

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	David Grant
Address	4 Warwick Court, Bicester, OX26 4YX
Type of Comment	Support
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>As a resident living in Cherwell District Council and an supporter of Oxford United Football Club, I support the application for the construction of the football stadium, and associated facilities. I outline the reasons for my support of the application below. I have specifically made comment on key considerations which I feel are key to the application.</p> <p>Socio-Economic Factors Football is not just a sport, for many people it is a way of life. They plan their week around football, often going to matches with family and friends. People have made lifelong friendships attending football matches. Win, draw or lose; it is evidenced that football provides a positive impact to physical health, mental wellbeing, education and employment; through community programmes, through job opportunities, through being something that people can focus on. Oxford United champions this, with significant focus and promotion of the community trust being a notable example. Now, imagine a scenario where Oxford United doesn't exist (which is a real possibility given the club's history and economic situations regarding its current location) and Oxfordshire has no professional sports team? It would be safe to assume that the four positive impacts outlined will substantially suffer. There would be some negative impact on mental wellbeing, adding pressure onto local NHS services. There would be an impact to physical health, with community groups who benefit from the programmes supporting by the club having to find alternatives or not offer the opportunities they currently do (it is worth noting that these opportunities benefit the elderly through walking football, and the disabled through similar programmes).</p> <p>Sport for Development have conducted research regarding the impact of football on communities, and I quote the following "Produced using data from 2019 to 2022, the report shows that EFL clubs and their club community organisations generated more than 865million of social value to towns and cities across the country through groundbreaking community programmes during the 2021/22 season". Bear in mind, this period was after COVID, there is substantial economic benefit to the local economy of having an football club close by. The current location of Oxford United is isolated, with limited economic benefit on the local community (due to the lack of community or local businesses around the location). The proposed location of the new stadium would mean that local businesses, local restaurants, local shops would be able to be a part of this economic benefit. I pose the question to CDC as a part of the planning permission decision, do YOU want to be the reason why Kidlington does not benefit from this social value, why Cherwell District does not receive the social value that this development will bring, just because of those elite that do not want this development in their back yard.</p> <p>Transport and Traffic I can understand how this is a contentious point of discussion with local residents, which is certainly being fuelled by those political individuals who are aligning themselves as anti-project. It is important to take the application on merit. In my view, the application does provide workable solutions to the management of match-day traffic, especially utilising transport links which are in place within close proximity of the site (good train links with</p>

Oxford Parkway, which can also utilise bus links), park and ride links for those who are travelling via vehicle. I do recognise that initially, there may be some disruption to local residents due to parking issues, especially on those residential areas close to the proposed site, however, these can be mitigated against through the implementation of permit parking schemes. if you need evidence on how the issue of parking can be mitigated against, look at over 50% of the football clubs within the Premier League and Championship which utilise public transport links and permit parking schemes. It is equally worth mentioning at this point on how there is a positive benefit to local people when it comes to parking. There is significant opportunity for local people to be able to financially benefit from the leasing of driveways and parking spaces through applications such as JustPark, which as a supporter who has travelled home and away, I have benefitted from using myself. There would also be an opportunity for CDC to benefit from parking, like the utilisation of the Stratfield Brake for parking. My overall point in this is that there are significant case studies where the success of carefully thought-out and council-backed mitigation measures, which if implemented as a part of this project, would significantly reduce any impact that this aspect has on the local community.

Personal View

I became an Oxford United supporter in 2010, in the run up to the Conference Play-Off Final. Before that, I grew up in a non-football supporting household, which was an unstable environment. Football gave me something positive to focus on, and so I can speak honestly about the positive influence football can have on mental health. Through that period, as a football supporter, there have been highs and lows. Personally, I have had highs and lows but during the lows, looking forward to football was something I used to get me through these lows. This is why I feel passionately about this application and the future of Oxford United. I am balanced though and can see why there are objections, but feel like the application has provided mitigation measures and evidence which identifies that this development will have an minimal negative impact on the local community, that is significantly outweighed by the positive impact.

It is time to put agendas and polarising views aside when assessing this application, and consider how this development will benefit the masses rather than inconvenience the few.

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Attachments