Statement of Common Ground between the South East Hampshire Local Authorities of Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council

November 2026

GOSPORT
BOROUGH COUNCIL

FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a jointly agreed statement between the South East Hampshire[1] (SEH) local authorities of Fareham Borough Council (FBC), Gosport Borough Council (GBC), Havant Borough Council (HBC) and Portsmouth City Council (PCC). The SCG sets out the position and understanding with respect to key cross boundary strategic issues between the four authorities. It is not binding on any of the parties but sets out a clear and positive direction to inform ongoing strategy and plan making. It should be noted that this is a multilateral agreement between these four authorities only. There are also more detailed bilateral SCGs between the individual authorities. The SCG is structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Shared geography
- Local and national policy context
- Duty to Cooperate work done to date in SEH
- Key cross boundary strategic issues in SEH with matters of agreement
- Future joint working and Local Government Reorganisation

1.2 This Statement supersedes the Statement of Common Ground between the South East Hampshire authorities dated March 2026.

2. Shared geography of South East Hampshire

2.1 A map showing the area covered by the four local authorities forms figure 1.

2.2 South East Hampshire is located on the coastal plain adjacent to the Solent on the southern coast of England. Combined the area has a total area of approximately 217 square kilometres, a coastline of approximately 152 kilometres and is home to approximately 528,700 people. Portsmouth is the only city in the area and there are a number of notable towns including Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Waterlooville. The area as a whole is well served by road, rail and ferry both east to west and north to south. Despite its predominantly urban nature, the coast of SEH is covered by statutory sites designated for their conservation interest. The sites have a special significance for their breeding bird populations and overwintering bird populations of international importance along with a range of rare maritime and coastal habitats. The northern part of SEH is made up of higher land close to the South Downs National Park.

[1] It should be noted that the four local authorities are all separate local authorities up until if and when Local Government Reorganisation happens.

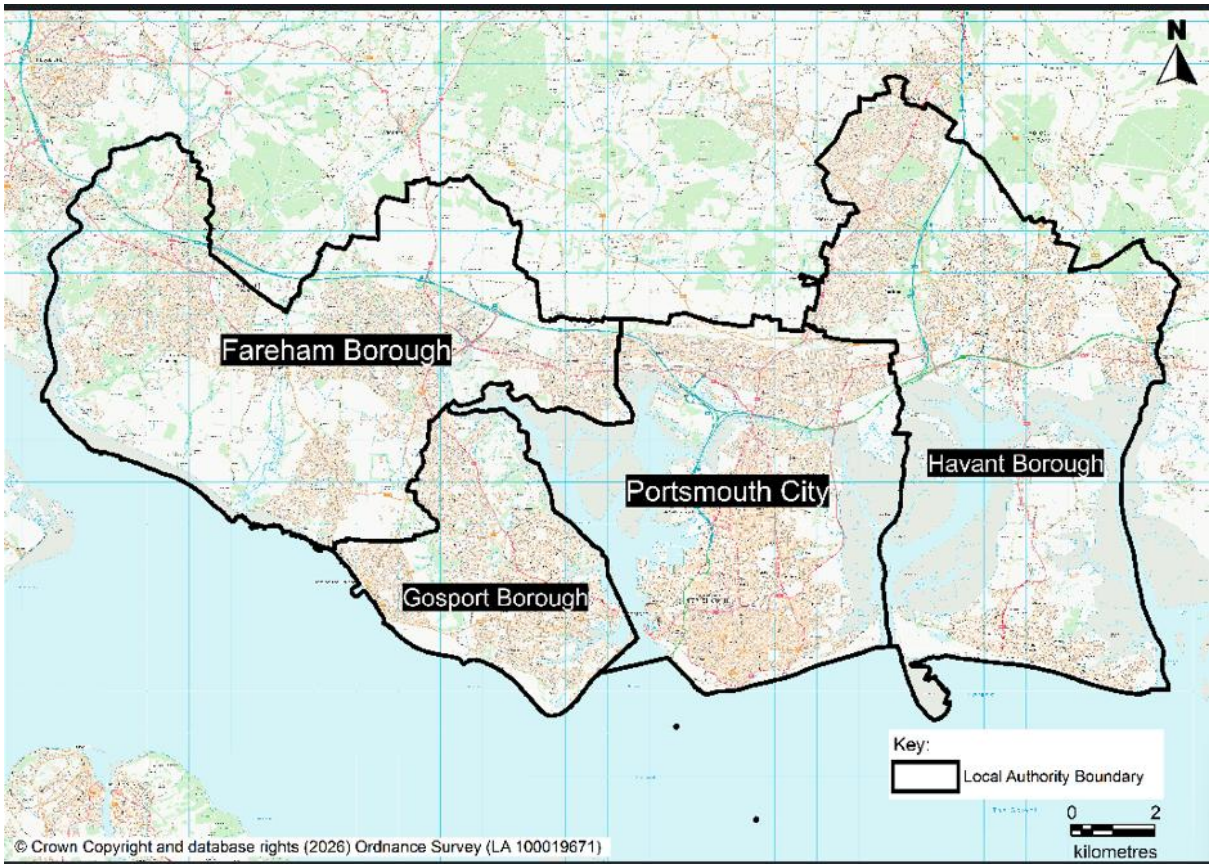

Figure 1: Map of South East Hampshire

2.3 All four local authorities are located either entirely or in part by the Portsmouth-focused Housing Market Area (HMA) as defined in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment of 2014[2] published by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire[3]. They are all located entirely within the Portsmouth-focused Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) as defined in the Economic, Employment and Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study[4] of 2021 published by the Partnership for South Hampshire. Parts of two other local authorities are located in South East Hampshire and share the same HMA/FEMA. They are Winchester City Council (WCC) and East Hampshire District Council (EHDC). Both local authorities have been kept updated on this work stream.

Local and national policy context

2.4 GBC and HBC intend to submit their emerging Local Plans under the legacy plan-making system. Portsmouth submitted their Plan on 18 March 2026 under the transitional arrangements for Local Plans set out in Annex 1 of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and are currently at examination. FBC has

[2] https://www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SHMA-2014-1.pdf
[3] The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire changed its name to the Partnership for South Hampshire in 2019. This was to better reflect the partnership's expanded, more diverse geographical membership, which included areas outside the main urban centres, such as the New Forest.
[4] https://www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Economic-Employments-and-Commercial-Needs-including-logistics-Study-Final-Report-March-2021.pdf

an up-to-date Local Plan[5] adopted in 2023 and published a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation[6] under the new plan-making system[7] on 26 June 2026. PCC similarly published a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation on 14 July 2026[8].

2.5 On 25 March 2026, new provisions from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act came into force. These regulations provide for the transition to the 'new style' plan making system, whilst importantly saving the relevant Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 enabling development plans, such as the Gosport, Havant and Portsmouth Local Plans to progress to adoption under transitional arrangements.

2.6 Significantly, however, the regulations do not 'save' the Duty to Co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development, set out in Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Although the legislative requirements remove the duty to cooperate as a legal compliance requirement, paragraph 24 of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to cooperate with each other on strategic matters.

2.7 All four SEH authorities agree on the importance of continuing to work on strategic cross boundary issues in line with national policy.

3. Duty to Cooperate work done to date in South East Hampshire

3.1 All four local authorities are active members of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH). It is a partnership of district, borough 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.

3.2 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 four authorities have kept PfSH fully updated on the emerging SEH work through the PfSH Planning Officers Group.

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[5] https://www.fareham.gov.uk/planning/localplan.aspx
[6] https://www.fareham.gov.uk/new_local_plan/noticecommence.aspx
[7] The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, Part 4, Regulation 19
[8] https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/development-and-planning/planning-policy/emerging-development-plan/future-portsmouth-plan-to-2045/notice-of-intention-to-commence-local-plan-preparation



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

3.3 In summer 2025, the three local authorities of GBC, HBC and PCC were at the same stage of plan making and decided that clarity was needed on the quantum of unmet development in their area. The matter was discussed at advisory meetings held by GBC and PCC respectively. Both authorities were advised that it would be prudent to engage with EHDC, FBC and WCC on any further distribution of unmet needs but were cautioned that there was only a focused window between now and submission to do so.

3.4 In autumn 2025, the three authorities hosted a meeting of all the local authorities that were wholly or partially within SEH. The purpose of the meeting was to provide clarity on the quantum of unmet development need and ask for assistance in meeting this unmet need. This was followed by bespoke letters being sent by the three authorities to EHDC, FBC and WCC. Letters of response were received from EHDC, FBC and WCC. All correspondence is published on PCC's Local Plan evidence page[9] and will be published on GBC's and HBC's examination webpages in due course.

3.5 The four authorities of FBC, GBC, HBC and PCC met in January 2026. The purpose of the meeting was to move on from identifying development need to thinking about how to meet it. It was agreed that the earlier work by PCC, HBC

[9] https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/development-and-planning/planning-policy/portsmouth-local-plan-evidence/duty-to-cooperate/

and GBC had been necessary as not only did they share the same HMA/FEMA, but they were at the same stage of plan making. Moving on from that initial work it was considered beneficial to include FBC in the group as the Borough is partially located in the same FEMA/HMA.

3.6 It was agreed at the January 2026 meeting to prepare a SCG[10] which led to an initial signing of a SCG between the four authorities in March 2026. This version of the Statement supersedes the original iteration of the Statement and includes up to date development supply quantums as of 31 March 2026 along with agreed transfers between the four authorities.

Housing numbers

3.7 The total unmet housing need for the three local authorities of GBC, HBC and PCC is 16,408 homes as of 31 March 2026. The breakdown of the total figure by local authority is set out in Table 1 below. The supply figures are taken from the Submission Local Plan for Portsmouth City, and the Publication Local Plans for Gosport Borough and Havant Borough. It is accepted by all of the signatories that the precise unmet need will evolve as local plans progress through examination. However, this is unlikely to materially alter the level of unmet need in the HMA.

3.8 The adopted Fareham Local Plan (2023) provides 900 homes for unmet need of which 800 are already allocated to PCC and the remaining 100 towards neighbouring authorities' unmet need. All four authorities agreed that the remaining 100 homes should be allocated to GBC with which it shares a boundary. This has been confirmed through a bilateral SCG between the two authorities[11].

3.9 The adopted Winchester District Local Plan 2020 – 2040 (2026) provides an unmet need allowance of 495 dwellings, of which 30% is apportioned to Portsmouth City Council and of which 70% is apportioned to Havant Borough Council[12]. This equates to 150 homes for Portsmouth City and 345 homes for Havant Borough.

[10] https://media.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Final_SCG_SEH_Mar-26.pdf
[11] https://www.gosport.gov.uk/gblp2042/PartD
[12] See Table H2 – Winchester District Housing Need and Provision https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/winchester-district-local-plan-2018-2038-emerging/adopted-local-plan-2020-2040

3.10 No contribution has been offered by EHDC to the SEH authorities. However, as of May 2026 EHDC are no longer seeking to submit a Local Plan under the 'legacy' planning system[13].

3.11 Table 1 sets out where there are agreed transfers of housing land supply between the four local authorities of SEH, and with Winchester City Council (WCC) which partially falls within the Portsmouth Housing Market Area.

LPA	Housing Surplus/Shortfall	Going to	Coming from	Number of Dwellings	Housing Surplus/Shortfall after reciprocation
PCC	-4,195	-	FBC and WCC	950 (800 + 150)	-3,245
GBC	-4,409	-	FBC	100	-4,309
HBC	-9,911	-	WCC	345	-9,566
FBC	+712	PCC and GBC	-	-900	+712[14]
				Total	**-16,408**

Table 1: Transfers of housing supply between authorities

Employment numbers

3.12 There is no unmet employment need resulting from the three local authorities of GBC, HBC and PCC as of November 2026. The breakdown of the total figure by local authority is set out in Table 2 below. The need figures are defined by local evidence base studies, and the supply figures are taken from the latest versions of Submitted or Publication Local Plans.

3.13 HBC has continued to identify an unmet employment need throughout their plan-making process. In July 2026, HBC published an Employment Land Review Update[15] which identifies an objectively assessed need figure of 146,213 m^2 of net new industrial floorspace and 35,258 m^2 of net new office floorspace. Whilst HBC is able to meet the industrial need by a small margin, there has been a lack of office sites promoted. The ELR Addendum therefore acknowledges that it may be better to work with neighbouring authorities, particularly Portsmouth City Council to address office need. Portsmouth City is identified as the larger established office area within the Functional Economic Market Area and

[13] https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29943/Cabinet%20Report%20Local%20Plan%20Update%2028.05.26.pdf

[14] The provision for 900 homes towards wider unmet need forms part of the total housing requirement in Table 4.1 of the Fareham Local Plan 2037 https://www.fareham.gov.uk/pdf/planning/local_plan/1.FLP2037.pdf

[15] https://www.havant.gov.uk/media/11142/download?inline

particularly suited to being able to accommodate office related labour supply growth in the short to medium term.

3.14 PCC originally agreed to provide a total of 31,261 m^2 of employment floorspace towards HBC's unmet employment needs. However, updated monitoring data resulted in a decreased surplus of employment floorspace which is set out in the Main Modifications[16] to the Portsmouth Local Plan. The updated surplus of employment is 22,743 m^2, which is entirely office floorspace. This contribution from Portsmouth would reduce HBC's unmet need for office floorspace to 12,515 m2. This has been formalised in a bilateral SCG between the two authorities[17].

3.15 FBC has agreed to provide a total of 19,973 m^2 of employment floorspace towards the remainder of HBC's unmet needs. This reflects the Borough Council's letter to Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council dated 26 November 2025 which offered 19,973 square metres of employment floorspace to address unmet needs in Havant Borough. FBC recently reaffirmed this commitment in light of Havant's updated evidence, which has been formalised in a bilateral SCG between the two authorities.

3.16 It should be noted that FBC's employment floorspace is an overall requirement, which does not distinguish between office, industrial and warehousing/logistics floorspace in the adopted Local Plan.

3.17 PCC is therefore best placed to address the unmet office need arising out of HBC given the certainty that 100% of the floorspace allocated will address this need. It is also well located in relation to Havant, being the closest established office area to HBC within the Function Economic Market Area. The contribution from FBC will address HBC's remaining unmet need (+12,515 m^2), though there is a reduced degree of certainty the transfer of employment would address HBC's unmet office need in full.

3.18 Table 2 sets out the agreed transfers of employment land between the four local authorities of SEH. Taking the transfers of employment land between FBC, HBC and PCC into account it is envisaged that there will be no unmet employment need in any of the local authorities and indeed there is an overall surplus of 118,109 m^2 in SEH.

[16] https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-09/FINAL_PLP_Main%20Mods%20V2.0.pdf
[17] https://www.havant.gov.uk/media/11320/download?inline

LPA	Employment Floorspace (m^2) Surplus/Shortfall	Going to	Coming from	Amount (m^2)	Floorspace Surplus/Shortfall after reciprocation
PCC	+22,743 (office)	HBC	-	-22,743	0
GBC	+8,177 (mixed)	-	-	-	8,117
FBC	+119,790 (mixed)	HBC	-	-19,973	99,817
HBC	+2,717 (industrial and warehousing)	-	-	-	2,717
	-35,258 (office)	-	PCC	22,743	-12,515
	0 (mixed)	-	FBC	19,973	19,973
				Total	**118,109**

Table 2: Transfers of employment land between the SEH authorities

Ecological infrastructure

3.19 Discussions are underway on how to make nature recovery bigger, better and more joined up through the South East Hampshire Environmental Group which consists of an officer group meeting of both planners and ecologists. There are already several innovative solutions to nature conservation constraints in place in the area including nutrient mitigation and recreational disturbance. There are also future ecological network opportunities in SEH to address mitigation requirements, meet biodiversity duties, link with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, link Green Infrastructure Networks and align ecological infrastructure with future plan-making.

3.20 It is agreed by all four authorities that they are in the same character area for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The agreed intention is to make SEH self-sufficient in terms of BNG. It is of note that the Members from all four LPA prefer on site or very local BNG to purchasing off site credits.

4. Future joint working

4.1 On 7 September 2026, the Government announced that it had withdrawn its previous Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton and will now review the LGR proposals following legal advice.

4.2 Councils that were previously anticipated to be included in the South East Hampshire unitary council including Fareham Borough Council, Havant Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, East Hampshire District (parishes of Clanfield, Horndean and Rowlands Castle), and Winchester District (parish of Newlands) have been asked to pause their work on LGR whilst the review takes place.

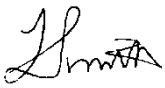
4.3 Nevertheless, all four SEH local authorities are committed to pragmatic joint working and will focus on shared and consistent methodologies for evidence gathering going forward.

5. Signatories

5.1 All four parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.

5.2 All four 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.

5.3 All four parties agree that there are no substantial areas of disagreement between them and will continue to work proactively on the key strategic cross boundary issues identified in this SCG.

			
Signature	Signature	Signature	Signature
Jayson Grygiel	David Hayward	Lee Smith	Lucy Howard
Name	Name	Name	Name
Head of Planning Policy	Strategic Planning Manager	Head of Planning	Head of Planning Policy
Title	Title	Title	Title
Gosport Borough Council	Havant Borough Council	Fareham Borough Council	Portsmouth City Council
Local authority	Local authority	Local authority	Local authority
03-11-2026	03-11-2026	03-11-2026	04-11-2026
Date	Date	Date	Date