

Hatherleigh Market Redevelopment

At the meeting held in the Vine Church on 24 August 2011 to discuss the Market redevelopment it appeared that the only objectors present were from the general public, which mostly use the Market just one day a week. If the campaign to stop or minimise the effects of the sale of the Market are to succeed then the objectors need to include the others that will be affected.

If the livestock market closes then both buyers and sellers of stock will have to travel further and incur higher transport costs. Stock sold at another market for slaughter is less likely to be processed in the Hatherleigh Abattoir. This will reduce the demand for its services, jobs could be lost. Following through the domino effect, eventually the Abattoir could be forced to close with a loss of up to 60 full time jobs. When the Abattoir site becomes vacant there will be overwhelming pressure to build houses from Oakfield Road to the Bypass.

Even if the demand for the Abattoir does not fall, the presence of houses on the Market site close to the Abattoir will put environmental pressures on West Devon Meats. Most of the Town's inhabitants already experience odours from the Abattoir and only just tolerate it now. Residents in dwellings any closer on the Market site would find it very unpleasant and with the help of Environmental Health, would force the Abattoir to improve its odour control systems very significantly. This is further investment which the Company probably cannot afford. Such demands could also lead to the closure of the Abattoir with the consequent sell off of the site for housing.

Most of the Market site is unsuitable for housing. Abattoirs and housing need a buffer zone between them to ensure the residents are protected. In 2008 a proposal to build housing on a site in Great Harwood, Blackburn, near the Great Harwood abattoir with a 70m buffer zone in between was rejected (http://www.blackburncitizen.co.uk/news/3856732.Great_Harwood_housing_development_proposed/ , http://menmedia.co.uk/accringtonobserver/news/s/1081691_stink_over_abattoir_plan).

Plan B

It is inevitable that there will be changes in land use over time and it is up to residents to ensure that the changes are for the best. What is needed in a town centre is not housing but mostly commerce and retail. Consider a scenario in 20 - 30 years time when the size of Hatherleigh has doubled by housing from Oakfield Road to the Bypass. Where will be the space for local shopping? The lack of local facilities will ensure that shoppers will travel even more than they do today. The few shops that we do have will die. Tesco will move in and will finally kill the last one.

If the site has to be redeveloped then it would be far better to have a balanced mix of development, with retail closest to Hancocks Garage near the town centre, possibly with a space for a pannier market, and an industrial buffer zone between the Abattoir and the rest of the site. The Town needs adequate parking to service the retail and relieve congestion on existing streets. The rest of the site can be redeveloped for commerce, some housing and open space.

Pressure for the best outcome from the proposed redevelopment needs to come from all of those likely to be affected and with one very loud voice.

United we stand divided we fall.