FRIENDS OF STRATFIELD BRAKE: WE NEED YOUR HELP!

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN OUR AREA IS BEING IGNORED:

PLEASE ACT BY 20 JANUARY

- We've been waiting for OVER NINE MONTHS for detailed plans from OUFC regarding Stratfield Brake.
- Kidlington and Gosford & Water Eaton were planning to then consult the local community.
- In December, however, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) announced that because of the 'significant challenges' with the site, it has instead offered to discuss 'the Triangle site' with the Club.
- The Triangle is the last remaining bit of green space between Kidlington and Oxford (situated south of Kidlington Roundabout, to the west of Oxford Parkway and to the east of Frieze Way).
- OCC won't say if Stratfield Brake is still on the table or not – if OCC get The Triangle, we don't think Stratfield Brake will be safe for long.
- Despite OCC (quite literally) moving the goal posts, they still plan to rely on the results from the previous public engagement exercise which included a completely different use of The Triangle!
- In the former proposal, the Triangle was earmarked for sports pitches rather than a massive stadium complex, which would obliterate the Kidlington Gap and dominate this area.
- We've been completely misled: it's entirely unreasonable for OCC to abdicate their responsibility to the local community by allowing the proposal to progress straight to planning permission stage without appropriate consultation: they MUST consult local residents BEFORE they start talking to OUFC about a lease.
- We're a growing community which is about to get 4,400 new houses on local Green Belt – if The Triangle is suddenly up for grabs, why can't this Green Belt site be used for additional recreational space for our community?

We're appalled – not only did OCC allow the previous consultation to be dominated by football supporters, but they are now proposing to use these results to support a completely different proposal. This is unfair and undemocratic. We've called on the County Councillors in charge of this proposal, and Layla Moran MP, to ask for an appropriate public engagement exercise on the Triangle but they don't seem to be listening.

PLEASE COULD YOU:

- **Write an email in your own words and style (this is important!).**
- **Use your own ideas and the list of points below (in your own order of importance) to explain why you think OCC should hold a public engagement exercise on the Triangle. Just pick out points which matter to you, you don't need to include all of them.**
- **Send two separate emails:**

[1.] To Layla Moran MP (MP for Oxford West and Abingdon) layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk
AND Councillor Calum Miller Calum.Miller@Oxfordshire.gov.uk CC to Claire Taylor Claire.Taylor@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
AND your local Councillor:

- Kidlington South: Councillor Ian Middleton ian.middleton@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Kidlington North and Kirtlington: Councillor Nigel Simpson nigel.simpson@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Gosford & Water Eaton: Councillor Ian Middleton ian.middleton@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Wolvercote and Summertown: Councillor Andrew Gant Andrew.Gant@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Marston and Northway: Councillor Mark Lygo mark.lygo@oxfordshire.gov.uk

AND CC Councillors at Oxford City Council cllrsgoddard@oxford.gov.uk and cllrjsandelson@oxford.gov.uk.

[2.] To the leader of OCC liz.leffman@oxfordshire.gov.uk with a copy to the rest of the cabinet: liz.brighouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk; glynis.phillips@oxfordshire.gov.uk; jenny.hannaby@oxfordshire.gov.uk; pete.sudbury@oxfordshire.gov.uk; duncan.enright@oxfordshire.gov.uk; tim.bearder@oxfordshire.gov.uk; mark.lygo@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Thank you in advance for taking action to ensure that the local communities in Kidlington, Gosford & Water Eaton, North Oxford and surrounding areas are consulted on the Triangle site.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Why should OCC hold a public engagement exercise on the Triangle site before allowing this to progress to a planning application?

1. Our MP has asked OCC to listen carefully to local residents

Both Layla Moran's 2022 survey and OCC's previous engagement exercise demonstrated that local residents are opposed to the stadium proposal at Stratfield Brake. There is no reason to assume that views on the Triangle will be any different. This is what Layla Moran said:

Thank you for contacting me about the proposal by Oxford United Football Club to build a new stadium at Stratfield Brake. There was a very high response to our recent survey of local residents which showed a clear majority of the local residents that responded are opposed to the plans. Key concerns include the threat to the Green Belt, increased traffic, parking problems and the need to protect the woodland.

I have communicated these concerns to the County Council Cabinet and will continue to make representations on behalf of local residents.

I have asked them to listen carefully to local residents and to the local parish councils as discussions with the club move forward.

Thank you again for contacting me about this important issue. Best wishes, Layla

Our MP knows that local residents are opposed to the stadium

WE NEED TO TELL HER THAT OCC IS REFUSING TO LISTEN: WE NEED HER SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IS CONSULTED ON THE TRIANGLE SITE. It would be entirely unreasonable for OCC to abdicate their responsibility by saying the stadium can be decided at planning permission stage. They MUST consult local residents before they start talking to OUFC about a lease. WE HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HEARD ON THIS!

2. The previous engagement exercise was defective because it:

- Mainly collected responses from OUFC supporters (2,919 out of 3,740 responses i.e. 79% were supporters!) and attributed unequal weight to their views.
- Didn't ensure that respondents were honest about where they lived.
- Didn't engage with residents of Cutteslowe/North Oxford who will also be affected (and are also disadvantaged by not having parish councils to represent their community).
- Favoured responses from OUFC supporters because OCC refused to extend the consultation to allow time for an opposition group to be formed.
- Produced a report that was written based mainly on the views of football supporters but was held out to be unbiased.
- Included 516 responses from outside Oxfordshire (14% of total responses were from outside the county!).

3. Results from the previous consultation apply differently to the Triangle:

- Asked for responses based on Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance (OFDA)'s criteria. (OFDA is the name of the alliance of parties which now have political control of OCC.) These criteria will apply very differently to the new Triangle proposal which would see a large-scale development crammed into a very small area, significantly impacting its surroundings. **The previous consultation does not provide a valid, fair or safe basis to proceed in the circumstances.**
- **As an example one of the OFDA's criteria was "*to maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and protecting and enhancing the surrounding environment including biodiversity, connecting habitats and supporting nature recovery*".**
    i. How can biodiversity net gain be achieved on this smaller site when the OUFC report concluded that their plans for Stratfield Brake site didn't achieve a net gain?
    ii. How can building on this green space maintain a green barrier between Kidlington and Oxford?
    iii. How can building a stadium on this space support nature recovery?

iv. What about the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41 Protected Habitat on the Triangle? It is shown as ancient woodland in the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review to 2031 and Government guidance defines this as irreplaceable.

4. OCC's conduct during this process has been extremely poor:

- OCC hasn't explained what the "considerable challenges" associated with Stratfield Brake are.
- OCC hasn't said that Stratfield Brake is definitely off the table as a potential site for the stadium; it has merely introduced an alternative site.
- The local community has had to wait eleven months (with an open-ended timetable) for OUFC to publish its detailed proposals. Even now only part of the report has been published and it still fails to resolve any of the key issues - it is not fit for purpose.
- OCC has misled the public by saying that OUFC was going to publish detailed proposals on Stratfield Brake for our consideration; failing to ensure that report was published in full; then unilaterally deciding to offer the Triangle as an alternative Green Belt site.

5. OCC has not been transparent on fundamental strategic considerations:

- Neither Stratfield Brake nor the Triangle are earmarked for development in the Cherwell Local Plan. They are strategically designated Green Belt sites to maintain a gap between Kidlington and North Oxford (once 2,000 houses have been built in the Kidlington Gap).
- OCC purchased this land to ensure that a gap was maintained between Kidlington and Oxford. This publicly owned land is held in trust for the local community who should be consulted on its potential use for a stadium.
- OCC is side-stepping the democratic Local Plan process by proposing Green Belt sites for a stadium. But worse they are refusing to even ask local people what they think of the Triangle site!
- Site allocation should only be made once all possible options have been considered, but OCC first chose Stratfield Brake then the Triangle with no attempt to justify its site selection. What other sites have been considered?
- Kidlington is a rapidly growing community and green space is an increasingly rare resource. OCC is failing to take account of the value of this land to local people for future recreational and sports use.
- Do OUFC REALLY need to move? There is a lack of transparency on this.
- If a piece of land the size of the Triangle will do, why don't OUFC's investors seek to purchase a site which is up for sale and doesn't form part of the Green Belt?

JUST WHAT IS STOPPING OCC FROM SEEKING TO GAUGE LOCAL OPINION?

- There isn't a downside to consulting in an appropriate manner with the local community. This is exactly what OCC should WANT to do.
- Why don't they? Is it time pressure from OUFC? Given that the local community, as part of OCC's process on the stadium, has waited ELEVEN months for a report from OUFC, which still hasn't been published in full, why the hurry to make a decision on the Triangle site in January?