

Statement as read out to Cllr Bob Price on presentation of the Oxfordshire Badger Group Petition: 'Save Badgers, Abandon Seacourt Park and Ride plans' asks that:

"The City Council upholds its duty to protect the Green Belt for posterity and abandons these plans to destroy a locally important, unspoiled, abundant wildlife habitat for short term gain. Instead we ask the Council to commit to cherish and preserve environmentally rich green field sites such as this within the beautiful, historic City of Oxford."

OBG are concerned at the severe impact that extending the P&R will have on the badgers, their setts & foraging ground if these plans go ahead.

We know that badgers have lived on the site peacefully for at least 30 years. OBG has been involved with them directly over a number of years, including releasing back a badger that had been affected by flooding in the area.

Badgers have survived flooding events but won't survive drilling, piling or concrete pouring onto their setts & the fields where they forage.

We were disappointed to realize that the City Council had developed these extension plans without contacting the Badger Group, as we would have welcomed the opportunity to offer our expertise & work together.

It was a horrifying shock to read that WYG had failed to find or identify the 11 hole main sett that borders the planned development. This inability to see a huge sett raises grave concerns about their competence that overshadows the veracity of the rest of their report. Why was a consultancy from London brought in? Why not appoint local ecologists who would have more familiarity with the area and species using it? How can their report be trusted?

Badgers are a protected species that is under threat: the government funded cull is taking place right up to the borders of our county & it is unthinkable that a silent cull by developers could eradicate badgers in our city, within the shadow of Wytham Woods, defined as the epicenter of UK badgerlands.

We are not convinced that concreting over more of the precious floodplain that flanks Botley Road is the best or only solution to Oxford's traffic and parking issues, nor that decisions to cut capacity at the Redbridge P&R nor the explanations for pursuing an extension put forward in the Planning Statement Addendum by Turley, hold water.

We abhor the permanent and irrevocable loss of Green Belt floodplain for what's described as a 'temporary' fix. So we started a petition to ask whether others shared our concerns & to date more than 1700 people have signed it. That's about 500 more people than any single City Councillor achieved in votes in the May 2016 elections. Your electorate says 'abandon the plans', please listen and leave a legacy of rich habitat rather than concrete.

Barbara Witkowski, 15th October 2017