

Comment for planning application 24/00539/F

Application Number	24/00539/F
Location	Land To The East Of Stratfield Brake And West Of Oxford Parkway Railway Station Oxford Road Kidlington
Proposal	Erection of a stadium (Use Class F2) with flexible commercial and community facilities and uses including for conferences, exhibitions, education, and other events, club shop, public restaurant, bar, health and wellbeing facility/clinic, and gym (Use Class E/Sui Generis), hotel (Use Class C1), external concourse/fan-zone, car and cycle parking, access and highway works, utilities, public realm, landscaping and all associated and ancillary works and structures
Case Officer	Laura Bell
Organisation Name	
Address	
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>Planning Application - 24/00539/F - Objection</p> <p>The reasons that this application should be objected and not supported are as follows:</p> <p>Firstly infrastructure and transport:</p> <p>The proposal includes widening the pavements from one person wide to two to accommodate more foot traffic. To do this, they will need to remove the bus lane between the stadium and Oxford Parkway.</p> <p>This will cause massive delays for people going to and from work/education. The only way of getting into Oxford or Summertown by 9am Mon-Fri is by bus. If we travel by car the road turns into a car park as the traffic is either stationary or crawling along after 7am in the mornings. Also, if this proposal goes ahead, this necessitates closing the Oxford Road for weeks, probably months to complete. This will be catastrophic for the area as residents have already experienced, that if you close a major route in Oxford or it has reduced road capacity due to road works, it makes the rest of Oxford grind to a halt. Many people already struggle to get to work, appointments and education on time. It is likely to become impossible during that period and also on match days, if the roadworks result in the road being closed for any period of time. Local residents will lose easy access to Oxford as they will need to navigate dual carriageways and motorway-style junctions which are not cycle-friendly and already very busy if you go by car.</p> <p>If, however, it is decided that the bus lane removal is not part of the plans, then they won't be able to widen the pavements, then these pavements will remain only wide enough for one person. This will make it even more likely that they will need to close the road, before and after the football matches. It will be impossible to get 16000 people to walk single file to and from Oxford parkway. A 2-person wide pavement bottleneck queue of up to 16000 people, next to a 40mph road especially when fans are trying to leave after a match, in the evening, after dark after having a couple of beers will be a nightmare. It will take hours and will be especially dangerous when fans are inebriated after a match</p> <p>In addition, the pedestrian traffic plans are woefully inadequate. The majority of fans will come by car, as train prices are extremely high and only set to become higher. Going by train also means changing at Oxford, or going via London which may not make sense for fans to use because of travel time, complexity, and cost. If they come by car, they will have to use the park and rides. It will not be a good experience for fans trying to find the nearest park and ride with free spaces and then having to be reliant on shuttle buses to get to and from their car. Having the extra complexity cost and time and will very likely cause a lot of fans to fill the car park in Sainsbury's and park in local residential streets. Parking around the Kassam is already a problem and that's a stadium of half the capacity. This will mean there will need to be permit holders-only zones and a lot of parking officers to enforce all of the side streets and stiff penalties to allow residents to leave their houses on match days. This will cause chaos and many residents are very concerned about the real impact this will have.</p> <p>Parking, park and ride with shuttle buses and onsite facilities</p> <p>There are 78 regular, plus 104 Disabled parking spaces on site in this plan and only one</p>

narrow pedestrian route for people coming via public transport. 180 bed hotel is going to be probably 250-300 guests at least. Plus, there will be a lot of staff who need parking. It won't be sufficient even for just the staff and hotel guests. There is also going to be a restaurant, gym, a Clinic, and conference spaces for up to 1000 attendees. The plans are insufficient to accommodate customers and staff of all of the secondary facilities of the stadium even on non-match days and without any events being hosted. Also, the communal areas and on-site facilities are very unlikely to be used by residents as it will be far easier to use the existing facilities and green spaces in Kidlington as they are closer, have less local traffic and have a lot easier access.

The stadium will have a capacity of 16000. Under these plans, it is reliant on all or most fans coming by train, park at any available spaces at the 750 space Oxford Parkway or be shuttled to Oxford Parkway from other park and rides around Oxford. These 15000+ people will need to walk down the road along widened footpaths that would still only be developed to accommodate only 2 people wide, then cross the busy 40mph road to get to Oxford Parkway.

The First proposal which was rejected was to close Oxford Road. The current plans drawn now include a footbridge. This will still be inadequate, when almost all fans will arrive at the train station or one of the park and rides where shuttle buses will drop them off at the Oxford Parkway site. Wouldn't it also make more sense for there to be more parking for shuttle bus stops within the proposed site where they could drop and pick up fans?

The bus stops on the road outside the stadium do not have their own bus gate to take them to the side of the road, which will just cause traffic build up due to people being held up by stopped buses, especially with the number of shuttle buses needed for these plans.

The Frieze Way crossing

The Frieze Way crossing location is also not feasible and is very dangerous. Why are there plans to place a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights on a 70mph road? This is not something that would never be considered installing on a motorway or any other dual carriageway that is 70mph. It is incredibly dangerous and would like to be the cause of many accidents and potential loss of life. If lots of traffic light-controlled crossings are installed, this will slow traffic down and increase congestion in the area. Why not install wide pedestrian bridges and underpasses that would allow safe and higher flow crossing.

Economics

The economic impact is clearly overstated by the use of gross value-added figures. These figures are for output money per employee to the company and are only partially added to the local economy and to the incomes of households. The real economic benefits for the area are the wages and 285000 business rate given to the council, minus any incurred costs for the council. For example, the plan states it will support 285 net full-time equivalent jobs on-site generating 12.6m total which works out at 44200 per job. This is an extremely unlikely average salary as many of the jobs will be low skill lower pay jobs which will be close to minimum wage which is 23,797.28 per year for 40 hours a week. Their figure is well above the national average for all jobs which is 34,900. It is also likely that not even the supervisors or managers of the onsite businesses will be earning even the average amount they have stated.

The details do not include the details of which of the 'new' onsite jobs are just the renaming of the same jobs that are already held at the Kassam which would be moved a few miles down the road

The documents only mention that 'some' of the offsite figures include current retained jobs. It is difficult to equate the figure given of 5.8m per year that will be generated by increased traffic to other businesses in the area. Especially if you are just moving site and the named businesses in the area.

The increased traffic will make it harder to get to existing jobs, harming the local economy as well as the other negative effects on the area. Including, the costs to the local authority due to illegal parking; enforcing parking rules or any probable antisocial behaviour and policing. These factors as well as any commuting from non-local employees will reduce the economic benefits, we are led to believe and may even make the stadium a net loss for the local economy. Many Kidlington Residents have already calculated that we will not get a real net benefit from having the OUFC new stadium built in the area of the current proposed site and under these plans. Instead, it would be highly detrimental to their lives and community overall.

The the conditions of the lease. "The club must produce a net-zero plan"

These plans clearly do not meet the conditions of the lease. One of the conditions is that "The club must produce a net-zero plan that is fully costed and comes with clear timescales and outcomes from design, construction and full operation of the stadium." These plans clearly do not meet the requirement in emissions alone. The emissions generated from the construction of the project alone will be enormous. The stadium will be made of mostly concrete and steel which are highly carbon-intensive to produce, transport and use in construction. The surrounding road parking and pavements will also be made of very

carbon-intensive materials like bitumen. The construction workers will likely live well outside of Oxfordshire as with most large projects which will generate a lot of emissions in transport. The construction vehicles and equipment will almost certainly also be mostly powered by fossil fuels, and all power needed onsite will also very likely be generated by fossil fuel generators.

There may be a suggestion they will use biofuels and solar, but this in reality will be tricky to implement due to lack of availability of biofuels and sustainable construction equipment among contractors. Also, any new plants planted will just replace old plants destroyed in construction. Overall, it will have a huge carbon footprint which will be more than solar on the stadium roof can offset. Plus, you have the emissions generated by the transport of fans. This will be large as most people still have fossil fuel cars and the buses will also take a while to be replaced by electric buses. Also, the train line at Oxford Parkway (the Chiltern line) is not electrified and currently runs diesel trains with flat non-aerodynamic fronts and there are no plans to electrify the line, only aspires to want to do it at some point. It will likely remain a source of high emissions for many decades. This means in reality that all of the methods of transport proposed will have a large carbon footprint which again definitely will not be offset by some solar panels when the grid nets zero in 2035. After 2035, using solar will not offset emissions generated by using electricity and will therefore not reduce the carbon footprint of this project.

Solar panels also take 1-3 years to offset the emissions of their own production. Moreover, air-source heat pumps and making sure the building is not using fossil fuels whilst operating also does not offset the emissions of the project; it only reduces operating emissions. A project can only be net zero if all the emissions generated due to the existence of the project are recaptured or offset by the emissions from the surrounding area outside of the project being reduced. Reducing emissions of areas within a project, is not the same as offsetting as emissions are still a positive figure after being reduced. The plan is of a leading industry standard in emission reduction, but the industry is very behind other sectors, and it still does not meet the zero-emission target it needs, to meet the conditions of the lease.

Finally, the local views:

Many of the locals do not want the stadium for many different reasons and have already stated this in the Kidlington Parish Council held poll.

Kidlington is not the place for a 6-story high stadium which will be totally out of place in the local area and the police presence required for matches will also be necessitated. Will residents be able to go out in their neighbourhood and beyond on match days. Many have stated they will avoid the area and are worried about feeling confined to their homes due to traffic or antisocial behaviour. Local residents who have expressed their concerns and objection to the relocation and building of the stadium, have already also been repeatedly harassed, abused, and threatened by Oxford United supporters. What does this tell us about fan behaviour if the stadium is to go ahead and these fans are in front of our homes and in our neighbourhoods regularly? What will it be like for local residents on match days, especially when the fans have consumed alcohol and been riled up by the match? Some residents have already felt forced to move away, especially those who are disabled or vulnerable. Kidlington has firmly resisted many plans which change the close village feel including by de-electing anyone who tries to change its status to a town. Many of the residents do not speak up due to fears of harassment, intimidation or because they do not know how. It is also very difficult to find detailed information about this for many other people as you have to wade through lots of documents to try and find figures and details that are important.

Residents also feel they are being ignored and the council is forcing it on them regardless of whether they want it. The parish poll taken a few months ago was strongly against this proposal even with Oxford United having a larger campaign than any opposition. It also had a considerably high turnout given the very short time the polls were open, and the queues for voting were very long.

This is clearly an issue local Kidlington people deeply care about. If councillors represent the people, then if the councillors themselves need to represent and support the views of the majority of these people whom they are serving.

The amount of people who turn out at the polling stations continues to decrease. Therefore, this is only likely to decrease further, when people see councillors backing any ill-thought-out plan which is clearly not fit for purpose due to the ill choice of location, design and insufficient capacity of the size of area chosen.

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Attachments