



Barbara Winkworth, Noralee Griffiths, Gerald Bland, Joan Buller and Jean Buxby collect signatures for their petition to the council calling to save Tyting Farm.

Government could have say on Tyting Farm sale

by Mike Russell

ANY sale of Tyting Farm could require county council and possibly even Government approval, a report into the project has revealed.

A decision on what Guildford Borough Council will do with the land, in an area of outstanding

natural beauty, was expected at the end of this week. Senior council officials carried a detailed study into various issues surrounding the sale of the farmland at Halfpenny Lane, St Martin's.

The report highlights a number of restrictions the council would be advised to place on anyone buying all or part of the site.

This includes a clawback clause, through which a purchaser securing planning permission for development would have to pay the council a slice of the increased value of the land. According to the man in charge of Millmead's legal and property services and the council's head of property, this is designed as "a deterrent to

any would-be speculator".

Another restriction is pig farming and intensive poultry rearing being ruled out by the council under any sale contracts.

If any sale was agreed, the report placed before the decision-making executive is that "the objective of the council is for the land to

remain in its present open form".

A flood of letters to the council opposed to the sale, along with a petition with more than 1,700 signatures orchestrated by the Saving Tyting Farm Campaign, could also see the government get involved if any sale was given the go ahead.

"The Government Office for the South East (GOSE) has confirmed that all letters of objection must be submitted to the minister with any application for consent to the disposal," the joint report by Richard Lingard, head of legal and property services and John Weedon, head of property states.

"The council's application must also include a statement of reasons for the proposed sale and the circumstances generally, including details of any restrictions to which the land has been subject."

Surrey County Council (SCC) could also pull the plug on the deal as it contributed to the purchase of the land along with Guildford Council in 1942 and would be entitled to some of the profits from a sale.

If the Government refused to give its backing to a sale, or if SCC did likewise, an inquiry would be necessary to decide the fate of the project.

Although still under wraps, Guildford Council has confirmed it has received 42 bids, for either all or some of plots, after it asked agents to undertake the marketing of Tyting Farm.

At a meeting scheduled to take place last night, Guildford Council's Executive was presented with three options - go back on the decision to sell, go ahead with selling the whole farm, or sell particular lots. If a part sale programme was agreed, the council would be likely to sell the farmhouse, lodge and farm buildings.

Restrictions on the farmhouse and lodge would see them remain as single residential properties.

Other lots, making up a total of almost 63 acres, could be offered to Surrey farmers or to Surrey Wildlife Trust to take ownership of. See next week's *Surrey Advertiser* for the council's decision on the future of Tyting Farm.