Statement of Common Ground

Gosport Borough Council &

Havant Borough Council

May 2026





1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a jointly agreed statement between Gosport Borough Council (GBC) 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.

1.2. Both GBC and HBC intend to submit their emerging Local Plans as legacy plans, to be examined under 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 27th 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 Gosport and Havant Local Plans, to progress to submission for 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 the Pre-Submission Havant Borough Building a Better Future Plan and the Publication Gosport Borough Local Plan 2042 under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). GBC and HBC agree on the importance of continuing to work on strategic cross boundary issues in line with both existing and draft national policy.

2. Strategic Geography

2.1. A map of the two authority areas is set out in figure 1. Havant Borough is located to the northeast of Gosport Borough, separated by Portsmouth and Langstone Harbours and the city of Portsmouth.

2.2. Gosport Borough sits on a peninsula adjacent to Fareham Borough and is surrounded on three sides by the Solent and Portsmouth Harbour, with 39 kilometres of coastline. The Borough is predominantly urban in character and over 80% 'built on'. There are two main settlements, Gosport and Lee-on-the Solent, which are separated by the Alver Valley. The authority area covers 27.6 kilometres and is home to approximately 81,952 people and is densely populated with 3,230 people per square kilometre.

2.3. 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.

2.4. Gosport Borough has an established history of being pro-growth and is now a largely dense urban area, with any non-urban areas affected by constraints including operational MoD establishments and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Council has one of the highest rates of granting planning permission in England. However recent evidence shows that most of the brownfield developments in Gosport Borough have particular deliverability and viability issues including: contaminated land; a lack of investment by Government agencies in infrastructure including sea defences; ongoing flood management issues; significant heritage assets that have been left in a deteriorating condition; limited transport options; and relatively low gross development values. All these issues have affected the speed of delivery of past and current sites and continue to impact on ascertaining whether current brownfield releases are deliverable.

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. The Borough has 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. Gosport Borough Council and Havant Borough Council both fall within the Portsmouth Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area in their entirety.

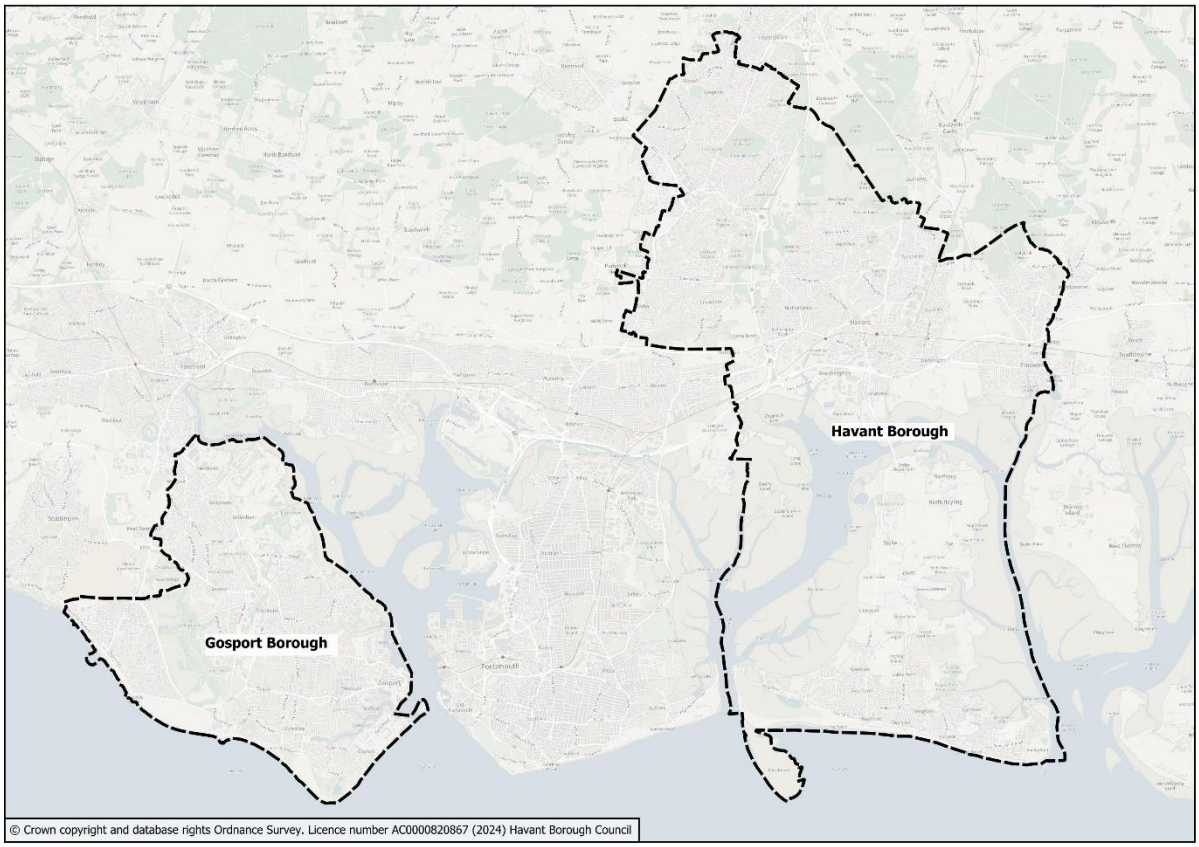

Figure 1: Map of Gosport Borough and Havant Borough

2.7. This geography informs the shared issues faced by both Boroughs in planning for their futures. Finding new land for housing and employment is key to both authorities, which face similar geographical constraints.

Partnership for South Hampshire and South East Hampshire Joint working

2.8. Gosport Borough Council and Havant Borough Council 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. 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.

2.10. 2.10 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.

2.11. 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 such as this.



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

2.12. More recently, the two authorities have also taken part in collective discussions as part of a grouping of South East Hampshire authorities including Portsmouth City and Fareham 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. It has resulted in agreement between the Authorities to help accommodate each other's housing and employment land needs. This has been addressed fully through a South East Hampshire Statement of Common Ground (March 2026). In addition, the South East

Hampshire Authorities have agreed to further meetings and collaboration on key environmental issues including green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain.

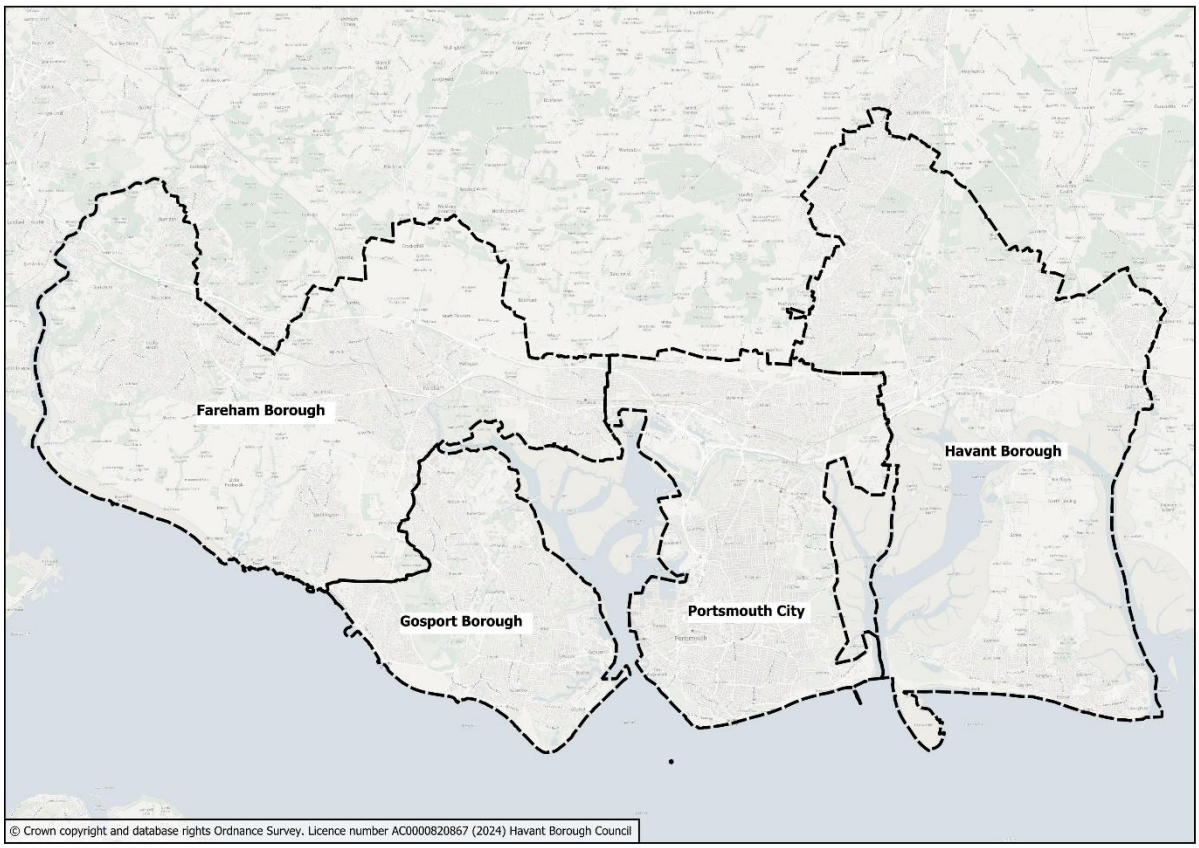

Figure 3: Map of South East Hampshire Authorities

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 Gosport Local Plan of 2025-2042 and for the Havant Borough Local Plan period of 2023-2043.

Housing

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

LPA	Plan period		Housing need according to the standard method	Housing supply	Unmet need
Gosport Borough Council	**2025-2042 (17 years)**	**Total**	**7,378**	**2,592**	**- 4,786**
		Dwellings per annum	**434**	**152**	**-282**
Havant Borough Council	**2023-2043 (20 years)**	**Total**	**17,840**	**7,218**	**-10,622**
		Dwellings per annum	***892***	***361***	***-531***

Table 1: Housing Land Position - March 2026

Gosport Borough Council's Position

3.3. Gosport Borough Council held a consultation on its Regulation 19 (Publication) version of its Local Plan between 5th March and 16th April 2026 and anticipates that its Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in July 2026. The Local Plan will cover the period from 2025 to 2042.

3.4. The Council has taken a no-stone-unturned approach and has undertaken four 'call for sites' including enabling landowners/developers and other interested parties to submit sites at any time through the preparation of the Local Plan. The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has been refreshed for the Reg. 19 consultation. The Government's standard method requires 7,378 homes over the plan period and Gosport Borough has a supply of 2,592 dwellings over the plan period to 2042 which means the Borough has an unmet need of 4,786 dwellings.

3.5. The Borough Council has formally requested assistance from all the local authorities in the Portsmouth Housing Market Area, including Havant Borough to consider whether they are able to assist in taking any of Gosport's identified unmet housing need.

3.6. To date, with the exception of Fareham Borough Council, the other neighbouring local authorities have been unable to assist Gosport Borough with this request due to the difficulties faced by these local authorities who also have unmet housing needs and require assistance themselves.

3.7. The adopted Fareham Local Plan (2023) provides 900 homes for unmet need of which 800 are already allocated to PCC. Through the South East Hampshire group, it has been agreed between all four authorities agreed that the remaining 100 homes should be allocated to GBC with which Fareham Borough Council shares a boundary. This will be confirmed through a bilateral SCG between the two authorities.

Havant Borough Council's Position

3.8. 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.

3.9. 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 Council's (the exact number this equates to is being confirmed through the Winchester City Council examination). 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

3.10. The two authorities note the respective positions on housing need and supply. It is agreed that neither authority can assist the other with accommodating unmet need arising out of each Local Plan. 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

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

LPA	Plan period		Employment need	Employment supply	Surplus/unmet need
Gosport Borough Council	2025-2042 (17 years)	Total	83,930[1]	90,508[2]	+6,578
Havant Borough Council	2023-2043 (20 years)	Total	175,199	123,775	-51,424

Table 2: Employment Land Position - December 2025

Gosport Borough Council's Position

3.12. The employment floorspace figures in the GBLP 2042 has been informed by the Economic, Employment and Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study produced for PfSH by Stantec in 2021, and the Gosport Development Needs Assessment and Employment Land Availability Assessment (EDNA/ELLA) which was published in February 2026. The EDNA/ELAA study identified a number of appropriate employment sites. The study highlights that the Borough has a good range of employment sites and the Council considers that it should allocate those sites that can realistically provide new employment floorspace and boost overall job numbers, increase job densities and reduce out-commuting.

3.13. Nationally there is recognition of the importance in assisting underperforming economies around the country including those of coastal towns and Gosport Borough was identified as a Category 1 area through the former Levelling-Up Fund bidding process recognising Gosport as being a high priority for funding and the only authority in Hampshire with this categorisation

3.14. A figure of 90,000 sq.m (5,294 sq.m per annum) is considered an appropriate allocation target to meet the ambitions to delivery economic growth in the Borough3. It is a realistic ambition being just over 13% higher than the current Local Plan requirements (annualised). The 90,000 sq.m is slightly higher than the identified capacity of 84,564 sq.m (as at 1st April 2021) identified in the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan and therefore it is necessary to identify additional land through the consultation process and/or ensure that appropriate employment floorspace is secured on any windfall site that is likely to come forward.

3.15. The Council is aware of additional employment floorspace supply that may come forward but not currently deliverable. The most obvious example is HMS Sultan, the

[1] This figure is a recommendation from Gosport Borough Council's Economic Development Needs Assessment and Economic Land Availability Assessment (February 2026) and includes a five-year buffer.

[2] As set out in Regulation 19 Gosport Borough Local Plan 2042 Table 2: Employment supply at 1 April 2025 for the plan period to 2042, March 2026 page 43. www.gosport.gov.uk/gblp2042

[3] Further details are set out in the Employment Background Paper March 2026 Gosport Borough Local Plan 2042 Supporting Evidence - Gosport Borough Council

Borough's largest employer which could include a phased development of Fort Rowner for employment purposes. The Government announced that this site could be released after 2029 and consequently the Local Plan recognises the Council's preference that the site is retained as a training base but should any release take place it is clear that most of the western site would be identified for major employment and training opportunities. Such circumstances would trigger a major review of employment supply and of the Local Plan as a whole. There may be the opportunity for small employment land intensification on this site in the meantime to contribute towards the current difference between identified supply and the 90,000 sq.m target.

3.16. It is understood that Havant Borough Council have come to an agreement with Portsmouth City Council and Fareham Borough Council regarding accommodating Havant Borough's unmet employment needs and therefore it is not necessary for Gosport Borough Council to assist in this matter.

Havant Borough Council's Position

3.17. The Council's Employment Land Review (ELR) provides an up to-date assessment of the Borough's economic and employment development needs. 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.

3.18. 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

3.19. Both authorities are working proactively through the South East Hampshire Group which has resulted in transfers of employment land between the authorities in the group. Taking the transfers of employment land between FBC, PCC and HBC it is envisaged that there will be no unmet employment need in any of the local authorities.

Environment

Agreed Position

3.20. 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.

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 areas of disagreement between the parties relating to the emerging Pre-Submission Havant Borough Building a Better Future Plan and the Publication Gosport Borough Local Plan 2042 and will both continue to work proactively on the key strategic cross boundary issues identified in this SCG.

	Signed:	Signed:
		
	Name: Jayson Grygiel	Name: David Hayward
	Position: Head of Planning Policy	Position: Strategic Planning Manager
	Gosport Borough Council	Havant Borough Council
	Date: 13/05/2026	Date: 13/05/2026