

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Hart Local Plan

Post-submission Interim SA Report
Non-technical Summary

August 2018

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	August 2018	Non-technical summary of the Post Submission Interim SA Report focused on spatial strategy alternatives	Mark Fessey Associate Director	Steve Smith Technical Director	Steve Smith Technical Director

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Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Hart Local Plan: Strategy and Sites. Once adopted, the plan will allocate land for development and set policies to guide decisions on development and changes in how land is used.

SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA for Local Plans is a legal requirement, in-line with the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

The 'proposed submission' version of the plan was published, under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations, in early 2018, and the 'SA Report' was published alongside. The Plan and SA Report were then submitted to Government for independent examination (Regulation 22) in June 2018.

Subsequently, the decision was taken to prepare an *Interim* SA Report, with a view to presenting supplementary information on 'reasonable alternatives'. Reasonable alternatives are a focus of the SA Report (see 'Part 1'), but representations received served to highlight the need to revisit the matter.

This is a Non-technical Summary (NTS) of the Interim SA Report.

Structure of the SA Report / this NTS

SA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1. What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?
 - i.e. when preparing the draft plan.
2. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
3. What are the next steps?

Each of these questions is answered in turn below. Firstly though there is a need to set the scene further by answering the question 'What's the scope of the SA?'

What's the scope of the SA?

The scope of the SA is essentially reflected in a list of sustainability topics and objectives. Taken together, this list indicates the parameters of SA, and provides a methodological 'framework' for appraisal.

Sustainability topics and objectives (the SA framework)

Topic	Objectives
1 Accessibility	SA2 Protect and enhance the health and well-being of the population; SA3 Encourage increased engagement in cultural activity, leisure, and recreation across all sections of the community; SA17 Improve accessibility to all services and facilities; SA19 Maintain and improve opportunities for everyone to acquire the education and skills they need to find and remain in work.
2 Biodiversity	SA8 Protect and enhance biodiversity .
3 Climate change mitigation	SA12 Reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change; SA14 Increase energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources.
4 Communities	SA4 Reduce inequality , poverty and social exclusion; SA5 Improve community safety by reducing crime and the fear of crime; SA6 Create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive settlements and communities ; SA21 Stimulate regeneration where appropriate and encourage urban renaissance. N.B. the objectives listed above, under 'Accessibility' are also relevant here.
5 Employment & the economy	SA20 Maintain high and stable levels of employment and promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness.
6 Flood risk / climate change adaptation	SA12 Reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change ; SA13 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to the local community, environment and economy.
7 Housing	SA1 Provide all residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home which meets their needs.
8 Historic environment	SA7 Protect and enhance the District's historic environment .
9 Land and other resources	SA11 Maintain and improve soil quality; SA15 Promote the efficient use of land through the appropriate re-use of previously developed land; SA16 Improve the efficiency of resource use and achieve sustainable resource management.
10 Landscape	SA9 Protect and enhance the District's countryside and rural landscape.
11 Transport	SA17 Improve accessibility to all services and facilities; SA18 Improve efficiency of transport networks by enhancing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.
12 Water	SA10 Maintain and improve the water quality of the District's rivers and groundwaters and other water bodies.

PLAN-MAKING / SA UP TO THIS POINT

Plan-making has been ongoing for several years; however, the key matter to discuss here is the work undertaken in summer 2018 to establish a refined set of reasonable alternatives for appraisal.

Several steps were taken, as discussed within Section 2 of the main report, but most importantly work was undertaken to compare and contrast the merits of alternative locations for a 'new settlement area of search'.

Policy SS1 of the Submission Plan supports a new settlement area of search covering the Murrell Green / Winchfield area; however, an alternative location is being promoted at Rye Common. Ultimately, following the analysis reported within Appendix 1 of the main report, the Council determined that Murrell Green / Winchfield is the preferred location - see the Council's detailed reasons at para 2.2.13 of the main report.

Ultimately, the Council (working with AECOM) was able to arrive at a set of refined reasonable spatial strategy alternatives, which are presented below, across a table and a series of maps.

Points to note are as follows -

- there are a number of '**constants**' across the alternatives (completions,¹ commitments,² urban brownfield sites, windfall sites³ and allocation of Hartland Park⁴) and a number of '**variables**'.
- There are three variables: 1) the approach to growth at strategic urban extensions (Pale Lane and/or West of Hook); 2) the approach to growth at non-strategic urban extensions (an *indicative* package is identified, which, it is assumed, would either delivered in full, or not at all); and 3) whether or not a new settlement area of search (AoS) is supported at Murrell Green / Winchfield (MG/W).
- The final rows explain the total number of homes that are provided for under each option. Figures are provided for: the total number of dwellings across the plan period; the average number of dwellings per annum (dpa) across the plan period; and the relationship of each 'total housing' figure to housing needs, which is understood to stand at either 292 dpa or 382 dpa, depending on which methodology is applied.
- The alternatives are as per those examined within the SA Report, except that: a new row/variable has been added ("MG/W New Settlement AoS") and consequentially four new spatial strategy options have been added, namely Options 1b, 2b, 3b and 4b; and Option 8 has been added.

¹ i.e. sites that have been built since the start of the plan period.

² i.e. sites with planning permission plus sites allocated within a neighbourhood plan.

³ i.e. unallocated sites that will come forward as they are in accordance with Local Plan policy.

⁴ Hartland Park has outline planning permission.

The reasonable alternatives





		Option 1		Option 2		Option 3		Option 4		Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	
		Do minimum		Non-strategic		Pale Lane		W. of Hook		Pale Lane + non-strategic	W. of Hook + non-strategic	Pale Lane + W. of Hook	All	
		1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	4a	4b					
Completions ⁵		1174		1174		1174		1174		1174	1174	1174	1174	
Commitments ⁶		3373		3373		3373		3373		3373	3373	3373	3373	
Urban brownfield		150		150		150		150		150	150	150	150	
Windfall		276		276		276		276		276	276	276	276	
Allocations	Hartland Park	1428		1428		1428		1428		1428	1428	1428	1428	
	Variables	Pale Lane, Fleet	-	-	-	700	-	-	700	-	700	-	700	700
		S. of Church Crookham, Fleet	-	-	200	-	-	-	200	-	200	200	-	200
		West of Hook	-	-	90	-	-	-	790	-	90	790	790	790
		West of Yateley	-	-	170	-	-	-	-	-	170	170	-	170
		East of Yateley	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	25	25	-	25
		North West of Crondall	-	-	65	-	-	-	-	-	65	65	-	65
		North of Reading Rd, Eversley	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	25	25	-	25
		Long Sutton or S Warnborough	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	25	25	-	25
MG/W New Settlement AoS?		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	
Total	N.B the figures for the 'b' options are minima, as the new settlement will be in addition.	6401		7001		7101		7191		7701	7701	7891	8401	
Total p.a.		400		438		444		449		481	481	493	525	
% over 292 dpa		37%		50%		52%		54%		65%	65%	69%	80%	
% over 382 dpa		5%		15%		16%		18%		26%	26%	29%	37%	

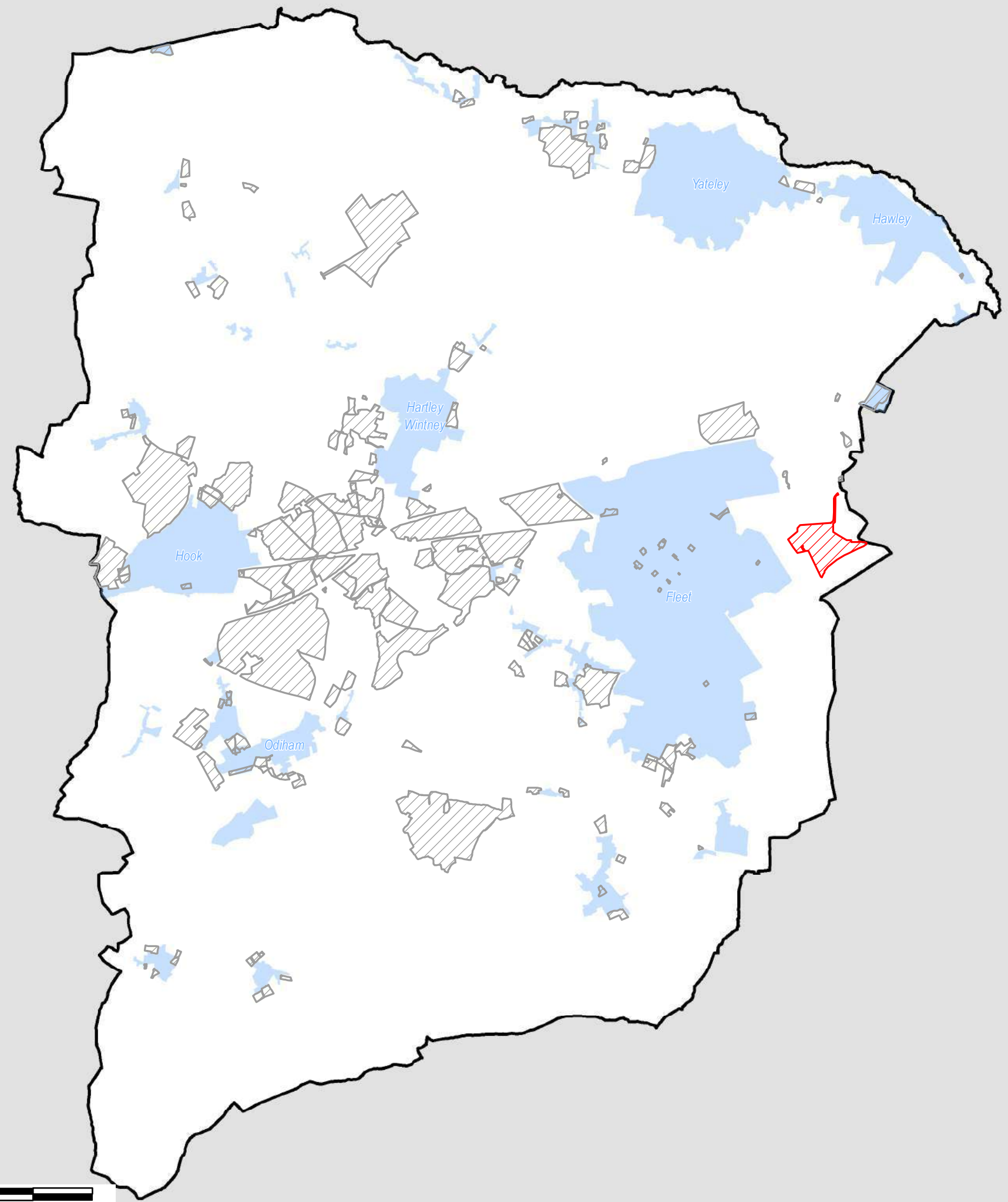
⁵ Homes built since the start of the plan period.

⁶ Homes in the pipeline, i.e. with planning permission (outline or full) and allocations within made Neighbourhood Plans.

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-  District Boundary
-  Allocations
-  SHLAA Sites
-  Settlement



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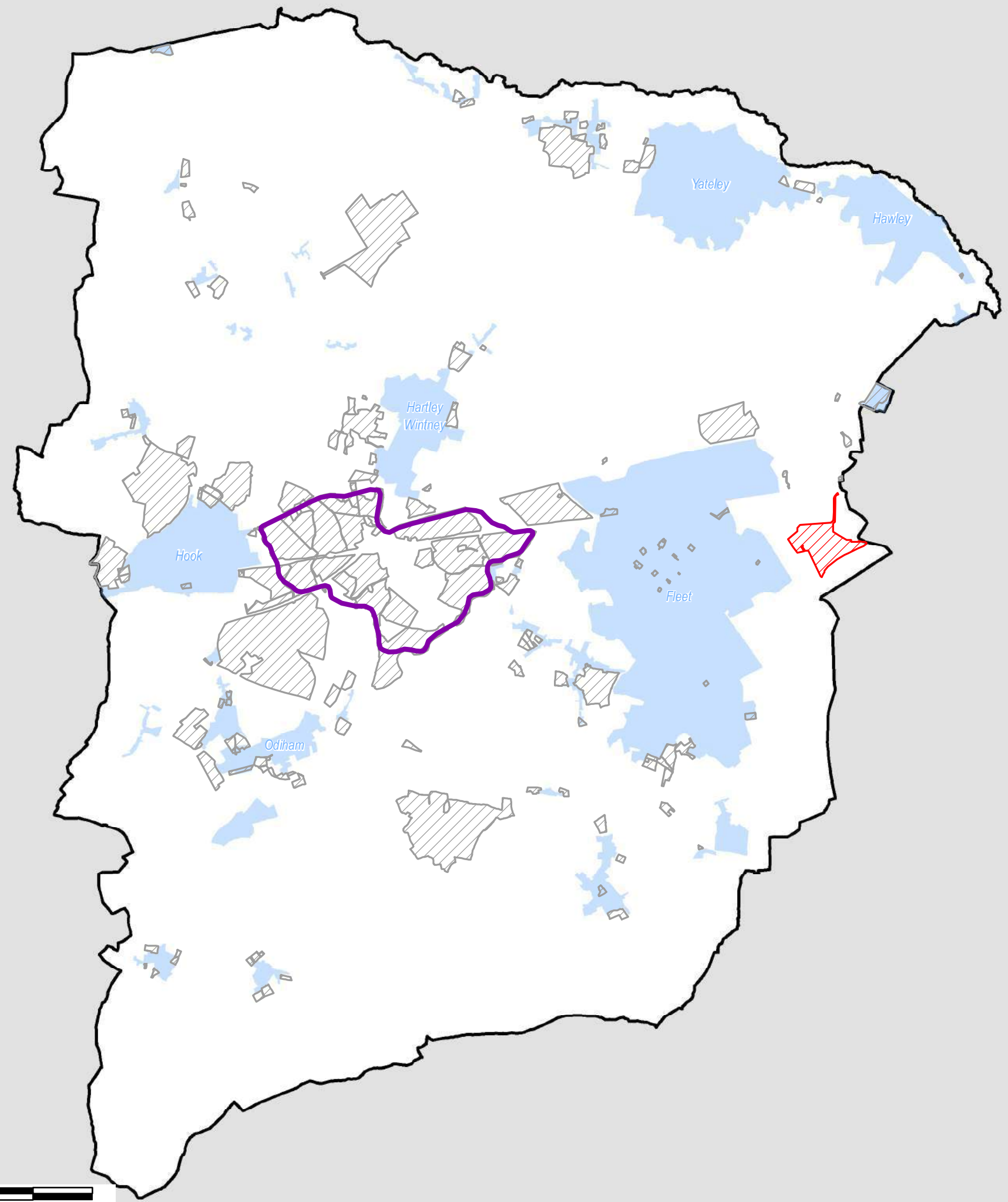
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
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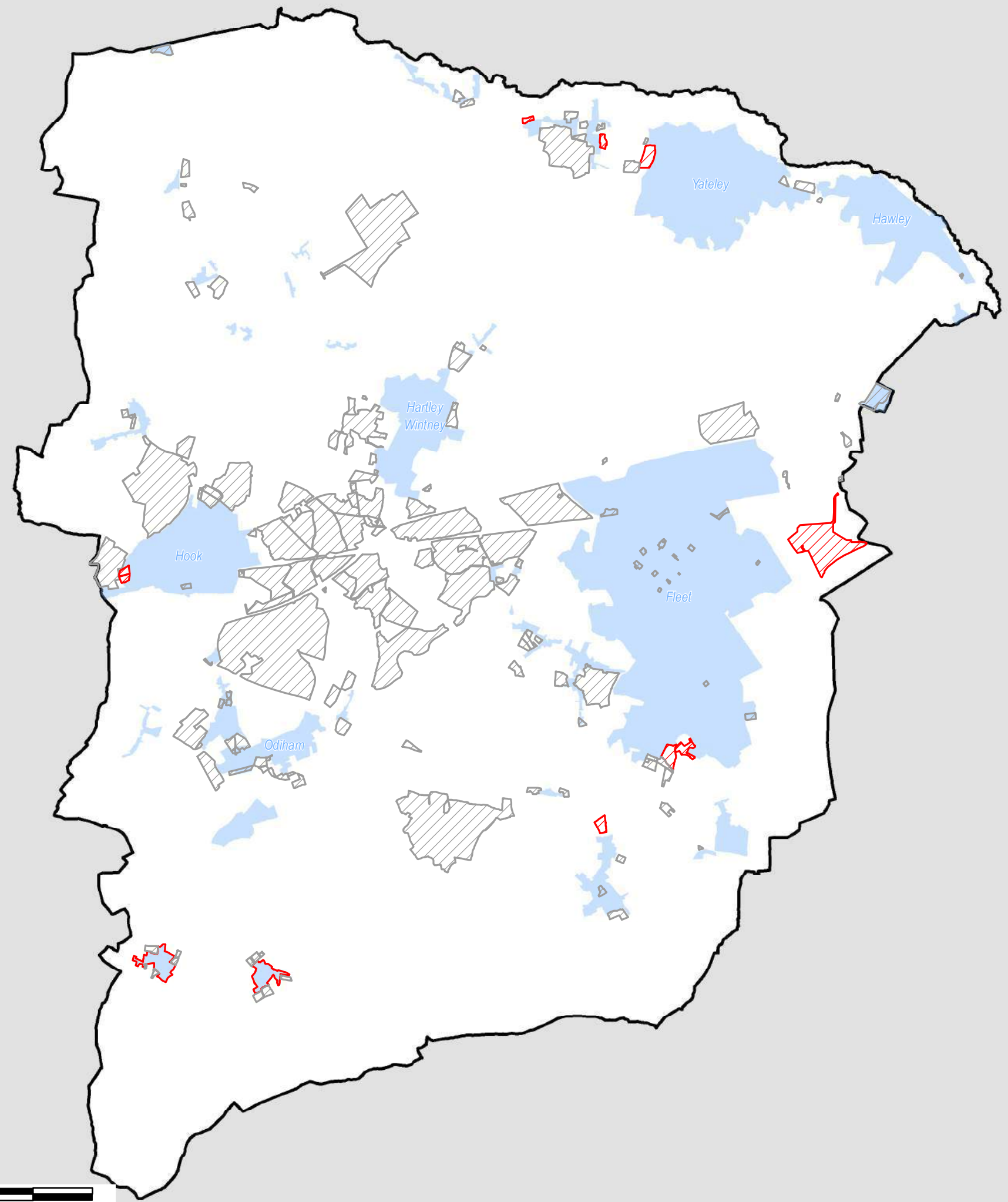
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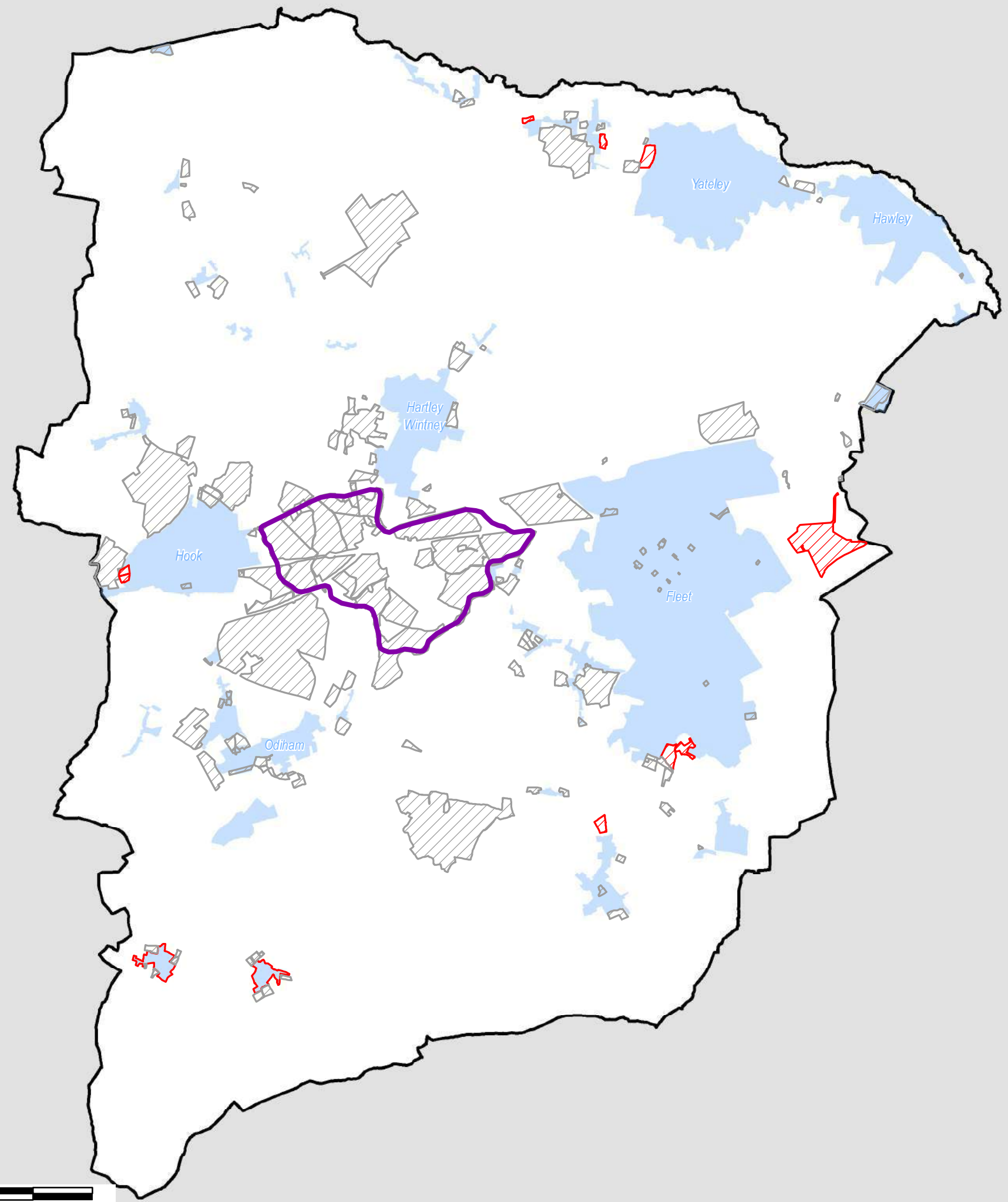
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
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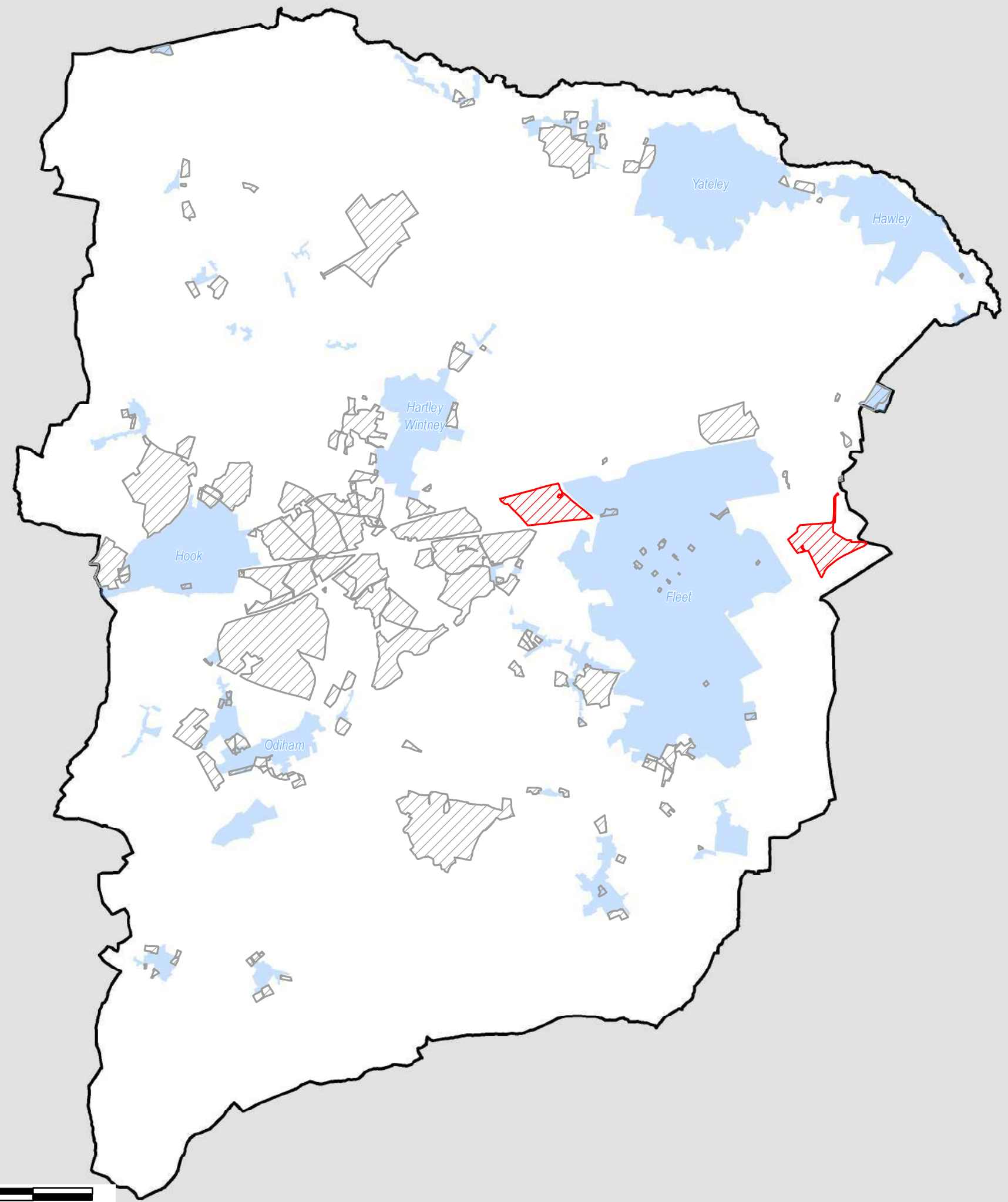


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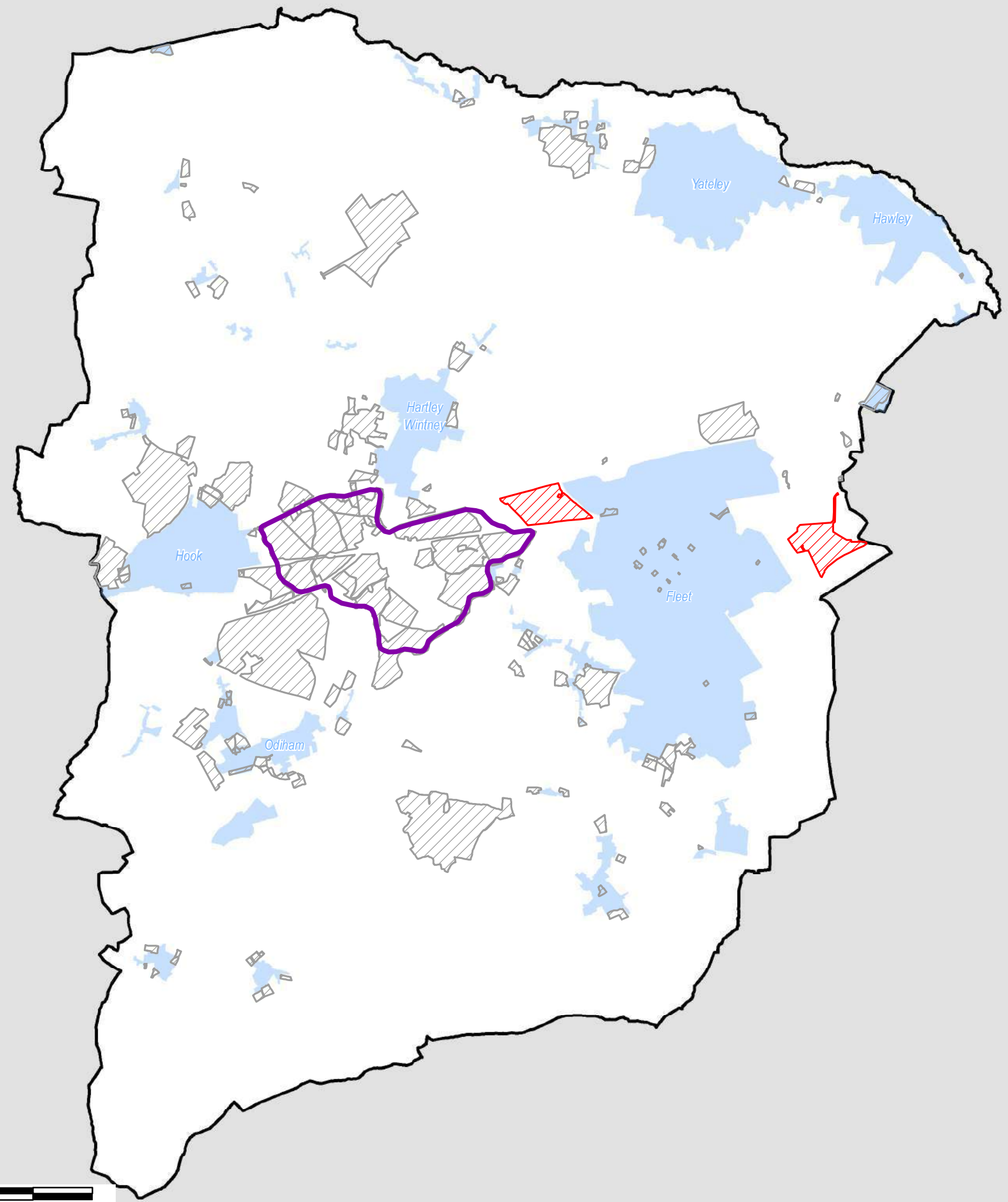
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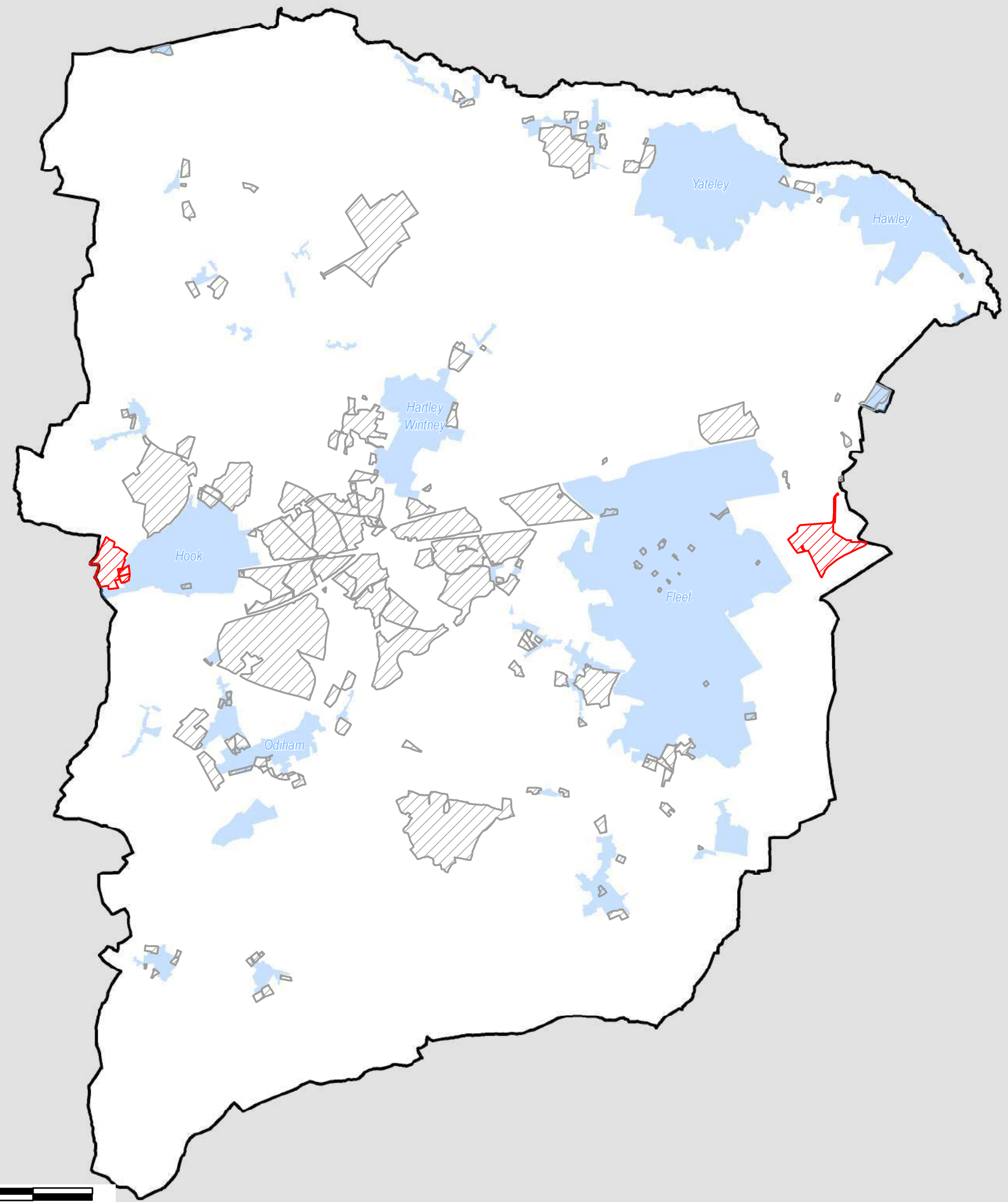
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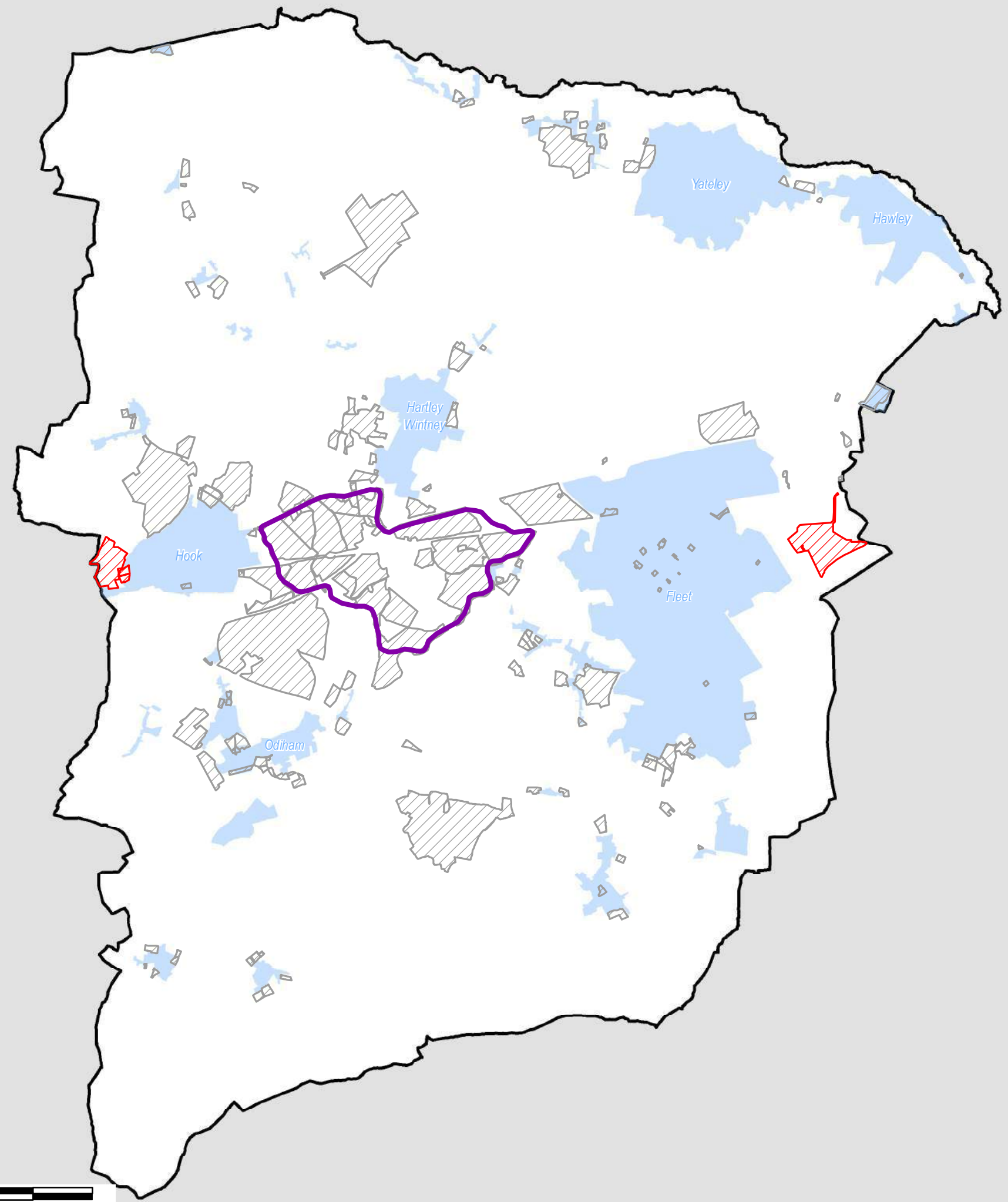
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
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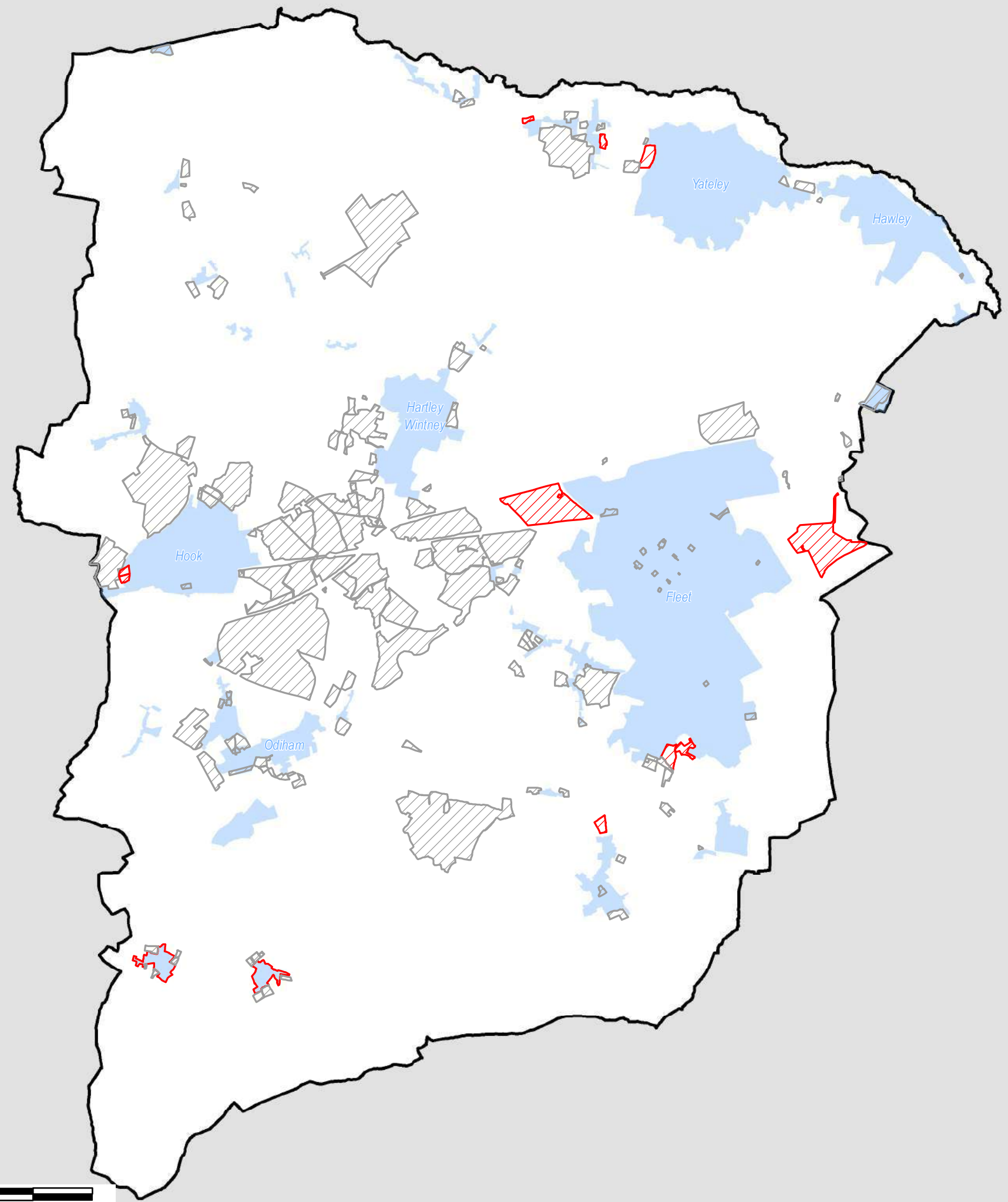


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


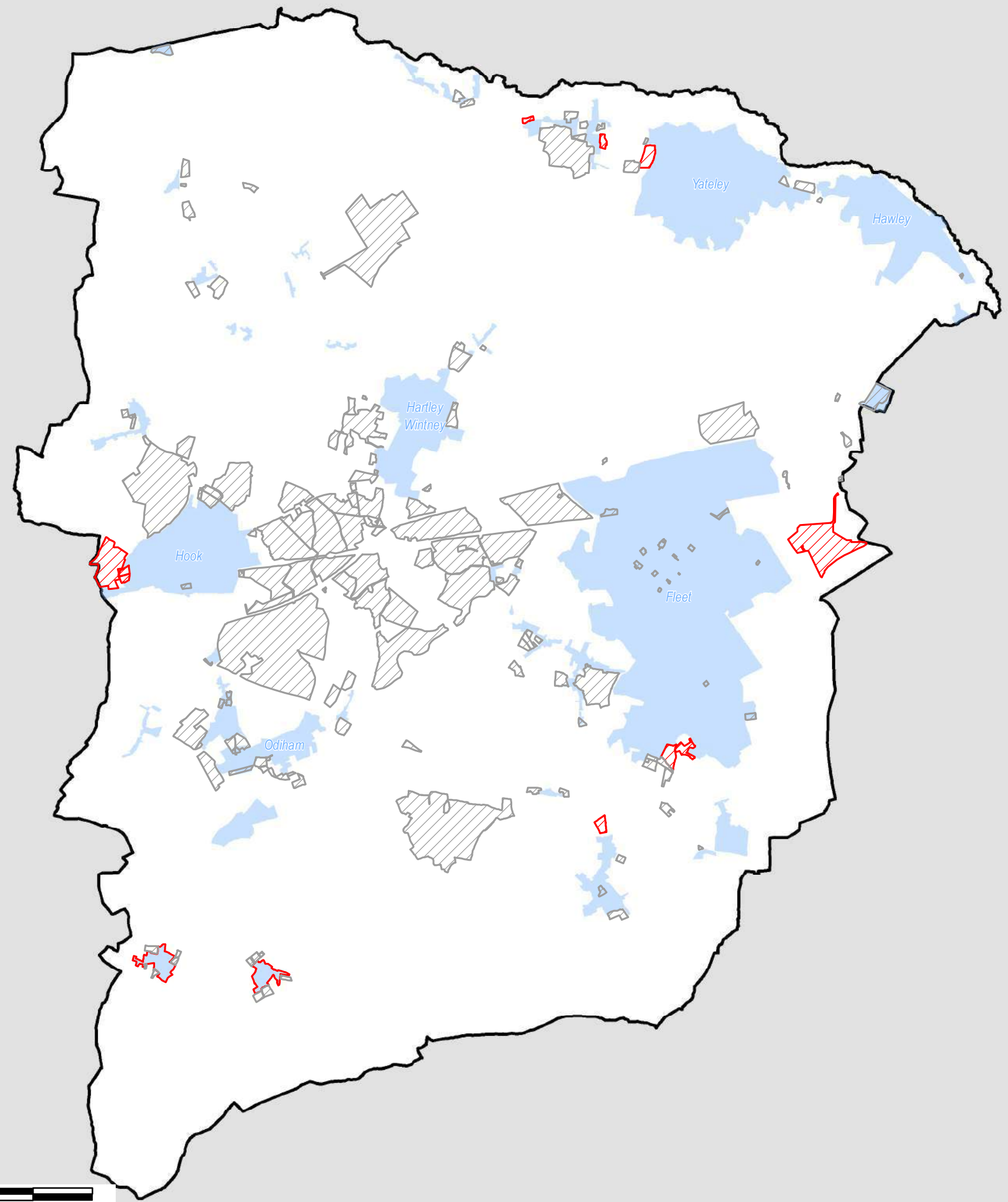
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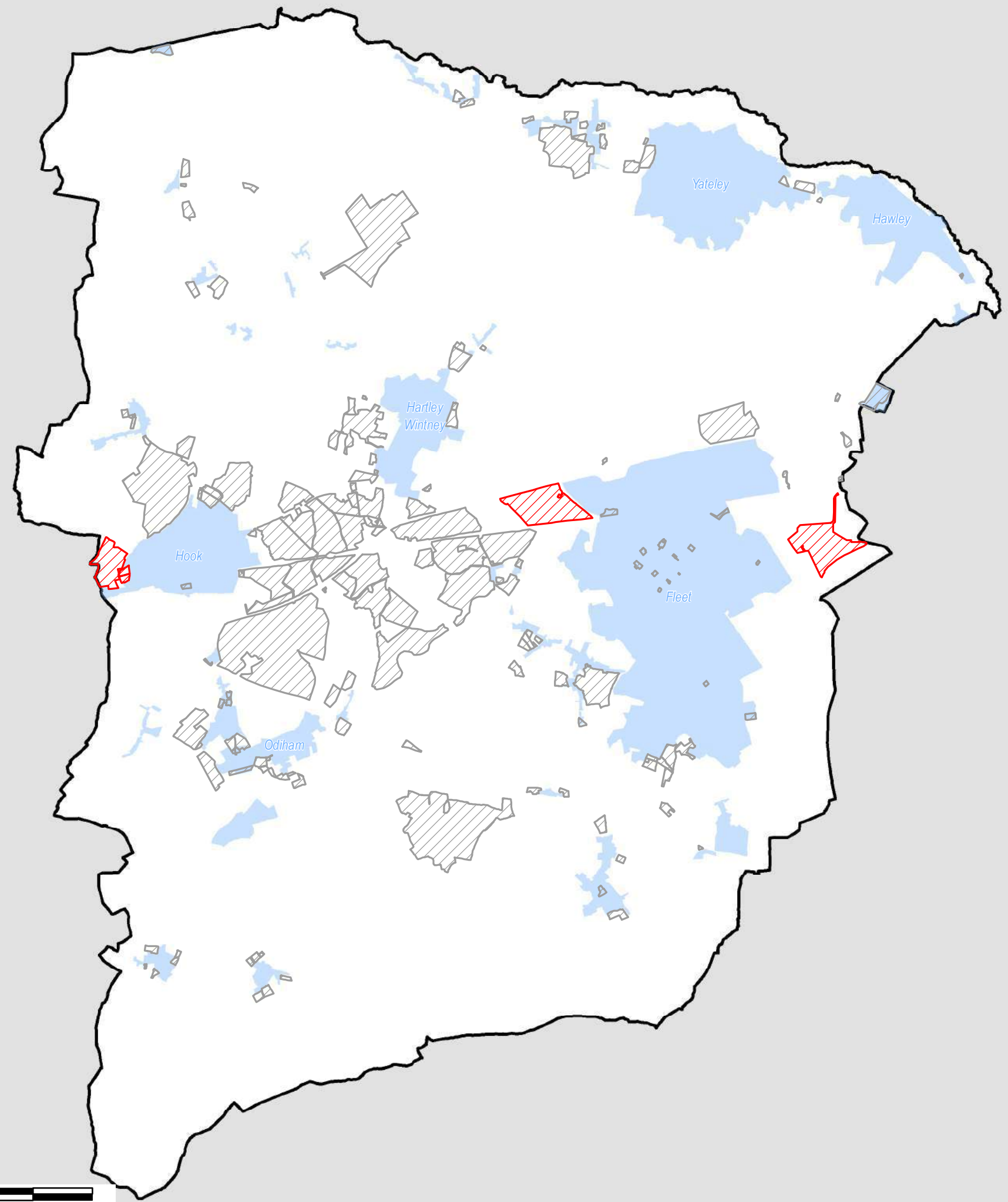
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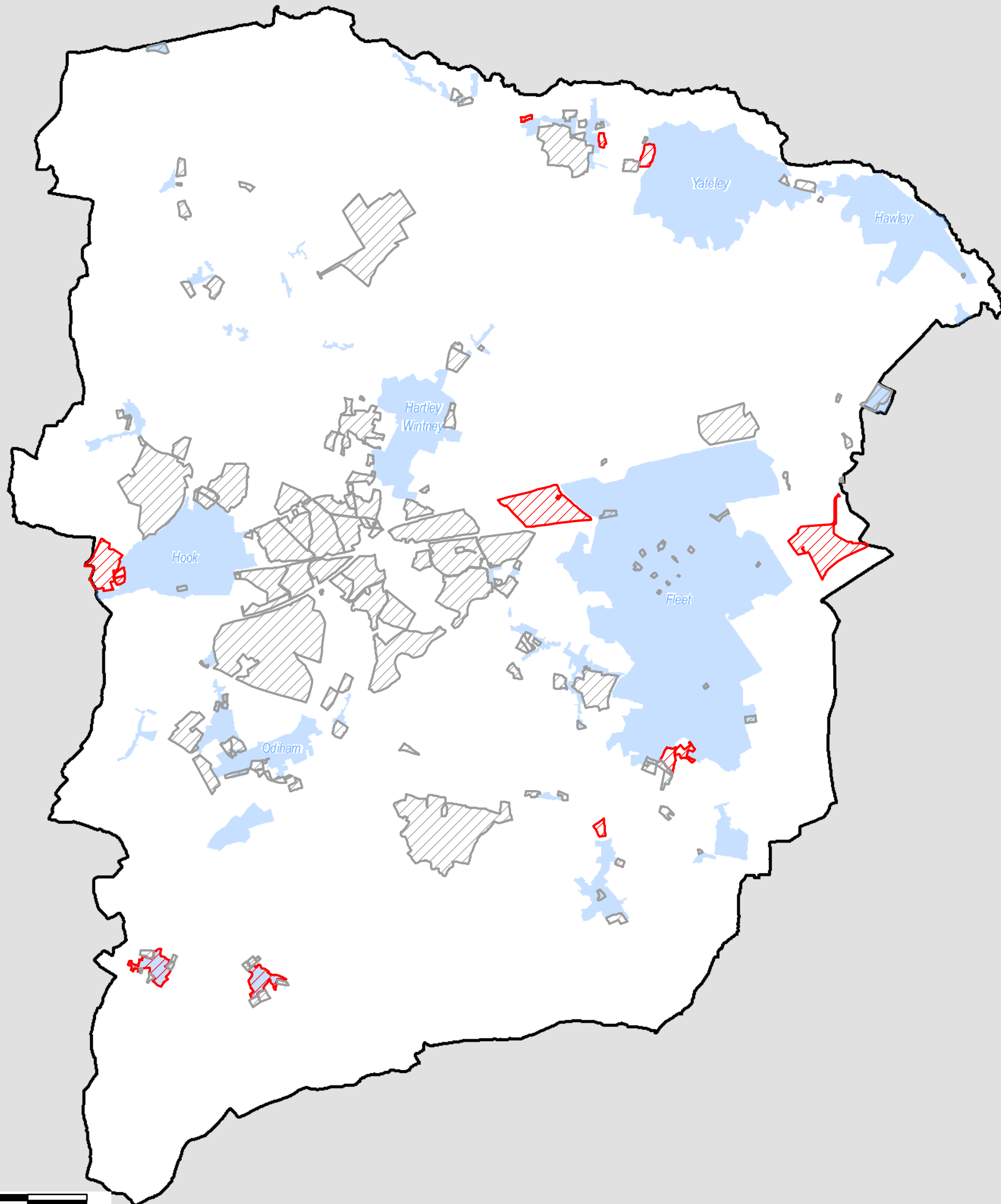
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LEGEND

-  District Boundary
-  Allocations
-  SHLAA Sites
-  Settlement



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Purpose of Issue

Client
HART COUNCIL

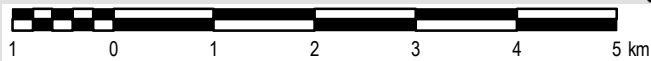
Project Title
HART SA

Drawing Title
OPTION 8

Drawn SM	Checked MF	Approved MF	Date 08/08/2018
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APPRAISAL FINDINGS AT THIS STAGE

The main report presents a detailed appraisal of the refined reasonable spatial strategy alternatives introduced above. Summary findings are presented in the table below. Within each row of the table below the columns to the right hand side seek to both categorise the performance of each option in terms of ‘significant effects’ (using red / green) and also rank the alternatives.

Summary appraisal findings

Summary findings and conclusions												
Topic	Categorisation and rank											
	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3		Option 4		Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8
	Do min	Non-strat	Pale Lane	W. Hook	Pale Lane + non-strat	W. Hook + non-strat	Pale Lane + W Hook	All				
	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b				
Accessibility	2	★1	4	3	4	3	4	3	6	5	5	6
Biodiversity	2	★1	4	3	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	6
Climate change mitigation	2	★1	7	4	4	3	4	3	5	5	3	6
Communities	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
Employment and the economy	2	★1	2	★1	2	★1	2	★1	2	2	2	2
Flood risk / climate change adaptation	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
Historic environment	2	★1	4	3	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	6
Housing	5	2	4	★1	4	★1	4	★1	3	3	3	2
Land and other resources	★1	★1	3	3	3	3	2	2	5	4	4	5
Landscape	★1	★1	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	5	4	6
Transport	★1	★1	3	3	2	2	2	2	5	5	4	6
Water	★1	★1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3

Topic	Categorisation and rank											
	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3		Option 4		Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8
	Do min		Non-strat		Pale Lane		W. Hook		Pale Lane + non-strat	W. Hook + non-strat	Pale Lane + W Hook	All
	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b				

Summary and conclusions

The appraisal shows Options 1b ('do minimum' allocations plus a MG/W new settlement AoS) to perform best in terms of the greatest number of objectives. This, in itself, does not directly enable a conclusion to be reached that Option 1b performs best *overall* (because there is no assumption that all objectives have equal importance); however, it does provide an indication of the overall strength of this option.

The appraisal shows strongest support for Option 1b in respect of 'Accessibility'. This is on the basis that the new settlement would deliver a secondary school, thereby avoiding (or at least significantly mitigating) the capacity constraints that are otherwise anticipated under the baseline scenario (which is essentially Option 1a), and which would be worsened under Options 2 to 8.

In terms of a number of objectives (biodiversity, landscape, heritage, land, landscape, transport, water) the new settlement AoS is supported (to varying degrees) despite the AoS being associated with notable issues/constraints. This is because, under a baseline scenario, an absence of a new settlement (or delays to delivering a new settlement) would lead to increased pressure (in the long term, i.e. either in the latter part of this plan period, or in the next plan period) for further urban extensions, which would themselves be subject to considerable issues/constraints (plus in-combination effects would be likely).

Having made these initial points, the following points summarise other key messages from the appraisal -

Accessibility - the order of preference, and conclusion on significant effects, reflects the school capacity issue discussed above. Option 5 performs worst as a concentration of new development at Fleet would load pressure on Calthorpe Secondary School.

Biodiversity - the sensitive nature of Hart District means that lower growth is supported, from a biodiversity perspective, albeit the effect could be to increase pressure on other parts of the heavily constrained HMA.

Climate change mitigation - a new settlement is supported, despite there being uncertainty regarding what would be delivered in respect of low carbon infrastructure. The potential to deliver low carbon infrastructure also serves to suggest that growth at strategic sites (i.e. Pale Lane and/or West of Hook) is preferable to dispersal of growth between non-strategic sites; however, this is marginal, and uncertain.

Communities - there are some specific concerns associated with certain sites, e.g. in respect of road safety; however, concerns are judged to be of limited significance, given mitigation potential.

Employment and the economy - it is only a new settlement that would deliver new employment land, however, this would likely be of limited strategic significance.

Flood risk - whilst there are quite extensive issues across the District, all of the sites in question are subject to limited constraint, such that there would be good potential to avoid or mitigate risk.

Historic environment - the order of preference, and conclusion on significant effects, reflect the extent of heritage assets / issues that constrain settlement expansion in the District.

Housing - all options would provide for housing needs, whether such needs are understood from the standard methodology in Planning Practice Guidance, or the OAHN figure identified in the SHMA, with a 'contingency' to account for unanticipated delivery problems. The highest growth options would involve allocation of sites sufficient to deliver well in excess of housing needs, such that the Council might commit to being monitored against a housing target in excess of needs, with a view to meeting affordable housing needs more fully. Higher growth options could also assist with addressing any unmet needs that might arise from neighbouring areas; however, no such unmet needs are known to exist at the current time.

Land - the order of preference, and conclusion on significant effects, reflects an understanding that West of Hook is relatively unconstrained, in that it does not comprise 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.

Topic	Categorisation and rank											
	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3		Option 4		Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8
	Do min		Non-strat		Pale Lane		W. Hook		Pale Lane + non-strat	W. Hook + non-strat	Pale Lane + W Hook	All
	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b				
Landscape	- the order of preference reflects the extent of sensitivities across the District, and also an understanding that Pale Lane would appear relatively unconstrained in this respect (i.e. would impact to a lesser extent than West of Hook or the non-strategic sites package).											
Transport	- the order of preference reflects the extent of transport/traffic issues across the District, and also an understanding that housing growth at Pale Lane or West of Hook would be preferable to dispersed growth across a package of non-strategic sites. A new settlement at MG/W would benefit from proximity to Winchfield train station; however, there is a need for further work to understanding traffic issues/impacts.											
Water	- there are few constraints to growth that would affect one option more than another, but the matter of constraints at Eversley WwTW enables some differentiation.											
In conclusion	, all alternatives are associated with certain 'pros and cons'. The intention is for the Council and stakeholders to take this understanding into account when considering how best to 'trade-off' between competing objectives, and establish the 'most sustainable' option.											
	N.B. the Council's position is presented within the submitted 'topic papers' and will be elaborated upon within hearing statements. However, suffice to say here, that Option 1b is the Council's preferred option.											

Next steps

The next step is for the Local Plan, and its supporting evidence-base, to be subject to an examination in public, to include a series of public hearings, overseen by an appointed Planning Inspector. The examination will provide a forum to discuss the the Local Plan spatial strategy, informed by this Post Submission Interim SA Report, the SA Report (2018), and other evidence. More information is available at - <https://www.hart.gov.uk/local-plan-examination-2018>.

Subsequent to Examination Hearings, the Inspector will determine whether the plan is sound, or requires modifications. Once found to be 'sound' the plan will be adopted by the Council.