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Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) was first designated as a 'Neighbourhood Forum' in 2014, and was re-designated in 2019 and in 2024. It seeks to represent the views, in relation to planning matters, of residents in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area, located just 1 km south of The Triangle and stretching from the river Thames in the west to Cutteslowe Park in the east. Our Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was approved overwhelmingly by residents in a referendum in May 2021 and was subsequently 'made' by Oxford City Council.

WNF again OBJECTS to Cherwell District Council planning application 24/00539/F, in response to the re-consultation of May 2025.

This is our fifth statement of objection to planning application 24/00539/F. We strongly oppose the granting of planning permission, because of the unreasonable adverse impacts the operation of such a stadium on the Triangle site will have on local highways. These impacts will be felt especially by residents of the area that we represent, only 1km from the stadium.

We are objecting again because new information submitted by OUFC in two recent documents reveal problems that we already identified will be even worse than was apparent previously. These documents are:

- (i) Addendum Transport Assessment – Option and Sensitivity Tests 20 March 2025
- (ii) Oxford United FC – New Stadium Development Response to Security Comments [UPDATE]

1. Closure of Oxford Road

One of the most damaging consequences of OUFC's plans for locating their stadium at The Triangle is that, according to OUFC, Oxford Road would need to be closed to traffic¹ for substantial periods of time on match days. This is a very busy road; one of only two arterial routes for exiting the Oxford City northbound, and it is a prominent facility of our area. At the Cutteslowe roundabout it intersects another very busy road: the A40 forming Oxford's northern bypass. Closure of Oxford Road and the diversion of so much traffic via other roads and the Wolvercote roundabout will obviously cause immense disruption to local traffic flows, and hence inconvenience to many of our residents, e.g. those needing to shop at Kidlington Sainsbury's on a Saturday afternoon. Obviously, the severity of the inconvenience suffered by local residents would be highly sensitive to the length of time for which Oxford Road is closed. The new documents reveal closures will be even longer than suggested previously.

First, document (i) above makes clear (P.26) that OUFC expect it to take 35mins to clear Oxford Road of spectators, and hence the VISSIM modelling they are relying on (see P.101 of

¹ Except for local bus services, that will be escorted slowly through the crowds of thousands of pedestrians crossing Oxford Road.

the TAA) assumes road closures of 45mins before and after matches, to allow time for setting up and taking down of barriers, signage etc required to implement the closures. Thus it is clear the periods of closure are expected to be at least 50% higher than the 30mins referred to in earlier documents.

Second, document (ii) above refers (on P.1) to the possibility of Oxford Road being used as a 'muster point' to accommodate an 'Exceptional Egress' from the stadium in the event of an emergency requiring rapid evacuation. Since Oxford Road is normally busy with traffic and could not be closed rapidly enough to serve this purpose safely and effectively, the implication is that it might be necessary to close Oxford Road not just pre-match and post-match, but throughout matches too. If this were the case, closures of Oxford Road would extend for over 3 hours for each match: an extraordinarily severe imposition on the local road network.

Document (ii) proposes that the strategy for emergency evacuation, and therefore the decision whether to implement such a measure, would be decided via OUFC's 'event licencing application' after review and comment from the stadium's 'Safety Advisory Group'. We object strongly to this suggestion. Such important questions as whether the stadium could be evacuated safely and rapidly in an emergency, and whether this would require imposing on the local road network severe 3+ hour closures of Oxford Road, are crucial judgements potentially affecting many thousands of spectators and local residents. In our view, the Planning Committee will be accepting responsibility for these decisions, when deciding whether to grant planning permission.

2. Overwhelming of Oxford Parkway

One of the most unconvincing features of OUFC's match-day planning has been their assumption that spectators arriving by car will not try to park at Oxford Parkway. OUFC imagine they would all be deterred by signage placed along potential approach routes, by the requests of marshals at Parkway, and by the need to buy a cheap train ticket to park in the station car park at Parkway. In view of the clear implausibility of this vision, since Parkway will be, by far, the most convenient place to park for spectators, Oxfordshire County Council has asked OUFC for new match-day transport assessments, for the other extreme, and most likely, scenario, where virtually *all* spectator cars attempt to park at Parkway.

Results of this work are now available in document (i) above. They take account of current typical usage of the Parkway car park spaces by P&R users and rail passengers, together with the need on match days for spaces for OUFC's own staff, VIPs, spectator coaches, and queuing rail passengers. The resulting estimates of remaining car spaces likely to be available for spectators at Parkway are (see P.77 of (i)): 487 spaces (weekday evening match) and 291 spaces (Saturday match).

These figures can be compared with OUFC's previous predictions of the likely number of cars that will be arriving with spectators. Data provided previously indicate that OUFC estimate the typical number of spectators arriving by car to each match to increase from

5400 when the stadium opens, to 9440 eventually². OUFC also estimate in (i) (P.162) that the average occupancy of spectator cars will be 2.7. Hence, from OUFC's estimates³, the number of spectator cars arriving will increase from $5400 \div 2.7 = 2000$ when the stadium opens, to 3496 eventually. While OUFC hope these cars will be parked at other P&R car parks around Oxford's perimeter, the much more realistic scenario is that the majority will aim to park at the Parkway car parks, adjacent to the stadium.

Thus, when the stadium opens, each match day can be expected to see approximately 2000 spectator cars heading for a car park with approximately 487 empty spaces (weekday) or 291 empty spaces (Saturday), and the likely trend will be for this problem to become worse with time. The potential for chaos in our neighbourhood is clear, as spectators desperately look for other places to park. Also clear is the potential for gross inconvenience of non-spectators arriving by car to use the Parkway P&R facility or the train station, and finding no parking spaces available on match days.

Conclusion

For all these reasons, the consequences of OUFC's proposed stadium would be even more damaging to highways and car parks in the vicinity of our neighbourhood than was previously apparent. **We therefore OBJECT again to planning permission being granted.**

From Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee

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30 May, 2025

² See P.26 of ES Volume 3 Appendix 10.2.

³ These estimates are based on current statistics for spectator travel modes, whereas OUFC plan to encourage spectators to shift to modes of transport other than cars, so the 9440 figure might prove to be an over-estimate, but not to an extent sufficient to remove the problem of a chronic parking shortage at Parkway.