

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for the Hart Local Plan

Scoping Report

June 2026

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V0.1	9 th April 2026	First draft for internal review	EB	Environmental Planner
V1.0	14 th April 2026	Draft for client review	EB	Environmental Planner
V2.0	30 th June 2026	Consultation version	CB	Associate Director
V2.1	9 th September 2026	Consultation close acknowledgement	CB	Associate Director

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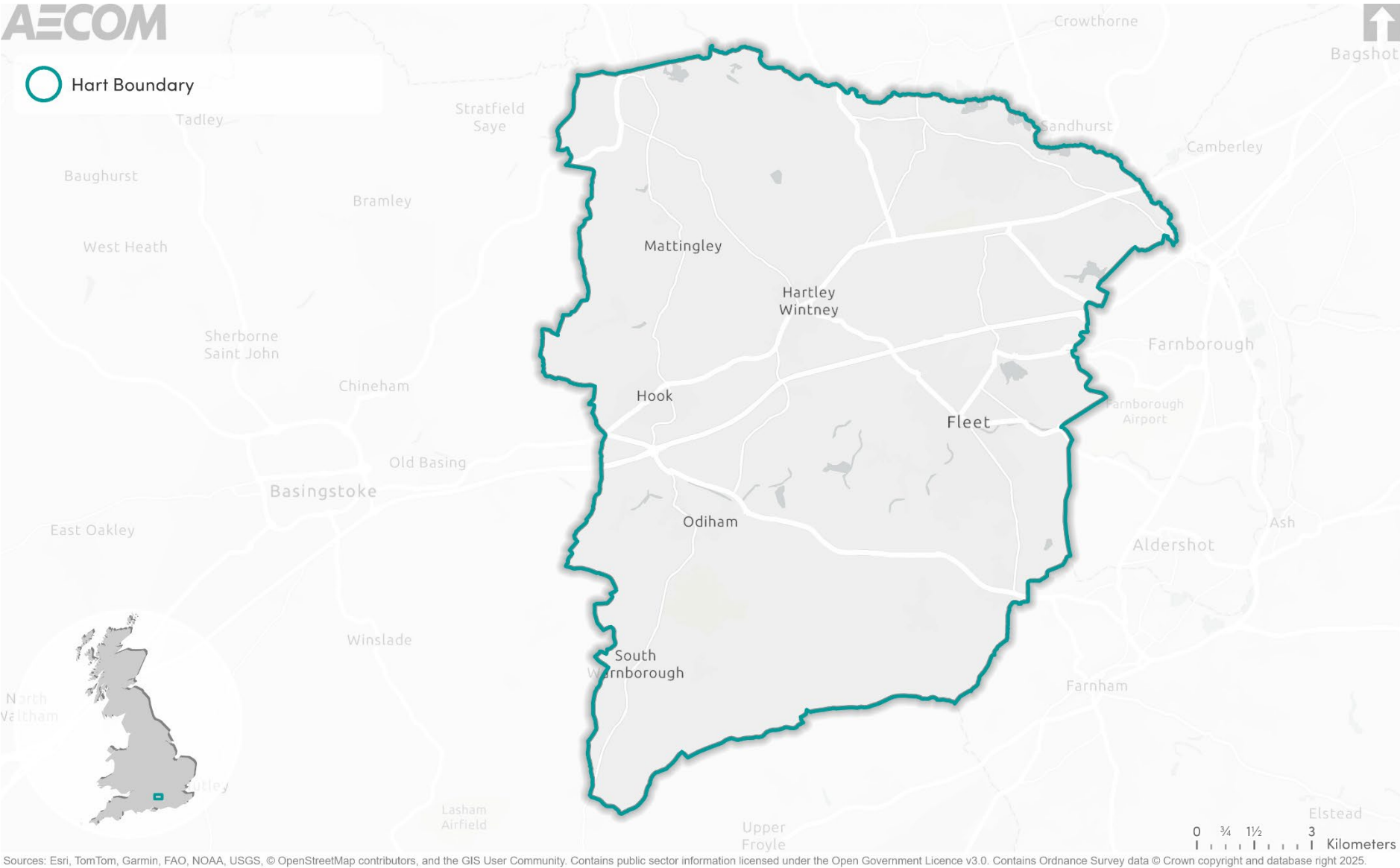


Figure 1.1: Hart district

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) in support of the emerging Hart Local Plan (HLP). Hart is located in Hampshire in South East England. The district boundary is depicted in Figure 1.1.
- 1.1.2 The IIA incorporates the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'). The IIA ensures that environmental, social, and economic considerations are integrated into the plan-making process from the outset, helping to promote sustainable development and assess reasonable alternatives.
- 1.1.3 The IIA is being undertaken in accordance with relevant national guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It is an iterative process that informs the development of the Local Plan and supports its legal compliance and soundness.

Planning Policy Context

- 1.1.4 The NPPF provides an overarching framework for development in England. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is supported by planning practice guidance, which is a suite of policy papers covering a broad range of topics, including IIA.
- 1.1.5 The NPPF includes significant reforms aimed at boosting housing supply and supporting sustainable growth. One of the key changes is the reintroduction of housing targets, which now require an increased number of dwellings in Hart. Consultation on the proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system closed on 10th March 2026. The NPPF is clear on the need for local authorities to prioritise local plan making as the central pillar of England's plan-led system, with a motivation to avoid a "permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development".
- 1.1.6 The new plan-making system covers plans prepared and adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. A package of regulations to implement the new system was put to Parliament in early March 2026. This package includes the new Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, which commenced from the 25 March 2026 and replaced the existing 2012 plan-making regulations.
- 1.1.7 Hart District Council are in the process of creating a new Local Plan that will cover the period 2025 – 2044 and will cover issues such as; housing provision, the economy, retail and town centres; infrastructure provision and the environment. It will also set out policies by which planning applications will be determined, in addition to allocating land for housing, employment and other uses; albeit these will be more limited with the introduction of national decision-making policies.

1.2 IIA Explained

- 1.2.1 Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is a mechanism for assessing and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to achieving sustainable development. IIA fulfils the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and discharges the duties for Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA). In addition, a parallel Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process will be undertaken to support the development of the HLP and reported on separately.
- 1.2.2 The aim of the IIA will be to inform plan-making both directly (i.e. through structured, systematic and evidence-based analysis), and indirectly (through providing stakeholders with information on potential plan impacts and so facilitating effective consultation).
- 1.2.3 The use of an IIA approach will help ensure consistency in the development and evaluation of the HLP, and is considered best practice.
- 1.2.4 A discussion of the different elements to be integrated within the IIA process is presented below.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 1.2.5 SEA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations'). It also widens the scope of the assessment from focusing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues. The SEA Regulations only formally apply to plans and programmes for which there is a statutory requirement; Local Plans fall within this definition.
- 1.2.6 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
- When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
 - A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan for consultation that presents an assessment of the draft plan (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 1.2.7 As a public sector organisation, Hart District Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that the objectives and policy options within the District eliminate unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those with a protected characteristics¹ and all others. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is

¹ Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 include age, sex, marital status, disability, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and deprived/disadvantaged groups.

often used by public sector organisations to demonstrate how this duty has been met.

1.2.8 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace and in wider society. It replaces previous anti-discrimination laws which include the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Act ensures that individuals with certain 'protected characteristics' are not indirectly or directly discriminated against. The protected characteristics include:

- Age: this refers to persons defined by either a particular age or a range of ages.
- Disability: a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Gender reassignment: this refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their gender identity.
- Marriage and civil partnership: marriage can be between a man and a woman or between two people of the same sex. Same-sex couples can also have a civil partnership. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples.
- Pregnancy and maternity: pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth.
- Race: the Equality Act 2010 defines race as encompassing colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins;
- Religion or belief: religion means any religion a person follows. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, and includes those people who have no formal religion or belief.
- Gender: this refers to a man or to a woman or a group of people of the same sex, while gender refers to the wider social roles and relationships that structure men's and women's, boys' and girls' lives.
- Sexual orientation: a person's sexual orientation relates to their emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.
- Socio-economic status: a person's socio-economic status referring to combined economic and sociological measure of a person's work experience and economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

- 1.2.9 There are numerous links between planning and health highlighted throughout the NPPF. In this context, Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process which seeks to ensure that the effect of proposals on both health and health inequalities are considered and responded to during the plan's development process.
- 1.2.10 An HIA identifies the positive impacts, and minimise the negative impacts, of a project or plan, with a view to informing decision making.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- 1.2.11 As previously explained, the IIA seeks to fulfil the requirement for SEA, address the duty to undertake an EqlA, and integrate HIA. The approach is to fully integrate these to provide a single assessment process to inform the development of the HLP. This reflects the process undertaken for the IIA for the HLP.

1.3 Scoping

- 1.3.1 A key procedural requirement of the SEA Regulations is to present a scope for the IIA, so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.
- 1.3.2 Developing the draft scope for the IIA as presented in this Scoping Report has involved the following steps:
- Exploring the policy context for the Plan and IIA to summarise the key messages arising.
 - Establishing the baseline for the IIA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the Plan) to help identify the Plan's likely significant effects.
 - Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the IIA.
 - Considering this information, developing an IIA framework comprising IIA Objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.
- 1.3.3 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:
- Accessibility (Community Infrastructure).
 - Air Quality and Noise.
 - Biodiversity.
 - Climate Change Adaptation.
 - Climate Change Mitigation.

- Communities.
- Economy and Employment.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Health and Wellbeing.
- Historic Environment.
- Homes.
- Landscape.
- Soils and Natural Resources.
- Transport and Travel.
- Water.

1.3.4 The selected IIA themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Schedule 2(6) of the SEA Regulations. These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in **Chapters 2 to 16**, and the proposed IIA framework is brought together as a whole in **Chapter 17**. Each proposal within the HLP will be assessed consistently using this Framework.

2. Accessibility (Community Infrastructure)

2.1 Focus of Theme

- 2.1.1 This chapter has a focus on identifying accessible locations in Hart, with sustainable and active transport links, essential services, and inclusive infrastructure.

2.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 2.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the accessibility theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032</u>	2020
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019

2.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

- 2.3.1 Hart is located in the north-eastern extent of Hampshire. There are 34 settlements dispersed across the district, which are categorised by their size and services and facilities under the adopted Hart Local Plan:²
- Fleet (including Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath) is the main urban area.
 - Blackwater, Hook, and Yateley are the primary local service centres.
 - Hartley Wintney and Odiham, and North Warnborough are secondary local service centres.
 - The remaining settlements are categorised as small settlements.

² Urban Intelligence (2023). 'Hart District Council Settlement Capacity and Intensification Study' can be accessed through [this link](#).

2.3.2 Within the district there are:^{3, 4, 5}

- Eleven dental surgeries.
- Ten GP surgeries.
- Nine opticians.
- 17 pharmacies.
- 39 schools – 31 primary schools, and eight secondary schools.
- Two libraries.
- Country parks and multiple green spaces
- 18 village greens (which can be seen in **Figure 2.1** at the end of this chapter).
- Sports facilities.

Access to services

2.3.3 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)⁶ is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of several different domains. These are assessed on a 'lower super output area' (LSOA) basis – these are standardised geographies that include approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. LSOAs are ranked out of 32,844 – with lower numbers representing lower levels of deprivation. Of relevance to this chapter is the barriers to housing and services domain – measuring the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.

2.3.4 As demonstrated in **Figure 2.2** at the end of this chapter, Hart district faces largely high deprivation linked to barriers to housing and services. High deprivation is largely experienced within the more rural / countryside areas of the district, with deprivation lower within and around Fleet and Yateley to the east and north-east.

Transport and connectivity

2.3.5 Hart benefits from multi-modal transport links, including rail and road links to major population centres within the South East England region. The road network includes the M3 and multiple A roads and B roads, and there is a network of public footpaths and bridleways in the district that contribute towards public rights of way (PRoW) in Hampshire. The Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan seeks to ensure that people can access their daily needs within a 20 minute walk of their home, through the creation of liveable neighbourhoods. For further detail on transportation and travel, see **Chapter 15**.

Broadband

2.3.6 Digital connectivity is becoming increasingly important, especially given the shift of services to online platforms. Reliable internet access is now critical

³ Hart District Council (2025). 'My Maps' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁴ Snobe (2026). 'Find All Schools In Hart, Hampshire – 39 Schools' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵ Hart District (2025). 'Welcome to Hart' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶ GOV.UK (2025). 'English indices of deprivation 2025' can be accessed through [this link](#).

for supporting social inclusion, remote working, education, and the viability of local businesses.

- 2.3.7 As of July 2025, 86% of premises in Hart had coverage from a gigabit-capable service (download speeds of 1,000 Mbps or more). This is greater than the average for the UK.⁷ Additionally, 100% of the district has 4G coverage from at least one mobile network provider⁸, and 89% of the district has 5G coverage from at least one mobile network provider – this is greater than the average for the UK.⁹ Only 2.3% of premises in Hart do not have access to services above 30 Mbps, which is lower than the average for the UK.¹⁰ This demonstrates that the district has good broadband and digital connectivity.

Future Baseline

- 2.3.8 Focusing growth within the more sustainable locations within the district (e.g., Fleet and the primary local service centres) would deliver development within better proximity to existing services and facilities in Hart. This would likely help to improve accessibility, and reduce the need to travel.
- 2.3.9 An increase in the built environment and population of Hart has the potential to lead to new or increased stresses experienced by infrastructure, services and facilities. This is due to more people requiring access. As such, it will be important to seek new development that is designed alongside new infrastructure, or can facilitate enhancements to existing infrastructure.
- 2.3.10 Working from home has become more common across the UK, and has the potential to alter commuting patterns and access trends of residents in Hart in the future. Whilst there is uncertainty around how and where impacts may occur, the emerging HLP provides opportunities to guide development that can accommodate changing work patterns and lifestyles.

2.4 Key Issues

- 2.4.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to accessibility:
- Hart has a largely dispersed settlement pattern, with many small and rural settlements that do not have good access to services and facilities within the larger settlements and urban areas – as demonstrated by the IMD data. As such, residents in these areas are more likely to experience reduced physical access to healthcare, education, retail, and community facilities, and likely rely on private car travel to access these services. Enhancements to public transport, active travel routes, and PRow network could improve access to services, particularly if integrated into new development. The emerging HLP could also support accessibility by seeking development that supports new or the expansion

⁷ ONS (2025). 'Gigabit capable broadband' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸ ONS (2025). '4G coverage' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹ ONS (2025). '5G coverage' can be accessed through [this link](#).

¹⁰ ONS (2025). 'Premises below 30 Mbps' can be accessed through [this link](#).

of existing community infrastructure, to help improve access and reduce existing inequalities within the district.

- The emerging HLP could place additional pressure on existing services, transport infrastructure, and digital networks, linked to new development. This has the potential to worsen accessibility if not adequately addressed. It will be important for the emerging HLP to deliver infrastructure improvements alongside development, to ensuring accessibility to key services and facilities is maintained or enhanced.
- Hart has strong broadband and mobile coverage, which likely helps to mitigate the effects of poor accessibility in the more rural parts of the district. However, 2021 Census data indicates that a small proportion of premises still lack high-speed connectivity, which could lead to digital exclusion if services continue to move online.

2.5 IIA Objective

- 2.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to accessibility:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
To improve accessibility to essential services and facilities across Hart.	• Identify priority measures that will improve active travel networks in future growth? • Reduce inequalities in access to essential services across Hart, particularly in its most deprived areas? • Connect new housing and employment development with healthcare, educational, and community services and facilities? • Enhance digital connectivity and inclusion to ensure all residents can access online services and opportunities?

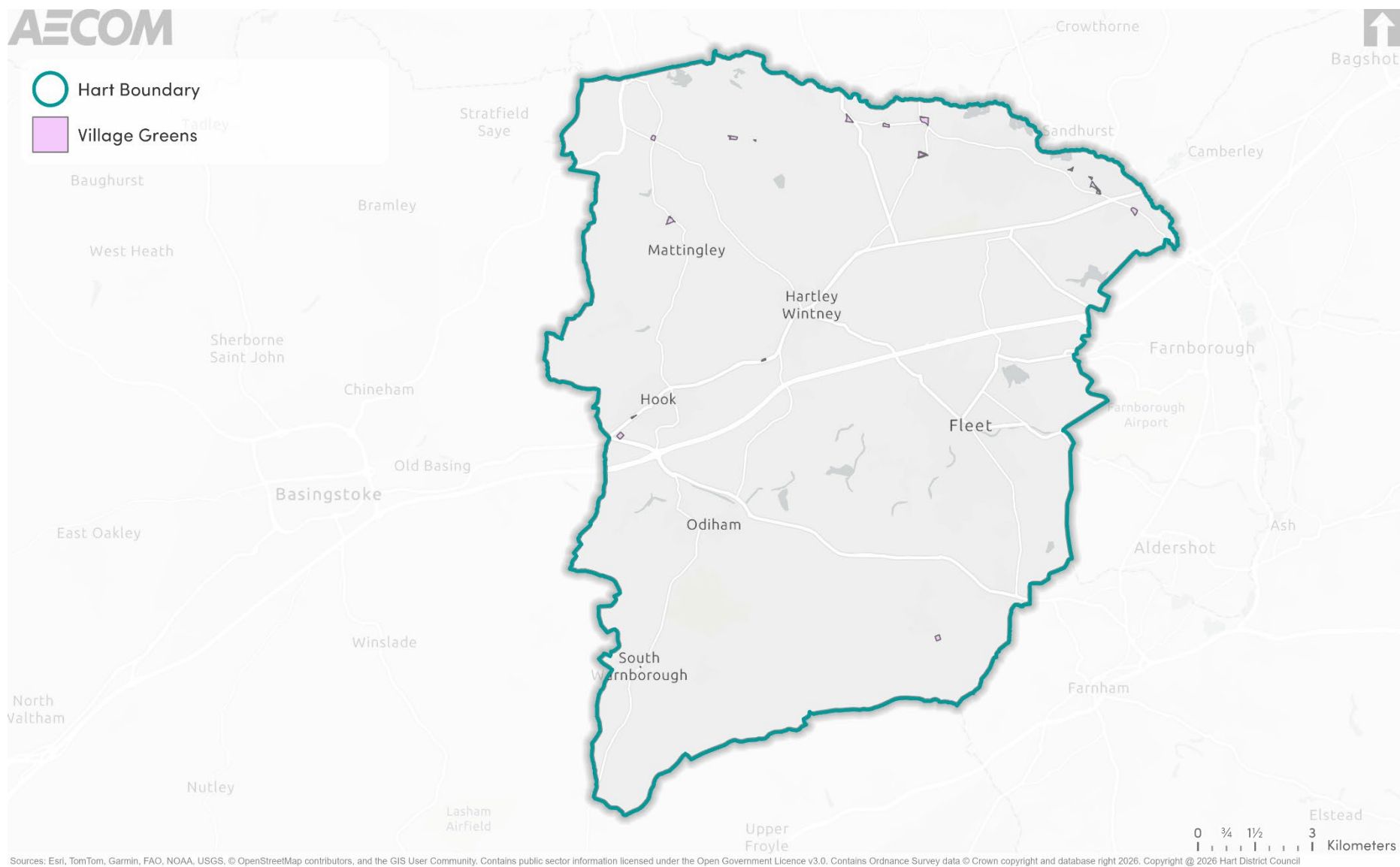


Figure 2.1: Village Greens in Hart

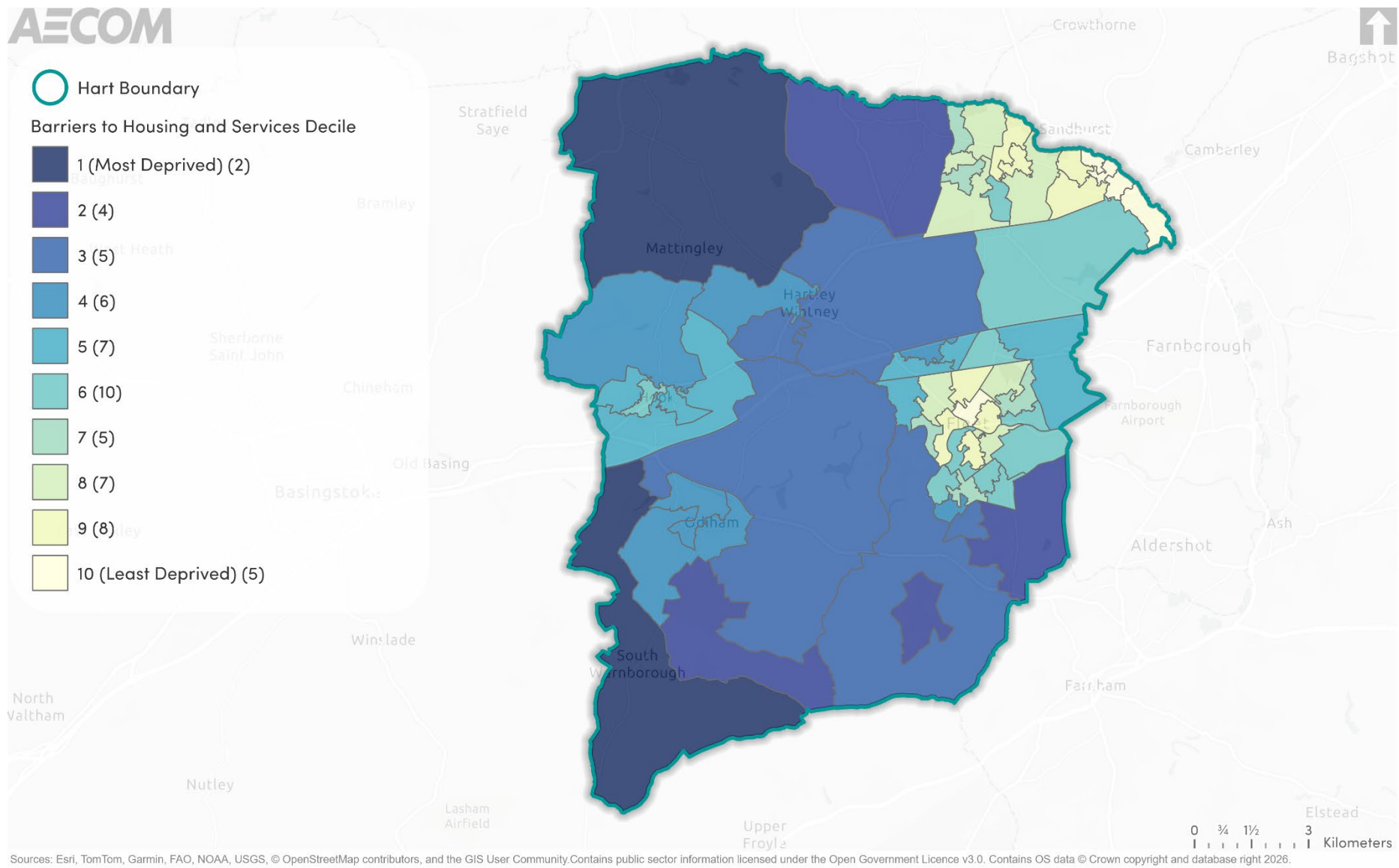


Figure 2.2: IMD - Barriers to housing and services deprivation domain in Hart

3. Air Quality and Noise

3.1 Focus of Theme

- 3.1.1 This theme focuses on local air quality within Hart. This includes sources of air pollution, air quality hotspots, and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality. This theme also looks at local sources of noise pollution.

3.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 3.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the air quality and noise theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart District Council Air quality annual status report</u>	2025
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4</u>	2024
<u>Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032</u>	2020
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019

3.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Air Quality Management Areas

- 3.3.1 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared by councils in areas that record exceedances in national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides.
- 3.3.2 At present, Hart contains no AQMAs and air quality is considered to be generally good within the area. According to the 2025 Air quality annual status report (ASR), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) pollution in Hart is generally low and below national targets. Additionally, NO₂ concentrations are showing long term improvements throughout the district.
- 3.3.3 The 2025 ASR identifies that one of the main sources of pollution in the area is NO₂ from road traffic, which is generally worse in the urban areas. Monitoring is carried out at 13 sites across Hart, focusing on roads and

areas of potential exposure. The data suggests that NO₂ pollution is continuing its broad decreasing trend experienced in Hart since 2022, though it is recognised that one monitoring location saw a slight increase in 2024 data when compared to 2023.

- 3.3.4 Particulate monitoring is more limited. At present no automatic monitoring stations measure PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} within the district. Instead, background concentrations are estimated using Defra national modelling data.
- 3.3.5 The Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan recognises the impact the transportation network has on air quality – outlining that long-term exposure to NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ adversely affects a range of health conditions, including those associated with the heart and lungs.

Industry

- 3.3.6 In addition to transport, industrial process can be a significant source of air pollution, particularly in urban areas. Emissions can include particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), depending on the nature of the process.
- 3.3.7 Within Hart, industrial emissions may arise from manufacturing and processing facilities, energy generation sites, waste management and treatment operations. However, a review of industrial processes operating within the district has not identified any major new sources of emissions in 2024 according to the 2025 ASR.

Construction and demolition

- 3.3.8 Construction and demolition activities are also a common source of dust and fine particulates, especially during earthworks, site preparation, and materials handling. Emissions from non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) also contribute to local NO_x and PM levels. In areas of Hart undergoing rapid development, multiple construction sites can also lead to cumulative air quality impacts.
- 3.3.9 Dust from construction and demolition is usually coarse (PM₁₀), but fine fractions (PM_{2.5}) are also generated and can remain airborne longer, affecting health and visibility. Controls to mitigate noise and air quality adverse impacts from construction and demolition is regulated through Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) for major sites.

Aggregates

- 3.3.10 The handling, storage, processing, and transport of aggregates and minerals (such as sand, gravel, and crushed rock) are associated with the release of coarse and fine dust particles, particularly from loading/ unloading, screening, and crushing operations. Dust can travel beyond site boundaries without appropriate suppression measures.
- 3.3.11 To manage these emissions, aggregate sites are required to implement dust management plans. These typically include measures such as wheel washing, road cleaning, and material covering, to minimise the spread of dust and reduce adverse impacts on local air quality.

Noise

- 3.3.12 The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 transpose the Environmental Noise Directive into law for England. These regulations apply to environmental noise, including that linked to transport, and require regular noise action planning for road, rail and aviation noise, as well as noise in large urban areas.¹¹
- 3.3.13 **Figure 3.1** at the end of the chapter shows the extent of noise pollution in Hart relating to the major road network. The highest levels of noise pollution are found along the M3. Noise levels relating to the road network are also particularly high along the A30, A287, and the A327.
- 3.3.14 **Figure 3.2** at the end of the chapter shows the extent of noise pollution in Hart relating to the rail network. A single railway line that bisects the district in a broadly east to west direction is the source of noise associated with the rail network in the district.
- 3.3.15 The Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan recognises the impact the transportation network has on noise – outlining that long-term exposure to traffic-related noise can result in sleep disturbance, and physical and mental health problems.

Future Baseline

- 3.3.16 Growth associated with future development in the district has the potential for adverse effects on air quality and noise in the short to medium term, due to construction activities and increased levels of traffic and associated pollutants. In absence of the emerging HLP, the continued adoption of low-emission vehicles alongside national policy stipulations should contribute towards improving noise pollution and air quality. Furthermore, improvements in the sustainable and active transportation networks through the Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan is also anticipated to positively contribute towards reducing poor air quality and noise pollution, including through support opportunities to improve sustainable transportation options and accessibility.

3.4 Key Issues

- 3.4.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to air quality and noise:
- Vehicle emissions remain a key source of pollution in Hart, with pollution generally worse in urban areas. Development is more likely to be directed to urban areas, as they generally represent more sustainable locations – largely linked to their service provision. As such, these areas are sensitive to growth in terms of associated pressures on air quality.
 - Industrial, quarrying, and construction and demolition activities can lead to long and short-term increases in noise, dust and fine particulates, with cumulative impacts where multiple sites are active concurrently.

¹¹ GOV.UK (2022). 'Noise management' can be accessed through [this link](#).

- Road traffic is a significant source of environmental noise within Hart, particularly along the M3, A30, A287, and the A327. The impacts of traffic-related noise is recognised in the Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan.
- Future development may temporarily increase air pollution through construction and traffic-related emissions, but also presents opportunities to embed sustainable transport, active travel, and low-emission technologies into planning and infrastructure.

3.5 IIA Objectives

- 3.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to air quality and noise:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
To improve air quality, reduce air pollution and exposure to air pollution.	• Minimise traffic congestion and encourage active travel and public transport use, to help reduce key pollutant emissions - particularly nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀/PM_{2.5})? • Support a reduction in air pollution for key pollutants, including carbon dioxide emissions, and contribute towards net-zero ambitions?
To reduce noise pollution and minimise exposure to harmful noise levels.	• Minimise noise pollution and protect sensitive receptors, including residential communities, from noise associated with transport and construction activities? • Prevent or mitigate adverse air quality and noise impacts from construction and industry activities? • Support compliance with, or improvement beyond, national air quality and noise standards across the district?

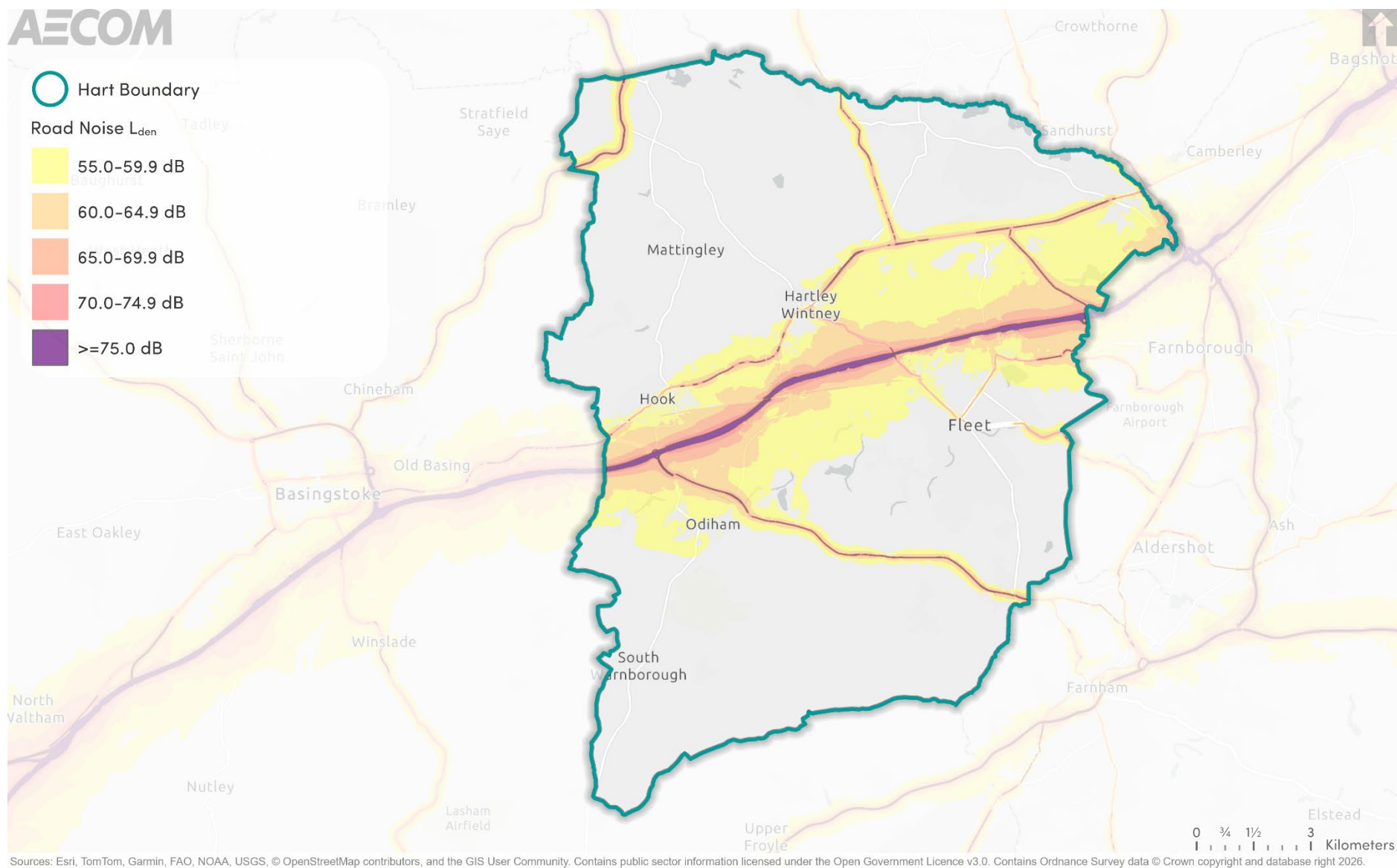


Figure 3.1: Noise associated with the road network in Hart

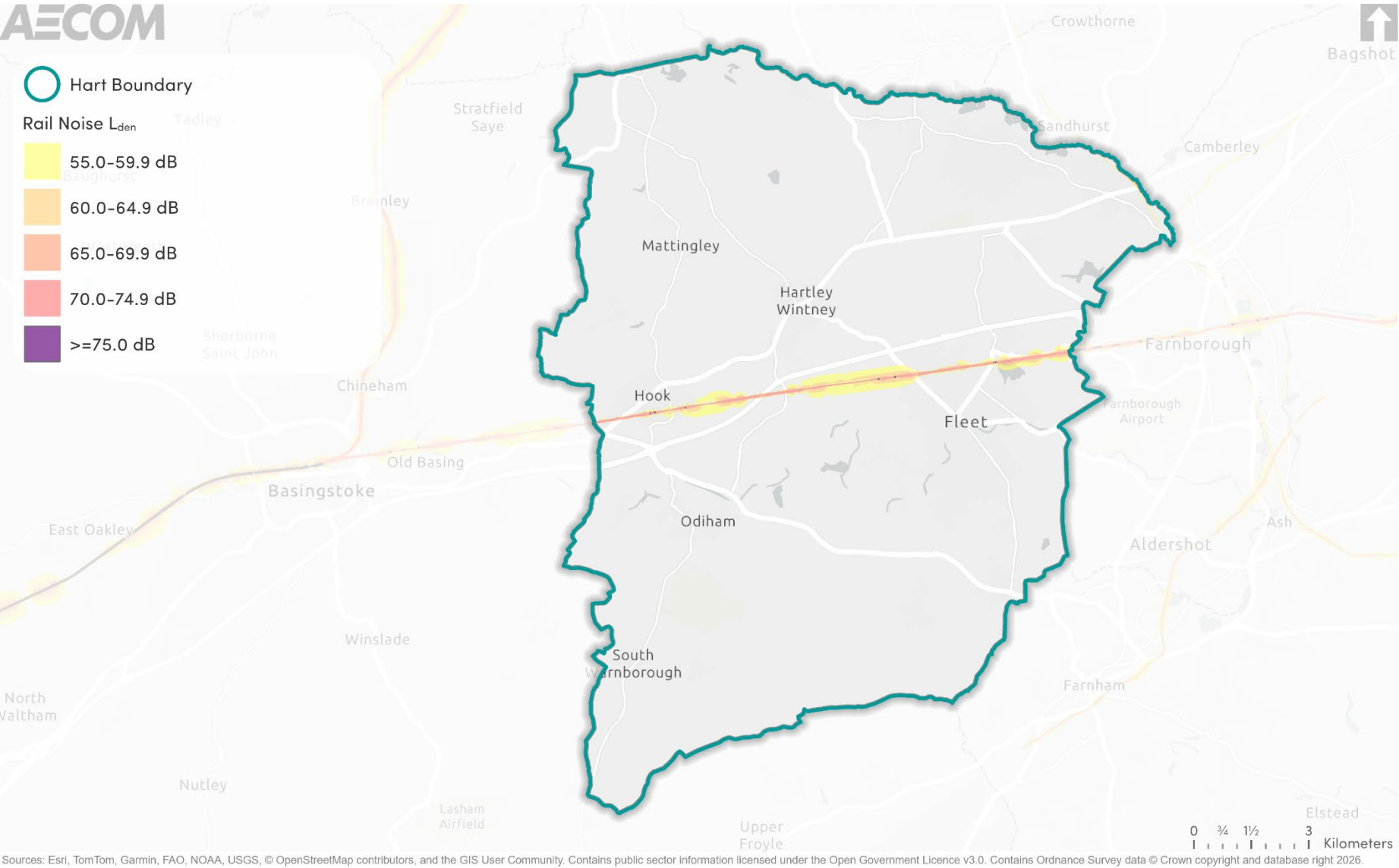


Figure 3.2: Noise associated with the rail network in Hart

4. Biodiversity

4.1 Focus of Theme

- 4.1.1 This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats, and species within and surrounding Hart.

4.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 4.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the biodiversity theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire</u>	2025
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire and Isle of Wight's Natural Wealth</u>	2022
<u>State of Hampshire's Natural Environment</u>	2020
<u>Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032</u>	2020
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>Biodiversity Action Plan for Hart 2018-2023</u>	2018
<u>Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy</u>	2017

4.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Internationally important sites

- 4.3.1 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites are designated biodiversity assets of international importance, which are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Act (2010). There is one internationally designated biodiversity site located within Hart, and several more within a 15km radius of its boundary. The locations of these designations are shown on **Figure 4.1** at the end of the chapter.
- 4.3.2 The Thames Basin Heaths SPA extends across multiple locations within and beyond Hart, covering a total area of approximately 8,274 ha. The site is characterised by a range of heathland, scrub and woodland habitats that were once continuous but are now fragmented by roads, urban development and farmland. The site has important habitats that support breeding

populations of Annex 1 species (bird species and subspecies that require special conservation measures due to their threatened status or specific habitat needs). Specifically, the habitats support nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler populations.¹²

- 4.3.3 The Site Improvement Plan for Thames Basin Heaths SPA identifies that public access / disturbance is a threat to the site. Additionally, undergrazing, forest and woodland management, inappropriate scrub control, and wildfire / arson are identified as pressures to the designated site.¹³

Nationally important sites

- 4.3.4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are nationally designated areas that protect the UK's most important wildlife, habitats, and geological features. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are a selection of the most significant SSSIs, established to conserve key habitats, species, and geology, and to support scientific research, education, and public understanding of the natural environment. SSSIs and NNRs are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 4.3.5 In total, there are 16 SSSIs within the district and a further eleven within 5km of the boundary as shown in **Figure 4.2** at the end of the chapter. The unit condition of each of these sites can be seen in **Figure 4.3** at the end of the chapter. This shows that sections of several SSSIs are in unfavourable-declining, or unfavourable-no change condition. This includes: Basingstoke Canal SSSI; Warnborough Green SSSI; Greywell Fen SSSI; Bramshill SSSI; Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Commons SSSI; West Minley Meadow SSSI; Blackwater Valley SSSI; and Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSI.
- 4.3.6 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool/ dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds of development which indicate a need to consult Natural England. In this respect, there are areas of the district that overlap with IRZs for development types that are likely to be brought forward through the emerging HLP; therefore, consultation with Natural England is likely to be required for any applications that come forward in these locations.
- 4.3.7 Environmental impacts of water abstraction in South East Water's Water Resource Zone is harming and further deteriorating the Greywell Fen SSSI and its associated chalk groundwater aquifer. In particular, the alkaline fen habitat associated with this SSSI is being particularly impacted – compromising the site's special interest. Given that the Greywell Fen SSSI is one of the largest remaining examples of alkaline fen in southern Europe, continued reliance on abstraction could further delay restoration of the SSSI.
- 4.3.8 The district also contains one NNR – Castle Bottom NNR. Location in the north of the district, it is one of the most important valley mires in the south of England and supports a range of bird species.¹⁴

¹² Natural England (2014). 'Thames Basin Heaths SPA Citation, PDF, 56.0 kB' can be downloaded through [this link](#).

¹³ Natural England (2014). 'Site Improvement Plan: Thames Basin (SIP237)' can be downloaded from [this link](#).

¹⁴ Hampshire County Council (no date). 'Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve' can be accessed through [this link](#).

Locally important sites

- 4.3.9 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are designated to conserve locally significant natural habitats, species, and geological features. They provide accessible green spaces for community enjoyment, education, and engagement, while also serving as valuable sites for local ecological research and conservation efforts. There are three LNRs in Hart, as demonstrated through Error! Reference source not found. at the end of the chapter.
- 4.3.10 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are another local designation for nature conservation. Designating a SINC raises awareness of its importance for wildlife, particularly with regards to planning and land management decision making. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire provides a map showing the locations of all the SINC in the county¹⁵, SINC located in Hart are displayed in **Figure 4.5**.
- 4.3.11 The Hampshire LNRS also identifies priority locations where there are opportunities for recovering and enhancing biodiversity through habitat creation, improved management, and better ecological connectivity. These are known as 'areas that could become of importance for biodiversity' (ACB). Areas on the ACB map cover 51,477ha, which is 13.4% of Hampshire's land area. Some of these ACBs are within the Hart district boundary.
- 4.3.12 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) in Hart are publicly accessible greenspaces, created through development to mitigate recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Each SANG has a defined capacity to mitigate development, measured in terms of the number of persons generated by new residential development that it can mitigate. Development proposals for 10 or more homes that require SPA mitigation must fall within the catchment of the SANG being used for mitigation. As of October 2025, Hart has a combination of Council-controlled and privately owned SANGs, with a total remaining capacity of 2,421 persons across existing and future sites.¹⁶

Ancient Woodland

- 4.3.13 Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. It is considered important for its wildlife (often including rare and threatened species), and soils. Ancient woodland includes land that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. This means the following is included under its designation:
- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and
 - Plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.¹⁷

¹⁵ Nature Recovery Hampshire (no date). 'Local Habitat Map' can be accessed through [this link](#).

¹⁶ Hart District Council (2025). 'SANG Capacity in Hart' can be accessed through [this link](#).

¹⁷ GOV.UK (2022). 'Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions' can be accessed through [this link](#).

- 4.3.14 Within Hart there are approximately 196 ancient woodland sites, with many other sites located adjacent to the district's border. The location of these sites is shown on **Figure 4.6** at the end of the chapter.

Priority Habitats and species

- 4.3.15 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types, and were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. **Figure 4.7** at the end of the chapter shows the location and type of Priority Habitats present throughout Hart.

Chalk rivers

- 4.3.16 Chalk rivers are a particular type of lowland river characterised by clear water and diverse flora. England's chalk rivers and streams are world famous for trout and salmon fishing. Globally, only 200 chalk rivers are known, 85% of which are found in southern and eastern England. There are a number of chalk rivers throughout Hart, as shown in **Figure 4.8** at the end of the chapter.

National Habitat Network

- 4.3.17 The National Habitat Network (NHN) is a set of maps that work to help identify areas for future habitat creation and restoration at a landscape scale.¹⁸
- 4.3.18 NHN designations are found throughout Hart. Network Enhancement Zones 1 (deemed most suitable for habitat re-creation supporting the primary habitat) and 2 (most suitable for new habitats and green infrastructure) are found throughout the plan area, with some sections classified as Network Expansion Zones (identified as a suitable location for connecting and linking up habitats across a landscape through new habitat creation). There is also a notable section of Restorable Habitat found to the north of the district. The NHN in Hart is shown on **Figure 4.9** at the end of the chapter.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 4.3.19 Green and blue infrastructure can connect significant areas of wildlife habitat, helping to mitigate some of the adverse ecological effects of habitat fragmentation. These corridors enable the movement and dispersal of species between Hart's many sites of high biodiversity value, including internationally, nationally, and locally important sites and priority and non-priority habitats.
- 4.3.20 Hart's Green Infrastructure Study notes that although Hart has a good provision of green infrastructure, there are very few green corridors which contributes towards a fragmented green infrastructure network in the district. The strategy highlights opportunities to enhance connectivity through the creation and strengthening of corridors along rivers, canals, hedgerows, transport routes, and Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Enhancement of these assets will improve wildlife movement and habitat connectivity within the district.

¹⁸ Natural England (2020). 'National Habitat Network Maps User Guidance v.2' can be accessed through [this link](#).

Future Baseline

- 4.3.21 Biodiversity designations in Hart have the potential to experience an increase in pressure associated with potential new growth. For example, this could include an increase in recreational disturbances (both occurrences and intensity / effects) linked to an increase in people accessing the more undeveloped, natural spaces in Hart – especially within and around the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, which could disturb the important bird populations that inhabit the designation. Disturbances could also be linked to an increase in noise and light pollution associated with the provision of new housing, employment, and infrastructure, or with localised effects linked to climate change associated with an increase in emissions. Impacts to biodiversity designations have the potential to change the distribution and abundance of flora and fauna species.
- 4.3.22 It is possible that growth could also lead to biodiversity fragmentation or loss, depending on the location of new development. This could include the loss of habitats as a result of new development, and impacts to the biodiversity network due to disruption to biodiversity corridors. This could have an impact on wider habitats and species across Hart.
- 4.3.23 Without the emerging HLP, speculative development would continue to come forward under the currently adopted Hart Local Plan. However, the emerging HLP provides an opportunity to coordinate the delivery of growth to meet future needs, protect and minimise impacts on biodiversity and seek strategic opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gain where possible. This could include integrating and improving green infrastructure and ecological corridors, to contribute towards biodiversity connectivity in the district.

4.4 Key Issues

- 4.4.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to biodiversity:
- New development through the emerging HLP may result in direct or indirect impacts on the integrity of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites within and in proximity to the district. Development proposals should assess and mitigate potential impacts on these designations.
 - The district contains several SSSIs and one NNR. New development may affect the integrity of these sites if located within their proximity. Additionally, much of the district overlaps with SSSI IRZs for development types likely to come forward through the emerging HLP, indicating a need for consultation with Natural England.
 - Development could also have an impact upon LNRs, SINC and SANGs within Hart, which provide important habitats and accessible green spaces for local communities.
 - The district contains a range of BAP Priority Habitats and wildlife corridors. These habitats support a range of species that could be negatively impacted by habitat loss, fragmentation and weakened ecological networks as a result of development.

- The district has a wide range of NHN designations that cover the majority of the district. The presence of these designations suggests that the area has substantial potential for habitat restoration and green infrastructure provision.
- The district has a good provision of green infrastructure, however, there are very few green corridors between these areas. This lack of connectivity could reduce the movement and dispersal of species between habitats within Hart.
- The emerging HLP presents an opportunity to deliver and coordinate biodiversity net gain through development location, design and management. This includes creating new habitats, improving connectivity, restoring degraded areas, and strengthening green and blue infrastructure networks to support ecological resilience and climate adaptation.

4.5 IIA Objective

- 4.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to biodiversity:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
To maintain, create and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity habitats and networks within and surrounding the district, and protect species population and diversity.	• Avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on internationally and nationally designated sites and their integrity? • Improve the condition of designated sites with indicators showing progress towards favourable condition in SSSI units? • Contribute towards the Environmental Improvement Plan's target of protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030 in order to restore nature and promote species abundance? • Protect and enhance locally important sites? • Contribute towards Local Nature Recovery Networks and deliver net gains for nature, including via supporting connected and resilient ecological networks through habitat creation and restoration? • Prevent habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, maintaining or improving connectivity through wildlife corridors and ecological networks? • Promote biodiversity net gain by encouraging habitat creation, restoration, and enhancement in development proposals? • Support the conservation of priority habitats and protected species?

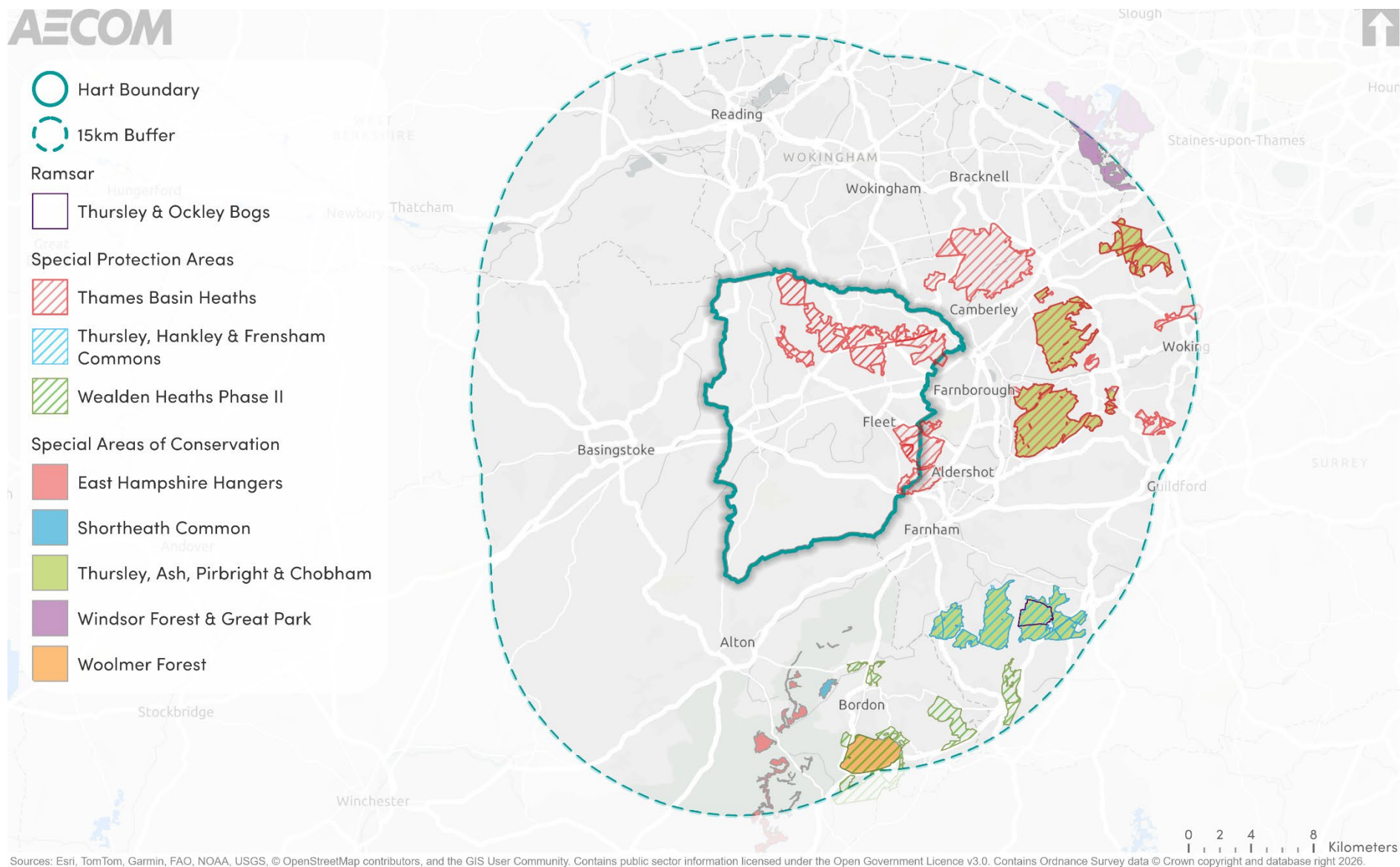


Figure 4.1: Internationally designated biodiversity sites within and in proximity to Hart

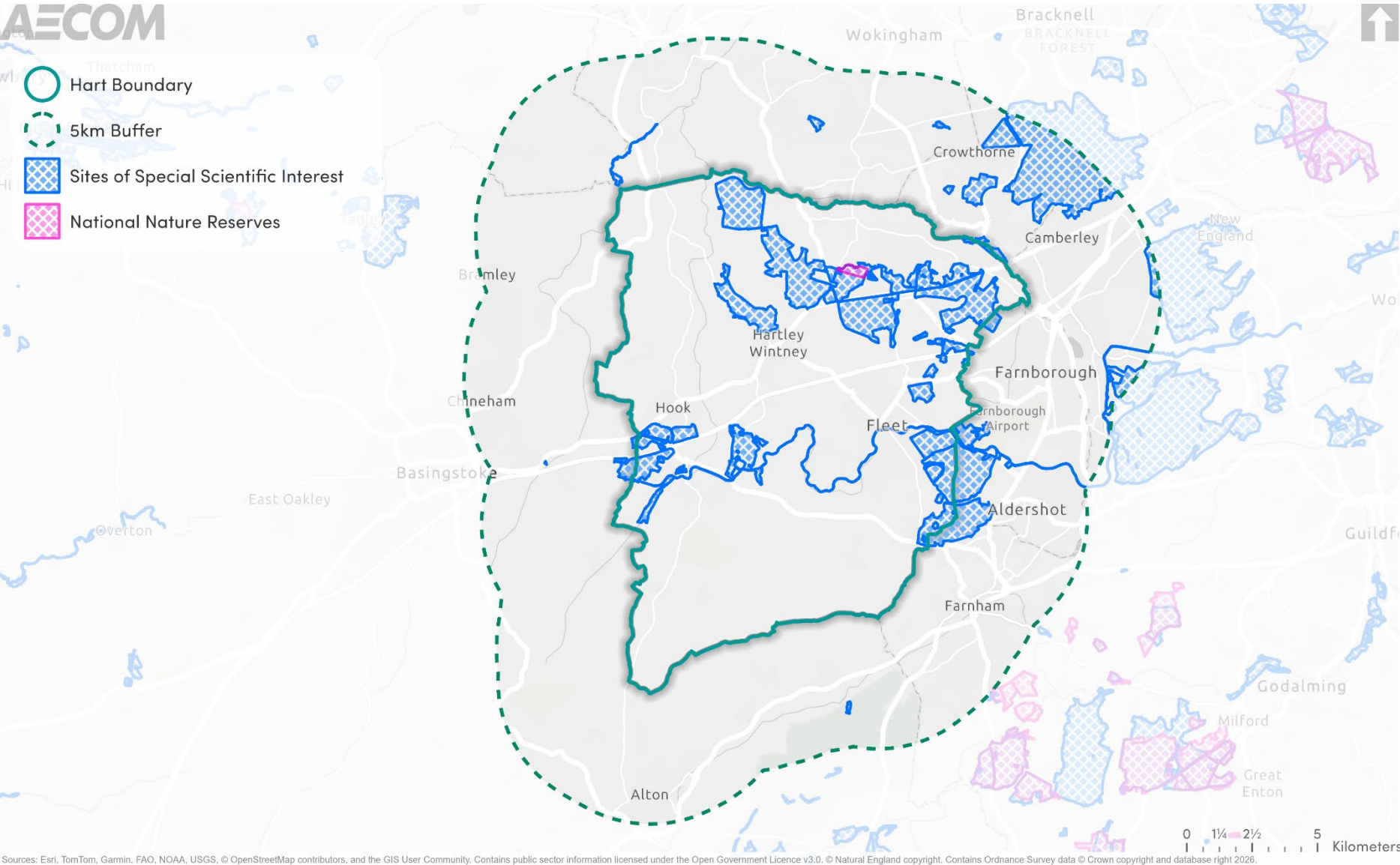


Figure 4.2: Nationally designated biodiversity sites within and in proximity to Hart



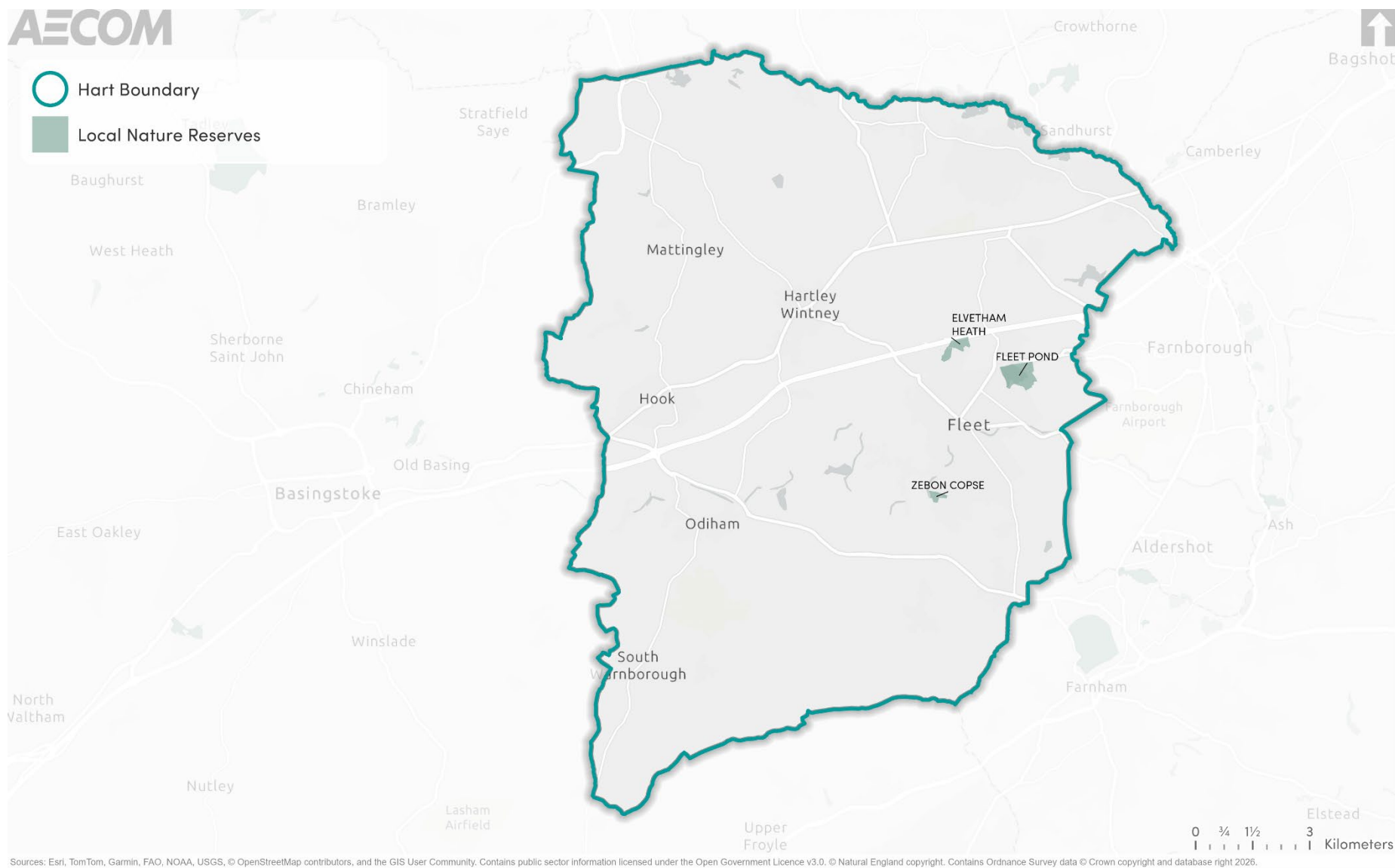


Figure 4.4: Local nature reserves in Hart

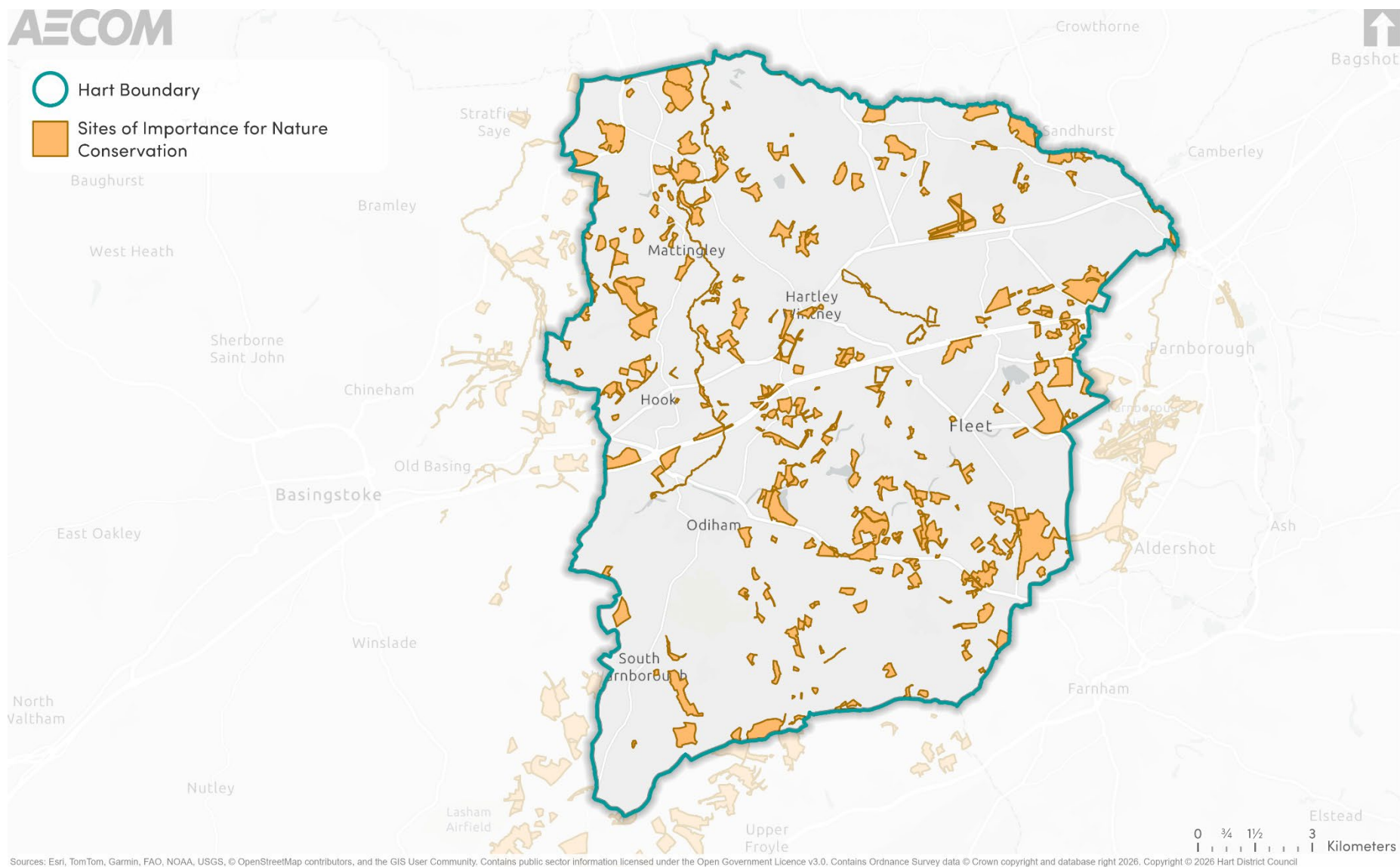


Figure 4.5 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within and in proximity to Hart

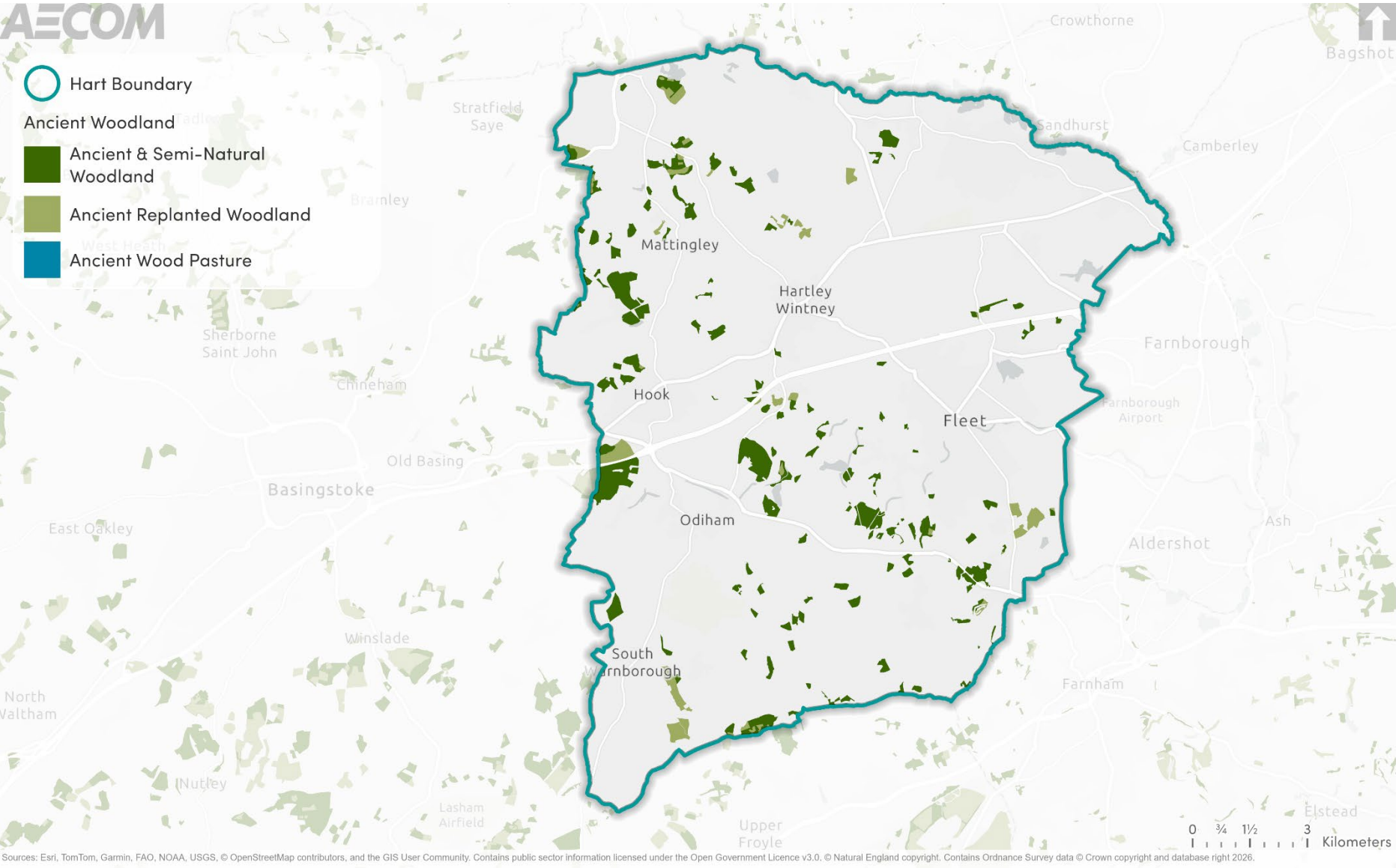


Figure 4.6: Ancient woodland in Hart

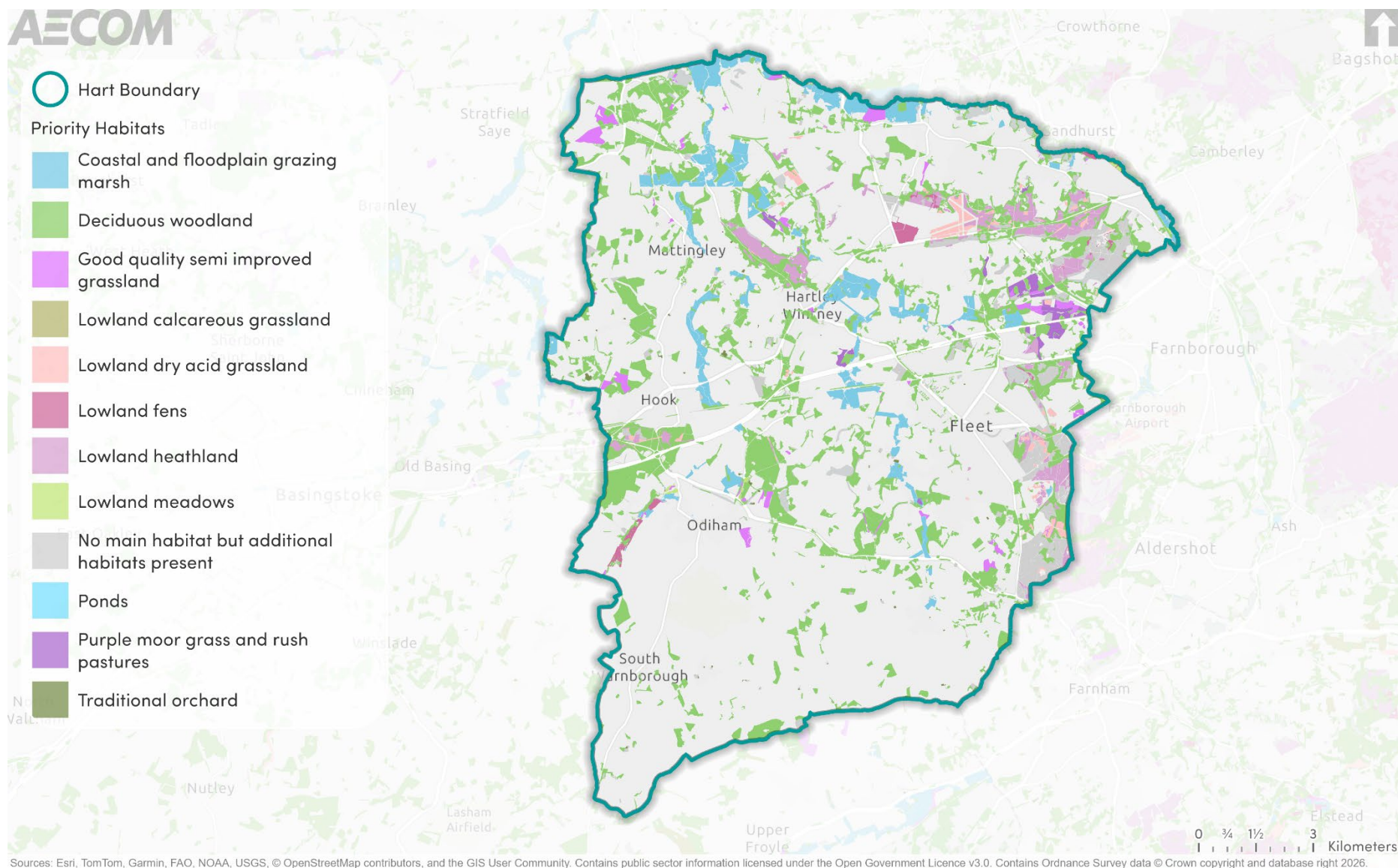


Figure 4.7: Priority habitat coverage in Hart

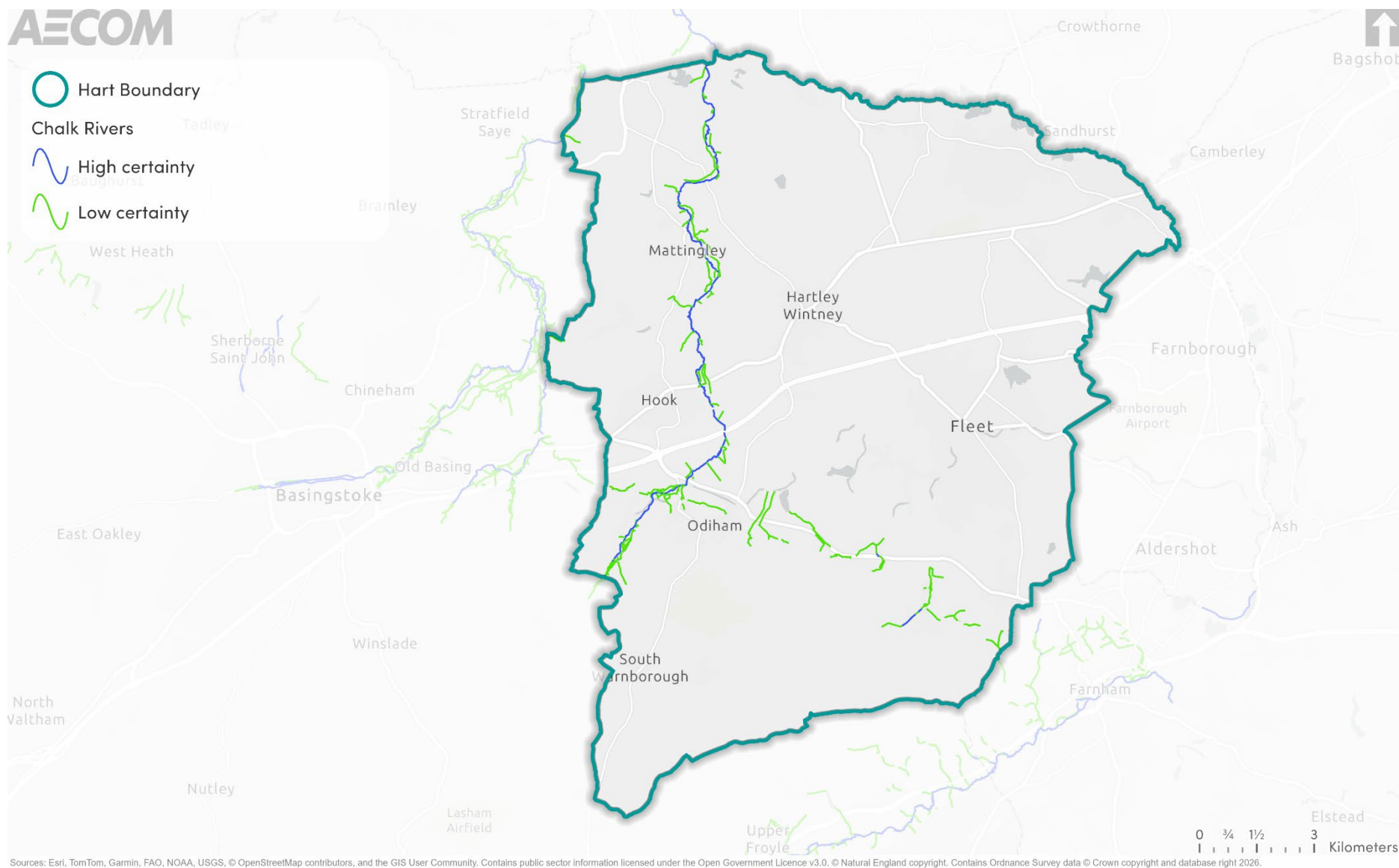


Figure 4.8: Chalk Rivers in Hart

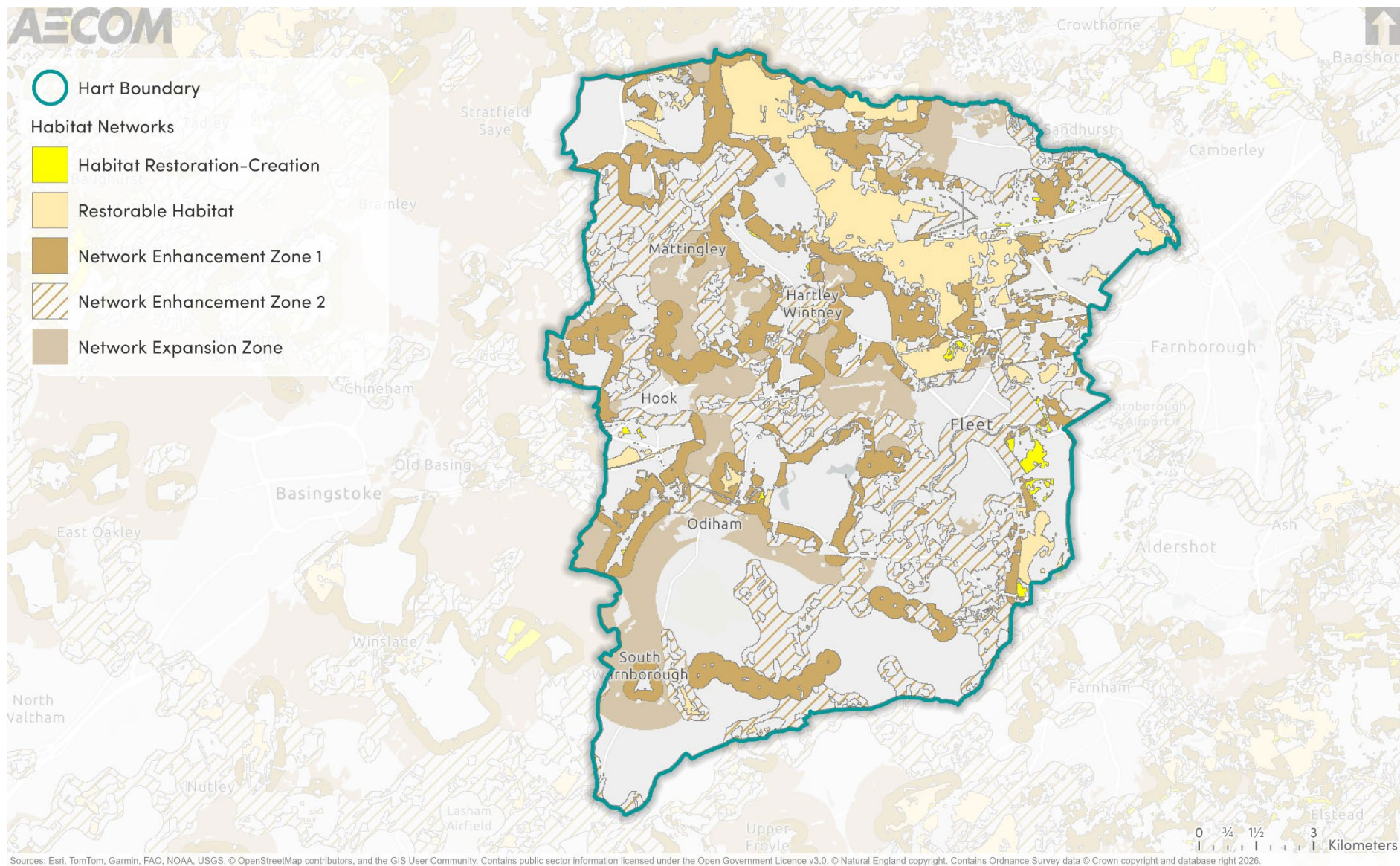


Figure 4.9: National Habitat Network in Hart

5. Climate Change Adaptation

5.1 Focus of Theme

- 5.1.1 This theme focuses on activities in Hart District that contribute to climate change and its associated effects, including flood risk.

5.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 5.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the climate change adaptation theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031	2026
Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025	2025
Hampshire County Council local flood and water management strategy	2020
Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032	2020
Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report	2019
Hart District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2	2018
Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy	2017
Hart District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1	2016

5.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Climate projections

- 5.3.1 The UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) programmes is a climate analysis tool that provides the most up to date assessment on potential future climatic changes in the UK, based on climate model simulations.¹⁹ Projections can be downscaled to a regional level across the UK, allowing for specific evaluations of a selected area. The UKCP18 projections conclude the effects of climate change under a high emissions 'worst case' scenario, known as the 'business as usual' scenario RCP8.5.²⁰ The UKCP18 projection

¹⁹ Met Office (no date). 'UK Climate Projections (UKCP18)' can be accessed through [this link](#).

²⁰ The RCP8.5 emissions scenario assumes there is fast population growth, low technical development rate, slow GDP growth, a massive increase in world poverty and high energy use and emissions. It also assumes no climate change mitigation or adaptation techniques are engaged with.

conclusions for the South East England region are shown in **Table 5.2** below, and **Figure 5.1** and **Figure 5.2** on the following pages.

5.3.2

Table 5.2: UKCP18 climate projections for the South East England region

	Mean average air temperature (°C)		Mean precipitation rate (mm/day)		Mean relative humidity (%)	
	Winter	Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter	Summer
1981-2000	4.54	15.81	3.22	1.71	87.48	74.27
2021-2040	5.81	18.12	3.42	1.46	87.16	69.95
2061-2080	7.66	21.15	3.94	1.05	86.82	65.08

5.3.3 In this context:

- There could be a 3.12°C increase in winter mean average air temperature, and a 5.34°C increase in summer mean average air temperature.
- There could be a 0.72mm/day increase in winter mean precipitation rate, and a 0.65mm/day decrease in summer mean precipitation rate.
- There could be a 0.66% decrease in winter relative humidity, and a 9.19% decrease in summer relative humidity.

5.3.4 If these changes occur, Hart could face a range of risks, including (but not limited to):

- Increases in cases of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer period, as well as illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight.
- An increase in the risk of injuries and deaths caused by storm events, due to both the increase in quantity and magnitude.
- Changes to water resources, in terms of quality and quantity
- An increased risk of flooding, including changes in vulnerability to 1 in 100-year floods, and a need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their distribution, particularly their southern edge, and a spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution, as species track their ideal climatic conditions.
- Increased drought events, both in quantity and magnitude.

- Heat related impacts to local infrastructure, e.g., road surfaces melting.

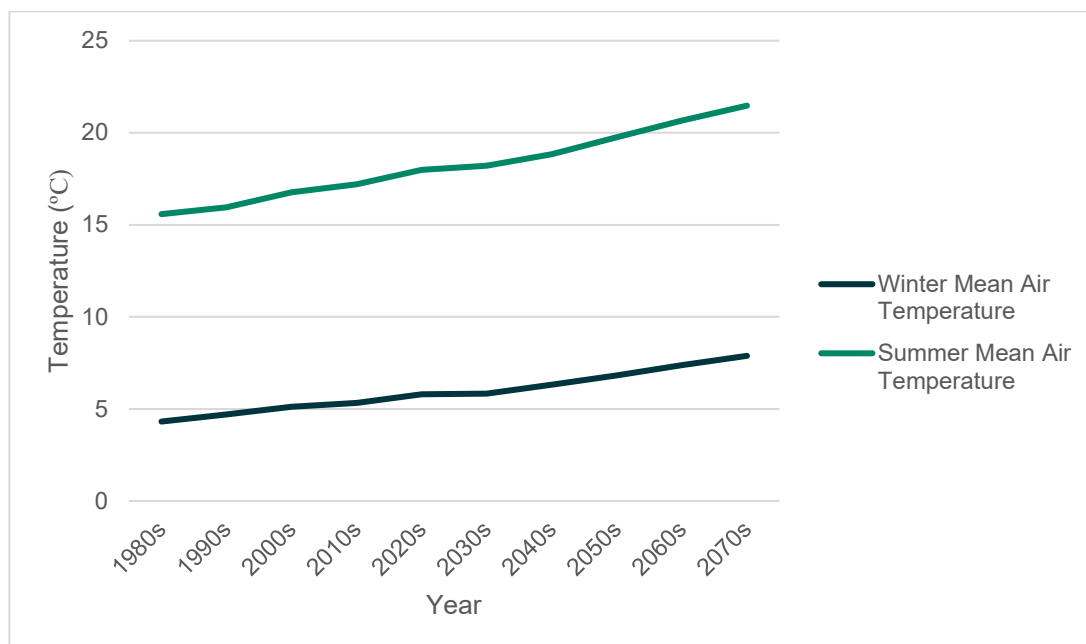


Figure 5.1: UKCP18 projections for mean air temperature in the South East England region

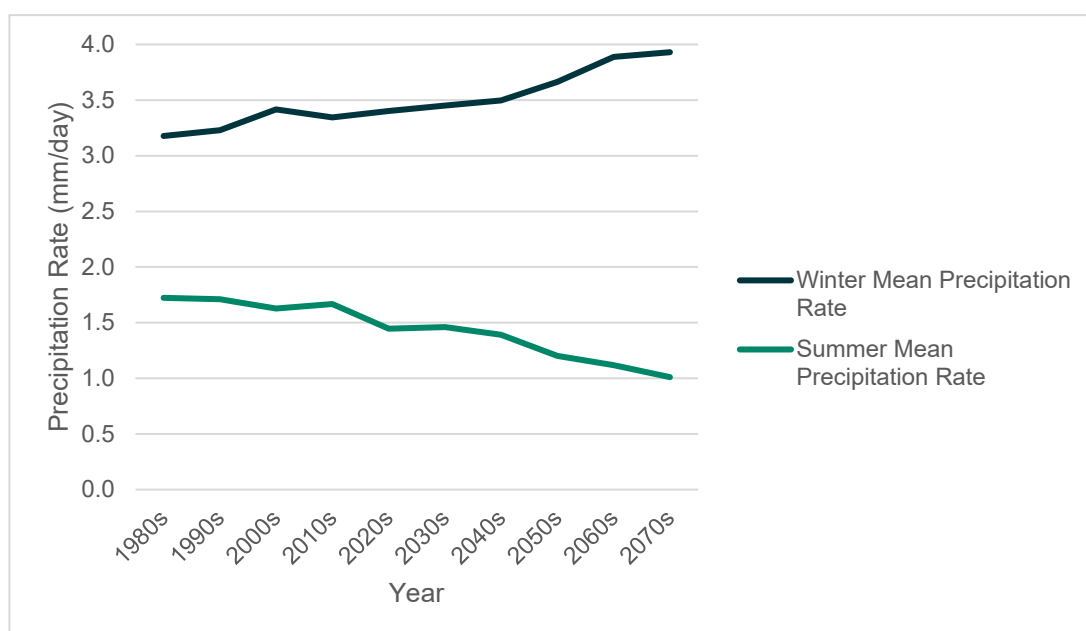


Figure 5.2: UKCP18 projections for mean precipitation rate in the South East England region

Flood risk

- 5.3.5 Hampshire County Council is Hart District's Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA). As such, Hampshire County Council has a responsibility to control the risk of flooding from surface water and groundwater. This is achieved through the development of a local flood risk management strategy (LFRMS).

5.3.6 The Hampshire County Council LFRMS seeks to prioritise protecting people, homes, businesses and key infrastructure from flood risk and its effects, including through:

- Avoiding risks and managing water resources through effective planning and design.
- Preventing future flooding by reducing or removing existing risks.
- Adapting to flood risk in order to minimise the impact and enable normal life to return as soon as possible.
- Enabling communities to be better prepared to react to flood events and recover more easily.
- Adopting effective practices that are sustainable and affordable now and in the future.

5.3.7 According to **Figure 5.3** at the end of the chapter, fluvial flooding is linked to the main watercourses and associated drainage in Hart. This includes River Whitewater in the north and west, River Hart in north and east, Fleet Brook in the north and east, Fleet Pond in the east, Gelvert Stream in the east, and the Yateley Lakes to the north. The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) indicates that the main urban areas at risk of fluvial flooding are Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater/ Hawley, and Crondall.

5.3.8 Demonstrated by **Figure 5.4** at the end of the chapter, surface water flood risk is also present within Hart, and broadly follows the drainage pattern of the district. The Level 1 SFRA indicates that Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater/ Hawley, and Crondall are the main areas at risk of surface water flooding.

5.3.9 According to the Level 1 SFRA, Crondall reports the most internal seer flooding incidents in the district. Northern Fleet also reports a number of incidents, as does Church Crookham, Blackwater, Yateley, and North Warnborough. The assessment also indicates that twelve urban areas in Hart are at risk of groundwater flooding at the surface, and a further four are at risk of below groundwater flooding – for example, basements, sewers, and other infrastructure. Specific areas in Crondall, Blackwater/ Hawley, Fleet, Hook, Eversley, and North Warnborough. Groundwater flooding extents can be seen in **Figure 5.5** at the end of the chapter.

Flood alerts and defences

5.3.10 The Level 1 SFRA indicates that very few of the rivers in Hart are gauged, so flood warning coverage is sparse. Flood warnings are only available on the Blackwater River (three level gauges) and the downstream sections of the River Hart (six gauges; level, flow velocity-index, and flow structures) and the River Whitewater (one flow ultrasonic gauge).

5.3.11 The catchments within Hart are small, and are understood to have quick fluvial response times. As such, flood warnings and alerts may not always give adequate lead times to flood events.

5.3.12 In 2016, there were five formal flood defences in Hart. These are small scale and provide localised flood alleviation to a few properties:

- Beacon Hill Flood Storage Area in Fleet.

- Royal Oak Vally Flood Storage Area in Yateley.
- Church View interception ditch in Phoenix Green.
- York Lane interception ditch in Phoenix Green.
- Burnside overflow culvert in Fleet.

Green infrastructure

- 5.3.13 Natural solutions to reducing flood risk can come in the form of green infrastructure, including tree cover. Permeable surfaces provided by greenspace help to reduce surface water runoff, which in turn helps to reduce flood risk. Trees provide interception, reducing the volume of water reaching the ground during rainfall events, helping to reduce flood risk. In this sense, it is important to look at the levels of green infrastructure and its management within urban areas, including the soil resource, path networks, urban woodlands and other green infrastructure aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of the local environment. Note that rural areas are generally open countryside which are less likely to have issues relating to surface water runoff.
- 5.3.14 Hart has a high coverage of green infrastructure. However, it is fragmented as there are few green corridors in Hart that link designations and green areas that contribute to the network. Additionally, part of the green infrastructure network is within private ownership, and so some areas are not accessible to the public. These areas can be of low quality, and need more active management to be as effective as possible.

Future Baseline

- 5.3.15 Climate change has the potential to impact upon temperatures, precipitation rates, and humidity levels in Hart, which can have an impact upon human health, biodiversity, and natural resources. As such, it is likely that Hart will experience an increased level of risk associated with climate change and a subsequent increase in need for resilience and adaptation measures. This could include the retention of existing and the planting of new trees, increased green infrastructure provision, and improved ventilation techniques.
- 5.3.16 New development could potentially increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, loss of mature vegetation, damaging soils, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk and potential elevated flood risks in the future.
- 5.3.17 Creating and enhancing hedgerows and woodland planting through development would likely help to improve connections between designations, areas and features that contribute to the green infrastructure network. Additionally, incorporating green corridors along access routes (including public rights of way) could also strengthen the network.

5.4 Key Issues

5.4.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to climate change adaptation:

- Projected changes in temperature and humidity levels have the potential to increase risks to human health – for example, through increased incidences of heat-related illnesses. It will be important to ensure development and communities are resilient to these changes, which could be achieved through development design (for example, integrating cooling techniques). High temperatures also have the potential to impact upon infrastructure, such as road surfaces, so it will be important to ensure that infrastructure is designed or retrofitted to withstand higher temperatures and more volatile weather patterns.
- Projected changes in precipitation levels, combined with quick catchment response times and limited flood warning infrastructure, presents the potential for more frequent and severe fluvial and surface water flooding in Hart. It will be important for development through the emerging HLP to avoid being focused in areas at greater risk of flooding, avoid intensifying surface water runoff, and incorporate flood resilience and mitigation measures.
- Projected changes in precipitation levels and humidity has the potential to lead to drought conditions. This could lead to reduced water availability for households, agricultural activity, and the natural environment. As such, it will be important for new development to improve water efficiency and storage to build resilience to drier conditions.
- Changes in temperature, precipitation, and humidity also has the potential to impact upon biodiversity and ecosystems in Hart. Enhancing habitat connectivity and green corridors will allow species to adapt and track climate in response to changing conditions.
- Whilst Hart has a high level of green infrastructure, it is fragmented, partially inaccessible, and varies in quality and management. This may impact upon the network's effectiveness in managing climate change effects. By strengthening, connecting, and actively managing green infrastructure, the HLP presents an opportunity to maximise the climate change adaptation benefits of the green infrastructure network.

5.5 IIA Objective

- 5.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to climate change adaptation:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/ proposal help to:
To support the resilience of Hart to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding from fluvial and surface water sources.	• Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Increase resilience of the built and natural environment to the effects of climate change particularly in areas where fluvial and surface water flooding is identified? • Ensure that the potential risks associated with climate change are considered in new development in the plan area? • Protect, improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support climate change adaptation? • Utilise green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems to sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff, whilst creating opportunities for habitat creation, tree planting and open spaces? • Minimise flood risk for key infrastructures, such as transport, agriculture and power?

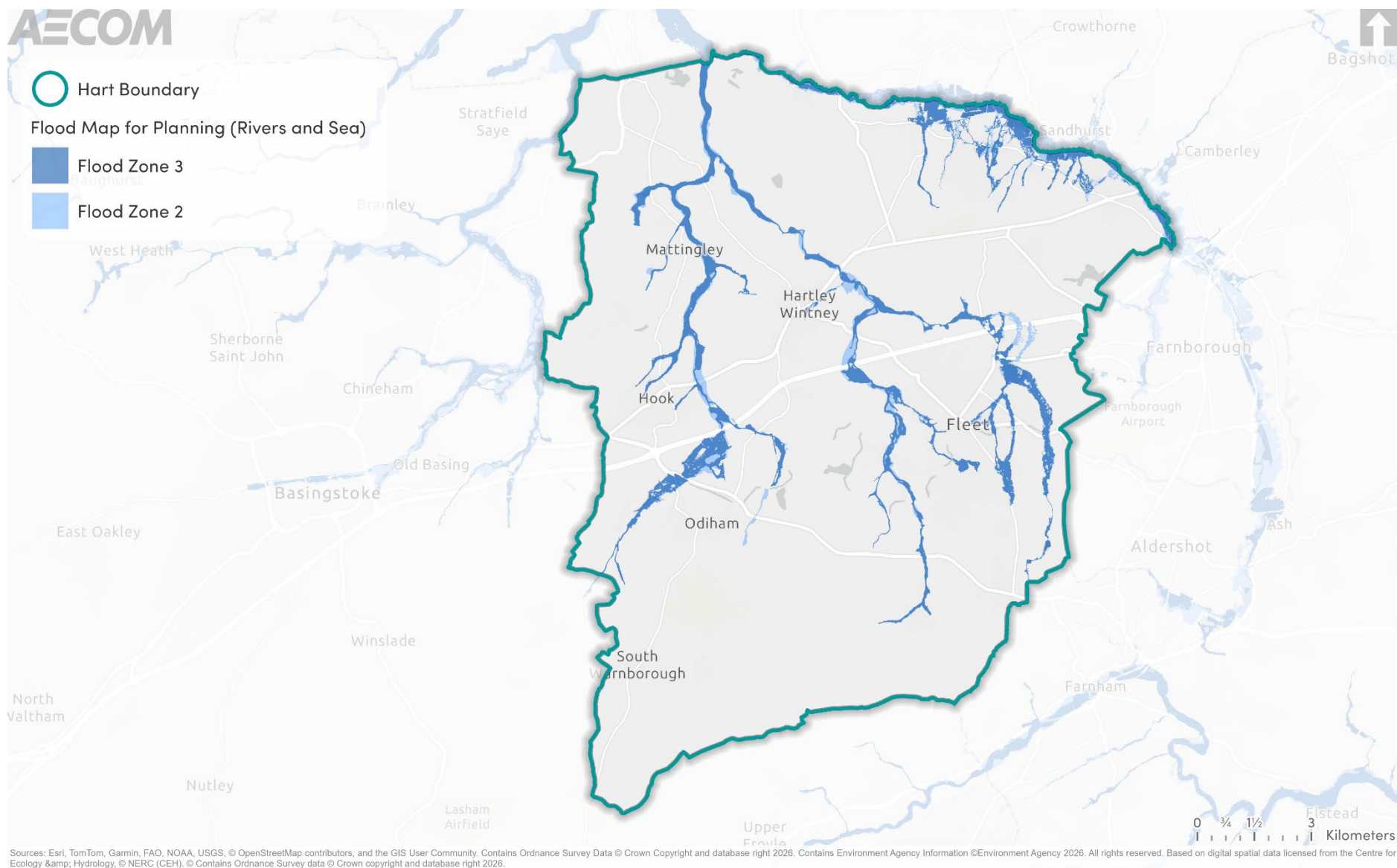


Figure 5.3: Fluvial flood risk in Hart

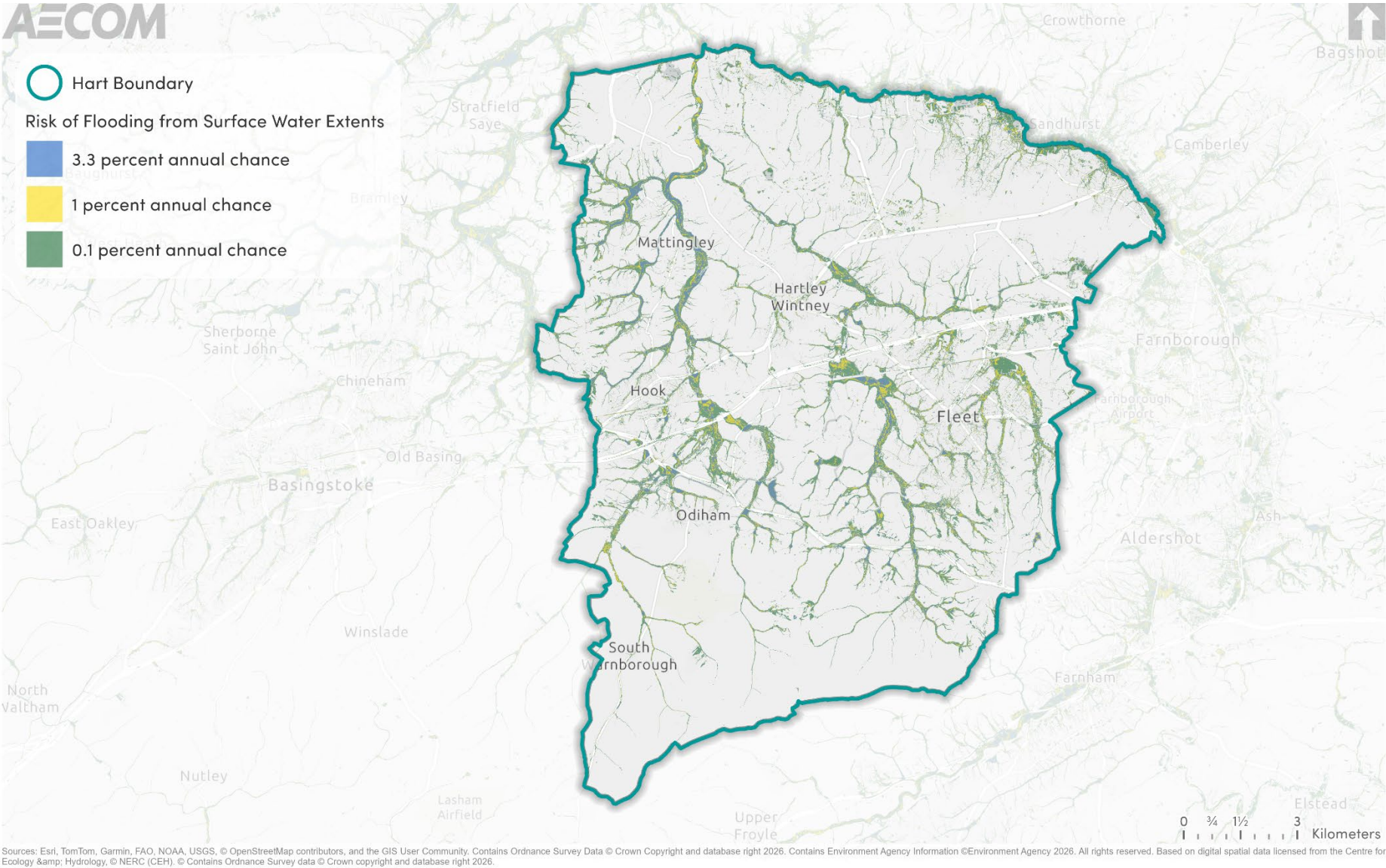


Figure 5.4: Surface water flood risk in Hart

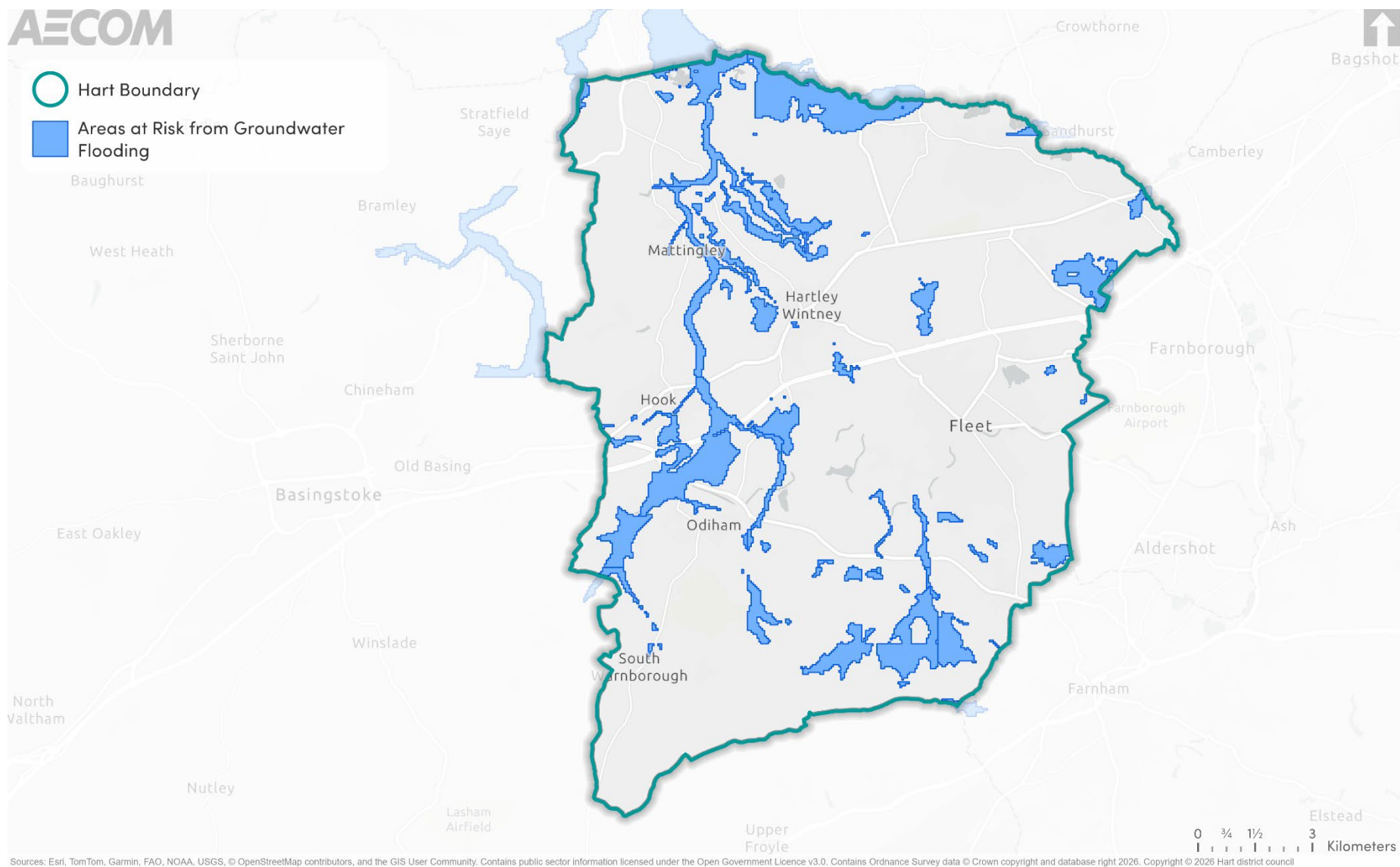


Figure 5.5: Groundwater flood risk in Hart

6. Climate Change Mitigation

6.1 Focus of Theme

- 6.1.1 This theme focuses on activities in Hart that contribute to climate change mitigation, including mitigating the districts emissions, and developing renewable energy infrastructure.

6.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 6.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 6.1** Table 5.1.

Table 6.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the climate change mitigation theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031	2026
Hart District Council - Meeting notes: Climate change update	2025
Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025	2025
Hart Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029	2025
Hampshire Climate Change Annual Progress Report 2023-2024	2024
Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032	2020
Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report	2019
Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy	2017

6.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Climate emergency

- 6.3.1 Hart Council declared a climate emergency in April 2021. As part of the declaration the council has committed to becoming a carbon-neutral authority by 2035 and a carbon-neutral district by 2040.²¹
- 6.3.2 The Hart District Council Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027) outlines the steps the Council are taking to reduce carbon emissions across a range of sectors - including buildings, energy, transport, communications and reporting, and district wide actions.²²

²¹ Hart District Council (2025). 'Declaring a climate emergency in Hart' can be accessed through [this link](#).

²² Hart District Council (2023) 'Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029' can be accessed through [this link](#).

Contribution to climate change

- 6.3.3 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 requires carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the built environment to be monitored and recorded at the local authority level.
- 6.3.4 The CO₂ emissions shown in **Figure 6.1** and **Figure 6.2** are generated from data supplied by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.²³ Figure 6.1 shows that throughout the observed period, the transport and domestic sectors have historically been the largest CO₂ emitting sectors in the district. Both sectors have seen a reduction in overall emissions since 2005, although emissions from the domestic sector have seen a greater reduction than emissions from the transport sector.

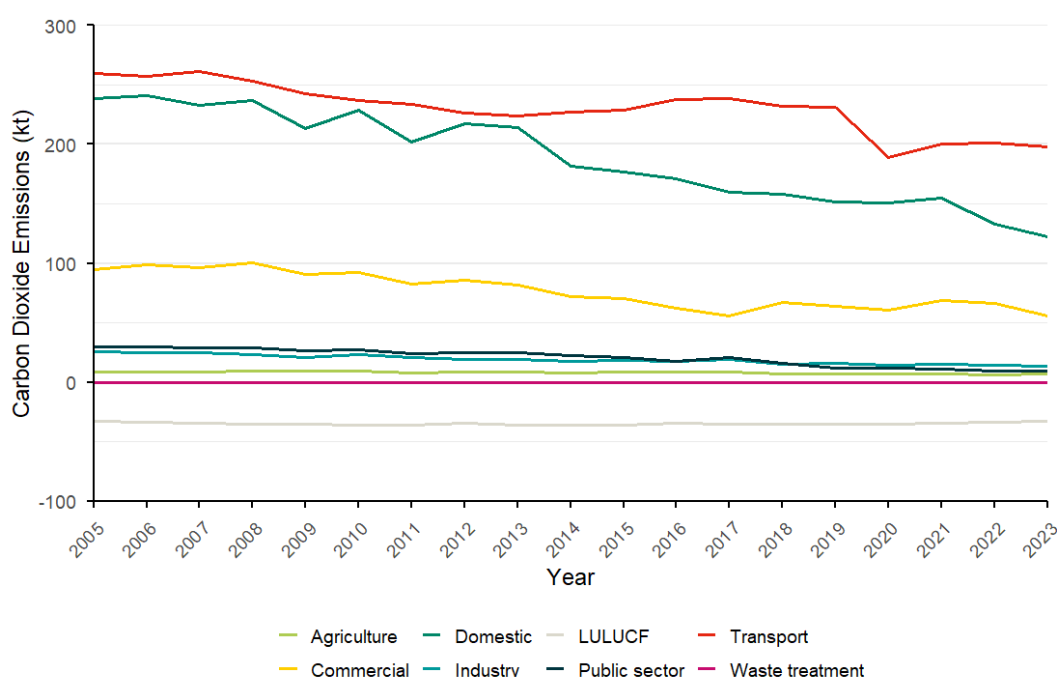


Figure 6.1: Local authority territorial carbon dioxide emissions estimates within the scope of influence of Hart (2005-2023)

- 6.3.5 Figure 6.2 overleaf shows that since 2005 per capita emissions have decreased in Hart – and whilst this decrease is broadly in line with regional and national trends, it is recognised that the rate of decrease in Hart is slightly less. As such, per capita emissions for Hart have been higher than regional averages since 2016, but have remained below national averages.

²³ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025). 'UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2023' can be accessed through [this link](#). Table 1.2.

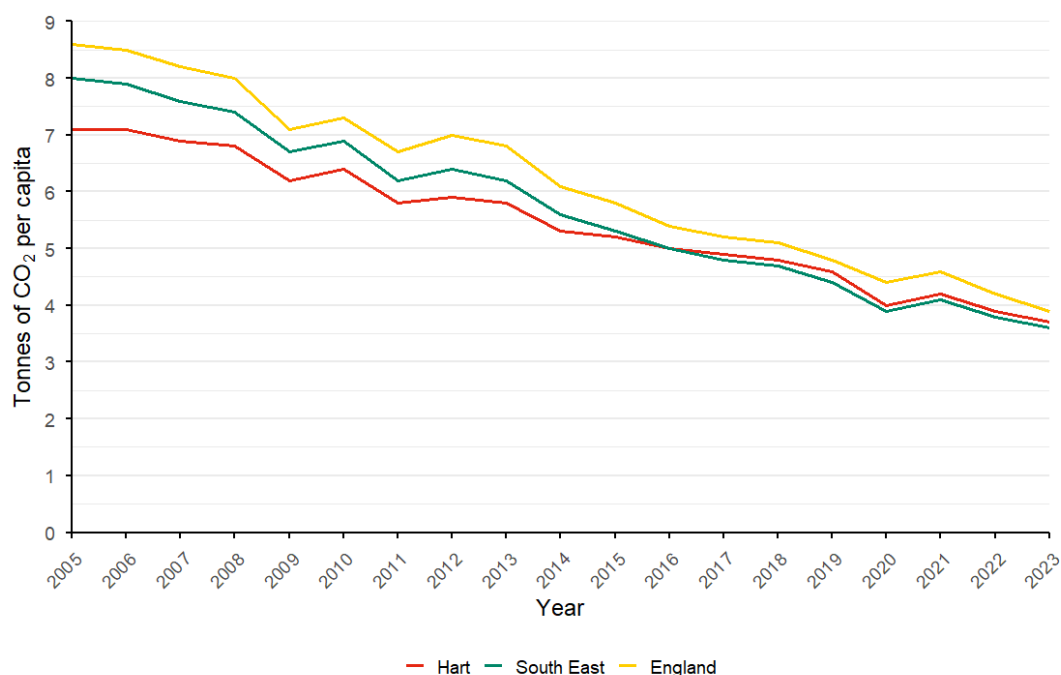


Figure 6.2: Territorial carbon dioxide emissions per capita (t) for Hart in comparison to the South East Region and England

Renewable energy

- 6.3.6 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation by each Local Authority. The most recently published data is for 2024 and indicates that Hart has a total renewable energy installed capacity of 22.4MW. This consists of 21.8MW generated from solar photovoltaics (PV) and 0.6MW generated from landfill gas²⁴. This level of generation places Hart 263rd among UK Local Authorities for installed renewable energy generation capacity.
- 6.3.7 Hart District Council is supporting the transition to renewable energy through a range of initiatives outline in its Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027). This includes installing PV panels on council-owned buildings and car parks, working with local organisations to expand renewable energy generation, and investigating opportunities for the development of onshore wind turbines and battery storage to store locally generated electricity. In addition, Hart District Council plans to transition its energy supply to 100% renewable sources. The strategies outlined above should help to support the council's target of becoming carbon neutral by 2035 and achieving a carbon neutral district by 2040.

Energy efficiency

- 6.3.8 Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are standardised documents that assess the energy efficiency of buildings, providing ratings from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). They are produced whenever a building is constructed, sold, or rented.

²⁴ DESNZ (2025). 'Regional Renewable Statistics' can be accessed from [this link](#).

- 6.3.9 According to data from the UK Government, the district has shown a gradual shift towards improving energy efficiency since 2008 (**Figure 6.3**). The EPC data reflects a positive trend in energy efficiency across the district, likely driven by retrofitting efforts, energy performance upgrades, and adherence to modern building standards. However, the majority of properties still fall short of the highest efficiency rating, with few properties reaching an EPC rating of A.

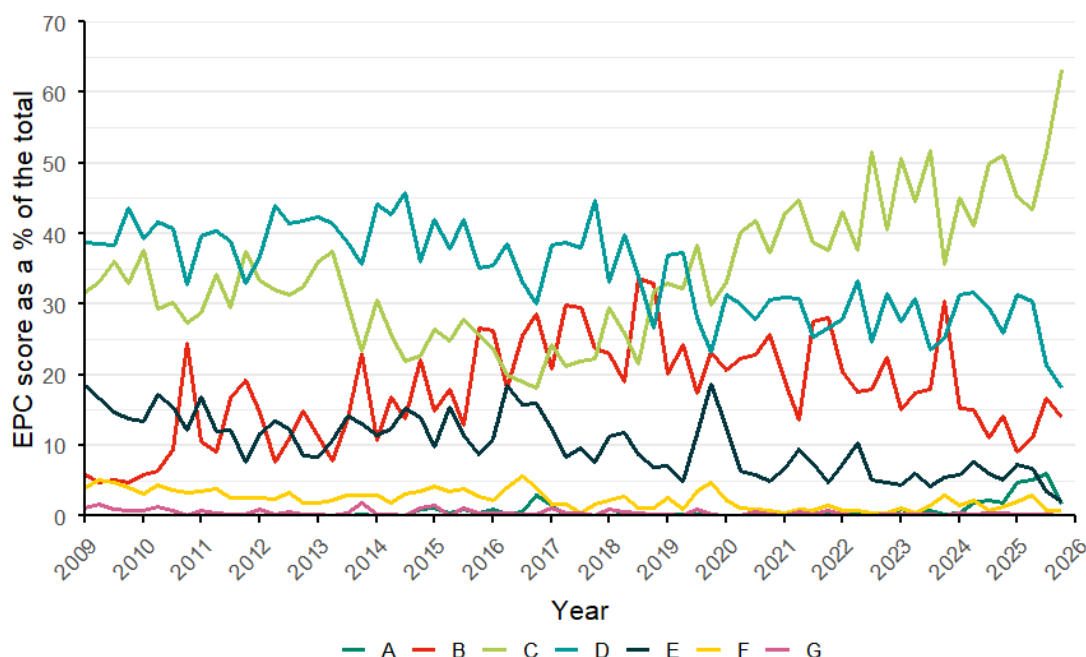


Figure 6.3: EPC scores in Hart (2009-2025)²⁵

Net zero

- 6.3.10 Climate Emergency UK publishes climate scorecards every other year to assess the progress councils have made towards net zero across multiple categories. In 2025, Hart District Council achieved an overall score of 38%, representing a 10% increase since 2023.
- 6.3.11 Hart District Council performed most strongly in buildings and heating, scoring 66%. Improvements were also recorded in planning and land use, governance, collaboration, and waste reduction. Conversely, performance in biodiversity and transport declined. Overall, the results demonstrate that Hart District Council is making progress in climate action in relation to a number of sectors while highlighting the need for further improvement in biodiversity and transport to support the transition to net zero.²⁶

Future Baseline

- 6.3.12 In line with UK trends, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PVs, become more widely adopted. Despite this, uncoordinated development in the absence of the emerging HLP may affect

²⁵ Gov.uk (2025). 'Live tables on Energy Performance of Buildings Certificates' can be accessed through [this link](#). [Table D1]

²⁶ Climate Emergency UK (2025). '2025 Action Scorecards' can be accessed through [this link](#).

the rate of progress and is less likely to support strategic opportunities to increase resilience to climate change.

- 6.3.13 With regard specifically to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' Report (2018)²⁷, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and aside from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), many more vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

6.4 Key Issues

- 6.4.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to climate change mitigation:
- Hart District Council declared a climate emergency in 2021. As part of the declaration the Council has committed to becoming a carbon-neutral authority by 2035 and a carbon-neutral district by 2040. The Hart District Council Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027) outlines step the council is taking to reduce carbon emissions within Hart.
 - The transport and domestic sectors are the largest contributors to carbon emissions within Hart, highlighting the need for spatial planning, infrastructure upgrades and energy efficient housing to reduce car dependency, increase active travel uptake and manage the contribution of housing to CO₂ emissions in the district.
 - Per capita emissions in Hart have declined since 2005, although at a slower rate than national and regional rates. Development associated with then emerging HLP should ensure that per capita emissions continue to decrease.
 - The Council performed favourably in its progress towards net zero in buildings and heating, but performed less favourably in transport and biodiversity policy related to net zero.
 - EPC data indicates an overall improvement in the energy efficiency of the district. However, few buildings achieve the highest efficiency rating (A).
 - Expanding EV infrastructure is needed to support the transition to a less fossil fuel dependant transport sector.

²⁷ HM Gov (2018) 'The Road to Zero – Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' can be accessed through [this link](#).

6.5 IIA Objective

- 6.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to climate change mitigation:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/ proposal help to:
To mitigate climate change by increasing decarbonisation, with a focus on the built environment and the industry, transport and domestic sectors, increasing efficiency and reducing energy use.	• Ensure new developments achieve high energy efficiency with monitored performance? • Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to accelerate to net zero and work to prepare the natural environment for the effects of climate change? • Expand EV charging infrastructure to support the shift to electric vehicles? • Increase renewable energy generation? • Promote sustainable transport options that reduce transport emissions?

7. Communities

7.1 Focus of Theme

- 7.1.1 This theme focuses on the demographics and households of the population in Hart.

7.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 7.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the communities theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032</u>	2020
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>Hampshire County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</u>	No date

7.3 Baseline summary

Current Baseline

Settlement hierarchy

- 7.3.1 Hart is located in the north-eastern extent of Hampshire. There are 34 settlements dispersed across the district, which are categorised by their size and services and facilities under the adopted Hart Local Plan:²⁸
- Fleet (including Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath) is the main urban area.
 - Blackwater, Hook, and Yateley are the primary local service centres.
 - Hartley Wintney and Odiham, and North Warnborough are secondary local service centres.
 - The remaining settlements are categorised as small settlements.
- 7.3.2 The parish of Fleet had an estimated population of 24,316 in 2024 – which is approximately 23.6% of the estimated population in 2024. In the adopted HLP, Fleet is described as the largest administrative, retail and commercial

²⁸ Urban Intelligence (2023). 'Hart District Council Settlement Capacity and Intensification Study' can be accessed through [this link](#).

centre within Hart, including a significant proportion of employment opportunities. It benefits from close proximity to the M3 motorway and a mainline railway station. There has been significant housing development surrounding Fleet.

- 7.3.3 Blackwater and Hawley is described in the adopted HLP as a settlement with some retail and office units, benefitting from its close proximity and good access to Farnborough, Camberley and the Meadows retail park. It is well connected through the A30 that bisects the settlement, and the Blackwater railway station. However, the settlement is very constrained by both flood risk to the north and the Thames Basin Heaths SPA to the south. As such, it has reduced development potential.
- 7.3.4 Hook is a large village that has been the focus of newer urban development, having grown significantly in recent years. It is a largely residential to the north of the railway line, and employment opportunities via Osbourne Way, Bartley Point and Bartley Wood Business Park to the south. The train station and the M3 junction in proximity provide for good connectivity.
- 7.3.5 Yateley is the second largest settlement in Hart, benefitting from several schools, a library, and a few retail centres. However, access is heavily car dependent - though it is noted that Blackwater train station and Sandhurst train station offer sustainable transport access to a number of locations within proximity to Hart and further afield. It is recognised that Yateley is constrained to the north and east by flood risk, and to the south and south-west by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
- 7.3.6 It is recognised that Hartland Village is a major development under construction. Located to the east of Fleet, the creation of this new community is anticipated to deliver 1,500 homes and provide additional services – such as local retail facilities and a primary school education facility.
- 7.3.7 Despite the presence of these larger settlements and urban areas, Hart is primarily rural. Other settlements are mainly small, dispersed villages and hamlets that support the rural community in the district. The rural population accounts for approximately 30% of the Hart population.

Population overview

- 7.3.8 In 2021 Hart had a total population of 99,400, up from 91,000 in 2011. This represents a 9.2% increase - slightly above the levels of growth in the South East region (7.5%) and England as a whole (6.6%). The mid-year population estimate for in 2024 was 103,162 people.²⁹
- 7.3.9 Hart has a relatively low population density, with 462 people per square kilometre (three residents for every football pitch-sized area of land). Out of 64 local authority areas in the South East region, it is the 29th least densely populated.
- 7.3.10 The median age in Hart district has risen from 41 years in 2011 to 43 years in 2021. 19.7% of people in Hart were aged 65 and over in 2021. Further analysis by Hampshire County Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) identifies that the population of Hart is ageing, with increases

²⁹ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

predicted mainly amongst the older population aged 80 and above, as well as those aged 60 to 69. 19.2% of people in Hart were aged 15 years and under in 2021, and the JSNA forecast this to decrease by 2029. 10.2% of people in Hart were aged 15 to 24 in 2021 and the JSNA projects this to increase to 2029.

7.3.11 According to mid-year estimates:³⁰

- 17.3% of the population were aged 15 years and under in 2024. This is in line with the JSNA forecast.
- 10.2% of the population were aged between 15 and 24 – showing no change from the 2021 figure.
- 20.5% of the population were aged 65 and over, showing that the population is ageing in line with the JSNA.

7.3.12 Furthermore, according to mid-year estimates for 2024, 50.6% of the population of Hart are female, leaving 49.4% male. This is broadly similar to national figures.³¹

Future population changes

7.3.13 Population change is projected by looking at births and deaths (natural change) and people moving in and out of areas. According to the ONS, the following is projected for the Hart district population in 2032:³²

- A population total of 106,594. This is an increase from approximately 100,912 people in 2022, and represents an increase of 5.6%. This is lower than the anticipated average for England of 6.4%.
- There will be more births than deaths – with 9,149 births and 8,720 deaths in Hart between 2022 and 2032. This means natural change would increase the population in Hart by 0.4%, compared with an increase of 0.2% in England.
- Net internal migration is anticipated to be 5,329 people – this is likely to be the largest factor in the population increase between 2022 and 2032.
- The projected median age is 44, an increase from the 2021 median age of 43.
- 22% of the population in Hart are projected to be aged 65 years or over, up from 19% in 2022.
- 20% of people are projected to be aged 18 years and under, down from 23% in 2022.

7.3.14 The population estimates and forecasts produced by Hampshire County Council provide a population projection of 106,336 people in Hart in 2031.³³

Future Baseline

7.3.15 Hart is anticipated to experience an increase in overall population of approximately 5.6% by 2032 based on 2022 data. This is likely to have far

³⁰ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

³¹ Ibid.

³² ONS (2025). 'Subnational population projections for England: 2022-based' can be accessed through [this link](#).

³³ Hampshire County Council (no date): 'Population estimates and forecasts' can be accessed through [this link](#).

reaching impacts, affecting the economy, environment, society and culture in Hart.

- 7.3.16 The emerging HLP offers the opportunity to promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise encounter each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.

7.4 Key Issues

- 7.4.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Overall, there has been a growth in the population of Hart since 2011. Additionally, the number of people aged 65 and above has also increased between 2021 and 2024 – whereas the proportion of those aged under 15 has decreased over the same period. This suggests that Hart has an ageing population, and there needs to be consideration for the specific needs this age group will need, for example specialist housing and health and care provision.
- It is forecast that the population of Hart will increase by 5.6% by 2032. A rising population can have impacts on the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of a place by affecting the availability of housing, community services and green space. Ensuring that there is suitable provision of services for residents will be important to maintain and enhance residents' quality of life.
- Hart has four larger urban areas within its boundaries: Fleet, Blackwater and Hawley, Hook, and Yateley. Whilst these would represent the most sustainable growth locations, considering their infrastructure provision, Blackwater and Hawley and Yateley are constrained by flood risk concerns and biodiversity designations. Additionally, Fleet and Hook have previously experienced a high level of housing development. As such, it will be important for the emerging HLP to manage growth in the district whilst ensuring that development has good access to services and facilities. This will help to maintain and enhance the quality of life of new and existing residents across the district.
- Outside of the larger settlements and built-up areas in Hart are a number of smaller villages and hamlets, which support the district's rural communities. It will be important for the emerging HLP to manage growth in these areas, to ensure that potential new growth does not increase pressure on limited services and facilities, and new housing reflects the needs of the communities. This could include ensuring affordable housing is put forward, so that important facilities can be maintained – including village schools, which could be threatened by lower housing growth and declining pupil projections.

7.5 IIA Objective

7.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
To enhance design quality to create natural beautiful places for people that maintain and enhance community and settlement identity.	• Support the needs of an ageing population, through providing new community infrastructure, or enhancing access to existing services and facilities? • Improve connectivity between communities and facilitate social interaction? • Protect and enhance community identity and distinctiveness? • Prevent the coalescence of settlements and retain the openness of land, green infrastructure and habitat connectivity?

8. Economy and Employment

8.1 Focus of Theme

- 8.1.1 This theme focusses on local businesses, access to employment, tourism, education, and skill level.

8.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 8.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 8.1**.

Table 8.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the economy and employment theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>A Prosperous Future for Hart - A Strategy to Support a Successful Local Economy 2025-2035</u>	2025
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019

8.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Qualifications

- 8.3.1 Skills and education are a key factor in driving economic growth. The 2021 Census indicates that in the district, 41.4% of residents aged 16 and above have a level 4 qualification and above, as shown in **Figure 8.1** overleaf. This is above both regional (35.8%) and national (33.9%) levels. There is also a lower proportion of residents with no qualifications (10.9%) compared to regional (15.4%) and national (18.1%) averages. This indicates a highly skilled local workforce and aligns with Hart's economic structure, which includes a strong presence of professional, managerial and knowledge-based occupations.

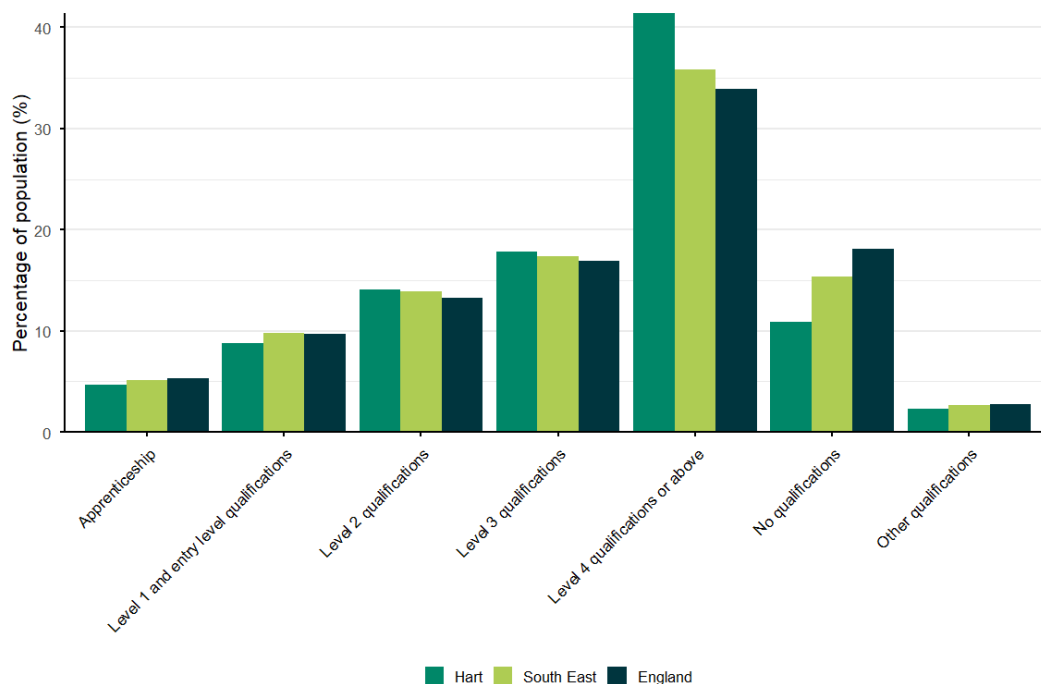


Figure 8.1: Highest level of qualification in Hart, the South East Region and England (2021)³⁴

Index of Multiple Deprivation

8.3.2 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of several different domains. These are assessed on a 'lower super output area' (LSOA) basis – these are standardised geographies that include approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. LSOAs are ranked out of 32,844 – with lower numbers representing lower levels of deprivation. Of particular relevance to the economy and employment IIA theme are:

- Education, skills and training: the lack of attainment and skills in the population.
- Employment: the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot.
- Income: the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income.

8.3.3 **Table 8.2** overleaf provides details on the LSOAs within Hart that fall within the 50% most deprived, or worse, areas for the education, skills and training, employment and income domains.

³⁴ Nomis (2021). 'Query Data' can be accessed through [this link](#). See Table TS067.

Table 8.2: LSOAs in Hart ranked within 50% most deprived or worse for the Education, Skills and Training IMD domain, the Employment IMD domain, and the Income IMD domain

	Education, Skills and Training domain	Employment domain	Income domain
50% Most Deprived	4	3	2
40% Most Deprived	0	0	1
30% Most Deprived	0	0	0
20% Most Deprived	2	0	0
10% Most Deprived	0	0	0
Total (out of 59)	6	3	3

- 8.3.4 Breaking the results down by decile illustrates how deprivation is distributed within Hart. Most of the identified LSOAs fall within the 50% and 40% most deprived groups, with fewer represented in the 30%, 20% and 10% most deprived nationally. Only the education domain includes LSOAs within the 20% most deprived category, while neither the employment nor income domains have any LSOAs in the 30%, 20% or 10% most deprived LSOAs. **Figure 8.2, Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.4** at the end of the chapter show the spatial distribution of these deprivation domains in Hart.
- 8.3.5 Overall, Hart district performs well compared to other lower tier local authorities (LTLAs) for the education, skills and training deprivation domain ranking 286th out of 296 LTLAs (where 1st is the most deprived). In total, just 10% of the districts LSOAs fall within the 50% most deprived areas nationally for education, skills and training. The two areas (Hart 003E, Hart 001A) that fall within the 20% most deprived nationally are located in the north east of the district, indicating the need for targeted interventions to combat this type of deprivation within these areas.
- 8.3.6 Similar results are noted for the employment deprivation domain, with Hart district ranking 294th out of 296 LTLAs. In total, just 5% of the districts LSOAs fall within the 50% most deprived LSOAs nationally for education, skills and training. The three areas (Hart 001A, Hart 011C and Hart 008A) that fall within the most 50% most deprived nationally are located in the north east, west and centre of the plan area respectively.
- 8.3.7 With regards to the income deprivation domain, Hart ranks 293rd out of 296 LTLAs. In total, just 5% of the districts LSOAs fall within the 50% most deprived LSOAs nationally for income. The three areas (Hart 003E, Hart 001A and Hart 011C) that fall within the 50% most deprived LSOAs nationally are located in the north east and west of the district,
- 8.3.8 Further analysis of LSOAs within the 50% most deprived nationally across each domain indicated that, while deprivation in Hart is generally not within the most severe nationally, it is present across multiple domains in certain areas. In particular, Hart 001A falls within the 50% most deprived LSOAs across all three domains, suggesting a moderate level of deprivation in this area compared to other LSOAs across the district. As such, there is a

potential need for targeted interventions to address issues across multiple IMD domains.

Employment and occupation

- 8.3.9 Hart supports a strong and productive labour market, with approximately 43,000 jobs. In 2023, around 90% of people aged between 16 and 64 were economically active (compared to 78% in the UK overall), and of them, 88% were in employment.
- 8.3.10 Hart's employment structure reflects strengths in technology driven industries supported by a highly skilled workforce. While the local economy is generally driven by small and micro business, there are some larger firms operating within the district. Significant levels of employment are found in information and communications and professional, scientific and technical services in the district. However, following the decision by Virgin Media to relocate its headquarters from Hook to Reading in 2019 there has been a substantial loss of employment from the district.
- 8.3.11 Regional projections developed by the UK Government suggest that between 2020-2035 the future direction of employment growth will play to Hart's existing strengths, with the information technology sector and the professional services industry groups expected to grow 1.1% and 0.8% respectively. The strongest growth in the region is forecast in the food and tobacco industry.³⁵

Barriers to the local economy

- 8.3.12 One of the most significant barriers to Hart's economy is housing affordability. High house prices in the district making it difficult to attract and retain employees, particularly younger people in lower and middle income roles.
- 8.3.13 Demographic change also presents a key challenge. The district has a rapidly ageing population, with projections indicating a decline in the working age population over time. This may result in labour shortages and place increased pressure on local business to recruit and retain staff.
- 8.3.14 As of 2024, there were around 4,800 businesses in Hart. Data from the Office of National Statistics identifies that the number of businesses in the district between 2014 and 2024 remained relatively static. This, combined with the recent job losses in certain sectors, may limit the district's ability to fully capitalise on its economic strengths and may encourage out-commuting to larger population centres for work. Additionally, Hart's role within the North Hampshire and Blackwater Valley technology corridor is often under-appreciated, which may reduce the district's ability to attract inward investment compared to neighbouring areas.

Future Baseline

- 8.3.15 Whilst it is recognised that Hart is considered to have a highly skilled local workforce, as the population of Hart continues to age the percentage of people with high levels of qualifications may decrease. This could have an

³⁵ UK Government (2023) 'Labour market and skills projections: 2020 – 2035' can be accessed through [this link](#).

impact upon the overall skills and education of the population, and thus have an effect upon economic growth in the district.

- 8.3.16 Whilst the district as a whole experiences low levels of deprivation linked to the education, skills and training IMD domain, the employment IMD domain, and the income IMD domain, certain areas within the district experience greater deprivation than others in relation. Future development through the emerging HLP could contribute to exacerbating or reducing these inequalities through the positioning of new infrastructure and growth.

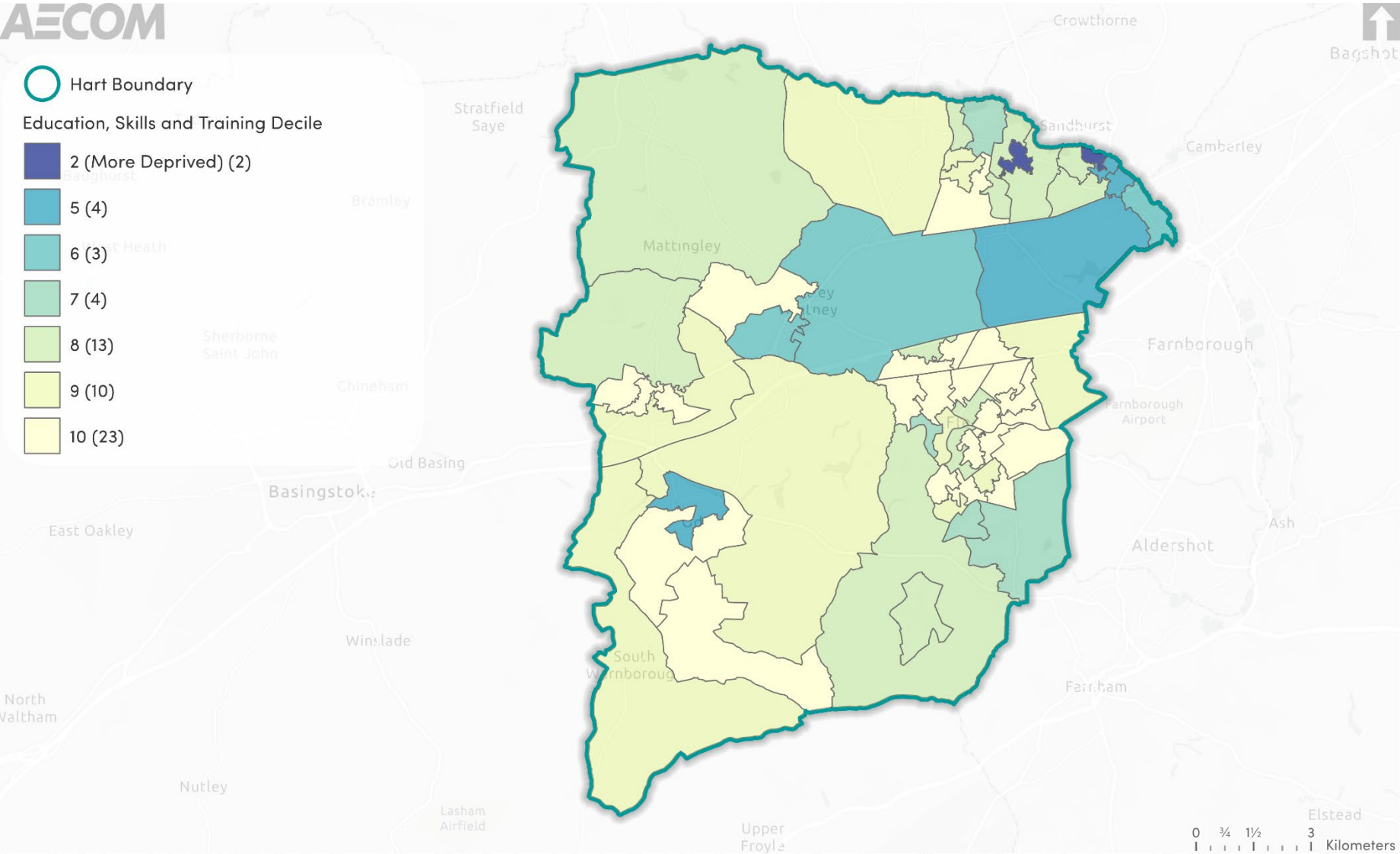
8.4 Key Issues

- 8.4.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):
- Hart has a high percentage of residents with Level 4 qualifications or higher – greater than the average for regional and national figures. This contributes to a highly skilled workforce within Hart, and the emerging HLP should seek to retain and enhance these residents as far as possible to maintain economic growth levels – especially given the ageing population in the district.
 - Whilst the IMD domains indicate that Hart experiences low levels of deprivation linked to employment, skills and training, income, and employment, there are internal inequalities in relation to these deprivation domains. The emerging HLP has the potential to reduce these experienced inequalities through focusing new growth and development within areas with greater deprivation, to provide more opportunities for residents.
 - Hart is positioned well to capitalise on regional economic projections, which indicate that the information technology sector and the professional services industry groups expected to grow 1.1% and 0.8% respectively.

8.5 IIA Objective

8.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
Support a sustainable, diverse, and resilient economy, with innovative responses to changing conditions and support for a strong future workforce.	• Provide sufficient land for businesses to grow and ensure alignment with housing / infrastructure? • Support the creation of accessible new jobs and facilitate home and distance working? • Ensure that town centres are considered first for new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure and public service facilities? • Ensure the capacity of educational facilities keep pace with population growth? • Enhance the vitality and resilience of town centre and retail centres, supporting diversification in line with changing needs? • Safeguard existing employment areas? • Maintain and enhance existing tourism destinations? • Encourage sustainable development and quality facilities to enrich the experience for visitors and residents? • Promote a green economy and decarbonisation? • Ensure the economy grows in a sustainable manner?



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Figure 8.2: IMD - Education, skills and training deprivation domain across Hart

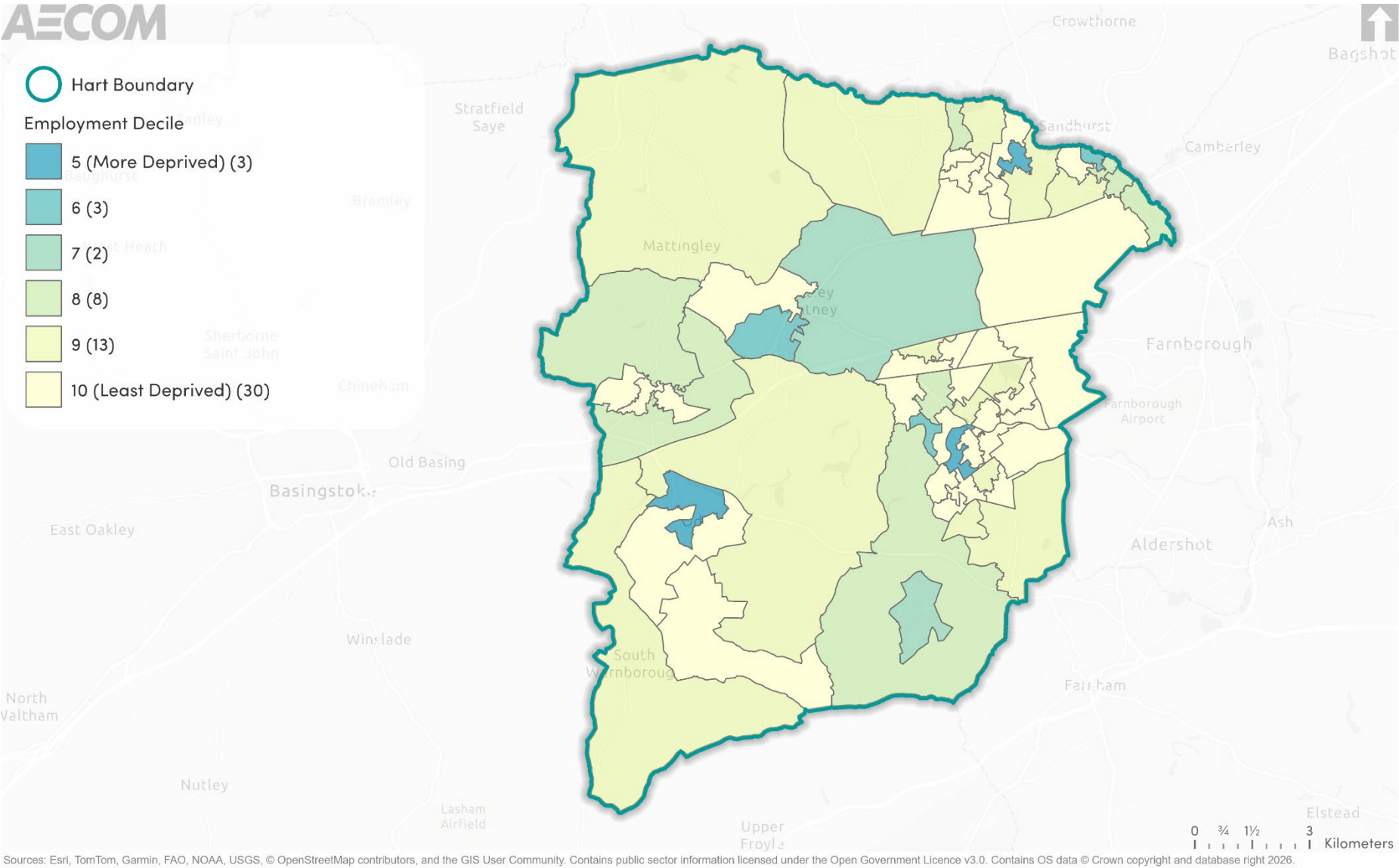


Figure 8.3: IMD - Employment deprivation domain across Hart

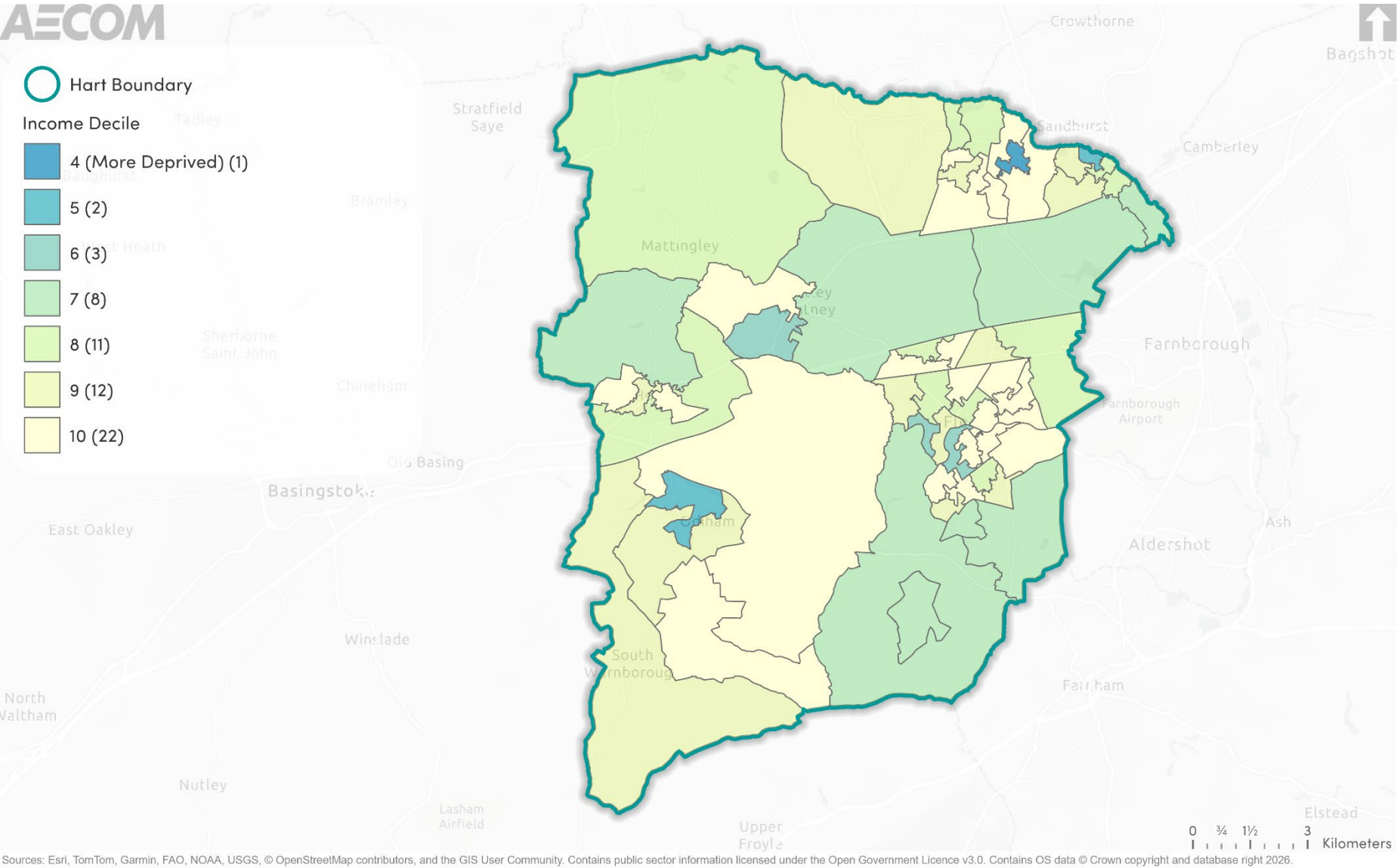


Figure 8.4: IMD - Income deprivation domain across Hart

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

9.1 Focus of Theme

- 9.1.1 This theme focuses on the demographics and households of the population in Hart, as well as deprivation linked to crime and the living environment.

9.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 9.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 9.1**.

Table 9.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hart Equality and Diversity Information 2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>Hampshire County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</u>	No date

9.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Equalities data

- 9.3.1 Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age.

Pregnancy

- 9.3.2 In relation to pregnancy and maternity, there were 877 births in Hart in 2023, which was a decrease from 892 in 2022. According to 2024 data, this decreased further to 848.³⁶ This demonstrates a falling birth rate in the district, though this is in line with the trend for England.
- 9.3.3 In 2023, compared to Hampshire there was a smaller percentage of mothers in Hart under the age of 20 and between 20-29. However, there were more mothers in the 30-44 age category in Hart compared to Hampshire as a whole.

³⁶ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

9.3.4 In 2020, the fertility rate in Hart was 1.77 – which was higher than the average for England and Wales.³⁷

Legal partnership status

9.3.5 According to 2021 Census data, 54.7% of the respondents were married or in a civil partnership. This is greater than the average for England for 2021 (44.7%). 1.8% of respondents indicated that they were separated but still legally married or legally within a civil partnership (less than the England average of 2.2%), and 28.9% of people have never married or registered a civil partnership (compared to 37.9% of respondents in England). The percentage of people in Hart that are divorced or have had their civil partnership dissolved (8.7%) is broadly in line with the England average (9.1%), as is the number of people that have been widowed or are a surviving civil partnership partner (6% for Hart in comparison to 6.1% for England).³⁸

Age distribution

9.3.6 Age characteristics data taken from the 2021 Census illustrates an ageing population across England. According to 2021 Census data:³⁹

- 18% of the population of Hart were aged under 15 years; this is greater than the average for Hampshire (16.8%), the South East region (17.4%), and England (17.3%).
- 62.4% of the population of Hart were aged between 15-64; this is greater than the average for Hampshire (61.5%), but less than the average for the South East region (63.1%) and England (64.1%).
- 19.6% of the population of Hart were aged over 65; this is less than the average for Hampshire (21.8%) and England (18.4%), but broadly in line with trends for the South East region (19.5%).

9.3.7 In comparison, according to 2024 mid-year estimates:

- 17.3% of the population of Hart were aged under 15 years. Whilst this demonstrates a decrease from 2021 figures, this is broadly in line with the decrease seen across the South East region (17.3%) and England (17.1%). The percentage for Hampshire has increased to 17.8%.
- 62.2% of the population of Hart were aged between 15 and 64. This is broadly in line with the figures for 2021 – but the average for Hampshire overall has increased (to 64.2%).
- 20.5% of the population of Hart were aged 65 and over. This is greater than the average for Hampshire (18%), the South East (19.9%) and England (18.7%).

9.3.8 The data suggests an ageing population in Hart.

³⁷ ONS (no date). 'Births in England and Wales' can be accessed through [this link](#).

³⁸ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

³⁹ Ibid.

Sexual orientation and gender identity

- 9.3.9 According to the mid-year estimate for Hart, 50.6% of the 2024 population were female – slightly less than the average for England (51%). 49.4% were male in the district.⁴⁰
- 9.3.10 As of 2021 Census data, the majority of the Hart population aged 16 and above had a gender identity that matched their sex registered at birth (95.8%). 0.1% of the respondent population had a gender identity different to that of sex registered at birth, but no specific identity was given. Additionally, 0.1% of respondents indicates they were a trans woman, and 0.1% indicated they were a trans man. The remaining 4% did not answer.⁴¹
- 9.3.11 In relation to sexual orientation, 92.4% of population aged 16 and above in Hart indicated they were straight or heterosexual in the 2021 Census. 1.1% of the responding population indicated they were gay or lesbian, and 0.8% indicated they were bisexual. A further 0.1% indicated they were pansexual, 0.1% indicated they were asexual, and 0.1% indicated they were another sexual orientation. 5.5% of respondents did not answer the question.⁴²
- 9.3.12 National hate crime statistics for England and Wales demonstrates that there has been a decrease in recorded hate crimes related to sexual orientation and transgender crime strands. This was a decrease of 2% for sexual orientation hate crime from 2023/24 data, and a decrease of 11% for transgender hate crime from 2023/24 data.⁴³

Ethnicity and race

- 9.3.13 Data from the 2021 Census demonstrates that the population of Hart is predominantly white – 92.5%, in comparison to 81% for England. The Asian ethnic group were the largest non-white minority in Hart (3.6%), followed by the mixed or multiple ethnic group (2.2%). The Black ethnic group accounted for 0.8% of the population – and other ethnic groups contributed the remaining 0.8%. The non-white ethnicities in Hart are lower than the average for England – which are 9.6% for Asian communities, 4.2% for Black communities, 3% for mixed or multiple ethnic group communities, and 2.2% for other ethnic groups.⁴⁴

Religion

- 9.3.14 As shown in **Table 9.2**, the majority of the responding population in Hart are Christian, followed by no religion. Whilst higher than the data for England, it largely demonstrates the same trend. However, the Muslim population in Hart is significantly lower than the average figures for England.

Table 9.2: Religious identity in Hart and England in 2021⁴⁵

	Hart	England
Christian	49.8%	46.3%

⁴⁰ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁴¹ Nomis (2021). 'Query Data' can be accessed through [this link](#). See Table TS070.

⁴² Nomis (2021). 'Query Data' can be accessed through [this link](#). See Table TS079.

⁴³ GOV.UK (2025). 'Official Statistics: Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁴ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

	Hart	England
Buddhist	0.6%	0.5%
Hindu	1.2%	1.8%
Jewish	0.1%	0.5%
Muslim	0.8%	6.7%
Sikh	0.3%	0.9%
Other religion	0.4%	0.6%
No religion	41.1%	36.7%
Not answered	5.6%	6%

Disability

9.3.15 According to 2021 Census data, approximately 87.1% of the Hart population are not disabled under the Equality Act.⁴⁶ This is higher than the average for England (82.7%). Furthermore, in 2021, 4.2% of Hart residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 5.1% in 2011. It is recognised that Hart had the country's third lowest proportion of residents who were identified as being disabled and limited a lot (4.2%) in 2021.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Crime

9.3.16 The three most common types of crime occurring within Hart include: violence and sexual offences, anti-social behaviour, and criminal damage and arson. The three most common places for crime to occur in include: parking areas, supermarkets, and petrol stations. It is recognised that the number of crimes reported in 2024 dropped to under 1,000, whereas in 2023 over 4,000 crimes were reported to Hampshire Police.⁴⁷

9.3.17 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of several different domains. These are assessed on a 'lower super output area' (LSOA) basis – these are standardised geographies that include approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. LSOAs are ranked out of 32,844 – with lower numbers representing lower levels of deprivation. The crime deprivation domain indicates the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level. The domain indicates that one area within Fleet is within the 30% most deprived LSOAs, and two further LSOAs are within the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods. The remaining LSOAs are within the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods as a minimum. The distribution of the crime deprivation domain is demonstrated in **Figure 9.1** at the end of this chapter.

⁴⁶ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁴⁷ Police-uk.org (2023). 'Hart Crime Data, Postcodes, Wards, Map' can be accessed through [here](#).

Living environment

9.3.18 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of several different domains. These are assessed on a 'lower super output area' (LSOA) basis – these are standardised geographies that include approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. LSOAs are ranked out of 32,844 – with lower numbers representing lower levels of deprivation. The living environment deprivation domain indicates the quality of the local environment – categories into 'indoors living environment' (for example, the quality of housing), and 'outdoors living environment' (for example, air quality and road traffic accidents). The domain indicates that one LSOA within Hart is within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods – located in the north-west of the district. In total, four LSOAs are within the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods at a minimum. The distribution of the living environment deprivation domain is demonstrated in **Figure 9.2** at the end of this chapter.

Future Baseline

- 9.3.19 The Hampshire JSNA includes a number of overarching themes that contribute towards inequalities in Hart. It will be important for the emerging HLP to work in line with the JSNA and seek to improve wellbeing in areas of the district where deprivation is experienced more acutely.
- 9.3.20 Economic regeneration, alongside community regeneration, are key factors that can transform local neighbourhoods and the lives of local people, given that they can have secondary benefits for reducing inequality. New development coming forward through the emerging HLP should therefore focus on reducing the gap between the most and the least deprived areas in the district – for example, including through (but not limited to) ensuring development provides new or improves access to existing facilities that support health and education.
- 9.3.21 It is important to recognise that without the emerging HLP, it is possible that inequalities in Hart would increase and potentially impact upon more people. This is due to the likelihood of speculative development coming forward that does not meet the needs of, or serve, the community of Hart. As such, an update to local planning policy through the emerging HLP provides an opportunity to support inclusive communities and address deprivation and inequalities in the district.

9.4 Key Issues

- 9.4.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):
- The birth rate in Hart is decreasing. This, alongside the number of older people in the district, is anticipated to influence changes in the demographics of the population – and contributes towards the ageing population.
 - There are only small proportions of residents that are within minority ethnic, religious, and racial groups.

- There are greater levels of deprivation associated with the living environment deprivation domain in Hart, with the eastern part of the district having lower levels of deprivation. This shows that there is greater inequality associated with this deprivation domain in the district.

9.5 IIA Objective

9.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
To reduce poverty and inequality; tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion.	• Reduce inequalities and deprivation across Hart? • Improve equality of opportunities amongst the groups most in need? • Contribute to a reduction in crime and social disorder and the fear of crime, promoting safer neighbourhoods? • Promote, strengthen, and enhance placemaking principles? • Protect and provide improved local, social, recreational and leisure facilities and access to the natural environment for all sectors of the community, and improve access to them to maximise opportunities for community development and social welfare? • Ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures to meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? • Support the ageing population to ensure they do not become socially excluded? • Ensure there is adequate provision of facilities and services for minority groups?

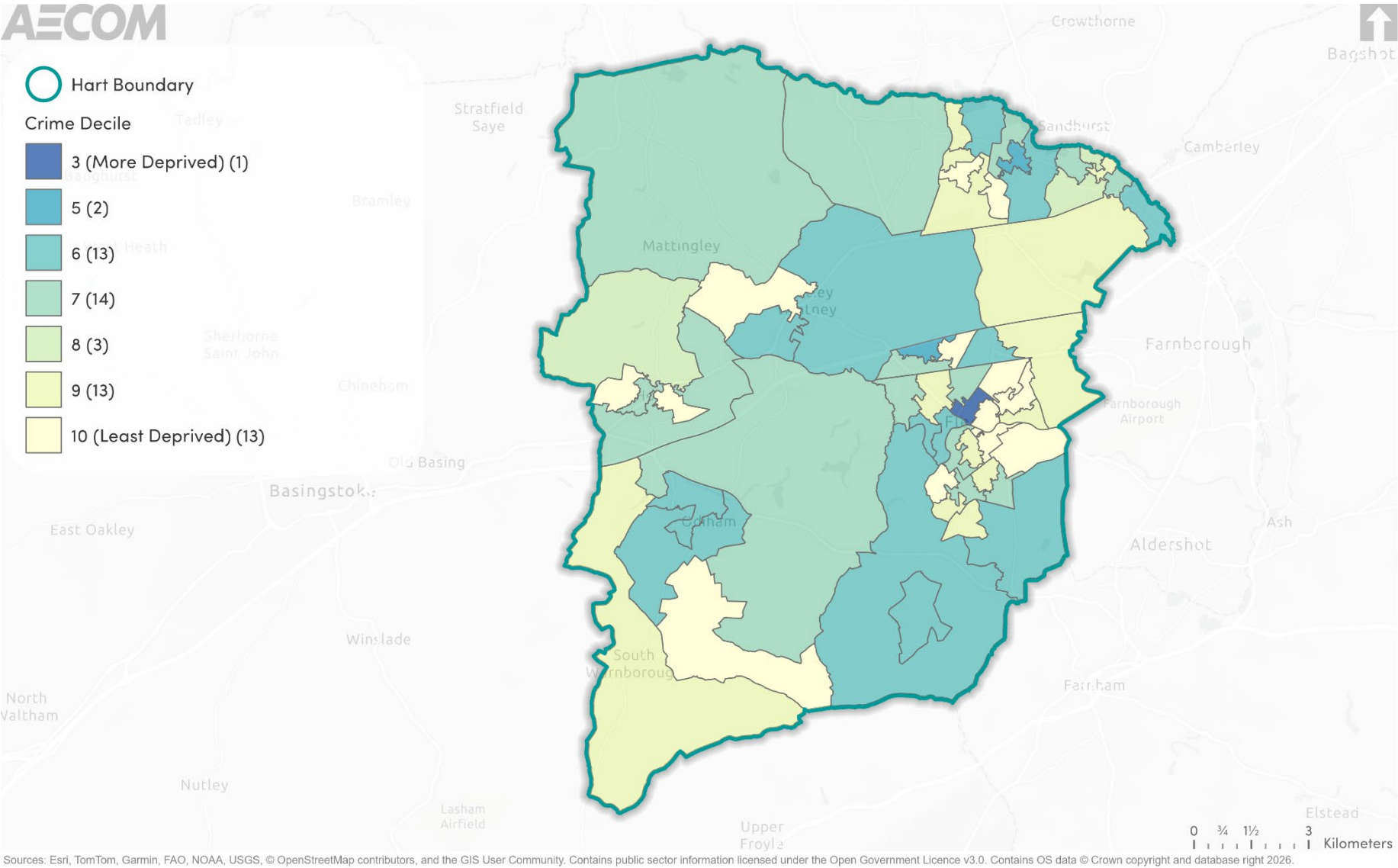


Figure 9.1: IMD - Crime deprivation domain across Hart

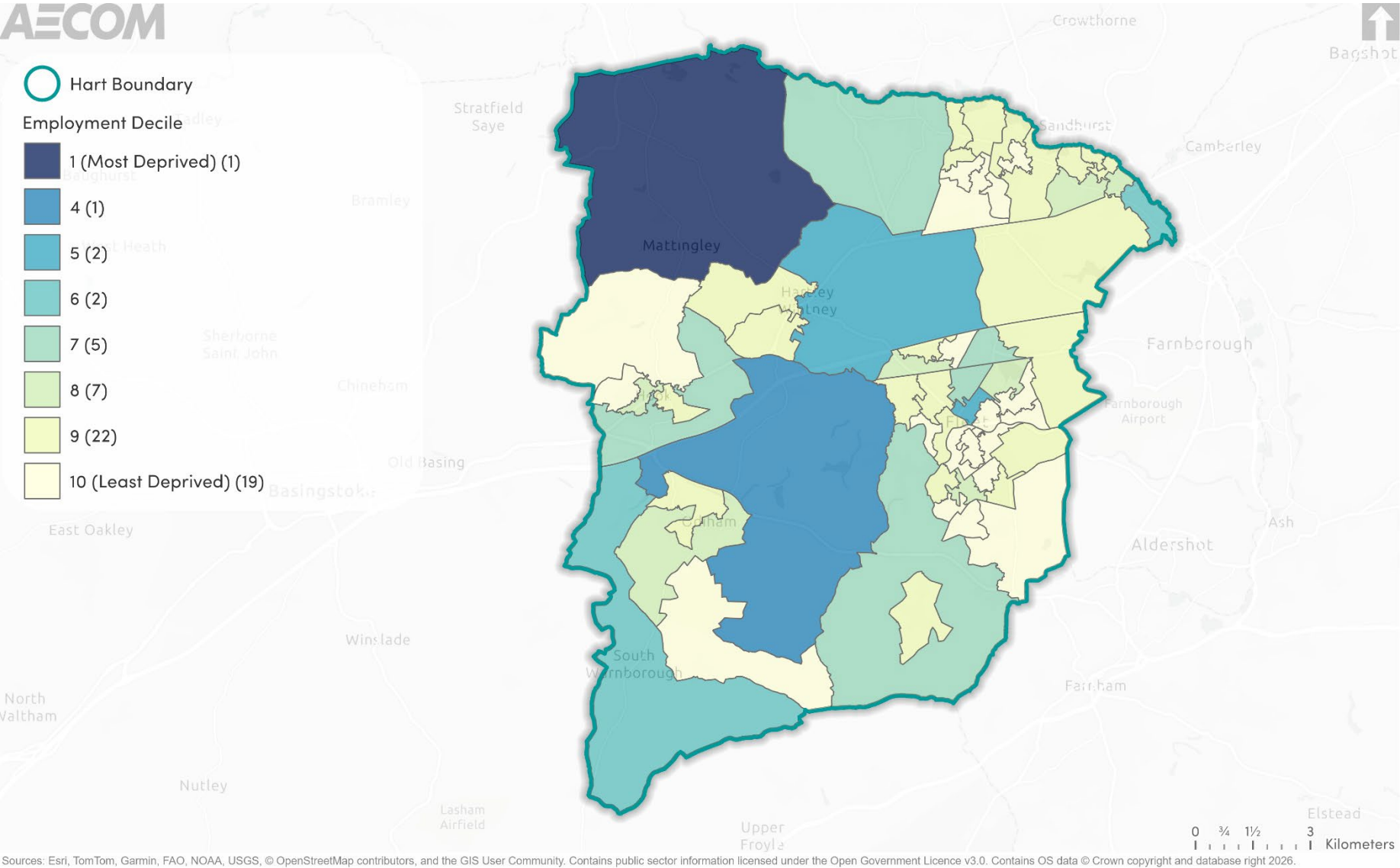


Figure 9.2: IMD - Living environment deprivation domain across Hart

10. Health and Well-being

10.1 Focus of Theme

- 10.1.1 This theme focuses on the general health of the population in Hart, as well as access to open space and play facilities, healthcare facilities, and active travel opportunities.

10.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 10.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 10.1**.

Table 10.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the health and well-being theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy</u>	2017
<u>Hart District Council - Built Facilities Strategy</u>	2016
<u>Hart Open Space Study</u>	2016
<u>Hart District Council Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 to 2032</u>	2016
<u>Hampshire County Council Public Health Strategy 2023 - 2026</u>	No date
<u>Hampshire County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</u>	No date

10.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

General health

- 10.3.1 The following trends have been identified in relation to general health in Hart, according to 2024 data:⁴⁸
- Life expectancy at birth for males was 84.6 years – this is 3.7 years longer than the average for the South East region, and 4.8 years longer than the average for England.

⁴⁸ Department of Health and Social Care (2026). 'Local Authority Health Profiles' can be accessed through [this link](#).

- Life expectancy at birth for females was 86.7 years – this is two years longer than the average for the South East region, and 3.1 years longer than the average for England.
- The under 75 mortality rate from all causes was 191.9 per 100,000 – this is the lowest in the South East region.
- The percentage of the population aged 18 years and above that are overweight or obese is 63.9% - this is slightly higher than the average for the South East (63.2%), and slightly less than the average for England (64.5%). The percentage of ten and eleven year olds that are overweight or obese is 15% - lower than the South East region average (19.2%) and the England average (22.2%).
- The percentage of physically active adults aged 19 and above in Hart is 78.5% - greater than the average for the South East (70.5%) and England (67.4%).
- The estimated dementia diagnosis rate is 66.6 people per 100 – higher than the average for the South East (63.3) and England (65.6). This is a decrease from the previous year, which was 67.8 people per 100.
- The percentage of children (aged under 16 years old) in absolute low income families is 6%. Whilst this is lower than the average for the South East (12.3%) and England (19.1%), this shows a continuing trend from 2021.

10.3.2 Furthermore, according to 2021 Census data:⁴⁹

- 54.9% of the population of Hart report very good health (higher than the average for England, which is 48.5%). 32.9% report good health, 9.4% report fair health, 2.2% report bad health, and 0.6% report very bad health – these are less than the corresponding averages for England.
- 12.9% of the population are disabled under the Equality Act – less than the England average of 17.3%.

Open space and play facilities

10.3.3 Access to open space can have benefits that are both mental and physical. Areas of deficiency may therefore result in a population that does not participate in informal physical activity alongside other secondary effects associated with environmental inequality.

10.3.4 Among the provision of open spaces in Hart are parks and gardens, natural / semi-natural green space, green corridors, amenity green space, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, space for children and young people, roadside verges, outdoor sports facilities, and civic space. In 2016, approximately 91.2% of the publicly accessible open space recorded in Hart was natural / semi-natural green space.

10.3.5 It is recognised that some of the more rural parts of the district do not have access to well-designed parks and gardens, and there have been concerns over the long term funding of open spaces in the area. However, it is likely

⁴⁹ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

that these areas access the countryside and informal open spaces in the district.

10.3.6 The 2016 Open Space Study identified that of the twelve parishes assessed:

- Church Crookham had average accessibility to open spaces.
- Crondall had poor accessibility to open spaces.
- Elvetham and Odiham had average quality open spaces.
- Fleet had an average quantity of open spaces.
- Greywell had very poor open space quantity, quality, and accessibility.
- Crookham Village had average open space quantity, quality, and accessibility.
- Eversley had average quality open spaces.

10.3.7 In relation to playing pitches, in 2016 a total of 68 secured and unsecured grass pitch playing field sites, a total of 117 grass playing pitches, a total of 82 football pitches, and a total of 28 artificial grass pitches and non-turf cricket wickets. It is considered that the sports and recreation facilities in Hart are sufficient to meet the demand of the local community.

Healthcare facilities

10.3.8 NHS healthcare facilities within Hart include:⁵⁰

- Eleven dental surgeries; one in Odiham, one in Hartley Wintney, one in Church Crookham, one in Yateley, one in Blackwater, two in Hook, and four in Fleet.
- Ten GP surgeries; one in Hook, one in Odiham, one in Crondall, three in Fleet, one in Hartley Wintney, two in Yateley, and one in Blackwater.
- Nine opticians; one in Odiham, one in Hook, one in Yateley, one in Blackwater, and five in Fleet.
- 17 pharmacies; one in Odiham, one in Hartley Wintney, one in Elvetham Heath, one in Church Crookham, two in Blackwater, two in Hook, three in Yateley, and six in Fleet.

10.3.9 It is recognised that there are more private facilities, but these are considered to be less accessible in relation to affordability.

Active travel

10.3.10 Walking and cycling are sustainable travel methods that can support healthy lifestyles and contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing. Hart has a large Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, as discussed in the Transport and Travel chapter (**Chapter 15**), which allows for safe engagement with exercise by providing opportunities to walk and cycle away from the road network.

⁵⁰ Hart District Council (2025). 'My Maps' can be accessed through [this link](#).

10.3.11 It is also noted that the St Swithuns Way long distance walking route is on part of the south east district boundary, which is likely to provide further opportunities to engage with physical activity linked to recreation.⁵¹

Future Baseline

10.3.12 Overall, the population of Hart is considered to be in good health – as evidenced by the greater life expectancies, and low mortality rate. However, it is recognised that there is a larger percentage of the adult population that are overweight or obese, which could have health implications for the population in the future, given the link between obesity and mental and physical health conditions.

10.3.13 The emerging Hart Local Plan should focus on maintaining and improving access to green spaces, and connectivity to green spaces, as well as the active travel networks, to meet community infrastructure needs throughout the district. This is likely to support the improvement of overall health and wellbeing for the population of Hart. Equality of access to facilities, services, green spaces, retail and leisure is crucial to enable people to improve and maintain good health and wellbeing.

10.4 Key Issues

10.4.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- The population of Hart benefits from a high life expectancy and a low mortality rate, and a high proportion of residents report good or very good health. However, without careful planning, future growth in the district could result in the erosion of these positive health indicators over the plan period.
- Despite overall good health in the district, a relatively high proportion of adults in Hart are overweight or obese. This presents a long-term risk to physical and mental health, with potential implications for chronic disease prevalence, healthcare demand, and reduced quality of life in the future.
- Additionally, the proportion of children living in absolute low-income households highlights the potential for inequality in access to healthy environments, recreation opportunities, and informal physical activity.
- Hart offers a variety of open spaces to allow for engagement with activities that contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing. However, residents in the more rural parts of the district have reduced access to such facilities – whilst it is likely that residents engage with the open countryside and informal open spaces, this reduced infrastructure could have negative effects in relation to health and wellbeing. It will be important to ensure that new development delivers open spaces, or provides connections to existing open spaces, to support physical and mental health.

⁵¹ Hampshire County Council (no date). 'St Swithuns Way' can be accessed through [this link](#).

- Future population ageing is likely to increase demand for healthcare services, accessible environments, and facilities that support independence, mental wellbeing, and social inclusion. It will be important to ensure that new development provides new infrastructure to support an increase in residents, or improves connectivity and access of existing health and wellbeing services and facilities.

10.5 IIA Objective

10.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
To improve the health and wellbeing of residents within Hart, promoting healthy and sustainable places.	• Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities through provision of open space, play spaces, food growing, and community spaces? • Facilitate good access to healthcare, social, recreational and leisure facilities for all sectors of the community? • Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks and connectivity throughout the plan area? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green spaces? • Improve access to open spaces, the countryside and leisure and recreation facilities? • Support healthy / active and inclusive environments? • Support the creation of cohesive, connected communities? • Provide formal and informal, and natural play spaces for children which are safe and easy and safe to access? • Support active travel and improvements to air quality?

11. Historic Environment

11.1 Focus of Theme

- 11.1.1 This theme focuses on designated and non-designated historic assets (including archaeology) and their setting.

11.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 11.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 11.1**.

Table 11.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the historic environment theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>Hampshire Archaeological Strategy</u>	2012

11.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Listed buildings

- 11.3.1 Hart has 929 Listed Buildings whose special architectural or historic interest is protected by the need to obtain Listed Building Consent under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.⁵² The setting of such buildings is often critical to the character and significance of the building, and can be restricted to its immediate site or extend to a much wider area.
- 11.3.2 Of the 929 Listed Buildings, 13 are Grade I Listed, and 42 are Grade II* Listed. The distribution of listed buildings is shown in **Figure 11.1** at the end of the chapter.

Scheduled monuments

- 11.3.3 Scheduled monuments are a selection of nationally important archaeological sites, including (but not limited to) standing stones, burial mounds, the remains of monastic buildings. It is the oldest form of heritage protection, going back as far as the 1882 Ancient Monuments Protection Act.⁵³

⁵² Historic England (2025). 'What Are Listed Buildings?' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵³ Historic England (2025). 'What Are Scheduled Monuments?' can be accessed through [this link](#).

11.3.4 Within Hart, there are ten designated scheduled monuments. One of these monuments, 'Large multivallate hillfort and later park pale at Caesar's Camp'⁵⁴ extends into the neighbouring Rushmoor Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council boundaries. The distribution of the scheduled monuments is shown in **Figure 11.2** at the end of this chapter.

Registered Parks and Gardens

11.3.5 Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest includes over 1,700 designated historic landscapes assessed to be of particular significance. The designation is established under the National Heritage Act 1983.⁵⁵

11.3.6 There are eight Registered Parks and Gardens within Hart. The Grade II Stratfield Saye Park extends into the boundaries of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to the west and Wokingham Borough Council to the north.⁵⁶ Additionally, Grade II* Tylney Hall extends southwards into Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council area⁵⁷, and Grade II Minley Manor extends eastwards into the boundaries of Rushmoor Borough Council.⁵⁸ The distribution of the registered parks and gardens is shown in **Figure 11.2** at the end of this chapter.

Conservation Areas

11.3.7 Conservation areas are created where a local planning authority identifies an area of special architectural or historic interest, which deserves careful management to protect that character. A good understanding of what makes these areas special, and active management once they are designated, are key to their ongoing success.⁵⁹

11.3.8 There are 32 conservation areas with Hart District; however, not all of the conservation areas have up to date conservation area appraisals – which help people to understand the history of an area and why it is special.⁶⁰ The distribution of the conservation areas is shown in **Figure 11.2** at the end of this chapter.

Heritage at Risk

11.3.9 Annually, Historic England assesses designated sites for Heritage at Risk (HAR), to understand the overall state of historic sites. The process identifies sites across the country that are most at risk of being lost as a result of decay, neglect, or inappropriate development.⁶¹

11.3.10 According to the most recent assessment, three historic sites are included on the HAR:

- The Grade II* Warbrook House Registered Park and Garden.
- The Grade I Bramsill Park Registered Park and Garden.

⁵⁴ Historic England (2026). *Large multivallate hillfort and later park pale at Caesar's Camp* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵⁵ Historic England (2025). *What Are Registered Parks and Gardens?* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵⁶ Historic England (2026). *Stratfield Saye Park* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵⁷ Historic England (2026). *Tylney Hall* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵⁸ Historic England (2026). *Minley Manor* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁵⁹ Historic England (2026). *Designating and Managing a Conservation Area* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁰ Hart District Council (2026). *Conservation areas* can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶¹ Historic England (2026). *What is Heritage at Risk* can be accessed through [this link](#).

- Grade I listed Garden walls and gateways north of Bramsill House Listed Building.

Archaeology and the local historic environment

11.3.11 The Hampshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is a database of known historic sites across the county. It includes archaeological sites, finds, historic buildings, historic landscapes, parks and gardens, and industrial monuments.⁶² Any locally important, non-designated heritage assets, areas and features within Hart will be included in the Hampshire HER.

Future Baseline

11.3.12 New development promoted through the emerging Hart Local Plan could bring forward growth within closer proximity to designated and non-designated heritage assets, areas and features. This has the potential to alter their fabric and setting, for example – changes to surroundings could influence how the historic environment is interpreted and understood. These impacts could be either positive or negative, and are largely dependent on the location, scale, and quality of potential design schemes.

11.3.13 Whilst new growth has the potential to cause harm to the fabric, setting and significance of the historic environment through unsympathetic development, new growth also has the potential to present opportunities to enhance historic settings, reinforce historic landscape character and better reveal the significance of heritage assets. This is considered likely to be achieved through sensitive design and layout.

11.3.14 New development in Hart could also contribute positively to the historic environment by supporting the management of heritage assets, areas and features, and strengthening evidence bases. New growth may also require archaeological investigation in previously undeveloped areas, leading to new discoveries and a greater understanding of local heritage in the district, and potentially the wider Hampshire County area.

11.3.15 Existing statutory designations and legislation, alongside national planning policy and the adopted Hart Local Plan, already provide a degree of protection for designated heritage assets, areas and features, and their settings. These protections would continue in the absence of a new Local Plan, helping to safeguard both designated and non-designated contributors to the historic environment. However, without a new Local Plan, opportunities to proactively enhance the historic environment through strategic development could be missed.

11.4 Key Issues

11.4.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Hart District contains a number of designated heritage assets, areas and features. The number, variety and sensitivity of these heritage assets, areas and features have the potential to create challenges relating to

⁶² Hampshire County Council (no date). 'Search and request Historic Environment Record data' can be accessed through [this link](#).

effective protection, management and decision-making – particularly in relation to development pressures. However, it is recognised that existing legislation and policy provides a baseline level of protection for the historic environment.

- The setting of heritage assets, areas and features is often a key contributor to their significance – and settings can often extend beyond their immediate surroundings. As such, new development through the emerging Hart Local Plan has the potential to adversely affect the setting and significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, areas and features if not carefully located, designed and managed. Ensuring that heritage considerations are embedded early in the design and site selection process is anticipated to contribute towards securing positive effects, rather than relying solely on mitigation at later stages.
- It is recognised that several designated historic sites in Hart extend into surrounding local authorities. The presence of these cross-boundary heritage assets creates a need for effective cooperation with neighbouring authorities, as changes outside of Hart’s administrative area could still affect the significance, setting and management of assets and the wider historic environment within the district.
- The emerging Hart Local Plan presents opportunities in relation to the historic environment in the district. For example, this could include: encouraging the creation of new, and updates to existing, conservation area appraisals; supporting action to reduce the vulnerability of HAR; and engaging with development-led archaeology (where appropriate) to contribute to the Hampshire HER and improve the understanding of Hart’s historic environment.
- It is considered that the new Hart Local Plan has the potential to establish cross-cutting provisions relating to new development, possibly including the creation and enhancement of functional environmental infrastructure, the encouragement of ecosystem services, the development of buffers to natural spaces, and the restoration of connectivity. In this context, improving network resilience is likely to protect the fabric and settings of designated and non-designated heritage assets, areas and features, and their contribution to the wider historic environment in Hart.

11.5 IIA objective

11.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the option / proposal help to:
Preserve and enhance Hart’s heritage resource, including its historic environment and	• Preserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural and / or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the option / proposal help to:
archaeological assets.	• Preserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings? • Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, and archaeologically sensitive areas, and support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic and cultural environment?

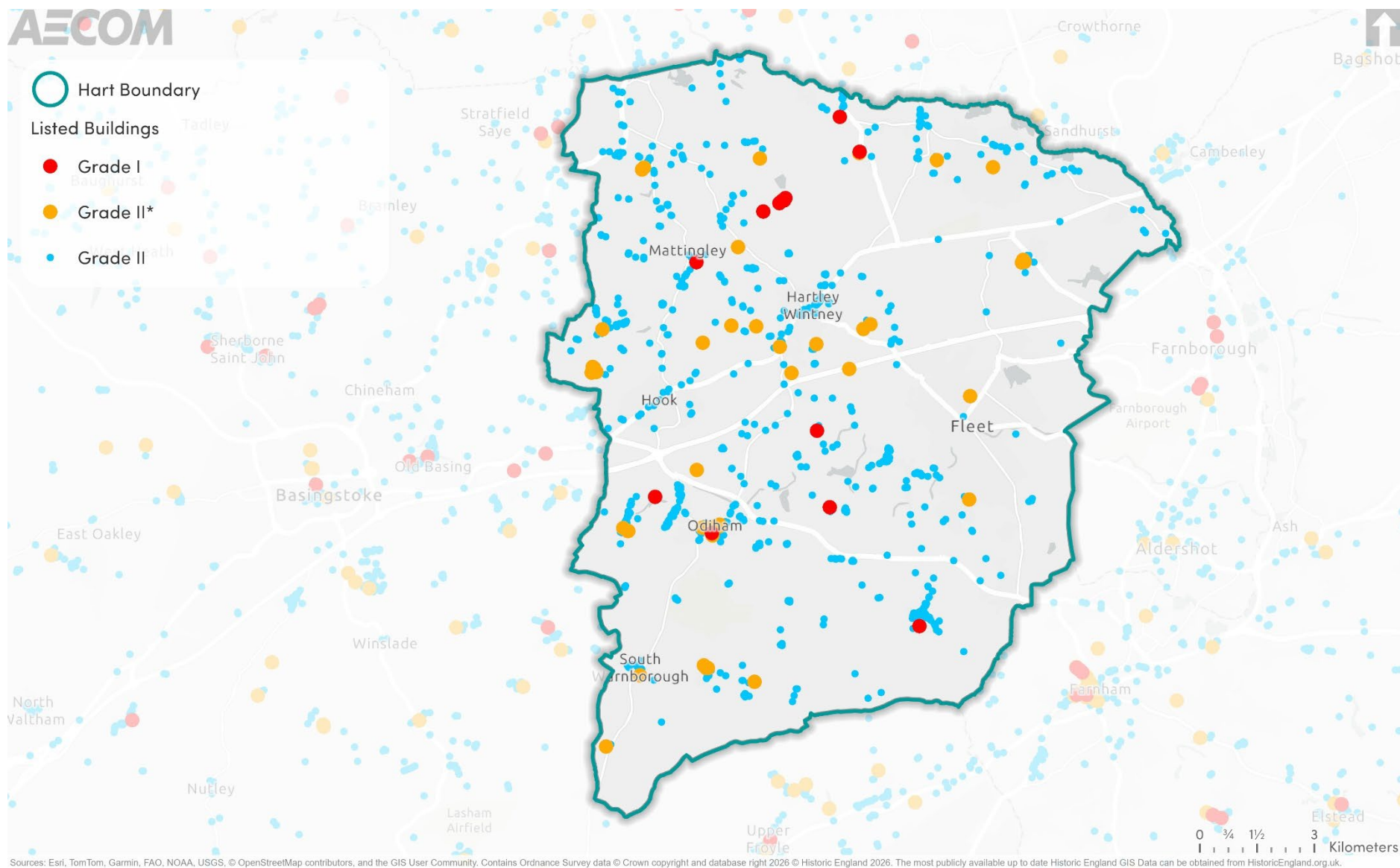


Figure 11.1: Distribution of listed buildings in Hart

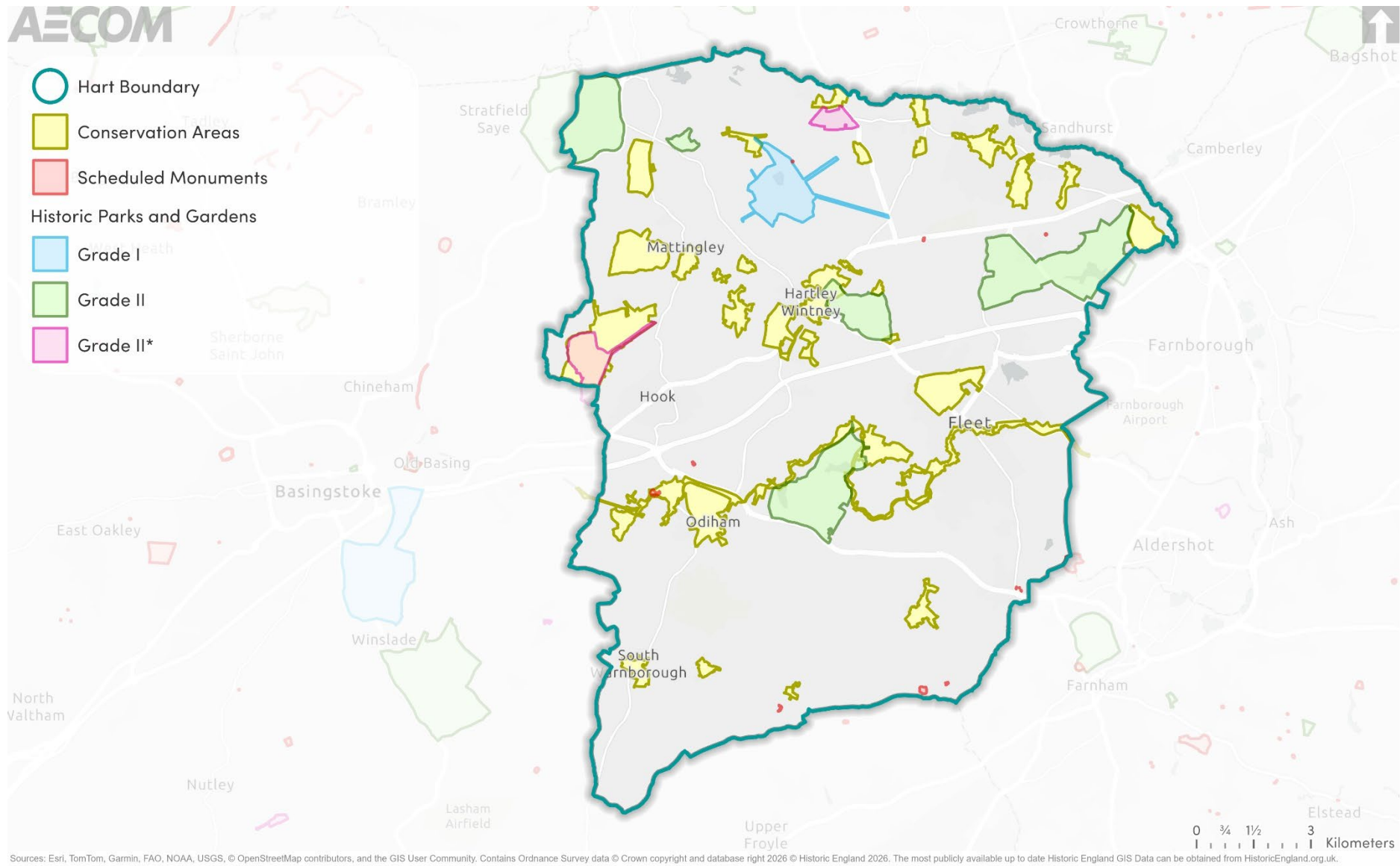


Figure 11.2: The distribution of conservation areas, scheduled monuments, and historic parks and gardens in Hart

12. Homes

12.1 Focus of Theme

- 12.1.1 This theme focuses on housing need, including affordable housing, housing mix (for example, size, type and tenure), and specialist accommodation need.

12.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 12.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 12.1**.

Table 12.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the homes theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart District Council Housing Strategy 2026 to 2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hart District Council Hart Housing Allocations Policy</u>	2025
<u>Hart District Council Tackling empty homes 2025-2030 Strategy</u>	2025
<u>Hart District Council Tenancy Strategy 2023 - 2028</u>	2023
<u>Hart District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping</u>	2022
<u>Hart District Council Wheel Accessible Housing Guidance</u>	2022
<u>Hart District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment</u>	2020
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</u>	2017

12.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Population

- 12.3.1 According to the 2021 Census, Hart had a total population of 99,400 – this is an increase from 91,000 recorded in the 2011 Census. This represents a 9.2% increase - slightly above the levels of growth recorded in the South East (7.5%) and England as a whole (6.6%) over the same time period.⁶³
- 12.3.2 The 2021 Census data indicates that approximately 19.2% of the Hart population are aged 15 and under, 61.1% are between the ages of 16 and 64, and 19.7% are aged 65+. ⁶⁴ In comparison, the 2011 Census indicated that approximately 20.2% of the population were aged 15 and below, 63.3% were aged between 16 and 64, and the remaining 16.5% were 65+. ⁶⁵ This demonstrates that Hart is experiencing an ageing population, which has an implication for future housing needs.

Housing stock (type and size)

- 12.3.3 Household data from the 2021 Census indicates that there were an estimated 39,964 households in Hart. This is the third lowest of the local authorities within Hampshire, which overall had an estimated 587,693 households in 2021. ⁶⁶
- 12.3.4 2021 Census data indicates that 38.9% of properties within Hart have four or more bedrooms, and 34.3% have three bedrooms. Two-bedroom dwellings contribute 19.5% of the housing stock, and one-bedroom dwellings account for 7.2%. ⁶⁷
- 12.3.5 In terms of housing delivery, monitoring data indicates that between 2014 and 2025, 5,773 housing units have been delivered in Hart, which is an average of 525 homes per annum. This is higher than the average number of homes per annum under Policy SS1 in the made Hart Local Plan (423 homes), and in total 1,120 homes higher than the anticipated number to be delivered between 2014 and 2025 (4,653 homes). ⁶⁸

Tenure and affordability

- 12.3.6 According to 2021 Census data, homeownership is the dominant tenure in Hart, with 75.7% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage. This is much higher than the average for England (61.3%). Shared ownership in Hart is also slightly higher than the average for England (1.9% versus 1%). However, renting is much lower in the district – social renting makes up 8.8% of households (in comparison to 17.1% across England), and 13.6% of households are privately rented (in comparison to 20.5% across England). ⁶⁹

⁶³ Hart District Council (2025). 'Hart District Council Authority Monitoring Report 2024/25' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁴ ONS (2021). 'TS007B – Age by broad age bands' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁵ ONS (2013). 'QS103EW – Age by single year' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁶ ONS (2022). 'TS041 – Number of Households' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁷ ONS (2023). 'TS050 – Number of bedrooms' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁸ Hart District Council (2025). 'Hart District Council Authority Monitoring Report 2024/25' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁶⁹ ONS (2023). 'TS054 – Tenure' can be accessed through [this link](#).

12.3.7 The HM Land Registry data (UK House Price Index) indicates that the average house price in Hart in 2010 was £277,382 – which is higher than the England average of £167,557.92. House prices have increased in Hart by approximately 70.1% to an average of £471,845.08 in 2025. This increase is greater than the England average for the same period (£290,181.92), but the percentage increase is slightly less (approximately 70.2% for England over 15 years).⁷⁰ **Figure 2.1** in **Chapter 2** presents deprivation linked to barriers to housing and services – which reflects both the physical and financial accessibility of housing in Hart.

Homelessness

12.3.8 Homelessness is associated with severe poverty and is a social determinant of health. It often results from a combination of events such as relationship breakdowns, debt, and adverse experiences in childhood and through ill health.

12.3.9 In 2021 there were 1,468 people on Hart District Council's housing register for rented accommodation, and only 198 properties were available to let between 2020-21. Hart District has a low rough sleeping figure – with only one reported over 2020-21. The top three reasons for homelessness in Hart have remained the same:

- Asked to leave by friends and family.
- End of assured shorthold tenancy.
- Violence or harassment or violent relationship breakdown.

Specialist housing need

12.3.10 Policy H2 in the adopted Hart Local Plan 2032 requires 40% affordable housing on major sites, with 65% delivered as affordable housing for rent and 35% affordable home ownership (unless superseded by the most up to date evidence concerning local housing need). According to the latest annual monitoring report, between 2014 and 2025 1,568 affordable homes have been completed.⁷¹

12.3.11 The housing need for older people (sheltered accommodation) has been met up to 2025, and residential and nursing care needs are anticipated to be exceeded by 35 spaces to 2030. However, housing with care need have not been met.⁷²

Gypsy and traveller accommodation

12.3.12 The 2020 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment highlights that there is a need for 24 pitches for traveller households that meet the planning definition, 20 pitches that meet the need for households that do not meet the planning definition, and five plots for travelling showpeople households that meet the planning definition. Since the publication of the assessment, two traveller pitches were granted at Farnham Lodge in 2021.⁷³

⁷⁰ HM Land Registry (2026). 'UK House Price Index' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁷¹ Hart District Council (2025). 'Hart District Council Authority Monitoring Report 2024/25' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

Future Baseline

- 12.3.13 Census data indicates that the population of Hart is ageing. As this trend continues, the need for different housing types and tenures is likely to arise. It will be important to ensure that housing growth is appropriately planned, to avoid having wider implications on health and population metrics (e.g., barriers to housing and services deprivation domain) or introducing a housing imbalance and failing to meet local needs in the district.
- 12.3.14 There should be a focus on providing appropriate levels of specialist and affordable housing in Hart, to help encourage a vibrant community of different age groups. This would also likely contribute to keeping family groups together – as housing for younger people and older people would be more accessible and affordable.
- 12.3.15 There should be a focus on delivering additional gypsy and traveller accommodation, to meet the identified need in Hart.

12.4 Key Issues

- 12.4.1 The context review and baseline informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):
- The housing stock in Hart is dominated by larger homes, with a limited supply of smaller dwellings. Additionally, home ownership is high, and rented housing is limited. This may not reflect the needs of the community in the district, who may require smaller dwellings for downsizing, more affordable housing, and more rented accommodation. A more mixed balance of housing types and tenures could support a wider range of household needs.
 - Hart has an ageing population, which is anticipated to increase the demand for accessible and specialist housing. Whilst some housing need has been met, housing with care remains under-provided. As such, there is likely to be a need to plan for a wider range of age-appropriate and adaptable housing.
 - House prices in Hart have increased significantly, which is likely to affect first-time buyers, younger people, and lower-income households. The continued delivery of affordable housing will be important to address these pressures.
 - There is a greater need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in Hart. Planned provision for these sites will likely be required to meet the identified need in the district.

12.5 IIA Objective

12.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the option / proposal help to:
To support the delivery of a range of housing to meet identified needs, with a focus on improving affordability for those most in need.	• Increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing for all residents, including lower-income and vulnerable groups? • Deliver a balanced housing mix that meets the needs of different household types, including smaller homes and specialist housing for older people? • Provide appropriate accommodation for gypsy and traveller communities? • Ensure that housing growth is supported by adequate infrastructure, services, and community facilities?

13. Landscape

13.1 Focus of Theme

- 13.1.1 This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within proximity to Hart, as well as landscape character and quality, and visual amenity.

13.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 13.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 13.1**.

Table 13.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the landscape theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Plan</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033</u>	2019
<u>Hart District Landscape Assessment</u>	1997

13.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Nationally designated landscapes

- 13.3.1 Whilst not within the Hart District area, the South Downs National Park is within 3km south of the local authority boundary. As such, Hart District may form part of the landscape setting of the designation, provide long-distance views southwards to the designation, or could contribute to views out of the designated landscape.
- 13.3.2 The South Downs National Park was designated in 2010, and includes over 1,600km² of lowland landscapes from Winchester to Eastbourne. It has seven special qualities, which help to determine what should be safeguarded and enhanced in the National Park:⁷⁴

⁷⁴ South Downs National Park Authority (2019). 'South Downs Local Plan 2014-33' can be access through [this link](#).

- Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area.
- Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage.
- Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences.
- Tranquil and unspoilt places.
- Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views.
- A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species.
- An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise.

13.3.3 Additionally, the Surrey Hills National landscape is within 5km to the south-east of the Hart district boundary. As such, Hart could contribute to the setting and context of the designated landscape, or contribute to views. The

13.3.4 It is noted that Hart is also within 15km of the Chilterns National Landscape, and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. However, it is not considered likely to impact upon these designations. The National Landscape is designated for the following special qualities:

- Hills and views.
- Ancient trees and woodland.
- Heathland.
- Commons.
- Chalk downland.
- Water – rivers and ponds.
- Farmland.
- Boundary features.
- Parkland and historic landscape features.
- Routeways – country lanes and rights of way.
- Settlements and the built heritage.
- Tranquillity and darker skies.

13.3.5 The location of designated landscapes in relation to Hart is presented in **Figure 13.1** at the end of the chapter.

National Character Areas

13.3.6 Natural England's National Character Areas (NCAs) split England into 159 distinct areas, based on their recognisable character. The boundaries of these areas follow natural lines in the landscape, which makes them a good framework for decision-making and planning for future change.⁷⁵ Hart District overlaps with three different NCAs: Thames Basin Heaths,

⁷⁵ Natural England (2026). 'Natural England – National Character Area Profiles' can be accessed through [this link](#).

Hampshire Downs, and Thames Basin Lowlands. NCA coverage is shown in **Figure 13.2** at the end of the chapter.

13.3.7 The Thames Basin Heaths NCA overlaps with the majority of the Hart area – from the northern extent past the A287 and the settlements of Greywell, Odiham and Crondall. The NCA is described as stretching from Weybridge to the countryside around Newbury, and incorporating part of the London greenbelt. Woodland accounts for a quarter of the NCA, and only 20% of this is on ancient woodland sites. Common land is also found across the NCA, and semi-natural habitats are extensive. Key characteristics include (but are not limited to):⁷⁶

- High woodland cover, offering an array of colour in the autumn. Conifers and large plantations on former heathland are dominant features in the east, while the west is scattered with small, semi-natural woodlands on ancient sites.
- Prehistoric earthworks such as barrows and hill forts mark promontories on the plateaux. Archaeology is well preserved on historic heathland. Mosaics of open heathland and grassland with scrub, secondary woodland and plantation. Valley bogs, ponds and streams enhance diversity. Large, continuous mosaics are found in the east: they include Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Chobham Common National Nature Reserve (NNR).
- Historic commons offer tranquillity and unenclosed views, while other rights of access are enjoyed across farmland, canals and downland. Ministry of Defence ownership restricts (but does not entirely prevent) public enjoyment.

13.3.8 The Hampshire Downs NCA overlaps with the southern extent of Hart, south of the A287 and the settlements of Greywell, Odiham and Crondall. The NCA is described as part of the central southern England chalk belt, with a steep scarp delineating the NCA to the north and east. The majority of the area is elevated, open, and rolling, with large arable fields and low hedgerows on thin chalk soils. Part of the NCA is within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, and within the South Downs National Park. Key characteristics include (but are not limited to):⁷⁷

- There is widespread evidence of prehistoric settlement on the open downlands, including burial mounds with visually prominent iron age hill forts. In the valleys, there is evidence of Roman estates and nucleated medieval village settlement patterns, and fieldscapes and farmsteads across the downlands evidence the gradual and planned enclosure from the medieval period.
- The settlement pattern varies between the relatively dense strings of villages along the lower river valleys and the very low-density, nucleated settlements in the upper reaches of the rivers and on the Downs.
- A network of distinctive and ancient droving roads and trackways is a particular feature across the Downs.

⁷⁶ Natural England (2026). 'National Character Area 129 Thames Basin Heaths' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁷⁷ Natural England (2026). 'National Character Area 130 Hampshire Downs' can be accessed through [this link](#).

13.3.9 The Thames Basin Lowlands NCA has a small overlap with Hart District in the south-eastern extent – to the south-east of Crondall. The NCA is described as a low-lying plain that stretches from South Norwood to Hale – it is generally flat, but gently undulates in some places. Key characteristics include (but are not limited to):⁷⁸

- Gently undulating lowlands crossed by meandering rivers with broad and flat valley plains.
- A pastoral landscape interspersed with woodland and shaws, hedgerows and trees, remnant commons, villages and farmsteads.
- Increasing fragmentation of farmland character from spread of development, urban fringe influences and transport infrastructure.

Local landscape character

13.3.10 The Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment assesses landscapes, townscapes and seascapes across the county. It indicates that there are four landscapes overlapping with Hart: 2C Loddon Valley and Western Forest of Eversley in the north and west⁷⁹; 1B North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath in the north and east⁸⁰; 8C North East Hampshire Open Downs in the south⁸¹; and a small overlap with 6A East Hampshire Wooded Downland Plateau on the southern boundary⁸².

13.3.11 Local landscape character areas are unique and have their own particular identity. Their identification and assessment allows for a strategic approach to classifying landscapes and understanding threats and opportunities within local authority areas. The Hart District Landscape Assessment was published in 1997, and splits the district into 15 separate landscape character areas.

Tree Preservation Orders

13.3.12 Some trees in Hart District are important, either due to their age or due to their prominence in the landscape. If such trees are under threat, they can be protected through the creation of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)⁸³. **Figure 13.3** at the end of the chapter displays the location of TPOs within the district. It is recognised that trees above a certain size in a conservation area are also treated as though they were covered by a TPO, and as there are several conservation areas within Hart it is likely that there are more important trees.

Topography

13.3.13 The elevation of Hart ranges between 43m and 222m above sea level. It largely has a low elevation, with an incline in the southern extent of the district. There is also an area of elevation in the northern extent, which is surrounded by low-lying land. **Figure 13.3** at the end of the chapter

⁷⁸ Natural England (2026). 'National Character Area 114 Thames Basin Lowlands' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁷⁹ Hampshire County Council (2012). '2C: Loddon Valley and Western Forest of Eversley' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸⁰ Hampshire County Council (2012). '1B: North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸¹ Hampshire County Council (2012). '8C: North East Hampshire Downs' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸² Hampshire County Council (2012). '6A: East Hampshire Wooded Downland Plateau' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸³ Hart District Council (2026). 'Trees and hedges' can be accessed through [this link](#).

demonstrates that elevation is linked to the river valleys and drainage in the district.

Future Baseline

13.3.14 Whilst Hart does not include any national landscape designations within its boundaries, it does overlap with a number of different character areas at various scales (local, county-wide, and national), each with their own unique characteristics and associated issues and opportunities. New development within Hart District will therefore need to carefully consider the landscape context to ensure character is maintained and enhanced through new growth.

13.3.15 Hart is also likely to contribute to the setting of the South Downs National Park, located to the south of the district. It will be important to ensure that new development considers the special qualities of the designation, and does not detract from its settings or impact upon views northwards from the designation.

13.4 Key Issues

13.4.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Whilst the South Downs National Park is outside of the district, Hart is anticipated to contribute towards its setting and long distance views, particularly along its southern boundary. Growth through the emerging Hart Local Plan could impact upon the special qualities and views of the designation if not carefully managed.
- Hart District contains a range of landscapes, reflected in the overlapping national, county and local character areas. This diversity contributes to landscape sensitivity, and new development will need to consider and respond carefully to local landscape character, scale and settlement patterns. It is recognised that the emerging Hart Local Plan could encourage landscape-led planning and design work, to ensure new growth responds positively to different landscape contexts in the district.
- According to the landscape character types, much of Hart includes open land, heathland, and woodland – which are likely to be valued for their tranquillity and contribution to the historic environment (setting and historic context) and biodiversity (important habitats). These landscapes are likely to be particularly sensitive to visual intrusion, fragmentation, and loss of openness. New development could help to maintain and enhance these important features through sensitive and considerate design, including the integration of green infrastructure.
- It is recognised that the local landscape evidence base for Hart is out of date – including the Hart District Landscape Assessment, published in 1997. This could lead to landscape harm overtime, as information is not kept up to date and may not reflect the current baseline, and possible issues and opportunities. The emerging Hart District Local Plan provides an opportunity to update the evidence base during its preparation and evidence gathering stages.

13.5 IIA Objective

13.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy / proposal help to:
To protect and enhance the quality and character of Hart's landscape.	• Ensure that Hart's varied landscape character is conserved and enhanced? • Use new and existing natural landscape features to mitigate any potential effects on nearby and distance interpretations of its landscapes? • Contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the South Downs National Park to the south? • Contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Surrey Hills National Landscape?

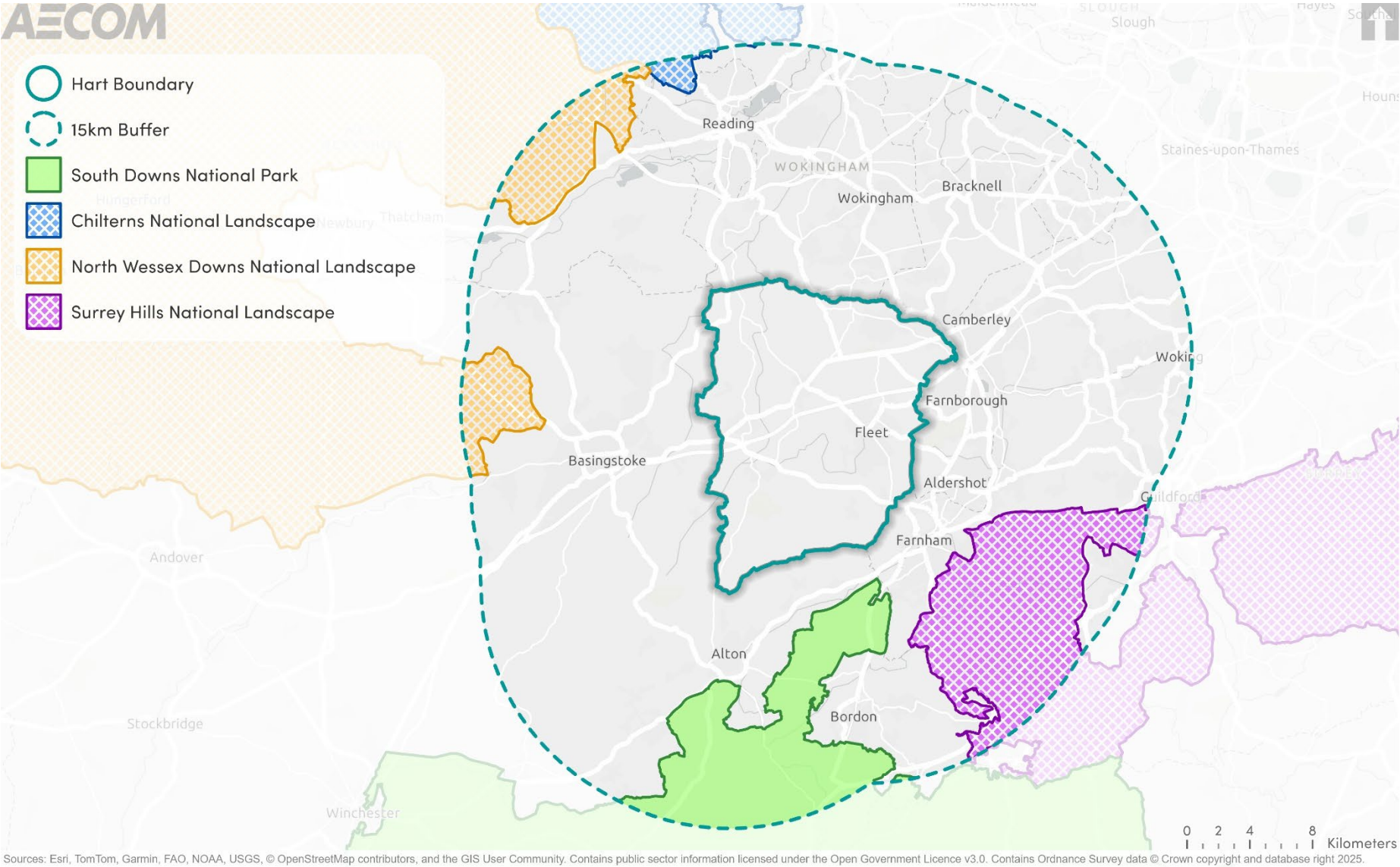


Figure 13.1: Nationally designated landscapes within proximity to Hart

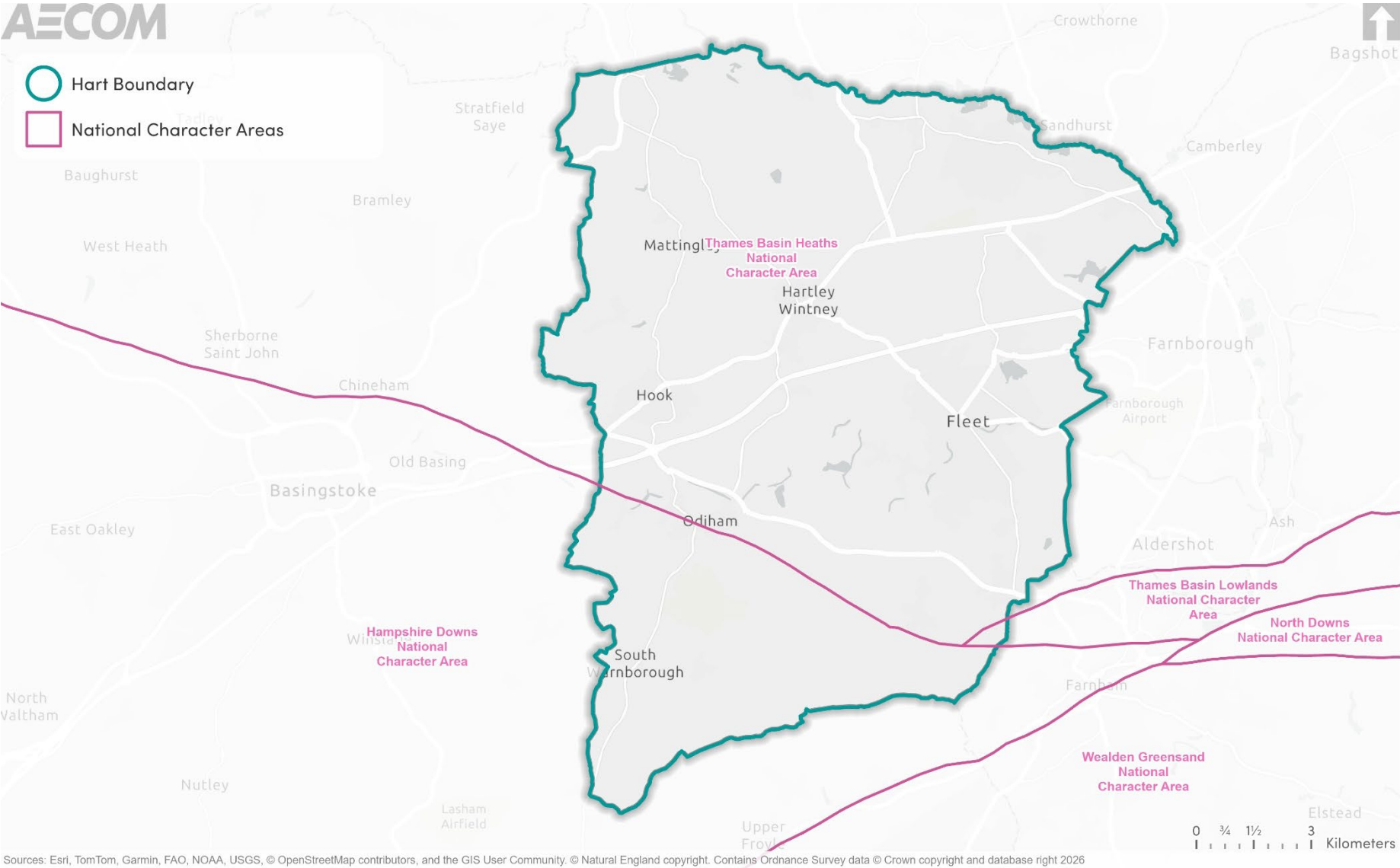


Figure 13.2: National character areas in Hart

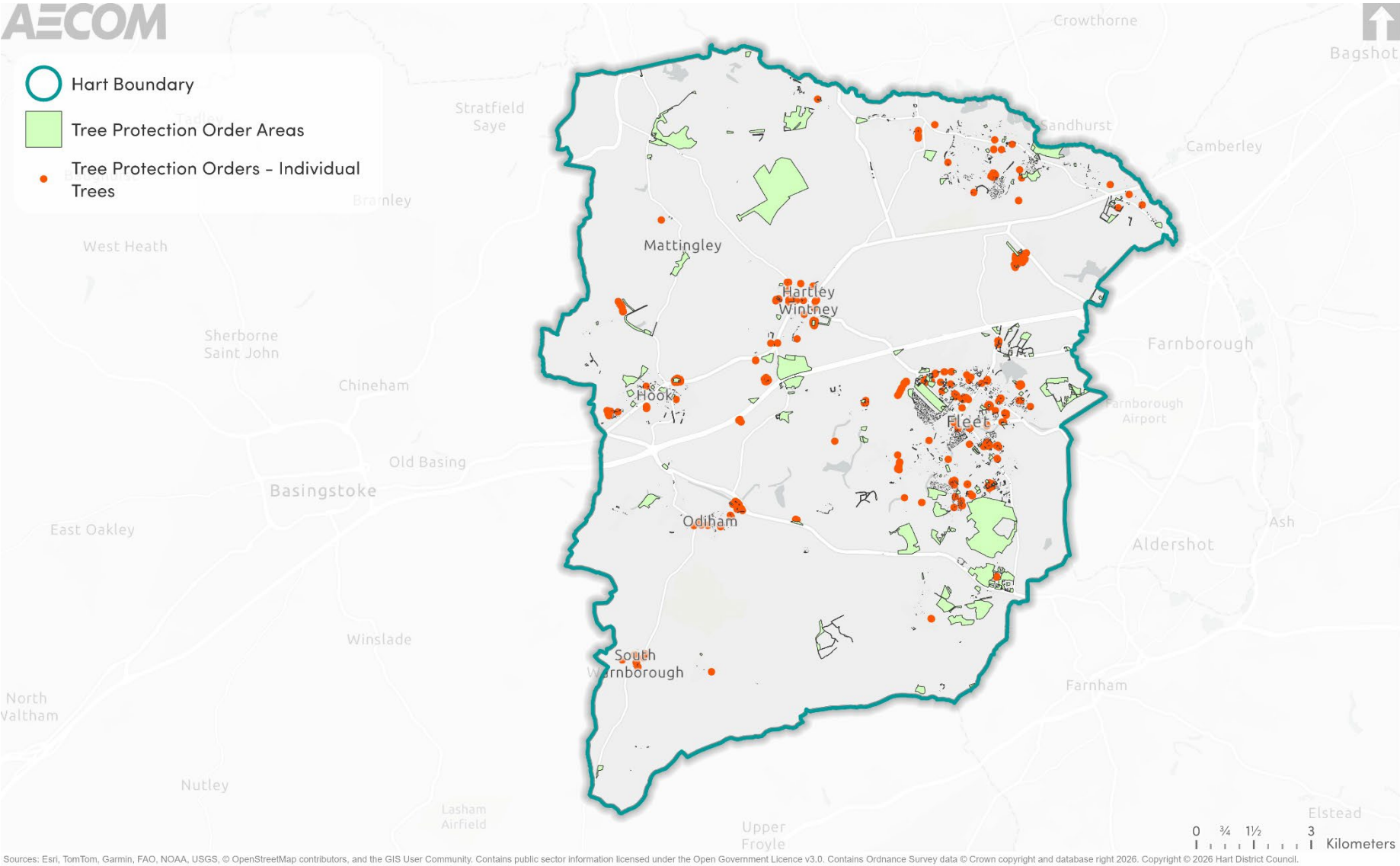


Figure 13.3: Tree Preservation Orders in Hart

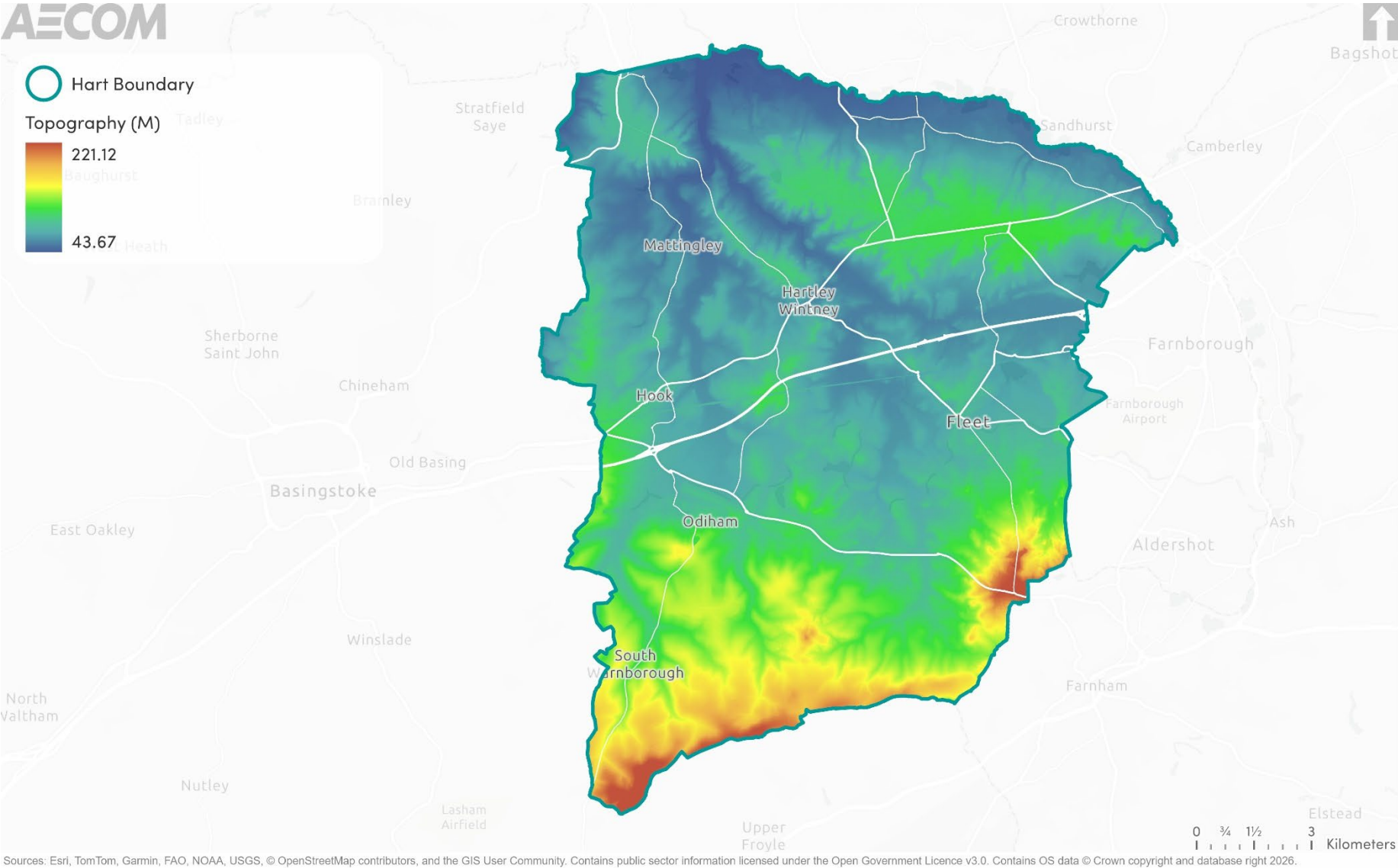


Figure 13.4: Topography of Hart

14. Soils and Natural Resources

14.1 Focus of Theme

- 14.1.1 This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, waste generation, and the extent of mineral resources in Hart.

14.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 14.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 14.1**.

Table 14.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the soils and natural resources theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031	2026
Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025	2025
Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report	2019
Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan	2013

14.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Agricultural land

- 14.3.1 The agricultural land classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (as well as 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.
- 14.3.2 The post-1988 assessment in Hart only examines small pockets of the underlying soils in the district. It demonstrates that assessed land is largely Grade 3a, Grade 3b, and Grade 2 – especially around Hook. The distribution is shown in **Figure 14.1** at the end of this chapter.
- 14.3.3 Maps suggest that the majority of Hart is underlain with Grade 3 'Good' provisional agricultural land – it is not possible to differentiate between Grade 3a and Grade 3b. There are also three areas of Grade 2 'Very Good' to the south – past the A287. The central area of the district is a mix of Grade 3 and Grade 4 'Poor' land, and much of the eastern and northern areas of the district are classified as 'land predominantly in urban use' (underlying Fleet),

and 'other land primarily in non-agricultural use'.⁸⁴ The distribution of the provisional ALC is shown in **Figure 14.2** at the end of this chapter.

- 14.3.4 It is worth noting that agricultural land, especially land that utilises farming methods such as conservation tillage, also acts as a carbon sink, storing carbon in the soil through sequestration. When land is disturbed, such as when it is developed for housing, carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing towards climate change.

Brownfield land

- 14.3.5 Brownfield land refers to previously developed land that is no longer in use, and is available for redevelopment. A brownfield register identifies previously developed sites considered to be appropriate for residential development.
- 14.3.6 The latest brownfield register for Hart District indicates that there were 88 brownfield sites at the time of publication; of which, only 25 did not have planning permission.⁸⁵ The distribution of these sites is shown in **Figure 14.3** at the end of this chapter.

Mineral resources

- 14.3.7 The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan seeks to ensure that there are enough mineral resources to meet the needs of the area. Across Hampshire, there are deposits of clay, sharp sand and gravel, silica sand, soft sand, and chalk.
- 14.3.8 Within Hart, there are mineral conservation areas for brick clay, and superficial sand and gravel. There are also a number of minerals safeguarded sites that undertake mineral processing, aggregate recycling, and mineral waste processing.⁸⁶
- 14.3.9 National planning policy states that sufficient land should be identified to maintain landbanks of at least seven year for sand and gravel, and there should be an adequate and steady supply of aggregates. According to the Regulation 22 Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan Partial Update, Hampshire had a landbank of 11.9 years in total in 2022 – 12.7 years of sharp sand and gravel, and 7 years of soft sand.⁸⁷

Waste

- 14.3.10 According to the latest available data, in 2023-24 Hart District produced a total of 34,997 tonnes of waste – 34,834 tonnes through households, and the rest through non-household activity. Of the 34,834 tonnes of waste generated through household activity, 14,666 tonnes (approximately 42.1%) was sent for recycling, composting, or reuse.⁸⁸
- 14.3.11 Hampshire County Council is the waste disposal authority for Hart. In 2023-24 of the total waste disposed by the authority, approximately 4.3% was

⁸⁴ Natural England (2010). 'Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007)' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸⁵ Hart District Council (2024). 'Brownfield land register' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸⁶ Hampshire County Council (no date). 'Hantsweb – minerals consultation areas' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸⁷ Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton, New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park (2024). 'Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Submission Plan' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁸⁸ DEFRA (2025). 'Local authority collected waste management – Provisional annual results 2023/24' can be accessed through [this link](#).

landfilled, approximately 54.8% was incinerated with EfW (Energy from Waste – thermal treatment to recover energy), and approximately 39% was recycled or composted. The remaining 1.9% of waste was treated or disposed through other unspecified methods.⁸⁹

14.3.12 There are a number of historic landfill sites across Hart, as demonstrated in **Figure 14.4** at the end of this chapter.

Future Baseline

14.3.13 New development in Hart has the potential to impact on Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural quality land, which could result in the loss of productive soils suitable for supporting agricultural activity. In this context, there could be opportunities to avoid developing Grade 3a by directing growth towards the Grade 4 areas, and the existing urban / developed parts of Hart largely located to the north and east.

14.3.14 Given that the majority of brownfield sites on the current register for Hart already have planning permission, the future availability of previously developed land could be limited. As such, there is a risk that growth will increasingly be directed towards greenfield sites, including agricultural land and areas close to mineral resources.

14.3.15 Due to the presence of mineral resources within Hart, new development that is located outside of the settlement boundaries have the potential to lead to the sterilisation of important resources. This could undermine the ability to maintain a steady and adequate supply of resources in Hampshire.

14.3.16 An increase in the built environment in Hart is anticipated to increase the amount of waste generated in the district. This may lead to capacity issues for waste facilities and services. It will be important to continue to encourage recycling in Hart to avoid a large increase in waste ending up in landfill or being incinerated.

14.4 Key Issues

14.4.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- New development in Hart has the potential to result in the loss of Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land, the loss of which cannot be mitigated. This could reduce the availability of productive soils, and their associated ecosystem services (e.g., carbon sequestration). Directing development towards lower quality agricultural land (Grade 4), existing urban areas, and suitable brownfield sites could minimise impacts on higher quality soils and support more sustainable land use patterns.
- There is a limited number of brownfield sites available without planning permission in Hart, which is likely to contribute towards increased pressure to allocate greenfield land for development. Maximising the efficient use of brownfield land where it is available, as well as supporting higher density development in appropriate locations, and

⁸⁹ Ibid.

encouraging regeneration within existing settlements, could help to reduce greenfield land take.

- Development outside settlement boundaries in Hart risks the sterilisation of safeguarded mineral resources, and could undermine the long-term supply of aggregates – resulting in reduced landbanks and available materials needed for construction. Ensuring growth is considerate of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste policies is anticipated to reduce this risk.
- Growth in housing and population is likely to increase the amount of waste produced in Hart, placing pressure on waste management infrastructure and potentially increasing the reliance on incineration if recycling rates do not increase in line with waste production. However, it is recognised that waste will be managed through the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

14.5 IIA Objective

14.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy / proposal help to:
To ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect soil and mineral resources.	• Identify and minimise the development of higher quality agricultural land? • Encourage growth within or settlement boundaries, or areas with lower quality soils? • Promote the redevelopment of previously developed land? • Protect the integrity of mineral resources?

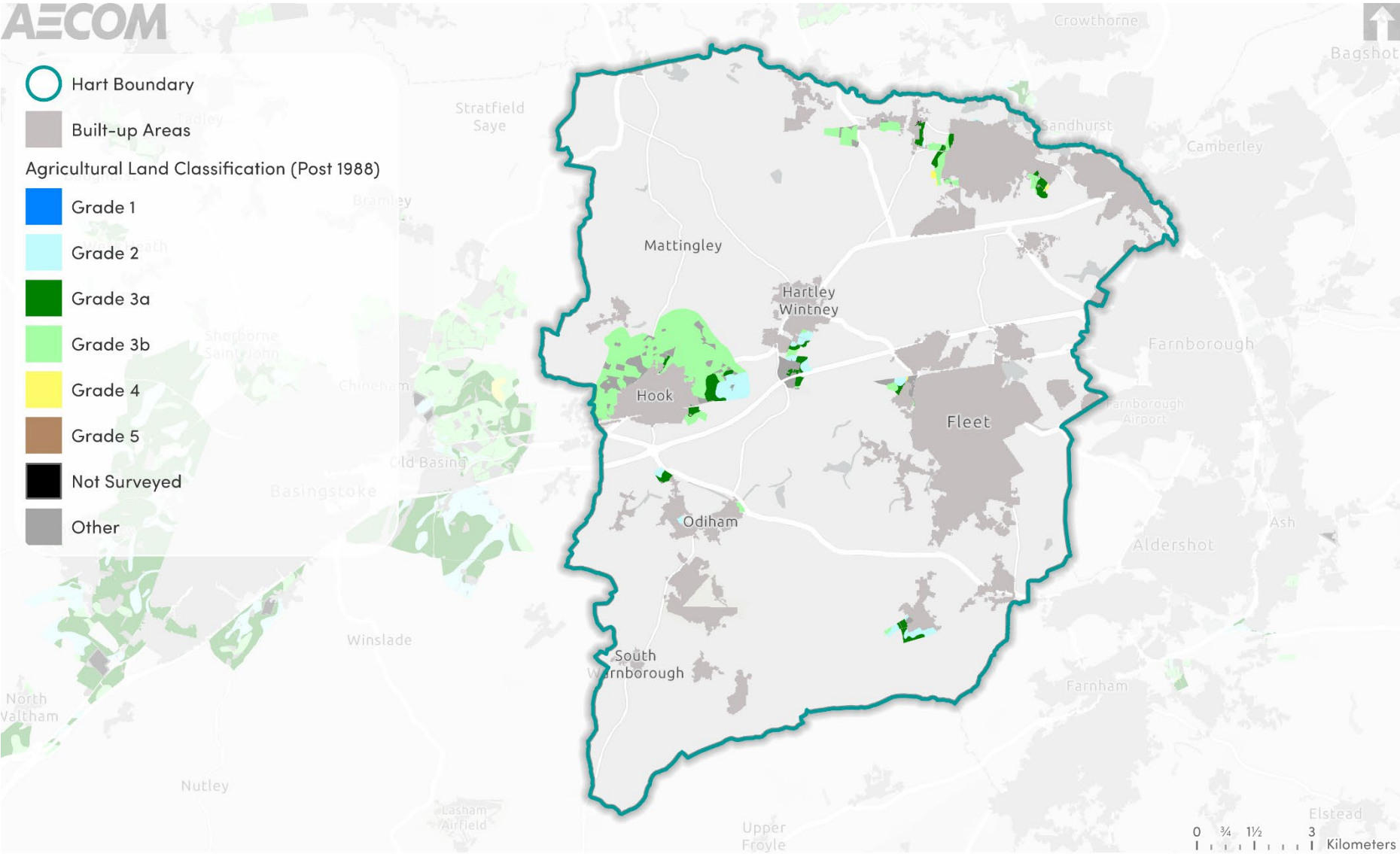


Figure 14.1: Post 1988 ALC in Hart

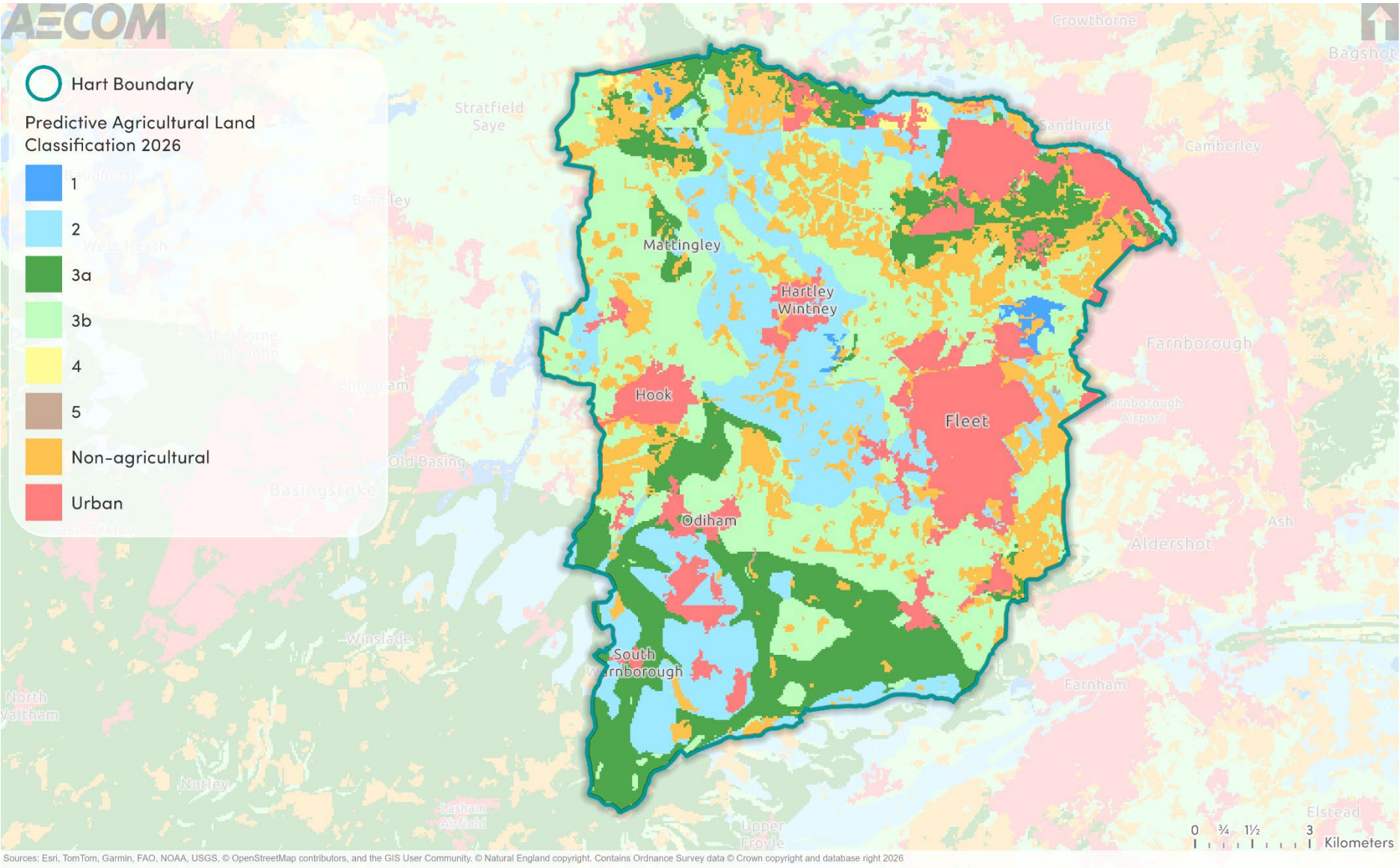
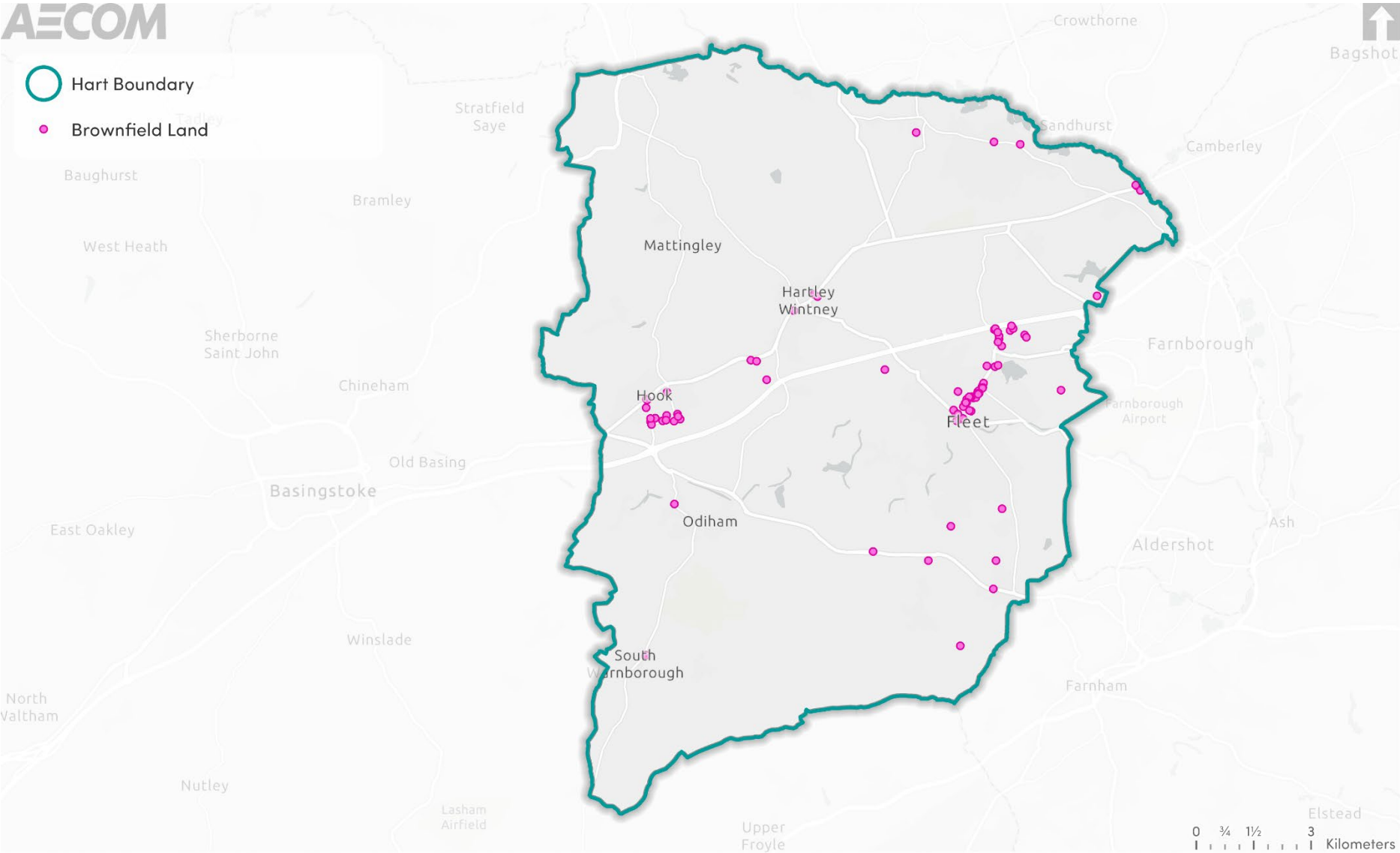
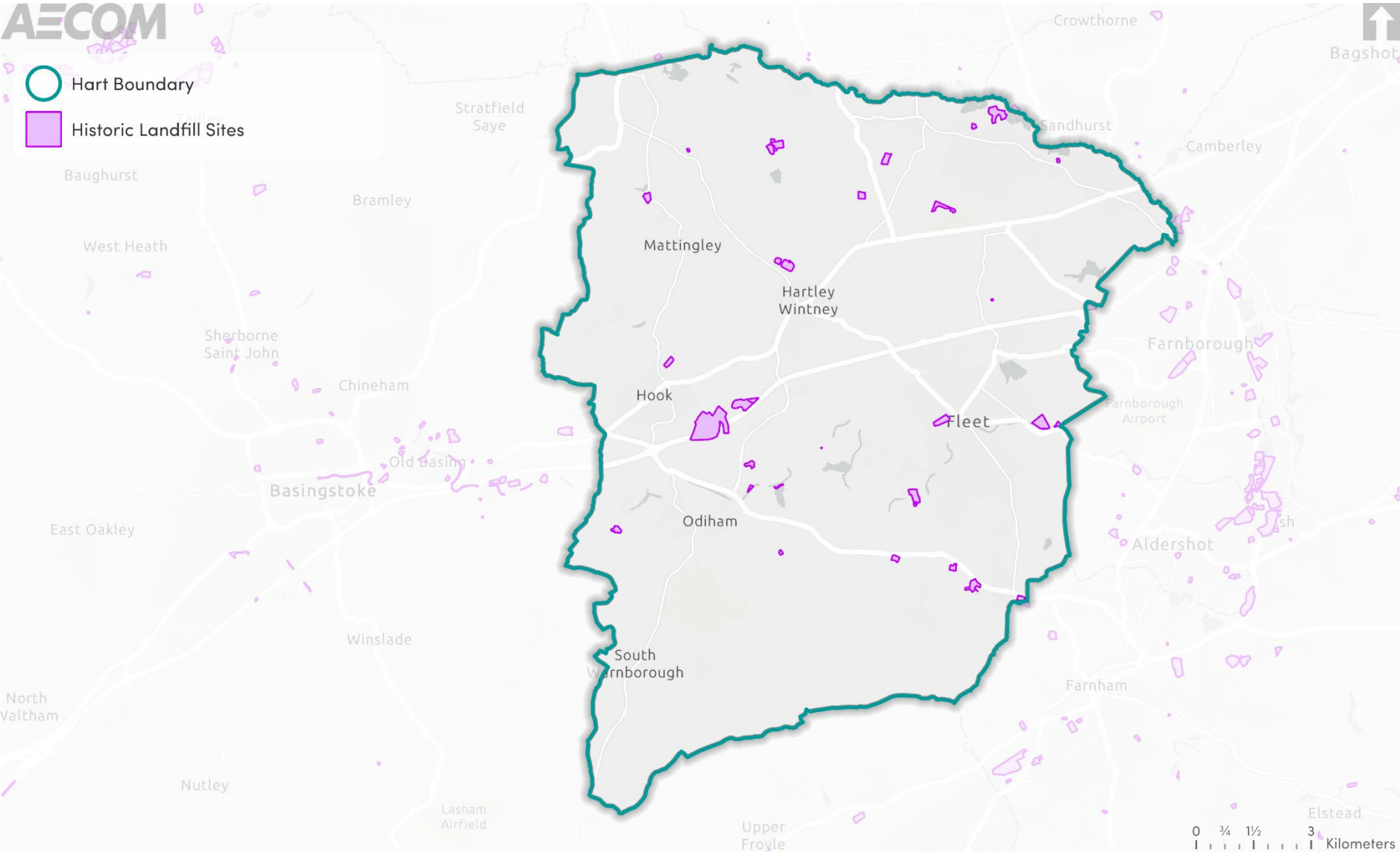


Figure 14.2: Provisional ALC in Hart



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Figure 14.3: Brownfield sites within Hart



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.

Figure 14.4: Historic landfill in Hart

15. Transport and Travel

15.1 Focus of Theme

- 15.1.1 This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in Hart.

15.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 15.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 15.1**.

Table 15.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the transport and travel theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan</u>	2024
<u>Hart District Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</u>	2024
<u>Hart District Council Cycle and Car Parking in New Development SPD</u>	2023
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019

15.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Road network

- 15.3.1 The M3 intersects Hart district in a broadly north east / west direction, with Junction 5 being located to the south of Hook. The M3 connects Sunbury-on-Thames in Surrey to Eastleigh in Hampshire, including other settlements like Aldershot, Basingstoke, Winchester and Southampton on its 59 mile route.
- 15.3.2 There are multiple A roads within Hart – including the A30, A327, A33, A287, A323, and the A3013. There are also a number of B roads, and lower class roads that facilitate vehicular access in the more rural parts of the district.

Sustainable transport

- 15.3.3 There are four rail stations within the Hart district: Hook Station, Winchfield Station, Fleet Station, and Blackwater Station. The stations at Hook, Winchfield, and Fleet are on the same South Western Railway line – offering

regular journeys to Basingstoke to the west and London Waterloo to the north east. The Blackwater Station is on a Great Western Railway line, and provides for regular journeys to Reading to the north west, and Gatwick Airport to the south east. The location of the rail stations is shown in **Figure 15.1** at the end of the chapter.

- 15.3.4 Bus stops are distributed across Hart, but are largely concentrated within the bigger settlements. Specifically within and in proximity to Hook, Odiham, Fleet, Crookham Village, Elvetham Heath, Blackwater and Yateley.⁹⁰
- 15.3.5 Fleet (including Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath) have two bus services and three school bus services; Yateley has one bus service and an additional football service to Reading Football Club; Blackwater (including Hawley, Frogmore, and Darby Green) have one bus service, an additional football service to Reading Football Club, and one school bus service. Both Hook and Odiham have one bus service and one school bus service, as does Hartley Wintney, North Warnborough, Eversley Cross and Up Green, Eversley Centre, South Warnborough, and Long Sutton. The remaining settlements in Hart have limited access to bus services.

Active travel

- 15.3.6 Walking and cycling are sustainable and practical alternatives to the private car, supporting healthy lifestyles and reducing the impact on the environment.
- 15.3.7 As shown in **Figure 15.2** at the end of this chapter, there are multiple public rights of way (PRoW) in Hart, which are largely concentrated away from Fleet and its surrounding built up area. The majority of these PRoWs are public footpaths, with a smaller proportion of bridleways – many of which are located around Yateley.⁹¹ The PRoW in Hart help to connect settlements in the district, especially those located in the more rural areas, and provide opportunities for safe active travel for localised journeys.
- 15.3.8 Whilst no designated long-distance routes or off-road cycle routes intersect the district boundary and enter into Hart, the St Swithuns Way long distance route is on part of the south east district boundary. Whilst much of the original route has been converted into the A31, the long-distance route runs between Winchester and Farnham and uses some of Hampshire's best countryside paths.⁹²

Travel to work

- 15.3.9 Understanding commuting patterns provide an insight into how and where residents of Hart travel to work.
- 15.3.10 2021 Census data indicates that the majority of people aged 16 years and above and in employment in Hart work mainly from home – 44.8%, which is above the average for England (31.5%). 25.3% of the respondents work less than 10km from their home (this is less than the average for England, which is 35.4%); 12.7% travel between 10km and less than 30km (lower than the England average of 14.4%), and 5.1% travel over 30km (in comparison to

⁹⁰ Hart District Council (2025). 'My Maps' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹¹ Hampshire County Council (no date). 'Map of Public Rights of Way' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹² Hampshire County Council (no date). 'St Swithuns Way' can be accessed through [this link](#).

average of 4.3% for England). 12.1% of the respondents are classified as 'other distance'. These figures indicate that there are local opportunities within Hart, reducing a great need to travel further to access employment.⁹³

15.3.11 In terms of method of travel to work:⁹⁴

- 44.8% work from home.
- 0.1% take the underground, metro, light rail, or tram.
- 1.3% take the train.
- 0.4% take a bus, minibus, or coach.
- 0.1% take a taxi.
- 0.4% take a motorcycle, scooter or moped.
- 43.5% drive a car or van.
- 2.4% are a passenger in a car or van.
- 1.2% cycle.
- 5% travel on foot.
- 0.8% travel via another method.

15.3.12 Driving to work via private vehicle is the greatest method of travel (excluding work from home) – likely reflecting the working population within the more rural parts of the district with reduced sustainable transport connectivity.

15.3.13 It is recognised that the 2021 Census figures may have been affected by the COVID-19 lockdown measures, and these figures may not reflect the most current circumstance.

Future Baseline

15.3.14 New development in the district has the potential to increase the number of private vehicles on the local road network, linked to an increase in population and the need to travel to locations within and outside Hart to access services and facilities. This could lead to increased traffic on the local road network, and the potential for traffic-related issues, such as congestion at peak times. However, growth could be focused in areas with a greater sustainable transport provision or a greater number of facilities, which could reduce the need to travel via private vehicles. Furthermore, new development could provide transportation enhancements, such as additional travel services or improved active transport connectivity. This is dependent on the design scheme taken forward.

15.3.15 Climate change has the potential to impact upon Hart's transport network, with extreme weather increasing risks of flooding, road damage, and public transport disruptions. Heavy rainfall has the potential to cause excess surface water runoff, impacting upon road surfaces, whilst increases in temperature could lead to road surfaces deteriorating and affect rail reliability. To mitigate these risks, future transport planning should seek to

⁹³ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹⁴ ONS (no date). 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed through [this link](#).

integrate climate resilience measures and promote sustainable travel options.

- 15.3.16 It will be important to ensure home working is facilitated in line with existing employment patterns in Hart, to help reduce the amount of commuting within and outside of the district, and to avoid traffic related issues.

15.4 Key Issues

- 15.4.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Hart is served by the M3 and a network of A roads and B roads, which provide strong regional and local connectivity to important centres – such as Basingstoke and Southampton. However, future growth has the potential to increase the number of vehicles on the local road network and travelling through the more rural settlements and areas of the district. To help reduce the potential for negative effects, growth should be focused within proximity to existing larger settlements and more urban areas within Hart, so that new residents can access associated services and facilities, and be well connected to the available sustainable and active travel networks. This is anticipated to help reduce a reliance on private vehicles, and reduce the potential for traffic related issues – such as congestion at peak travel times.
- Despite there being four train stations within Hart offering good connectivity to key centres, such as stations in London and in Basingstoke, a relatively small proportion of employed residents commute by train. The same applies to commuting to work by bus via one of the four bus services available. By focusing on improving access to these sustainable transportation opportunities (for example, by integrating them with active travel routes) and encouraging growth to come forward within the catchments of train stations and bus corridors, the emerging Hart Local Plan could help to increase sustainable transportation use.
- Hart has an extensive network of PRowS, especially within the more rural areas, but these are largely disconnected from the larger settlements and built-up areas – including Fleet. As such, there could be the potential to enhance walking and cycling in Hart for localised journeys through the emerging Hart Local Plan.
- A significantly higher proportion of residents work from home compared to the national average, which is likely to contribute towards reducing peak-time travel demand and pressure on transport infrastructure. New development should seek to support digital connectivity, local services and flexible working hubs, to help maintain and embed reduced commuting patterns, which will likely help to reduce congestion.
- The transport network is vulnerable to climate change impacts, including surface water flooding, extreme heat, and service disruption to roads and rail. As such, there is likely to be a need to integrate climate resilience into transport planning, including sustainable drainage, resilient materials, and a shift toward low-carbon and active modes of travel.

15.5 IIA Objective

15.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy / proposal help to:
To increase sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	• Support the objectives within the Hampshire Local Transport Plan? • Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development? • Provide opportunities to improve frequency and availability of public transport services, particularly for the more rural communities? • Encourage a modal shift to more sustainable and active forms of travel, such as walking and cycling and use of public transport? • Prioritise sustainable transport options over car use where possible, including provision of adequate cycle parking and storage options? • Enable transport infrastructure improvements? • Deliver and where necessary improve active travel networks? • Facilitate working from home and remote working? • Provide improvements to and / or reduce congestion on the existing highway network? • Contribute to green infrastructure networks?



Figure 15.1: Rail stations in Hart

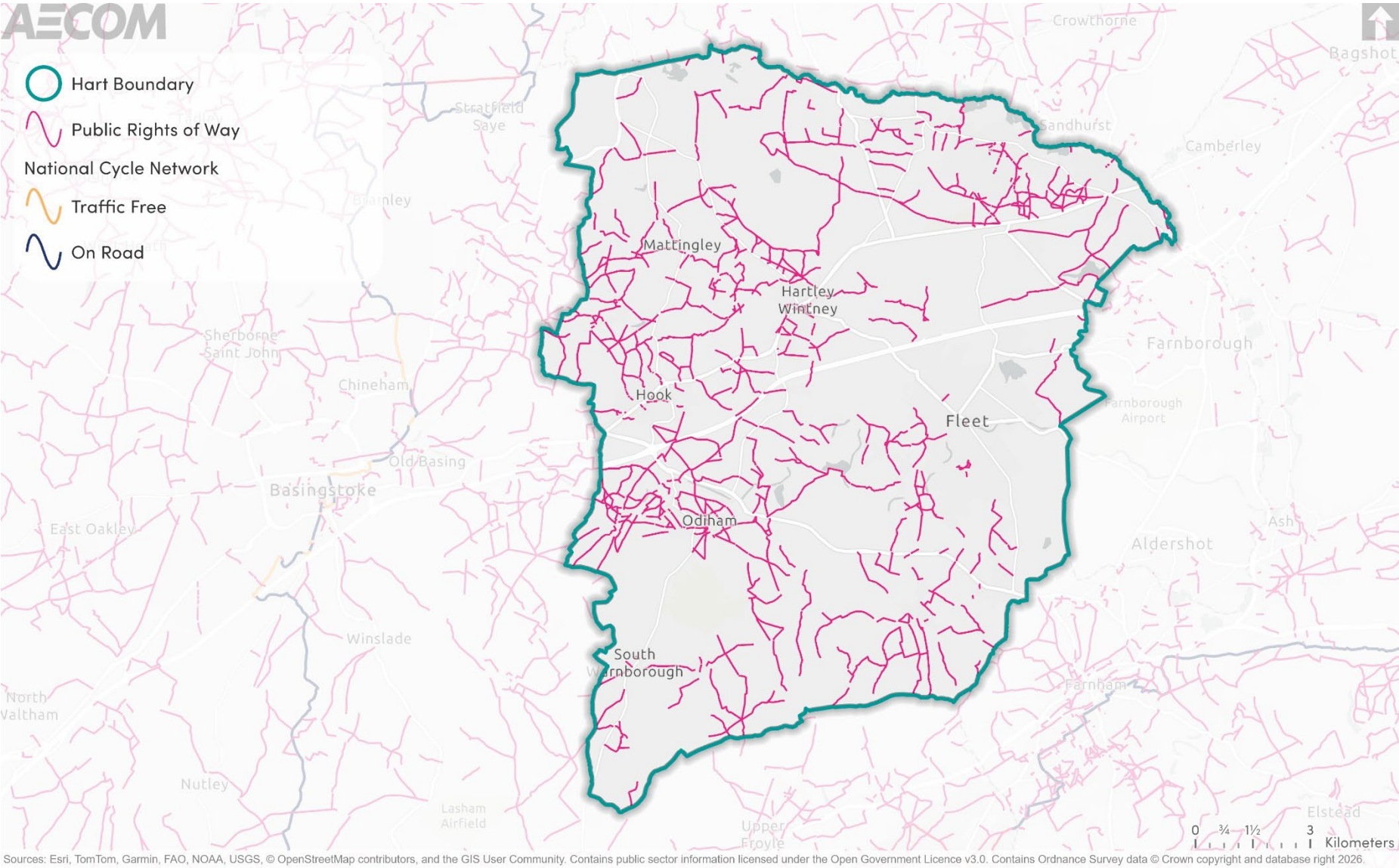


Figure 15.2: Active travel opportunities in Hart

16. Water

16.1 Focus of Theme

- 16.1.1 This theme focuses on the local water supply, water resources, and their quality within Hart.

16.2 Key Sources of Baseline Information

- 16.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are presented in **Appendix A**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 16.1**.

Table 16.1: Key sources of information identified in relation to the water theme

Document Title	Year of Publication
<u>Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2026-2031</u>	2026
<u>Hart Authority Monitoring Report 2024/2025</u>	2025
<u>Water Resources South East Regional Plan</u>	2025
<u>Thames Water: Water Resources Management Plan 2024</u>	2024
<u>Thames Water: Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2023</u>	2023
<u>Thames river basin district river basin management plan: updated 2022</u>	2022
<u>Hampshire 2050 Vision for the Future: Commissioners' Summary Report</u>	2019
<u>South East Water: Water Resources Management Plan 2019</u>	2019

16.3 Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Water resources and quality

- 16.3.1 Hart District is located within the Thames River Basin District, and overlaps with two management catchments. The majority of Hart is within the Loddon and Trib management catchment; a small area in the south-east is within the Wey and Trib management catchment.⁹⁵
- 16.3.2 Within the Loddon and Trib management catchment, Hart is within the Loddon Operational Catchment. There are 22 water body catchments in this operational catchment: 19 river, canal and surface water transfer

⁹⁵ Environment Agency (no date). 'Thames River Basin District' can be accessed through [this link](#).

catchments, and three lake catchments. In 2019, one water body catchment had a 'bad' ecological status, nine had a 'poor' ecological status, and the remaining 12 had a 'moderate' ecological status.⁹⁶

- 16.3.3 Within the Wey and Trib management catchment, Hart is within the Wey Operational Catchment. There are 42 water body catchments in this operational catchment: 31 river, canal and surface water transfer catchments, and eleven lake catchments. In 2019, four water body catchments had a 'bad' ecological status, 13 had a 'poor' ecological status, 23 had a 'moderate' ecological status, and the remaining two had a 'good' ecological status.⁹⁷

Water management

- 16.3.4 Water and sewage services are provided by South East Water and Thames Water – and their associated water resource management plans (WRMPs) assess the need for additional water and demand management. Thames Water and South East Water have partnered with each other and four other water companies (Affinity Water, Portsmouth Water, SES Water, and Southern Water) to develop a regional plan through Water Resources South East (WRSE). This allows for addressing future water challenges in a more collaborative way.
- 16.3.5 The WRSE Regional Plan indicates that the south east of England is likely to face some of the most significant challenges to water resources in the future. This is due to most of the region being classified as water stressed, and the anticipated population increase – which is partly linked to planned major growth. Climate change is also anticipated to have an impact on water availability, due to potential changes to rainfall amounts and patterns.

Wastewater treatment

- 16.3.6 Within the Loddon and Trib and Wey and Trib management catchments, approximately 113 individual water bodies are listed as having pollution from wastewater as their national significant water management issue.⁹⁸ It is considered that the following measures could be used to address this issue:⁹⁹
- Mitigate / remediate point source impacts on the receptor.
 - Reduce point source pollution at source.
 - Reduce point source pollution pathways (including controlling entry to the water environment).
 - Reduce diffuse pollution at source.
- 16.3.7 Sewage and wastewater are managed by Thames Water. The water company is currently producing the associated statutory drainage and wastewater management plan (DWMP), which will set out how Thames Water will manage, maintain and improve drainage and wastewater.¹⁰⁰ The

⁹⁶ Environment Agency (no date). 'Classifications data for Loddon Operational Catchment' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹⁷ Environment Agency (no date). 'Classifications data for Wey Operational Catchment' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹⁸ Environment Agency (no date). 'Challenges data for Thames River Basin District' can be accessed through [this link](#).

⁹⁹ Environment Agency (2022). *River basin management plan for the Thames River Basin District – Habitats Regulations Assessment* can be accessed through [this link](#).

¹⁰⁰ Thames Water (2026). *Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)* can be accessed through [this link](#).

non-statutory DWMP23 was published with a narrow scope to mitigate the impact of growth and climate change on flooding. Thames Water are currently working on producing an updated DWMP.

Nitrate vulnerable zones

- 16.3.8 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as the requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas.¹⁰¹
- 16.3.9 **Figure 16.1** at the end of the chapter shows that much of the Hart district intersects with five NVZs: Hart (Elvetham to Hartley Wintney), Kingsclere and Greywell, Loddon (Hartley Wespall to Sherfield on Loddon), North Wey (Alton to Tilford), and ‘other’ NVZs. The northern and western extents of the district are largely unconstrained.

Source protection zones

- 16.3.10 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes, and springs that are used for public drinking water supply.¹⁰²
- 16.3.11 Parts of the southern half of the district overlaps with SPZs – to the west, south west and south of Odiham, and to the north west, west and south of Crondall. The distribution of SPZs are shown in **Figure 16.2** at the end of the chapter, which shows that the majority of the overlap is with total catchment protection.

Future Baseline

- 16.3.12 Future development in Hart has the potential to affect water quality and availability, due to increased consumption and pollution, wastewater discharges, water runoff, and water body modification. This is likely to be associated with an increase in the built environment of the district, and the likely increase in population.
- 16.3.13 Thames Water and South East Water are likely to maintain adequate water services over the plan period. As such, it will be important for new development to avoid negative impacts upon water quality and availability, and instead contribute towards reducing consumption and improving water network efficiency.
- 16.3.14 However, it is recognised that there have been some water supply issues identified to the west of Hart District in the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council area. This is due to the increase in housing that has been planned for, reflecting the change in planning policy in 2024. An update to the water cycle study raised questions over South East Water’s ability to provide a resilient supply of fresh water, due to a transfer pipeline not being delivered to the originally planned timetable.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ GOV.UK (2025). ‘Nitrate vulnerable zone designations and appeals 2025 to 2028’ can be accessed through [this link](#).

¹⁰² GOV.UK (2024). ‘Groundwater protection’ can be accessed through [this link](#).

¹⁰³ Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (2026). ‘More infrastructure work needed before borough’s plan for new homes can progress’ can be accessed through [this link](#).

16.4 Key Issues

16.4.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- A high proportion of water bodies within both the Loddon and Trib and Wey and Trib operational catchments currently fail to achieve good ecological status. This could indicate that there are existing pressures on rivers, canals, and lakes, which contribute towards limiting ecological resilience. As such, it is possible that future development in Hart could result in additional stress on some of these water bodies – and mitigation measures should be secured where appropriate to reduce this risk.
- A number of water bodies are also identified as being negatively affected by pollution linked to wastewater. Without upgrades to wastewater treatment and drainage infrastructure, growth in Hart may worsen pollution incidents and their effects. However, it is anticipated that issues relating to drainage and wastewater will be addressed in the emerging DWMP produced by Thames Water.
- The South East region is water stressed – and it is likely that growth in Hart could result in increased pressure on water sources. This is due to an increase in the built environment and the population of the district resulting in greater water consumption, wastewater generation, and surface water runoff. It will be important to ensure a sufficient and sustainable water supply is available in Hart – this could include through incorporating design stipulations into new development that encourages water recycling and improved network efficiency.
- Much of the district overlaps with NVZs, and there is a level of overlap with SPZs in the south. Development within or in close proximity to these areas will need to consider the potential for contamination on important water resources.
- New development in Hart presents an opportunity to incorporate water-efficient design, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and pollution reduction measures. By incorporating such design measures, and aligning with the regional WRSE objectives, development could contribute positively towards long-term improvements in water quality, efficiency and resilience.

16.5 IIA Objective

16.5.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

IIA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy / proposal help to:
To ensure the efficient and effective use of water, in addition to protecting and enhancing water quality.	• Avoid any negative impacts on water quality, and support improvements to water quality where achievable and appropriate? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development?

IIA objective**Assessment questions – will the policy / proposal help to:**

- Protect water bodies from pollution?
- Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and / or water recycling?
- Protect NVS and SPZs in the district?

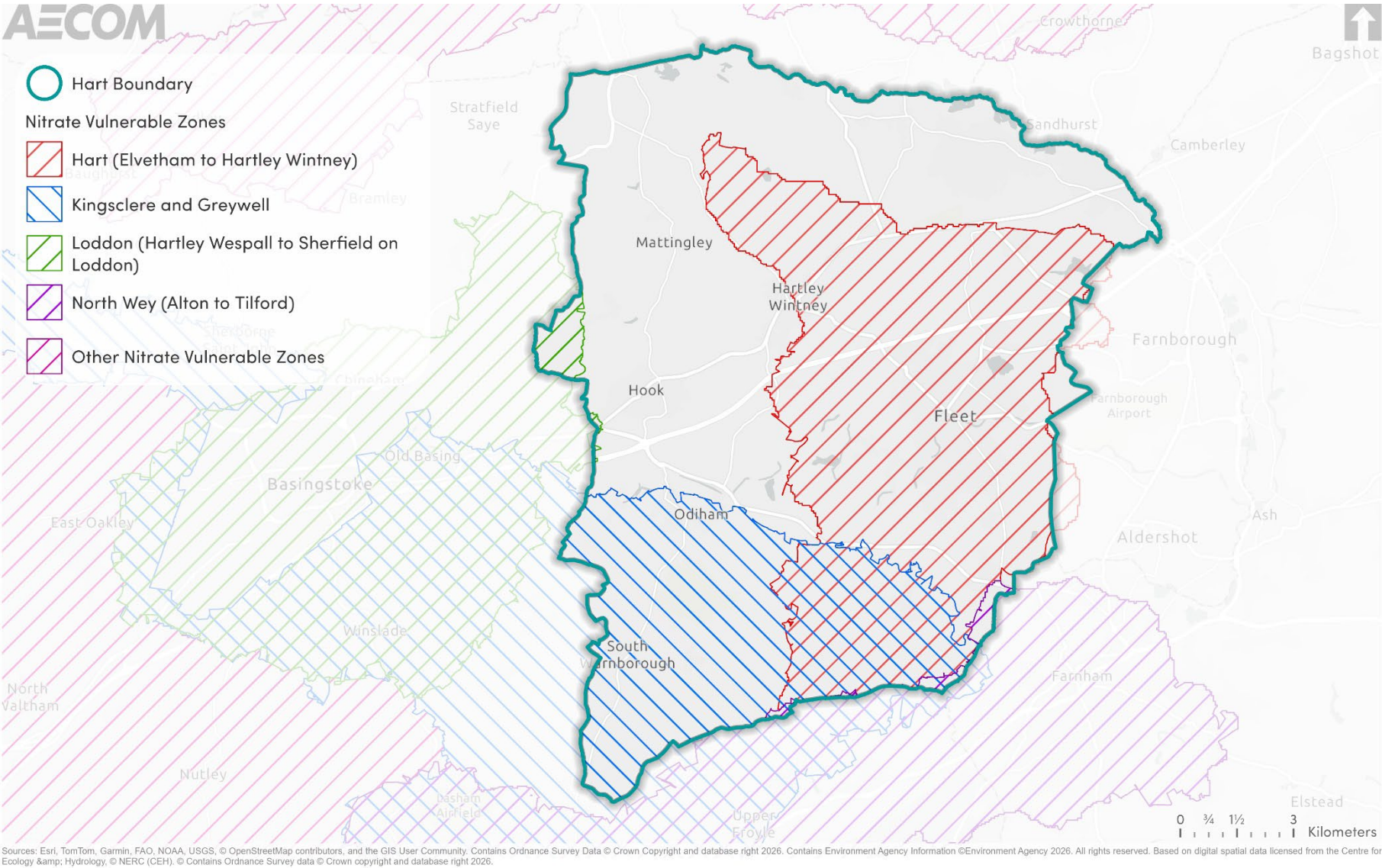


Figure 16.1: Nitrate vulnerable zones in Hart

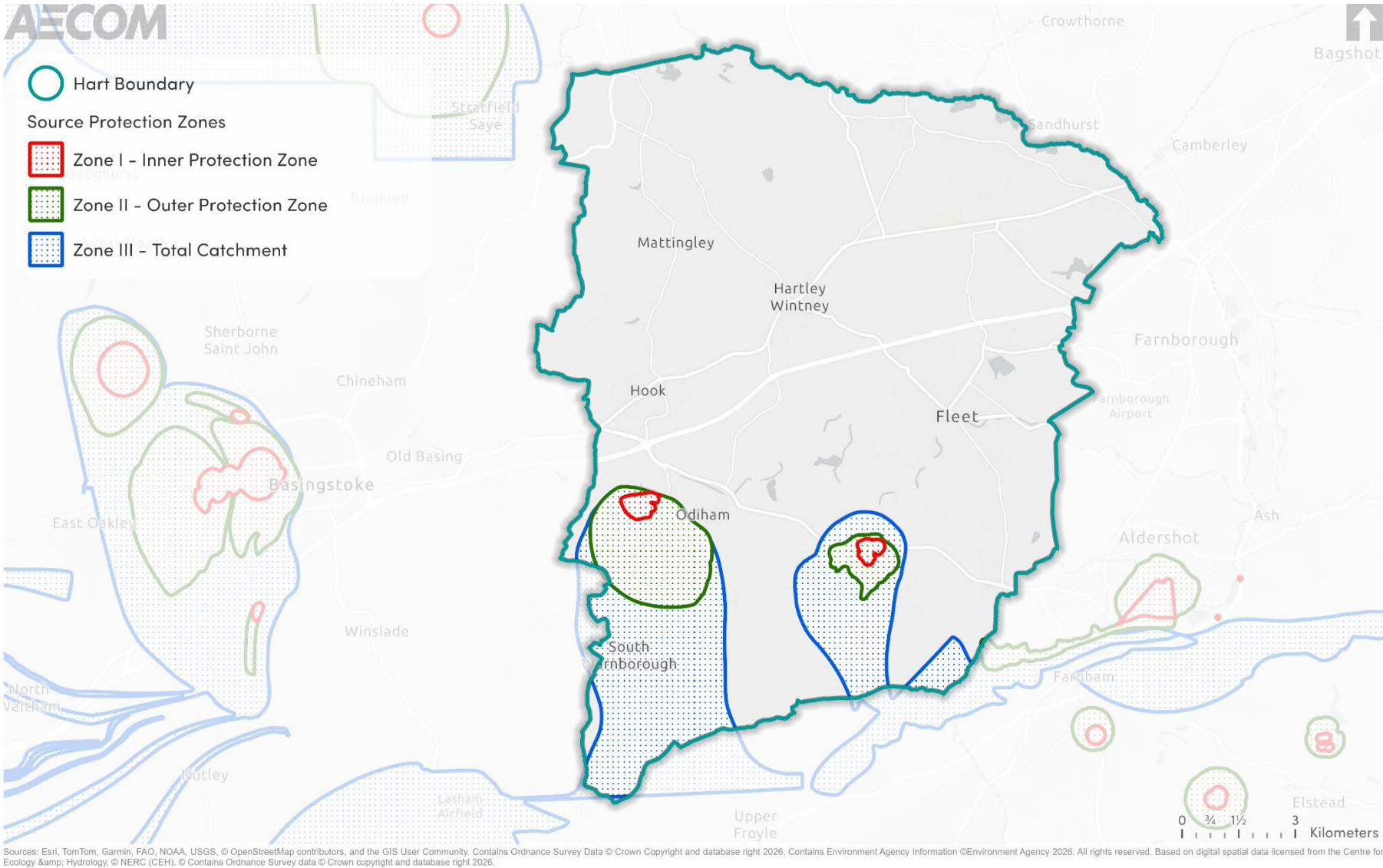


Figure 16.2: SPZs in Hart

17. Proposed IIA Framework

- 17.1.1 The IIA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of IIA themes (as set out in **Chapters 2-16**).
- 17.1.2 The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and supporting assessment questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Plan (and reasonable alternatives).
- 17.1.3 **Table 17.1** below outlines the proposed IIA framework, bringing together the objectives and assessment questions that have been set out at the end of each IIA theme.
- 17.1.4 Example supporting questions for each IIA Objective are listed at the end of each IIA theme's chapter.

Table 17.1: Proposed IIA Framework

IIA Theme	IIA Objective
Accessibility	To improve accessibility to essential services and facilities across Hart.
Air quality and noise	To improve air quality, reduce air pollution and exposure to air pollution.
	To reduce noise pollution and minimise exposure to harmful noise levels.
Biodiversity	To maintain, create and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity habitats and networks within and surrounding the district, and protect species population and diversity
Climate Change Adaptation	To support the resilience of Hart to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding from fluvial and surface water sources.
Climate Change Mitigation	To mitigate climate change by increasing decarbonisation, with a focus on the built environment and the industry, transport and domestic sectors, increasing efficiency and reducing energy use.
Communities	To enhance design quality to create natural beautiful places for people that maintain and enhance community and settlement identity.
Economy and Employment	Support a sustainable, diverse, and resilient economy, with innovative responses to changing conditions and support for a strong future workforce.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	To reduce poverty and inequality; tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion.

IIA Theme	IIA Objective
Health and Well-being	To improve the health and wellbeing of residents within Hart, promoting healthy and sustainable places.
Historic Environment	Preserve and enhance Hart's heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets.
Homes	To support the delivery of a range of housing to meet identified needs, with a focus on improving affordability for those most in need.
Landscape	To protect and enhance the quality and character of Hart's landscape.
Soils and Natural Resources	To ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect soil and mineral resources.
Transport and Travel	To increase sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.
Water	To ensure the efficient and effective use of water, in addition to protecting and enhancing water quality.

18. Next Steps

18.1 IIA Stages

18.1.1 Scoping (the current stage) is the first stage of the IIA process:

- Scoping.
- Assess reasonable alternatives (to inform preparation of the draft plan); and
- Prepare the Environmental Report (to inform consultation and plan finalisation).

18.1.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the HLP. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Council so that they might be considered when preparing the draft plan.

18.1.3 Once the draft ('pre-submission version') plan has been prepared by the Council, it will be subjected to IIA and an Interim IIA Report prepared for consultation alongside it.

18.2 Consultation on the Scoping Report

18.2.1 Consultation is a key element of the IIA process. At this early scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultees only.

18.2.2 This Scoping Report was shared with the statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England), neighbouring Local Authorities, and other key stakeholders over the period 30th June 2026 to 5th August 2026.

18.2.3 Comments received on the scope are currently being considered and will be reported on in detail in the Interim IIA Report. The Interim IIA Report will be consulted on more widely (to include the general public) alongside the draft plan at Regulation 23 consultation.

Appendix A Policy Context

A.1 National policy

The below table presents the most relevant national plans, policies, strategies and documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the emerging HLP and the IIA.

Document title	Year of publication
<u>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations</u>	2026
<u>Land Use Framework</u>	2026
<u>Planning and Infrastructure Act</u>	2025
<u>National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system</u>	2025
<u>10 Year Health Plan for England</u>	2025
<u>Environmental Improvement Plan</u>	2025
<u>Get Britain Working White Paper</u>	2024
<u>Historic England Advice Note 14: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency</u>	2024
<u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u>	2024
<u>Planning Policy for Traveller Sites</u>	2024
<u>Homes England Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028</u>	2023
<u>Levelling-up and Regeneration Act</u>	2023
<u>Long-Term Plan for Housing</u>	2023
<u>Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework</u>	2023
<u>Our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water</u>	2023
<u>The Environmental Targets (Fine Particular Matter) (England) Regulations 2023</u>	2023
<u>The National Housing Federation's Vision for a Long-Term Housing Strategy</u>	2023
<u>Historic England Advice Note 17: Planning and Archaeology</u>	2022

Document title	Year of publication
<u>Historic England Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings Advice Note</u>	2022
<u>Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change</u>	2022
<u>Streets for a Healthy Life: A companion guide to building for a Healthy Life</u>	2022
<u>UK Climate Change Risk Assessment</u>	2022
<u>Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain</u>	2021
<u>Environment Act</u>	2021
<u>National Infrastructure Assessment</u>	2021
<u>National Model Design Code</u>	2021
<u>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</u>	2021
<u>The National Design Guide</u>	2021
<u>Waste Management Plan for England</u>	2021
<u>Building for a Healthy Life</u>	2020
<u>Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge</u>	2020
<u>Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</u>	2020
<u>Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework</u>	2020
<u>National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy</u>	2020
<u>UK Sixth Carbon Budget</u>	2020
<u>Clean Growth Strategy</u>	2019
<u>Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management</u>	2019
<u>Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance</u>	2019
<u>Planning for Sport Guidance</u>	2019
<u>Resources and Waste Strategy for England</u>	2019

Document title	Year of publication
<u>The Clean Air Strategy</u>	2019
<u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u>	2018
<u>Healthy High Streets</u>	2018
<u>UK (third) National Adaptation Programme 2023 to 2028</u>	2018
<u>Historic England Good Practice Advice: The Setting of Heritage Assets</u>	2017
<u>Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets</u>	2017
<u>Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places</u>	2017
<u>The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations</u>	2017
<u>The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead</u>	2017
<u>UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</u>	2017
<u>Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations</u>	2017
<u>Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016</u>	2016
<u>Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</u>	2016
<u>The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy</u>	2016
<u>Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans</u>	2015
<u>Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Historic Environment in Local Plans</u>	2015
<u>Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act</u>	2013

Document title	Year of publication
<u>National policy statement for hazardous waste</u>	2013
<u>Health and Social Care Act</u>	2012
<u>How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk</u>	2012
<u>National policy statement for waste water</u>	2012
<u>UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Infrastructure Framework</u>	2012
<u>Biodiversity Infrastructure 2020 Strategy</u>	2011
<u>Future Water: The government's water strategy for England</u>	2011
<u>Localism Act</u>	2011
<u>The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)</u>	2011
<u>Water for Life</u>	2011
<u>Equality Act 2010</u>	2010
<u>Flood and Water Management Act</u>	2010
<u>The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations Act 2010</u>	2010
<u>Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England</u>	2009
<u>Climate Change Act 2008</u>	2008
<u>Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance - For the sustainable management of the historic environment</u>	2008
<u>The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006</u>	2006
<u>The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act</u>	2006
<u>The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations</u>	2004
<u>Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</u>	2000
<u>UK Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure Action Plan</u>	1994

Document title	Year of publication
<u>Environmental Protection Act (Part 2A)</u>	1990
<u>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990</u>	1990
<u>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</u>	1981
<u>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</u>	1979
<u>Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act</u>	1953
<u>National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949</u>	1949
<u>Invest 2035: UK Industrial Strategy Green Paper</u>	emerging
<u>The Seventh Carbon Budget</u>	emerging
<u>Planning Practice Guidance</u>	various

