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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 21, 2024 3:16 PM
To: Planning Policy <Planning.Policy@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>; PlanningPolicyConsulta•on
<PlanningPolicyConsulta•on@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>
Subject: Planning applica•on for stadium in Kidlington number 24/00539/F

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Dear Sirs,

I am wri•ng to object to the proposal to grant planning permission for the construc•on of stadium in Kidlington for the reasons set out below.

I believe that it will have a dispropor•onately adverse e•ect on the lives of residents in Kidlington and surrounding areas for the following :-

General

The arrival of several thousand people in any loca•on is certain to cause local disrupt•on in par•cular to the •ow of tra•c, road safety, parking, use of public transport and other facili•es, quite apart from issues such as noise pollu•on and environmental damage, crea•on of waste etc so in order to jus•fy this there has to be a clear public bene•t to the community as a whole. This proposal creates a number of problems

Parking

If the stadium is designed to have a capacity for several thousand people, provision of 184 car parking spaces and two coach spaces is wholly inadequate. This seems to me to reflect the fact that the site is too small for the proposed use and it is relying on public facilities constructed for other purposes.

I understand that it is the aim of the football club that 90% of all travel to games will be by "sustainable means". This is a very laudable aim, but that is not what happens at present, when 83.1% of support is travel by car. There is no guarantee that it will happen in future either. The club can encourage but has no way of forcing supporters to use particular modes of transport to attend the ground.

It is evident that with such a small number of parking spaces, the club must be relying on the availability of public spaces at Oxford Parkway station (153 spaces) and the Kidlington park-and-ride (758 spaces). Local residents do of course use them too. They were constructed with local use in mind long before the stadium was proposed and not for the purpose of the stadium.

If, however, fans continue to travel to games by car even this will not be sufficient. OUFC state that their average attendance at home games is between 8 and 9000 people which suggests that approximately 6500 of them come by car and assuming that each car contains four people, this will mean that accommodation will be required for around 1600 cars, but in practice not every car will contain four occupants. Presumably the club hopes to increase attendance and as it does so the parking problem would increase. A capacity crowd would presumably require 3000 spaces or more.

Clearly even allowing for ALL the spaces at the station and park and ride being exclusively available and no one else using them, considerably more parking spaces will be needed.

Where will they go?

Even if fans are discouraged from travelling by car, they will not stop doing so as long as it is convenient and they can find parking spaces. It is unavoidable that fans will do what they do in other places and will park in local residential streets, grass verges and the small parking areas serving small shops and St John's church, and potentially also Sainsbury's. These include a hairdresser, and post office, and the only bakery now in Kidlington. They will use the facilities at Exeter Hall and potentially also in the High Street, thus making access very difficult for local residents. Heavy on street parking will worsen traffic congestion and increase the risk of accidents.

Traffic congestion

The stadium is certain to cause traffic congestion on days when it is in use. I understand that the VISSIM assessment is not yet available and obviously I cannot comment on the conclusions until this report is available and therefore reserve my position on this. There are, however, a number of common sense points to be made.

The extra traffic cannot help but affect everybody who currently uses the roads in Kidlington to go about their lawful business. Oxford Road is a main route to Central Oxford.

The A40 to London

Oxford Parkway station

And most importantly, the hospitals.

If I have understood press reports correctly, some commitment has been given not to close Oxford Road to allow access to the stadium but that instead "diversions" are proposed.

The difference between a road closure and a diversion is unclear. It is evident that the diversions will in fact amount to road closures so as at the very least to allow buses and coaches priority access for a period of time before and after each game. It is not quite clear where the coaches will be coming from (assuming only two coach parking spaces in the stadium) but nonetheless such diversions are likely to be in place for a very considerable period of time to allow clearance of traffic. During this time Oxford Road will, in practice be closed to other traffic, even if different vocabulary is used to describe what is happening.

As I understand it the " diversion " is to be via Peartree roundabout . If is the proposed solu•on then even without the stadium this is an area already heavily congested almost all the •me, as is the junc•on with the Ring Road, not withstanding that this is an essen•al area for emergency services. It is also unclear from the plan whether it is now proposed that the bus lane on the east side of Oxford Road is to be closed, but if this is the case, and it is a full permanent closure then this will create further tra•c conges•on at rush hour not limited to days when a stadium is in use.

The tra•c conges•on will not be limited to the main roads. People living in the area who want to go to other des•na•ons will have to •nd ways of doing so. People travelling southbound on the Banbury Road wishing to get to the A34 junc•on will no doubt cut through The Moors, Mill Street, Evans Lane and Bicester Road in the hope of avoiding tra•c, so those roads too will be congested. The Moors and Mill Street have very narrow or no pavements in some parts of the road. There is parking on the le•-hand side of Bicester Road which can also make this road tricky to navigate under normal tra•c condi•ons. This can only be made worse with an increase in tra•c. Cromwell Way will also be used for parking and in the hope of gaining access. Once again, this is a narrow residen•al street not suitable for heavy tra•c or heavy parking.

It is probable that tra•c congestion together with the parking at Exeter Hall and behind the high street in Kidlington will a•ect local access to shopping facili•es and the market. The facili•es in central Kidlington are very valuable to the community as a whole, and some smaller businesses could be forced out if it becomes di•cult to reach them on what is usually the busiest shopping day .Delivery drivers may also be reluctant to deliver to the area on match days

The greater the amount of tra•c conges•on the higher the levels of air pollu•on un• petrol and diesel cars have en•rely disappeared

E•ect on trains

If sta•on parking is taken up by fans who are not using the trains, but who can legi•mately obtain parking by driving to the sta•on , paying for a cheap •cket to Oxford from Oxford Parkway which they do not use and paying a low parking fee, it will not be available for other people not going to the stadium. This will make it di•cult for local people to use the sta•on to go anywhere at all on match days. Similar considera•ons will apply to the park-and-ride.

I am aware of one person who if the stadium is built , proposes to drive to Bicester Village , park there and use the train to get to the stadium. He will not be the only one, so Bicester Village may also be directly a•ected by parking issues on match days .

The trains themselves currently mostly four carriages, if they are used heavily by fans, which would appear to be part of the " sustainable "aim, will be unacceptably overcrowded, it is unclear whether Chiltern Railways could lay on addi•onal services or rolling stock or are willing to do so. At any event who will pay for it?

The facili•es at Oxford Parkway Sta•on, loos, refreshments , •cket machines , sta• , are also very limited and not designed for large crowds. The sta•on pla•orms are narrow, as is the footbridge. The access through the •cket turns•les is limited to about half a dozen people at a •me , because this sta•on was never designed for crowds.

If crowds use the service to get to the stadium from the direc•on of London, this may well also have the e•ect of discouraging people from using the trains on match days to go to Bicester Village . Why would you choose to go on an overcrowded train full of football supporters for a shopping day? This may be more relevant if other events are put on at the stadium

E•ect of addi•onal tra•c on road safety and the emergency services

Above all I am concerned about the e•ect stadium tra•c will have on access by emergency services to the hospital complex or to a•end •res. Or other incidents

The only alterna•ve routes to the hospital if the area around the proposed stadium is congested or "diverted" " are longer and in the case of the Islip route, not suited to heavy or fast tra•c.

It is not only emergency services who need to have access to the hospital, but also people who, if they are not attending clinics on a Saturday, may well be wishing to visit patients. This is very important both for visitor and hospital inmates. Taxi drivers will want to avoid being stuck in traffic and may well reduce their services too.

This is a matter of risk assessment: how likely is it that congestion caused by stadium traffic would lead to fatal delay in obtaining medical treatment, or cause difficulty to Thames Valley police in reaching a major incident in Oxford, or making it impossible for the fire service to get through to a fire? The risk must obviously increase with the size of the crowd, hence the amount of traffic, and the frequency of use of the stadium. How many fatalities per annum amount to an acceptable risk when set against the wishes of to locate the stadium here.

In this connection, it is naive to suppose that the use of the stadium will be confined to home games during the football season. The directors of the company owning the football stadium will be under a legal duty to maximise the profitability of their company and will therefore seek to exploit its facilities on as many days as possible in order to maximise company income. The object of building the stadium will be to use it to the maximum, not the minimum so not just every other weekend in the football season.

We can expect not only increased use for sporting activities, but also proposals to house concerts if they are available, and no doubt other activities. It is probable also that the location of a stadium in this place will inspire requests for further associated commercial developments. The site on which is proposed to construct the stadium is small and some thought, in considering this proposal ought to be given to the medium term and to where such additional facilities might go.

Use of statistics

It is reported that the construction of the stadium is attracting support from large numbers of people who do not live in the area, and some of whom do not even live in the UK. In publishing the statistics showing the percentages of people supporting or objecting to the construction of the stadium, it would not be appropriate for the planning authority not to distinguish between local supporters and others. With all due respect to the strength of feeling of a supporter who may live many miles away, he will not be much inconvenienced by the structure construction of the stadium by comparison with those who live locally.

Green Belt

And it is proposed to build it in the Green Belt, where construction should be permitted only under exceptional circumstances. The circumstances here are that it is commercially convenient for a football club to build a new stadium on this site. The need is not exceptional. It will clearly benefit fans to have a new stadium, but they are only part of the population and it is not clear how the community as a whole would benefit or what problem in the Kidlington community is being addressed, It is not to be compared with a medical facility or a school or even community sports facilities. It is, in fact a purely commercial venture. Its promoters have no interest in the sanctity of the green belt or welfare of the community in Kidlington, nor are they obliged to, but the council do.

For these reasons I request that the application be rejected.

Yours faithfully,



Sent from my iPad