**Introduction to EIP**

Good morning everyone and welcome to the opening of this public examination of Chichester District Council’s Local Plan. Can I specifically welcome our two Inspectors, Mr Lewis and Ms Ayres and their team. We thank the Inspectors for their advance work in reading the background material which underpins our evidence as well as all of the representations made on the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

Whilst CDC is a relatively large, rural District, its developable area is limited by the South Downs National Park to the north and the AONB to the south which together amount to some 75% of the Districts land area. Consequently, most development is proposed along a corridor to the east and west of Chichester. This L P has been a long time in the making due to a number of quite meaty challenges which have required extensive background work and evidence gathering, as can be seen by the documentation in the LP library. I will briefly summarise under four headings the range of environmental and infrastructure constraints which have had to be addressed.

***Key Environmental constraints***

Under this heading we have the importance of views to and from the South Downs National Park, the Harbour area AONB and numerous SAC’s and SPAs, together with the need for Strategic Wildlife Corridors between the South Downs and the AONB. In addition, we have to mitigate for nitrate neutrality in the south of the district and water neutrality and air quality in the north east.

***Flooding and Drainage Infrastructure***

Much or our coastline faces long term flood risk. Currently there is evidence of coastal erosion and inland pockets of surface water flooding. Several of our STWs are at or nearing full capacity and Southern Water regularly discharges into the harbour and local rivers. Time is needed to address these capacity constraints.

***Land Use***

Agriculture, horticulture and their downstream processes are important to the economy of the district. Chichester developed over time as an administrative centre and market town. It is an attractive historic City and has not experienced large scale industrialisation. Whilst suitable for higher density development, the numerous heritage assets of national importance and the positioning of the city at the foot of the South Downs National Park add a layer of sensitivity to high-rise development. Consequently, there are limited areas for major brownfield development. Similarly with our smaller towns and settlement hubs. Consequently, most new development will have to be in the rural hinterland in the east west corridor, much of which is rated best and most versatile agricultural land.

***Transport Infrastructure***

Whilst Chichester City and Southbourne are well served by train, most of the District’s settlements are not. Both urban and rural bus services need improvement together with pedestrian and cycle routes.

The key challenge for the LP has been the A27, a National Highway but with no attendant national funding for improvement. The A27 Chichester Bypass is currently operating at full or near full capacity and at present there is no realistic and sufficient scale of funding available that can mitigate the impacts of both existing and projected growth. The LP team has worked extensively with National Highways and West Sussex County Council to achieve an acceptable policy framework in relation to the A27 and associated housing development.

 ***Conclusion***

This Examination in Public will now consider the manner in which the District Council has addressed these various constraints. We look forward to a lively debate and a constructive outcome.