



**Winchester**  
City Council

**Statement of Common Ground**  
**Between**  
**Winchester City Council and Portsmouth City Council**

**August 2024**

## 1. Introduction

A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), which concerns strategic cross-boundary matters, is a written record of the progress made by strategic plan-making authorities (and other prescribed bodies<sup>1</sup>) during the process of producing or reviewing a local plan. It documents the effective co-operation between the parties and outlines matters that are common ground (agreed) and uncommon ground (not agreed). Introduced by Section 33A of the Localism Act 2011 and the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework, strategic policy making authorities are required to produce, maintain, and keep up to date a SoCG to highlight the agreements on cross-boundary strategic issues.

The SoCG is used to demonstrate at examination that respective authorities (and relevant bodies) have cooperated on cross-boundary matters; and that the plan has been prepared in a positive and effective manner, therefore meeting the soundness test<sup>1</sup>. The document assists in presenting evidence that plans are deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. Furthermore, it is also part of the evidence required for local planning authorities to demonstrate that they have complied with the legal compliance of the Duty to Cooperate.

This SoCG documents the outcomes of co-operation to date in preparing the local plan in order to inform and shape a positively prepared and justified strategy. In doing so it addresses that and it has been produced in accordance with, and takes account of the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2</sup> (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance<sup>3</sup> (PPG), relevant planning acts, and any other applicable information.

This document therefore sets out Winchester City Council's and Portsmouth City Council's current positions regarding points of common and/or disagreement on relevant strategic cross-boundary matters. Section 3 – Strategic Geography, sets out the geographic relationship between Winchester District and Portsmouth City, with the associated statement and/or evidence of cooperation contained later in the document. Each SoCG contains a timetable for agreement (should matters yet to have been agreed), review, and update.

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<sup>1</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682222/nppf-2018-07-20.pdf) para 24

<sup>2</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682222/nppf-2018-07-20.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [Plan-making - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682222/nppf-2018-07-20.pdf) Maintaining Effective Cooperation

## 2. Legislation

The “Duty to Cooperate” was introduced by Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)<sup>4</sup> from Section 110 of the Localism Act (2011)<sup>5</sup> as a strategic planning mechanism to replace regional spatial strategies. It places a legal duty on Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and prescribed public bodies to engage constructively, actively, and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plan and marine plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

Strategic matters regarding plan-making refers to: *“sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.”* (Section 33A, (4)(a))

Additionally, paragraph 20 of the NPPF outlines the strategic policies that a local plan should address, resolve, and where necessary, make provision for, these being:

- a) *“Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
- b) *The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- c) *Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
- d) *Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”*

Paragraphs 24 – 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises this duty and considers effective, joint working between relevant bodies as integral to a positive and well-prepared strategy. Paragraph 26 also identifies joint working as helping to determine additional infrastructure, and whether development needs that cannot be wholly met within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere. PPG paragraphs 029 – 033, and 075 provide further information on meeting the Duty to Cooperate, explains the differences between the Duty to Cooperate and a SoCG, illustrates how the Duty to Cooperate is considered during examination, and how the Duty to Cooperate should be addressed during plan review.

Further to this, two of the four “tests of soundness” of Local Plans (NPPF Paragraph 35) directly relate to the Duty to Cooperate, specifically:

- a) *“Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring*

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<sup>4</sup> [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/24/section/33A)

<sup>5</sup> [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/22/section/110)

*areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;*

- c) *Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and 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”*

In regard to the production of a SoCG, paragraph 27 of the NPPF specifically states:

*“In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.”*

The Plan Making chapter of the PPG and in particular the *Maintaining Effective Cooperation* section (paragraphs 009 – 028) provides additional information and guidance on how authorities should (non-exhaustive): produce a SoCG, what cross-boundary matters should be included, carrying out effective cooperation, activities documented, functional geographical area, and preparation and publication.



The Government consulted upon reforms to national planning policy during December 2022 as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB), stating that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) will remove the Duty to Co-operate, but that the duty will remain in place until those provisions come into effect. To secure appropriate engagement between authorities where strategic planning considerations concern cross-boundary matters, the Government intends to introduce an alignment policy as part of a future revised Framework. Further consultation on what should constitute the alignment policy is anticipated to be undertaken.

The LURA was enacted during November 2023, and now includes provisions to remove the legislative that imposes the Duty to Co-operate. However, these provisions have not yet been enacted and will *‘come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint’*. Transitional arrangements mean that the Duty to Cooperate will remain for plans submitted for examination before June 2025 and adopted by December 2026.

### 3. Statement of Common Ground

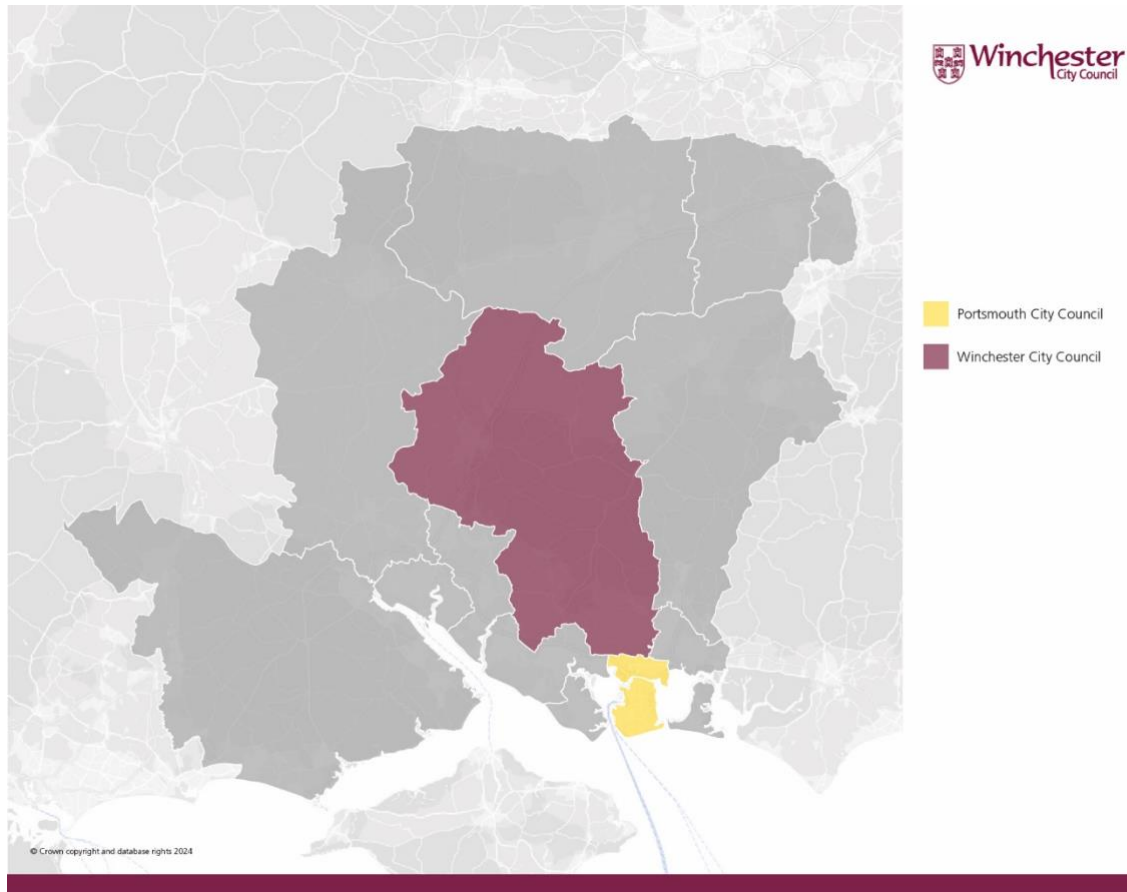
This section comprises all the Statement of Common Ground that Winchester City Council and Portsmouth City Council have entered into in relation to points of common and uncommon ground for relevant strategic cross-boundary matters.

#### Portsmouth City Council

<b>1. List of Parties involved:</b>	
Winchester City Council and Portsmouth City Council	
<b>2. Signatories:</b>	
<p>Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon, or where there are areas of disagreement, this statement documents the issue, and that both parties confirm their respective position.</p> <p>It is agreed that these discussions will inform the Winchester City Council Local Plan 2020 - 2040 and the emerging Portsmouth City Council Local Plan; both parties will continue to work collaboratively to meet the Duty to Cooperate obligations and will both continue to work proactively on the key strategic cross boundary issues identified in this document.</p> <p>For Winchester City Council the Statement of Common Ground is signed by Julie Pinnock, Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services.</p> <p>For Portsmouth City Council this Statement of Common Ground is signed by Lucy Howard, Planning Policy Manager.</p>	
Signed: 	Signed: 
Name: Julie Pinnock	Name: Lucy Howard
Position: Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services	Position: Planning Policy Manager
Winchester City Council	Portsmouth City Council
<b>3. Strategic Geography</b>	
Portsmouth City Council is located on the Solent coast to the south east of the Winchester administrative area and shares a long-standing strategic partnership with the Council having previously undertaken a joint approach working through PfSH including the preparation of the latest Spatial Position Statement <sup>6</sup> and Statements of	

<sup>6</sup> [PfSH-Spatial-Position-Statement-6-December-2023.doc \(live.com\)](#)

Common Ground<sup>7</sup> . The south eastern portion of Winchester District shares a functional housing market area with Portsmouth, that can be demonstrated by residents living in one locality while working in the other. Economically, Winchester operates within multiple economic subregions one of which is South Hampshire which is shared 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.



Winchester City Council:

The existing WCC Local Plan Part 1 (JCS with the SDNPA) was adopted during March 2013 with the Local Plan Part 2 Housing and Employment allocations adopted during April 2017) and Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpersons Development Plan Document (Traveller DPD) (adopted 2019) forming the Development Plan as a whole. Work on the emerging plan began during 2018 with public consultation on a Strategic Issues and Priorities consultation taking place Feb – April 2021 followed by a draft plan Regulation 18 consultation occurring during Nov – Dec 2022.

<sup>7</sup> [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 28/06/2023 10:30 \(push.gov.uk\)](#)

#### **4. Strategic Matters**

This section sets out where agreement has been reached on cross-border strategic matters, or where further work to reach common ground is required. Duty to Cooperate meetings have taken place over the course of the Local Plan review, details of which and minutes documenting the outcome of the meeting(s) are attached as an appendix to this SoCG.

The existing WCC Local Plan Part 1 (JCS with the SDNPA) was adopted during March 2013 with the Local Plan Part 2 Housing and Employment allocations adopted during April 2017. Work on the emerging plan began during 2018 with a Strategic Issues and Priorities consultation taking place Feb – April 2021 followed by a draft plan Regulation 18 consultation occurring during Nov – Dec 2022. Subsequent to the two Regulation 18 consultations, a Regulation 19 consultation is scheduled to take place in Sept 2024. Following this, it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be submitted to the Inspectorate by October/November 2024 with the Examination early in the New Year and once adopted will replace the existing development plan.

The Portsmouth Plan (Core Strategy) was adopted in January 2012 and along with two area action plans form the development plan for the City. Work began on the Local Plan review during 2017 whereby the first public consultation considered the Issues and Options for Portsmouth City and was undertaken during July of that year. Two further Reg 18 consultations were carried out; one that concerned the Evidence Base (completed during February 2019) and the other that consulted upon a draft Local Plan during September 2021. A Pre-Submission Local Plan was published for consultation between July and September 2024.

#### **Housing**

##### Winchester City Council:

The emerging Local Plan aims to deliver sufficient land to meet the housing need for the local planning area and in assessing the housing requirement for the plan-period, the amount of existing pipeline development is taken into consideration. The Standard Method output has established an overall need for Winchester District over the plan-period of 13,565 dwellings; the Standard Method is updated on an annual basis with the first four years from 2020 resulting in a yearly need for 685, 666, 707, and 691 dwellings (2,749 total). The remaining 16 years of the plan-period (2024-2040) equates to 676 dwellings per annum i.e, 10,816, totalling in 13,565 dwellings.

It remains WCCs intention to meet the housing need of the local planning area. In addition to this the plan makes provision for an 'unmet needs allowance' to help with meeting the (currently undefined) unmet needs of neighbouring authorities in accordance with the Partnership for South Hampshire's 2023 'Spatial Position Statement'.

The below table illustrates the overall position in terms of housing need and supply for the Winchester District:

<b>Winchester District Housing Need</b>		<b>Winchester District Housing Provision</b>	
Standard Method need for Plan period 2020-2040 (see Table H1)	13,565	Completions since start of Local Plan period (2020-2023)	3,170
Unmet Needs Allowance (for unmet need in neighbouring authorities)	1,900	Outstanding planning permissions	6,780
		Other Commitments (previous Local Plans incl. SDNP)	745
		Windfall development	1,895
		Additional allocations made in this Local Plan	2,875
<b>Total District Housing Requirement</b>	<b>15,465*</b>	<b>Total District Housing Provision*</b>	<b>15,465</b>

\* Includes approximately 350 dwellings within the South Downs National Park part of Winchester district.

The table relates to housing need and supply for the whole of Winchester District, reflecting the area covered by the Standard Method figure. The Local Plan area excludes that part of the District within the South Downs National Park, where it is assumed that about 350 dwellings will be completed. The remaining housing requirement for the Local Plan area is 15,115 dwellings (15,465 – 350 = 15,115).

#### Portsmouth City Council:

The standard method sets a housing need of 899 homes per year for the City. The Council commissioned a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), which forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The HEDNA assessed data relating to demographic trends and economic growth scenarios that point to Portsmouth's housing need being much lower than the standard method. This is due to household and population growth being far weaker than was projected in the 2014-based projections; analysis of past housing completions does not point to this lower growth being attributed to reduced housing delivery. The HEDNA found that an estimate of housing need based on trend-based population projections point to a need of up to 655 dwellings per annum. If this is set against job growth scenarios, then a housing need ranging from 431 to 634 dwellings per annum is produced. These alternative analyses of housing need suggest that actual housing need for Portsmouth is in a downward direction to levels which are clearly below the standard method figure. It is not, however, definitively clear that exceptional circumstances exist for the Local Plan to adopt a housing need figure lower than the standard method. The HEDNA also identifies a need for 851 affordable homes per year.

To meet the full housing need set by the standard method of 899 homes per year is extremely difficult in the context of Portsmouth and its geography. Portsmouth is a



physically compact City with many constraining factors, including its wealth of nature and heritage designations, that limit space for development growth. The reality is that land availability and housing delivery in the City is a major challenge, which means that the Local Plan has an important role to play in balancing the wide range of competing development needs and the need to protect or enhance the quality of the environment, in order to plan for the long-term sustainable growth of the City. Despite this challenge, however, the Council has sought to plan positively and to establish through its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) the level of housing delivery could be achieved based upon the capacity of the City.

Based upon the assessment carried out through the HELAA the Local Plan has set a housing target for Portsmouth of 13,603 new homes from 2020 to 2040 or approximately 680 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 through the application of a 'non-implementation discount'.

Whilst the housing target does not meet the standard method housing need in full, it does meet and exceed the level of housing need that may actually exist as assessed through the HEDNA of up to 655 dwellings per annum (if solely using the trend-based population projections) or the range of 431 to 634 dwellings per annum (if set against job-growth scenarios). The NPPF states that the outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement. The City Council therefore considers that the housing target set in the emerging Local Plan as both justified and consistent with Government policy.

The City Council has an unmet housing need of 4,377 dwellings against its housing need. The City Council has written to its immediate neighbours (Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council and Winchester City Council) to ascertain if they are able to accommodate its unmet need. Fareham Borough Council confirmed through its Local Plan that it would accommodate 800 dwellings of the City's unmet need.

In January 2024, Portsmouth City Council contacted Winchester City Council requesting that Winchester City Council helped to accommodate Portsmouth's unmet housing need. Following a meeting between Officers from both councils on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 a formal response to this Duty to Co-operate letter was sent from Winchester City Council to Portsmouth City Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024.

The below table illustrates the overall position in terms of housing need and supply for Portsmouth City:

### **Portsmouth City Council's Position**

Housing Need	Housing Supply	Unmet need
17,980 2020-40	13,603	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4,377</li> <li>• 800 from FBC</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,577 outstanding</li> </ul>
899 per year	680 per year	219 per year

Portsmouth City Council had an advisory call from the Planning Inspectorate (Louise Crossley). The advice received by Portsmouth was that WCC should identify geographically appropriate sites for meeting the unmet need arising from specific neighbouring LPAs. It would be necessary for WCC to SA the choice of these sites and monitor their development.

The Inspector also advised that keeping a written record of discussions with WCC is important, for example, letters, emails, committee minutes.

Following the meeting the Inspector sent a written report that responded to specific questions asked by Portsmouth. This included a question in regard to Winchester District Council's housing land supply buffer, specifically whether WCC's Housing land supply buffer should be a general figure to meet the needs of PfSH or should it allocate to specific neighbouring authorities with an unmet need a portion / proportion of this housing land supply buffer. PCC asked their inspector her view on this.

The inspector gave the following written response: *It will be for that examination (Winchester's) to resolve that. You (Portsmouth) could make reps on their plan for that Inspector to consider. Everything needs to be in SoCG and evidence of attempts to resolve it e.g. letters/emails, minutes of meetings, committee reports etc. Other Council's will need to consider releasing land to meet the unmet needs of other Councils in their SA and be able to monitor sites.*

The advice provided to the Inspector to Portsmouth City Council lacks consistency between what was said and what was written. PCC considers that WCC should identify specific sites in its Plan to help meet the unmet need of the City and other LPAs as necessary. Relevant sites should be located close to the boundaries of the relevant LPAs and within the relevant housing market area.

Portsmouth will continue to work closely with Winchester in relation to housing and SOCG between the two authorities will be updated to reflect the latest housing position.

Agreed Position:

It is agreed that WCC are in a position to meet their local housing need in full and will continue in using the Standard Method output to establish their housing need. It is also agreed that PCC are unable to meet the need established through the Standard Method. Portsmouth City Council has therefore formally approached Winchester District to request help in meeting the City's unmet housing need of 219 dwelling per annum.

WCC have confirmed that the unmet need allowance of about 1,900 dwellings set within the emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan can contribute to meeting the needs of PfSH authorities. Duty to Co-operate letters that have been received from Portsmouth and Havant Borough Council that have asked for assistance to meet their unmet

housing needs. Both councils agree that Winchester's approach towards unmet needs reflects the strategy adopted in the PfSH Spatial Position Statement, agreed in December 2023. The authorities do not agree on whether specific sites should be identified in the Winchester Local Plan to meet the unmet needs of neighbouring authorities, and have received varying advice on this matter from Planning Inspectorate advisory visits.

WCC supports the contribution from Fareham Borough Council and understands that 800 dwellings are to contribute toward the PCC unmet need.

Both Councils will work in collaboration with all other PfSH authorities to support the ongoing partnership working on housing need and unmet need being delivered through the PfSH Spatial Position Statement (see below).

### **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs**

#### Winchester City Council:

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.

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.

The 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. A Gypsy and Traveller Topic Paper has been produced to evidence this work, which reaches the following conclusions on traveller pitch / plot needs and 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
<b>Surplus / Shortfall</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>+50</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-7</b>

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.

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.

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.

#### Portsmouth City Council:

The 2024 Portsmouth City Council updated its Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) previously carried out in 2018 by Opinion Research Services.

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.

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.

Existing provision:

Category	Sites/Yards	Pitches/Plots
Private with permanent planning permission	0	0

Private with temporary planning permission	0	0
Unauthorised sites	0	0
Travelling Showpeople yards	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Agreed Position:

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.

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.

**Land West Portsdown Technology Park**

Portsmouth Position:

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 m<sup>2</sup> Research & Development E(g)(ii) and/or manufacturing (B2).

Agreed position

It is agreed that Winchester District has no objection to the delivery of development on the site (within Portsmouth City) 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.

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.

## Partnership for South Hampshire

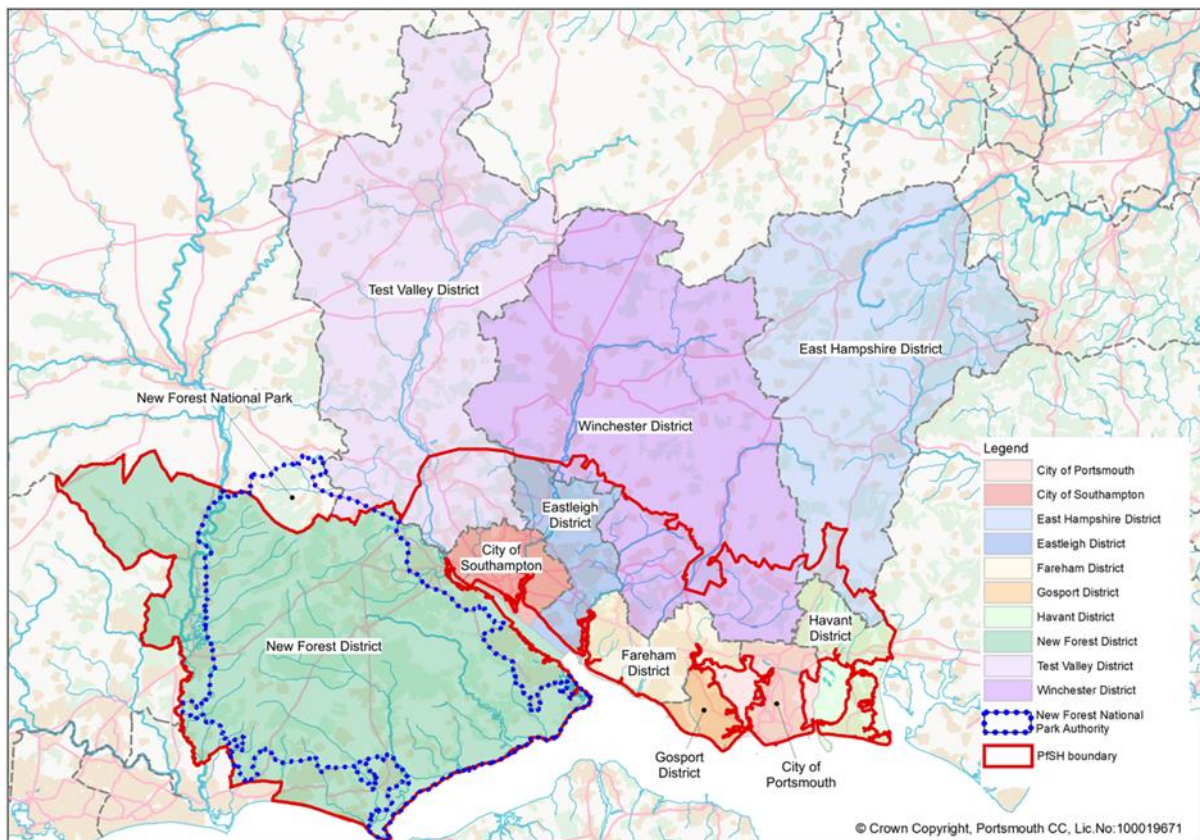


Figure 1: Map of the Partnership for South Hampshire sub-region

WCC and PCC are active members of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), which was originally formed in 2003 as the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). 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 1.

The Partnership has a strong track record in collaborative working to achieve common goals in South Hampshire. The Partnership was heavily involved in the production of a sub-regional strategy for development that formed part of the South East Plan. This strategy was tested through public examination and when adopted by the Secretary of State, formed part of the development plan at that time and informed the production of local plans.

The ethos of collaborative cross boundary working continued in South Hampshire after the abolition of regional planning and the revocation for the South East Plan in 2013. As well as joint working between member authorities, PfSH works with partner agencies in the sub-region and Government departments to deliver joint strategies and pool resources. PfSH has successfully developed a number of innovative solutions to challenging issues and thus unlocked development in the sub-region whilst recognising its constraints.

A number of SCG have been produced by PfSH over the years. The last one was signed by Joint Committee, which includes leaders or representatives of all authorities, in September 2023 . It sets out the key strategic cross-boundary planning issues including housing needs and the methodology and framework for the preparation of the new Spatial Position Statement published in December 2023. The Spatial Position Statement sets out a comparison of housing need and supply in the sub-region divided up between its constituent local authorities from 2023-36. The overall deficit is estimated to be 11,771 homes. The SCG states that the shortfall is best defined as need that is not yet planned for, rather than need that it is definitively unmet. It states that the shortfall would diminish over time as local plan reviews get underway and emerging plans are progressed.

The SCG identifies six local planning authorities that are less likely/unlikely to meet their housing needs: New Forest District, New Forest National Park Authority, Southampton, Gosport, Portsmouth and Havant. It states that the PfSH authorities are taking a two-stage approach to addressing the needs of those authorities that are unable to meet their housing needs in full. In the first stage, the following authorities are identified as more likely to be able to meet and potentially exceed their housing need: East Hampshire, Eastleigh, Fareham, Test Valley and Winchester. The precise contribution from each authority will be determined through their respective local plan processes.

In the longer term and in stage two, Broad Areas of Search for Growth identified in the Spatial Position Statement will be considered through Local Plans. These were identified by considering the combination of a relative absence of strategic constraints, relative proximity to opportunities and services, and their scope in principle for good public and active travel connectivity. The broad areas would require further investigation and technical work to determine their suitability as specific locations for development, and to test their capacity, deliverability, infrastructure and mitigation needs to achieve allocations in Local Plans. A preliminary assessment suggests that the areas of search have a combined capacity for around 9,700 dwellings, subject to deliverability, infrastructure and mitigation.

Growth in the sub-region is constrained as it is bounded by two national parks, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the coast/estuaries, a range of international, national and local biodiversity designations and it needs to accommodate land for biodiversity mitigation and net gain. South Hampshire is already heavily built up in places, with areas of valued countryside often important in landscape terms or as settlement gaps protecting the identity of individual towns and villages. Some areas are less accessible by public transport. The SCG states that the need to accommodate significantly more homes for people in the medium and longer term, including in the areas of search, will need to be carefully tested through local plans against all of these important characteristics to achieve the optimum solution.

The PfSH Spatial Position Statement was approved by Joint Committee in December 2023. It aims to provide guiding principles for local plans to help deliver sustainable development within South Hampshire. It should be noted that it is not an upper tier plan with which future local plans will need to conform. It does, however, help inform the preparation and strategic co-ordination of local plans under the duty to cooperate. Table 1 of the Spatial Position Statement compares housing need and supply along

with shortfalls and surpluses for each local authority in PfSH as a snapshot in time. On this basis the latest shortfall is 11,771 dwellings (2023 – 2036). Several evidence based documents supporting the Spatial Position Statement were published at the same time including the Broad Areas of Growth Assessments.

The Spatial Position Statement retains the strategic principle of focusing growth on cities/urban areas first to maximise housing delivery within existing urban areas and identifies a number of existing strategic development locations in SPS7. It also identifies new Broad Areas of Search for Growth in SPS8 as follows:

- South-east/east of Eastleigh Town (Eastleigh)
- Havant Town Centre (Havant)
- Waterlooville Town Centre (Havant)
- Southleigh (Havant)
- East of Romsey (Test Valley)
- South-west of Chandler’s Ford (Test Valley)
- East of Botley (Winchester)

The sites that fall within the broad areas of search will need to be tested through the local plan preparation process, including against other sites that may be available or promoted within individual local planning authority areas. The next local plan process will also need to resolve the quantum and form of development on sites and the infrastructure that will need to be provided to support development and make it sustainable.

Agreed Position:

Both WCC and PCC agree to work proactively in collaboration with all other PfSH authorities to support the PfSH Statement of Common Ground and Spatial Position Statement, which have been agreed by the PfSH Joint Committee and are available on the PfSH website.

**5. Governance Arrangements**

For the purpose of this document, and to evidence the cooperative process undertaken between Winchester City Council and Portsmouth City Council, it has been decided that the final signing of the Statement of Common Ground can be at Head of Service Level.

**6. Timetable for review and ongoing cooperation**

Winchester City Council will continue to work collaboratively with Portsmouth City Council to address strategic matters that, in addition to the above, arise through the plan-making process or require a resolution where there is yet to be an agreed matter. This will occur on an ongoing basis and relate to the timings of the relevant regulatory stages that the respective authorities are at during the plan-making process. The aim is to resolve any outstanding matters through regular meetings where cross-boundary strategic matters will be addressed.