

Statement of Common Ground

Canterbury City Council and Swale Borough Council

March 2026

1. Overview

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) reflects the agreed position between the parties.

1.2 The purpose of this SOCG is to set out the areas of agreement on key strategic matters and the basis on which the parties will continue to work together to meet the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate.

1.3 The geographical relationship between the parties, reflecting local authority boundaries, is represented at Figure 1.

Figure 1 CCC and SBC boundaries.



2 Key strategic matters

2.1 The NPPF defines the topics considered to be strategic matters. The strategic matters relevant to CCC and SBC are:

- **Housing** - housing market area, meeting housing needs;
- **Economy** - economic market area;
- **Infrastructure** - transport, education; and
- **Environment** - habitats regulations issues, landscape.

Key Strategic Matters	Evidence	Process	Status
Housing The parties agree that there is no material overlap between the HMA centred on Canterbury, and the HMA for Swale. The latest Local Housing Need figure for Swale under the Governments NPPF 2024 methodology is 1,064 dwellings per annum. At a meeting of Swale Borough Council in January 2025, it was agreed that the use of the Governments Local Housing Need methodology would be the starting point for setting the Council's Local Plan target. The Local Housing Need figure for Canterbury District is currently 1,215 homes per annum. It is agreed that each party will meet its own housing needs.			
Housing Market Area	CCC SHMA (2018). CCC Housing Needs Assessment and updates (2021, 2024, 2025) SBC SHMA (2020)	Both parties have prepared, or are involved in the preparation of SHMAs, and have agreed with the other parties' conclusions regarding HMAs. Both parties have agreed to prepare our Local Plans on the basis of separate HMAs.	Agreed May 2021
Meeting Housing Needs	CCC SHMA (2018). CCC Housing Needs Assessment	Both parties have prepared, or are involved in the preparation of SHMAs, and have agreed with the	Agreed May 2021

	and updates (2021, 2024, 2025) SBC SHMA (2020)	other parties' conclusions regarding HMAs.	
	Both parties' annual Housing Information Audit	Both parties have agreed we will meet housing needs within our own areas.	

Economy

The parties **agree** that there is no material overlap between the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) centred on Canterbury, and the FEMA for Swale, and as such our FEMAs are fully contained within our district areas for the purposes of plan making.

It is **agreed** that each party will meet its own employment needs.

Functional Economic Market Area	CCC EDTS and updates (2020, 2022, 2024) SBC ELR (2018) SBC ELR update January 2024	Both parties have prepared, or are involved in the preparation of Economic Assessments and have agreed with the other parties' conclusions regarding FEMAs. Both parties have agreed to prepare our Local Plans on the basis of separate FEMAs.	Agreed May 2021
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Infrastructure

The parties **agree** that strategic transport issues include the A2, the implications of the Lower Thames Crossing and improvements to key junctions and interchanges on the A2, including Brenley Corner.

Information regarding the transport implications of the CCC Local Plan has been shared with SBC and the parties **agree** that it is anticipated that the in-principle approach agreed in the 2023 SOCG will continue through the implementation of the Local Plan.

The parties are involved in the additional modelling being undertaken in collaboration with NH and KCC,

A separate SOCG has been prepared with other relevant parties on this matter.

The parties **agree** that strategic education issues relate to the provision of secondary school education capacity in the Canterbury/north Swale area and **agree** that the respective plans provide an appropriate quantum to accommodate secondary school capacity within their own areas, whilst acknowledging that pupils move between the two districts by choice.

Transport	CCC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019) CCC Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2024, 2026) CCC Transport Strategy (2017) CCC Draft Transport Strategy (2024, 2026) Canterbury Transport Model Forecasting Reports SBC Local Plan Model Rerun (2020) Kent County Council Local Transport Plan 5 (2024) Transport for South East Transport Strategy (2020)	The parties have and will continue to share information and engage on transport modelling, working with KCC and others on evidence for our Local Plans, to determine respective impacts and mitigation solutions where necessary, including in the context of the A2/M2 SOCG. The parties have cooperated on input to the Transport for the South East Strategy and on representations to the Lower Thames Crossing.	Agreed March 2026
Education	CCC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019) CCC Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2024, 2026) SBC Infrastructure	The parties have shared information and engaged on education infrastructure requirements, working with KCC and others, on evidence for our Local Plans.	Agreed March 2026

	Delivery Plan (2021)		
	KCC School Commissioning Plans		
Environment The parties agree that recreational impacts could have an adverse impact on the species for which the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries SPAs and Ramsar sites have been designated. The parties agree that specific areas of each district fall within the catchment issued by Natural England in respect of the Stodmarsh protected site and nutrient neutrality advice. The parties have worked and continue to work collaboratively on the development and delivery of mitigation, including through the catchment-wide strategy and in respect of the emerging Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs). The parties agree to prepare their Local Plans in line with Natural England guidance on Functionally Linked Land (FLL) and on the basis of separate district-wide assessments to inform HRAs.			
Habitats Regulations Issues: - Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries SPAs and Ramsar sites	Thames, Medway & Swale Estuaries - Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (2014) Bird Wise North Kent Mitigation Strategy (2018) Bird Wise North Kent Business Plan (2017-2022) Bird Wise North Kent Mitigation Strategy 2024-2029 Bird Wise North Kent Annual Reports	In developing the mitigation strategies, the parties have engaged and shared information, including with other parties. The parties have agreed to continue with the effective joint strategy. In developing our respective mitigation strategies, the parties have engaged on this issue, shared information and have agreed that our respective strategies are effective.	Agreed May 2021

Stodmarsh European protected site	NE Advice Note (2020) and subsequent updates CCC Draft Nutrient Mitigation Strategy (2024, 2026) Catchment-wide Stodmarsh Nutrient Mitigation Strategy (2025)	The parties will continue to work together on the development and delivery of nutrient neutrality mitigation including through the implementation of the catchment wide strategy and the development of the emerging EDPs.	Agreed March 2026
National Landscape	Kent Downs Management Plan	The parties agree that the Kent Downs National Landscape Team, of which the parties are full members, provides for an appropriately joined-up approach to management of the Kent Downs National Landscape. The third revision of the Kent Downs Management Plan (2021-2026) was adopted in 2021 by the twelve local authorities whose administrative areas include land within the Kent Downs National Landscape. The parties have cooperated on inputs to the Management Plan	Agreed July 2025

Functionally Linked Land (FLL)	Habitat Regulations Assessment of Regulation 18 draft Local Plan 2024 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Regulation 19 draft Local Plan 2026	FLL should be assessed in line with Natural England guidance. Currently this entails doing a Habitat Suitability Assessment if a development has the potential to affect FLL. If the Habitat Suitability Assessment concludes that the site is not suitable as functionally linked land, no further assessment will be required. If, however, the assessment does not rule out the site's suitability as functionally linked land, then a further desk-based assessment will be required. If the desk-based assessment concludes that the site is likely to serve as functionally linked land, site specific surveys (undertaken during the appropriate time of year, and with consideration to the ecological	Agreed July 2025
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		behaviour of the target species and the ways in which they use sites outside of the designated site boundaries) should be undertaken. Where necessary the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, and finally, compensate, must be followed. The parties have agreed to prepare their respective Local Plans in line with Natural England guidance and on the basis of separate district-wide assessments to inform HRAs.	
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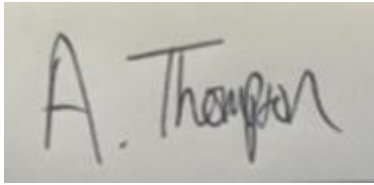
3 Governance arrangements

3.1 This SOCG will be published and kept up to date by the parties as a record of where agreement has or has not been reached on strategic issues.

3.2 The parties will meet to discuss these issues via meetings between the two authorities, bringing in other parties where necessary. The SOCG will be updated as changes take place on these strategic issues or where new strategic issues arise.

4 Signatories/declaration

Signed on behalf of Canterbury City Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrew Thompson

Position:

Corporate Policy and Strategy
Manager, Canterbury City Council

Date: 11 March 2026

Signed on behalf of Swale Borough Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Earl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N'.

Natalie Earl

Position:

Planning Manager (Policy)

Date: 11 March 2026