

Statement of Common Ground

Portsmouth City Council & Havant Borough Council

February 2026



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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 Havant Borough Council (HBC). 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. It supersedes the SCG between PCC and HBC dated 12 July 2024.

1.2 Both PCC and the HBC intend to submit their emerging Local Plans under the legacy planning system. PCC are submitting 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 and Havant Local Plans, 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 This SCG has been prepared in parallel with both HBC's Pre-Submission Building a Better Future Plan and PCC's Pre-Submission Local Plan under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). PCC and HBC agree on the importance of continuing to work on strategic cross boundary issues in line with both existing and draft national policy.

What does this document include?

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

Section 2 outlines the strategic geography of Portsmouth City and Havant Borough.

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.

2. Strategic Geography

2.1 A map of the two authority areas is set out in figure 1. 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 219,101 people, with a population density higher than some parts of London.

2.2 The Borough of Havant is located on the coastal plain between the South Downs and the Solent. The authority area comprises approximately 55 square kilometres with a population of 132,006. The borough is made up of five sub areas namely Emsworth, Havant, Hayling Island, Leigh Park and Waterlooville.

2.3 Havant Borough lies immediately to the northeast of Portsmouth. The Drayton & Farlington ward of Portsmouth borders the Bedhampton and Purbrook wards of Havant.

2.4 Portsmouth is constrained in terms of geographical area, with the Solent to the south, the large natural Harbours and the close proximity of the adjoining boroughs and districts to the north. This limits the space for potential development in the City largely to brownfield land. Most of the brownfield sites in the City have significant constraints such as contamination, historic structures and complicated ownership.

2.5 Havant Borough is mainly urban in nature though there are some areas which are more rural in character, notably that of Hayling Island. Havant Borough shares a large proportion of the constraints which also affect Portsmouth City, being a small, already densely built-up urban area with little growth potential and significant constraints affecting potential development sites. Chichester Harbour National Landscape encompasses the eastern edges of Hayling Island and the southern part of Emsworth. The northern part of the Borough adjoins and falls within the setting of the South Downs National Park.

2.6 PCC and HBC both fall within the Portsmouth Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area in their entirety.

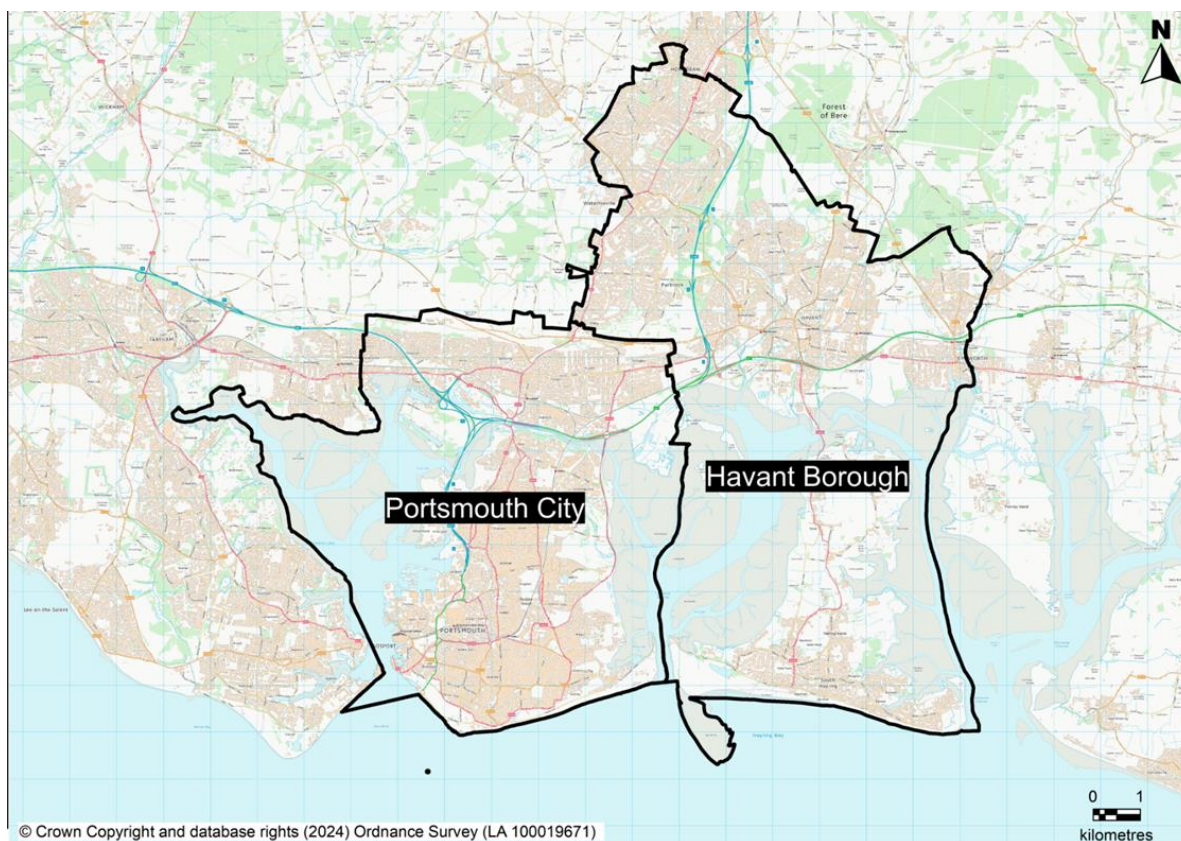


Figure 1: Map of Portsmouth City and Havant Borough

2.7 This geography informs the shared issues faced by the City and Borough in planning for their futures. Finding new land for housing and employment is key to both authorities, which face similar geographical constraints. As adjoining local authorities, the impact of new development is felt across the boundary. PCC is a significant landowner in the Borough of Havant with large areas of Council housing at Leigh Park and Wecock Farm. PCC is also the landowner of Dunsbury Park which is part of the Solent Freeport.

Partnership for South Hampshire and South East Hampshire joint working

2.8 PCC and HBC 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. A map of the PfSH area is set out in figure 2.

2.9 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 2023¹. It aims to provide guiding principles for local plans to help deliver sustainable development within South Hampshire.

2.10 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 statement:

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.

¹ <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

2.11 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 Fareham Borough Councils. This collaborative working between the four local planning authorities has allowed for the development of an up-to-date picture of the unmet development need situation in South East Hampshire. It 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 collaborative work on key environmental issues including green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain.

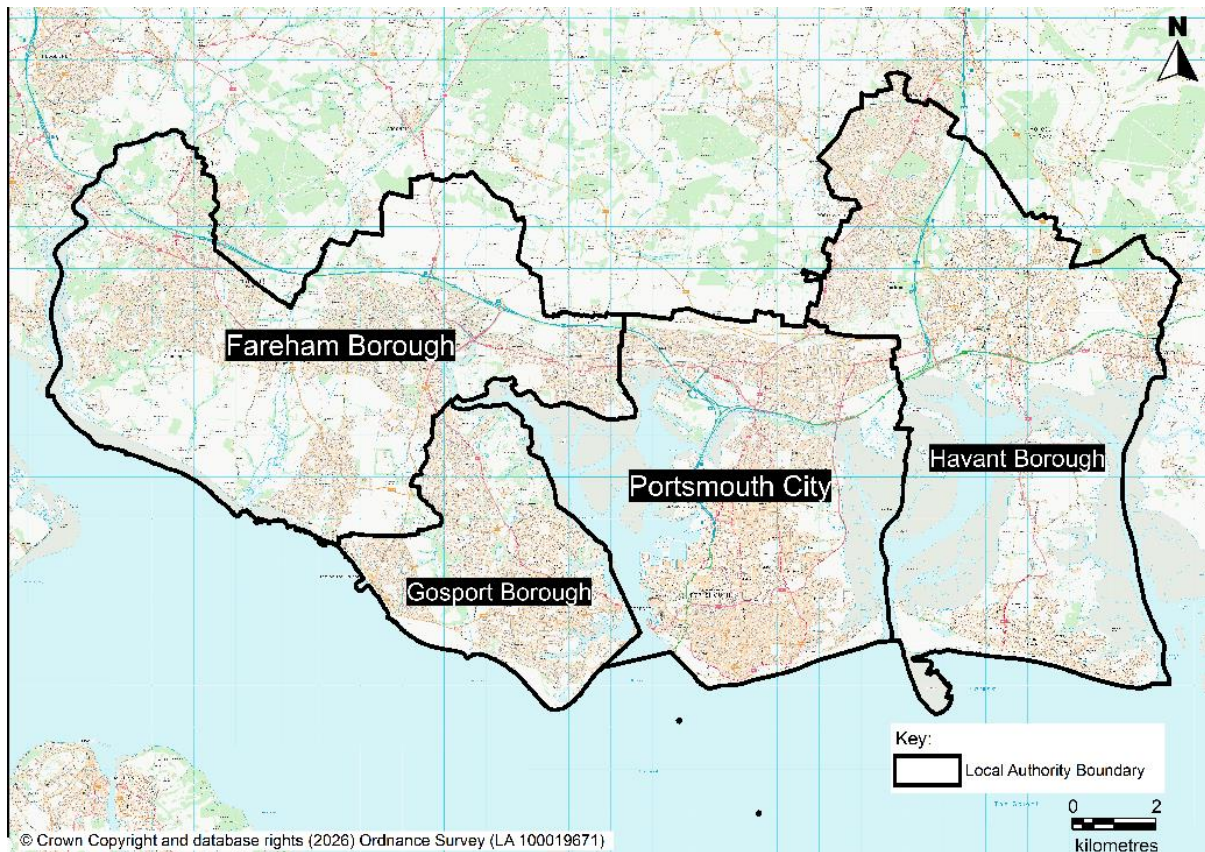


Figure 3: Map of the South East Hampshire authorities

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 Havant Borough Local Plan period of 2023-2042².

Housing

3.2 The table below sets out the respective housing land supply positions of the two authorities as of December 2025.

² HBC are considering if they need to re-base the plan period to 2025 for the Pre-Submission Local Plan

LPA	Plan period		Housing need according to the standard method	Housing supply	Unmet need
Havant Borough Council	2023-2043 (20 years)	Total	17,840	7,218	-10,622
		Dwellings per annum	892	361	-531
Portsmouth City Council	2025-2040 (15 years)	Total	15,285	11,369	-3,916
		Dwellings per annum	1,019	758	-261

Table 1: Housing Land Position - December 2025

3.3 PCC has recently gone out for consultation on its Pre-Submission Local Plan Addendum (November 2025) and anticipates that its Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in March 2026. The Local Plan will cover 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 written to its neighbours including those in the South East Hampshire 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 any of its unmet need. Fareham Borough Council confirmed through its Local Plan that it would accommodate 800 dwellings of the City's unmet need. Winchester City Council has agreed to provide 30% of its unmet housing need allowance to Portsmouth through a joint negotiation with Havant, Portsmouth and Winchester Councils (the exact number this equates to is being confirmed through the Winchester Local Plan examination). This was confirmed through bilateral agreements between PCC and WCC and HBC and WCC. The City Council is also working proactively with Gosport,

Havant and Fareham Borough Councils as part of the South East Hampshire group as set out above.

Havant Borough Council's Position

3.6 HBC is currently working towards a regulation 19 Local Plan consultation in Q3 2026, aiming for submission in Q4 2026. This follows consultation on a Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan in 2025.

3.7 The Council undertook a comprehensive review of the Borough's need and supply to inform the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This work indicates there is an unmet need arising from Havant Borough of 10,622 homes based on a plan period of 2022/23-2042/43. The Borough Council has written to its immediate neighbours (Chichester District Council, East Hampshire District Council, Portsmouth City Council, the South Downs National Park Authority, and Winchester City Council), and other authorities (Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council) falling within the same Housing Market Area (HMA) to ascertain if they are able to accommodate its unmet need. Winchester City Council has agreed to provide 70% of its unmet housing need allowance to Havant through a joint agreement with Havant, Portsmouth and Winchester Councils (the exact number this equates to is being confirmed through the Winchester Local Plan examination). This was confirmed through bilateral agreements between PCC and WCC, and HBC and WCC. The Borough Council is also working proactively with Gosport Borough and Portsmouth City Councils as part of the South East Hampshire group as set out above.

Agreed Position

3.8 The two authorities note the respective positions on housing need and supply. It is agreed that neither authority is in a position to assist the other with accommodating unmet need arising out of each Local Plan. It is agreed that both authorities have prepared their local plans with a robust approach that maximises housing supply as far as is possible in providing sustainable development. Both authorities will continue to work through PfSH and the South East Hampshire group to address the wider need for housing in the HMA.

Employment

3.9 The table below sets out the respective employment land supply positions of the two authorities as of December 2025

LPA	Plan period		Employment need	Employment supply	Surplus/unmet need
Havant Borough Council	2023-2043 (20 years)	Total	175,199	123,775	-51,424
		<i>m² per annum</i>	8,760	6,189	-2571
Portsmouth City Council	2025-2040 (15 years)	Total	107,485	138,746	+31,261

Table 2: Employment Land Position - December 2025

Portsmouth City Council's Position

3.10 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 Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (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 sqm of new floorspace.

Havant Borough Council's Position

3.11 The Council's Employment Land Review (ELR) provides a robust assessment of the Borough's economic and employment development needs and will be updated to support the Pre-Submission Building a Better Future Plan. It identifies an objectively assessed need figure of 175,199 sq. m of net new floorspace over the plan period of which 139,140 sq. m results from industrial demand and 36,059 sq. m for office demand. The ELR indicates that the industrial market is strong across the Borough, but the market is constrained due to low levels of availability. The potential site allocations could help to address some of those supply constraints, but these are not sufficient to address industrial demand in its totality. This is further compounded by a lack of office sites promoted to meet need and a number of allocated sites no longer available to meet the Borough's employment need.

3.12 On this basis, the Borough has an unmet need of 51,424 sq. m for employment floorspace over the plan period. Of this, 17,665 sq. m is industrial demand, and 33,759 sq. m is office demand.

Agreed Position

3.13 PCC has agreed to provide a total of 31,261 sqm of employment floor space towards HBC's unmet employment needs. This is set out in Paragraph A214 and table 7.1 of the Portsmouth Local Plan Addendum where it is noted that there is an

oversupply in overall employment development of 31,261 square metres. This reflects the City Council's letter to Havant Borough Council dated 21 August 2025 which offered 31,261 square metres of office supply within Portsmouth City to address unmet office needs in Havant Borough. This would reduce Havant Borough's unmet need for office demand to 2,498 square metres.

Transport

Portsmouth City Council's Position

3.14 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 PCC 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.

3.15 In November 2025, PCC received their Draft Interim Strategic Transport Assessment. The study identified a number of junctions where congestion issues were expected. The road junction that most impacts commuters and residents of Havant Borough is the junction of the Havant Bypass (A27) and Eastern Road (A2030). The study shows that there will be a minor increase in delays on some of the arms of this junction, but due to physical constraints there are not any additional mitigation measures that can be undertaken. The Interim Strategic Transport Assessment also considered the impact of development beyond the city boundaries, including Havant, but did not identify any specific impact on Havant and that no mitigation in Havant Borough was considered necessary.

Havant Borough Council's Position

3.16 The M27/A27 coastal trunk and the A3(M) meet in Havant Borough and so the Borough enjoys excellent connections towards London, Brighton, Portsmouth, Southampton and beyond. Havant Station is also the best-connected train station in South Hampshire. The London airports of Heathrow and Gatwick are just over an hour away and Portsmouth International Port is nearby offering further international connections. The Building a Better Future Plan embeds the new Local Transport Plan 4 which was adopted by Hampshire County Council in 2024 which sets out a vision for future transport and travel infrastructure.

3.17 The Local Plan Transport Assessment (TA) will describe the availability and operation of the transport infrastructure and networks within Havant Borough and considers the potential transport related impacts of the proposed Local Plan growth. It considers what interventions may be required to address any identified cumulative impacts specifically resulting from the Local Plan growth that may have unacceptable impact on highway safety, or severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network. The recommended interventions will be incorporated in the Havant Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

3.18 Taking the 'decide and provide' approach advocated by LTP4, it is based on an approach to transport provision that seeks to deliver the interventions needed to achieve the agreed transport outcomes. The emphasis is on planning for people and places, providing transport choice and easing movement by sustainable modes, rather than providing capacity for private vehicle movements.

3.19 The TA will identify a number of junctions likely to experience increases in delay due to transport movements arising from the planned growth Building a Better Future Plan. Most of these are within Havant Borough, and while the network beyond the borough boundary was also considered, none of the affected junctions lie in Portsmouth. On the eastern boundary, the junction delay considered to be most likely to affect Portsmouth residents is additional westbound delay at the Harts Farm Way teardrop junction connecting to the A27. No interventions are recommended here through the TA, in line with the decide and provide approach.

Agreed Position

3.20 The two Authorities have good road (in the form of the A27, A2030 and London Road), bus and rail links and many people live in one authority area and work in the other. The Portsmouth Transport Assessment confirms that there will not be a materially significant impact on the transport network serving the two areas. The two authorities will work together and with Hampshire County Council to promote improved sustainable transport connections.

Environment

Agreed Position

3.21 The two authorities will continue to work closely on cross boundary environmental issues. A recent example of this is the provision of proposed enhancement of Southmoor Nature Reserve in Havant in order to provide mitigation for the partial loss of a Low Use Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy Site (P136) within the Tipner East Strategic Site in Portsmouth. This enhancement will comprise the following elements:

- Creation of new access off Southmoor Lane;
- Installation of livestock fencing;
- Tree works to improve sightlines;
- New water connection; and
- Installation of water troughs

3.22 The Councils also support the provision of joined up open space and environmental mitigation that cross the boundary between the authority areas to create a wider corridor linking green infrastructure in Havant and Portsmouth centred on Portsdown Hill.

3.23 The two authorities will continue to work positively together as part of wider sub regional partnership work including nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain through the Solent Mitigation Partnership and recreational disturbance through Bird Aware Solent.

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 group of South East Hampshire 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: David Hayward
	Position: Head of Planning Policy	Position: Strategic Planning Manager
	Portsmouth City Council	Havant Borough Council
	Date: 18-02-26	Date: 19-02-2026