Mr Richard Homewood, 29 March 2018

Waverley Borough Council.

The Burys,

GODALMING. BY EMAIL

Dear Mr Homewood,

 WEY HILL CAR PARK SITE, HASLEMERE, FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Haslemere Society has learnt of a meeting between WBC, HTC. HV and the Haslemere Chamber of Trade to discuss proposals to deregulate the Common Land status of the site and the further use and development of the site. As the Local Civic Society with over 500 members we consider it is appropriate for us to express our views and aspirations for this eyesore site and we respond accordingly with this statement. We are also mindful of the public response to the consultation made by Haslemere Vision in 2014.

Wey Hill is a ‘poor relation’ to the Haslemere High Street Conservation Area and is in need of enhancement. It is therefore important that the site be developed appropriately, sympathetically and comprehensively. It should not simply be harnessed as a ‘cash cow’ to further Waverley Borough Council’s requirements at the expense of an opportunity for a radical improvement to the attractiveness of the Wey Hill area for the benefit of the local population.

The Society campaigned over a decade ago for a multi storey commuter car park on the Weydown Road car park with time related road parking restrictions to remove the commuter parking from this Common Land and the roads in the vicinity of the station.

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We demonstrated to WBC the economic benefits such a scheme could produce for the council. The recent additional parking deck at the station is not adequate to cope with current and increasing future commuter parking demands. The development of the Wey Hill site or introduction of parking charges on the Wey Hill site will inevitably result in an undesirable increase in street commuter parking unless yellow line restrictions are introduced at the same time.

The Society hopes that efforts to produce and agree a development scheme for the site will commence as soon as possible and until that happens The Society would not support deregulation of the site. Subsequent to the general agreement on the site redevelopment and deregulation it may be that a **temporary** minimum cost pay and display scheme could produce some income to cover scheme design costs in the interim before any project commences. However, it is very important to allocate an area for free parking to support the struggling retail trade in Wey Hill during this period.

It is important to have, say, a couple of outline development schemes drawn up by a conceptual architect (not a town planner!) for public appraisal and comment and to generate interest in the regeneration of this area opposite St Christopher’s Green. Such genuine evidence of the Borough Council’s commitment to this will be well received by the local people.

The Haslemere Society suggests that a development scheme should include apartments, retail, offices, parking for local shoppers (not commuters) and a hard/soft landscaped public open space complimenting St Christopher’s Green where a market and other social events could be held. The residential content should be well designed to fit with other elements and without the sole intent of maximising numbers of units.

It is well known that part of the site (the old clay pit) was used many decades ago as a local rubbish dump and there have been ill informed suggestions that this would preclude building on the site. Some soil investigations were carried out in recent years by Soil Mechanics Ltd for the intended new library (and possibly also prior to previous WBC P&D proposals in 2013/14) and more

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investigations might be necessary to assist in the design of building foundations which are entirely feasible using modern piling methods if this is necessary. Such investigations could help in determining the positioning of the various building elements of a scheme. A detailed topographical survey of the site has been carried out by Sterling Surveys and the Council should have all these in their records, which will be very helpful in drawing up proposals for the site.

Reference is made in suggestions for a temporary car park scheme to macadam roadways and mesh or matting covered porous parking bays. We would point out that due to the nature of tipped materials on the site and its compaction due to heavy usage over many decades the substructure is generally impervious and such proposals will not be feasible without significant earth moving and surface reconstruction. Also reference is made to carrying out temporary improvements for ‘’health and safety’’ reasons. We would question what H & S problems have occurred on this site throughout its several decades of use as a car park? Commuters have been very happy to use this site in its current state for a long time save for laying small amounts of type 1 granular material where puddles formed. In conclusion only very limited expenditure seems necessary until a site development scheme is carried out.

To summarise, The Haslemere Society will only support the deregulation of the Common Land for future development and the removal of free commuter parking from the site when alternative conceptual development schemes for the site have been drawn up and agreed along the lines described.

The Society will be happy to meet and assist in achieving the enhancement and development of this site.

Yours faithfully,

 John Greer (Vice Chairman The Haslemere Society)

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