

Comments on Oxford University Development 'Begbroke Innovation District' Planning Application CDC 23/02098/OUT

I have been contacted by a number of constituents who have concerns and comments about the above planning application.

General Comments

The push to deliver Oxford's Unmet Housing Need continues to impact upon villages and settlements outside the city.

My constituents regularly complain about the negative impacts of this very high level of growth, including:

- Growing congestion;
- Slower journey times;
- Poorer air quality;
- Pressure on GPs and hospitals;
- Flooding and waste water problems;
- Crowded buses and traffic congestion
- Reduction of green spaces

Any new development must take account of this reality and ensure that new developments do not make these issues worse. Good planning will acknowledge the reality of these past decisions and produce solutions that wholly and adequately mitigate for them.

More specifically, residents have told me that they are concerned about the loss of connectivity between Yarnton and Kidlington, the impact on local traffic and the increased flood risk. These points are expanded below.

Connectivity between Yarnton & Kidlington/Sandy Lane Crossing

Significant concerns have been raised about the proposed closure of the Sandy Lane and Yarnton Lane crossings by Network Rail. Maintaining connectivity between the two settlements of Yarnton and Kidlington is critical. People who live in Yarnton depend on the ability to get to Kidlington, Gosford Hill School, local supermarkets as well as accessing day-to-day essential services such as GP surgeries and pharmacies.

Equally people who live in Kidlington, and who work in Begbroke Science Park need to stay connected. Investment will need to be made to improve travel options, otherwise the alternative route for vehicles via the A44 will add to congestion and travel times for all.

The potential closure of Sandy Lane level crossing and the requirements for any replacement bridge access must put the connectivity of these two settlements as a priority. I am concerned that the outline planning application makes a vague reference to 'improvements to the existing Sandy Lane and Begbroke Hill road, [and] a bridge over the Oxford Canal'. This needs a much more detailed solution that maintains and improves access between Yarnton and Kidlington.

This links to my concerns about the sustainability of the development. The new community needs to be built with better connected public transport options hard-wired into the design.

Housing

To combat climate change there should be a stronger emphasis on the delivery of the highest standard of energy efficiency in new housing – both for social and affordable housing as well as larger homes.

Traffic Impacts

I have particular concerns about the impact of traffic on the communities of Yarnton and Kidlington. I would like to see the traffic modelling assessments of the new development, and also the expected traffic impacts on existing communities taking into account the proposal to site the Oxford United Football Club at the site south of Stratfield Brake.

Flood Risk

For several years, residents in Yarnton and Kidlington has been subject to multiple flood events where immense damage has been caused to property from poor drainage and ill maintained flood mitigation measures. Past flooding has caused misery and significant disruption to the people of Yarnton and Kidlington, leading to distress and financial cost.

Yarnton Flood Group has consistently highlighted the flood risk in the area to myself and local councillors. I have significant concerns that the cumulative impact of surface run-off water from neighbouring Land PR7b, any proposed development at The Triangle and this planning application (23/02098/OUT) has not been fully evaluated and I would like to understand the mitigation measures proposed to account for the cumulative impacts.

I would ask that the Planning Authority consider flood mitigation on a strategic and spatial basis. This could be an opportunity to pre-empt Government proposals to use nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk, while also boosting biodiversity net-gain delivery. Given the potential off-site cumulative impact of pluvial flooding resulting from PR8 and PR9 development, a holistic flood management strategy would be of great benefit to the current built environment of Yarnton, Kidlington and Begbroke.

Yarnton Flood Group have suggested that there is merit in considering the flash-flood risk from Spring Hill to the west and the wrap-around nature of strategic sites PR8 and PR9 to the north of Yarnton village, and looking to divert waters (particularly foul drainage) through the two new sites, around the north of the current village of Yarnton, and into the main sewer at its current termination at the abandoned Yarnton sewage treatment site. I would support the evaluation of this option in the overall scheme.

Layla Moran

Member of Parliament for Oxford West & Abingdon