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The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) seeks to represent the views, in relation to planning matters, of residents in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area, located just 1 km south of The Triangle. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was approved overwhelmingly by our residents in a referendum in May 2021 and was subsequently 'made' by Oxford City Council.

### **WNF response to OUFC's consultation on plans for a new stadium at the Triangle in October 2023**

The WNF Steering Committee has considered the developing plans shared with the public in October 2023 by OUFC, for a new stadium at the Triangle site. Our members attended the public exhibition and reviewed the images and other information made available online.

We confine our comments here to one particular adverse impact that the OUFC proposals will have on the residents of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area that we represent.

OUFC clearly recognise that siting the new stadium at the Triangle would pose an especially severe challenge on match days, in safely managing the large numbers of spectators and their vehicles, arriving and departing. Most spectators would arrive at the Water Eaton P&R car park or Oxford Parkway train station, both of which are to the east of Oxford Road, whereas the Triangle site is to the west of Oxford Road. Before and after each match, thousands of spectators would need to safely cross the very busy Oxford Road, to access the stadium.

In earlier versions of the OUFC plans, this problem was addressed by reference to the 'potential' for providing a new footbridge across Oxford Road, to provide spectators with a safe means of crossing it in large numbers before and after matches, but without interfering with traffic flow along it. Details of the bridge were not provided, but it would clearly need to be a substantial structure, capable of coping safely with up to 16000 pedestrians crossing in, say, approximately half an hour, i.e. about 500 per minute. Only if such a bridge were provided would it be possible to ensure that traffic could keep flowing, uninterrupted, along Oxford Road, without threatening the safety of the spectators trying to cross it. We were therefore very surprised to see that the latest proposals from OUFC do not include the bridge. Without it, spectator safety would require some form of major interruption to the flow of traffic along Oxford Road, and that would have an unreasonable impact on users of that road.

The solution now proposed by OUFC is precisely that. Oxford Road would be closed to traffic for one hour before each match, and for two hours after each match. Oxford Road is a very

busy road, and a vital route north out of Oxford towards Kidlington and Banbury. Many residents of our area rely heavily on access to Kidlington facilities such as the Sainsbury's supermarket, especially on Saturdays. For many in the eastern part of our area Oxford Road is also the most direct route north out of Oxford, to access the A34 northbound and hence trunk routes such as the M40. In our view, it would be an intolerable imposition on our residents to have this main road closed to them for a significant part of match days on a regular basis.

**We therefore object strongly to the omission of a commitment to provide a high capacity footbridge across Oxford Road, and the proposal instead to close Oxford Road to traffic for part of the day on match days.**

From Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee, 1 November 2023

Paul Buckley, John Bleach, Mary Brown, Tony Dale, Suzy Donald, Katherine Kaye, Richard Lawrence-Wilson, Andrew Siantonas, Tamsin Smith, Cllr Steve Goddard