

NEWS RELEASE

Thursday 1st October 2009

For Immediate Release

IMPORTANT HARBOUR DECISION NEEDS CALM AND RATIONAL DEBATE

The MP for the West Cornwall and Isles of Scilly constituency of St Ives, Andrew George, has today expressed his concern that an important decision about the Penzance ferry terminal may not be based on a rational assessment of all of the facts and his regret that a planning chief has resorted to personal attacks.

In an outburst to the media, the Councillor who is charged with taking the lead on plans for the Isles of Scilly ferry terminal at Penzance Harbour, described some Penzance residents as 'small minded' and a public meeting which Mr George has called in Penzance next Friday as 'sinister'.

Mr George said: **"Feelings in Penzance are already running high. Local people hope that their voices will be heard and want reassurance that they are being consulted. Intemperate remarks from the Council's planning chief will deepen concern that Penzance will suffer another planning blunder which future generations will regret.**

"On the one hand Cllr Hicks accuses the people of Penzance of not being 'fully appraised' of the plans for Penzance Harbour.¹ But he doesn't want to use the opportunity of the very first public meeting on the subject to 'appraise' them; instead he issues insults and seeks to castigate those who have called for and are organising the meeting.

"I am holding six public meetings on the Isles of Scilly. It is curious that he is not criticising me for that. Why is it ok to consult and discuss this with residents on Scilly but no in Penzance?"

"It is regrettable that many of Cllr Hicks' contributions to this debate since he arrived in post this summer have only contributed to inflame rather than calm the situation. This is an important and difficult project to deliver. The local community deserve reassurance that the people who are responsible for making the decisions have the capacity to listen and ability to act rationally.

"At the end of the day, this is a decision for the Council, not for me. I have been involved in this project since its first inception in 2003, including the efforts to secure the crucial Government funding package to enable it to succeed. No-one is more passionately committed to ensure that this project succeeds than I.

"I repeat again that I do not diminish the serious risk of losing the funding if all of the statutory permissions are not in place by early 2010. A solution is staring everyone in the face but the decision is one for the Council not for me.

"This latest outburst will not help to reassure the local community that those who have to take this decision are necessarily best equipped to do so," said Mr George.

Ends

¹ See statement issued on 1st September 2009

2. For further information Andrew George MP can be contacted via his constituency office by calling 01736 360020.

3. Mr George has organised the following public meetings on the Isles of Scilly; Sunday 4th October at St Martin's Monday 5th October at Bryher; Monday 5th October at Treco, Monday 5th October at St Mary's and Tuesday 5th October at St Mary's.

He has already held one on St Martin's.