SADDLEWORTH SCHOOL - THE LAST CHANCE TO ACT

This flawed proposal will generate traffic, flood and environmental problems that will impact not just on Diggle but on the surrounding villages. OMBC bury their heads in the sand over the mounting problems, costs and environmental damage.

Boxing Day 2015: the latest flood on the Diggle River floodplain

Flooding of this field is a regular occurrence and for good reason, since part of it is classed by the Environment Agency as a ‘functional floodplain’ i.e. “land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood”. It therefore plays an important role in helping to reduce flooding downstream in Uppermill. Despite this fact, extensive ground/soil engineering works are proposed here (introducing artificial surfaces, removing natural contours to create a flat surface, compacting the ground & topsoil) in order to accommodate sports facilities. This flies in the face of common sense: not only is it extremely unlikely that sports facilities would be of any useable quality for a large proportion of the year, but such proposals would also severely compromise the water storage capacity of the floodplain and exacerbate flooding problems downstream.

The Boxing Day floods in Uppermill could become a regular occurrence.

TRAFFIC CHAOS

£1.5 million of public money to be spent attempting to solve traffic issues. Still no solution to the junction ‘pinch point’; the council ‘may’ try & move the retaining wall back to widen the footpath at a later date, after planning permission is obtained, (at extra cost to the public purse - totalling hundreds of thousands) but OMBC won’t include this in the plans at this stage! No consideration of consequences for Dobcross and surrounding areas. Danger of possible change to junction priority. 1,500 pupils will be sharing a congested roadway with cars and buses and will have to negotiate a drop-off that also operates as a turnaround and a car park. Designated Green Belt land (supposedly protected from development) concreted over for parking & turn-around areas. Stone wall along Huddersfield Road removed & replaced by fencing - a significant impact on the character of the area. Illustration shows that traffic WILL back up to the junction due to the proximity of traffic lights & there will still be problems for cars turning around in the village.

THERE IS A BETTER OPTION AVAILABLE: The body funding the new school (the Education Funding Agency) carried out a feasibility study and published a report in 2015 showing that the Uppermill site is a feasible option, but OMBC decided to go with Diggle ‘despite a possible greater number of environmental considerations’.

SEE OVER PAGE TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP STOP THIS MADNESS & MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD
SUBMIT YOUR OBJECTIONS TO THE REVISED PLANNING APPLICATION(S)

- OMBC began a 21 day public consultation on 23rd December meaning that the statutory deadline for comments is 13th January! However, OMBC have now confirmed that public comments will be considered after this date. To ensure they are fully considered it is advisable however to submit your objections as soon as possible.

- This is the second public consultation - the first one ran its course with no decision made.

- The original application (number 1 below) has now been resubmitted with a revised Environment Statement and three additional individual planning applications have been uploaded to OMBC planning website:
  1. PA/337301/15   Construction of a new Saddleworth School ...
  2. PA/337930/15   New car park drop-off facility, residents’ parking area and associated highway works
  3. PA/337931/15   Demolition of 5 no. buildings
  4. LB/337929/15   Demolition of the link bridge connected to the listed office building

  This is clearly highly confusing for anyone. Having four separate planning applications complicates matters, especially for those wishing to submit one objection covering several issues!

  All previous objections submitted under PA/337301/15 as part of the 1st public consultation will not apply to the new three planning applications. If you have objected already and you want to ensure that your voice is heard then the only way to do this to submit another objection.

To Help you Object

SDAG have prepared a draft letter of objection for you to either address, sign & return to local post offices or send directly to the Council. Or you can use it for reference to write a personal letter. The Council will accept objections by letter or email - if you wish to email your objections the draft letter can be downloaded from the OMBC website (www.savediggle.org.uk) - but if you object in this way you must include your name and address with your email. It would also be helpful for monitoring purposes (i.e. ensure that OMBC do not lose any objections) if you would also email SDAG with your response. Remember everyone in your household can send a separate letter of objection. Every signature counts in demonstrating strength of concern.

OMBC: Planning Team, Civic Centre, PO Box 30, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UQ or planning@oldham.gov.uk
SDAG: savediggleactiongroup@gmail.com www.savediggle.org.uk

SDAG Also feel free to contact us by email for guidance in drafting your response or text 07545 939724 for more details.

SOME OF THE MANY ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Loss of a Large Area of High Quality Green Belt
Environmentally harmful development. The proposed plans conflict with government policies aimed at safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Loss of a Highly Valued Landscape
Permanent alteration to the landscape over a large area of the valley floor. The landscape of the Diggle Valley will be degraded forever.

Damage to Valued Recreational Facilities
The enjoyment of the surrounding footpath network (including the Huddersfield Canal towpath) will be affected, due to the visual intrusion and noise disturbance. The setting of the canal with its impressive series of locks will be seriously compromised by the modern architecture and playing fields.

Impacts on Protected Species (Bats)
A 200 fold increase in light levels in a currently completely dark area immediately adjacent to both the Huddersfield Canal & Diggle Brook: - both areas used by commuting & feeding bats. This will have a negative impact on their ability to feed and survive.

Loss of Lapwing Breeding Habitat
There is clear and substantial survey evidence that the fields within the Green Belt on which sports facilities will be located are a significant nesting site and feeding area for lapwings - a rapidly declining species of high conservation importance.

Noise and Light Pollution
A permanent loss of amenity for the local community through increased traffic, noise and light pollution from the playing fields.

Playing fields will urbanise a popular rural walk

Loss of Saddleworth’s Industrial Heritage
The demolition of the nineteenth century buildings that once made up the Dobcross Loom Works, a world leader in its day, will be a significant loss to Saddleworth’s industrial heritage. Only the clock tower and offices will remain surrounded by a wall of coloured render. The new buildings, fences and artificial pitches will destroy the setting and historical context of both the clock tower, the Huddersfield Canal and the relationship between them.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD