



A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR STOKE MANDEVILLE

1 June 2022

Councillor Martin Tett
c/o Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway Offices
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP19 8FF

Dear Cllr Tett,

I am writing as requested by David Pearce to summarise Stoke Mandeville Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's views about the development of the former Bucks Sports and Social Club site on Lower Road, Stoke Mandeville. While we believe this letter to represent the views of the Parish Council as a whole, there has been insufficient time as yet to get their formal approval of it.

In summary, we feel:

1. **The aspiration of local residents to re-open the former club as a going concern is admirable but impractical.** There is no realistic way for residents to raise the considerable capital required to purchase and refurbish the club building and sports facilities and, in our view, the residents lack the business knowledge and skills to effectively manage a challenging community facility. Neither, in our view, would there be sufficient demand and income from sporting users to make the club viable as a going concern. Those users likely to be able to pay high fees require correspondingly high levels of sporting facilities which the site could not deliver; and casual and community users cannot pay the high fees needed to maintain sporting facilities. We recognise the strong local feelings, but we do not think residents' ideas are practical or sustainable.
2. More importantly, **there are strong reasons why the site is not now suitable for a large sporting complex.** Vehicle access to the site is very constrained and there is insufficient space for the high level of car parking needed to service a large sports complex. Traffic congestion on Lower Road is a major issue. The proximity of housing and a SEND school mean that intensive sporting use, under floodlighting and with spectators, is inappropriate.

3. **We strongly support the ‘Garden Square’ concept and design developed for the BSSC site by Buckinghamshire Council with our own landscape architects.** We feel the Garden Square is fully in keeping with Aylesbury Garden Town ideas, with a large central green space, access to significant informal ‘turn up and play’ green play, sporting and leisure facilities, and a focus on disabled accessibility and inclusion reflecting the Paralympic legacy of nearby Stoke Mandeville hospital and stadium. We intend to work with BC, through the Neighbourhood Plan and by planning conditions, to ensure this vision is delivered for local residents. We support the use of the site to deliver much needed non-market housing.
4. **We agree with Sport England’s view that the club-standard sporting facilities of the former club should be re-provided so as to meet current unmet needs.** The evidence gathered for the evolving Neighbourhood Plan underlines the need for significant additional club-standard sporting facilities in Stoke Mandeville and southern Aylesbury, a conclusion supported by the evidence base for the VALP and the evolving sporting provision and pitch strategy for the AV area. But we feel these club-standard sporting facilities would be better provided on an alternative site, not at the former BSSC site.
5. **We have a clear deliverable vision for a club-standard sporting complex within easy walking distance of the former BSSC site, at our projected Parish Centre site on Lower Road.** Our proposed Parish Centre site is well located between the AGT1 and AGT2 strategic developments and close to existing neighbourhoods, has the space needed for a wide variety of uses including lit club-quality and artificial surface pitches, will have its own mobility hub and has vehicle access direct from the SEALR. Our intention is to bring forward this sporting complex as quickly as possible, in collaboration with BC and with a commercial partner. There are no insuperable barriers to delivery (landowners agree in principle, for example), and the delivery of facilities on this site would allow any Grampian conditions imposed by Sport England to be fulfilled. As a facility serving the needs of major developments, it would be eligible for s106 funding as well as national sports and community grants.
6. **We strongly oppose the tentative proposal by UK Power Networks to site a major substation on the BSSC site.** We recognise the need for the substation, but a small site with limited road access close to a SEND school and housing is not an appropriate site. We intend to propose to UKPN that they consider an alternative and more appropriate site off the SEALR and closer to HS2 (possibly adjacent to the proposed Parish Centre), which could be designated and safeguarded for that use through the Neighbourhood Plan.

We are very happy to meet to discuss these points in more detail if that would be useful.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Andrew Clark
Chair of Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group