



Statement of Common Ground

as agreed between

Hart District Council

and

Environment Agency

September 2026

In respect of the emerging Hart Local Plan 2044

1 Purpose & Background

Hart District Council (HDC) is currently developing a new Local Plan for the District (New Hart Local Plan, the 'Plan'), which will replace the Hart Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2032 adopted in April 2020 and saved policies from the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006.

The Environment Agency (EA) is the government agency which is a statutory consultee in the planning process. The EA aims to promote sustainable growth that contributes positively to creating resilient places and a healthy environment. The EA provides advice to LPAs on developing the evidence, plans and policies they need to demonstrate how growth will be delivered within the capacity of the water environment and infrastructure.

HDC and the EA are relevant stakeholders for the purposes of the Local Plan as local planning authority and statutory consultee.

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) sets out the position of the organisations to date and has regard to strategic matters in relation to the Hart Local Plan, including areas of agreement, areas for ongoing discussion, and how strategic matters between HDC and the EA are being addressed throughout the plan-making process.

The SoCG has been prepared in accordance with policies PM10 on Maintaining cooperation between plan-making authorities and PM11 on Demonstrating cooperation between plan-making authorities of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026. It also follows SoCG guidance prepared by the Planning Advisory Services (PAS).

2 List of Parties involved

- Hart District Council
- Environment Agency

3 Signatories

We confirm that the information in this statement and documents referred to therein reflect the joint working undertaken and agreements made to date between HDC and the EA in relation to the Hart Local Plan 2044. Environment Agency

Amy Richardson

Planning Advisor

A. Richardson

25th September 2026

Hart District Council

Daniel Hawes



Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager

28th September 2026

4 Strategic Geography

The Hart Local Plan 2044 will apply to the geographical area of Hart District and provide a long-term planning framework from 2026 to 2044. Appendix A provides a map of the plan areas which together constitute the strategic geography covered by this Statement of Common Ground.

5 Strategic Matters

5.1 Areas of Agreement

Strategic Matter	Hart District Council Position	Environment Agency Position	Record of Agreement (incl. date)
Ongoing Engagement and Cooperation	HDC is pursuing an accelerated timescale for the Local Plan. Regular engagement and cooperation with the EA are key to ensuring that the Plan and its evidence base is sound and proceeds to timetable	The EA recognises the importance of its input to the Hart Local Plan on key issues such as Water Resources. The EA will work closely with HDC on its Local Plan.	HDC and the EA have established an ongoing programme of engagement to support the preparation of the Hart Local Plan 2044. Both parties agree to continue collaborative working throughout plan preparation and to review emerging evidence and policy as it becomes available. The EA has confirmed that it is willing to review draft policies and supporting evidence before formal consultation stages where appropriate.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	HDC requested hydraulic modelling information from the Environment Agency and the LLFA, however no hydraulic modelling information is available at this time to inform the SFRA. In the absence of hydraulic modelling information, consultants to HDC have proposed to use the following datasets to inform the Level 1 SFRA:	The EA hold modelling for the River Blackwater and its tributaries however this model produced in 2025 cannot be provided at this time as it is subject to final review. The EA has subsequently confirmed that the latest flood mapping for the Blackwater Valley is due in September	HDC will share the SFRA methodology and outcomes with the EA for review. The EA will continue to engage on flood modelling updates and provide advice within the SFRA process. The draft Level 1 SFRA has since been provided to the EA for charged advice.

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	• 'NaFRA2 Rivers and Seas 3.3% defended flood risk extents - present day' to represent Flood Zone 3b • 'NaFRA2 Rivers and Sea defended and undefended flood risk extents - Present Day' to represent the present day 1% AEP and 0.1% AEP events. • 'Flood Map for Planning - Flood Zones plus Climate Change' dataset for the majority of the Borough. Where this shows as unavailable, 'NaFRA2 Rivers and Sea defended and undefended flood risk extents (1% AEP) - climate change datasets' apply.	Updated flood mapping for North Warnborough is expected in 2 – 3 years and is likely to fall outside of the current plan making process.	
Water Cycle Study	Arcadis are undertaking a Water Cycle Study on the behalf of HDC. The EA will be involved in the Water Cycle Study process through the workshops and consultation on its content.	The EA recognise the importance of water related issues to the Hart Local Plan and will input on the Water Cycle Study as required.	HDC is preparing a Water Cycle Study to inform the Local Plan evidence base. The EA supports this approach and will be involved in the Water Cycle Study process through technical engagement and workshop participation as appropriate. HDC will continue to share relevant information and

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			methodology with the EA during preparation of the study.

5.2 Areas of Ongoing Discussion

Strategic Matter	Hart District Council Position	Environment Agency Position	Implications of positions	Activities towards Agreement
Water Resources	HDC will work closely with the EA, East Hampshire District Council and other impacted LPA's, Natural England and South East Water to work towards a solution to the Water Resource issues which constrain future development in Water Resource Zone 4 West (WRZ4-W). HDC has commissioned a Water Cycle Study which will address the Water Resource issues in the district. The EA have been invited to review the Water Cycle Study methodology and participate in the	The Environment Agency has produced a position Statement. For Local Plans this advises that: <i>A comprehensive assessment of water supply capacity for SEW WRZ4-West and the capacity of the receiving environment, accounting for statutory environmental objectives, should be undertaken to understand if planned growth can be accommodated until increased water supply capacity for the WRZ is provided.</i> The EA strongly advise that this assessment forms part of the Water Cycle Study (WCS) to be prepared as part of the local plan evidence base. The WCS should be carried out with input and	South East Water's (SEW) sub-zone WRZ4-W has a catchment that serves the western half of Hart District Council (HDC). SEW has identified a water supply-demand deficit in the sub-zone WRZ4-West for at least the next five years. Until works to increase the sustainable supply of water to increase capacity to support growth are delivered, all development requiring new connections to mains water supply in SEW WRZ4-West will increase the reliance on abstraction from Greywell and Itchel. Continued abstraction at Itchel and Greywell is contributing to those water bodies failing to achieve the statutory objective of Good status and risks their	HDC and the EA will work closely with East Hampshire District Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and other impacted LPA's, Natural England and South East Water through the SEW WRZ4-W water resource group. HDC and the EA will work together with the SEW WRZ4-W water resource group to produce the evidence needed to resolve the water resources issues. To date this has included position statements by the EA and SEW and joint positions on the level of development impacted. The EA will work closely with HDC on water resources through the

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	draft findings workshop in September.	support from SEW and assess water supply capacity to support growth and achievement of statutory environmental objectives across the plan area. The WCS should assess water supply capacity of the SEW WRZ4-West to accommodate growth coming forward in the emerging local plans. The EA will work closely with HDC, East Hampshire District Council and other impacted LPA's, Natural England and South East Water to work towards a solution to the Water Resource issues which constrain future development in Water Resource Zone 4 West (WRZ4-W).	deterioration. Greywell abstraction is preventing the Greywell Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from achieving Favourable Status and Itchel abstraction is adversely impacting an adjacent wet woodland Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). HDC will need to account for any environmental impact this will pose for planned growth in the HDC local plan for the WRZ4-W area.	Council's Water Cycle Study work and HDC will ensure that the EA are involved as needed. The resolution of water supply issues is dependant upon a proposed pipeline that will transfer water from Maidenhead towards Basingstoke. SEW water position Statement currently indicates that this will be post 2030, and the EA's more recent Position Statement (with input from SEW) indicates that it will be at least post 2032. HDC and the EA will work with the members of the WRZ4-W water resource group to determine the exact timeframe for the delivery of the pipeline.

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Wastewater Sewage Treatment Works (STW)	HDC will work closely with the EA and Thames Water to ensure that the Local Plan takes account of wastewater constraints and enables the infrastructure required to overcome wastewater constraints at the Fleet STW. HDC will work closely with the EA and Thames Water and Surrey Heath and Rushmoor Councils to ensure that the Local Plan takes account of wastewater constraints and enables the infrastructure required to overcome wastewater	The EA has produced position Statements for the Fleet and Camberley STW's The EA requires that cumulative impact assessment is undertaken as part of the plan making process to ensure that there is sufficient wastewater capacity for all future developments in the plan. It will also be required for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan. This cumulative assessment can be undertaken as part of a WCS prepared as part of the local plan evidence base. The EA strongly recommend the local plan is supported with a WCS to inform this cumulative assessment.	Fleet STW The Fleet STW discharges to the Fleet Brook. The Water quality of the Fleet Brook is not achieving good status and is deteriorating due to phosphates. Water industry discharges have been identified as being responsible for the phosphates in the Fleet Brook. Fleet STW has insufficient hydraulic capacity for the current population served. A scheme to improve Fleet STW was identified and funded to increase Flow to Full Treatment from 274l/s to 300l/s. This scheme was due for delivery in March 2025, but it has been delayed until at least 2030. Fleet STW is considered a high spilling site, with a Long Term	The EA will work closely with HDC on wastewater through the Council's Water Cycle Study and Infrastructure Delivery Plan work. HDC will ensure that the EA are as needed on plan development and policy formulation. HDC and the EA will work closely with Thames Water to ensure that the necessary wastewater infrastructure is delivered to enable development in the Local Plan. HDC and the EA will work closely with Rushmoor and Surrey Heaths Council's and Thames Water in respect of the Camberley STW.

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	constraints at the Camberley STW. HDC has commissioned a Water Cycle Study which will address the wastewater issues in the District. The EA have been invited to review the Water Cycle Study methodology and participate in the draft findings workshop in September. HDC has commissioned an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will include wastewater infrastructure.	The EA will support the development of the HDC WCS, Infrastructure Development Plan and other evidence as required. For both the Fleet and Camberley STW The EA have stated that in order to support the Council and its WCS work Thames Water, need to provide the following information: Future Q80 and Q90 flow projections for Hart District Council to help assess the environmental risks.	Average of 77 spills per year. Without the improvement being delivered, any additional flows to Fleet STW from development risk an increase in frequency and volume of storm overflows. Camberley STW Camberley STW catchment area is split between the Rushmoor, Hart and Surrey Heath Districts. The Blackwater is not achieving good status and is deteriorating due to Phosphate and Macrophytes and Phytobenthos. Water industry discharges are attributed as the activity responsible. Thames Water need to apply for a new Dry Weather Flow permit to support new development over the future local plan period.	

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			The EA has not been approached by Thames Water with an application to increase Dry Weather Flow at Camberley STW. There is therefore uncertainty that there will be sufficient capacity at the Camberley STW to cope with increased discharges due to new development coming forward in applications and in the next local plan.	

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Policies for inclusion in the Local Plan	HDC is currently in the process of determining the policies which will be included in the Local Plan. This will be influenced by the 2026 NPPF when published as well as the evidence currently being gathered. Policies in the Hart Local Plan will need to be locally specific and not repeat national planning policy. HDC will consult the EA on the Draft Local Plan and its policies as the plan progresses.	The EA recommend that the Hart Local Plan should consider the following policies to deliver sustainable development in Hart: • Flood risk • Water quality and resource • Land and groundwater contamination • Nature conservation and ecology • Waste management • Air quality and pollution Further detail on the suggested policies was set out in the EA's June 2026 response to the HDC scoping consultation. This is included as Appendix B of this SoCG.	The policies in the Hart Local Plan will protect the environment, natural resources and promote sustainable development. The best approach to doing so will be determined based upon the supporting evidence gathered and consultation with relevant organisations including the EA.	HDC will consult the Environment Agency regularly on the Local Plan and its supporting evidence as the plan progresses. The EA will provide commentary on policy formulation and the evidence supporting it as required. The EA and HDC agree to continue proactive engagement throughout the Local Plan process. The EA will provide advice on emerging evidence and review draft policies where appropriate before consultation stages.

6 Governance Arrangements & Review

Decisions on this SoCG will be managed and agreed through cooperation meetings, circulation of draft statements, signature of final statements, and circulation of proposed revisions where necessary, between designated officers of HDC and the EA.

HDC take responsibility for the drafting, updating, and circulation of this SoCG in cooperation with the EA. The two authorities will publish the SoCG on their website at appropriate points.

A SoCG is a live document. This SoCG will be drafted and reviewed by officers at appropriate points. These may include:

- Whenever agreement is reached on any outstanding matters, or
- Relevant new evidence becomes available, or
- At key milestones in progress towards addressing strategic matters, or
- At relevant key stages of the plan making process.

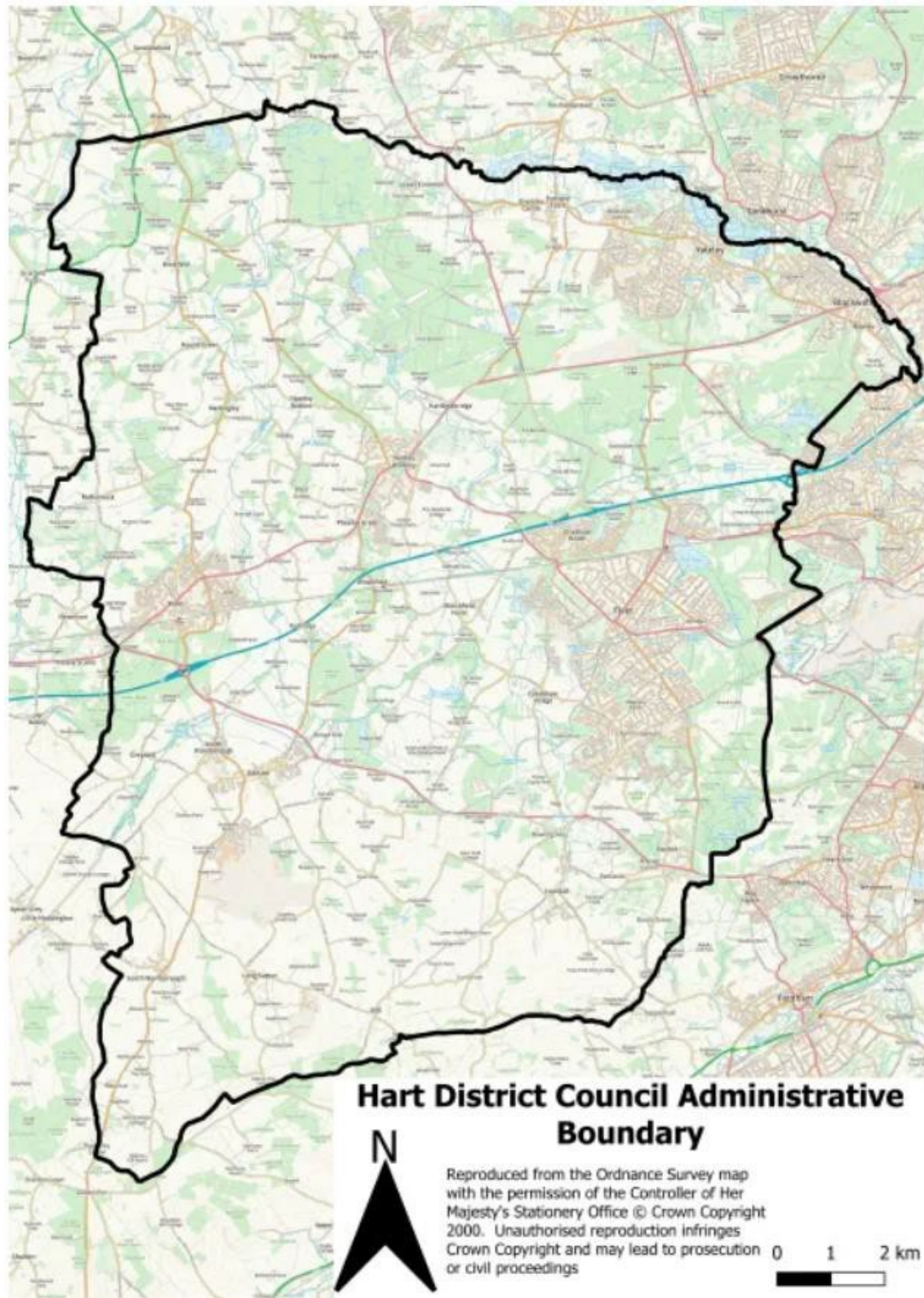
6. Record of / Timetable for Cooperation

Date	Stage	Form of Correspondence / Meeting	Matters for discussion
27.05.26	Scoping	WRZ4 -W meeting with partners	Water Resources in WRZ4 -W
03.06.26	Scoping	Cooperation meeting between HDC and the EA	Local Plan Engagement, Policies to be addressed in the Plan, Water Cycle Study, Water Resources, Wastewater evidence sheets, SFRA.
10.06.26	Scoping	WRZ4 -W meeting with partners	Water Resources in WRZ4 -W
08.07.26	Gateway 1 prep	WRZ4 -W workshop with partners	Water Resources in WRZ4 -W
22.07.26	Gateway 1 prep	WRZ4 -W meeting with partners	Water Resources in WRZ4 -W
12.08.26	Gateway 1 prep	WRZ4 -W meeting with partners	Water Resources in WRZ4 -W
02.09.26	Gateway 1 prep	WRZ4 -W meeting with partners	Water Resources in WRZ4 -W

30.09.2026	Gateway 1 prep	Preparation and agreement of a SoCG	Water Resources, Waste Water, Local Plan policies, SFRA.
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Appendix A - Strategic Geography

Geographical area to which the Hart Local Plan 2044 will relate:



Appendix B – Environment Agency Response to the Hart Local Plan Scoping consultation