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To: Whom it may concern

**RE: *Site Allocations and Development Management Options (SADMO) Consultation***

Please find below the response from Friends of Horfield Common to the SADMO proposals for Wellington Hill Playing Field (known locally as the 'Rectory' or 'Church' Field).

**The site details are:** Site reference: BSA0406; Site address/location: Wellington Hill Playing Field; Neighbourhood Partnership Area: NP04: Horfield and Lockleaze

The existing allocation is for: Open Space, Playing Fields & Recreation Grounds (NE1, L1)

**FOHC believes that the current allocation for Open Space, Playing Fields and Recreation Grounds should remain in place for this site.**

The SADMO consultation document<sup>1</sup> states that: *'The Area Green Space Planning process has suggested that this site is no longer required as open space, and it is considered suitable for housing due to its residential context. The site is owned by the city council.'*

***Option B for this site is DO NOT ALLOCATE FOR DEVELOPMENT.'***

**FOHC fully support Option B and object to the proposal to dispose of this site.**

Contrary to the statement made in the SADMOD and concurrent AGSP consultation documents that Wellington Hill Playing Field is 'little used for most of the week other than by dog walkers,' - it is in fact a well-used space, highly valued by the local community and an open space in which community, recreational and sporting activities take place throughout the year.

The use of the site, and value to the local community, is being grossly misrepresented in the AGSP and SADMOD consultation documentation.

FOHC has recently undertaken a survey to find out how Wellington Hill Playing Field is used by local residents as the statements made in the AGSP and SADMO documents did not align with our experience of, and perceptions of, the use of the field on a weekly basis.

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<sup>1</sup> *Site Allocations and Development Management Options Document*, Bristol City Council, 2010.

The results of this survey – an overview of which is attached as Appendix 1 - demonstrate a high level of usage by local residents from for a wide range of leisure and formal and informal sports and recreation activity on a weekly basis (some detail daily use or use of the field multiple times per week).

On the basis of this level of use, Wellington Hill Playing Field should not be being considered as a site for disposal in the AGSP.

Whilst FOHC was contacted during the development phase of the AGSP proposals, none of the leaders of any of the groups who use the field for activities on a weekly basis have been consulted or asked to provide any details of the schedule of work that they do which uses the field, with a wide range of groups.

Horfield Parish Church Hall adjoins the field and functions as a centre of community activity – it has a wide-range of groups who meet for sessions there throughout the year – including ‘Welly Tots’ – Mums and Toddlers Group, Playgroups, Dog Training Groups, Brownies, Guides, Rainbows, Youth Clubs, Drama Groups and others. All of these groups use the field during their sessions – and have used it consistently without challenge for many years. They would not be able to continue their activities without being able to use it.

The groups meeting in the Church Hall on a weekly basis include those which run extensive programmes of work with young people from the ages of 4-18 years – there is a youth group (Horfield Young People’s Club/Geoff’s Club) which has been meeting in the church hall on a Friday evening every week since 1975, and which uses the field extensively for a wide range of activities.

Additionally, Manor Farm Boys Club is located opposite the entrance to the field, next to the Church and has used the field 2-3 times per week for more than 40 years for sports and recreational activities for the young people that it works with.

The 62nd Bristol Scout Troop’s meeting hut is located in the field itself. The group has more than 120 members, and uses the field throughout the year for their activities. The group has been meeting in this location for more than 70 years.

The proposal to dispose of Wellington Hill Playing Field fails to adhere to the criteria stated in Bristol City Council’s *Green Infrastructure Core Strategy (BCS9)* regarding the release of open spaces for development. This policy states that the Strategy seeks ‘*to safeguard and enhance important green infrastructure – such as open spaces, recreation areas and wildlife sites – across the city....*’<sup>2</sup> and that ‘*open spaces should only be released for development where they are no longer important for recreation, leisure and community use and where development would result in improved urban form or an enhancement to existing open spaces.*’

Wellington Hill Playing Field remains important for recreation, leisure and community use.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘*Bristol’s Parks and Green Space Strategy*’<sup>2</sup> document, Bristol City Council, 2008.

Any development of the site would not result in improved urban form nor an enhancement to the existing open space, therefore Wellington Hill Playing Field should not be being considered as a site for disposal.

Bristol City Council's *'Bristol's Parks and Green Space Strategy'*<sup>3</sup> document, published in 2008, describes parks and green spaces as *'green lungs of the city,'* and as *'having well documented health benefits both in improving physical fitness and improving mental health.'*<sup>4</sup> Within the same document green spaces are described as being *'central to the way that cities adapt to climate change, including their role in capturing and storing water after heavy rainfall, preventing localised flooding. Green Spaces also provide an important cooling effect in cities.'*<sup>5</sup> The AGSP documents currently being consulted on state that there are ongoing, unidentified problems with the drainage and subsidence of land in the Horfield Common area. It is logical to assume that these problems may be exacerbated significantly in the future if additional, currently open land is built on.

The AGSP itself also states that *'the Horfield and Lockleaze Neighbourhood Partnership area is considerably under-served for Natural Green Space with the majority of Horfield outside of the distance standard.'*<sup>6</sup> Bishopston, Cotham and Redland's AGSP states that *'the area has one of the lowest amounts of publicly accessible open space in the city,'*<sup>7</sup> and Henleaze, Stoke Bishop and W-O-T's *'Facilitators summary observations of ideas and suggestions arising from the stakeholder participation process for the AGSP for W-O-T, Henleaze and Stoke Bishop,'* states in its opening sentence that *'There is a limited amount of green space in this Neighbourhood Partnership Area.'*<sup>8</sup>

Whilst the council may classify the field as 'a facility for active sports', it serves many purposes and is clearly a natural space. It is also well used by residents who live in Bishopston – whose boundary begins on Horfield Common (the Ardagh is officially in Bishopston) as well as residents who live in Horfield, Manor Farm, Henleaze, Filton and other local areas (despite the AGSP's treatment of artificial administrative boundaries in the city failing to recognise them as this). The sale of Wellington Hill Playing Field would work against stated aims in other parts of the AGSP.

FOHC objects strongly to the proposal to dispose of Wellington Hill Playing Field as a site for development, and regards the site as a highly valued, well-used and crucial community facility.

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<sup>3</sup> Adopted by Bristol City Council in February 2008

<sup>4</sup> Page 40

<sup>5</sup> Page 27

<sup>6</sup> Page 27

<sup>7</sup> *Ideas and Options Paper* Bishopston, Cotham and Redland AGSP, Bristol City Council: Page 13

<sup>8</sup> *'Facilitators summary observations of ideas and suggestions arising from the stakeholder participation process for the AGSP for W-O-T, Henleaze and Stoke Bishop'* document, Bristol City Council, 2009.Pg. 1

Please can you acknowledge receipt of this response to the SADMED consultation in order that we can confirm to our members that it has been received and that the views expressed in it have been registered as part of the consultation event?

Yours Faithfully,

Kay Thomson, Chair FOHC