Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make a few closing comments on CIL on behalf of the Council. My name is John Kaiser and I am the Executive member for Planning and Highways. My portfolio includes responsibility for delivering our Local Plan, ensuring appropriate infrastructure is in place and of course, overseeing the development and implementation of CIL.

As you have heard through the course of the hearing, the Council has an ambitious growth agenda. It has taken the bold step in allocating four Strategic Development Locations, but these require the provision of new roads, schools and community facilities. As a Council, we have made a firm commitment to our residents that this infrastructure will be delivered and in a timely way. We strongly believe our proposed rates and approach to CIL are the way forward.

We are a pioneering and enabling authority with an exceptional track record of delivery. We do not sit on our laurels but actively pursue every opportunity. We have successfully secured over £5 million of Local Pinchpoint Funding for highways projects and have an indicative allocation of £24 million of Local Growth funding through the Local Enterprise Partnership towards our new relief roads. Where we have identified a barrier to development, we have sought to find a solution – we have undertaken masterplanning work on the SDLs and feasibility studies on the associated relief roads and purchased land and property where this will enable development to come forward. Our commitment to growth, meeting needs and delivering infrastructure could not be clearer.

The Council has put forward robust evidence to support its proposed CIL rates and demonstrated that it has aimed to ‘strike (what appears to it) to be an appropriate balance between the funding of infrastructure from the CIL and the potential effects of the CIL on the viability of the development of the areas as a whole’. Whilst I am fully confident in the viability appraisals undertaken by our consultants, GL Hearn, for me the most compelling fact is that these levels have been consistently achieved on the early SDL phases and are well within the amounts planned in 2010 when the Inspector found our Core Strategy sound.

Before the hearing closes, I would like to say a few thank you’s on behalf of the Council. Firstly, I would like to thank the Examiner for the way he has conducted the hearing. I would also like to thank the Programme Officer, Claire Jones-Hughes, for the way in which she has co-ordinated the hearing and ensured its smooth running. Thanks also need to go to all of those who have participated in these hearings or who have responded to the consultations – inevitably there will be disagreements between us but we feel the dialogue has been a constructive one. Finally, I must thank the Council’s team of officers and consultants who have worked tirelessly to pull together the evidence to support our proposed CIL rates and present such a compelling case.

In conclusion, we are confident the CIL charging schedule before you represents the most suitable, appropriate and viable way forward in delivering the infrastructure required to support the growth of the Borough. Accordingly, I would commend the Charging Schedule to you as being in accordance with the legislation, regulations and national guidance.