



10. Sustainability

10 Sustainability

10.1 Sustainability Approach

The 360 Framework is a bespoke methodology, highlighting priority themes across the club and defining levels of ambition, and will provide a mechanism to communicate sustainability initiatives, commitments, and targets.

The 360 Framework is used to encourage sustainability across both the club's activities and for the stadium. The key aims of the Framework are:

- To embed sustainability throughout the project, reflecting the Club's ambitions.
- To encourage reflection and effective innovation across the project.
- To provide a method of measuring progress and reporting on targets, aims, and objectives.

The 360 Sustainability Framework is built around a four-tier structure outlined below.

1. Themes are identified represent priority areas to improve sustainability performance.
2. Key principles reflecting the club's commitments and policy drivers to further define specific objectives and guide target setting.
3. Questions underpinning the sustainability themes and principles are set and designed to demonstrate impact on the stadium.
4. Performance indicators will be carried through the design, construction and operation of the stadium to demonstrate progress.

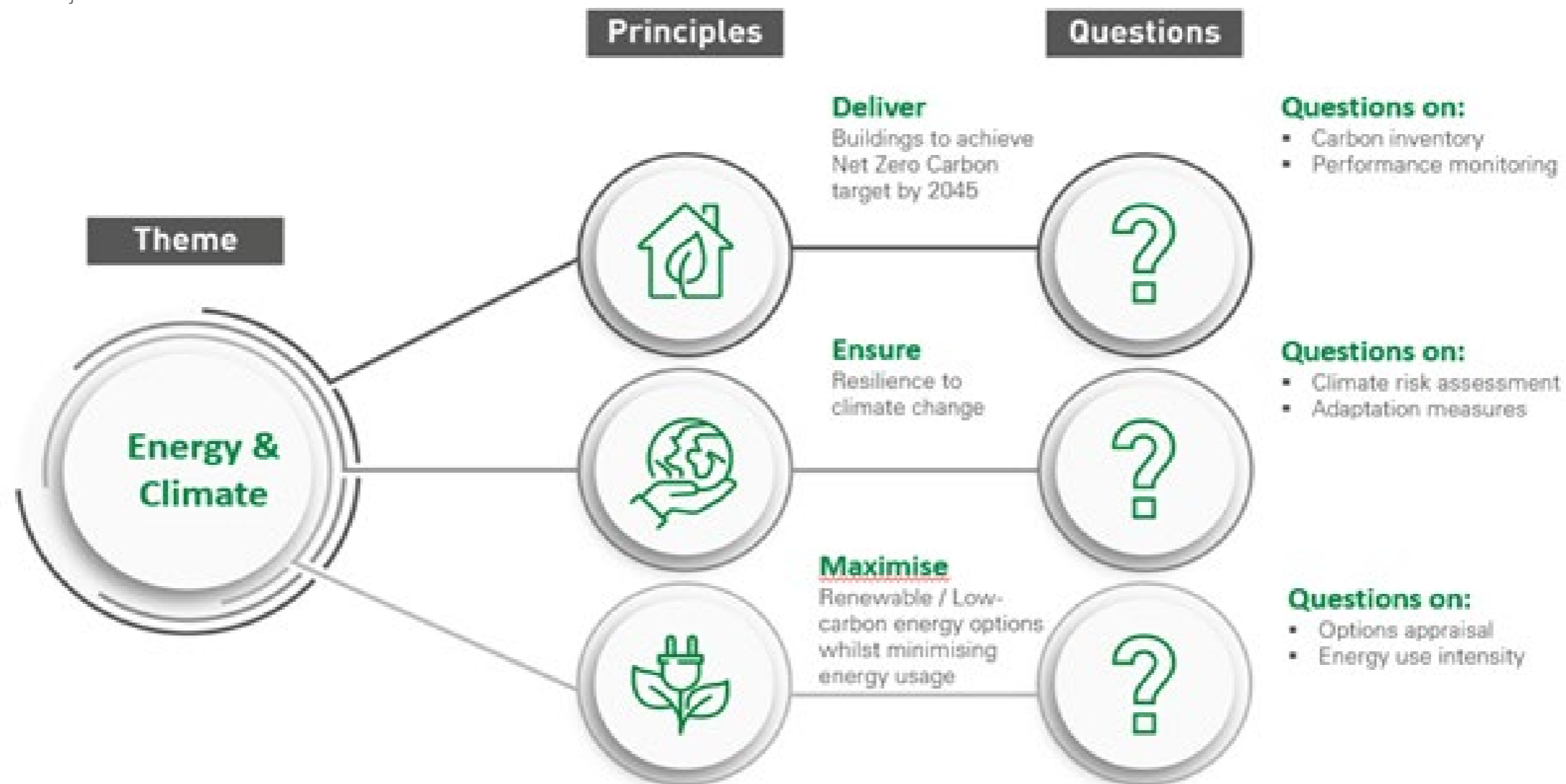
Performance indicators are defined as

C: Compliance/Advisory: Typically, a regulatory minimum e.g. minimum planning requirements

B: Best in Class: Current best in class performance amongst peers and other similar sized projects. This is based on performance against sector best practice from industry guidance or peer review.

Definition of all levels is supported by appropriate legislation or guidance material relevant to the club and the stadium.

The approach is specifically designed to encourage new ideas and innovation beyond the traditional certification routes but still providing a robust, evidence-based system for corporate and ESG reporting. The framework also incorporates reporting mechanisms at the corporate, development and project level and is underpinned by a cost model providing clarity between attainment levels and financial impact.



10.2 Identified Themes and Principles

The themes and principles for the stadium are as indicated below. These are determined through engagement with the project team and build on any key commitments that OUFC have undertaken. These themes and principles are underpinned by key questions and target levels within the framework.

1. Energy & Carbon

- Drive towards net zero carbon emissions
- Energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, energy reuse and on-site storage are maximised across the site.
- Limit exposure to climate change and fluctuating energy pricing.

2. Ecology and Biodiversity

- Provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) by retaining existing on-site habitats and providing new and improved off-site habitats.

3. Waste and Materials

- Ensure application of embodied impacts, sourcing, conservation, and re-use
- Sustainable use of materials and resources on a whole life value basis
- Commitment to the management of waste through the waste hierarchy

4. Water

- Minimise flood risk.
- Reduce potable water demand through the efficient use of water and wastewater.
- Maximise the opportunity to use natural sources of water.

5. Transport and Movement

- Provide efficient, clean and healthy transport options.
- Provide innovative mobility solutions.

6. Health & Wellbeing

- Creating built environments that are healthy, safe and desirable to use.
- Minimise the localised disturbance and pollution of the project.

7. Community

- Ensure all activities support local residents, business and the local community.
- Maximise all opportunities to enhance the reputation of the project.

8. Governance

- strong and transparent governance framework
- comply with all current legislation.
- ensure the Club are prepared for future regulatory requirements



For each of the themes, we have identified that the project is targeting 'Best in Class' or better across all the themes. This provides a baseline of what the project is aspiring to and will allow the design to identify the best approach possible.



11. Stadium Accessibility



11 Stadium Accessibility

11.1 Access to the stadium

The stadium can be accessed via the means of public and private transport.

Due to the site constraints parking on site is limited. On-site parking numbers will be dominated by accessible car-parking bays and will require prior booking on match days.

The stadium is clearly visible, with glimpses of the stadium from surrounding areas. Once at the site, the main entrances will be clear via a change in material and signage.

11.2 Access routes to and around the building

The route to all building entrances is accessible throughout with drop kerbs provided where required.

All external access routes are in excess of 1800mm.

Gradients on external access routes are no steeper than 1:21. The detailed design of these will include resting/passing places along the routes.

Handrails to external steps will be set out in accordance with BS8300.

11.3 Inclusive access to the stadium

The following provides a specific written commentary on how the design of the stadium meets the requirements of BS8300 and incorporates advice given in Accessible Stadia (2nd edition). Terrace designs are based on the advice given within the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (fifth edition)

11.4 Entering the stadium

All entrances to the stadium are level with a nominal threshold, doors throughout will be in accordance with BS8300.

Disabled spectators are assisted by stewards from entry to the stadium to concourses. Entrance lobbies are designed in accordance with BS8300.

Access from the disabled entrances to the relevant concourse is either via level access or lifts, which are stewarded on match days. Disabled access will be separate to but adjacent to the general admission turnstiles.

Access from concourse to disabled spectator platforms is through shared ramped vomitories on the lower tier, with designated lifts to the higher level.

Entrance to the disabled spectator platforms outside the hospitality lounges are via level access.

11.5 Vertical Circulation

Internal steps and stairs are designed in accordance with the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds and comply with requirements for assembly buildings.

Internal ramps are designed with handrails in accordance with BS8300.

11.6 Surfaces and communication aids

- All finishes, fitting, equipment including signage and lighting will be designed in accordance with the latest guidance.
- Hearing enhancement systems will be provided at the reception desk and the disabled spectator platforms.

11.7 Facilities

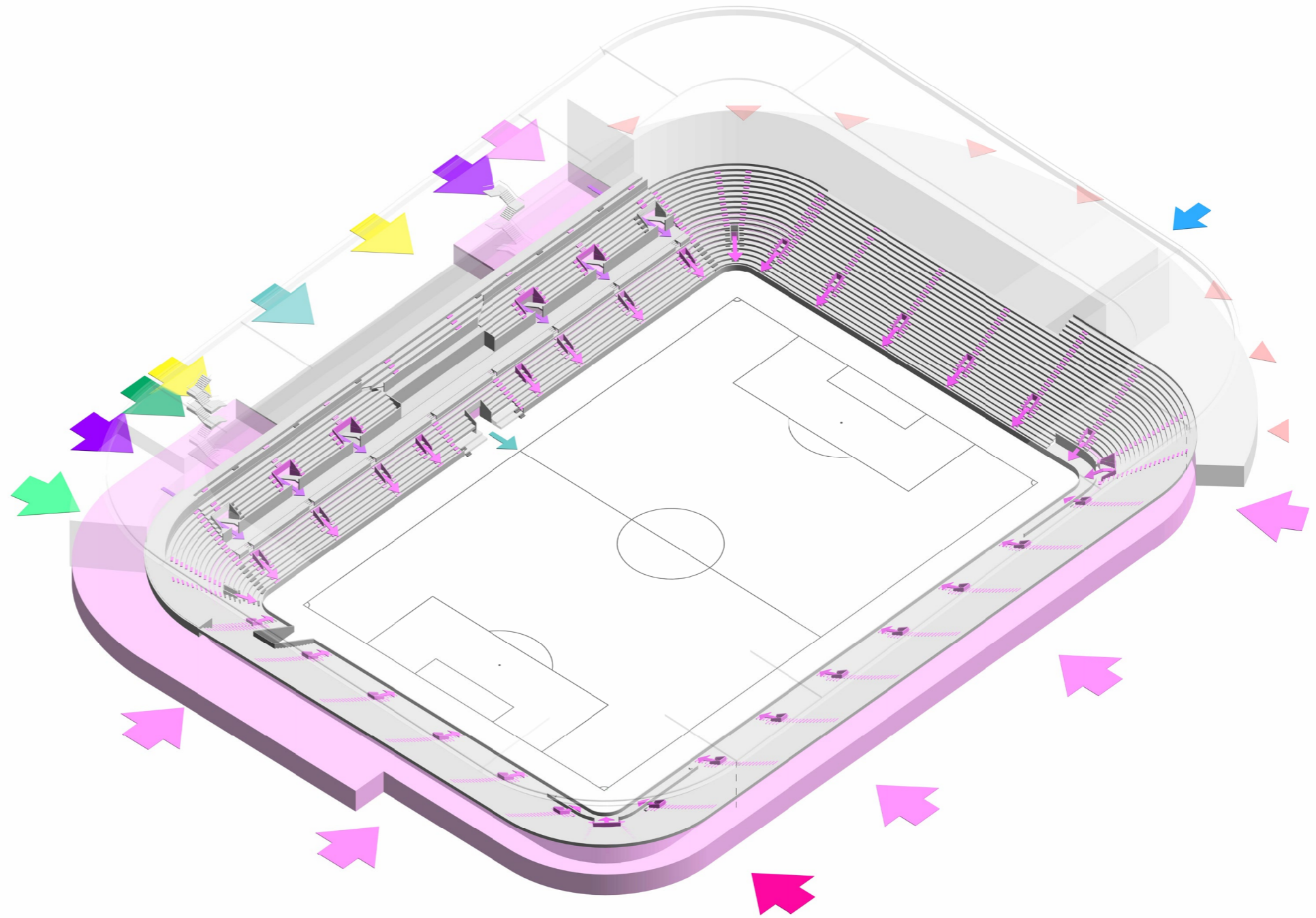
- All counters, including the main reception desk, ticket office, catering kiosks and bars will incorporate a low level section, have adequate maneuvering space and be located to be easily identifiable.
- Toilet accommodation includes unisex accessible WCs in accordance with Fig 51 of BS 8300, which are located so that a user does not have to travel more than 40m from the viewing area.
- 'Changing places' accessible toilets are provided and easily accessible for all stadium visitors.
- Kiosks will be included to all larger disabled platforms, with smaller platforms having access to main concourse kiosks.



11.8 GA Entrances & Vomitories

This diagram highlights the 8 key spectator entrances, leading the majority of the 16,000 spectators, through the 38 Vomitories, to their seats.

- Hotel
- Commercial
- General Admission (GA)
- Away (GA)
- Premium GA
- Hospitality Entrance
- Players & Officials
- Media
- Venue Operations



11.9 Seating Bowl Accessibility

Each seating category/ hospitality space will have a designated number of wheelchair positions, the current breakdown is as follows:

- Boardroom	1no.
- Director's Box	1no.
- Gold Lounge	2no.
- Silver Lounge	5no.
- Sky Box	3no.
- Premium GA	9no.
- GA Concourse	114no.

The wheelchair provision is split between:

- High Level (West Stand)	97no.
- Low Level (East Corners)	38no.
TOTAL	135no.

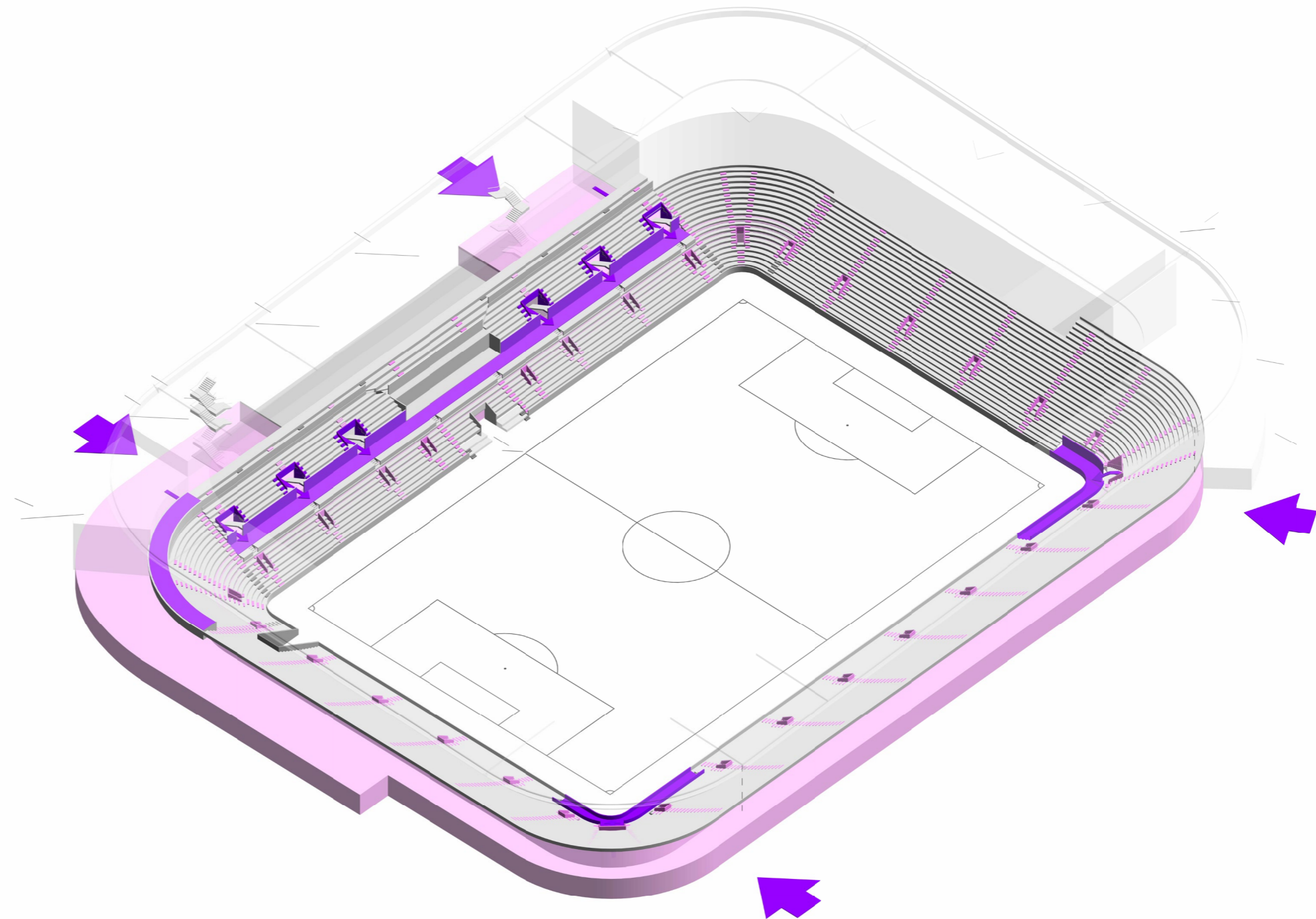
All wheelchair positions are paired with a companion seat as standard.

As a design team we are also assigning specific family/ group companion seating. This will allow wheelchair users to sit with groups of friends or family rather than just one.

They will be spread across multiple locations to provide the users with flexibility and choice.

This is a direct improvement to the accessible facilities on the back of a pre planning Accessibility workshop, undertaken in October 2023.

There will also be a provision for 'Easy Access' and 'Ambulant' seating with a minimum of 65no. of each.



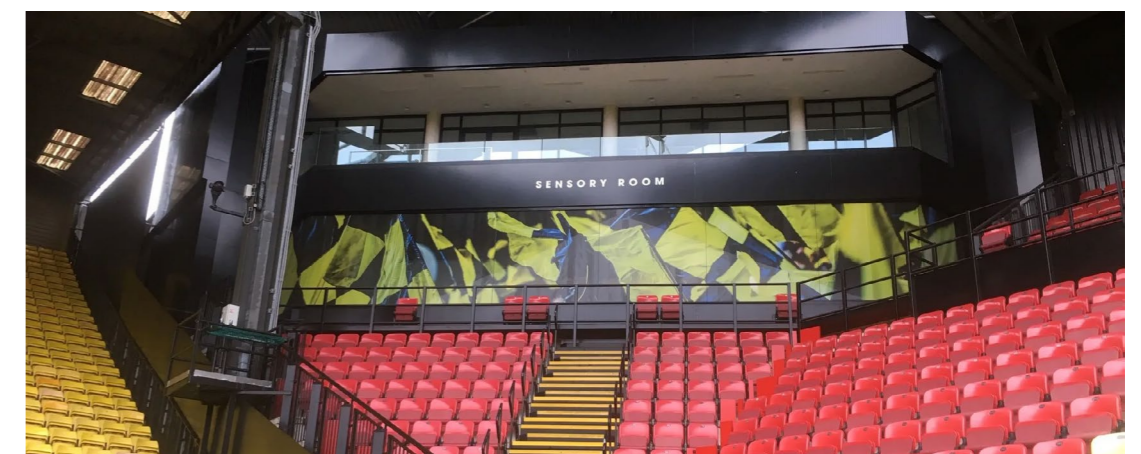
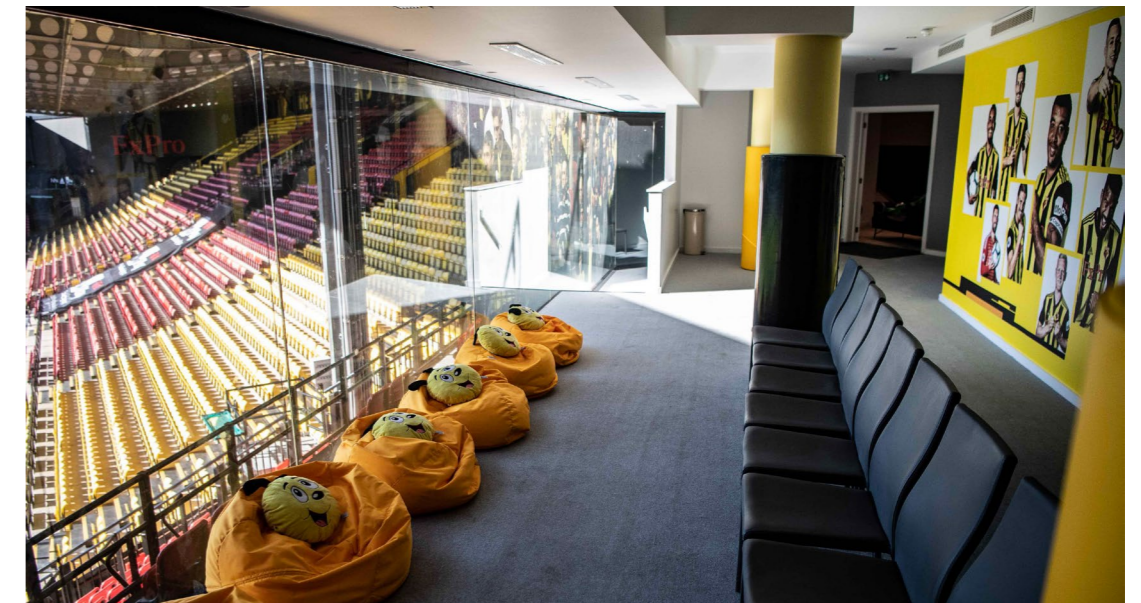
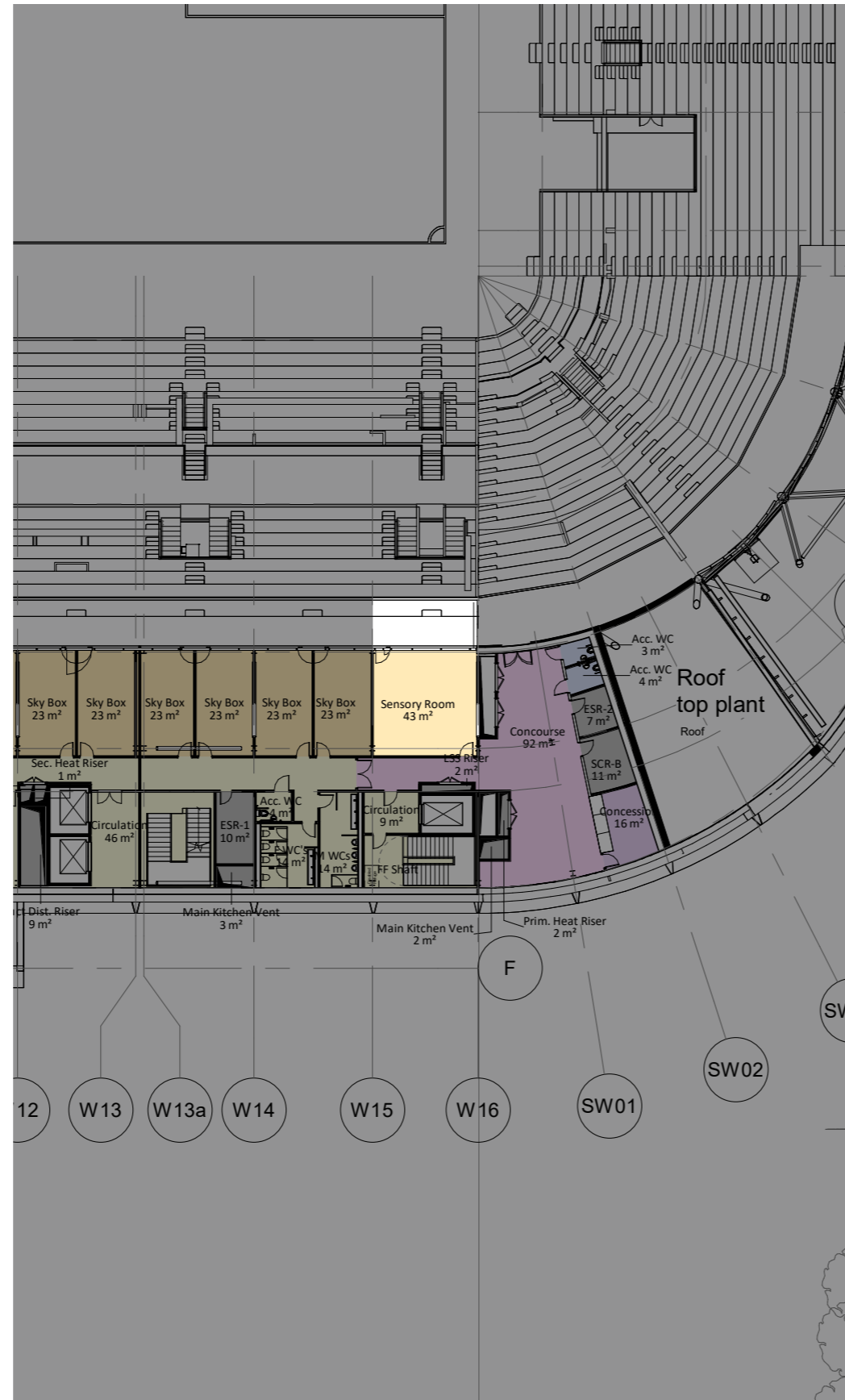
11.10 Sensory Room

The club and design team have placed significant emphasis on creating high-quality spaces to accommodate all visitors and fans. As designers, it's imperative that the sensory room is easily accessible and flexible enough to cater to the diverse needs of individuals with a wide range of requirements.

The proposed location for the sensory room is on Level 03, adjacent to the Sky Boxes. This strategic positioning provides users with the option to enjoy the game from within the room itself or on an adjoining platform, ensuring their comfort and protection from other fans on the terraces. The room will be situated in the southwest corner of the plan, with direct access to a staircase and lift core.

Furthermore, given its proximity to the high-level wheelchair platform, the sensory room will also have close proximity to a changing place facility, accessible toilets, and an accessible concession area.

To provide a visual reference, we have included precedent images of the Watford FC Sensory room.



11.11 Multi-faith Space

The current proposal incorporates two multi-faith spaces: one designated for players, officials, and staff, and the other intended for match day spectators and non-match day visitors.

The primary multi-faith space will be situated on the ground floor, positioned next to the general admission concourse and the premium concourse space. It will also be conveniently located in close proximity to the primary hospitality stairwell and lift core.



11.12 Changing Places

The current proposal includes a 'Changing Places' facility on ground floor.

The facility on ground floor is located between the adjacent to the Premium GA concourse and the premium concourse and in close proximity to the SW hospitality stairwell and lift core - linking directly to the Sensory Room and wheelchair platform.





12. Transport

12 Transport

12.1 Transport Assessment

The Transport Assessment sets out the relevant national, regional and local transport policy, strategies and plans that needs to be complied with. There is significant commitment nationally, regionally and locally to encourage and prioritise sustainable to improve health and wellbeing, air pollution, congestion and climate change. This proposed development complies with the relevant transport policy and will provide sustainable development.

Development Proposals

The development will incorporate a total of 184 car parking spaces, split between accessible parking (78), standard parking allocation (104), coach bays (2) and motorcycle spaces. The site will also include capacity to secure 150 bikes. An additional max. 495 spaces will be delivered at Oxford Parkway Park and Ride.

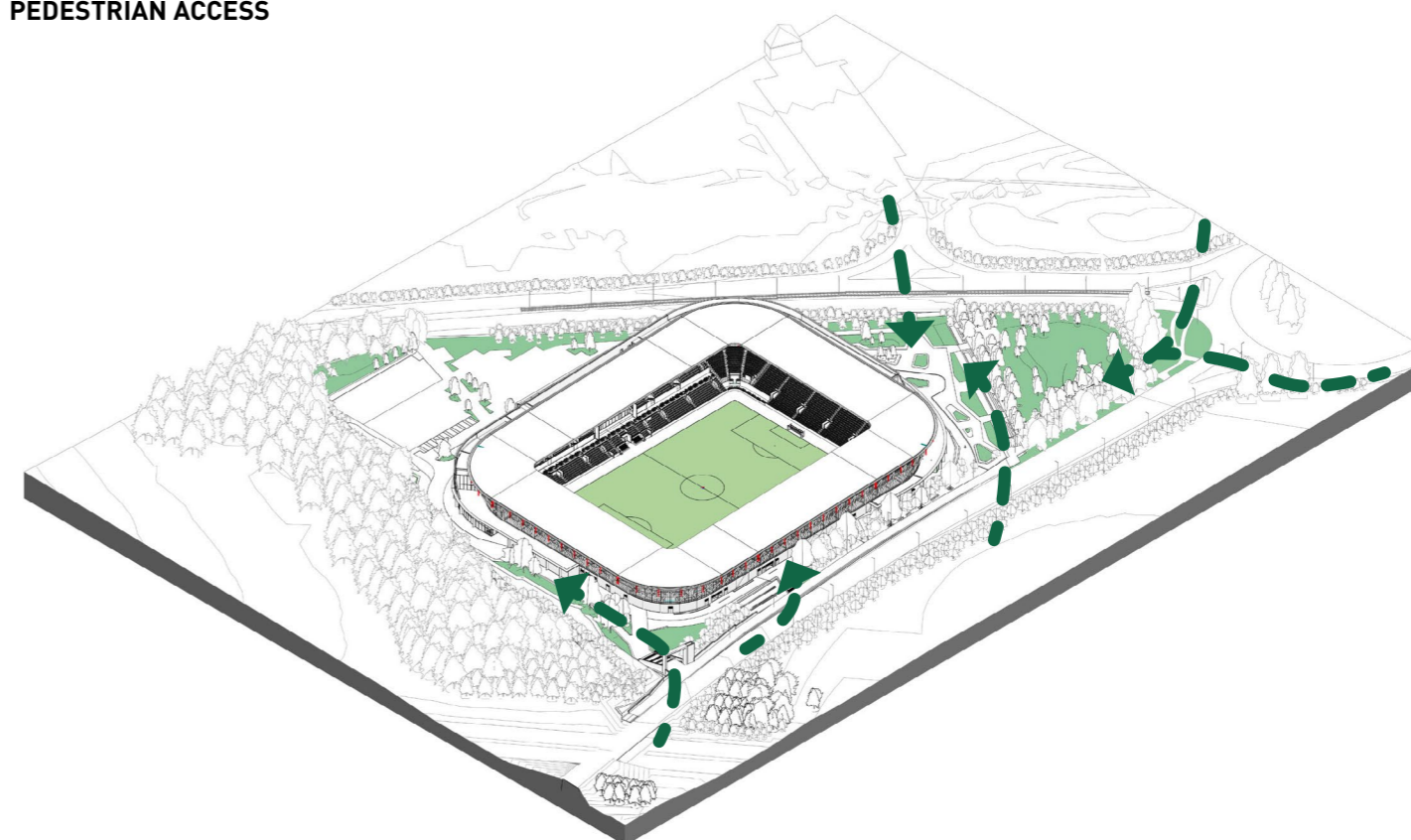
The Stadium is likely to hold 28 first team football matches per annum, including home league games, and pre-season and cup games. In addition to this, Women's league and cup fixtures are proposed to be held at the Stadium of which it is anticipated that there will be 13 home league games and cup fixtures per annum. It is also projected that there will be 2 Stadium hire events per year, for sporting events such as junior international matches, or community or university sport events.

In terms of events, the Stadium will be utilised for a wide range of activities including conferences, meetings, trade shows, corporate events and dinners. Over the course of a year, it is anticipated that around 580 events will be hosted. These will be of differing scales, with the majority being smaller events with an average attendance of 10 or 30 people. The Stadium has capacity to host events for up to 1,000 attendees and initial projections anticipate that there will be approximately 85 events with an average of 150 people, and 68 large events with an average number of 700 people, including Christmas parties.

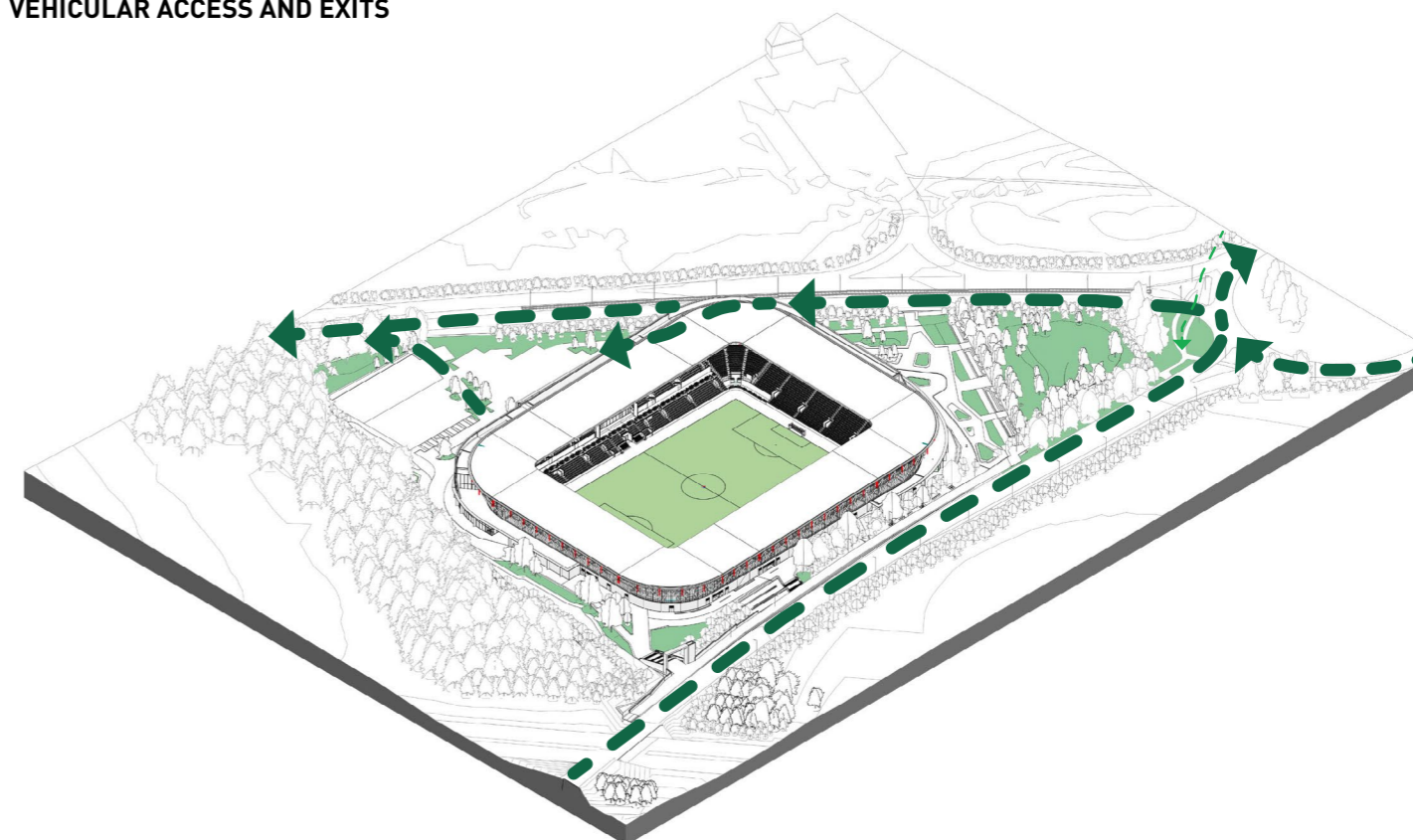
Site Accessibility

The Site is bound by Kidlington Roundabout to the north, Oxford Road to the north-east, Frieze Way A4260 to the west and a block of woodland to the south, with further agricultural land beyond. The Site is also bound by a number of site allocations within the adopted Local Plan. The Site is located in a highly accessible location, adjacent to the strategic highway network which is an important public transport route and benefits from existing and proposed cycle connections. It is in close proximity to Oxford Parkway Railway Station and Oxford Parkway Park and Ride. It is therefore accessible by a range of transport modes.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



VEHICULAR ACCESS AND EXITS





12.2 Transport Strategy

Walking and Cycling Proposals

- New and Improved pedestrian and cycle routes to/from the Stadium from/to Oxford Parkway.
- Wayfinding elements such as lighting bollards, street furniture and signage will be placed at strategic locations to create a unified spaces which will assist supporters route to the stadium.
- A new stepped access to Oxford Parkway from Oxford Road.
- New pedestrian crossings on Oxford Road and Freize Way.
- Provision of 150 Sheffield stands onsite with access to a further max. 495 spaces at Oxford Parkway, including electric bike charging.

Public Transport Proposals

- Club Website and Matchday programme: Travel information regarding bus and train travel including location of bus stops and access routes on match day will be readily available online and in the matchday programme.
- Integrated Public Transport ticket: we are working with Oxford Bus Company, Stagecoach, Chiltern Railways and Oxfordshire County Council to include a return public transport journey in the cost of a season ticket and match day tickets to the stadium for bus and rail services including Park and Ride

- New bus stops for the existing bus services passing the stadium (bus service 700 and S5)
- Increased frequency and longer operating hours of public bus services to the Stadium on match days, if demand/ticket sales require.
- Supporter match day shuttle buses from Park & Ride sites to intercept supporter vehicle trips
- Work with supporters' associations and clubs to organise away supporter coaches and provide coach parking through agreement with OCC at Oxford Parkway.
- Supporter coach services will be provided a dedicated drop off at Oxford Parkway Park and Ride.
- Promotion of the integrated public transport ticket when purchasing tickets for a game.
- Investigate installation of a Public Transport Information System in a publicly accessible area to inform supporters of any live travel news or delays that may impact travel from the stadium after a match.

Match Day Traffic Management Proposals

- The use of the stadium will vary depending upon the event, the profile and importance of the football game, and the day of the week.
- Key bus services and coaches marshalled through Oxford Road during periods of lighter pedestrian flows.

Match Day Crowd Management

- Matchday stewards will be strategically located at the Stadium, Plaza, bus stops on Oxford Road and at Oxford Parkway to manage and facilitate the safe movement of supporters between the Stadium and services at Oxford Parkway.
- The Variable Message Signage (VMS) signage will divert traffic via the A4260, A44 and A40 whilst any match day traffic management is in operation. The VMS strategy will be developed with OCC to determine the optimal locations for the installation of VMS. The VMS will operate in advance of a football match to provide warning of traffic management and time periods of road closures in the week ahead.
- The club will publish a list of the planned closures each season and this will be available to local residents either by paper copy or electronically on the club's website. Oxford United FC will investigate an electronic alert system via text message to update local residents, if the demand/ticket sales required this level of advance warning.
- Signage for the Park and Ride sites will be enhanced, if necessary, to intercept supporters at the first Park and Ride site they pass on the routes into Oxford. This may include replacement signage with additional information and/or new signage on radial routes into Oxford to direct supporters.
- The ticket will be issued with travel information regarding cycling routes and parking, bus services and their nearest Park and Ride location based on their origin to reduce the impact of private vehicles within the vicinity of 'The Triangle'.

- Match Day Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) will be implemented up to 2km from the Stadium in Kidlington, North Oxford and Yarnton. These will operate during matches (Saturday and evenings) and will discourage supporters travelling to stadium by car and parking on nearby residential streets on match days. These Match Day CPZs will dovetail with the parking management strategy emerging for the PR Sites around Kidlington and Oxford Parkway.

Vehicle

- Supporters will be advised that no car parking is available at the Stadium (aside from accessible and operational spaces) when purchasing a ticket.
- On site parking up to 184 spaces will be reserved for accessible users, match officials/ operational staff/ Oxford United FC staff and outside broadcast (25 spaces) on match days.
- EV charging for 25% of the car parking spaces across the Site, equating to 46 of the 184 spaces. Passive provision (ducting/base infrastructure) will be installed for all spaces to allow further EV capacity to be rolled out in future as required.
- Parking, including accessible parking will be accommodated on site through a booking system. This will be managed through ANPR, signage and active enforcement.
- Non match day taxi drop off is provided in the Plaza to the north of the Stadium.
- Match day taxi drop off and pick up will be accommodated within the stadium car park and at Oxford Parkway. No taxi parking will be provided on Site.



Other Measures for Staff

- Promotion of the Travel Plan at initial staff induction.
- Opportunity to purchase a public transport season ticket or discounted public transport ticket for travel to and from the Stadium.
- Staff showers, changing and drying facilities within the Stadium for those who walk / cycle to work to use.
- Promotion of the Cycle to Work Scheme to all staff who work at the Stadium.

Pedestrian Modelling

Pedestrian modelling has been undertaken to understand the busiest period of pedestrian flows outside the Stadium and within the Oxford Road area for the hour following the final whistle. This is based upon a worst case scenario with a full stadium and a weekday departure profile.

This modelling demonstrates the need for:

- Traffic management for at least 30 minute pre and post-match to accommodate the pedestrians walking to/from the Parkway station and Oxford Parkway Park and Ride
- Key bus services and coaches marshalled through Oxford Road during periods of lighter pedestrian flows.
- Peartree and Eynsham Park and Ride Shuttles to use the stadium car park
- Other Park and Ride Shuttles to use two of the bus stands at Oxford Parkway Park and Ride (with third stand to be used by existing local services)
- Segregated routes to Parkway station (for rail users) and local buses, then for Park and Ride Shuttles to improve the efficiency of queuing.
- Queue management at Parkway station
- Queue management to the bus stands at Oxford Parkway Park and Ride

Transport Modelling

Transport modelling will be undertaken and will be submitted via an Addendum Report. OCC has advised via pre application discussions that the North Oxford VISSIM Model is required to be used to assess the impact of the stadium during operation, rather than junction modelling that had initially been carried out.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed transport strategy will provide a wide range of non-car travel options and supporting measures for employees, supporters and visitors travelling to/from the stadium.

The proposals seek to minimise car use and maximise travel on foot, cycle and public transport in line with national and local policy.

Traffic management (at least 30 minutes before and after the match) will only be implemented on match days with high ticket sales and will:

- Significantly improve safety for pedestrians and other street users
- Prioritise walking, cycling, bus, rail and coach travel to/from the stadium
- Meet local, regional and national policy to prioritise more sustainable travel
- Help to achieve the district and county council's commitment for net-zero

The Transport Assessment provides detail on the proposals, evidence and transport strategy to support the planning application for a new stadium.



13. Security



13 Security

13.1 Security Principles

The Security principles applied to the Stadium have been developed using an accepted and tested process, which follows international standards including:

ISO 31000 Risk Management, which is considered to be the 'best practice' approach within the security industry. The process followed includes the steps listed below and illustrated in the diagram that follows:

- Scoping, study of the development design and operating concepts.
- Analysis of the stadium and United Kingdom security environment and threat spectrum.
- Oxford United Stadium Security Threat Assessment and report.
- Oxford United Stadium Security Risk Assessment, including identification of individual asset risk profiles and vulnerability, and high-level mitigation strategies.
- Development of the Oxford United Stadium Security Protection Objectives.

The Security Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA) for the Oxford United New Stadium Project has been undertaken and the STRA has identified security hazards, threats and vulnerabilities based on the current design information, discussion and workshops with key stakeholders, specialist consultation and experience.

Within this STRA we have examined high-level threats, risks and incidents that have occurred in and around the UK and from information gained on other similar developments worldwide. As part of this process, consideration has been given to the vulnerability of the project to those threats and importantly, the severity of the consequences should they occur.

Our assessment of identified risks and the recommended mitigation solutions have followed industry best practice and standards to achieve risk reduction to a level deemed As Low As Reasonably Practical (ALARP). Whilst the range of security can be extensive, within this report treatment options have been maintained at a level of proportionality.

The future design phases will be based on the development of Protection Objectives which are determined against the identified higher risks from the STRA. Protection Objectives follow the strategy of DDDRR (D3R2):

- Deter potential threat actors before they act.
- Detect threats before they can affect an asset.
- Delay threat actors from accessing an asset.
- Provide deployment capability for a coordinated Response.
- Enable operation to Recover from a security incident quickly and effectively.

The Protection Objectives cover the full security spectrum of technical, physical, and operational security mitigations for the Oxford United Stadium development, which will be further developed during the future design stages of this project.

Utilising these Protection Objectives, several high-level mitigation measures for the identified vulnerabilities have been proposed throughout the site. Some protection strategies are specific to each asset, whilst other strategies are broader and can be applied site wide.

The next design stages of the process will be the development of the Security Objectives into a coordinated and approved Security Strategy that will create an environment for all people that is secure and safe against identified threats and enables effective and sustained operation of the Stadium in all operational postures.

Consolidated High Level Protection Objectives	Deter	Detect	Delay	Respond	Recover
Technical					
Video surveillance monitoring as per UK requirements to deter and detect crime and provide post incident evidence; for GA, buildings, infrastructure, and external areas	✓	✓		✓	
Intelligent Video Analytics to reliably detect, track and analyse moving objects		✓			
Integrated access control system that will restrict pedestrian access into the buildings for all staff, contractors and visitors who are issued with an access card.	✓	✓	✓		
Intrusion detection for infrastructure and high security areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Security Screening Capability or Provision at all Site Entrances to provide detection for illicit material, weapons and explosive trace detection.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ANPR at vehicle entrances and exits		✓			
Communication between select locations and security personnel for information to be provided without delay or prejudice	✓	✓		✓	
Site-wide mobile radio communications		✓		✓	✓
Integration of infrastructure and building systems monitoring with security to allow for 24/7 monitoring		✓		✓	✓
Redundancy and / or back-up of critical infrastructure.		✓	✓		✓
Dedicated local security control room, staffed 24/7		✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical					
Segregation of Public Realm spaces through the use of natural access control, Landscaping and Environmental Design (CPTED)	✓	✓	✓		
Stepped Terraces, Natural Contour Changes to define boundaries and deter unauthorized access.	✓	✓	✓		
Multiple Dedicated security networks, and system redundancy, and integration with supporting systems		✓		✓	✓
Dedicated site-wide security control room, staffed 24/7	✓	✓			
Lighting levels throughout the site in accordance with security principles and operational requirements	✓	✓	✓		
Gatehouses or Controls at all roads leading to the site to control access	✓		✓		✓
Design of active and Passive Hostile Vehicle Mitigation at Public Realm and to facilitate increased Stand Off Distances	✓	✓			
Site signage, wayfinding and pathways	✓		✓		
Operational					
Security policies and procedures to be developed in line with varying site requirements.	✓	✓		✓	✓
Security manpower to be licensed and trained to the highest standards.	✓	✓		✓	✓
Coordination with emergency services for effective incident response. Creation of onsite response methodology in coordination with UK Authorities				✓	✓
Establish site-wide operational hierarchy and coordination plan.		✓		✓	✓
Background checks and monitoring of staff	✓	✓		✓	



14. Public Engagement

14 Public Engagement

14.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout RIBA Work Stage 2 we have engaged with the potential end users of the stadium, both internally at Oxford United and externally in the commercial and football governance world.

Our plans have been developed alongside the end-users to ensure the spaces align to how the envisage using the space.

We have organised and participated in the following workshops:

- OUFC Media
- OUFC Players & Staff
- OUFC Venue Operations
- Design Review Panel
- Hotel Operators
- Security Workshop (OUFC, Police, SGSA, Emergency services, etc)
- Accessibility (including additional meeting with Level Playing Field)
- Meet The Team Public Exhibition

Media Workshop

During RIBA Work Stage 2, the design team sat down with members of the broadcasting teams and EFL media representatives to discuss our proposed design and to learn about the latest trends and technologies.

The outside broadcast area was amended to suit to the requirements - moving it further away from the stadium, clarifying the overall area, and providing it with a "plug in and play" strategy linked directly to the TV gantry on Level 4.

We also took on board comments in regard to designing for media journey and for broadcast flexibility. In particular, we have allocated area for print and online for attendees to share their feedback. These were then collected securely in a feedback collection box.

Meet The Team Public Exhibition

As part of the consultation exercise for the new stadium planning application, a public exhibition was held to present the proposals and secure feedback from members of the public.

The in-person exhibition was coordinated with a digital exhibition on the project website, where visitors were able to review the proposals and leave feedback.

The exhibition ran for two weeks, during this time three 'Meet the project team' days have been arranged to provide members of the public opportunities to speak directly to project team consultants.

The public exhibition aimed to engage the community and stakeholders in the consultation process for the planning application. This event allowed for the public to view and provide feedback on the proposed stadium plans.

Feedback forms were made available both in print and online for attendees to share their feedback. These were then collected securely in a feedback collection box.

Accessibility Workshop

Our original proposal to the workshop participants had four low level wheelchair platforms and a long high level platform to the west stand.

Based on the feedback we received, we made the decision to increase the number of high level wheelchair positions. With the introduction of a back row platform in the south-west corner, we now have around 75% high level and 25% at pitch level.

It was also raised to the club and to the design team that as a fan in a wheelchair, you only have the option to watch the game with one companion. It is standard to design each wheelchair position with a regular seat - a 'companion seat'.

On the back of the concerns raised, the design team have highlighted a number of locations around the bowl where multiple companions could sit together. This allows wheelchair fans to sit with a group of friend or family.



14.2 Design Review Panel

This design review panel session was booked by Ridge and Partners, and this is the first time The Design Review Panel has reviewed this scheme. The session incorporated a site visit.

The information presented for review is considered to have been clear and professional. This is welcomed by the Panel and this presentation material is of benefit to the design review process. Notwithstanding this, due to the information being provided by the Design Team only on the day of review, the session focused on wider operational and site issues. Generally architecturally it is felt the proposal is ambitious and based on the limited inspection of the presentation information that could occur within the time constraints of the session, the Panel recognizes and supports the aspirational nature of the project coming forward.

Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states: -

“Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, ... In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.”

The Panel comments as follows:-

The session began with a site visit and a walk around of the surrounding area. This was extremely useful for the Panellists, particularly in terms of helping understand how people will access and egress the site. The visit revealed a site significantly constrained in many ways, not least by its awkward shape and the busy highways that adjoin the site on two of its three sides. These factors alone make the development of the site challenging.

Identifying sites for stadium development is a notoriously difficult task and it is understood and accepted by the Panel that the Football Club has undertaken a comprehensive site search before resolving to promote the current scheme. Accepting that the site is not ideal in many respects, not least in terms of walking distance for the majority of the fan base, the Panel’s view is that the Football Club and Design Team have put considerable effort into the question of how football supporters and other visitors will be able to access the site and have proposed some positive ideas. These include promoting access by rail and by coach and potential discounted ticketing solution following discussions with transport operators. Considerable thought has also been given to how the flow of pedestrian traffic will make its way from the station and across the busy A34 to the site entrance. This is a particular challenge for matchdays when the majority of supporters arrive and exit the stadium during relatively short periods before and after the game.

Notwithstanding the above, there is a concern that the proposed main entrance area point to the stadium may not be able to safely accommodate the sheer volume of fans. It is felt there may not be enough arrival space to accommodate the supporters before they disperse to their seats. A lack of space in this area could also give rise to problems of supporter segregation. The practical problems of access are also accentuated by the difference in levels from the highway.

The Panel suggests that consideration be given to re-orientating the stadium slightly in a clockwise direction to create some additional arrival space. This may lead to the loss of some car parking on the western side of the site and potentially to a loss of some trees. However the Panel’s view is that the benefits of reorientation in terms of crowd safety and management may outweigh these concerns.

The Design Review Panel

www.designreviewpanel.co.uk



Site	The Triangle, Land to the East of Stratfield Brake, Kidlington, Oxfordshire
Proposal	Erection of 16,000 capacity stadium, incorporating a 180 bed hotel, restaurant and café, flexible community and business facilities, gym, external community and multi-functional plaza, and associated parking, landscaping and other supporting infrastructure
Local Authority	Cherwell District Council
Applicant	Oxford United Football Club
Agent	Ridge and Partners LLP
Architecture	AFL Architects
Landscape	Fabrik
Review Date	7 th November 2023

This design review panel session was booked by Ridge and Partners, and this is the first time The Design Review Panel has reviewed this scheme. The session incorporated a site visit.

The information presented for review is considered to have been clear and professional. This is welcomed by the Panel and this presentation material is of benefit to the design review process. Notwithstanding this, due to the information being provided by the Design Team only on the day of review, the session focused on wider operational and site issues. Generally architecturally it is felt the proposal is ambitious and based on the limited inspection of the presentation information that could occur within the time constraints of the session, the Panel recognizes and supports the aspirational nature of the project coming forward.

Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states: -

“Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, ... In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.”



The Panel suggests that consideration be given to re-orientating the stadium slightly in a clockwise direction to create some additional arrival space. This may lead to the loss of some car parking on the western side of the site and potentially to a loss of some trees. However the Panel's view is that the benefits of reorientation in terms of crowd safety and management may outweigh these concerns.

It was not clear from the presentation, how rigorously any optioneering exercise has been in determining the correct siting for the stadium within the site. Options are undoubtedly limited because of the shape and size of the site and the Panel does not dissent from the view that the current siting is broadly correct, however it may be beneficial to demonstrate evidence of an options exercise which looked at landscape and visual impact in addition to operational factors.

Putting aside difficulties of access to the site, the Design Team and Football Club have put forward an admirable project which, in addition to a striking piece of architecture comprises a genuine community led facility. The scheme vision and founding principles are felt to be visionary, very clearly articulated and it may be helpful for these principles to be used as "guiding lights" as the project progresses further.

The Football Club clearly recognises its important role in the social fabric of the city but is also sensitive enough to recognise that a stadium is rarely perceived as a good neighbour. This sensitivity manifests itself in a genuine attempt to embed the stadium within the village of Kidlington and to encourage local residents that it belongs to them as much as the football club and its supporters. This objective is articulated most obviously in the community garden and plaza but some of the proposed commercial uses may also serve the local community.

In regard to the proposed garden, the Panel is very impressed by the design and it is considered to be in the correct part of the site, close to Kidlington village. It has the potential to be something special but the Panel notes that it may require a relatively high level of management. It is therefore suggested that it may be beneficial to ensure that a realistic budget for maintenance is reserved annually. Similarly the plaza has significant potential as a community space but will most likely be heavily used and thus it is felt it would be beneficial for materials to be of the highest quality.

The use of an arch to signify the main point of arrival with its historic echoes of the former Manor Ground is both an appropriate nod to tradition and a potential means of heightening the arrival experience; it is felt that this is a good idea that is supported by the Panel, although it is considered the images are not yet convincing and the proposed scale may benefit from further consideration. Furthermore in a spirit of helpfulness, it is suggested that rotating the arch slightly could be beneficial. This adjustment may better align with the direction of travel of the end users, more effectively reflecting their desired paths and harmonizing with the proposed boulevard's layout. Additionally, it may be beneficial to further examine the design of the ramp and steps, particularly focusing on their spatial relationship and positioning relative to each other.

The Design Team persuasively articulated the arrival experience and the way in which visitors move around the stadium via a series of events including the entrance arch, tree planted boulevard and the plaza. This legibility is admirable and use of landscaping as a means of moving people through spaces is a clever one. It is noted that the challenge will be to create a landscape which is not only beautiful but also robust to cope with the high footfall at peak times.

The Panel's chief concern regarding the project is that the awkward shape of the site and its relatively small size may potentially be prejudicing the delivery of the laudable aspirations for public realm. Aside from the concerns regarding the size of the arrival space, there is a general feeling that everything is ever so slightly squeezed and that there is no spare land. The Panel suggests therefore that the quantum of car parking be reduced and that consideration be given to steepening the rake of the stadium seating in order to reduce the stadium footprint. It is recognised that both of these interventions are challenging – no doubt the quantum of car parking is influenced by the requirements of the hotel operator and a steeper rake may unacceptably increase the height of the stadium and lead to greater construction costs – but it is nevertheless suggested that it may be beneficial for this to be seriously explored.

Regarding the height, and indeed the general scale and massing of the stadium, it is suggested that it may be beneficial for the Design Team to prepare a full Landscape Visual Impact Assessment. This may be particularly relevant given that the site is within the Green Belt, and will be required as part of any future planning application.

In terms of the main stadium building, the Panel is impressed by its well-considered and elegant form. It represents a considerable improvement on the club's existing stadium in visual terms and, through a combination of the existing planting to the south and proposed new planting, will have the benefit of a soft green setting, which it is felt will set it aside from most football stadiums. It is likely that the stadium will be visible from some distance but the elegant form of the building and its gently undulating roof form may contribute positively to the wider Oxfordshire landscape.

Perhaps even more importantly, it is felt that the facilities for spectators and users of the hotel and conference centre will be of a high standard, which is welcomed. The Panel is particularly impressed with the thought that has been given to all different fan groups. The facilities make the stadium accessible for all, and the special thought that has been given to wheelchair supporters and those with sensory impairments is felt to be cutting edge. The warm welcome will clearly extend to away supporters which will help to ensure that everybody will enjoy their visit, whatever the result.

Notwithstanding its general support for the design, the Panel would have liked to have seen some more detailed elevations to fully understand the visual appearance. It would also have been helpful if the material had been circulated in advance so that panellists had more time with which to digest the details. The material palette for the stadium is also somewhat unclear, and it is considered that appropriate choices will be critical to the project meeting its objectives.

The lighting of the stadium will be a key component of its appearance and it is noted that a balance will need to be struck between using the lighting scheme positively, almost as feature, and respecting its semi-rural hinterland. Subtle lighting of the soffits may be way using light imaginatively and showing off the stadium without creating something too intrusive.



The Panel notes and supports the aspirations in terms of sustainability for the whole project. The aim of 90% of travel to the stadium being by sustainable modes is challenging but also necessary given its location. This may be unachievable without the proximity of the railway station and the Panel is pleased to see how much work has already been undertaken by the Football Club and Design Team to maximise this opportunity. The zero plastic pledge and proposed use of renewable energy and storage on site is to be applauded. The aspiration to meet BREEAM excellent is challenging, given the location of the site, but it may be beneficial for every effort to be made to achieve this.

Returning finally to the site visit, panellists noted that the ground was unnaturally contoured in parts, suggesting some fill had been imported. It may therefore be prudent for a full ground conditions survey to be undertaken before the design is progressed further.

In conclusion, the Panel reiterates its admiration for the scope of the project. The site is challenging in terms of location shape and size and the development timetable very tight. However the work undertaken to date is impressive and the emerging design is both striking architecturally and very much fit for purpose in terms of meeting modern aspirations for stadium users. The landscape strategy and the community garden, are particularly innovative for new stadium and combined with a mix of uses that will appeal on a day-to-day basis, have the potential to be a great place. It is considered there are logistical difficulties still to be addressed, particularly in terms of the entrance area and the movement of end users, but it is felt the project deserves to succeed and will hopefully secure the long-term future of the football club and enrich the lives of local residents.

The Panel would welcome a further opportunity to assess any future iteration of the scheme and suggest that it would again be beneficial for the Local planning Authority to be present at any such review.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(to be read in conjunction with the above)

In summary, the main conclusions of the Panel are: -

- Information presented was clear & professional, aiding the design review process.
 - Site visit revealed the site's constraints, including its shape & busy highways.
 - Panel acknowledges the Football Club's effort in site selection & access planning.
 - Concerns about the proposed main entrance handling large crowds & level differences from the highway.
 - Suggests re-orienting the stadium for more arrival space, accepting potential car park loss.
 - Suggests demonstrating an options exercise for stadium siting considering landscape & visual impact.
 - Commends the project's community focus, particularly the community garden & plaza.

- Urges ensuring a realistic maintenance budget for the garden & high-quality materials for the plaza.
- Supports the entrance arch concept, but suggests further consideration of its scale.
 - Admires the use of landscaping for visitor movement but highlights the need for robust design.
 - Suggests reducing car parking & steepening stadium seating rake to address spatial constraints.
 - A full Landscape Visual Impact Assessment due to Green Belt location may be required.
 - Impressed by the stadium's elegant form & spectator facilities, catering to diverse fan groups
 - More detailed elevations & clarity on material palette may be helpful.

- Suggests subtle stadium lighting, to balance feature use with semi-rural surroundings.
- Supports sustainability goals, including BREEAM excellent aspirations.
- Notes ground irregularities; suggests a full ground conditions survey may be beneficial.
- Admires project's scope, community integration, & innovative landscape strategy.



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