

tel 753131

1st Dec 2008

Dear Councillor
Re the Hawkins Motors site

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-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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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,

Yours sincerely
Owen and Colin Philp

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**

- 2 Extract from Hayle Town Council Meeting 26th Sept 2007 *Minute 87 page3 fist 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