

Phoenix Estate

The proposal below is for a community-led acquisition of a parcel of land within the Phoenix/North Street development area, for the purpose of building genuinely affordable innovative new homes, live/work space and maintaining and enhancing the industrial and creative quarter at the heart of Lewes.

The proposal is gathering momentum and is being discussed with Lewes District Council, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) planning department, Santon (the developer) and our MP. We believe there is a window of opportunity if we act fast. We are looking at funding possibilities to create a masterplan for the development and a business plan to see it through. The masterplan will be led by us, the users of the site and local residents, with expert input from community planners and architects.

We will submit this plan to the SDNPA in parallel with Santon's outline planning application, to illustrate the type of development Lewes wants and needs.

In order to keep the proposal 'live', it is being amended according to your responses and to clarify our vision. So do read it again to check that it still is what you want. The more signatories we get, the more traction we will have, so please circulate it widely. If you would like to add your name to this proposal please email:

lewesphoenixrising@gmail.com

A NEW PROPOSAL

Summary:

It is our view (see undersigned) that Santon's emerging plans for the development of the Phoenix Estate are not based on a genuine vision for this new community in the town and do not sufficiently satisfy the community benefit requirements of the people of Lewes. The proposed new development displaces industry, limits social and economic diversity through the loss of creative and community enterprises and does not provide sufficient genuinely affordable housing for local people. We are also concerned by the impact of additional traffic on surrounding parts of the town and flood defences that have yet to satisfy local residents. Nor do we consider that the plans take into account the need for innovative and sustainable new build that meets a high architectural and environmental design standard, that complements the historic town of Lewes.

We therefore propose to acquire and develop a portion of the land within the development area, to be funded, built and managed by the community, for the community. This will be a not-for-profit development that provides homes for local people (for rental at the level of housing benefit) and which creates and adapts affordable work space for creative and light industries and social enterprises.

We propose a landmark development that is worthy of the South Downs National Park (SDNPA) and the historic town of Lewes (a transition town). The development would showcase the best elements of community driven planning and environmentally sustainable construction and development, creating an exemplary scheme of which the town and National Park can be proud.

There are a number of Community Interest Companies that can provide potentially the management and development vehicle for this scheme, in partnership with local housing and energy providers, funded by a share issue, social investment and section 106 contributions. We propose to work alongside Lewes District Council, Santon and other landowners in the development area to form a 'Joint Venture'. This would leave Santon to pursue the commercial elements of the scheme and some affordable housing, once the Joint Venture has secured outline planning consent from the SDNPA.

Background:

The area around the Phoenix Wharf on the river Ouse has been a centre for industry and manufacturing in Lewes for many years and as such it has played an integral part in our local history and provided generations of Lewes residents with homes and jobs. More recently the old Phoenix Ironworks has been converted into workshops for light industry and studios for the creative industries as well as popular venues for community activity of all ages. As such it is a vibrant area with an important economic, educational and recreational function.

Notwithstanding these positive attributes, the community accepts that the area is in need of regeneration and that there is a pressing need to provide new and affordable housing for people in Lewes.

Now:

We believe a golden opportunity exists to create a 'living machine'; a landmark sustainable development providing:

- **genuinely affordable homes**
- **building structures that can be internally adapted by the occupants for live/work space**
- **a visually innovative and inspirational creative, industrial and social quarter**

We plan to raise the funds to acquire and develop the triangle of land immediately to the right of North Street as you enter the Phoenix Estate, which is between the river, Phoenix Causeway and North Street. Within this parcel (about 30% of the total development area) are the bulk of the creative industry workshops, some light industry and social enterprises and the remaining heritage features and facades of the Phoenix Iron Works. With rationalisation and infill, there is space enough to accommodate outlying workshops and enterprises, create new work space, build adaptable live/work structures and a proportion of LDC's affordable housing commitments.

Our development will be a beacon of:

- **Economic sustainability:** By ensuring that the site generates genuinely affordable homes and jobs for local people and keeps the manufacturing, creative and social

‘engine room’ at the heart of Lewes, we will be boosting the local economy through employment, leisure and tourism.

- **Environmental sustainability:** We will completely rethink the approach to the site and how it works. We propose an holistic approach to the river, drainage, the generation of power and the use of local materials to create a new model of sustainable development that befits Lewes, “The Gateway to the South Downs National Park.”
- **Social sustainability:** We know that the lack of affordable homes and work spaces are driving people and businesses out of our town. We are very concerned that the current development will amplify this problem. By doing as we suggest and providing what people actually want in terms of living and work space, we could reverse this trend. One of the great joys of Lewes is its social diversity and its creative spirit and we intend to enhance it.

If you would like to add your name and some information about yourself to this proposal, please email:

lewesphoenixrising@gmail.com

<http://lewesphoenixrising.com>