

# NO!

## TO THE LOXLEY VALLEY TOWNSHIP!

[www.loxleyvalley.com](http://www.loxleyvalley.com)

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

9<sup>th</sup> March 2006

*Dear Neighbour,*

If you attended the recent public meeting at Wisewood School, you will know that Bovis Homes are likely to submit a planning application later this year for a new township on the old Hepworth site in the Loxley Valley. They made it clear they would like to build a substantial new housing estate, possibly with a nursery and health facilities to support the new population.

Bovis try to give the impression that planning law is on their side. They would have us believe there is no argument against building hundreds of new homes, so long as you can sort out the problems of transport, education and health. Representatives of local organisations strongly disagree. We believe Bovis are putting the cart before the horse by assuming a case for development, and then trying to address the problems it would cause. We have met Bovis to challenge their approach, and to put across our view that any redevelopment will have to meet very strict planning criteria. The meeting was minuted, and Bovis broadly accepted what we said. This letter gives an outline of what was discussed.

**Both sides agreed the following:**

- That the site is in the green belt and no development can take place unless Bovis can make a special case and demonstrate that new building would “enhance” the site substantially.
- That the inspector who ruled on the status of this site about 10 years ago said a case had not been made for that enhancement to consist of housing.
- That a city council planner, also about 10 years ago, had suggested housing on the site, but that the idea had been withdrawn in the face of strong public opposition.

We then discussed how Bovis might improve the site. We said it was unlikely they would get planning permission for mass housing, as the city had ample housing land in the existing urban area. We urged them to consider a small-scale mixed use development, and they said they would not necessarily be against this.

They agreed with our view that the site could only be “enhanced” if any new development was smaller than what already exists.

Both parties also agreed that Bovis may need some development on the site to cover the cost of cleaning it up, and that the scale of development should be broadly in keeping with these costs. Bovis disputed our estimate that the site could be cleared for about £1 million. We agreed that these costs should be looked at in the future and that an analysis of Bovis’ figures would be useful.

What this means is that Bovis accept that any development must substantially improve the green belt and should be broadly consistent with the cost of cleaning up the site. They acknowledge that they must prove there is a need for new housing before they can get permission to build it. We are confident that need can be met on existing urban sites and that there is no case for a new township in the valley.

Bovis said it may be next year before any planning decision is finally taken, as the site is so large and complex. We said clearance of the derelict factories was long overdue and urged them to do it now, but they said they were wary of this as it might change the site’s standing in planning law.

We told Bovis that their public meetings were not useful, as they come up with very little information. They imply that large scale housing is already a fact and then go on to discuss how to deal with the problems arising from such development. Although they take this stance in public, at our meeting they acknowledged that planning rules will to some extent restrict what they can do.

We would now urge Bovis to accept that mass housing is not appropriate, and to put their planning application for a new township on hold. Instead, they should make public the cost of clearing the site, and begin consultation about solutions that would genuinely improve the valley.

Bovis have agreed that further meetings will be useful. In the meantime, we are providing them with a list of applications already passed or likely to be passed which will provide housing in the Loxley Valley area and which will add to the present traffic congestion, e.g. the Wraggs building in Stannington and the Corn Factors Mill at Malin Bridge.

We will keep you updated as soon as there is more to say. We are also developing a community website where people can share their views. The website will develop over the next few months. Check us out at [www.loxleyvalley.com](http://www.loxleyvalley.com)

Yours sincerely,

***The Loxley Valley Protection Society  
The Loxley Valley Design Group  
Representatives of Bradfield Parish Council  
The Campaign to Protect Rural England***