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PENWITH DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Dear Councillor,

I have received a letter from Hayle residents C and O Philp which was issued to all councillors. I believe it contains some misleading information and I have appended my views in red below each of the major points in the letter (original in blue).

There are over 550 local people on the housing waiting list in Hayle of which 150 are on the shared – ownership list to buy.

No, this is misleading. If you add all categories together you get 550 but most people register in all three categories (purchase, shared purchase & rent), hence there is triple counting. In addition, this number includes bronze and silver categories that are unlikely to qualify for housing association rentals. In the rental category there are 24 in Extra Gold and 57 in Gold. These are the only categories likely to receive housing association properties. It is likely that only 50-80 families are, in practice, actually waiting and qualified for Hayle housing. A smaller number (about a dozen) are waiting for properties to buy. Although the town council would like to help all of these families, it is misleading to quote the larger figure as meaningful.

No-one should need reminding of the housing crisis but there are those on Hayle Town Council opposed to providing affordable homes for local people on the vacated Hawkins Motors site.

No. Hayle Town Council is not opposed to affordable housing but, recognising, that high-density housing cannot be built on that location in a conservation area and World Heritage Site, a compromise solution is necessary. A number of affordable housing projects are under way in Hayle and a contribution to affordable housing has been offered by Hawkins.

This site has now stood empty and unsightly for some 6 years, yet it is one of the most appropriate brown field sites in Cornwall for housing; close to all services, shops, library, buses, trains etc, and right in the middle of town. It ticks every sustainability box you can throw at it. A legally binding section 106 planning obligation allowed the successful and expanding motor business to relocate to Marsh Lane thereby securing jobs and business for Hayle. This relieved local residents from the hassle of having a busy commercial activity on their doorsteps, of which some often complained. The obligation on Hawkins was to provide desperately needed affordable homes on the vacated site, which would bring about a transformation by replacing ugly utilitarian buildings with an attractive residential development. Both Hayle Town Council and Penwith District Council supported the move at the time. In short, the section 106 agreement provided real solutions to real problems.

No. Even the authors of this letter supported more recent attempts to come up with a design brief that was substantially different from the S106 agreement. The original S106 agreement for 'a minimum of 26 affordable homes' cannot be delivered.

It is the provision of the affordable housing side of the bargain that is now the issue.

A small group of local residents who live opposite have objected to the scheme for affordable

housing on the site without furnishing valid planning objections to support their views, They were unfortunately encouraged that the site could be left as an open space.

No. It was not a small group of local residents but 972 out of 1069 voters in the Parish Poll and over 500 signatories of a petition collected by Mrs. L. Stevens. The valid planning objections included: public view, over-development and conservation area considerations. There are other important issues such as the views of statutory consultees who have opposed high-density development.

Over 5 years a bucketload of fanciful pipe-dreams have floated like confetti over aspirations for the site: - 'we could buy the site, ask Hawkins to give us the site, borrow £350000 from the Public Works Loan Board, put a new firestation there, or an interpretation centre or a restaurant, or a bandstand or a tourist information centre, the harbour developers could occupy the site etc, etc'. None have seen the light of day.

No. The desire of the people of Hayle for open space is met by this agreement among PDC, HTC and Hawkins and brokered by senior PDC management. It is normal that a number of ideas should have been proposed to try to resolve this difficult issue.

A local referendum on the site merely served to further encourage the public that the proposed development on the site could be abandoned in favour of an open amenity space. The whole exercise was totally valueless since the result could not be considered as material to the planning application, and was otherwise unrealistic since no-one could deliver on the outcome.

No. While the Parish Poll was recognised by all as non-binding, it served to indicate that, despite the claims in this letter, the people of Hayle would prefer open space to affordable housing on this precious site. The outcome is on the table tonight.

So with the aspirations of the referendum now dead, houses will be built on site, and all the pipe-dreams have evaporated, The very politicians who shouted against housing on the site are now promoting them! But bizarrely not homes that are desperately needed by local Hayle people, but open market houses

No. The aspirations of the Parish Poll will have been met. The Hayle Residents Association, which called for the poll, has written a letter supporting the Hayle Town Council – as has the Hayle and District Chamber of Commerce. These will not be 'luxury homes', simply open-market homes.

Now that everyone agrees that houses will go there, we must ensure they are affordable for our local people. It is time now for Penwith to reaffirm its priorities, support their own policies and achievable aspirations, and ensure that affordable homes are built on this site, in accordance with government guidelines and the 106 agreement. As in all things compromises are often necessary, but capitulation should never be an option The draft Development brief of 11th March this year, endorsed by the planning committee is a way forward and its proposal for a mix of affordable and market units should be finalised rapidly on this site.. If Penwith fails to show leadership on this site it will set a damaging precedent for the future provision of affordable homes for our people. Let not the legacy of the District Council, in its final days be that they failed to grasp this nettle. We believe and hope that there are enough experienced and knowledgeable councillors on Penwith who will not turn their backs on our local home seekers,

No. Everyone has not agreed that houses will go on this site, they have agreed that a small number of houses will go on this site and that the people of Hayle will benefit from maintaining the open aspect over Copperhouse Pool in perpetuity. In exchange for this planning gain, Hayle Town Council, supported by almost everyone who has made a comment on this issue, has conceded that affordable housing is not an option on this site and has accepted the compromise of a contribution to off-site affordable housing.

Please note the following important items

- 1 Extract from the Draft Development Brief – Hawkins Motors Report of the Head of Sustainable Development and Improvement (reported to the Planning Committee 11th March 2008)
page 6

Open Market Housing (re Hawkins site)

Given the relatively simplistic nature of traditional housing in the locality there is **no reason** why affordable housing should not achieve the same design standard as open market housing. Indeed, simple two story terrace form housing would be very much in keeping. **Thus, in visual conservation and heritage terms there is not a strong case to support open market housing in favour of affordable housing**

However, note also from the same document:

- 3.3 The changing circumstances outlined in paragraph 3.1 point to the original S106a agreed in 2002 being potentially undeliverable in the context of the additional constraints on the site. The costs of constructing 26 affordable units of a design and materials which protect the character of the Conservation Area and World Heritage status is less viable, while the scale and massing of a 26 unit development has the potential to harm the historic character of the area as well as conflicting with local aspirations for public open space. The production of a development brief, at this time, would allow a reassessment of the best options for the site.
- 3.6 In terms of viability, any developer proposals would be subject to viability testing by the Council. Where the developer proposes less than the 26 affordable units required by the 8106a, then justification needs to be made in terms of equivalent gains for the wider community.

- 2 Extract from Hayle Town Council Meeting 26th Sept 2007 *Minute 87 page3 first full para (re Hawkins Site)*

The District Officers, (*Matt Barton and Alan Hampshire*) whilst recognising there is a duty to preserve and enhance sites in the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, explained that a precedent **must not be set not to build affordable homes in such places**. Mr Barton explained that the District Council had to be particularly cautious about setting any precedent relating to affordable homes in view also of the Hayle Harbour Application.

There is no precedent being set that affordable homes should **not** be built in conservation areas or in the World Heritage Site. The designations are, however, material and when taken with the large number of other issues support the agreement that has finally been worked out. Indeed, it is expected that 175 affordable dwellings will be built as part of the proposed Hayle Harbour development.

As an elected representative for Hayle I listen closely to the views of local residents. Not one person has expressed to me directly the views stated above. I believe these views to be held by just a handful of residents and are not in any way representative.

Having spent a lot of time working to bring this issue to a close after years of frustration, I am convinced that the recommendation of the officers on the table tonight is an excellent outcome and I urge you to support it.

Yours sincerely,



John Bennett