### Forward

This study has been produced by the City Planning Team as part of the ‘evidence gathering process’ necessary to inform the Council’s emerging Local Development Framework.

I commend it to you as a comprehensive piece of city-wide urban analysis and character assessment, which provides an understanding and appreciation of Brighton & Hove’s many and varied neighbourhoods.

Cllr. Geoffrey Theobald OBE,
Cabinet Member for Environment

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### Neighbourhood Studies

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1.1 purpose of the study

Brighton and Hove is an historic English city and resort. It is famous for its cosmopolitan lifestyle, elegant Regency architecture, its iconic Victorian seafront and its high quality churches. It has expanded progressively during the 19th and 20th Centuries along the coast and onto the downs. During the later part of the 20th Century the city has undergone significant redevelopment to meet changing needs and aspirations.

Delivering quality change that safeguards the best of the city’s urban character and secures positive improvements elsewhere requires a clear understanding of the city’s urban character, past influences that have shaped its appearance, for better or worse, and the current trends and pressures upon it.

This study aims to provide that understanding through analysis of the city’s urban structure and its neighbourhoods. It will help guide decisions about the location, form and type of future development, and more particularly will inform the Core Strategy component of the City Council’s Local Development Framework.

The study aims to provide a comprehensive and objective ‘evidence based’ document that can provide a starting point for how future developments might contribute positively to the evolving urban character of the city.

1.2 document background

Brighton and Hove has rich and diverse patterns of development. To a greater or lesser degree each district or neighbourhood within the city exhibits particular urban characteristics unique to that area, and which give it its sense of place or local distinctiveness, and which in turn may contribute to a sense of civic pride and local well being. There may also be characteristics or features that have a negative effect.

For nearly 40 years the city council has focused on preserving the special character and appearance of areas of special architectural quality or historic interest by designating conservation areas. These areas now account for 20% of the built up area. Elsewhere, and more recently, the concept of delivering an ‘urban renaissance’ through the application of tried and tested urban design principles has been used to regenerate inner city areas. With growing pressure to provide increased housing and services there is also now a need to consider sustainable development objectives including making best use of land.

Most development change is small and incremental. In some cases however the change may be large with a more immediate and dramatic effect. But in either case it is incumbent upon the council to consider the effect such change, large or small, will have on the special and unique identity of the city, and the particular qualities of its neighbourhoods.

1.3 background policy

National planning policy statements

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development: The government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, and requires a high level of protection for the most valued townscapes. It recognises that the condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and that the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefits for local communities. It advises that development plan policies and planning decisions should be based on up-to-date information on the environmental characteristics of the area.

PPS12 Local Development Frameworks: It is important that local planning authorities have an understanding of what exists already before deciding what to change. Background documents are required, which provide a robust evidence base for future planning policy documents.

Local planning policy

Brighton & Hove Local Plan: policy QD2 requires that all new developments should take into account local neighbourhood characteristics, including built form, street layout, topography and natural landscape, landmarks and views, linkages with available local facilities, and patterns of movement.
The Urban Characterisation Study aims to identify, analyse and describe in a systematic and objective way those elements or combination of elements that help to form the character of a place.

Using best practice developed by the Countryside Agency for Landscape Character Assessment, the city can be broken down into distinct landscape character types. Within these landscape types the city can be broken down into neighbourhoods based on local association.

To obtain an understanding of relationships between topography, settlement patterns and developments in human activity each neighbourhood has been analysed against the following criteria:

- Historic influences
- Settlement typology
- Topography and microclimate
- Land Use
- Scale and density
- Architecture
- Socio-economic characteristics
- Movement
- Open space

The criteria chosen have been adapted from best practice provided by a number of key urban design publications including:

1. By Design: urban design in the planning system towards better practice: DETR
2. Urban Design Compendium: English Partnerships & The Housing Corporation
3. Towards an Urban Renaissance: Urban Task Force

The first part of this study is structured to give an initial city wide context, providing a brief overview of how topography and historic human activity have shaped the four landscape types within the city. Other key criteria have been identified that have had a profound effect on the development of the city, its visual character and how it functions.

The detailed character assessments for each neighbourhood are arranged under the four landscape character types so that they can be easily located. These are:

1. Urban Coastal
2. Urban
3. Suburban Downland Fringe
4. Downland Settlements

The study identifies different townscape types within the city. These have been mapped and interpreted to produce a broad quality assessment of the city’s landscape.
* The Central Conservation Areas have not been included in this study. These areas have already been appraised in individual Conservation Area Character Statements (see www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/conservation), and in ‘Brighton & Hove: Historic Character Assessment Report, Sussex Extensive Urban Study’ by Roland B Harris, March 2007
visual character
relationship between topography and views

Developed valleys with views out to surrounding downland
Undulating landscape allowing glimpses to the countryside beyond
Steep slopes allowing for city-wide panoramas
Gently sloping landscape allowing glimpses down to the sea

significant views and landmarks

A 27
A 270
A 259

100m +
50m +
land above sea level
study area

grand architectural statements
significant panoramas
Church
windmill
other landmark

significant views and landmarks
Neolithic and Bronze Age settlements were once located on the high ground along the coast within the Brighton area. Later a Roman Villa was located within the Preston area. It was not until the early Saxon Period that the settlement of ‘Brighthelmstone’ grew up at the point where the Downs met the sea.

During the medieval period the settlement developed into a fishing village surrounded by agricultural holdings on the adjacent hills. During the sixteenth century the town grew with the success of the fisheries. By the 1640s Brighton was one of the largest and most important towns in Sussex. Its success however was short lived due to military attacks and a resulting decline in the fishing industry. Severe storms destroyed most of the town in 1703 and 1705.

Fishing remained an important industry up until the town began to develop into a resort in the 1730s. Nearby Shoreham was an important port used to distribute timber from the Baltic and Canada to smaller towns along the south coast.

Brighton began to develop into a holiday and health resort with the popular publications of local figure Dr Russell. He was an advocate of the curative powers of bathing in seawater and by 1750 was sending many of his patients to Brighton. He encouraged local businessmen from Lewes to invest in Brighton. This saw the growth in visitor facilities such as libraries, lodging houses, baths, shops and the selling of luxury goods. With this came a wealth of service trades and general building trades to support the development. With London traffic came an increase in the transport trades such as blacksmiths, stables, coachmakers and saddlemakers.

The small fishing village town transformed into a modern Georgian town with its focus in the Old Steine. At this time there was no promenade. The town of Brighton expanded onto surrounding farmland. Much of this was still cultivated in the strip farming system. Terraced housing developed over the historic field pattern, which can be still seen today in the street pattern of the North Laine in particular. By the time George, Prince of Wales arrived in 1783 Brighton had already established itself as ‘the nation’s premier resort town’.

The early nineteenth century saw the greatest growth in population and Brighton was one of the fastest growing towns in England. The major developments of Brunswick Town and Kemp Town, built as locations for wealthy visitors, saw an increase in manufacturing and servicing for local needs. These included iron and brass foundaries, brick and lime kilns, furniture making, food processing and a rapid expansion in tourism. Much of this development was within the flatter land of Hove seafront, however linear development had started to grow up along the main routes. These routes followed the floors of dry valleys into the centre of the town.

The arrival of the railways in the 1840s saw an increase in heavier engineering and an increase in visitors, particularly day trippers. Middle-class families began to commute to London and so the fashionable inner suburbs of Preston and Cliftonville grew up around train stations.

Developments in public and private transport meant that Brighton and Hove could expand even further into its rolling hinterland. The city doubled in size with the building of inter-war garden suburbs and large detached homes with sea views.

Notable developments since the Second World War have been the Brighton Marina and the Universities.

For more information please consult:
1. ‘The Encyclopedia of Brighton’
   T Carder, 1990
   ISBN 086 147 3159
   J Middleton, 2003
3. ‘Brighton & Hove: Historic Character Assessment Report, Sussex Extensive Urban Study’
   Roland B Harris, March 2007
Gross densities in dwellings per hectare (dph) based on household figures from 2001 Census. The densities are based on the best fit of the smallest enumeration districts within each neighbourhood. This information was obtained from Citystats website, which is now www.bhlis.org. See individual studies for more detailed information.

Gross housing density, measured in dwellings per hectare, is a useful tool to compare the relative density between different parts of the city and different built forms. Gross density includes roads but excludes parks, and other large areas of open space. Gross density is influenced by the proximity of dwellings to other dwellings, the width of the streets, the size and provision of private gardens and the mix of uses and tenure types.

Areas with 19th Century terraced housing provide the city’s highest densities, and therefore the most efficient use of land, particularly those terraces subdivided into flats.

Two sample strips a-a and b-b have been selected, and illustrated overleaf, which show densities of varying built forms, including detached, semi-detached and terraced housing, and converted and purpose built flats.
The sections below show examples of how density fluctuates across the city due to building type. Net density is the ratio of the dwellings to the plot sizes, in dwellings per hectare, and does not include roads and pavements.

**section a-a, west hove-central hove**

Two storey semi-detached houses: net density = 33 dph  
Two storey semi-detached houses: net density = 23 dph  
Four storey terraced houses divided into flats: net density = 160 dph  
Three storey semi-detached houses: net density = 66 dph  
Four/five storey semi detached houses converted to flats: net density = 116 dph  
Three storey semi detached houses converted to flats: net density = 88 dph  
Eleven storey flats: net density = 184 dph

**section b-b, hanover-queen’s park-pankhurst & craven vale**

Two storey terraced houses, with small rear patio gardens: net density = 203 dph  
Three storey terraced houses, some divided into flats: net density = 150 dph  
Large 2-3 storey detached/semi-detached houses with front and rear gardens: net density = 12 dph  
Large two storey detached/semi-detached houses, some divided into flats: net density = 47 dph  
Two storey terraced houses: net density = 98 dph  
Three storey flats set in amenity grassland: net density = 56 dph
Located on the south coast, Brighton & Hove is part of a chain of coastal towns and cities linked via the A27 from Southampton to Hastings. The city is directly linked to the capital by the A23 and rail.

The 180 degree nature of the city means that Brighton's main movement corridors radiate in from surrounding suburbs and countryside into a dispersed city centre. Unlike many other cities with a 360 degree layout, these routes come to an abrupt end at the Palace Pier requiring vehicular traffic to move parallel to the shore.

Many of the centres of activity are arranged along corridors. Many of the city's leisure, recreational and tourist attractions are located along the seafront and the A259 coast road while a block back from the sea there is a retail corridor stretching from Church Road in Hove, along Western Road, North Street, to the top of St. James's Street in Brighton. The city's universities are located along the A270, Lewes Rd creating an 'academic corridor' from the A27 into the centre of Brighton. The London Road corridor is predominantly residential in character.

For more information please consult:
1. ‘Brighton and Hove Tall Buildings Study’ Gillespies Brighton & Hove City Council.
2. ‘Brighton and Hove Legibility Study: Public Space Public Life’ Gehl Architects Brighton & Hove City Council.
The concentration of different tenure type is reflected in the concentrations of demographic types across the city. The map shows the main concentrations (60% or more of households) of demographic types, although there are pockets of different demographic types within most neighbourhoods. These demographic types are set by Acorn Data, and were sourced from citystats website (now www.bhlis.org). The main five Acorn categories are described as:

Wealthy Achievers
Urban Prosperity
Comfortably Off
Moderate Means
Hard Pressed

These are then broken down into 56 different types. A further Unclassified type, ‘mostly communal population’, is particularly apparent in this city with a significant student population. The University neighbourhood has therefore not been included in this diagram.

A more detailed Acorn profile is shown at the end of every neighbourhood appraisal to give an in depth insight into the neighbourhoods’ socio-economic background.
Brighton & Hove sits over upper and middle chalk formations creating a smooth rolling relief. The broad rounded ridges and sweeping dry chalk valleys extend into the city. These ridgelines bring a mosaic of woodland and grassland into the urban environment creating a distinct setting for the city between rolling downland and the sea.

The topography, developments in transport, and Brighton & Hove’s historical legacy of a seaside resort, have all shaped its urban landscape and influenced the patterns of settlement that we see today. The landscape of the city can be broken down into four distinct landscape character types:

1. Urban Coastal
2. Urban
3. Suburban Downland Fringe
4. Downland Settlements

Each is characterised by its own distinct and influential mix of elements, including geology, topography, vegetation, land use and settlement patterns. The following pages describe each landscape type in turn.

For more information please consult:
2. ‘Brighton-Peacehaven-Newhaven, Urban Fringe landscape study’ published by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board.
3. www.citywildlife.org.uk
The urbanised coastline that we see today has evolved over several centuries. It wasn’t until 1724 that the first groynes were constructed to protect the town from erosion and storms. The groynes allowed the gradual build-up of the shingle beach, 15 foot deep in places, helping to protect the fragile cliffs and town above. The western cliffs in front of the old town were first protected by a wall in 1811. This was gradually extended. The sea wall ran from the Chain Pier to Brunswick Town in Hove. The cliffs to the east of the town rise to 135 feet above sea level, between Rottingdean and Saltdean, and have been noted for their geological significance. It was not until 1838 that a sea wall was built to protect the crumbling cliffs. Madeira Drive was constructed in 1872.

The development of Brighton & Hove as a seaside resort has greatly influenced the appearance of the seafront. The development of formal architectural set pieces exploiting sea views to the best effect, arranged around formal squares and gardens, to house those coming to bathe and take the air, dominate the seafront. The reclaiming of the beach from the sea over time has meant that the beach itself could be developed. Once used as the fish market and other uses associated with the fishing industry, the arches now accommodate a range of bars, clubs, restaurants and shops.

The arrival of the railways brings visitors and day trippers to the city. It has also allowed the Shoreham Port to develop and so with it came terraces to house its workers.

topography
- Low lying beach rising to chalk cliffs.

geology
- Upper chalk formation.

hydrology
- Free draining chalk formation and raised flint beach.

dominant landscape elements:

buildings
- Low-mid rise seafront facades with some high rise. The two piers are prominent landmarks along the coast line as are the cliffs in the distance. Port development to the west. Victorian promenades, arches and colonnades in the centre. High quality examples of Regency and Victorian seafront engineering and architecture, including piers.

landscape archeology
- Cliffs to the east are designated both an SSSI and RIGS containing many large fossil remains.

land cover
- Flint pebble beach, wide paved promenade interspersed with amenity grass lawns and shallow man-made lagoons, very little in maritime habitats.

communications
- High degree of pedestrian access. A259 runs along the coast and is one of the main approaches into the city centre.

visual character
- City directly relates to the flat open coastline, offering panoramic sea views punctuated by historic seaside development in the foreground. Its open nature creates an exposed environment during the winter months. The rising chalk cliffs increase visual permeability out towards the sea. Below the cliffs visual connection with the city is reduced.
The historic fishing town of Brighton was surrounded by five ‘laines’, each of which was further divided into furloong strips. These strips of land were leased by tenant husbandmen and farmed in the traditional way into the C19th. Complex land ownerships shaped the city’s early incremental growth within the laines. The result is a very regular grid pattern of small scale streets that has built up around the medieval core to the east and west of the central valley.

The arrival of the railways in 1840 meant that development quickly expanded alongside railway land. Victorian suburbs grew up around stations, and industrial uses located themselves close to the railways to allow easy access. Workers’ terraces developed close to the industry. Further afield, as and when larger parcels of land became available, speculative developments occurred. A range of distinct late 19th century estates were built for the new middle classes.

topography
Predominately valley sides and coastal plain.

geology
Upper chalk formation and raised beach consisting of marine deposits.

hydrology
The chalk group that underlies Brighton & Hove is the most important aquifer in Southern England.

dominant landscape elements:

buildings
Predominately medium to high density inner suburban and urban settlement patterns.

landscape archeology
Field patterns and urban growth due to the railways.

land cover
Predominately urban development peppered with historic parks and gardens, recreation grounds, cemeteries and tree-lined streets. High quality townscape. Few local nature reserves.

communications
High degree of public access with road network, pavements and railway.

visual character
Fine textured complex landscape of buildings and vegetation. At times balanced between built form and open space such as historic square and mature tree-lined streets but occasionally a discordant, chaotic angular landscape with little vegetative relief. Significant areas of good quality townscape.

1750-1850 growth of fishing industry. Beginnings of resort development and expansion of town onto agricultural land

1850 -1900 resort development and arrival of the railways see growth of Victorian suburbs

1900-1945 increased urban development along the railway
suburban downland fringe landscape

Much of the downland acquired by Brighton Council in the 1920s was developed, and large housing estates grew around the urban core of Brighton & Hove. Some of these have grown around existing historic villages and Victorian suburbs. Developments in private and public transport meant that Brighton & Hove’s population could be housed further from the city centre and within the rolling downland that could now be accessed by car and bus.

The result is an undulating landscape of low rise development interspersed by green ridges of woodland and grassland that extend into the city.

topography
Open upland with small dry valleys winding through.

geology
Middle and upper chalk formation.

hydrology
Dry valleys and free draining chalk.

dominant landscape elements:
buildings
Low rise suburban settlements developed, enveloping historic villages, and scattered farmsteads.

landscape archeology
Pre-historic hill forts, causewayed enclosures, barrows, agricultural terracing and trackways.

farming
Large scale arable, rough grazing, stables, fields, very few and degraded hedgerows.

land cover
Isolated fragments of species rich chalk grassland, suburban development peppered with amenity grassland and grass verges, pockets of deciduous woodland, regenerating scrub on former allotment sites.
Large scale recreational uses such as golf courses.

communications
Degree of public access with road network, tracks and footpaths, railway, communication masts.

visual character
Prominent ridgelines of chalk upland extend into the city providing panoramic views across the city and surrounding downland. The uplands can feel remote and exposed. Older developments are located within the more sheltered valleys while twentieth century suburban development has extended along valley sides.

key events
1900-1945 Interwar suburban growth

1945-2001 Post second world war development now constrained by by-pass and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
The South Downs are a range of chalk hills that stretch from Beachy Head to Winchester. They bound the north and east of Brighton & Hove, and create a distinctive setting for the city. The South Downs are designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are of national significance. In the 1920s and 30s much of Brighton’s open downland was purchased for the council in order to protect the downland itself, protect the city’s water supply and provide some building land. The council owns some 16,000 acres of farmland, most of which is let to tenant farmers.

Within this downland setting lie rural settlements, medieval in origin. These have grown over time, contributing to the present character of the landscape.

topography Rolling open upland with small dry valleys winding through.
geology Middle and upper chalk formation.
hydrolgy Dry valleys and free draining chalk formation.
dominant landscape elements:
buildings Low-rise historic village developments nestled along valley floors and isolated farm buildings and landmark buildings. Low rise residential suburbs.
landscape archeology Landscape scattered with barrows and sites of archeological interest.
farming Large scale arable and rough grazing fields, very few and degraded hedgerows.
land cover Isolated fragments of species rich chalk grassland, pockets of deciduous woodland and exposed golf courses on higher ground.
communications Limited public access in the form of roads, tracks and footpaths.
visual character Rolling, open landscape with close relationship to big open skies. Panoramic views including glimpses of the sea. Prominent landmarks are visible over long distances.

Rural settlements with historic centres
Views out over surrounding landscape
Pockets of woodland
Suburban expansion of downland villages and suburban development within the surrounding rural landscape
Small villages nesting in rolling large scale arable fields
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<th>character</th>
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<td>Downland settlements</td>
<td>Historic village</td>
<td>Expanded village settlements, contained by the Downs, with strong historic identity and distinctive vernacular architecture.</td>
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<td>C20th residential suburb</td>
<td>Detached 'dormitory' districts in open downland, exhibiting waves of development, with mixed building styles: lacking unifying features or architectural cohesion. Predominently low rise, low density housing with limited dispersed services and high car dependancy.</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>‘Out of town’ compact, low rise, self contained campus development with landscape focus.</td>
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<td>C20th residential suburb (evolved)</td>
<td>Low rise, low density residential suburban expansion. Predominantly medium-large privately owned homes with front and rear private gardens arranged over a typical suburban layout. Weak architectural cohesion, but cohesive public realm. Developed incrementally, enveloping earlier downland villages and farmsteads.</td>
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<td>C20th residential suburb (planned)</td>
<td>Low rise, low density semi-detached or terraced housing much of which built as public housing. Strong identity.</td>
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<td>Pre-1914 residential inner suburb (well preserved)</td>
<td>Neighbourhoods with strong architectural cohesion. Quality terraces, semi-detached and large villas, some converted into apartments. Good quality urban environment with tree-lined streets and located near popular public parks. Many in conservation areas.</td>
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<td>Pre-1914 residential inner suburb (eroded)</td>
<td>Mix of redevelopment types. Remnants of C19th development interspersed with C20th public housing developments creating a great mix of building type, quality and density ranges. Few local centres. Poor urban environment with limited access to quality public open space. Weak architectural cohesion.</td>
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<td>Post second world war housing estate</td>
<td>Terraced housing arranged over a clearly defined grid pattern originally built to accommodate the artisan class. Low rise but has some of the highest gross densities within the city with good access to services. Strong architectural cohesion, eroded public realm. Narrow streets with little street tree planting. Areas tend to attract a young population with students and young families starting out.</td>
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<td>Historic resort development</td>
<td>Regency and Victorian estate development that has a direct relationship with the sea. Many are planned estates driven by the rise in popularity of Brighton and Hove as a seaside resort. Some include grand squares and gardens. High densities support thriving local shopping streets and good social mix. Strong architectural cohesion; designated conservation areas.</td>
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<td>Conference/ Shopping Core</td>
<td>Modern, large scale shopping centre.</td>
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<td>Late C20th marina development</td>
<td>Purpose built marina development on edge of the city. Cliff backdrop. Mix of commercial residential and leisure uses.</td>
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**neighbourhoods**

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- Ovingdean (part of)
- Saltdean
- Woodingdean
- Ovingdean (part of)
- University
- Tongdean
- Westdene & Withdean
- Patcham
- Hangleton (part of)
- West Blatchington
- Portslade Village
- Coldean
- Bovendean
- Mousecommb
- Hollingdean
- Mildeak
- College
- Queen’s Park
- Willett Estate*
- Denmark Villas*
- Pembroke & Princes*
- The Drive
- Hove Station
- Sackville Gardens
- Clifton Hill*
- Wilbury
- Round Hill
- Preston
- Tivoli & Prestonville
- West Hove
- Hanover & Elm Grove
- Bear Road
- Hanover & Elm Grove (part of)
- East Brighton
- Pankhurst & Craven Vale
- Kemp Town*
- East Cliff (part of)*
- Regency Square*
- Portslade-by-Sea
- Churchill Square/ Western Road
- Old Town*
- Valley Gardens*
- North Laine*
- East Cliff (part of)*
- Brighton Marina
- *The central conservation areas are not included in this study. Refer to conservation area studies on www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/conservation for more information.*
good quality urban landscapes
mixed quality urban landscapes
poor quality urban landscapes
good quality suburban landscapes
mixed quality suburban landscapes
good quality historic landscapes