

NEW BID FOR BLUES' MOVE

Club, hospital both backing it

by Lucy Tennyson

WYCOMBE Wanderers should be allowed to move to a new ground at Sands, according to both the football club and Wycombe Hospital authorities.

Wycombe District Council, criticised for sitting on the fence, is being urged to look again at proposals to move the club to Green Belt land at the end of Hillbottom Road, High Wycombe.

Wycombe Hospital, desperately cramped and short of car parking, needs to expand on to adjacent Loakes Park, home of the Wanderers for 40 years.

Money is available to build wards for the elderly and mentally ill, but fears are mounting that it could be withdrawn if the deadlock continues.

Authorities

Thousands of people supported the hospital in a petition a year ago but a solution to the impasse remains as distant as ever.

Now, both the hospital authorities and Wycombe

Wanderers are urging the council to think again.

Plans to build a football stadium on land owned by Sir Francis Dashwood at Sands were turned down by Wycombe Council in August.

Developers Westbruton's appeal against that decision will be held on July 14 — pushing any chance of building a new ground well into 1988.

"We want to try to resolve it without an appeal," said Blues' patron Jack Adams.

"The council has been sitting on the fence, so we have called for discussions. We are prepared to alter our plans for Hillbottom Road to meet car parking and traffic problems."

Warehouses

Wycombe MP Ray Whitney has stepped in to help, and the club is lobbying district councillors for support, he said.

But on Wednesday night, Wycombe councillors again voiced their opposition to the third part of the Loakes Park deal, in which DIY warehouses would be built on half of the ground to fund the club's move to Sands.

Despite a plea from council chairman Len Hampton, who said they should compromise and accept warehouses in order to get what they want for the hospital, councillors said they would oppose the plans at the July inquiry.

The warehouses were speculative and the whole site should be used for the hospital and the community, Wycombe planning committee decided.

Meanwhile, the man caught in the middle, Wycombe Health Authority chief Roy Darby, said time was running out. They might be forced to build temporary wards for patients, he said.

"We hope the council will give a favourable consideration to the whole thing again."

"Unless the football club can move, our plans are just pie in the sky."

Mr Darby added that the Sandfords site next to the hospital was unsuitable for their expansion plans.

And for the Wanderers with a 14-point lead in their current league, and Division Four in their sights for 1988/9, the need for an end to the impasse is just as great