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Dear Sirs

Car parking availability in Littleborough

Rochdale M.B.C. have recently indicated that they wish to sell, as a way of financing ever decreasing funding, the former Gas Works site situated at Hare Hill Rd., Littleborough. The proposal is with a view to granting planning permission for an office block, of the type used as a local business centre, rather than for any particular company.

Now take into consideration the lack of; or very limited, available car parking space in the centre of Littleborough. Attempt to park there at any time of your choosing during business hours and anyone will essentially struggle to do so.

This current situation has detrimental effects on both residents and businesses alike. Residents cannot go about their daily routine of wishing to support local businesses by shopping local; and local businesses suffer as a consequence. Similarly, the potential of new businesses locating to Littleborough is hampered by the same.

Returning to the aforementioned former Gas Works site, it would make good planning sense to provide a public car park on the site. Local residents will flag up that the land is contaminated and that it why it has been left to stand, the Gas Works being long gone, circa 1960s. However, the land has never been a secure (fenced off) area and no-one has ever suffered illness or injury as a consequence.

If any form of building were to take place, then it would inevitably require excavating, whereas if a car park was constructed this would require far less disturbance of the ground. At some point no doubt, some form of a contamination survey will be required if the site is to be developed. The costs of such a survey, if not payed for by any potential developer, could be recovered by 'pay and display' fees if looked at in the longer term.

Recognising that many local residents see the area in question as a local "green area" resource and would be reluctant to see the area completely covered in tarmac. Thus, consideration could be given to the development of car parking facilities similar to that for Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre where some of the green space is protected and effectively acts as an environmentally friendly screen to protect the sense of open space; especially as the site is within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area.

Planning applications are constantly submitted for residential development in Littleborough, but without any regard for the infrastructure of the locality, and developers have more or less squeezed the lifeblood out of green belt land etc., whilst making themselves a tidy profit. This is an ongoing situation with a proposal for 110 more houses on land at Dearnley.

It can be likened to the situations at any hospital; especially now that NHS England are proposing so called 'super hospitals'. They build extensions on existing hospitals but don't provide any additional car parking space. Go to any NHS hospital website and it will surely warn you that 'car parking is inadequate'!

If Rochdale M.B.C. regard Littleborough as a tourist destination; the 'Jewel in the Crown' so to speak, then careful consideration should be given to the effect on all concerned by the lack of facilities.

Rochdale M.B.C.'s investment in Littleborough is noticeably negligible when compared to other parts designated as 'Rochdale'. They are in fact though, their own communities under Rochdale's administrative area.

Yours faithfully

Ian Jackson
Secretary, Littleborough Civic Trust