

Statement of Common Ground

Winchester City Council and Portsmouth City Council

February 2026



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL



 **Winchester**
City Council

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 Winchester City Council (WCC). 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 intend 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.' WCC submitted their plan for examination in November 2024 under the December 2023 NPPF, in accordance with the legal and procedural requirements as set out by 2023 NPPF Para 35. 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 This SCG has been prepared in reference to both the Winchester Local Plan 2020 - 2040 and Portsmouth Pre-Submission Local Plan under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012¹. PCC and WCC agree on the importance of continuing to work on strategic cross boundary issues in line with both existing and draft national policy.

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

What does this document include?

- 1.6 Section 1 introduces the current requirements under the Duty to Cooperate and sets the context for this SCG.
- 1.7 Section 2 outlines the strategic geographies of Portsmouth City and Winchester District
- 1.8 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 A map of the two local authority areas is set out in figure 1.
- 2.2 Portsmouth City is located on the Solent coast to the southeast of the Winchester District Council area. 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 Winchester District is located to the north of Portsmouth and 40% of the District falls within the South Downs National Park. The nature of the District and the way it functions depends on a variety of inter-relationships with its neighbours for employment, shopping, leisure and housing needs. In particular, the urban areas to the south of the District often look towards the urban areas of Portsmouth and Fareham rather than Winchester itself. This means that the south-eastern portion of Winchester District shares functional housing and economic market areas with Portsmouth. South Hampshire has a wide range of employment sectors, though some such as marine employment are not found at scale elsewhere in Hampshire. The continued collaborative approach to plan-making is key in delivering development within the City and District and wider area over the plan-period.

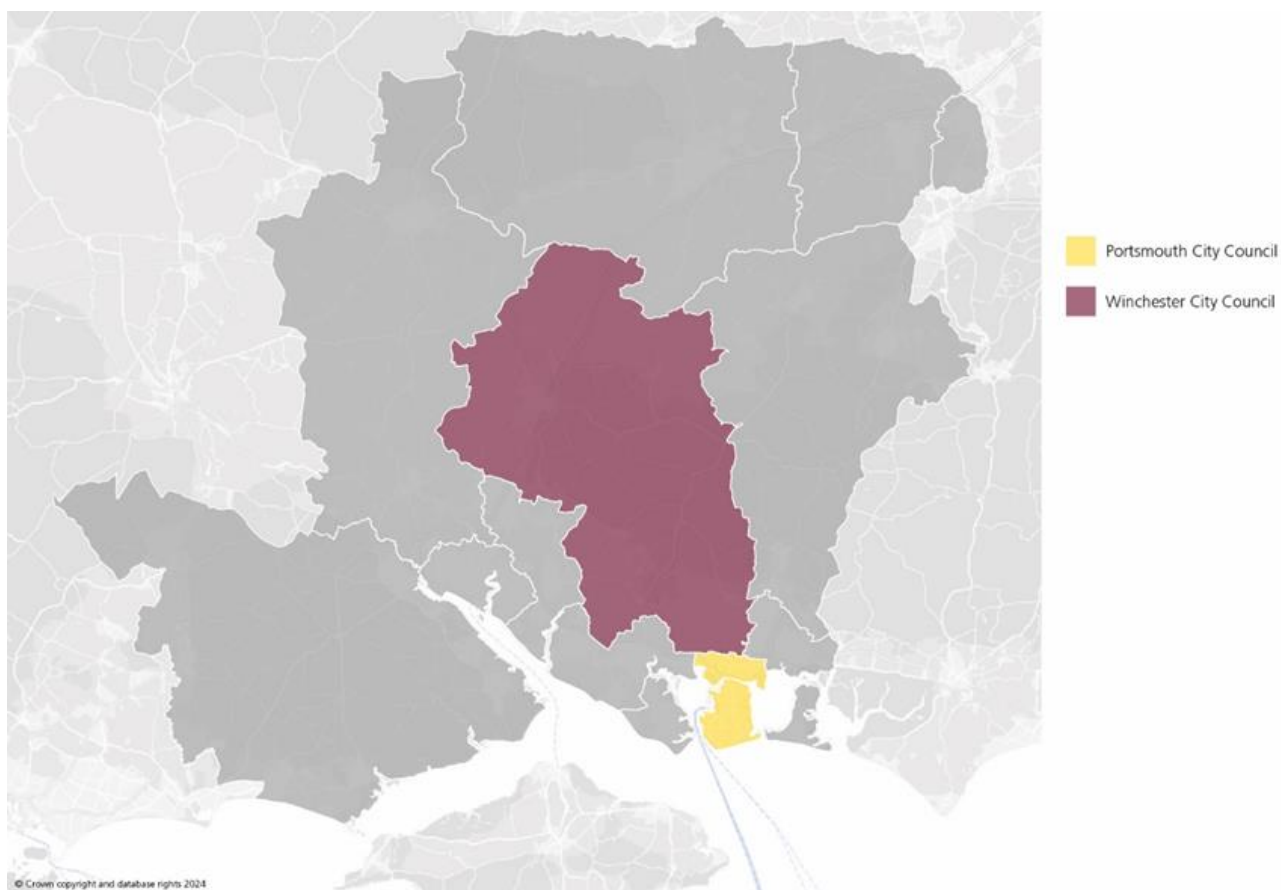


Figure 1: Winchester City Council and Portsmouth City Council Administrative Boundaries

Partnership for South Hampshire

2.4 Portsmouth City and Winchester District 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

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

dwelling 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.



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

South East Hampshire

2.7 More recently, Portsmouth City Council has been taking part in collective discussions as part of a grouping of South East Hampshire authorities including Gosport Borough Council and Havant Borough Council (and more recently Farham Borough Council). This collaborative working allowed for the development of an up-to-date picture of the unmet development need situation in South East Hampshire. The combined unmet housing need for the South East Hampshire local authority areas as of October 2025 was 18,347 homes.

An unmet need of 19,973sqm of employment floorspace was also identified, though Fareham Borough Council have since agreed to use their oversupply to meet that need. There is therefore no longer an unmet employment need arising from the South East Hampshire Authorities. Fareham have also agreed to provide 100 homes to Gosport reducing the unmet housing need for the South East Hampshire Authorities by 100 to 18,247 dwellings.

2.8 The South East Hampshire Authorities held collective discussions in autumn 2025 with WCC, East Hampshire District Council and Fareham Borough Council on the joint unmet development need position. This included a request to help meet the unmet housing needs of the South Hampshire Authorities. In response to this request WCC indicated that it was unable to provide further contribution to the unmet housing needs of the authorities beyond what it had already agreed with Portsmouth and Havant Borough Council's as detailed in the housing section of this SoCG. The request letter³ to and response⁴ from WCC form part of the Portsmouth Local Plan examination library.

2.9 A map of the South East Hampshire local authorities is set out in figure 3.

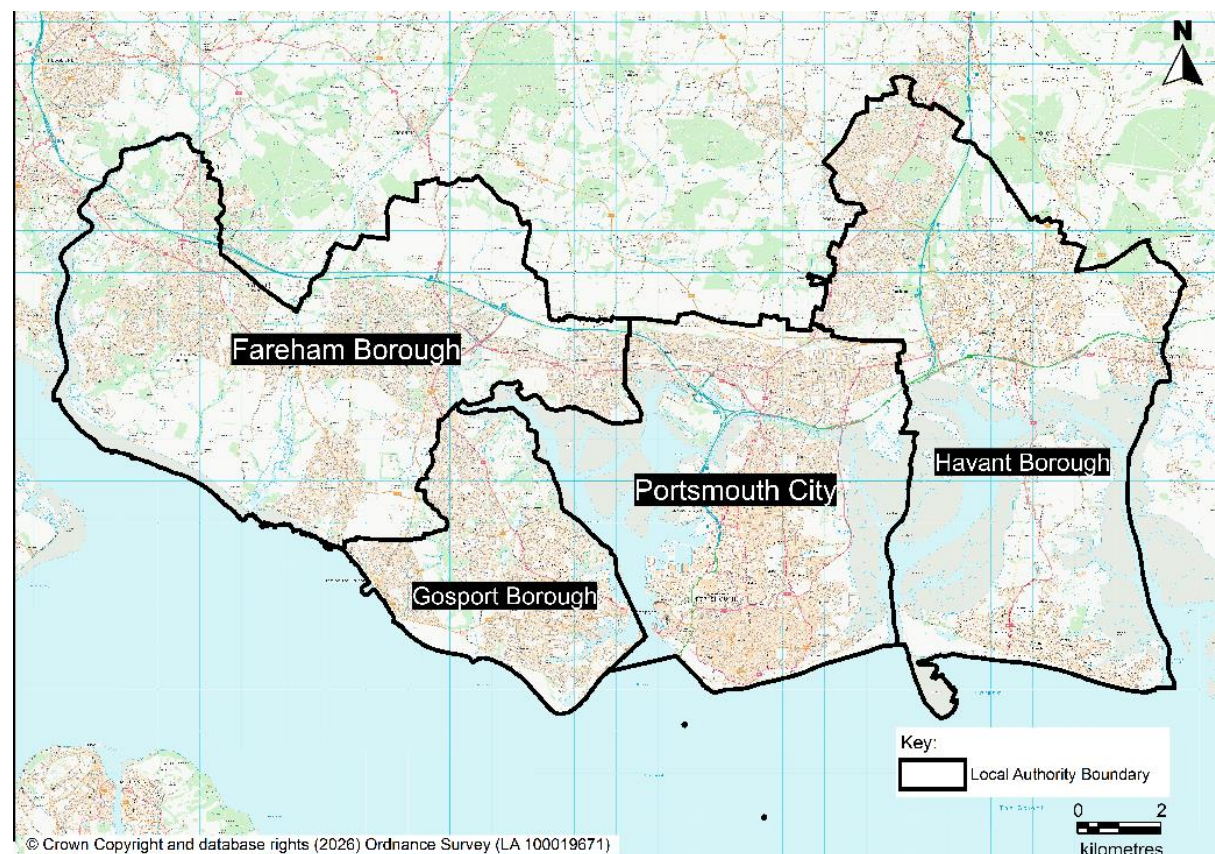


Figure 3: Map of South East Hampshire Authorities

3. Key Cross boundary Strategic Matters

³ https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/FINAL_Letter_WCC_13-10-25.pdf

⁴ https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/WCC_Response-to-Joint-letter-from-Portsmouth-Havant-and-Gosport-BC-Nov-2025.pdf

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 Winchester Local Plan period of 2020 to 2040.

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
Winchester City Council	2024-2040	Total	10,816	11,311	+495
		Dwellings per annum	676	706	+30
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 - February 2026

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 Portsmouth 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. 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). FBC confirmed through its adopted Local Plan that it would accommodate 800 dwellings of the City's unmet need. The City Council is also working proactively with Gosport, Fareham and Havant Borough Councils as part of the South East Hampshire group.

WCC position

3.6 As a result of the outcome of the examination into the Winchester City Council's Regulation 19 Local Plan, the Local Housing Need was altered from 2020 – 2040 to 2024 – 2040. This aligned the Plan's housing requirement with the latest calculation of Local Housing Need (2024), housing land monitoring information for the year 2024-2025, and revisions to the capacity of proposed allocations Policy SH1 and Policy SH2. Whilst the agreed percentages remained unchanged (30% of the unmet housing allowance to Portsmouth) this altered the unmet need figure from 1,900 homes to 495 homes. Applying the agreed 30% split between Portsmouth City Council and Havant Borough Council this equates to 150 homes for Portsmouth.

Agreed position

3.7 In the Statement of Common Ground between the two authorities dated October 2024 the two councils confirmed the tripartite agreement made between them and Havant Borough Council to apportion the unmet need allowance in the Submission Winchester Local Plan to Portsmouth and Havant as follows:

- To Portsmouth City Council: 30% apportionment of the unmet need housing allowance in the Winchester District Local Plan.
- To Havant Borough Council: 70% apportionment of the unmet need housing allowance in the Winchester District Local Plan.

3.8 The two authorities agreed to work collaboratively and with Havant Borough Council on modifications alongside the submission of the Winchester District Local Plan for the Inspector to consider. It was recognised that the unmet need allowance in the Winchester District Local Plan was subject to change in the course of its examination (which did happen).

3.9 As mentioned above, the agreed position that was included in Policy H1 of the Submission Winchester Local Plan (Regulation 19) included an unmet needs allowance of 1,900 dwellings as a contribution towards the unmet needs of neighbouring areas in South Hampshire. Throughout the course of the Winchester Local Plan examination the unmet need allowance has reduced to 495 homes (as of January 2026), equating to approximately 150 homes for Portsmouth City Council and 345 homes for Havant Borough Council.

3.10 Winchester City Council is currently still in examination, and at the current point in time is focusing upon that examination prior to restarting its work on the next Local Plan which will cover the period 2026 - 2044.

3.11 Winchester City Council is currently unable to meet an additional unmet housing need from Portsmouth beyond that already agreed and factored into policy H1 of its emerging Local Plan.

3.12 Both Councils will work in collaboration with the South East Hampshire and PfSH authorities to support the ongoing partnership working on housing need and supply.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

WCC Position

3.13 In support of the Local Plan Review, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has been produced to inform the likely need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation over the plan period. The GTAA breaks down the overall Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople need into 4-year bands. The current need takes into account unauthorised pitches, pitches with temporary planning permission, concealed and doubled-up households and movement from bricks and mortar in the first 4 years. The total net new household formation is then applied proportionately across the remaining 4-year bands. The GTAA identifies an overall need for:

- 115 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers that met the PPTS planning definition of a traveller.
- 85 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers that at the time of preparing the GTAA did not meet the planning definition of a traveller.
- 27 plots for Travelling Showperson's that met the PPTS planning definition of a traveller; and
- 6 plots for Travelling Showperson's that at the time of preparing the GTAA did not meet the planning definition of a traveller.

3.14 The consultants were also appointed to prepare a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) with the objective to provide advice on the suitability, availability, and achievability of any existing private Gypsy and Traveller sites (with permanent planning permission) to assist in meeting the identified accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers.

3.15 Winchester City Council has undertaken further work following the GTAA to take account of changes to the definition of travellers in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and changes in traveller needs and on key sites. This has reduced the overall need for pitches, particularly for gypsy travellers and has examined various potential sources of supply:

	Gypsy traveller (Years 0-5)	Gypsy traveller (Years 6-19)	Travelling showpersons (Years 0-5)	Travelling showpersons (Years 6-19)
Pitch / plot need	51	40	22	13
Pitch / plot supply	38	90	11	6
Surplus / Shortfall	-13	+50	-11	-7

Table 2: Winchester Gypsy and Traveller Site Position - February 2026

3.16 A Gypsy and Traveller Topic Paper was produced to evidence the work that has been undertaken on Gypsy and Travellers based on the findings of the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (2022) and the Pitch Deliverability Assessment (2022). The work that has been undertaken on the Pitch Deliverability Assessment

concluded that there is scope to meet the need for about 68 additional gypsy traveller pitches through the intensification or expansion of existing sites. In addition, the Council is seeking to bring the former public site at Tynefield (Whiteley) back into use and to expand the number of pitches provided to about 30 and there is scope to achieve about 30 additional pitches, if needed, through windfall provision.

3.17 The need for plots for travelling showpeople is much more modest and there is scope to provide about 17 additional plots through site intensification or expansion and maintaining travelling showpersons' use of plots at The Nurseries, Shedfield.

3.18 As a result, the Council expects to be able to meet gypsy traveller needs over the Local Plan period as a whole but is unable to identify sufficient available and deliverable sites to meet current needs (years 0-5, 2022-2026). For travelling showpersons, the Council is unable to meet either short-term or longer-term needs. Winchester City Council has contacted neighbouring Local Planning Authorities to see if they could assist with helping to meet this unmet need but despite leaving 'no stone' unturned Winchester City Council is unable to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers in the emerging Local Plan (2020 – 2040).

PCC Position

3.19 In 2024 PCC updated its GTAA previously carried out in 2018 by Opinion Research Services.

3.20 The assessment provides a robust evidence base that assesses the housing needs of gypsies and the travelling community. In summary the study showed that there is no identified need for additional pitches in Portsmouth over the GTAA period for Gypsy and Traveller households, as none were identified at the time of the Assessment. In addition, the study concluded that there is no need for additional plots for Travelling Showpeople in Portsmouth over the plan period to 2040 as none were identified.

3.21 The Study Recommended that Portsmouth City Council develop a criteria-based policy to address any need arising from new Gypsy and Traveller and Showman households seeking to move to the area and develop a site or yard. This recommendation has been taken forward in the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

Agreed Position:

3.22 Both WCC and PCC have updated their evidence base to support the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. There is an unmet need in Winchester District but no identified need in Portsmouth. Subsequently, Winchester City Council contacted Portsmouth City Council in August 2023 under the Duty to Cooperate requesting assistance in meeting their unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller development. Portsmouth's land supply to cater for its own varied development needs is extremely constrained and limited, and as such, the City is not in a position to meet any of Winchester's unmet need for gypsies and travellers. This position was confirmed in the October 2024⁵ SoCG between the two authorities and is reiterated here.

⁵ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Statement-of-Common-Ground-between-Portsmouth-and-Winchester-PCC-updated-October-2024-FINAL.pdf>

3.23 The Winchester evidence base now takes account of the updated PPTS (2023) definition and will continue to follow the latest Government guidance. This shows a current shortfall of gypsy traveller pitches and an on-going shortfall of travelling showpersons' plots. The Councils will continue to engage on the matter as their respective local plans progress.

Employment

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

LPA	Plan period		Employment need	Employment supply	Surplus/unmet need
Winchester City Council	2020-2040		The Local Plan makes the provision for an estimated 38.9 ha of employment land, against an identified need of 27.6ha – 37.8 ha.	38.9 ha (office, industrial and warehousing)	None
		Total			
		<i>m² annum per</i>	<i>1.38 ha - 1.89 ha</i>	<i>1.945 ha</i>	<i>None</i>
Portsmouth City Council	2025-2040 (15 years)				
		Total	107,485	138,746	+31,261
		<i>m² annum per</i>	<i>7,166</i>	<i>9,250</i>	<i>2,084</i>

Table 3: Employment Land Position - February 2026

PCC position

3.25 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.

WCC position

3.26 Winchester City Council's economic strategy was informed by an updated employment land study; the Employment and Town Centre Uses Study 2024 (ETCUS). The main findings of this study regarding future needs for employment land are set out below:

- Additional employment land need 2022- 2040 of between 27.6ha – 37.8 ha for the Winchester Plan area.
- The current identified supply suggests sufficient land to meet identified needs.
- No need for large warehousing or logistics sites, but localised needs for mid-sized units, with flexibility between B2/B8 uses.
- Rural areas are an important contribution to supply, development is coming forward, no justification to change current approach.

3.27 As the ETCUS included a range, Winchester City Council's Regulation 19 Local Plan made provision for an estimated 39.36 ha of employment land, against an identified need of 27.6ha – 37.8 ha. Following public consultation on the Regulation 19 Local Plan, there was a slight reduction in the amount of employment floor space at the Solent Business Park which changed the employment floorspace need for this site from 4 hectares to 2 hectares (Main Modification MM59). The consequently changed the additional employment land figure, against the need of 27.6ha – 38.9ha.

Agreed Position

3.28 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. The two authorities agree that the Portsmouth FEMA includes the Southern parishes of Winchester District. The ongoing cross boundary work of the South East Hampshire Authorities indicates that currently the authorities in the FEMA will be able to accommodate the employment needs of the FEMA within their boundaries and not require further assistance from authorities across wider Hampshire including WCC. Both Councils will work in collaboration with the PFSH authorities to support the ongoing partnership working on employment need and supply.

Land West Portsdown Technology Park

Portsmouth Position:

3.29 PCC have allocated land for employment at a cross-boundary location of Land West of Portsdown Technology Park in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. The site is proposed for the following uses: 12,500 m2 Research & Development E(g)(ii), manufacturing (B2) and / or storage or distribution (B8). No minor modifications are proposed to the allocation before Submission.

Winchester position

3.30 The representation from WCC on the Portsmouth Local Plan Pre-Submission Addendum sets out Winchester's position on the allocation namely that there is no objection in principle. However, WCC would prefer if the area of development was limited to the part of the site comprising the existing extent of pdl land, to minimise potential amenity and landscape impacts.

Agreed position

3.31 It is agreed that Winchester District has no objection in principle to the delivery of development on the site (within Portsmouth City administrative area) as set out above. It is agreed that that part of the wider site which falls within the WCC District is not intended for future development with areas to remain as or be reinstated as chalk downland.

3.32 As the future development of this site could have cross boundary implications, both parties agree to keep each other abreast of any emerging plans for the site and officers will notify each other in advance of any pre-application enquiries, planning applications and enforcement action at the site.

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: Julie Pinnock
Position: Head of Planning Policy	Position: Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Portsmouth City Council	Winchester City Council
Date: 18/02/2026	Date: 12/02/2026