

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	Support
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I have lived in Kidlington for most of my nearly 60 years, so I have been part of the village community for a long period of time. I think in that time that Kidlington has lost its character and regerttably its reputation as simply as dormitory for Oxford has been fortified. There is so little happening in Kidlington that unless you escape to Oxford for entertainment, sleep is arguably the only decent option. Kidlington needs revitalising and local government at all levels does not appear to have the wherewithal (or funds) to make this happen.</p> <p>The proposed stadium when complete offers so many opportunities for generations to come - rather than the older generation who are most likely to object to this proposal and frankly, not be around - in terms of inspiring them to see, enjoy and take part in sport, improve health and wellbeing, provide jobs, attract investment and provide a world class facility befitting the City of Oxford and the County of Oxfordshire. A facility that residents of the village and the county can be proud.</p> <p>The value of this existing site as part of the green belt is vastly overstated by objectors. The area is for want of a better term "scrubland", which I have passed on my way to/from work over many years. There is a huge opportunity to enhance the bio-diversity of the area and provide access to this land that apart from a brief period and for a few people, has never been afforded before.</p> <p>Investment in flood improvement and improved care to facilities at Stratfield Brake only serve to enhance the opportunities afforded by this development. These are both opportunities that local authorities cannot afford to invest in, again enhancing the availability, viability, access to green space and health benefits provided by the stadium. This is an opportunity that Oxfordshire County has recognised and hope that Cherwell does so by approving the application.</p> <p>I want to contextualise my comments against how run-down the village of Kidlington has become. Whilst this would be no different to many areas of the country, few have the bare faced opportunity to revive the situation afforded by this stunning development. Like many town and village centres, Kidlington has lost so many specialist, local retailers and they have either not been replaced, leaving unsightly shop units prone to graffiti and vandalism or chains of banal charity shops. Kidlington seems also seems to have uniquely plagued by an influx of garish barbers shops. There has to be more diversity in the shops on offer if the local economy is to be revived and this is the opportunity afforded by this development, generating opportunities for existing business and for those local people who are able and willing to take the chance. Perhaps for example, Kidlington would not have lost its much loved patisserie in Garden City recently, had the trade from matchdays and the facility in general been located nearby. Make no mistake, this about revival of a village that has become stagnant and depressing.</p> <p>Turning to environmental benefits, it appears to me that Oxford United want to be at the cutting edge in providing a stadium that is eco-friendly both in its build and going forward. The Club is clearly intent on marshalling its support to commit to "travel green" something</p>

which cannot be achieved at its existing rented dump of a ground. Much of the travel infrastructure is already in place at Oxford Parkway and through the fabulous rail and bus links, totally at odds with the current situation for OUFC and its fans. Car travel to games - currently often the only option for many - would be dramatically reduced for the benefit of all road users in Oxfordshire. In this case, it truly does require Councillors in Cherwell being able to see what is best for the wider environment in Oxfordshire rather than the narrow view of village objectors. There is no doubt that this application sits comfortably with government and local government policy in relation to sustainable travel and the build and operation of the stadium is similarly committed to sustainability and carbon neutrality.

As with most major developments there has to be a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty about how precisely all the elements of a project will come together. Much is made of this by local objectors yet, as a Kidlington resident of many years standing, I am convinced that these are teething problems that can be resolved if there is a will to do so. The idea, for example, that traffic problems do not exist in Kidlington and will be perpetually worse solely as a result of the stadium, is both fanciful and an act of irresponsible scaremongering.

As a resident of Kidlington, I wholeheartedly support this planning application and hope that the Councillors in Cherwell District will recognise the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that is being afforded to the village, the district and the county.

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Attachments