

## **PRESS RELEASE      12th October 2017**

### **Oxford Badger Group joins local residents and Green groups to hand in petition to Bob Price, Leader, Oxford City Council, opposing Seacourt Park and Ride extension**

On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 12.30 Oxfordshire Badger Group along with local groups and Dominic Dyer CEO, Badger Trust will hand in their petition which has amassed over 1500 signatures to Councillor Bob Price at Oxford Town Hall, in opposition to the plans to extend Seacourt Park and Ride onto flood plain and Green Belt. After months of delay Oxford County Council are preparing to 'bite the bullet' and take the controversial Seacourt proposals to an Extraordinary Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>.

The proposals, costing £4 million, breach national planning policies and the Council's own Core Strategy and could increase flooding in the city. The Council claims the extra 650 parking spaces are needed urgently, yet it intends to cut capacity at the nearby 'underused' Redbridge Park & Ride by 270 spaces. Seacourt will become Oxford's largest Park & Ride, yet is on natural flood plain and will flood, as it has done in the past.

The Council has a duty to preserve the Oxford City's Green Belt for posterity yet seems determined to destroy it. The Green Belt land that the extension will destroy is part of a network of fields, water meadow and scrub where badgers and other wildlife thrive. It's rich in insects and is a feeding and commuting zone for bats and birds. Once it's gone, this precious mosaic of habitats will be lost forever, all to provide a short term fix rather than providing a coherent, long term plan to deal with transport issues in Oxford. Badgers and other wildlife which have survived the floods for many years will suffer immensely if the Green Belt at Seacourt is sacrificed and the Flood Plain concreted over.

It is not reasonable to permanently destroy a locally important, unspoilt, abundant wildlife habitat for short term gain. We urge Councillor Price and Oxford City Council to withdraw this deeply flawed application. It must commit to cherish and preserve environmentally rich green field areas such as these.

Dominic Dyer CEO Badger Trust said "The Oxfordshire Badger Group are absolutely right to oppose plans to extend the Seacourt Park and Ride scheme, which will put an increasing number of badgers under threat in Oxford

Oxford is a city with an abundance of urban wildlife which is to be treasured. However it is also seeing a huge increase in housing that is forcing badgers from their setts, resulting in many dying on roads across the City

Despite being a protected species, badgers are one of the most threatened wild animals in Britain today. Over 50,000 die on our roads every year, thousands are killed as a result of vicious persecution and over 30,000 could die as a result of a government sanctioned cull by end of November.

With all these threats to their survival, Oxford City Council should do all it can to protect badgers and their setts across Oxford when it comes to future housing and infrastructure developments"

View and sign the petition here <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-badgers-abandon-seacourt-park-ride-plans>

Website <https://www.oxonbadgergroup.org.uk/>

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