

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on behalf of Oxford United Football Club (OUFC: 'the Applicant') to accompany a planning application for a new stadium development at Land East of Stratfield Brake and West of Oxford Parkway Station, known as The Triangle ('the Site').

1.2 The Proposed Development for the purposes of the application and the ES is as follows:

*'Full planning permission for the 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'*

1.3 This Chapter outlines the background to the Applicant, a summary of the Site's context, a summary of the Proposed Development, requirements and purpose of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the structure this ES will follow, and the project team.

## About the Applicant

1.4 OUFC is a professional football club in the county of Oxfordshire which currently competes in League One of the English Football. In 2001, the Club moved to The Kassam Stadium from The Manor Ground, where it played their football for nearly three quarters of a century. OUFC's current home the Kassam stadium is unsustainable in a number of ways, and remote from public transport. With the current agreement for the Kassam Stadium coming to an end in 2026, there is an urgent need to develop a new stadium in order to protect the future existence of one of the oldest football clubs in the UK.

1.5 Much like the county of Oxfordshire, OUFC comes from a proud heritage and rich history. The Club has aspirations for a new stadium to be a community landmark which contributes meaningfully to the economy and society of Oxfordshire. This is a once in a generation opportunity to provide a new home for sport, entertainment, business, education and tourism for the whole of Oxfordshire to be proud of.

## Summary of Site Context

1.6 The Site is approximately 7.17 ha and is situated 6 km to the north of Oxford and at the gateway of Kidlington. The Site includes stretches of Oxford Road along its north-eastern boundary, and Frieze

Way along the north-western boundary. Kidlington Roundabout is located to the north of the site, and woodland forms the southern boundary of the site, beyond which is agricultural land. Beyond the south-eastern boundary of the Site Oxford Parkway Railway Station and the Park and Ride, and to the west of the Site is Stratfield Brake Sports Ground.

- 1.7 The Site is also bound by a number of site allocations within the adopted Local Plan. A detailed description of the Site and surrounding area is found in **Chapter 3**.

## Summary of Proposed Development

- 1.8 The Proposed Development includes the development of a stadium and ancillary uses. The Stadium has a capacity of 16,000 people and will include Sky boxes and flexible lounge spaces for match and non-match day uses including corporate, community, education and other events. The Proposed Development also includes a 180-bed hotel and a variety of commercial spaces opening out onto a new plaza and community park. These commercial spaces will include a public restaurant, bar, health and wellbeing clinic, OUFC Shop and a gym.
- 1.9 These uses will be situated within a strong landscape setting, with native species and landscaping elements incorporated into the design. The vision is to incorporate flexible multi-functional spaces that can be enjoyed whether it be a match day or not. The project aims to connect the stadium to the wider countryside, woodlands, canal walks, and nearby settlements in a way that is attractive, safe, and enjoyable for walkers and cyclists, while also promoting environmental and cultural stewardship.

## Requirement for EIA

- 1.10 The statutory requirements for carrying out an EIA, the contents of the ES, and the procedures for determining planning applications for 'EIA Development' are set out within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'EIA Regulations').
- 1.11 The aim of an EIA is to protect the environment by ensuring that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) grants planning permission for a project in full knowledge of the likely significant effects on the environment<sup>1</sup>. As set out in Regulation 4(1) of the EIA Regulations, an EIA is a process comprising three parts:
- (a) *"The preparation of an environmental statement;*
  - (b) *Any consultation, publication and notification required by, or by virtue of, these Regulations or any other enactment in respect of EIA development; and*
  - (c) *The steps required under regulation 26."*

- 1.12 Regulation 4(2) states an EIA must identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the Proposed Development on the following factors:
- (a) Population and human health;
  - (b) Biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under [any law that implemented] Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;
  - (c) Land, soil, water, air and climate;
  - (d) Material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; and
  - (e) The interaction between the factors referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d).
- 1.13 The EIA Regulations categorise proposed developments into two types. Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations lists developments that always require EIA, and Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations lists developments that may require EIA if it is considered that they could give rise to significant environmental effects.
- 1.14 The application qualifies as EIA development under Schedule 2, Category 10 (b) which relates to 'Infrastructure Projects' of which the proposal would fall under the category of *'urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas'*. Category 10 (b) sets the threshold as follows:
- i. The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or
  - ii. the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
  - iii. the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.
- 1.15 Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations makes provision for a developer to request a 'Screening Opinion' from the LPA to ascertain whether an EIA is required if the development meets the above thresholds. This decision is based on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising in relation to the development proposals. The more environmentally sensitive the location, the more likely it is that the effects on the environment will be significant and will require an EIA. Whilst the Site does not fall within a 'sensitive area', as defined by Regulation 2(1) of the EIA Regulations, due to the scale and nature of the proposals, a Screening Opinion has not been requested, and a voluntary ES has been prepared and submitted.
- 1.16 In line with the EIA Regulations, the purpose of this ES is to identify and assess potential significant environmental effects. In doing so, it will assess the baseline environmental conditions and the likely significant effects during the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development. The ES also identifies proposed mitigation to reduce identified effects, as well as enhancement measures.

## Structure of the ES

1.17 The ES is provided in four parts:

- **Non-Technical Summary** – contains, in non-technical language, a summary of the main text as a separate self-contained document.
- **Volume 1: Main Text (This Document)** – contains a detailed description of the Proposed Development. It evaluates the existing environmental baseline conditions and identifies and addresses the predicted significant environmental effects that could occur as a result of the Proposed Development. It also provides analysis of the design process and how mitigation measures have been embedded into the design, where possible, to prevent, reduce or offset any significant environmental effects identified. Where this is not possible, mitigation has been proposed to alleviate those effects which cannot be dealt with through embedded mitigation.
- **Volume 2: Figures** – contains all the illustrative material referred to in the Main Text (Volume 1).
- **Volume 3: Appendices** – contains details of assessment methodologies, assessment data, technical reports. and background information.

1.18 **Table 1.1** below outlines the structure and content of Volume 1: Main Text.

**Table 1.1 - Structure and Context of Volume 1: Main Text.**

| Chapter Number | Chapter Title                                       | Content  |
|----------------|---|--|
| 1              | <b>Introduction</b>                                 | This Chapter summarises the background to the site and the Applicant, the Proposed Development, the requirement and purpose of the ES, and a summary of the structure of this ES and the project team involved.  |
| 2              | <b>Approach to EIA</b>                              | This Chapter outlines the methodology applied throughout the ES.   |
| 3              | <b>Description of the Site and Surrounding Area</b> | This Chapter provides a description of the site and surrounding area.  |
| 4              | <b>Description of Development</b>                   | This Chapter provides a description of development.  |
| 5              | <b>Consideration of Alternatives</b>                | This Chapter outlines the description of the alternatives considered.  |
| 6              | <b>Planning Policy Context</b>                      | This Chapter summarises the relevant local and national planning policy context against the proposed scheme is to be assessed.   |
| 7-18           | <b>Technical Chapters</b>                           | These Chapters provide a description of the existing baseline condition, the specific methods used to assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development, an assessment of these effects and mitigation measures proposed to remove/reduce adverse significant effects for each receptor on a chapter-by-chapter basis. A summary of the significant effects is given at the end of each chapter. |
| 19             | <b>Cumulative Effects</b>                           | This Chapter assesses the potential for significant cumulative environmental effects associated with the Proposed Development.   |
| 20             | <b>Summary</b>                                      | This Chapter provides a summary of the ES findings.  |

1.19 The ES is one of the supporting documents submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) as part of this planning application. It should be read in conjunction with other technical information that, whilst external to the ES, also accompanies the planning application

## The Project Team

1.20 The project team, authors of ES Chapters are set out in **Table 1.2** below. All members of the team are competent experts in accordance with Regulation 18(5) of the EIA regulations. The qualifications of those responsible for the preparation of the Technical Chapters are set out at **Appendix 1.1**. The ES has been coordinated by Ridge and Partners LLP.

**Table 1.2 - Summary of Project Team.**

| <b>Chapter</b>  | <b>Organisation</b>    |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>1-6: Introduction, Approach to EIA, Description of the Site and Surrounding Area, Description of Development, Consideration of Alternatives, Planning Policy Context</b> | Ridge and Partners LLP |
| <b>7: Landscape and Visual Impact</b>   | Fabrik                 |
| <b>8: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b>   | Ecology Solutions      |
| <b>9: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology</b>   | Cotswold Archaeology   |
| <b>10: Transport and Access</b>   | Ridge and Partners LLP |
| <b>11: Noise and Vibration</b>  | Mott Macdonald         |
| <b>12: Air Quality</b>  | Mott MacDonald         |
| <b>13: Lighting</b>   | Mott Macdonald         |
| <b>14: Flood Risk and Drainage</b>  | Mott Macdonald         |
| <b>15: Socio-Economics</b>  | Eksogen                |
| <b>16: Climate Change</b>   | Mott Macdonald         |
| <b>17: Waste</b>  | Mott Macdonald         |
| <b>18. Major Accidents and Disasters</b>  | LUC                    |
| <b>19: Cumulative Effects</b>   | Ridge and Partners LLP |
| <b>20: Summary</b>  | Ridge and Partners LLP |

1.21 The application has been submitted to Cherwell District Council. During the consultation period of the application, members of the public may comment on the application via the Council's online planning register<sup>ii</sup>, or in writing to:

Cherwell District Council  
 Bodicote House  
 Bodicote  
 Banbury  
 Oxon  
 OX15 4AA

1.22 A hard copy of the ES will also be available for viewing during normal opening hours at the above address.

1.23 Copies of the ES can be requested from Ridge and Partners for a fee of £15 (digital file). Hard copies can be provided for a reasonable fee. Requests can be made via the following contact details:

Ridge and Partners LLP  
Regents House  
65 Rodney Road  
Cheltenham  
GL50 1HX

Email: [planning@ridge.co.uk](mailto:planning@ridge.co.uk)

Tel: 01242 230066

## **References**

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<sup>i</sup> PPG: Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 4-002-20140306.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/>