



**Statement of Common Ground
between Fareham Borough Council and
the Partnership for South Hampshire**

**Version 1.0
August 2021**

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1 Introduction

What is a Statement of Common Ground?

- 1.1 The Duty to Co-operate, introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (amended by Section 33A of the Localism Act) places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and other prescribed bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to develop development plan documents, including activities that prepare the way or support the activities of preparing development plan documents, in respect of strategic matters.
- 1.2 The Duty to Co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development as set out in Section 33A of the Localism Act 2011 specifically relates to 'strategic matters' which are defined as follows:
- Sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, in particular in connection with sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with strategic infrastructure which has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, and
 - Sustainable development or use of land in a two-tier area if the development or use— (i) is a county matter, or (ii) has or would have a significant impact on a county matter.
- 1.3 Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also outlines strategic priorities that a local plan should have to cover. They include:
- Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - 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);
 - Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
 - 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.
- 1.4 In accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 24), public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities set out above. This forms part of each local planning authority's evidence for their respective emerging Local Plans.
- 1.5 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared in accordance with Paragraph 27 of the NPPF and the section of the Planning Practice Guidance on Maintaining Effective Cooperation. It has also followed guidance prepared by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on this matter. It has been prepared in parallel with the Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012¹). This Plan, upon adoption, will supersede the existing Fareham Local Plan Parts 1 and 2. The new Local Plan will cover the period to 2037 and sets out the vision, objectives and policies to guide future development in the Borough over the plan period.

What does this document include?

- 1.6 Section 2 outlines the administrative areas covered by the SoCG.

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

- 1.7 Section 3 sets out the Strategic Issues which form the background to this SoCG.
- 1.8 Section 4 sets out the area of agreements which have been reached on the Strategic Issues.

What parties are involved with this Statement of Common Ground?

- 1.9 This SoCG is an agreed statement between Fareham Borough Council (FBC) and the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) in relation to FBC’s Revised Publication Local Plan.
- 1.10 This is the first version of the SoCG which has been agreed by officers and will be updated in October 2021 and presented to PfSH Joint Committee to coincide with the updated PfSH SoCG including an updated position on unmet need (see paragraph 4.7)

2.0 Strategic Geography

- 2.1 This SoCG relates to the area covered by the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) as shown on the map below and highlights the Borough’s location within the PfSH boundary.

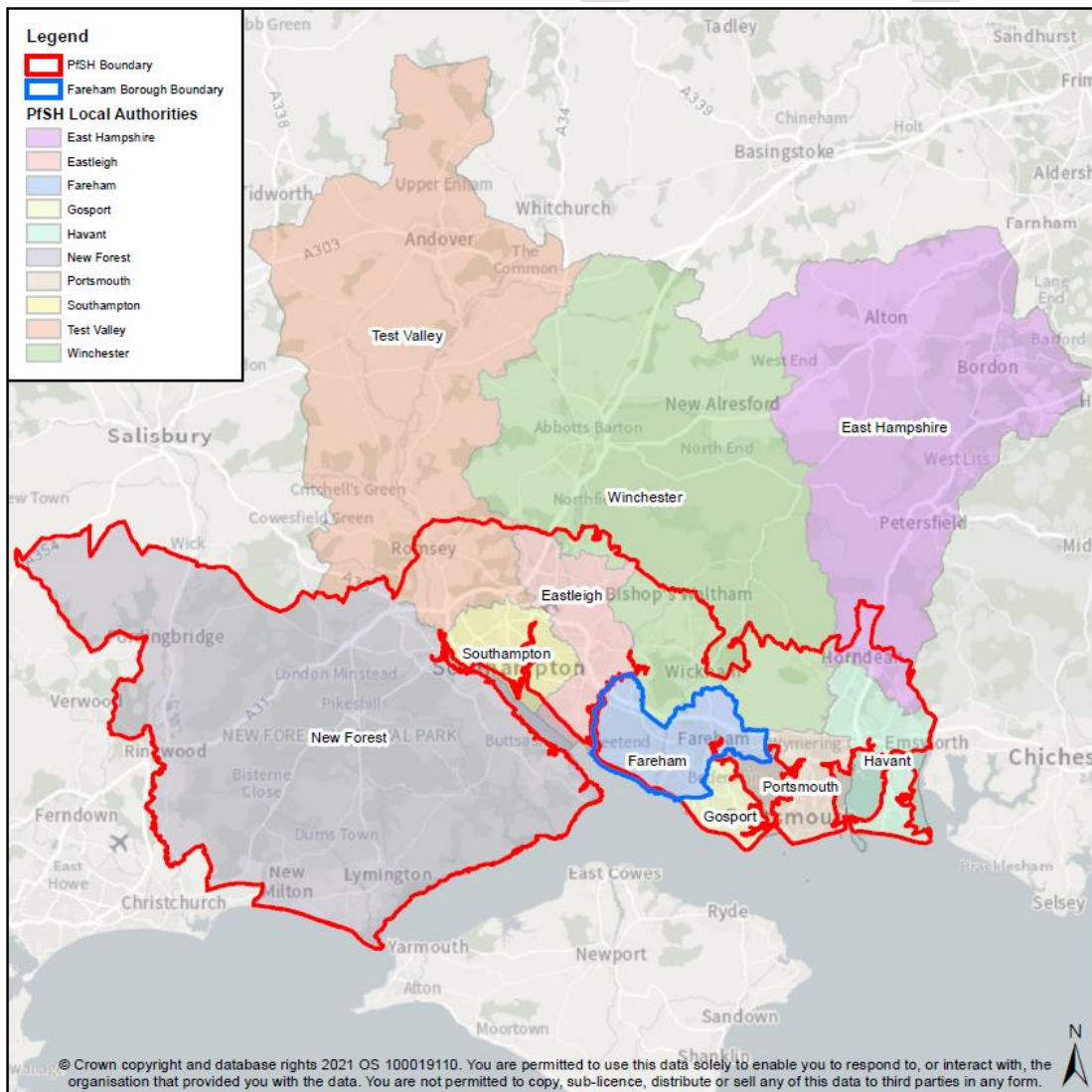


Figure 1: Fareham Borough Council and Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) Boundaries

2.2 The Planning Practice Guidance states that a SoCG will need to cover the area that policy making authorities and public bodies cooperate within, depending on the strategic matters being planned for and the most appropriate functional geography for the gathering of evidence and the preparation of planning policies. However, local planning authorities may have more than one Statement of Common Ground where there are strategic cross-boundary matters to be addressed.

3.0 Background

3.1 Paragraph 16c of the NPPF states that “Plans should:

be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees.”

3.2 In addition, Chapter 3 provides a framework for maintaining effective cooperation with relevant stakeholders. Paragraph 24 of the NPPF sets out that:

“Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies’ on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.”

3.3 Fareham Borough Council has an obligation to work with neighbouring authorities and bodies to identify and address unmet needs within the region. FBC has been a member of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) since it formed in 2003. The partnership consists of a number of district and unitary authorities, the county council and a national park authority. In 2016, the PfSH authorities agreed a Spatial Position Statement setting out the overall need for development to 2034 and proposed development targets for each of the member Councils, helping Councils meet their duty to co-operate.

3.4 Work to update this Spatial Position Statement with a new Joint Strategy has begun and the PfSH authorities entered into and agreed a Statement of Common Ground in October 2019, which was updated in September 2020. This sets out the strategic issues to be addressed in the sub-region and the process for resolving them. The PfSH SoCG also sets out the process and workstreams that will lead to the review of the current PfSH Spatial Position Statement (SPS) and the production of a Joint Strategy. The Joint Strategy will be a non-statutory high-level strategic plan to guide development across the sub-region to 2036 and beyond to 2050. The latest version of the PfSH Statement of Common Ground was approved at a meeting of the PfSH Joint Committee on the 30th September 2020². Fareham Borough Council remains a committed member of PfSH and to the work to produce a new Joint Strategy.

3.5 This Statement of Common Ground outlines the key issues and relationship of the Fareham Local Plan with strategic planning activities undertaken by PfSH and areas for agreement in Section 4.

² [Statement-of-Common-Ground-September-2020-Final-No-Signatures.pdf \(push.gov.uk\)](#)

4.0 Strategic Matters

- 4.1 This section sets out where agreement has or has not been reached on cross border strategic matters.

Housing Need and Supply

- 4.2 Fareham Borough Council's (FBC) emerging Local Plan aims to deliver sufficient land to meet the housing need for the Borough and make a contribution to wider unmet need. FBC has undertaken a Regulation 19 consultation and three Regulation 18 consultations on that basis. FBC are currently consulting on a Revised Publication Local Plan aligned with the Government's standard methodology for calculating housing need. Since the start of the Local Plan review, it has been FBC's intention to meet the housing need of the borough.
- 4.3 The current standard methodology takes account of population growth and housing affordability with a cities and urban centres uplift for urban local authorities in the top 20 cities and urban centres. National policy currently dictates that Local Planning Authorities are to use the 2014-based household projections as the basis for calculating their housing need, unless there are exceptional circumstances where alternatives may be appropriate. The household projections are then adjusted to take account of affordability using the most recent affordability data (March 2021). Therefore, the housing requirement for the borough is 541 homes per annum.
- 4.4 The strategic housing provision, described in Strategic Policy H1 (Housing Provision) of the Revised Publication Local Plan, is based on the standard methodology figure re-confirmed by the Government in December 2020. The level of housing provision in the Revised Publication Local Plan includes a contingency of 11% of the overall housing supply and an additional contribution of 900 homes, plus the 11% contingency, towards unmet need from neighbouring authorities and to address any potential slippages in delivery. Therefore, the overall growth level for the Borough until 2037 is projected to be 9,556 new dwellings.
- 4.5 Strategic Policy H1 along with the Housing Allocations identified in the Revised Publication Local Plan show how FBC will deliver the above identified housing requirement. The stepped trajectory included in the Plan shows that whilst challenging, the housing requirement is deliverable and the contribution to unmet need is currently considered appropriate.
- 4.6 It is understood from the work on the revised PfSH Statement of Common Ground that, based on standardised plan periods of 2020-2036, there is a predicted shortfall in the region of some 10,750 homes across the sub-region³. This figure is derived from eleven authorities who are all at different stages of plan preparation and is set out in the PfSH Statement of Common Ground.
- 4.7 The numbers presented at table 4 in the September 2020 Statement of Common Ground are based on the existing standard methodology for calculating housing need. Updated housing need figures in future versions of the Statement of Common Ground will need to factor in the recently published affordability data in March 2021 and the cities and urban centre uplift which applies to the housing requirement for Southampton, and will need to consider a different base date to 2020. Additionally, the supply figures will be reviewed as Local Plans progress as the figures presented do not consider housing sites that are not yet in the public domain which could be proposed in emerging Local Plans. For example, the figures presented in September 2020 indicate that Fareham would have a shortfall of supply which is not correct now

³ Based on figures released in September 2020.

that the Regulation 19 Publication Plans have been published. Subsequently several district and borough councils' housing requirements within PfSH have reduced and furthermore the figures are likely to evolve as the PfSH work progresses. PfSH Joint Committee will receive an updated housing need and supply position across the sub-region at the October 2021 meeting, and as such, this SOCG between PfSH and FBC will be updated and presented to the same Joint Committee for approval.

- 4.8 As a consequence, the level of unmet need within neighbouring authorities and across the sub-region is therefore likely to alter as plans emerge within the sub-region and the government makes changes to the standard methodology. FBC are committed to inputting towards this development of the Joint Strategy which considers how partner authorities will meet housing needs.

Agreed Position

- 4.9 Both Fareham Borough Council and the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) recognise there is ongoing work in relation to housing need and supply and that the level of unmet need will alter as other Local Plans progress. Both bodies agree to support the ongoing partnership working on housing need and unmet need being delivered through the PfSH Statement of Common Ground and the review of the Spatial Position Statement and production of a new Joint Strategy and will continue to contribute towards the project. PfSH is supportive of authorities proceeding with local plans before the production of the Joint Strategy has concluded and recognises the importance of partnership authorities having up-to-date Local Plans.

Matters to be Resolved

- 4.10 None.

PfSH Strategic Development Opportunity Area's (SDOA's)

- 4.11 The Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) is in the process of undertaking work to identify the level of unmet need within the PfSH authorities. This work, which is not yet in the public domain, will identify a number of Strategic Development Opportunity Areas (SDOA's) and different development scenarios which could be selected to address identified unmet need in the PfSH sub-region as highlighted above. The assessment of the SDOA's will include a transport assessment and sustainability appraisal. To date the Council has been an active party in discussions and technical assessment undertaken on the potential SDOA's within the borough and the wider sub-region. The Fareham Local Plan goes ahead of this workstream.
- 4.12 PfSH acknowledges that Fareham's Revised Publication Local Plan has identified sufficient sites in its Borough that will allow the Plan to meet Fareham's need and make a contribution to the unmet need.

Agreed Position

- 4.13 Both parties acknowledge that the unmet need position is changing as plans develop, and as the housing need and supply picture across the sub-region changes, and that the Fareham Local Plan has reached the Regulation 19 Publication stage before information on the pSDOAs is advanced enough to influence Local Plans. However, PfSH recognises Fareham's contribution to unmet need and continued work in the partnership. The Council are supportive of the PfSH work and the Council remain an active partner in discussions. Should the Joint Strategy work identify sites not considered suitable for development in the Fareham Local Plan technical evidence, this would be a matter for the Local Plan review.

Matters to be Resolved

4.14 None

Additional workstreams

Employment Need

4.15 In the Publication Local Plan, Fareham's employment need was derived from the Council's own evidence and amounted to 104,000 square metres (sqm) over the plan period. Following the publication of the Stantec work by PfSH and an increase for Fareham to 140,000 sqm, the Revised Publication Local Plan, on which the Council is currently consulting, proposes this higher need as the basis for its employment need figure. Both parties agree that this is a sensible approach to align Fareham's Local Plan with published PfSH evidence.

Countryside Gaps

4.16 A key aspect of the FBC's development strategy and selecting sites for allocation in the FLP is the desire to retain the separate identity of individual towns, villages and local communities and to prevent their coalescence by retaining open and undeveloped countryside gaps between them. Position Statement S1 of the SPS reflects this important principle. It makes provision for local authorities to identify in local plans strategic countryside gaps of sub-regional significance as well as local countryside gaps which are of fundamental local importance.

4.17 Strategic Policy DS2 of the FLP sets out to do this and identifies two countryside gaps where development, which would physically or visually diminish the gap or have an urbanising effect detrimental to retaining its openness, its character or the separate identity of adjoining settlements, will not be permitted.

Nutrient Neutrality



4.18 Following case law in 2018 and evidence creating uncertainty around the contribution of new development in Fareham to deteriorating water quality (eutrophication) in the Solent and the effect this is having on the internationally designated sites, there is greater emphasis on the burden of proof to demonstrate that new development will not cause a likely significant effect on the integrity of these sites. Development needs to demonstrate that it would prevent any net increase in nutrients and therefore be 'nutrient neutral'. The Council have created a nutrient budget to demonstrate the extent of nutrient loading and the amount of mitigation offsetting (in kgs/TN/yr) that would be required to ensure that development proposed within the Plan would not result in a likely significant effect on designated sites, through deteriorating water environment. Mitigation for each individual development allocation in the Plan is then identified through two main pathways, onsite and offsite. There are currently at least three offsite schemes which development in the Local Plan can utilise to achieve nutrient neutrality.

4.19 The Council continues to work with PfSH through the Water Quality Working Group to coordinate the provision of a strategic PfSH wide solution⁴ in the medium to long term. This includes the appointment of a Strategic Environmental Planning Officer to take forward the creation of a pilot sub-region mitigation scheme.

5.0 Signatories

⁴ [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Partnership for South Hampshire \(PfSH\) Joint Committee, 22/03/2021 18:00 \(push.gov.uk\)](#)

- 5.1 Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.
- 5.2 It is agreed that these discussions will inform the Fareham Borough Council Local Plan 2037 and both parties will continue to work collaboratively in order to meet the duty to cooperate.
- 5.3 For the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) the Statement of Common Ground is signed by the Paddy May, PfSH Co-ordinator.

Signed: 	Signed: 
Name: Paddy May	Name: Richard Jolley
Position: PfSH Co-ordinator	Position: Director of Planning and Regulation
Partnership for South Hampshire	Fareham Borough Council
Date: 16 August 2021	Date: 16 August 2021