

## Planning Application - 24/00539/F OUFC proposed stadium

Reasons for objecting are set out below

### Road closures and implied traffic congestion

It appears that OUFC used an incorrect traffic modelling tool and the correct VSIM analysis is not available. Therefore, it is currently irrelevant to comment on this data which we will review and comment upon when published.

Oxford County Council stated when considering whether to lease the site that Oxford Road cannot be closed, yet the application disregards and proposes road closures (referred to as diversions). OCC also stated that a footbridge is required to avoid road closures, yet this requirement is also disregarded and should be an integral part of it, not the subject of a separate application.

The proposed road closures would in practice be for much longer than 30 minutes before and after matches. The suggested diversion routes are already heavily congested (Peartree Roundabout, Wolvercote Roundabout and Cutteslowe Roundabout in particular). These key local roads, including Five Mile Drive, would become “rat runs” on match days.

There is no persuasive data to support the assertion that many supporters will travel by train. Expense and capacity on the Oxford Parkway train route would likely be a highly limiting factor. Nor is there any basis for claiming “*many of our fans live within 20 minutes walk, cycle, or on public transport of the proposed location*”. In reality the availability of Park and Ride facilities will encourage fans to travel by car exacerbating congestion. Therefore, the intent for 90% of fans to travel by sustainable modes is only that and appears unfounded and unrealistic. It seems unlikely there would be a material reduction from the 83.1% who currently travel using private transport.

The bus lane to the East side of Oxford Road appears to have been removed in the plans submitted. Oxford road is a heavily used by residents to access sports facilities (including North Oxford tennis club and sport and leisure facilities Kidlington) and Sainsbury’s in particular. Loss of this route through road closures and impeding the free flow of buses cannot be considered acceptable.

If a significant number of fans continue to travel by car there will be significant issues for local residential areas, and businesses.

Thames Valley Police have expressed serious concerns for public safety on match days as well as impacts on the national road network (A34/A40 in particular).

We consider the travel plan submitted lacks credible commitments and is therefore not acceptable in its present form.

## Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework states that inappropriate development on the Green Belt is not allowed unless there are ‘very special circumstances’ (VSC).

OUFC accepts that the proposed stadium is an inappropriate development which would harm the Green Belt, but the application does not present a convincing VSC. In particular

- *“The club has to find a new home by 2026”* It has been publicly reported that the owner of says it is possible for OUFC to stay at Kassam Stadium. Therefore, Cherwell District Council should not accept this statement at face value nor as a VSC
- *“financial sustainability”* Given its financial condition (£24 million deficit) as reported in the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023, and without a substantial cash injection from its shareholders, it seems unlikely that OUFC would own the stadium

None of the suggested VSC criteria contain any substantive or persuasive case and do not appear to be acceptable.

## Parking

Parking spaces at 184 on site is inadequate given present supporter travel patterns. Yet the Design and Review Panel recommends that onsite parking should be reduced.

As a consequence, it is likely that there would likely be an increased strain on Park and Ride facilities. The P&R’s will already be facing additional demand when traffic filters/bus gates and workplace parking levy are introduced, let alone the Oxford North and other developments.

The application gives no specifics on how parking would be managed and controlled including the above and more widely such as CPZ’s