



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP  
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London  
SW1A 2BQ

Our Ref: JG / ZA25421

9 July 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing as the Member of Parliament for Brent North in response to the Football Association's announcement that it was considering selling Wembley National Stadium, an international icon vital not only to Brent, and to London, but also to England and the United Kingdom.

Wembley Stadium sits at the heart of the borough and is a key element to the ongoing regeneration of Wembley. It is a key driver of hundreds of thousands of visitors being attracted to Brent every year and contributes to the continued transformation of the local area.

However, the stadium and its activities also create stresses and strains within local communities, bears heavily on local transport systems and it has significant environmental impacts. The stadium is a key public transport destination and despite extensive improvements to Wembley Park station, Wembley Central and Wembley Stadium stations, all located within my Brent North Constituency, "Event Days" are not always a pleasant experience for local residents.

Most residents plan their days around event days because even a simple shopping trip for food can become a difficult task. On an event day in excess of 50,000 people will go through Wembley Park Station and 100 trains an hour will go through the three Wembley stations serving the Stadium. The operational pressures which are placed directly on the London Borough of Brent on event days across the calendar year cannot be underestimated.

I would therefore draw your attention to the fact that public monies were provided for the construction of the stadium in return for a range of public benefits and agreements in principle to include the lease of the site, the operating contract, events commitments, ticket pricing and broadcasting rights.



The key public benefits required are set out in full in the National Audit Office's report of June 2003 and I would particularly wish to draw your attention to:

**“Starting five years after the stadium opens, Wembley National Stadium Limited shall donate one per cent of its turnover each year to Wembley National Stadium Trust, an independent charity which will distribute money to sports education and other projects.**

**A legal agreement was signed on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2002 by Wembley National Stadium Limited (WNSL) and Wembley National Stadium Trust which required and requires WNSL to pay 1% of its annual gross revenue to the Trust for a period of 50 years as a condition of the FA receiving public funding.**

Wembley National Stadium Trust (WNST) is a community initiative working in the London Borough of Brent in local areas around the Stadium as well as more widely across London and around England.

This legal agreement goes some way to "repaying the debt for the inconvenience caused to the local community." Wembley Stadium recognises the importance of making a positive difference in Brent and in their annual review the Operations Director of WNSL said "We are delighted to continue to work closely with WNST, funding its important work encouraging participation in football and other sports both locally and nationally."

Within the local community WNST has become very well-known and very well respected, having supported some 150 local clubs, groups and charities for a wide range of different sports and physical recreation. These local groups might otherwise have benefitted from the lottery funds that were subsequently diverted to support the Stadium redevelopment.

With the significant scaling back of funding to local authorities, at this critical time for public health, the potential loss of any local community sports provision must not be overlooked in the midst of any commercial negotiations. Any sale should be conditional on the continued flow of revenue to the Trust.

The future ownership of the stadium, and the uses to which it might be put, are a matter for the Football Association. I note their assurances that it would ring-fence all its proceeds from any potential sale into community facilities for football across England and I also note they have stated the following would be protected (until at least 2057 as in the current contract):

England men's and women's international  
The FA Cup  
The FA Vase and Trophy



Community Shield  
National League Play-Off-Final  
Women's FA Cup Final  
EFL playoffs  
EFL Cup Final  
EFL Trophy Final  
Rugby League Challenge Final

If the stadium was subsequently sold again, these protections would also be guaranteed.

Of interest and concern to me as the Member of Parliament for Brent North is that the sale may create a framework or set of conditions whereby the existing relationships and legal agreements between the stadium (essentially the FA) and Wembley National Stadium Trust are dismantled or open to being dismantled.

Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in the UK but it is generally a poor area with over 33 per cent of households living in poverty and 32 per cent of employees earning less than the living wage. It can continue to grow and prosper but only through an approach of close partnership working.

I seek your urgent assurance that any future owner of the stadium will be obliged to recognise their responsibilities to the local community and that it be a precondition of any sale that the 1% turnover should continue to flow to Wembley National Stadium Trust.

Additionally I would ask the Secretary of State to confirm that if a sale took place and the new owner sought, through a planning application, to increase the number of maximum capacity events in a calendar year then the arrangement with WNST would not in any way prejudice the council's legitimate requests for planning gain in respect of socio-economic effects such as transport, air quality, noise and disruption to the community.

I have made appropriate representations to the DCMS Select Committee hearing scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> July but wanted to write to you personally on this important issue.

I am copying this letter to the Minister of Sport, Tracey Crouch MP and the Shadow Secretary of State DCMS, Tom Watson.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Barry Gardiner", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.



**Barry Gardiner**  
***Member of Parliament for Brent North***