

Dear Cllr Morgan

REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY INTO THE COUNCIL'S OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The last twelve months have seen the loss of three of Brighton & Hove's open spaces to development, namely:

1. Land to the east of 55 Highcroft Villas (planning permission granted on appeal by Public Inquiry, January 2009)
2. Land to the rear of 67-81 Princes Road (planning permission granted on officer recommendation, July 2009)
3. Land to the rear of 140-146 Springfield Road (planning permission granted on appeal by Public Inquiry, October 2009)

All three sites are 'greenfield', having never been previously built on, and having been used historically as allotments in the case of Highcroft Villas and Springfield Road. While not publicly accessible, these sites are quite rightly much-loved by the residents who live nearby, providing valuable pockets of wildlife habitat, and forming part of the city's 'green network'.

Indeed, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) paragraph 2.4 recognises that such plots, including privately owned ones which are inaccessible, can offer wide-ranging environmental benefits, visual amenity and can contribute to the health and well-being of those who overlook them.

Although the Local Authority sought to defend the sites at Highcroft Villas and Springfield Road, the Planning Inspector upheld the appeal in both cases, citing the earlier decisions to allow development on the Highcroft Villas site and at Princes Road in his Appeal Decision Notice for Springfield Road (ref. APP / Q1445 / A / 09 / 2105969).

Members and residents alike are now gravely concerned that a dangerous precedent has been set by this series of decisions to grant planning permission for development on 'greenfield' sites.

As a city, Brighton & Hove is physically constrained by the sea and the South Downs, and is under considerable pressure to provide sufficient land for development, particularly housing.

The recent reluctant decision to include the Urban Fringe as contingency land for development in the Local Development Framework amplifies the likelihood that there will now be even greater stress on open spaces in the city.

I would therefore like to request a report to the committee into the Council's policies and strategy for identifying and protecting the City's open spaces. Seeking out best

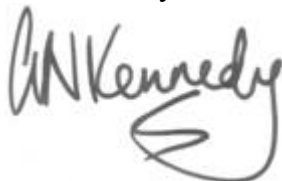
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practice from other authorities and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), among the questions that such a report might examine are:

- What is the current status of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy?
- What work is underway to develop policies to inform the Open Spaces Strategy?
- How can the Council support and reinforce the work being undertaken towards designation of the city as an urban Biosphere Reserve through its Open Spaces Strategy?
- Is the Council following Government Guidance on Open Space Assessment and Public Consultation?
- How have the above planning decisions affected the Council's ability to defend valuable open spaces from development?
- Will the Council now begin to formally identify vulnerable open spaces in the city as sites which should be protected in accordance with PPG17?

Many thanks for your consideration in this instance. I hope that you and the committee will feel able to accommodate my request in your work programme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'A' and 'K'.

Cllr Amy Kennedy

Green Member for Preston Park Ward
Brighton & Hove City Council