

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>For the attention of the Cherwell District Council's Planning team:</p> <p>I am writing to set out my objections to the proposed Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) planning application.</p> <p>My key reasons are set out as follows:</p> <p>i) Lack of consideration of Green Belt policy - It is understood that development such as this in a Green Belt area isn't allowed apart from under very special circumstances. OUFC note that the stadium is an inappropriate development that would cause harm to the Green Belt but the reasons why they feel it is acceptable are still very woolly, including their need to find a new home by 2026 which was their issue rather than something that should be put upon CDC and Kidlington residents and there is no clear evidence that they have exhausted negotiations in relation to the existing site. For CDC to be performing their functions correctly, they should be challenging this in detail as it is not a 'very special circumstance'.</p> <p>ii) The Alternative Sites Report is a poorly prepared and pre-determined document. How can it be seen as reliable if it was prepared after the lease was agreed by Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet? This is a key example of the lack of detailed analysis by OCC in letting this application get as far as a planning application being submitted without sufficient due diligence.</p> <p>iii) For Kidlington, it will change the face of what must be remembered is still a village. On a general level, the additional traffic, disruption and potential negative behaviour by home and away fans is a huge concern.</p> <p>iv) Sustainable travel proposals by OUFC are very vague when the majority of fans travel by cars at present. This is a major concern which should have far more detailed analysis. There is a fan travel section in the planning sustainability statement but how can it be relied upon as a valid source of data if it is based on surveys of football supporters, many who very vocal on social media about their keenness for the stadium to move.</p> <p>v) Environmental benefits seem rather spun in favour of the application rather than applying a city wide approach on a site by site basis. What assessments were done for other sites, including the new potential Cowley branch line being considered? Knocking down one stadium to build an entire new one is not in line with county wide environmental policy.</p> <p>vi) It is not clear what the social and community benefits are and these are clearly not guaranteed. The early commitments to local Kidlington youth sport have been gradually watered down at this proposal has developed and I am concerned that the club will let down youth football in particular in the area.</p> <p>vii) The application talks about improved access to the Green Belt but this is a poor argument by OUFC which when interrogated falls apart quite easily. The actual amount of</p>

open Green Belt and green space will be quite limited in reality. The usage of it on match days will likely be for fans so it won't be available to general public at all times and no new public rights of way are being formed.

viii) Negative impact on existing users for local park and rides in the area.

ix) Insufficient clarity on the bridge over to the station that CDC requested. Put simply, this is needed as without it there will be road closures and should be an integral part of this planning application, not a separate one.

x) It is understood that Thames Valley Police have already raised concerns that fans won't use designated crossing routes. Where is this covered in the application?

xi) Have OUFC, CDC and OCC properly considered the potential impact on the strategic road network including the A34 and the A40? This isn't sufficiently covered by the application.

xii) For people living in Garden City in Kidlington, there would be widespread abuse of parking on residential roads and any potential permit scheme would not be welcomed by residents.

xiii) Parking proposals of only 184 parking spaces and 2 coach bays is appalling. How can this be considered as appropriate when OUFC have advised that over 80% of their supporters travel by car currently. Unless the public transport infrastructure is magically improved to a much higher quality and offer, this will continue to be the case. The same comment applies to the amount of cycle stands proposed which is far less than needed and again will rely in the Parkway site.

xiv) Traffic congestion - congestion really needs to be looked at closely by CDC. It is understood that OUFC used an incorrect traffic modelling tool and a correct modelling is not yet available. This is very poor practice and shouldn't be something that the Council should allow people to comment on when the data is actually available rather than on something that is not suitable as evidence.

xv) Insufficient thought has been given in the application to the safety of non-football pedestrians and cyclists who would like to use the pedestrian paths and cycleways on matchdays. Why not?

xvi) Road closures - these seem to be referred to as diversions in the planning application but I had understood that OCC's status was that the Oxford Road can't be closed. I would expect that the County Council are objecting to the OUFC planning application on this fundamental point if they are to perform their functions correctly. OUFC's reference to closures being at least 30 minutes before and after matches is unrealistic and a more sensible traffic / pedestrian flow model must be applied which will likely show greater delays than a mere half an hour's inconvenience. The application also refers to key bus services and coaches being marshalled through during periods of lighter pedestrian flows and also a direction route and new pedestrian crossings. With the current road infrastructure, this will be chaos and OUFC simply don't seem to understand the impact it will have on Kidlington residents when these roads are already congested.

xvii) The OUFC is disingenuous when it states that 'many of our fans live within 20 minutes walk, cycle, or on public transport of the proposed location'. Anyone who has followed Oxford United as a football club is well aware that the majority of fans live in East Oxford. OUFC simply saying this in the application doesn't immediately make it true, it is just spin to get a planning application through.

xviii) Oxford Parkway station. This was not designed for football stadium use and is not fit for purpose for the levels of pedestrian flow proposed. Why hasn't this been analysed in detail in the application? There are real safety / parking / congestion issues here that have not been duly considered.

xix) OUFC refer to match day controlled parking zones being proposed. This is a clear indication that they know a large amount of fans will travel by car and have negative impacts on the local community. This isn't how a controlled parking zone is supposed to work and would surely require separate consultation?

xx) I have concerns that parking in other spaces close by like Exeter Hall, Stratfield Brake, and Cutteslowe Park will be used by fans when they are already well used by local people.

xxi) General concerns over nature conservation including the quality of the bat and reptile

surveys and the overall loss of trees.

xxii) It is understood that the site is a potential flood risk. How is this being mitigated?

xxiii) Concerns over environmental pollution and high noise levels.

xxiv) Insufficient mitigation measures for anti-social behaviour in the application.

xxv) The pre-app Design and Review Panel report makes it clear that the site is slightly squeezed and there is no spare land. This is clearly evidence of concerns of overdevelopment.

xxvi) The Cherwell Local Plan does not include a football stadium. Surely such a large site needs to be assessed at the highest level as it will effectively remove any separation left between Kidlington and Oxford and it is understood that the Planning Inspector raised this point.

I do hope that the above points are taken seriously for a project that will have a huge impact on the local infrastructure and community in the long term. My concerns are that without the above points being sufficiently addressed the impact will be a negative one.

Received Date

20/04/2024 17:33:43

Attachments