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Armchair greenies missing point

THE many critics of the use of country park land for the proposed landfill site on the Clearwater Bay peninsula are surely armchair environmentalists.

Anyone who actually goes out on walks along the ridge from Sheung Yeung Shan to Tin Ha Shan (and that is the only worthwhile and practicable walk within that particular country park) will quickly realise that the fact that the South East New Territories (SENT) refuse tip will marginally encroach on to the park is entirely irrelevant.

The sad fact is that, with or without that encroachment, the noise, smell, dust and above all the sheer ugliness of the landfill will have a devastating effect on the views from this ridge and on the overall ambience of the park.

Although sacrificing country park land for development is undoubtedly a cause for public outcry, it should not be the sole criterion for criticism.

Development outside, but adjacent to our parks can be just as damaging as that within them. This is exemplified by the proposed Shalotung development site, where an "environmentalist's victory" has recently been hailed.

Although the Shalotung scheme has been redrawn to avoid incursion into the country park, it will still result in a huge housing development within the unspoiled Shalotung valley and an even more environmentally damaging access road.

Success in revising the boundaries of the SENT landfill to avoid the country park, were it to be forthcoming, would be an equally hollow victory.

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