

THAMES FARM ACTION GROUP (TFAG) UPDATE 21

Sent to all residents who registered on the TFAG Database

Should a developer be allowed to take enormous unquantifiable risks with our only source of drinking water?

Since 2020 Taylor Wimpey has been trying to fulfill the conditional requirements of the drainage aspect of Thames Farm planning permission, which has been massively compromised by the fact the site lies directly above an aquifer which provides the only mains drinking water to Henley, Shiplake, Harpsden and surrounds (approx. 50,000 people in total). To develop the site Taylor Wimpey needs to stabilize the ground above the aquifer, which has created sink holes in the chalk strata above. In addition, the Government is requiring them to make a separate Planning Application for their proposed groundworks due to the size and extent of those works as well as a full Environmental Impact Assessment

Taylor Wimpey has proposed a grouting solution through a number of modified applications, which essentially means;

1. Drilling a grid of holes at 6m centres across huge areas of land and pumping it full of concrete slurry so that the concrete permeates the gaps and crevices that has arisen from the water action on the chalk over hundreds or thousands of years.
2. Digging down 3m across most of the sites surface area, filling that gap with stones, and then vibrating the mass of stones with effectively a big poker in order that the whole lot binds together and forms a huge impermeable platform.
3. Hauling vast amounts of material both some possibly contaminated to and from site around the countryside

TFAG, the Environment Agency and JBA (TFAG's technical advisors) have rejected the previous Taylor Wimpey applications which SODC and The Secretary of State have supported and required Taylor Wimpey to provide a revised drainage solution for the site. Taylor Wimpey has now submitted a further application to fulfill its conditional drainage requirement.

TFAG employed JBA to analyse the Taylor Wimpey's proposals and has come to the conclusion that the most recent application has considerable flaws within it and carries significant risks to the aquifer and potentially the drinking water of the area.

Without getting too technical, Taylor Wimpey's proposed solution and the potential effect on the aquifer is based on opinion in an area of geology and hydrological engineering that is not an exact science in the first place. It is very difficult to predict

how an aquifer will move and change over time as it is constantly eroding the strata through which it is flowing. However, importantly.....

THIS IS OUR ONLY SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER!

Surely it is a risk too far to even contemplate the proposed major groundworks **with** the resultant upheaval on such a huge scale and in respect of a precious and important resource. Yes, there is a requirement for more housing but it should not be at the risk of the whole community losing its drinking water either through loss or through contamination. Worse still.....

THERE IS NO PLAN B!

Taylor Wimpey has relied on opinion, as opposed to factual information when providing the background information to its latest application. What it hasn't provided is a contingency plan **i.e.** what would happen if the drinking water supply was interrupted, lost or contaminated by the proposed grouting of the site. An image of tankers and bottled water for months on end is not difficult to envisage, and the costs and time in providing an alternative water supply to 50,000 residents would not only be substantial, but also, almost certainly picked up by the tax- payer.

For those residents who would like to read the report from TFAG's advisors, JBA, please follow the link below together with TFAG's response to the application sent to SODC.

[TFAG Submission to SODC 13 June 2025](#)

[JBA Technical Note 10 June 2025](#)

ACTION

TFAG urges residents to make their feelings known to the LPA SODC, by sending them a strong response to the consultation exercise currently occurring. A template is below should you require this:-

Also, **an** email to your SODC Councillor would also be a great idea since it is Council Members who are likely to make this decision and thereafter perhaps the Government.

June 2025

Address for objections:

SODC Planning

**Amended Planning Applications P24/S2642/FUL, P24/S2652/S73,
P24/S2651/DIS**

Attn Emma Bowerman

Principal Major Applications Officer
Planning Services
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
01235 422600

Emma.bowerman@southandvale.gov.uk
CC to : planning@southoxon.gov.uk

Dear SODC,

**Representations re: Amended Planning Applications P24/S2642/FUL,
P24/S2652/S73, P24/S2651/DIS**

I/We am/are writing to you to once again to register my/our strong objections to these amended Planning Applications.

As you will be aware, numerous technical objections have been submitted by TFAG, the local councils, and other technical experts, which we fully support and endorse.

Beyond the technical issues it is quite clear, that the Applicant does not have any proof or evidence thereof, showing that **its** proposals can be safely carried out, that the potable water supply can be protected from both contamination and/or physical impacts, nor that there is a contingency plan that could be put in place immediately should contamination actually **occur**.

The whole reason for requiring the Applicant to produce an EIA was entirely to demonstrate these factors. **However**, the developer has failed to provide such a comprehensive document/explanation.

The proposed development poses an unacceptable risk to the **potable water** supplying some 50,000 residents, and the developer has failed to provide any concrete evidence or scientific proof that their proposals can be safely implemented. There is no emergency action plan and this lack of precaution is wholly unacceptable given the critical nature of the resource at stake.

The important / essential 'Precautionary Principle' is being ignored, and the site is neither essential nor critical for meeting housing demand in the district. There are a number of other opportunities identified in the South Oxfordshire region.

We are in full agreement that the risk profile of the proposed development is simply too great and would ask that these proposals are rejected.

[Your name and address]

Yours Faithfully