

Issues raised in relation to the Chadderton Partnership Neighbourhood Forum application and Chadderton Neighbourhood area application and Oldham Council's response

Objections – approximately 220

Supports – 75

Conditional support - 1

Issue raised	Oldham Council response
<p>Issue: Communication prior to application being submitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information was given anywhere obvious about Chadderton Partnerships inception, who Chadderton Partnership are, what their aims are why they want a Neighbourhood Forum. • Concerns around how the group and forum members, constitution and committee were established and the lack of community involvement and transparency. • Key stakeholders and local partners should be approached as they have an interest in the area. • Questions around how the meetings were advertised. • No methods stated of how Chadderton Partnership publicised their intentions. • April 2019 meeting was not advertised, and minutes were not shared. The attendance of 30 people at the meeting is poor and cannot accurately or fairly represent the views of 35,000 residents. • Lockdown ensured that the library and similar sources of local activities were closed and Facebook sites held no mention until very recently. This could be considered underhand and has left the general public in Chadderton without a voice. • Chadderton Partnership failed to advertise their Annual General Meeting. 	<p>Oldham Council must consider the application in line with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations). The Council must have regard to the desirability of designating a body which has taken reasonable steps to ensure that its membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area and from different sections of the community in that area.</p> <p>Whilst it is appreciated that many residents were not aware of Chadderton Partnership prior to the forum and area applications being consulted upon, the Council has to ensure that the necessary information has been provided.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group not inclusive of residents- no engagement in developing plans, no public meetings, etc. • Process of plan making can be achieved by producing newsletters and placing notices in public buildings and shops. • The application states that those who live, work or are active in the area were approached to become involved. Comments that the opportunity was not given. 	
<p>Issue: Make-up of the group (the forum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group is not truly representative of the residents of Chadderton. • The group is a politically motivated group as there is too much of a link to Oldham Council and the Labour party. • It feels like a historical group that represented Chadderton in the past. • Members can be directed to support certain issues e.g. Green Belt and this conflicts with residents' interests and views. • Councillors have openly supported the development of green belt for warehousing and housing which is contra to the views of many Chadderton residents as demonstrated by the Rallies to Tandle Hills in January 2017 and March 2019, in which many Chadderton residents took part. • Members have not been democratically elected by the constituents to represent the constituents of the three wards • It feels like a closed shop. • One of the planners involved is related to one of these councillors. • The proposed forum have hijacked the previous efforts of North Chadderton group. 	<p>Section 61F(5) of the Act requires that membership of the organisation must be open to individuals who live or work in the neighbourhood area or who are elected Council Members for the neighbourhood area. It also requires that the organisation's membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) lives in the neighbourhood area concerned, (ii) works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise), or (iii) is an elected Member of the Council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned. <p>In line with the Regulations, Oldham Council made the contact details of one member of the forum public.</p> <p>The Council was satisfied at the point of going out to consultation that all forum members were residents of Chadderton as they all have Chadderton addresses. The forum is also made up of people who work or have a business there and are from different age and ethnicity groups, as well as members.</p> <p>However, following consultation and to demonstrate a spread of members across the neighbourhood area, the Council plotted the forum member addresses against ward boundaries.</p> <p>This highlighted that one member, despite having a Chadderton address, lives within the Werneth ward.</p>

- The forum application duplicates the existing political council structure of the Chadderton wards, with the elected councillors of these wards already having an input, into any planning issues which arise.
- The proposed Chair (Tony Tomlinson) is a resident in North Chadderton and has in the past made several attempts to develop the area in which we live, none of which have gained the support of or are popular with residents. He has a vested interest in becoming its Chair.
- The application should be refused on the grounds that it has failed to demonstrate that the 21 individuals, who have 'committed to becoming members' of this group, are active, suitable, live in the area, or are from different sections of the community.
- The names of the 21 members of the group, reference to demographics, or their connection or interest in Chadderton or how they were enlisted has not been shared. This is an essential part of the consultation. They should not be entitled to anomaly.
- Not been transparent with vague statements and timescales.
- Request that democratic publication of this group's intentions is made public.
- Designation of the Chadderton Partnership Forum would stop local residents from having their own legitimate local forums and independent voices.
- I prefer a neighbourhood forum to be totally resident led.
- This group will not command the support of all residents across Chadderton.
- To be given an uncontested request to approve or not it is undemocratic.

As the forum application only included the minimum of 21 members and not more to offset the loss of this member which reduces total membership to 20, the application cannot be approved.

<p>Membership form:</p> <p>Comment that individual completed a membership form and have not heard back since.</p>	<p>Oldham Council has held the completed membership forms during consultation.</p> <p>The Council will work to providing Chadderton Partnership with the membership forms to process for any subsequent forum applications.</p>
<p>Issue: Relevant body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group calling themselves Chadderton Partnership (CP) are not a suitable 'relevant body', capable of being designated as a neighbourhood forum (Sect 61G Town and Country Planning Act 1990) • Do not meet the conditions specified in regulations to be designated as a 'relevant body'. • Chadderton Partnership are unable to demonstrate this. • Having looked at the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 specifically 61F and 61G representatives believe the application should be refused. • The application doesn't show how The Chadderton Partnership intends to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. 	<p>Section 61F of the Act specifies the conditions which must be satisfied before the Council can designate an organisation as a neighbourhood forum.</p> <p>As outlined above Oldham Council is not satisfied that the forum's membership includes a minimum of 21 members each of whom live, work, or is an elected member for the neighbourhood area as required by section 61F(5) (c) of the Act.</p> <p>Subsequent applications should ensure that members live within the area applied for. It is also worth noting that more than 21 members can be included within a forum application.</p>
<p>Issue: Constitution – Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application should be refused because their constitution provides that membership can be vetted. It will not be open and inclusive as required in regulations. • Paragraph 6.4 of the Chadderton Partnership's Constitution states that it can refuse membership or terminate membership. • To give a committee the power to refuse or end a membership without a prescribed criterion is neither democratic nor fair. 	<p>Membership is open because anyone can apply for membership.</p> <p>Paragraph 6.4 of the constitution states that where it is considered that membership would be detrimental to the purpose and principles of the Partnership, the Management Committee shall have the power to refuse membership or may terminate or suspend the membership of any member by resolution passed at a meeting.</p> <p>Therefore, any decision on allowing or terminating membership is to be judged against the purpose and principles of the Partnership, which are set out in section 2 of the constitution.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This goes against the government guidance and breaches the 'Equalities Act 2010' given that such a group should be inclusive to all residents. • Any resident that wants to join the Partnership can be turned down purely on the decision of the chairman. It would appear that once this group has been approved by the council there is nothing that can be done to overturn any decisions of the Partnership. 	<p>Paragraph 13.1 of the constitution sets out how the constitution may be amended.</p> <p>Oldham Council considers that ideally the constitution should provide for a right of appeal against the refusal or termination of membership of the Partnership. That right of appeal should be to persons who were not involved in the decision being appealed.</p> <p>Therefore, it will be recommended that as part of any subsequent applications for designation of the neighbourhood forum by the Council, the constitution be amended to provide for an appeal process.</p> <p>The proposed Partnership may also wish to amend the constitution to make clearer that the purpose and principles of the Partnership would be the criteria for assessing the refusal or termination of membership.</p> <p>It will be for The Chadderton Partnership to determine suitable wording of any changes to the constitution.</p>
<p>Issue: Plan intentions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chadderton Partnership have not tried to engage the community about what their proposals are, and I fear that this is because they do not have their best interests at heart. 	<p>The forum and area applications set out what the intentions of the partnership are.</p> <p>In order to comply with the Regulations, the Council needs to be satisfied that the forum is made up of at least 21 members (see response above).</p> <p>Once a forum and area are designated the forum can engage with the community to develop a shared vision that supports GMSF and the Local Plan to ensure that the plan reflects the issues raised.</p> <p>A neighbourhood forum is required to carry out informal consultation and maintain a consultation statement.</p>

	<p>This would be submitted to an independent inspector as part of the examination of the neighbourhood plan. If the Inspector finds the neighbourhood plan sound the community can then vote via a referendum.</p>
<p>Issue: Development and Green Belt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a large focus on development • Concerned about further developments on greenbelt land within the Chadderton area and Healds Green Area. • Would like to “save Chadderton’s Green Belt”. No very special circumstances. • Views that oppose release of Green Belt in Chadderton will not be represented as local authority and council members support this. • The chair has an interest to build on Green Belt land and therefore has a vested business interest. • Worried about pressure on infrastructure and impact on green space for recreation, health and ecology. 	<p>Neighbourhood Plans must be positively prepared and must not be used to restrict growth in an area.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans must be in conformity with the strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plans cannot be used to prevent strategic sites in strategic development plans from coming forward.</p> <p>Planning Practice Guidance states that neighbourhood planning gives communities power to shape development and growth of their local area.</p> <p>Therefore, it is intended that a neighbourhood plan should focus on development for the area designated.</p> <p>Paragraph 136 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states “Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.”</p> <p>Green Belt release will be determined and addressed at the strategic plan making level. Therefore it will not be the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to alter the Green Belt boundary.</p>

Issue: Size of the Chadderton neighbourhood area

- Do not support the designation of the three Chadderton wards.
- This would not be appropriate nor is it in keeping with guidance.
- Do not believe that one group can accurately represent a diverse population of 40,000 residents.
- A neighbourhood group needs to be able to listen and respond to the residents for which is it representing.
- Such a large group is unmanageable.
- The excessive size of the Chadderton area population, which is almost 7 times (636.4%) greater than the indicative size for a neighbourhood area, presents the risk of failure. It is not fair or viable.
- The town has always been north, central, south and should be kept as such.
- The application purpose does not capture, or reflect, the general characteristics, or ambitions, of the numerous neighbourhoods and communities in Chadderton.
- The needs are very different across the wards in Chadderton.
- It should be the villagers and nearby residents who decide what goes on in this village area.
- A town of nearly 40,000 people cannot be described as a 'neighbourhood'. The geography of Chadderton lends itself to at least four areas using Broadway/Middleton Rd as the centre. Residents at the south end of Chadderton will have little or no interest in the happenings of the northern part and vice versa. They would not consider themselves as neighbours. This would lead to a lack of interest by residents and allow a single forum to do what it wants virtually unchallenged

There is no size limit on a neighbourhood area in the Regulations, the Act or national planning guidance.

National planning guidance gives considerations when deciding the boundaries of a neighbourhood area. This states ward boundaries can be a useful starting point. It is not a limitation of only one ward however. The Regulations require a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area. Therefore, the neighbourhood area boundary needs to be justified and deemed to be appropriate.

Chadderton Partnership have justified their boundary in the area application ('justification of boundary'). This explains that it is better to look at the area in its wider context rather than individual wards; that strategic matters can be dealt with at a larger scale such as transport and that the future role of the town centre is an important issue which will have an impact on all residents in Chadderton. This is considered to be an appropriate justification by the Council.

They have also stated this includes the town centre, residential and employment areas as well as areas of open land and smaller settlements of Chadderton Heights and Healds Green.

Taking into account the character of Chadderton – an historic urban district now made up of the three wards including the town centre, open space and employment areas the purpose as set out in the forum application and constitution reflects this character as it seeks to set out policies for the use of land, to address issues such as supporting local business, enhancing heritage, protecting and enhancing open spaces etc.

In addition, additional grant funding is available for neighbourhood areas with a population of over 25,000. This also

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things work best when they are planned by people on the ground and the citizens of both North and South Chadderton have a right to operate and plan in the best interests of their local neighbourhood. • There is already friction between residents across Chadderton and the Chadderton Partnership group. • The statement made by Chadderton Partnership does not provide any rationale or justification for treating Chadderton as a single neighbourhood area. • Chadderton Partnership's application fails to describe the general characteristics of this diverse area, as is required • South Chadderton is often forgotten and may be lost within this large forum. • This is contrary to the objectives of the Localism Act 2011. • The more logical solution would be to split the Chadderton area into its four areas and allow the local residents to make the decisions for their own area. 	<p>demonstrates that there is not a cap on the population size for a neighbourhood area.</p> <p>It is for a neighbourhood planning group to consider how to best listen to the community as part of the neighbourhood plan preparation and informal consultation and how to best reflect the different needs and ambitions within the designated area.</p>
<p>Issue: North Chadderton Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would prefer and support a North Chadderton Neighbourhood forum that reflects the needs of our neighbourhood rather than a Chadderton wide forum. • Chadderton North Greenbelt Group is engaged in forming a Neighbourhood forum with the national government locality team. Members of the forum are residents and businesses, is 34 strong and they are good at communicating with residents. • North Chadderton is non-political and sought to engage local people from the outset. This would be a true neighbourhood forum rather than the suggested one which does not feel as open or independent. 	<p>An application for a Chadderton North forum has not been submitted to the Council to consider.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to consider the application that has been submitted in accordance with the Act and the Regulations.</p> <p>Whilst Oldham Council welcomes neighbourhood planning groups making the most of the resources available via locality it is important that neighbourhood planning groups consult the Council before making an application in line with national planning guidance.</p> <p>Oldham Council were not made aware since original contact was made in April 2019 where a meeting was offered with residents that Chadderton North were intending on preparing a neighbourhood plan.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Chadderton Neighbourhood Forum would represent only 7K and fulfils the image of a local neighbourhood. • Our area of Chadderton is among the largest historical boroughs in the country and as such should be divided according to population, its distinctive location and local history. It also commands a large area of open spaces for walks and relaxation for the whole of Oldham's residents and should be protected by those who know the area best. During this period of isolation this area has been a welcome retreat for many residents of our town. • I therefore support the current application for our own North Chadderton Neighbourhood Forum. • North Chadderton Greenbelt Group would be denied their rights if the application from The Chadderton Partnership goes ahead. 	
<p>Issue: Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor information that has been passed on to Healds Green residents during a global crisis. Decisions should be put on hold until it's safe to meet and discuss properly with all the residents of Healds green. • The holding of a public consultation during a pandemic was ill-advised, especially for those in the vulnerable age group. • The consultation period has not been adequately advertised and has failed to inform local residents. • Lockdown ensured that the library and similar sources of local activities were closed and Facebook sites held no mention until very recently. This could be considered somewhat underhand and has left the general public in Chadderton without a voice. 	<p>The Council has consulted on the neighbourhood planning application and forum application in accordance with the Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019) (see section 4.38).</p> <p>The Regulations require the application to be made available on the Council's website and in such other manner as they consider is likely to bring the area application to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the area.</p> <p>The SCI explains by 'other ways' that methods in Table 1 would be made use of, <u>as appropriate</u>. Table 1 includes optional extras. The Council in consulting on the forum and area applications used the following methods from Table 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicised the applications on the Council's website (minimum requirement);

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chadderton residents have not been made fully aware including those who do not have electronic devices or social media apps. • According to The Statement of Community Involvement (Table 1) there are 18 different ways in which OMBC aims to communicate with the public. I can only see one way in which OMBC have tried to engage with relevant stakeholders i.e. via the Council Website, in the same table it is acknowledges that this method has limitations “Some people may have poor IT skills. Areas may have poor broadband.” • I am registered with OMBC for information regarding local democracy issues and have seen nor received no information at all regarding the Chadderton Partnership. • Question on whether and when the public will have access to the comments made by residents during the consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicised the applications on the Council’s consultation portal; • Placed a public notice in the Oldham Times; • Released a press release; • Used social media to promote the consultation; • Contacted everyone on the Local Plan mailing list. <p>(Please note the list of methods outlined in 4.66 applies to Local Plan not neighbourhood plan documents).</p> <p>The Government’s Coronavirus: planning update statement (13 May 2020) states that it is important to keep the planning system moving and to keep Local Plans progressing. Under neighbourhood plans it is only the referendums that have been put on hold.</p> <p>Oldham Council did delay starting the consultation due to coronavirus restrictions, however in line with the above guidance and in recognition that there is uncertainty around when things will return to “normal”, the Council decided to carry out the consultation.</p> <p>Oldham Council cannot delay making a decision on the area and forum applications. The Regulations state that the Council has 13 weeks from publicising the application to determining the application.</p>
<p>Issue: Misunderstanding of the consultation being a “vote”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments that residents have been advised that the consultation is a “vote”. • This has not been given widespread public consent. • I contest that this is neither legal nor legitimate given that there has not been enough notice, the ballot is insecure and there is no impartial third party overseeing this to validate this request. 	<p>The consultation is not a vote and Oldham Council has not advertised it as such. Instead the Council has invited comments.</p> <p>A vote only takes place at referendum stage, after an examination on a neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>The Council has to determine the application in line with the Act and the Regulations.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a formal request that a postal ballot be held and another group of residents be allowed to submit their proposals. 	
<p>Issue: determination of planning applications</p> <p>By agreeing to this Partnership we are relinquishing the power to oppose any planning application and also ultimate decision if a dispute occurs.</p>	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan once passed becomes part of the statutory development plan for the neighbourhood plan area. However, Oldham Council would still determine the applications in line with the SCI.</p>
<p>Issue: Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding of this body seems to be very vague, will it receive funding from OMBC? • Who will audit this body and its funds and what qualifications will its finance officers have? • Is there any financial benefit/gain for the members? 	<p>Funding is available from central government to relevant bodies to help with the costs of preparing a neighbourhood plan. There is also funding available at certain stages for local planning authorities to help compensate the costs of carrying out its statutory duties.</p> <p>No funding from Oldham Council is given to a neighbourhood planning group.</p> <p>It will be the responsibility of a neighbourhood forum to make all suitable arrangements to audit funding in a transparent manner and manage its funds.</p> <p>There is no financial gain / benefit for members.</p>
<p>Support for Forum and area applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would support the Chadderton partnership. • It is important to have a voice to preserve our green belt and green spaces. • In favour of the proposal to establish a Neighbourhood Forum so that it can begin work on the consultation process to prepare a neighbourhood plan based on the three Chadderton wards. 	<p>The support for the forum and area applications is noted.</p>

- Fully support the application by The Chadderton Partnership Neighbourhood Forum to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Chadderton.
- I believe that having separate partnerships for North, Central and South would be less effective. Chadderton needs to speak with one voice and have an integrated plan as services and communities are inextricably linked.
- Support of the application by The Chadderton Partnership to designate a Neighbourhood Area and a Neighbourhood Forum for the three Chadderton wards.
- Delighted that we are making progress towards the first one.
- The ability of neighbourhoods to co-produce their own Neighbourhood Plans is something we should be encouraging; it is not contentious to say that the GMSF has not been well received amongst many people in Oldham and across Greater Manchester. It is therefore incredibly important that we encourage the development of Neighbourhood Plans not only in Chadderton as this application relates to, but across Oldham so that developments are steered in the direction that communities want.
- Rather than a top-down approach of implementing a plan upon residents it would be far better to work with residents to come up with a group of meaningful Neighbourhood Plans, which in turn leads to the development of a new Local Plan supported and created by the people of Oldham. Which can enable communities to play an integral role in shaping the areas where they live, work and socialise, as well as strengthening community cohesion.
- Creating an environment of strategic planning around the future of developments within a given area, rather than applications being made on a case by case basis would

<p>be hugely beneficial to the community within the designated area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no escaping the need to plan for the housing and jobs needs of the future, and I have always supported the principle of a single plan for Greater Manchester. It allows for joined up thinking, especially in areas of housing and transport across the conurbation, but this must be balanced to support communities wants and needs regarding protecting green spaces. • Having worked for some years on Neighbourhood plans in Saddleworth I can only encourage any area to make themselves available to make such a plan as part of the overall Oldham Plan and the GMSF. • Let it be noted that I declare an interest (T Tomlinson). • The team from the Chadderton Partnership have never made it political as they are thinking of and working for the whole of Chadderton and not specific areas of Chadderton. 	
<p>Conditional Support – Issue with Map:</p> <p>Conditionally support. The applications state it is for the whole of Chadderton but the area on attached map is not included (East of the A627M). If this is the case then the proposal is not valid. The proposals need mending to include the whole of Chadderton.</p>	<p>The area application states it is for the three wards of Chadderton – Chadderton South, Chadderton Central and Chadderton North. The map shows this area.</p> <p>Historical maps are not relevant to the area designation.</p>
<p>Statutory consultees:</p> <p>The following statutory consultees responded. No specific comments on the forum / area designation have been made. The responses highlight the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal authority – proposed neighbourhood area contains coal mining legacy including mine entries and likely unrecorded coal workings. Surface coal resource is 	<p>Comments noted.</p>

present. Any sites will need to consider the potential risks that the coal mining legacy features present to development proposals.

- Canal and Rivers Trust – No comment. The trust owns the Rochdale Canal, which runs through the proposed neighbourhood area. The trust would welcome being a consultee going forward.
- Homes England - No comment. Will engage as appropriate.
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust - I've no personal knowledge of the area delineated but can see no nature conservation reason why it would not be a suitable one. I've no personal knowledge of the Chadderton Partnership, so we have no initial comment on that.
- Natural England – No comment. Have provided information sources the neighbourhood plan may like to consider in developing the plan.
- Historic England – No comment on area application. The Neighbourhood Plan area contains approximately 12 textile mills which make a significant contribution to the area's unique character and identity. The Neighbourhood Plan for Chadderton provides an opportunity to include the mills, which are an important part of its historic environment, within the strategy. This will ensure that those assets and the wider historic environment can be enjoyed by future generations through their conservation and enhancement, and ensure that the plan is in line with the requirements of national planning policy as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).