

By email only

Your Ref:

Our ref:

Contact: Julie Pinnock

Direct Line: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

05 September 2025

Dear Jayson

Gosport Borough Unmet Housing Need

Thank you for your letter of 2 July outlining the current planning position in Gosport Borough and your request that Winchester City Council (WCC) consider taking any of Gosport Borough's unmet housing need. Your letter followed a very useful meeting you and members of your team had with officers from WCC's Strategic Planning Team which give further detail on the current planning issues facing Gosport Borough.

First, I should confirm that I recognise the description of how Gosport Borough has collaborated closely with WCC and others in the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire in cross-boundary planning matters, including the preparation of the PfSH Spatial Position Statement and ongoing work to deliver solutions to strategic environmental issues.

I understand from your meeting with my team, and subsequent letter, that Gosport BC has identified a number of issues, including the lack of deliverable land and planning constraints, which are leading to an unmet need of approximately 4,800 homes, and that Gosport BC is now contacting all authorities in the Portsmouth Housing Market Area to ask if any or all of this unmet need can be met in those authorities.

I do recognise the overall position you have outlined and note your position regarding the Borough's ability to accommodate the housing needs set out in the new Standard Method. I would encourage the Borough Council to do all it can in maximising the delivery of housing in suitable locations through its plan process in line with national planning policy, and no doubt that process will be tested through your forthcoming Local Plan Examination. I note your position on the Borough being pro-growth with a high rate of granting planning permissions. You explain the challenges of those sites coming forward. Given this, we expect that Gosport will



need to demonstrate it is doing all it can to support development coming forward, including reviewing the level of affordable housing and developer contributions sought.

For our part, the current WCC Local Plan is well advanced and is currently at Examination. The Council has already received formal requests for assistance with unmet housing needs from both Portsmouth City and Havant Borough Councils, both of which are neighbouring authorities. As a result the Council has signed statements of common ground with both authorities. Those agreements provide for 70% of housing delivery over the Standard Method for Winchester district to be made available for Portsmouth's unmet housing need, with the remaining 30% for Havant, and this approach is set out in the emerging Plan document. Given this situation, there is no scope for the emerging Plan to be revised at this late stage, though this contribution will of course go towards reducing the overall level of unmet need within the Portsmouth Housing Market area. At the time of writing this letter, we do not know yet what the outcome will be of our Local Plan examination as we are currently waiting for a response from our Inspector.

Going forward, The City Council agreed an updated Local Development Scheme in February 2025. We are starting work on a new Plan to address the changes in national planning policy, including the increased housing requirement derived from the standard method for Winchester. The new standard method increased the housing need for the district from 676 to 1,148 homes per year (a 70% increase), so the Council faces a significant challenge in meeting this increased figure, not least due to 40% of the District falling within the South Down National Park and the requirements for the impacts of phosphorus in the River Itchen catchment to be addressed.

Therefore at present we are unable to commit to assisting Gosport BC in unmet housing needs. However, as work on both the WCC and GBC Plans progress we will need to keep this matter under review.

I would be happy for us to agree a Statement of Common Ground at a convenient point which can then be updated as both plans progress.

Yours sincerely

Julie Pinnock
Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services