



DEVELOPMENT ON HOLD! COUNCIL SPIKES SANDFORD FARM APPLICATIONS

Wokingham Unitary Authority has halted Hicks Persimmon's applications to remove hazardous landfill and build 450 homes at Sandford Farm by rejecting the developer's Environmental Statement.

The Council has called for more detailed information as part of a total resubmission of the Statement, which will then be subject to a fresh period of public consultation.

This is likely to defer any decision on the plans until at least May 2004 effectively scuppering Hicks Persimmon's self-imposed deadline for 'a positive response' to its proposals no later than November 2003.

The deadline was an attempt to avoid new EU legislative controls on landfill (effective 14 July 2004) and lack of capacity at Lea Farm and Whistley Court, the landfill sites in Hurst targeted to receive the waste excavated from Sandford Farm. Both are likely to be full by summer 2004.

The Council has cast doubts on



PETITION PLAYS A PART

More than 2400 signatories to LVAG's petition against the Sandfarm Farm proposals gave voice to local opinion. It was presented to WUA in October.

the practicalities of dewatering, removing and draining Sandford Farm waste for transportation and redeposit.

It challenges the developer's suggestions that unpleasant

smells from the toxic landfill excavation would be generated only at the centre of the site, describing these as 'unrealistic'. Further clarification is also sought on lorry movements, bus services to the site, extra traffic generation on Bader Way and various ecological and flood issues.

"We're pleased that the Council has insisted on a thorough review and taken on board many of the concerns raised by local people, in particular the real threat posed by proposals to disturb 300,000 cubic metres of waste close to people's homes," said LVAG's Phil Challis.

"The Council's action confirms our view that the developer's Environmental Statement was heavyweight in volume but very lightweight in detail."

Read the Council's eight-page letter on the Sandford Farm Environmental Statement at:

www.lvag.org.uk

A seasonal 'thank you' to everyone in Woodley and Hurst who has supported the campaign so far by writing letters of objection, attending our campaign meetings, signing the LVAG petition, helping distribute this newsletter—or just reading it.

**We wish you all a happy Christmas
and a development free New Year**



The fight against the Sandford Farm proposals goes on in 2004!

END OF ROAD FOR BUS LANE?

The controversial bus lane replacement for the cycleway and footpath off Mohawk Way into the proposed development appears to have reached a dead end.

According to the Council's letter to the developers on the Environmental Statement, 'it is understood that the proposed bus link...is to be removed.'

If this is confirmed, then it's very good news - for the safety of parents and children who use this routeway to and from local schools, and for the mature trees alongside that might otherwise have to be felled.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

The protest against Hicks Persimmon's plans for Sandford Farm is set to continue in the New Year.

Whether the developer chooses to put its revised Environmental Statement to public consultation or, instead, withdraws the current application in favour of a fresh one, we must be ready to respond with letters of objection to both the Council and local media.

So stand by your pens and keyboards because the war isn't over yet...

TRIAL WORK BETRAYS PROMISES

Acrid smells and unidentified foam overflows from a test site on the proposed Sandford Farm development have apparently set the tone of Hicks Persimmon's community relations.

The developers said they would consult with local people but none, not even those in Anthian Close no more than 10 metres away, received any warning that the trial was about to begin, or what it was about.

The developers had claimed to be safety conscious. Yet fencing around the pumping area into a public drain in Beggars Hill Road was inadequate. No lights were provided and the manhole was left open—until LVAG and residents complained.

The developers had said previously they would use quiet equipment. Yet a noisy generator was left running all night. According to one resident, "It was like a double-decker bus idling outside the window."

LVAG's Phil Challis said, "The proposals promise to minimise smell and toxic dust should the plan to



The test site close to Anthian Close. "Naturally alarm bells ring when unidentified foam is seen gushing....just outside people's back gardens."

and not something that residents could reasonably be expected to tolerate even for a short length of time if extraction was to take place."

'There may need to be 'pilot' tests undertaken to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed method (of waste removal), the Council requires details of proposed tests to be submitted and approved before they take place.' Extract from Wokingham Planning Services' letter to the developers requesting revisions to the Environmental Statement, 19 November 2003 (our emphasis). Full story overleaf.

remove old landfill be allowed, but it appears such considerations were ignored for these trials."

When challenged, Wokingham Council first claimed the works covered a de-watering feasibility study. Then it said water had to be drained away to carry out testing as the site was waterlogged.

Anthian Close resident Joe Beckett said, "This whole situation highlights the potential health hazards of removing waste from the site. The smell was dreadful

"Naturally alarm bells ring when unidentified foam is seen gushing out of a tank, smells proliferate and water marked 'contaminated' is pumped into the main drain just outside people's back gardens," added Phil Challis.

"Residents will naturally ask whether they can really trust the developers to manage a complex remediation project on this evidence."