



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

West Northamptonshire Council

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Directorate Place, Economy & Environment
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John Morgan

Acting Secretary and Legal Adviser
NTFC Supporters Ltd

Copied by email to: WNC cabinet members, Cllr Sally Beardsworth, Cllr Emma Roberts, Cllr Gareth Eales, Cllr Jonathan Harris

29th March 2022

RE Sixfields

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter acting on behalf of the Northampton Town Football supporter Trust Ltd. In response to your urgent queries, I feel it is important that the Council correct you on several incorrect assertions set out in your correspondence. I also wanted to provide you with some confidence that the Council continues to act in the best interests, of not just the supporters of the club, but in the interests of all residents of West Northants, as we are required to do by law.

As you state, the Heads of Terms are indeed non-binding, and although included in the Cabinet report to provide an outline of the broad terms that support an offer, the full detail will be contained in the final contract sales agreement between seller and buyer. Please be assured on this point, the completion of the stand is part of the offer forwarded by CDNL and that this does include a specification that the council is satisfied will increase financial stability for the club including a specified number of boxes, food and beverage facilities and improved provision for disabled supporters. These requirements will therefore form an important part of any contract going forward. But I should highlight that while this is of course important to the town and indeed the supporters, in respect of the financial offer, the Council could not take the stand into account when making the decision as set out in Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1974 and as we set out in the Cabinet Report. This is because for any Land disposal we must achieve best consideration for the taxpayer and cannot consider wider benefits.

I can also assure you that in regard to the running track, we will be ensuring that any option to re-acquire the track will be fully protected, although I feel the scenario you set out in your letter is extremely unlikely in any event.

You also provide an analysis of 'your' estimates regarding possible profits to be made in respect of the land which you suggest could be in the region of around £7m. As you will be aware, the Council appointed an independent expert in the form of LSH (selected through a procurement process) to provide us with expert advice not only on the land value and potential uses but also the costs of remediation,

which are expected to be extensive. Both LSH and a second expert view commissioned by Cildara and shared with the Council, concluded that remediation costs could be between £10m and £12m. So, I am not sure on what basis you conclude that such profits are possible.

This is not the only evidence of the value of the land, as Homes England sold the land to the council for £1. Homes England is also an organisation who is legally required to provide best consideration in all land I, therefore, respectfully ask that either you provide evidence of your claims or cease making uninformed conclusions.

You state on a number of occasions that the council is failing the club and the supporters. However, the Council has been proactive in resolving what is a complicated and long running issue. We have worked hard since the end of 2020 to get to a solution that has now concluded with an outcome that will see the completion of the stand, that will be of a long-term benefit to the club and will support its community work and fans well into the future.

Whilst this may appear a simple conclusion to a complicated issue it does appear that, contrary to your allegations, this approach has significant support amongst supporters and was fully supported by Liberal Democrats at Cabinet and in full knowledge of the Labour Party who did not object. I would, therefore, welcome you posting both of these letters as a clear and concise understanding of the misinformation issues and in opposition to what we believe to be a pragmatic response to an extremely difficult and challenging issue. As ever we are happy to share any information with you, as we have throughout and only subject to any commercial confidentiality we need to maintain.

Our ultimate aim, has always been that we see the club grow and develop and that it has a strong future and success in keeping with the other key first class sports venues and clubs that West Northants has. The investment in the club will benefit football and the fans but will also now result in increased business rate income for the Council and regeneration opportunity that will help to heal the challenges created when the East Stand loan was misappropriated. As a Council we now want to look forward and not back and I hope you will support us in doing the same.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Timmiss', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Stuart Timmiss

Executive Director of Place, Economy and the Environment