

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	Paul Timms
Address	12 Parmiter Close, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8GS
Type of Comment	Support
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>There are several key reasons why this stadium should be built.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Oxford Utd Football Club is a huge part of the community, inspiring children and adults both on the field and off it. The real level of support and love for the club has been shown when the team has, on rare occasions, reached Wembley, when tens of thousands of people have attended to cheer on the U's.2. Despite the fallacious views of a tiny minority, there is no option to remain at the Kassam Stadium. This site has been officially earmarked by the council for redevelopment into housing, when the club's lease expires in 2026.3. The new stadium would be one of, if not the, greenest in the world. It will be the first to be powered solely by electricity, with solar panels all along the roof. It is also of a design which blends in to the surroundings, with the roof being low compared to most stadia. The roof's design will also keep the noise inside the stadium, thus not disturbing those in the near area.4. The proposed site is unused wasteland which has previously been used for motocross. The official ecology report found no reasons not to build on this land. Despite this, the northernmost corner of the Triangle will be developed into a managed wildlife habitat, promoting the wellbeing of animals and humans alike.5. There are concerns from a small number of people, most of whom like me do not live in the nearby village of Kidlington, about maintaining a gap between Kidlington and Oxford. The northern strip of Stratfield Brake is due to be developed into a housing estate, with Stratfield Farm at its centre. To the south of this are the sports pitches and a small strip of woodland, both of which offer a barrier to further housing. The stadium extends this barrier and will help to maintain this gap.6. There are a few concerns regarding the possible restriction of Oxford Road into a bus lane for a short period before and after matches. This proposal has the approval of the highways department and the police, and will ensure that thousands of people can cross the road safely, whilst still allowing public transport and bicycles to get through. Without this restriction and with no diversion signs in place, there is a danger of heavy traffic building up, drivers getting frustrated, buses not being able to get through, and a higher risk of pedestrians getting injured. Local users of this section of road will know when a match is on, and either avoid the area at those specific times or use the short diversion. If the season consists of 23 home league games, plus a handful of cup games and friendlies, then let's say that's 30 home games per year. If the road were restricted for 45 minutes both before and after those games, this restriction would be in place for a total of 45 hours per year, out of a total 8760 hours per year. That would mean the road would be open as normal for 99.5% of the year, and open for buses and cyclists for 100% of the year.7. The proposed site is extremely well situated for public transport, far more so than the

soon-to-be defunct Kassam Stadium. Travelling from outside Oxford, there are no straightforward methods of getting to and from the Kassam solely by public transport, especially for evening matches. This results in a large proportion of fans, both home and away, driving to the stadium. The new stadium would be next to Oxford Parkway railway station, linking up with train routes to the north, south and west, and soon to the east when the East-West Rail Link opens. It is also well served by buses from the city centre. I believe there would be a drastic reduction in the number of people driving to games. For those who do want/need to drive, the nearby Park & Ride will serve them well.

8. OUFC has promised to improve the sports facilities on Stratfield Brake, should the stadium be built next to there. This will be of great benefit to the local communities of North Oxford and Kidlington.

9. OUFC has also promised to put significant funds into other community projects, should the stadium be built. This would only be possible due to the club receiving the income from the stadium and its facilities, unlike the present situation where the club has to pay an unreasonably large amount to play in the current stadium, and receives no revenue from its use other than matchday ticket sales.

10. There will be significant economic benefits to the local communities, not just during construction which in itself would provide lots of work to local businesses within the Cherwell District, but jobs would be created on an ongoing, day-to-day basis.

11. Most importantly of all, without a stadium, Oxford United Football Club would cease to exist, and would deprive many thousands of people of one of their main passions. Football is a sport that many people attend in order to get away from their otherwise mundane or perhaps even troubling life. For 90 minutes they can become completely absorbed in two teams kicking a football, experiencing all the highs and lows of what that entails. To take this away would undoubtedly cause mental distress. Attending a football match has completely changed since the bad days of 40-50 years ago. Episodes of violence and bad behaviour have become rare, and such behaviour is frowned upon by the vast majority of supporters. Football clubs and the police are now very quick to ban people who commit offences and keep them away from matches, allowing the many to enjoy the atmosphere. Matches are attended by families with young children, and the club provides sensory rooms and other entertainment for young people and those who are on the spectrum. The new stadium would provide for this much more significantly than now, as well as making a huge provision for those requiring more assistance.

I would implore you to look at the facts, and only the facts, when making this decision. There should be no weight given to rumours, false accusations, or unofficial opinions. The benefits of the stadium are massive for the residents and businesses within Cherwell District Council, and it would be a complete waste, not to mention a disaster, to turn down this great opportunity.

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Attachments