

Incinerator plant 'should get go ahead'

■ Decision due on £70m plan for disused factory

■ Protests planned over 'unsuitable' location

NEAL KEELING

A CONTROVERSIAL recycling plant and incinerator proposed for the site of a disused factory should go ahead, say town hall officers.

The £70m scheme is due to be considered by Salford council's planning panel on June 2.

But a report to councillors recommends it should be approved.

Two demonstrations against the plan are being held before the meeting.

Sky Properties are proposing an eco-incinerator business on the former Mitchell Shackleton site on Green Lane, Mooton, Eccles. The plan has the backing of the Confederation Of

British Industry and the company says it will create 60 permanent jobs.

But residents have set up a pressure group to stop the plant and have the backing of Salford and Eccles MP Hazel Blears, and Shameless star Rebecca Atkinson. They will submit a 45-page objection letter to the council.

It says an incinerator should not be sited in a residential area, roads are not suited to lorries using the plant and consultation by Sky Properties with residents was flawed. It also claims the plan goes against council plans to bring a mix of new homes and workshops to the area.

Developer Anthony Hirsch bought the land in 2004 for just over £4m. It had been used for heavy engineering for 100 years.



►► **'REGENERATE'** Anthony Hirsch at the former Mitchell Shackleton site which his firm wants to turn into an 'Eco Park'. He bought the land in 2004 and applied for planning permission in 2006

He applied for planning permission in 2006 to build environmentally-friendly houses on the site - with solar panels and water-recycling facilities. Salford council refused and his appeal to the Secretary Of State for Communities And Local Government - who was Hazel Blears at the time - was rejected. Ms Blears upheld the decision of the council to protect the site for employment use.

The developers say the 'Eco Park' could potentially provide energy to heat and power 15,000 homes and businesses.

They claim it will treat about 240,000 tonnes of waste a year and is pioneering when landfill waste sites are expensive and environmentally undesirable. Paper, cardboard, glass, and cans would be recycled and food and other biodegradable waste turned into bio-gas.

On Saturday a protest will be staged by residents at Shackleton Street Park. Another will be outside Swinton Civic Centre on the day of the planning meeting.

Mr Hirsch said: "The Green Lane Eco Park offers the opportunity to regenerate disused

employment land through an investment of £70m in the local community, creating jobs, training placements and offering a more cost-effective and environmentally responsible way of managing local business waste."

Labour councillor Lisa Stone, who is campaigning against the plant, said: "It is very disappointing that council officers are recommending approval but I still believe the residents have made a very strong case for the scheme to be rejected."

Ms Blears said she would be attending the planning panel.