



South Downs National Park Authority
Contact: Adrian Fox

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11th December 2025

Dear Claire,

Subject: Housing Need in the South Downs National Park

Thank you for your letter dated 19 November 2025 regarding housing need in the South Downs National Park.

Housing unmet need

You will be well aware that around 40% of the City Councils geography is covered by the South Downs National Park. As there is a growing wider unmet housing need across Hampshire, we strongly feel that all Hampshire councils and beyond have a role to play and we all need to work collaboratively to plan strategically for this unmet housing need.

Meeting the unmet housing need

It is recognised that there are Local Planning Authorities in Hampshire and beyond are all located in different housing market areas. However, we consider that at your Local Plan examination you should be able to demonstrate to a Local Plan Inspector that you have left 'no stone unturned' in responding to the housing unmet need that has been identified in the AECOM report particularly as this represents 40% of the City Councils geographical area. In view of this we would strongly encourage the South Downs National Park to be proactive and to approach other Local Planning Authorities in Hampshire and wider Local Planning Authorities which are located outside of your Housing Market Area. We consider that this is important as you must be able to clearly demonstrate to a Local Plan Inspector that you have continued to work constructively on cross boundary issues such as housing unmet need. In addition to this your Local Plan is in line with the policies in the NPPF on 'maintaining



effective co-operation' and in accordance with the Government's '[Reforming Local Plan-Making](#)' Written Ministerial Statement published on 27th November 2025.

Winchester City Council have for example, been approached by other Local Planning Authorities which are located outside of our Housing Market Area. We would bring to your attention Chichester District Council which has recently successfully gone through a Local Plan examination which included a housing requirement that was below their Standard Method. As part of their evidence base under the Duty to Cooperate we are aware that they did approach local planning authorities that were located outside of their Housing Market Area. This is evidenced by the fact that we received and responded to a Duty to Cooperate letter from them. Linked to this, given the unmet housing need we would also strongly encourage the National Park to respond as we are to any Local Plan consultations in Hampshire as this is a joint issue that all local authorities need to approach in a consistent way given the importance of this matter. This will also in our professional opinion, strengthen your case at your respective Local Plan examination.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

We acknowledge your request to accommodate unmet gypsy and travellers in the National Park. You will be aware of our correspondence with the National Park prior to the start of our Local Plan examination that the City Council is unable to meet its own needs for Gypsy and Travellers. This is documented in our [Gypsy and Travellers Topic Paper](#) which provided the necessary evidence at our Local Plan examination that we had not 'left any stone unturned'. As we are unable to meet our own need for Gypsy and Travellers, we cannot meet any additional needs arising for Gypsy and Travellers in the National Park.

Winchester City Council's Local Plans

My team's primary focus is moving the emerging Local Plan forward to adoption. As you will be aware we are currently out for a 6 week public consultation on the [Main Modifications](#) and then onto subsequent adoption as soon as possible next year.

Next Local Plan

Whilst progressing the emerging Local Plan towards adoption is our number 1 priority some initial work has started on progressing work on the next Local Plan which will cover the period up to 2044.

This work has involved commissioning AECOM to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment/Habitats Regulations Assessment and appointing consultants to undertake an updated Employment and Retail Assessment. A new 'Call for Sites' closed on the 21st November 2025. However, no detailed work on the process on how to meet the increase in our Standard Method figure has been undertaken, and ultimately therefore, what contribution we might be able to make to unmet needs from neighbouring authorities. However, I must stress that all of the above work has now been temporarily paused to enable us to progress the emerging Local Plan towards adoption.

We do acknowledge the importance of planning for unmet needs across Hampshire and remain committed to working collaboratively with all of the authorities across Hampshire (and beyond). However, given the early stage of our Local Plan Review, it would be premature to make any firm commitments regarding the accommodation of unmet housing need at this time as we have not yet mapped out the process that we intend to follow.

We look forward to continuing constructive dialogue and joint working with you. We would be happy to meet in February/March 2026 to discuss an updated Statement of Common Ground.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Fox

Strategic Planning Manager
Winchester City Council