STAND UNITED

Oxford United FC

New Stadium Development Project Vision



May 2023



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Report prepared in conjunction with









Ekosgen

1 Project Background and Vision

Oxford United FC is a professional football club in the county of Oxfordshire and currently compete in the English Football League One. In 2001 they moved to The Kassam Stadium from The Manor Ground, where they played their football for nearly three-quarters of a century.

Oxford United now find themselves in a position where they can no longer play at the Kassam Stadium and want to create a home they can call their own for the 2026/27 season and beyond.

The club have set a requirement to the professional team of design and management consultants to develop a stadium which not only meets the needs of the club, but of its fans, community and neighbours.

The project aims to deliver the following benefits:

- Maintaining a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and protecting and enhancing the surrounding environment including biodiversity, connecting habitats and supporting nature recovery
- Improving public access to high-quality nature and green spaces
- Enhancing inclusive facilities for local sport groups and on-going financial support
- Significantly improving the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
- Developing local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
- Increasing education and innovation through the provision of an accessible sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
- Supporting the council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development
- Demonstrating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity





To create a sustainable sports, entertainment and lifestyle landmark in Oxfordshire which is locally loved and internationally recognised. The stadium will set the benchmark for commercial innovation, environmental performance and community benefit, and put the visitor experience at the heart of everything it does.

The world of professional football is changing. The Covid19 pandemic and 2021 Fan Led Review of Football Governance has highlighted the financial fragility of clubs up and down the English leagues. The result; a focus on financial fair play and a strive for commercial sustainability.

Oxford United's current home - the Kassam stadium, is unsustainable in a number of ways, and remote from public transport. With the current agreement for the Kassam stadium coming to an end in 2026, there is an urgent need to develop a new stadium in order to protect the future existence of one of the oldest football clubs in the UK.

Much like the county of Oxfordshire; Oxford United comes from a proud heritage and rich history. The club has aspirations for a new, modern, eco performing stadium which is a significant community landmark that contributes meaningfully to the economy and society of Oxfordshire. This is a once in a generation opportunity to provide a new home for sport, entertainment, business, education and tourism which the whole county can be proud of.

Our vision is to deliver on the key issues identified by local residents and fans, to ensure that this is both a stadium for elite sports and community use. Our proposals will provide significant and sustained benefits to Kidlington and Gosford and Water Eaton residents, our fans and the wider Oxfordshire community.

Our vision is set upon the foundational principles which will be taken throughout the project.

We have identified the following foundational pillars for our vision.





Construct a new landmark for Oxford which instils community pride, is accessible, welcoming and puts the visitor experience at the heart, not just for fans of the game, but for all who visit.

United with the community



Be an active and positive part of the community, creating a sporting legacy and generating new employment, education opportunities and having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.

Sustainability at the core



Ensure that environmental and commercial sustainability is at the core, to protect the long-term future of our club and our planet.

Improving connectivity & access



Ensure the site and all facilities are a safe and inclusive place for all, with improved connectivity and access to the site, creating a hive of activity and an atmosphere of community, removing barriers to the site.

Promoting innovation



Utilise technology to improve the way things are done, nurturing a culture of collaboration and new ideas.





2 Site Context

The site is situated north of Oxford and at the gateway of Kidlington. The area is well connected; sitting adjacent to Oxford Parkway train station, the sustainable travel and bus routes and wider vehicle access provided by the A4165 and A4260 and the proximity to Oxford Airport.

The site makes it easily accessible for fans travelling from afar, while Stratfield Brake Woodland and trees aid the blending of the building into its urban edge setting.

The site is currently owned by Oxfordshire County Council and discussions are underway on the potential use.

The New Stadium Project is one of several developments happening in the area. The site is in close proximity to a number of site allocations identified in the Development Plan (highlighted in grey), which are at varying stages of planning and development. In combination, these developments will bring new homes, facilities, public open space and infrastructure. The presence of these other developments will be complimentary to the proposed new stadium, which will provide additional community facilities for a growing local population.



The site offers a strong location for the new home of Oxford United FC, a positive outcome for the club and its visitors. Overall, the new football stadium represents a perfect synergy of sport, nature, and sustainability. The project team have reviewed the site, taking into careful consideration the surrounding developments, site topography, ecological impacts, utilities and constraints, alongside developing early thoughts on the stadium orientation, capacity options and approach precedents, including Oxford Parkway station and reviewing the existing access routes.

Site Topography

The site exhibits a varied topography, with a relatively flat gentle gradient of 1:150 – 1:200 falling north to south.

Trees

There are a large number of trees on site with advice highlighting no TPOs. Surveys have identified a range of trees including some that are well established around the outskirts of the woodland area. The club have also reviewed the area with the Woodland Trust and it has been identified that there are signs of oak and ash dieback and poor management to the existing woodland. The club will see that the woodland access is enhanced and ensure appropriate maintenance is in place in partnership with the statutory authorities.

Geology / Hydrogeology

Initial assessments highlight that the underlying geology in the area is weathered Oxford clay overlying un-weathered Oxford clay. The underlying strata is unlikely to contain groundwater and there are no main rivers, watercourses or water bodies within 300m of the site.

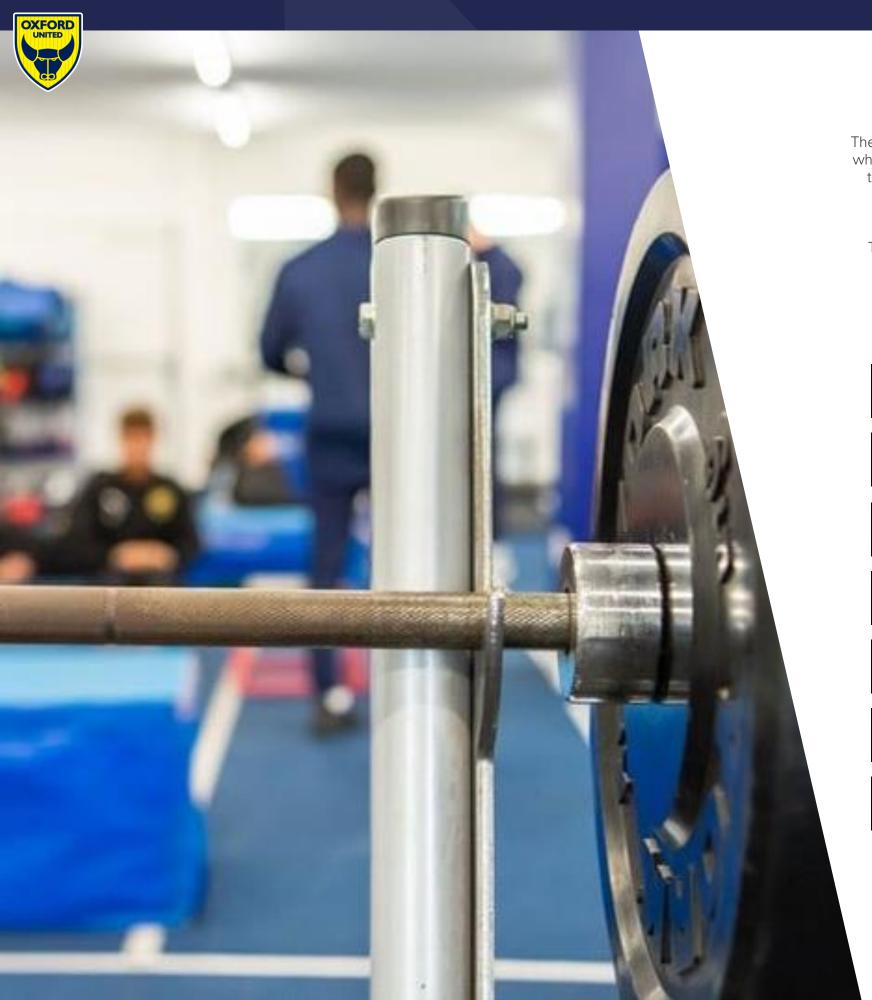
Drainage and Flood Risk

There are field ditches found on the western boundary and to the northern edge of the woodland. Initial review suggest these to be linked and discharge to the west via the culvert beneath the A4260. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore is not considered at risk of fluvial flooding. The west of the site however has been reviewed and indicates a risk of surface water flooding due to its topography which will be mitigated as part of any development.

Utility Infrastructure

There is a gas main to the north and east, and overhead power cable to the north of the site, and anticipated associated wayleaves and easements associated with both of these infrastructures.





3 Design Development

The proposed development is defined through a financial appraisal which identifies the ideal facilities which benefit both the club and the community. This contributes to the financial sustainability of the stadium, whilst also enhancing the offering to the local and national community around Oxford and the surrounding area.

The facilities listed below are to be included in a single building, providing a visitor focused destination for the community and wider network.

16,000 capacity stadium (including safe standing)

200-bed hotel, restaurant and café for visitors

Flexible community space for meetings, education and groups

Hospitality spaces for match day and non-match day conferencing and events

Active health and wellbeing facilities

Outdoor community and multi-functional plaza

Club shop

16,000 Seater Capacity Stadium (incl. safe standing)

The proposed stadium has been sized to sit within the optimum range of 14,000 – 18,000 seats, identified by a demand analysis undertaken by the club. Building a stadium too small will result in a stadium operating below the league one average attendance and restricting the number of fans and community visitors. However, building a stadium too large will create a poor matchday experience for fans. Based on the club's current ambitions and aspirations, a 16,000 capacity stadium has been selected to create the best visitor experience, whilst allowing for open spaces to the north and protecting the woodland to the south.



Hospitality / Conferencing / Events

It is important to create a stadium that has spaces which are flexible and adaptable for a variety of community and commercial uses.

Matchday hospitality will feature a range of offerings with some of the latest and innovative experiences available. On nonmatchdays, spaces will be open to the community, schools and businesses to utilise for conferences, collaboration and events.



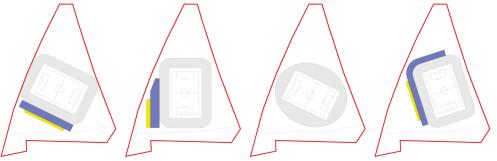




Using this facility mix, the team have created a massing of the stadium and located it in a conceptual masterplan based upon the constraints of the site, and in reviewing the optimum orientation of the playing surface.

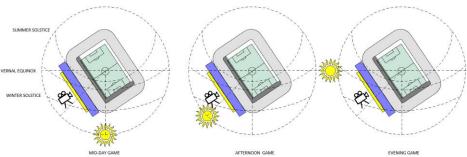
Early Stadium Massing Study

Differing stadium shapes and orientations would affect the stadium capacities. However, even though some orientations would physically allow for a larger stadium, this leaves very little room for circulation, access and green open spaces.



Early Stadium Orientation Study

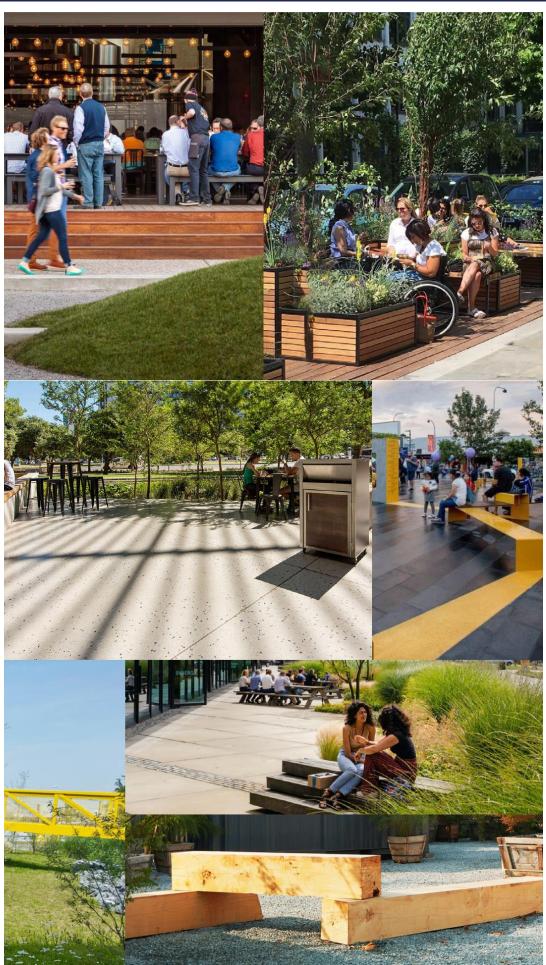
Differing stadium orientations bring with them their own list of pros and cons, relating to camera locations, position of the "Main Stand", relationship to the site, transport links and site dimensions.



Based on this study, the masterplan was defined by ensuring that the stadium massing was located as far south as possible, with an angled orientation to optimise the amount of Green space to the north with the playing surface and fan experience.







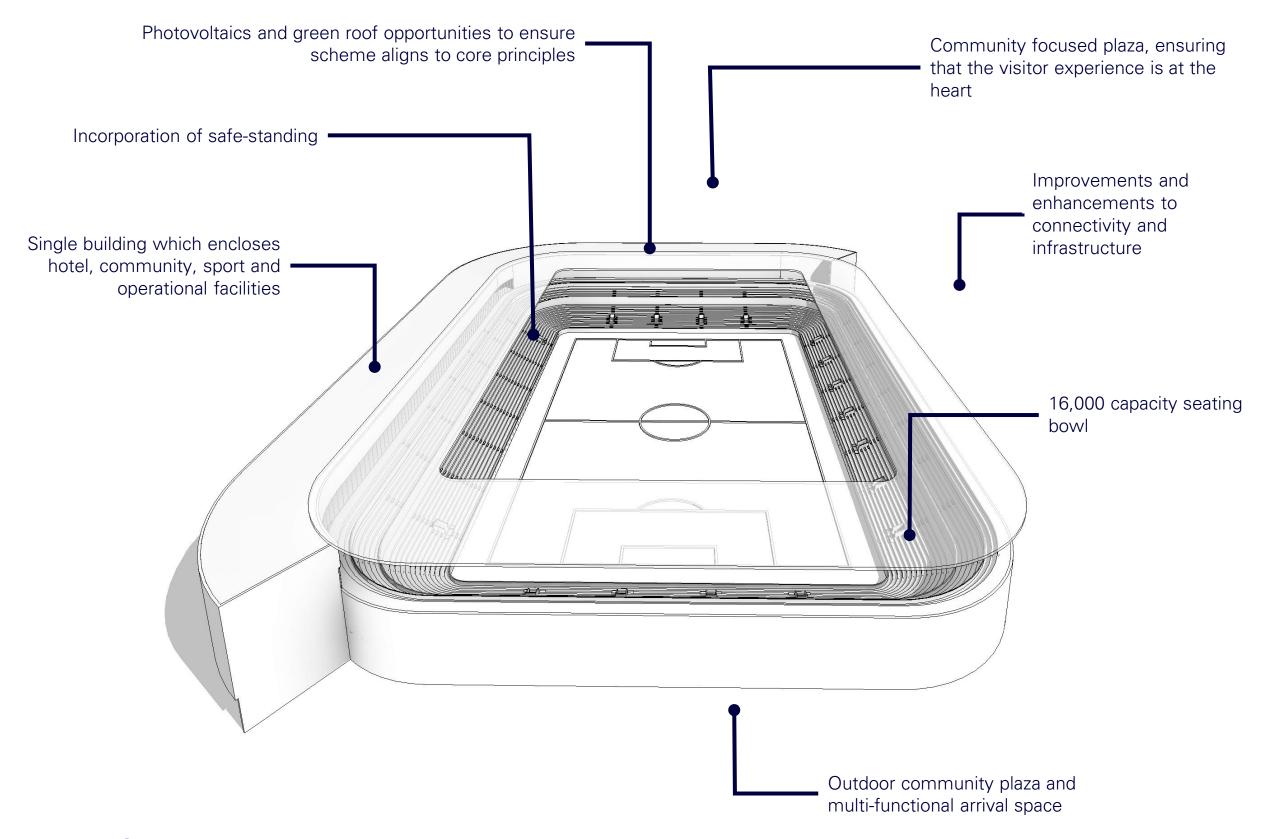
















Multi-Functional Arrival Space

As you approach the new stadium, the first thing you'll notice is the space that's directly adjacent to the road crossing. This area has been designed with pedestrians in mind, providing a safe and convenient area for fans arriving from the nearby park and ride and train station and from nearby Kidlington.

Along the edges of the arrival space, as it gently falls down toward the stadium, you will find a range of amenities, set amongst new tree and shrub planting. There are comfortable benches where you can sit and wait for friends, as well as bike racks and litter bins to keep the area tidy.

Overall, the arrival space provides a welcoming and convenient space for fans to gather before the game. Whether you're arriving by train, bus, foot or bike, you'll find everything you need to start your visitor experience off in the right way.

Legend

- Stadium Building (incl. hotel, gym, community and business facilities
- 2 Potential bridge crossing
- 3 Multi-functional arrival space
- 4 Accessible ramp
- 5 Stepped access
- 6 Enhanced tree planting and buffer
- 7 Preserved woodland





Outdoor Community Plaza

The outdoor community plaza to the north of the new stadium provides a welcoming open space for everyday use, for supporters to gather and socialise before and after matches and for hosting a variety of events. Surrounded by an avenue of trees and a vibrant wildflower meadow to the north, the community plaza offers a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of the adjacent areas.

This space is designed with flexibility in mind, making it the perfect location for relaxing, entertainment and health and wellbeing.

Visitors can enjoy a wide range of offerings while taking in the environment and landscape, and on match days, the community plaza open layout allows for a variety of activities, from impromptu games of pickup football to live music performances.

The plaza will act as the perfect destination for visitors of all ages and interests, providing a picturesque and flexible space that's sure to enhance the overall experience for fans, and act as an events and social space for the community on non-matchdays, connecting to the wider landscape.

Legend

- 1 Stadium Building (incl. hotel, gym, community and business facilities
- 2 Enhanced crossing infrastructure
- 3 Enhanced green space with community access
- 4 Outdoor community plaza
- 5 Overhead cables
- 6 Possible attenuation swale / sustainable drainage system
 - Green roof and landscaping

4 Environmental Impact and Sustainability

Oxford United FC are currently an EFL Green Club member. As part of this development, a detailed Biodiversity Net Gain assessment will be undertaken to achieve a minimum 10% net gain whilst aspiring to increase this gain in line with the 20% ambition targets in the area. Any trees which are displaced by the proposed development will be replaced in accordance with the local guidance and advice.

The site is located within the Green Belt and forms part of the landscape between Oxford and Kidlington. The technical work carried out to date has considered the site's context and contribution to its immediate surroundings with regard to the Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council Green Belt Assessments and Landscape Character Assessments.

This work has informed the location of the stadium as far south within the site as possible. The location and design of the community park and fan zone in the north of the site aims to strengthen the local green infrastructure network, complementing and connecting to the existing Stratfield Brake sports facility to the west and the emerging sports provision in site allocation PR7a to the east.

The site currently consists of areas of inaccessible scrub and commercial willow plantation. Opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the site will be taken where possible. The club and project team will consult with local interest groups and UK wide organisations such as the Woodland Trust, Wildlife and Countryside Link and the Open Spaces Society to ensure that a strong balance between nature enhancement and public access can be struck.







Oxford United FC is supportive of Oxfordshire's Net Zero aspirations and will work with the council and partners to seek opportunities to deliver Net Zero solutions to promote this. This not only applies to construction but in ensuring opportunities to develop a Net Zero Carbon operational plan are identified and reviewed. This includes promoting and supporting initiatives such as the 2030 target for zero emission bus fleets within Oxfordshire.

Our new stadium will be designed sustainably, built and operated sustainably to achieve at least BREEAM Very Good, with the aspiration to achieve Excellent.

This independent environmental assessment method from the Building Research Establishment will put the stadium in the top 25% of new buildings in terms of sustainable construction and sustainability during its life of use.

We are investigating the potential for clean energy generation on site. The stadium roof offers a platform for inclusion of sustainable measures such as green roofs or PV panels to generate energy for on-site use.

There will be electric vehicle charging points on site, covering current and future requirements. The stadium will operate with zero plastic, with minimal waste and packaging. On site catering will seek to maximise the use of locally produced food and drink.

The site will have a water management plan to include attenuation, reuse of rainwater on site and how wastewater can be reused for different purposes.

Light pollution will be minimised through considered design using LED technologies and intelligent controls. Floodlighting technology has advanced significantly and will be installed to limit light spill to neighbouring communities and environments.

There will be a focus on resource efficiency and renewable materials and re-use, in support of circular economy principles. The design process will also explore on-site re-use of demolition materials.







In 2022, Oxford United FC were ranked 29th in the Sports Positive EFL Combined League for sustainability. The introduction of a new stadium will enable us to improve on this, controlling issues such as ensuring all energy sources are clean, providing better and more sustainable transport links and providing educational schemes towards sustainability.

The UN Sustainable development goals (SDGs) highlight how all aspects of sustainability are connected. From climate change to biodiversity, gender and wider equality, clean and affordable energy. Through the project lifecycle, this project will ensure that the SDGs are a focal point in procurement, construction, delivery and operation.

The SDGs were first written into a national policy in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Wales (2015). The UK committed to the delivery of the SDGS's by embedding them in planned activities within each Government department, BREEAM will support in creating solutions which multi-solve and communicate how this happens.







5 Connectivity and Transport

Currently at the Kassam Stadium, a high proportion of fans travel on match days by car, with only 16.5% using buses and 6% using trains. We recognise concerns about parking management and access in residential streets, so we will work with the councils (who have the legal powers) and residents to put in place effective measures to control this. Through the new stadium development, we are targeting 90% of fans and site users to travel by sustainable modes. In order to achieve this aspiration, our transport vision for the site includes:

- 85% reduction in on-site car parking compared to a traditional stadium parking provision
- 140% increase in on-site cycle parking compared to a traditional stadium cycle storage provision
- Improvement in the connectivity of Oxford Parkway Railway Station and Park and Ride Site to the Stadium Site
- Investment in EV charging and bike storage areas for fans and the community
- Development of a sustainable Match Day Travel Plan to provide details on route to 90% sustainable travel
- Enhanced public bus services along Oxford Road and dedicated fan services on match days
- Public Transport connections to the park and ride sites around Oxford on match days



Stadium to Parkway
10 minute walk



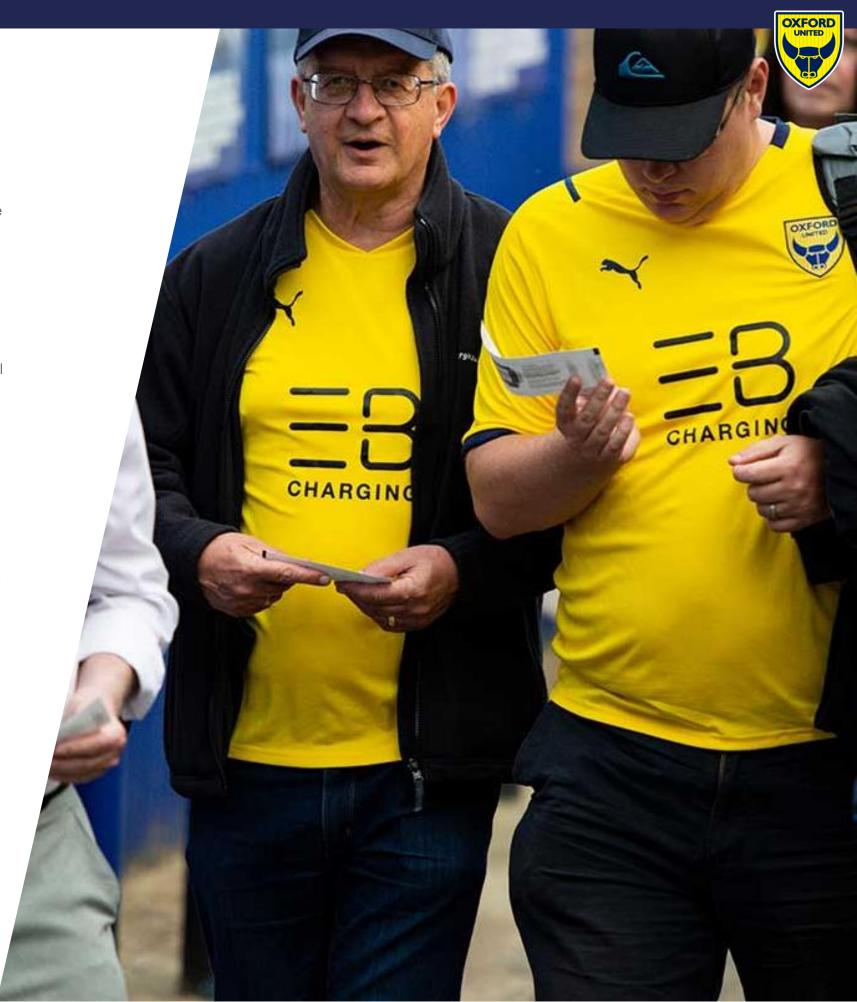
Parkway to City Centre 6 minute train

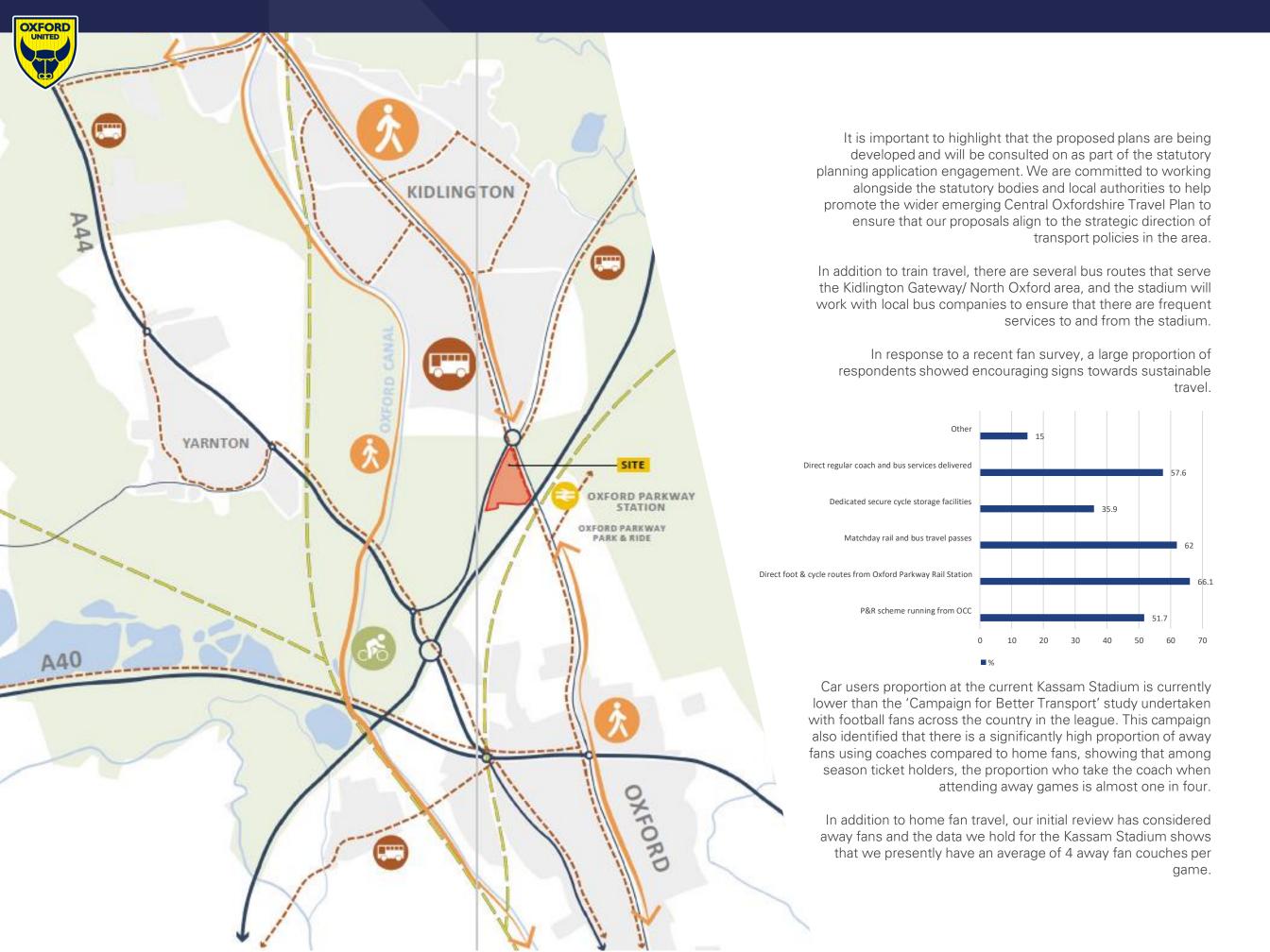


Parkway to London 60 minute train



Parkway to Birmingham 90 minute train





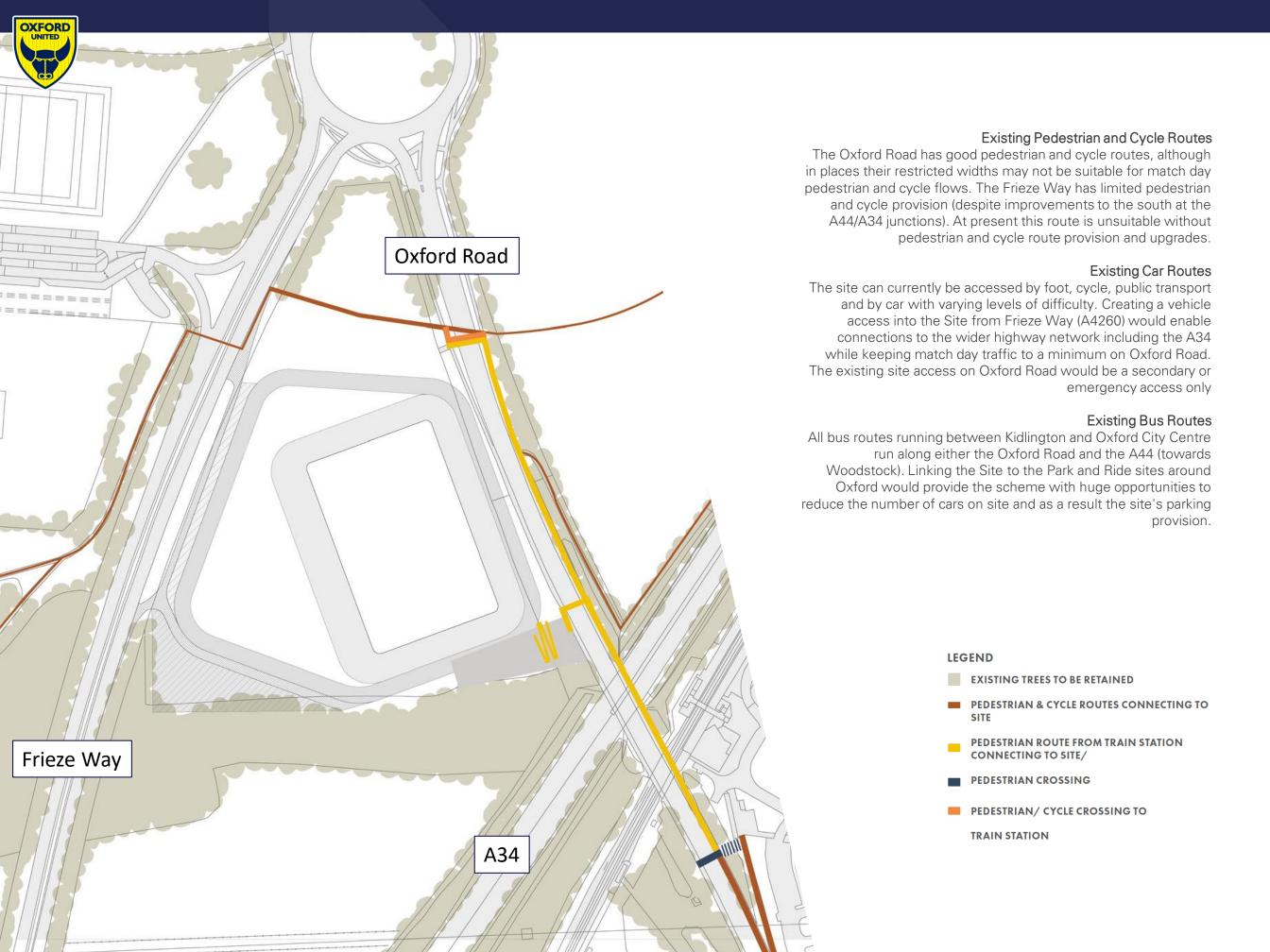
OUFC have met with the Oxford Bus Company who already provide some service to the Kassam Stadium on match days and a number of key risks and opportunities have been identified to be addressed through the proposed design. These include:

- Incorporation of the Central Oxfordshire Transport Plan and wider bus routes around Oxford and ring road links
- The Oxford Bus Company have agreed with Oxfordshire to reinvest any spare bus released by traffic / bus priority improvements to the pump prime new or enhanced services. This includes a ring road service that will terminate at Oxford Parkway with the intention longer term to serve Kidlington. The vision is that this service could operate every 10 minutes on a turn up and go basis
- Our proposals will look at the provision of bus stops within the masterplan for both matchdays and non-matchdays, providing a mixture of stands and stops

In order to promote the use of Oxford Parkway and train travel, and to improve the connectivity of the site and public realm, the proposed project aims to deliver

- New stepped access from Oxford Parkway up to Oxford Road
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycle facilities improving thew route between Oxford Parkway and the proposed Stadium Site and into Kidlington
- Enhanced and new controlled pedestrian crossing facilities across Oxford Road including the potential for a new pedestrian bridge over Oxford Road





The location of our new stadium is an absolute game changer for our fans and visiting fans. Our existing home at the Kassam is only accessible by congested local roads and one bus service.

At this current time, we have considered the relevant parking standards and looked at providing minimal parking at the site in order to actively encourage sustainable models of travel.

EV charging is expected to comply to at least the Building Regulations Part S standards, with 1 in 10 spaces being active and a further 20% passive ready for later installation.



enhanced local bus services



direct connection to National Rail Services at Oxford Parkway



coach parking for up to 15 coaches



around 700 cycle parking spaces



around 150 onsite stadium car parking spaces



around 6,000 P&R spaces





Current Issues

34% of supporters currently use unsustainable modes of transport

On average around 4,500 visitors drive to the existing site

On average around 100 visitors use a taxi

On average around 1,500 visitors use the bus network

Opportunities Generated

82% of season ticket holders and 62% of those without, live within OX Postcode

10% of visitors live within cycling distance (4 miles) of the new site

32% of visitors who currently use Oxford Parkway to the existing site will have a significantly reduced journey time

Around 50% of visitors live within 10 miles of the proposed site

6 Socio Economic Impact

Oxford United FC have commissioned an early independent socio economic impact review of the proposed development to understand what the opportunities are on a local (Oxfordshire) and wider level (National). These impacts are subject to change as the design and facilities progress, however they highlight and demonstrate the potential significant benefits which could be on offer through this development.

OUFC Stadium Proposals

Proposed Stadium Development



00

16,000



200

Hotel beds



and cycle links

New pedestrian



New and extended bus services

Local Drivers for Change



Highly accessible and well-connected Site



Local employment growth lagging behind the widereconomy



Identified need to improve activity & vitality in and around Kidlington local centre



Potential to improve local identity and tourism facilities in Kidlington



Local pockets of deprivation, particularly around education.skills & training

Construction Impacts over 2 years



£100.9m

Investmentin construction



380 Jobs

Construction jobs supported (on and off-site)



£17.8m **Annual** GVA

impact



At least 20 apprenticeships



Local recruitment and employmentsupport

Operational and Fiscal Impacts



340 Jobs

Direct FTE jobs supported



170 Jobs

Indirect & induced FTE jobs supported



£31m GVA p.a.

Direct and indirectimpact



£5.7m p.a. Off-site football supporter spending



95 Jobs FTEs supported by off-site football supporter spending



£280k p.a. in business rates

revenue



Section 106 contribution (to be agreed)

Working in Partnership with Local Organisations to Deliver:



Local resident employment & training opportunities

Local business supplychain opportunities



Improvements to local community sports facilities



Prioritising accessibility and active travel options



Improvements in local well-being through OU in the Community





7 Oxford United in the Community

Our Vision

Every person in Oxfordshire has a positive connection with OUFC / OUitC every day, inspiring happier, healthier and better-connected communities.

Our Mission

Working collaboratively with local and county-wide delivery partners, Oxford United in the Community uses the power of football to inspire the people and communities of Oxfordshire to have positive aspirations for their futures and the health, wellbeing, self-confidence, opportunities and resources to achieve them.

Our Focus

Whilst our work has traditionally focused on younger children in primary schools via Football in the Community programmes, our new strategy "Oxfordshire – A Community United" means we are extending that focus, working to support all of the community across Oxfordshire "aged from 2 to 92" with a more "placebased" approach.

For more information on our charitable work visit www.ouitc.org



Numbers are the baseline for the year ending 31st December 2020 – our starting point from which we will show the Charity's increased positive social impact in supporting the people of Oxfordshire.

8 Delivery Programme

The licence agreement at the Kassam Stadium ends in 2026, from which point Oxford United will have nowhere to play. We are grateful to Oxfordshire County Council and the local residents for providing feedback to date, and for attending the recent listening events.

The clear aim is to have a new home before the current licence agreement ends in 2026. For a project of this size and complexity, we are under no illusions that this is a very ambitious target and there will be a number of hurdles to overcome.

The first stage required is to secure the land in September 2023, following a public engagement period. Should the club be successful in securing the land, a planning application will be submitted shortly following to ensure that the necessary consultations and statutory approvals can be completed in time for the project to start on site in 2024.

We have an enhanced programme of engagement in place with the community throughout the entire project lifecycle and beyond.



Concept Design February 2023 OCC Decision on Land September 2023 Spatial Coordination February 2024

Public Engagement Period June – July 2023 Submit Planning Application October 2023 Planning Award March 2024

Planning Conditions Discharged June 2024 Stadium Operational July 2026

Start on Site July – August 2024

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