- 3.14 None

Transport

PCC position

- 3.15 The majority of Portsmouth is located on Portsea Island which has three road and one rail link to the mainland. Portsmouth is home to an international ferry port with connections to the Continent and Channel Islands, as well as links to the Isle of Wight by ferry and hovercraft. As a Unitary Authority Portsmouth is also the Transport Authority and adopted its Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) in October 2021 which details the Council's vision for travel in Portsmouth until 2038. In December 2025 Portsmouth City Council received their Interim Strategic Transport Assessment. The study identified a number of junctions where congestion issues were expected. Eight road junctions in the city were identified for mitigation. Junction improvements schemes were identified to be sufficient to mitigate the impacts of the local plan growth.

FBC position

- 3.16 The Local Plan 2037 has a focus on maintaining the function of the M27 and A27 for strategic connectivity whilst developing the concept and provision of public transport within the Borough and with links to adjoining areas and promoting sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. The Council is a partner in the Southeast Hampshire Rapid Transit (SEHRT) scheme which runs along the A27 between Fareham and Cosham in Portsmouth, as well as crossing some key roundabouts in Fareham town centre. The Local Plan 2037 is supportive of the SEHRT scheme and identifies and safeguards the route of the scheme. Fareham also has a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which is a key strategy in delivering on the aspirations for walking and cycling within the borough. The Council seeks contributions from development towards elements of the SEHRT scheme and LCWIP where appropriate to do so.

Agreed Position

- 3.17 Both authorities also agree to continue to support the SEHRT scheme along the A27 corridor, PCC as a neighbouring Highway Authority and FBC as partner Local Planning Authority. PCC support the safeguarding of land and securing of contributions towards the scheme where appropriate. Both authorities also agree to continue to proactively promote

the use of public transport, along with encouraging active travel modes ahead of use of the private motorised vehicle through sustainable transport policy.

Differences in position

3.18 None

Environment

Agreed Position

3.19 Both parties agree to work collaboratively on biodiversity matters as part of the South East Hampshire group of authorities going forward including specifically in relation to:

- Green Infrastructure
- Mitigation measures
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Nutrient Neutrality
- Bird Aware

3.20 This joint working will take the form of an initial scoping meeting involving planning officers and ecologists representing the SE Hampshire Authorities, with a follow-on work stream as required. The two Authorities will also continue to work closely together of environmental issues through PfSH and the Solent Mitigation partnership.

4 Signatories

- 4.1 Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.
- 4.2 Both parties agree that they have engaged positively on an ongoing basis both bilaterally and multilaterally through the Partnership for South Hampshire and the South East Hampshire Group of Authorities and that on this basis the Duty to Cooperate has been met.
- 4.3 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: Lucy Howard	Name: Lee Smith
Position: Head of Planning Policy	Position: Head of Planning
Portsmouth City Council	Fareham Borough Council
Date: 09-02-26	Date: 23-02-2026