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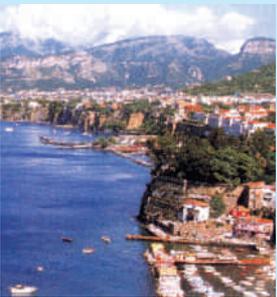
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Fears rural land will be under threat

Campaigner worried that time is running out

by JANICE BARKER

A HUGE swathe of land in the rural Foxdenton area of Chadderton could become a target for industry without local people voicing their objections.

That is the fear of local campaigner, Eric Trigg, who says the proposals in the Local Development Framework (LDF) will affect an area the size of Tandle Hill Country Park.

Mr Trigg, of Chadderton Hall Road, who is a co-optee on the Chadderton District Partnership, and a member of the Oldham Partnership Steering Group, says objections to the LDF have to be in by November 26.

He says the designation of the land, which stretches from behind the Radclyffe School on Hunt Lane, over to Ferney Field Road, and Foxdenton Lane, would also affect the Grade II-listed Foxdenton Hall and Foxdenton farmhouse.

Housing

If approved, the land could be used for office, light industry and warehousing and distribution, plus a quarter of the area could be used for homes, he says.

The land has been controversially selected for development before, although no building took place after plans went in for six industrial units in 2007, and it was suggested as a new Oldham Athletic site in 2005.

And last year it was one of 76 sites proposed for a new prison, although the Ministry of Justice said later it had no plans to build there.

Mr Trigg said: "The plan doesn't have the catchiest of titles and I spent two days at the library going through it.

"It would be the largest development site in the whole of the borough but



THE open area can be seen clearly, excluding the demolished Radclyffe Lower School site and playing fields, bottom right, now earmarked for the new Catholic high school. Firwood Park estate is top left. (image google earth)



DAVE HIBBERT . . . there are no development proposals at the moment

it's not being discussed at a more local level.

"I am objecting on the grounds that the need has not been demonstrated while we have old mills like the Hartford Mill which

are not being developed. It is easy to develop a green-field site rather than a brown-field one.

"There is a lack of awareness even though the plans are going through the statutory procedures.

"There will be a planning inquiry into the LDF when it is submitted, but raising objections then will be a bit late and the inspector will question why they weren't raised earlier.

"Councillors have told me it might not happen or to wait until the master-plan is published, but by then the decision about the land will have been taken."

Quality

Councillor John McCann, cabinet member for regeneration, said the aim is to create high quality businesses to bring high tech jobs to the area: "We don't want to concrete over it, and we want to bring quality work in some quality buildings, and improve areas of green.

"There aren't a lot of jobs in Chadderton and we are losing quality companies because we don't have anywhere suitable in Oldham."

Councillor Dave Hibbert, chairman of the Chadderton District Partnership, said: "There are no development proposals at all at the moment, but whatever goes there has got to be quality, probably with an element of residential, but there must be a clear buffer zone between the development and the existing houses in the area to protect them."



JOHN McCANN . . . vital for people to put forward their views

Chance to shape blueprint for the future

OLDHAMERS are being urged to have their say on plans for the borough's future.

Oldham Council is working on a blueprint for the borough to serve as a guide for future land use.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) will create a long-term vision on development and how planning applications will be dealt with.

Admitting the process can seem complex, Councillor John McCann, cabinet member for regeneration and Environment said, however, that it was vital people put forward their views to help shape the future of Oldham.

He said: "This policy is key to how the council operates and it is important that people have the opportunity to make their views known and comment on whether they believe that it is effective and consistent with national planning policy."

Comments

All comments received will be included when the plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate early next year.

The plan aims to improve quality of life and to meet local housing needs and demands, taking into account affordability by recycling brownfield land and maintaining Green Belt boundaries.

The proposed joint DPD submission is available on the council's website at www.oldham.gov.uk or can be seen at the Civic Centre's planning reception on level 12, at all public libraries, or by logging on to <http://oldham-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/oc/planning/spi/>

Comments should be sent by 5pm on November 26 to LDF and Urban Design, Level 3, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UH or by email to spi@oldham.gov.uk



THE Grade II-listed Foxdenton Hall