



**Councillor Stephen Hawkins**

Mr John Bury  
Head of Planning  
Waverley Court  
Level G:3

Date 28 September 2010

Our Ref SH/H2850/kjb

Your Ref

Dear Mr Bury

**Pre Planning Notification – 10/01733/PAN  
Former Scottish Power Site, Portobello**

I attended the Portobello Community Council last night and for the second consecutive meeting the above proposal was discussed with the developer, Phil Myerscough of BL Developments.

Mr Myerscough received comments from the Community Council following his previous presentation where concerns were expressed about the effect, in his latest proposal, of a supermarket on the existing town centre. He is saying that he needs an acceptance for a supermarket of 18,000 sq ft floor area from the Community Council before he commits to a new application containing such a use.

There was a concern expressed when Mr Myerscough stated that the Planning Department supported the inclusion of such a large amount of retail as many in the community had worked very hard over several years to arrive at the North West Portobello Design Brief in which only a small local shop was envisaged. Now, to find that the department has overturned what was supported by them, the developer and the Planning Committee only two years ago, comes as a smack in the face for local consultation.

Too often I hear that the general public do not engage with the planning process and yet when they do, as in the development of the brief, they find that all their effort is for nothing. People believed that when the brief said no supermarket then that was what was meant. The elasticity of language, or even a complete re-interpretation, leaves ordinary people wondering what was the point.

I am fully /



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I am fully aware that the economic situation in the country has changed and I know that many support the idea that the planning system exists to aid development but I do not believe it is the role of planning to bail out developers who have made a wrong business decision. If the site had started to be developed for housing in 2003 then the developer could have benefited from the rising property market but they had to be greedy and pursued the superstore proposal. If there had not been such a delay in preparing the Design Brief then BL Developments might have had a development that would allow them to return a profit. However, we are where we are; and with a site that has been allowed to deteriorate by BL Developments.

Mr Myerscough, I felt, was trying to put undue pressure on the Community Council to support his latest proposal but, without details, the issues could not be fully explored and the majority present last night could not support a supermarket. A minority wanted whatever the developer was willing to offer but certainly there was no consensus of opinion and Mr Myerscough abruptly left the meeting at about 22:15

It saddens me that with all the local time and effort invested by the community your Department has decided that a supermarket is acceptable before the application is received. It also saddens me that you did not tell us in the community of this change in the Design Brief. Can you please tell me when we were to be told?

Yours sincerely



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**PORTOBELLO AND CRAIGMILLAR**