Brighton & Hove City Plan Part 1
Examination Closing Statement

 Brighton & Hove is not quite between a rock and a hard place – although it does feel like that at times– but with the sea to the south and the South Downs to the north there are real constraints on the opportunities to accommodate all objectively assessed needs (housing, employment and open space) in full. We consider that we are responsible for planning the future of a unique City and this comes with its consequent, singular challenges.

However a clear thread running through the City Plan has been to ensure that the city can grow and regenerate in a balanced and sustainable manner. The Plan recognises the necessity of development to achieve social, economic and environmental goals as set out in the NPPF.

The City Plan Spatial Strategy is based on robust evidence (including public consultation) reflecting the local context, challenges and needs facing the city. It seeks to ensure that development opportunities are maximised to provide for a mix of homes, to facilitate growth in the economy and to make provision for essential development such as retail, leisure, health, education and other community facilities. We seek to boost development and particularly housing delivery, albeit from a starting point of a catastrophically damaged development market that is still recovering.

One of our challenges at present is to rebuild confidence in the market. There are positive signs of market recovery but we see a sound plan as one of the factors necessary to give investors the direction and confidence to bring forward development in the city.

The plan’s housing target of 11,300 (11,400) is set as a minimum but the target necessarily reflects realistic assumptions about the capacity and availability of land/sites in the city. The plan makes the most of development sites through challenging densities, taller buildings and mixed use developments.

Whilst addressing the city’s pressing need for more affordable housing the plan also includes positive policies to address the accommodation needs of students, older people and gypsies and travellers

With regard to the considerable discussion during the examination regarding the urban fringe, the council is proposing the major site at THV. It also acknowledges that there remains some potential for additional residential development on smaller scale sites in the UF. We are proposing a clear mechanism to identify and bring forward appropriate site allocations through Part 2 of the Plan.
The City Plan seeks to facilitate regeneration in a way which respects and enhances the wonderful natural and historic built environment of the city which is after all why so many people wish to work and live here.

There is no question that the city is a very attractive location which results in significant in migration, especially from London. You will also be very aware that one area where we are not unique is the challenge in the SE region demand to find space for homes. This does create pressure for our objectively assessed housing need. We are, and are committed to continue, to work with adjoining authorities to understand and meet this need over a broader area.

The Council has demonstrated it has positively and proactively undertaken its legal duty to co-operate and can reasonably claim to have made the running locally to engage with adjoining authorities; as we should because we are the core and powerhouse of a city region.

The council therefore does not see the submission of the City Plan as the end point to its duty to cooperate responsibilities. Significant progress has been taken to put in place arrangements for the continued, joint co-operation and working between authorities on the coast including Brighton & Hove the coastal and north Sussex authorities to resolve these issues. These ever more formalised arrangements may be slower to evolve than we might have wished but they do now have real momentum and political commitment, from the city’s administration and adjoining authorities.

**Lastly**
Can we extend our thanks to colleagues representing landowners and local amenity groups who have continued to pursue some fruitful discussions both before and during this examination and look forward to continued working with them.

Miss Graham we have very much appreciated your careful consideration of all party’s considerations and thank you for this. We hope that we have provided the information and clarification you sought and that you have been reassured by this. We continue to value any direction you can give us that provides an assured path to a sound plan.