

New Hart Local Plan Cooperation Summary Paper

October 2026

Introduction

Hart District Council (HDC) is preparing a [New Hart Local Plan](#). This note provides a summary of the approach being taken by HDC on cooperation with other plan-making authorities and other key stakeholders to date. It sets out the principles of cooperation, who we have cooperated with to date, how HDC has undertaken and demonstrated cooperation to date, and how it intends to cooperate going forward.

This note accompanies the consultation on 'proposed plan content and evidence' in October 2026 and is supported by a number of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs), available to view in separate appendices to this document. The summary and the SoCGs will be updated at appropriate future stages of plan making as required.

What is cooperation and why we need to do this

PM10 of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) August 2026](#) on maintaining cooperation between plan-making authorities sets out that:

- 1. Plan-making authorities should engage proactively and regularly with infrastructure providers, neighbouring and other relevant plan-making authorities (where there are strategic interdependencies across boundaries) and other relevant bodies to identify and address cross-boundary matters that need to be addressed in their plans, including:*
 - a. Where additional infrastructure (or additional capacity from existing infrastructure) is needed;*
 - b. Where development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere; and*
 - c. To determine optimal locations for growth, such as in connected places for housing or along major transport corridors for some types of employment (which may necessitate alignment between different strategic planning authorities).*
- 2. Plan-making authorities should ensure their plan policies align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where there are strategic interdependencies across boundaries, including neighbouring and other relevant nearby plan-making authorities. In doing so they should take into account the relevant infrastructure and investment plans of infrastructure providers and authorities.*
- 3. Where matters are already addressed by an adopted spatial development strategy, plan making authorities within the strategy area do not need to revisit them when preparing their plans.*
- 4. Where there is uncertainty about the future direction of other parts of the development plan or the plans of infrastructure providers, such as due to misaligned*

timings, plan making authorities should make pragmatic decisions on the basis of available information rather than waiting for a full set of evidence from other bodies.

PM11 of the NPPF 2026 on demonstrating cooperation between plan-making authorities adds further detail on how plan-making authorities are expected to demonstrate cooperation through the use of SoCG.

PM 11 states that:

1. Plan-making authorities should prepare, maintain and publish one or more statements of common ground to demonstrate that relevant cross-boundary matters have been addressed where possible, including by:

- a. Taking a consistent approach to planning the delivery of major infrastructure where this involves one or more neighbouring authorities;*
- b. Distributing and providing for unmet needs across neighbouring and/or nearby areas; and*
- c. Planning effectively for cross-boundary growth locations, allocations or designations with significant implications across neighbouring areas.*

2. Where it has not been possible to fully address cross-boundary matters, plan-making authorities should demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to address them.

Who we have cooperated with

We have been engaging with neighbouring plan making authorities and other relevant organisations through meetings on cross boundary and strategic issues and through the preparation of SoCGs.

These are the key plan-making authorities that we have engaged with to date:

- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council,
- Bracknell Forest Council,
- East Hampshire District Council,
- Rushmoor Borough Council,
- Surrey Heath Borough Council,
- Waverley District Council, and
- Wokingham Borough Council.

These are other organisations of relevance that we have engaged with to date:

- Environment Agency,
- Hampshire County Council (as Education Authority, Highways Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority, Public Health and as a landowner),
- Historic England,
- Integrated Care Board for National Health Service (NHS) Hampshire and Isle of Wight,

- National Highways,
- Natural England,
- Network Rail,
- South East Water, and
- Thames Water.

HDC is focusing on preparing SoCGs with the organisations outlined above to support the Local Plan. Where SoCG's have been agreed with these organisations they are included as appendices to this document. However, HDC is not limiting cooperation and SoCG to these bodies. Additional SoCGs are in the process of being prepared with other relevant organisations.

How we have cooperated with these bodies

HDC is engaging in cooperation meetings with relevant organisations at appropriate stages throughout the plan process.

In addition to these regular cooperation meetings, HDC is meeting with specific organisations as and when relevant matters arise. An example of this is the ongoing cooperation on the matter of water resource constraints which has involved close working with the Environment Agency and Natural England as well as South East Water and the neighbouring plan-making authorities of Basingstoke and Deane and East Hampshire amongst others.

Statement of Common Grounds to demonstrate cooperation

Following cooperation meetings, HDC has prepared a number of SoCGs (following a consistent template) to document and demonstrate cooperation to date. These can be viewed as separate appendices. The SoCGs include the following:

- a record of cooperation
- context covering the purpose and background of cooperation
- the parties involved
- signatories
- the relevant strategic geography
- matters agreed
- matters for ongoing discussion
- arrangements for ongoing governance, review and future cooperation

We are maintaining close communication with and meeting with the relevant organisations as needed to progress the SoCGs. HDC intends to update and add to SoCGs at key plan stages and/or if a specific issue indicates that an updated or new SoCG is required.

Statutory requirements in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment

We have also met the statutory requirements on cooperation related to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) supporting the Local Plan. HDC is undertaking SEA as part of a wider Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

As part of preparing the new Hart Local Plan, we have engaged with statutory consultees, neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders through the IIA process. The IIA meets the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and is undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and relevant Government Planning Practice Guidance.

As required by the SEA Regulations, we consulted the statutory environmental bodies, namely Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, on the scope and level of detail of the assessment. The IIA Scoping Report was consulted upon between 30 June and 5 August 2026 and was also shared with neighbouring local authorities and other key stakeholders. Feedback received has informed the development of the assessment framework that will be used to assess the emerging Local Plan and reasonable alternatives.

Cooperation as the Plan progresses

Following the consultation on proposed plan content and evidence in October 2026, we will prepare a draft local plan setting out a spatial strategy and policy directions to guide future development in the district. The draft local plan will be supported by an emerging evidence base. The Council is committed to work cooperatively with all relevant bodies on cross boundary and strategic matters as the plan progresses.

Appendices - Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) to date