# Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for the Winchester District Local Plan 2044

IIA Scoping Report

Winchester City Council

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## Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) in support of the new Winchester District Local Plan (WDLP) 2044.

1.2 As part of preparing the WDLP, the IIA is being undertaken as a statutory requirement under Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It incorporates the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') and seeks to fulfil the duties and obligations of the Equality Act 2010[1] and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

1.3 The IIA is also being undertaken in accordance with relevant national guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[2] and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It is an iterative process that informs the development of the Local Plan and supports its legal compliance and soundness.

1.4 Winchester District is a non-metropolitan District located in the south of Hampshire County. The Winchester District Local Plan area covers the area of the district outside of the South Downs National Park, see **Figure 1.1**. It is important to note that owing to limitations in data availability, certain datasets in this report are presented at District level rather than specifically for the plan area. Whilst the Government has recently announced that it has paused work on Local Government Re-organisation in Hampshire there was, under the previously proposals, a change in the plan area boundary, where the Newlands area west of Waterlooville would have moved into South East Hampshire authority area.

## Local Plan making

1.5 The WDLP is being prepared in the context of planning reforms and a new plan-making system. The new plan-making system covers plans prepared and adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. A package of regulations to implement the new system was put to Parliament in early March 2026. This package includes the new Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, which commenced on 25 March, and replaced the existing 2012 plan-making regulations.[3] Further details can be found at create or update a local plan using the new system and plan-making regulations explainer.

1.6 Under the new plan-making system, local authorities must prepare a single local plan and should adopt it within 30 months (see 30-month local plan process - an overview). The new plan-making system has a clear sequencing of tasks which are organised under a series of 'Gateways'. Before the 30-month

[1] UK Government (2010). *'Equality Act 2010'* can be accessed through this link.
[2] MHCLG (2026) National Planning Policy Framework
[3] MHCLG (March 2026): Planning Newsletter: The New Plan-Making System

process starts (i.e., before passing through Gateway 1), the following tasks must be completed:

- Local authority publishes their local plan timetable and gives at least four-months' notice of their intention to commence plan-making.
- Confirm requirement for SEA and gather baseline information, knowledge and understanding about the local plan area. The new plan-making system expects that all local plans will need to carry out SEA.
- Run a scoping consultation to engage with the public, statutory bodies and other stakeholders to invite feedback on the plan-making process and what the emerging plan should contain.
- Complete and publish a self-assessment and pass through Gateway 1, commencing the 30-month process.

1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides an overarching framework for development in England. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is supported by planning practice guidance, which is a suite of policy papers covering a broad range of topics, including SEA.

1.8 The NPPF has been the subject of revisions over the past few years and was recently updated in August 2026. The content of the NPPF will influence the structure and approach for the new WDLP as it has streamlined the way that Local Plans are produced and reduces the number of policies in a Local Plan.

# IIA Explained

1.9 Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is a mechanism for assessing and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to achieving sustainable development. IIA fulfils the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and discharges the duties for Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

1.10 The aim of the IIA will be to inform plan-making both directly (i.e. through structured, systematic and evidence-based analysis), and indirectly (through providing stakeholders with information on potential plan impacts and so facilitating effective consultation).

1.11 The use of an IIA approach will help ensure consistency in the development and evaluation of the WDLP and is considered best practice. Undertaken through an SEA-led methodology, the IIA will incorporate HIA and EqIA. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – another important environmental assessment process – will remain a separate undertaking to the IIA.

1.12 The integrated processes are discussed in turn below.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

1.13 SEA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA

Regulations').4 It also widens the scope of the assessment from focusing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues. The SEA Regulations only formally apply to plans and programmes for which there is a statutory requirement; this includes Local Plans.

1.14 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
- A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan for consultation that presents an assessment of the draft plan (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

## Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1.15 As a public sector organisation, Winchester City Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010[5] and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that the objectives and policy options within the District eliminate unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those with a protected characteristics[6] and all others. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is often used by public sector organisations to demonstrate how this duty has been met.

1.16 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace and in wider society. It replaces previous anti-discrimination laws which include the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Act ensures that individuals with certain 'protected characteristics' are not indirectly or directly discriminated against. The protected characteristics include:

- **Age:** this refers to persons defined by either a particular age or a range of ages;
- **Disability**: a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
- **Gender reassignment**: this refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their gender identity;
- **Marriage and civil partnership**: marriage can be between a man and a woman or between two people of the same sex. Same-sex couples can also have a civil partnership. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples;
- **Pregnancy and maternity**: pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth. In the non-

[4] UK Government (2004). '*The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004'* can be accessed through this link.
[5] UK Government (2010). *'Equality Act 2010*' can be accessed through this link.
[6] Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 include age, sex, marital status, disability, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and deprived/disadvantaged groups.

work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth;

- **Race**: the Equality Act 2010 defines race as encompassing colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins;
- **Religion or belief**: religion means any religion a person follows. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, and includes those people who have no formal religion or belief;
- **Gender**: this refers to a man or to a woman or a group of people of the same sex, while gender refers to the wider social roles and relationships that structure men's and women's, boys' and girls' lives;
- **Sexual orientation**: a person's sexual orientation relates to their emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.
- **Socio-economic status**: a person's socio-economic status referring to combined economic and sociological measure of a person's work experience and economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

## Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

1.17 There are numerous links between planning and health highlighted throughout the NPPF.[7] For example, Section 1 Paragraph 17 links sustainable development to the social objective to "support strong, vibrant and healthy communities" and Plan-making policies HC1 and HC2 and National decision-making policies HC3 to HC8 identify a range of planning considerations that promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places. Whilst there is no national policy requirement for HIA in plan-making, the NPPF establishes health and wellbeing as a material planning consideration that local planning authorities should address through plan-making. Integrated HIA can support a rounded assessment of plan performance and directly evidence health considerations.

## Integrating the assessment processes

1.18 As previously explained, the IIA seeks to fulfil the requirement for SEA and addresses the duty to undertake an EqIA and HIA. The approach is to fully integrate these to provide a single assessment process to inform the development of the WDLP.

1.19 Of note, there are emerging proposed reforms in relation to the undertaking of SEA, and the process is expected to move towards the delivery of 'Environmental Outcomes Reports' (EORs). EORs are expected to have clear outcomes aligned with the Environmental Improvement Plan. At this stage it is difficult to predict how these changes will materialise for SEA and affect reporting processes. Therefore, this SEA maintains our existing approach to SEA, whilst seeking to align better with the outcomes identified in the Environmental Improvement Plan and provide enough flexibility to respond to the forthcoming changes.

[7] UK Government (2026). '*National Planning Policy Framework'* can be accessed through this link.

# IIA scoping

1.20 This Scoping Report seeks to establish a suggested scope for the IIA. A key procedural requirement of the SEA Regulations is to present this scope to designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) so that they can provide timely comment.

1.21 Developing the draft scope for the IIA as presented in this report has involved a series of steps that includes exploring the policy context for different environmental topics as well as baseline conditions and apparent problems or opportunities (key issues). This work informs the establishment of a framework of sustainability themes and objectives (the IIA framework) that should be a focus for, and provide a methodological framework for, the subsequent assessment. Chapters 2 – 16 present information under each environmental topic, and the IIA framework is bought together in **Appendix A**.

1.22 The key environmental topics are as follows:

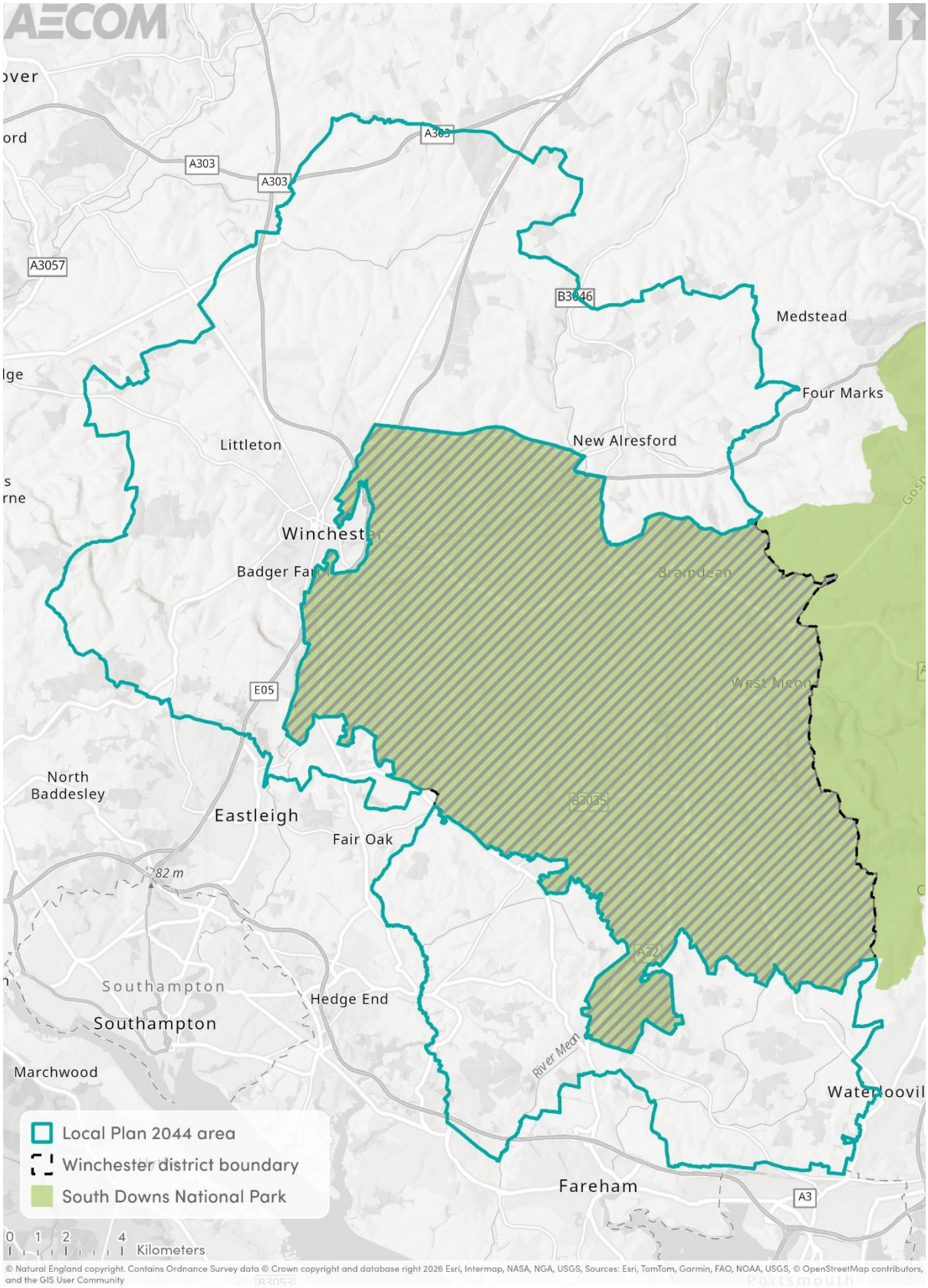
- Accessibility
- Air Quality
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Climate Change Mitigation
- Communities
- Equalities
- Economy and Employment
- Health, Wellbeing and Safety
- Historic Environment
- Housing
- Landscape
- Natural Resources
- Transportation
- Water

1.23 These selected IIA topics incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Schedule 2(6) of the SEA Regulations.[8] These topics have been slightly updated from the previous IIA framework supporting the Local Plan that was adopted on the 24th March, 2026[9]. The updates made are detailed in **Appendix A** and are minor in nature to improve clarity in the assessment process and to fully embed EqIA as part of the IIA process.

[8] UK Government (2004). '*The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004'* can be accessed through this link.
[9] Winchester City Council (2026). *'Winchester City Council Adoption Statement for Winchester District Local Plan 2040'* can be accessed through this link.

1.25 It is important to note that the Scoping Report and subsequent IIA framework is not targeted at assessing individual sites that are identified through the plan-making process. Rather it is intended as a high-level framework to guide the qualitative assessment of the draft plan and alternatives. A separate IIA site assessment methodology is being created (as a quantitative GIS analysis) – linked to the IIA framework of objectives. This method utilises nationally available datasets and local datasets provided by the Council. The method using nationally available data is presented in **Appendix B**. This will be supplemented with local data sets in due course.

## Figure 1.1.1: Winchester District and Winchester District Local Plan 2044 area



# 2. Accessibility

## Focus of theme

2.1 This theme focuses on the distribution and accessibility of services and facilities across the plan area, together with the capacity and provision of infrastructure needed to support existing communities and future growth.

## Policy context

2.2 **Table 2-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 2-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to accessibility**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Levelling-up and Regeneration Act | 2023 |
| Building for Life / Building for a Healthy Life | 2020 |
| Planning Practice Guidance | various |
| 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy | emerging |
| Planning and Infrastructure Bill | emerging |
| **Local** | |
| Hampshire School Places Plan 2026 - 2030 | 2026 |
| Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (City Focus) | 2025 |
| Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (District Focus) | 2024 |
| WDLP Settlement Hierarchy | 2024 |
| Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 | 2024 |
| WCC Strategic Transport Assessment | 2024 |
| WCC Town Centre Uses Study | 2024 |
| WCC Employment Land Study | 2024 |
| WCC Open Space Assessment | 2022 |
| Winchester District Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study | 2020 |
| WCC Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan | 2018 |

2.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

# Current baseline

2.4 The Plan Area contains a mix of rural villages and market towns. It is known for its unique natural, cultural, and historical assets, neighbouring the South Downs National Park, which features rare chalk downlands, ancient woodland, and other significant natural landscape features. The Plan Area includes towns such as Winchester Town, Bishops Waltham, New Alresford, Colden Common, Denmead, Kings Worthy, Swanmore, and Wickham which offer a range of residential, commercial, and community services.

2.5 The Plan Area is home to a wide range of services and facilities, including medical facilities such as Royal Hampshire County Hospital, numerous schools and further education establishments such as the University of Winchester. It also contains a variety of parks and open spaces like Abbey Gardens and Abbey House, as well as a range of community and leisure amenities.

2.6 Facilities and services in the Plan Area are varied, reflecting its mix of rural and urban environments. Larger towns and villages typically offer a broader range of amenities, including supermarkets, healthcare centres, schools, and public transport links. In contrast, many smaller villages and hamlets often face limited access to essential services, particularly affordable housing, regular public transport, and nearby medical facilities. This disparity can contribute to social and geographic isolation for some residents, especially the elderly and those without private transport.

2.7 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation, combining seven different domains. These domains will be explored in this Scoping Report (see also **Chapters 8 and 10**). Of particular relevance to the accessibility SEA theme is the Barriers to Housing and Services domain, which addresses the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.

2.8 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are standardised geographic units intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA typically containing between 1,000 and 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2025, LSOAs are ranked out of 33,755 in England and Wales, with a rank of 1 indicating the most deprived area. Within this context, the Plan Area contains 66 LSOAs.

2.9 **Figure 2.1** shows the ranking of Winchester's LSOAs for the Barriers to Housing and Services domain, while **Table 2.2** provides additional details on the LSOAs within Winchester that fall within the 50% most deprived, or worse, areas.

2.10 An analysis of this data reveals that almost 55% of Winchester's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived, or worse, LSOAs for the Barriers to Housing and Services domain. This includes nine LSOAs in the 10% most deprived areas of England and Wales for this domain. Higher levels of deprivation are found in the east of the district, primarily in the area which overlaps with the South Downs National Park (which is not within the geographical scope of the WDLP). Higher levels of deprivation are also found in the north and south of the Plan Area, located further from Winchester, in more rural areas.

2.11 As the Winchester Plan Area continues to grow, ensuring that residents can easily access essential services such as healthcare, education, and retail will

remain a priority. While more central areas of the District generally experience fewer accessibility issues, higher levels of deprivation in the more rural LSOAs of the Plan Area highlight challenges in reaching services, particularly in more peripheral areas. Addressing these disparities through targeted improvements in public transport coverage, digital accessibility, affordable housing, and local service provision will help reduce barriers and improve overall accessibility.

## Figure 2.1 Barriers to Housing and Services IMD domain

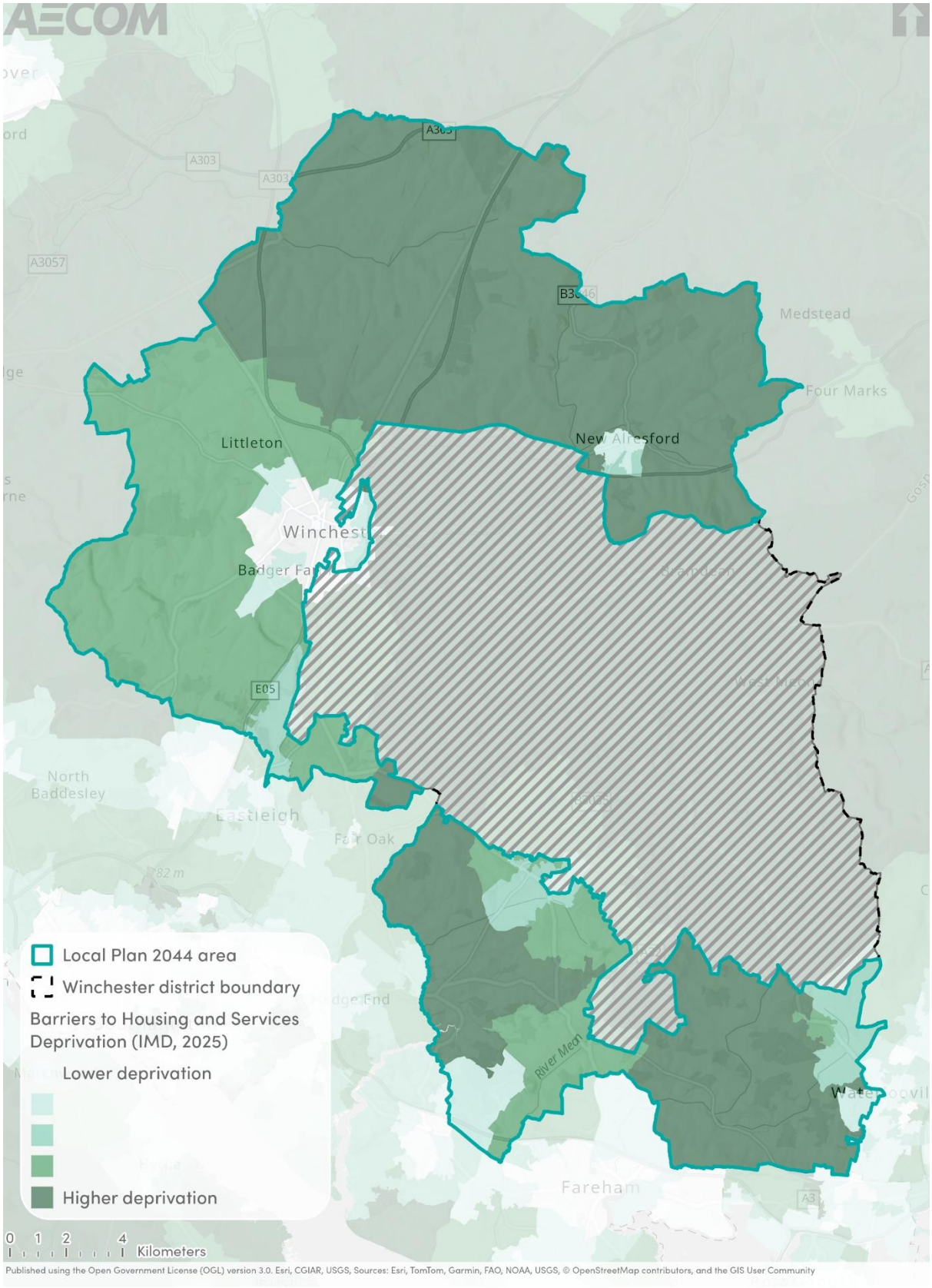


**Table 2.2 LSOAs in Winchester ranked within 50% most deprived or worse for the Barriers to Housing and Services IMD domain**

| Decile | Most Deprived Indices |
|---|---|
| 50% Most Deprived | 5 |
| 40% Most Deprived | 7 |
| 30% Most Deprived | 11 |
| 20% Most Deprived | 7 |
| 10% Most Deprived | 9 |
| Total | 39 (out of 66 in Winchester) |

2.12 Hampshire County Council's School Places Plan 2026 to 2030 provides forecasts for the capacity of schools in the area based on changes in the number and size of households.[10]

2.13 Development within the WDLP area may subsequently require the provision of new schools. When developing new schools, the County Council intend to provide, where possible, all-through primary provision and not separate infant and junior provision as they believe this model provides a beneficial educational continuity between Key Stages 1 and 2 by removing the need for transition at age seven.

2.14 As the recent decline in birth rates is anticipated to continue, the forecast % surplus in school places is expected to increase for both primary and secondary intakes by 2030. The greatest surplus in primary intake is anticipated to occur in the Winchester Rural South planning area, and the smallest surplus is forecast for the Whiteley planning area. Forecasts are based on existing planned levels of development provided in the adopted Local Plan, and as such capacity will need to be reassessed as part of the Local Plan Review, based on locational strategy and proposed levels of development. Where the need is identified, new school provision will need to be made in line with new housing delivery.

2.15 In terms of transport connectivity, Winchester benefits from several strategic transport corridors, notably the M27 and A3(M), though congestion, traffic volumes, and other road related issues such as pockets of poor air quality, are common. The district is also served by the railway stations at Winchester, Micheldever, Botley, and Shawford, offering direct connections to London, Birmingham, Manchester and other destinations. A broad bus network provides links between the main settlements, and there is an established, though varied in quality, provision of cycling routes across the district. However, opportunities to travel by sustainable modes differ considerably throughout the district, with Winchester Town itself naturally offering the most extensive range of sustainable travel options.

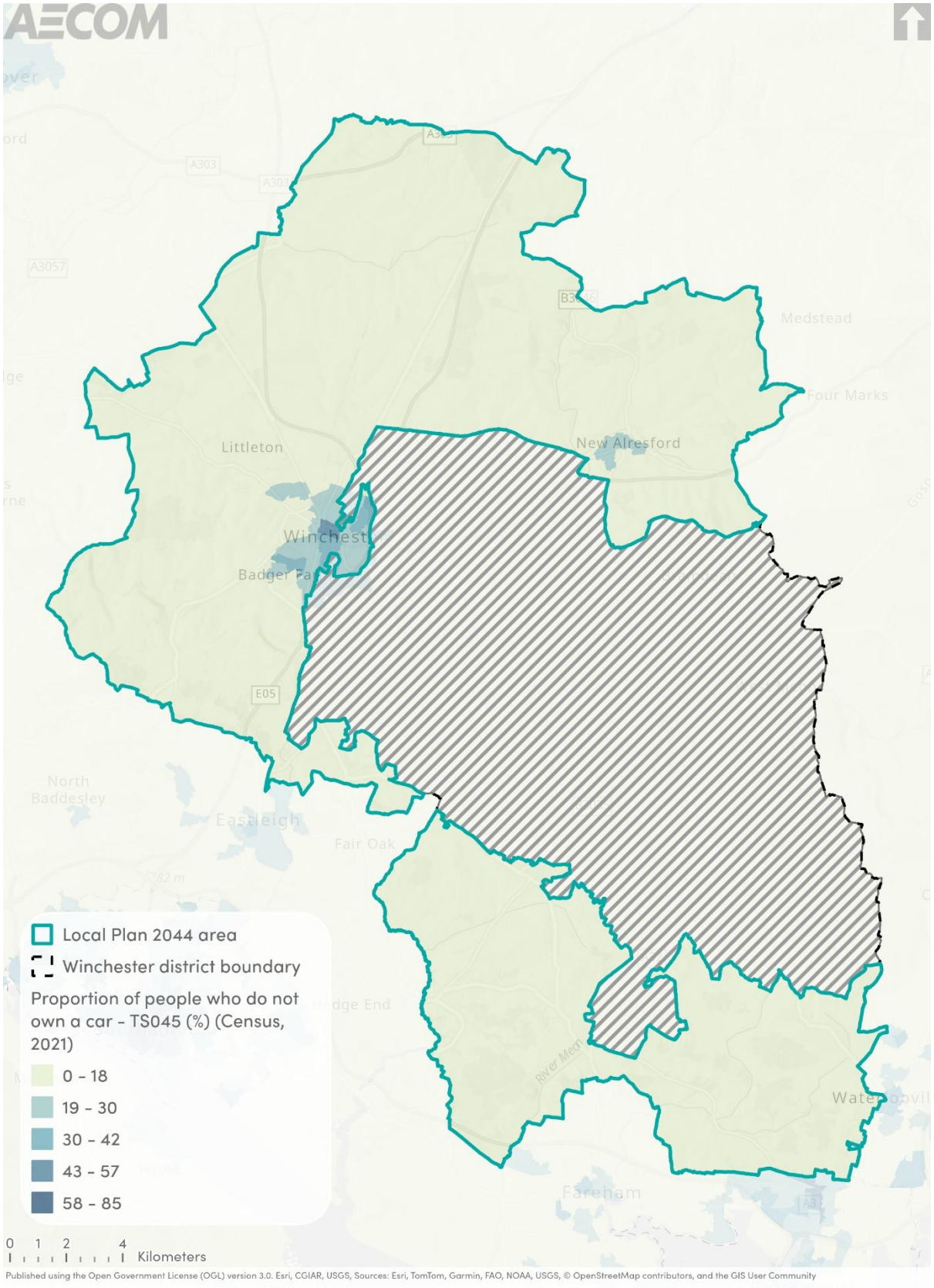
2.16 While there is a high level of car ownership in the district, there are still a significant number of households who do not have access to a car (6,996 or 13.5 %).[11] The spatial distribution is shown in **Figure 2.2**. Primarily, these

[10] Hampshire County Council (2026). '*School Places Plan 2026 to 2030'* can be accessed through this link.
[11] Nomis (2022). '*Query Data'* can be accessed through this link. [Table TS045]

residents are located in Winchester Town, likely due to accessible public transport and active travel networks, and there is a proportion of the population located in New Alresford who do not own cars, likely also related to alternatives being available. However, this can also put households at a disadvantage in terms of access to employment and facilities. Households with no car access are those most likely to be affected by reductions in public transport provision and the closure of local services.

2.17 For further detail on transport infrastructure in the WDLP area, see **Chapter 15**.

## Figure 2.2 Proportion of people who do not own cars



# Future baseline

2.18 Following the UK government's target for a carbon-neutral future, Winchester is likely to see further expansion in EV charging points to accommodate the growing number of electric vehicles. This includes potential initiatives to enhance the availability of charging infrastructure in both public and private spaces.

2.19 As digital infrastructure improves, ensuring equal access to digital services (e.g., online healthcare appointments, remote education) will become increasingly important. Addressing digital accessibility, especially for older residents and those with disabilities, should be a priority. This will be enhanced by Project Gigabit, which aims to enable hard-to-reach communities fast, and capable broadband – and investment has been confirmed in Hampshire for 75,000 properties in the Hampshire area[12].

# Key issues

2.20 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and/ or opportunities) are identified in relation to accessibility:

- There is a conflict between providing housing in the more rural areas of the plan area to meet localised needs and delivering growth that has good access to a range of local services and facilities. This will be a challenge that the Local Plan will need to grapple with, and alternative growth strategies will be appraised through the IIA. Targeted interventions may be required in some areas. There is a need to prioritise access by sustainable modes, including walking and cycling, to align with wider climate objectives and be inclusive of all people.
- Planning for growth requires an appropriate capacity assessment for key local facilities such as schools, play spaces and open spaces, and road infrastructure. It will be important to ensure this evidence is updated as the new local plan progresses and spatial priorities emerge.
- There are key accessibility considerations for specialist groups, for example, those who are less mobile or on lower incomes benefit from housing that is near local services, facilities and employment areas thereby reducing the distance to travel and the need to pay for transport. As a result, these groups are likely to benefit from growth and regeneration within higher tier settlements that can more readily meet these needs. It will be important to consider how growth in more rural areas could contribute to social isolation in this same respect.

# IIA objective

2.21 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to accessibility:

**Maximise accessibility to services and facilities through new development and ensure the appropriate delivery of new infrastructure as required.**

[12] Hampshire County Council (NA) *'Project Gigabit'* can be accessed via this link.

2.22 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Deliver new services or facilities?
- Identify priority measures that will improve active travel networks?
- Prioritise sustainable transport access?
- Reduce inequalities in access to essential services across the plan area, particularly in the most deprived areas?
- Connect new housing and employment development with healthcare, educational, and community services and facilities?
- Enhance digital connectivity and inclusion to ensure all residents can access online services and opportunities?

# 3. Air quality

## Focus of theme

3.1 This theme focuses on air quality, including local sources of air pollution and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality.

## Policy context

3.2 **Table 3.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 3.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| The Environmental Targets (Fine Particular Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 | 2023 |
| Environment Act | 2021 |
| The Clean Air Strategy | 2019 |
| A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment | 2018 |
| UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations | 2017 |
| **Local** | |
| An Air Quality Strategy for WCC | 2025 |
| Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 | 2024 |

3.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

3.4 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) can be declared by councils in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides. There are currently no AQMAs within the Plan Area.

3.5 The majority of air pollution within the Local Plan area arises from vehicle emissions along key transport corridors such as the M3, A34, A31 and A303. Additional contributions come from a mix of other sources, including industrial and commercial activities as well as emissions from homes, all of which add to overall background pollution levels.

3.6 The monitoring results from 2024 confirm that all monitoring locations met the annual mean $NO_2$ objective. Overall, a decreasing trend in $NO_2$ concentrations

has been observed across the monitoring network since 2020, with 2024 concentrations remaining below pre-pandemic 2019 levels. However, marginal increases were noted between 2023 and 2024 at Site 10 (Jewry St, 0.3 µg/m3 increase) and Site 28 (Bus Station, 2.7 µg/m3 increase). Monitoring from 2024 fell within defined targets, hence Winchester Town Centre AQMA, which was declared for $NO_2$ and $PM_{10}$ pollutants, was revoked in 2025.

3.7 In addition to $NO_2$, WCC also monitors fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$). However, WCC is already meeting the Environmental Target for $PM_{2.5}$ of 10 µg/m3, which the UK Government has set for England by 2040. Looking ahead, WCC's commitments to ensuring continued compliance and air quality improvement following the AQMA revocation are outlined in the newly adopted Winchester Air Quality Strategy (2025–2030), which sets an aspirational target of achieving $NO_2$ levels below 30 µg/m3 by 2030 ('30 by 30').

# Future baseline

3.8 The growth associated with future development within the district has the potential for adverse effects on air quality in the short to medium term, due to increased levels of traffic and associated pollutants. Although, in line with higher level planning policy, future development should contribute towards improving air quality, supporting opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of sustainable modes of transport, active travel modes, working from home, and electric vehicle use.

3.9 The adoption of low-emission vehicles and policies to reduce car dependency are expected to play a significant role in improving air quality over the long term.

3.10 Changing weather patterns due to climate change could influence air quality in the district. For example, increased temperatures may exacerbate ozone formation, while changes in precipitation and wind patterns could alter the dispersion of pollutants. The potential for hotter, drier summers may also result in more frequent periods of poor air quality.

# Key issues

3.11 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to the air quality SEA theme:

- Major road corridors (such as the M3) and industry are significant sources of air pollution where continued interventions may be required to reduce the impacts of growth.
- It will be important to continue to integrate air quality considerations into planning and development processes to mitigate potential adverse effects.
- Supporting the installation of electric vehicle charging points will play an important role in enabling the transition to lower-emission transport and reducing air pollution in the future.
- Air quality issues relating to protected habitats are assessed separately within the biodiversity IIA theme, and through the supporting Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process.

# IIA objective

3.12 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to air quality:

**Improve air quality and reduce exposure to air pollution.**

3.13 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Minimise traffic congestion and encourage active travel and public transport use?
- Support a reduction in air pollution for key pollutants, including carbon dioxide emissions?
- Provide any necessary mitigation measures to reduce impacts to air quality?
- Prevent or mitigate adverse air quality impacts from construction and industry activities?
- Support compliance with, or improvement beyond, national air quality standards across the plan area?

# 4. Biodiversity and geodiversity

## Focus of theme

4.1 This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats, and species within and surrounding the district.

## Policy context

4.2 **Table 4.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 4.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity and green/ blue infrastructure**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework | 2023 |
| Environment Act 2021 | 2021 |
| A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment | 2018 |
| UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Infrastructure Framework | 2012 |
| The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act | 2006 |
| UK Biodiversity Infrastructure Action Plan | 1994 |
| **Local** | |
| Hampshire County Council Tree Strategy | 2021 |
| WCC Biodiversity Action Plan | 2021 |
| South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan | 2019 |
| Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy | 2017 |
| Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy | 2017 |
| Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Volumes 1 & 2) | 1998 |
| Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire | 2025 |

4.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

# Current baseline

4.4 There are many internationally designated biodiversity sites within a 10km buffer in the region that could be affected by development within the district (see **Figure 4.1**), including:

- River Itchen SAC, designated for its high-quality chalk stream habitats of international importance, including clean, fast-flowing calcareous waters, associated riparian vegetation, fen, marshy grassland, wet woodland, and adjacent floodplain habitats. The site supports key Annex II species such as Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, bullhead *Cottus gobio*, southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*, white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, and otter *Lutra lutra*, as well as rich aquatic plant communities typical of chalk rivers; and
- Solent & Southampton Water SPA / Ramsar designated for its estuaries and adjacent coastal habitats including intertidal flats, saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reefs, saltmarsh, and reedbeds, damp woodland, and grazing marsh, supporting internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl including *Charadrius hiaticula*, *Anas crecca* and *Branta bernicla bernicla*; and
- Solent Maritime SAC, designated for a diverse and nationally significant range of coastal and estuarine habitats and species. It is recognised as one of the best areas in the UK for estuaries and Atlantic salt meadows.
- Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, located 2.3km south; and
- Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar, located 1.2km south; and
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, located 2.5km south; and
- East Hampshire Hangers SAC, located 9km east; and
- Butser Hill SAC, located 5.1km east; and
- Emer Bog SAC, located 2.3km west; and
- Mottisfont Bats SAC, located 6.3km west; and
- Solent and Dorset Coast SPA, located 2km south.

4.5 There are a number of nationally designated biodiversity sites within a 5km buffer of the Plan Area. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are nationally designated areas that protect the UK's most important wildlife, habitats, and geological features, often underpinning the internationally designated sites. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are a selection of the most significant SSSIs, established to conserve key habitats, species, and geology, and to support scientific research, education, and public understanding of the natural environment. There are twelve SSSIs and no NNRs within the Plan Area, and a further 29 SSSI and one NNR within 5 km of the Plan Area (see Figure 4.2). Beyond this of note is also Beacon Hill NNR and Old Winchester Hill NNR.

4.6 The protection, preservation and conservation of the district's designated sites is a key priority. Natural England conducts an annual survey on the condition of every SSSI in the country. The latest data, from 2024, shows that across the district (including the South Downs National Park area), that 88% of SSSIs units in the district are achieving favourable/unfavourable-recovering condition,

which is above the national target of 50% of SSSIs on track to achieve favourable condition by January 2028. Of these, Alresford Pond is unfavourable-declining, which is due to three pressures – siltation, scrub encroachment, and agricultural sources of water pollution[13]. The other SSSI that is not in favourable condition is the River Test, which is due to a number of pressures, including but not exclusive to scrub encroachment, water pollution (agricultural and water company discharges), invasive non-native species, and physical modification[14]

4.7 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds of development which indicate a need to consult Natural England. In this respect, there are areas of the district that overlap with IRZs for development types expected to be brought forward in the new Local Plan; therefore, consultation with Natural England should naturally continue through the plan-making process.

4.8 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are designated to conserve locally significant natural habitats, species, and geological features. They provide accessible green spaces for community enjoyment, education, and engagement, while also serving as valuable sites for local ecological research and conservation efforts. There are eight LNRs in Winchester, with an additional six LNRs within 2 km of the District (see **Figure 4.4**).

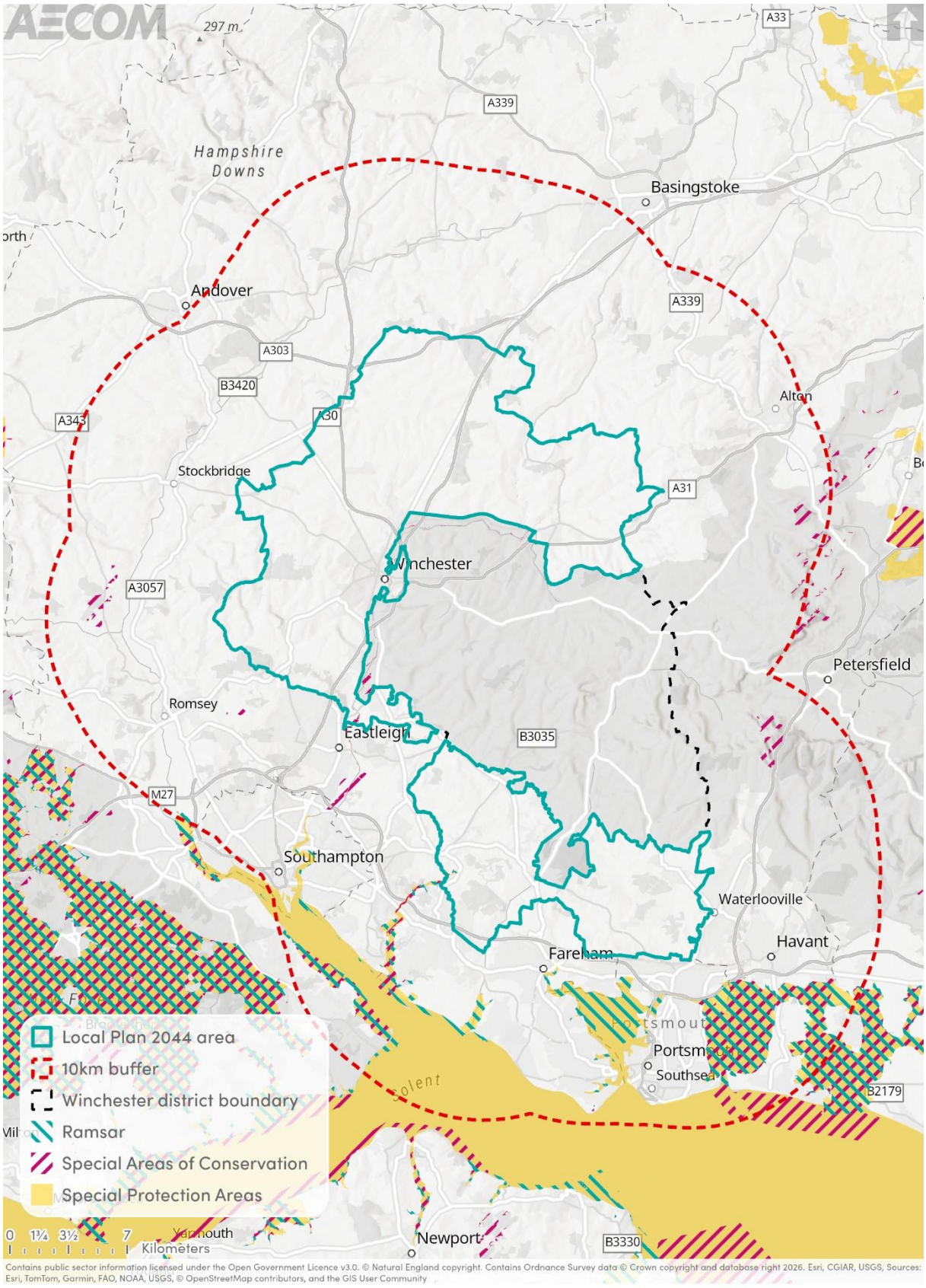
4.9 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are another local designation for nature conservation. There are nearly 600 SINCs within the district, including 369 woodland sites, 170 grassland sites, 4 sites with heathland, 17 sites with wetland habitats and 25 sites designated solely for priority species. Familiar SINCs in the district include the River Meon, West Wood and West Walk. Designating a SINC raises awareness of its importance for wildlife particularly with regard to planning and land management decision making. Data on Winchester's SINCs is available on request from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC); these will be explored in further detail in later stages of the IIA process.[15]

4.10 Pressures on the areas designated as being of nature conservation value include those arising from human activity (recreation, development and various forms of pollution including noise and light), and from climate change. These can result in habitat loss and fragmentation, disturbance to wildlife, introduction of non-native species, and increased flood risk. Such effects should be assessed as part of the IIA and plan process.

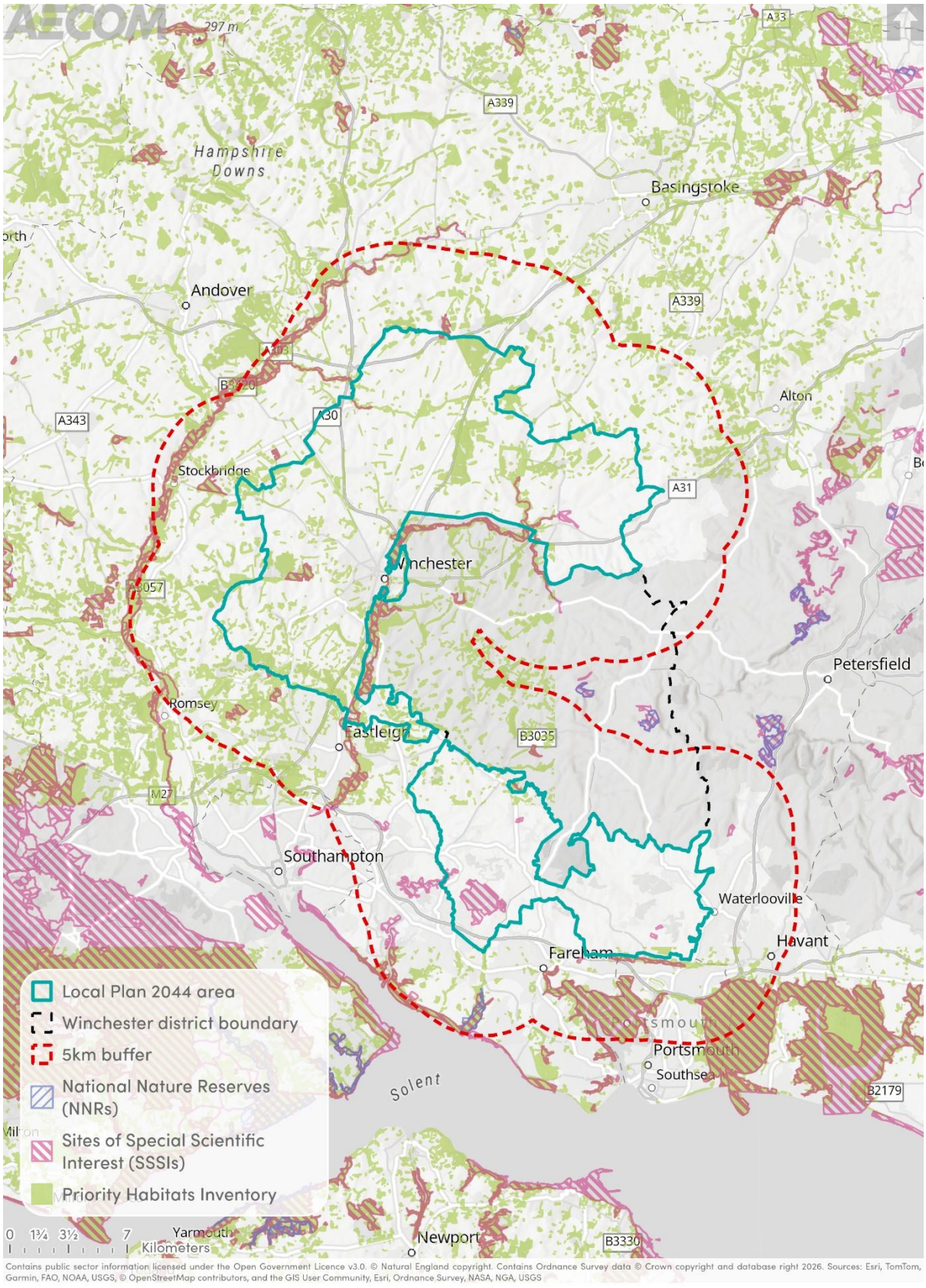
4.11 The Council is also part of the Solent Recreational Mitigation Partnership, which has formulated the Solent Mitigation and Disturbance Project which addresses the impacts of disturbance on wintering waterfowl in the Solent. Addressing the impacts on the Southampton Water and Solent Coast European Sites is dealt with by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, which was adopted in 2017 and later revised in 2024.[16]

[13] Natural England (2019), *'Alresford Pond SSSI'* can be accessed through this link
[14] Natural England (2019), *'River Test SSSI'* can be accessed through this link
[15] The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (no date). '*Biodiversity'* can be accessed through this link.
[16] Bird Aware Solent (2024). '*Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy'* can be accessed through this link.

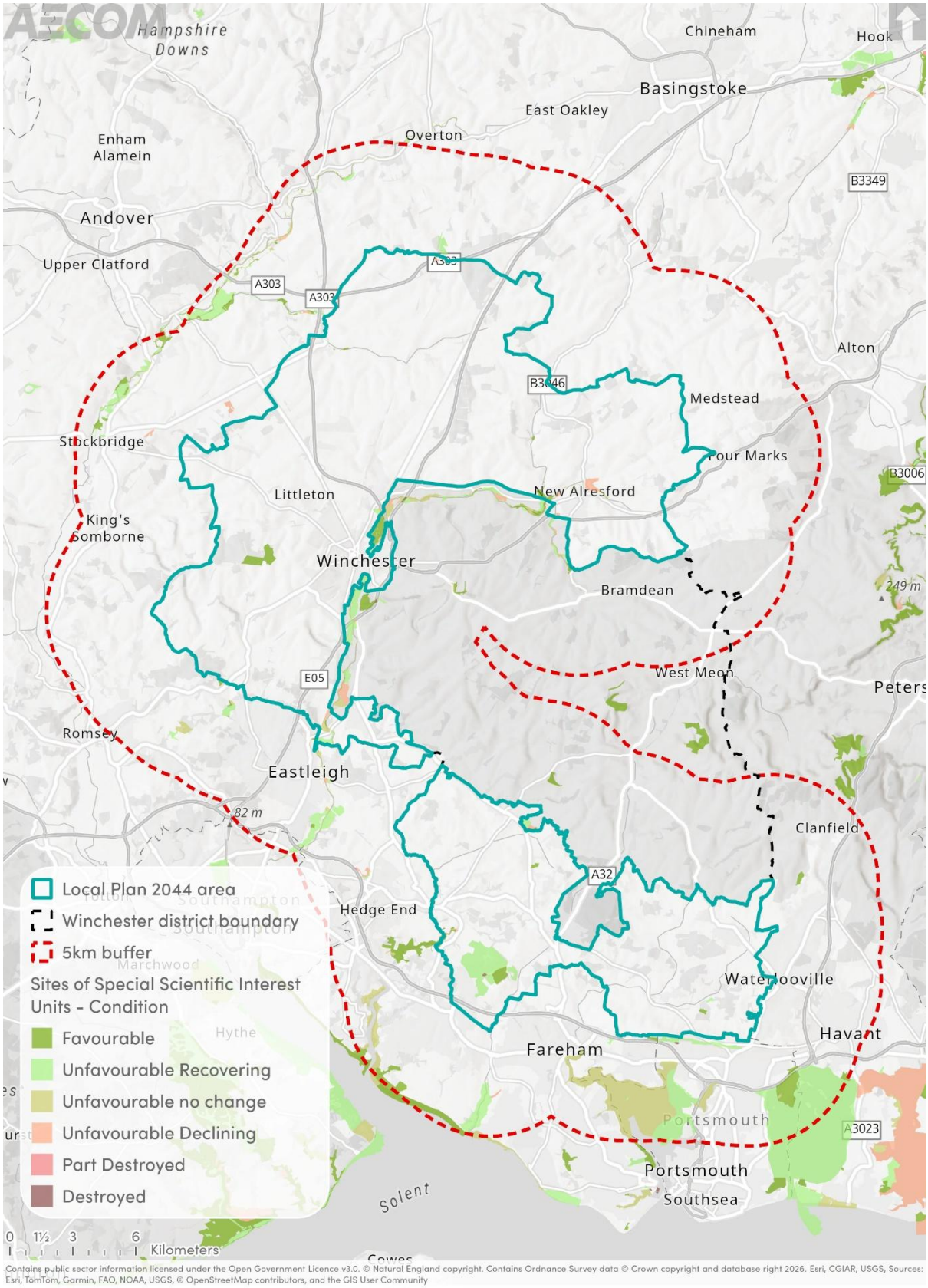
## Figure 4.1 International biodiversity designations



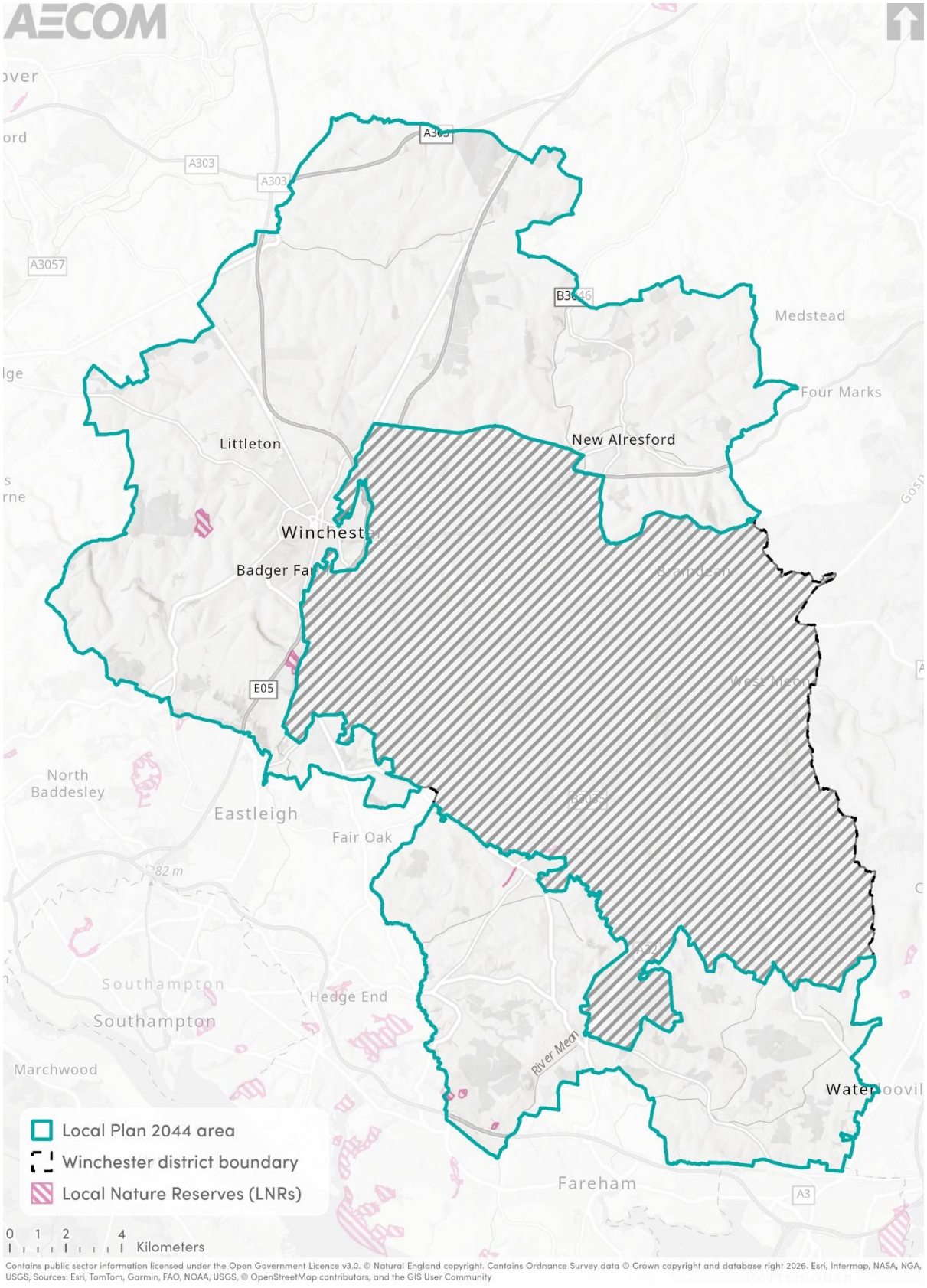
## Figure 4.2 National biodiversity designations and Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI)



## Figure 4.3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) units conditions



## Figure 4.4 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)



4.12 The district is interspersed with Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, especially in the south, as shown in **Figure 4.2.** The majority of the Priority Habitats are arable and improved grassland, but there is also a high proportion of deciduous woodland. Other Priority Habitats include heathland, unimproved grassland, wetlands, and coastal marshes.

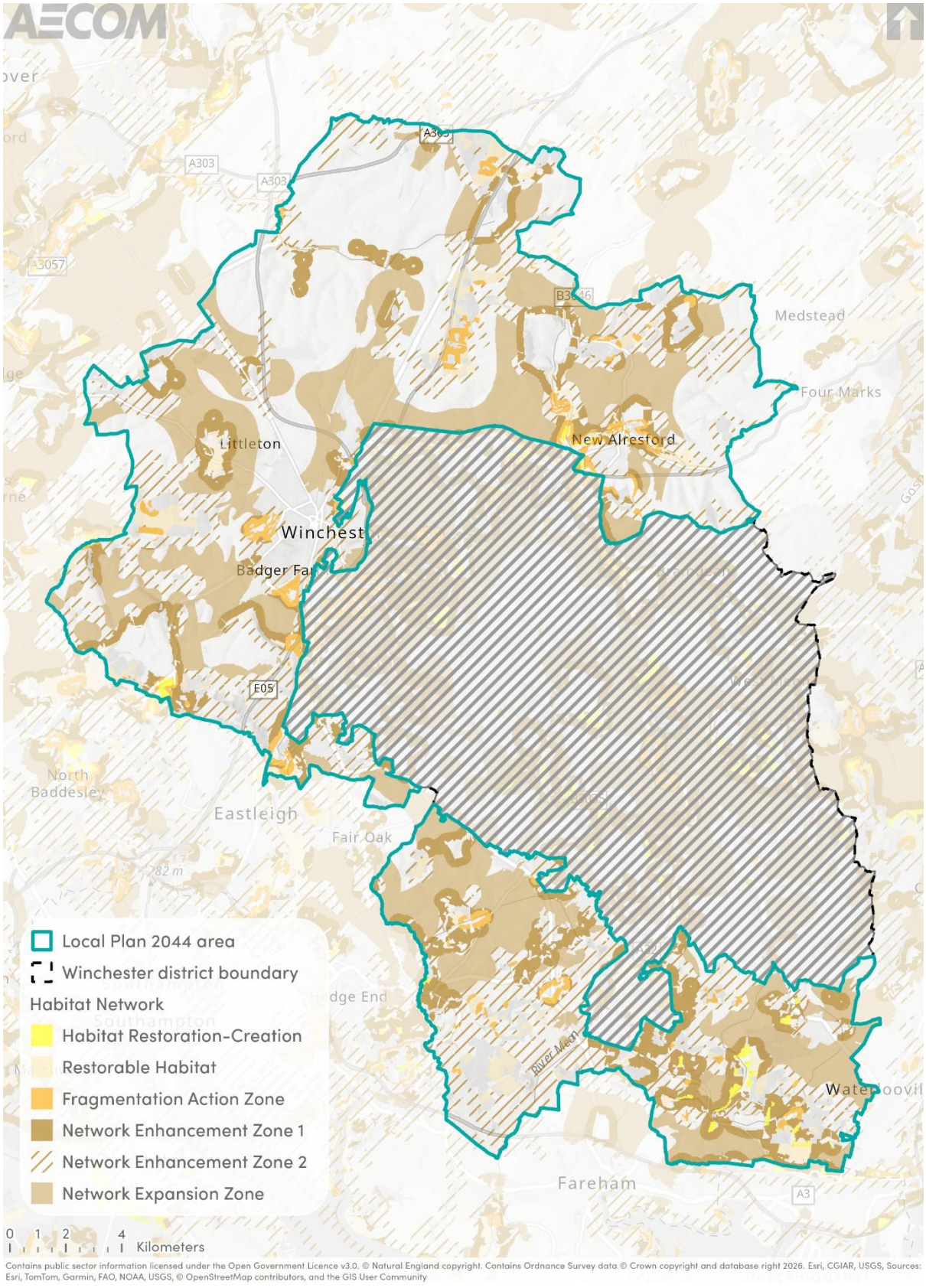
4.13 The BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the District are known to support populations of protected species. The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)[17] contains archives of protected and notable species within Winchester, including those species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981[18] and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

4.14 The National Habitat Network (NHN) is a set of maps that work to help identify areas for future habitat creation and restoration at a landscape scale (see **Figure 4.5**).[19]

4.15 According to the NHN, there are areas of Network Enhancement Zone 1 and 2 (most suitable for new habitats and green infrastructure) and Network Expansion Zone found throughout the District, indicating a high degree of potential to improve or expand the area's existing habitats.

[17] The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (no date). '*Biodiversity'* can be accessed through this link.
[18] UK Government (1981) '*The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981'* can be accessed through this link.
[19] Natural England (2020). '*National Habitat Network Maps*' can be accessed through this link.

## Figure 4.5 National Habitat Network



# Future baseline

4.16 Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by of climate change, particularly if development is unplanned. Significant impacts have the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

4.17 In line with the NPPF, the new WDLP provides an opportunity to maximise biodiversity benefits by requiring new development to incorporate opportunities for environmental restoration, taking into account the Hampshire Local Nature Recover Strategy. In addition, important habitats, species and designated sites should be identified and considered at an early stage in the planning process to inform sustainable future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats, but also the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of new development to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised.

# Key issues

4.18 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to biodiversity:

- There is a continued need for planning and development proposals to assess and mitigate potential impacts on designated habitats, species and ecological connectivity.
- The Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025) identifies priorities for nature recovery and ecological connectivity that should be taken into account in future growth.
- Clear and continued consultation with Natural England with regards to the spatial strategy of the plan should be maintained.
- The local plan and IIA processes allow for the identification and pursuit of significant opportunities to enhance biodiversity in future growth. This will in turn help to meet the requirement for the local plan to reflect and embed the LNRS core principles and actions.

# IIA objective

4.19 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to Biodiversity:

**Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity, nature conservation, habitats, and ecological networks, including ecological links with the South Downs National Park.**

4.21 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on internationally and nationally designated sites and their integrity?
- Improve the condition of designated sites with indicators showing progress towards favourable condition in SSSI units?
- Contribute towards the Environmental Improvement Plan's target of protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030 in order to restore nature and promote species abundance?
- Protect and enhance locally important sites?
- Contribute towards Local Nature Recovery Networks and deliver net gains for biodiversity, including via supporting connected and resilient ecological networks and habitat creation and restoration?
- Prevent habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, maintaining or improving connectivity through wildlife corridors and ecological networks?
- Support the conservation of priority habitats and protected species?
- Support and enhance cross-boundary biodiversity links with the South Downs National Park and North Wessex Downs National Landscape?

# 5. Climate change adaptation and flood risk

## Focus of theme

5.1 This theme focuses on the effects of climate change, including flood risk, overheating, and climate change adaptation.

## Policy context

5.2 **Table 5-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 5-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change and flood risk**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| UK Climate Change Risk Assessment | 2022 |
| The National Design Guide | 2021 |
| Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance | (emerging) |
| National Model Design Code | 2021 |
| National Infrastructure Assessment | 2021 |
| Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener | 2021 |
| UK Sixth Carbon Budget | 2020 |
| National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy | 2020 |
| Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework | 2020 |
| The Clean Air Strategy | 2019 |
| Clean Growth Strategy | 2019 |
| 25-Year Environment Plan | 2019 |
| UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023 | 2018 |
| How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk | 2012 |
| Flood and Water Management Act | 2010 |
| UK Climate Change Act | 2008 |
| River Basin Management Plans: Progress Report | 2025 |
| **Local** | |

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| PfSH Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment | 2024 |
| Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment | 2024 |
| South East River Basin Management Plan | 2022 |
| Hampshire Catchment Management Plans | 2022 |
| Hampshire Flood Risk Management Strategy | 2020 |
| South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy | 2017 |

5.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

# Current baseline

5.4 Flood risk within the Winchester plan area primarily relates to the river corridors and low-lying areas associated with the River Itchen, the River Meon, and their tributaries. Flooding in these locations is typically linked to periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall, high groundwater levels, and the interaction between river flows and local drainage systems. Climate change is expected to intensify these pressures, increasing both the probability and severity of flooding events.

5.5 Changes to natural river processes and increasing pressure on floodplain environments are contributing to heightened flood risk within parts of the District. More frequent high-flow events and rising groundwater levels can affect habitats of ecological value, while climate change is expected to elevate the frequency of incidents that impact both communities and sensitive natural areas. Opportunities to manage flood risk through natural floodplain restoration or improved land management may become increasingly important.

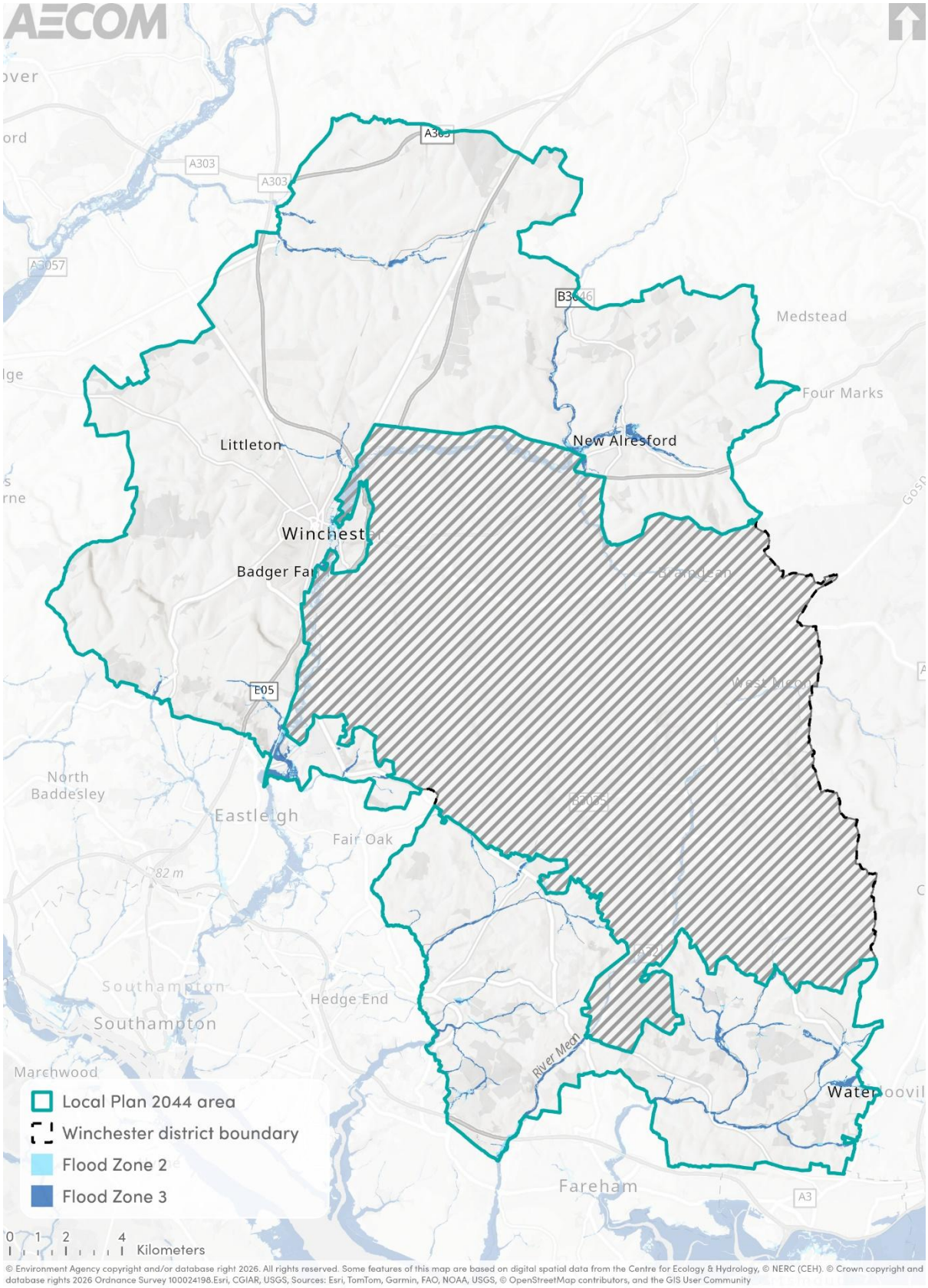
5.6 As illustrated in **Figure 5.1**, areas of flood risk are distributed across the District. Settlements that lie partly within flood risk zones are susceptible to fluvial or groundwater flooding, primarily where development is close to river valleys or historic floodplains.

5.7 With climate change expected to bring more intense rainfall and higher groundwater levels, a wider area of the district is likely to face increased flood risk in future decades. When considering new development locations, it is essential to avoid land that is currently at risk or is likely to become vulnerable as climate change progresses. Development should also be planned to avoid exacerbating flooding elsewhere by displacing water or increasing surface water runoff. Updated hydrological modelling from the Environment Agency will support this process.

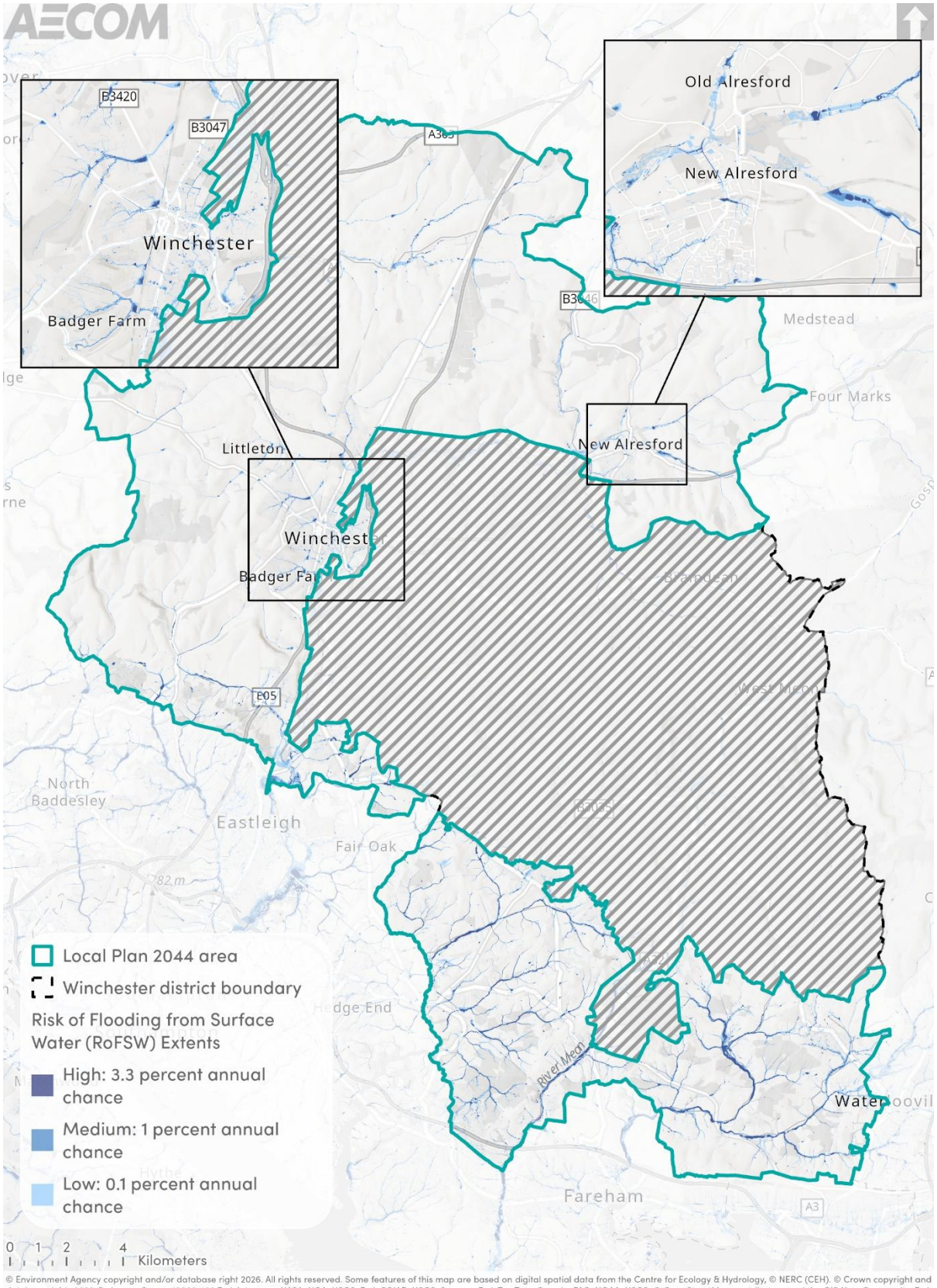
5.8 In settlements where parts of the built environment are already located in flood-prone areas, such as central Winchester and certain river-valley villages, the impacts of climate change may heighten existing risks. National planning policy provides detailed guidance for development in such areas. While new development should be steered towards areas of lowest risk, some redevelopment or regeneration within developed areas may still be appropriate where flood risks can be effectively managed and mitigated.

5.9 The Environment Agency has identified areas susceptible to surface water flooding, where intense rainfall cannot drain away efficiently and instead accumulates or flows across the land surface. **Figure 5.2** shows these areas, which include parts of Winchester, Whiteley, Kings Worthy and areas along the Itchen Valley. Development in these locations may increase the likelihood or severity of flooding unless measures are put in place to manage runoff and improve surface water drainage.

## Figure 5.1 Fluvial flood risk



## Figure 5.2 Flood risk from surface water




© Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2026. All rights reserved. Some features of this map are based on digital spatial data from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, © NERC (CEH). © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey 100024198.Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri,

# Future baseline

5.10 Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and level of confidence in each prediction.

5.11 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South East England by 2040 in a 'medium emissions' (RCP4.5) scenario are likely to be as follows:[20]

- An increase in winter mean temperature of 1ºC and an increase in summer mean temperature of 20 ºC ; and
- A change in winter mean precipitation up to +10% and summer mean precipitation up to -10%.

5.12 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks exist for the District, including:

- Effects on water resources, such as a reduction in availability of groundwater for extraction and a need to increase capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding and a need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Health impacts, including increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses during heatwaves, higher vulnerability among elderly and low-income populations, and mental health impacts associated with extreme weather events;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning; and
- Heat stress related issues with infrastructure due to increased temperature.

# Key issues

5.13 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to climate change adaptation:

- Rising fluvial and groundwater flood risk along the Itchen, Meon and their tributaries has the potential to impact settlements such as Winchester, New Alresford, Kings Worthy and Wickham, with climate change expected to intensify the frequency and severity of flooding events;
- Floodplain pressures and changes to natural river systems are increasing vulnerability in areas close to river valleys and historic floodplains,

[20] Met Office (2019) '*Climate change projections over land*' can be accessed through this link.

heightening risks to communities, infrastructure and ecologically important habitats;

- Surface water flood risk is a growing concern in locations such as Winchester, Whiteley, Kings Worthy and parts of the Itchen Valley, where intense rainfall events and impermeable surfaces can lead to significant run-off and localised flooding;
- The need for robust flood risk management is increasing, with some areas potentially requiring enhanced mitigation, improved surface water infrastructure or the integration of natural flood management approaches to alleviate pressure on floodplains;
- Projected climate changes, warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers, pose risks to water availability, water quality and soil stability, with implications for river health, development capacity, and resilience of critical infrastructure; and
- Future climate conditions may increase health risks, pressure on energy systems, and vulnerability among more sensitive populations, highlighting the need for climate-resilient design, green infrastructure and adaptation across the District.

# IIA objective

5.14 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to climate change adaptation:

**Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk.**

5.15 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?
- Increase the resilience of the built and natural environment to the effects of climate change?
- Ensure that the potential risks associated with climate change are considered in new development in the plan area?
- Protect, improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support climate change adaptation?
- Utilise nature based sustainable drainage systems to sustainably manage water run-off?
- Reduce surface water runoff?
- Minimise flood risk for vulnerable infrastructure such as hospitals, emergency services, and schools?

# 6. Climate change mitigation

## Focus of theme

6.1 This theme focuses on activities in the plan area that contribute to climate change mitigation, including the plan area's emissions, and renewable energy infrastructure.

## Policy context

6.2 **Table 2-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 6-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change mitigation**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| UK Climate Change Risk Assessment | 2022 |
| British Energy Security Strategy | 2022 |
| Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy | 2021 |
| The National Design Guide | 2021 |
| Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance | (emerging) |
| National Model Design Code | 2021 |
| National Infrastructure Assessment | 2021 |
| Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener | 2021 |
| UK Sixth Carbon Budget | 2020 |
| Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework | 2020 |
| The Clean Air Strategy | 2019 |
| Clean Growth Strategy | 2019 |
| 25-Year Environment Plan | 2019 |
| UK National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023 | 2018 |
| How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk | 2012 |
| UK Climate Change Act | 2008 |
| **Local** | |
| Carbon Neutrality Action Plan | 2023 |
| Hampshire's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan | 2020 |

6.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

# Current baseline

6.4 Winchester City Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019, setting a target of being a carbon neutral district by 2030. In 2020, the council adopted a Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) to help towards reaching these goals and have initiated a number of actions to reach these commitments.

6.5 In 2023, the District's total domestic energy consumption was higher than the regional average, at 75.8 ktoe (thousand tonnes of oil equivalent) compared to an average of 81.2 ktoe across local authorities in the South East of the country.[21]

6.6 Winchester City Council is currently preparing a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) to help identify the most cost-effective pathway for the district to achieve its carbon neutrality ambitions. The LAEP will assess future energy demand and infrastructure requirements across the district, including opportunities for energy efficiency improvements, low-carbon heating, renewable energy generation, energy storage and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Once completed, the LAEP is expected to provide an important evidence base for planning and investment decisions, helping to ensure that future growth is aligned with the transition to a low-carbon and resilient energy system.

6.7 In terms of renewable energy, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority.[22] The most recent data (to 2023) shows that Winchester has a total of 6,783 renewable energy (electricity) installations (mostly photovoltaics), amounting to a total renewable electricity capacity of 134 MW. The latest figures in Government's Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD) also indicates that 112.2 MW of this energy is generated from seven operational renewable energy schemes in the District.[23]

6.8 Electric Vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. As of October 2025, there were 219 public electric charging devices in Winchester.[24]

6.9 Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are standardised documents that assess the energy efficiency of buildings, providing ratings from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). They are produced whenever a building is constructed, sold, or rented.

6.10 According to Government's EPC data, the Winchester has demonstrated a clear shift toward improved energy efficiency over the period from 2008 to 2025 (**Figure 6.1**). EPC A ratings remained extremely low throughout much of the timeframe, consistently at or below 1% until more recent years. However, since

[21] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024). '*Sub-national total final energy consumption data: Dataset – Total final energy consumption at regional and local authority level: 2005 to 2022'* can be accessed through this link.
[22] DBEIS (2024) '*Renewable electricity by local authority, 2014 to 2023*' can be accessed through this link. LA-Sites 2023. LA-Capacity 2023.
[23] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025). '*Database: Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD): quarterly extract'* can be accessed through this link.
[24] HM Gov (2025) '*Electric vehicle charging infrastructure statistics: July 2025'* can be accessed through this link. Table 1a.

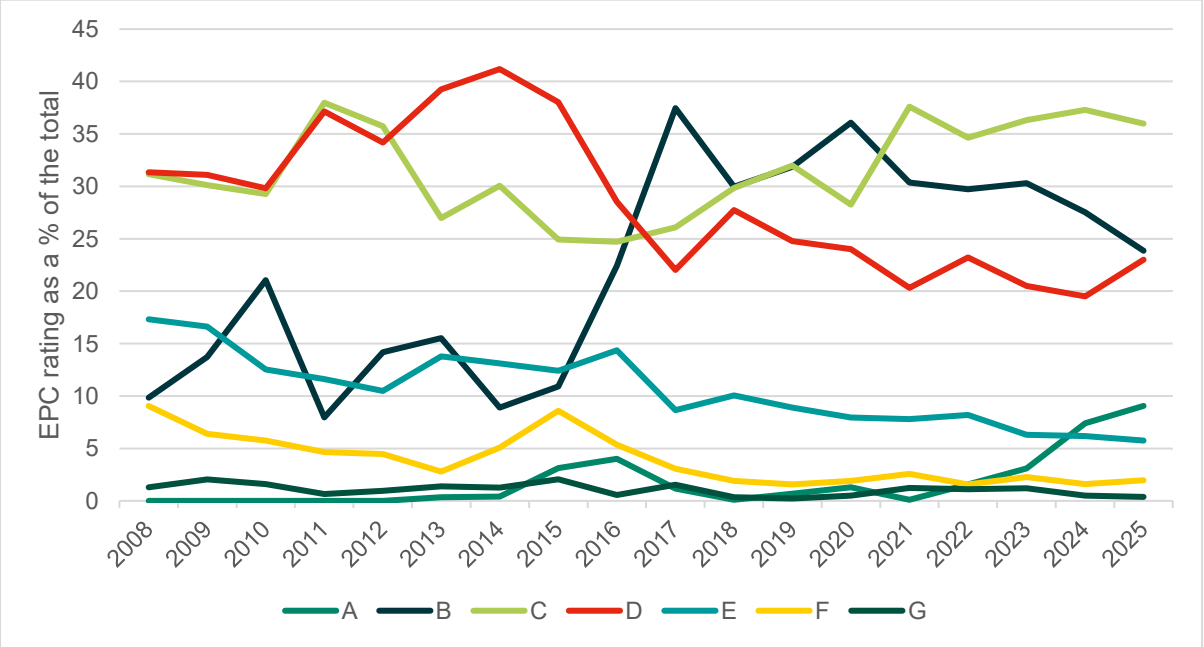
2023 there has been a noticeable increase, with A-rated properties rising to 7.4% in 2024 and 9.1% in 2025. EPC B ratings have fluctuated significantly over the period, peaking sharply at 37.5% in 2017 before stabilising around 24–30% in recent years.

6.11 The proportion of properties with a new EPC C have shown a clear upward trend, particularly from 2016 onward. By 2023, nearly half of all EPCs issued fell into this category, suggesting increased compliance with energy efficiency standards, likely driven by retrofitting initiatives or improved construction practices.

6.12 In contrast, EPC D ratings, historically one of the largest categories, have declined steadily after peaking at over 41% in 2014. By 2024 the proportion of D-rated properties had dropped to 19.5%, indicating a significant migration of homes into higher-efficiency categories. The least efficient ratings (E, F, and G) have also reduced substantially over the period. For example, E-rated properties fell from 17.3% in 2008 to just 6.2% in 2024, and F and G ratings declined to below 2% and 1% respectively in recent years. This reflects an overall shift away from low-efficiency housing stock.

6.13 In summary, Winchester's EPC trends demonstrate a positive and sustained improvement in energy efficiency across the District. Increases in A, B, and particularly C ratings suggest successful retrofitting efforts, greater uptake of energy-efficient technologies, and compliance with modern construction standards. However, despite this progress, a relatively small proportion of properties achieve the highest levels of efficiency, with most homes still falling below EPC A and B levels.

**Figure 6.1: EPC Scores in Winchester District (2009 – 2025)[25]**




6.14 In the District, 9.1% of households were estimated to be fuel poor in 2022, based on the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) definition.[26] Under this measure, a household is considered fuel poor if it has a low income (below the poverty line after housing costs) and lives in a property with an energy

[25] Gov.uk (2025). '*Live tables on Energy Performance of Buildings Certificates*' can be accessed through this link. [Table D1]
[26] ONS (2024). '*Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2024 (2022 data)*' can be accessed through this link. [Table 2]

efficiency rating of band D or below. Households in more efficient homes (rated EPC C or above) are excluded, even if their income is low, on the basis that their energy costs are likely to be more manageable.

# Future baseline

6.15 In line with UK trends and national commitments, the District's emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted.

# Key issues

6.16 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to climate change mitigation:

- Winchester City Council has declared a Climate Emergency and set a target to be a carbon-neutral District by 2030, requiring strong alignment between planning policy, development management and local carbon-reduction initiatives.
- Domestic energy consumption in Winchester remains higher than the South East regional average, signalling the need for continued focus on energy-efficiency improvements, retrofitting programmes and behavioural change to help reduce household emissions. The recently adopted Local Plan sets higher energy standards that will influence future development in this respect.
- Renewable energy capacity in the District is growing but remains modest relative to overall energy demand, with most installations being small-scale photovoltaics. However, two major schemes currently under construction will significantly boost local solar generation capacity and strengthen energy resilience. Delivery of large-scale renewable schemes, grid capacity enhancements, and local low-carbon infrastructure will be critical in enabling the District to meet its carbon-neutral targets and accommodate future demand for electrification, including EVs, heat pumps and battery storage.
- EPC data shows sustained improvement in the energy efficiency of the housing stock, with rising proportions of A–C-rated homes. Despite this, the uptake of top-rated (A and B) dwellings remains limited, indicating the need for policies and incentives that accelerate higher-performance standards in both new build and existing homes.
- A substantial share of properties remain below EPC band C, contributing to fuel-poverty levels affecting 9.1% of households. This highlights the importance of integrating energy-efficiency upgrades with social and health-focused interventions to support vulnerable residents.
- The District is continuing to expand low-carbon transport infrastructure, with 219 public EV charging devices recorded in 2025. Further investment is required to keep pace with projected growth in electric vehicle use and to support a transition away from fossil-fuel-based mobility.

# IIA objective

6.17 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to climate change mitigation:

**Mitigate climate change by supporting decarbonisation, with a focus on both transport and the built environment**.

6.18 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Ensure new developments achieve high energy efficiency with monitored performance?
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to accelerate to net zero and work to prepare the natural environment for the effects of climate change?
- Expand EV charging infrastructure to support the shift to electric vehicles?
- Increase renewable energy generation?
- Promote sustainable transport options that reduce transport emissions?

# 7. Communities

## Focus of theme

7.1 This theme focuses on protecting the identity of communities across the District, including preserving green wedges, preventing settlement coalescence, and maintaining the distinctive character of Winchester's towns and villages.

## Policy context

7.2 **Table 2-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SA.

**Table 7-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change mitigation**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Levelling-up and Regeneration Act | 2023 |
| Equality Act 2010 | 2010 |
| Planning Practice Guidance | various |
| **Local** | |
| Winchester District Thriving and Resilient Communities Strategy 2026-2030 | 2026 |
| Health Priorities Statement for Winchester District 2025 | 2025 |
| Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (City Focus) | 2025 |
| Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (District Focus) | 2024 |

7.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

7.4 Winchester District has a clearly defined settlement pattern comprising the city of Winchester as the principal centre, supported by a number of market towns including Bishops Waltham and New Alresford, alongside a range of larger and smaller villages and rural communities. This hierarchy reflects differences in accessibility, service provision, employment opportunities and connectivity.

7.5 Winchester City acts as the primary focus for employment, retail, education and cultural activities, attracting movements from across the District and beyond. The market towns provide an important secondary role, offering a range of

services and facilities to their surrounding rural hinterlands. Smaller villages tend to have more limited provision and are more reliant on higher order centres for access to services and employment.

7.6 The identity of settlements is shaped by their historic development, built form, scale and relationship with the surrounding landscape. Many settlements have a strong historic core, often centred around a church, high street or market area, which contributes to their distinct character. The variation in settlement size, function and form across the District is a key component of its overall character.

7.7 The pattern of development within Winchester District is generally characterised by a dispersed network of settlements separated by areas of open countryside. These undeveloped areas play an important role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between settlements, helping to preserve their individual identity and prevent coalescence.

7.8 In parts of the District, particularly in the south and along key transport corridors, settlements are located in relatively close proximity. In these areas, the presence of open land between settlements is especially important in maintaining a clear distinction between built-up areas. These areas of undeveloped land often perform multiple functions, including providing visual breaks, supporting landscape character and contributing to ecological connectivity.

7.9 There is evidence of increasing pressure on these landscapes from housing growth, infrastructure provision and changes in land use. Incremental encroachment into these areas, even at a small scale, has the potential to cumulatively reduce the effectiveness of settlement separation and increase the perception of coalescence. This will be a likely impact of growth, where careful planning plays an important role in minimising effects.

7.10 Within Winchester District, areas of open land between settlements—often referred to as settlement gaps—play an important role in maintaining the physical and visual separation of communities. These areas are typically undeveloped and may comprise agricultural land, woodland, river corridors or other green infrastructure.

7.11 In addition, settlement gaps contribute to wider environmental and social functions. They provide opportunities for leisure and recreation (with associated health benefits), support biodiversity and ecological networks, and help maintain important views into and out of settlements. They also play a role in reinforcing the rural setting of towns and villages.

7.12 Parts of Winchester District are influenced by their proximity to Southampton, Eastleigh, Fareham and Portsmouth. These areas experience relatively higher levels of development pressure, driven by demand for housing, employment space and associated infrastructure.

7.13 Urban fringe areas often represent the interface between built-up areas and open countryside and can be particularly sensitive to change. Development in these locations can alter the perception of settlement edges, reduce the openness of the countryside and affect the transition between urban and rural environments.

7.14 In addition, major transport corridors, including the M3 and A34, influence patterns of movement and accessibility within the District. Areas with good connectivity may experience increased development pressure, which can further contribute to changes in settlement form and character. This is discussed further under the Transport and Travel Chapter, Chapter 16.

# Future baseline

7.15 Without appropriate intervention, areas of open land between settlements within Winchester District are likely to come under increasing pressure from development. Housing and employment growth, alongside infrastructure provision, may lead to incremental encroachment into these areas, particularly where they are located close to existing settlement boundaries or in accessible locations. Planning provides the opportunity to minimise impacts, particularly within the most sensitive areas, and identify appropriate mitigation early on.

7.16 Over time, the cumulative effect of small-scale developments may reduce the effectiveness of landscapes in maintaining physical and visual separation between settlements. This could lead to an increased perception of coalescence, particularly in parts of the District where settlements are already in relatively close proximity, such as in the south and along key transport corridors.

7.17 The erosion of open land may also result in the loss of wider benefits they provide, including their role in maintaining landscape character, supporting biodiversity, providing recreational opportunities, and preserving important views into and out of settlements.

7.18 Increasing development pressures associated with population growth and proximity to the southern Hampshire urban area may further intensify demand for land within these areas. Without clear policy protection and strategic planning, this could lead to a gradual loss of openness and weakening of settlement identity.

7.19 Climate change and changing land management practices may also influence the condition and function of these areas, potentially affecting their landscape quality and ecological value over time.

# Key issues

7.20 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to communities:

- Pressure for development, particularly in accessible locations and at the edges of existing settlements, may reduce the effectiveness of open landscapes over time, requiring careful planning to retain separation and openness.
- The proximity of some settlements, particularly in the south of the District and along key transport corridors, increases the risk of coalescence, highlighting the need to maintain and strengthen physical and visual separation between communities.

- The identity and sense of place of towns and villages may be eroded if development is not appropriately located and designed, emphasising the importance of a clear settlement hierarchy and place-sensitive design.
- The need to accommodate increased housing requirements that have been set by Government and employment growth presents an opportunity to plan development strategically, ensuring that settlement identity is protected while delivering sustainable and well-integrated communities.

# IIA objective

7.21 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to communities:

**Protect settlement identities as they grow.**

7.22 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Help to maintain the services and facilities of the settlement?
- Deliver growth that is proportionate to the existing settlement and commensurate to its location and position in the settlement hierarchy?
- Deliver high-quality design?
- Deliver adaptable spaces and homes considering the lifelong needs of residents?
- Protect and enhance community identity and distinctiveness?
- Prevent the coalescence of settlements and retain the openness of land, green infrastructure and habitat connectivity between them?

# 8. Equalities

## Focus of theme

8.1 This theme focuses on groups with protected characteristics, addressing concentrations of relative deprivation, and inequalities.

## Policy context

8.2 **Table 8-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 8-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to equalities**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Levelling-up and Regeneration Act | 2023 |
| Equality Act 2010 | 2010 |
| Planning Practice Guidance | various |
| **Local** | |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025 - 2028 | 2025 |
| WCC Health Topic Paper | 2024 |
| Public Health Strategy 2023 – 2026 | 2023 |
| Skills for the Future | 2019 |

8.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

**8.4** The 2021 Census data, presented in

8.5 **Table** 8-2, shows that 93.6% of the population within Winchester identify as White. The population comprised of people identifying as Mixed and Asian are 2% and 3.1%, respectively. People identifying as Black (0.6%), Arab (0.1%), and Other ethnicities (0.5%) represent smaller proportions.

8.6 While the majority of Winchester's population identifies as White, the District has become increasingly diverse in recent years. The proportion of White residents declined by 2.1 percentage points between 2011 and 2021, while all other groups grew by up to 0.8 percentage points, reflecting broader migration trends and demographic shifts.

**Table 8-2: Ethnic groups within Winchester[27]**

| Ethnic Group | % 2011 | % 2021 | Change (% points) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh | 2.3 | 3.1 | +0.8 |
| Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African | 0.4 | 0.6 | +0.2 |
| Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups | 1.4 | 2 | +0.6 |
| White | 95.7 | 93.6 | -2.1 |
| Arab | 0.1 | 0.1 | No change |
| Any other ethnic group | 0.2 | 0.5 | +0.3 |

8.7 The 2021 Census data on religious communities, shown in **Table 8-3**, indicates that just under half of the population (46%) within Winchester's identify as Christian. Approximately 48.5% of the district's population stated they had no religion or no declared religion. Among the minority religious groups, the most common in Winchester are Hindu and Muslim at 0.7% each, with the other religions (Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh, other) making up 1.4% overall.

8.8 Winchester is becoming more secular, exemplified by a significant drop in Christian communities, falling 14.6 percentage points since the 2011 Census, while those with no religion grew by 14.9 percentage points.

**Table 8-3: Religious communities within Winchester[28]**

| Religion | % 2011 | % 2021 | Change (% points) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Christian | 63.2 | 48.6 | -14.6 |
| Buddhist | 0.5 | 0.6 | +0.1 |
| Hindu | 0.4 | 0.7 | +0.3 |
| Jewish | 0.2 | 0.2 | no change |
| Muslim | 0.5 | 0.7 | +0.2 |
| Sikh | 0.1 | 0.1 | no change |
| Other religion | 0.4 | 0.5 | +0.1 |
| No religion | 27.3 | 42.2 | +14.9 |
| Religion not stated | 7.5 | 6.3 | -1.2 |

8.9 The 2021 Census data, shown in **Table 8-4**, indicates 17.5% of residents in Winchester report that their day-to-day activities are limited in some way (split 6.1% to 'limited a lot' and 11.4% to 'limited a little'). This figure has increased by 3% since 2011, however this is primarily in the 'limited a little' category, with only 0.2% of the increase being 'limited a lot'.

8.10 The ageing population and increase in long term health problems/disability in Winchester suggests that demand for accessible housing, healthcare services, and public transport adaptations will likely increase. Additionally, disability

[27] Nomis (2011 and 2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables TS021 and KS201EW.
[28] Nomis (2011 and 2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables TS030 and KS209EW.

prevalence is often linked with economic inactivity, reinforcing the importance of inclusive employment opportunities.

**Table 8-4: Long term health problem or disability[29]**

| Long Term Health Problem or Disability | % 2011 | % 2021 | Change (% points) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day-to-day activities limited a lot | 5.9 | 6.1 | +0.2 |
| Day-to-day activities limited a little | 8.6 | 11.4 | +2.8 |
| Day-to-day activities not limited | 85.5 | 82.5 | -3.0 |

8.11 In 2023, the age structure of Winchester, shown in **Table 8-5** shows a relatively balanced distribution across age groups, with the largest proportion of the population falling into the 25-49 age bracket at 29.2%, indicating a working-age majority. The older aged residents aged 65 and over make up 21%, which is followed by 50-64 group makes up 19.7%, children aged 0-15 at 18%, and young adults at 12.1%.

8.12 Compared to the 2011 Census, the most notable trend is the decline in the 25-49 group by 5.3 percentage points, suggesting either a demographic shift or movement of this cohort out of the District. In contrast, there has been significant growth in the 50-64 group (+3.4 points) and a smaller increase in the 65+ group (+2.3 points), highlighting an ageing population. Overall, the District is experiencing a gradual demographic shift towards older age groups, which may have implications for service provision and future planning.

**Table 8-5: Age structure in Winchester in 2024**

| Age Bracket | 2011 Census (% of Population)[30] | ONS 2024 mid-year estimate (% of Population) [31] | Change (% points) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-15 | 18.4 | 18.0 | -0.4 |
| 16-24 | 12.1 | 12.1 | No change |
| 25-49 | 34.5 | 29.2 | -5.3 |
| 50-64 | 16.3 | 19.7 | +3.4 |
| 65+ | 18.7 | 21.0 | +2.3 |

8.13 The Equalities Act requires the assessment to investigate different barriers to, and potential for, advancing equality of opportunities across genders. The Equalities Act also requires the public authority to protect the rights of and advance equality of opportunity for those who have undergone gender reassignment.

8.14 As shown in **Table 8-6**, the 2021 Census suggests that in Winchester, the majority of the population have the same gender identity as their sex registered at birth. Approximately 0.2% of Winchester's population identify as either a trans man or trans woman (87 and 91 individuals, respectively).

[29] Nomis (2023). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables RM208 and QS303EW.
[30] Nomis (2023). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Table KS102EW.
[31] ONS (2024). '*Estimates of the population for England and Wales'* can be accessed through this link.

### Table 8-6: Gender identity in Winchester in 2021 (Population Aged 16 and Over)[32]

| Gender Identity | % 2021 |
|---|---|
| Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth | 94.8% |
| Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given | 0.1% |
| Trans woman | 0.1% |
| Trans man | 0.1% |
| All other gender identities | 0.1% |
| Not answered | 4.8% |

8.15 The WDLP will also need to consider equalities effects on the lesbian, gay, and bisexual population of Winchester. The 2021 Census data, shown in **Table 8-7**, shows that approximately 3.5% of the District's population identify as Gay and Lesbian, Bisexual, or another minority sexual orientation. Of these, Bisexual is the most common, accounting for 1.7% of the total population.

### Table 8-7: Sexual Orientation in Winchester (Population Aged 16 and Over)[33]

| Sexual Orientation | % 2021 |
|---|---|
| Straight or Heterosexual | 90.1% |
| Gay or Lesbian | 1.3% |
| Bisexual | 1.7% |
| Pansexual | 0.1% |
| Asexual | 0.1% |
| Queer | <0.1% |
| All other sexual orientations | 0.1% |
| Not answered | 6.6% |

**8.16** At the time of the 2021 Census, as shown in

[32] Nomis (2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables TS078.
[33] Nomis (2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables TS079.

8.17 **Table** 8-8, 39.6% of Winchester's adult population was economically inactive. This is slightly notably higher than the rate for the South East, and slightly lower than the rate for England. In Winchester, economic inactivity may also reflect a higher proportion of early retirees or individuals who are not in paid employment due to sufficient household income.

**Table 8-8: Economic activity status in Winchester in 2021 (Population Aged 16 and Over)** [34]

| Economic Activity Status | Winchester | South East | England |
|---|---|---|---|
| Economically active (excluding full-time students) | 57.4% | 60.1% | 58.6% |
| Economically active and a full-time student | 3% | 2.1% | 2.3% |
| Economically inactive | 39.6% | 37.8% | 39.1% |

8.18 The 2021 census indicated that 50.6% of Winchester's population are married (including in a civil partnership), which is slightly higher than the proportion of married couples for England and Wales (47%). The divorce rate in Winchester is slightly lower than England and Wales (8.2% compared to 9%, respectively).[35]

8.19 The total fertility rate (TFR) in Winchester has followed regional and national trends, having fallen slightly in recent years from 1.54 in 2014 to 1.46 in 2024.[36] Winchester's TFR in 2024 was slightly higher than the rate for England (1.4).

8.20 The government's approach to rural proofing[37] sets out a commitment that all policy decision-making should assess what might affect outcomes in rural areas, ensuring that rural communities are not overlooked and that policies are deliverable in rural contexts. Winchester District has a significant rural population and economy, and the Local Plan should ensure that its policies are considered against the particular needs and circumstances of rural parts of the Plan Area accordingly.

# Future baseline

8.21 The district's population is expected to age over time. This will have implications on the types of housing, facilities, and infrastructure needed in the District as the average age of Winchester's population grows older into the future (see **Chapter 12** for more detail).

8.22 Ethnic and religious diversity is expected to increase, reflecting broader national trends. Meanwhile, Winchester's is likely to become more secular, but ethnic diversity and religious diversity (among those who do identify with a faith) may continue to expand.

8.23 Socio-economic changes, including shifts in employment sectors, housing affordability, and the cost of living, will influence inequalities in Winchester. Planning for inclusive employment, accessible housing, and social mobility will be important considerations for the WDLP.

[34] Nomis (2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables TS066.
[35] Nomis (2021). '*Legal partnership status by age, sex and local authority Census 2021'* can be accessed through this link.
[36] Nomis (2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See *'Live births in England and Wales : birth rates down to local authority areas*'
[37] DEFRA (2025) *'The government's approach to rural proofing, 2025*' can be accessed through this link.

# Key issues

8.24 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to equalities:

- The district's increasing ethnic and religious diversity requires inclusive planning for housing, education, and community services to promote social cohesion and equal opportunities.
- With 17.5% of residents reporting disabilities, and an aging population, there is a need for accessible housing, transport, and employment opportunities.
- The projected increase in older residents will drive demand for healthcare, age-friendly housing, and adapted infrastructure.
- Policies should support gender-neutral facilities, inclusive public spaces, and equal access to services for LGBTQ+ residents.
- Population growth and socio-economic shifts will require policies that promote equal access to housing, employment, and community services for all residents, including those who reside in rural areas.

# IIA objective

8.25 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to equality:

**Promote equality, social inclusion, and opportunities for all, ensuring that diverse needs are met across the plan area**.

8.26 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Reduce inequalities and deprivation across the plan area?
- Improve equality of opportunities amongst the groups most in need?
- Promote, strengthen, and enhance placemaking principles?
- Protect and provide improved local, social, recreational and leisure facilities and access to the natural environment?
- Ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures to meet the needs of all sectors of the community?
- Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?
- Support the ageing population to ensure they do not become socially excluded?
- Ensure there is adequate provision of facilities and services for minority groups?

# 9. Economy and employment

## Focus of theme

9.1.1 This theme focuses on supporting the local economy by planning for key economic sectors, meeting employment land needs, and promoting education, skills development, and productivity growth.

## Policy context

9.1.2 **Table 9-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 9-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to economy and employment**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Get Britain Working White Paper | 2024 |
| Planning Practice Guidance | various |
| UK's Modern Industrial Strategy | 2025 |
| **Local** | |
| Winchester City Council Employment Land Study | 2024 |
| Winchester District Ten Year Green Economic Development Strategy | 2021 |
| Hampshire Economic Strategy | 2023 |
| Winchester City Council Green Economic Development Strategy Action Plan | 2024 |
| Hampshire County Council – State of the economy | 2020 |

9.2 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

9.3 Winchester district has a lower proportion of residents with no formal qualifications (11.1%), as shown in **Figure 9.1**, compared to both the Hampshire (14.7%) and England (18.1%) averages, reflecting the district's relatively well-educated population. The proportion of residents qualified to Level 1 and Level 2 is also slightly below regional and national levels. Winchester district has fewer residents holding Apprenticeships (4.0%) than Hampshire (5.7%) and England (5.3%), which may relate to the district's employment profile, with a lower concentration of sectors that typically rely on apprenticeship pathways. By contrast, Winchester district significantly exceeds

both the regional and national picture for higher-level qualifications, with 44.9% of residents holding Level 4 qualifications or above, compared with 34.2% in Hampshire and 33.9% in England. This indicates a highly skilled local workforce and aligns with Winchester district's economic structure, which includes a strong presence of professional, managerial and knowledge-based occupations.

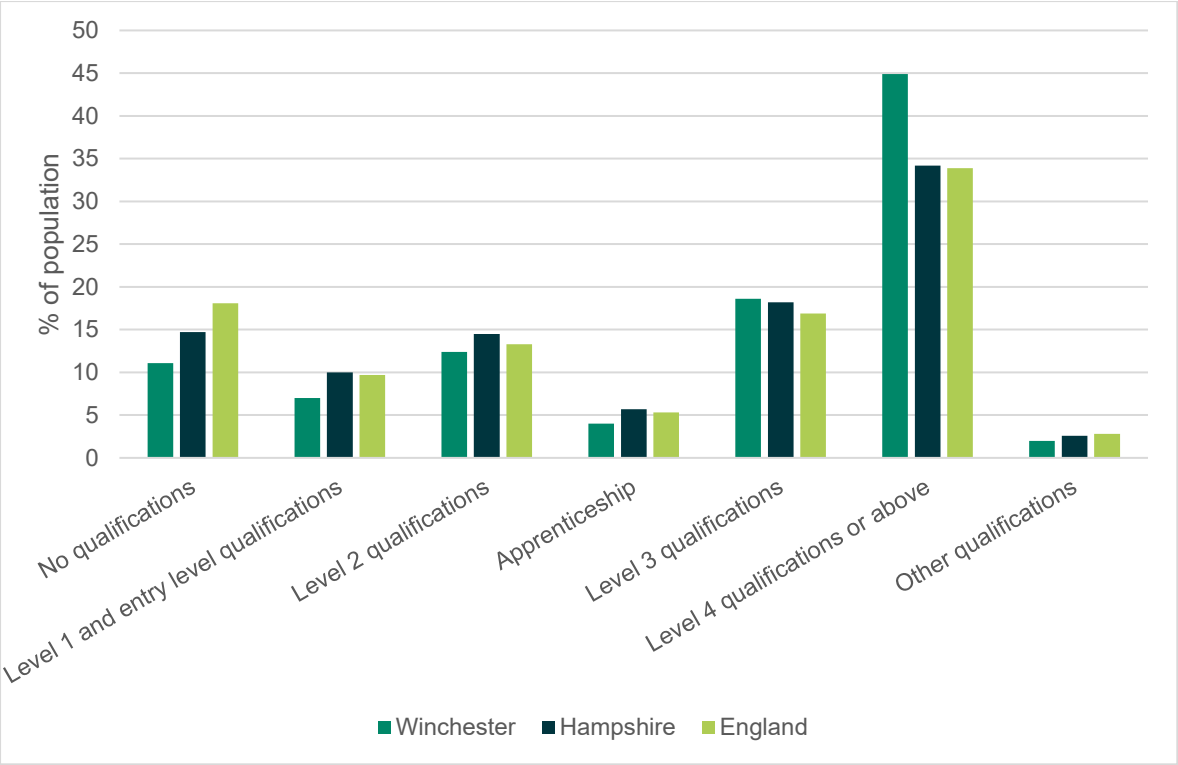



**Figure 9.1 Highest level of qualification in the Winchester district and comparator geographies (2021)** [38]

9.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation, combining seven different domains. These domains will be explored in this Scoping Report (see also **Chapters 2 and 8**). Of particular relevance to the economy and employment IIA theme are:

- **Education, skills, and training:** the lack of attainment and skills in the population;
- **Employment**: the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot; and
- **Income**: the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income.

9.5 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are standardised geographic units intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA typically containing between 1,000 and 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2025, LSOAs are ranked out of 33,755 in England and Wales, with a rank of 1 indicating the most deprived area. Within this context, the Plan Area spans 66 LSOAs.

[38] Nomis (2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Table TS067.

9.6 **Table 9-2** provides details on the LSOAs within Winchester District that fall within the 50% most deprived, or worse, areas for the relevant IMD domains outlined above.

**Table 9-2: LSOAs in Winchester ranked within 50% most deprived or worse for the Education, Skills and Training IMD domain, Employment IMD domain, and Income IMD domain**

| | Education, Skills and Training IMD domain | Employment domain | Income domain |
|---|---|---|---|
| 50% Most Deprived | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| 40% Most Deprived | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| 30% Most Deprived | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 20% Most Deprived | 2 (Winchester 008B, Winchester 006C) | 1 (Winchester 006C) | 2 (Winchester 006C, Winchester 008B) |
| 10% Most Deprived | 2 (Winchester 008C, Winchester 008A) | 0 | 0 |
| **Total (out of 66)** | **12** | **12** | **15** |

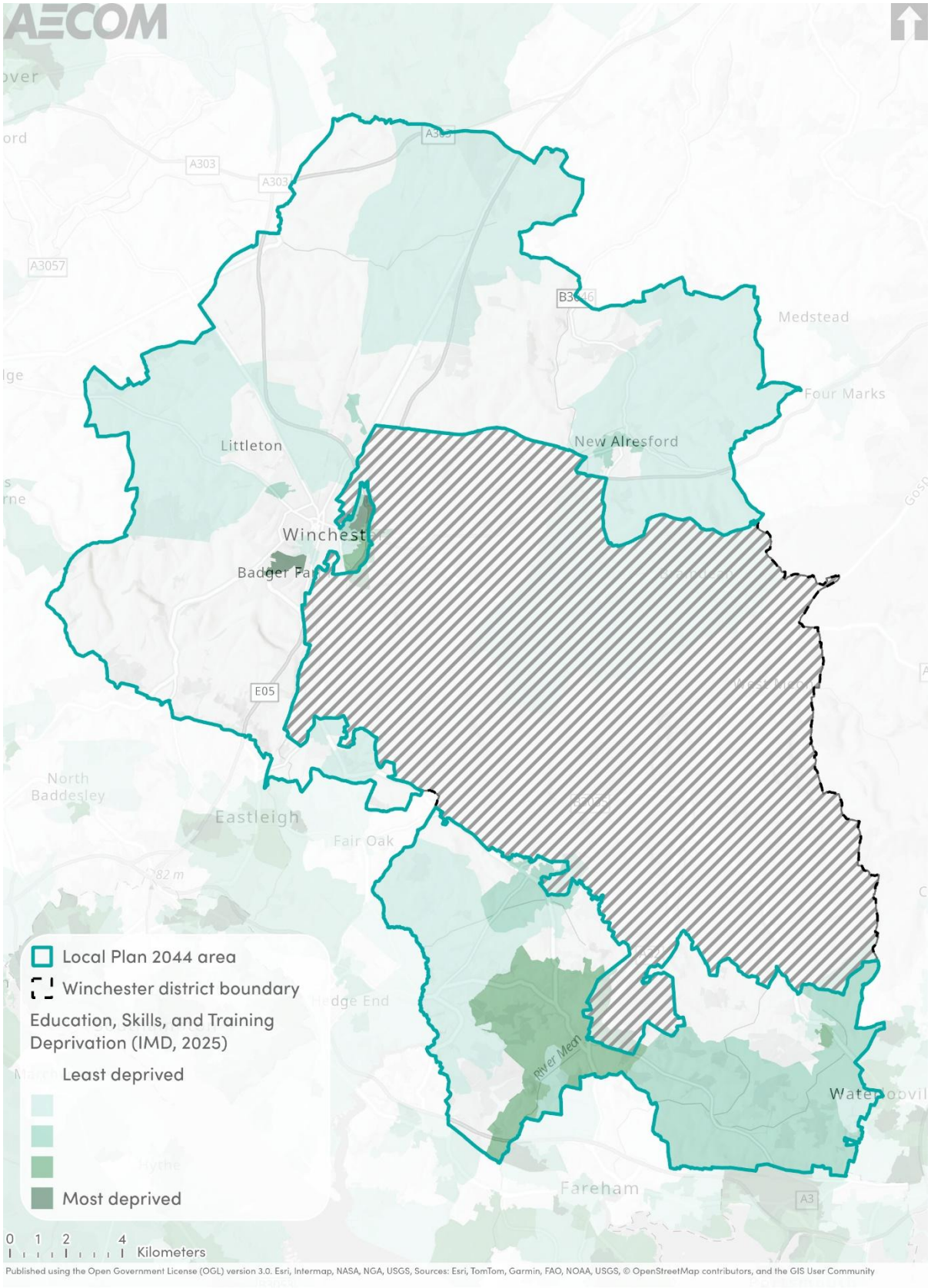
9.7 The data shows that there are several LSOAs in the WDLP Plan Area that fall within the 50% most deprived nationally across the three IMD domains. Out of a total of 66 LSOAs, 12 fall within the bottom 50% for education, 12 for employment, and 15 for income. This indicates that income-related deprivation is the most widespread of the three domains within the Plan Area. It is important to note that Winchester District as a whole is a relatively affluent area compared to most neighbouring districts and the national average; however, these figures highlight that deprivation is not uniformly distributed across the district. A notable proportion of residents experience income constraints that sit in contrast to the district's overall prosperity, pointing to pockets of financial vulnerability and uneven economic resilience within the Plan Area. Although the most severe levels of deprivation are not widespread, the distribution demonstrates that a significant proportion of residents experience constraints linked to economic wellbeing.

9.8 Breaking the results down further by decile illustrates how deprivation is distributed within the Plan Area. Most of the identified LSOAs fall within the 50%, 40%, and 30% most deprived groups, with fewer represented in the 20% and 10% most deprived nationally. Only the education domain includes LSOAs within the 10% most deprived category (Winchester 008C and Winchester 008A, these are shown in **Figures 9.1 – 9.3** below), while neither the employment nor income domains have any LSOAs in this most deprived decile. Representation within the 20% most deprived group is limited but present across all three domains. This pattern suggests that while pockets of more acute deprivation exist, they are isolated and tend to be domain-specific rather than widespread across the Plan Area.

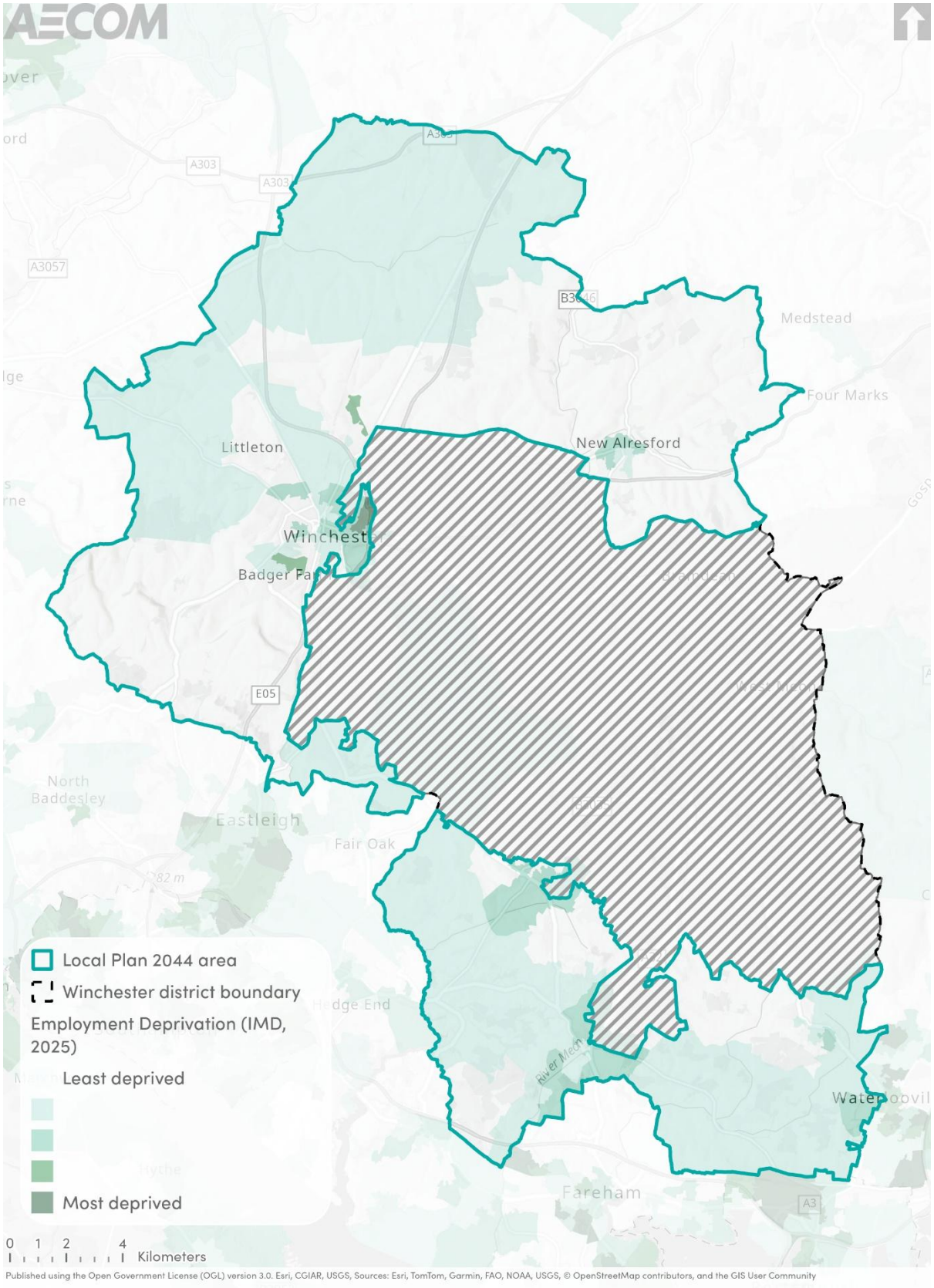
9.9 The table also highlights LSOAs that appear across multiple domains, indicating points where deprivation overlaps. Also shown in the figures below, Winchester 006C and Winchester 008B, for example, appear within the 20%

most deprived for more than one domain, while several other LSOAs recur across the 30%, 40%, and 50% ranges. These overlaps indicate neighbourhoods where residents may face interconnected barriers across income, employment, and education. Such areas are likely to benefit from coordinated and holistic interventions that address several forms of disadvantage concurrently.

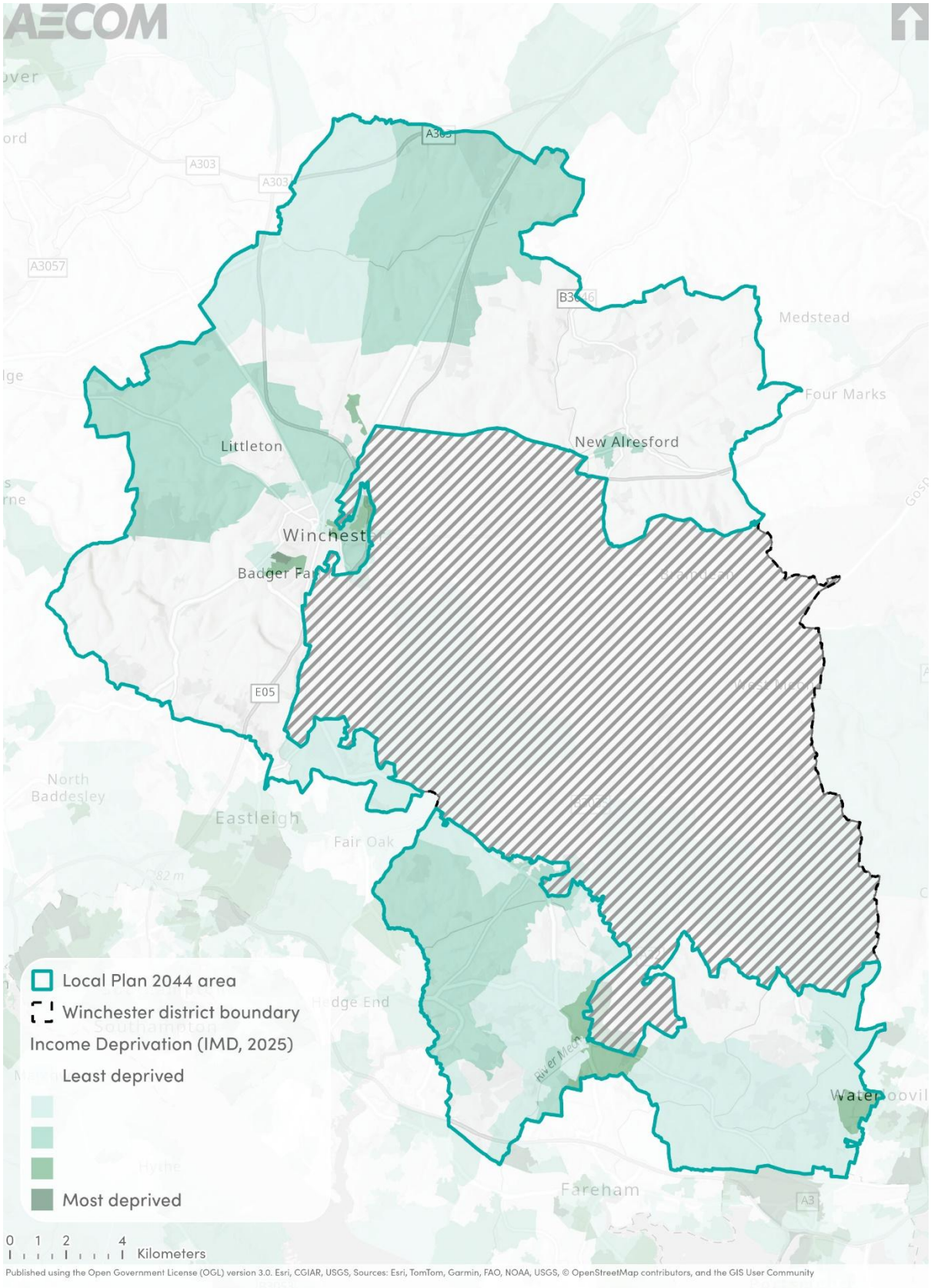
## Figure 9.1 Education, skills and training deprivation in Winchester



## Figure 9.2 Employment deprivation in Winchester



## Figure 9.3 Income deprivation in Winchester



9.10 The Winchester district area's unemployment rate in 2025 was 3.1%, substantially below many regional and national rates[39]. The "unemployed" are defined by the ONS in the standard way, people without a job who are available to start work soon and who have recently looked for work (or are waiting to start a job already secured). This relatively low unemployment rate suggests that compared with broader benchmarks, Winchester has a stronger labour market, fewer people are actively seeking work relative to those available. Additionally, the employment rate for people aged 16–64 in Winchester was 78.4% in the year ending December 2025, up from 75.6% the prior year. Meanwhile the "Claimant Count", a measure of those receiving unemployment-related benefits among 16–64-year-olds, was 2.1% in March 2026. Finally, economic inactivity (people neither employed nor actively seeking work) affected about 20.7% of the 16–64 population in Winchester over that period.

9.11 The majority of employment opportunities rely on residents having accessibility to public transport services and / or the highway network.

9.12 Employment in the Winchester area reflects a strong and predominantly full-time workforce. Of the total employment base, 64.6% are full-time employees, while 32.1% are part-time, producing a combined total of 96.7% employee jobs overall[40]. A notably high proportion of these roles, 78.8% of all employees, are within the private sector, with the public sector representing 17.9%. The area also shows a comparatively balanced part-time profile, with part-time employment making up just over one-third of all employee roles, which is broadly aligned with regional patterns but slightly higher than some neighbouring authorities. Total employment (including employees plus self-employment) reaches 98.2%, further evidencing a strong labour market.

9.13 Within this employment structure, Winchester District has a higher proportion of workers in the Manufacturing and Construction sectors than the South East regional average. This suggests that despite being known for higher-value service industries, the area retains a significant foundation of traditional productive industries. These sectors are likely supported by strong local supply chains, a skilled trades workforce and accessibility to strategic transport corridors.

9.14 Conversely, the area has a lower proportion of its workforce in Professional, Scientific and Technical activities when compared with regional benchmarks. At the same time, Winchester has a significantly higher share of employment in 'Accommodation and Food Services' and 'Arts, Entertainment and Recreation'. This pattern is strongly influenced by the area's visitor economy, heritage attractions, cultural infrastructure, and the role of the city as a tourism and hospitality hub within the wider region.

9.15 The high proportion of privately-employed full-time workers (54.3% of all employees) indicates a stable and predominantly market-driven labour economy. The relatively modest size of the public sector (10.3% full-time; 7.6% part-time) also reflects the strong influence of private enterprises in creating local employment. Furthermore, the balance between full- and part-time roles

[39] Office for National Statistics (2024). '*Labour Market Profile – Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity in Winchester*' can be accessed through this link.
[40] Office for National Statistics (2024). '*Business Register and Employment Survey. Dataset: Local authority district – Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES): Table 6*' can be accessed through this link.

suggests a diverse labour market accommodating a range of working patterns, which may contribute positively to workforce flexibility and labour-market participation among groups with differing needs, such as students, parents and older workers.

9.16 Compared to the South East regional picture, the Winchester District area has a distinctly different business-size profile. While large businesses (those employing 250 or more people) remain rare across the region, Winchester mirrors this trend, with only 0.4% of enterprises falling into this category.[41] The overwhelming majority of businesses in the area are micro-enterprises, which account for 82.0% of all enterprises, although this is notably lower than the regional proportion of 89.6%. Winchester has a comparatively higher share of small enterprises (16.1%), almost double the South East average (8.4%), and a similar proportion of medium-sized enterprises (1.5%, compared with 1.6% regionally).

9.17 This indicates that Winchester District's economy is characterised by a strong presence of micro and small businesses, but with a greater concentration of small firms than is typical across the wider region, suggesting a more developed base of growing enterprises. This is likely to be a result of the rural economy, with evidence showing that approximately 29% of total jobs are located within rural areas[42].

9.18 A similar pattern is reflected in business local units, where 80.1% fall within the micro category and 16.9% are small units, again, higher than the South East average. Medium and large units remain a small minority (2.4% and 0.6%, respectively). This distribution reinforces the importance of supporting the small-business sector in the Winchester area, both in terms of physical premises and wider economic development. The relatively high proportion of small and medium-sized firms may indicate a strong entrepreneurial environment and opportunities for business growth but also highlights the need for ongoing investment in workspace, infrastructure, and skills to sustain this expansion.

9.19 Recent data also shows that in Winchester there is a substantial portion of workers who are self-employed, about 10.5% of 16-64 population are self-employed (versus 10.2% for the South East). There is also a relatively high rate of standard "employee" roles: around 69.3% of 16-64 population are employees, compared with 67.7% for the South East. These patterns, a mix of traditional employment and self-employment, reflect both flexibility and entrepreneurial activity. It suggests that Winchester's labour market is not just reliant on large employers, but also on self-employment and smaller-scale businesses.

9.20 The level of commuting outside of the Winchester District has changed significantly between the 2011 Census and 2021 Census, largely due to the Coronavirus pandemic and shift towards home working.

9.21 According to the most recent available origin-destination data, Winchester District experiences significant commuting flows both into and out of the District. The principal out-commuting destinations include Eastleigh, Southampton, Portsmouth, Fareham, and Basingstoke and Deane, reflecting

[41] Nomis (2025). *'Labour Market Profile – Winchester'* can be accessed through this link.
[42] Winchester City Council (2024). *'Winchester City Council Employment Land Study'* can be accessed through this link.

the strong functional economic links Winchester has with nearby urban centres and major employment hubs. Winchester also experiences a notably high level of in-commuting, with the largest inflows originating from Eastleigh, Southampton, Fareham, and Test Valley, highlighting Winchester's role as a significant employment centre for the wider sub-region, resulting in a substantial net inflow of workers. Commuting patterns can be explored further via the ONS Census 2021 origin-destination interactive map[43], though it should be noted that as data collection took place during a national lockdown, figures may not be fully representative of typical commuting behaviour.

9.22 From a sustainability perspective, the provision of increased employment opportunities within the Plan Area may reduce the need to travel longer distances for work, however in reality this continues to be a complex matter, influenced by a multitude of factors. Whilst this may be advantageous, the need for localised employment opportunities must be balanced against the environmental impacts of such development and the subsequent pressures this may have on housing demand.

9.23 In 2025, there were 5,080 non-domestic properties across the District.[44] Of these, 770 properties were within the retail sector (15.2%), 1380 properties within the office sector (27.2%) and 1,430 were within the industry sector (28.2%). This indicates that the District has a relatively high proportion of office premises in comparison with the South East region (21.0 %) and England as a whole (20.4 %). The District's proportion of floorspace within the 'Other' category sits at 29.5% which is broadly in line with the regional (30.2 % and national (29.1 %) proportions.

9.24 The rural economy plays a significant role in Winchester District. The Employment Land Study (2024) identifies that 29% of jobs are located in rural areas, with higher proportions in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, construction, information and communications, and arts and entertainment[45]. Farm diversification is a key component of employment land delivery, accounting for around 20% of sites and 35% of completed employment floorspace. The study also identifies a need for small-scale rural premises, including offices, workshops, studios, and storage, to support local businesses.

9.25 The Green Economic Development Strategy and GEDS Action Plan position low carbon growth as a core priority, linking economic development with decarbonisation[46]. This approach is supported by Local Plan policy and focuses on sectors such as natural capital, digital, tourism, and low carbon energy, with the aim of aligning growth with environmental objectives.

# Future baseline

9.26 As it stands, Winchester District is likely to maintain a relatively strong and highly skilled labour market, supported by a high proportion of residents with Level 4 qualifications and above. However, disparities in skills, income and employment outcomes are likely to persist in certain areas, particularly where deprivation overlaps across multiple domains.

[43] Office for National Statistics (2021) *'Visualising People Flows'* can be accessed through this link.
[44] Valuation Office Agency (2025). '*Non-domestic rating: stock of properties collection. Dataset: Non-domestic rating: stock of properties, 2024'* can be accessed through this link.
[45] Winchester City Council (2024) *'Employment Land Study'* can be accessed through this link.
[46] Winchester City Council (2021) *'Green Economic Development Strategy'* can be accessed via this link.

9.27 The concentration of higher-level qualifications alongside lower levels of apprenticeship attainment may continue to influence the structure of the local economy, potentially limiting access to vocational pathways and contributing to skills mismatches in sectors such as construction and manufacturing.

9.28 While overall employment rates are expected to remain high, pockets of deprivation identified through the IMD may persist or widen, particularly in relation to income and financial resilience. These areas may continue to experience barriers to accessing employment, training and higher-paid job opportunities.

9.29 The District's economy is likely to remain characterised by a high proportion of small and micro businesses, alongside a strong private sector presence. While this may support entrepreneurship and economic flexibility, it may also create challenges in terms of business resilience, productivity and access to suitable premises and infrastructure.

9.30 The visitor economy is expected to continue to play a significant role in shaping employment patterns, with relatively high proportions of jobs in accommodation, food services and recreation. These sectors may be more vulnerable to economic fluctuations and may offer lower average wages compared to higher-skilled occupations.

9.31 Commuting patterns are likely to remain an important feature of the local economy, with strong functional links to surrounding authorities such as Eastleigh, Southampton and Portsmouth. While increased home working may reduce some commuting demand, reliance on travel to access employment opportunities is expected to continue.

9.32 There is potential for ongoing challenges in ensuring that all residents can access employment opportunities, particularly those without access to private transport or those living in more deprived areas. This could reinforce existing inequalities within the District.

9.33 Looking ahead, the rural economy and green growth are likely to become more central to the economic role of Winchester District. Farm diversification is expected to continue contributing to employment land supply, alongside growth in nature-based and low carbon sectors. Increasing demand for green goods and services as the wider economy decarbonises presents further opportunities.

# Key issues

9.34 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified:

- The district's highly qualified workforce supports a strong knowledge-based economy, but lower levels of apprenticeship attainment may limit access to vocational pathways and skills development opportunities.
- While overall employment levels are high, pockets of deprivation persist across parts of the District, particularly in relation to income, highlighting the need to improve access to higher-value employment opportunities.

- The presence of overlapping deprivation in certain areas indicates that some communities face multiple and interconnected barriers to employment, skills and income, requiring coordinated and targeted interventions.
- The local economy is characterised by a high proportion of micro and small businesses, creating opportunities for entrepreneurship and growth, but also presenting challenges in terms of business resilience, productivity and access to suitable workspace.
- A relatively high reliance on sectors such as accommodation, food services and recreation supports the visitor economy, but may result in a higher proportion of lower-paid or less secure employment.
- Strong commuting patterns reflect good connectivity and access to wider employment markets but also indicate a reliance on travel which may have implications for sustainability and access to jobs for those without private transport.
- The need to balance the provision of local employment opportunities with wider sustainability considerations presents an opportunity to reduce out-commuting and support more self-contained and resilient communities.

# IIA objective

9.35 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to economy and employment:

**Support a strong, diverse and resilient local economy by providing land for sustainable economic growth and growing the rural economy.**

9.36 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Provide sufficient land for businesses to grow?
- Deliver proportionate housing growth and infrastructure improvements alongside employment growth?
- Support the creation of accessible new jobs and facilitate home and distance working?
- Ensure that town centres are considered first for new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure and public service facilities?
- Ensure the capacity of educational facilities keep pace with population growth?
- Safeguard existing employment areas?
- Maintain and enhance existing tourism destinations?
- Promote a green economy and decarbonisation?
- Promote the vitality of rural economies?

# 10. Health and wellbeing

## Focus of theme

10.1 This chapter explores key social and equality issues relevant to the local plan, including community concerns, tackling relative deprivation, promoting vibrant and resilient communities through design, and supporting improved health and safety outcomes.

## Policy context

10.2 **Table 8-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 10-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Levelling-up and Regeneration Act | 2023 |
| Equality Act 2010 | 2010 |
| Planning Practice Guidance | various |
| **Local** | |
| Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 - 2035 | emerging |
| Health Priorities Statement for Winchester District | 2025 |
| Winchester Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2025 | 2025 |
| WCC Health Topic Paper | 2024 |
| Public Health Strategy 2023 – 2026 | 2023 |
| Skills for the Future | 2019 |

10.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

10.4 As of the 2021 Census, the district of Winchester's population was 127,445, marking an increase of 9.3% from 116,595 in 2011.[47] This growth rate is much higher than both the South East average of 7.5% and the England average of 6.6%. Unless specified, population data presented in this section relate to the

[47] Office for National Statistics (2022). '*Census 2021 Dataset – Usual resident population by sex and five-year age group, local authorities in England and Wales'* can be accessed through this link.

whole district (i.e. including those residing within the South Downs National Park).

10.5 The latest mid-year ONS estimates (from 2024) for population suggest further growth has occurred in Winchester in the years since the 2021 Census, rising to 135,632 (6.4% growth since 2021).[48]

10.6 According to the 2021 Census, 86.1% of the population of Winchester report good or very good health[49], which is broadly in line with the 2011 Census data. Compared to England, this is a notably higher level of better general health (82%). The proportion of people reporting fair health has remained broadly the same, going from 10.6% in 2011 to 10.4% in 2021.

10.7 The latest district-level data for life expectancy in Winchester District (covering the period from 2022 to 2024) indicates the figure was 82.4 years for males and 86.3 for females[50]. These figures are higher than the equivalent figures for the period 2017 to 2019 (81.3 and 85.4, respectively). However, it is noted that the lower figures may be influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

10.8 Public Health England have released Health Profiles, for each local authority area in England, including Winchester. The latest of these for Winchester summarises data from up to 2024. **Table 10-2** provides a high-level review of the district's performance compared to England for 37 health indicators.[51]

10.9 Winchester generally performed the same as, or better than the national average for the majority of indicators (see **Table 10-2**). However, the district performed worse than England for the following six indicators:

Emergency hospital emissions for intentional self-harm;

Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate;

Estimated dementia diagnosis rate (aged 65 and older);

Admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions (under 18 years);

Infant mortality rate;

Winter mortality index.

**Table 10-2: Health summary for Winchester**

| Indicator Category (Number of Indicators) | Significantly Better than England (Better 95%) | Not Significantly Different (Similar) | Significantly Worse (Worse 95%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Life expectancy and causes of death (8) | **6** | **2** | **0** |
| Injuries and ill health (6)* | **2** | **0** | **3** |
| Behavioural risk factors (5) | **2** | **3** | **0** |

[48] ONS (2023). '*Estimates of the population for England and Wales'* can be accessed through this link.
[49] Nomis (2021). '*Query Data*' can be accessed through this link. See Tables TS037 and KS301EW.
[50] ONS (2024). *'Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023'* can be accessed through this link.
[51] Public Health England (2019). '*Winchester Local Authority Health Profile'* can be accessed through this link.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child health (5)* | **2** | **2** | **0** |
| Inequalities (4) | **1** | **2** | **1** |
| Wider determinants of health (6) | **6** | **0** | **0** |
| Health protection (3) | **2** | **1** | **0** |
| **Total** | **21** | **10** | **4** |

* one indicator was not given a ranking.

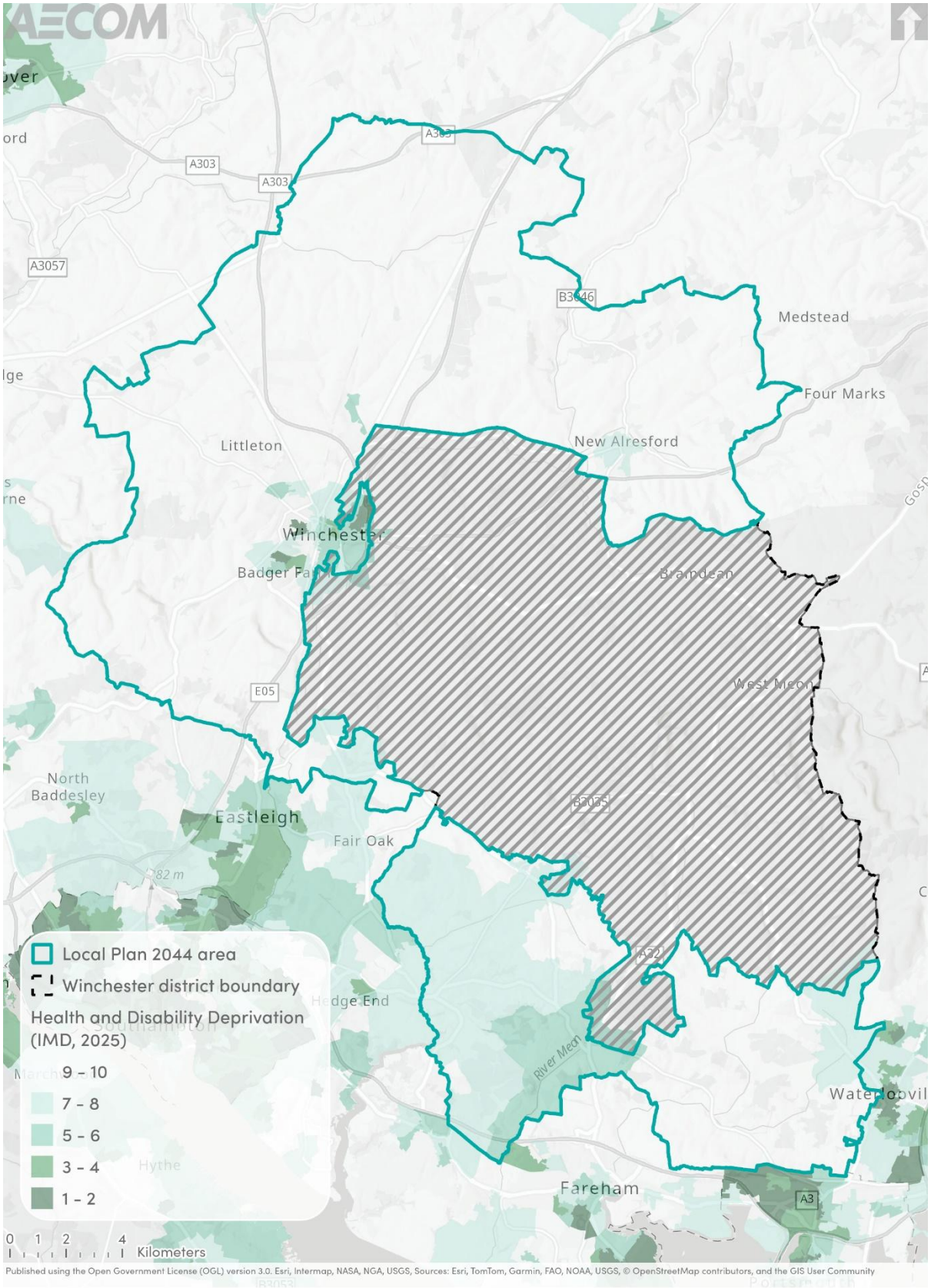
10.10 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation, combining seven different domains. These domains will be explored in this Scoping Report (see also **Chapter 2 and 8**).[52] Of particular relevance to the health, wellbeing and safety IIA theme are:

- **Health deprivation and disability**: the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health;
- **Crime**: the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level; and
- **Living environment**: the quality of the local environment, categorised into 'indoors living environment' to measure the quality of housing and 'outdoors living environment' to measure indicators e.g., air quality/road traffic accidents.

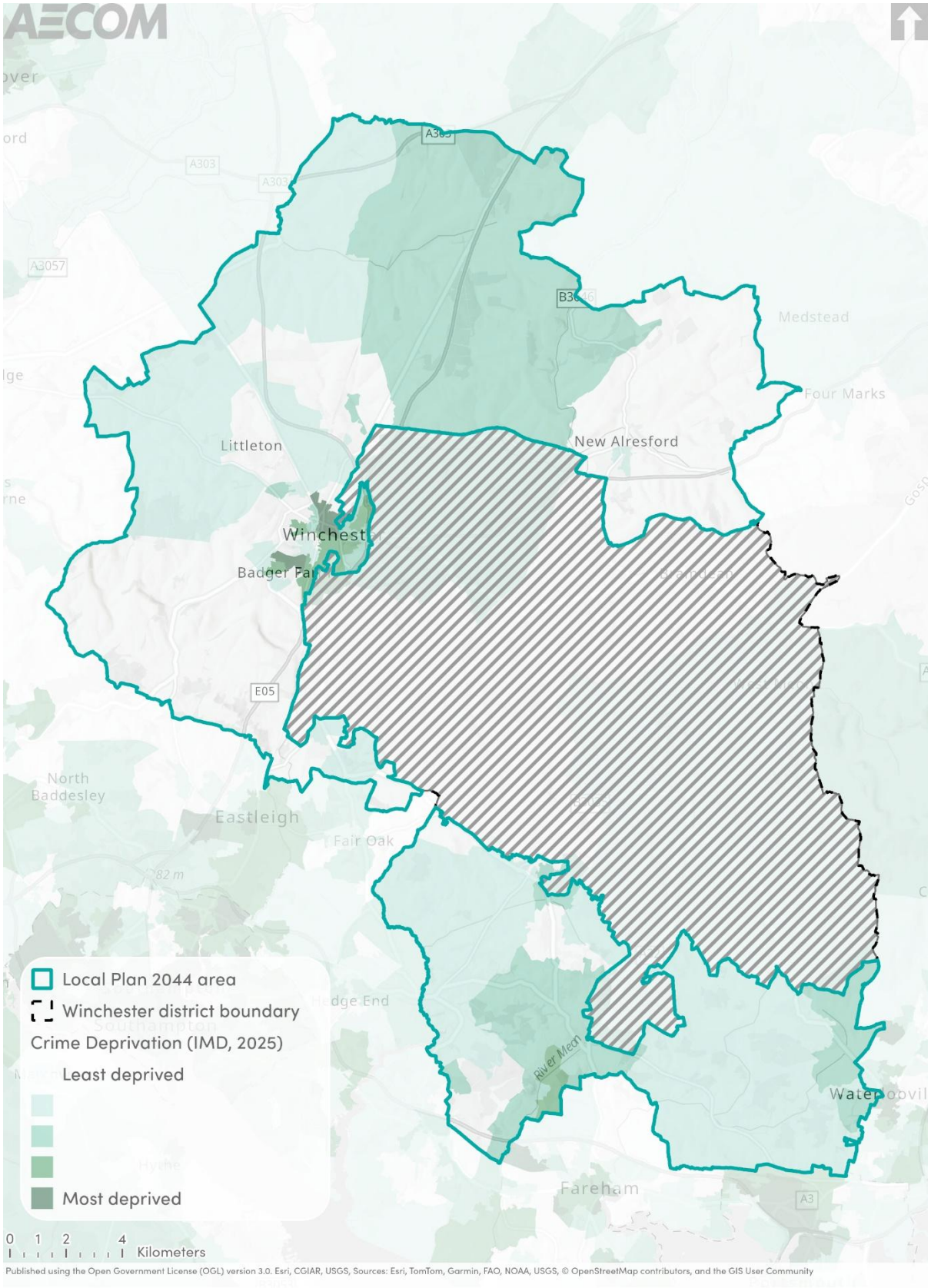
10.11 The distribution of the deprivation of the relevant domains are shown in **Figure 10.1 – 10.5** below. Generally, there is a higher proportion of this type of deprivation 0 in central Winchester, as well as in the south of the Plan Area.

[52] The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed through this link.

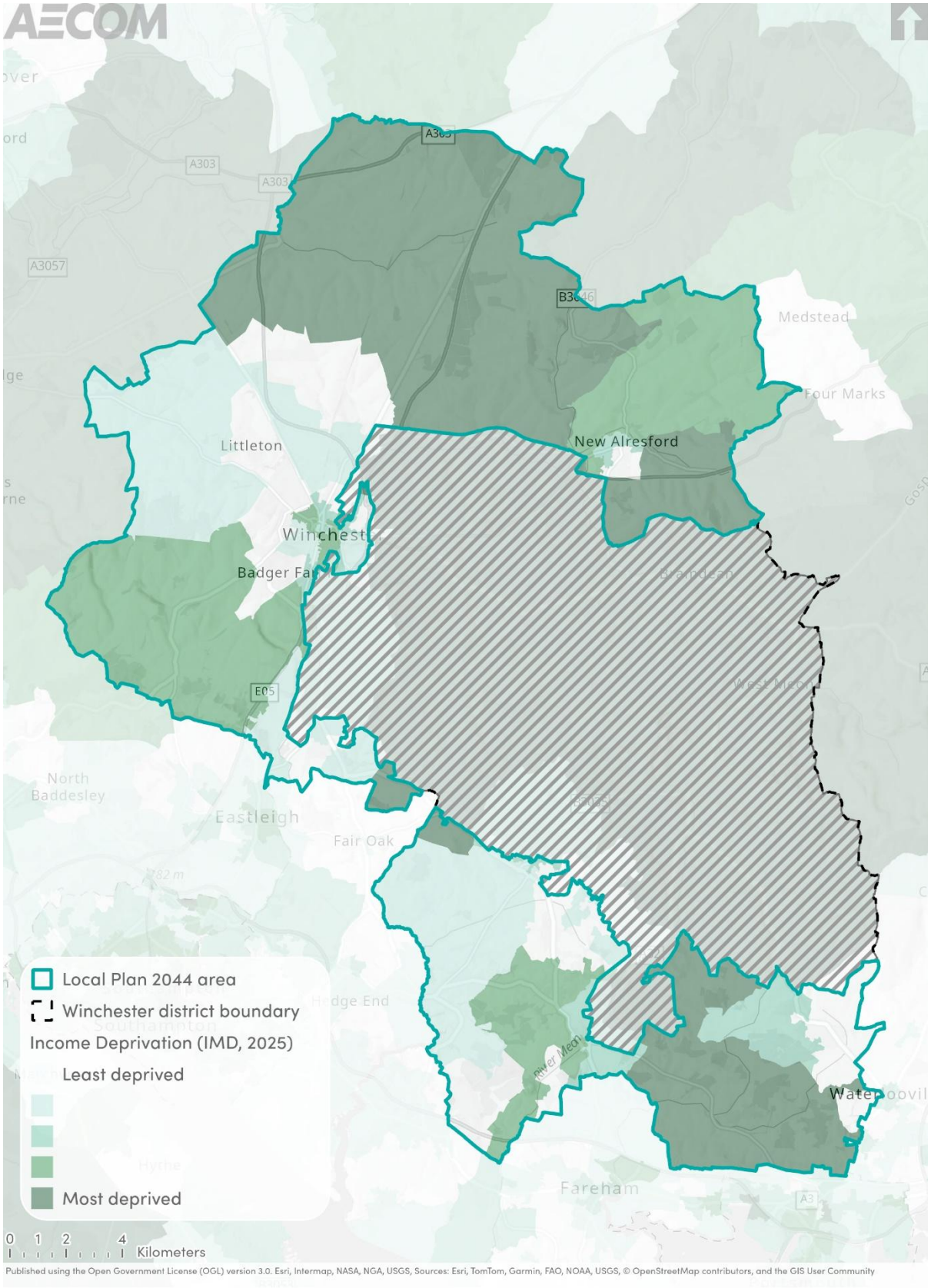
## Figure 10.1 Health Deprivation and Disability domain (IMD, 2025)



## Figure 10.2 Crime Deprivation domain (IMD, 2025)



## Figure 10.3 Living Environment Deprivation domain (IMD, 2025)



10.12 Improving access to greenspace are increasingly being recognised as an important asset for supporting health and wellbeing. This 'natural capital' can help local authorities address local issues that they face, including improving health and wellbeing, managing health and social care costs, reducing health inequalities, improving social cohesion and taking positive action to address climate change.[53]

10.13 The District Council maintain a wide range of public open spaces across the Plan Area. These include over 1,324 ha of open space, with a number of parishes and wards having a surplus in accessible open space.[54] The Plan Area also benefits from its proximity to South Downs National Park.

# Future baseline

10.14 As the population of the Plan Area grows due to development driven by the WDLP, it is likely that this will increase pressure on both local and external services. This highlights the need to support the retention of existing community facilities in the District and seek new (or upgrades to) services and infrastructure where possible.

10.15 An ageing population will put pressure on social care services, while health inequalities may persist, particularly in more deprived areas of the District. Life expectancy improvements could slow further without targeted interventions addressing long-term conditions, mental health, and obesity.

10.16 Crime patterns in Winchester may shift due to population growth and socio-economic factors, with theft and violent crime remaining key concerns. Higher crime rates in hotspot areas such as central Winchester could persist unless community safety initiatives, youth engagement programmes, and policing strategies effectively address underlying issues.

10.17 Environmental pressures will grow as Winchester urbanises, impacting air quality, noise pollution, and access to green space. Maintaining and expanding Winchester's parks and open spaces will be vital to supporting public health, social cohesion, and climate resilience. Poorer air quality and heat island effects may become more pronounced in densely developed areas, making sustainable urban planning important.

# Key issues

10.18 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified:

- Population growth is increasing pressure on local services. Winchester's above average population growth will place greater demand on healthcare, social care, education, community facilities and infrastructure across the district. Without careful planning, rural communities could also be disproportionately affected by growth.
- An ageing population will increase the need for adult social care, dementia services, specialist healthcare, and accessible housing.

[53] PHE (2020); '*Improving access to greenspace'* can be accessed through this link.
[54] Winchester City Council (2022). '*Open Space Assessment'* can be accessed through this link.

- Health inequalities persist despite generally good outcomes. Some LSOAs in central and southern Winchester experience higher levels of poor health, inactivity, and health deprivation.
- Mental health and preventable conditions require attention. Rates of intentional self harm admissions, diabetes diagnosis, dementia diagnosis, and alcohol specific admissions for under 18s are worse than the national average and highlight the need for targeted intervention.
- Child health indicators show areas of concern. Infant mortality and alcohol related admissions among under 18s indicate a need for continued public health action.
- Environmental quality and the living environment vary across the district. Several LSOAs fall within the more deprived deciles for indicators such as air quality, housing condition and outdoor environmental quality, which may affect long term health and wellbeing.
- Access to green space is generally strong but is likely to come under increasing pressure as the population grows. Continued investment in green infrastructure is important for physical and mental health.
- Crime patterns remain a concern in some areas. Although Winchester is generally a safe district, some LSOAs are in the more deprived deciles for crime and may require targeted community safety initiatives.
- Transport, air quality and noise impacts may worsen with future development. Increased traffic could result in higher pollution and congestion, particularly in more densely populated areas.

# IIA objective

10.19 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to health and wellbeing:

**Maximise the potential for positive health outcomes in new development.**

10.20 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Encourage healthy lifestyles through provision of open space, play spaces, food growing, and community spaces?
- Facilitate good access to healthcare, social, recreational and leisure facilities for all sectors of the community?
- Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks and connectivity throughout the plan area?
- Improve access to green spaces, open spaces, the countryside and leisure and recreation facilities?
- Support healthy / active and inclusive environments?
- Support the creation of cohesive, connected communities?
- Provide formal and informal, and natural play spaces for children which are safe and easy to access?

# 11. Historic environment

## Focus of theme

11.1 This theme focuses on designated and non-designated heritage assets and features (including archaeology) and their setting.

## Policy context

11.2 **Table 10-3** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 10-3: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to historic environment**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change | 2022 |
| Historic England Advice Note 11: Local Planning and the Historic Environment | 2022 |
| Historic England Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings Advice Note | 2022 |
| The National Design Guide | 2019 |
| Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management | 2019 |
| The 25 Year Environment Plan | 2018 |
| Historic England Good Practice Advice: The Setting of Heritage Assets | 2017 |
| Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) | 2016 |
| Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans | 2015 |

11.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

11.4 Listed buildings are designated heritage assets, of national importance, which are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.[55] These are shown in **Figure 10.4**. To assess the historic environment, the National Heritage List for England, provided by Historic

[55] UK Government (1990) '*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act*' can be accessed through this link.

England,[56] has been utilised. There are a total of 1,460 listed buildings in the Plan Area: 1,318 Grade II, 88 Grade II*, and 54 Grade I.

11.5 In England, scheduled monuments are nationally important archaeological sites or historical building designated and protected by Historic England under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.[57] There is 69 scheduled monument in the Plan Area, these are shown in **Figure 10.5**, as well as registered parks and gardens, as well as registered battlefields.

11.6 Registered parks and gardens are designated areas of special historic interest in the UK, recognised for their significant landscape design, historical associations, or horticultural value. These sites are listed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, maintained by Historic England, to ensure their preservation and protection for future generations. The Plan Area has seven registered parks and gardens: four Grade II* and three Grade II.

11.7 The Register of Historic Battlefields was established in 1995 and is administered by Historic England, with the primary purpose of identifying historic battlefields of note and encouraging their appropriate protection. There are 47 battlefields on the Register, hosted on the National Heritage List for England. The NPPF defines registered battlefields as designated heritage assets, and substantial harm or total loss of a registered battlefield should be wholly exceptional. Any proposed harm requires clear and convincing justification, and local planning authorities should refuse consent where proposals would lead to substantial harm unless it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh it. Winchester District contains one registered battlefield, the Battle of Cheriton (1644). The battlefield is located at Cheriton in the south of the district, falling partly within the South Downs National Park, and was listed on the Register in June 1995.

11.8 Conservation areas are places of historical or architectural importance protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Stricter planning rules apply, requiring permission for demolitions, significant alterations, or new developments to preserve their character. The Winchester district has 37 conservation areas within its boundaries, some of which are also within the South Downs National Park. The designated conservation areas include a variety of settlements, such as the Winchester urban centre itself, as well as market towns, and small downland villages. Each area is unique with its own intrinsic sense of place and contribution to the historic environment of the district. Whilst it is considered that the protection and enhancement of these designated areas is included through the adopted Winchester District Local Plan, technical assessments have been produced for 35 of the conservation areas. However, it is recognised that the majority of these supporting technical assessments were published over 25 years ago, and as such their information may be out of date / inaccurate.

11.9 The two conservation areas without a supporting appraisal / technical assessment are St Giles Hill, and a portion of The Walled Town. A pilot scheme was undertaken between 2018 and 2020 to aid in the production of conservation area management plans and guidance – it is anticipated that the

[56] Historic England (no date) '*National Heritage List for England – Search the List – Advanced Search'* can be accessed through this link.
[57] Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) can be accessed through this link.

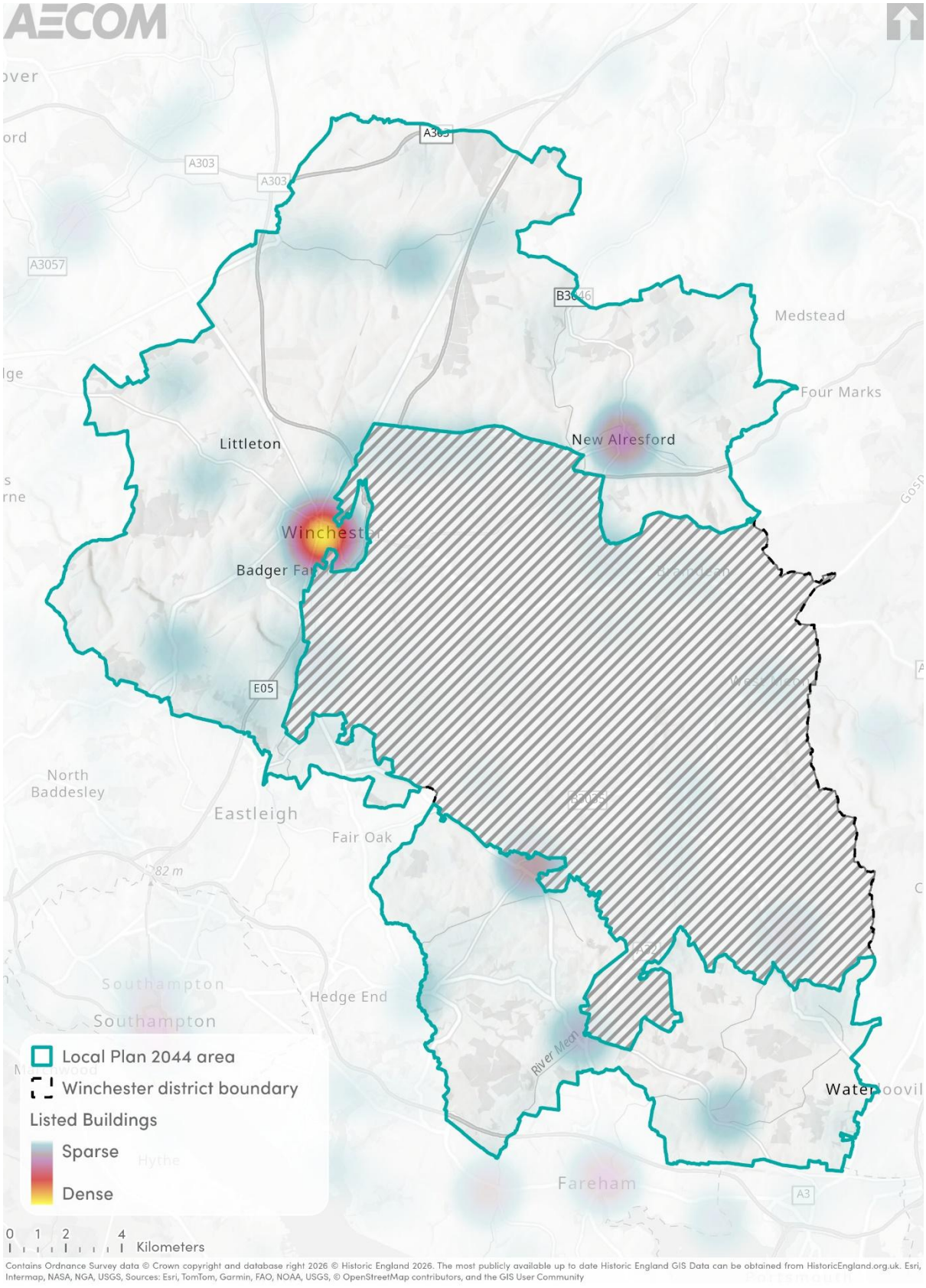
finalised conservation area technical assessments will be made available on the Winchester City Council website in due course.

11.10 According to the latest Heritage at Risk Register (2024), three of the Plan Area's heritage designations are known to be at risk[58] of being lost due to neglect, decay, or inappropriate development. These are:

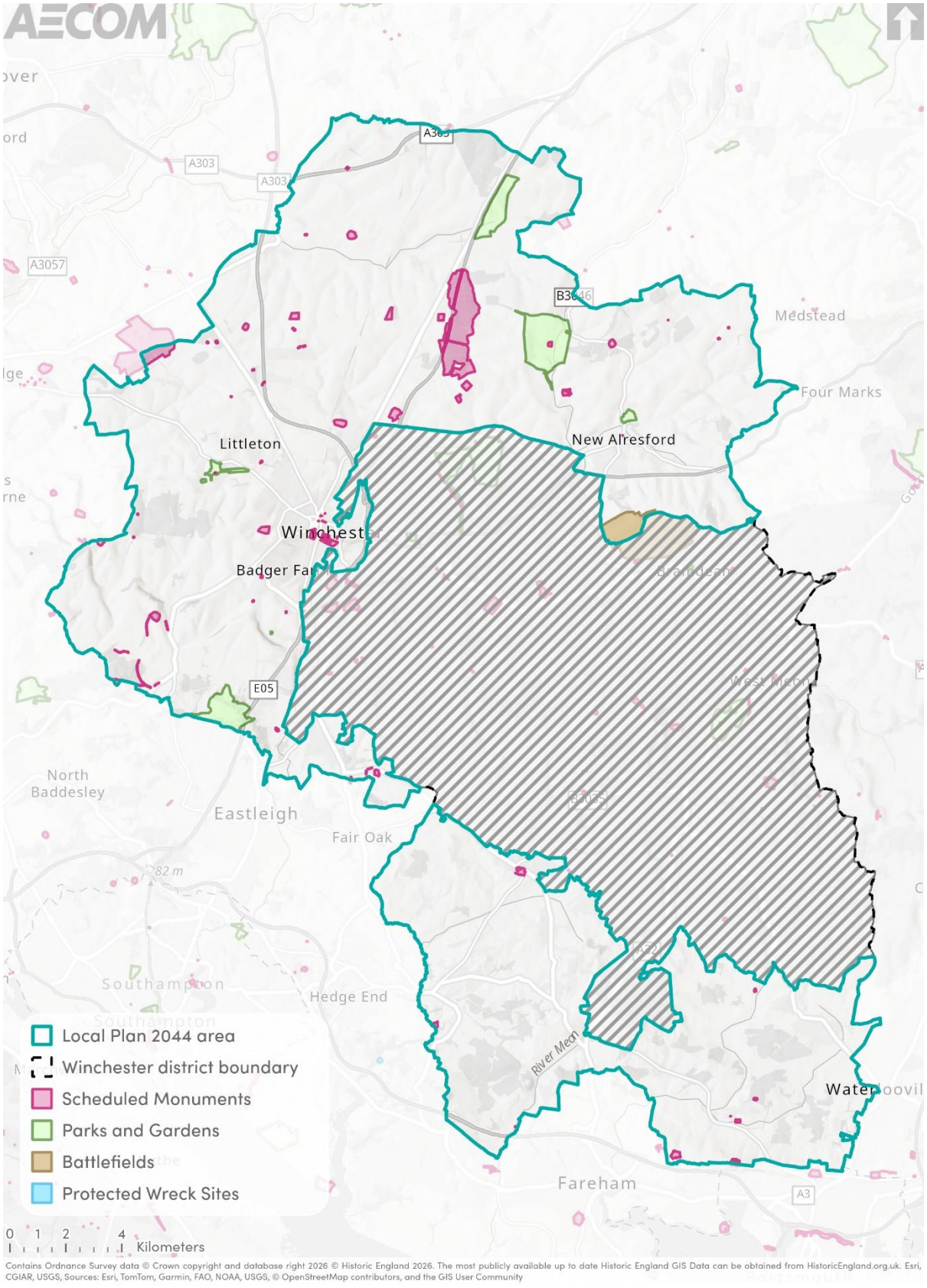
- Norsebury Ring hillfort, Micheldever – Winchester. This is a high vulnerability asset, in declining trend with extensive significant problems, however an action/strategy has been agreed but not yet implemented[59].
- Long barrow and bowl barrow 440m north west of Sanctuary Farm, Wonston – Winchester. This is a high vulnerability asset, in declining trend with extensive significant problems, however an action/strategy has been agreed but not yet implemented[60].
- Roman villa and earlier prehistoric settlement 400m west of Lone Farm, Itchen, Itchen Valley – Winchester. This is a high vulnerability asset, in declining trend with extensive significant problems, with no action/strategy identified or agreed[61].

[58] Historic England (2024). '*Heritage at Risk 2024 Registers*' can be accessed through this link.
[59] Historic England (2024). *'Norsebury Ring hillfort… List Entry'* can be accessed through this link.
[60] Historic England (2024). *'Long barrow and bowl barrow… List Entry'* can be accessed through this link.
[61] Historic England (2024). *'Roman villa and earlier prehistoric settlement… List Entry'* can be accessed through this link.

## Figure 10.4 Listed buildings distribution across Winchester

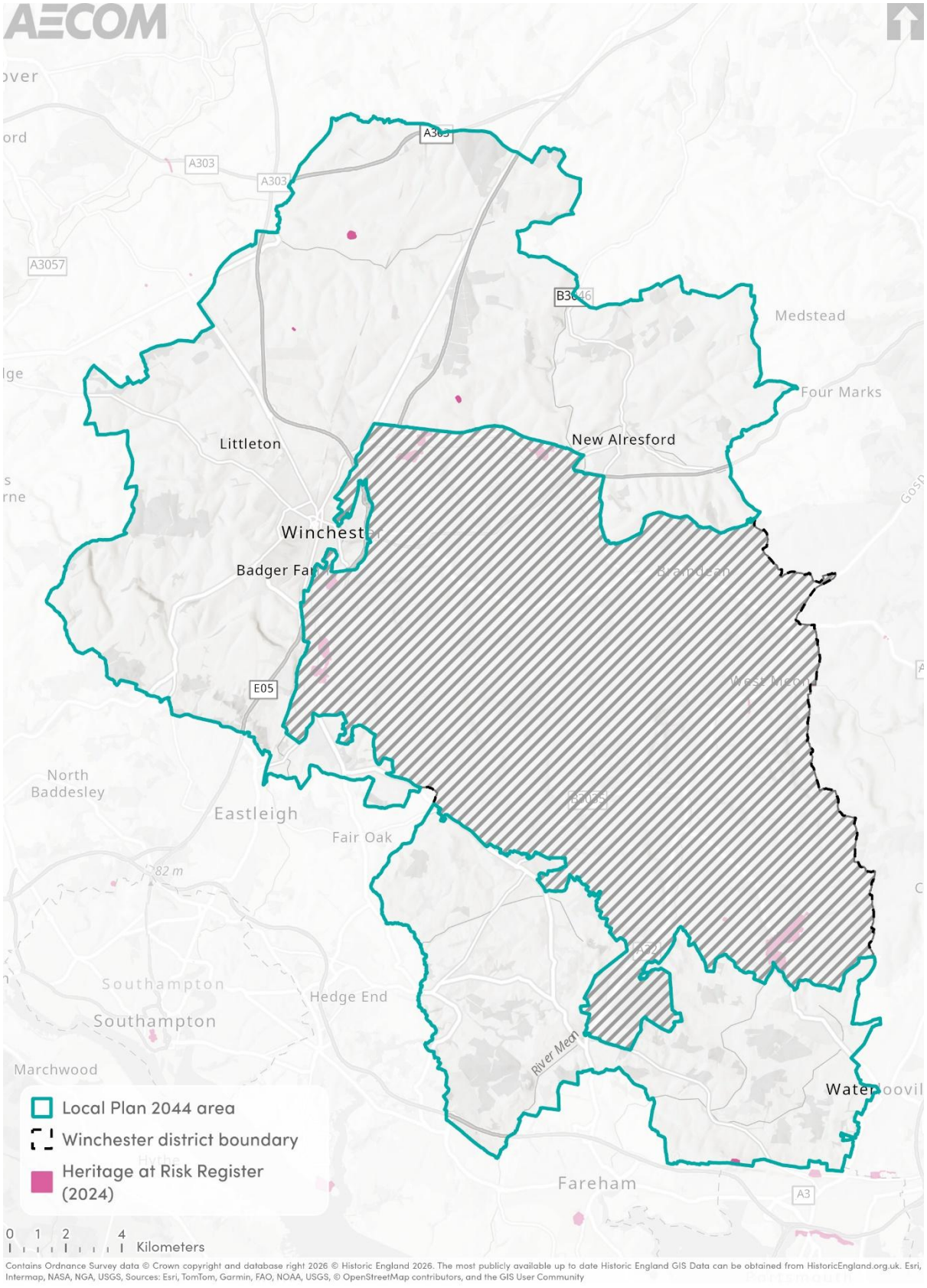


## Figure 10.5 Historic environment assets distribution across Winchester




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## Figure 10.6 Heritage at risk register (2024)



11.11 It is noted that not all of the District's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations. Despite this, non-designated features still remain as important historic features of the environment for local communities.

11.12 There is no existing list of non-designated heritage and locally listed heritage assets for the Winchester Plan Area, however the criteria for selection are in place and can be viewed on the WCC website.[62]

11.13 There is a Hampshire-wide register of locally important Historic Parks and Gardens. The Register of Hampshire's gardens, parks and landscapes of historical interest was created by Hampshire County Council in the 1980s as a direct result of concern about the growing pressure on land in Hampshire and a fear that the County's rich heritage of historic parks and gardens could be under threat from development. There are thirteen sites within the Winchester District area.[63]

11.14 Winchester District also holds considerable archaeological importance due to the depth and continuity of its human occupation. The city of Winchester, originating as the Roman town of Venta Belgarum, contains well-preserved structural remains, including elements of the Roman street layout and associated public and domestic buildings. These features have contributed substantially to the study of urban development and the relationship between Roman and later medieval settlement patterns.[64]

11.15 The district is also central to understanding Anglo-Saxon political and ecclesiastical organisation. As the principal city of Wessex, Winchester provides material evidence for early administrative, religious, and economic structures. Excavations have identified high-status architecture, craft-working areas, and burial sites, offering a reliable archaeological basis for interpreting the formation of early English governance.[65]

11.16 Beyond the urban core, the wider district encompasses a broad range of prehistoric, Roman, and medieval rural sites, including barrows, hillforts, villas, field systems, and monastic landscapes. Collectively, these sites document long-term land use and settlement continuity. The concentration and variety of archaeological remains within Winchester District make it a significant area for examining the development of communities and landscapes over several millennia.

11.17 The Winchester Historic Environment Record (HER) is the definitive record of the archaeology of Winchester, and the Winchester Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) is part of the HER that provides a detailed record covering the historic city of Winchester. The Winchester HER returns 7,082 resource results, which includes a number of historical assets including but not exclusive to Roman villas, cemeteries, Roman roads, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements, moated gardens, and city defences.

[62] Winchester City Council (no date). *'Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Locally Listed Heritage Assets'* can be accessed through this link.
[63] Hampshire Gardens Trust (no date). '*Register'* can be accessed through this link.
[64] Winchester City Council (no date). *'Archaeology in Winchester'* can be accessed through this link.
[65] Winchester City Council (no date). *'Archaeology Projects'* can be accessed through this link.

# Future baseline

11.18 Whilst designated and non-designated assets will continue to be afforded protection under the provisions of the NPPF and the WDLP, it is recognised that future development could, without the necessary care and attention, have the potential to adversely impact historic character and settings, detract from historic settlement qualities and disrupt valued viewpoints; being susceptible to insensitive design and layout in new development.

11.19 It is recognised that the Winchester Future 50 Conservation Area project has recently been completed. Up to date information, including images and supplementary guidance with regards to heritage assets, will be available for users to view on the Winchester Future 50 Conservation Area GIS Layer. This will help the community to understand and engage with heritage in their local area.

11.20 Climate change threatens heritage assets through extreme weather, rising sea levels, and erosion. Increased rainfall and humidity can accelerate material decay, while coastal sites risk permanent loss. Sustainable conservation strategies, like improved drainage and digital documentation, are important to protecting historic sites for the future.

# Key issues

11.21 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified:

- Winchester is a historically rich district, with a range of designated and non-designated assets. It is important that these are protected from inappropriate development that could damage their historic character or settings, ensuring that future developments do not negatively impact these assets.
- It will be important for any new development near to conservation areas to be considerate of historic context, as set out in the conservation area appraisal or conservation area character statements and technical assessments.
- A number of heritage assets within the Winchester District Local Plan area are at risk, highlighting the need for their preservation.
- Climate change, including increased rainfall and extreme weather, poses a significant threat to heritage sites, potentially accelerating deterioration. Development should incorporate sustainable practices that mitigate these risks to protect heritage for future generations.
- Planning for future growth through the WDLP will support the minimisation of impacts on heritage assets. It can also seek opportunities for public realm improvements, and accessibility improvements which can indirectly benefit access to and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- Sustainable conservation strategies, such as improved drainage systems and digital documentation, are important for safeguarding Winchester's historic assets amidst future development.

# IIA objective

11.21.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to the historic environment:

**Conserve and where possible, enhance the historic environment and its setting.**

11.22 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Preserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural and / or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?
- Preserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings?
- Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, and archaeologically sensitive areas, and support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
- Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic and cultural environment?

# 12. Housing

## Focus of theme

12.1 This theme focuses on meeting housing needs, including affordable housing, housing mix (size, type and tenure), and specialist accommodation needs.

## Policy context

12.2 **Table 12-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 12-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to housing**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Levelling-up and Regeneration Act | 2023 |
| Homes England Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 | 2023 |
| Long-Term Plan for Housing | 2023 |
| The National Housing Federation's Vision for a Long-Term Housing Strategy | 2023 |
| Planning Policy for Traveller Sites | 2023 |
| 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy | emerging |
| **Local** | |
| Housing Strategy (2023 – 2028) | 2024 |
| Gypsy and Traveller Topic Paper | 2024 |
| Winchester Strategic Housing Market Update | 2024 |
| WCC including SDNP Pitch Delivery Assessment | 2022 |
| WCC including SDNP Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment | 2022 |
| Housing Development Strategy (2021 – 2030) | 2021 |

12.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

12.4 The latest mid-year ONS estimates (from 2024) for population suggest further growth has occurred in Winchester in the years since the 2021 Census, rising to 135,632 (6.4% growth since 2021).[66]

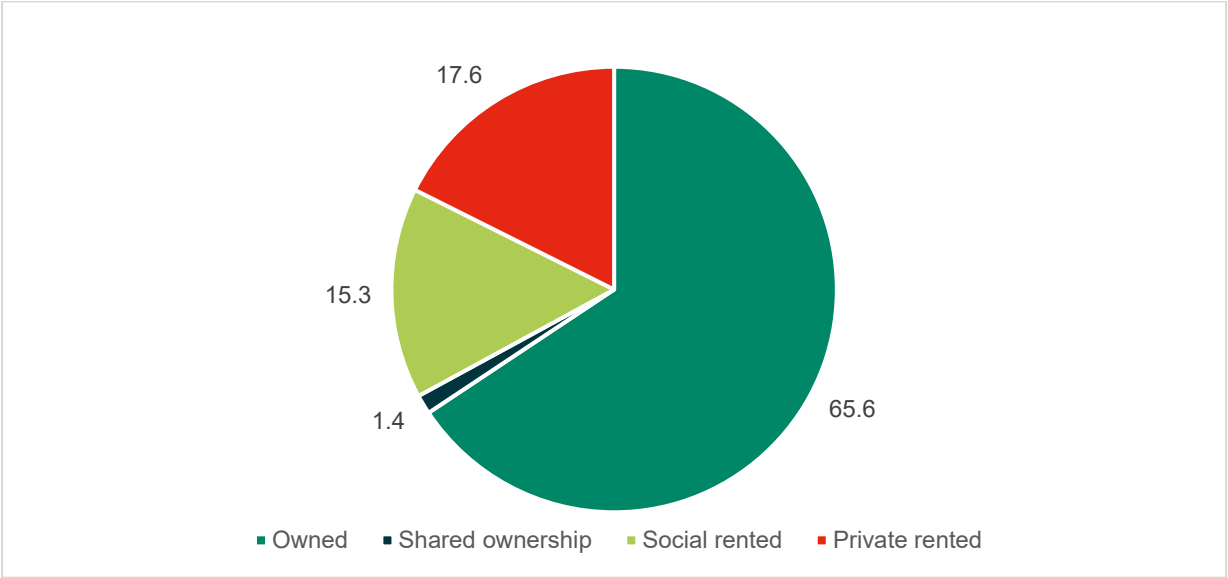
[66] ONS (2024). '*Estimates of the population for England and Wales*' can be accessed through this link.

12.5 As of the 2021 Census, there were 54,469 households in Winchester, mostly accommodated in detached houses (36%). Another 25% semi-detached houses, 20% were terraced, and 15% were flats or shared houses. Compared to both Hampshire and the rest of England, Winchester has a much higher proportion of lower-density housing types.[67]

12.6 Winchester's housing is also dominated by larger-sized homes, with 33% of dwellings having three bedrooms, and 34% having four-or-more bedrooms. Two-bedroom dwellings account for 23% of the housing stock, while only 10% have one bedroom. This is similar to the housing size mix at the county scale, but slightly larger than the national trend (Census 2021).

12.7 The 2021 Census shows that Winchester District's housing stock is dominated by ownership tenures (66%), as shown in **Figure 12.1**.[68] Private renting and social rent accounted for similar proportions: 18% and 15%, respectively. Finally, a small share (1%) is in shared ownership. This reflects Winchester's rural nature, where ownership is more common than in urban areas.

**Figure 12.1 Tenure by Household Composition for Winchester District**




12.8 As reported by Zoopla,[69] the average house price over the past 12 months in Winchester District is £632,927 – this is higher than both Hampshire and England. In the District, detached houses sold for an average of £1,018,355, semi-detached houses selling for an average of £578,618, terraced houses selling for an average of £539,687, and flats selling for an average of £316,794.

12.9 The average house prices for this period in the District are significantly higher than Hampshire (£397,411) and England (£357,891), highlighting affordability concerns. The high average house prices also impact the ability for young people to take their first step onto the housing ladder.

12.10 As noted in **Chapter 10**, the District has experienced a large population increase over the past 10 years. In line with this, housing growth has continued, driven by a range of factors including demographic changes, household

[67] ONS (2021) *'RM207 – Accommodation Type'* can be accessed through this link.
[68] ONS (2021) '*TS054 – Tenure*' can be accessed through this link.
[69] Zoopla (2025) '*House prices in Winchester'* can be accessed through this link.

formation trends, and national planning policy requirements. Planned development in the District aims to address housing need, affordability challenges, and to support economic growth.

12.11 It is worth noting, however, that the District faces challenges to new home building, especially in terms of the number of homes it needs to plan for, land availability, with large areas of protected landscapes such as the South Downs National Park, flood risk, and areas of environmental sensitivity. These constraints limit the amount of land available for development.

12.12 Winchester City also has a notable student population, with the University of Winchester, the University of Southampton's Winchester School of Art, and Peter Symonds College all located within the city. The University of Winchester alone enrols approximately 6,800 students, which is down from highs of 7,500 back in 2015-2018[70]. As both universities are experiencing a decline in student projections, there is no longer such a strong need for student housing and more students are living at home. There is also Sparsholt College, which offers post 16 education including degrees and focuses on agricultural, animal and environmental courses, however is located outside of Winchester City. This concentration of students has a direct effect on the private rented sector, particularly in city wards close to the university, where demand for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) is a persistent feature of the housing market. This can affect the availability and affordability of housing for other households, including families and young workers.

12.13 Further, Census data (2021) shows that Winchester has an older age profile than both the regional and national average. The median age increased from 42 to 43 between 2011 and 2021, compared to 41 for the South East and 40 for England. The number of residents aged 65 and over grew by 22.1% between 2011 and 2021, above the national rate of 20.1%, and life expectancy at birth is 84 years against a national average of 81. This has clear implications for housing mix, with increasing demand for accessible and smaller homes, and for health and care services.

12.14 Winchester City Council owns and manages over 5,000 residential properties which are let to residents who have joined the Hampshire Home Choice register[71]. East Hampshire District Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Havant Borough Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Winchester City Council, have agreed a common approach for the allocation of social housing across the five local authority areas and together operate a sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme called Hampshire Home Choice.

12.15 As of the 1st of April, 2025, a total of 9,952 households were registered of Hampshire Home Choice with 1,607 of these being registered with Winchester. There has been an overall increase of 53 homes (+0.5%) across the Hampshire area, with an increase of 63 in Winchester (+4%). This is the second highest increase across the Hampshire Home Choice register.

12.16 Of the 1,607 households on the Housing Register for Winchester, 2 are in Band 1 (<1%), 228 are Band 2 (14%), 1,271 are Band 3 (79%), and 106 are Band 4 (7%). This is broadly in line with the other local authority areas. Band 1 is highest priority, with Band 4 being lowest. In terms of assessed need, 1,052

[70] Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2026). *'Where do HE students study?'* can be accessed through this link.
[71] Winchester City Council (2025), *'Council Housing and Tenants'* can be accessed through this link.

households have a 1-bed assessed need (65%), 307 have a 2-bed assessed need (19%), 188 have a 3-bed need (12%), and 60 have a 4-bed assessed need (4%). As of April 2025, there were 1,873 total letting across the local authority areas, with 528 of these being in Winchester (28%).

12.17 A household is considered fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain an adequate level of warmth in the home. Although the emphasis is on heating in the home, fuel costs are based on total household fuel consumption and also include cooking, hot water, lighting and appliance usage.[72] The data indicates that 9.1% of households in Winchester are fuel poor, which is below the South East regional figure of 9.7%, and significantly below the national figure for England which was 13.1%.

12.18 Although fuel poverty rates within the District were relatively low compared to national and regional figures, there is considerable variation between different LSOAs within the Local Plan area. For example, the south of the district (Curdridge, Wickham, Knowle) contains areas with both the lowest and some of the highest rates within it. The Winchester City area has a broadly higher level of households who are fuel poor, with some higher pockets in and around New Alresford also. Other areas with relatively high rates include Warnford and Droxford in the National Park. Factors such as low household incomes, less well insulated housing stock, and reliance on more expensive forms of fuel such as oil are likely to be important in influencing these rates.

12.19 Homelessness is associated with severe poverty and is a social determinant of health. It often results from a combination of events such as relationship breakdown, debt, and adverse experiences in childhood and through ill health.

12.20 According to Winchester City Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019 – 2024)[73], the Plan Area faces a range of housing challenges that reflect both the area's affluence but also underlying inequalities. Winchester faces significant affordability pressures, with average house prices far exceeding local incomes and placing home ownership beyond the reach of many households. The typical home costs around £402,000 (at the time of the published strategy, now sits around £630,000), requiring an income far above what most local residents earn, while high private rents and a widening gap between Local Housing Allowance and market rents limit realistic options for lower-income households. Demand for affordable and social housing remains high, and there is limited availability within the private rented sector, rising evictions linked to welfare reform, and reduced funding for homelessness support services further constrain supply. These factors combine to increase the number of households living in unsuitable or insecure accommodation across the district.

12.21 Winchester District has a long-established Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community, and the evidence demonstrates a clear and continuing need for additional accommodation across the Plan area. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (Winchester City Council, 2022), updated through the Gypsy and Traveller Topic Paper 2024, identifies a need for approximately 91 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 35 Travelling Showpeople plots for the period 2022 to 2040. While overall provision for Gypsy and Travellers is expected to meet needs across the Local Plan period,

[72] Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (2024). '*Sub-regional fuel poverty, 2022 data'* can be accessed through this link.
[73] Winchester City Council (2020). *'Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024'* can be accessed through this link.

it is not possible to meet short-term needs in full or to demonstrate a five-year supply of sites. For Travelling Showpeople it is not possible to meet overall needs or to demonstrate a five-year supply.

12.22 The adopted Winchester District Local Plan 2020-2040 takes a positive approach to meeting these needs. Policy H11 sets out criteria for new sites, while Policies H12, H13 and H14 provide for the retention, intensification and expansion of existing sites respectively, and Policies H15 and H16 include site allocations. The approach is based primarily on expanding, intensifying or reconfiguring existing authorised sites, informed by a Pitch Deliverability Strategy prepared alongside the GTAA.

# Future baseline

12.23 Projections presented in the Hampshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2024 suggest population growth of 10.8% in Winchester from 2024 to 2031.[74] The District's population is also expected to age over time, with the proportions of those aged 65+ projected to grow by 17.8% by 2031, which will have implications on the need for specialist accommodation for older people.

12.24 The construction of new housing developments will put increased pressure on local services, including schools, healthcare facilities, public transport, and emergency services. As new housing is delivered across the Plan period, without the necessary forward planning by all of the infrastructure providers, increased pressure on local services and infrastructure can be anticipated, including schools, healthcare facilities, public transport, and emergency services. As the population grows and ages, demand on existing provision is likely to rise, with potential implications for GP surgeries, hospitals, schools, and transport networks.

# Key issues

12.25 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified:

- The District has experienced notable population growth since 2021, and projections indicate continued increases towards 2031. This growth, combined with demographic change, will place additional pressure on housing supply, local services, and essential infrastructure across Winchester.
- A significant rise in the older population is expected, with residents aged 65 and over projected to increase sharply by 2031. This ageing trend will create increased demand for specialist housing, accessible homes, and enhanced health and social care provision.
- Winchester District's housing stock is dominated by larger, low-density detached and semi-detached homes, with limited smaller properties available. This imbalance creates challenges for younger households, single-person households, and those seeking to downsize, and indicates a mismatch between existing stock and future needs.
- The District faces serious affordability pressures, with average house prices and rental costs far exceeding both county and national averages. Home

[74] Hampshire County Council (2024). '*Hampshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*' can be accessed through this link.

ownership is unattainable for many households, and rising private rents, combined with a widening gap between Local Housing Allowance and market rents, are limiting access to suitable and secure accommodation.

- Demand for affordable and social housing remains high, with over 1,600 households on the Hampshire Home Choice register in Winchester alone, most of whom require one-bedroom homes. Despite continued lettings, supply is insufficient to meet accumulated need, indicating sustained pressure on the affordable housing system.
- Although fuel poverty levels in the District are lower than regional and national averages, there are clear hotspots, particularly within Winchester city, parts of New Alresford, and rural villages such as Wickham and Droxford. These variations highlight the influence of older housing stock and reliance on more expensive fuel sources in rural areas.
- Homelessness remains a challenge, driven by high living costs, limited availability of affordable rented homes, welfare-related pressures, and reduced funding for support services. These factors contribute to rising housing insecurity and the increasing number of households living in unsuitable conditions.
- The District has an established Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people community, and evidence identifies an ongoing need for additional accommodation. While planned provision meets the long-term pitch requirements for Gypsy and Traveller households, short-term needs remain unmet, alongside an ongoing shortfall in Travelling Showpeople plots in both the short and long term. This reflects difficulties in identifying suitable land and addressing the needs of concealed and newly forming households.
- Planned housing growth will create additional demand for schools, health facilities, transport, and wider infrastructure. Without parallel investment by all of infrastructure providers, these pressures could lead to overcrowding, limited accessibility, and strain on essential public services, particularly as the population continues to grow and age. The Local Plan provides an opportunity to assess infrastructure and service capacity to serve new development, and for arrangements to be made in a timely way for appropriate increases in infrastructure capacity and measures to mitigate impacts.

# IIA objective

12.26 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to the housing:

**Ensure a range of housing types, sizes, and tenures to meet the identified housing needs.**

12.28 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Promote housing delivery that aligns with forecasted needs?
- Increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing for all residents, including lower-income and vulnerable groups?
- Deliver a balanced housing mix that meets the needs of different household types and sizes, including smaller homes and specialist housing for older people?
- Provide appropriate accommodation for gypsy and traveller communities and other specialist groups?
- Ensure that housing growth is supported by adequate infrastructure, services, and community facilities?

# 13. Landscape

## Focus of theme

13.1 This theme focuses on designated / protected landscapes within or near to the District, as well as landscape character, landscape quality, views, and visual amenity.

## Policy context

13.2 **Table 13-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 13-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Landscape**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| National Model Design Code | 2021 |
| The National Design Guide | 2019 |
| A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment | 2018 |
| **Local** | |
| South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2026 – 2031 | 2026 |
| Chichester Harbour National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030 | 2025 |
| North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030 | 2025 |
| Re:New Forest – Partnership Plan (2022-2027) | 2022 |
| Winchester City Council Landscape Character Assessment | 2022 |
| Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment | 2010 |
| Winchester City and its Setting | 1998 |

13.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

13.4 The South Downs National Park (SDNP), designated in 2010, extends across parts of Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex and includes a significant area within Winchester District. The SDNP covers 40% of the Winchester District (see Error! Reference source not found.). Although the local plan does not include the National Park, the landscape setting and special characteristics of the designation, alongside its diverse environmental and distinct visual

context, are an important influence. The key qualities and priorities for the National Park are set out in the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan and are summarised as follows:

- A nationally important landscape of distinctive natural beauty: the South Downs comprises a diverse landscape of rolling chalk downland, dramatic escarpments, river valleys, ancient woodland and farmland shaped by centuries of land management and settlement;
- A rich and diverse natural environment: the National Park supports internationally and nationally important habitats and species, including chalk grassland, ancient woodland, rivers and wetlands, forming an extensive ecological network that contributes to nature recovery and biodiversity across the wider region;
- An extensive cultural and historic landscape: the South Downs contains a wealth of archaeological and historic features, including prehistoric sites, historic parklands, farmsteads, villages and market towns, reflecting thousands of years of human interaction with the landscape;
- A living, working landscape shaped by farming and land management: agriculture and other land-based industries play an important role in maintaining the character of the landscape and supporting a sustainable rural economy and local communities;
- Opportunities for recreation, learning and access to nature: the National Park provides extensive opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the countryside through a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes, including the South Downs Way National Trail and the Pilgrims Trail, alongside opportunities for education, volunteering and outdoor learning;
- Tranquillity, dark night skies and a sense of place: despite being located within one of the most densely populated parts of England, the South Downs retains areas of tranquillity and dark skies that are valued by residents and visitors alike;
- A place for people and communities: the National Park contains a number of towns, villages and rural communities, supporting a diverse rural economy and encouraging people to connect with, enjoy and help care for the landscape; and
- A landscape responding to nature and climate challenges: the Partnership Management Plan places particular emphasis on nature recovery, climate action, clean water, improved access and the long-term sustainability of communities and land management within the National Park.

13.5 The New Forest National Park is located approximately 10km from the District, and is likely to influence upon the WDLP. The National Park was designated in 2005, forms the majority of the area within New Forest District (see Error! Reference source not found.). The key qualities of the National Park are set out in the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan and summarised below:

- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty: the National Park encompasses a wide variety of landscapes, ranging from ancient woodland with large veteran trees, to heathland, bog and unspoilt coastline;
- An extraordinary diversity of plans and animals and habitats of national and international importance: the mosaic of lowland heath, mire, ancient pasture

woodland and Forest lawns that forms the Open Forest is unique in Britain and Europe. In addition, the Solent coastline comprises extensive areas of mudflats, salt marsh and shingle, backed in places by low cliffs, supporting large populations of wintering wildfowl and waders. In total 56% of the National Park is designated for its national or international nature conservation value – a far higher proportion than any other English national park;

- A unique historic, cultural and archaeological heritage, from royal hunting ground, to shipbuilding, salt making and 500 years of military coastal defence. The cultural landscape of the New Forest has developed continuously from prehistoric times to the present;
- An historic communing system forming the heart of the working landscape based on farming and forestry. The New Forest remains one of the few extensive lowland commons where rights are still widely practised and a strong commoning culture continues;
- The iconic New Forest pony, together with donkeys, pigs and cattle, roaming free. The grazing of ponies and cattle has always been central to the pastoral economy of the New Forest and they are one of the most obvious and distinctive features of the area;
- Tranquillity in the midst of the busy, built up south of England. The tranquillity and sense of remoteness that can still be found in many parts of the National Park is a quality of importance to many people;
- Opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery in one of the largest extensive gentle landscapes in the south, including unmatched open access on foot and horseback to more than 30,000 hectares (116 square miles) in the centre of the National Park, and an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths across the rest of the area;
- A healthy environment: fresh air, clean water, local produce and a sense of ‘wildness’. The coastal location and prevailing south westerly wind mean that air pollution is generally low, and water quality in the New Forest rivers and streams, and on the coastal beaches, is also good; and
- Strong and distinctive local communities with a strong cultural identity and a wealth of local traditions and a thriving communing community.

13.6 The Winchester district is situated in close proximity to two designated National Landscapes, Chichester Harbour to the south, and the North Wessex Downs to the north. These areas are recognised for their outstanding natural beauty and are subject to specific management plans that guide their conservation and use. These designations represent contrasting landscape types, a low-lying coastal environment and an extensive rural chalk downland, each facing distinct environmental pressures and management priorities.

13.7 The Chichester Harbour National Landscape, located to the south of Winchester, is defined in its 2025–2030 Management Plan as a highly sensitive coastal environment with a “delicate balance” between internationally important habitats, recreational use, and economic activity. The plan highlights the harbour’s ecological significance, particularly its intertidal habitats and biodiversity, but emphasises that it is currently under severe pressure from climate change, declining water quality, and loss of saltmarsh habitats. These issues have contributed to a wider biodiversity crisis, with much of the site

assessed as being in unfavourable condition. In response, the Management Plan prioritises nature recovery, improved water quality, and more sustainable coastal management, alongside careful control of development and continued support for recreation and local industries such as boating.

13.8 In contrast, the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, located to the north of Winchester, is characterised in its 2025–2030 Management Plan as a predominantly rural, agricultural landscape where land management plays a central role in maintaining natural beauty. The plan identifies farming and land use as the primary influences on landscape character, with approximately 84% of the area in agricultural use, and emphasises the importance of sustainable land management in conserving biodiversity, heritage, and scenic quality. A key focus of the current Management Plan is nature recovery, including ambitious targets to increase wildlife-rich habitats and woodland cover by 2030, alongside addressing major challenges such as climate change and development pressure. The plan also reinforces the need to balance environmental protection with thriving rural communities and economic activity, ensuring that the landscape continues to function as a “working countryside” while maintaining its special qualities.

13.9 Natural England has produced national character area (NCA) profiles which outline the landscape character of different areas and explain how that character has arisen and is changing. The District is covered by South Hampshire Lowlands, Hampshire Downs, and South Downs LCAs (see **Figure 13.1**). Key characteristics of each NCA is provided in **Table 13-2** overleaf.

13.10 Natural England stress the importance of protecting ecosystem services provided by NCAs. This includes food provision, water availability, regulating soil erosion, regulating soil quality, regulating water quality, sense of place / inspiration, sense of history, recreation, biodiversity, and geodiversity.

### Table 13-2: National Character Areas in Winchester

| National Character Area | Summary of Key Characteristics |
|---|---|
| **South Hampshire Lowlands (NCA 128)** | • Low-lying, gently undulating landscape to the south of Winchester, underlain by Tertiary deposits with predominantly clayey soils and some more freely draining areas.<br>• A well-wooded landscape with a high proportion of ancient semi-natural woodland and copses.<br>• A pattern of small to medium-sized irregular fields, often enclosed by hedgerows, giving an intimate rural character.<br>• Mixed farmland with a mosaic of arable and pasture, interspersed with semi-natural habitats.<br>• River valleys, including parts of the River Itchen, providing lush, well-vegetated corridors.<br>• Areas influenced by urban fringe pressures, particularly around settlements such as Winchester and Eastleigh. |
| **Hampshire Downs (NCA 130)** | • Open, rolling chalk downland forming a large part of the northern and central parts of the District, with thin, well-drained calcareous soils.<br>• Large-scale arable fields with relatively few boundaries, creating an expansive, open landscape with long views.<br>• Remnant chalk grassland and areas of semi-natural habitat, often on steeper slopes and less intensively farmed land.<br>• Network of dry valleys and escarpments, with distinctive landform features.<br>• Sparse settlement pattern, with small villages and isolated farmsteads.<br>• Rich historic environment, including prehistoric earthworks, field systems and ancient trackways. |
| **South Downs (NCA 125)** | • A distinctive chalk landscape characterised by dramatic escarpments, rolling downland and a series of river valleys, including the River Meon and Itchen.<br>• A mosaic of land uses including arable farming, pasture and areas of species-rich chalk grassland of high biodiversity value.<br>• Extensive areas of ancient woodland, particularly on steeper slopes and in valleys.<br>• Strong historic character, with numerous archaeological features, historic parklands, and traditional villages built from local materials.<br>• A well-defined sense of place with high scenic quality, forming part of the South Downs National Park.<br>• Opportunities for recreation supported by an extensive network of public rights of way, including long-distance routes such as the South Downs Way. |

13.12 In terms of local landscape, the Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document covering the Plan Area. It identifies 23 Landscape Character Areas across 11 broad Landscape Character Types, ranging from open chalk downland and river valleys to ancient woodland, heathland remnants, and clay lowlands.

13.13 The assessment shows that the district's landscape is diverse and largely rural. Chalk downlands in the north and east are characterised by open farmland, long panoramic views, dark skies, and a strong sense of time-depth through prehistoric features and ancient field systems. The Itchen and Dever valleys carry European and national designations. The southern and eastern district contains significant ancient and semi-natural woodland and heathland remnants. Valued characteristics identified across the LCAs include tranquillity, dark skies, historic parkland, and the settings of historic settlements, all of which are sensitive to the cumulative effects of development and land use change.

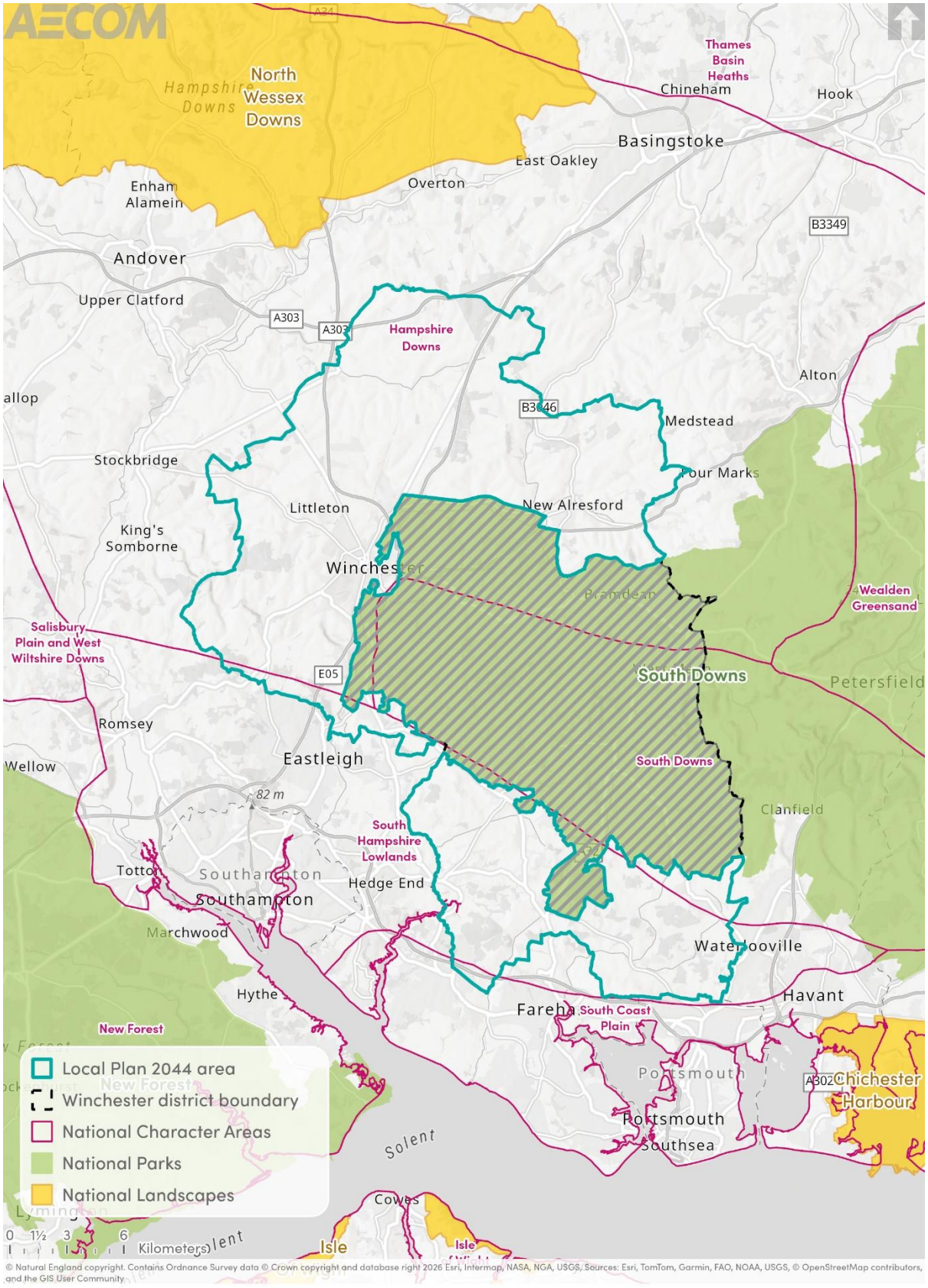
13.14 Ash dieback is a significant and widespread threat, with potential for substantial loss of mature tree cover across almost every character area. The cumulative effects of renewable energy infrastructure, particularly solar farms, are a growing concern across open downland and valley landscapes. Suburbanisation through horsiculture, inappropriate boundary treatment, and light pollution is eroding rural character in the urban fringes of Winchester and the southern settlements. Intensive agricultural practices continue to affect hedgerow condition and water quality across the chalk aquifer and river systems.

13.15 Winchester contains a number of TPOs across the District, reflecting the value placed on its trees and woodlands for their contribution to local character, biodiversity, and landscape quality.

13.16 Light pollution affects the sense of remoteness and tranquillity for which the area is valued. In 2016, CPRE produced an interactive map depicting the level of light pollution and dark skies in Britain.[75] The map indicates that areas of higher light pollution within the District are typically associated with Winchester city, the M3 corridor, and settlements close to the South Hampshire urban area (including those near Eastleigh and along key transport routes). In contrast, lower levels of light pollution are generally experienced in more rural parts of the District, particularly in the north and west, although these areas can still be influenced to some extent by light spill from nearby settlements and major roads.

[75] CPRE (2016). '*England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies'* can be accessed through this link.

## Figure 13.1: Landscape designations within and around Winchester



# Future baseline

13.17 Growth in Winchester plan area is likely to lead to changes within the landscape, particularly due to its rural areas and green spaces. New development could place pressure on the surrounding countryside, including areas of high environmental value.

13.18 Looking ahead, the condition of National Landscapes surrounding Winchester, is expected to remain under increasing pressure from climate change, development, and changing land use practices. Management Plans for both areas identify key future challenges such as biodiversity loss, water quality decline, and the need for large-scale nature recovery. Without effective intervention, these pressures may lead to further degradation of landscape character and ecological value. However, ongoing policy support and targeted management measures are likely to play a critical role in enhancing resilience, promoting sustainable land use, and delivering long-term environmental improvements within these protected landscapes.

13.19 New development also has the potential to result in incremental changes to landscape character within and surrounding the District. This could place increased pressure on landscape designations, their setting and special features. In particular, development on the edges of settlements, on elevated land, or within open countryside may affect important views within and across the District. For example, this might include views to and from the surrounding chalk downland and distinctive river valleys.

13.20 Climate change may also influence the character of the District's landscapes over time, with potential impacts on vegetation, water availability and the condition of habitats. These changes may affect the appearance and function of green spaces, historic landscapes and valued natural features.

13.21 Without appropriate planning and management, there is potential for cumulative effects arising from development and land use change to erode local distinctiveness and tranquillity. However, there are opportunities to deliver coordinated green infrastructure, enhance landscape character, and strengthen ecological networks. The Local Plan therefore provides an opportunity to ensure that development is planned in a way which conserves and enhances the landscape, while responding to future environmental pressures.

# Key issues

13.21.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified:

- Development within the District could adversely affect the setting and special qualities of the South Downs National Park, particularly in relation to views, tranquillity, dark skies and the wider landscape setting of the designation;
- Increased housing and infrastructure growth proposed through the Winchester District Local Plan may place pressure on nearby National Landscapes, through visual intrusion, increased recreational use.
- The District lies within three National Character Areas, each with their own distinctive landscape qualities. LCAs are sensitive to change and should be considered through plan-making.

- Expansion of settlements will require careful design to maintain rural character and local distinctiveness. This includes visually prominent locations, such as elevated land or open countryside.
- Light pollution, particularly from Winchester city, larger settlements and major transport corridors such as the M3, may reduce the extent of dark skies and affect the tranquillity of rural areas.
- Infrastructure provision and transport improvements, including along key corridors, have the potential to impact on landscape character, visual amenity and the setting of settlements if not considered strategically and sensitively designed.
- Climate change may result in changes to vegetation, water environments and land management practices, with potential impacts on the character and visual quality of the District's landscapes, including river valleys and chalk downland.

# IIA objective

13.22 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to landscape:

**Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the setting of the SDNP.**

13.23 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Ensure that Winchester's varied landscape character is conserved and enhanced?
- Use new and existing natural landscape features to mitigate any potential effects on nearby and distance interpretations of its landscapes?
- Contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the South Downs National Park?
- Minimise development impacts on the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape?

# 14. Natural resources

## Focus of theme

14.1 This theme focuses on use of resources (including agricultural land), good waste management, and circular economy.

## Policy context

14.2 **Table 14-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 14-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to natural resources**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| The 25 Year Environment Plan | 2018 |
| Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England | 2009 |
| **Local** | |
| Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan | 2026 |

14.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

## Current baseline

14.4 Management of land and stock for agriculture, forestry and horticulture has a major influence on landscape quality. Maintaining a viable agricultural and communing economy is an important consideration and emerging issue. Agricultural diversification can help support the long-term viability of these traditional land management practices, while adapting to a changing rural economy.

14.5 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. The ALC also includes classifications for 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'. Recent agricultural land classification has not been undertaken for the whole of the District. As such, in the absence of more detailed ALC surveys, ALC grades from pre-1988 ALC surveys are relied upon, which do not distinguish between sub-grade 3a land (BMV land) and 3b (not BMV land).

14.6 As shown in **Figure 14.1**, Grade 1 (excellent) land is concentrated in small patches to the south west of the district and is not found elsewhere in the District. Pockets of Grade 2 (very good) land is concentrated to the south of the District. Grade 3 (good to moderate) land is widespread across the District with notable concentrations to the north. Lower quality agricultural land (Grade 4) is

predominantly found in larger patches to the south and exists as corridors of lower quality land in the north. Grade 5 is absent from the District.

14.7 Development in the district, particularly in the north and south west, could result in the permanent loss of high quality agricultural soils, with an element of uncertainty at this stage surrounding the classification of Grade 3 land. The protection of high-quality agricultural land from unnecessary development remains a material consideration in planning decisions. Preserving the district's soils also supports the agricultural setting of parts of Winchester, which contributes to the area's sense of place and visual amenity.

14.8 Post 1988 agricultural classification has been undertaken in small, fragmented patches across the District (**Figure 14.2**)[76]. Grade 3a (BMV land) and Grade 3b (not BMV land) are the most widespread, appearing in several clusters throughout the District, although more concentrated in the north.

14.9 Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest in the present or the future due to their inherent properties. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is deployed as the process through which it is ensured that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources[77].

14.10 The adopted Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (HMWP) proposes several sites within Winchester as a mineral consultation/ safeguarding areas[78]. These are shown in **Figure 14.4**. Development without prior extraction of mineral resources in these areas may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that sterilisation of the resource will not occur, mineral extraction is inappropriate at that location, development would not pose a serious hinderance to mineral development in the vicinity or the merits of the development outweigh the safeguarding of the mineral.

14.11 There are no major extraction sites allocated in the adopted Minerals and Waste Plan for Winchester. However, there is a site at Micheldever Sidings that is allocated for minerals infrastructure. Specifically, the site has been safeguarded to support the sustainable transport and supply of aggregates in Hampshire.

14.12 Waste policy in Winchester will be set by the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (HMWP), which is expected to guide minerals and waste development to 2040[79]The Partial Update promotes a circular economy approach, seeking to maximise the reuse, recycling and recovery of waste and move towards a ‘zero waste to landfill’ economy. The Plan identifies a need for additional waste management capacity by 2040 to achieve net self-sufficiency, including approximately 0.5 million tonnes per annum of additional non-hazardous recycling and recovery capacity, 0.4 million tonnes per annum of inert recycling capacity, 0.16 million tonnes per annum of hazardous waste recycling and recovery capacity, and around 2.3 million tonnes of additional non-hazardous landfill capacity. The Plan also seeks to maintain Hampshire’s strong

[76] Much of the post-1988 mapping is tied to specific planning applications or local studies, meaning only areas of immediate interest were assessed in detail. As a result, coverage is uneven, with some regions having high-resolution, modern data while others still rely on older or less detailed classifications.
[77] UK Government (2014) ‘*Guidance: Minerals’* can be accessed through this link.
[78] Hampshire County Council (2013). ‘*Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan*’ can be accessed through this link.
[79] Hampshire County Council (2024). *‘Minerals and Waste Plan’* can be accessed through this link.

performance in diverting waste from landfill, with over 90% of municipal waste already diverted from landfill.

14.13 The HMWP identifies an estimated need for a further 0.9mtpa of waste management capacity by 2040 in order to achieve net self-sufficiency. concluded that overall waste management capacity in Hampshire is broadly meeting forecasts although recycling and diversion targets have been challenging to meet[80]. As of 2018, the recycling rate for non-hazardous waste had declined to below 45%, and the 95% landfill diversion target had not yet been met. More recent data for Winchester indicates that this challenge persists, with a household recycling rate of 39.5% recorded in 2022/2023. It is noted that Winchester have recently rolled out food waste waste bins. While this figure is not directly comparable, as it relates to total household waste rather than specifically non-hazardous waste, it nevertheless provides a useful indication of current performance. In comparison with neighbouring authorities, Winchester performs moderately well: it achieves a higher recycling rate than areas such as Basingstoke and Deane (29.4%) and Havant (29.9%), but falls below higher-performing districts including Eastleigh (42.2%), Hart (41.9%), and Rushmoor (41.7%)[81]. This variation reflects wider disparities in recycling performance across Hampshire authorities.

14.14 In Hampshire, the existing network of waste facilities are mainly concentrated in urban areas in the south and north of the county. The spatial distribution of these facilities was not expected to change significantly over the plan period. The plan notes that as waste management increasingly prioritises recycling and recovery over landfill, a greater proportion of waste is likely to be managed closer to where it is generated, particularly within urban areas. Despite this, the target for diverting waste from landfill has not yet been met, which could place additional pressure on the waste management and transport infrastructure in Hampshire in locations where waste management facilities have not been appropriately located.

14.15 Brownfield land is previously developed land that is previously developed and no longer in active use, it forms part of the land resources within Winchester. Re-use of brownfield land can help reduce pressure on undeveloped areas, make efficient use of existing infrastructure, and support regeneration objectives.

14.16 The most recent Winchester Brownfield Land Register (which includes those within the SDNP) (2025)[82] identifies 58 sites within Winchester. Of these sites, 44 have been permissioned and 14 have been marked as not permissioned.

14.17 Brownfield sites can present risks associated with contaminated land, particularly where historic industrial, commercial or transport-related uses have occurred. Redevelopment can disturb contaminated soils and potentially mobilise pollutants that pose risks to groundwater, surface water and human health. Any development enabled under the WDLP would therefore need to be supported by appropriate site investigation, risk assessment and remediation, in accordance with the Environment Agency's Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) guidance and its Approach to Groundwater Protection.

[80] Hampshire County Council (2020). '*Review of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan*' can be accessed through this link.
[81] Hart Council (2024). *'Cabinet Report – Waste Contract'* can be accessed through this link.
[82] Winchester City Council (2025). '*Brownfield Land Register*' can be accessed through this link.

This will help ensure that soil and groundwater quality are safeguarded during construction and operation.[83]

14.18 Historic landfill sites (HLS), once used for waste disposal, can create challenges for development due to potential contamination from harmful gases and leachate. Development sites near to HLS must conduct site assessments to check for environmental risks, which may require remediation efforts like soil removal or gas monitoring.

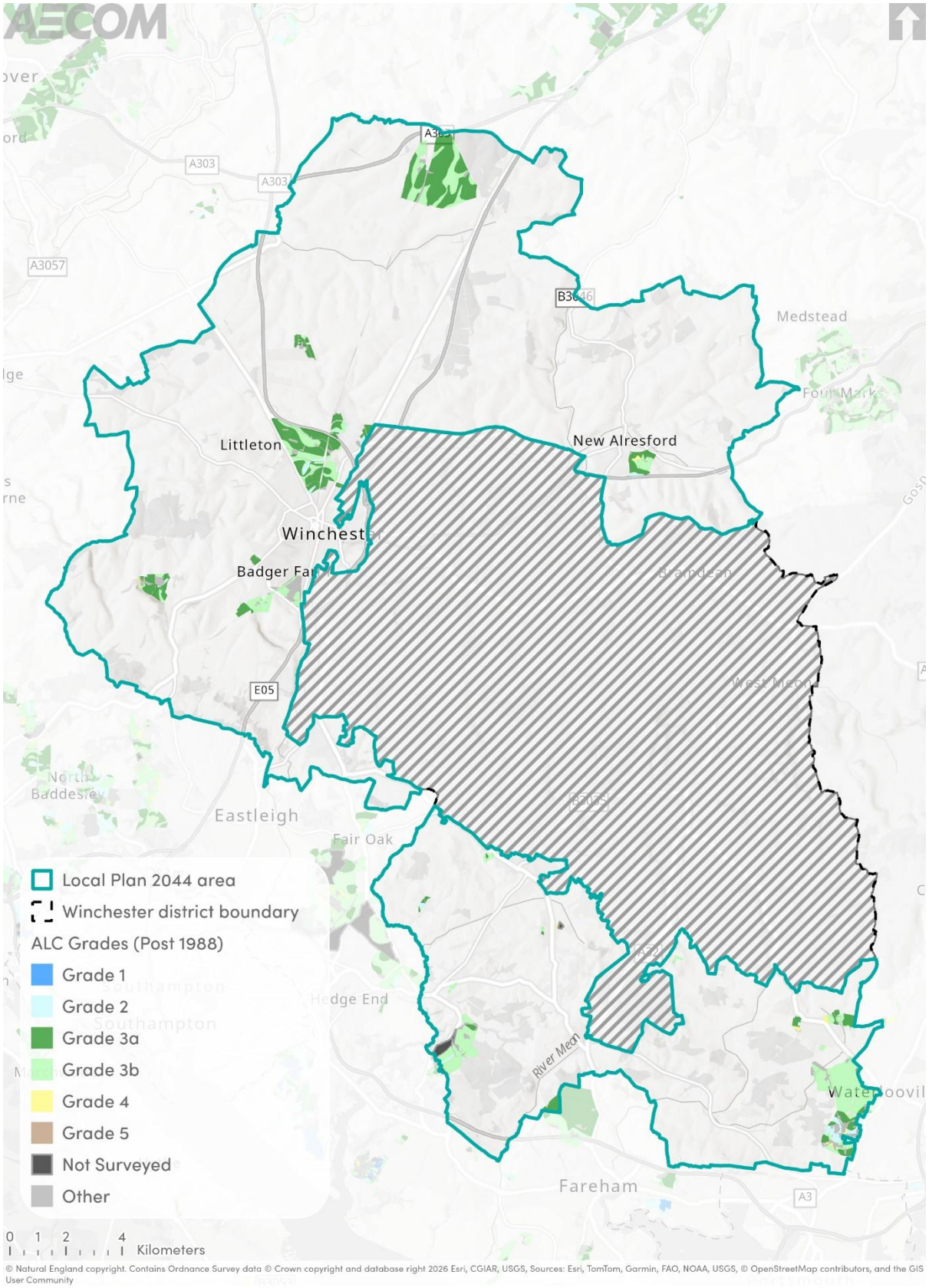
14.19 The District covers 59 HLS (see **Figure 14.3**) and is located adjacent to a number of others. The presence of these sites means that future development associated with the WDLP could intersect with areas of potential contamination risk, requiring careful ground investigation, risk assessment and management during construction and operation.

14.20 Winchesters most recent contaminated land strategy (2014-2019) sets out how Winchester City Council will implement the contaminated land regime as required by the Environmental Protection Act 1990[84]. In addition, the Development on Potentially Contaminated Land document (2014) produced by Winchester City Council provides guidance for developers, consultants and planning agents working on sites that may contain contaminated land[85]. The report emphasises early consultation with the local authorities to ensure compliance with planning regulations and environmental legislation.

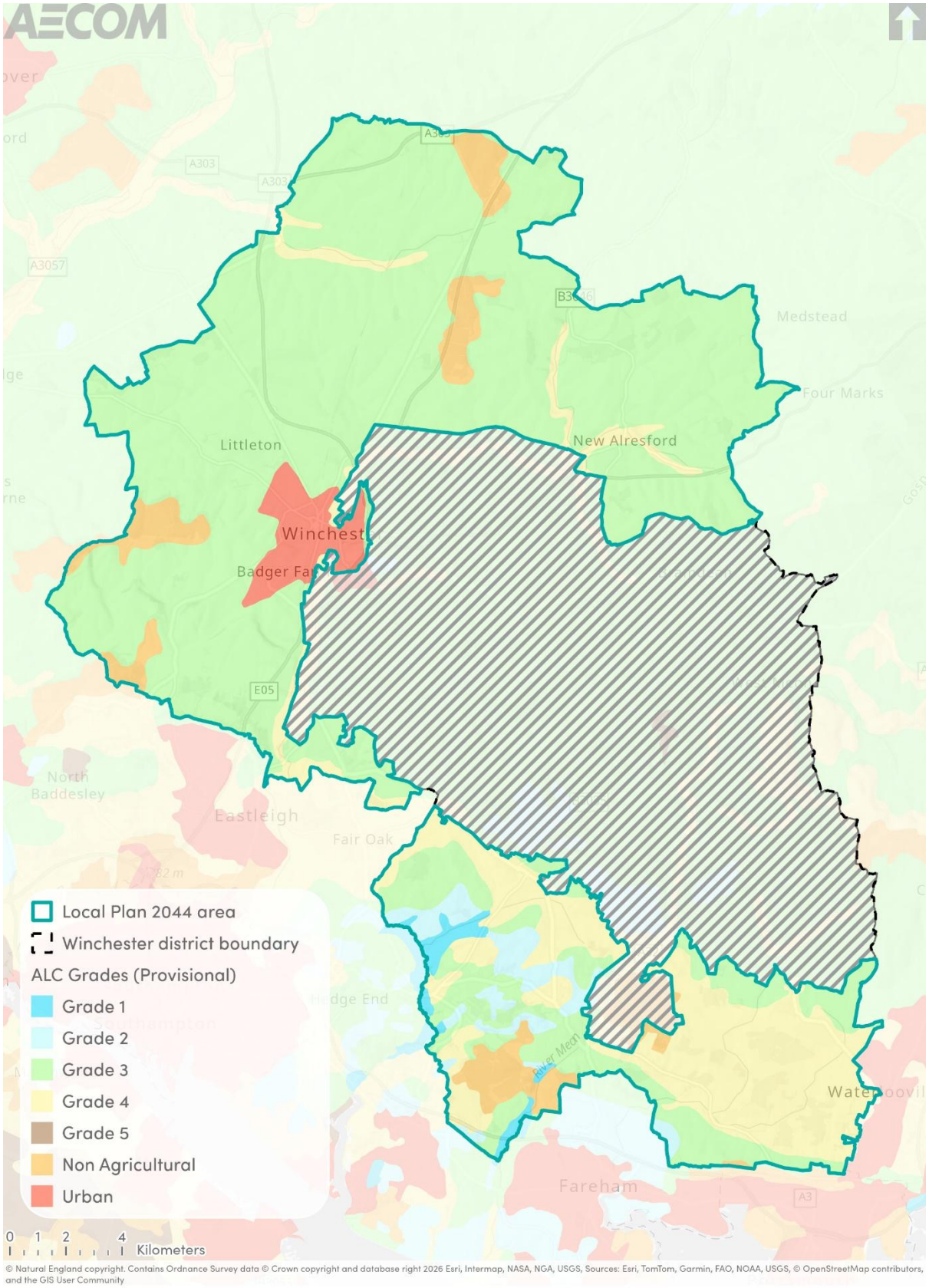
14.21 As of March 2026, there are no entries on the Winchester contaminated land register.

[83] Environment Agency (2018). '*The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection'* can be accessed through this link.
[84] Winchester City Council (2014). '*Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy*' can be accessed through this link.
[85] Winchester City Council (2014). '*Development on Potentially Contaminated Land*' can be accessed through this link.

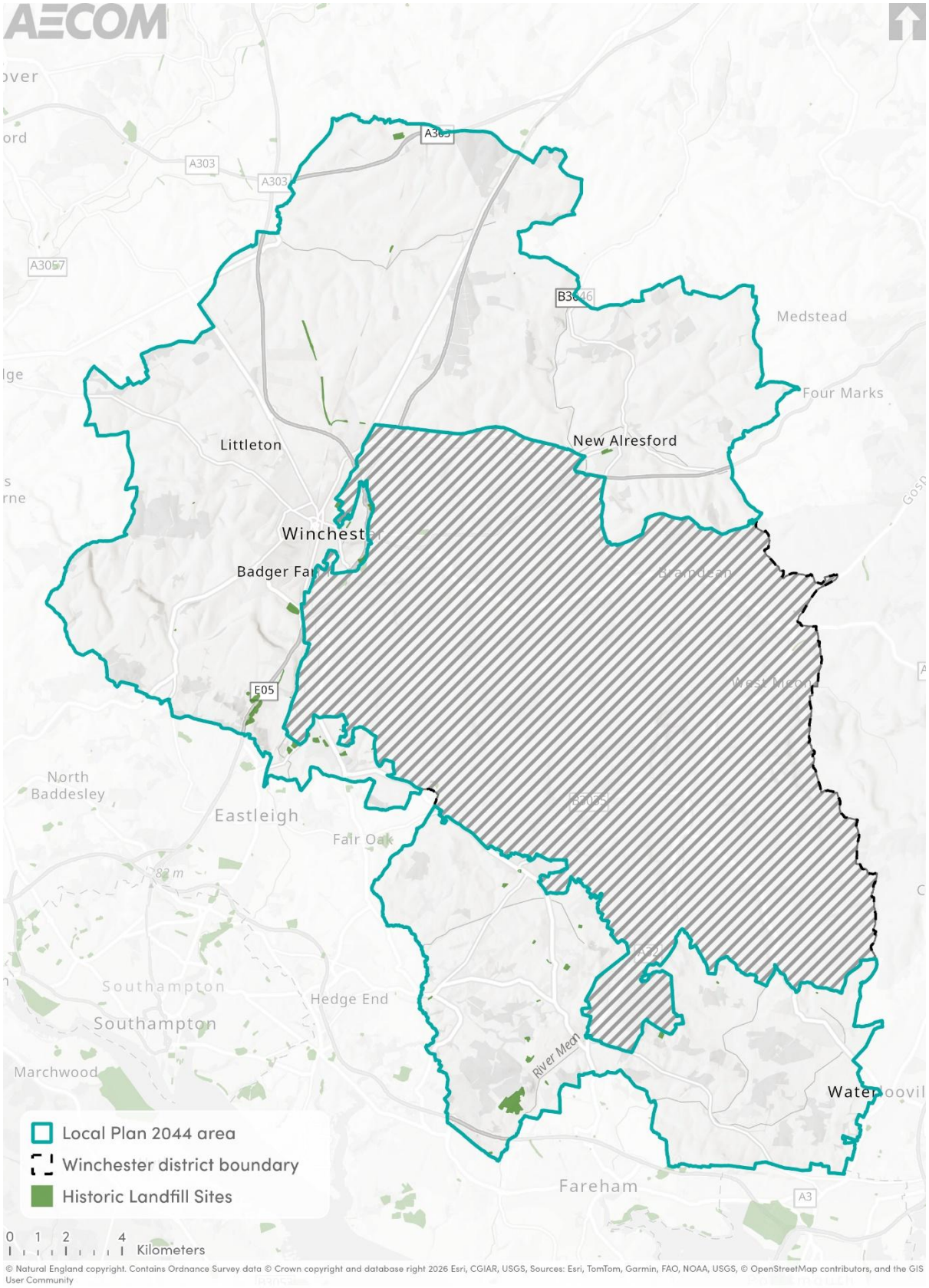
## Figure 14.1: Post 1988 ALC in the Winchester area



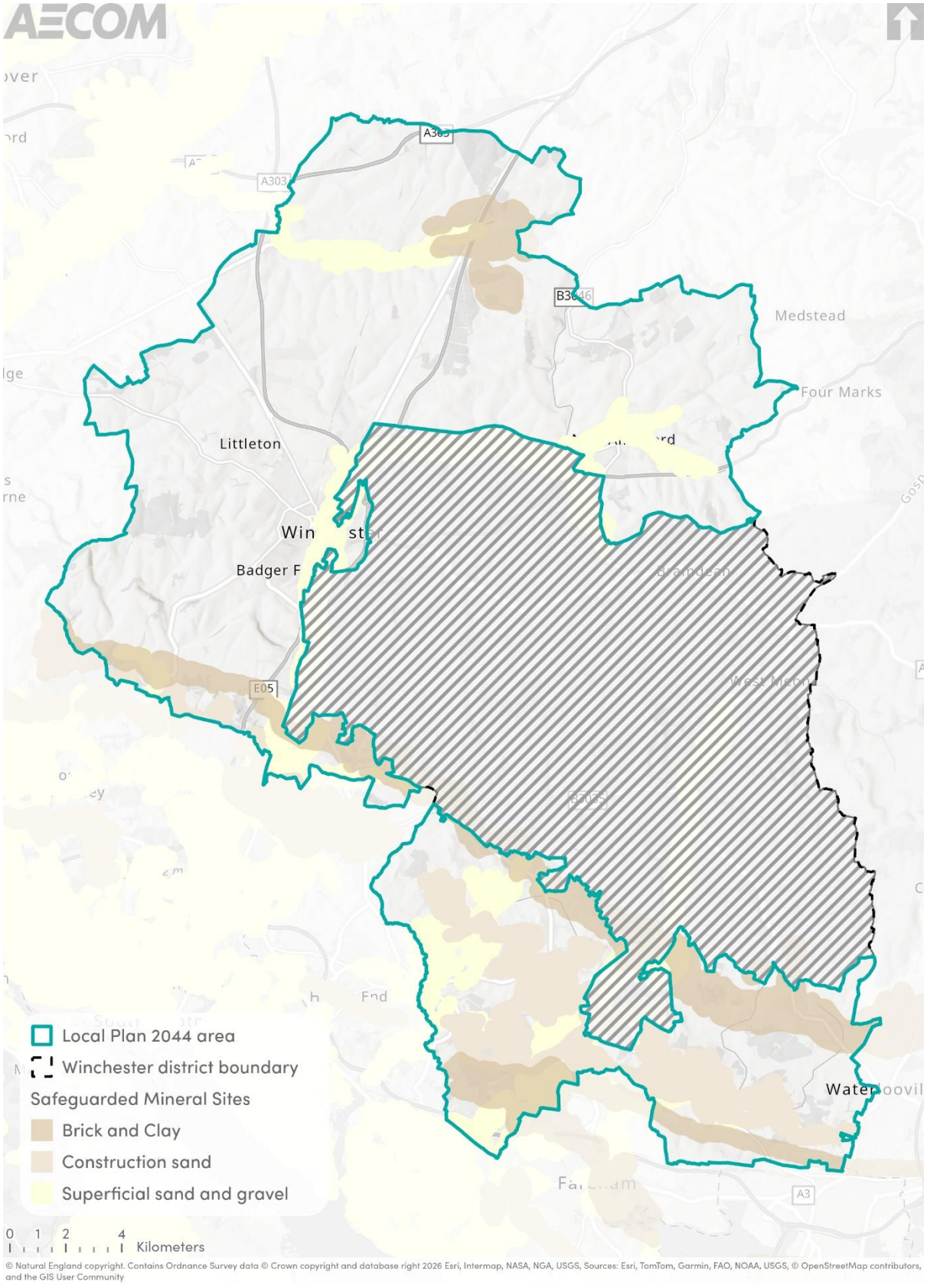
## Figure 14.2: Provisional ALC in the Winchester area



## Figure 14.3: Historic landfill sites in the Winchester area



## Figure 14.4: Safeguarded Mineral Sites in the Winchester area



# Future baseline

14.22 Future development has the potential to affect soil resources in the district through the loss of BMV land. Due to the prevalence of potential BMV land across the district, development outside of urban settlements could lead to the permanent loss of this resource.

14.23 That being said, it is recognised that rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns may lead to more frequent droughts or floods, affecting soil moisture, structure, and agricultural productivity. Soil erosion risks may also increase due to extreme weather, reducing soil fertility and agricultural potential, especially in BMV land.

14.24 The adopted Winchester District Local Plan 2020-2040 provides the strategic framework for directing development to the most sustainable locations, including prioritising the use of brownfield land where appropriate and viable. Whilst national policy establishes a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, and increased housing need will weigh significantly in planning decisions regardless of land type, the Local Plan presents an opportunity to plan for growth strategically, alongside promoting the sustainable management of natural resources through circular economy and design for life principles.

14.25 Demand for waste processing is likely to grow alongside population increases and urban expansion. While no capacity issues are currently identified for the period up until 2030, the capacity of existing waste management infrastructure will need to be regularly assessed to ensure that it can cope with increasing demand.

# Key issues

- Development outside urban areas could result in the permanent loss of BMV agricultural land, particularly in the north, west, and south. This could impact food production, landscape characteristics and soil quality;
- Redevelopment of brownfield sites offers opportunities to reduce urban sprawl, utilise existing infrastructure, and support regeneration. However, development on these sites may pose contamination risks to groundwater, requiring appropriate site investigations and remediation;
- Climate change may increase the risk of soil erosion, drought, and flooding, affecting soil structure, moisture levels, and agricultural productivity, especially in areas with BMV land;
- The district contains a number of mineral safeguarding areas which should be protected to avoid sterilisation of mineral resources by non-mineral development;
- Recycling and diversion from landfill targets outlined by the HMWP were not achieved by 2020. As of 2022/2023, Winchester had still not met the required recycling targets. Low recycling rates increase the volume of waste sent to landfill or incineration, which can lead to greater environmental impacts such as soil contamination and groundwater pollution;
- Historic landfill sites across the district present contamination risks from harmful gases and leachate. Development near these sites may require environmental permits and remediation measures; and

- Population growth and urban expansion will increase demand for waste processing infrastructure. Existing facilities must be monitored and potentially expanded to meet future needs, while ensuring that any new facilities do not adversely affect nearby communities or the environment.

# IIA objective

14.26 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objectives and assessment questions in relation to natural resources:

**Protect soil and mineral resources and promote efficient land use and waste management.**

14.27 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Maximise opportunities for urban development?
- Identify and minimise the development of higher quality agricultural land?
- Encourage growth within or adjacent to settlement boundaries, or areas with lower quality soils?
- Promote the redevelopment of previously developed land?
- Protect the integrity of mineral resources?
- Promote a circular waste economy?

# 15. Transport and Travel

## Focus of theme

15.1 This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in the District.

## Policy context

15.2 **Table 15-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 15-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transport**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain | 2021 |
| Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge | 2020 |
| The National Design Guide | 2019 |
| The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead | 2017 |
| The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy | 2016 |
| **Local** | |
| Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (City Focus) | 2025 |
| Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (District Focus) | 2024 |
| Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 | 2024 |
| Winchester Movement Strategy | 2019 |

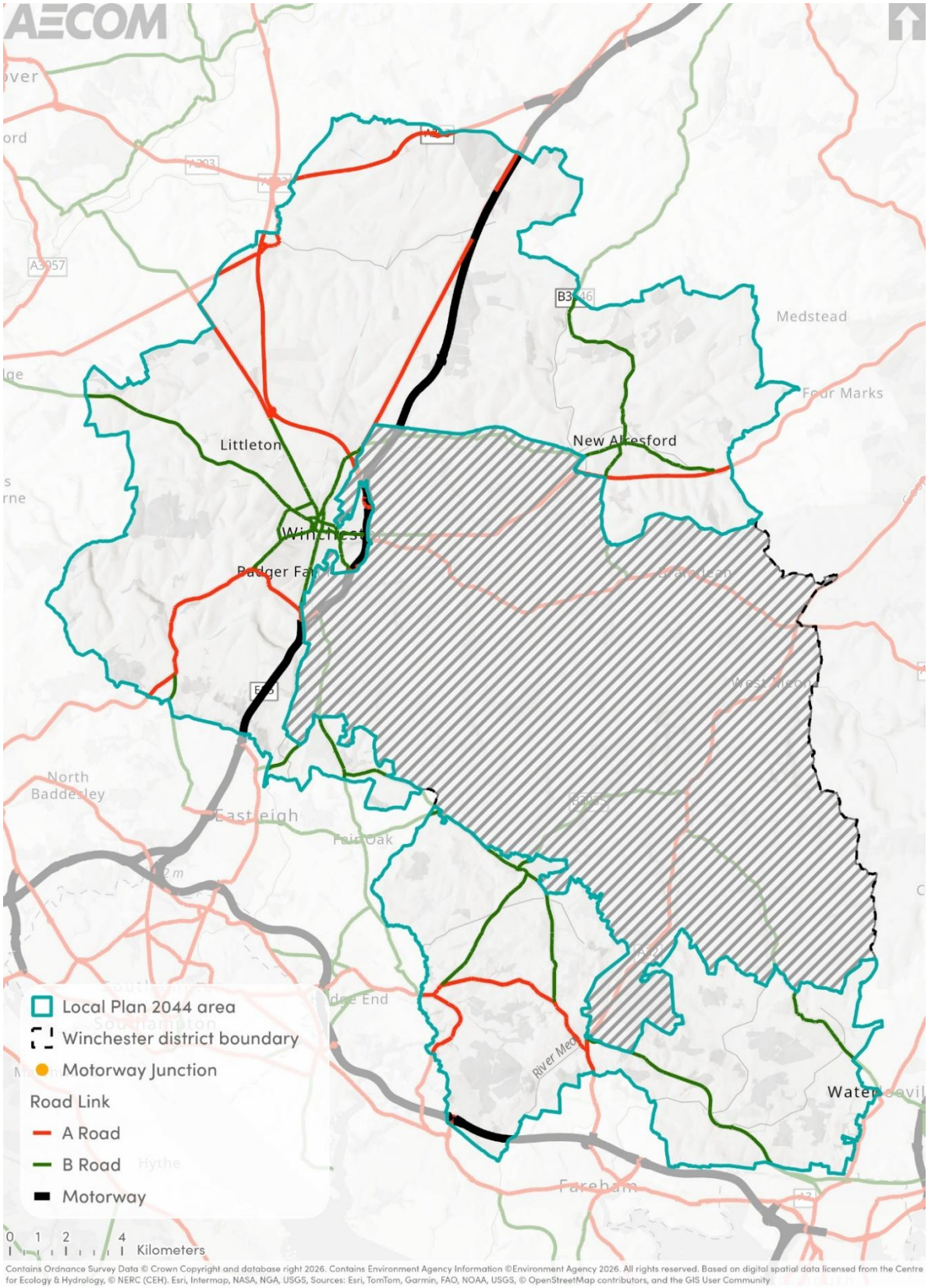
15.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as the new plan progresses.

## Current baseline

15.4 Winchester is well connected by the strategic road network. The M3 motorway runs to the east of the city, providing north–south connections between London and Southampton. The A34 road also passes close to the city and forms a key north–south route linking the Midlands and Oxfordshire with the south coast. Other important routes serving the city include the A31 road towards Farnham and the A272 road which provides east–west connections across Hampshire. To the south of the Plan area, the M27 forms a key east-west corridor serving Whiteley, Fareham, and other communities, providing connections between

Southampton and Portsmouth. These routes provide regional connectivity but also carry significant volumes of through-traffic. The strategic road network is shown in **Figure 15.1.**

## Figure 15.1 Strategic road network in Winchester




15.5 Bus services provide local public transport within the city and connect Winchester with surrounding settlements such as Kings Worthy, Colden Common and New Alresford, as well as larger nearby centres including Eastleigh and Andover. However, as with many areas outside major urban centres, bus services generally operate at lower frequencies compared with

larger cities. Across more rural parts of the District public transport provision tends to be more limited, and demand is generally local and low-scale, with some reliance on community transport and private car travel.

15.6 Winchester is well served by rail services, with regular direct connections to London Waterloo, Southampton, Basingstoke, Portsmouth and other destinations along the South Western Main Line. These services provide an important link for commuters and visitors and support the District's economic role within the wider sub-region. Rail accessibility is more limited elsewhere in the District, with smaller stations at locations such as Shawford, Micheldever, and the nearby stations at Swanwick and Botley, providing more limited stopping services.

15.7 Within the district, key trip generators include the historic city centre, employment areas, and major institutions such as the University of Winchester and Winchester College. Healthcare facilities including Royal Hampshire County Hospital also generate significant travel demand. To the south of the Plan area, settlements such as Whiteley, Wickham, and Bishop's Waltham generate their own significant travel patterns, with many residents travelling to employment centres including Southampton, Fareham, and Portsmouth. Across both the northern and southern parts of the district, these destinations attract trips from the surrounding rural areas, contributing to pressure on the road network and public transport provision throughout the Plan area.

15.8 The Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) sets out the strategic framework for transport across the County, including Winchester District. The LTP4 stresses the need for transport networks to support sustainable economic growth, reduce carbon emissions and improve accessibility, while responding to the challenges of climate change and changing travel behaviour. Within Winchester District, these issues are particularly relevant given the mix of urban and rural communities, strong commuting flows to nearby centres such as Southampton and Portsmouth, and the presence of strategic road and rail corridors passing through the District.

15.9 The key transport challenges relevant to Winchester District are summarised below:

- Congestion on key road corridors and within Winchester city: the M3, A34 and key radial routes into the city can experience congestion, particularly at peak times, reflecting commuting patterns and through-traffic movements;
- Managing the transport impacts of planned growth: future housing and employment development within the District and surrounding authorities will place additional pressure on the strategic and local transport networks;
- Reducing carbon emissions from transport: encouraging a shift towards sustainable modes of travel will be important in supporting wider climate change objectives;
- Improving opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use: enhancing active travel networks and improving public transport connectivity will help reduce reliance on private car travel;
- Addressing accessibility challenges in rural areas: many communities within the District have limited public transport provision and a greater reliance on private vehicles to access employment, education and services;

- Improving the resilience and maintenance of the transport network: climate change and extreme weather events present increasing challenges for maintaining reliable and safe transport infrastructure; and
- Supporting sustainable economic growth and access to employment: ensuring that the transport network enables access to jobs, services and education while maintaining the quality of life of residents and the character of the District's towns and villages.

15.10 The District has an extensive Public Rights of Way network, linking towns with the National Park and the wider region. Active travel is further supported by a limited cycle network. National cycle routes provide an important recreational and sustainable transport function within the Winchester area. The city is located on the National Cycle Network Route 23, which runs between Reading and Southampton via Basingstoke, Alresford and Eastleigh, passing directly through Winchester and linking the city to a wider network of towns and rural areas. Sections of this route include traffic-free paths and former railway corridors, such as the restored Hockley Viaduct.

15.11 In addition, Winchester forms the western starting point of the South Downs Way, a 100-mile long-distance trail that is open to cyclists for most of its length and provides a strategic recreational route across the South Downs to Eastbourne. These routes, alongside a wider network of local paths and quiet lanes, contribute to opportunities for active travel and recreation within the Winchester area.

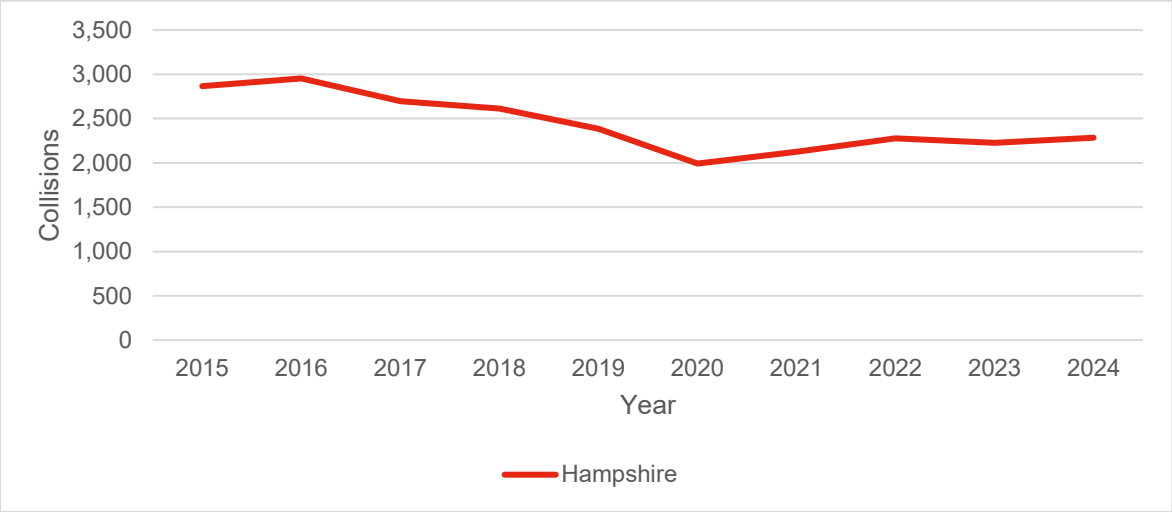
15.12 In 2024 and 2025, Hampshire County Council, working with Winchester City Council, adopted the Winchester District Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). LCWIPs set out a long-term approach to improving walking and cycling infrastructure. Reflecting the geography of the district, the LCWIP has been prepared in two complementary parts: a District Focus document covering the more rural parts of the district and a City Focus document addressing the urban area of Winchester City. Together, these documents establish a strategic network of cycling routes and walking corridors and identify priority schemes for future investment.

15.13 The LCWIP aims to make walking and cycling safer, more convenient and more attractive for everyday journeys. The Plan identifies a series of primary and secondary cycling corridors linking residential areas with key destinations such as the city centre, the railway station, employment areas, schools and local services. It also identifies Core Walking Zones and priority walking routes where improvements to the public realm, crossings and pedestrian facilities will be prioritised in order to encourage more short trips to be undertaken on foot or by cycle.

15.14 The Plan supports the wider objectives of the Winchester Movement Strategy and Hampshire's Local Transport Plan by promoting active travel and reducing reliance on private car use. The LCWIP provides an evidence base and prioritised programme of improvements which can be delivered as funding becomes available, including through developer contributions and government funding streams. By improving connectivity between neighbourhoods, services and transport interchanges, the Plan also seeks to support sustainable growth, improve air quality and contribute to healthier lifestyles for residents and visitors.

15.15 The Department for Transport provides information on the number and nature of casualties sustained as a result of road traffic accidents reported in Great Britain's roads, with the latest available data from 2024.[86] Over the last 10 years, there has been a general downward trend in reported collisions in Hampshire (see **Figure 15.2**), reflecting a wide range of factors (including road improvement schemes, improved vehicle safety, and national and local measures to improve the training and skills of road users and their compliance with traffic laws).

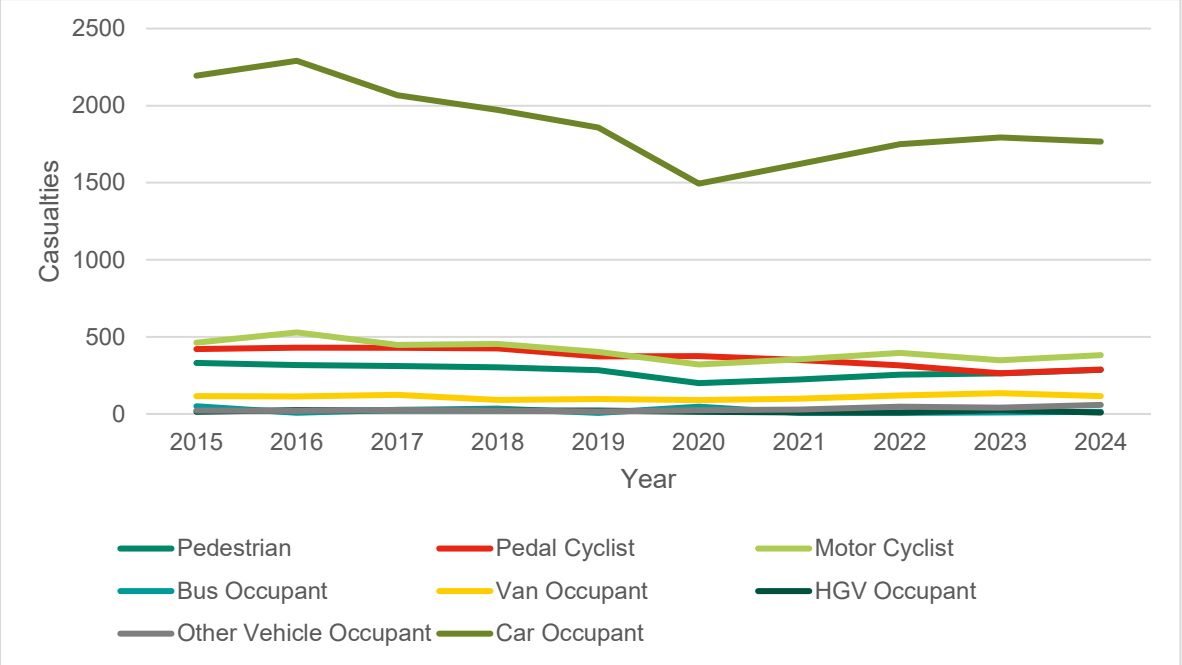
**Figure 15.2 Collisions in Winchester (All Severities) (2015 - 2024)**




15.16 As shown in **Figure 15.3**, reductions in the number of casualties are being seen among most of the road user groups in Winchester between 2015 and 2024. The exception to this is the 'other vehicle occupant' group, which saw casualty numbers experiencing a slight upward trend over the observed period.

[86] Department for Transport (2023). '*Number and rates of reported road collisions by severity and local authority, Great Britain, 10 years up to 2024*' can be accessed through this link. [See Sheet RAS0403]

**Figure 15.3 Casualties in Winchester by Road User (2015 - 2024)**




# Future baseline

15.17 Winchester is expected to see continued population growth, driven by new developments such as those in the emerging WDLP. As the population increases, there will be greater demand for transport services and infrastructure.

15.18 In the absence of further interventions, travel patterns across the District are expected to remain heavily reliant on private car use, particularly in rural areas where public transport provision is more limited and settlements are dispersed. Planned population and employment growth within the District may increase pressure on the local highway network, particularly on key routes serving Winchester city and connections to the strategic road network.

15.19 The need to reduce carbon emissions from transport is likely to become increasingly important over the plan period. Transport currently represents a significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions and achieving national and local climate targets will require a shift towards lower-carbon travel, including greater use of public transport, walking and cycling, as well as the transition to zero-emission vehicles. Without measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns, reliance on private car use may remain high, particularly in rural parts of the District where alternative transport options can be limited.

15.20 Accessibility challenges may also persist in some parts of the District, particularly in smaller rural settlements where public transport services are less frequent. This may affect the ability of some residents to access employment, education, healthcare and other services without the use of a private vehicle. An ageing population may also increase demand for accessible transport options and community transport services.

15.21 Climate change is also expected to place increasing pressure on transport infrastructure through more frequent extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall and flooding, which may affect the resilience and maintenance

requirements of the highway and rail networks. Ensuring that transport infrastructure is resilient to these effects will become increasingly important over the plan period.

15.22 It is recognised that national and local transport strategies, including the Hampshire Local Transport Plan, seek to address aforementioned challenges by supporting a more sustainable and resilient transport system. Measures to improve public transport, expand walking and cycling networks, promote low-carbon travel and manage travel demand are expected to play an important role in shaping future travel patterns within the District.

15.23 As development continues, road traffic volumes are expected to rise, increasing the risk of accidents, particularly among vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists. Active travel infrastructure improvements, including better cycling and pedestrian routes, will play an important role in promoting safer and more sustainable transport options. With an ageing population, mobility aids (such as safe resting areas, and assisted crossing aids) and the legibility of the public realm (clear areas that give pedestrian priority for example) also become increasingly important considerations in the strategic location of growth.

# Key issues

15.25 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Transport and Travel:

- Congestion on key road corridors and within Winchester city, particularly on routes connecting the District to the wider sub-regional road network, including the M3 and A34, and on main routes serving the city centre;
- Limited public transport coverage and service frequency in rural parts of the District may reinforce car dependency and reduce accessibility for non-drivers, particularly in more isolated communities;
- The potential for planned growth within the District and surrounding areas to place additional pressure on transport infrastructure, including both the strategic road network and local roads;
- Ensuring that the transport network supports economic activity and access to employment, while maintaining the quality of life of residents and the character of the District's towns and villages; and
- The need to improve the resilience of the transport network, particularly in response to the potential impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.
- Road safety has improved overall, but some risks remain. Casualties among some user groups, such as other vehicle occupants, have shown a slight upward trend and require continued monitoring and safety measures.

# IIA objective

15.25.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to Transport and Travel:

**Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel by less sustainable modes whilst mitigating the likely impacts of increased congestion from future growth.**

15.26 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Support the objectives of the Local Transport Plan?
- Reduce the need to travel with sustainable patterns of land use and development?
- Be able to deliver the necessary mitigation to reduce its impact on the highways network?
- Provide opportunities to improve frequency and availability of public transport services, particularly for the more rural communities?
- Encourage a modal shift to more sustainable and active forms of travel, such as walking and cycling and use of public transport?
- Prioritise sustainable transport options over car use where possible?
- Provide adequate cycle parking and storage options?
- Facilitate working from home and remote working?

# 16. Water resources

## Focus of theme

16.1 This theme focuses on water supply resources and water quality (including wastewater treatment) in Winchester.

## Policy context

16.2 **Table 16-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the IIA.

**Table 16-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Water**

| Document Title | Year of Publication |
|---|---|
| **National** | |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2026 |
| The 25 Year Environment Plan | 2018 |
| Future Water: The government's water strategy for England | 2011 |
| Water for Life | 2011 |
| **Local** | |
| South East Water: Water Resource Management Plan 2025-2075 | 2024 |
| Southern Water: Water Resource Management Plan 2024 | 2024 |
| LEEP Networks: Water Resource Management Plan 2025-2050 | 2024 |
| Independent Water Networks: Water Resource Management Plan | 2024 |
| Portsmouth Water: Water Resources Management Plan 2025-2075 | 2024 |
| Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the New Forest River Basin Catchment | 2022 |
| Nutrient Neutrality Topic Paper | 2024 |
| South Inshore and South Offshore Marine Plan (2018) | 2018 |

16.3 It is recognised that some of these plans and strategies may be updated as part of the new plan process.

# Current baseline

16.4 The district lies within the South East River Basin District, with most of its area falling under the Test and Itchen and East Hampshire Management Catchments. There is also a small section to the west located in the South East TraC Management Catchment. In terms of Operational Catchments:

- Within the Test and Itchen Management Catchment the district is located within the Itchen, Test Lower and Southampton Streams and Test Upper and Middle Operational Catchments.
- Within the East Hampshire Management Catchment, the district is located within the East Hampshire Rivers Operational Catchment.
- Within the South East TraC Management Catchment the district is located within the Southampton Water Operational Catchment.

16.5 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires the creation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). In these, surface waterbodies are classified using a system of five quality classes: high, good, moderate, poor, and bad. In general, the classification of waterbodies is defined by how much their condition or status differs from near natural conditions.

16.6 **Table 16-2** displays the water bodies that overlap with the boundary of Winchester and includes their ecological and chemical status.

**Table 16-2: Waterbodies in Winchester**

| Operational Catchment | Water Body name | Ecological Status | Chemical Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Test Upper and Middle** | Test (Upper) | Good | Fail |
| | Sombourne Stream | Good | Fail |
| | Dever | Bad | Fail |
| **Test Lower and Southampton Streams** | Fairbourne Stream to Fishlake Meadows | Moderate | Fail |
| | Tadburn Lake | Moderate | Fail |
| **Itchen** | Monks Brook | Moderate | Fail |
| | Bow Lake | Bad | Fail |
| | Itchen (Cheriton Stream) | Good | Fail |
| | Itchen | Good | Fail |
| | Arle | Moderate | Fail |
| | Candover Brook | Moderate | Fail |
| | Nun's Walk Stream | Moderate | Fail |
| **East Hampshire Rivers** | Main River Hamble | Moderate | Fail |
| | Moors Stream | Good | Fail |

| Operational Catchment | Water Body name | Ecological Status | Chemical Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Horton Heath Stream | Good | Fail |
| | Upper Hamble | Moderate | Fail |
| | Upper Wallington | Good | Fail |
| | Wallington below Southwick | Moderate | Fail |
| | Potwell Trib | Moderate | Fail |
| | Meon | Moderate | Fail |
| **Southampton Water** | Southampton Water | Moderate | Fail |

16.7 Reflecting the most recently available condition assessments[87], twelve of the 21 water bodies within Winchester have been assessed as having moderate ecological status, with seven achieving good status and two bad status. All water bodies failed the most recent chemical status assessment, however this is a national challenge associated with a change in methodology and an increase in the evidence base[88].

16.8 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas. In total, there are five surface water NVZs; R. Meon NVZ, Upper Hamble NVZ, Bow Lake NVZ, Nun's Walk Stream NVZ and North Wey (Alton to Tilford) NVZ, three groundwater NVZs; Hampshire Chalk, Kingsclere and Greywell and Fareham NVZ and two eutrophic water NVZs; Chichester, Langstone and Portsmouth Harbours Eutrophic NVZ (TraC) and Hamble Estuary Eutrophic NVZ (TraC). These designations cover the entirety of the district aside from a small section to the south west.

16.9 Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (DWSZ) are areas that have been identified as being 'at risk' of failing the drinking water protection objectives of the Water Environment Regulations 2017[89]. In total, there is one surface water DWSZ; River Wey DWSZ and seven groundwater DWSZ; Winchester DWSZ, Twyford DWSZ, Itchen Groundwater DWSZ, Clanfield (including Catherington South) DWSZ, Fareham DWSZ, and Bishops Waltham DWSZ.

16.10 Development allocated through the WDLP will need to demonstrate that proposed policies and site allocations within or near NVZs, SPZs or DWSZs appropriately safeguard water quality.

16.11 In England, watercourses can be designated as 'Main Rivers'. These are usually larger rivers and streams, and they are managed by the Environment Agency. The designated Main Rivers in Winchester are shown in **Figure 16.1** and include, but are not limited to:

[87] Environment Agency (no date). '*Catchment Data Explorer*' can be accessed through this link.
[88] Environment Agency (2019) *'How to Use Catchment Data Explorer'* can be accessed through this link.
[89] UK Government (2017) '*The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations*' can be accessed through this link.

- Curbridge Creek
- Moors Stream
- Nun's Walk Stream
- Old Park Stream
- Otterbourne Stream
- River Arle
- River Hamble
- River Itchen
- River Meon
- Southbrook Stream
- Upper Hamble Estuary
- Wallington River

16.12 The River Itchen forms the main river corridor, flowing north–south through the centre of the District via Winchester. To the east, the River Arle joins the Itchen near New Alresford, while the River Meon lies along the eastern edge of the District, flowing south through the Meon Valley. In the south, the River Hamble and the Upper Hamble Estuary form key tidal water features, with associated tributaries including Curbridge Creek and the Wallington River located towards the south-eastern part of the District near Whiteley and the boundary with Fareham. A series of smaller streams are dispersed across the District, particularly in the southern and central parts, including Moors Stream, Nun's Walk Stream, Old Park Stream, Otterbourne Stream and Southbrook Stream, which generally drain southwards into the Hamble or Itchen catchments.

16.13 Rivers that are not designated as main rivers are known as 'ordinary watercourses', and are instead managed by lead local flood authorities, district/borough councils and internal drainage boards. Winchester has many ordinary watercourses, which are smaller stream, tributaries, and drainage channels that contribute to the local water network.

16.14 Water resources in the district are primarily supplied by Southern Water. A small area in the south-west of the district is served by Portsmouth Water, while other smaller parts of the Plan Area are supplied by South East Water, LEEP Networks and Independent Water Networks (IWN). Unlike the main water companies, LEEP networks and IWN do not own or operate water sources and instead obtain their water through bulk supply connections from the local incumbent water provider.

16.15 The Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs) for Southern Water, Portsmouth Water and South East Water (2024 – 2025) all highlight that water availability in the region is under increasing pressure from population growth and the impacts of climate change[90,91,92]. This aligns with the Environment Agency's 'Water Stressed Areas – 2021 classification', within which the whole

[90]Southern Water (2025) '*Water Resources Management Plan*' can be accessed through this link.
[91] Portsmouth Water (2024) '*Water Resources Management Plan*' can be accessed through this link.
[92] South East Water (2024) '*Water Resources Management Plan*' can be accessed through this link.

of Southern Water, South East Water and Portsmouth Water's supply area is shown as an area of 'Serious' water stress. [93] The classification is based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future.

16.16 Within WRMPs, water companies refer to their Water Resource Zones (WRZs). WRZs are the largest possible zone in which all resources, including external transfers, can be shared and hence the zone in which all customers experience the same risk of supply failure from a resource deficiency. Within the WRZs that cover the district, Southern Waters Hampshire Southampton East (HSE) and Hampshire Southampton West (HSW) are considered to be particularly vulnerable. Both zones are particularly sensitive to drought because they rely on river abstractions, which are more susceptible to reduced flows during periods of drought. In addition, HSE has been identified as especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, further increasing the risk to long-term water availability within the district.

16.17 Groundwater plays an important role in the district's water resource system, contributing to both water supply and ecological health. Winchester sits upon aquifers, which are vulnerable to pollution, over-abstraction, and changes in infiltration patterns due to urban development.

16.18 All development through the WDLP must be consistent with the Environment Agency's Approach to Groundwater Protection, which sets out principles for safeguarding groundwater from contamination and unsustainable use[94]. This includes:

- Preventing pollution from hazardous substances and contaminated land;
- Ensuring infiltration-based drainage systems (for example, SuDS) do not compromise groundwater quality or increase flood risk; and
- Conducting site-specific groundwater risk assessments where development may affect aquifers or involve subsurface works.
- Groundwater protection is also important for maintaining long-term water availability, especially in a district identified as being within a seriously water-stressed area. Sustainable water management should therefore include:
- Minimising demand on groundwater through water-efficient design and technologies;
- Protecting recharge zones and avoiding development that could reduce infiltration in appropriate areas; and
- Remediating contaminated sites prior to development to prevent leaching into groundwater.

16.19 Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are areas defined by the Environment Agency around large or public groundwater abstraction sites used for drinking water. They are designated to protect water quality by identifying areas where activities that could cause pollution need to be restricted. In this regard, Winchester contains a number of SPZs throughout the area (see **Figure 16.2**).

[93] Environment Agency and DEFRA (2021) '*Water stressed areas – 2021 classification'* can be accessed through this link.
[94] Environment Agency (2018). '*The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection'* can be accessed through this link.

16.20 Wastewater management in Winchester is handled by Southern Water. [95] Increased population growth, together with ageing infrastructure, is placing additional pressure on the wastewater network. These pressures are intensified by 'urban creep', where replacement of permeable surfaces increases surface water runoff. As such, large volumes of rainwater enter drainage systems, which can lead to hydraulic overloading during prolonged rainfall, impacting local businesses and homes.

16.21 Capacity is further restricted by groundwater infiltration. Groundwater infiltration can cause overloading which can lead to restricted toilet use or localised flooding. Escape of sewage from sewers can affect the quality of water underground in aquifers, which are a source of drinking water.

16.22 These capacity issues have led to 'nutrient neutrality' requirements in sensitive catchments. Across Winchester district, all relevant development must demonstrate nitrate neutrality. Within the River Itchen catchment specifically, development must consider both nitrate and phosphate neutrality, reflecting the particular sensitivity of the Itchen. These requirements restrict new housing permissions unless developers can demonstrate, through a nutrient budget calculation, that their development will not add to the existing nutrient burden.

16.23 The District is home to a number of chalk rivers, a rare lowland river type characterised by clear water and diverse flora. Furthermore, a number of waterbodies within the district have a moderate ecological status. As such, upgrades or expansion of wastewater facilities will need to ensure that water can be treated sustainably and without exacerbating existing ecological issues in their respective discharge water body or any nearby chalk rivers.

[95] Southern Water (2023). '*Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan Level 1*' can be accessed through this link.

## Figure 16.1: Rivers in Winchester

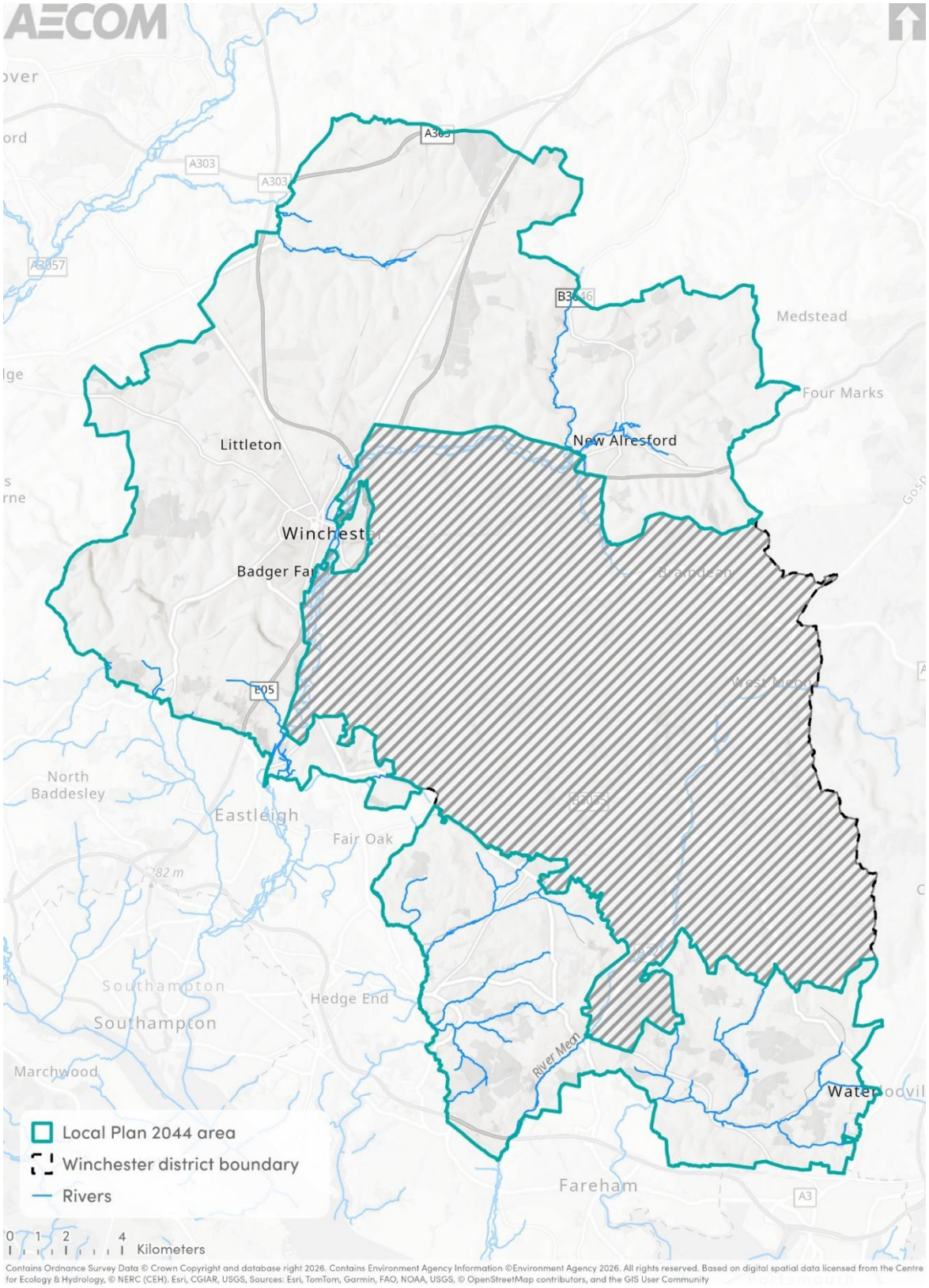
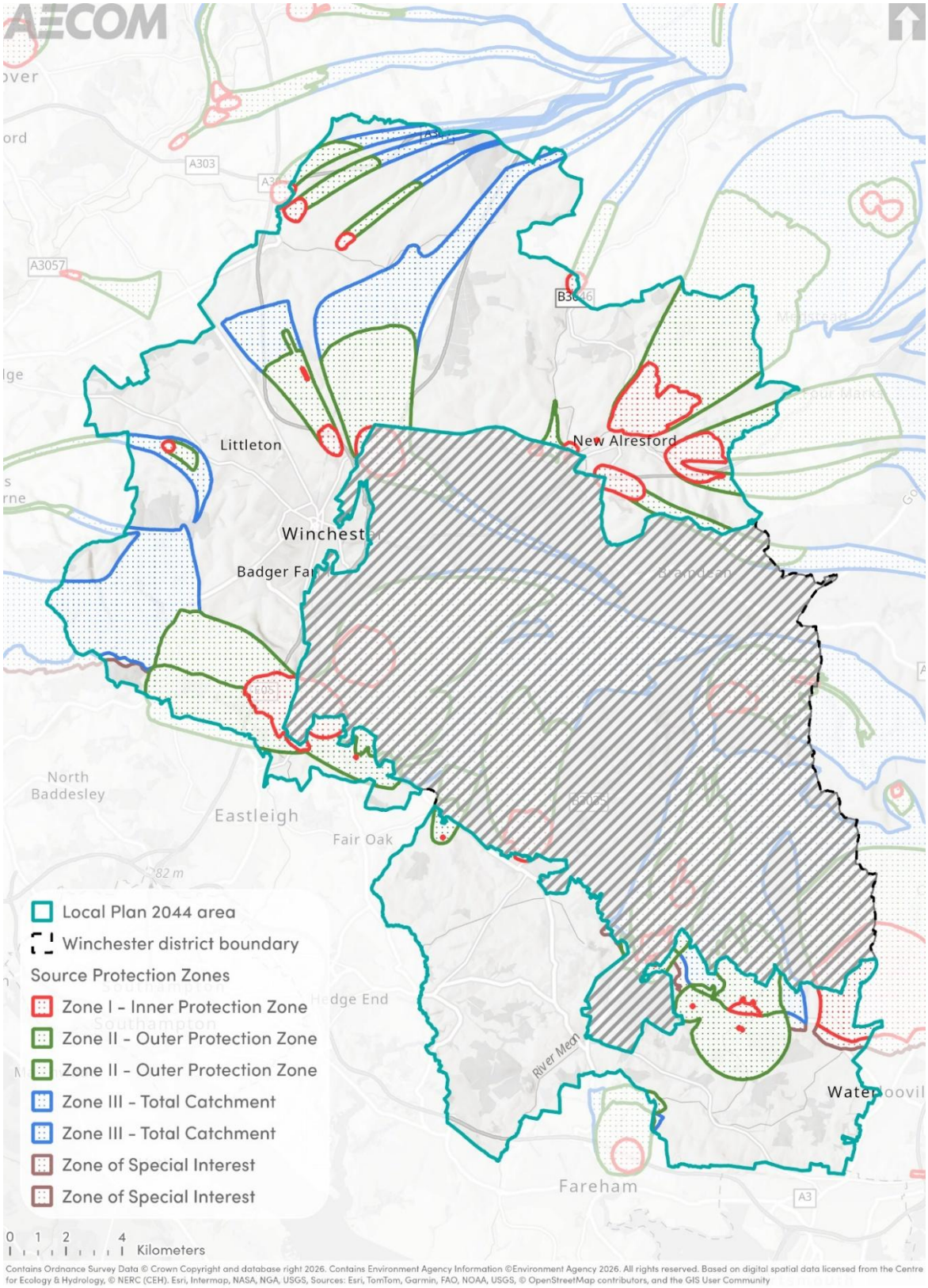


**Figure 16.2: SPZs in Winchester**




# Future baseline

16.24 Climate change is expected to have significant implications for water resources in Winchester, exacerbating existing pressures on both water availability and quality. Rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns could lead to more frequent droughts, reducing river flows and increasing competition

for already scarce water supplies in the area. More intense rainfall events may also result in increased surface water runoff, heightening the risk of pollution in local watercourses.

16.25 Future development also has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. The Local Plan will provide an opportunity to strategically support the actions outlined in the WRMPs.

16.26 The requirements of the Water Framework Directive, as transposed into national legislation, are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within Winchester. However, in the absence of the WDLP, development is less likely to support strategic opportunities to enhance water quality.

16.27 Given that the district is located within a seriously water-stressed area, all new residential developments must meet the higher water efficiency standard of 100 l per person per day, as set out in the Building Regulations & c. (Amendment) Regulations, and reinforced by Local Plan policy CN4. A Water Cycle Study has been commissioned.

16.28 It will also be important to consult with wastewater treatment facilities to ensure there is capacity to support proposed development in a given area.

# Key issues

16.28.1 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constrains and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to water:

- The majority of water bodies in Winchester do not achieve good ecological status, with most classified as moderate, poor or bad. Future development should ensure that no further deterioration occurs and should contribute to achieving good ecological status as required by the WFD;
- All water bodies failed the most recent chemical status assessment. Development should avoid introducing pollutants and support measures to improve chemical quality;
- Winchester is wholly covered by several NVZs, meaning all parts of the district are at risk of agricultural nitrate and phosphate pollution. New development should minimise the risk of water pollution from urban runoff, construction, and wastewater discharge;
- Limited water resources and existing pressures on water supply represent a significant constraint to future growth, with the potential to influence the location, scale and delivery of development proposed through the Local Plan
- Increased housing and associated infrastructure could lead to higher water consumption and wastewater generation, which may place additional pressures on water treatment facilities and local watercourses;
- The district lies within an area of ‘serious’ water stress, requiring development to incorporate water efficiency measures to reduce demand;
- Capacity issues have led to ‘nutrient neutrality’ requirements in sensitive catchments. These requirements restrict new housing permissions unless developers can ensure they will not add to the current nutrient burden affecting these areas;

- Climate change, environmental designations and population growth are placing additional pressures on the district's WRZs. New development should consider sustainable water management, including rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, and water-efficient appliances;
- Groundwater SPZs are present in parts of the district, meaning development in these areas must prevent contamination of drinking water sources; and
- Winchester district contains a DWSZ, meaning drinking water from this part of the district is at risk from pollution. New development should minimise the risk of water pollution from urban runoff, construction, and wastewater discharge

# IIA objective

16.28.2 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the IIA should include the following objective in relation to water:

**Protect and enhance water quality and resources and ensure sustainable water management.**

16.29 To assist assessments against this objective the following supporting assessment questions are identified:

- Avoid any negative impacts on water quality, and support improvements to water quality where achievable and appropriate?
- Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development?
- Protect water bodies from pollution?
- Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and / or water recycling?
- Protect water designations in the plan area?

# 17. Next steps

## IIA Stages

17.1 Scoping (the current stage) is the first stage of the IIA process.

17.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the WDLP. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Council so that they might be considered when preparing the draft Local Plan.

## Consultation on the Scoping Report

17.3 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the IIA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.

17.4 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. This scoping report has been released to these three statutory consultees alongside additional key stakeholders.

17.5 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this scoping report, particularly the evidence base for the IIA, the identified key issues, the proposed SA framework and the separate proposed GIS site assessment methodology.

17.6 All comments received on the scoping report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the IIA as appropriate.

# Appendix A - Proposed IIA framework

Table A.1 brings together the IIA themes and objectives established through scoping to form the IIA framework. Table A.2 details the updates that are made to the IIA framework when compared to the IIA undertaken for the adopted Local Plan.

### Table A-1: Proposed IIA framework

| IIA theme | IIA objective |
|---|---|
| Accessibility | Maximise accessibility to services and facilities through new development and ensure the appropriate delivery of new infrastructure as required. |
| Air quality | Improve air quality and reduce exposure to air pollution. |
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity, nature conservation, habitats, and ecological networks, including ecological links with the South Downs National Park. |
| Climate change adaptation and flood risk | Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk. |
| Climate change mitigation | Mitigate climate change by supporting decarbonisation, with a focus on both transport and the built environment. |
| Communities | Protect settlement identities as they grow. |
| Equalities | Promote equality, social inclusion, and opportunities for all, ensuring that diverse needs are met across the plan area. |
| Economy and employment | Support a strong, diverse and resilient local economy by providing land for sustainable economic growth and growing the rural economy. |
| Health and wellbeing | Maximise the potential for positive health outcomes in new development. |
| Historic environment | Conserve and where possible, enhance the historic environment and its setting. |
| Housing | Ensure a range of housing types, sizes, and tenures to meet the identified housing needs. |
| Landscape | Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the setting of the SDNP. |
| Natural resources | Protect soil and mineral resources and promote efficient land use and waste management. |
| Transport and travel | Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel by less sustainable modes whilst mitigating the likely impacts of increased congestion from future growth. |
| Water resources | Protect and enhance water quality and resources and ensure sustainable water management. |

## Table A.2: IIA framework comparison

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Climate change mitigation | To minimise the District's contribution to climate change through a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from all sources and facilitate the aim of carbon neutrality by 2030. | Climate change mitigation | Mitigate climate change by supporting decarbonisation, with a focus on both transport and the built environment | No substantial changes, the focus remains on activities that contribute to mitigation (linked to emissions and renewable energy) | To explore the potential for new development to contribute to climate resilience and decarbonisation. |

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Travel and air quality | To reduce the need to travel by private vehicle in the District and improve air quality | Transportation / Air quality | Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel by less sustainable modes whilst mitigating the likely impacts of increased congestion in future growth.<br><br>And<br><br>Improve air quality and reduce exposure to air pollution. | This theme has been split into two separate objectives – one for transport and travel and one for air quality. Whilst these objectives are very closely linked there are also distinct differences to consider when comparing options. | (Air Quality)<br>To identify where growth could be of a scale or at a location where air quality impacts could be significant and mitigation may be required.<br><br>(Transport)<br>Taking a two-pronged approach this objective looks at both maximising the use of sustainable transport modes and the effects of congestion in new development. |
| Climate change adaptation | To support the District's adaptation to unavoidable climate change | Climate change adaptation, including flood risk | Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk. | This theme now incorporates flood risk considerations as these are considered intrinsically linked and will avoid repetitiveness in assessment discussions. | To explore the effects of development in relation to flood risk, future flood risk, and the predicted impacts of climate change. |

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health and wellbeing | To improve public health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in the District | Health and wellbeing | Maximise the potential for positive health outcomes in new development. | No substantial changes, but in the new IIA objective, consideration is given to safety under this theme rather than under the communities theme as the focus for the themes are more clearly aligned. | The focus for this objective will be to assess how the plan contributes towards positive health outcomes, in terms of access to healthcare, access to nature, inclusive design, and targeted interventions that could reduce health inequalities. |
| Communities | To support community cohesion and safety in the District | Communities | Protect settlement identities as they grow. | Whilst broadly similar in nature, this theme has been updated to consider more aspects of settlement identity, including the settlement hierarchy and effects such as coalescence. Equalities considerations are dealt with through a standalone equalities theme, and safety is considered as part of the health and wellbeing theme. | This investigates the relative scale of growth at settlements and how this could impact upon settlement identities, including such things as character, coalescence of settlement areas, infrastructure severance at settlements (e.g., rail lines, main distributor roads), and barriers to cohesive growth. |

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing | To provide housing of a decent standard to meet the needs in the District | Housing | Ensure a range of housing types, sizes, and tenures to meet the identified housing needs. | No substantial changes to focus of appraisal. | This objective explores how the plan with meet LHN and whether a range of homes are promoted that align with the forecasted needs. |
| Accessibility | To ensure essential services and facilities and jobs in the District are accessible | Accessibility | Maximise accessibility to services and facilities in new growth and ensure the appropriate delivery of new infrastructure as required. | No substantial changes – the focus remains on access to key services, facilities, centres and employment opportunities and the potential to improve accessibility. | To explore the accessibility of spatial strategy options relative to the District (i.e., relative to its best performing areas). Where capacity information is available (e.g., school capacities) this information will be used to judge the relative need for new infrastructure. The IDP will feed into this objective. |

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economy and employment | To support the sustainable growth of the District's economy | Economy and employment | Support a strong, diverse and resilient local economy including by providing land for sustainable economic growth and supporting growth in rural enterprises. | No substantial changes to focus of appraisal. | This objective explores both how growth will deliver against forecasted needs, and how growth may impact upon existing businesses and sectors. |
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | To support the District's biodiversity and geodiversity | Biodiversity and geodiversity | Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity, nature conservation, habitats, and ecological networks, including at the National Park | No substantial changes to focus of appraisal. | Taking a two-pronged approach this objective looks at both biodiversity and nature conservation assets and how they may be affected by growth options, and how growth could realise any potential opportunities for habitat extensions, restoration, and/ or enhancements. |

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Landscape | To conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the District's landscapes | Landscape | Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the setting of the National Park. | No substantial changes to focus of appraisal. | This is a focused objective to protect landscape character in new development. |
| Historic environment | To conserve and enhance the District's historic environment including its setting | Historic environment | Conserve, and where possible, enhance the significance of the historic environment and its setting. | No substantial changes to focus of appraisal. | This is a focused objective to protect the historic environment in new development. |
| Natural resources | To support the efficient use of the District's resources, including land and minerals | Natural resources | Protect soil and mineral resources, and promote efficient land use and waste management. | No substantial changes. The focus remains on soil and mineral resources and waste. | Natural resources will focus on effects in relation to agricultural land, contaminated land, mineral resources and waste management. |
| Water resources | To protect the quality and quantity of the District's water resource | Water resources | Protect and enhance water quality and resources and ensure sustainable water management. | No substantial changes, the focus remains on both water quality and water supply – including wastewater. | This theme investigates both the efficient use of water resources and potential effects in relation to water quality. |

| Previous IIA theme | Previous IIA objective | New IIA theme | New IIA objective | Detailed changes | Purpose of the objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flood risk | To manage and reduce flood risk from all sources | | | See climate change mitigation – flood risk has been incorporated as part of this theme. | |
| | | Equalities | Promote equality, social inclusion, and opportunities for all, ensuring that diverse needs are met across Winchester's communities | Previously a separate EqIA was undertaken to support the IIA alongside equalities considerations under the communities theme. The new IIA fully integrates equalities considerations, separate from the communities theme, with a standalone theme and IIA objective. | This investigates how options are likely to perform in relation to specialist groups and protected characteristics. |

# Appendix B - GIS sites assessment methodology

## Foreword

At this early stage, we recognise the benefit of statutory consultees having an insight into the proposed GIS site analysis methodology that will be used to assess individual sites for the purposes of IIA. The assessment of individual sites is considered a building block in the process of arriving at reasonable alternatives, but individual sites do not constitute alternatives in and of themselves. The assessment is also not intended to represent a measure of significant effects – which will be considered in greater detail as part of the assessment process.

The methodology includes the use of both national and local datasets, and we would welcome comments particularly on the national datasets being proposed for use. It is also important to note that the local data reflects the evidence available at this stage and no new local data is being proposed or created.

## Methodology

The methodology for the IIA of site options involves employing GIS datasets and measuring ('quantitative analysis') how each potential site relates to various metrics. Specifically, the aim is to gauge the relative performance of the potential sites in respect of different criteria. The IIA site methodology allows for the consistent and transparent assessment of all sites. It is important to clarify that the GIS assessment of sites is not a measure of significant effects but rather provides indicative metrics that can be scrutinised further in qualitative analysis.

Two GIS tools could potentially be used to undertake the assessment of site options, depending on the metric. This includes:

- A straight-line distance from a feature to a potential site, and percentage overlap of any features within a site. Measurements will be taken from the closest boundary of the potential site and the feature. These are typically used for designations including (but not limited to): biodiversity (for example, SSSIs), historic environment (for example, scheduled monuments), and natural resources (for example, ALC land classification areas).
- Department for Transport's Connectivity Tool which combines transport and land use data to generate a national measure of connectivity for any location in England and Wales – measuring people's ability to get where they want to go.

The IIA site assessment work will seek to avoid duplicating any data and would factor in the Council's separate site assessment work relating to viability, availability and deliverability.

It is recognised that some of the nationally available datasets will be relevant to multiple themes. For example, deprivation levels are an applicable consideration to multiple social and economic themes.

Table AB.1 provides an overview of the metrics being proposed under each IIA objective and Table AB.2 takes the identified metrics and provides indicative 'RAG' thresholds that could be applied in the assessment. These are being shared at an early IIA scoping stage with the intention of gaining feedback on the suggested metrics and appropriate thresholds.

# Assumptions and limitations

The assessment of site options will be tailored to the spatial data sets available. Where there are any significant gaps in the data, this will be highlighted in the assessment and the IIA.

It is also important to clarify that the assessment is limited on the basis that proximity / percentage intersect is often (i.e. for many objectives) a crude indicator of constraint or opportunity. For example, whilst overlapping with a flood risk zone is a strong indicator of actual flood risk constraint, proximity to a designated biodiversity or heritage feature, is less robust as an indicator of constraint. In this respect, the assessment is not designed to indicate a 'significant effect', rather it is designed to aid further analysis.

# Proposed metrics and thresholds

### Table AB.1: Suggested metrics for the IIA GIS site assessment

| IIA objective | Focus area(s) | Suggested metrics and their source | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accessibility | This assessment theme will focus on access to key services and facilities in the area and transport connectivity. | National datasets and source:<br>• Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – Open Government License (OGL) V3.<br>• Connectivity Tool – Department for Transport<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Primary and Secondary Schools and Further Education establishments.<br>• Community Facilities<br>• Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) data<br>• Winchester City Walking Routes | The DfT Connectivity Tool assigns Output Areas (OA) with a national overall connectivity score for walking, cycling, public transport, and driving. A sites score will be determined by the OA it predominantly falls within, and the spread of scores across sites within the plan area will be considered when determining 'RAG' thresholds.<br>Supplementing this will be a straight-line distance / percentage overlap assessment utilising the local datasets.<br>IMD data may be applicable, particularly in relation to the 'barriers to housing and services' domain. A sites deprivation score would be determined by the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) it predominantly falls within, |

| IIA objective | Focus area(s) | Suggested metrics and their source | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | and different scores would be assigned different 'RAG' thresholds.<br>In terms of limitations, it is recognised that outcomes for these metrics could be affected by additional factors, such as new infrastructure proposals and onsite provisions. |
| Air quality | N/A – see commentary | N/A – see commentary | This assessment theme would naturally focus on relative distance to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). As there are no AQMAs within or adjacent to the plan area this is not proposed as a metric to consider. No additional local datasets have been identified that could supplement the assessment, relative to this objective (outside of those being measured against other objectives such as accessibility and transport). |
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | This assessment theme will focus on the location of key designated biodiversity sites in relation to the site options, as well as habitat type and coverage at site options and position in relation to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). | National datasets and source:<br>• Natural England data including: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and their associated Impact Risk Zones (IRZ), National Nature Reserves, and Ancient Woodland.<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Local Wildlife Sites<br>• Priority Habitats and Protected and Notable Species<br>• Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) and Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACB) | It is anticipated that local data will be used to supplement nationally available data for this IIA theme, particularly to measure the relative distance to key local sites, and any links with the LNRS.<br>Internationally and nationally designated biodiversity sites outside of the plan area will also be considered, and an appropriate buffer will be applied in agreement with the Council.<br>The assessment uses a straight-line distance/ percentage overlap measurement to identify a sites relative distance from biodiversity assets.<br>With regards to SSSI Impact Risk Zones, the assessment seeks to highlight if the type of development being proposed at the site (e.g., housing or employment) is captured as a risk indicator. |
| Climate change adaptation and flood risk | This assessment theme will focus on identifying flood risk at sites. | National datasets and source:<br>• Environment Agency's fluvial flood zones, surface water flood risk and groundwater flood risk data | The assessment uses a percentage overlap measurement to identify the extent to which a site lies within a flood risk zone and identifies which zone accordingly.<br>It is recognised that outcomes for these metrics could be affected by additional factors such as onsite mitigation |

| IIA objective | Focus area(s) | Suggested metrics and their source | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | (e.g., sustainable drainage systems) and wider flood alleviation schemes. |
| Climate change mitigation | N/A – see commentary | N/A – see commentary | Performance in relation to climate change mitigation will be considered in the round as part of qualitative analysis and largely linked to policy directions, particularly given that accessibility is a separated theme and design will be a core consideration. |
| Communities | This assessment theme will likely focus on the relative distance of site options to key local green spaces and community infrastructure such as local centres. | No national datasets identified.<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centre boundaries<br>• Public Open Spaces<br>• Recreation and Playgrounds | The assessment uses a straight-line distance/ percentage overlap measurement to identify a sites relative distance from green infrastructure and retail centres<br>It is recognised that outcomes for these metrics could be affected by additional factors, such as new infrastructure proposals, development contributions, and onsite provisions. |
| Equalities | N/A – see commentary | N/A – see commentary | Performance in relation to equalities and Protected Characteristics will be considered as part of qualitative analysis and no specific relative datasets can be identified at this stage for quantitative analysis. |
| Economy and employment | This assessment theme will focus on the proximity of site options to local economic and employment opportunities within the plan area. | National datasets and source:<br>• Connectivity Tool – Department for Transport<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Employment allocations | The DfT Connectivity Tool assigns Output Areas (OA) with a national employment connectivity score for walking, cycling, public transport, and driving. A sites score will be determined by the OA it predominantly falls within, and the spread of scores across sites within the plan area will be considered when determining 'RAG' thresholds.<br>Supplementing this will be a straight-line distance / percentage overlap assessment utilising the local datasets. Whether a site is proposed for new employment development would also be factored in. |
| Health and wellbeing | This assessment theme will focus on the opportunities for positive health outcomes, such as development in an area of high deprivation, and | National datasets and source:<br>• Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – Open Government License (OGL) V3.<br>• Connectivity Tool – Department for Transport<br>Local datasets provided by WCC: | The DfT Connectivity Tool assigns Output Areas (OA) with a national healthcare connectivity score for walking, cycling, public transport, and driving. A sites score will be determined by the OA it predominantly falls within, and the spread of scores across sites within the plan area will be considered when determining 'RAG' thresholds. |

| IIA objective | Focus area(s) | Suggested metrics and their source | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|
| | access to key health facilities. | • LCWIP<br>• Hospitals and GP Surgeries<br>• Sports Facilities, Sports Halls and Playing Pitches | Supplementing this will be a straight-line distance / percentage overlap assessment utilising the local datasets.<br>IMD data may be applicable, particularly in relation to the healthcare domain. A sites deprivation score would be determined by the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) it predominantly falls within, and different scores would be assigned different 'RAG' thresholds. |
| Historic environment | This assessment theme will focus on the proximity of sites to identified heritage assets. | National datasets and source:<br>• Historic England data including: Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Conservation Areas | Straight-line distance measurements (taken from the closest point of the boundaries of the asset and site option) will be used to identify the sites proximity to heritage assets.<br>World Heritage Sites do not feature as part of the assessment as none lie within or in proximity of the plan area.<br>There is currently no data for locally listed (non-designated) heritage assets identified. |
| Housing | N/A – see commentary | N/A – see commentary | The qualitative analysis will consider a sites potential contribution to housing supply, including in relation to affordable tenures. No measurement tool is required and this will not feature as part of the quantitative analysis. |
| Landscape | This assessment theme will focus on the proximity of site options to designated landscapes. | National datasets and source:<br>• National Parks - Natural England<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) | Reflecting the scope of the plan, none of the site options are expected to fall within the South Downs National Park, instead a straight-line distance measurement will highlight sites that fall in proximity where development could affect the setting of the designated landscape. Whether sites intersect TPOs would also be captured. |
| Natural resources | This assessment theme will focus on distinguishing site options that contain high quality soil resources, or intersect mineral resources, or alternatively utilise brownfield land. | National datasets and source:<br>• Agricultural Land Classification - DEFRA<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Brownfield Register sites<br>• Contaminated land<br>• Minerals Safeguarding Areas | The ALC Predictive Map (revised 2026) is available and provides a distinction between Grade 3a (i.e. land classified as the 'best and most versatile') and Grade 3b land (i.e. land which is not classified as such). Using a straight-line distance/ percentage overlap measurement, the assessment will 'flag' those sites that may include Grade 1 to 3a 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. |

| IIA objective | Focus area(s) | Suggested metrics and their source | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Percentage overlap measurements would be used in relation to local datasets. |
| Transport and travel | This assessment theme will focus on the transport connectivity of site options, in relation to nearest sustainable transport infrastructure. | National datasets and source:<br>• Connectivity Tool – Department for Transport<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• LCWIP<br>• Train Stations<br>• Bus Stops<br>• Cycleway Network | The DfT Connectivity Tool assigns Output Areas (OA) with a national overall connectivity score for walking, cycling, public transport, and driving. A sites score will be determined by the OA it predominantly falls within, and the spread of scores across sites within the plan area will be considered when determining 'RAG' thresholds.<br>Supplementing this will be a straight-line distance / percentage overlap assessment utilising the local datasets. |
| Water resources | This assessment theme will focus on the proximity of site options to sensitive water environments. | National datasets and source:<br>• Environment Agency data including: waterbodies, Groundwater Source Protection Zones, and Drinking Water Safeguard Zones<br>Local datasets provided by WCC:<br>• Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) | Straight-line distance/ percentage overlap measurements will be used to identify a sites proximity to the various water zones.<br>Everything in the district will fall within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone or Nitrate and Phosphate Area so these metrics will not be utilised in the assessment.<br>There is local data that will allow for identification of the closest WWTW to a site, if there are known capacity issues at any given WWTW the assessment could highlight this but capacity needs to be investigated in more detail at this stage. |

## Table AB.2: Suggested thresholds for the IIA GIS site assessment

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accessibility | IMD – Barriers to access to housing and services domain | | N/A[96] |
| | | | Site lies within a LSOA that is ranked in the 20% most deprived, accessibility improvements likely to be required. |

[96] Where N/A is used no sites will fall into this category, it is not applicable as the metric is not identifying a major constraint or opportunity.

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Site is not within a LSOA that is ranked in the 20% most deprived |
| | | | N/A |
| | Overall connectivity score (all modes / all domains) | | OA is one of the 25% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25-75% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25% most connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 10% most connected in the plan area |
| | Primary School | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing Primary School |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a Primary School |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Primary School |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Primary School |
| | Secondary School | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing Secondary School |
| | | | Site lies beyond 1600m of a Secondary School |
| | | | Site lies within 1600m of a Secondary School |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Secondary School |
| | Further education establishment | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing further education establishment |
| | | | Site lies beyond 1600m of a further education establishment |
| | | | Site lies within 1600m of a further education establishment |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a further education establishment |
| | Community facilities | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing community facility |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a community facility |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a community facility |

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a community facility |
| | LCWIP City or District Line or Winchester City Walking Route | | Development at the site would result in the loss of a LCWIP City or District Line or Winchester City Walking Route |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a LCWIP City or District Line or Winchester City Walking Route |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a LCWIP City or District Line or Winchester City Walking Route |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a LCWIP City or District Line or Winchester City Walking Route |
| Biodiversity and Geodiversity | European designated site (SAC, SPA, Ramsar) | | Site contains or intersects a European designated site |
| | | | Site lies within 2km of a European designated site |
| | | | Site lies beyond 2km of a European designated site |
| | | | N/A |
| | SSSIs | | Site contains or intersects a SSSI |
| | | | Site lies within 500m of a SSSI[97] |
| | | | Site lies beyond 500m of a SSSI |
| | | | N/A |
| | SSSI Impact Risk Zone | | N/A |
| | | | Proposed use at site captured by SSSI IRZ |
| | | | Site and/ or proposed use at site is not captured by SSSI IRZ |
| | | | N/A |
| | Ancient Woodland Inventory | | Site contains or intersects Ancient Woodland |

[97] 500m is based on the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) criteria for screening planning applications

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Site lies within 100m of Ancient Woodland[98] |
| | | | Site lies beyond 100m of Ancient Woodland |
| | | | N/A |
| | Priority Habitat | | Site contains or intersects BAP Priority Habitat(s) |
| | | | Site lies within 100m of BAP Priority Habitat(s)[99] |
| | | | Site lies beyond 100m of BAP Priority Habitat(s) |
| | | | N/A |
| | Local Wildlife Sites | | Site contains or intersects a Local Wildlife Site |
| | | | Site lies within 500m of a Local Wildlife Site |
| | | | Site lies beyond 500m of a Local Wildlife Site |
| | | | N/A |
| | LNRS APIB or ACB | | Site contains or intersects an LNRS APIB or ACB |
| | | | Site lies within 100m of an LNRS APIB or ACB |
| | | | Site lies beyond 100m of an LNRS APIB or ACB |
| | | | N/A |
| Climate Change Adaptation | Fluvial flood risk | | 50% or more of the site lies within FRZ2/3 |
| | | | 0-49% of the site lies within FRZ2/3 |
| | | | Site lies outside of FRZ2/3 |
| | | | N/A |
| | Surface water flood risk | | 50% or more of the site contains or intersects area(s) of surface water flood risk (high, medium or low) |

[98] 100m is based on the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) criteria for screening planning applications
[99] Ibid.

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 0-49% of the site contains or intersects area(s) of surface water flood risk (high, medium or low) |
| | | | The site does not contain or intersect an area of surface water flood risk (high, medium or low) |
| | | | N/A |
| | Groundwater flood risk | | 50% or more of the site contains or intersects area(s) of groundwater water flood risk |
| | | | 0-49% of the site contains or intersects area(s) of groundwater flood risk |
| | | | The site does not contain or intersect an area of groundwater flood risk |
| | | | N/A |
| Communities | Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres | | N/A |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a Town Centre, District Centre or Local Centre |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Town Centre, District Centre or Local Centre |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Town Centre, District Centre or Local Centre |
| | Public Open Space | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing Public Open Space |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of Public Open Space |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of Public Open Space |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of Public Open Space |
| | Recreation areas and playgounds | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing recreation area or playground |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a recreation area or playground |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a recreation area or playground |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a recreation area or playground |

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| Economy and employment | Employment connectivity score | | OA is one of the 25% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25-75% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25% most connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 10% most connected in the plan area |
| | Employment allocations | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an employment allocation |
| | | | Site lies beyond 1600m of an employment allocation |
| | | | Site lies within 1600m of an employment allocation |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of an employment allocation |
| Health, Wellbeing and Safety | IMD – health domain | | N/A |
| | | | Site lies within a LSOA that is ranked in the 20% most deprived. |
| | | | Sites does not lie within a LSOA that is ranked in the 20% most deprived |
| | | | N/A |
| | Health connectivity score | | OA is one of the 25% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25-75% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25% most connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 10% most connected in the plan area |
| | Hospital | | N/A |
| | | | Site lies beyond 1600m of a hospital |
| | | | Site lies within 1600m of a hospital |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a hospital |
| | GP Surgery | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing GP Surgery |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a GP Surgery |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a GP Surgery |

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a GP Surgery |
| | Sports Facility, Sports Hall or Playing Pitch | | Development at the site would result in the loss of an existing Sports Facility, Sports Hall or Playing Pitch |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a Sports Facility, Sports Hall or Playing Pitch |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Sports Facility, Sports Hall or Playing Pitch |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Sports Facility, Sports Hall or Playing Pitch |
| Historic Environment | Scheduled monument | | Site contains or intersects a SM |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a SM |
| | | | Site lies beyond 400m of a SM |
| | | | N/A |
| | Listed building | | Site contains or intersects a LB |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a LB |
| | | | Site lies beyond 400m of a LB |
| | | | N/A |
| | Registered Park and Garden | | Site contains or intersects a Registered Park and Garden |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Registered Park and Garden |
| | | | Site lies beyond 400m of a Registered Park and Garden |
| | | | N/A |
| | Registered Battlefield | | Site contains or intersects a Registered Battlefield |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Registered Battlefield |
| | | | Site lies beyond 400m of a Registered Battlefield |
| | | | N/A |
| | Conservation Area | | Site lies predominantly within a Conservation Area |

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Conservation Area |
| | | | Site lies beyond 400m of a Conservation Area |
| | | | N/A |
| Landscape | National Park | | Site lies within 400m of National Park boundary |
| | | | Site lies within 2km of National Park boundary |
| | | | Site lies beyond 2km of National Park boundary |
| | | | N/A |
| | TPO | | N/A |
| | | | Site contains or lies adjacent to TPO(s) |
| | | | Site does not contain or lie adjacent to TOP(s) |
| | | | N/A |
| Natural Resources | Predictive ALC (2026) | | Site contains 'best and most versatile' agricultural land (Grades 1 – 3a) |
| | | | Site contains agricultural land of a lower quality grade (Grade 3b) |
| | | | Site is agricultural land of lower quality grade (Grade 4 or 5) or non-agricultural |
| | | | Site is classified as urban land |
| | Brownfield Land Register | | N/A |
| | | | Site is not listed on the Brownfield Register or identified as brownfield land |
| | | | Site is listed on the Brownfield Register or identified as brownfield land |
| | | | N/A |
| | Contaminated Land | | N/A |
| | | | Site is identified as contaminated land |
| | | | Site is not identified as contaminated land |
| | | | N/A |

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Mineral Safeguarding Areas | | Site lies predominantly (50% or more) within a Mineral Safeguarding Area |
| | | | Site lies partially (0-49%) within a Mineral Safeguarding Area |
| | | | Site does not intersect a Mineral Safeguarding Area |
| | | | N/A |
| Transportation | Overall Public Transport Connectivity Score | | OA is one of the 25% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25-75% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25% most connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 10% most connected in the plan area |
| | Overall Cycling Connectivity Score | | OA is one of the 25% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25-75% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25% most connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 10% most connected in the plan area |
| | Overall Walking Connectivity Score | | OA is one of the 25% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25-75% least connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 25% most connected in the plan area |
| | | | OA is one of the 10% most connected in the plan area |
| | Train Station | | N/A |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a Train Station |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Train Station |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Train Station |
| | Bus Stops | | N/A |

| IIA Objective | National metric | Indicator | Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a Bus Stop |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Bus Stop |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Bus Stop |
| | Cycleway Network | | N/A |
| | | | Site lies beyond 800m of a Cycleway Network |
| | | | Site lies within 800m of a Cycleway Network |
| | | | Site lies within 400m of a Cycleway Network |
| Water | Waterbody | | Site intersects a waterbody |
| | | | Site contains a small pond or isolated waterbody |
| | | | Sites does not contain or intersect a waterbody |
| | | | N/A |
| | Groundwater SPZ | | 50% or more of the site lies within a Groundwater SPZ |
| | | | 0-49% of the site lies within a Groundwater SPZ |
| | | | The site lies outside of a Groundwater SPZ |
| | | | N/A |
| | Drinking Water Safeguard Zone | | 50% or more of the site lies within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone |
| | | | 0-49% of the site lies within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone |
| | | | The site lies outside of a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone |
| | | | N/A |