

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	Julia Donaldson
Address	15 Hayward Road,Oxford OX2 8LN
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I object to this planning application on several grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Green Belt development against the Local Plan. Allowing building on this land goes against the Cherwell Local Plan. The Local Plan kept the site as Green Belt land. If commercial enterprises are allowed to come along and disregard the Local Plan this is anti-democratic. The Local Plan process is one that local people engage in in good faith and local communities should expect development decisions to be made in line with this.- Environmental destruction. Allowing major construction on Green Belt land is not consistent with the direction of policy pursued by the Council, which has sought to address climate change. If the club stayed at its current site (ie no new construction) this would be the best option for the environment no matter what BREEAM rating is achieved. The triangle site is included in the proposed Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire by Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre. Moreover, Cherwell District Council's own Ecology Officer said that "The very high level of public use of the site which will occur at certain times will necessitate some areas to be retained and managed solely for biodiversity to ensure habitats can function" but this has not been addressed in the planning application. Allowing this development to go ahead would be hugely hypocritical and would surely leave residents questioning how sincerely councillors really take environmental protection, or whether there are vested interests at work in this case.- Oxford United is not being honest about its reasons for pursuing the development instead of staying put. It has become clear from information that has come to light in the last year that it does not, in fact, need to leave its current stadium site by 2026, but it has chosen not to seek to extend its lease. I understand the club may have business reasons for making this decision but these do not justify trying to build on Green Belt land. The National Planning Policy Framework allows inappropriate development (which Oxford United has acknowledged that this would be) only in very special circumstances but one of the club's key justifications is not valid - the claim that the club cannot extend its lease should be challenged. Further, the Alternative Sites report was prepared only after the lease had been prepared (and wrongly states that the club cannot stay at its current site), so I don't believe this was conducted impartially. The majority of Oxford United fans are based in east Oxford so why has there been no green belt site identified there? This would make walking and cycling most likely. The Council seems to be acting in the club's commercial interests rather than for local residents and many of us are wondering why this should be the case.- Parking. The application does not include nearly enough parking spaces to accommodate all of the fans likely to turn up to matches and other events. The application does not include an adequate plan for preventing the majority of home or away fans travelling by car and seeking to park within walking distance to the site. With 81% of supporters currently travelling by car this will be the norm in the future and the application does not include an effective strategy for achieving the pie-in-the-sky aim of having 90% of fans travelling sustainably. This will have knock-on effects for local residents, such as filling up the park & ride car parks, nearby car parks such as at Cutteslowe Park, which are already full much of

the time at weekends, and on busy residential streets. The new Oxford traffic filters will soon mean more people visiting Westgate and the city centre need to use the park and ride, meaning increased demand for park and ride parking from this group. The Match Day Parking Zones that are proposed in the application will have a significant effect on those of us living near the site and would have an adverse impact on our quality of life as streets are currently already busy and congested. If parking is taken up by Oxford United fans there will be less for eg community football events and other sports and weekend leisure activities that help to make our community vibrant and healthy.

- Road closures and increased traffic congestion. As the police have already outlined, there are major problems with the proposed road closures and the inevitable road and pavement congestion. The concerns of Thames Valley Police around congestion and safety have not been addressed in the planning application. At the moment it is not possible to comment on traffic modelling because the VISSIM models have not been produced. Nevertheless, it is clear that the location would be a disaster for the nearby roads. The A34 and A40 are key roads serving Oxford and the surrounding area and are extremely vulnerable to congestion and sensitive to traffic incidents already. Road closures (the 'diversions' in the application) and the lack of the promised footbridge are completely unacceptable because closures would interfere dramatically with the everyday life of local residents, causing further misery for those of us trying to get around, especially when the new traffic filters will already be forcing more vehicles onto the ring road. Oxford County Council has already said that roads cannot be closed so changing the term used in the application should fool no one.

- Promised community benefits should not depend on the club getting its new site. If the club is genuinely community-minded, it would be perfectly capable of developing more community initiatives, benefitting the wider Oxfordshire area, from its current site. The club is not a charity but a business and it is naive to believe that it will put community benefit above profit, no matter what promises it makes now try try and get its application approved.

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Attachments