

# **Stratfield Brake, Kidlington land use proposal**

## **Engagement report**

**Date: 7 March 2022**

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## Engagement report

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# 1. Background and approach

## Background

- 1.1 Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) has asked Oxfordshire County Council, as the landowner, to lease some of the land it owns at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington for a term of 250 years. The club proposes to build a new football stadium at the site, subject to planning permission. In addition to the stadium, the club's proposal includes facilities such as a hotel, retail, conferencing and training and community grounds.
- 1.2. At its meeting of 18 January 2022, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet discussed a paper entitled 'Land at Stratfield Brake, Kidlington – proposal from Oxford United Football Club to Oxfordshire County Council as landowner'. Having considered the report and representations from people who addressed the meeting on the day, Cabinet agreed to carry out an engagement exercise. Its aim was to hear what people think about whether the county council, as the landowner, should start formal negotiations with Oxford United Football Club about the lease of this land and if so, which principles (objectives) should guide any discussions. The findings from this exercise are set out in this report.

## Approach

- 1.3 The engagement exercise ran between 25 January and 22 February 2022. Participants were signposted to the [Cabinet paper](#) for background information and encouraged to read this before having their say.
- 1.4 Feedback was primarily collated using an online survey hosted on the county council's digital consultation and engagement platform, Let's Talk Oxfordshire. People also had the opportunity to request paper copies of the engagement materials or ask for them in alternative formats. They could also submit comments by email or by letter. Overall, 3,740 survey responses were submitted, and 14 written submissions were received.

## Promotion

- 1.5 The council promoted the engagement exercise in various ways. Activity mainly focused on reaching residents and stakeholders in and around the Kidlington and Gosford and Water Eaton parishes, as these communities are local to Stratfield Brake and are more likely to be impacted by any future changes to this land.
- 1.6 The council's promotional activity included:
- A news story, issued to media outlets and published on the news pages of county council's website ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)).
  - An item in the county council's eNewsletter, YourOxfordshire, sent by direct email to subscribers across the county and beyond.
  - An item in the council's weekly newsletter for county councillors and in its weekly staff newsletter.
  - Posts on Nextdoor targeting the Kidlington and Gosford and Water Eaton area.

- Packaged content sent to community news editors in the Kidlington and Gosford and Water Eaton area for use across their channels.
  - An extensive poster campaign across Kidlington village, including a wide range of local businesses and community noticeboards.
- 1.7 The council also wrote to the key stakeholders to inform them of its engagement exercise, including the current leaseholders at Stratfield Brake, the local parish councils, councillors, Cherwell District Council, and sports clubs using the site. The council met with representatives from some of these stakeholder groups prior to the Cabinet report being considered in January.
- 1.8 Oxford United Football Club and independent supporters' groups also heavily promoted the engagement exercise, which has generated a high level of interest from supporters. This targeted activity (largely on digital media) is likely to have had a strong bearing on the engagement exercise participant profile.
- 1.9 The local media took an initial high level of interest in the engagement exercise and its launch was covered by print, digital and broadcast channels. The survey asked how people found out about the engagement exercise and people could select more than one option. Overall, 35 per cent of people said they heard about the exercise through the media; social media in its various forms (cumulatively 59 per cent) and word of mouth (19 per cent) also played key roles.

#### **Continued exploratory discussion during the engagement period**

- 1.10 During the four-week engagement exercise, county council officers have continued to progress exploratory discussions with The Woodland Trust, Foxcotte Fencing Ltd, Kidlington and Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Councils and the community sports clubs who currently use Stratfield Brake. These discussions are entirely separate and feedback from these meetings are not included in this report.

#### **How to interpret this report**

- 1.11 This is an engagement exercise and has not been designed to be a piece of representative research. Therefore, the council cannot attribute any statistical confidence intervals to the data. The people who participated are entirely self-selecting.
- 1.12 The report is presented in two parts, with the first section focusing on the responses to the survey form and the second section summarising the key messages from written correspondence received by the council as part of the engagement exercise.
- 1.13 Please note that restrictions were placed on the online survey, to limit people to sending only one response from any specific email address. That said, the council cannot prevent individuals from submitting multiple responses, should they have multiple email addresses or from submitting an online form as well as comments by letter, email or paper form should they choose to do so.

Checks have been made on the data and there is no specific evidence of any significant organised campaign to disrupt this exercise.

- 1.14 While, the survey had an overall response rate of 3,740 responses, not everyone answered each question. This report uses variable base figures because of this, focusing on the number of people who answered each question. Please note some questions had routing<sup>1</sup> and the council only asked demographic questions for people responding as members of the public. Stakeholders were asked to provide different information, depending on who they were.
- 1.15 The council commissioned an independent agency, IDA (Independent Data Analysis) to read and code the open-ended questions in this survey and to produce a set of data tabulations. The coding process has created 'other' answers, which are referred to in tables in this report. No one part of the statements made by participants which have been coded into the 'other' categories amount to ten per cent or more of all responses to that question. This is why they do not have a unique code of their own.

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<sup>1</sup> Routing (also known as skip-logic or branching) directs a respondent through a survey based on the answers they give.

## 1. Executive summary

- The engagement exercise received a high level of interest, with 3,740 survey responses submitted, and 14 written submissions received.
- Nearly all survey participants – 3,517 (94 per cent) – were members of the public and 207 (six per cent) were stakeholders.
- A very large proportion of people completing the survey, 79 per cent (2,919 people), were Oxford United FC (OUFC) supporters, whereas 21 per cent (785 people) said they were not. Sixty per cent of the OUFC supporters said they regularly attend home games, with 34 per cent saying they attend all home games.
- Local residents (Kidlington, Gosford, Water Eaton) represent 22 per cent of the participants - naturally with some overlap with OUFC supporters.
- Among all survey participants, there is very strong support for the county council, as the landowner, to start negotiations with OUFC regarding the lease of land that it owns at Stratfield Brake for a term of 250 years: eighty per cent say yes, although support is much lower (38 per cent) among local residents.
- Among local residents responding to the survey, 38 per cent are in favour of the county council starting negotiations and 58 per cent are not. Four per cent are unsure.
- Many survey participants recognise the importance of OUFC to the broader area, the city, and the county.
- Supporters of the negotiations feel that it is a good opportunity on both a countywide basis and locally, especially with the promise to develop and enhance many local health and fitness and sports clubs, and that it is good for the community. They positively considered the potential from an employment perspective. With regards to infrastructure, people felt the location was good, with both road links and transport access.
- Concerns expressed by those against mainly revolve around traffic, congestion, and parking, and about environmental (including green gap/belt) issues.
- The list of six objectives is generally thought to be good and exhaustive, although some expressed concerns about whether the objectives are realistic or achievable.
- Twenty-two per cent of survey participants said something should be added to the list of objectives, with comments focusing mainly on the broad themes of environmental impact, infrastructure, and community impact and were largely points of detail that could sit behind four of the existing six objectives.
- Eighty-two per cent of survey participants thought none of the objectives should be removed. The objective that people would most like seen taken off the list, with just 108 mentions, was objective a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces. This was substantiated by comments around the lack of necessity for

a green belt, that development was already happening, and that this proposal is necessary.

- With regard to the written submissions, eight were from members of the public – all of which were against the council entering into formal negotiations and six were from stakeholders (two supportive, two against, one unsure and one did not give a view).
- Those against the council entering into formal negotiations detailed concerns around the scale of development in the area and encroachment, the loss of green space/belt, concerns about traffic, transport, and parking. Several people also raised planning matters.

## Section 1: Survey responses

### 2. Respondent profile

2.1 Overall, 3,740 people responded to the engagement exercise survey. All but one used the online form.

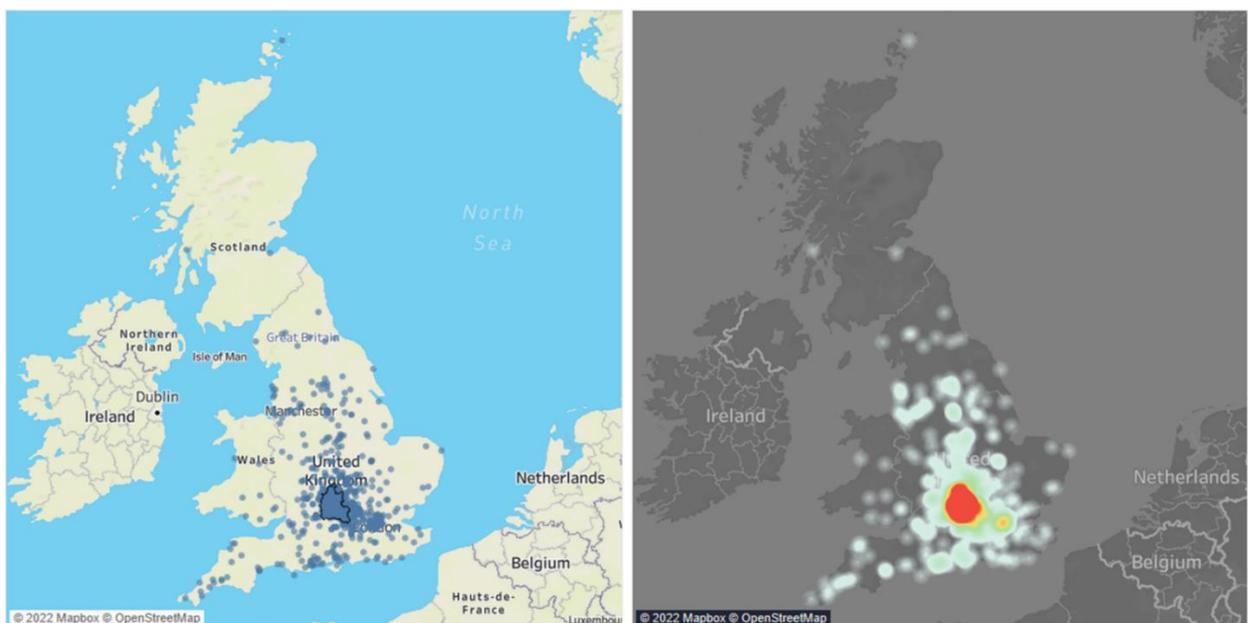
2.2 Of the 3,724 people who told us in which context they were responding, the breakdown is as follows:

- Nearly all participants, 3,517 (94 per cent), were members of the public and 207 (six per cent) said they were stakeholders.
- Of the stakeholders, 12 people said they were a representative of a sports club using Stratfield Brake, 17 said they were a business, 13 said they were a representative of a group or organisation, 16 said they were a parish, town, district or county councillor and the largest proportion (149 people) said they were another type of stakeholder.
- One hundred and seventy-seven people said they or their children attended a sports club that is currently using Stratfield Brake.

2.3 Geographically, participants were based across the UK, with some internationally:

- Most members of the public participating (2,956 people) said they lived in Oxfordshire, whereas 516 said they live outside of the county.
- 22 per cent (819 people) said they lived in the parishes of Gosford and Water Eaton (75 people) and Kidlington (744 people).

#### Map 1: Geographical distribution of engagement exercise participants in UK



Base: 3,457 out of 3,740 responses (92 per cent) mapped. Postcode locations not exact locations of residential addresses, but postcode unit, district, or area centrepoin.

- 2.4 A very large proportion of participants, 79 per cent, were Oxford United FC (OUFC) supporters (2,919 people), whereas 21 per cent (785 people) said they were not. Non-OUFC supporters are more likely to live closer to Stratfield Brake (on average, 2.3 km away), than OUFC supporters (13.2 km away, on average).
- 2.5 Naturally some Oxford United FC supporters also live in the two communities, which are in the closest proximity to Stratfield Brake. For Gosford and Water Eaton parish (30 people who selected they lived in the parish said they were supporters, and 43 people were not) and for Kidlington parish (296 people who selected they lived in the parish said they were supporters, and 441 people were not).
- 2.6 Of the Oxford United supporter base (2,911 people), six in 10 (60 per cent or 1,747 people) said they were regular attendees of home games, with around a third (34 per cent) saying they go to all home games. Twenty-nine per cent said they occasionally went to home games, nine per cent said they rarely went. Two per cent (56 people) said they never go.
- 2.7 Interestingly, 176 people who identified themselves as stakeholders (86 per cent) said they were Oxford United fans, whereas 29 (14 per cent) said they were not.
- 2.8 A small number of demographic questions were asked of the members of the public who responded. This information showed:
- Far more men (76 per cent) than women (21 per cent) responded. Two per cent preferred not to say.
  - There was a good spread across age groups.
  - Most participants said they were of white British, Irish or any other white background, whereas two per cent disclosed a different ethnic group or background. Five per cent preferred not to say.

### 3. Main findings

#### Views on whether the county council should start formal negotiations

3.1 A key aspect of this engagement exercise was to seek views on whether the county council, as landowner, should start formal negotiations with Oxford United Football Club. Specifically, the survey asked:

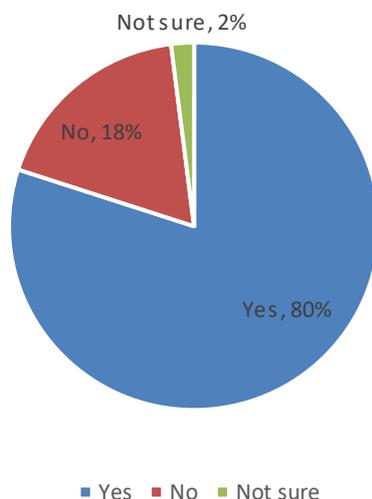
**Taking account of the background information provided above and the further supporting information in the [Cabinet paper](#), in principle, do you think the County Council should start formal negotiations with OUFC about the lease of land that it owns at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington for a term of 250 years?**

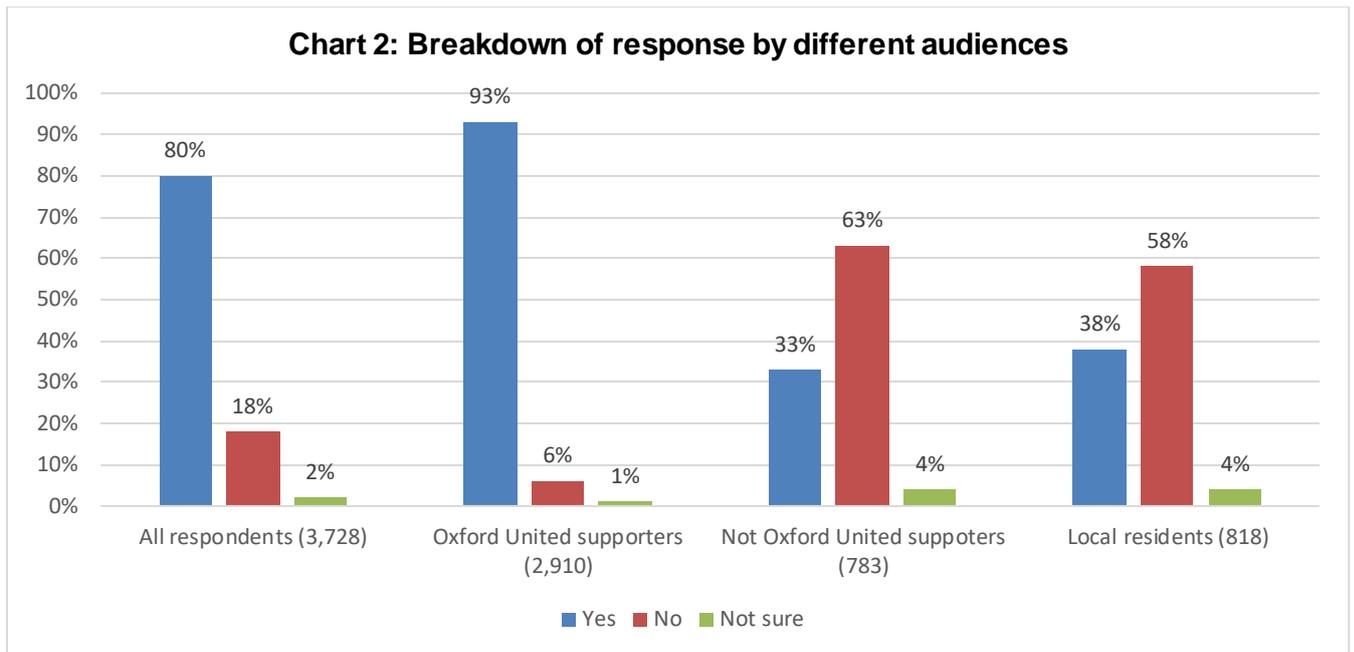
This request from Oxfordshire United Football club is for the proposed development of a new football stadium, subject to planning permission. In addition to the stadium, the club's proposal includes facilities such as a hotel, retail, conferencing and training and community grounds.

3.2 Among all answering (3,728 people), there is very strong support for the county council to start negotiations. Eighty per cent (2,982 people) said yes, 18 per cent (683 people) said no and two per cent (68 people) were unsure.

**Chart 1: Should the county council start formal negotiations about the lease of land that it owns at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington for a term of 250 years?**

**Base: All answering (3,728)**





3.3 As shown by the participant profile, Oxford United FC (OUFC) supporters form most of the participants of this engagement exercise. Nearly all these, 93 per cent (2,709 people), are supportive of the county council starting negotiations whereas six per cent (166 people) said no, and one per cent (35 people) were unsure.

3.4 Opponents of the county council starting formal negotiations with OUFC are more likely to live closer to Stratfield Brake (on average, 1.9 km away), than supporters (13.3 km away, on average).

3.5 Among local residents, from the parishes of Gosford and Water Eaton and Kidlington, (some of which are also Oxford United supporters), 38 per cent (312 people) said yes, they are in favour of the council starting negotiations and 58 per cent (476 people) said no. Four per cent (30 people) were unsure.

**Map 2: Distribution of views of participants in and around Kidlington**



- 3.5 With regard to stakeholders, most of which said they were Oxford United supporters, 177 people said yes (86 per cent), 23 people said no (11 per cent) and six people (three per cent) were unsure.
- 3.6 Analysis by declared stakeholder type (most people said other), is shown below. Of these, 39 people said yes, 15 people said no, and four people were unsure.

**Table 1: Breakdown of response by declared stakeholder type**

<b>Specific types of stakeholder</b>	<b>Yes</b> (Number of responses)	<b>No</b> (Number of responses)	<b>Not Sure</b> (Number of responses)
a business	13	4	0
a parish, town, district, or county councillor	8	7	1
a representative of a group or organisation	8	3	2
a representative of a sports club currently using Stratfield Brake	9	2	1

### **Reasons behind people's views**

- 3.7 All participants were invited to provide further information to explain their point of view, and these are summarised in tables 2, 3 and 4 below.
- 3.8 Those in favour of the county council starting formal negotiations, feel that it is a good opportunity on both a countywide basis and locally, especially with the promise to develop and enhance many local health and fitness and sports clubs, and that it is good for the community. They also positively considered the potential from an employment perspective.
- 3.9 With regards to infrastructure, people felt the location was good, with both road links and transport access.
- 3.10 With such a high number of Oxford United FC supporters participating in the engagement exercise, many of the reasons for why participants thought the council should start formal negotiations were unsurprisingly club focused. This included stating the benefits the football club brings on many fronts, the overall positive potential this move could bring to the club and expressing negativity towards OUFC's current home ground.
- 3.11 Eighty-nine people thought the council should at least open negotiations and explore possibilities.

**Table 2: Reasons given as to why the county council should start formal negotiations**

<b>Base: All in favour of the county council starting formal negotiations who provided further comments (2,598)</b>	All (2,598)  (Number of mentions)	Local residents (274)  (Number of mentions)
<b>Community impact</b>		
It would improve facilities and choice for other local sports and leisure groups, centre of excellence, elite and grass roots and a community hub	1,199	131
Employment	473	76
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Location is good, road links, transport access	843	77
<b>Oxford United specific comments</b>		
OUFC is important for the area, the city and the county, economically and reputationally, and good for local businesses	1,034	101
Proposal is good for the club: newer and more professional facilities, financial security, stability, permanent home	896	65
Problems with the existing site (cost, location, size, old access, ownership)	426	19
Oxford United FC is the county's only professional football club and should be supported	186	7
<b>Other</b>		
Good idea/location/non-specific reason	230	32

- 3.11 For those who are against the council starting formal negotiations, their concerns mainly revolved around protection of the green belt, environmental, wildlife and infrastructure including traffic congestion, road capacity and parking.
- 3.12 These participants also brought to the fore concerns about the potential negative impact on the local community – its character, the extent to which the area is already being subjected to development, the potential for light pollution, noise, litter and other forms of antisocial behaviour and the continuity of existing local sporting facilities.
- 3.13 One hundred and twenty-one people thought it would be better to negotiate/improve the existing site, Kassam Stadium.

**Table 3: Reasons given as to why the county council should not start formal negotiations**

<b>Base: All not in favour of the county council starting formal negotiations who provided further comments (650)</b>	All (650)  (Number of mentions)	Local residents (457)  (Number of mentions)
<b>Environmental impact</b>		
Green belt protection, gap from Oxford city should be preserved	377	252
Environmental impact, wildlife, climate, woodland, loss of quiet space, pollution	267	210
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Traffic congestion, roads will not cope	352	270
Parking capacity, people blocking illegally, blocking roads	160	145
Infrastructure unable to cope	79	59
<b>Community impact</b>		
Out of character with village environment - residential not commercial	208	163
Noise, light pollution, anti-social behaviour, including litter and rubbish	174	155
Area already being over-developed with new housing	129	86
No need for hotel/conference facilities in the area	49	34
Concerns about existing sports facilities, continuity	36	29
<b>Other</b>		
Better to negotiate/improve existing site, Kassam Stadium	121	72
Various other reasons (looking at other options first, policing, future controls of OUFC ownership - 250-year lease, area in wetland, often floods etc.)	107	72

3.11 For the small number of people who were unsure whether the council should start formal negotiations, many also expressed concerns about the green belt, the potential negative impact on traffic congestion and parking, while others raised issues (positive and negative) relating to the local community. Fourteen people felt they simply needed more information in order to form an opinion.

**Table 4: Reasons given as to why people were unsure if the county council should start formal negotiations**

<b>Base: All in favour of the county council starting formal negotiations who provided further comments (650)</b>	All (51)  (Number of mentions)	Local residents (27)  (Number of mentions)
<b>Environmental impact</b>		
Green belt development and environmental impact	21	9
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Traffic/parking concerns	25	18
<b>Community impact</b>		
Concern about character of the village	7	6
Worries about existing sports clubs and facilities	7	3
Jobs, local employment, business	6	4
Improving local facilities and amenities	4	4
<b>Oxford United specific comments</b>		
Better than existing Kassam stadium	3	2
<b>Other</b>		
Need to know more, including details of lease to protect use in the future	14	10
Other non-supportive reasons (eg consider other sites, or better deal at Kassam)	13	7
Other supportive reasons	4	3

### **Views on the six key objectives**

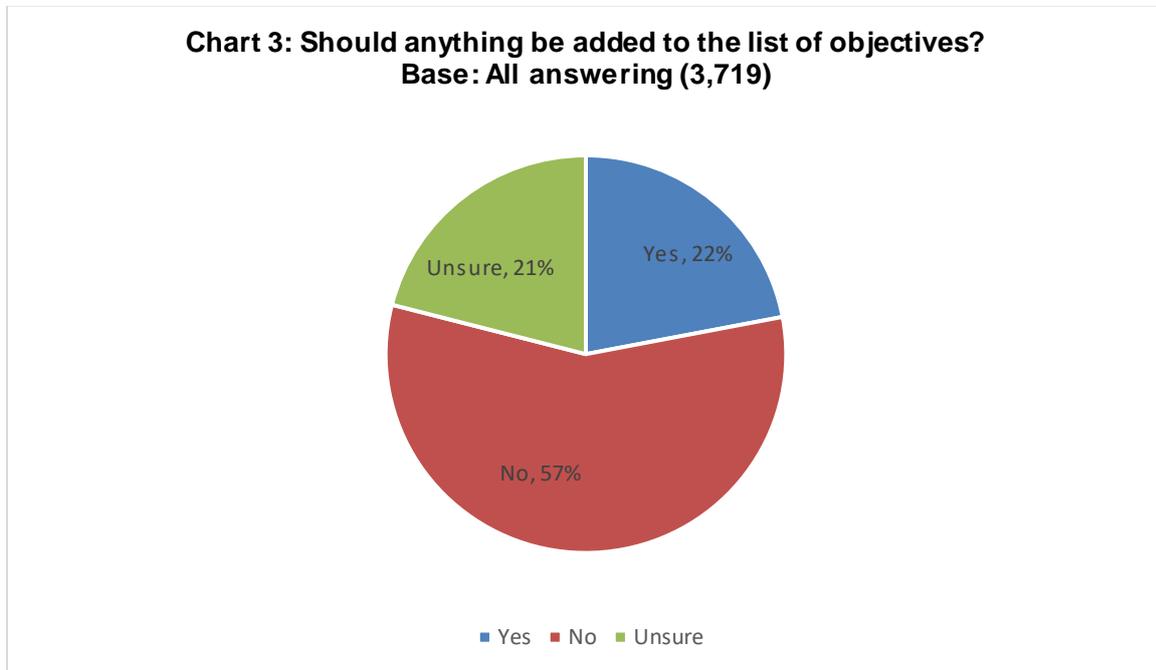
3.12 In the Cabinet report of 18 January 2022, county council officers recommended to Cabinet that any lease of their land to OUFC should achieve six key objectives.

#### **These are:**

- a) Maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces.
- b) Enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support.
- c) Significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use.
- d) Develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire.
- e) Increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing.
- f) Support the county council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development.

### Should any objectives be added to the list?

3.13. Participants were presented with this information and asked if anything should be added to this list of objectives. As shown by Chart 3 below, overall, just over one in five participants (22 per cent or 835 people) said yes, over half (57 per cent or 2,109 people) said no and another one in five participants (21 per cent or 775 people) were unsure.

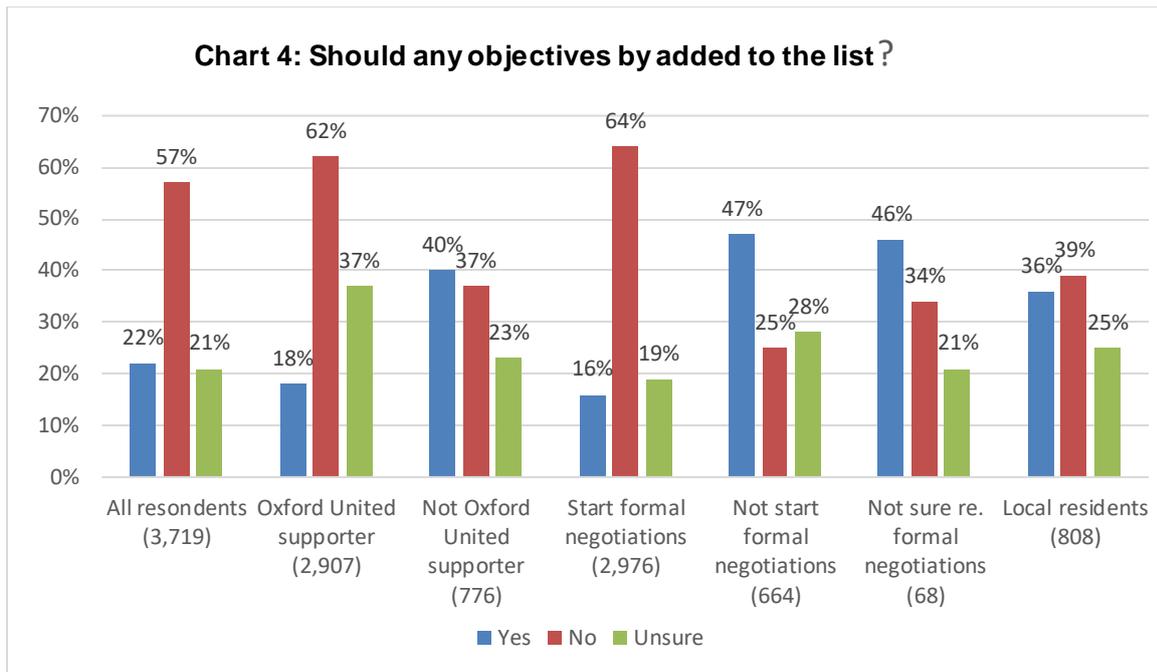


3.14. Chart 4 below, presents the differing opinions by respondent type. People who were not Oxford United FC supporters were proportionally more likely to want something added to the list of objectives than OUFC supporters (40 per cent versus 18 per cent).

3.15. Those who were supportive of the county council starting formal negotiations were significantly less likely to want something added to the list (16 per cent) than those who do not wish the council to proceed (47 per cent) or those that are unsure (46 per cent).

3.16 Among local residents, from the parishes of Gosford and Water Eaton and Kidlington), opinion was more evenly split. Thirty-six per cent (293 people) said yes, something should be added to the objectives and 39 per cent (313 people) said no. Twenty-five per cent (202 people) were unsure.

3.17 As regards to stakeholders, 21 per cent (44 people) said yes, something should be added to the objectives and 58 per cent (121 people) said no. Twenty per cent (42 people) were unsure.



3.18 Table five summarises the additional information people would like to see added to the objectives. The comments focus mainly around the broad themes of environmental impact, infrastructure, and community impact and are largely points of detail that could sit behind four of the existing six objectives as summarised below:

**Objective a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces**

- Environmental aspects, biodiversity, wildlife protection, green space, woodlands protection, consider noise and light pollution (136 mentions).

**Objective b) enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support**

- Other sports and fitness groups to develop/improve (93 mentions).

**Objective c) significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use**

- Road access to be improved, traffic management, foot bridges, buses on match days, road and pedestrian safety, cycle lanes (135 mentions).
- Parking – planning and restrictions and enforcement (74 mentions).

**Objective d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire**

- Local business/employment improvements (21 mentions).

- 3.19 There were three areas that people would like added to the list of current objectives, that are not obviously linked to those currently listed. These were:
- Other non-sport local facilities, parks, play areas (39 mentions).
  - Disabled and under privileged access/facilities (18 mentions).
  - Promote the development so that the whole city and county can benefit (36 mentions).
- 3.20 A significant number of comments relating directly to the interests of Oxford United Football Club or responsibilities people would like the club to absorb.
- 3.21 For those opponents of the county council starting formal negotiations, proposed additions to the objectives mainly revolved around protection of the green belt, environmental and wildlife and infrastructure including traffic congestion, road capacity and parking.

**Table 5: Details people would like to see added to the existing list of objectives**

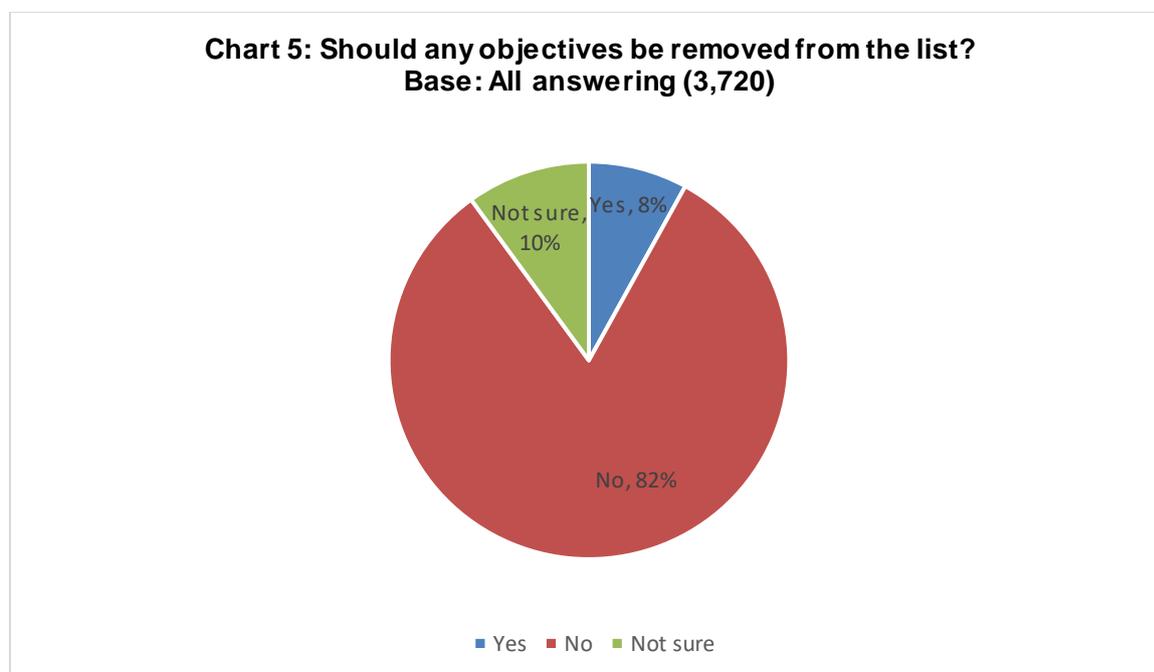
<b>Base: All those who wanted further information added to the objectives who provided further comments (764)</b>	All (764) (Number of mentions)	Local residents (256) (Number of mentions)	Against or not sure re. negotiations (294) (Number of mentions)
<b>Environmental impact</b>			
Environmental aspects, biodiversity, wildlife protection, green space, woodlands protection, consider noise and light pollution	136	75	103
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Road access to be improved, traffic management, foot bridges, buses on match days, road and pedestrian safety, cycle lanes	135	63	64
Parking – planning and restrictions and enforcement	74	40	40
<b>Community impact</b>			
Other sports and fitness groups to develop/improve	93	25	23
Other non-sport local facilities, parks, play areas	39	11	10
Local business/employment improvements	21	8	6
Disabled and under privileged access/facilities	18	6	4
<b>Oxford United specific comments</b>			
Protect OUFC in the longer term as an important institution for the city and county	170	9	2
Ensure lease benefit is with OUFC and not with any owner to protect against detrimental ownership/control in the future	76	21	23
Rubbish and litter clearing, anti-social behaviour and policing paid for by OUFC	28	23	23
Current stadiums, plans, housing	21	5	11

**Table 5: Continued**

<b>Base: All those who wanted further information added to the objectives who provided further comments (764)</b>	All (764) (Number of mentions)	Local residents (27) (Number of mentions)	Against or not sure re. negotiations (274) (Number of mentions)
<b>Other</b>			
Promote the development so that the whole city and county can benefit	36	5	5
Other answers (eg more details, more specifics, compensation for residents nearby, must comply with recent adopted CDC local plan, discounts for residents, good design etc.)	153	78	103

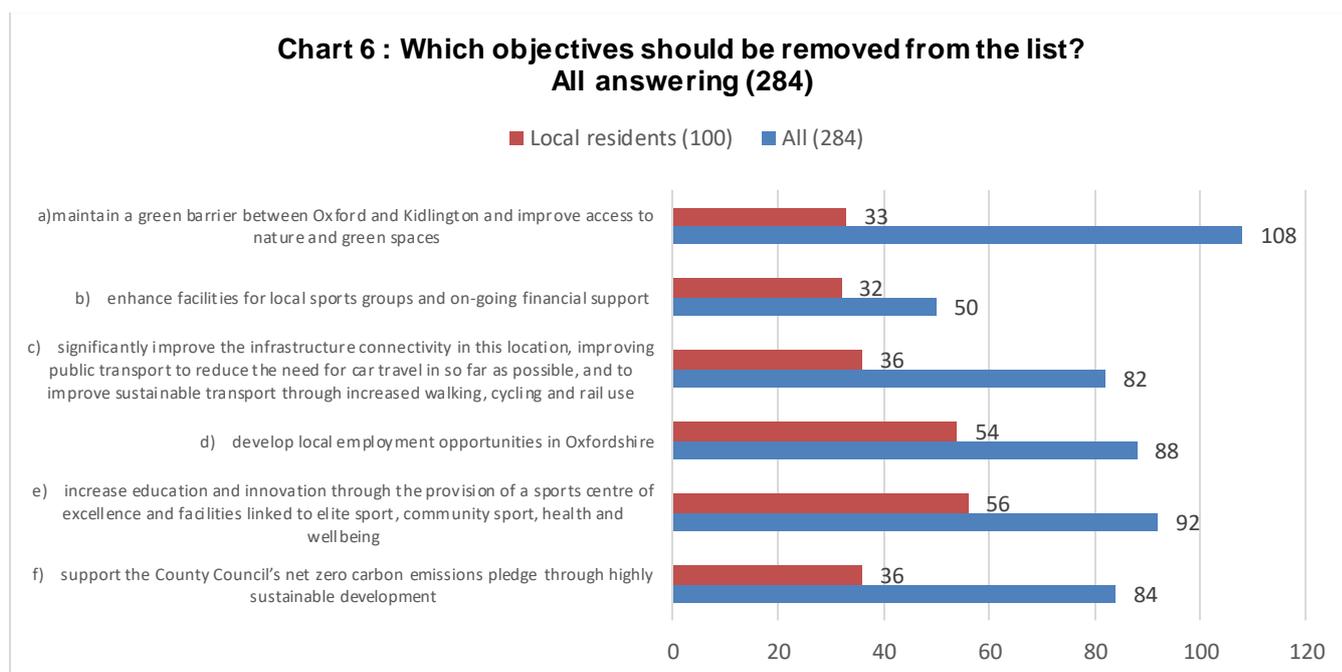
**Should any objectives be removed from the list?**

- 3.20 Participants were also asked if any of the objectives should be removed from the list and they were given the opportunity to select as many as they wished and provide supporting comments to their reasoning.
- 3.21 Chart five below shows the engagement exercise did not present a specifically strong case for any of the six objectives to be removed. Overall, only eight per cent of participants (284 people) said yes, one or more objectives should be removed, the majority (82 per cent or 3,066 people) said no and ten per cent (370 people) were unsure. As regards local residents, 113 out of the 807 people who responded to this question said yes, they would like one of more objectives removing and for stakeholders 16 out of 207 people said yes.



- 3.22 The objective that people would most like seen taken off the list, with just 108 mentions, was objective a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces.

3.23 Focusing just on local residents, the two objectives they would most like to see removed from the list are: objective e) increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health, and wellbeing with 56 mentions and d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire with 54 mentions.



3.24 Summarised below are the reasons why people would like each of the specific objectives to be removed. Some people made general negative or cynical comments about “empty words” (23 mentions), “too vague” (nine mentions) or felt simply that land negotiations should not go ahead (54 mentions). Despite selecting objectives to be removed, a very small number of people used this opportunity to say “just do it, go ahead, no objections” (six people).

**Objective a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces**

Sixty-two people made comments.

- Green barrier/protection not necessary, not appropriate these days/not as important as benefits (44 mentions).
- Area already losing green barrier with hundreds of new housing (22 mentions).
- Appropriate site for a development – an opportunity (11 mentions).

**Objective b) enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support**

Nineteen people made comments.

- Already got good local sports facilities (17 mentions).
- Ongoing financial support not appropriate (2 mentions).

**Objective c) significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use**

Twenty-six people made comments.

- Already well served by public transport (16 mentions).
- Some people in the community (eg elderly) need cars and parking (six mentions).
- This is not the football club's responsibility (four mentions).

**Objective d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire**

Thirty-nine people made comments.

- There are plenty of jobs opportunities in the area already (37 mentions).
- This is not the football club's responsibility (three mentions).

**Objective e) increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing**

Twenty people made comments.

- Not appropriate (11 mentions).
- Not necessary, already good (10 mentions).

**Objective f) support the county council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development**

Thirty-two people made comments.

- It is impossible for development or club to be net zero (24 mentions).
- This is not the football club's responsibility (five mentions).
- Not so important (four mentions).

## **Other comments on the six key objectives**

- 3.25 The survey form presented participants with a final opportunity to provide comments on the six key objectives that county council officers recommended to Cabinet. Overall, 1,446 people took the opportunity to share their views, and these are presented in table six. Unsurprisingly, many of the points that had been mentioned already had prominence.
- 3.26 A large number of comments predominantly revolved around the potential environmental impact - protecting the greenbelt and wildlife and around the provision of sufficient and sustainable transport infrastructure and concerns about parking. Other stressed the importance of positive community impact.
- 3.27 As before many of comments relate directly to four of the six objectives and these are summarised below:

### **Objective a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces**

- Protect green space and barrier woodlands as much as possible, protect wildlife, needs definition (316 mentions).

### **Objective b) enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support**

- Local sports/leisure/health/community facilities important, better for everyone, better for housing (218 mentions).

### **Objective c) significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use**

- Transport infrastructure very important, including bridges and walkways – better for carbon emissions to encourage use of public transport, cycling, sustainable (339 mentions).

### **Objective d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire**

- Good for local business and employment (58 mentions).

- 3.28 Four hundred and twenty-three participants stated they had no further comments and that all/most are good points/achievable. Others made generally positive comments (99 mentions).
- 3.29 One hundred and sixty-four participants made negative comments covering a wide range of different subjects. Some people saw meeting the objectives as set out as an opportunity, while others were pessimistic. Some people viewed the objectives as unrealistic, vague – as needing to be more specific, that will not be met or will be impossible to manage in the future.

**Table six: Other comments on the six key objectives**

<b>Base: All those who wanted further information added to the objectives who provided further comments (1,446)</b>	All (1,146) (Number of mentions)	Local residents (405) (Number of mentions)	Against or not sure re. negotiations (422) (Number of mentions)
<b>Environmental impact</b>			
Protect green space and barrier woodlands as much as possible, protect wildlife, needs definition	316	154	177
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Transport infrastructure very important, including bridges and walkways – better for carbon emissions to encourage use of public transport, cycling, sustainable	339	70	60
Traffic, parking concerns	148	93	102
<b>Community impact</b>			
Local sports/leisure/health/community facilities important, better for everyone, better for housing	218	48	42
Good for local business and employment	58	7	1
Noise and ASB concerns, fan behaviour	22	15	17
<b>Oxford United specific comments</b>			
Important to encourage and support OUFC, good for the city and county	96	6	2
Existing Kassam site: either get a better deal or use for housing	55	28	41
<b>Other</b>			
Meeting all the objectives good opportunity for the city and county	113	6	0
Objectives unrealistic, vague, need to be more specific, will not be met, impossible to manage in the future	101	61	82
Just do it	44	8	1
Just don't do it	50	31	49
No further comments, all/most are good points/achievable	423	43	11
Other positive comments (eg will help to achieve net zero)	99	19	7
Other negative comments (eg environmental concerns, net zero, cannot be achieved, concerns about ownership and responsibility in the future, consider other locations, impact on local people, already have good transport/sport/leisure/space)	164	109	146

## Section 2: Written submissions

- 4.1 The council received 14 written submissions to the engagement exercise, some very detailed and these are included in a confidential deposit (GDPR compliant) for councillors to review. All except one (response from current tenant at Stratfield Brake site), did not answer the questions in the survey.
- 4.2 Eight submissions were from members of the public, all of which were against the council entering into formal negotiations. Many of the points raised (in varying levels of detail) were common to all submissions and were also similar to those raised in the survey.
- 4.3 Members of the public detailed concerns around the scale of development in the area and encroachment, the loss of green space/belt, concerns about traffic, transport, and parking – all the above amounting to a perceived negative impact on quality of life.
- 4.4 One person felt that employment levels were already positive in the local area (job creation not an issue) and two people raised other points relating to planning matters.
- 4.5 Six submissions were from stakeholders (two supportive, two against, one unsure and one did not give a view). Some responses went into detail regarding planning matters and the two sports clubs (both in favour) expressed recognition of benefits to the local community from their perspective.
- 4.6 Below is a summary of each of the written stakeholder responses received:

### **Responses from two sports clubs currently using the Stratfield Brake**

**Stance:** Both were supportive of the council starting formal negotiations.

**Points:**

- Recognised the benefits to their clubs and community.

### **Response from current tenant at Stratfield Brake site**

**Stance:** Unsure about the council starting formal negotiations due to range of potential negative impacts that could permanently affect the amenity of their site.

**Points:**

- Put forward recommendations on how to strengthen 'objective a'.
- Would like to see a new objective added focussing on protecting the surrounding natural environment and provided their reasons for this.
- Do not consider any of the six objectives should be removed from the list.

## **Joint response from national environmental campaign group and two local community interest organisations**

**Stance:** Against the council starting formal negotiations.

### **Points:**

- Concerned about any potential loss of Green Belt land at Stratfield Brake.
- Detailed substantive concerns regarding process.
- Not supportive of the six objectives, providing detailed reasoning on a case-by-case basis.
- Raised other points relating to planning matters.

## **Response from an Oxfordshire MP**

**Stance:** Representing constituents, most are against the council starting formal negotiations, a small number are supportive.

### **Points:**

- The main concerns include Green Belt, overdevelopment, length of lease, traffic, noise pollutions and antisocial behaviour, age of Kassam Stadium. Further information has been provided to further substantiate each of these points.

## **Response from a local planning, environment, and transport group**

**Stance:** Did not provide a definite stance, rather a range of issues for the council to consider.

### **Points:**

- Sets out detailed points and questions for the council to consider under the following headings: history, future safeguards, public finances, climate emergency, carbon impacts, environment and biodiversity, green belt, local facilities, and transport.

## Appendix A – survey form

### Stratfield Brake, Kidlington – land use proposal Engagement exercise

Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) has asked Oxfordshire County Council, as the landowner, to lease some of the land it owns at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington for a term of 250 years. The club propose to build a new football stadium at the site, subject to planning permission. In addition to the stadium, the club's proposal includes facilities such as a hotel, retail, conferencing and training and community grounds.

#### Have your say

Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet would like to hear what you think about whether the County Council, as the landowner, should start formal negotiations with Oxford United Football Club about the lease of this land and if so, which principles should guide any discussions.

Please fill in our online survey by visiting the council's online consultation and engagement platform called [letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk). We would like to encourage as many people as possible to complete the online survey as it is more efficient to process.

However, if you are unable to complete the survey online, you can use the paper copy in this document and return it Freepost to the county council.

#### Alternative formats

If you (or anyone you know) need a printed copy of the questionnaire and consultation information or require information in an alternative format, ie Easy Read, large text, audio, Braille or a community language, please email [consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or call the Council's customer services team on 01865 792422. Please note that our customer services team are unable to answer any detailed questions about this engagement exercise but can take your details and ask for an appropriate member of staff to get in touch.

#### Background information and documents

We have provided some background information at the start of the survey and encourage you to read this before filling it in.

Further information is in the paper called [Land at Stratfield Brake, Kidlington – proposal from Oxford United Football Club to Oxfordshire County Council as landowner](#), which was discussed at the Cabinet meeting on the 18 January 2022. We would encourage you to read this additional information as well.

This is available in the meetings and decisions section of the County Council website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk). We have also put a copy of this paper in Kidlington library for reference. For those filling in the online survey, there is a direct hyperlink to the paper in the paragraph above and at the start of the survey below.

## **Next steps**

Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet requested that an officer recommendation on whether to proceed with formal negotiations about the lease of land be made to its meeting on 15 March. The outcomes of this engagement exercise and feedback from the exploratory discussions with OUFC will be shared with Cabinet in advance of this meeting.

No decisions have been made yet and the outcomes of this engagement exercise will be one of the various factors to be taken into account by Cabinet.

Under the terms of the proposal, if the County Council, as landowner, were to approve the lease of land, planning permission would have to be obtained separately. Oxfordshire County Council would be a statutory consultee in various capacities (such as the highways authority), in any planning application.

## **Background information**

**We encourage you to read this important background information before having your say in this survey.**

### **Introduction**

Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) has asked Oxfordshire County Council, as the landowner, to lease 18 hectares/44.48 acres of land that it owns at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington for a term of 250 years. This request is for the proposed development of a new football stadium, subject to planning permission. In addition to the stadium, the club's proposal includes facilities such as a hotel, retail, conferencing and training and community grounds.

Under the terms of the proposal, if the County Council, as landowner, were to approve the lease of land, planning permission would have to be obtained separately. Oxfordshire County Council would be a statutory consultee in various capacities (such as the highways authority), in any planning application.

### **About the land**

Oxfordshire County Council purchased part of the land at Stratfield Brake in 1937 to provide a strategic gap between north Oxford and Kidlington. The site is in the Green Belt and is currently leased out to three tenants. These are Cherwell District Council (who in turn sub-lease to Kidlington Parish Council and Water Eaton and Gosford Parish Council), Foxcotte Fencing Limited and The Woodland Trust.

### **How the land is currently used**

- Part of the site is already sports ground. OUFC has proposed that they take responsibility for the cost to replace or mitigate the loss of any community sports facilities at Stratfield Brake should its proposal for development go ahead.
- Part of the site is currently let on a short-term basis to Foxcotte Fencing Limited, with the council having the ability to break the lease on 12 months' notice.

- Part of the site is leased to the Woodland Trust. Taking account of the Council's commitment to Access to Nature, one of the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance Cabinet's nine priorities, the County Council is not prepared to give up its current lease to the Woodland Trust. It is therefore **NOT INCLUDED** in any discussions whatsoever and is not part of any proposal by OUFC being considered.

## Survey

- Q1. Taking account of the background information provided above and the further supporting information in the [Cabinet paper](#), in principle, do you think the County Council should start formal negotiations with OUFC about the lease of land that it owns at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington for a term of 250 years?**

This request from Oxfordshire United Football club is for the proposed development of a new football stadium, subject to planning permission. In addition to the stadium, the club's proposal includes facilities such as a hotel, retail, conferencing and training and community grounds.

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure

**Please provide further information to explain your view:**

**County Council officers have recommended to Cabinet that any lease of their land to OUFC should achieve six key objectives.**

**These are:**

- a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces
- b) enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support
- c) significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
- d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
- e) increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
- f) support the County Council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development

**Q2. Should anything be added to this list of objectives?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Please provide further information in the box below
<input type="checkbox"/>	No,	Go to Q3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	Go to Q3

**Please provide further information:**

**Q3. Do you think any of the objectives should be removed from this list?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Continue
<input type="checkbox"/>	No,	Go to Q5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	Go to Q5

**Q4. If yes, please select the objectives you think should be removed from this list.**

(Please tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces
<input type="checkbox"/>	b) enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support
<input type="checkbox"/>	c) significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
<input type="checkbox"/>	d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	e) increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
<input type="checkbox"/>	f) support the County Council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development

**Please provide further information to explain your view(s):**

**Q5. Do you have any other comments on the six key objectives County Council officers have recommended to Cabinet?**

- a) maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and improve access to nature and green spaces
- b) enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support
- c) significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
- d) develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
- e) increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
- f) support the County Council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development

**Please write your comments here:**

## Information about you

We would like to know more about you so that we can understand more about who is responding to this engagement exercise. It helps us to know if we are hearing the views of a wide range of people and communities.

If you do not want to provide any of this information, please select 'prefer not to say'.

**All information given is anonymous and is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.**

**Q6. Are you or your child(ren) a member of a sports club currently using Stratfield Brake?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, please give the name of the sports club(s) you or your child(ren) belong to: <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

**Q7. Do you support Oxford United Football Club (OUFC)?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Continue
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	Go to Q9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	Go to Q9

**Q8. If yes, how regularly do you attend home games?**  
(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	All
<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequently
<input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rarely
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

**Q9. How did you find out about this engagement exercise?**

(Please choose all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook
<input type="checkbox"/>	Twitter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instagram
<input type="checkbox"/>	Linkedin
<input type="checkbox"/>	NextDoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oxfordshire.gov.uk website
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct contact from Oxfordshire County Council (email, letter, meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local news item (newspaper, online, radio, tv)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oxfordshire county councillor
<input type="checkbox"/>	City or district councilor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish or town councillor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local community news item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poster
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friend or relative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

**Q10. I am responding to this survey as:**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A resident living in Kidlington parish
<input type="checkbox"/>	A resident living in Gosford and Water Eaton parish
<input type="checkbox"/>	An Oxfordshire resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	A member of the public living outside of Oxfordshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	A representative of a sports club currently using Stratfield Brake Please give the name of the sports club you represent: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	A business Please give the name of the business you represent: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	A representative of a group or organisation Please give the name of the group or organisation you represent: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	A parish, town, district, or county councillor Please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

**Q11. What is your postcode?**

Please provide the first four or five digits of your postcode (but not the letters at the end). eg. **OX1 1** or **OX14 5**.

---

If you are responding as a resident living in Kidlington Parish or Gosford or Water Eaton Parish, an Oxfordshire resident or a member of the public living elsewhere please respond to the following questions. If you are responding as a stakeholder, please go to the end of this survey.

**Q12. What is your age?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 16
<input type="checkbox"/>	16 - 24
<input type="checkbox"/>	25 - 34
<input type="checkbox"/>	35 - 44
<input type="checkbox"/>	45 – 54
<input type="checkbox"/>	55 – 64
<input type="checkbox"/>	65 – 74
<input type="checkbox"/>	75 – 84
<input type="checkbox"/>	85 or over
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

**Q13. What is your gender?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	I use another term (please state here:) _____

**Q14. What is your ethnic group or background?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)
<input type="checkbox"/>	White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other ethnic group or background, please specify: _____

## Data protection and privacy

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we (Oxfordshire County Council) have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to open government and this may include quoting extracts from your response in our report.

We will not however, disclose the names of people who have responded unless they have provided consent. For this purpose, we ask that you are careful not to disclose personal information in your comments – for example the names of service users or children. If you do not want all or part of your response to be made public, or shared with councillors, please state below which parts you wish us to keep confidential.

View Oxfordshire County Council's privacy notice online at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

**Q15. Please use this space to tell us if there is any specific part of your response you wish to keep confidential:**

## Stay in touch

We invite you to sign up to get regular email updates on news, events, and developments from across the county.

**Q16. Would you like to sign-up?**

(Please tick one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

If you have chosen 'Yes' for 'Would you like to sign-up?', please provide your email address below, so we can contact you and send a link to our sign-up page where you can tailor which communications you receive:

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please send your completed response to the Freepost address below, writing Stratfield Brake in the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

**FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

This survey closes on Tuesday 22 February 2022. All paper responses must be returned by this date.